

Mid-Valley Trails Plan



August 2020 - Draft Final



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1. Acknowledgments

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 Eagle County Historical Society
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 Eagle County Road and Bridge Department
 Eagle County Sustainable Communities Department
 Garfield County Community Development Department
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 Mid-Valley Trails Committee
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 Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
 Roaring Fork School District
 Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
 Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
 Summit Vista Homeowners Association
 United States Forest Service
 WE-cycle

2. Glossaries

2.1. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in the Plan:

BSWA	Basalt State Wildlife Area
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CMPRD	Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
CODEX	Colorado Conservation Data Explorer
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CRVFO	Colorado River Valley Field Office of the BLM
ECLUR	Eagle County Land Use Regulations
ECCD	Eagle County Community Development Department
HOA	Homeowners Association
HSNC	Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative
MVTC	Mid-Valley Trails Committee
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PCOST	Pitkin County Open Space and Trails
PUD	Planned Unit Development
RFVHC	Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
RFMBA	Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
RFOV	Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
RFTA	Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
RFVRPC	Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission
SH 82	Colorado State Highway 82
SRMA	Special Resource Management Area
TMP	Travel Management Plan
USFS	United States Forest Service
WRNF	White River National Forest

2.2 MAPS

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3. Mid-Valley Trails Plan Purpose

The Eagle County 2020 Mid-Valley Trails Plan (the “Plan”) documents the Mid-Valley community’s belief that a connected and well-maintained network of paved and unpaved trails and shared roadways is an essential component of public infrastructure. Trail and shared roadway networks directly contribute to community health, economic vitality, inclusive accessibility and environmental sustainability.

The Plan is a supporting document to the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and the 2018 Mid-Valley Area Community Plan. The Plan reflects the goals and strategies detailed in those Eagle County foundational land use plans that support safe, environmentally friendly transportation facilities and quality of life-enhancing recreation opportunities. The Plan is an update to the 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan (the “2006 Plan”), and replaces that document in its entirety.

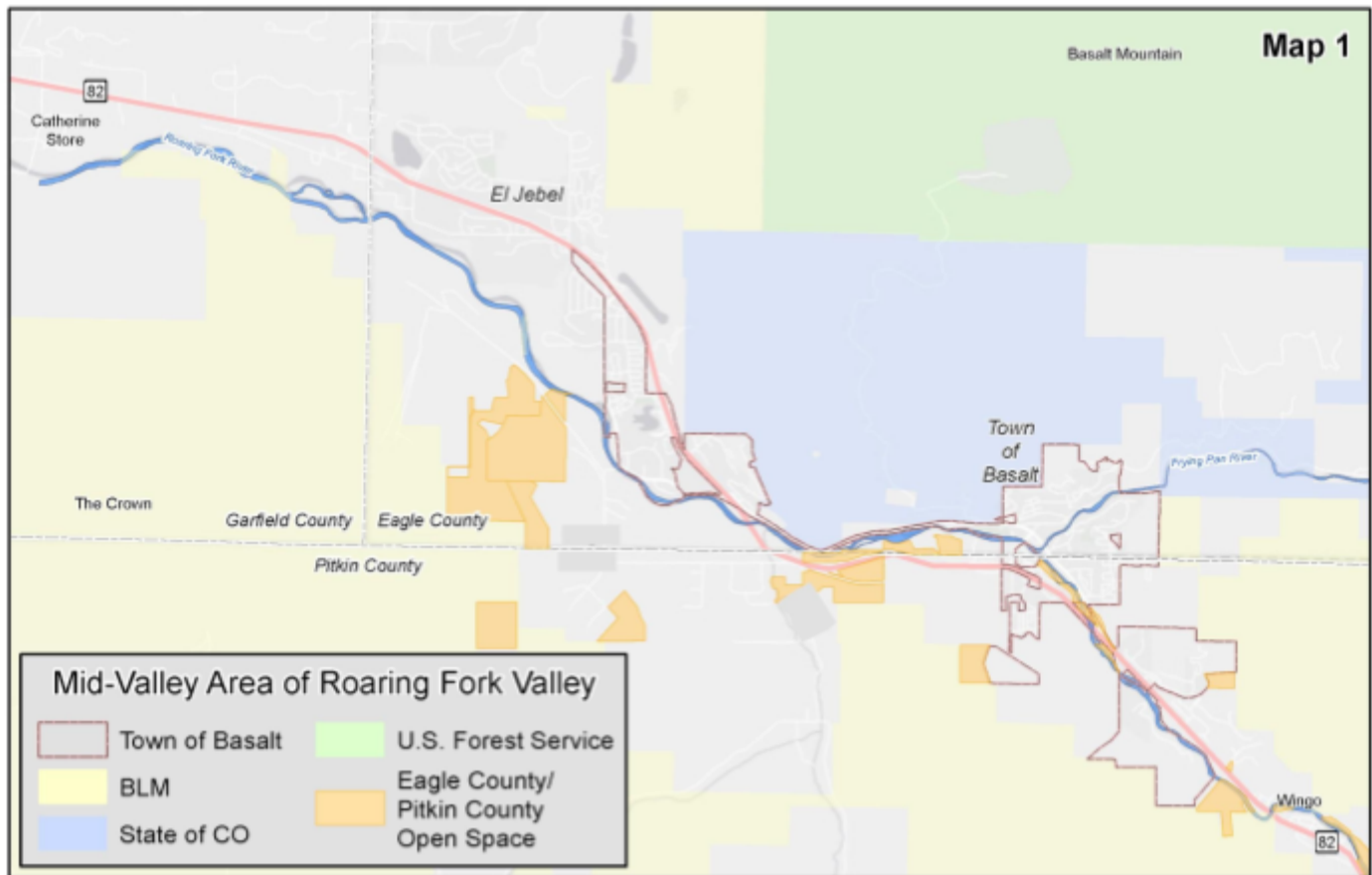


Bike to Work Day in the Roaring Fork Valley. Photo: RFTA

The Plan primarily focuses on the Roaring Fork Valley “Mid-Valley” area in Eagle County. It also includes information related to trail networks extending from Eagle County into neighboring Garfield and Pitkin Counties. The Mid-Valley area evaluated for this planning effort generally includes the valley floor and Colorado State Highway 82 (SH 82) corridor between Catherine Store Road to Wingo bridge and framed on the west by the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) “Crown” management area and on the east by Missouri Heights and Basalt Mountain and extending up the Frying Pan Valley to Ruedi Reservoir.

The Plan supports increasing opportunities for active transportation and recreation by underserved and underrepresented populations. The Plan’s proposed improvements and programs are aimed to support increased active transportation by underserved and underrepresented populations through providing low or no-cost recreation areas, increased engagement in outdoor activities and improved transportation route connectivity.

The Plan is a moment in time and updating the Plan is necessary on a routine basis based on performance measures. Eagle County intends to update the Plan every five years. Updates will use performance measure benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan while noting the areas of deficiency so they can be focused on in the future including how projects and programs are implemented and well as how the trail system is functioning.



Map 1. The "Mid-Valley" Area of the Roaring Fork Valley

The Mid-Valley area is unique in terms of its convergence of several managing jurisdictions including Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, Crown Mountain Park Recreation District, Mid-Valley Metropolitan District and many homeowner and property owner associations. Additionally, the regional and state-managed transportation facilities of RFTA and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) form the backbone of the local transportation system, and federally managed BLM and United States Forest Service (USFS) lands frame the populated area. Residents and visitors routinely cross boundaries on roads and trails within the Mid-Valley during their daily activities.

To acknowledge and include the significant expertise and wide-ranging public input that has been gathered to date, this Plan relies strongly on prior community planning work in the Mid-Valley area and public involvement in those processes. For example, through planning efforts by Town of Basalt and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA)¹, a substantial amount of constituent input and data was gathered and priority trail projects were identified to direct their organization's future planning and budgeting.

Proposed projects from those documents are included in this Plan but due to the number of overlapping jurisdictions and varying priorities in the Mid-Valley, are not prioritized in the context of this Plan. The majority of proposed projects listed in the Plan also have yet to be fully evaluated for feasibility.

¹ See documents referenced in Section 6.1

There are multiple new projects proposed in the Plan. The tables below details the name of the proposed alignment, the proponent - meaning the agency or entity interested in moving the project forward, the decision making authority or the landowner, Eagle County's role in the process, and the feasibility considerations that should be investigated as part of the analysis for implementation.

Table 1. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTE PAVED TRAILS				
Emma Trail Relocation and Bridge	Basalt	Basalt	Referral	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt's 2020 Master Plan and memorialized in their Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and received limited comment during review.
Rio Grande - Crown Mountain Park Bridge	MVCA Plan RFTA Plan	Eagle County USFS Private	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion	Included in multiple jurisdictional plans. Implementation challenges include potential impacts on sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitat and private property owner support. Extensive public comment received.
Rio Grande Equestrian	RFVHC	RFTA	Referral	Request made by local nonprofit to implement or improve this trail. Limited public and referral comments received on this expansion.
Willits Connections	Basalt	Basalt Eagle County	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion or a referral if located in Basalt	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt and memorialized in their Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan. Project would reduce safety concerns along Willits Lane. Limited comments were received.
Hooks Lane Trail Bridge	MVTC	Private Eagle County	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion	Multiple entities identify this section of trail as a safety and maintenance concern. There is support from these entities to improve this section. Public comment supported this project.
Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm - East side of SH 82	MVTC Basalt	Basalt CDOT Eagle County HOA PUD	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion/Possible Partner	The trail connection is recognized as a necessary improvement by multiple jurisdictions to improve walking, bicycling and transit connectivity within the Mid-Valley SH 82 corridor. It may be necessary to request right-of-way from adjacent private properties to complete the connection to the Tree Farm PUD if the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will not permit construction of the trail within the SH 82 primary right of way. No public comment was received.

Table 1 Continued. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTE PAVED TRAILS				
West side of SH 82 Trail	MVTC Basalt	CDOT	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion /Possible Partner	The project is supported by the Town of Basalt and the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. A partnership with CDOT is necessary for this project. No public comment was received regarding this segment of trail.
Two Rivers Road to downtown Basalt	Basalt	Basalt	Referral	Supported by the Town of Basalt's Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan and Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan. No public comment was received.
Valley Road Trails	MVTC	Eagle County HOA CDOT	Full review and permitting for the Eagle County portion/ Possible Lead	Supported by public agencies. Most public comment supports completing existing trail and sidewalk gaps on Valley Road with additional paved sections on both the north and south side of Valley Road. Summit Vista HOA indicated non-support to a public trail connection within their property. However, the trail connection for Summit Vista was art of the original subdivision approval and the trail easement is for public use based on County approval documents.
SH 82 Frontage Road Trail	MVTC	Eagle County Garfield County CDOT	Referral / Possible Partner	Supported by MVTC and the public. A partnership of Eagle County, Garfield County and CDOT is required to study and construct, with support from MVTC, private property owners and other agencies.

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Table 2. List of Proposed New or Expanded Projects

Project Name	Proponent	Decision Authority (Landowner)	Eagle County Role	Feasibility Considerations
SINGLETRACK TRAILS				
Blue Lake to Missouri Heights	RFMBA	Private HOA	Referral from HOA	A nonprofit proposes a singletrack trail connection to Missouri Heights through Blue Lake Open Space. The connection would require access across private property. Due to lack of public comment on the project, it is unclear if the property owners impacted are in support of the connection.
Shadowrock Trail	MVTC	Private HOA BLM	Referral from BLM	MVTC supports investigation of a potential trail easement with Shadowrock HOA, Tree Farm PUD, Eagle County, BLM, CPW and USFS to allow access to singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain. No public comment was received.
Valley Floor to Basalt Mtn	MVTC RFMBA Basalt	Private HOA BLM USFS CPW	Referral from BLM, USFS or CPW	Supported by multiple agencies and included in multiple jurisdictional plans. Collaboration is required with private property owners and homeowner associations, BLM, USFS and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to identify and study appropriate routes that might allow this connection to travel from the valley floor in El Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain. A new trail connection on federal lands would require a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and a public input process. Per BLM, wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM. Public comment received supported the concerns of the CPW and BLM regarding wildlife habitat protection.
Basalt Mountain top and Basalt State Wildlife Area	RFMBA RFVHC Basalt	BLM USFS CPW	Referral from BLM, USFS, CPW	Supported by the Town of Basalt and identified as a connection in the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. It is unclear if appropriate routes are possible to connect with the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain, with minimal impact on the wildlife habitat area and a NEPA process is required.
Crown SRMA Monte Carlo	RFMBA	BLM	Referral from Pitkin County or BLM	Proposed by the RFMBA. Public comments were concerned about the amount of trails already located on the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the impacts on wildlife.
Crown SRMA Crown Royale	RFMBA	BLM RFTA	Referral from RFTA or BLM	Proposed by the RFMBA. Public comments were concerned about the amount of trails already located on the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the impacts on wildlife.
Arbaney Kittle connection, entirely in Pitkin County	Basalt	Private BLM	Referral from Basalt or BLM	Supported by the Town of Basalt and identified as a connection in the Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. Would require a partnership among multiple agencies and a NEPA review is required since the project is located on federal lands.

The Plan is an inventory of programmatic priorities, existing and proposed trails and roadway infrastructure, both paved and unpaved. The Plan outlines opportunities and challenges for each proposed alignment and documents input from stakeholders of all types such as trail users, non-profit organizations, private developers, and public agencies. Additionally, the Plan includes guidelines for trail design and maintenance best practices. The Plan will serve multiple purposes to benefit the residents, visitors, businesses and public entities, in the following ways:

1. **Guidance for Land Use Application Review:** The Plan will serve as a guiding document for Eagle County's review of land use applications and the related need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to serve the community. Conformance with the policies of the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan is a standard required for most land use applications located in the Roaring Fork Valley. In some cases, the addition or connection to an existing trail facility will be required while in other cases it may be recommended or voluntarily provided by the applicant based on a verified nexus to the land use application.
2. **Infrastructure Inventory:** The Plan provides an alphabetical inventory and maps of the existing paved and unpaved trails network and shared roadways used by people who walk, bike, run, horseback ride or travel with other power driven mobility devices in the Mid-Valley area.
3. **Suggested Trail and Roadway Improvements:** The Plan includes recommendations and suggestions for future trail and shared roadway projects that are either already included in adopted local jurisdiction documents, or were suggested through the referral agency and public comment process. The majority of suggested or proposed improvement projects listed are expressed as concepts and will require further evaluation to determine feasibility and assure compliance with the guiding policies and regulations of the underlying jurisdiction, such as Eagle County, Town of Basalt, BLM or USFS.
4. **Standards:** The Plan provides standards for constructing and maintaining safe and enjoyable shared-use paved and unpaved trails and roadways and references required and recommended specifications.



View of El Jabel Community Center. Photo: Eagle County

4. Vision for Trails and Shared Roadways in the Mid-Valley

The vision for the Mid-Valley trails and shared roadway network is to seamlessly connect the community's residential, commercial and civic destinations safely and provide a wide range of enjoyable, sustainable, and appropriately located recreational routes on the valley floor and surrounding public lands.



*East Valley Road Trail in Willits.
Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media*

5. Planning Area Description: Roaring Fork “Mid-Valley”



The Roaring Fork Mid-Valley as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County

The Mid-Valley area is considered the mid-point in the length of the Roaring Fork River Valley spanning roughly 60 miles between the city of Glenwood Springs and Independence Pass south of Aspen.

Several jurisdictional entities overlay the Mid-Valley area including Eagle, Pitkin and Garfield counties, the Town of Basalt, State of Colorado, BLM and USFS in addition to metropolitan and

special districts. The linear Mid-Valley features of the Roaring Fork River, SH 82 and the Rio Grande Trail are critical community assets that have a defining role in land use and transportation patterns in the Mid-Valley area. Approximately 6,000 people reside in the 245 square miles of the portion of the Mid-Valley that Eagle County administers, including the Frying Pan River Valley east of Basalt.

The following descriptions from the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan and slightly modified for this Plan context, demonstrate the variety in land use, character and activity in the Mid-Valley area.

- **SH 82 Corridor** - SH 82 parallels the Roaring Fork River as it runs the length of the Mid-Valley, serving the communities of El Jebel and Basalt located on the valley floor. SH 82 is the main arterial roadway for the Roaring Fork Valley with an average of 25,000 vehicles per day (2018) passing through El Jebel in Eagle County. Numerous commercial and retail services are located in El Jebel or within Basalt town limits in the corridor area, with mixed-density residential neighborhoods in close proximity. The Rio Grande Trail, the Roaring Fork Valley's trail arterial, generally parallels SH 82 on the western edge of the valley floor. Many secondary trail segments facilitate trips to and from the corridor's commercial, residential and public facility centers.
- **Emma** - South and west of the Roaring Fork River is the Emma area featuring historic ranch lands, irrigated fields and expansive views. Residential densities are relatively low in this part of the valley floor, and preservation of rural character is the predominant focus. The Rio Grande Trail travels through the Emma area adjacent to the Roaring Fork River and Hooks Spur Road. From the Rio Grande Trail, several trails access "The Crown," an elevated backcountry area to the south and west that is popular with hikers, bicyclists and equestrians.

- **Missouri Heights** - To the north of El Jebel is the Missouri Heights area, where scattered neighborhoods enjoy lower density living with views of the Roaring Fork Valley, Mount Sopris and the Elk Range. The area also includes larger agricultural properties. Horse ownership and horseback riding along County roads and trails in this area is fairly common. Primary access roads in the area are paved, but many side roads are not. Trailheads on Missouri Heights provide access to public lands on Basalt Mountain managed by the USFS.



View of Mid-Valley in winter from Missouri Heights. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

- **Frying Pan River Valley** - The Mid-Valley area also includes portions of the Frying Pan River Valley located below and to the north of Ruedi Reservoir located east of the Town of Basalt. Renowned for its fishing and scenery, the Frying Pan River Valley is a significant tourist attraction. Frying Pan Road parallels the river, serving agricultural properties and small pockets of residential development. Numerous turnouts exist for anglers and sightseers. The paved road is narrow and can be busy at times, and it is increasingly popular with bicyclists in warmer months. There are concerns for safety given the mix of users, poor sight distances and the narrow or non-existent road shoulders.

6. The Planning Process

During the 2016-2018 process to update the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan, stakeholder and public input included detailed comments about trail and shared roadway policy and projects.

In response to the interest in trail and shared roadway infrastructure and policy, it was determined by the sitting Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission (RFVRPC) and staff that an update to the 2006 Plan was the appropriate method for documenting the community's suggestions and requests. Additionally, many of the trail projects recommended by the 2006 Plan were complete, such as the Rio Grande Trail and Willits Lane Trail, and new project recommendations had emerged.



Kids walking near Basalt Elementary School. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

Furthermore, in the last decade, the Town of Basalt, RFTA and others have adopted detailed planning documents that include recommendations for improvements to the trail and transportation systems in the Mid-Valley with significant community support for continued expansion or enhancements.

Eagle County regularly updates land use documents ensuring the goals reflect current community priorities and jurisdictional policies. As specified by the Eagle County Land Use Regulations (ECLURs), preparation and adoption of planning documents are overseen by the planning commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Eagle County RFVRPC is ultimately responsible for the preparation and adoption of this Plan. The current ECLUR requires that certain land use applications be in “substantial conformance” with the Comprehensive Plan, Sub Area Plans or other goals, policies, and intents of any applicable County adopted documents pertaining to natural resource protection, affordable housing or infrastructure management.

Plans such as this Plan are a key component in the review of land use applications by both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. The standard of “Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan” for certain land use applications demonstrates the importance of a clear and visionary document which reflects the desires of Eagle County residents, visitors and businesses.

For the projects to become a reality and investigated for compatibility, an overall plan helps frame the goals and metrics that should be considered prior to moving a project forward. There is a delicate balance between serving many different user types, the environment, and ensuring all stakeholder concerns are addressed.

When new or proposed trails are considered, it is with the understanding that in-depth analysis, as is required for all development projects, may unearth unmitigatable impacts that make the project unfeasible for implementation. If a trail is identified in this Plan, it is not a guarantee that the proposed project can or will be implemented. The majority of proposed projects or upgrades described in the Plan are in the concept stage. Inclusion in the Plan is not intended to imply Eagle County government's approval, but to capture conceptual proposals that may or may not be investigated for further action by the lead proponents. It is also possible that some of the proposed projects that may have merit may not proceed past the planning and feasibility stage if the challenges outweigh potential benefit such as if impacts to sensitive lands, wildlife or neighborhoods are unavoidable or unmitigatable, or if the project otherwise cannot comply with government policies or regulatory requirements.

Any entity who desires to create or expand a trail requires approval from the appropriate government and environmental agencies before proceeding forward. It is with these safeguards in place, that Eagle County endorses the investigation of the trails included in the Plan and to use this Plan as a guiding document during the review of applicable land use proposals.

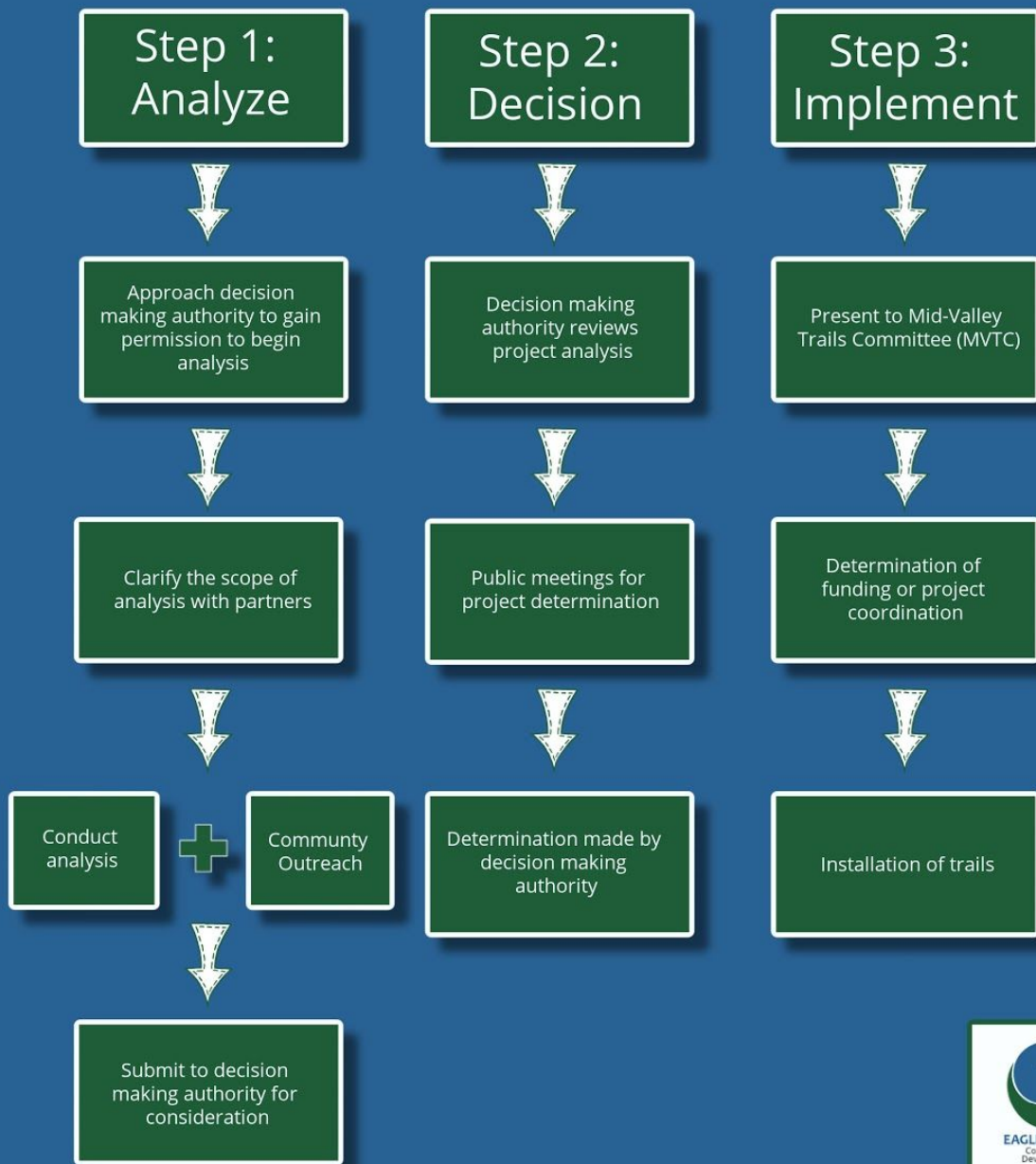
Getting a trail implemented is a multi-step process. Below is an example illustration of how the process could proceed for a new trail.

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Example Process for a Trail Project



Trail Project Examples: Trail maintenance Trail construction Trail educational events



6.1. Mid-Valley Trails Plan Timeline 2017 - 2020

2017:

- **Work began to review and revise the 2006 Plan**, with Eagle County Community Development (ECCD) and Mid-Valley Trails Committee (MVTC) staff guiding the effort.
- In May 2017 approximately **30 people attended a public meeting** hosted by the MVTC and ECCD at the El Jebel Community Center to gather trail and shared roadway input from Mid-Valley residents and other interested parties. The majority of comments received focused on expanding singletrack trail networks in and adjacent to Eagle County on county, state or federal public lands. MVTC staff reports that this was a shift from the 2006 Plan public input that focused primarily on completion or expansion of several valley-floor paved trail connections, many of which are now complete.

2018:

- **Basalt Park Open Space and Trails Committee (POST)** hosted a joint meeting to review trail and shared roadways priorities and a USFS Basalt Mountain forest salvage project. MVTC, Roaring Fork Outdoors Volunteers (RFOV), Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA) and Pitkin County Open Space & Trails (PCOST) participated, with meeting findings incorporated into this Plan update that indicated a strong interest in singletrack trail completions and enhancements, as well as completing and upgrading paved trail connections and improving shared roadways.
- The **Mid-Valley Community Area Plan** process concluded following two years of public process and draft reviews with an adopted plan that includes multiple references to Mid-Valley Community goals for safe connectivity to enable bicycle and pedestrian transportation and the desire for recreational trails provided those amenities can be appropriately located and not impact wildlife, sensitive landscapes and adjacent properties.

2017-2018:

- **ECCD staff prepares the first draft of the revised Plan.** MVTC and MVTC staff, and interested stakeholders, such as RFMBA, contributed text, editing and map content to the first draft document.

2019:

- **ECCD staff and MVTC staff expanded the draft for MVTC review** as the next step towards preparation of a public review draft for release in early 2020.
- **Stakeholder Outreach:** The late 2019 MVTC review draft included information from phone interviews or email exchanges with Mid-Valley jurisdictional and organizational stakeholders², including:
 1. Town of Basalt including Basalt Parks, Open Space & Trails Committee
 2. Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
 3. Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
 4. Crawford Properties, LLC
 5. Eagle County Road and Bridge Department
 6. Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
 7. Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
 8. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
 9. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department

² see Appendix F for discussion notes

10. Garfield County Community Development Department
11. Colorado Department of Transportation
12. Colorado Parks and Wildlife
13. Bureau of Land Management
14. United States Forest Service

■ **Data gathering and research** including review of the following related land use, transportation, trails and resource management plans pertinent to the Mid-Valley area and Roaring Fork Valley³:

1. [Basalt 2020 Master Plan](#) with [Community Outreach Summary](#)
2. [Basalt Area Parks Open Space and Trails Master Plan \(2013\)](#)
3. [Basalt Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan \(2007\)](#)
4. [CDOT 2040 Regional Transportation Plan \(2015\)](#)
5. [CPW Basalt State Wildlife Area Management Plan \(2015\) - links to map only](#)
6. [BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office Resource Management Plan \(2015\)](#)
7. [BLM Crown Special Recreation Management Area - Travel Resource Management Plan Implementation \(2019\)](#)
8. [Eagle County Climate Action Plan \(2016\)](#)
9. [Eagle County Comprehensive Plan \(2005\)](#)
10. [Eagle County Environmental Policy Statement \(2013\)](#)
11. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan \(2018\)](#)
12. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Plan \(2006\)](#)
13. [Eagle County Strategic Plan \(2017\)](#)
14. [Garfield County 2030 Comprehensive Plan \(2013\)](#)
15. [Pitkin County Down Valley Comprehensive Plan \(1987\)](#)
16. [Pitkin County Frying Pan Master Plan \(2016\)](#)
17. [Pitkin County Glassier Open Space Management Plan \(2105\)](#)
18. [Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan \(2015\)](#)
19. [Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Policies \(2018\)](#)
20. [Pitkin County Rio Grande Trail Management Plan \(2015\)](#)
21. [RFTA Access Control Plan \(2018\)](#)
22. [RFTA Corridor Investment Study \(2003\)](#)
23. [RFTA Recreational Trails Plan Update - Draft Rio Grande Trails Master Plan \(2018\)](#)
24. [RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan \(2015\)](#)
25. [RFTA Rules and Regulations for Trail Use](#)
26. [USFS Motorized Vehicle Travel Management Map \(2011\)](#)
27. [USFS WRNF Travel Management Plan \(2011\)](#)

Common Themes in Adopted Plans and Stakeholder Interviews:

Several common themes emerged from the stakeholder outreach conversations and from the review of the resource and community documents list above:

- **Safe, efficient and connected infrastructure** for people walking and bicycling are an important component of community health and economy.
- **Roadways need to be upgraded and maintained** to safely accommodate non-motorized users.
- **Recreation is an important element** of the Roaring Fork Valley lifestyle.
- **Sustainability and environmental stewardship** must be considered and impacts avoided or mitigated.
- **Partnerships and regional cooperation are a necessity** to complete projects.

³ see Appendix C for related map excerpts

2020:

- **January:** A work session was held with the MVTC at their regular meeting to discuss the first draft of the Plan, draft maps, and the proposed project schedule. Parties attending included ECCD, RFOV, RFMBA and Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council (RFVHC) The draft Plan was released on January 28 for review and comment in compliance with the ECLUR stipulated "Referral" review process to 70 public agencies, property associations and organizations. The draft Plan was also advertised in local papers and public radio as available for public comment with a 30-day review period.



Setting Nordic Ski Tracks at Crown Mountain Park. Photo: Laurel Smith / Sopris Media

- **February:** The RFVRPC reviewed the draft Plan as a worksession item at their February 6 regular meeting. ECCD hosted an Open-House prior to and following the meeting to invite comment on the Plan text and maps on display. The RFVRPC scheduled an additional work session for mid-March to review comments received regarding the Plan. 35 comment responses were submitted by the February 28 deadline.
- **June:** Due to Eagle County and state public health orders prohibiting public gatherings, all public hearings were postponed. In the March through May period, staff advanced Plan edits related to formatting, exhibits, new or updated project details and other information to improve the Plan. At the RFVRPC June 4 meeting, referral comments and related revisions for the final draft Plan were reviewed and the RFVRPC directed staff to further update the Plan to include additional discussion on regulatory reviews, compliance with pertinent plans and environmental sustainability.
- **July:** The revised Plan was presented to the RFVRPC and the public on July 2 for adoption consideration. A second and final public hearing was tabled on July 16, 2020 to provide staff additional time to comprehensively address the comments from the RFVRPC and the public received during the July 2, 2020 adoption hearing. A second and final public hearing was tabled on July 16, 2020 to address the comments from the RFVRPC and the public received during the July 2, 2020 adoption hearing.
- **August:** The second and final hearing was held on August 20, 2020 to formally adopt the Plan under Resolution No. 2020-01.

7. Plan Goals for Trails and Shared Roadways

The following are the **goals for the Mid-Valley trails and shared roadways network** and this Plan have been identified:



Rio Grande Trail near Glassier Open Space in Eagle County. Photo: Pitkin County

■ **PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK**

Continue to provide and maintain, and improve safe, connected and enjoyable transportation and recreation routes for Roaring Fork Valley residents and visitors for non-motorized uses such as walking, running, hiking, road biking, paved trail biking, mountain biking (including electrical assist bicycles where permitted), Other Power Driven Mobility Devices, cross-country skiing and horseback riding.

■ **EVALUATE LAND USE APPLICATIONS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION NEEDS**

Support Eagle County, Town of Basalt, Garfield and Pitkin County land use review processes and adopted comprehensive planning documents to ensure connected walking and bicycling facilities to and within proposed developments.

■ **ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY VALUES**

Review suggested trail and shared roadway improvements for conformance to adopted community master plan and sub-area plan goals, policies and strategies, and continued compliance through the life of the project.

■ MEET DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Support the provision of facilities that meet national standards for pedestrian, bicycling, accessibility and shared roadways. Properly designed infrastructure also promotes ease of maintenance and sustainability of the community asset. A well-designed and well-built trail should require less resources to maintain, and is sustainable or “manageable” compared to the budget and staffing available and tasks required.

■ ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Support trail projects that adhere to local, state and federal government environmental sustainability and stewardship policies to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and other natural resources. Sustainability refers to the study and careful use of a resource (such as public lands) so that the environmental resources are not depleted or permanently damaged.



Frying Pan Valley. Photo: Eagle County

Eagle County is a place where natural ecosystems are preserved and maintained to assure the health and well-being of local wildlife populations. Trail projects must provide analysis and evidence the wildlife surrounding the trail will not be impacted or unduly affected, and that Colorado Parks and Wildlife approved mitigation measures can be utilized and enforced.

■ CLOSE PAVED TRAIL NETWORK GAPS

Support closing all gaps in the paved trail network and prioritize gaps where safety is an issue due to adjacent roadways and deficient facilities. The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan included stakeholder input from all communities of the Roaring Fork Valley and found that the top factors that discourage biking and walking include gaps in the system, substandard or poorly maintained facilities, dangerous intersections and crossing busy roads.

■ SUPPORT SINGLETRACK FOR MULTIPLE USER GROUPS

Work with public land managers on improved and additional singletrack trail opportunities, located where appropriate and in compliance with pertinent regulations and management

plans, for walking, bicycling and horseback riding on the Roaring Fork Valley floor as well as connections to surrounding public lands such as on Basalt Mountain and The Crown.

■ IMPROVE TRAILS AND ROADWAYS FOR SHARED USE

Support the consistent improvement of roads and trails to enable safe sharing by people walking, biking, and riding through widening, additional striping, safety and wayfinding signage, educational information and consistent maintenance, where appropriate.

■ CONSISTENTLY MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Support consistent and enhanced maintenance of existing trail networks and shared roadways.

■ SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE ACTION GOALS

Support programs and infrastructure, such as bike-share programs, that in combination with improved trail and shared road infrastructure advance Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals.

■ ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When considering or prioritizing trail project additions or improvements, the economic development impacts should be considered. The economic benefits of recreational trails have been studied nationwide by advocacy groups including American Trails, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and others, verifying that trails can spur economic development through construction and maintenance, equipment sales and rentals, services, restaurants, lodging and increased property values.

■ COLLABORATE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Support public and private partnerships essential for trail and shared roadway construction or maintenance including collaboration with landowners, incorporated communities, adjacent counties, local, state and federal agencies and advocacy organizations.



Handcrafted pedestrian bridge in El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County

8. Summary of Existing and Proposed Trails and Shared Roadways



Cross country skiers at Crown Mountain Park. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

The following summary lists the trails and shared roadways in the Mid-Valley area as well as projects identified by the participants in this Plan update process and by the relevant trails and transportation planning documents adopted between 2013 and 2019⁴ for the Mid-Valley area and Roaring Fork Valley. For a full description of each trail, shared roadway and suggested projects, as well as related implementation considerations, see Section 11 - Inventory of Existing Trails and Shared Roadway with Proposed Projects.

The list of trails is organized in alphabetical order *and it is important to note that trail or roadway project improvement or expansion suggestions are not organized in order of recommended completion or priority. Many of the suggestions are in concept stage only and have not been fully evaluated to be feasible.* With partnerships, studies, public outreach, budget planning and permit approvals by applicable jurisdictions, some projects may move forward to completion. Others may not move past the concept or feasibility stage due to issues ranging from inability to comply with agency regulation or policy, to mitigate impact, to respond to public concerns, or due to budget constraints or insurmountable constructability or environmental issues.

Several of the existing planning documents for Mid-Valley jurisdictions or management agencies have clearly identified their jurisdictional priorities. **Project implementation would presumably be led by the jurisdiction, management agency or advocacy group whose interests or mandates the project will serve,** and a collaboration formed of supporting partners. When a project is identified as a priority to move into a feasibility study or planning phase, the “Goals” of this Plan⁵ as well as the “Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design” located in Appendix B are recommended as guiding principles.

⁴ See Section 6.1

⁵ See Section 7

Common Themes Found in the Project Summary List Include:

- **Closing gaps:** Close gaps in the paved trail network to improve overall connectivity for people walking, bicycling or safely accessing transit stops in all seasons.
- **Streamline valley-floor trail connections:** Reconstruct or realign trail segments that are not functioning well due to safety, navigation or accessibility issues, such as Hooks Bridge area.
- **Comply with natural resource policies:** Evaluate proposed trail and shared roadway improvements to ensure compliance with adopted comprehensive and natural resource plans goals for avoiding impacts to wildlife, wildlife habitat and other sensitive lands.
- **Consistent maintenance:** Improve local collaboration to provide consistent trail maintenance of all paved surfaces.
- **Access to public lands:** Provide singletrack trail connections from the valley-floor population areas to adjacent public lands, such as the El Jebel and Basalt link to Basalt Mountain.
- **Upgrade roadways:** Upgrade local roadways to maintain and widen shoulders and add additional safety and wayfinding signage such as on Frying Pan Road.
- **Collaboration:** Address various user-group needs and encourage collaboration among jurisdictions, agencies and interest groups such as between mountain bikers, horseback riders and hikers.

Table 3. Programs and Studies

Project Name	Description
Accessibility	Encourage a multi-jurisdictional accessibility study of paved trails in the Mid-Valley area to ensure universal access is available to users with disabilities or low-skill levels. Potential partners include Eagle County, Basalt, RFTA, Pitkin County, Garfield County, WE-Cycle, Mid-Valley Metro Districts, CPW, POA's/HOA's.
E-Bikes	Consider a campaign to publicize and educate about legal and appropriate uses of electrical assisted bicycles (E-Bikes) on paved or singletrack trails as a Mid-Valley multi-jurisdictional effort. This should include E-Bike policy signage improvements as well as the development of a clear regional policy through multi-jurisdictional collaboration and adoption. Potential partners include Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, MVTC, Town of Basalt, WE-cycle, RFTA, PCOST, USFS, BLM, CPW.
Leadership	MVTC may be the appropriate entity to lead monitoring the programs and projects suggested in this Plan, and encourage partner involvement or leadership as necessary. Potential partners include MVTC, RFTA, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC, WE-cycle.

Project Name	Description
<p>Maintenance and Funding</p>	<p>Collaborative and Consistent Maintenance: Appendix A includes recommended schedule and tasks for trails and shared roadways that, if collaboratively followed by local trail managers, would create a consistent level of maintenance service throughout the Mid-Valley area. Other recommended goals and next steps include providing Plan information to all jurisdictions, combine equipment needs, add trails to pavement management inventories, and incorporate trails into capital improvement planning.</p> <p>Maintenance Funding: Through the MVTC, develop a funding program to support existing singletrack trail adoption programs and create a paved trail adoption program to support enhanced maintenance by local government, HOA and special districts. MVTC to provide resident/user input to jurisdictions about maintenance issues observed throughout the Mid-Valley area. Potential partners for consistent and adequately funded maintenance include MVTC, RFTA, RFMBA, RFOV, RFBVC, Town of Basalt, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County HOA/POA's, CPW, Crawford Properties, Metro Districts.</p>
<p>Mid-Valley Trails Committee Outreach</p>	<p>As a committee of RFTA and Eagle County government, MVTC is tasked with increasing public awareness about MVTC and all Mid-Valley trail resources through local government and trail organization websites and inviting increased public meeting involvement by individuals, interest groups and agencies. Make meeting notes, budget, funding priorities, and other documentation available to the public. Expand MVTC partnerships with RFTA, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFMBA, RFOV, RFBVC, HSNL, HOA's/POA's, WE-cycle, Metro Districts and other interested organizations.</p>
<p>Signage Coordination and Enhancement</p>	<p>Wayfinding: Review the entire Mid-Valley paved and unpaved network to determine areas that require additional wayfinding signage to improve navigation. Encourage standardization with a common visual appearance while adhering to traffic sign specifications.</p> <p>Etiquette and Education: Continue and expand current efforts to educate users about etiquette and regulations for sharing trails and roads. This work is important to foster understanding and avoid conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers, horseback riders and wildlife. Include information about area wildlife, seasonal closures, permitted shared uses, speed and passing, avoidance during wet conditions and consequences of non-compliance with use regulations. Also identify areas for installation of historic and natural environment interpretive signs at trailheads or appropriate locations along trails. RFMBA and RFBVC are currently collaborating on an etiquette and education campaign with radio public services announcements and trail signage.</p> <p>Current "hot spots" for signage coordination are Hooks Spur Bridge, south end of East Valley Road Trail, Aspen Junction Trail, Summit Vista - Valley Road, the Crown and Basalt Mountain. Potential partners for these efforts include MVTC, Eagle County, Garfield County, Pitkin County, Town of Basalt, CPW, RFTA, RFMBA, RFOV, RFBVC, HOA/POA's, Crawford, Metro Districts, WE-cycle, USFS, BLM.</p>



Project Name	Description
Pets	Rules vary throughout the area and are periodically revised. A regularly updated public information notice through the MVTC to inform trail and public lands users where pets are prohibited or allowed seasonally, year-round, on-leash and off-leash could be developed. Develop consistent signage to alert the public where pets are or are not allowed on trails. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Crown Mountain Park, Town of Basalt, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, CPW.
Trailhead Improvements	MVTC could coordinate trailhead improvements throughout the Mid-Valley to support appropriate, well-organized and “right-sized” parking and enhancements such as trailhead signs, refuse containers, structures, etc. that accommodate a range of users. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, RLVHC, RLVBA, RLVFV.
Target Outreach Program for Underserved and Underrepresented	To increase active transportation and recreation among underserved and underrepresented communities, MVTC could partner with community stakeholders and local organizations such as Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Wilderness Workshop, Aspen Center for Environmental Education, Aspen Nature.org and Valley Settlement.org to enhance programming. Efforts should include supporting active transportation and recreation opportunities by taking advantage of existing infrastructure and understanding where gaps are located and should be included in future iterations of this Plan. Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS, RLVHC, RLVBA, RLVFV.
Digital and Hard Copy of Mid-Valley Trails Map	MVTC should undertake the creation of a digital and hard copy of map program for the entire Mid-Valley Trails system. This program would provide accessible information on how to access trails, current conditions, rules, trail type, and cell phone coverage. An example program that could be used as a framework is located here: https://www.tahoebike.org/where-to-ride/ . Potential partners include MVTC, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County, Town of Basalt, CPW, PCOST, RFTA, BLM, USFS.

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Map Item#	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	Emma Trail	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Upgrade SH 82 trail underpass. ■ Add a new trail section on Old Emma Road to replace the section close to the roadway. ■ Add Roaring Fork River bridge connection to Two Rivers Road. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.1
2.	Rio Grande Trail	RFTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Widen and repave high-use sections. ■ Study bridge connection to Crown Mountain Park. ■ Study needed for additional equestrian improvements. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.1
3.	Willits Lane Trail	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.1

Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford Trails	Blue Lake HOA Eagle Dakota HOA Crawford Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seek public access to Eagle-Dakota trails. ■ Accommodate planned school access. ■ Provide a safe crossing of SH 82. ■ Improve bikeshare facilities. ■ Study public access for Blue Lake to Missouri Heights trail. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
2.	Crown Mountain Park Trails	CMPRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study trail bridge connection to Rio Grande Trail. ■ Pave gravel trail on Valley Road. 	10.2
3.	East Valley Road Trails	Town of Basalt Willits PUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create paved or unpaved trail connections through residential areas off of East Valley Road to Willits. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
4.	El Jebel Road Trail to SH 82 Underpass	Eagle County CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure long term maintenance of SH 82 tunnel. ■ Modify SH 82 underpass for improved bicycle access. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2

Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
5.	Hooks Lane Trail	Eagle County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve bridge and trail connections. ■ Resolve winter maintenance issues. ■ Study new bridge connection. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
6.	Orchard Plaza Trail	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
7.	Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails	Shadowrock HOA Tree Farm Metro District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add bikeshare improvements. ■ Request trail connection to adjacent public lands. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
8.	Southside Trail	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
9.	SH 82 Corridor	Aspen Junction HOA CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Upgrade existing unpaved SH 82 trails to paved trails. ■ Close Two Rivers to Tree Farm trail gaps on the east side of SH 82. ■ Complete Two Rivers trail to Basalt. ■ Add Willits neighborhood trail connection. ■ Add bikeshare improvements and transit connections. ■ Provide consistent maintenance. 	10.2
10.	Valley Road Corridor	Summit Vista HOA Aspen Skiing Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Close gaps in the existing trail network on the south and north side of Valley Road. ■ Pave gravel trail on south side Valley Road. ■ Request improved maintenance of existing trails. ■ Seek public access connections through subdivisions to reach SH 82 crossing to Blue Lake. ■ Improve SH 82 crossing. ■ Install signs and safety improvements on Valley Road. ■ Extend trail on Valley Road or widen road shoulders. ■ Add bikeshare improvements. ■ Create a trail on SH 82 Frontage Road or widen road shoulders. 	10.2

Map Item #	Trail or Trail Network Name	Trail Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	Basalt Mountain Trails	USFS BLM CPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue improvements to existing trails. ■ Study Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain connections with USFS, BLM, CPW. ■ Study reopening of closed trail routes for horse and foot. ■ Study potential new routes with USFS. ■ Improve wayfinding signage. ■ Improve equestrian facilities with USFS. 	10.3
2.	Basalt State Wildlife Area	CPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain connection. ■ Study mountain bike seasonal use. 	10.3
3.	Crown Mountain SRMA	BLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue improvements to existing approved trails. ■ Request BLM study trail use levels for wildlife impacts and enforce trail regulations. ■ Study new trail routes with BLM. ■ Improve equestrian facilities with BLM. 	10.3
4.	Glassier Open Space	Pitkin County PCOST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Request PCOST study trail use levels for wildlife impacts and enforce trail regulations. ■ Improve equestrian facilities with RFTA and PCOST. 	10.3
5.	Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek to Ruedi	Private, Eagle County, CPW, USFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study historic route location and trail feasibility. ■ Monitor historic right-of-way encroachments. 	10.3
Located in Pitkin County				
6.	Arbaney Kittle Trail	PCOST BLM USFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study proposed new trail connection from Basalt with Eagle County, PCOST, BLM, USFS. 	10.3

Table 7. Proposed Projects for Shared Roadways				
Map Item #	Road Name	Road Owner	Summary of Proposed Projects	Plan Section
1.	Frying Pan Road	Eagle County Pitkin County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adopt policy and study potential to widen shoulders wherever possible. ■ Add safety signs. ■ Identify restroom locations. ■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance. 	10.4
2.	Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road	Eagle County CDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study potential to road widen and add shoulders or paved trail on Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road. ■ Add safety signs. ■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance. 	10.4
3.	Upper Cattle Creek	Eagle County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study potential to road widen and add shoulders and pave gravel sections. ■ Add safety signs. ■ Provide consistent shoulder/right pavement edge maintenance. 	10.4
4.	Willits Lane	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add designated bike lanes on both sides of the road. 	10.4
5.	Southside Drive	Town of Basalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add a designated bike lane on the westbound side of the road. 	10.4

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9. Plan Implementation



Rio Grande Trail near Basalt High School. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

Development of the existing trail segments in the Mid-Valley has primarily been the result of:

- Construction facilitated by local, state or federal government.
- Construction as part of a land development to comply with the conditions of local government approval.
- Additionally, several trail projects in the Mid-Valley were initiated by local trail advocacy groups in partnership with private property owners, and local, state or federal government.

This Plan includes suggestions for existing trail segment improvements, including enhanced maintenance, as well as ideas for new trail connections throughout the Mid-Valley area. These suggestions were gathered from a variety of sources, including adopted community or infrastructure plans from Eagle County, Town of Basalt and RFTA, as well as from local trail advocacy groups, agencies, organizations and interested public as part of the public comment phase of this Plan.

It is important to note that the majority of the recommended trail or roadway upgrades or suggested new projects described in the Plan are in the concept stage only. Inclusion in this Plan is not intended to imply Eagle County government's approval, but to capture current conceptual ideas and proposals regarding Mid-Valley trails and shared roadways that may or may not be investigated for further action by the lead proponents.

Next steps in project investigations by project proponents would typically include, but are not limited to:

- Review of a project's compliance with the policies, regulations and management plans of the underlying jurisdiction or a private property owner or association.
- Environmental studies and review of potential impact.
- Private land right-of-way acquisition or permits to locate in a public right-of-way.
- Community Engagement.
- Constructability and budget feasibility studies.

It is possible that some of the suggested projects that may have merit as new or improved trail connections or roadway expansions may not proceed past the planning and feasibility stage if the challenges outweigh potential benefit, impacts to sensitive lands, wildlife or neighborhoods are unavoidable or unmitigatable, or if the project otherwise cannot comply with government policies or regulatory requirements.

Compliance with Adopted Plans and Regulations

The Comprehensive Plans of the local governments of Town of Basalt, Eagle County, Garfield County and Pitkin County feature very similar policy and goal statements regarding consistent intergovernmental cooperation, land use, infrastructure, environmental stewardship and overall sustainability. Any project under or within Eagle County's jurisdiction or adjacent to Eagle County jurisdiction as identified through a local referral process, will be evaluated for compliance against applicable Eagle County policy documents and regulations including, without limitation:

1. [Eagle County Comprehensive Plan \(2005\)](#)
2. [Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan \(2018\)](#)
3. Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Plan (2020)
4. [Eagle County Climate Action Plan \(2016\)](#)
5. [Eagle County Land Use Regulations \(ECLUR\)](#)

As an example, the following policies from the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan would be reviewed for compliance as part of a project's analysis:

Eagle County Comprehensive Plan:

- **3.1.3 f.** - The community should be involved with County planning and decision-making processes.
- **3.5.2.a.** - Developed areas in Eagle County should be served by multiple modes of transportation.
- **3.5.2.b.** - Pedestrian paths should be safe, well-designed, well-maintained and appropriately networked within and between communities.
- **3.5.2.d.** - Bike paths should be safe, well-designed, well-maintained and appropriately connected within and between communities.
- **3.5.2.j.** - The management and distribution of recreation areas and facilities in Eagle County should be implemented in an environmentally conscious manner.
- **3.7.5.i** - Access to public lands and opportunities for public land recreation should be balanced with the need to preserve quality wildlife habitat.

Mid-Valley Area Community Plan:

- Accommodate appropriate public involvement and participation in local planning and decision making.
- Accommodate appropriate recreation opportunities and facilities.
- Promote appropriate and efficient vehicular and pedestrian connectivity.
- Promote energy efficient lifestyles.
- Promote understanding of natural systems and encourage stewardship of natural resources.
- Monitor and identify recreational uses appropriate to the area.
- Strive to protect and preserve the quality of wildlife habitat and the vitality of wildlife populations.
- Promote adequate long term management and accountability for open space and recreational use areas and facilities.

Similarly any project that is proposed in Eagle County that is adjacent to or impacts surrounding local and state jurisdictional lands will be referred to such agencies who will also review proposals against their own adopted plans and regulations.

Environmental Studies and Potential Impact

New paved and unpaved trail or roadway improvement implementation has the ability to further connect the community and meet the goals outlined in this Plan. However, any public new or substantially modified improvements, under Eagle County's jurisdiction require an environmental analysis by the trail proponent. Eagle County would also review, as a referral agent, potential environmental impacts of a proposed project located in another jurisdiction against 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan policies, as amended. During such analysis, multiple alignments may be investigated to determine the least environmentally impactful routes. Typical issues of concern are wildlife habitat, erosion, and water quality. In some cases, impacts can be mitigated and in some cases they cannot, which in turn would make the concept infeasible.

As part of the environmental studies for a potential trail project, applicants must utilize the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that includes CPW's most up-to-date wildlife mapping. The Colorado Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX) will launch in late 2020 and includes a set of tools to support conservation planning, environmental review, evaluation of conservation portfolios, and more. Users have the ability to upload project maps and run queries to determine which wildlife habitats a project interacts with during trail alignment planning. Eagle County and CPW support running all potential projects through CODEX during the feasibility stage. If the trail project moves forward, formal CPW consultations on each proposed project is required to ensure wildlife best management practices for the immediate area are included in final project implementation strategies. CPW staff will work with project proponents to both accommodate recreation and lessen potential impacts on Colorado's wildlife resources and wildlife habitats. The link for CODEX is <https://cnhp.colostate.edu/maps/codex/>.

Right-of-Way Acquisition or Permits

Paved and unpaved trail development may require the acquisition of right-of-way from private and public property owners which requires consultation, agreements, and in some cases specific land use approvals or records to document granted easements. If the trail location requires private easements or fee simple land acquisition from a private property owner, an acceptable value would typically be negotiated by the trail proponent with the grantor or seller. If located in the public right-of-way, any jurisdiction, agency, or organization who plans to build and maintain the trail are required to obtain the necessary permits such as a special use permit from CDOT.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is the cornerstone of any new project. Under Eagle County's jurisdiction, the entity proposing to implement a new trail or roadway improvement must complete an authentic community engagement process that involves impacted jurisdictions, non-profits, and constituents. The community engagement process may look different depending on the size and scope of the project. Evidence must be provided demonstrating how community engagement was conducted and utilized in the development of the project.

Constructability and Budget Feasibility Studies

The projects proposed in this Plan may or may not yet have been studied to determine the construction feasibility or the short and long term cost of project implementation. Constructability refers to identifying any obstacles or challenges prior to or as part of a construction design process. Additionally, multiple alignments may be investigated to find the most constructible, and least environmentally impactful location. Items reviewed as part of a budget feasibility study include what planning approvals or permits are required, the likelihood an environmental impact report would be needed, site assessment information, land or easement acquisition costs if necessary, a preliminary construction cost estimate and a life-cycle maintenance cost estimate. This information will help outline the amount of funding necessary in the short and long term, and if the project is feasible.

9.1 Partnerships for Trails and Shared Roadways

The planning, construction and maintenance of the Mid-Valley trail and shared road network has and will continue to be successful because of the initiative and partnerships assembled by government agencies, citizen advocates, community organizations, developers and landowners in the interest of producing useful, sustainable and well-built projects.

This section describes the multitude of entities that have and will continue to be involved in improving or appropriately expanding the trail and shared roadway network in the Mid-Valley Area. Also described in this section are the guiding policies and regulations that pertain to management, improvement or expansion of trails in Eagle County.

As this Plan details, miles of paved and unpaved trail, road shoulders and sidewalks exist, but there are gaps that must be closed to improve safety, extensions that can further improve connectivity and additional infrastructure that could enhance the trail and shared road experience.

The completion of the Rio Grande Trail in 2008 is a premier example of how collaboration by local governments, through the RFTA consortium in partnership with state agencies, led to the successful completion of the 42-mile continuous “rail-trail”. The Rio Grande Trail has transformed the Roaring Fork Valley’s transportation system and is now known nationwide as a top long-distance trail destination.

Local and State Government

State and local governments provide routes for multiple types of non-motorized uses, often referred to as “multi-use trails”, for people walking, running, biking, riding horses, using adaptive mobility devices and e-bikes where permitted. Providing multi-use trails has become a very common and accepted responsibility of governance at the local, state and federal levels. Local and state governments fill several roles in the development and oversight of trail and shared roadway networks, including:

- Trails funding through discretionary or mandated sources such as the Eagle County-RFTA mass transportation sales tax
- Making or seeking grants
- Ensuring trail and roadway proposals are in compliance with local policies and regulations
- Obtaining and holding rights-of-way or easements
- Managing planning, construction and maintenance

Jurisdictional partnerships are common in regards to right-of-way needs, funding and long-term maintenance. It is also a function of governance to oversee the development and management of trail and shared infrastructure to ensure it is built and operated in accordance with applicable policies and regulations. Local entities have collaborated on many completed projects in the Mid-Valley area, also in partnerships with federal agencies and advocacy groups through planning, review, revision, funding, construction and management. Due to the overlapping and converging jurisdictions located within the Mid-Valley area, intergovernmental cooperation will continue to be standard protocol for future network improvements. Some trail or shared roadway project examples of local government collaboration in the last two decades includes:

- **Willits Lane Trail** - a cooperative effort between the Town of Basalt, MVTC and Eagle County.
- **El Jebel Road Trail** - the result of a construction and maintenance agreement between Eagle County and Crawford Properties.
- **Glassier Open Space** - physically located in Eagle County, the property was acquired through joint funding by Pitkin County, Eagle County and Great Outdoors Colorado and is now owned and managed by Pitkin County, while Eagle County holds the conservation easement. The Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (PCOST) program has since funded trail construction, a trailhead and a parking lot for Glassier Open Space improved access. RFTA and PCOST partnered on building an equestrian trail adjacent to the Rio Grande Trail from the Hooks Lane Trailhead to Glassier Open Space.

- **Singletrack Trail Improvements** - MVTC and PCOST have partnered with RFOV and RFMBA on several trail projects in the Mid-Valley area.
- **SH 82 and El Jebel Road** - pedestrian improvements made in the interface area of SH 82 and El Jebel Road were a joint project between CDOT and Eagle County. CDOT has incorporated significant pedestrian and bicycle improvements into SH 82 improvements over the last two decades.

In the Mid-Valley area, local and state jurisdictional partners that have an interest in provision of walking and bicycling infrastructure include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Eagle County | ■ PCOST |
| ■ Eagle County Open Space Program | ■ Garfield County |
| ■ Town of Basalt | ■ Crown Mountain Recreation District |
| ■ Basalt POST | ■ Mid-Valley Metropolitan District |
| ■ RFTA | ■ CDOT |
| ■ Pitkin County | ■ CPW |

9.2 Performance Measures

There are a variety of different performance measure types and purposes. Performance measures can be used to assess the effectiveness of this Plan, how the trail system is functioning, or as a test to determine if or how a project should move towards implementation. Clear performance measures can inform decision-making and support efficient and effective program implementation. All performance measures should be linked to a Plan goal and help to bring the vision of the Plan to fruition.

Performance measures normally have a benchmark that the performance measure is measured against. The 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan which is fully replaced by this Plan, did not include performance measures. Therefore, the performance measure targets of this Plan establish the performance measure benchmarks for the future update in 2025.

Below are three performance measures frameworks for Plan Effectiveness, Project and Program Implementation, and System Function established with the adoption of the Plan. The tables describe the Plan goal for each metric, the target to achieve the metric, the measure used to evaluate, and the method of data collection.



Emma area as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County

Plan Effectiveness: The effectiveness of the Plan should be monitored and analyzed prior to an update to this Plan. Areas noted to be deficient should be focused on for improvement in the future updates.

Table 8: Plan Effectiveness Performance Measurement Framework

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Evaluate Land use Applications for Active Transportation and Recreation Needs	Increased review of Land Use Development Permits against Plan projects and programs by MVTC and Eagle County	Number of permits where trail or roadway improvements are recommended or required	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of trails and roadway improvements mentioned or included in land use development permit review or approvals.
Ensure Alignment with Community Values	Increase in community engagement	Number of community members who attend and participate in MVTC meetings and education events	MVTC to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of community members who attend and participate in MVTC meetings and educational events
Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Increase in the number of projects that have environmental or cost/benefit analysis prior to inclusion in the Plan to clarify challenges and solutions or the project or program is eliminated for future consideration.	Number of projects and programs with a completed Environmental Impact Report or cost/benefit analysis.	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects and programs with a Environmental Impact Report or cost/benefit analysis.
Collaborate Through Partnerships	Increase the number of projects that utilize collaboration and partnerships to achieve project goals.	Number of projects that are completed utilizing collaboration and partnerships	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects that demonstrate collaboration and partnerships
Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Increase Mid-Valley Trail System Buildout Program Analysis	Level of consensus between local, state and federal agencies, non-profit, advocacy, and constituent stakeholders on appropriate trail buildout.	Eagle County to coordinate a partnership effort to create and evaluate Mid-Valley Trail System Buildout Program

Project and Program Implementation: Implementation of projects and programs will be led by the jurisdiction, management agency or advocacy group whose interests or mandates the project will serve, as well as through a collaboration formed of supporting partners. When a proponent is interested in moving a project or program forward, the proposal should be analyzed against the project and program performance measure framework.

Table 9: Project and Program Implementation Performance Measurement Framework

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Implementation of Projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan’s Goals such as does the project close a gap in the existing network, ensuring environmental sustainability, and improve roadways for shared use.	Increase in projects or programs that that meet at least three of the Plan’s Goals	Number of projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan’s Goals	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of projects or programs that meet at least three of the Plan’s Goals.
Meet Design, Construction, and Accessibility Standards	Increase in projects wherein the design is in alignment with the “Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design” located in Appendix B of the Plan	Number of projects that meet the “Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design” located in Appendix B of the Plan	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of projects that meet the “Fundamentals of Trail and Shared Roadway Design” located in Appendix B of the Plan
Consistently Maintain Infrastructure	Increase the number of plans and partnership agreements that provide consistent and enhanced maintenance of existing trails and shared roadways.	Number of maintenance plans and agreements established for existing trails and shared roadways	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of plans and agreements established for the existing trail networks and shared roadways
Support Transportation Climate Action Goals	Increase in the number of programs and infrastructure that advance Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals	Number of programs and infrastructure that demonstrate compliance with Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan updates a record of the number of programs and infrastructure that demonstrate compliance with Eagle County, Town of Basalt and regional climate action goals

System Function: The County does not monitor active transportation and recreational use. However, County Departments such as the Road and Bridge or Transportation Department, and partnering agencies should consider the creation and implementation of a monitoring program. A monitoring program that collects relevant information can help inform future plan goals, project and program needs, and help to accelerate implementation.

Table 10: System Function Performance Measurement Framework

Plan Goal	Target	Measure	Method of Collection
Provide a Comprehensive Network	The increase of people walking and biking to work, school or for fun.	Number of users utilizing the trail system	Eagle County to partner with other agencies and nonprofits to monitor usage
Improve Roadways and Trails For Shared Use	Reduction in serious or fatal injuries while walking and biking and the reduction of user conflict between bicyclist, hikers, and equestrians.	Number of incidents involving an injury, fatality or user conflict	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of incidents involving an injury, fatality or user conflicts
Encourage Economic Development	Increase facility improvements and programs such as wayfinding signage and improved maintenance to enhance visitor experience.	Number of projects and programs implemented that demonstrate economic development enhancement.	MVTC and Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of projects that demonstrated economic development enhancements
Support Singletrack For Multiple User Groups	Increase implementation of single track connections to surrounding public lands.	Number of single track connections completed.	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of singletrack connections.
Close Paved Trail Network Gaps	Increase the implementation of paved trail gap closures with a priority on location where safety is an issue.	Number of projects that close gaps in the paved trail network	Eagle County to maintain and report in future Plan update a record of the number of paved trail projects that close a gap in the network

Local Government Citizen Committee: The Mid-Valley Trails Committee (MVTC)

Following the passage of a new Mass Transportation Sales Tax in 1995, this citizen-volunteer Committee was established in 1998 to advise the Eagle County Commissioners on recommended use of the 10% of the tax proceeds that must be directed to bike paths.

The MVTC fiscally operates as a subcommittee of RFTA following a tax increase in 2000 for transit and trails approved by the voters in the Roaring Fork Valley portion of Eagle County. The MVTC annually provides the RFTA Board of Directors with their budget recommendations for financial contributions to trail projects using the tax proceeds collected in Eagle County.

The MVTC Mission Statement is to *“Conceive, develop, enhance and promote safe and attractive public trails in the Roaring Fork Valley portion of Eagle County.”* Roles and responsibilities of the MVTC include:

- MVTC provides constituent input and leadership for the collective effort to further upgrade, improve and expand the trails and shared roadways in the Mid-Valley area of Eagle County.
- MVTC has been successful at facilitating communication and building partnerships between entities and agencies to help plan and complete projects, obtaining easements from private property owners, seeking additional grant funding and working to ensure long-term maintenance for constructed trails.
- MVTC provides referral comments for land use applications under consideration by Eagle County.
- MVTC works with a part-time staff person whose position is funded by a portion of the mass-transportation sales tax revenues managed by RFTA and an additional contribution from Eagle County. The MVTC staff person assists with administrative functions, including proper and transparent public notice of meetings and project implementation in the interest of moving projects forward to completion.

Federal Government Land Management Agencies

In the Mid-Valley area, the USFS manages lands on Basalt Mountain and in the Frying Pan River Valley. The BLM manages lands adjacent to Basalt Mountain and the recreation area known as the Crown Special Resource Management Area (SRMA) at the base of Mt. Sopris, and located in Eagle County, Garfield County and Pitkin County.

The surrounding federal lands are locally acknowledged to be a dominant reason why people have chosen to live and stay in the Roaring Fork Valley. The options for recreation are extensive and generally no-cost due to the “open to all” philosophy of federal public lands. Local residents have a particular sense of ownership and interest in the recreation options available on these lands, and land managers must balance those interests with serving the broader public ownership as well as acting as stewards of forest and rangeland health, wildlife and water resources.

On public lands, coordination and approval by the management agency having jurisdiction is required prior to construction of any new or enhanced trail project that may be proposed by a local government or interest group. In the last ten years, both the USFS and BLM have updated the resource and travel management plans specific to this region, including agency lands in the Roaring Fork

Mid-Valley area. Generally, the plans support continued or enhanced recreation, while closing or limiting activities in certain areas for a range of reasons usually related to wildlife, vegetation or maintenance issues.

United States Forest Service (USFS):

In 2011, the USFS adopted the White River National Forest Travel Management Plan (TMP) for the 2.3 million acre White River National Forest (WRNF) to provide policy direction for management of roads, trails and other routes throughout the WRNF Forest and for the five separate Ranger Districts. The Mid-Valley Area falls within the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District. The [2011 WRNF TMP](#) and [TMP map](#) identify permitted uses, seasonal status and other management strategies for all approved “system” routes.

The TMP also identified routes to be decommissioned and rehabilitated due to natural resource or maintenance issues. In the comments submitted for this Plan’s “Referral” review process, the USFS District Ranger⁶ provided input that any potential requests “To construct a new trail or bring an old trail back into the system requires an environmental analysis, as required by the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA).”



USFS and RFMBA work crews on the Red Table Trail. Photo: Mike Pritchard

The USFS response continues with further clarification and guidance for any proponent of a new trail concept on USFS lands, such as on Basalt Mountain: “The trails mentioned in the plan that would connect the valley floor to the Basalt Mountain area would also require this analysis, and extensive public outreach work, if they were to be pursued. The outcomes of any of these NEPA analyses do not always result in approval of the proposed projects. Any trails shown on the current WRNF Visitor Map are system trails, and maintenance, upkeep, etc. does not require similar analysis”.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM):

The BLM manages the Mid-Valley BLM lands through its Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) located in Silt, Colorado, as a portion of the 3.7 million acre Northwest Colorado District. In 2015, the [Colorado River Valley Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan](#) and the recreation-specific [Appendix E](#) were approved for administration of the 567,000 acres managed by the CRVFO management that includes the BLM lands on the Crown and Basalt Mountain. Subsequently, the BLM adopted the [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Travel Resource Management Plan](#)

⁶ See Appendix G

[Implementation](#) (and as amended in 2019) to define specific strategies to manage human uses on the Crown lands. To expand the permitted uses of the Crown currently approved by these management plans, the BLM is required to initiate federal regulatory reviews and public outreach processes similar to the USFS.

Trails and Multi-Modal Transportation Organizations



RFMBA work day on Buckhorn Traverse. Photo: Michael Pritchard

The Roaring Fork Valley has a well-established trails and transportation advocacy community who successfully partner with local, state and federal land managers, as well as private property owners, to improve or expand local recreation and transportation facilities and programs.

Active non-profit, advocacy and local government volunteer organizations interested in Mid-Valley area trails currently include:

- [Basalt Parks, Open Space and Trails Committee](#)
- [Mid-Valley Trails Committee](#)
- [Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board](#)
- [Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers](#)

- [Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association](#)
- [Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council](#)
- [Roaring Fork Conservancy](#)
- [WE-cycle Bikeshare Program](#)

These partnerships result in developing, enhancing and maintaining the widespread trail and multi-modal transportation network between Aspen and Glenwood Springs. For example:

- RFOV, RFMBA and RFVHC partnered with the BLM, USFS, RFTA, MVTC and Pitkin County to build, reroute, sign and repair many miles of unpaved singletrack trails over the last decade, or advocated for new amenities such as additional parking and trailheads to access the BLM Crown SRMA.
- On the valley floor, WE-cycle bike share program serves the Town of Basalt (located in both Pitkin County and Eagle County) and unincorporated Eagle County area of El Jebel with 90 bikes and 25 stations to provide the community with a fast, convenient and healthy mode of transportation to and from local neighborhoods to commercial and community centers and the SH 82 transit corridor. The success of the bike-share program depends on a well-connected and safe trail and shared roadway network that users can confidently navigate to and from their destinations.

Several of these local recreation or transportation advocacy groups received operational and project support from the property tax or sales tax funds administered by MVTC, RFTA, POST or PCOST for projects in the Mid-Valley Area. For example, the MVTC sales tax proceeds helped fund the Vasten, Lower Buckhorn Reroute and Buckhorn Traverse trail projects implemented on the Crown SRMA over the last five years. Eagle County, Pitkin County and the Town of Basalt are financial sponsors of the WE-cycle program for the Basalt-El Jebel area.

Private Land Development

Trail construction may also be accomplished through a land use approval granted by a local government to a private property development. Eagle County and Town of Basalt work with land use applicants to identify what pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be warranted by the development's scope and scale and in compliance with the adopted comprehensive plans for the regulating jurisdiction. Conditions of development approval may include a trail, sidewalk or roadway improvement contribution to the community. Pertinent regulations will apply, such as standards for site design and construction.



*New construction in Willits in Basalt with East Valley Trail in foreground.
Photo: Eagle County*

Trail or roadway improvements contributed by an approved land use development generally involve these actions or features:

- On private lands, public trails are typically located within “easements” dedicated to the public and of adequate dimension to accommodate the trail and associated maintenance needs and drainage features.
- Easements are established during the platting or other land use approval process and are defined as available for public use.
- Trail segments constructed across private lands are usually limited to the development property, although in some instances negotiation results in an off-site extension to tie into an existing trail system.
- Utilities and drainage improvements often share space with a designated trail easement, particularly in urbanizing areas.
- Maintenance of a development trail may be arranged with the public jurisdiction if the trail becomes a component of a larger system, or it may remain as a responsibility of the homeowner, business or property owner association.

9.3 Funding Sources

Potential funding sources for trail projects in the Mid-Valley area include:

- **Special Use or District Tax Funds:** This category of funds must be allocated to a certain type of use or area such as the 10% share of the transportation tax administered by RFTA and the MVTC. The MVTC has granted funds to various projects to support design, construction, grant matching, maintenance, environmental studies and easements.

Due to the transportation mandate, RFTA may be a source for additional funding for future capital-intensive trail or roadway enhancement projects in the Mid-Valley above and beyond the 10% administered by the MVTC. Eligible examples could include construction of secondary-route trails that contribute to RFTA’s Rio Grande Trail functionality as a primary route. In 2019, the 10% managed by MVTC totaled approximately \$59,000, with a portion of that annual sum funding the MVTC staff position. The remainder of the MVTC 10% share of the annual tax proceeds may not fully fund completion of a paved trail project, but can be accrued over a period of years to amount to a more sizable contribution to either fully fund or match funds from other sources.

Open Space and Trails tax funds also exist as a potential source for Mid-Valley trails either through the PCOST and Trails property tax fund or the Town of Basalt’s POST Parks, Open Space and Trails sales tax fund. Generally, the Pitkin County fund is intended for projects located in Pitkin County but some exceptions have been made, such as Glassier Open Space and trails, located in Eagle County, when the benefits to the larger ecosystem and community are deemed exceptional.

- **Capital Improvement Program Funds (CIP):** Local governments typically allocate a varying portion of revenues to capital (infrastructure) needs in the governed jurisdiction, such as road projects to widen shoulders to improve safety, construct a building or install a new trail bridge. Eagle County and Town of Basalt each manage a CIP Fund, and Special Districts will typically have a CIP as well. CIP funds are typically prioritized in five-year increments, but are reviewed and revised annually as needed.

- **General Funds:** Local governments may opt to fund an urgent or strongly-supported project with General (operating) funds or Reserve (savings) funds to accelerate priority project completion.
- **Planning and Construction Program Funds:** CDOT and federal agencies typically require substantial lead time to build a project into an annual or long-range budget, but do have agency mandates to partner where possible. Safety, transportation and recreation are common priorities for these agencies.
- **Grants:** State, federal, local and foundation grants are annually available for trail projects. In Colorado, Great Outdoors Colorado Grants (GOCO) and the State Trails Program provide funding to trail projects statewide. These grants require matching funds from the project applicant. The MVTC has been a source of funding for the local match to these popular state grant programs for several successfully completed projects. The grant application process typically includes questions regarding trails master planning, need, urgency and public support. The adopted update of this Plan, in addition to other related plans currently in place, will serve to enhance the competitiveness of future Mid-Valley trail project grants.



View of Crown SRMA Mt. Sopris from Eagle County. Photo: Eagle County

10. Inventory of Existing Trails and Shared Roadways with Proposed Projects



The Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County. Photo: Eagle County

The following section provides an overview of the existing trails and shared roadways inventory in the Mid-Valley area. Each trail and shared roadway description also includes recommendations or suggestions for improvements or additions that were gathered from adopted planning documents for the Mid-Valley or contributed during the referral agency and public input process for this Plan. If several comments were received through the input process about certain existing or proposed projects, the comments were summarized or provided verbatim to provide background for consideration during the study phase of a project. If few comments were received on proposed projects, the referral or public input comments were not summarized or quoted, but generally incorporated into the “Proposed Projects and Implementation Consideration” section. All referral and public comments can be found in Appendix G.

Types of Routes:

There are **five types of paved and unpaved non-motorized routes in the Mid-Valley area**. A summary description and examples are listed below in Table 6. The five route types are also described in detail in the respective subsection further along in this section of the Plan.

Table 11. Overview of Trail Types

Type of Route	Description	Example
Primary Route Paved Trails	Serves as a main arterial route. Typically 10 to 12 feet wide.	Rio Grande Trail
Secondary Route Paved Trails	Serves as a collector route. Typically 8 feet wide.	El Jebel Road Trail
Secondary Route Unpaved Trails	Serves as a collector route on the valley floor. Local examples range from 3 to 8 feet wide.	Aspen Junction Trail near Original Road
Singletrack Unpaved Trails	Most often found on public lands and used for recreation. Typically 2 to 4 feet wide.	Buckhorn Traverse in the BLM Crown SRMA
Shared Paved Roadways	Local roads that are most popular for shared use by vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. Presence and width of shoulders varies throughout the inventory.	Upper Cattle Creek Road from El Jebel to Missouri Heights

The following provides more details on the trail types and how each is described in this Plan:

- **Definition of Trail:** For the purposes of this Plan, the word “trail” is used to describe both paved and unpaved routes that exist or are planned for use by people walking, biking, and riding horses.
- **Sidewalks:** Sidewalks that are wider than the typical four to six-foot standard and create connected systems are only incorporated by reference into the trail networks described in this section. The Plan does not specifically call out or map sidewalks of less than eight feet wide that may occur adjacent to streets in commercial or residential subdivisions.
- **Surfaces:** Paved refers to a non-permeable surface such as asphalt or concrete and is found throughout the most populous portions of the Mid-Valley including the Town of Basalt incorporated areas and valley floor neighborhoods of unincorporated Eagle County. Unpaved may refer to a variety of soft-surfaces such as gravel or finely-crushed rock, called crusher fines, sand or natural surface dirt trails. The term “singletrack” was chosen as the common term for this Plan to describe trails that are always unpaved, generally less than three feet wide and used for area hiking, running, mountain biking and horseback riding.

- **Four-Season or Seasonal Use:** Most paved trails in the Mid-Valley are functionally four-season to allow for year-round transportation and recreation. Four-season trails cleared of snow and ice are especially important to support safe travel by mobility-impaired users and children, but also essential for avoiding the hazards inherent to people walking and biking when sharing roads during winter driving conditions.
- **Winter Operations:** Some segments of the paved and unpaved Mid-Valley trails are used by Nordic enthusiasts during the winter season. For example, PCOST grooms portions of the Rio Grande Trail for this use as does Crown Mountain Park when snow coverage conditions allow. RFTA provides a compacted area for walking or skiing on the portion of the Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County that remains open through the winter.

Types of Trail and Shared Roadway Users:

In the Mid-Valley, there is an impressive range of activities to choose from in relationship to the trail network: walking, running, biking, horseback riding, dog-walking, in-line skating, skateboarding, hiking, fishing and boating access, and using power driven mobility devices such as wheelchairs or scooters.



Rio Grande Trail at Hooks Spur Road. Photo: Eagle County

Generally, user types can be grouped into four categories based on the type of use, why they chose that type of use and where they prefer to do it:

The **“Recreational”** user primarily includes walking or bicycling by children, families or adults out for social or exercise reasons. Recreational users in the Mid-Valley includes local residents as well as visitors that want to enjoy some exercise and exploration. In general, recreational users prefer trails that have some separation from the street, or low traffic volume streets and singletrack trails. As seen in the photo at left, the Rio Grande Trail attracts a variety of types of recreational users, in addition to the other types of users as described below.

The **“Trainer”** category defines bicyclists, hikers or runners training for a high-level of fitness or competition who generally prefer to travel faster and longer distances than the

recreational bicyclist, walker or runner. Trainers on “road bikes” tend to prefer roads over shared-use paved trails because of permitted higher speeds and fewer intersections that require stopping. Once

in motion, trainers like to keep up their momentum. The Rio Grande Trail functions well for the Trainer's needs due to its relatively straight alignment that allows consistent speeds, but does have a posted speed limit of 20 mph to manage possible conflicts between the Trainer type of user and other slower speed or less skilled users.

The **"Commuter"** or **"Utility"** user walks or bicycles to work or school on a trail or road. This category is usually local residents and they prefer the most direct route with the least stops and delays. Low volume streets or trails are ideal, but a higher traffic volume road may be part of their route if it aids connectivity or the road is more direct than a trail. Utility trips include trips to the store, library, bank, etc. The benefits of commuting by foot or bicycle include financial savings, wellness and supporting environmental sustainability.

The **"Equestrian"** trail user has different needs or preferences than other user types due to their mode of transport being uniquely different. For safety reasons as well as enjoyment level, horseback riders generally prefer not to mix with vehicular traffic, especially avoiding busy roads. Horses and bicycles, or horses and pedestrians with pets are sometimes not compatible. Paved trails are generally not preferred by horseback riders, also for safety reasons, but bridle paths or "soft trails" can be constructed within the corridors to allow shared use. The use and enjoyment of horses is a large part of the region's history and present-day lifestyles and this Plan advocates accommodating that use where compatible with the more common types of users listed above.



Basalt Mountain. Photo: Eagle County

10.1 Primary Route Paved Trails

Primary Route paved trails serve as arterial or main routes with significant use by people walking, bicycling and horseback riding. In the Mid-Valley area there are three significant routes that transport users for multi-mile distances, enabling efficient commuting to work or school, utility trips such as shopping, or recreating for healthy, outdoor exercise. The primary route paved trails in the Mid-Valley are typically 10 to 12 feet wide and surfaced with asphalt or concrete.

Table 12. Existing Primary Route Paved Trails

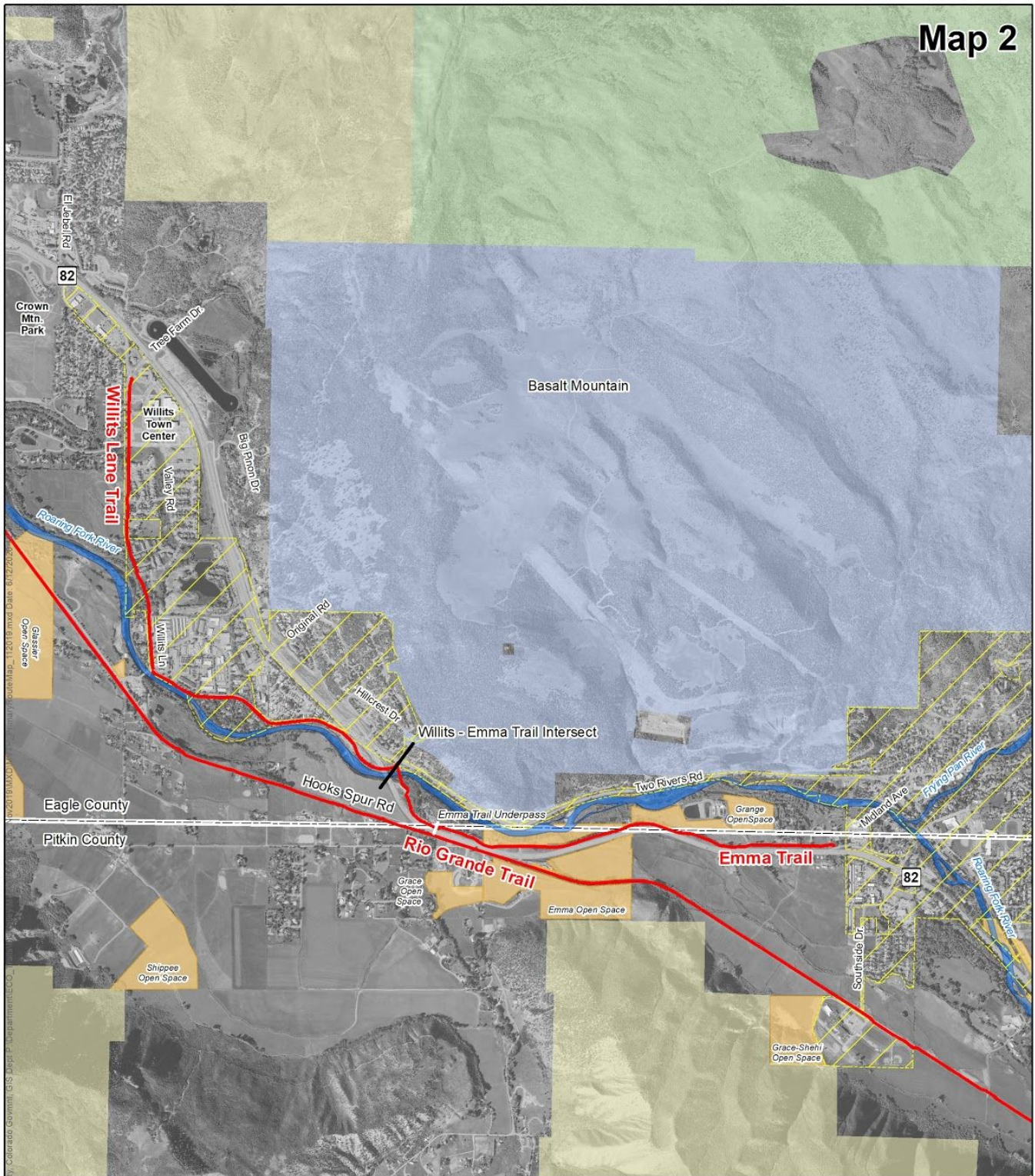
Map Item #	Trail Name	Trail Owner	Location
1.	Emma Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
2.	Rio Grande Trail	RFTA	Eagle County
3.	Willits Lane Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt

As of the adoption of this Plan in _____, 2020, new primary route paved trails are not proposed or envisioned in the Mid-Valley area; however, some enhancements are recommended. Secondary route paved trails are the focus for additions or upgrades. The completion of the Rio Grande Trail through the Mid-Valley in 2008 very successfully addressed the demand and need for a large-scale primary route paved trail running the length of the Roaring Fork Valley for walking, bicycling and horseback riding and connecting all the communities in the valley.

Where existing primary route paved trails are located within a road right-of-way, they are typically detached and separated from the road surface. Separation by grade, distance or physical barriers are desirable for increased safety. Where space allows, a soft surface trail may parallel a primary hard surface trails for use by runners or horseback riders, such as the crushed gravel trail alongside the Rio Grande Trail in Emma from Hooks Lane Trailhead to Glassier Open Space, and for trail-user passing opportunities in more densely populated areas.

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Map 2



Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Primary Route Paved Trails

- Primary Route Paved Trail
- Town of Basalt
- County Boundary

- Public Lands**
- BLM
 - U.S. Forest Service
 - State of CO
 - Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space



1. Emma Trail

LOCATION: Town of Basalt and unincorporated Eagle County and Pitkin County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Town of Basalt

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The 1.9-mile long Emma Trail serves as the primary route paved trail to connect “Old Town” and East Basalt to West Basalt and unincorporated El Jebel.
- In Eagle County, the 10-foot trail begins at the intersection of Willits Lane and SH 82, traveling southeast and over the Roaring Fork River on a trail bridge that was repurposed from a portion of a railroad trestle bridge originally located over Maroon Creek in Aspen. After crossing the Roaring Fork, the Emma trail utilizes Old Emma Road, a 22-foot wide asphalt surface that travels on the north side of SH 82 providing vehicular access to a limited number of private properties along its route before ending at the intersection of Emma East Road and Midland Avenue in Pitkin County.
- An existing SH 82 trail underpass near Emma Spur road provides direct connection from the Emma Trail to the Rio Grande Trail. Town of Basalt, RFTA and PCOST prior planning efforts identified this tunnel as insufficient and in need of upgrading due drainage, width, overhead clearance and internal visibility (i.e. darkness) issues.



The Emma Trail crossing the Roaring Fork River. Photo: Eagle County

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** Town of Basalt and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Emma Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.

2. **Maintenance and Safety:** The Basalt POST Plan, 2020 Basalt Master Plan public input, Basalt POST Plan, and the RFTA Bike-Ped-Transit Plan support drainage, lighting, surfacing and dimensional upgrades to the Emma SH 82 trail underpass to improve user-friendliness and safety.
3. **Paved Trail Replacement:** Town of Basalt POST recommends reconstruction of a section of the Emma Trail to move it away from Emma Road in the area east of the Basalt Sanitation Plant as part of any future development approvals.
4. **New Bridge Connection:** Town of Basalt POST also recommends a new pedestrian-bicycle bridge over the Roaring Fork from the Emma Trail, in the same vicinity as the new recommended trail section above, to connect with the proposed Two Rivers Road Trail.



*Emma Trail, looking toward East Basalt with an osprey nest and PCOST webcam on pole above. SH 82 is located to the right.
Photo: Eagle County.*

2. Rio Grande Trail

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County.

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

RFTA owns and manages the 3.2 mile portion of the Rio Grande Trail located in Eagle County. Three jurisdictions own and maintain the full 42-mile corridor length:

1. RFTA owns 33.4 miles and maintains 21 miles.
2. Pitkin County maintains 19 miles, including the 5 miles of the corridor Pitkin County owns outright from Woody Creek to the trail's end in Aspen at the U.S. Post Office, and the approximately 14 miles it holds through easements from Emma to Woody Creek.
3. City of Glenwood Springs owns and maintains 2 miles.



*The Rio Grande Trail in Eagle County heading north towards the Garfield County line.
Photo: Eagle County*

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Rio Grande Trail is the central spine of the Roaring Fork Valley trail network.
- Completed in 2008, this 42-mile continuous trail follows an historic railroad grade linking Glenwood Springs to Carbondale, Basalt and Aspen. The rail corridor was purchased by a consortium of local and state agencies in 1997.
- The trail is generally 10-feet wide throughout its length.
- The majority of the route is paved, with the exception of the 4.2 mile crusher-fines section located in Pitkin County through the Roaring Fork Gorge area between Woody Creek and Aspen.
- The Rio Grande Trail is enjoyed by user groups of all levels and modes including walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding for recreation or commuting.
- A crushed gravel trail was constructed by PCOST and RFTA alongside the Rio Grande Trail through the Emma-Hooks Spur area to accommodate horseback riding as well as foot and bicycle travel in the trail corridor. This separated trail is considered a safer surface for riders and their horses as well as provides separation from faster trails users.

- The length of the Rio Grande trail within Pitkin County has a gravel shoulder available to equestrians.
- Due to the popularity of the trail with a wide range of users and related traffic volumes, as well the potential for impacts on adjacent landowners and area wildlife, pets are required to be leashed at all times and may be prohibited from certain sections of the trail, according to RFTA's [RFTA Rules and Regulations for Trail Use⁷](#).
- The Rio Grande Trail is currently "railbanked" through federal laws that allow for use as a trail with possible reversion to railroad use at some time in the future if there is an exceptional demand and need for rail service.
- The Rio Grande Trail Rock Bottom Ranch to Catherine Store segment located in Eagle and Garfield Counties is seasonally closed for wildlife habitat needs from November 30 through April 30. A detour route using local roads is seasonally marked by RFTA and follows the SH 82 Frontage Road, Valley Road, various roads through the Willits area and reconnects with the Rio Grande Trail near Hooks Lane Bridge.
- As winter conditions allow, RFTA uses a snowmobile to compact snow from Emma Road to Rock Bottom Ranch in Eagle County to enable a range of uses including cross-country skiing, walking and "fat" biking. RFTA uses this same method of "compaction grooming" on the Catherine Store to Snowmass Drive section of the Rio Grande Trail in adjacent Garfield County.



Gravel equestrian trail located alongside the Rio Grande Trail with Hooks Spur Road to the right. Photo: Eagle County



RFTA compacts snow on the Eagle County section of the Rio Grande Trail for walking, skiing and snowbiking. Photo: RFTA.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC, Town of Basalt and Basalt POST support RFTA's continued efforts to consistently perform routine maintenance of the Rio Grande Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections and snow removal.

⁷ The RFTA corridor map is included in Appendix C of this plan, or at [RFTA Rio Grande Trail Map](#).

2. **Maintenance:** MVTC, Town of Basalt and public input supports RFTA’s work to widen Mid-Valley Rio Grande Trail areas of substandard trail width, upgrade pavement quality and expand trailheads and parking areas. According to input during the the RFTA Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan and pedestrian access study as well as the draft RFTA Recreational Trails Plan 2018 Update, there are Rio Grande Trail sections where surface conditions could be improved due to aging asphalt, drainage and tree root cracking or heaving, and other areas where the trail popularity and shared uses warrant widening.
3. **New Bridge Connection:** The Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan, RFTA Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan and Basalt POST Plan each include recommendations for a bridge connection from the Rio Grande Trail to Crown Mountain Park crossing the Roaring Fork River. This suggested project is described in detail in Section 10.2.
4. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC plans to continue working with RFTA and PCOST to evaluate the potential for increased or improved equestrian use of the Rio-Grande Trail in the Mid-Valley and the entire length of the corridor, with additional trailhead parking and provision of added or wider soft-tracks for equestrian use.



The Rio Grande Trail in Pitkin County near Basalt High School. Photo: Eagle County

3. Willits Lane Trail

LOCATION: Town of Basalt in Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Town of Basalt

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- This 2-mile trail is located within the right-of-way of Willits Lane and travels along the eastern edge of the Willits Planned Unit Development (PUD) and several other developments, terminating at the intersection of SH 82, Willits Lane and Two Rivers Road intersection where it converges with the Emma Trail.
- Portions of this trail are 10-foot wide concrete, other sections are 8-foot wide asphalt, with the entire trail in good condition and well-maintained.
- Standard and raised “speed-table” crosswalks are provided at various locations along the route.
- This trail provides connection to Hook Spur Trail, the Rio Grande Trail and Emma Trail, and also to trails within the Willits Town Center and Sopris Meadows PUD’s.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** Town of Basalt, Basalt POST and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Willits Lane Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections and snow removal.



The Willits Lane Trail parallel to Willits Lane in Basalt. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

10.2 Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails

In the Mid-Valley, several secondary route paved trails exist and act as collectors to allow people to travel between neighborhoods, shopping areas, parks and schools, and to connect with primary trail, roadway and transit corridors. These trails have relatively high use by people walking, biking, and running and occasional equestrian use depending on location.

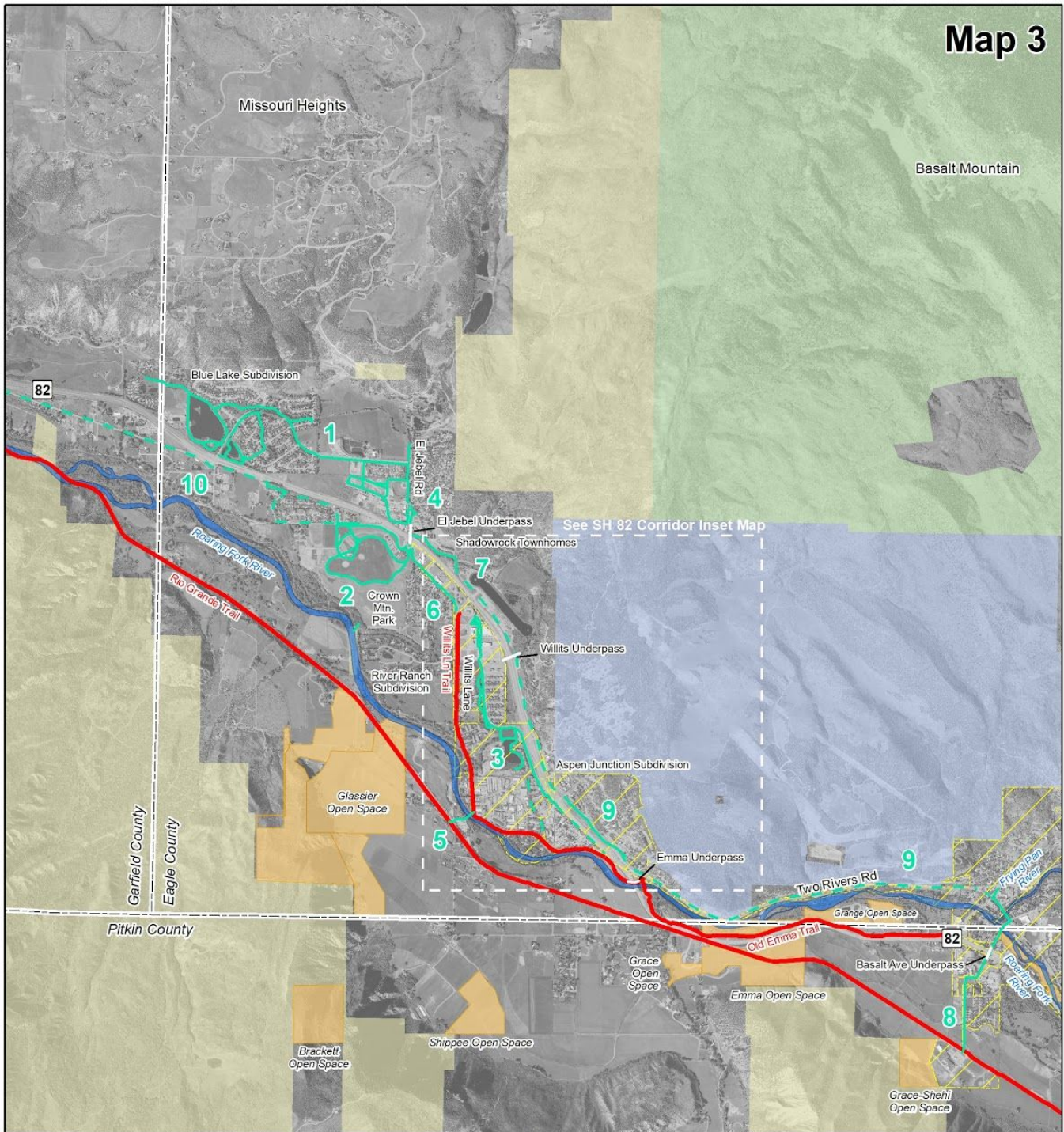
Mid-Valley secondary route paved trails are typically less than eight feet in width, surfaced with asphalt or concrete. Where existing secondary route paved trails are located within a road right-of-way, they are usually grade separated from the vehicle lanes of the roadway by a curb and gutter system or a strip of native or landscaped ground.

There are very few secondary route unpaved trails located on the valley floor. Typically, unpaved secondary routes are eight feet or less in width and surfaced with compacted gravel or crusher fines on a compacted base or subgrade, or may be a native dirt surface. Constructed where heavy use is not anticipated, secondary route unpaved trails can provide important connections for people walking and off-road bicycling throughout the system. An example of a secondary route unpaved trail is the Aspen Junction Trail generally located between Original Road and Hillcrest Drive on the north of SH 82.

Table 13. Existing Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails

Map Item #	Trail Name (listed in alphabetical order)	Trail Owner	Location
1.	Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford Trails	Blue Lake HOA Eagle Dakota HOA Crawford Properties	Eagle County Garfield County
2.	Crown Mountain Park Trails	CMPRD	Eagle County
3.	East Valley Road-Willits-Sopris Meadows Trails	Town of Basalt Willits PUD	Town of Basalt
4.	El Jebel Road Trail to SH 82 Underpass	Eagle County CDOT	Eagle County
5.	Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail	Eagle County	Eagle County
6.	Orchard Plaza Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
7.	Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails	Shadowrock HOA Tree Farm Metro District	Eagle County
8.	Southside Trail	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
9.	SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD	Aspen Junction HOA CDOT	Town of Basalt Eagle County
10.	Valley Road Corridor: Sopris View-Summit Vista to Catherine Store Road	Summit Vista HOA Aspen Skiing Company	Eagle County Garfield County

Map 3



Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Secondary Route Paved Trails

- Secondary Route Paved Trail
- - - Proposed Secondary Route Paved Trail
- Primary Route Paved Trail
- Town of Basalt

Public Lands

- BLM
- U.S. Forest Service
- State of CO
- Eagle County/ Pitkin County Open Space

- 1 Blue Lake - Eagle Dakota - Crawford Trails
- 2 Crown Mountain Park Trails
- 3 East Valley Road - Willits - Sopris Meadow Trails
- 4 El Jebel Road Trails to SH 82 Underpass
- 5 Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail
- 6 Orchard Plaza Trail
- 7 Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails
- 8 Southside Trail
- 9 SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD
- 10 Valley Road Corridor: Sopris View-Summit Vista to Catherine Store Rd



1. Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford



*Paved and well-maintained trails in Blue Lake provide access to the community's parks, open space and transit stops.
Photo: Eagle County*

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota HOA's and Crawford Properties.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Approximately 2.8 miles of paved asphalt or concrete trails are located within and link the neighborhoods of Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota and Crawford Properties.
- The asphalt trail along JW Drive, owned and maintained by Blue Lake HOA, functions as a major collector trail to connect Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota to the El Jabel Trail and all associated commercial and recreational activity centers.
- Trail surfaces are in good condition and well maintained by their respective owners.
- The trails located within the public road right-of-way in these three areas are dedicated for public use, and available to subdivision residents as well as non-residents.
- A portion of the Eagle-Dakota subdivision is located in adjacent Garfield County.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports consistent maintenance of the Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford trail networks monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Expand Trail Connections:** MVTC recommends working with Eagle-Dakota Homeowner Association to secure public access from the Blue Lake lakeside trail to the Eagle-Dakota subdivision trail, which could possibly tie into the Cerise Ranch trail system in Garfield County.
3. **Safety:** RFSO encourages that safe road crossings and pedestrian/bike-friendly connections be considered in the El Jebel area in consideration of a planned future school in the Blue Lake neighborhood. The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan also points out safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing SH 82 from Valley Road to the Blue Lake entrance. Potential improvements need to be evaluated.
4. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports trail resurfacing and improvements along JW Drive to encourage increased bike and pedestrian usage from Blue Lake to El Jebel. WE-cycle also recommends a permanent WE-cycle station in conjunction with an enhanced bus stop in El Jebel.
5. **New Singletrack Trail:** RFMBA proposes a singletrack trail connection to Missouri Heights through Blue Lake Open Space open space located adjacent to Deer Run Road to connect with Sunrise Lane, the majority of which is a private road, in Missouri Heights. Blue Lake Homeowner Association, private property owners and Eagle County coordination would be required for this project suggested by RFMBA.



Sledding at Blue Lake. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

2. Crown Mountain Park Trails

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District (CMPRD) maintains all trails and sidewalks associated with the community park and El Jebel Community Center. Eagle County is the underlying landowner of Crown Mountain Park and leases to CMPRD.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Approximately 2 miles of paved, gravel or unpaved trails are located within this community park that was formerly a portion of a USFS tree nursery and administrative site.
- The USFS transferred 132 acres of the 202-acre property to Eagle County in 1994 for public uses.
- The trail network within Crown Mountain Park provides walking, dog-walking, running and casual bicycling opportunities as well as access to park amenities such as soccer fields and a playground.

- The majority of park trails are paved and in good condition, and are configured as routes on the perimeter of the park with spur trails to connect to activity areas such as the playground, parking or restrooms.



Crown Mountain Park Trail. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

- When snow cover allows, portions of the park system may be groomed for Nordic skiing.
- The Eagle County El Jebel Community Center is located in the northeast corner of the property.
- Paved or gravel trail and sidewalk routes extend from the property to connect with Orchard Plaza (City Market) and Willits, the SH 82 underpass, and apartments and subdivisions along Valley Road.
- The USFS retained 70 acres of the original property and provides public Roaring Fork River access via Crown Mountain Park through a 40-acre parcel of riparian area and wetlands that is planned to be permanently preserved. Primitive trails exist through this area.

- The remaining 30 USFS acres are located adjacent to the western boundary of the park with frontage on Valley Road. A river access parking lot and primitive trails are currently located on this parcel, that may eventually be developed for employee housing and other uses. In 2019, the WRNF Supervisor announced that the USFS will undertake a planning effort at a future time to determine what the most appropriate uses are for the upland and riverside parcels and public input will be requested at that time.
- Dogs are permitted off-leash at the park if under voice-control.

Previously proposed major trail improvements for Crown Mountain Park:

- The concept of a bicycle-pedestrian bridge connection from the Rio Grande Trail to Crown Mountain Park is included in several planning documents adopted for the Mid-Valley area in the last decade or longer, including the 2015 RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit Access Plan, 2020 Basalt Master Plan Community Outreach, 2013 Basalt Area Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and the 2006 version of the Mid-Valley Trails Plan.
- In these documents, the recommendations or comments related to the trail bridge connection cite the need for a more direct link from the El Jebel population area to the Rio Grande Trail, and improved connection from the trail corridor to the busy activity center of Crown Mountain Park. Enhanced access to the BLM Crown singletrack trailheads located along the Rio Grande Trail is also noted.
- The RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan includes a conceptual review of the components and cost of the project, but otherwise a comprehensive study of feasibility and required regulatory compliance has not been undertaken as of 2020 and there is not currently a lead proponent for the bridge concept project.
- Implementation challenges for the project include potential impacts on sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitat bordering the river. The Roaring Fork River corridor adjacent to Crown Mountain Park features extensive wetlands of varying widths alongside the river channel.
- At this time, there is no approved route for the bridge concept on either side of the river. Lands bordering Crown Mountain Park and the Rio Grande River are currently owned by the USFS (see following map), private property owners including the Saltonstall Conservation Easement parcel held by Pitkin County (who commented that bridge infrastructure would not be permitted), and a very narrow area of BLM land.



View of Crown Mountain Park Photo: Eagle County

- The USFS, as the primary east riverbank landowner, would be required to review a trail bridge proposal in accordance with federal environmental and public process regulations, and possibly the BLM depending on location.
- Eagle County engineering and environmental policies and regulations would also apply to a potential bridge crossing project.



Crown Mountain Park and surrounding properties including USFS wetlands and river access parcels.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding trails at Crown Mountain Park are outlined below.

Referral:

- CMPRD is in favor of the trail bridge concept to create a safer trail connection to the park that could also reduce vehicle traffic by encouraging trips via the Rio Grande Trail to the park from El Jebel, Carbondale, Basalt, and other neighborhoods and schools. The park hosts 300,000 visits annually as the most heavily used park in the Roaring Fork Valley.
- Crawford Properties supports the bridge connection as an improvement that could serve El Jebel and the Mid-Valley community.

- Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative (HSNC) opposes the bridge plan due to the anticipated impacts on the neighboring land owners, wildlife habitat and non-compliance with an existing conservation easement and the environmental stewardship protection policies of the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan.

Public Comment:

- Remove the trail bridge proposal from the plan.
- Right-of-way will not be provided by local landowners.
- This is a unique area of undisturbed wetlands and riparian area along the Roaring Fork River.
- Pristine river corridor habitat will be severely damaged and impacted.
- Wildlife will be irreparably harmed.
- The significant wildlife diversity of the area will be impacted.
- Neighbors will be heavily impacted by additional traffic, noise and change in area character.
- The area is already heavily impacted by larger than expected increase in recreational traffic due to the Glassier Open Space trails.
- For additional suggestions for improvements to Crown Mountain Park trails, see Section 10.2.10 for public comments recommending improvements to the existing gravel trail alongside Valley Road.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.



Crown Mountain Park Photo: Eagle County

1. **New Bridge Connection:** If community leaders choose to further explore the trail bridge project feasibility, a broad consortium including private property owners, HSNC, USFS, BLM, CPW, Eagle County, Pitkin County, RFTA, CMPRD and Town of Basalt would be essential participants in the feasibility review. NEPA review and compliance with adopted community plans and regulations would also likely be required by the USFS. If the project is determined to be infeasible, community leaders should consider alternatives to improve connections between the Rio Grande Trail and Crown Mountain Park. If a new option is identified, this Plan should be amended to reflect that new information.

3. East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris Meadows Trails

LOCATION: Town of Basalt in Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Town of Basalt and homeowners or property owners associations in this residential-commercial corridor share responsibility for maintenance.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This trail network includes several trail segments in the East Valley Road to Willits corridor in West Basalt:

- The 4,500-foot long East Valley Road Trail is the central route in this network traveling adjacent to East Valley Road from Original Road to the Willits commercial and residential area.
- The trail provides access to the Mid-Valley Center, Willits Town Center, Willits Recreation Park and the residential neighborhoods of Lakeside Townhomes, Valley Pines Condominiums and the Sopris Meadows PUD with each area having a paved trail or sidewalk network that links to the East Valley Road trail.
- The trail network consists of a mix of asphalt and concrete surfaces and is in good condition throughout.
- Across from and south of the end of the East Valley Road Trail at the Original Road-SH 82 intersection, an unpaved trail is constructed in the SH 82 right-of-way adjacent to the Aspen Skiing Company employee “tiny home” project and the Aspen Basalt Mobile Home Park and connects to Willits Lane. Upgrading this trail to a paved trail would enhance safety and connectivity from the East Valley Road Trail network to Willits Lane. See Section 10.2.9 for the detailed SH 82 corridor description and recommended trail improvements.
- WE-cycle has bike-share stations located at Aspen Basalt Campground, Mid-Valley Medical Center and Lakeside Townhomes.



Sopris Meadows PUD trail. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris Trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **New Trail Connections:** Town of Basalt recommends one or more trail connections from Willits Lane through the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris residential and commercial areas to access the Original Road-SH 82 intersection. Connections can be achieved by formalizing social trails currently in use, such as the unpaved trail that currently follows the irrigation ditch adjacent to the Willits Bend PUD and Mid-Valley Center, providing access to the Original Road signalized intersection. Appropriate surfacing, either as paved or unpaved trails, would likely be determined by the Town of Basalt with the property owners.



East Valley Road Trail in the Town of Basalt. Photo: Eagle County

4. El Jebel Trail to SH 82 Underpass

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Eagle County owns the El Jebel Road Trail. Through agreement, Crawford Properties maintains the full length of the El Jebel Trail. CDOT owns and maintains the box culvert underpass. Crawford Properties contributes in-kind cleaning services to augment the maintenance by CDOT.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The 2,100 foot El Jebel Road Trail is a collector from several adjacent neighborhoods and provides access to parks and the SH 82 corridor, ending at the El Jebel Road SH 82 underpass.
- The 12-foot wide box culvert equipped with ADA ramps provides pedestrian passage under SH 82 just east of the main El Jebel intersection.
- Sidewalks connect the SH 82 underpass to the El Jebel Community Center, Orchard Plaza (City Market) and CMPRD trails to the south.
- Both trail and underpass facilities are in good condition.



SH 82 Underpass at El Jebel Road. Photo: Eagle County

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the El Jebel Trail and underpass monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports ensuring long-term maintenance of the underpass by CDOT in the event Crawford Properties is unable to contribute in-kind services in perpetuity.
3. **Trail Improvements:** WE-cycle supports future modifications to the SH 82 underpass to encourage more bike commuting, such as an expanded turn radius on the access ramps on either side of the tunnel.



El Jebel Road Trail. Photo: Eagle County

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5. Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Eagle County

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- This approximately 750-foot long stretch of trail consists of a 3-foot sidewalk on the south (upstream) side of the Hooks Lane bridge, and adjacent sections of gravel shoulder and asphalt trail. The Hooks Lane Trail is important as the connecting corridor from the Willits Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail, and the only current connection to the Rio Grande Trail between West Basalt and Catherine Store Bridge.



Hooks Lane Bridge in unincorporated Eagle County. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

- Town of Basalt, MVTC and RFTA have identified this area as a weak link for clear navigation and safe circulation for walking and bicycling from Basalt to the Rio Grande Trail, and recommend further study to resolve the pedestrian, bicyclists and vehicular safety issues related to poor sight distance and lack of a connected route separated from the road.
- The MVTC, PCOST and RFTA invested funds to improve the Rio Grande and Glassier Open Space trailheads and parking that are located in this area, expanding the parking to accommodate truck and horse trailers to facilitate easier access to the Glassier Open Space trails.
- Eagle County Road and Bridge is working to resolve winter maintenance issues in this area due to lack of appropriate equipment to clear the sidewalk. Resolution may include collaboration with the Town of Basalt, or other service providers.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support consistent maintenance of the Hooks Trail monthly and seasonally, particularly prior to resolution of current connectivity issues. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Eagle County support defined responsibility and implementation of snow removal on Hooks Spur Bridge for people walking. Collaboration between Eagle County and the Town of Basalt should be pursued.
3. **Safety Improvements:** Public comments recommend that Eagle County remove the existing bridge sidewalk, address the double blind corner safety, improve signage and include adjacent landowners in the planning process.
4. **New Bridge Connection:** The MVTC suggests study of a possible pedestrian-bicycle bridge parallel to Hooks Lane bridge may resolve safety and circulation and wayfinding issues for non-motorized and motorized traffic through the area, with further study of regulatory compliance, constructability and neighborhood impacts required.



Hooks Lane blind corner just west of Hooks Lane Bridge. Photo: Eagle County

6. Orchard Plaza Trail



Orchard Plaza Trail behind City Market. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

LOCATION: Town of Basalt in Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:
Town of Basalt

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The approximately 2,000 long, 10-foot wide concrete trail that travels along the southern boundary of the City Market parcel is in good condition and well maintained.
- The trail supports access to and from nearby residential neighborhoods, multiple commercial centers, the Willits Road Trail, the El Jebel Community Center, the SH 82 underpass and trails in Crown Mountain Park.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support continued, consistent maintenance of the Orchard Plaza Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections, and snow removal.

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7. Shadowrock and Tree Farm Trails

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Shadowrock HOA maintains trails in the Shadowrock subdivision. The Tree Farm Metropolitan District will be responsible for the trail construction and maintenance in the Tree Farm PUD.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Shadowrock Townhomes completed an 8-foot side concrete trail adjacent to the townhouse development.
- The Tree Farm PUD approved in 2018 will include asphalt and concrete trail routes, and are shown in detail on the approved development plans.
- Tree Farm trails and sidewalks would connect internal destinations and provide access from the PUD to the SH 82 Willits Town Center underpass.
- Tree Farm trails are also anticipated to eventually connect west through the Shadowrock development, improving access to the El Jebel Town Center.



Exiting the SH 82 underpass from Tree Farm-Shadowrock to Willits Commercial area. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports continued, consistent maintenance of the Shadowrock Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports eventual provision of bike-share stations at this location. WE-cycle is not currently able to serve the Shadowrock and Tree Farm area due to lack of trail connectivity, pending construction of the completion of the Tree Farm PUD infrastructure.
3. **New Singletrack Trail:** MVTC supports investigation of a potential trail easement with Shadowrock HOA, Tree Farm PUD, Eagle County, BLM, CPW and USFS to allow access to singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain, or at minimum as a short "neighborhood trail" to the low hilltop located on BLM land immediately east of Shadowrock.

8. Southside Trail

LOCATION: Town of Basalt in Pitkin County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Town of Basalt

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- This trail follows local roads Basalt Avenue and Southside Drive, with a crossing under SH 82, to connect Old Town Basalt to Basalt High School.
- Heavily used by students during the school year, the route consists of sidewalks on Basalt Avenue and Fiou Lane, and transitions to an 8-foot wide asphalt section on the east side of Southside Drive, crossing each road at well-marked intersections.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** The Town of Basalt and MVTC support consistent maintenance of the Basalt Avenue to Southside Trail route monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.



Southside Drive Trail looking towards Basalt Mountain. Photo: Eagle County

9. SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD

LOCATION: Town of Basalt within Eagle County and unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: The “Aspen Junction Trail” is owned by the Aspen Junction Homeowners Association. The “CDOT Trail” is an informal, unpaved trail located in the SH 82 right-of-way between Original Road and Willits Lane.

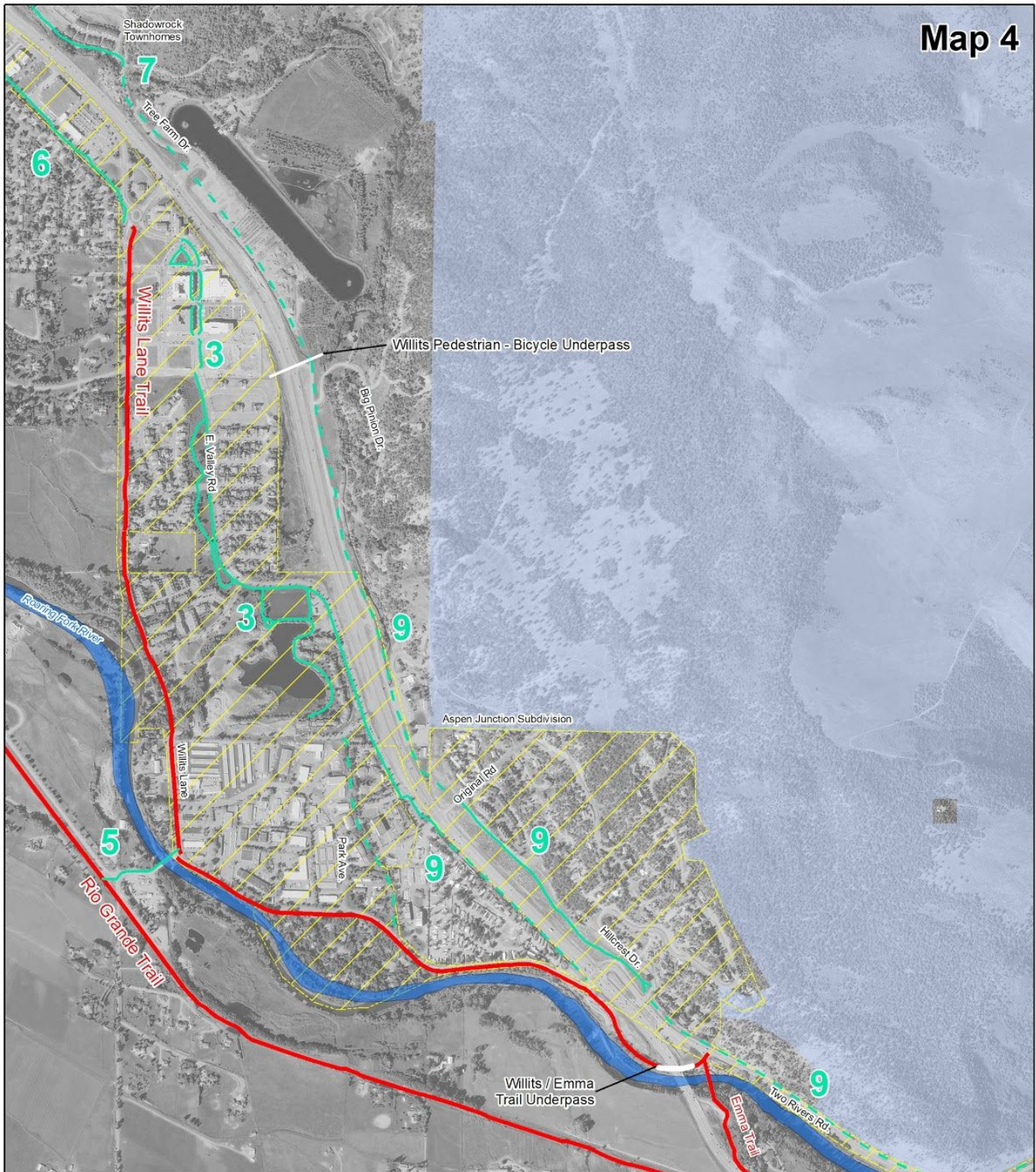
TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The approximately 500-foot wide SH 82 transportation zone between Two Rivers Road in Basalt to the Willits Lane-Tree Farm Drive signalized intersection is identified in Mid-Valley community planning efforts, including the Town of Basalt 2020 Master Plan, Mid-Valley Community Area Plan and Basalt POST Plan, as requiring improved and additional facilities to serve people walking, bicycling and using transit stations in the busy highway corridor.
- Two unpaved trails exist in or adjacent to the SH 82 right of way, the Aspen Junction Trail and the CDOT Trail, but are considered deficient due to lack of year-round maintenance and lack of paved surfacing that would enable a wider range of users to safely use the trails.
- There is a significant gap in trail connectivity between Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm Drive on the east side of SH 82.
- The following descriptions and map depict the current status of infrastructure in three subareas of the corridor and summarize potential improvements:
 1. Aspen Junction Trail
 2. SH 82 CDOT Trail
 3. Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Proposed Trail



SH 82 North Frontage Road right-of-way is a potential connector to link Two Rivers Road to the Tree Farm PUD. Photo: Eagle County

Map 4



Inset Map: Secondary Route Paved Trails in SH 82 Corridor

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
|  Secondary Route Paved Trail |  Town of Basalt | 3 East Valley Road - Willits - Sopris Meadow Trails | 7 Shadowrock and Tree Farm PUD Trails |
|  Proposed Secondary Route Paved Trail | Public Lands | 5 Hooks Lane Trail to Rio Grande Trail | 9 SH 82 Corridor: Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD |
|  Primary Route Paved Trail |  State of CO | 6 Orchard Plaza Trail | |



Aspen Junction Trail:



Aspen Junction Trail south access, from Original Road. SH 82 is located to the left. Photo: Eagle County

- The 2,300-foot Aspen Junction Trail is a natural surface trail generally located between Original Road and Hillcrest Drive on the north side of and parallel to SH 82. Some gravel has been placed on the northern end but the trail surface is primarily compacted dirt.

- This trail serves as a connector route between the two residential neighborhoods in that area as well as a pedestrian access route to the RFTA SH 82 north-bound “Sagewood” transit stop and the signalized intersection crossing of SH 82 at Original Road.

- According to the MVTC, this trail is not well-maintained. The trail has narrowed over the years due to encroaching vegetation. Users report that seasonally, the trail can be muddy and difficult to use.



Aspen Junction Trail north access, SH 82 to the right. Photos: Eagle County

- RFTA plans to relocate the Sagewood transit stop nearer to the Original Road and SH 82 signalized intersection to encourage transit passengers to cross SH 82 at that location for their safety. Other modifications will be incorporated into the stop relocation to improve passenger accessibility and transit vehicle access.
- WE-cycle has bike-share stations located at Aspen Basalt Campground, Mid-Valley Medical Center and Lakeside Townhomes. Due to concerns about the safety of the SH 82 highway crossing and transit stations near Original Road, there is not a bike-share station on the east side of SH 82 near the Aspen Junction neighborhood.

SH 82 CDOT Trail:

- The 1,900-foot “CDOT Trail” located on the west side of SH 82 across from the Aspen Junction area is an unpaved trail located in the highway right-of-way between the edge of the road pavement and the fenceline of the adjacent Aspen Basalt Mobile Home Park and the Aspen Skiing Company’s “tiny home” employee housing property.
- The trail is used most often by people walking between Willits Lane Trail and the Original Road intersection.
- The trail is not maintained in any season and varies in width and levelness. The surfacing is gravel or compacted dirt.



*The unpaved “CDOT trail” on the west side of the CDOT SH 82 right-of-way, looking south from Original Road intersection.
Photo: Eagle County*

Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Trail Connection:



Unpaved trail on the west side of the CDOT SH 82 right-of-way, looking north from the Willits Lane intersection towards Original Road. Photo: Eagle County

- To improve walking, bicycling and transit connectivity within the Mid-Valley SH 82 corridor, adopted Basalt and Eagle County plans call for completion of a trail connection on the east side of the SH 82 corridor between Two Rivers Road and the Tree Farm PUD. Improvement of the Aspen Junction Trail (described above) and utilizing the SH 82 Frontage Road on the east side of the highway would be key components of this connectivity goal.
- At the north terminus of the SH 82 frontage road, it may be necessary to request right-of-way from adjacent private properties to complete the connection to the Tree Farm PUD if CDOT will not permit construction of the trail within the SH 82 primary right of way.
- For a direct and scenic connection between SH 82 and Old Town Basalt, the Town of Basalt’s “Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan”, envisions construction of a 10-foot wide trail between the Frying Pan River and Two Rivers Road, ending at the Two Rivers Road/SH 82 intersection.
- Additional trail connections recommended by Town of Basalt and MVTC between Willits Lane and Original Road, such as the Willits Bend ditch trail described in Section 10.2.3 would also contribute to overall improved safety and connectivity in the vicinity of this section of the SH 82 corridor.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Town of Basalt urge consistent maintenance of the Aspen Junction and SH 82 CDOT trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.
2. **Improve Existing Paved Trail:** Aspen Junction Trail - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with Aspen Junction, CDOT and RFTA to upgrade the trail to widen, level and pave the trail to create a route that would be available to a wider range of users from Two Rivers Road, improve access to RFTA transit stops, and encourage full connection to the Tree Farm PUD.
3. **Improve Existing Paved Trail:** SH 82 CDOT Trail - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with CDOT, RFTA and Eagle County to upgrade the trail to widen, level and pave the trail to create a safe and usable connection from Willits Lane to Original Road.
4. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Two Rivers Road to Tree Farm PUD Trail Connection - Town of Basalt and MVTC recommend working with private property owners, CDOT and Eagle County to construct a trail route on the east side of the SH 82 corridor to connect the Two Rivers Road intersection (and future Two Rivers Trail to Old Town Basalt) to the Tree Farm PUD.
5. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Two Rivers Road Trail - Town of Basalt "Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan" includes a recommendation for construction of a 10-foot paved trail located between the Roaring Fork River and Two Rivers Road and ending at the SH 82 intersection.
6. **New Paved Trail Connection:** Willits Lane to Original Road trails - MVTC and Town of Basalt recommend one or more trail connections from Willits Lane through the East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris residential and commercial areas to access the Original Road-SH 82 intersection, working with HOA's and other private property owners.⁸
7. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports upgrades to the Aspen Junction unpaved trail segment as well as all connectivity improvements in this area, and requests inclusion in the planning process.



Short segments of paved sidewalks and unpaved "social" trails connect to transit stops in the SH 82 corridor area. Photo: Eagle County

⁸ See Section 10.2.3.

10. Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road Corridors

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County and Garfield County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: There is a mix of trail type, ownership and management in the Valley Road Corridor by a variety of entities including Crown Mountain Park, the Sopris View Apartments, and the Summit Vista, Parkside and Valley View residential subdivisions. The Valley Road is a right-of-way owned and managed by Eagle County. The SH 82 Frontage Road is owned and maintained by CDOT.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

From the SH 82 intersection and heading west, Valley Road and the SH 82 Frontage Road serve as essential transportation routes to and from local neighborhoods, Crown Mountain Park and the commercial districts of El Jebel and Willits. These corridors are also important routes for walking and biking, particularly when a two-mile section of the Rio Grande Trail is closed seasonally for wildlife habitat needs and trail traffic is re-routed to local roads. The walking and bicycling facilities that exist along these corridors vary in width and surfacing, are not fully connected and some are not consistently maintained.

Valley Road Corridor:

Existing Trails on the North Side of Valley Road: The following list describes the existing trail segments and missing lengths along the north side of Valley Road, west of the SH 82-Valley Road- El Jebel Road intersection, ending at the Valley Road-SH82-JW Drive intersection:

- 540 feet of 6-foot wide paved trail crosses the frontage of Sopris View Apartments. The trail segment was built with the project in the Valley Road public right-of-way for public use and is maintained by the current apartment project owner, the Aspen Skiing Company. MVTC reports that this trail section is not consistently maintained in the winter or kept clear of snow.



Trail on frontage of Sopris View Apartments on Valley Road. Photos: Eagle County and Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

- There is no trail or sidewalk located on the Summit Vista Subdivision's frontage on Valley Road, on its east and west borders with Valley Road. A 10-foot wide paved trail exists parallel to Summit Drive within Summit Vista subdivision and is located inside the public right-of-way. The trail ends in the Summit Vista Open Space located adjacent to SH 82.

- A 600-foot gap in sidewalk or trail exists on the Valley Road Frontage of the Parkside Subdivision and in front of two residential parcels not affiliated with the neighboring subdivisions.



The frontage of Parkside Subdivision on Valley Road. Photo: Eagle County

- 450 feet of 8-foot wide paved trail crosses the frontage of the Valley View Subdivision.

- No additional sections of trail or sidewalk are constructed west of Valley View Subdivision on the north side of Valley Road.

Crown Mountain Park Trails on Valley Road:

- On the north side of Valley Road, CMPRD owns and maintains the combination paved and gravel trail running the length of Crown Mountain Park that is parallel to Valley Road (see photo at right) and connects to the SH 82 intersection and sidewalks leading to the El Jebel Community Center.

- The paved trail transitions to a gravel trail at the park entrance and travels west to the boundary of the park to turn south and merge with a paved trail.
- The trail does not extend past the park’s west boundary.
- The USFS owns the property adjacent to the park's west boundary. No trail or sidewalk route exists along the USFS frontage on Valley Road.
- There are no striped crosswalks or raised “table” crossings on Valley Road from residential areas on the north side of Valley Road to Crown Mountain Park.



Gravel trail alongside Valley Road on Crown Mtn Park property starting at the main entrance, heading west, and ending at the park boundary Photo: Eagle County

Potential Future Trail Connections on Valley Road:

- A vacant property owned by Crawford Properties is located immediately east of and adjacent to Sopris View apartments. Future development of the vacant parcel could result in provision of another section of paved trail along the parcel frontage.
- Adjacent to the west boundary of Summit Vista subdivision, residential units are proposed as the “Fields Subdivision”, on the north side of Valley Road. The Subdivision Sketch Plan Approval in 2018 included a condition of approval to “Construct and maintain a 10’ paved sidewalk/trail along Valley Road to Valley Court”, resulting in 1,000 feet of added trail route.

- Additionally, the proposed Fields Subdivision, if approved, will include a dedicated easement to the public along the northside of the property line adjacent to SH 82 to allow for a possible future connection to the existing paved trail on the north boundary of the adjacent Summit Vista subdivision. This proposal would enable a future trail connection to the intersection of Valley Road, SH 82 and JW Drive and a link with the community of Blue Lake on the opposite side of SH 82, if CDOT and adjacent private property owners participate.
- If connection to the Summit Vista trail is not possible, construction of a trail in the Valley Road right-of-way from the Fields Subdivision to SH 82 may be possible. Further study is required to determine if sufficient unimproved right-of-way exists on Valley Road to accommodate the width of a paved trail, or if it will be necessary to seek additional property from adjacent private property owners.

SH 82 Frontage Road Corridor:

- The 2.5 mile two-lane SH 82 Frontage Road connects Valley Road to Catherine Store Road in Garfield County and was the original SH 82 roadway until the mid-1990's when it was rebuilt as a four-lane highway immediately to the east. The road also serves as a walking and bicycling route for local residents, neighborhoods and as part of the detour route for the Rio Grande Trail during the annual winter wildlife closure from the Catherine Store bridge in Garfield County to Rock Bottom Ranch preserve and farm in Eagle County.



SH 82 Frontage Road between Valley Road in Eagle County and Catherine Store Road in Garfield County. Photo: Eagle County

- 2.2 miles of the road is located in Garfield County and .3 miles in Eagle County.
- The MVTC and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan encourages improved safety and connectivity on the Frontage Road with development of a paved trail route separated from the roadway.
- This recommended trail route should be a minimum of 8-feet wide for two-way travel, with 10-feet wide preferred.
- Alternatively, widened road shoulders may be an option to a separated trail if physical space is constrained and additional right-of-way and funding can't be secured. Potential for widening the road shoulders should be studied in conjunction with the trail feasibility.

- Garfield County and CDOT would be key partners as most of the work is outside of Eagle County's jurisdiction. Ownership and maintenance of a new trail alignment would be determined through the planning and permitting process. Typically, CDOT does not own trail alignments, with some exceptions, such as the Glenwood Canyon Trail; however, CDOT is a frequent partner for multi-use trails located in state highway right-of-ways in the interest of overall road safety and supporting multi-modal travel.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding trail use in the Valley Road corridor are outlined below.

Referral:

- WE-cycle strongly supports improvements to the Valley Road corridor and requests involvement in the process. Existing Valley Road trails are a vital link between the highly-used Sopris View WE-cycle station to both the El Jebel Up and Down Valley WE-cycle stations adjacent to the RFTA bus stops.
- Summit Vista Homeowners Association does not support granting an easement to allow public use of their existing paved trail through their open space parcel and connecting to the proposed Fields Subdivision.

Public Comment:

- Provide paved sidewalks along Valley Road where no facilities exist to accommodate users of all abilities who are currently sharing the narrow roadway with vehicular traffic.
- The trail segments on the north side of Valley Road are difficult to use during winter conditions.
- Provide a sidewalk wide enough for 2-way pedestrian traffic on the USFS side Valley Road where the land is generally more level.
- The trail parallel to Valley Road in Crown Mountain Park should be surfaced with pavement rather than the existing gravel. It is heavily used and becomes icy in winter and impassable mud in the spring.
- Add speed bumps to Valley Road to slow traffic that is typically heading to Crown Mountain Park.
- Improve the signage for access to Crown Mountain Park to include a clear "Entrance" sign with arrows. Confusion about the park entrance results in people driving using the Valley Road shoulder as parking for events and impacting bicycling and walking on Valley Road.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports improved maintenance of the Sopris View Apartments, Parkside Subdivision and Valley View Subdivision Valley Road frontage trails monthly and seasonally. Tasks should include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, inspections and snow removal.

2. **New Paved Trail Connections:** Public comment supports completing existing trail and sidewalk gaps on Valley Road with additional paved sections on both the north and south side of Valley Road. This requires collaboration between Eagle County, USFS, CMPRD, private property owners and subdivision HOA's.
3. **New Paved Trail Connections:** Subject to Summit Vista collaboration and approval, MVTC supports use of the Summit Vista trail as a public route to allow connection to the proposed Fields subdivision, if approved, or another land use project, which would facilitate a subsequent connection to the SH 82 and JW Drive intersection and the trails network in Blue Lake PUD.
4. **New Paved Trail Connections:** MVTC, Mid-Valley Area Community Plan and public comment support improvements to SH 82 Frontage Road for separated paved trail or expanded roads shoulders as a trail alternative. A partnership of Eagle County, Garfield County and CDOT is required to study and construct, with support from MVTC, private property owners and other agencies.
5. **Improved Existing Unpaved Trail:** Public comment recommends the existing gravel trail on Crown Mountain Park that travels alongside the south side of Valley Road be paved for improved, year-round usability.
6. **Bike-Share Improvements:** WE-cycle supports upgrades to the Valley Road corridor that supports trail and transit-stop connectivity, and requests inclusion in the planning process.
7. **Sign and Safety Improvements:** To support non-motorized users and reduced impacts to the Valley Road neighborhood, public comments recommend additional wayfinding signage for people driving related to Crown Mountain Park and speed controls such as bumps or tables. Crosswalk improvements do not exist and would enhance safety.



El Jebel overlook as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County

10.3 Singletrack Unpaved Trails



Mountain biking the Buckhorn Traverse trail on the BLM's Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard

The most popular active recreation pursuits in the United States include hiking, running, walking and mountain biking and are also some of the common activities enjoyed by Roaring Fork Valley residents during their leisure time. Horseback riding has a long history in Colorado, for both utility and pleasure, and many residents of the Roaring Fork Valley own and ride horses for recreation.

Encouraging and facilitating these healthy pastimes is an extensive unpaved, natural-surface, singletrack trail network located in relative close proximity to the population centers on the

Roaring Fork River valley floor, Missouri Heights and up the Frying Pan River valley. The majority of the unpaved Mid-Valley singletrack trails described in this section are located on USFS and BLM public lands, or on Eagle County and Pitkin County public open space properties.

In the Mid-Valley, singletrack trails are typically one to four-foot wide unpaved trails that were purpose-built for people to walk, bike and horseback ride. This type of trail may also be incidentally created through years of casual "social use" or originated as wildlife "game" trails. Unpaved singletrack trails are also referred to as "soft-surface", "soft-track", "natural surface" or "dirt trails." The term "singletrack" was chosen for use in this Plan and refers to a trail that is generally available to all of the uses listed above unless otherwise managed for separation of uses due to resource or safety management issues.

Common in Roaring Fork Valley rural areas and on lands managed by the USFS or BLM, singletrack trails also exist in developed areas where they serve as shortcuts linking established trails or destinations. Many singletrack trail segments on public lands have use restrictions and some have seasonal closures to protect wildlife habitat.

The Mid-Valley unpaved trail network described here also includes many miles of unpaved road, often referred to as "doubletrack." These roads serve to link trails or serve as a route, providing many miles of recreation opportunity for bicycle, foot and horse travel. Doubletrack routes may or may not be open to motorized travel, depending on the management designations by the landowner, County open space programs, or CPW, BLM or USFS land management plans.

The following section describes the singletrack trail networks that exist in the Mid-Valley area and also lists recommendations from local organizations for improvements or additions to the singletrack

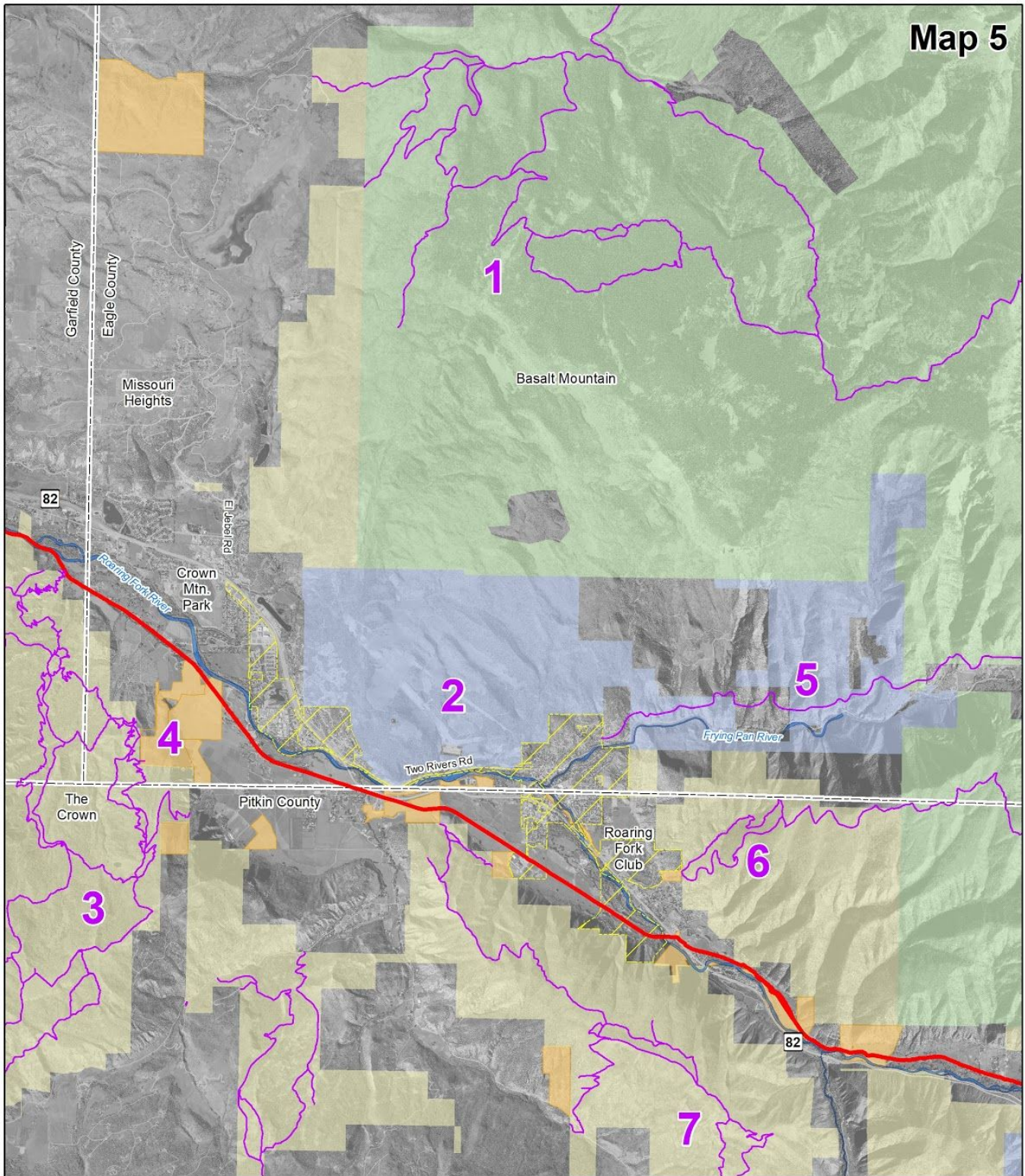
networks. *It is important to note that many of the proposals have not yet been studied thoroughly, reviewed, or approved by the appropriate decision making authorities, including land owners, federal, state or county agencies. This Plan captures the concepts, but more research and approvals are necessary prior to implementation, with some projects moving forward while others may not due to unmitigable compliance or feasibility issues.*

Note: Two proposed singletrack projects (unpaved trails of less than eight feet wide) were suggested through the public input phase of this Plan - by RFMBA at Blue Lake in the El Jebel area, and by the MVTC and Town of Basalt in the SH 82-East Valley Road area. See Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved and Unpaved Trails for descriptions of these suggested trails. They have not been included in this Section 10.3 Singletrack Trails due to their location in more densely populated areas and stated proposed purpose to serve as neighborhood connector trails, rather than as recreation-focused singletrack trails through public land or rural areas.

Table 14. Existing Singletrack Unpaved Trails

Map Item #	Trail or Trail Network Name	Trail Owner - Land Manager	Location
1.	Basalt Mountain Trails	USFS BLM CPW	Eagle County
2.	Basalt State Wildlife Area	CPW	Eagle County
3.	Crown Mountain SRMA	BLM	Eagle, Pitkin, Garfield Counties
4.	Glassier Open Space	Pitkin County - PCOST	Eagle County
5.	Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek	Private, Eagle County, CPW, USFS	Eagle County
Located in Pitkin County			
6.	Arbaney Kittle Trail	PCOST BLM USFS	Pitkin County

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Map 5

Mid Valley Trails Plan 2020: Singletrack Networks

Singletrack Unpaved Trail	Public Lands	U.S. Forest Service	1 Basalt Mountain Trails	5 Stage Trail Cedar Drive to Toner Creek
Rio Grande Trail	BLM	Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space	2 Basalt State Wildlife Area	6 Arbaney Kittle Trail
Town of Basalt	State of CO		3 Crown Mountain SRMA	7 Light Hill Trails
			4 Glassier Open Space	

1. Basalt Mountain Trails

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: BLM, USFS and CPW



Basalt Mountain Trail after the Lake Christine Fire. Photo: Mike Pritchard

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Located entirely in Eagle County, this extensive singletrack, doubletrack and road network is located on both BLM and USFS lands above in elevation and north of the Town of Basalt and east of the Missouri Heights area above El Jebel.
- Trails are primarily accessed via an improved trailhead off of Upper Cattle Creek Road.
- The Basalt Mountain network also links to the Red Table-Ruedi Reservoir singletrack and doubletrack network, also located in Eagle County, north and east of Basalt.
- The area is enjoyed by hikers, runners, bikers and equestrians, as well as motorized users and hunters. The USFS worked with a regional motorized group including motorcycles and OHV's, to create a Basalt to Gypsum trail network that is partially complete and also available to all other users.

Existing Trail Network:

The following list describes the majority of routes available for public use on Basalt Mountain:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Basalt Mountain Road and Trail | 10.5 miles |
| 2. Blue Creek Trail | 2 miles |
| 3. Cattle Creek Trail | 9 miles |
| 4. Mill Creek Rim Trail | 1 mile |
| 5. Red Table Road and Trail | 18 miles |
| 6. Ruedi Overlook | 6.5 miles |
| 7. Taylor Creek Spur Trail | .7 miles |
| 8. Taylor Creek Road | 8 miles |

Annual Wildlife Closures:

Basalt Mountain trails are closed to mountain biking November 23 through May 22, and open to foot and horse travel year-round for wildlife winter habitat needs.

2018 Lake Christine Fire:

- The area suffered severe damage, on USFS, BLM and CPW lands in addition to private property during the 2018 wildfire designated as the “Lake Christine Fire” that burned over 12,000 acres after igniting at the Basalt State Wildlife Area and moving to the northern and western flanks of the mountain.
- The BLM, USFS and CPW have since developed and implemented a fire rehabilitation plan for the area that included clearing and reseeding selected areas in collaboration with local volunteer groups and local government agencies.
- USFS recreation staff (see Appendix F stakeholder discussion notes) reports that the agency has completed their rehabilitation work on Basalt Mountain and appropriated federal funds have been spent.
- USFS recreation staff does not foresee additional trail network additions at this time with the exception of trail reroutes related to logging taking place on Basalt Mountain in 2020. RFMBA is collaborating with the USFS on the reroute project.



Basalt Mountain Road. Photo: Mike Pritchard

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding the Basalt Mountain trail network are outlined below.

Referral:

- BLM noted that the emphasis for management of BLM lands on Basalt Mountain is protecting wildlife and draft Plan text provided during the referral period was in potential conflict with the 2015 Approved Resource Management Plan decision involving protecting wildlife habitat on Basalt Mountain. BLM does not intend to expand trail routes on Basalt Mountain due to the wildlife priority area designation. A surface-disturbing action or activity, such as a trail, or

use may be considered if BLM, in consultation with CPW, determines that the proposed action or activity would not impair wildlife habitat values. Wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

- The USFS Aspen-Sopris District Ranger, in response to the draft Plan text provided during the referral period regarding reopening former trails proposed by local interest groups, provided comment that any potential requests “To construct a new trail or bring an old trail back into the

system requires an environmental analysis, as required by the [National Environmental Policy Act](#).” Further stating that, “The trails mentioned in the Plan that would connect the valley floor to the Basalt Mountain area would also require this analysis, and extensive public outreach work, if they were to be pursued. The outcomes of any of these NEPA analyses do not always result in approval of the proposed projects. Any trails shown on the current WRNF Visitor Map are system trails, and maintenance, upkeep, etc. does not require similar analysis.”

- Town of Basalt, MVTC and RFMBA support the Town of Basalt POST, 2020 Basalt Master Plan and Mid-Valley Area Community Plan recommendations for a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection inclusion in this Plan. New trails are proposed, though route locations are not yet determined, from El Jebel and Old Town Basalt on the valley floor to the middle levels and forested top of Basalt Mountain. The goal is to enable hiking, biking and equestrian access to surrounding public land without relying on a vehicle to get there, as well as to provide close-to-home recreation.



**Wildlife Closure Information Sign at Basalt Mountain Road gate in early May, 2020
Photo: Eagle County**

Collaboration is required with private property owners and owner associations, BLM, USFS and CPW to identify and study appropriate routes that might allow this connection to travel from the valley floor in El Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain. On BLM and USFS lands, NEPA review and a public input process will be required for any new trail proposals. Per BLM, wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

- MVTC suggests a possible trailhead and connector trail from the Shadowrock neighborhood to allow access to existing singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain, as part of the “Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain” trail concept, or at minimum as a short “neighborhood trail” to the low hilltop located on BLM land immediately east of Shadowrock. This concept requires approval by Shadowrock HOA, adjacent private property owners, BLM, USFS and CPW. This proposed connection is also noted in Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved Trails.
- RFVHC is interested in working with the USFS and other groups to clear and rehabilitate an old route that follows the North Fork of Cattle Creek to connect to Red Table Road (east of trail #1913). They recommend both this trail and a former section of FT #1909 that traveled closer and parallel to Upper Cattle Creek that has been decommissioned (closed) be restored as alternatives to Basalt Mountain trails that are heavily used by either mechanized (mountain bikes) or motorized users. Per RFVHC, both the North Fork route and the closed #1909 section have truck and horse trailer parking available. A related project RFVHC is interested in pursuing in the Basalt Mountain/Missouri Heights area is the “Missouri Heights Trail” starting at BLM Sutey Ranch in

Garfield County near Carbondale to Spring Park Reservoir in Eagle County at the base of Basalt Mountain. This involves crossing several private properties located in Garfield and Eagle Counties. RVHC also recommends improved management of singletrack trail uses to protect sensitive ecosystems, wildlife habitat and quality of the trail user experience. Specific recommendations include enforcement of closures and permitted use, implementation of trail patrols, and installation of improved wayfinding, educational, regulatory and shared-use etiquette signage.

- HSNC supports access to trails close to communities, but is concerned that wildlife will be impacted by a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection. Citing the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan 3.7.5: "Other forms of recreation can create other negative impacts. The mere presence of humans, vehicles and domestic animals in areas frequented by wildlife can have negative psychological effects, causing stress in animals as they must alter their instinctual travel routes and feeding patterns. Stress increases susceptibility to disease and can reduce reproduction rates." HSNC asks that CPW or other agencies conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of additional recreational use on Basalt Mountain wildlife prior to any approval of additional trails.

Public Comment:

- Easy access to trails on Basalt Mountain from El Jebel or Basalt may be desirable but the County must take wildlife into consideration. More research is needed on impact before projects can be approved.
- Enforce wildlife closures.
- Remove trails built in critical wildlife habitat.
- Adhere to Eagle County wildlife habitat protection policies and regulations.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Improve Existing Trail:** RFMBA is scheduled to work with USFS per an approved WRNF Environmental Assessment to reroute a portion of the Basalt Mountain Trail due to logging activities on the existing route to become the Mill Creek Overlook Trail.
2. **Improve Existing Trails:** MVTC and Town of Basalt support local collaboration with USFS and BLM for continued rehabilitation and restoration of fire or logged trail corridors on Basalt Mountain.
3. **Wayfinding:** Town of Basalt, RFVHC and public comment recommend additional directional signs on Basalt Mountain. Additional directional signs are recommended as well as etiquette and education signs for shared use by hikers, bikers and horseback riders.
4. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC will continue to collaborate with counties, BLM and USFS to plan and include equestrian parking in future improvements, to accommodate truck and trailer ingress, and loading and egress movements that safely allow access for all users of the Basalt Mountain trailhead. Equestrian parking specifications are provided in Appendix B.
5. **New Trail Connections:** Town of Basalt POST, 2020 Basalt Master Plan and 2018 Mid-Valley Area Community Plan each include recommendation for a Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain trail connection. Collaboration is required with BLM, USFS, CPW and private property owners to identify if appropriate routes are possible that might allow a connection to travel from the valley floor in El

Jebel and downtown Basalt to access established trails higher up on Basalt Mountain via foot, horse and biking singletrack while maintaining resource management plan protections for wildlife. A [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) review and public process will be required for new trails on BLM and USFS lands. Wildlife habitat needs are an issue of critical concern to CPW and BLM.

6. **New Trail Connections:** RFMBA supports future additional trail improvements and expansions in the Basalt Mountain management area if resource management criteria can be suitably addressed. A NEPA review and public process will be required for new trails on BLM and USFS lands.
7. **New Trail Connections:** Partners interested in reopening trails that have been closed by the USFS on Basalt Mountain are encouraged to discuss proposals with the USFS for specific guidance. RFVHC supports reactivation of certain decommissioned routes on Basalt Mountain, for example, an older trail parallel to existing trail #1909, and members of MVTC have suggested possible reinstatement of other trails (e.g. #1913) in the area. Per the USFS comments, any requests for reopening decommissioned trails will require a federal government NEPA review process.



Basalt Mountain Road access to singletrack trails. Photo: Eagle County

2. Basalt State Wildlife Area

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: CPW

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The 2,577-acre Basalt State Wildlife Area (BSWA) is located generally north of and adjacent to the Town of Basalt on the southern flank of Basalt Mountain.

- According to CPW, the BSWA is primarily managed for wildlife needs and related human activities such as hunting and fishing, and is divided into the Lake Christine and Toner Creek management units.

- A firearms shooting range, a small reservoir (Lake Christine), picnic area and hay fields are also located on the property.



Interpretive signs at Lake Christine in the Basalt State Wildlife Area. Photo: Eagle County

- A formal trail network is not designated or signed. Some trails connect to routes higher up on Basalt Mountain on USFS property. The historic Stage Road route is located in the Toner unit of the BSWA.
- Doubletrack road and singletrack social trails are open to hikers and equestrians. All routes that are closed to motor vehicles are also closed to mountain biking.

Annual Wildlife Closures:

The area is fully closed to human use December 1 to April 15 for wildlife winter habitat.

2018 Lake Christine Fire:

The BSWA suffered severe damage, as well as adjacent BLM, USFS and private property during the 2018 “Lake Christine” fire that burned over 12,000 acres after igniting at the shooting range at the BSWA and moving to the northern and western flanks of the mountain.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral comments regarding trail use within the BSWA are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

Referral:

- Town of Basalt would like to collaborate with CPW to create an appropriate route through the BSWA property to access the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain.
- RFMBA requests that summer season wildlife surveys be performed to determine if reinstated access for mountain biking during the season of lowest use by wildlife may be appropriate.
- RFVHC recommends the current travel management policies regarding use of the property be maintained and no new trails be constructed on the BSWA property to connect the Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain.
- As previously noted in Section 10.3.1. above regarding Basalt Mountain Trails, BLM and USFS have conveyed that wildlife habitat is a management priority for Basalt Mountain and a NEPA analysis including an extensive public process would be required for new trails proposed. This would apply to any new trails linking to Basalt Mountain from the BSWA through USFS or BLM lands.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **New Trails Connections:** Town of Basalt is coordinating with CPW to determine if appropriate routes are possible to connect with the upper reaches of Basalt Mountain, with minimal impact on the wildlife habitat area. As noted in Section 9 Plan Implementation, any proposal should be evaluated according to the policies, goals and regulations of the Town of Basalt and Eagle County regarding preservation of wildlife and sensitive lands, in addition to the requirements of CPW.
2. **Trail Management:** RFMBA suggests that seasonal wildlife surveys be performed to determine if reinstated access for mountain biking during the season of lowest use by wildlife may be appropriate.

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3. Crown Special Recreation Management Area

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County, Garfield and Pitkin Counties

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: BLM

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Located at the base of Mt. Sopris in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties, the BLM lands known as the “Crown” features an extensive singletrack trail and doubletrack road network.
- Access to the eastern side of the Crown located in Eagle and Garfield Counties is from the Rio Grande Trail between Carbondale and Basalt via the Glassier Open Space trails or Buckhorn trail.
- The western side of the Crown is located in Pitkin County and accessed from Prince Creek road off and Highway 133 in the Crystal River Valley.



Mountain bike riding on Lower Buckhorn on the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard

BLM Management of the Crown SRMA:

- Activities on the Crown are guided by the BLM’s [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Trails Resource Management Plan Implementation](#) (SRMA Plan) approved in 2019. The “Record of Decision” approving the SRMA Plan states that one purpose of the plan is to “improve the experience of public land users in the area and address multiple issues documented in the Environmental Assessment.”
- The SRMA Plan is a supporting document to the overarching [Colorado River Valley Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan](#) (RMP) approved in 2015 for BLM lands in Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Mesa and Routt Counties.
- The SRMA Plan includes the following best management practices (BMP’s) pertaining to recreation management of the Crown. According to BLM staff, BMP’s are not management decisions but are developed to aid analysis, identify opportunities for stakeholder collaboration, and help guide implementation actions to stay in alignment with RMP and SRMS goals and objectives.
 - Reroute trails that create resource damage and trespass on private property.
 - Install mountain bike cattle guards when existing or proposed routes cross fence lines.
 - Construct approximately 12-15 miles of new single-track mountain bike trails to create loop trails, link existing trails, reduce the amount of biking on roads and create trail connections to new access points.

- Downhill bikes are primarily intended for high speed descent. Downhill biking trails would not be constructed.
- With stakeholder involvement, apply adaptive management (e.g. Limits of Acceptable Change) which focuses on cycle of designing - implementing - monitoring - evaluating - adjusting implementation actions to respond to future recreation issues and the results of monitoring.
- If future monitoring indicates that social RSC's are not being achieved, visitor health and safety issues exist, resource damage is occurring or user conflicts need to be addressed, the CRVFO may implement additional visitor use restrictions for private and commercial use.
- In referral agency comments provided for this Plan, BLM management staff stated, "For BLM lands in the Roaring Fork Valley, the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the Red Hill SRMA are the areas where recreation infrastructure will likely be developed/improved to meet future recreation demand," referencing the guidance provided by 2019 SRMA and 2015 RMP.
- BLM staff is interested in continuing to work with partners to refine all aspects of the Crown trail networks and the auxiliary facilities (trailheads, parking areas, campsites, wayfinding, etc.).
- The SRMA Plan defines trail mileage management actions for the SRMA as follows, and further clarified by BLM during this Plan process. BLM staff also provided further clarification that mileages for each type of use listed below may be approximated but total, cumulative mileage will be limited to the maximum permitted by the SRMA Plan:
 - "19.21 miles of designated routes (most is two track⁹) would be undesignated and rehabilitated to the extent necessary;
 - 11.85 miles of new mountain bike single-track trail would be designated and constructed;
 - 10.02 miles of designated mountain bike trail (all is two track) would have its designation changed to Foot/Horse Trail;
 - 14.7 miles of designated mountain bike trail would have its designation changed to administrative use only to accommodate permitted grazing activities.



The Vasten Trail in the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard

⁹ The BLM term "two track" refers to unpaved roadways on public lands, and is synonymous with the term "Double Track" that is used throughout this Plan.

- These routes would have gates placed as necessary to restrict mechanized and motorized traffic. Some of these routes overlap with the proposed Foot/Horse trails as shown on the accompanying map.¹⁰ In this case, gates would be accompanied by foot/horse passage structures to be identified with the aid of the RFVHC.
- A winter closure as described in the 2015 CRVFO Approved RMP will be in effect for all motorized and mechanized travel from December 1 through April 15 outside of mechanized routes in the Prince Creek corridor. Horses would be allowed to use any trail designated for their use as well as off trail travel during this winter closure.
- Timeframes. Trail construction would be anticipated to begin in the spring/summer of 2019 and could continue for several years as funding and volunteer labor become available.”

Annual Wildlife Closures: Trails in the Crown SRMA are closed to motorized and mechanized travel from December 1 to April 15 to protect wintering big game species, except trails along paralleling Prince Creek Road (BLM routes #8320, #8320E, and #8325D) remain open. Foot and horse travel is open year round.

The Crown SRMA in Eagle County:

- BLM collaborated with local partners including RFMBA, RFVHC, RFOV, RFTA, Pitkin County (as owners and managers of the Glassier Open Space parcel adjacent to the Crown) to implement some of the work described above within Eagle County.
- The following trails are located on BLM lands on the Crown on the Eagle County-Roaring Fork Valley side, via the Buckhorn or Glassier Open Space trailheads along the Rio Grande Trail between Hooks Lane Bridge near Basalt and Catherine Bridge near Carbondale:
 1. Buckhorn 4 miles
 2. Buckhorn Traverse 4.4 miles
 3. Vasten 6.1 miles
- The Pitkin County Glassier Open Space that is located in Eagle County and immediately adjacent to the eastern flank of the Crown, augments the access to the BLM Crown SRMA with two trails constructed in partnership with RFMBA, MVTC, RFTA and BLM:
 1. Glassier Trail 2 miles
 2. Glassier Equestrian Trail 1.5 miles

The Crown SRMA in Pitkin County:

- RFMBA and PCOST collaborated with BLM to improve existing trails or develop new trails and add a trailhead along Prince Creek Road in 2017-2018. The PCOST trail routes adjacent to Prince Creek Road now serve as the primary access to and from BLM routes on the Crown. MVTC has been a funding partner for trail planning and construction costs.
- As a low-service level road, Pitkin County closes the upper 3.36 miles of Prince Creek Road on or around December 1st and reopens the road on or around April 15th.

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 (page 29) of the [Crown Special Recreation Management Area Travel Resource Management Plan Implementation](#).

- The following trails are accessed from the Pitkin County-Prince Creek Road portal in the Crystal River Valley:
 1. Christmas Tree .5 miles
 2. Dinkle Lake 1.3 miles
 3. Father of Ginormous 2.4 miles
 4. Highline .8 miles
 5. Innie 3.8 miles
 6. Lower Monte Carlo 2 miles
 7. Monte Carlo 1.1 miles
 8. Next Jen 2.9 miles
 9. North Porcupine 2.7 miles
 10. Outie 2.5 miles
 11. Prince Creek 1.8 miles
 12. Skullbucket 1.1 miles
 13. South Porcupine 1.2 miles

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding the Crown SRMA trail network are outlined below.

Referral:

- RFMBA commented that “following up on a 2019 BLM decision to close 44 miles of routes to mechanized use (through rehabilitation, or re-categorized for foot and horse only, or administrative use only), RFMBA will continue a partnership with BLM to study and designate new routes design for mountain bike experience. Anticipated routes include the Crown Royale concept trail that will connect the top of the Crown SRMA to the Rio Grande Trail.”
- HSNC is concerned about a significant decrease in wildlife activity since the increase in human activity on the Crown and Glassier Open Space, with the understanding that studies have not yet been performed to verify the impacts. HSNC met with officials to express concern. HSNC understands the need for recreation on open space and public lands but urges cost/benefit review of increased traffic on the Crown and irreversible impacts on wildlife. Additionally Eagle County should apply the recommendations of the 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan regarding preservation of wildlife and habitat.



Mountain biking on Buckhorn Trail on the Crown SRMA. Photo: Mike Pritchard

- RFVHC is interested in collaborating with Pitkin or Eagle County and BLM to improve equestrian parking access to the Crown at the Divide lot off of Prince Creek Road. Per BLM Plan comments: “RFVHC and BLM have discussed improvements to “The Divide” parking area at the top of West Sopris Creek Road and Prince Creek to better accommodate truck and horse trailer parking. No BLM funding is currently budgeted, but the project is included in the BLM’s “out-year” recreation planning.” RFVHC states their concerns regarding wildlife impacts due to heavy trail use on the Crown and requests that land managers consider limitations and monitoring of trail use levels in the interest of reducing or eliminating impacts on the Crown’s wildlife and habitat. RFVHC also requests education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, restrictions on dogs and shared-trail etiquette.

Public Comment:

- Singletrack trails constructed on the Crown and Glassier Open Space properties have significantly increased recreation traffic on those public lands and in the Hooks Spur area.
- Expanded recreation use of the area has displaced and disturbed wildlife to a significant extent.
- Increased recreational use can result in conflicts with the historic use of the area for cattle grazing.
- Existing trails have exceeded their carrying capacity.
- Recreation impacts and capacity need to be monitored and better managed.
- A metrics methodology needs to be developed to measure and amend use levels based on impacts.
- Dog restrictions are not enforced and frequently violated.
- Seasonal closures are not enforced and frequently violated.
- New or expanded trails should not be permitted.



RFVHC members riding from the Crown towards Mt. Sopris. Photo: Holly McClain

POTENTIAL PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Improve Existing Trails:** Following review and approval by the BLM per the Crown SRMA, RfvHC is working with BLM and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in 2020 to create the “Crown Jewel Horse Trail” a 12+ mile designated horse and hiking trail that would connect Glassier Open Space in Eagle County to the Divide parking lot in Pitkin County using or improving existing routes on the Crown.
2. **New Trail Connection:** Following review and approval by the BLM per the Crown SRMA, RfmBA began construction in late summer 2019 on the Undie Trail, located in Pitkin County-Prince Creek area. Construction will continue in 2020 to construct the 5-mile long trail in 2020 with accelerated completion dependent on available funding.
3. **Manage, Monitor and Mitigate Trail Development and Use:** HSNC, RfvHC and public comment request that BLM and Eagle County consider limitations on adding more trail mileage or expanding the network in the interest of preserving wildlife habitat and reducing impacts to adjacent neighbors, and adhere to federal, state and local policies and regulations regarding balanced and appropriate development of trails and preservation of wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and neighborhood character. Education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, dogs restrictions, shared use etiquette and development of an impact monitoring methodology is requested.
4. **New Trail Connections:** Subject to BLM review and approval, RfmBA recommends a segment of climbing trail to avoid conflicts on the two-way portion of the Monte Carlo trail as well as an easement or land acquisition to enable a merger of the Prince Creek and Monte Carlo trails (located in Pitkin County) to create a continuous singletrack route that helps bicyclists avoid interface with vehicles on a section of Pitkin County’s Prince Creek Road.
5. **New Trail Connections:** RfmBA also seeks to continue a partnership with BLM to study and designate new routes designed for mountain bike experience. Anticipated routes include the Crown Royale concept trail that would connect the top of the Crown SRMA to the Rio Grande Trail (located in Eagle County) and subject to review by RFTA and Eagle County as potential referral agencies.
6. **Equestrian Improvements:** RfvHC will continue to collaborate with counties and BLM to plan and include equestrian parking in future improvements, to accommodate truck and trailer ingress, and loading and egress movements that safely allow access for all users of the Crown area. Equestrian parking specifications are provided in Appendix B.

4. Glassier Open Space

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Pitkin County owns and manages the Glassier Open Space property.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The 282-acre Glassier Open Space property is comprised of two historic ranches located on Hooks Spur Road.
- The ranch properties were purchased through a partnership effort by Pitkin County, Eagle County, Town of Basalt, MVTC and Great Outdoors Colorado.
- The open space property is located in Eagle County and Eagle County holds the conservation easement.
- Eagle County would participate as a referral agency in the updates to the current Glassier Open Space Management Plan.
- According to PCOST, “the property contains significant and relatively natural habitat for plants and wildlife, scenic open space, agriculture and opportunities for recreation. The property is adjacent to undeveloped BLM acreage, contributing to contiguous, expansive portions of undisturbed habitat for numerous species. Together with the BLM land and other private conservation easements in the area, the property contributes to a large, natural scenic landscape characteristic of western Colorado, and is important to the agricultural heritage and viability of the region.”
- Several agricultural easements are in place on the property, encouraging the continuation of crop and livestock growing in the Hooks Spur-Emma area of the Mid-Valley.
- Ranch roads connecting to recently constructed trails crossing the Glassier Open Space property can be accessed from the Rio Grande Trail on foot, bicycle or horseback. Parking for all trail users, including equestrians, is available at a Rio Grande Trail trailhead near Hooks Lane bridge.
- 3.5 miles of trail on Glassier Open Space provide foot, bicycle and equestrian trail connection to the BLM Crown, including:
 - The 2-mile Glassier Trail open to foot and bicycle travel
 - The 1.5-mile Glassier Equestrian Trail dedicated to equestrian use only, and purpose-built to help reduce potential conflicts between bikes, hikers and horses.



Glassier Open Space Trailhead. Photo: Eagle County

- RFMBA, RFOV, MVTC, RFVHC, and BLM collaborated with PCOST to develop the Glassier trail system and parking areas, and continue to participate to maintain and improve the trail network.

Annual Wildlife Closures and Pet Control:

- Glassier Open Space is closed to all human recreation use from December 1 through May 15 for wildlife winter habitat.
- Dogs are prohibited from the Glassier Open Space property at all times to prevent wildlife and livestock conflicts.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral and public comments regarding the Glassier Open Space trail network are outlined below.

Referral:

- Pitkin County plans to update the Glassier Open Space Management Plan in late summer, 2020. The process will include opportunities for public comment. See the [Glassier Open Space Management Plan](#) for the current 2015 version. Go to [the PCOST Project List](#) for information on the update and notification process.
- HSNC is concerned about a significant decrease in local wildlife activity since the increase in human activity on Glassier Open Space and the Crown and urges additional study to evaluate irreversible impacts, cost/benefit, and ensure the recommendations of Eagle County 2005 Eagle County Comprehensive Plan regarding preservation of wildlife and habitat are being considered.

Public Comment:

- Singletrack trails constructed on the Crown and Glassier Open Space properties have significantly increased recreation traffic on those public lands and in the Hooks Spur area.
- The purchase of the Glassier Open Space has benefited people and impacted wildlife.
- Recreation impacts and capacity need to be monitored and better managed.
- Dogs restrictions are not enforced and frequently violated.
- Seasonal closures are not enforced and frequently violated.



The Glassier Equestrian Trail is open to foot and horse travel. Photo: Eagle County

- Glassier Open Space is a conduit for wildlife to travel from the Crown to the Roaring Fork River.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Equestrian Improvements:** RFVHC requests that the equestrian parking at the Glassier Trailhead parking area be specifically delineated, or alternately, etiquette education signs be posted to alert non-equestrian trailhead users that trucks with trailers will require backing and turning space to exit the lot, and to park accordingly.
2. **Manage, Monitor and Mitigate Trail Development and Use:** HSNC, RFVHC and interested public request that Glassier Open Space PCOST property managers and adjacent BLM land managers place limitations and conduct monitoring of trail use levels in the interest of reducing or eliminating impacts on Hooks Spur and Crown area wildlife habitat and the local residents. Additionally, they request that they adhere to federal, state and local policies and regulations regarding balanced and appropriate development of trails and preservation of wildlife habitat, sensitive lands and neighborhood character. Education and enforcement about existing closures, ecosystems, dogs restrictions, shared use etiquette is also requested.



Glassier Ranch Roads provide access to the singletracks Trail network. Photo: Eagle County

5. Stage Road: Basalt to Toner Creek to Ruedi Reservoir

LOCATION: Town of Basalt in Eagle County and Unincorporated Eagle County

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Eagle County has historic ownership of this right-of-way but it is not formally managed or maintained. The route passes through private property, CPW and USFS lands.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Stage Road is a historic transportation route that connected the Town of Basalt to Ruedi Reservoir and points further east.
- The old road platform is generally located a hundred feet above and parallel to the existing Frying Pan Road on the east side of the valley, winding in and out of numerous drainages. Use of this route ceased when Frying Pan Road was constructed near the river.
- Per the Eagle County Surveyor¹¹ the public right-of-way for Stage Road was not officially abandoned as a public route by Eagle County after construction of Frying Pan Road.
- Approximately 50% of the route length is located on public land, passing through the “Toner Unit” of the Basalt State Wildlife Area and USFS lands.
- Where the route passes through private property, in a number of locations residences have been built in very close proximity to the historic right-of-way as it travels through private property. Two subdivision plats in the 7 Castles area document and reserve the road as a public right-of-way with provisions.
- Portions of the historic road route are lightly used for biking and hiking as an informal trail, primarily between Cedar Drive in the Town of Basalt and the Toner Creek drainage approximately three miles to the east.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral comments regarding the Stage Road Trail are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

- Per MVTC, at the May, 2017 public meeting that kicked-off this Plan’s revision process, several private property owners along the historic Stage Road route attended and shared their objections to potential restoration of the route as a public trail.
- MVTC supports restoration of the historic right-of-way and is interested in working with property owners along the route to review concerns and methods for mitigating those concerns.
- If restored, RRVHC prefers the route be designated as open to foot and horse only to maintain the historic uses and minimize potential impacts to wildlife and private property owners along the route.

¹¹ as of 2019

- If restored, RFMBA advocates for the historic road to be open to bicycle use to allow for a 38-mile out-and-back trail experience and avoidance of bicycling on the narrow and often shoulderless Frying Pan Road. RFMBA has offered to coordinate volunteers and staff to assist with maintenance of the public route.

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Feasibility Studies:** Partners such as MVTC, RFMBA, RFVHC and Town of Basalt that are interested in restoring the Stage Road could collaborate with private property owners, USFS and CPW to perform studies of the road platform condition, land development status, encroachments, viability for restoration, mitigation methods, county, state and federal land use policy and regulatory reviews regarding natural resources, wildlife and required public review processes, as well as other actions and studies that may be determined as necessary to restore the public road route as a navigable, non-motorized trail.
2. **Preserve Historic Public Right of Way:** Eagle County land use applications and building permits will continue to be monitored to determine if the property includes the historic Stage Road as a means of ensuring the public right-of-way route remains free of structures and other encumbrances.
3. **Wayfinding and Interpretation:** If the route restoration project is implemented, Eagle County Historical Society suggests incorporating interpretive signs that explain the history of the Stage Road.



Ruedi Shores Subdivision. Photo: Eagle County

6. Arbaney Kittle Trail

LOCATION: Unincorporated Pitkin County



Horseback riders on the Arbaney Kittle trail. Photo: RFVHC

TRAIL OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: PCOST owns and maintains the trailhead and lower trail portion; BLM manages approximately 3 miles of the route and USFS maintains the upper reaches of the trail network.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Located in Pitkin County, this popular 17.6 mile trail network located southwest of the Town of Basalt starts at a PCOST trailhead in the Holland Hills neighborhood off SH 82, travels up through BLM lands and into USFS lands and a ridge top running southeast of Basalt and overlooking the Frying Pan Valley.

- The primary trail is a fairly steep climb to the ridge.

Annual Wildlife Closures: The trail is open to foot and horse year-round. Bikes are prohibited on the USFS portion of the network from November 23 through May 22 for wildlife habitat needs.

Referral and Public Comment:

Referral comments regarding the Arbaney Kittle Trail are outlined below. No public comment was received for this area.

Referral:

- Town of Basalt is interested in creating an unpaved connecting trail from central Basalt to the BLM portion of the Arbaney Kittle trail. A new route may be possible if a short easement across private land can be secured through properties located in both the Eagle County and the Pitkin County areas of Basalt. An in-town trailhead, wayfinding improvements and a sustainable, “kid-friendly” route are components of this recommended improvement for the community and is supported in the Town’s adopted 2020 Master Plan and 2013 POST Plan.
- In the interest of avoiding vegetation removal and wildlife habitat disturbance, RFVHC requests that no new trails be constructed to connect from the Town of Basalt to the Arbaney Kittle Trail and that existing paved routes, such as the Basalt-Old Snowmass paved trail, be used to reach the existing PCOST trailhead.

- BLM provided comment that “the Arbaney-Kittle area is identified in the 2015 BLM Approved Resource Management Plan as a wildlife priority area - a stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas such as expanding the existing trail system.” This would apply to any trail work proposed on BLM lands. BLM also noted that “A surface-disturbing activity, (such as a trail) or use may be considered, if BLM in consultation with CPW, determines that the proposed action/activity would not impair wildlife habitat values.”

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **New Trail Connection:** A partnership effort including private property owners, county government, interested organizations and federal and state agencies will be required to implement the Town of Basalt’s concept for an unpaved trail from central Basalt to the BLM portion of the Arbaney Kittle trail. As detailed in Section 9 - Plan Implementation, standard procedure for any new local government project would involve an overall review of a project’s compliance with the policies, regulations and management plans of the underlying jurisdictions of Town of Basalt, Eagle County and Pitkin County, as well as required NEPA reviews by the BLM and USFS if federal lands are involved.



Arbaney Kittle Trailhead is accessed from the Holland Hills neighborhood south of Basalt. Photo: Eagle County

10.4 Shared Roadways

The roadways described in this section are the most popular and commonly used routes used for bicycling in the Mid-Valley area of Eagle County. All roadways in Eagle County are generally open and legally available to people walking and bicycling, with the exception of state highways or other roads where non-motorized use is specifically prohibited.

These shared roadways share several common characteristics:

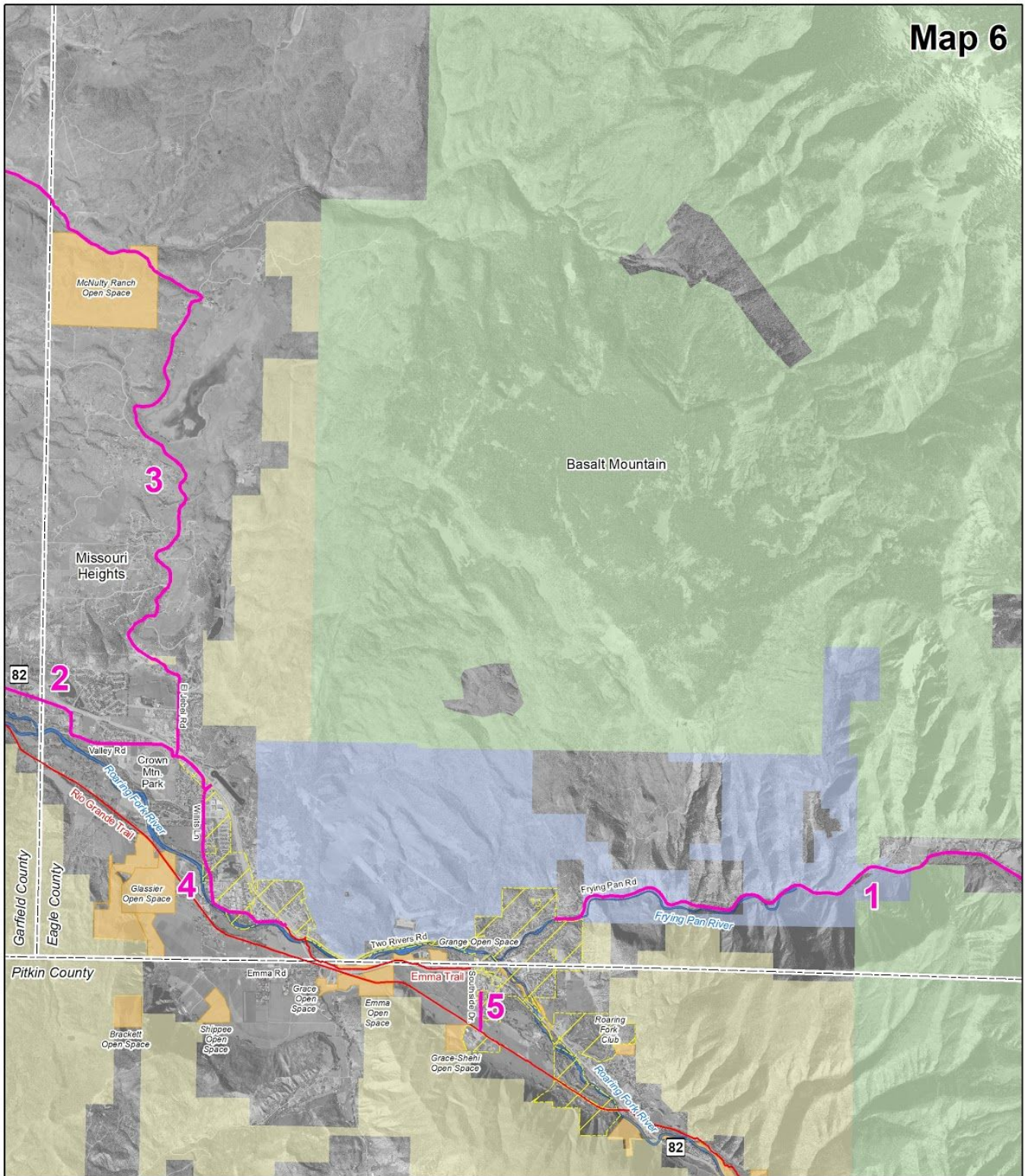
- Bicycling along these routes typically involves riding on the paved road shoulder, which is a shared space, as people driving are permitted to use shoulders to pull-off of the traveled way in the event of an accident or a need to temporarily park.
- On certain roads, the shoulders are not striped, such as Upper Cattle Creek Road, and bicyclists share the vehicle lane, staying as far to the right as possible.
- Speed limits on popular Mid-Valley shared roadways generally range from 25 to 35 miles per hour (mph).
- Separation between people bicycling and driving is often minimal on these shared routes, and awareness and safety are critical issues.
- Few designated bike lanes or signed bike routes exist on Mid-Valley roadways and are primarily located in the Town of Basalt incorporated area.
- See Appendix B for additional definition of bike lanes, routes and shoulders.

The following routes are described in this section, including suggestions for improving user safety and experience that were contributed through the Plan process.

Table 15. Existing Shared Roadways

Map Item #	Road Name	Road Owner	Location
1.	Frying Pan Road	Eagle County Pitkin County	Eagle County and Pitkin County - Frying Pan River Valley
2.	Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road	Eagle County CDOT	Eagle County - El Jebel
3.	Upper Cattle Creek	Eagle County	Eagle County - Missouri Heights
4.	Willits Lane	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt
5.	Southside Drive	Town of Basalt	Town of Basalt

Map 6



Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Shared Roadway Routes

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Shared Roadway Route | Public Lands | U.S. Forest Service | 1 Frying Pan Road | 4 Willits Lane |
| Primary Route Paved Trail | BLM | Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space | 2 Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road | 5 Southside Drive |
| Town of Basalt | State of CO | | 3 Upper Cattle Creek Road | |



1. Frying Pan Road

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County and Pitkin County

OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Eagle County owns and maintains 19.5 miles of Frying Pan Road right-of-way from Basalt town limits to just east of Freeman Drive in the Ruedi Shores subdivision that is located at the west end of Ruedi Reservoir.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Eagle County portion of the road is asphalt paved and travels northeast as a scenic route that parallels the Frying Pan River to Ruedi Reservoir.
- After leaving Eagle County and entering Pitkin County, the paved road travels above the north shore of Ruedi Reservoir, eventually transitioning to an unpaved USFS high-clearance route over Hagerman Pass into Lake County.
- At and beyond Ruedi Reservoir, the scenic route provides access to several wilderness trailheads and all terrain vehicle options.



Frying Pan Road. Photo: Eagle County

- The paved portion of Frying Pan Road is generally a narrow two-lane road with no shoulders with many curves and areas of limited sight distance.
- Portions of the road are in close proximity to adjacent cliffs and rockfall areas. Rockfall debris occasionally impacts the roadway and traffic flow.
- During the summer, the road is busy with people fishing, sight-seers, vehicles pulling boats or campers, local commuters and, increasingly, people bicycling who share the two travel lanes with people driving.
- Safety is a concern for all users sharing this roadway due to the narrow road, curves, limited sight distance, speed, traffic volume and vehicle type. The current speed limit is 35 mph.
- 4.8 miles was resurfaced by Eagle County Road and Bridge in 2019. Due to road platform width constraints, the adjacent river bank and wetlands, the road pavement width remained the same.

- The asphalt is not striped for a shoulder due to limited space, but an edge stripe was installed to visually emphasize the edge of pavement. The adjacent shoulder is gravel.
- As right-of-way owner, Eagle County, through its Road and Bridge and Engineering Departments, would have authority over any modifications, expansions or enhancements of the Frying Pan Road. Eagle County must adhere to policies and regulations regarding engineering standards, environmental impacts, neighborhood and other impacts in addition to considering potential project benefits for improved bicyclist, pedestrian and motor vehicle driver safety.

Referral and Public Comment:

Public comments regarding Frying Pan Road are outlined below. No referral comments were received for this roadway.

Public Comment:

- Frying Pan Road improvements are needed for bicycling. Kids aren't using the road as they have different needs for safety, as novice or vulnerable riders.
- Safety signs would be a good first step.
- More pull-outs are needed on the uphill (north) side of the road for bicyclists to get out of traffic and take a break.
- Restrooms needed for bicyclists and people fishing.
- Seek data from bicycling event organizers and advocacy organizations about Frying Pan Road use to better understand necessary improvements.
- Consistently maintain the roadway including after storm events to ensure safe road sharing for all users. Bicyclists can stay to the far right side if the road edge is free of debris.



Frying Pan Road. Photo: Eagle County

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Development of a Corridor Management Plan:** The popularity and types of users within the Frying Pan Valley including Frying Pan Road continues to grow and diversify. To protect this area, increase safety for all user types, and support the corridor's continued use for sustainable recreation, it is necessary to formally organize and address the impacts of user activity on the area's unique natural and recreational resources through the development of a Frying Pan Valley Corridor Management Plan. A corridor management plan would engage all jurisdictions operating in the Frying Pan Valley, evaluate shared challenges, coordinate planning and construction projects and monitor impacts to ensure overall community and environmental needs are met. Part of investigating the creation of a corridor management plan would include collaboration with multiple stakeholders and leveraging funding sources. Funding sources could be obtained through grants or partnerships with local, state and federal agencies or non-profits. A corridor management plan should address safety, transportation, environmental, recreation, scenic, and economic needs in a coordinated manner.
2. **Capital Improvement Planning:** MVTC supports adopting a policy to widen the road platform where possible to increase road or shoulder width where 2 to 3-foot shoulders are acceptable, 4 feet or wider is preferred. Include Frying Pan Road in County CIP as a standing item for improvements.
3. **Feasibility Studies:** MVTC requests an update to the Eagle County Engineering Department study¹² to identify potential locations for road-widening and constraints or opportunities. Include analysis of potential locations for a grade or horizontally separated trail platform and potential pull-outs on the westbound (uphill) side of the road to improve the ability for bicyclists and vehicles to safely pull off the road as needed.
4. **Sign and Safety Improvements:** MVTC and RFVRPC request additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
5. **Amenities:** RFVRPC supports identifying appropriate locations for future restroom improvements and collaboration with partners to install restrooms to reduce impact on the river corridor.
6. **Maintenance:** MVTC recommends evaluating Eagle and Pitkin County shoulder maintenance schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season.



*Sample bicycling safety road sign in Garfield County.
Photo: Eagle County*

¹² Approx. 2009

2. Valley Road to SH 82 Frontage Road

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County and Garfield County

ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Eagle County owns and maintains the Valley Road right-of-way. CDOT owns and maintains the SH 82 Frontage Road.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Valley Road is a 1.5-mile paved road route that begins at the main El Jebel intersection with SH 82 and travels west past Crown Mountain Park and a number of subdivisions before turning east to tie back into SH 82.
- SH 82 Frontage Road's south end is in Eagle County and ties into Valley Road near the Eagle-Garfield County line, providing a route to Catherine Store Road, the Rio Grande Trail and Carbondale.
- Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road each currently lack shoulders. People walking and biking are in close proximity to people driving.
- The current speed limit is 25 mph.
- See Secondary Route Paved Trails Section 10.2.10 for related information on Valley Road and SH 82 suggested trail improvements.



SH 82 Frontage Road between Valley Road and Catherine Store Road. Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** MVTC supports adoption of a policy to widen the Valley Road platform where possible to increase road or shoulder width where 2 to 3-foot shoulders are acceptable, 4 feet or wider is preferred. Adding Valley Road to Eagle County Capital Improvements list is also recommended.
2. **Road Studies:** MVTC requests Eagle County review of the potential for trail construction in the Valley Road right-of-way in addition to road improvements.
3. **Road Studies:** In partnership with Garfield County, MVTC to study potential locations for SH 82 road-widening as well as potential locations for a grade or horizontally separated trail platform from Valley Road in El Jebel to Catherine Store.¹³
4. **Safety Signs:** MVTC to study with Eagle County Engineering where to appropriately install additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
5. **Maintenance:** MVTC and Eagle County Road and Bridge to evaluate the road sweeping schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season. Bicyclists can stay to the right side if the road edge is free of debris.



Valley Road near the USFS Fishing Access entry, to the right. Photo: Eagle County

¹³ See Section 10.2 Secondary Route Paved Trails.

3. El Jebel Road to Upper Cattle Creek Road

LOCATION: Unincorporated Eagle County

ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:

Eagle County owns and maintains these road rights-of-way. The BLM and USFS own and maintain unpaved Basalt Mountain Road.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- El Jebel Road begins on the valley floor at the intersection with SH 82 and in 2/3 of a mile, the road becomes Upper Cattle Creek Road just as it begins the climb north out of El Jebel towards Missouri Heights.
- The Upper Cattle Creek Road paved section lacks delineated shoulders, forcing people walking and bicycling to travel in close proximity to people driving.
- This bicycling route is becoming more popular due to the scenery and rolling hills combined with steep climbs, with options to create loop rides as well as connections to the valley floor paved routes.
- Upper Cattle Creek is paved for approximately 5.5 miles with pavement ending near Spring Park Reservoir. The road remains unpaved for the remainder of its length and eventually enters Garfield County to intersect with paved Cattle Creek Road.
- Vehicular traffic on Upper Cattle Creek Road is steadily increasing as Missouri Heights properties are developed and also due to increased use of the route to access the Cottonwood Pass Road to shop in Gypsum (Costco) and access the Interstate 70 corridor.
- Unpaved Basalt Mountain Road ties into Upper Cattle Creek Road north of the reservoir and provides access into national forest, parking areas and singletrack trail network accessing the middle and upper Basalt Mountain area.



Unpaved Upper Cattle Creek Road near Spring Park Reservoir. Bicyclist is traveling southwest to El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County

- Upper Cattle Creek Road to Fender Lane, an Eagle County paved road, provides an additional bicycling route option and connects with Garfield County Road 103, also known as Upper Catherine Store Road, and several other paved road bicycling options on Missouri Height.
- The current speed limits on these combined roadways range from 25 mph at the El Jebel Road roundabout to 30 mph to 35 mph up to Missouri Heights and 35 mph the remainder of the route.

Referral and Public Comment:

Public comments regarding Upper Cattle Creek Road are outlined below. No referral comments were received for this roadway.

Public Comment:

- Usage by pedestrians and bikes of Upper Cattle Creek Road from El Jebel to Fender Lane and Garfield County is increasing at a high rate, with bicyclists comprising the majority of non-motorized users.
- Create a paved bike/pedestrian lane on each side of Upper Cattle Creek Road as a priority action.
- Pave Upper Cattle Creek Road to the Garfield County line for improved bicyclist and vehicular safety and to diffuse bicycling use of Fender Lane.



Paved Upper Cattle Creek Road in Missouri Heights looking towards El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Studies:** In response to public comment and supported by MVTC and adopted plans, identify potential locations for road-widening and shoulder striping to alleviate safety conflict areas on Upper Cattle Creek Road and incorporate study findings into Eagle County CIP planning. Other suggested improvements for further study include designated bicycling and walking lanes and paving Upper Cattle Creek Road to the Garfield County boundary line to accommodate growing vehicle and bicyclist traffic volumes.
2. **Safety Signs:** In response to public comment, provide additional road-sharing and safety signage such as: 3-foot separation required between vehicle and bicyclist, Watch for Bicyclists, Road Narrows, Bicyclists Next 13 Miles, Share the Road, Ride Single File, etc.
3. **Maintenance:** MVTC supports evaluating Eagle County shoulder maintenance schedule (sweeping) to determine if additional attention is required to improve three-season shared-road season. Bicyclists can stay to the right side if the road edge is free of debris.



Spring Park Reservoir in Missouri Heights. Photo: Eagle County.

4. Willits Lane

LOCATION: Town of Basalt and Unincorporated Eagle County

ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT: Town of Basalt

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Willits Lane is an approximately 2.5-mile primary road route that serves the north and west areas of Basalt as well as adjacent unincorporated Eagle County.
- Town of Basalt has identified the need for a designated bike lane on Willits Lane to accommodate the increase in bike traffic during seasonal closures of the Rio Grande Trail as well as the year-round tendency for the majority of road bicyclists to not use the Willits Lane Trail.
- Willits Lane Trail includes stop signs at intersections and also serves people walking, dog-walkers and less-skilled bicyclists, which may discourage desired travel efficiency for some higher-speed cyclists.
- With added bicycle use of Willits Lane and lack of adequate on-street facilities, roadway levels of service and safety may be reduced for all users.
- As right-of-way owner, the Town of Basalt has authority over any modifications, expansions or enhancements of Willits Lane.



Willits Lane in Basalt. Photo: Eagle County

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** Town of Basalt recommends construction of on-street bike lanes the length of Willits Lane and is the lead on design studies and the public engagement process.

5. Southside Drive



*Southside Drive, looking towards Basalt High School.
Photo: Eagle County*

LOCATION: Town of Basalt and unincorporated Pitkin County

ROAD OWNERSHIP and MANAGEMENT:
Town of Basalt

ROUTE DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Southside Drive provides a bicycling connection route from Old Town Basalt and East Basalt to the Rio Grande Trail trailhead at the Basalt High School. This route also includes Fiou Lane and Basalt Avenue and the underpass at SH 82.

- The secondary route paved trail is located primarily on the east side of these roads, as a route for bicyclists, walkers and other non-motorized users.

- Faster bicyclists frequently use the road shoulder or traffic lane to avoid conflicts with slower-speed users on the trail or trail-driveway intersections. For this reason, Town of Basalt staff and POST have identified the need for an uphill bicycle lane to be added on the west side of Southside Drive, on the opposite side from the existing paved trail to accommodate faster speed bicyclists that do not use the trail.
- Town of Basalt has been steadily adding wayfinding signage to direct bicyclists to and from the town center to the primary Rio Grande Trail route, using Southside Drive.
- This roadway is located outside of Eagle County in Pitkin County. Comment during the Plan process regarding the extent of recreation and travel by residents and visitors resulted in the inclusion of certain commonly used facilities, such as Southside Drive, located outside of Eagle County's boundary but within close proximity.

PROPOSED PROJECTS and IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The following list reflects information from pertinent adopted plans and comments received during the Plan process from stakeholders, public participants, referral agencies and organizations.

1. **Road Improvements:** Town of Basalt recommends construction of an on-street bike lane the length of westbound Southside Drive and is the lead for design studies and the public engagement process.

11. Project Implementation and Next Steps

Project Implementation:

There are essentially two methods through which projects and programs will be implemented:

1. Initiated by a public or advocacy entity: Local government, management agencies or advocacy groups, with support from the MVTC act as the general coordinating agency to facilitate collaboration and investigation between all appropriate parties. Effort may include design coordination, public outreach, environmental analysis, grant application submission, construction management, and long-term maintenance agreements.
2. Initiated by private land development, either voluntarily or as part of an approved development project: The specific requirement for trails shall be determined by the approving jurisdiction based on the criteria in their land use regulations and linked to the scale of the development and its associated impacts. Either a trail easement or trail easement and construction may be required as part of a development approval.

Next Steps:

The Plan is the result of a three-year process to update the 2006 Mid-Valley Trails Plan and is the culmination of an extended effort involving many participants, with valuable input gained through the referral and public comment process. The comment process provided essential information and input creating a comprehensive and balanced Plan. The Plan documents the vision created by multiple agencies, nonprofits, and community members. Desiring to connect a well-maintained network of paved and unpaved trails and shared roadways is at the heart of the Mid-Valley trail users.

Moving forward, the Plan should be utilized as part of the referral review process for land use applications within the Roaring Fork Valley. All the work completed to date and incorporated into the Plan positions the Mid-Valley area to plan and create trails, shared roadway networks, and supportive programs that directly contribute to community health, economic vitality, inclusive accessibility and environmental sustainability.

Recognizing the Plan is a snapshot in time documenting the inventory of existing trails, proposed projects and programs as well as the desires of the community members engaged in the process of developing the Plan; an update is expected to occur in 2025. Part of the update should examine at what point the Mid-Valley Trail System is at buildout to ensure a balance of recreation and environmental preservation. There are a finite amount of natural resources within the Mid-Valley and analysis is needed if future trail expansion is proposed beyond what is outlined in the Plan.

The Plan is a living document and significant changes within the Mid-Valley may necessitate an update sooner than 2025. It is up to RFVRPC and the MVTC to make the determination that changes within the Mid-Valley require a thoughtful and intentional update to the Plan.

Appendix A: Maintenance Standards for Trail and Shared Roadways



Goats working on noxious weed-control on the Rio Grande Trail. Photo: RFTA

Consistent maintenance of the trail and shared-road network in the Mid-Valley is essential for safe and enjoyable use. If trails or road shoulders are not maintained properly over the long term, the infrastructure may become a safety hazard or a wasted investment of financial and natural resources. In the Mid-Valley area, numerous trails cross jurisdictional boundaries in the interest of serving a broad community and achieving connectivity.

The range of trail types in the Mid-Valley area are maintained by the following jurisdictions and organizations that own or manage them, or through formal and informal partnerships that promote efficiency and stewardship.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. RFTA | 8. Crawford Properties |
| 2. Town of Basalt | 9. CDOT |
| 3. Eagle County Road and Bridge –
primarily shared roadways | 10. USFS |
| 4. PCOST | 11. BLM |
| 5. CMPRD | 12. RFOV |
| 6. Property Owner and Homeowner
Associations | 13. RFMBA |
| 7. Business Owners | |

Goals for Trail Maintenance:

Many of the trails and shared roadways described in this plan are consistently and well-maintained, with adequate staffing and equipment allocated to the required tasks. Some sections of trail, sidewalks and shared road require additional seasonal or monthly attention for improved user experience and safety. Other sections need repair or retrofit. Section 11 of the Plan describes these sections in greater detail.

Through the development of this Plan, goals and actions regarding next steps for trail maintenance were identified for specific trails and could be useful to the managing authority.

1. **Develop a shared, consistent approach to trail maintenance.** Next steps may include:
 - a. Eagle County and MVTC facilitate information-sharing of the maintenance schedule from this Plan with Mid-Valley jurisdictions and trail owners and managers.
 - b. Develop a set of detailed maintenance maps by jurisdiction using Eagle County GIS resources as a follow up to the inventory maps in this Plan. Provide the maps to all partners. Identify and clarify gaps in trail maintenance, highest priorities for enhanced maintenance, repairs or retrofits. Maps are helpful for maintenance discussions and planning.
2. **Combine equipment needs** through the different jurisdictions and hire the necessary staff to handle associated maintenance tasks.
3. **Encourage jurisdictions to add trails and shared roadways to pavement management inventories** to ensure that trails are incorporated into schedules for surface treatments such as overlays, sealing, and patching.
4. **Review overlap areas at jurisdiction boundaries to determine if partnerships can be formalized** to enhance maintenance and create efficiencies such as Basalt taking over maintenance of an Eagle County short section at Hook's Lane bridge due to equipment needed and efficient response time.
5. **Annual budget development and long-range capital improvement planning** should include trail maintenance projects, equipment or contract/staff needs.
6. **Encourage Paved and Unpaved Trail Adoption programs** throughout the Mid-Valley area. MVTC budget could support non-profit volunteer groups or public agency programs with maintenance service contract costs, equipment, supplies, signage and tools. RFOV manages a volunteer trail adoption program and RFMBA manages a staffed Seasonal Trail Crew program as well the "Trail Agent" program that enlists volunteers to maintain trails on their own time, follow safety protocols and report their results.
7. **Include enhancements in trail construction or upgrade existing trails** to improve function and user-friendliness. Common amenities include:
 - Trailhead signs that include distance, direction and destination data as well as education and etiquette information.
 - Parking that can accommodate cars as well as trucks and trailers.
 - Bike racks.
 - Trash receptacles and recycle bins.

- Benches and picnic tables, with shade structures.
- Landscaping.
- Restrooms.
- Drinking fountains
- Bike repair stations

Recommended Trail and Shared Roadway Maintenance Schedule:

The maintenance standards below are recommended as a minimum level that all managing jurisdictions should strive to achieve monthly and annually. These standards are nationally accepted for paved or unpaved trail networks.

MONTHLY:

Sweeping:

- ❑ Sweep paved surfaces, to anticipate higher use levels in early April through mid-November.
- ❑ Sweep trail sections that are heavily impacted by debris from adjacent road gravel or hillsides more frequently, and inspect after storm events.
- ❑ Sweeping is often cited in trail-user surveys as the most deficient item in trail maintenance.

Surfacing:

- ❑ Repair hazardous surface conditions as soon as possible upon discovery. Root heaves, settled areas and holes are very wide cracks are paved surface hazards that can have serious consequences if not corrected.

Drainage:

- ❑ Clean culverts as needed.
- ❑ Correct adjacent areas of poor drainage causing gravel or water to wash over trail surface.
- ❑ Deflect water from singletrack trails to prevent erosion or gully development due to water flow.

Vegetation:

- ❑ During the growing season, perform weed and vegetation control including mowing and clipping up to 2 feet on each side of the trail as needed.
- ❑ Maintain a 10-foot minimum overhead clear zone on paved trails, 8 feet on singletrack trails.

Litter:

- ❑ Empty trash containers as needed.
- ❑ Remove trash from adjacent ground as needed.

Inspections:

- ❑ Inspect trail surface, shoulders and structures such as bridges, walls, signposts every two weeks or each month at minimum. A checklist is a common tool and ensures consistency by varied staff and jurisdictions.

SEASONALLY:

- ❑ In spring, after the snow has fully melted and the paved trail has been swept for the first time, a meticulous inspection should be performed.
- ❑ Perform seasonal inspections of unpaved routes to remove debris and restore trail tread.
- ❑ Repaint trail or road crosswalk or bike lane striping as needed.
- ❑ Install or replace signs
- ❑ Inspect and repair (or add) trail furniture and fencing as needed.
- ❑ Repair and retrofit general trail surface cracks or holes, shoulder erosion, structure damage.
- ❑ Seal-coat to protect asphalt surface to the extent possible. Every 5 years is encouraged to prolong asphalt life.
- ❑ Inspect bridge structures periodically, as recommended by the manufacturer or a structural engineering professional (typically two to five years).
- ❑ Plow trails identified as 4-season routes as soon as practicable after each snow-event.
- ❑ In the case of widened shoulders or specially designated bike lanes on Town, County, State or Federal roads, seasonal maintenance should include restriping, debris clearing, pavement repair of edges and potholes, and chip seals.
- ❑ Clear snow from roadways to the edge of asphalt if possible, to accommodate the use of roadways by pedestrians or winter-bicyclists as linking routes between disconnected trail segments or sidewalks.
- ❑ Seasonally, inspect the roadway for hazards that may not affect motorists but could pose challenges for bicyclists. Focus shoulder inspection of raveled edges, ruts and cracks and striping wear.
- ❑ Review annually the need for safety sign installation, install in the spring if possible in preparation for biking and tourism high-use seasons.
- ❑ If possible, sweep shared roadways prone to drainage or erosion issues and also popular as cycling routes on an additional monthly or as-needed basis. Shoulders free of debris enable to stay as far to the right of the roadway as possible and avoid conflicts with motorized vehicles.

Appendix B: Trail Design Standards

This chapter includes recommended standards for design, construction and maintenance of paved and unpaved trails and shared roadways in the Eagle County Mid-Valley area. The majority of the standards addressed in this section apply to paved trails.

Sources for Trail Design Standards:

These following standards are significantly, but not wholly, based on the CDOT 2015 Roadway Design Guide, Chapter 14 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities adopted in 2015 and were developed by CDOT to implement the organizational mission to promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation on the state highway system. The CDOT standards are required on any project built by CDOT or built in a CDOT right-of-way by others.

Through this Plan, Eagle County recommends compliance to CDOT standards for construction of paved or unpaved primary or secondary trails in the interest of assuring safe and durable trail facilities. The standards are not included in their entirety below, but are provided as a sample of design components typical to a trail or shared roadway project. The current version of pertinent technical specifications must be consulted prior to design and construction of a paved trail or road improvement project in Eagle County. Additional design recommendations are included below that were adopted in the 2006 Plan and are retained or minorly amended.

In developing Chapter 14, CDOT relied on a variety of sources to develop the standards including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

(MUTCD) and the State of Colorado Model Traffic Code, Part 12. The standards recommended by CDOT and AASHTO are summarized below and should be consulted to ensure use of updated and accurate information.

Construction of trails should be implemented by qualified construction professionals under the direction of local, state or federal government agencies or private land developers.

Projects in the CDOT SH 82 Right-of-Way:

As noted, any newly proposed trail project or improvement to an existing facility located within the SH 82 right-of-way is required to meet current CDOT standards. This includes any trail, drainage facilities, bridges, underpasses, highway crossings, signs, parking or trailheads. Additional standards will be applied above and beyond what has been referenced in this document for trails located in the SH 82 CDOT right of way.

Unpaved Singletrack Trail Standards:

Standards for unpaved singletrack trails for hiking, biking and equestrian use are included in these design standards in summary detail. Due to the site specific evaluations and extensive review process by the public land agencies that typically permit and manage these trails, it is expected that additional standards will be applied above and beyond what has been referenced in this document for those trail types.

Fundamentals of Trail or Shared Roadway Design

The following design philosophies are recommended when considering new trail construction or enhancement of existing facilities.

<p><i>Maximize Safety and Accessibility for a Broad Range of User Groups</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider design speeds, grades and cross-slopes, sight distance, curve radius, road separation distances, surfaces, access points, obstacles, crosswalks, and general alignments to keep trails and shared roadways safe and available to a variety of users.
<p><i>Consider Carrying Capacity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design should be responsive to the type of trail users sharing a facility such as road bikers and pedestrians, mountain bikers and hikers and horses, and overall carrying capacity to accommodate multiple user types. ■ The Rio Grande Trail, for example, has been designed for high volume use by a wide-range of user groups and skill levels, including families on bikes with children that might need to be passed by others.
<p><i>Locate Trails in the Most Efficient, Direct Travel Route Where Possible</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Directness can encourage use for commuting and utility trips. The exception is when the purpose of the trail has been determined to be primarily scenic and recreational.
<p><i>Incorporate Features for Navigation and Education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep surface type, width and trail support facilities consistent throughout the system to extent possible including wayfinding features, lighting, trailhead design and amenities. ■ Mid-Valley trails may pass through multiple jurisdictions and it's recommended that wayfinding signs and pavement markings remain as consistent as possible for system signs, mile markers and trailheads, but most importantly, provide concise and accurate information. For example, RFTA will be installing new Rio Grande Trail signs in the Mid-Valley in 2020 to match the signs on the section of the Rio Grande Trail managed by Pitkin County. ■ Design wayfinding features for users who are unfamiliar with the system and can be understood by non-English speaking individuals if possible.
<p><i>Design as Four-Season Trail in Populated Areas</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This enables use for year-round transportation to school and work, and for health and wellness recreation. "Close to home" recreation opportunities are important year-round, and avoiding the use of a vehicle to access trails has many benefits. ■ Winter maintenance will require prior commitment by the managing agency and lack of wildlife impacts.
<p><i>Design Trails to Avoid or Mitigate Environmental Impact</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid encroaching upon wetlands or riparian corridors, critical habitat areas, or erosive landforms. Follow natural contours, cross drainages perpendicular to their flow and minimize cut and fill slopes. Make every effort to preserve existing vegetation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If environmental impacts are unavoidable, mitigate with established best practices. Where possible, align trails with existing disturbances such as utility line easements, abandoned roads or rail corridors, irrigation ditches, etc.
<p><i>Minimize or Mitigate Impacts on Adjacent Landowners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some trail sections may be in close proximity to residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural land uses. ■ Adjacent owners should be contacted in advance of trail construction, and possible conflicts should be identified and mitigated as part of the analysis for each trail segment. ■ The “good neighbor” policy is important, particularly during the construction period.
<p><i>Maximize Scenic Quality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Site the alignment to view scenic features while actively using the trail and at rest stops.
<p><i>Design for Efficient Maintenance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid constructing trail sections that may be subject to rock fall or bank erosion, poor drainage, snow slide or debris flow. ■ Trails immediately adjacent to roadways and shared road shoulders will be impacted by sand or snow plowing activities; snow storage, shoulder drainage and adjacent or crossing vehicle use. ■ Trails close to certain types of vegetation may be impacted by root heaves, deadfall and debris. ■ Consider vandalism susceptibility and prevention when selecting materials and accessories (lighting, bollards, furniture, etc.).
<p><i>Retrofitting Existing Facilities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Retrofitting older trail segments and road platforms is encouraged to meet the standards contained in this Plan.

Sample rest area on the Rio Grande Trail near Catherine Bridge in Garfield County that includes informational signs, shade structures, picnic tables, trash and recycling bins. Photo: RFTA



Trail and Shared Roadway Design Standards

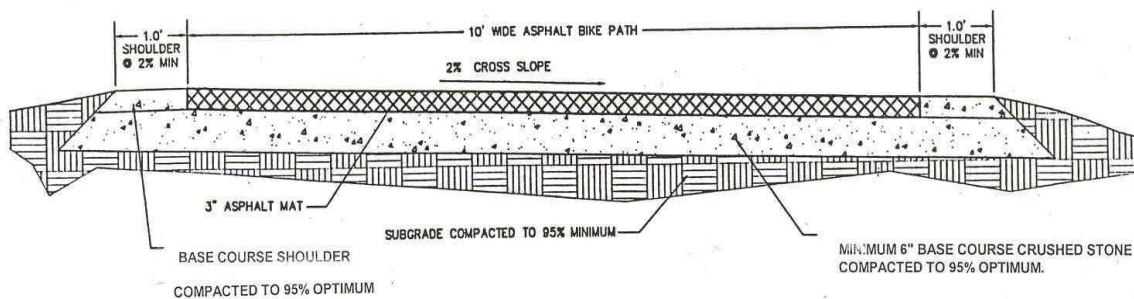
The following standards should be adhered to except in those cases where a deviation from the standards is necessary to avoid hazards, critical environmentally sensitive areas, lower maintenance costs or reduce negative impact. In any event, safety should never be compromised, and the quality of the user experience should be retained. Additional information is available through the CDOT, MUTCD and AASHTO guideline documents cited above.

Note: Any newly proposed trail project or improvement to an existing facility located with the SH 82 right-of-way is required to meet CDOT standards.

Trail Width:

- 10 to 14 feet wide for Primary Route trails for medium to high levels of use by a variety of user types (pedestrians, bicycles, occasional maintenance vehicles, cycling two abreast, roller skaters), with a 1 to 2-foot clear shoulder areas, graded for drainage on each side of the trail. Level, compacted gravel shoulders are recommended as a recovery zone if a bicycle leaves the asphalt.

TYPICAL TRAIL CROSS SECTION



- 8 feet wide for secondary trails connecting to primary trails, or on other public trails where traffic is expected to be moderate and pedestrian use is occasional, even on typical peak days during peak hours, and there are safe opportunities to pass. Provide 1 to 2-foot clear areas and shoulders as noted above for 10 to 14-foot wide trails.
- For any width of trail listed above, where demand and space exist and budget allows, an adjacent or separated 3 to 5-foot soft surface trail is recommended for separate walking or jogging use.

Surfacing and Compaction:

- A minimum of 3 inches bituminous asphalt over 6 inches of compacted CDOT Class 6 aggregate base course (ABC) over a compacted subgrade. A soils report is advisable to determine appropriate pavement and sub-material thickness.
- Concrete trails are encouraged where feasible and should be constructed with 4 inches of reinforced 3,000 psi concrete over 6 inches of compacted CDOT Class 6 ABC. In areas prone to erosion or flood, concrete may be required.
- Transitions between different surfacing types (e.g. new asphalt to existing asphalt, asphalt to concrete, and asphalt to base course) should be flush.

- All asphalt, base course (including shoulders) and subgrade material should be compacted to current CDOT standards. Subgrade and base course must be dry and free of frost when asphalt is placed. Shoulders may require additional treatment to retain compaction where shoulders may be prone to erosion.

Design Speed:

- Design speeds on paved paths typically range from 12 to 30 mph. Per CDOT, an 18 mph design speed is generally sufficient.
- Lower design speed may be necessary in areas where lower speed uses may be present, e.g. connection to trail accessing a school and children likely to be present.
- Speed bumps and/or bollards should not be used to reduce speeds as they create more of a hazard than a deterrent (see Barriers section below).

Sight Distance and Stopping Sight Distance:

- All alignments should incorporate safe sight distance, stopping site distance and sight triangles in compliance with CDOT guidelines, especially at narrow sections, curves and street and driveway intersections, and shall give special attention to wet, shaded, unpaved or otherwise hazardous sections.
- Signing and pavement markings may be warranted to warn of substandard sight distance.

Minimum Curve Radius:

- CDOT provides horizontal alignment specifications to determine appropriate curve radius on a paved trail, based on lean angle and design speed.
- When substandard radius curves must be used on shared use trails because of right-of-way, topographical or other considerations, standard curve warning signs and supplemental pavement markings should be installed.
- It is advisable to widen the trail in order to increase the lateral space available to bicyclists as they lean to the inside of the turn.

Grade:

- Vertical alignment (grade) should be limited to 5%. Where provision of less than 5% grade is impractical, grades should be minimized to the extent possible.
- On shared use paths, where terrain dictates, designers may need to exceed the 5% grade recommended for bicycles on some short sections and revise design speeds accordingly.
- Steep trail grades may be mitigated by widening the trail, incorporating short switchbacks where possible, adding recovery areas and incorporating longer sight distances.

Cross Slope:

- A minimum of a 1% cross slope on a paved trail is recommended to allow water and snowmelt to drain.
- The maximum is 2% to accommodate use by persons with disabilities.

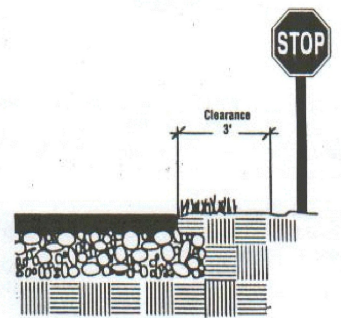
Accessibility:

- Per CDOT "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates the accommodation of persons with disabilities in pedestrian facility design through the provision of pedestrian access routes".
- Multi-use trails that serve pedestrians as well as bicyclists and must meet ADA requirements to the greatest extent possible.

- Trail designers must accommodate ADA specifications related to pedestrian (and multi-use trail) facilities in all public projects in Eagle County.
- ADA guidelines recognize that in some cases it may be difficult to meet recommended standards in all situations.
- It is recognized that some types of trails, for example on backcountry unpaved trails or to retrofit existing trails, it is technically infeasible to comply with ADA and may result in excessive land disturbance and cost compared to levels of use.
- Steep trail grades may be mitigated for disabled trail users by widening the trail, incorporating short switchbacks where possible, adding recovery areas and incorporating longer sight distances.
- Signs should alert users to the presence of steep uphill and downhill grades.

Clearance:

- A 3-foot graded clear area should be maintained adjacent to both sides of the trail, with a maximum 6:1 slope, providing separation between the path surface and trees, poles, retaining walls, fences, railings, guardrails, etc.
- In constrained sections, a 2-foot clear area should be provided.
- Where the trail is adjacent to ditches or slopes down steeper than 3:1, a wider separation should be considered. A 5-foot separation from the edge of pavement to top of a steep slope is desirable.
- Depending on the height of the embankment, and condition at bottom, a physical barrier such as a railing, fence or dense shrubbery may be required. See CDOT standards for recommended slope clearance.
- Vertical clearance of 10 to 12 feet should be maintained passing under structures or vegetation.
- For existing structures (i.e. bridges, underpasses) with substandard clearances, hazard signs and dismount signs should be posted where necessary.



Adjacent Cut and Fill Slopes:

- Adjacent uphill slopes, 3:1 preferred, 1.5:1 maximum
- Adjacent downhill slopes, 6:1 preferred, 3:1 may be acceptable, 2:1 maximum.
- Railing, fence or dense landscape barrier required for greater than 2:1 slope.

Railings/Fences:

- 42 inch (3.5 feet) minimum height. Additional height and smooth rub rails may be warranted depending on the hazard conditions e.g. a trail bridge railing should be 54 inches high (4.5 feet).
- Railing or fence openings are recommended as 4" or less, but wider spacing may be acceptable upon review.
- Railing or fence sections should extend 4 to 8 feet beyond the edge of a hazard area and ends flared away from the trail for safety.
- Railing and fence design should be consistent throughout a trail network to the extent possible.

Separation from Adjacent Roadway:

- 10 foot minimum, a wider separation is strongly recommended. Separation from a parking lot should be a minimum of 5 feet.
- Where separation distance cannot be achieved, a barrier such as a guardrail or concrete wall may be required.

Trail and Road or Driveway Intersections:

- Where possible, trail crossings should be placed at existing stop-signed or signalized road intersections.
- Crossings should be at 90 degrees and feature a flat approach.
- Signs should comply with MUTCD recommendations for multi-use path intersections.
- Maintain adequate sight lines to and from the roadway for safe crossing.
- Commercial or industrial driveways that are paved as part of the trail should be evaluated to determine the need for thicker pavement to withstand higher loading, a wider path section to prevent edge raveling and curve radius to prevent scattering of road shoulder gravel across the path by motor vehicles.
- For crossings of high traffic roadways, consult CDOT for detailed guidelines. Traffic control devices such as timed or user-activated signals may be necessary at certain crossings.

Drainage:

- Cross sloping in one direction at an optimum of 2% (higher % on curves may be acceptable if ADA compliance can be maintained) is preferred over crowning to simplify construction and enhance ease of maintenance.
- Hillside trails may require drainage swales on the uphill side to intercept downhill drainage. Swales should be located outside of the shoulder area, although this may be modified through sections where the trail must be narrowed. In these instances, an uphill slope to the edge of pavement and sheet flow across the path may be the only option.
- Preserve natural ground cover as much as possible or assure successful revegetation to minimize runoff.
- Catch basins and cross culverts may be necessary. Culvert openings should be protected and hidden if possible. Stone facings are recommended; flared-end sections shall be used at minimum.
- Clearance between the edge of the culvert and the trail surface should be at minimum 3 feet so as not to create a hazard.

Erosion Control:

- Best management practices should be utilized to prevent erosion both during and after trail construction. Eagle County Land Use Regulations Section 4-665 for Erosion Control Standards shall apply to projects under Eagle County's jurisdiction and are recommended to other jurisdictions as best management practices.
- Unpaved singletrack trail construction is typically required to adhere to erosion control standards and best management practices as directed by the town, county, state or federal agency permitting the trail project.

Barriers to Motor Vehicles:

- Trails may occasionally need some form of physical barrier to prevent unauthorized motor vehicles on the trail. Because barriers are sometimes a hazard, they should only be used where encroachment by vehicles is expected to be a problem.
- Common barrier types include bollards, boulders, low landscaping, plastic breakaway posts or fencing and should be at least 3 feet tall.
- Bollards should be removable but should include a mechanism to lock the feature in place.
- Barriers should be reflectorized for visibility and painted a bright color for daytime visibility. Striping an envelope around the barrier is recommended.
- Barriers should be spaced to allow wheelchairs and bicycles with trailers to pass through.

Utility Structures:

- Utility structures such as valve boxes, manhole frames, lids and grates, sanitary sewer clean outs and storm drain inlets should not be located on the path surface.
- All unavoidable utility lids or covers in the trail should be pavement-flush with a non-skid bicycle-safe surface.
- Utility structures should otherwise conform to the lateral clearance standards noted above.

Bridges:

- Bridges should be 2 to 4 feet wider than approaching trails and a minimum of 12 feet wide for shared pedestrian and bicycle use is advised.
- The top horizontal rail should be a minimum of 54 inches high (4.5 feet). Hand railings mounted below should be a minimum of 42 inches high (3.5 feet) and smooth material such as sanded, stained wood or steel.
- Bridge railings should extend a minimum of 5 feet beyond the end of the bridge and be flared.
- Longer approach rails are recommended when the path is on an incline.
- New bridges should meet a 10,000-pound maximum weight load standard with the weight limit posted. 12,500 pounds is preferred or as recommended by the agency or entity that will maintain the bridge.
- Decking shall be of a high friction type laid perpendicular to the direction of travel. Joints should be bicycle safe.
- Concrete or smooth non-slip decking is recommended due to longer life span and less maintenance than wood decking.
- Drainage must be considered in the bridge design.
- Bridges shall meet the requirements of local floodplain construction regulations and other pertinent state and federal regulations. Clearance for watercraft should be considered.
- Highway bridges that are integral to the trail system should be designed to accommodate pedestrian and bike traffic in a separate safe lane.
- Depending on bridge location and anticipated users, use by equestrians and associated needs for safety should be considered.

Underpasses or Tunnels:

- Minimum recommended width for an underpass is 2 feet on each side of the trail. If constrained and unable to accomplish the desired width, rub railings may be necessary.
- Minimum overhead clearance should be 10 feet or more if vehicles will use the structure.
- A tunnel height of 8 feet is sufficient if there will not be vehicle traffic.
- Walls should be coated with epoxy paint to mitigate vandalism.
- If necessary, vandal resistant lighting should be mounted on the ceiling or walls
- Underpasses should be adequately drained and comply with current ADA grade specifications.
- Signs should be mounted in the approach zones to warn of the tunnel hazard ahead.
- Depending on tunnel location and anticipated users, use by equestrians and associated needs for safety should be considered.

At-Grade Railroad Crossings:

- Railroad crossings are subject to specific standards per railroad design standards, policy and state regulations.
- Signs, signalization, widths and type of crossing will be specified in the railroad crossing permit.
- Trail crossings should be at a right angle to the tracks to the extent possible, with a flat approach (such as 0.5% to 2% maximum).

Lighting:

- Lighting of certain trail sections in more developed areas may be proposed. Placement should be considerate of adjacent land uses and focused on increasing safety for trail use at night.
- Light fixtures should be at a scale appropriate for pedestrian uses.
- Light sources should be shielded to minimize impacts to the night sky and adjacent properties.
- Maintenance responsibility for the lights must be established prior to installation.
- Style of lighting fixtures should remain consistent throughout the system.

Signs:

- Each trail segment should be evaluated for appropriate signs. Mid-Valley trails may pass through various jurisdictions, but it is recommended that sign design and placement be as consistent as possible.
- Construction plans for each trail segment should include specifications for location and type of signs necessary for the specific trail.
- There are generally three types of sign types on paved trails: Safety (Caution or Regulatory), Etiquette, and Information. The MUTCD provides standards sizes and mounting systems for trail signs. Custom signs are sometimes necessary to address a specific trail situation.



- Mile markers should be installed every two miles in rural areas, and every mile in developed areas, which is especially helpful to emergency providers.
- Signs directing users from the trail to activity areas and community centers should be installed where appropriate.
- Where trail gaps exist, informational signs should be installed to direct users to the safest route.
- Paved trails that end and become either shared roadway routes or continue as unpaved trails should include a "Trail Ends" warning sign. Depending on the particular location, a directional sign may also be warranted to direct users to the next section of trail.
- Trailhead signs should include pertinent usable or interesting information such as:
 - Trail map with distance, direction and destination information.
 - Trail etiquette and regulations (such as how to safely share a trail with horses, avoiding riding and damaging wet trails, stay to the right and announce passing).
 - Trail seasonal closure dates.
 - Contact information for emergencies and maintenance agencies.
 - Wildlife and ecosystem information.
 - Inform of special considerations (i.e. disabled accessibility, cautions, restroom locations, rest area locations).

Sign Installation:

- A recommended sign post type is a 4" by 4" treated wood or coated with sealant.
- Other post materials may be used, but consistent height of sign is recommended for visibility and consistency.
- Post should be six feet above ground, measured from finished ground level, and buried a minimum of 2-3 feet.
- Top of the backfill should be ramped slightly away from the post for drainage.
- Dry cement may be added to the backfill before filling in the hole and tamp.
- Top of the sign should be flush with the top of the post.
- Affix sign with lag bolts, vandal-proof variety recommended.

Pavement Striping:

- On paved trails where traffic is steady or high at peak hours, a center stripe is recommended.
- Center striping is also recommended on curved or straight inclines to manage flow of uphill and downhill traffic.
- Crosswalks should be painted at all road and major driveway intersections, and maintained annually.

Standard Trail Easement Width:

- 20-foot minimum for paved trail.
- 30-foot minimum for combination paved, off-road trail and unpaved, equestrian trail.
- It may be acceptable to request less than 20 feet, depending on location.

Trail Accessories:

- Benches and picnic tables should be made of durable material in a style consistent throughout the system.
- All furniture should be placed to meet the recommended clearance of 3 feet from the trail.
- Bicycle racks may be located at trailheads and access points.
- Bicycle racks are encouraged at busy destinations and transit stops.
- Wildlife resistant trash and recycling containers should be located in rest areas and at trailheads, and should be durable and of a design consistent throughout the system.
- Restrooms should be designed to be easily maintained, environmentally sound and reflect the natural surroundings.
- Drinking water should be available at restroom facilities.
- Pet waste stations and wildlife resistant trash and recycling containers should be located at trailheads and at vehicle-accessible intervals along trails.

Trailhead or Rest Area Design:

- Trailhead sites should be selected based on available space, ease of access, public land management criteria, and minimizing impacts to neighborhoods and other uses.
- Parking lots, restrooms, signs, etc. should be sited to showcase rather than block scenic views.
- Construction materials should blend in with the adjacent surroundings.
- Rest areas along the trail should be located in areas of likely need, such as at the end of an incline or at a shady spot after an exposed stretch, and they should consider view opportunities.
- Parking lots, restrooms, signs, etc. should be sited to showcase rather than block scenic views.
 - Construction materials should blend in with the adjacent surroundings.
- The following items should be considered in trailhead design:

- Signage - trailhead signs should include pertinent usable or interesting information such as a trail map with distance information, trail rules, emergencies and maintenance contact information, flora and fauna information, and any special considerations (i.e. handicapped accessibility, hazards, restroom locations, rest area locations).
- Parking - consider both cars and trucks with trailers
- Bike racks
- Wildlife resistant trash receptacles including recycle bins
- Benches
- Picnic tables
- Landscaping and shade structures
- Restrooms
- Drinking fountains

Landscaping:

- Prominent existing vegetation should be preserved and protected during trail construction.
- Emphasis for new landscaping should be on native, low maintenance species.
- Supplemental irrigation to aid in plant establishment and first year should be included where possible.
- All areas disturbed during construction shall be revegetated with an appropriate ground cover seed mix.
- Steep areas may require additional stabilization (fiber matting, etc.) during plant establishment.

Maintenance and Emergency Access:

- Paved trails should accommodate vehicles for the purpose of maintenance. Special attention should be paid to access points and turnarounds and turning radius through trail curves.
- Emergency access points should be identified during trail planning, and should be coordinated with local emergency service providers.

Wildlife Protection:

Trails and the traffic they bring to an area can have negative impacts on wildlife. CPW recommends the following design and management principles to help reduce impacts. All trails must be evaluated fully for compliance with local land use regulation and policy regarding wildlife protection and impacts, as well as applicable state and federal regulations and management plans.

- Locate trails in already disturbed areas.
- Disturb as narrow an area as possible when constructing the trail.
- Riparian corridors should be crossed with the least disturbance possible, and wetlands should be avoided.
- Discourage the creation of spurs off of the main trail, particularly along stream banks.
- Avoid wildlife routes to local water sources.
- Consider screening trails with vegetation in known habitat areas.
- Dogs should be restricted or not allowed in sensitive habitat areas.
- Railing and fences should be constructed to not impede wildlife movement.
- Wildlife resistant trash cans should be installed if trash cans are included at trailhead or trail rest area facilities.
- Include interpretive displays along the trail about respecting wildlife and habitat.
- Work with state wildlife managers to determine best management practices for winter trail use including possible trail closures as necessary to protect vulnerable wildlife populations.

Unpaved Singletrack Trails:

- Trail design manuals such as the joint BLM and International Mountain Bike Association's (IMBA) [Guide to Quality Trail Experiences](#) and the IMBA trail building guide "Trail Solutions" are recommended resources for singletrack trail construction standards for hiking, biking and horseback riding.
- Singletrack trail tread width may range from 12" to 36" depending on terrain and anticipated uses.
- Unpaved doubletrack trails range from 6 to 8 feet wide, depending on location, purpose and population to be served, such as providing a park or neighborhood path as a secondary or main route.
- Overhead clearances for bike use is generally 8 feet while low clearance features are sometimes retained for interest or may be difficult to alter (e.g. rock features).
- In an urban or suburban neighborhood setting, unpaved trails should be built to consider grades that allow accessibility to the greatest extent possible. For example, grades below 10% are recommended.
- Backcountry singletracks are typically not in compliance with ADA standards due to terrain.
- Consult trail design manuals to evaluate accessibility requirements and recommendations.
- Include structures necessary to prevent erosion of surface material, such as water bars and rock lined pans at cross drainage locations.

Equestrian (Bridle) Trails and Shared-Use with Horses:

- Bridle paths separated from paved surfaces reduce the potential for conflicts and provide soft surfaces which are safer for horses.
- Recommended separation between a paved shared-use trail and a bridle path is 10 feet or greater.
- Recommended path width is 8 to 10 feet, graded to drain properly. Surfacing should be soil, fine gravel, crusher fines or wood chips.
- Etiquette signing is critical on shared horse, hike and bike trails due to the safety issues associated with riding horses. All trailhead signs in the Mid-Valley area that are open to horses and other users should include education information about sharing trails with horses.
- Bridges or tunnels installed on trails where equestrian use is encouraged should be designed to provide adequate overhead clearance and horse-friendly surfacing.
- Development of new or improvements to existing trailheads should consider the specific dimensions necessary to provide sufficient area for horse trailers with trucks to access a trailhead if separate designated parking facilities for equestrians are not available or practicable. The RFVHC recommends the following parking lot specifications:
 - An appropriate equestrian parking lot accommodates trucks and trailers as they pull in, swing around in the area, and angle park, facing out.
 - 125 feet is the minimum space needed to swing around modern horse trucks and trailers.
 - Typical Vehicle Dimensions:
 - Horse trailers are 7 feet, 8 inches to 8 feet, 6 inches wide.
 - Tow vehicles are 6 feet to 8 feet, 6 inches wide.
 - Maximum trailer height is 13 feet, 6 inches.
 - Legal limit in the length of a trailer is 53 feet.



- Shared parking works best when non-equestrian vehicles have designated parking areas separate from the horse trailers.
- People unfamiliar with horses may not understand that horsemen and horses need extra space by the trailer for tying, saddling and loading.
- See comprehensive parking lot reference materials provided by RFVHC-[Equestrian Parking Lots](#).



Capital Creek Trailhead in Pitkin County is an example of a parking area with ample equestrian parking and turnaround space. Photo: RFVHC

Shared Roadways:

Shared roadway facilities to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists may include one or more of these features. The CDOT specifications and AASHTO guidelines provide additional information on designing and retrofitting roadways to accommodate bicycles.

Bike Lane:

- Per CDOT, a bike lane is a portion of a roadway which has been designated by signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists.
- Bike lanes are typically one-way facilities on each side of the roadway located to the right of the vehicle travel lanes. Bike lanes should be incorporated where possible into new street design or retrofit of existing streets when possible.
- The minimum width of a bike lane on a street with no curb and gutter is 4 feet, and a total of 6 feet if a curb is present to provide shy distance. Additional widths are desirable when substantial truck traffic, parallel parking, speeds over 55 mph, long grades or curves are present.
- Bike lanes may be separated visually from the travel lanes by installing a pattern of pavement markings to create a 2 to 6 foot space between uses, known as “buffering”.
- Another version of this separated facility is the “protected” bike lane, or “cycletrack” that is physically separated from motorized traffic and sidewalk with barriers, curbs or other vertical separation and designated specifically for bicycling. A buffered bike lane may include two-directions of bike on one side of the street, or a one-way travel flowing with traffic on each side of the street.

- These two types of facilities are common in Europe and expanding in the U.S. Traffic engineering study and design will determine when this type of design is acceptable.

Bike Route:

- Per CDOT, a bike route is not an actual facility type. A bike route is a designation of several facilities that have been linked together through signing, markings and mapping to provide a designated route for bicycle travel.
- Each Eagle County jurisdiction is encouraged to incorporate bike routes into their comprehensive streets plan. Establishing bike routes that are fairly direct with relatively few stop signs or intersections can reduce hazards to bicyclists on other shared routes.
- Bike routes are generally more appropriate on routes with lower traffic volumes, less than 3,000 average daily trips per day. Mid-Valley roads generally range from 25 to 35 miles per hour, but carry varying traffic volumes.
- Signs and symbols painted on the road surface will also improve vehicle awareness of alternative modes of transportation.
- Shoulders often function as a de-facto bike lane on a bike route and should be inspected for hazards prior to establishing a route (manholes, sewer inlets, blind driveways, etc.).
- Bike routes should travel in one direction with traffic. Incorporating bike routes into a streets system is typically easier than a bike lanes system because it utilizes existing pavement.



Shoulder:

- A road shoulder is defined as the portion of a roadway to the outside of the white line. Colorado Bicycle Law 42-4-106.5-(5) states "...where a paved shoulder suitable for bicycle riding is present, persons operating bicycles shall ride on the paved shoulders."
- A paved shoulder is a de facto bikeway when present, but is different from a Bike Lane in that it is not signed nor meant exclusively for the use of bicycles.
- Shoulders should be provided and maintained on roads where it is anticipated that cyclists will ride, pedestrians may walk and no other facilities are available.
- A minimum of four feet of shoulder width is recommended, 6 feet or greater is preferred. If rumble strips are present, that area should not be included in the above widths.
- Consult CDOT and local road standards for additional specifications.

Sidewalks:

- Typically intended for pedestrians, and not designed for higher speed traffic.
- Bicyclists are typically discouraged from using sidewalks unless other safe options do not exist.
- Sidewalks are usually part of road design specifications, and are not addressed in detail in these specifications.
- Standard width is 4-feet wide if not attached to a curb, 6-feet wide if attached to curb and gutter.
- Sidewalk connections are encouraged throughout developed areas as they serve to connect people walking to neighborhoods, to community centers, trail systems and other destinations.

Appendix C: Related Planning Maps and Resource Links

The following maps are attached as supporting information to this plan:

1. RFTA Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan (2015)
 - a. Opportunities and Constraints
 - b. Regional Project Recommendations
2. RFTA RGT Map Update (2018)
3. Town of Basalt Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2013):
 - a. Existing and Proposed Facilities, East Basalt
 - b. Existing and Proposed Facilities, West Basalt
4. Pitkin County RGT Node Plan (2019)
5. Basalt State Wildlife Area (including the Lake Christine Unit) (2017)
6. BLM Crown Special Management Resource Area (website version 2019)
7. USFS White River National Forest Summer Designated Bike Route System (2017)
8. WE-cycle Bike Share Station Map for Basalt and El Jebel

Additional Mid-Valley Trail maps can be found on-line at:

<https://www.pitkinoutside.org/trailfinder/map.html>

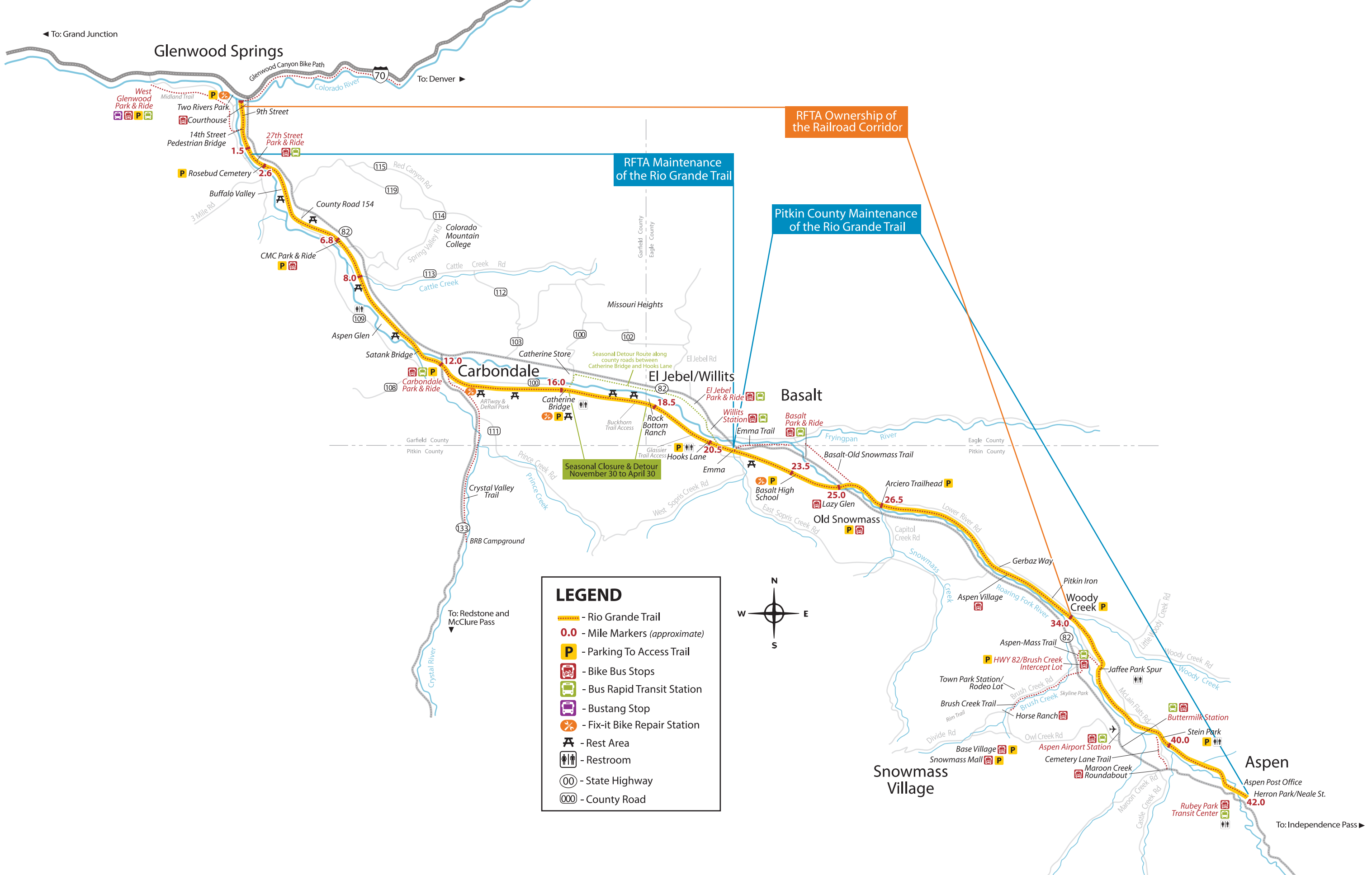
<https://www.aspentrailfinder.com/>

<https://www.alltrails.com/us/colorado/basalt>

<https://www.mtbproject.com/search?q=basalt%20colorado>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recmain/whiteriver/recreation>

<https://www.blm.gov/office/colorado-river-valley-field-office/recreation>



◀ To: Grand Junction

Glenwood Springs

To: Denver ▶

RFTA Ownership of the Railroad Corridor

RFTA Maintenance of the Rio Grande Trail

Pitkin County Maintenance of the Rio Grande Trail

Seasonal Closure & Detour November 30 to April 30

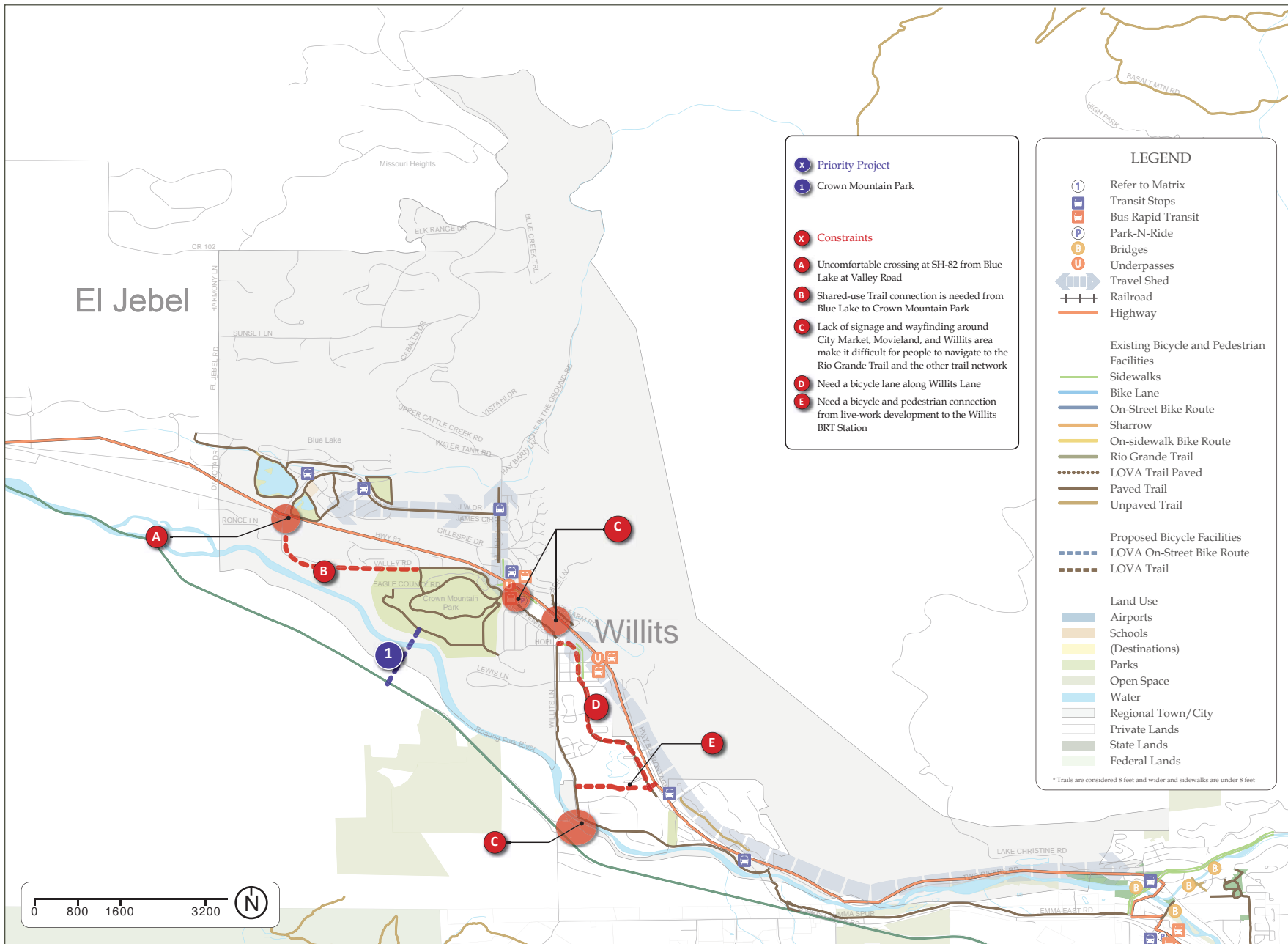
LEGEND

- - Rio Grande Trail
- 0.0 - Mile Markers (approximate)
- P - Parking To Access Trail
- Bike Bus Stops
- Bus Rapid Transit Station
- Bustang Stop
- Fix-it Bike Repair Station
- Rest Area
- Restroom
- 00 - State Highway
- 000 - County Road

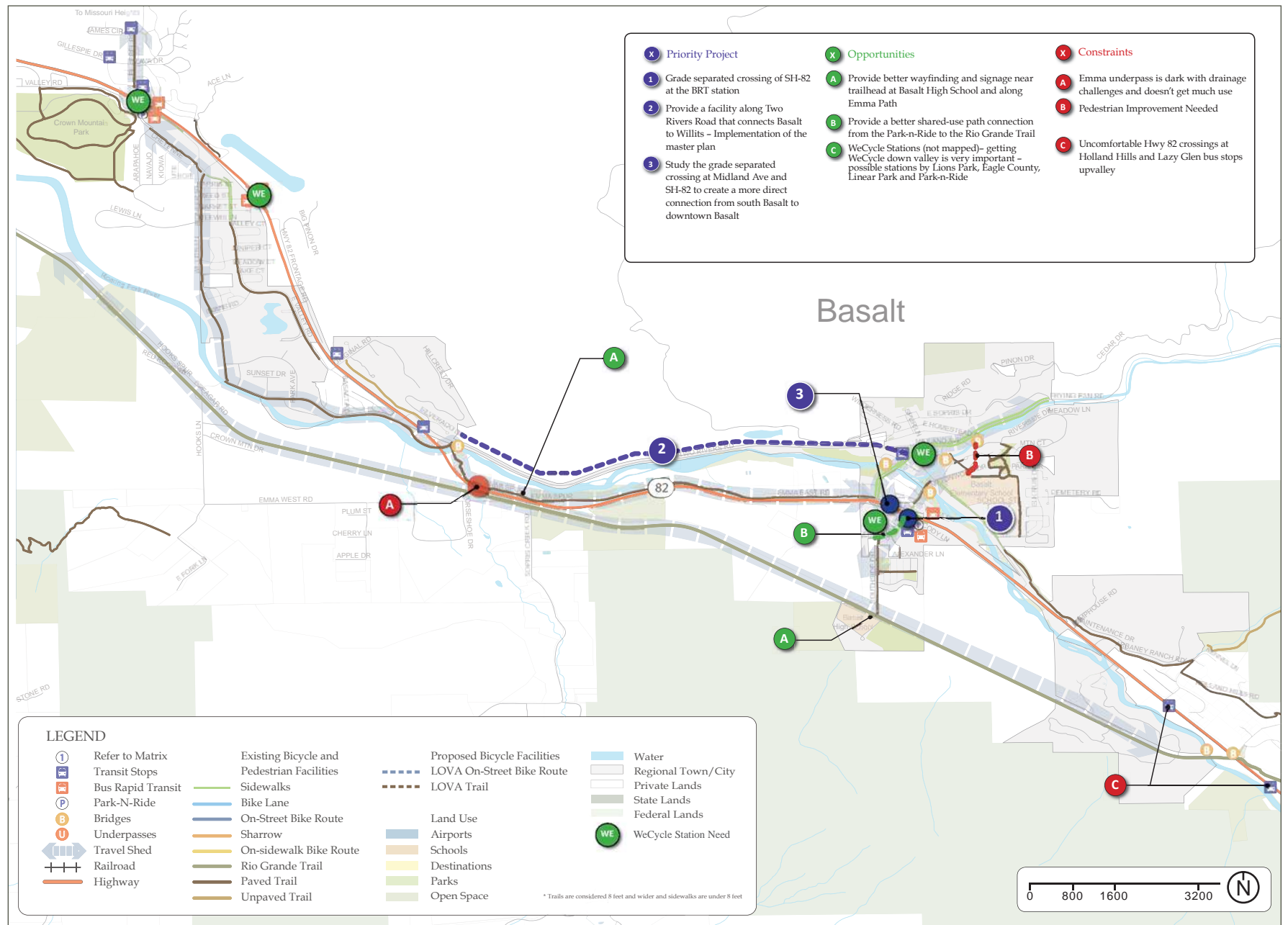


To: Redstone and McClure Pass ▼

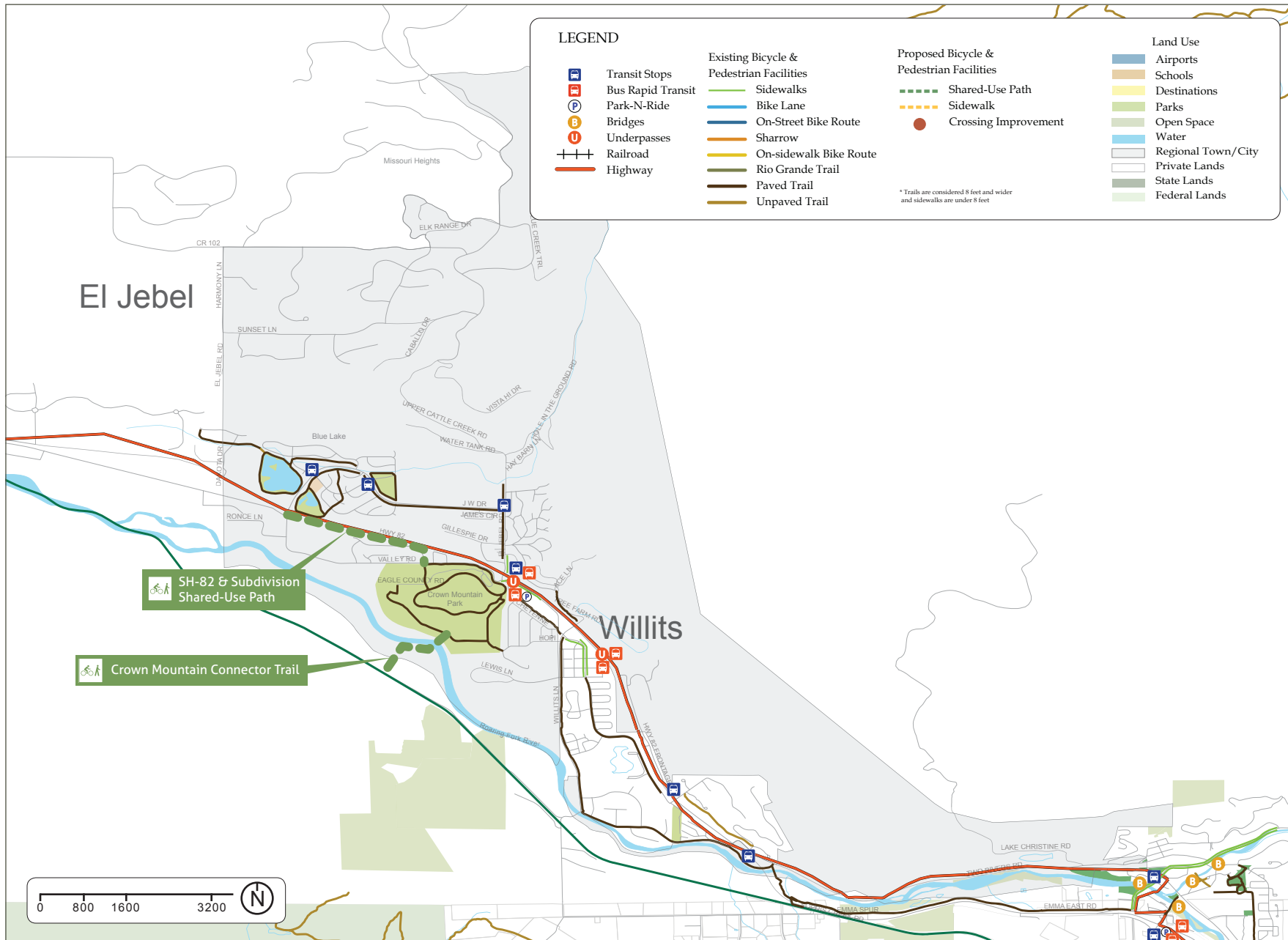
To: Independence Pass ▶



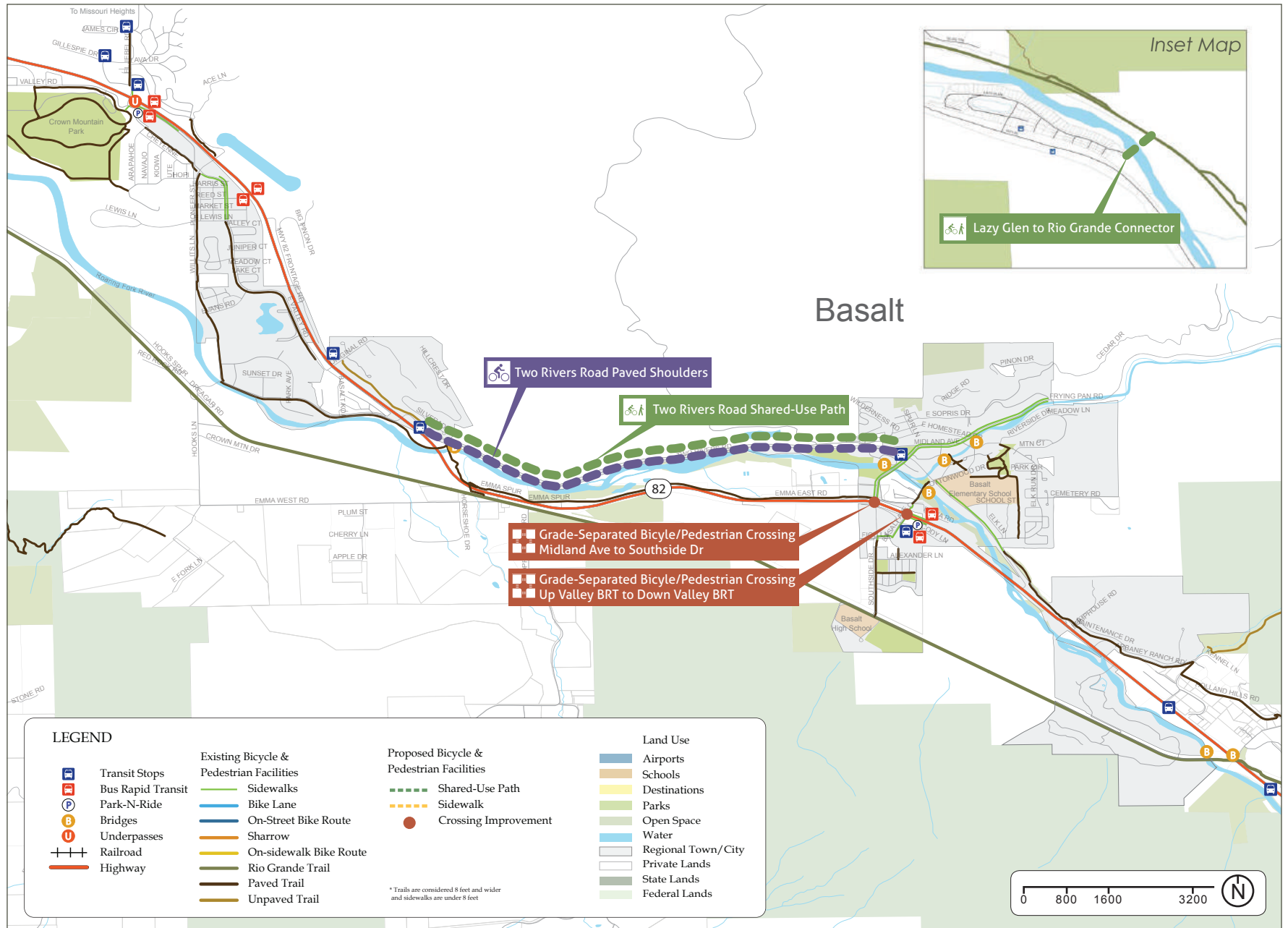
Map 3.7: El Jebel/Willits Opportunities and Constraints Map



Map 3.8: Basalt Opportunities and Constraints Map



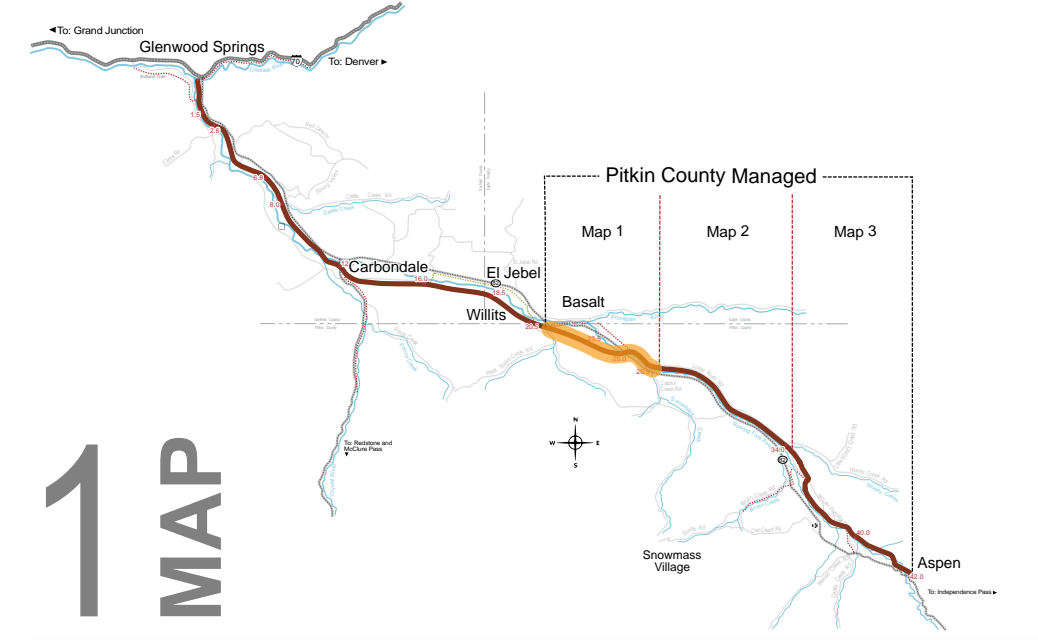
Map 5.7: El Jebel/Willits Priority Projects Map



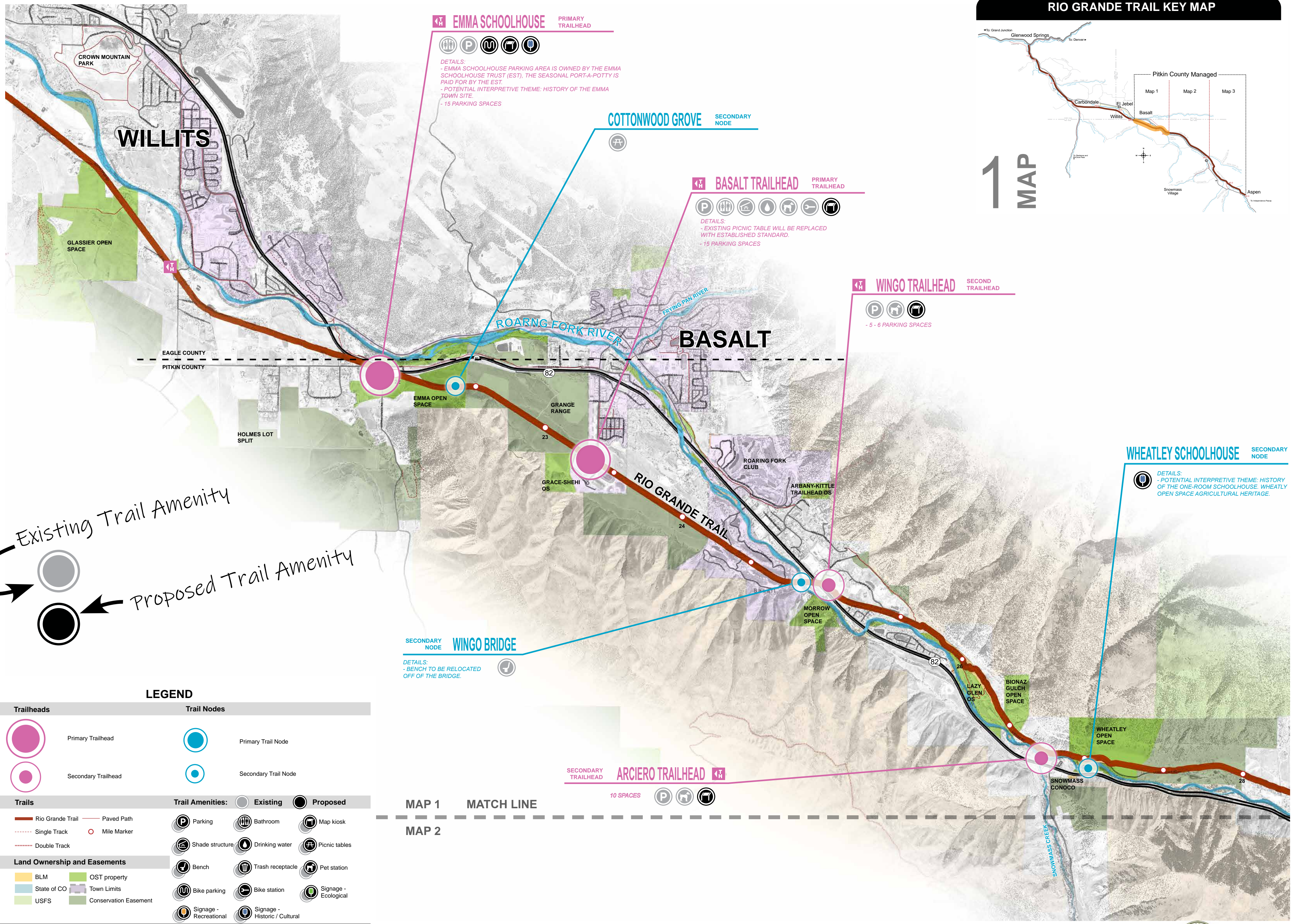
Map 5.8: Basalt Priority Projects Map

DRAFT TRAILHEADS AND NODE LOCATIONS | EMMA TO OLD SNOWMASS

RIO GRANDE TRAIL KEY MAP



1
MAP



EMMA SCHOOLHOUSE PRIMARY TRAILHEAD

DETAILS:
 - EMMA SCHOOLHOUSE PARKING AREA IS OWNED BY THE EMMA SCHOOLHOUSE TRUST (EST), THE SEASONAL PORT-A-POTTY IS PAID FOR BY THE EST.
 - POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE THEME: HISTORY OF THE EMMA TOWN SITE.
 - 15 PARKING SPACES

COTTONWOOD GROVE SECONDARY NODE

BASALT TRAILHEAD PRIMARY TRAILHEAD

DETAILS:
 - EXISTING PICNIC TABLE WILL BE REPLACED WITH ESTABLISHED STANDARD.
 - 15 PARKING SPACES

WINGO TRAILHEAD SECOND TRAILHEAD

- 5 - 6 PARKING SPACES

WHEATLEY SCHOOLHOUSE SECONDARY NODE

DETAILS:
 - POTENTIAL INTERPRETIVE THEME: HISTORY OF THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE, WHEATLEY OPEN SPACE AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE.

ARCIERO TRAILHEAD SECONDARY TRAILHEAD

10 SPACES

WINGO BRIDGE SECONDARY NODE

DETAILS:
 - BENCH TO BE RELOCATED OFF OF THE BRIDGE.

Existing Trail Amenity

Proposed Trail Amenity

LEGEND

Trailheads		Trail Nodes	
	Primary Trailhead		Primary Trail Node
	Secondary Trailhead		Secondary Trail Node
Trails		Trail Amenities: Existing Proposed	
	Rio Grande Trail		Parking
	Paved Path		Bathroom
	Single Track		Map kiosk
	Double Track		Shade structure
	Mile Marker		Drinking water
	BLM		Picnic tables
	State of CO		Bench
	USFS		Trash receptacle
	OST property		Pet station
	Town Limits		Bike parking
	Conservation Easement		Bike station
			Signage - Ecological
			Signage - Recreational
			Signage - Historic / Cultural

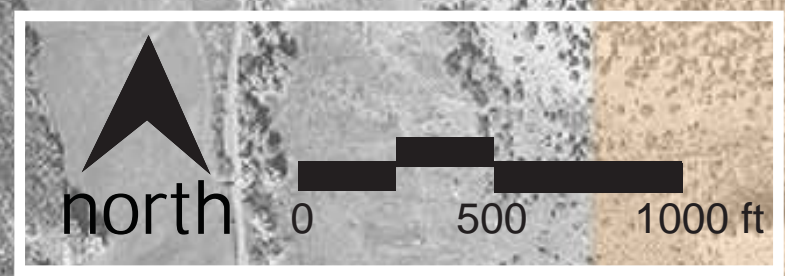
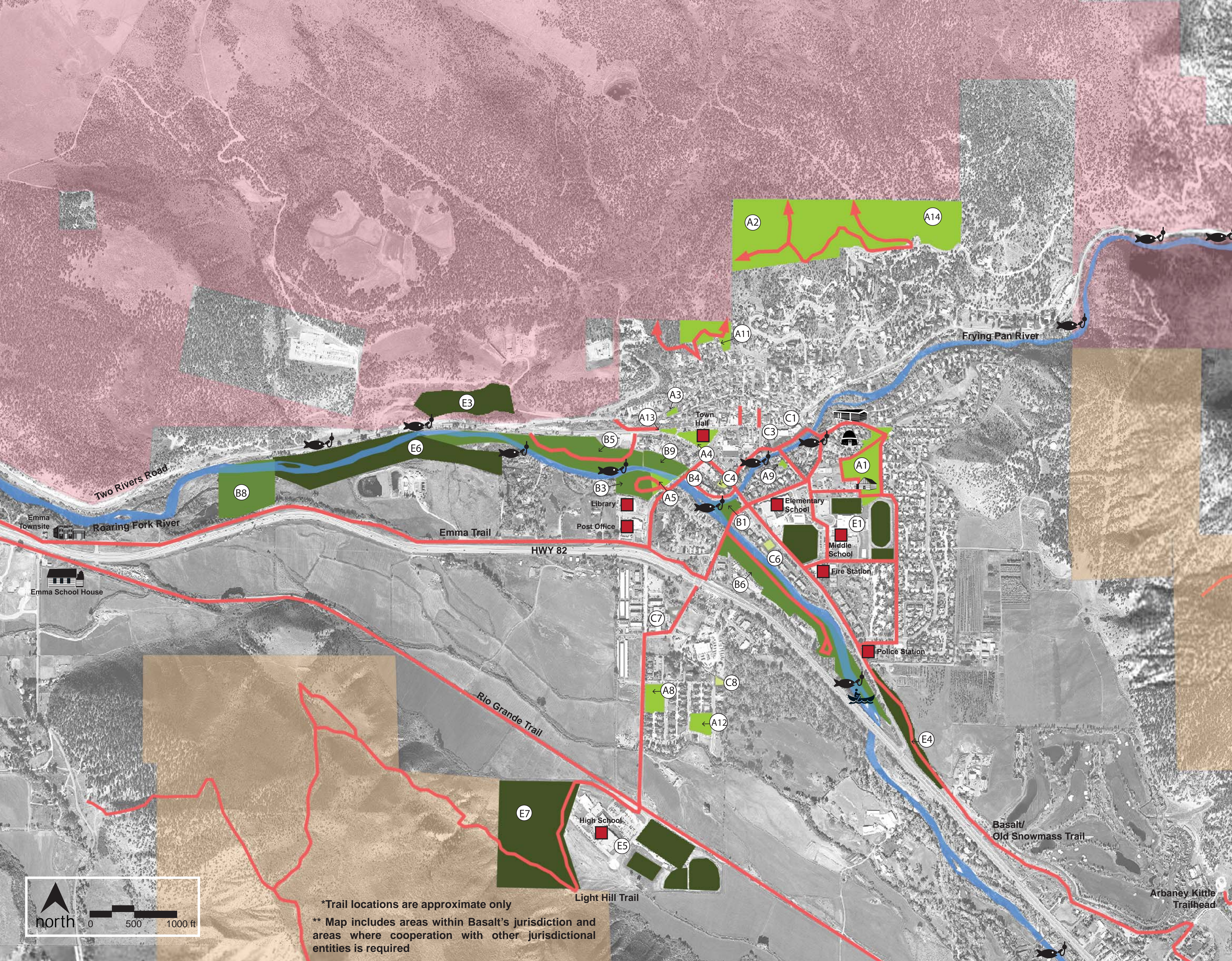
MAP 1 MATCH LINE

MAP 2



Existing East Basalt Area

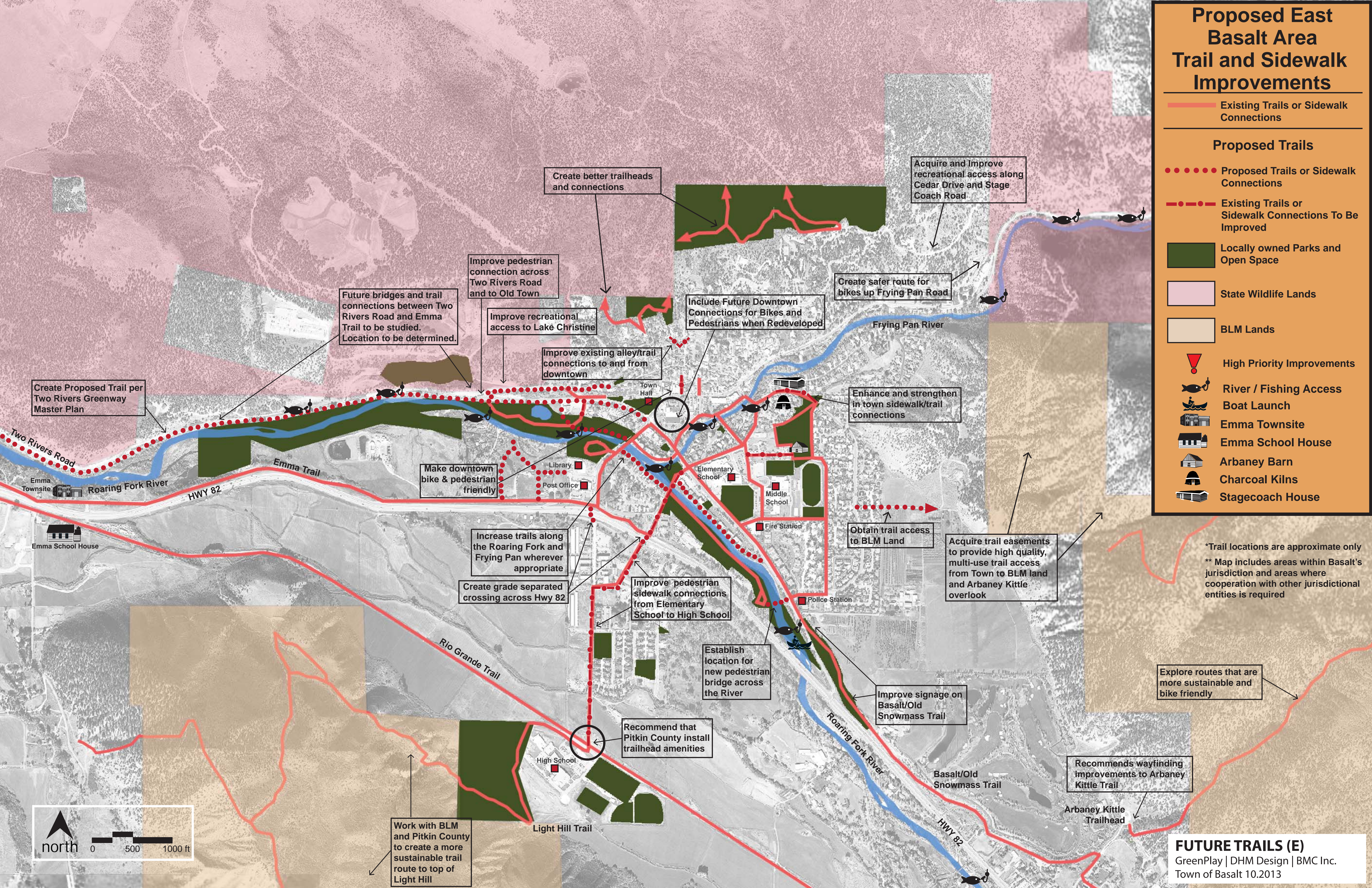
- Open Space (Non-Riverfront)**
- A1 Arboney Park
- A2 Basalt Highlands Open Space
- A3 Cliff's Hillside Park
- A4 Lions Park / Town Hall
- A5 Gisella Fiou Skate Park
- A8 Southside Park
- A9 Swinging Bridge Park
- A11 Wilds Dedication
- A12 Wildwood Park
- A13 Lucksinger Park
- A14 Fletcher Open Space
- Riverfront Town-Owned Parks and Open Space**
- B1 Confluence Park and Bridge
- B3 Midland Park
- B4 Midland Avenue Bridge Plaza
- B5 Old Pond Park
- B6 Ponderosa Park
- B8 Emma Overlook and Trimble Open Space
- B9 Pan and Fork Riverfront Park
- Other Town-Owned Committed Parks, Open Space Areas**
- C1 Riverwalk Easement
- C3 Swinging Bridge Easement
- C4 Ute Center River Easement
- C6 Residences at Roaring Fork Easement and Dedication
- C7 Cather's
- C8 Southside IV Dedication
- Other-Intergovernmental in Three Mile Planning Area**
- E1 Middle School Courts
- E3 Lake Christine at Basalt State Wildlife Area
- E4 Fisherman's Park Owned by Pitkin County
- E5 Basalt Community Track
- E6 Grange River Parcel
- E7 Grace-Shehi Open Space
- State Wildlife Lands**
- BLM Lands**
- Trails or Sidewalk Connections River / Fishing Access**
- Boat Launch**
- Emma Townsite**
- Emma School House**
- Arboney Barn**
- Charcoal Kilns**
- Stagecoach House**



*Trail locations are approximate only
 ** Map includes areas within Basalt's jurisdiction and areas where cooperation with other jurisdictional entities is required

Proposed East Basalt Area Trail and Sidewalk Improvements

-  Existing Trails or Sidewalk Connections
- Proposed Trails**
-  Proposed Trails or Sidewalk Connections
-  Existing Trails or Sidewalk Connections To Be Improved
-  Locally owned Parks and Open Space
-  State Wildlife Lands
-  BLM Lands
-  High Priority Improvements
-  River / Fishing Access
-  Boat Launch
-  Emma Townsite
-  Emma School House
-  Arbaney Barn
-  Charcoal Kilns
-  Stagecoach House



Create Proposed Trail per Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan

Future bridges and trail connections between Two Rivers Road and Emma Trail to be studied. Location to be determined.

Improve pedestrian connection across Two Rivers Road and to Old Town

Create better trailheads and connections

Improve recreational access to Lake Christine

Include Future Downtown Connections for Bikes and Pedestrians when Redeveloped

Acquire and Improve recreational access along Cedar Drive and Stage Coach Road

Create safer route for bikes up Frying Pan Road

Improve existing alley/trail connections to and from downtown

Enhance and strengthen in town sidewalk/trail connections

Make downtown bike & pedestrian friendly

Obtain trail access to BLM Land

Acquire trail easements to provide high quality, multi-use trail access from Town to BLM land and Arbaney Kittle overlook

Increase trails along the Roaring Fork and Frying Pan wherever appropriate

Improve pedestrian sidewalk connections from Elementary School to High School

Create grade separated crossing across Hwy 82

Establish location for new pedestrian bridge across the River

Improve signage on Basalt/Old Snowmass Trail

Recommend that Pitkin County install trailhead amenities

Explore routes that are more sustainable and bike friendly

Work with BLM and Pitkin County to create a more sustainable trail route to top of Light Hill

Recommends wayfinding improvements to Arbaney Kittle Trail

Existing West Basalt Area

Town-Owned Parks and Open Space (Non-Riverfront)

- (A6) Willits Recreation Park
- (A7) Willits Linear Park
- (A10) Triangle Park

Riverfront Town-Owned Parks and Open Space

- (B2) Duroux Park
- (B7) Sopris Meadows River Park

Other Town-Owned Committed Parks, Open Space Areas

- (C2) Willits Town Center
- (C5) Valley Pines Park (Privately Owned)
- (C9) Performing Arts / Park

Other-Intergovernmental in Three Mile Planning Area

- (E2) Crown Mountain Park
- (E8) Red Ridge Ranch Open Space

Potential Future Park

State Wildlife Lands

BLM Lands

US Forest Service Lands

Trails or Sidewalk Connections

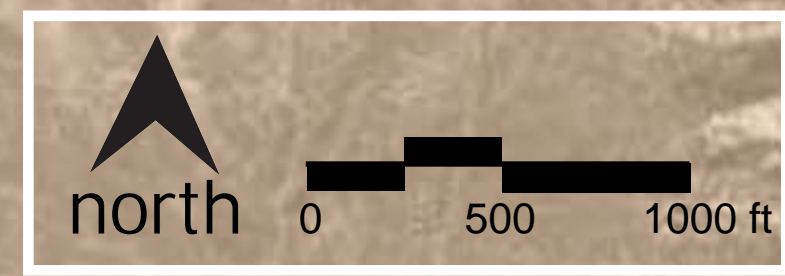
Boat Launch

River / Fishing Access

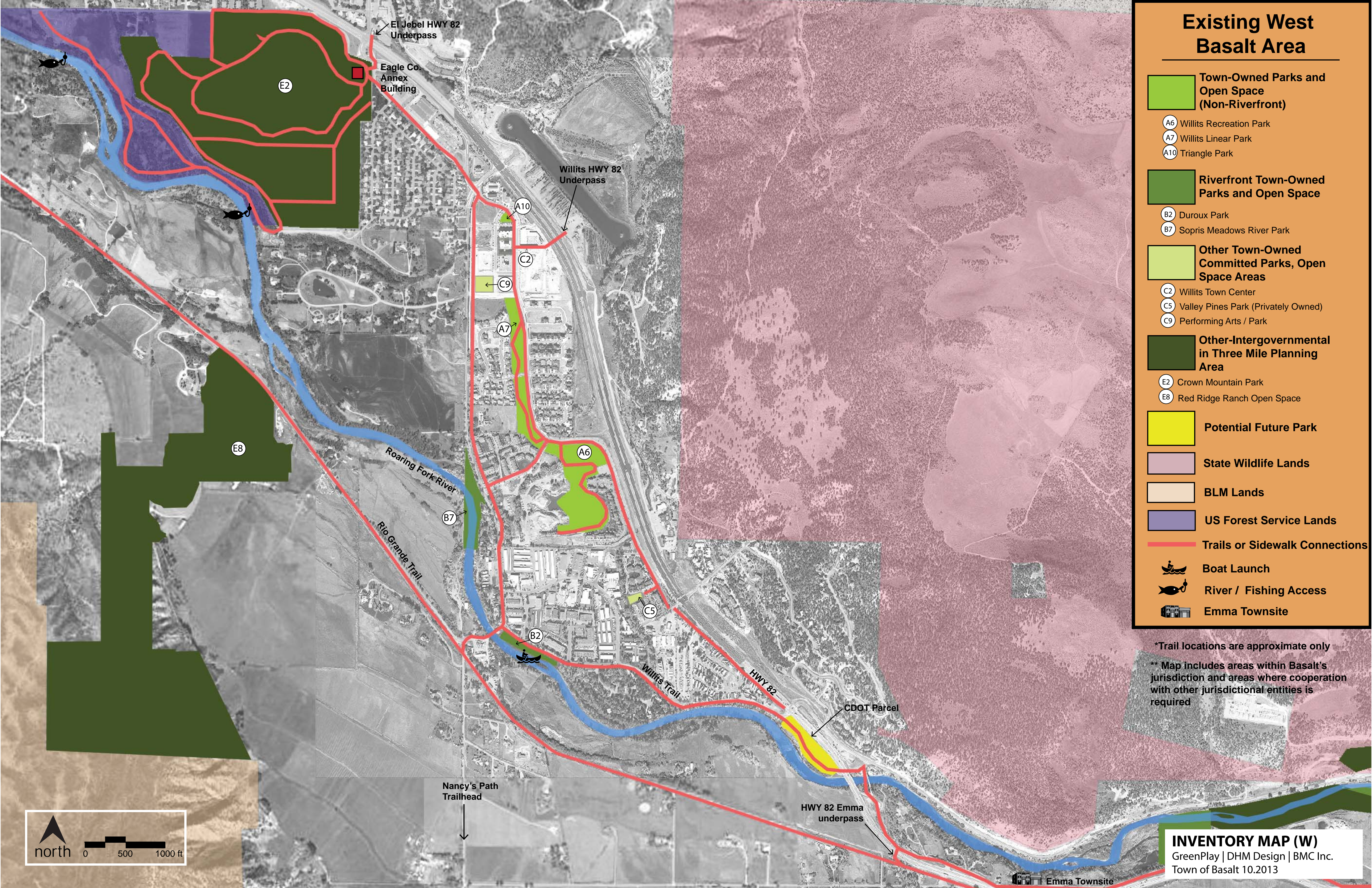
Emma Townsite

*Trail locations are approximate only

** Map includes areas within Basalt's jurisdiction and areas where cooperation with other jurisdictional entities is required



INVENTORY MAP (W)
 GreenPlay | DHM Design | BMC Inc.
 Town of Basalt 10.2013



Proposed West Basalt Area Trail and Sidewalk Improvements

Existing Trails or Sidewalk Connections

Proposed Trails

Proposed Trails or Sidewalk Connections

Existing Trails or Sidewalk Connections To Be Improved

Locally owned Parks and Open Space

State Wildlife Lands

BLM Lands

U.S. Forest Service Lands

High Priority Improvements

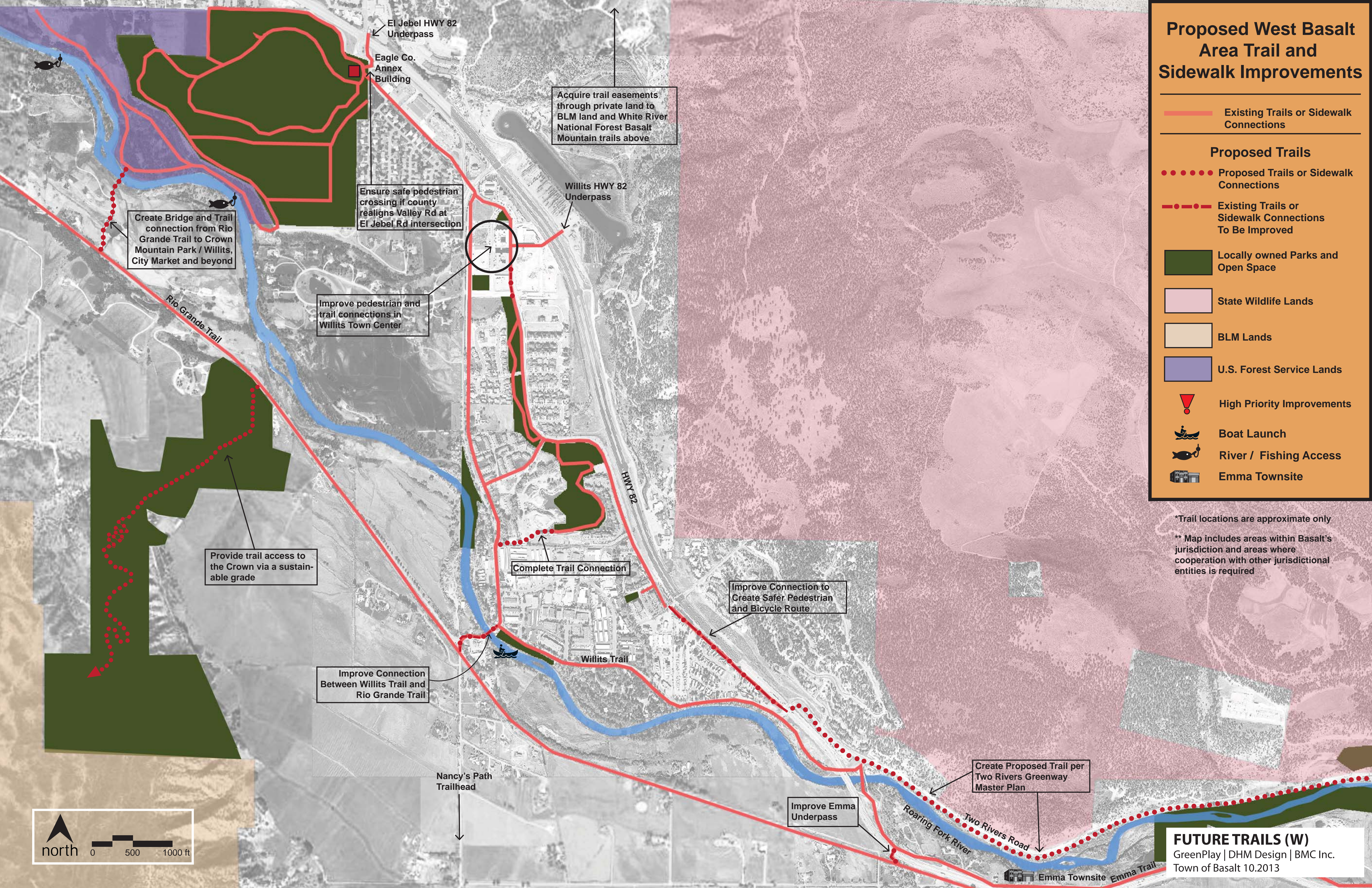
Boat Launch

River / Fishing Access

Emma Townsite

*Trail locations are approximate only

** Map includes areas within Basalt's jurisdiction and areas where cooperation with other jurisdictional entities is required



Create Bridge and Trail connection from Rio Grande Trail to Crown Mountain Park / Willits, City Market and beyond

Ensure safe pedestrian crossing if county realigns Valley Rd at El Jebel Rd intersection

Acquire trail easements through private land to BLM land and White River National Forest Basalt Mountain trails above

Improve pedestrian and trail connections in Willits Town Center

Provide trail access to the Crown via a sustainable grade

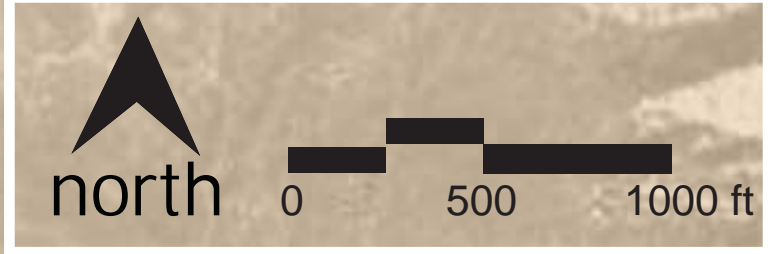
Complete Trail Connection

Improve Connection to Create Safer Pedestrian and Bicycle Route

Improve Connection Between Willits Trail and Rio Grande Trail

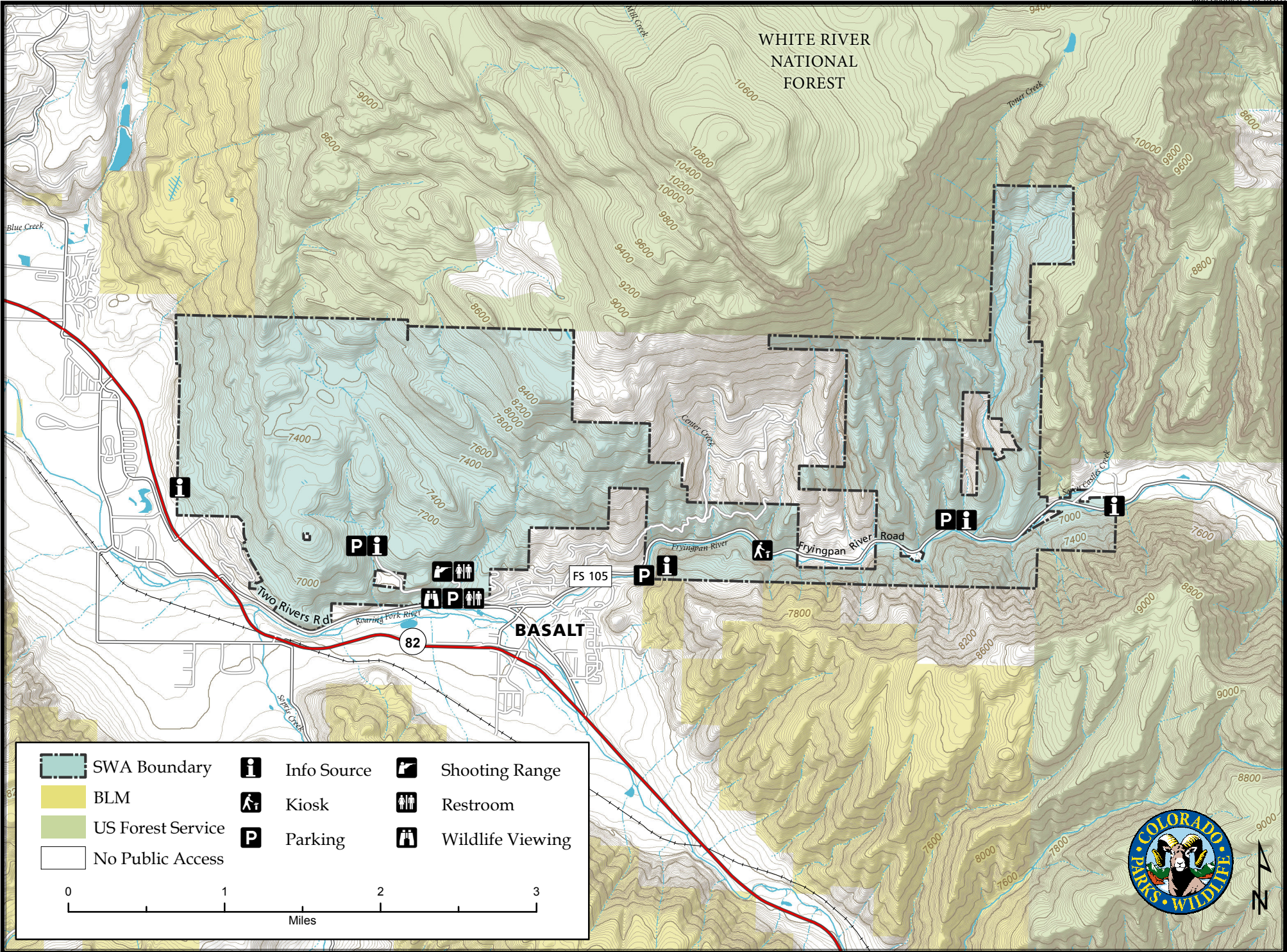
Create Proposed Trail per Two Rivers Greenway Master Plan

Improve Emma Underpass



Basalt State Wildlife Area

Map Updated: 11/21/2017



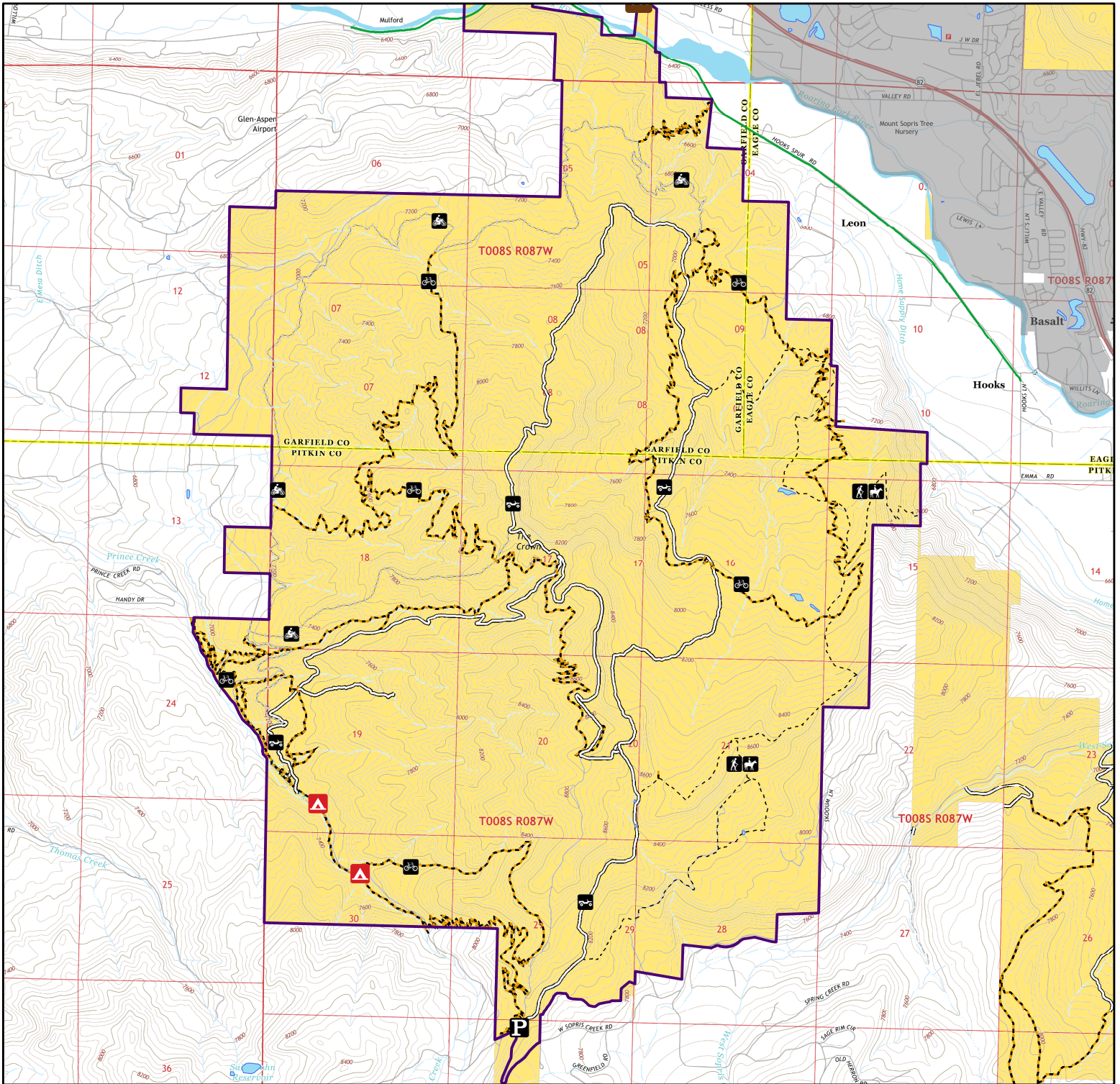
	SWA Boundary		Info Source		Shooting Range
	BLM		Kiosk		Restroom
	US Forest Service		Parking		Wildlife Viewing
	No Public Access				

0 1 2 3
Miles





The Crown SRMA- Colorado River Valley Field Office



BLM Routes

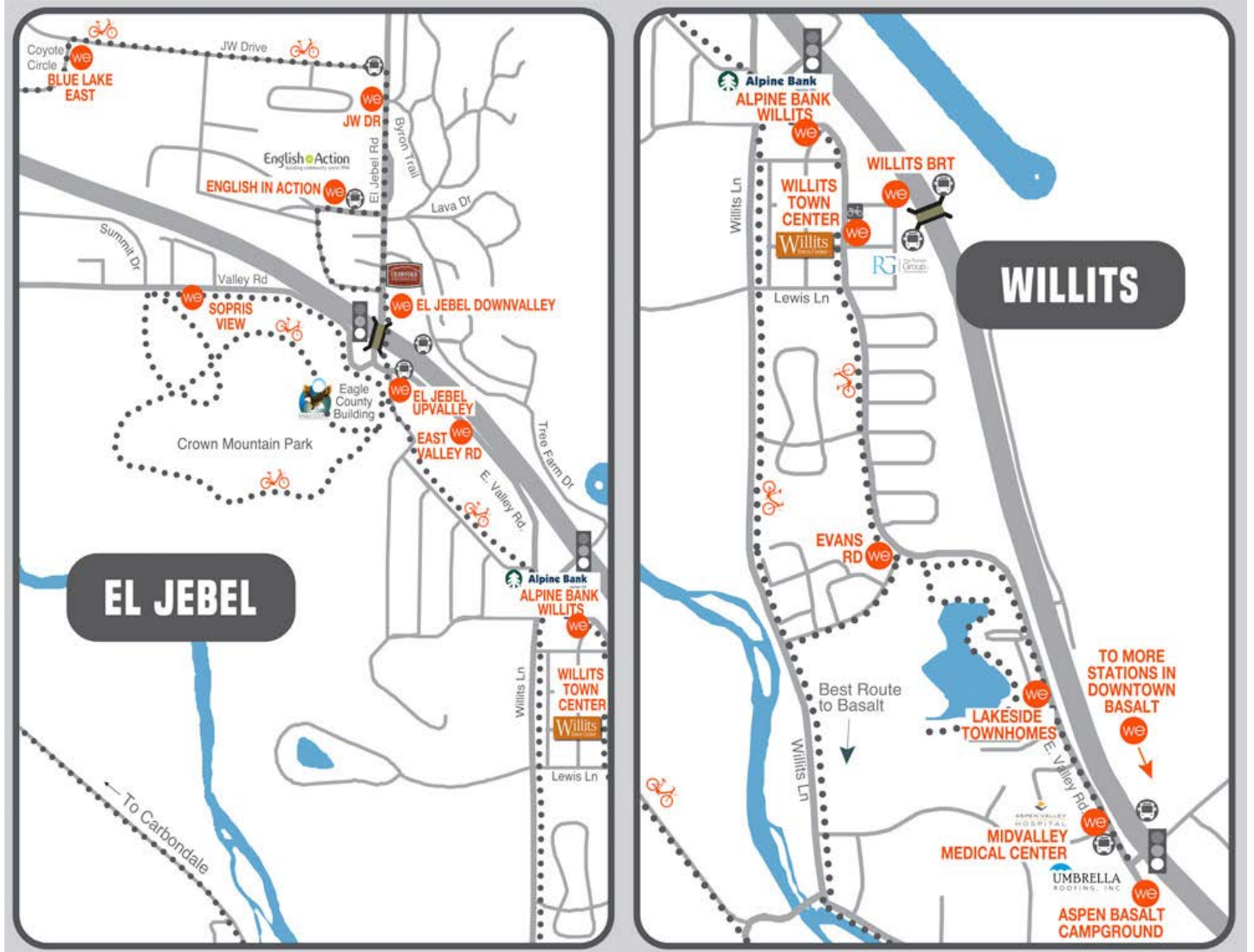
- Open to Bikes, Hikers, Equestrians
- Open to Hikers, Equestrian, and Livestock
- Open to Motorcycles, Bikes, Hikers, & Equestrians
- Open to all Modes of Transportation
- Rio Grande Trail

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- State Wildlife Area
- Campground
- Parking Area

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for the purposes not intended by the BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

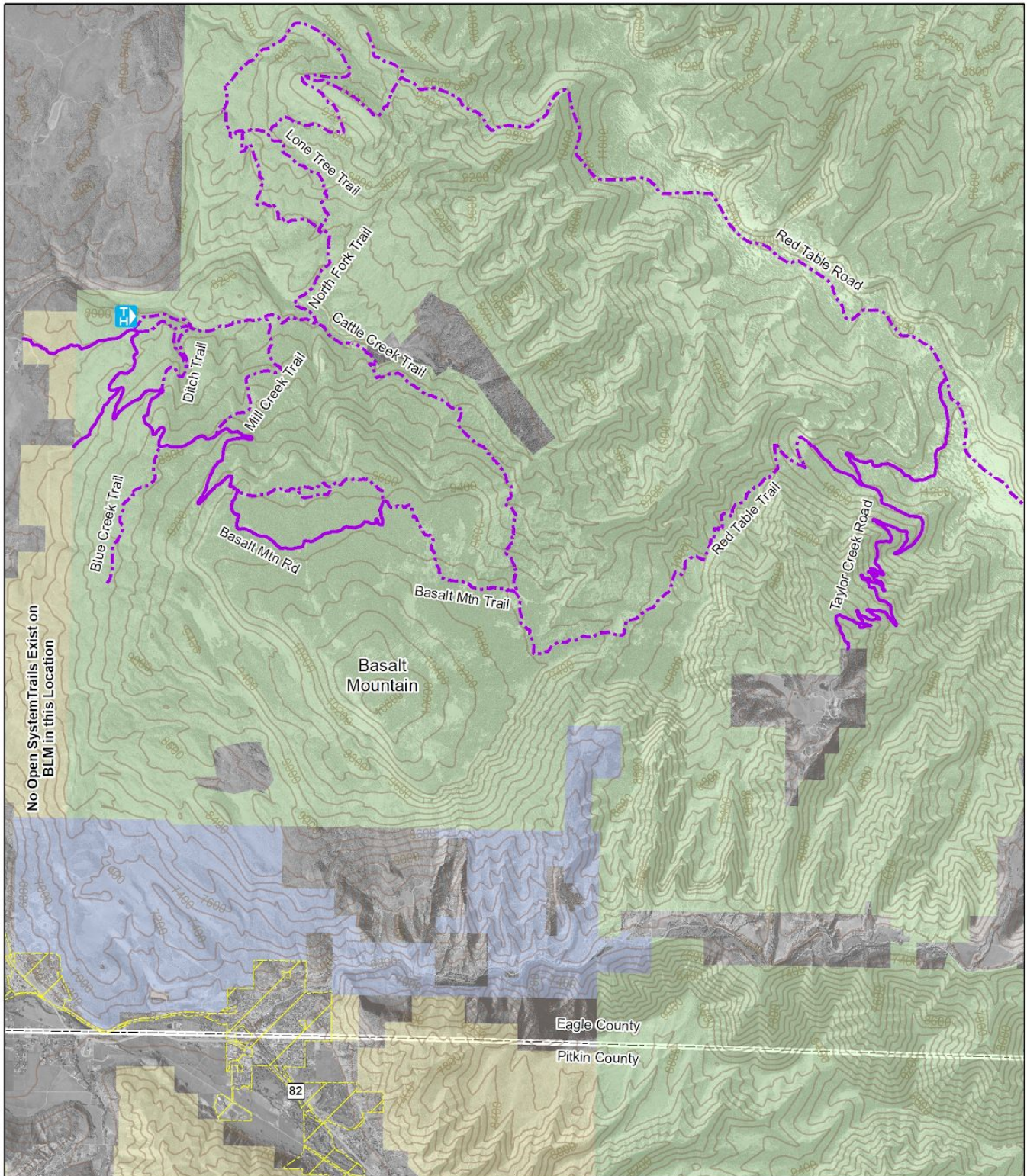
WE-cycle EL JEBEL + WILLITS STATION MAPS



Appendix D: Mid-Valley Singletrack Detail Maps

1. Basalt Mountain
2. The Crown
3. Glassier Open Space
4. Stage Road (set of 4 maps)
5. Arbaney Kittle
6. Light Hill

Note: Due to the lack of a designated trail system at Basalt State Wildlife Area (BSWA) and related information, a map was not created for this Plan. See Appendix C for a CPW overview map of the BSWA.

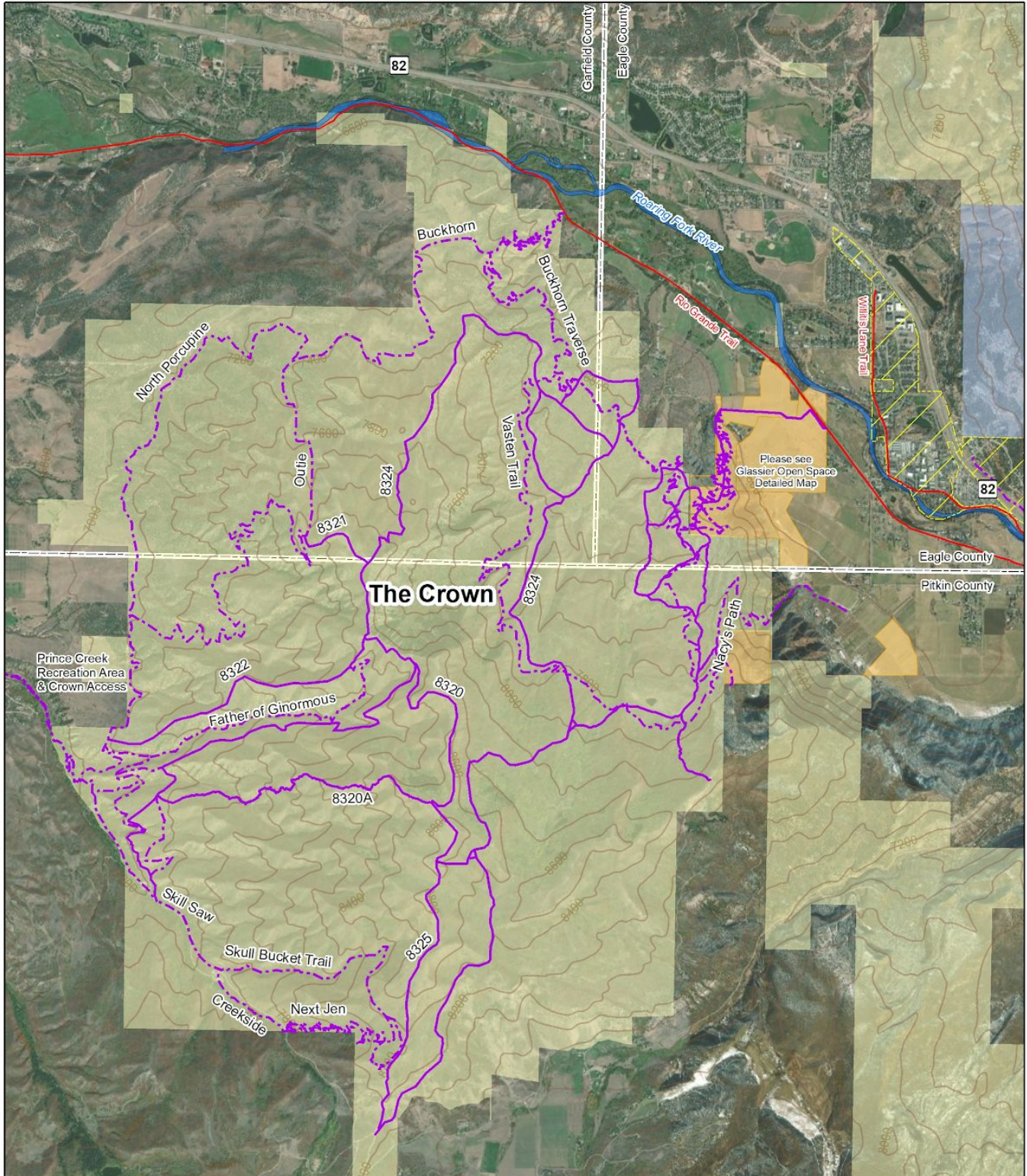


No Open System Trails Exist on BLM in this Location

Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Basalt Mountain Trail Network

- Doubletrack Road
- - - Singletrack Trail
- Town Boundary
- Trailhead
- U.S. Forest Service
- BLM
- State of CO





Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: The Crown Trail Network

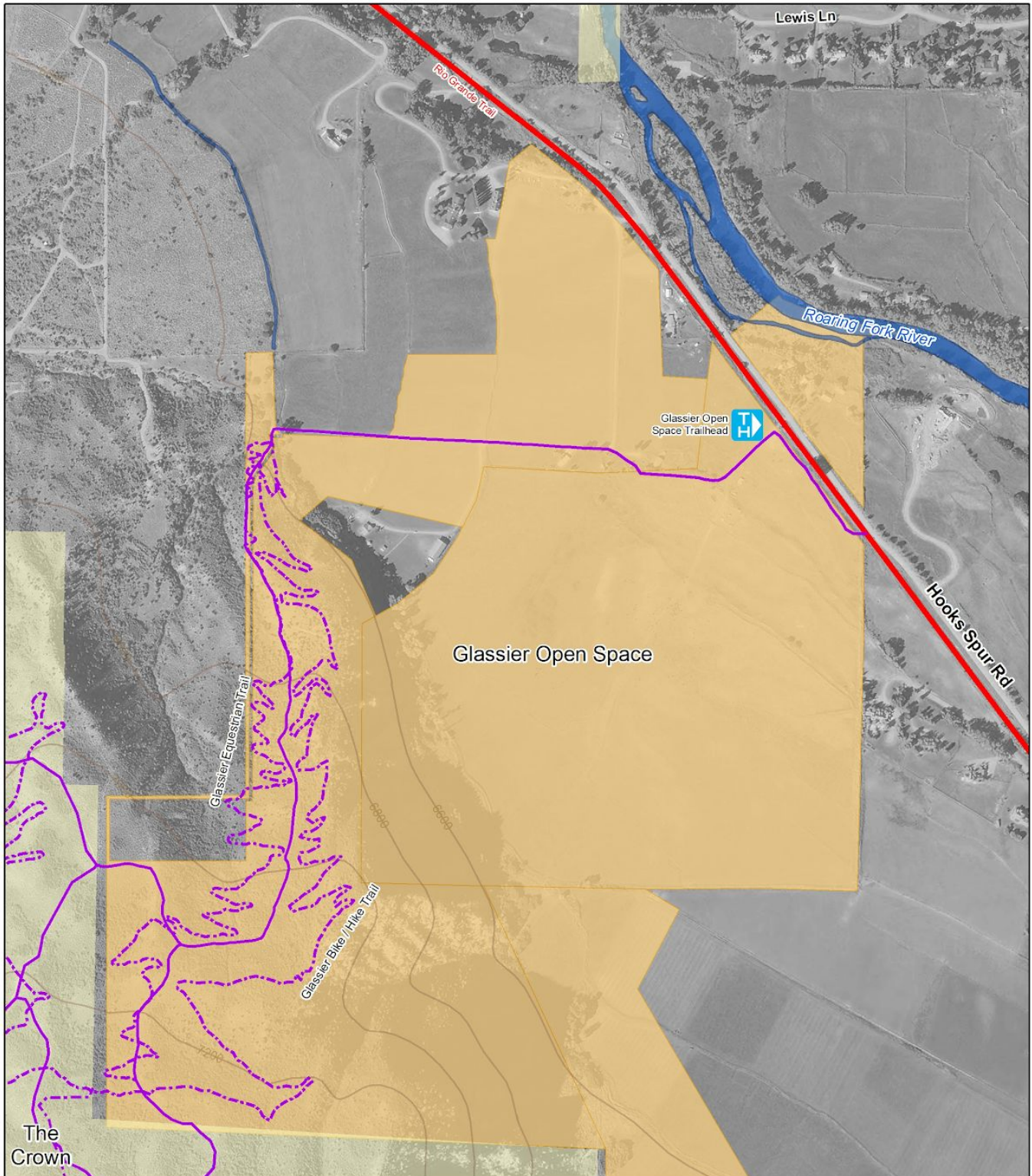
- - - Singletrack Trail
- Double Track Road
- Primary Route Paved Trail

- Town of Basalt
- County Boundary

Public Lands

- BLM
- Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space
- State of CO





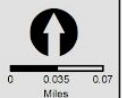
Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Glassier Open Space Trail Network

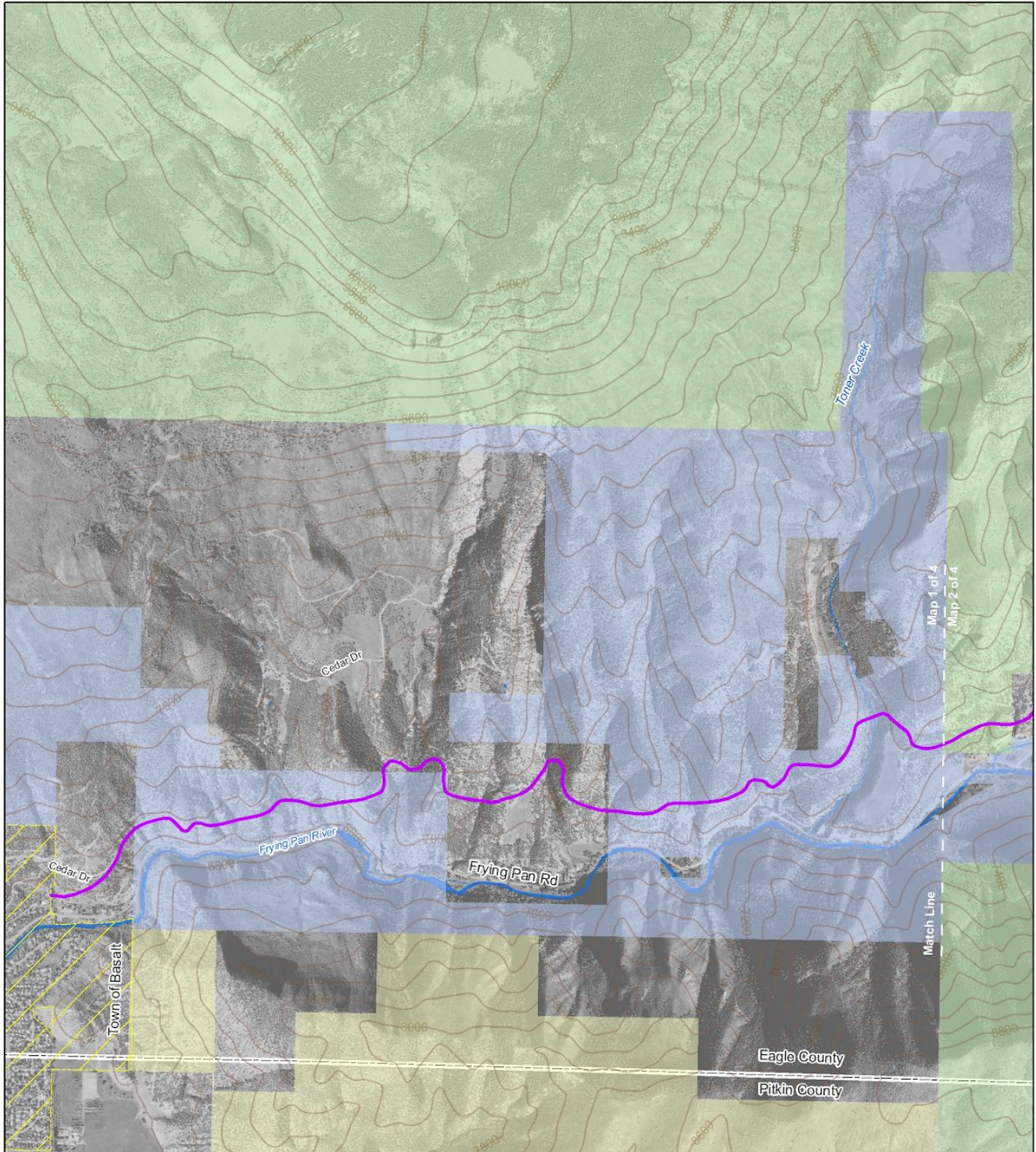
- Singletrack Trail
- Doubletrack Road
- Primary Route Paved Trail

Trailhead

Public Lands

- BLM
- Eagle County / Pitkin County Open Space





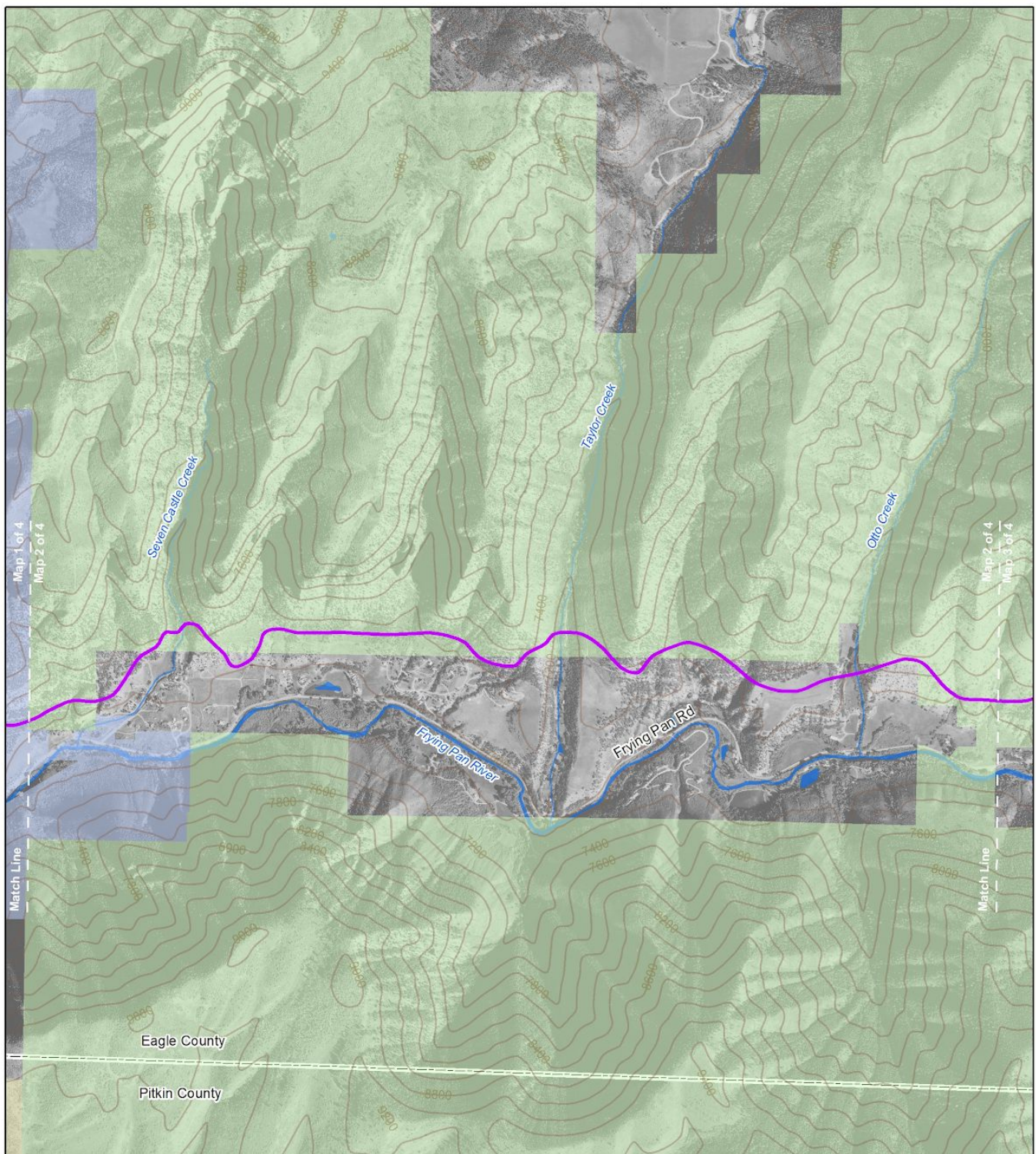
Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Stage Road Trail Map 1 of 4

- Singletrack or Doubletrack Route
- Town of Basalt
- County Boundary

Public Lands

- BLM
- State of CO
- U.S. Forest Service

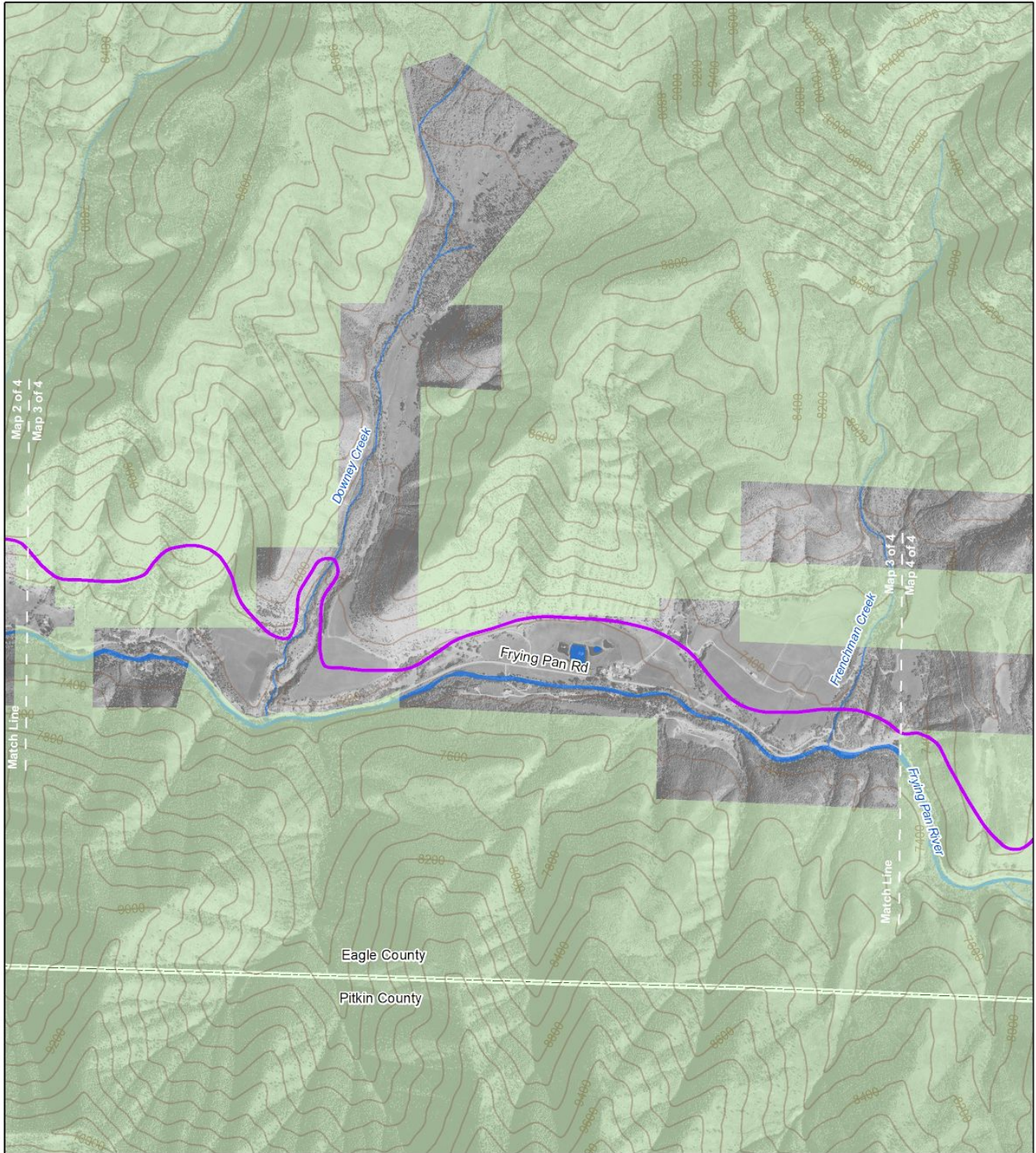




Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Stage Road Trail Map 2 of 4

- Singletrack or Doubletrack Route
- County Boundary
- Public Lands**
 - State of CO
 - U.S. Forest Service





Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Stage Road Trail Map 3 of 4

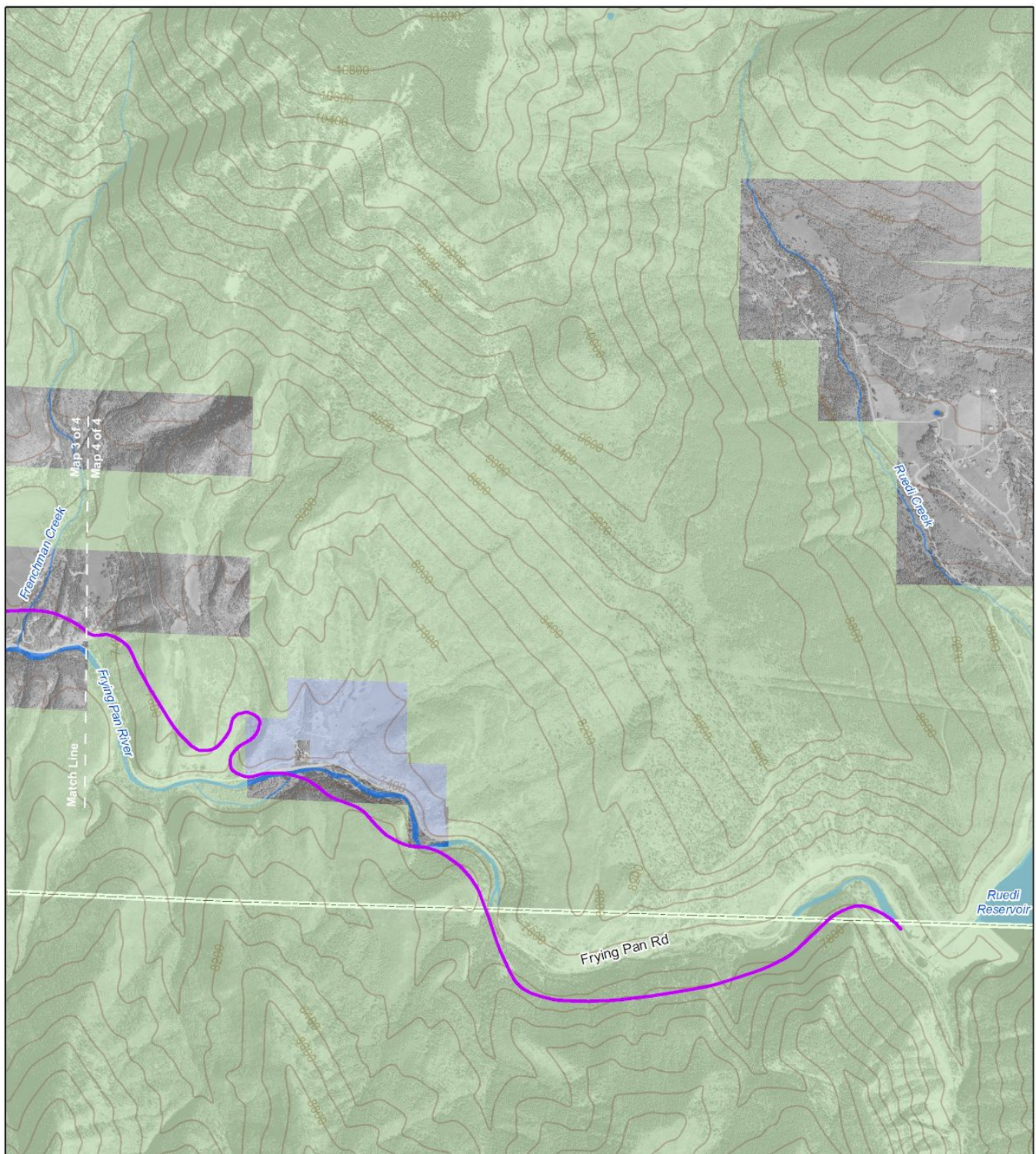
— Singletrack or Doubletrack Route

Public Lands



--- County Boundary

U.S. Forest Service

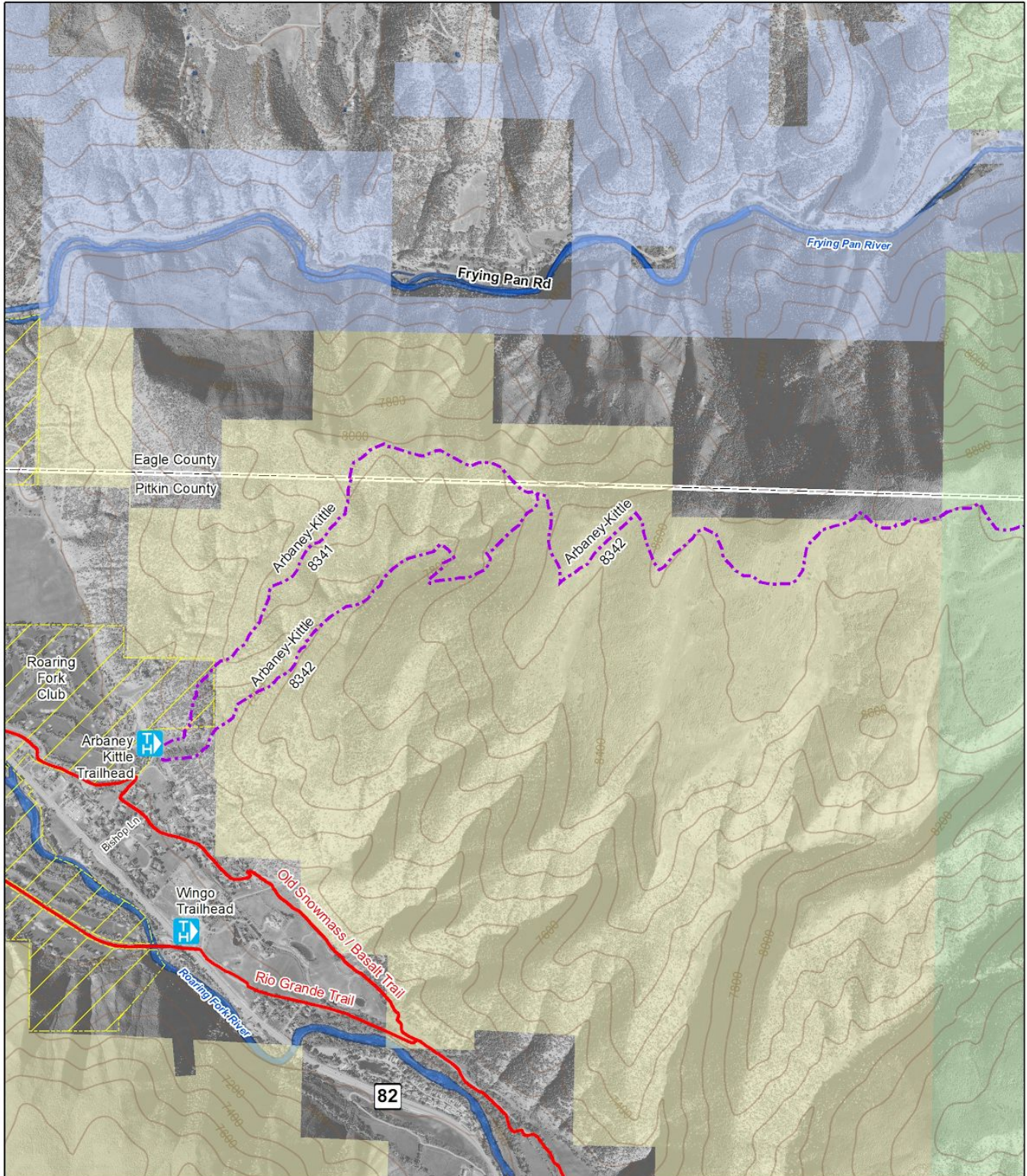




Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Stage Road Trail Map 4 of 4

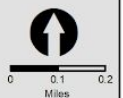
-  Singletrack or Doubletrack Route
-  County Boundary
- Public Lands**
-  U.S. Forest Service

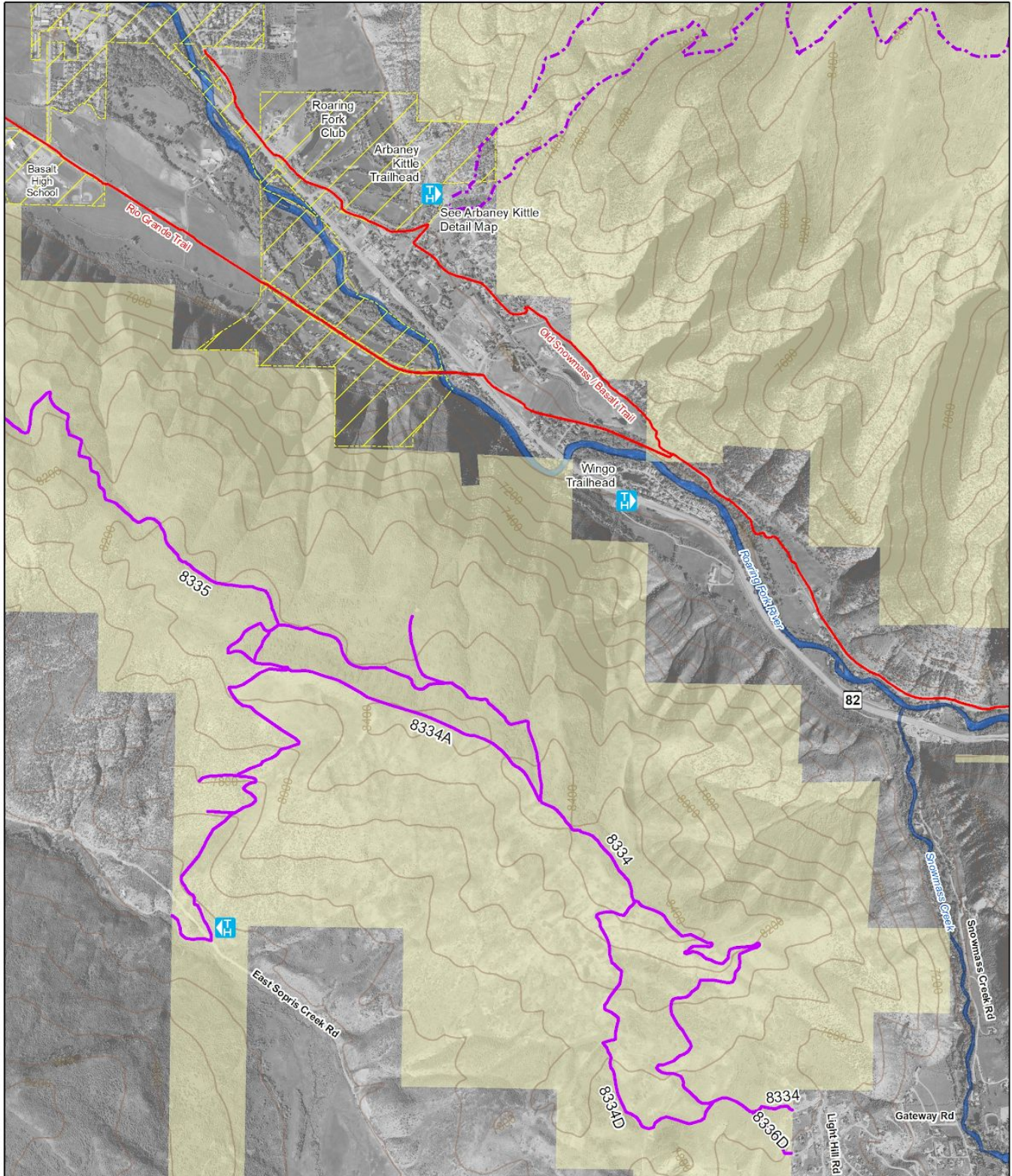




Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Arbaney Kettle Trail Network

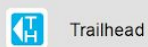
- - - Singletrack Trail
- Primary Route Paved Trail
- Town of Basalt
- County Boundary
- BLM
- U.S. Forest Service
- State of CO





Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020: Light Hill Trail Network

- Doubletrack Road
- - - Singletrack Trail
- Primary Route Paved Trail



Trailhead

Public Lands

- BLM
- Town Boundary



Appendix E: Electrical Assisted Bicycles in the Mid-Valley

The following information is provided on the regulated use of Electrical Assisted Bicycles (E-bikes) in the Mid-Valley of Eagle County as of December, 2019.

State of Colorado:

E-bikes are legal in Colorado. Class 1 and 2 E-bikes are not considered motor vehicles under state law, but as bicycles and can be allowed on roads and multi-use paths. As stated by the Colorado Revised Statutes: Section 42-4-1412, an “Electrical assisted bicycle” means a vehicle having two or three wheels, fully operable pedals, and an electric motor not exceeding seven hundred fifty watts of power.

Electrical assisted bicycles are further required to conform to one of three classes as follows: “Class 1 electrical assisted bicycle” means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.” “Class 2 electrical assisted bicycle” means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling but ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-eight miles per hour. Class 3 E-bikes can only be ridden on public roads, are not allowed for riders under age 16 and riders under age 18 are required to wear a bike helmet with safety strap in use while in motion.

Though allowed by state law, a local jurisdiction (town, county, metropolitan district) has the authority to regulate E-bikes more restrictively than state law allows. Federal jurisdictions including the BLM and USFS are not subject to state law and manage E-bikes per agency policy directives.

Eagle County:

On Eagle County owned and managed bicycle facilities and roads, E-bikes are allowed as per the state law described in the above reference to Colorado State Statutes (source: Eagle County website 12/2019).

Town of Basalt:

The Town of Basalt hasn’t adopted a specific policy regarding e-bikes but adheres to state laws as required (source: Town of Basalt staff interview 12/2019).

RFTA:

Class I and Class II E-bikes are allowed on the RGT between Two Rivers Park in Glenwood Springs and Emma Road in Basalt (source: RFTA website 12/2019).

Pitkin County:

Pitkin County allows Class 1, pedal-assist e-bikes on paved trails plus the gravel East of Aspen Trail and the gravel section of the RGT. E-bike use is not permitted on any single-track trail on Pitkin County’s open spaces. A Class 1 bike must be pedaled in order to operate and has a maximum speed of 20 mph (source: Pitkin County website 12/2019).

BLM:

In August 2019, the Secretary of the Interior issued an Order for the purpose of increasing recreational opportunities through the use of Electric Bikes (e-bikes). The SO directs the BLM to develop a proposed rule and associated regulations to be consistent with the Order, add a definition for e-bikes, and exempt all Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes from the definition of off-road vehicles or motorized vehicles. During the time necessary to revise BLM regulations in accordance with the SO, e-bikes may be allowed on trails limited to bicycles and non-motorized travel ONLY IF a BLM Manager issues a written decision authorizing e-bike use in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. BLM offices have the authority to identify additional trails for e-bike use on BLM-managed lands. BLM District and Field Managers are encouraged to issue decisions authorizing e-bike use in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (source: BLM website, 12/2019).

USFS:

E-bikes are deemed motorized vehicles and not permitted on any trail designated for non-motorized use only (source: USFS staff interview 12/2019).

Appendix F: 2019 Stakeholder Discussion Notes

The following organizations or agencies were contacted in November and December 2019 for the purpose of determining current trail priorities and goals, as well as to inform them of the re-start of the trails plan process. Summaries of conversation highlights are provided for the following:

1. Town of Basalt including Basalt Parks, Open Space & Trails Committee
2. Bureau of Land Management
3. Colorado Department of Transportation
4. Colorado Parks and Wildlife
5. Crawford Properties, LLC
6. Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
7. Eagle County Road and Bridge Department
8. Garfield County Community Development Department
9. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department
10. Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
11. Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
12. Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
13. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
14. United States Forest Service

1. Town of Basalt

Susan Philp, Town Planner and Watkins Fulk-Gray, Staff Planner

- Town of Basalt completed Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan in 2013.
- Very active POST Committee, will participate in the Mid-Valley Trail Plan process (meets 2nd and 4th Wed 4 pm, Basalt).
- Town maintains all town-owned trails.
- POST provided detailed comments in March 2018 to the Roaring Fork Regional Planning Commission for the Mid-Valley Area Community Plan to Eagle County. The following projects and issues were highlighted:
 - Pedestrian bridge over Roaring Fork River from Crown Mountain Park to RGT
 - Trail connections into and within the BLM Crown Area, including via Glassier and Buckhorn Trails
 - Connect Summit Vista Trail for access between Crown Mountain and Blue Lake PUD
 - Connect El Jebel to Missouri Heights, Basalt Mountain and Cottonwood Pass
 - Connect Shadow Rock and Tree Farm and El Jebel to Basalt Mountain
 - Connect Town of Basalt downtown to Basalt (and on to Eagle Valley)
 - Connection between Willits Lane Trail – Medical Center and Basalt Design
 - Improve Lake Christine and amenities
 - Develop Stage Road using existing public right-of-way
 - Update the Crown Mountain Park plan
 - Continue to highlight Intergovernmental Cooperation, as opportunities have been missed.
- POST hosted a December 2018 meeting to review local trail priorities with Pitkin County Open Space & Trails. Mid-Valley Trails Committee, RFOV and RFMBA and discuss proposed USFS Salvage project on Basalt Mountain. The collaborative group sent a letter to USFS requesting that, as part of the salvage operations with clearing equipment present, new trail connections be made to Mill Creek to provide subsequent access to Basalt Mountain trail network. Buffers and hand cutting around existing trails was requested to preserve the trail experience, as well as continued collaboration with USFS on trail building.
- Basalt recently met with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) about Lake Christine Wildlife Area and the town's interest in seeing the area improved and access from downtown to Basalt Mountain through the area. Contact with CPW recommended. CPW is not in favor of increased access to the area, maintained primarily as a wildlife area.
- Hooks Spur Bridge is an awkward and busy circulation area in the paved trail category. Parking is limited at Glassier, RFTA has installed more parking near Hooks Bridge. MVTC staff indicated they will take the lead on evaluating solutions in that area.
- Stage Road Trail is being used now, accessed via Cedar Drive. Need to install wayfinding signage to get there but concerned about directing trail users to a trail that is currently not a designated open public route, some owners (and dogs) consider trespass.
- Discussion about how much plan should include beyond Eagle County boundaries. Include all Eagle County and discuss the peripheral area in Pitkin.

2. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Brian Hopkins, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

- BLM Colorado River Field Office manages the Crown area at the base of Mt. Sopris that is located in Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin County.
- The area is managed primarily for mountain biking with trails available also to hikers, runners, and horseback riders.
- BLM has completed the majority of planned trail, campground and parking improvements on the Crown as envisioned by the Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) Travel Management Plan.

- RFMBA has been a major partner in the completion of new trail connections and improvements to existing trails.
- Working with a local horse group to address equestrian-specific facilities.
- A horse and foot-only trail was constructed on the east side of the Crown to mitigate conflicts that can occur between horses, bikers and hikers.
- New parking is planned on top of the Crown for trucks with horse trailers.
- Campgrounds and parking lots have been added on the Pitkin and Garfield County sides of the Crown.
- Winter gates have been installed.
- There will likely be adjustments or “tweaks” to the trails network, including removing trails off of private lands on the west side of Crown.
- The Crown and Red Hill focus on human use, Sutey Ranch is reserved for wildlife use, limited human access.
- Majority of the Crown is closed for winter wildlife needs. Exception is a ditch trail along Prince Creek Road for XC skiing, walking and horse.
- CPW is involved in a study of trail use on deer and elk populations.
- CPW concerned about bighorn sheep population at Lake Christine-Basalt Mountain.
- Approximately 1000 acres of the total 1800 acres of BLM lands on Basalt Mountain were substantially burned in the Lake Christine fire in 2018, in addition to burned USFS, state and private lands.
- A recent order from the Secretary of Dept. of Interior directs BLM to allow electric bikes on non-motorized routes, subject to local agency further study and official authorization.

3. Colorado Department of Transportation Region 3 (CDOT)

Andrew Knapp, Resident Engineer, Mark Bunnell, Resident Engineer Traffic and Safety, Mark Rogers, Planning Manager

- No additional improvements to SH-82 are planned at this time.
- Project priorities from the Inter-Mountain Transportation Planning Region are due soon, and will advise if any SH-82 projects requested for the Mid-Valley area.

4. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)

Peter Boyatt, Wildlife Officer

- Lake Christine Basalt State Wildlife Area was purchased as winter habitat for deer and elk herds.
- It is closed to all human use Dec. 1 – April 15 for wildlife migration, and open to foot and horse travel the remainder of the year.
- Bicycle use is not permitted at any time of the year.
- No formal trail system exists, human travel occurs on administrative roads or social trails.
- Other uses of the property include hay fields and a gun range.
- A management plan is adopted for the area and will be provided.

5. Crawford Properties, LLC (CP)

Prentice Hubbell, Owner

- Crawford Properties, LLC maintains trails and sidewalks that it owns in the El Jebel area as well trails and sidewalks owned by others as follows:
 1. SH 82 El Jebel underpass – owned by CDOT with CP contributing gratis “additional” services as a benefit to the community. The underpass occasionally needs more attention than CDOT can provide. CP pressure washes and cleans the tunnel periodically.
 2. CP maintains the paved trail parallel to El Jebel Road through a signed agreement with Eagle County. Project construction was a partnership between CP and Eagle County.

3. CP maintains all paved routes to tunnel on the east side of the tunnel (not on west side / County annex side)
4. CP maintains several trails that connect CP properties and neighborhoods, including an 8-foot trail from El Jebel Road to new 46 home development near the fire station.
5. JW Drive – ownership in question at present. CP did not build and does not own or maintain, but does provide snowplowing services gratis as community benefit.
6. CP does not maintain Blue Lake subdivision trails.
 - Upper Cattle Creek Road features blind curves. Sight distance for bikers and drivers can be unsafe.
 - Additional shoulders on El Jebel Road would be difficult, a corridor is developed.
 - Crawford’s own land between El Jebel and Basalt Mountain, trail connection not preferred, fire zone.

6. Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District (CMPRD)

Rebecca Wagner, Director

- Planning 3-4-acre bike skills park with jumps, etc. as 2020 construction project.
- Partnering with Aspen Valley Ski Club, funding with Crown Mountain revenues, hoping for possible GOCO grant
- Trail connection from Crown Mountain Park to RGT is a big vision, would be ideal to circulate trail users to and through the park, and enable El Jebel and Willits residents improved access to RGT via CMPRD.
- CMPRD funded by a property tax.
- CMPRD maintains all paved and unpaved paths in the park, providing snowplowing and sweeping as needed.
- Maintenance includes the sidewalks circling the Eagle County annex.
- Trail paralleling Valley Road is currently unpaved.
- Nordic trails are groomed on the property for winter use

7. Eagle County Road and Bridge Department (EC R&B)

John Harris, Road and Bridge Director

- Responsible for roads in unincorporated areas of Eagle County Mid-Valley unless otherwise maintained by HOA or POA, or similar.
- See https://map.eaglecounty.us/GIS_Viewers_Road_Maintenance/ for maintenance locations.
- Basalt maintains all roads within town limits.
- CDOT maintains SH 82 as well as SH 82 Frontage Road between Valley Road and Catherine Store Road.
- Some local confusion about Frontage Road maintenance, it is CDOT’s responsibility. EC R&B does receive calls for maintenance issues.
- Maintenance maps for trails, sidewalks, shared roads, tunnels in Mid-Valley would be a good tool to provide public information.
- Trail, path, sidewalk discussion:
 1. Most facilities in Eagle County Mid-Valley are owned and maintained by others.
 2. JW Drive paved trail (1,250’) is currently under ownership-maintenance review.
 3. Hooks Spur bridge sidewalk is a maintenance matter, and is not currently plowed. Too narrow for R&B equipment. Not owned by Basalt, but they may be a partner for maintenance. This area could use some review for pedestrian and bicycle circulation and trail improvements.
 4. Crawford Properties maintains several trails in El Jebel.
- Shared Roads:
 1. Frying Pan Road is owned and maintained by Eagle County from Sopris Drive in Basalt to 19.5 miles east, ending just east of Freeman Drive. 4.8 miles resurfaced in 2019, road platform width remained the same due to terrain constraints (wetlands, bank, and river). No shoulder striped but edge stripe provided for visibility, safety cue. Gravel shoulder. Cyclists to share lanes. Acceptable to have goals

to improve roads where can, area available is severely constrained. Eagle County Engineering performed a shared-road study approximately mid-2000's. Retrieve for information, evaluate where roads could be widened or separated trails added.

2. Cattle Creek Road and Valley Road, no widening currently planned.

8. Garfield County

Sheryl Bowers, Community Development Director

- Garfield County Comprehensive Plan includes some language related to trail networks.
- There is not a specific trail plan for Garfield County with specific trails identified.
- Recent "Live Well" Human Services Needs Assessment report provided recommendations related to biking and walking.
- County has installed signs on certain country roads asking motorists to provide three feet of clearance to cyclists (per state law).

9. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department (PCOST)

Lindsey Utter, Planning and Outreach Manager

- No major trail projects are planned for the Mid-Valley area of Pitkin County.
- Glassier Open Space Management Plan will be updated next year.
- PCOST is not involved in Light Hill trail expansions, BLM and CPW management.
- The Arbaney Kittle connection to Basalt is desired but requires private landowner approval.

10. Roaring Forks Mountain Bike Association (RFMBV)

Mike Pritchard, Executive Director

- RFMBA has been a regular participant at MVTC meetings the last 3-4 years.
- Have completed projects with BLM on the Crown: determine trail connections, Environmental Assessments and implement construction.
- MVTC has contributed funding to the federally and state required resource studies (known as NEPA studies per the National Environmental Policy Act) and construction work.
- There is a little more work to do on the Crown that would be within Eagle County.
- Majority of work left on Crown is in Garfield County.
- Working with the USFS to reroute a trail on Basalt Mountain in 2020.
- Would like to work with USFS on a Mill Creek Rim trail on Basalt Mountain.
- Additional trails on USFS would be ideal but USFS not approving more at this time.
- Trail from Basalt downtown to Basalt Mountain is also a goal. BLM and private land must be crossed.
- More work necessary to get necessary approvals from public and private.
- Ideal to create a hiking trail to reduce conflicts on other trails (Crown), and disburse hikers on more trails so wildlife impacts are reduced.
- Lake Christine was once open to bikes, and would like to be able to access that area for biking during the least-impactful times of the year.
- Good to have more trails in Basalt's "backyard".
- Stage Road is also a potential trail for improvement and expansion.
- RFBVHC seeks additional parking for horse trailers, BLM is constructing a new lot on the Crown.

11. Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers (RFOV)

Ron Rash, Executive Director

- RFOV has worked with MVTC for over 20 years.
- Have worked closely with USFS, BLM, RFMBA, Pitkin, Eagle and Garfield County, RFBVHC on trails in the Mid-Valley area.

- Annually communicate with agencies (federal, state, towns, counties) to develop long term (10-year outlook) and the next year's project lists.
- Recommend speaking to Leslie Thomas of RFVHC.
- Working with Matt Yamashita, CDOW, on a possible solution to construct a trail at the base of Basalt Mountain as a route to public lands and connect Basalt and El Jebel. CPW has wildlife and burn area concerns.
- Looking to repair an eroded route on Light Hill in spring 2020

12. Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

Brett Meredith, RFTA Trails and Corridor Manager

- Repairs underway to Sopris Creek bridge on Eagle/Pitkin County line.
- Asphalt repair project planned for 2020 including repairs of root upheaval, cracking, etc. in Eagle County
- Recreational Trails Plan in draft stage. Process included public outreach and 500 surveys were completed. Findings available at <https://www.rfta.com/trail-information/>
- Some themes from survey and planning effort included:
 1. Corridor is highly valued, safe and amenitized
 2. Multi-use safety is critical
 3. Passing etiquette and speed control are ongoing safety concerns
 4. Striping, wayfinding and mileage markers appreciated
 5. Drinking water stations and restrooms highly desired
 6. Tree roots and bumps safety concern
- Also see <https://www.rfta.com/2040roadmap/> for agency goals and new maps at <https://www.rfta.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/trailmap.pdf>
- Trailhead kiosks are to be updated, including Hooks Spur Lane trailhead to match Pitkin County design.
- Additional wayfinding signs will also be installed along the corridor.

David Johnson, Director of Planning

- Five primary regional bus stops with the highest ridership along the Highway 82 corridor have been identified as high priority bus stops in need of improvement:
 1. Catherine Store
 2. Sagewood
 3. Lazy Glen
 4. Holland Hills
 5. Aspen Village
- Improvements to these bus stops include the potential relocation and improvement of bus shelters, safety improvements to SH 82 crossings, improved lighting, improved bus bays, next bus signage and access to Wi-Fi. Where appropriate, slip lanes and access for private autos for drop-offs will be considered.

Nick Senn, Senior Project Manager

- Clarification of pedestrian tunnel ownership and maintenance:
 1. El Jebel Road and Highway 82 – CDOT, but the local business cleans and takes care because highway crews are sometimes not as attentive
 2. Basalt Avenue – Town of Basalt has IGA with CDOT
 3. Willits to Tree Farm – Town of Basalt has IGA with CDOT
 4. Old Emma Trail (minor tunnel) – ties into the RGT at Sopris Creek; is also owned by CDOT

13. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council (RFVHC)**Leslie Thomas and Susan Cuseo**

- Interested in preserving and enhancing opportunities for horse use on trails.
- Goals are to keep horses on trails, have suitable truck and trailer parking, and promote safety, education and shared trail use.
- Important to have trails for all levels of skill, get youth involved, a historic and enjoyable activity
- Want horseback riding to “stay in the picture”.
- Parking has been a challenge and conflicts on some trails with other users.
- Electric mountain bikes are a concern.
- Have coordinated projects with BLM, Pitkin County and would like to be more involved, thanks for being included in this project.
- Use Basalt Mountain parking area and USFS is a great deal. Would like to see trails and roads closed by USFS decades ago due to lack of maintenance. Want trails and roads revived and cleared.
- Equestrians also enjoy loop trails, similar to mountain bikers, motorcyclists, and hikers.
- Not requesting cutting new trails but cleaning up and re-opening old trails and roads.
- Hoping to find funds to work with the USFS to hire Youth Corps or others to clear trails.
- Further comments provided via email subsequent to phone interview, as follows:

The identified trail projects are in Eagle County and connect into neighboring Pitkin and Garfield Counties. They cross US Forest, BLM, private holdings, and open space lands managed by different land managers. These are generally trails long used by horseback riders for decades and some 100 years or more. The goal of the RFVHC is to provide safe parking for trucks and trailers and connections to trails offering the opportunity to enjoy an outdoor experience so vital to all our physical, mental and spiritual well-being and health. It is also vital to our horse’s health as well.

1. Basalt Mountain USFS Trail #1909. This trail was earlier a USFS trail that has fallen out of use due to lack of maintenance. Trail #1909 departs road FS 509 at the private property gate as a singletrack trail then continues parallel to the private property boundary (after intersection with Basalt Mountain Trail) and Cattle Creek heading SE. The trail returns to Cattle Creek and then climbs through the forest and meadows to reach Toner Reservoir. The above is the trail segment that RFVHC proposed be cleared, restored to use. From Toner Reservoir, one can travel either S/downstream on Toner Creek to the Frying Pan road (also not maintained) or to the west and connect with the Basalt Mountain trail currently popular with mountain bikers. Another connection is NE to the USFS #514, Red Table Mountain Rd. With all these options from Toner Reservoir, having this #1909 restored to use would be a great trail asset.
2. North Fork Trail - USFS. This trail leaves the heavily used single track along Cattle Creek and turns north, closely following the creek and reaching the Red Table Mountain road. This trail also connects to the more used Lone Tree single track trail to make a loop. Both this trail and the previous #1909 travel through beautiful country and are safe trails once cleared. Both trails provide alternatives to trails heavily used by mechanized or motorized travelers. Both trails already have truck and trailer parking.
3. Missouri Heights. A trail long envisioned by Kit Strang, Strang Ranch that would cross several private properties from BLM Sutey Ranch to Strang Ranch to Spring Park Reservoir (and, extend to trails listed in #1 and #2). Discussions have taken place with some landowners but no firm agreements have been accomplished. This will link parking and equestrian centers. We would hope to obtain advice to make this happen.
4. The Crown Jewel Horse Trail, a horse and hiking trail. A 12+ mile trail connection Glassier Open Space across the BLM Crown to the Divide Parking at the top of West Sopris Mountain and Prince

Creek Road. This will link the RFT, parking and equestrian center on either end of the wonderful 9,100 acres of the BLM.

5. The RGT. Because the Rio Grande is a valley corridor that provides connections throughout we are working to improve or bring back soft track surface for safe horseback riding.
6. Sweetwater in the Flat Tops. We understand this area may be acquired by Eagle County Open Space. The history horseback riders have with this special area goes back a long way. This area is of vital interest to us. We look forward to learning more about this potential acquisition and how we may fit into future planning for it.

14. United States Forest Service (USFS)

Shelly Grail, Recreation Manager

- USFS manages lands on Basalt Mountain, Red Table and Frying Pan Valley.
- No new trails are currently planned in the Mid-Valley region by USFS.
- Will work with RFMBA to decommission a logging road, and reroute a small trail that is not in good shape.
- Summer 2020 Basalt Mountain will be cleared to remove downed timber, revegetate.
- Received funding in 2018 to restore Basalt Mountain Trail system. Included tread rework and noxious weed control. Funds are spent.
- USFS is aware Basalt would like a connector trail to the top of Basalt Mountain, Basalt has provided comment to USFS.
- Recommended contacting CPW.
- Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Trail is in place. Open to bikes and e-bikes as motorized.
- Expansion desired by OHV community, OHV group advocacy and maintenance support necessary to help advance.
- E-bikes are not allowed on USFS trails posted as non-motorized.
- Stage Road not on a project list at present time.

Appendix G: Referral and Public Comment on the Draft Plan

The following comment letters were submitted during the 30-day referral period regarding the proposed Plan that commenced on January 28, 2020 and ended on February 28, 2020 in compliance with the ECLUR Referral review process. The following letters are retained for the record in this appendix and organized by type with a cover sheet listing respondents. 18 responses were received from agencies and organizations. 17 responses were received from individual public constituents.

Referral Agency and Organization Comment on the Draft Plan

Referral comment original letters from the following Agency and Organization respondents are listed alphabetically and attached:

1. Town of Basalt
2. BLM
3. CDOT
4. Crawford Properties
5. Crown Mountain Park and Recreation District
6. Eagle County Historical Society
7. Eagle County, Sustainable Communities Department.
8. Hooks Spur Collaborative
9. Mid-Valley Trails Committee
10. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails
11. Roaring Fork Mountain Biking Association
12. Roaring Fork School District
13. Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
14. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
15. Summit Vista HOA
16. Ten Peaks HOA
17. USFS
18. WE-cycle

February 28, 2020

Kris Valdez, Senior Planner, MURP, AICP
Eagle County Planning Department
500 Broadway
P.O. Box 179
Eagle, CO 81631
Delivered by E-mail



Dear Ellie,

Re: Town of Basalt Referral comments for the Mid-Valley Trails Plan

Thank you for the opportunity for the Town of Basalt to provide both initial and referral comments on the draft Mid-Valley Trails Plan and thank you for incorporating much of the Town's initial feedback. The Parks Open Space and Trails (POST) Committee reviewed the draft Plan in February. The comments below reflect a combination of comments from POST and Basalt Staff.

POST and Staff are very pleased with the Plan and all the coordination that lead up to the referral draft. POST finds the draft plan consistent with the 2013 Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan and the draft of the 2020 Basalt Master Plan. We believe the Plan provides excellent direction for numerous parties to incorporate the best trail network for this portion of the valley. The suggestions below are primarily technical and are aimed at providing more clarity to readers to understand the trail descriptions in the Basalt area.

- A. It may be appropriate to include a map of the trails in the East Valley Road area, including the social trail from Valley Pines to Willits Lane and the various trails and social paths connecting to bus stops.
- B. Page 18 - Recommend changing the project name from Southside Trail to Southside Drive since the bike lane is proposed as part of the road instead of a separate trail.
- C. Page 19 - Basalt could be listed as a potential partner in the Basalt Mountain Trail Rehabilitation project.
- D. Page 19 - Wayfinding is particularly lacking on Basalt Mountain, and little information generally is available for how to access singletrack trails there. Basalt Mountain could be added as one of the "hot spots" needing trail etiquette and wayfinding signage, which could also be noted as a specific item on page 19 within the Basalt Mountain Trail Rehabilitation discussion.
- E. Page 24 -To add to the ways in which the Town of Basalt contributes funding, the Basalt Parks, Open Space and Trails sales tax could be included as an additional bullet.
- F. Page 39 - Old Emma Trail, first bullet. The reference to connecting old town Basalt to north Basalt should be changed to west Basalt.
- G. Page 38 - Willits Trail Description, suggest that the following be used to describe the location of the Willits Trail: This 2-mile trail is located within the right-of way of Willits Lane and travels along the edge of the Willits PUD and several other developments, terminating at the Intersection of the Highway 82 and Willits Lane/Two Rivers Road intersection where it converges into the Emma Trail.
- H. Page 39 - A reader could interpret that the Emma Trail Bridge is a new bridge as the

language states that it was designed to mimic a trestle bridge. The Plan could mention that the bridge over the river is a part of the trestle bridge that was over Maroon Creek. It was originally a railroad bridge that was repurposed into a road bridge, and different parts were repurposed and moved to various locations.

- I. Page 39-40 Emma Trail, under proposed trail improvements, the Plan should recommend that a new trail separate from Emma Road be required in the area east of the Basalt Sanitation Plant access if Basalt approves new development west of the US Post Office, and that eventually the Emma Trail should be connected to the Two Rivers Road Trail through a bridge over the Roaring Fork River in that area.
- J. Page 41 - Consider changing the location description of the Aspen Junction Trail to: ... generally located between Original Road and Hillcrest Drive on the north side of SH 82.
- K. Page 42 – Pedestrian safety could be added as a concern along with poor sight distance and lack of a connected route.
- L. Page 49, fourth bullet – Consider changing the trail description for the Valley Pines area to: A 2020 addition to the trails network recommended by the Town of Basalt, is one or more trail connections from Willits Lane to the Original Road/SH 82 intersection to formalize or serve the purpose of social trails currently in use. One proposed alignment would follow an irrigation ditch near Willits Bend.
- M. Page 49, fifth bullet - Consider changing the trail description to: Near where the East Valley Road Trail ends at the Original Road/SH82 intersection, an unpaved crusher-fine trail is constructed in the SH 82 right of way, passing in front of the Aspen Skiing Company employee tiny home project and the Aspen Basalt Mobile Home Park and connecting to Willits Lane.
- N. Page 61- Recommend that the CPW also be referenced as owning land in the area in addition to the USFS and BLM.

Please feel free to call Watkins Fulk-Gray at the Basalt Planning Office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Cindy Bruce
Chair, Basalt POST Committee

cc : Basalt Town Council
Basalt Planning and Zoning
Watkins-Fulk Gray, Basalt Staff Planner
Susan Philp, Basalt Planning Director
Ellie Caryl, Contract Planner for Eagle County
Morgan Beryl, Eagle County Community Development Director



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Hopkins, Brian <bhopkins@blm.gov>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Wed, Feb 5, 2020 at 10:24 AM

Kris - Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan. Overall the plan is very complete and the layout was easy to follow.

I did find a couple of minor edits. I also noted a potential conflict with our 2015 Approved Resource Management Plan involving protecting wildlife habitat on Basalt Mountain, Light Hill and the Arbaney-Kittle area. A surface-disturbing activity (such as a trail) or use may be considered, if BLM in consultation with CPW, determines that the proposed action/activity would not impair wildlife habitat values. For BLM lands in the Roaring Fork Valley, the Crown Special Recreation Management Area and the Red Hill SRMA are the areas where recreation infrastructure will likely be developed/improved to meet future recreation demand.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Page 34	Singletrack Networks Map – The map displays two-track routes as single-track routes on BLM lands.
Page 58	Basalt Mountain is listed under Proposed Single-track Trail Projects. BLM is not looking to expand the route system on Basalt Mountain due to its identification as a wildlife priority area - a stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas such as expanding the existing trail system. Perhaps exist routes could support connections to Basalt Mountain USFS trails
Page 58	<p>Light Hill is listed under Proposed Single-track Trail Projects. It is important to note that environmental assessment # DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2019-0077-EA approved a reroute of the Light Hill trail behind Basalt High School.</p> <p>However the BLM is not looking to expand the route system on Light Hill due to its identification as a wildlife priority area in the 2015 BLM Approved Resource Management Plan. Stipulation "CRVFO-NSO-7: Priority Wildlife Habitat" prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas to protect vegetation cover and forage on state wildlife areas and BLM lands with high and overlying wildlife values.</p> <p>You can read the full stipulation and the list of priority wildlife habitat areas covered by the stipulation on Page 11 of Appendix B at https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/68506/90704/109014/03_Appendix_B_Stips_FINAL_6-12-15.pdf</p>
Page 63	BLM has met on-site with the RFVHC on the feasibility to improve the "The Divide" parking area. No funding is available and no design work has been done. But it is in BLM out-year recreation planning to improve the trailhead/parking area to accommodate trailer parking
Page 63	<p>These statements - and dates - are not quite accurate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>"Trails in the Prince Creek portion of the Crown SRMA are closed to mountain biking December 15 through April 15 and open to foot and horse trail year-round."</i> · <i>Year-round access is provided for mountain biking on lower elevation Prince Creek trails (Porcupine Ditch and below).</i> <p>A more correct statement would be:</p>

	<p>· “Trails in the Prince Creek portion of the Crown SRMA are closed to motorized and mechanized travel from December 1 to April 15 except portions of BLM routes #8320, #8320E, and #8325D, paralleling Pitkin County Road 5, that remain open to mechanized travel. Foot and horse travel is open year round.”</p> <p>Two other notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) BLM does not groom the routes open to winter biking so it is very difficult riding. 2) Pitkin County is now closing the Prince Creek Road, making winter access for biking even more difficult.
Page 68	It is important to note that Light Hill is identified in the 2015 BLM Approved Resource Management Plan as a wildlife priority area - a stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas such as expanding the existing trail system.
Page 69	It is important to note that the Arbaney-Kittle area is identified in the 2015 BLM Approved Resource Management Plan as a wildlife priority area - a stipulation that prohibits surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities on priority wildlife habitat areas such as expanding the existing trail system.

Brian Hopkins
Assistant Field Manager - Resources
Bureau of Land Management
Interior Region 7
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652
(970) 876-9003

On Tue, Jan 28, 2020 at 4:26 PM Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

comments to Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Blender - CDOT, Emmalee <emmalee.blender@state.co.us>

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 11:50 AM

To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Cc: Emmalee Blender - CDOT <emmalee.blender@state.co.us>, Andrew Knapp - CDOT <andrew.knapp@state.co.us>

Kris-

Sorry this is a little late. I compiled comments from several internal staff and tried to keep it brief and general. If you have questions, you can contact me or Andrew Knapp, Glenwood Springs Resident Engineer (andrew.knapp@state.co.us).

1. **References.** When designing trails and structures in CDOT Right of Way, there are state laws, CDOT specifications, manuals and other materials, in addition to industrial standards such as AASHTO, MASH, NCHRP, etc. As project design takes proceeds, these are used as guidelines by the designer engineers. Engineering judgement is used to determine the best use of the transportation corridor that enhances the safety of the traveling public. All facilities in CDOT ROW must meet ADA requirements.
2. **Underpasses.** Underpasses on CDOT highway are constructed for many purposes. Sometimes the initial purpose (stock passes) changes to pedestrian underpasses. The ownership of these structures may be CDOT. However, each structure is unique for management, maintenance, lighting and operations. These functions may be the responsibility of a Local Agency.
3. **State Statute, §43-2-135 Division of authority over streets.** Paragraph (1)(a) assigns responsibility of infrastructure beyond the back of curb to cities and counties. Therefore, construction and maintenance of trails, pedestrian lighting of paths and underpasses, and trailhead parking are not CDOT functions.
4. **Pedestrian/bike crossing CDOT highways.** Crosswalks or independent pedestrian signals (sheet 9) must have engineering analysis and meet warrants. It's best to talk to us as early as possible if these are proposed. Many times the proposed action is not warranted and doesn't get installed. The best contact person is the CDOT Resident Engineer for your county.
5. **Clear zone requirements.** Landscaping and barriers to motor vehicles (sheet 10) need to meet engineering requirements for line of sight and clear zone requirements. These would be the responsibility of the Local Agency to maintain.
6. **Bridges.** All bridges on CDOT Right of Way must be reviewed by Staff Bridge. Staff Bridge has requirements for the design vehicle for calculating bridge loads, depending on the location and proposed use of the trail. The design specifications in this Master Plan may not be consistent with the Staff Bridge requirements.
7. **Signs.** We have learned from experience that there must be 7 feet of clearance to the bike path or sidewalk to the bottom of signs in order to clear bicyclists' heads and helmets.
8. **Utilities.** All utilities within 15 feet of the edge of pavement must be a minimum of 60 inches deep. This is to accommodate the sign bases. Past 15 feet, the utilities must be a minimum of 48 inches deep.
9. **Parks, trailhead parking, sanitation and trash.** The State of Colorado Model Traffic Code, Part 12 controls parking in CDOT Right of Way. The CDOT Right of Way is for transportation purposes. Safety issues are paramount when considering parking in the Right of Way,
 - a. This includes informal recreational parking. CDOT is working with trail applicants to include trail head parking off CDOT Right of Way for safety reasons. Other items which need considered for trailhead parking are sanitary facilities, trash cans, picnic areas and wayfinding signage. Access and informal parking for trails must be considered when they enter CDOT Right of Way.
 - b. Inventory Map (W) shows a possible park in a CDOT parcel. In the unlikely situation where this site was allowed to be used as a park, it would only be a temporary use. When CDOT needs that Right of Way, the park and facilities would be removed.

Emmalee Blender, MSCE, E.I.T.

Region 3 Traffic and Safety Regional Traffic Representative for Program Eng. East, Project Manager/Engineer and Traffic Bike/Pedestrian Trail Specialist



P 970.683.6280 | F 970.683.6290

2/28/2020

Eagle County Government Mail - comments to Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

emmalee.blender@state.co.us | www.codot.gov | www.cotrip.org

222 S. 6th Street, Room 100 Grand Junction, CO 81501



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Trails

Prentice Hubbell <prentice@eljebel.co>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Thu, Feb 6, 2020 at 3:37 PM

Hello Kris,

It was a pleasure meeting you and Ellie today. I wanted to let you know I am very excited about the possible bridge over the Roaring Fork River at Crown Mt. Park! I believe it would be a great improvement to the park and this area of the valley. It would allow residence from El Jebel to avoid using Willits Ln. to gain access to the Rio Grand Trail.

Great job on the trails report!

Thank you,

Prentice Hubbell
Office: (970)963-2684 x 3
Mobile: (970)948-0835
prentice@eljebel.co
www.eljebel.co





Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Crown Mtn Park and Rio Grande Connection

Rebecca Wagner <crownmtdirector@sopris.net>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Thu, Feb 6, 2020 at 2:27 PM

Kris,

The top priority trail projects should be connecting Crown Mtn Park & El Jebel to the Rio Grande Trail. The district has 300,000 visits to the park annually 67,000 of them being athletic visits. We have people from Glenwood Springs to Aspen using the park daily. We are the most heavily used park in the Roaring Fork Valley. This connection not only decreases traffic, it will create safe connection for people living in El Jebel to get to both Carbondale and Basalt. It also would connect Crown Mtn Park to the schools making it convenient for families to get their kids to programming at the park.

The district is in the process of putting in a world class bike park with a variety of bike programming. With this trail connection it takes our bike park and programming to the next level by making Crown Mtn Park the entry point for biking the Crown Mtn Biking Trails and road biking the Rio Grande.

The International Mountain Bike Association just awarded the Roaring Fork Valley with the gold level award, only 7 places in the world have been given this award. We can only expect more biking tourism coming to the valley. The current parking for the glassier and prince creek trail is minimal. Crown Mtn Park is in the process of adding parking; this would reduce parking congestion at both trail heads.

Crown Mtn Park would like to be involved in getting this project off the ground. We are interested in learning more about the stakeholders and how we can be proactive at moving this project forward.

Thanks for your time today!

Rebecca Wagner

Crown Mountain Park & Recreation District

Executive Director

970.319.8041



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Kathy Heicher <kheicher@gmail.com>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Sun, Feb 23, 2020 at 10:39 AM

Kris,

The Eagle County Historical Society's comment is that this Trails plan is an excellent opportunity to incorporate some of the Roaring Fork Valley's history into the effort. It appears the County is already working at that, with the reconstruction of the old stage road. How about including an interpretive sign along the path? And how about interpretive signs that explain the origination of Emma, the Catherine Store (there's gotta be a story there), etc.

The Eagle County Historical Society's files at the Eagle Library are a bit light on history of the Roaring Fork Valley, although we do have some stuff. Basalt has its own Historical Society that only functions periodically. Carbondale is better with that effort. The county could also glean some information from some of the long-time residents (Crawford, Cerise, Duroux, Vagneur).

It is also possible the Aspen Historical Society would have some information.

Kathy Heicher
President
Eagle County Historical Society
[Quoted text hidden]



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid Valley Trail Plan comments

Adam Palmer <adam.palmer@eaglecounty.us>

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 1:32 PM

To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Hi Kris,

Thank you for reaching out regarding comments for the draft Mid-Valley Trails Plan. I had a couple comments for consideration:

1. While I love the cover photo, it may encourage dogs to be off leash in an area (Tree Farm Crown Mountain Rec Area) which requires dogs to be on a leash.
2. Recognizing dog park areas and/or including some language regarding pet policies as it pertains to Mid Valley Trails might be helpful to strengthen the plan since this was mentioned in a couple of stakeholder comments.
3. Including a policy or directive around electric bikes or e-bikes would be helpful since this is an evolving mode of transportation where guidance would be helpful. The draft does a good job of articulating some of the existing rules and policies around e-bikes, having some directive might be helpful.

Thank you,

Adam

Adam Palmer
Sustainable Communities Director
adam.palmer@eaglecounty.us
970-328-8734

Hooks Spur Neighborhood Collaborative

Referral: Mid-Valley Trails Plan

We want to thank Eagle County for including us as a referral group for the proposed Mid-Valley Trails Plan. We appreciate the County's inclusive approach and believe that all stakeholders want to work together to ensure the Roaring Fork Valley plans for its future through an approach that balances the needs of an increased human population with the critical work necessary to ensure that wildlife habitat is protected and our natural assets are preserved.

We have reviewed the proposed plan through a balanced lens of the needs of humans and the needs of wildlife. We have focused on four projects to offer the following feedback/recommendations:

1. Hooks Lane Bridge – Support

“Basalt and RFTA trail planning documents identify this area as a weak link for clear navigation and safe circulation from Basalt to the Rio Grande Trail, and recommend further study and action to resolve the issues such as poor sight distance and lack of a connected route separated from the road. A trail bridge parallel to Hooks Lane Bridge has been recommended to resolve the deficiencies of the 3-foot sidewalk on one side of the bridge.”

We concur that the Bridge Connection in its current state is potentially dangerous and needs to be redesigned. Specifically:

- Raised sidewalk needs to be removed.
- The lack of winter snow removal on the sidewalk pushes pedestrians into the road.
- Double blind corner is dangerous for pedestrians, bikers, and autos. The potential for disaster increases as more and more people use the area.
- Better signage will help travelers along RGT during winter closures.

There are four landowners adjacent to the bridge, and we encourage the County to include them in any redesign process as they have the most knowledge of how this area is used throughout the day and seasons. This will meet the following **Design Standards Mid-Valley Trails Plan**:

- Some trail sections may be in close proximity to residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural land uses.
 - Adjacent owners should be contacted in advance of trail construction, and possible conflicts should be identified and mitigated as part of the analysis for each trail segment.
 - The “good neighbor” policy is important, particularly during the construction period.

2. Crown – RGT Bridge Connection – Strongly Oppose

“Construct a trail connection from the RGT to Crown Mountain Park, crossing the Roaring Fork River. The project implementation would involve RFTA, CMRD, BLM and private property owners at minimum.”

We object to this project from both the human and wildlife perspectives. First, we do not see a compelling case for the need of this connection. We understand that the purpose of a comprehensive trail plan is to provide people with an alternative to getting in vehicles and using trails to connect, and we read this as part of the plan to “Close gaps in the system.” However, we disagree that this is a gap. People can easily get from RGT to Crown Mountain Park via Willits Lane. Many of us use Crown Mountain Park and find the walk down Hooks Spur, by Willits, and to the park enjoyable. **This is a solution in search of a problem.**

More importantly, the disruption to, and eventual decimation of, wildlife along the river and in the abundant riparian ecosystem is completely unacceptable to anyone who considers the sanctuary for bird and animal life that this stretch provides as important to the preservation of what makes this Valley so beautiful.

The proposal acknowledges that the project would require collaboration with property owners. The owners along the river observe that this stretch provides many species with a sanctuary. One observes, “The game camera out by the barn captures all kinds of wildlife moving down to what we call the “island”. There are a nesting pair of horned owls, nesting pair of red hawks, at least three herons (usually found in the pond/swamp at the edge of the woods, and a bedding area that is almost always full of deer.) During the last two summers, we have averaged about 35+ turkeys down there as well...that parcel of land is the last quiet place animals can go for water and not be disturbed in our area.”

For this project to be considered in the overall plan, at a minimum, landowners and leaseholders on both sides of the river must be consulted. This contact should have been made prior to finalizing the draft, and we are concerned that the group has not done its due diligence for this project. The proposal map indicates the crossing in an area of one landowner with a conservation easement that reads:

The majority of the Property is comprised of Rocky Mountain lower montane riparian woodland and shrubland. This native habitat provides shelter between the pastures and the Roaring Fork river for grazing wildlife. It also provides terrestrial habitat for water-loving species...

Conservation of the Property will protect potential nesting, migrating, grazing, foraging, and resting habitat for many species including osprey, the great blue heron, and the threatened river otter. The CPW identified the Property as providing important winter and summer range for mule deer. It also provides fall concentration and overall habitat for black bear and is located near elk winter range and concentration areas.

This language is supported by the **Eagle County Comprehensive Plan 3.7.2**

In these areas, open fields and shallower snow depths provide critical winter range for elk and deer. Historic migration routes follow rivers and tributary streams, and the associated riparian areas provide drinking water, cover, and a rich mixture of forage plants. Low elevation meadows support large populations of small mammals, which in turn support healthy numbers of hawks, golden eagles and other predators.

In addition, this proposal does not meet the following **Design Standards for Environmental Mitigation in the Mid-Valley Trails Plan**.

- *Avoid encroaching upon wetlands or riparian corridors, critical habitat areas, or erosive landforms.*

Clearly, this project encroaches on riparian corridors, critical habitat, and erosive habitat. We believe the Hooks Bridge Connector just a mile up the road “fills the gap” between RGT and Crown Mountain Park.

3. Basalt Mountain Trails – Concerned; More Information Needed

Basalt Mountain offers a lot of recreational opportunity, and we appreciate the perspective of many that access without the need of a vehicle may be beneficial to people. We are concerned, however, that these new trails will further disturb the wildlife on the south facing side of the mountain. We would like more study or information on how these trails will impact wildlife before trail proposal is approved through the Plan. This includes access from El Jebel and Lake Christine.

The Eagle County Comprehensive Plan 3.7.5

Other forms of recreation can create other negative impacts. The mere presence of humans, vehicles and domestic animals in areas frequented by wildlife can have negative psychological effects, causing stress in animals as they must alter their instinctual travel routes and feeding patterns. Stress increases susceptibility to disease and can reduce reproduction rates.

We ask that CDW or other agency conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of additional recreational use on the wildlife on Basalt Mountain. This information is critical to informing any additional recreation on Basalt Mountain.

4. Crown SRMA and Glassier Open Space – Concerned; Impact of Increased Activity

As neighbors of the Crown, we have seen a significant decrease in wildlife activity since the increase in human activity on The Crown. We understand a study determining causation has not been done, yet anecdotally we see a correlation.

We have met with various officials to express this concern and have heard the rationale that residents and visitors need the opportunity to recreate in open spaces and public lands. We understand this need yet continue to be hopeful that citizen advocacy groups and professional planners weigh the cost/benefit of increased traffic on The Crown. We believe that we are at an inflection point in which decisions made today will have irreversible impacts on wildlife now and in the future.

Our understanding is The Crown is designated as critical wildlife habitat and ask the County to apply the recommendations of the **Eagle County Comprehensive Plan 3.7.5**

Eagle County should continue to work with public land managers to place the appropriate restrictions on recreational uses and intensities of use in areas indicated by the Division of Wildlife to be important to wildlife. As cited earlier in this section, residential, commercial and recreational development that removes critical habitat, or diminishes the use by wildlife of these habitats, should not be allowed.

We appreciate the efforts of all in drafting the Mid-Valley Trails Plan. The trail system is an important part of a comprehensive planning effort for the Valley, and we hope that our input is viewed in the spirit of collaboration. We value and use the trail system yet want to balance the needs of humans with the needs of wildlife; sometimes, a more circuitous trail route or spaces left alone best serve both.



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

George Trantow <georgetrantow@gmail.com>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>
Cc: Mike Pritchard <mike.pritchard@rfmba.org>

Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 7:29 PM

Kris:
Page 16 of Appendix D is missing the
Vasten trail. This is important piece of the puzzle of the Crown.
Thanks,
George

On Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 9:54 AM Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us> wrote:
[Quoted text hidden]

--

George D. Trantow

"Work hard, play hard and smile...avoid those who don't"



Ellie Caryl <ellieveracity@gmail.com>

Small edits to Master Plan

1 message

George Trantow <georgetrantow@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2020 at 6:17 AM

To: Ellie Caryl <ellieveracity@gmail.com>, Unknown <tglassier@yahoo.com>

Ellie:

You may have already edited the master plan for these small points. (Attached)

I could not find any other issues.

Best,

George

--

George D. Trantow

"Work hard, play hard and smile...avoid those who don't"

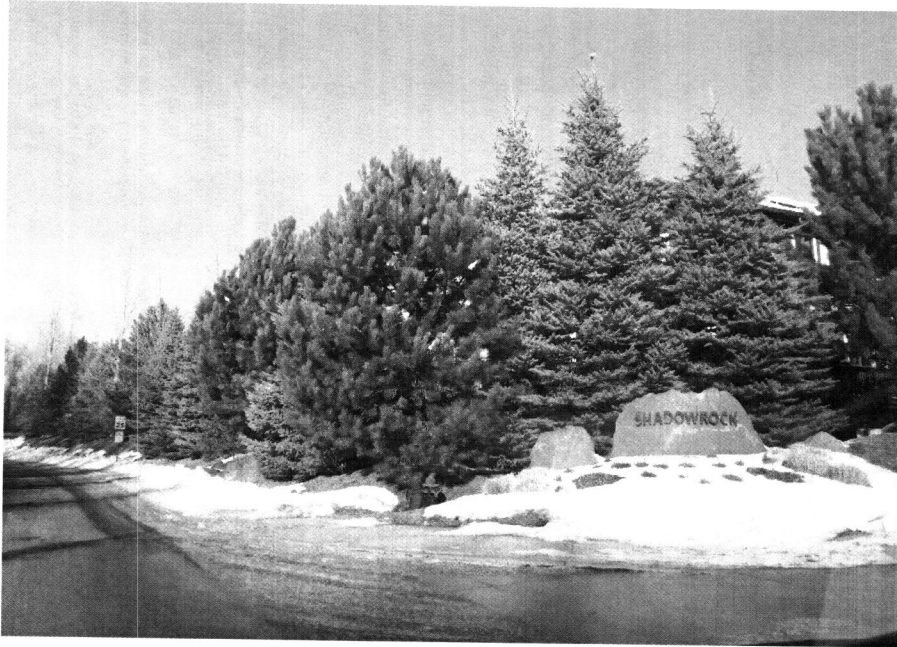


2020-02-26-06-Edits.pdf

1279K

12. Shadowrock and Tree Farm Trails

Location: Eagle County

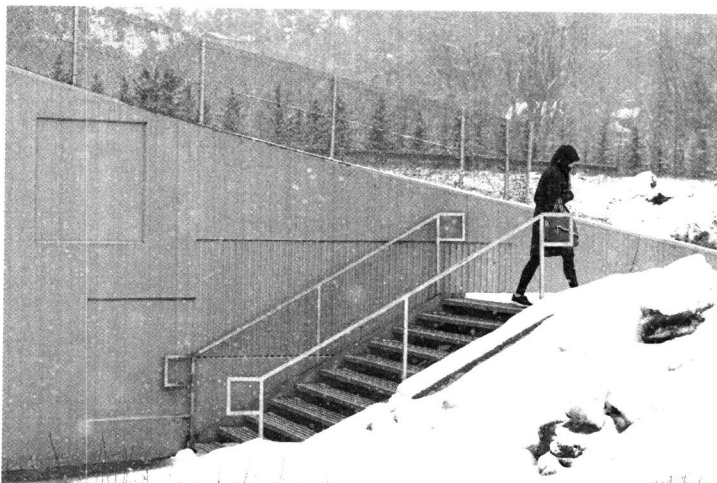


Shadowrock development in El Jebel. Photo: Eagle County

Trail Description:

- Shadowrock Townhomes has completed an 8 foot wide concrete trail adjacent to the townhouse development.
- The recently approved (2018) Tree Farm PUD development will include asphalt and concrete trail routes, with routes are detailed on development plans and construction drawings for the approved projects.
- Tree Farm trails and sidewalks would connect internal destinations, and provide access from all PUD properties to the SH 82 Willits Town Center underpass.
- Tree Farm trails are also anticipated to eventually connect west through the Shadowrock development, allowing access to the El Jebel Town Center.

(Next Page)
 Proposed access
 easement thru
 Shadowrock to
 BLM lands below
 Busalt, Mtn.



Exiting the SH 82 underpass from Tree Farm-Shadowrock to Willits.
 Photo: Laurel Smith/Sopris Media

Trail Ownership & Management:

Shadowrock HOA maintains trails in the subdivision. Tree Farm Metropolitan District will be responsible for the trail network construction and maintenance.

Proposed Trail Improvements:

1. Investigate a potential trailhead and connector trail from this area to allow access to singletrack trails on BLM and USFS lands on Basalt Mountain. The concept will require approval and partnership with metropolitan districts, HOA's, other private landowners, BLM, USFS and CPW.

Several BLM and private property parcels adjoin the trail and easement and should be pursued,



Eagle County Planning
Attn: Kris Valdez
P.O. Box 179
500 Broadway
Eagle, CO 81631

Via Email: Kris.Valdez@EagleCounty.us

Re: Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan

Kris,

Thank you for the opportunity for Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (OST) to comment on the Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan (the “Plan”). Recreation and trails access is an important part of the Roaring Fork Valley and contributes to the quality life we enjoy. The Plan does a good job of identifying the amenities our organizations maintain and the possible opportunities. OST staff reviewed the Plan for accuracy and made some notes which have been attached in list form with page numbers and location of the edit for ease (Attachment A).

More generally, OST staff believe the Plan would be more effective and give the public a more complete vision of the conservation landscape if the maps within the document displayed Pitkin County fee-owned and privately conserved properties. OST would be happy to provide GIS shapefiles of the conserved properties. The Plan also discusses the desire to construct a bridge and trail connecting Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grande Trail. The location of the bridge, which makes that connection possible, lands on the Saltonstall River Conservation Easement co-held by Pitkin County, Eagle County, and the Town of Basalt. The conservation values protected by that document list the high-quality wetland and riparian habitat, including specifically significant wetlands, narrowleaf cottonwood/alder riparian forest, and habitat for mountain whitefish, a threatened species native to Colorado’s rivers. The easement also contains language that would prohibit the infrastructure necessary to construct a bridge. If the connection is pursued, the private property owners located on the opposite side of the Roaring Fork River should be contacted early in the process to determine feasibility of obtaining either an access easement or fee ownership to connect.

Please let OST staff know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for taking on this effort!

ATTACHEMENT A – Minor Edits to the Mid-Valley Trails Plan

- Page 22 – Photo credits Rio Grande in Eagle County when it is actually the Rio Grande in Pitkin County.
- Page 23 – Photo credits Rio Grande in Eagle County when it is actually the Rio Grande in Garfield County.
- Page 37
 - 2nd bullet point describes the Rio Grande trail as paved; there is still a section of trail unpaved in Pitkin County.
 - 5th bullet point; Pitkin County maintains 20 miles of the trail
 - 7th bullet point; All of the Rio Grande trail within Pitkin County has a gravel shoulder accessible to equestrians.
- Page 38 – Trail Ownership & Management; Pitkin County maintains a 20' recreation easement from Emma to Woody Creek and owns 5 miles of the right of way outright.
- Page 39 – Old Emma Trail – Trail Ownership and Management; trail is owned and maintained by Town of Basalt.
- Page 66 – Glassier Open Space is owned by Pitkin County and Eagle County holds the conservation easement.



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Mike Pritchard <mike.pritchard@rfmba.org>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Thu, Feb 27, 2020 at 11:36 PM

Hi Kris,

Please accept the following comments from RFMBA on the Draft Plan:

Page 60 & 61:

RFVHC comments regarding routes #1909 + North Fork Trail need more research before inclusion in the plan. Existing & recently maintained Cattle Creek Trail + Red Table Trail depart FS Road 509 and head SE to arrive at Toner Reservoir. CCT and RTT are labeled as #1909 on Maps including NatGeo Trails Illustrated & "USFS Classic". These routes have been maintained by RFOV at lower stretches in past years, and in their full length by WRNF and RFMBA trail crews in 2019 after the Lake Christine Fire. The North Fork Trail is also known as #1914 and exists to the north of Cattle Creek Rd. / FS Rd. 509.

Page 62:

Double check that the 98 miles of routes noted matches with BLM decision in 2019 that recategorizes many routes as to be decommissioned. 19 miles are to be undesignated and rehabilitated, 14.7 miles become available for administrative use only. More details at this link: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName=dispatchToPatternPage¤tPageId=177801>

Page 63:

Clarify that the winter seasonal closure, Dec. 1 to April 15 is for mechanized and motorized use (not just mountain bikes). Might be ok to further clarify that there is minimal if any foot and horse use during this closure period, although it is permitted as BLM does not typically manage for full human closure periods.

Page 64:

Please add to the Proposed Trail Projects List: (Suggest that this become "a" on the list.)

Continued SRMA Implementation: Following up on a 2019 BLM decision to close 44 miles of routes to mechanized use (through rehabilitation, or re-categorized for foot and horse only, or administrative use only), RFMBA will continue a partnership with BLM to study and designate new routes designed for mountain bike experience. Anticipated routes include the Crown Royale concept trail that will connect the top of the Crown SRMA to the Rio Grande Trail.

Page 66:

Revise last bullet point to use full name: "Town of Basalt".

Revise this sentence in the last bullet point to read: "RFMBA favors summer season wildlife surveys to determine if reinstated access for mountain biking during the season of lowest use by wildlife may be appropriate."

Page 68:

Please add a bullet point:

If this long distance route can be fully re-established for public use, it would be approximately 19 miles long, allowing for a 38 mile out and back experience. As such, RFMBA advocates for the historic Stage Road to be open to bicycle use; this may become a popular alternative to the danger currently encountered by cyclists on the narrow and often shoulderless Frying Pan Road. RFMBA would coordinate volunteers and seasonal staff to assist with maintenance of the public route.

Add to the plan:

An existing singletrack / soft surface route exists that connects Blue Lake subdivision (Deer Run) to Missouri Heights (Sunrise Lane). The route passes by and was created in part to construct the water towers above Blue Lake. The route continues above the water towers, but currently dead ends at it's uppermost point at a recently developed residential private property. The route's bench-cut alignment was reportedly created by the Crawford family decades ago. Over recent decades it has been used as a non-motorized connection by friends, families, and children visiting each other in the Blue Lake and Missouri Heights neighborhoods. Eagle County might have resolved the issue during planning approvals for the new home, but missed the opportunity and the owner has now blocked off public access. There is an opportunity to address this access issue by purchasing the adjacent undeveloped lot, encumbering it with a new trail easement to connect to the nearby county maintained road (Sunrise Lane). Attached is a .kmz of the alignment.

Appendix D Comments:

Map for Singletrack on Basalt Mountain:

- revise the upper elevation trail currently labeled as Cattle Creek Trail, this is the Red Table Trail. (the label is about 1.5 miles west of the Taylor Creek Trail Label.
- A route is missing for Basalt Mt. Trail (just north of the label "Basalt Mt. Road"), see this link: <https://www.mtbproject.com/trail/4764152/basalt-mountain-trail>
- Revise the Label that says "Basalt Mt. Road and Trail" to be just Basalt Mt. Trail (no road all the way out there).
- Revise linetype to be Singletrack for: Mill Creek Trail, Cattle Creek Trail, Basalt Mt. Trail, Red Table Trail. (Determine where Cattle Creek Rd. ends, and the Catttle Creek Trail starts...)
- Revise linetype to be Road for: the Y shaped route segments near the label "Taylor Creek Trail" (these are all doubletrack roads)

Map for Singletrack on the Crown:

- Add missing singletrack not shown on the map, download .gpx files from MTBproject.com: Skill Saw, Creekside, Next Jen, & Vasten Trail.
- Delete a minor doubletrack route that is shown as singletrack... but was decommissioned (or set as Admin. only in 2019): it is located about 1/4 mile east of the "8320" label near the middle of the Crown, it is about 0.6 miles long and orients north/south as a dead end off of Route 8324.
- Revise the very northeast end of Buckhorn Trail; map shows the old closed alignment that goes on private property to connect to Rio Grande Trail, this was closed several years ago. Review MTBproject.com for clarity.

Thank you,
Mike

Mike Pritchard

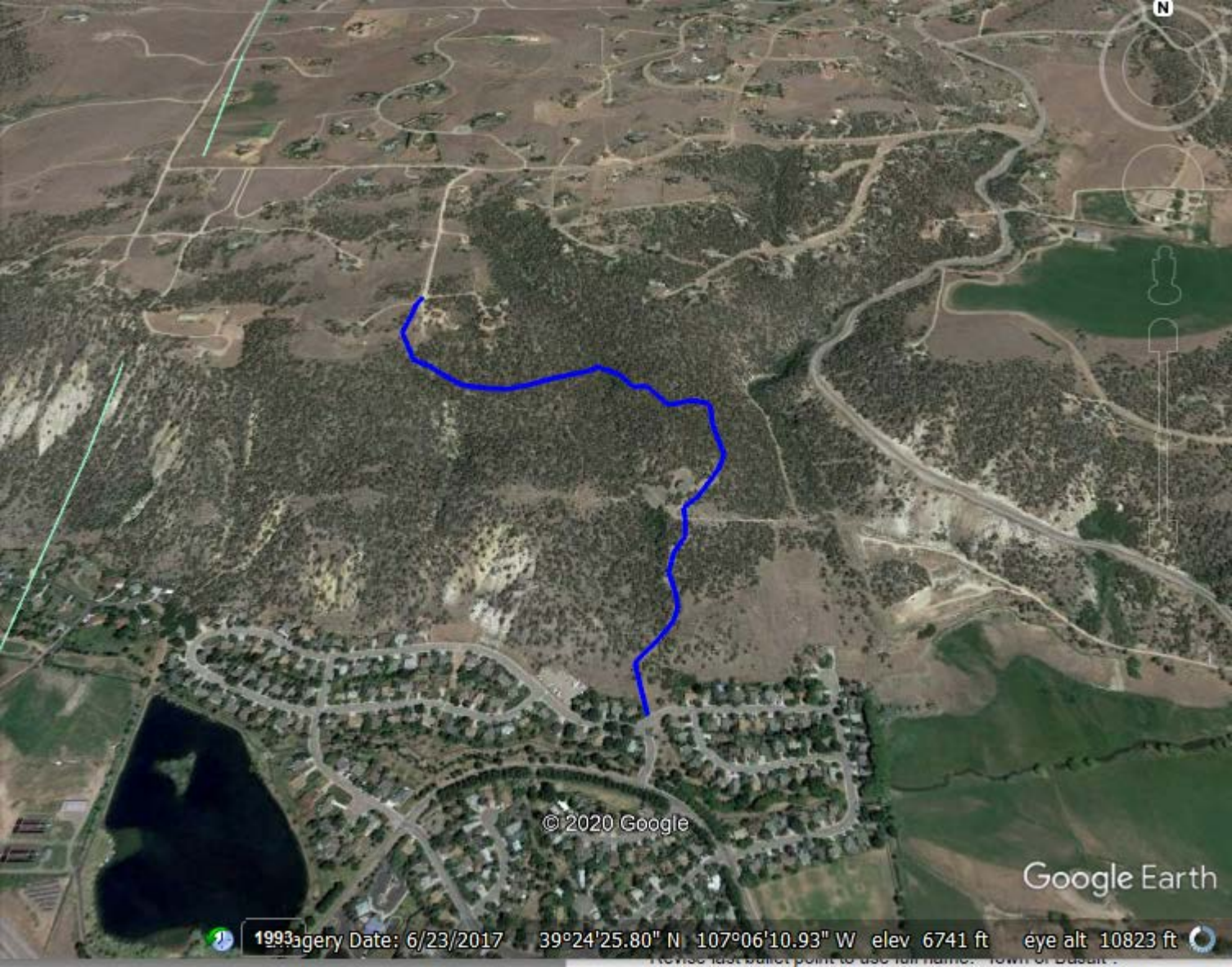
RFMBA, Executive Director

(970) 948-3486 . RFMBA.org . IMBA.com



[Quoted text hidden]

 **Blue Lake Connector.kmz**
2K



© 2020 Google

Google Earth



1993 Imagery Date: 6/23/2017

39°24'25.80" N 107°06'10.93" W elev 6741 ft

eye alt 10823 ft



Review last bullet point to use full name: Town of Basalt



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Jeff Gatlin <jgatlin@rfschools.com>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Wed, Feb 12, 2020 at 10:11 AM

Hi Kris,

Upon further review of the maps, the school district would like consideration to encourage safe road crossings and pedestrian/bike-friendly connections near/to our future school site located in El Jebel (Blue Lake).

Thanks,
Jeff

Jeff Gatlin
Chief Operating Officer
Roaring Fork Schools
jgatlin@rfschools.com

On Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 9:54 AM Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us> wrote:
[Quoted text hidden]

6. Planning Area Description: Roaring Fork "Mid-Valley"



The Roaring Fork Mid-Valley as viewed from Missouri Heights. Photo: permission pending

The Mid-Valley area is considered the mid-point in the length of the Roaring Fork River Valley spanning roughly 60 miles between the city of Glenwood Springs and Independence Pass south of Aspen.

Several jurisdictional entities overlay the Mid-Valley area including Eagle, Pitkin and Garfield counties, the Town of Basalt, State of Colorado, BLM and USFS in addition to several metropolitan and special districts.

Approximately 6,000 people reside in the 245 square miles of the portion of the Mid-Valley that Eagle County administers, including the Frying Pan River Valley, east of Basalt.

The following descriptions demonstrate the variety in land use, character and activity in the Mid-Valley area.

- **Highway 82 Corridor** - Colorado Highway 82 parallels the Roaring Fork River as it passes through the Mid-Valley, serving the communities of El Jebel and Basalt. Highway 82 is the main arterial roadway for the Roaring Fork Valley with an average of 20,000 vehicles per day passing through El Jebel in Eagle County. Numerous residential neighborhoods are located in proximity to commercial and retail services in this area. Many trail segments exist and others are proposed for construction by recently approved developments in Eagle County.
- **Emma** - South and west of the Roaring Fork River is the Emma area featuring historic ranch lands irrigated fields and expansive views. Residential densities are relatively low in this part of the valley floor, and preservation of rural character is the predominant focus. The Rio Grande Regional Trail, the region's trail arterial, travels through the Emma area adjacent to the Roaring Fork River and Hooks Spur Road. From the Rio Grande several trails access "The Crown", an elevated backcountry area to the south and west that is popular with hikers, cyclists and equestrians.

Summary of Comments on RFTA Mid Valley Trails DRAFT Master Plan for Jan 28 Referral.pdf

Page: 9

Author: jwhite Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/29/2020 4:35:07 PM
 It might be nice to recognize the RFTA Rio Grande Railroad Corridor/Rio Grande Trail (RGT) that ribbons through the entire valley.

8. Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
 9. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department
 10. Garfield County Community Development Department
 11. Colorado Department of Transportation
 12. Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 13. Bureau of Land Management
 14. United States Forest Service
- **Data gathering and research** including review of the following related land use, transportation, trails and resource management plans pertinent to the Mid-Valley area and Roaring Fork Valley (see Appendix D for related map excerpts):
 1. Eagle County Mid-Valley Area Community Plan (2018)
 2. Eagle County Comprehensive Plan (2005)
 3. Eagle County Strategic Plan (2017)
 4. Basalt Area Parks and Open Space and Trails Master Plan (2013)
 5. Basalt Master Plan (2007)
 6. RFTA Corridor Investment Study (2003)
 7. RFTA Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Access Plan (2015)
 8. RFTA Recreational Trails Plan Update – Draft Rio Grande Trail Master Plan (2019)
 9. Pitkin County Nordic Ski Trails Plan (2015)
 10. Pitkin County Down Valley Comprehensive Plan (1987)
 11. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Policies (2018)
 12. Pitkin County Frying Pan Master Plan (2016)
 13. Garfield County Comprehensive Plan 2030 (2013)
 14. CDOT 2040 Regional Plan (2015)
 15. USFS Travel Management Plan Map (2011)
 16. BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office Resource Management Plan (2015)
 17. Crown Special Recreation Management Area Map (2017)


Common Themes in Adopted Plans, related Public Process and Stakeholder Interviews:

Several common themes emerged from the stakeholder outreach conversations and from the review of the resource and community documents list above:


- **Safe, efficient and connected infrastructure** for walking and biking are an important component of community health and economy.
- **Roadways need to be upgraded and maintained** to safely accommodate non-motorized users.
- **Recreation is a very important element** of the Roaring Fork Valley lifestyle
- **Sustainability and environmental stewardship** must be considered
- **Partnerships are a necessity** to complete projects


Secondary Route Paved Trails			
Project Name	Description	County	Potential Partners
Hooks Lane Connection	Upgrade trail route and wayfinding at Hooks Lane for improved connection between the Willits Lane and Rio Grande trails. Resolve winter maintenance issues.	Eagle	Eagle County, MVTC, RFTA, Basalt
Southside Trail	Construct an on-street bike lane on the opposite side of the street from the existing trail location.	Eagle	Basalt, RFTA
Blue Lake/Eagle Dakota Subdivision Trail Network	Secure public access to the Dakota Subdivision trail to tie into the Cerise Ranch trail system in Garfield County.	Eagle, Garfield	MVTC, Eagle County, Garfield County, Blue Lake and Eagle Dakota HOA
Summit Vista Trail	Request improved maintenance and seek trail connection through adjacent Fields property.	Eagle	MVTC, Eagle County, HOA's, CDOT
El Jebel Road Trail to Highway 82 Underpass	Monitor underpass maintenance and explore long term maintenance agreements.	Eagle	CDOT, Crawford Properties, Eagle County, MVTC
Crown Mountain Park to Rio Grande Trail	Construct trail bridge over Roaring Fork River to connect Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grande Trail.	Eagle	Crown Mountain, RFTA, Basalt, Eagle County, BLM, MVTC, MVMD
East Valley Road Trail and Willits-Sopris Trails	Explore feasibility of Willits Lane-Willits Bend ditch trail. Upgrade and pave existing unpaved trail adjacent to south side of Highway 82 from Original Road to Willits Lane and Willits Trail.	Eagle	CDOT, Basalt, Eagle County, RFTA
El Jebel to Catherine Store Road	Construct new trail alongside Valley Road and SH 82 Frontage Road; expand road shoulders as alternative.	Eagle, Garfield	Eagle County, Garfield County, CDOT, MVTC, MVMD
Highway 82 Underpasses	Upgrade Emma Trail underpass.	Eagle, Pitkin	Eagle & Pitkin County, CDOT, Basalt, RFTA
RFTA Transit Stops	Upgrade Aspen Junction to Sagewood unpaved trail to improve access to neighborhoods and transit stops.	Eagle	Basalt, MVTC, RFTA
Two Rivers Trail	Complete trail connection from downtown Basalt to SH 82 per the Two Rivers Greenway Plan and 2013 POST plan.	Eagle	Basalt, MVTC, RFTA

- Author: jwhite Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/29/2020 4:56:41 PM
Where is this on RFTA's current priority list?
- Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:46:42 AM
RFTA and CDOT are in the process of making some major changes to this intersection and the adjacent bus stops

Consistent Paved Trail Maintenance	Define maintenance responsibilities and need for improved seasonal (such as sweeping, plowing) or project (such as drainage, pavement) maintenance and enhancements (such as wayfinding, trailheads, parking) throughout the Mid-Valley. Current "hot spots" are Hooks Spur Bridge, south end of East Valley Road Trail, Aspen Junction Trail and Summit Vista Trail and additional equestrian enhancements along the Rio Grande Trail where feasible. 	Eagle	Eagle County, Basalt, HOA's, Crown Mountain, Crawford, RFTA, MVTC
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 Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2/5/2020 10:36:44 AM
not sure that adding equestrian enhancements along the RGT pertains to "Consistent Paved Trail Maintenance?" Move to a more appropriate section

 Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:17:36 AM
agree with Brett...equestrian use is usually soft surface, not a paved surface

Singletrack Trails			
Project Name	Description	County	Potential Partners
Valley Floor to Basalt Mountain	Work collaboratively with private property owners, BLM and USFS to determine appropriate trailheads and trails from the valley floor communities of El Jebel and Basalt to middle and upper Basalt Mountain.	Eagle	Private property owners, USFS, Basalt, RFMBA, RFOV, MVTC, BLM, CPW, RFVHC
Basalt Mountain Trail Rehabilitation	Participate in possible Lake Christine fire or post-logging restoration efforts to rehabilitate or upgrade trail corridors on Basalt Mountain. Explore potential reroutes or reopening of closed routes with USFS.	Eagle	USFS, CPW, BLM, MVTC, RFOV, RFMBA, RFVHC
Crown SRMA Trail Enhancements	Continue to work with BLM to enhance and maintain existing routes for bike, hike and horse use.	Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin	BLM, RFMBA, RFTA, RFOV, MVTC, RFVHC, Pitkin and Eagle County OS.
Lake Christine Trail Access	Investigate the foot and horse access to Basalt Mountain through Basalt Wildlife Area property with CPW, and explore limited mountain bike use during low-impact times of the year on the property.	Eagle	CPW, Basalt, RFMBA, RFOV, MVTC, RFVHC
Stage Road: Basalt to Toner Creek to Ruedi Reservoir	Work with private property owners, USFS and CPW to restore the historic road platform for public use as a trail.	Eagle	Private property owners Basalt, Eagle County, USFS, MVTC, RFOV, RFMBA, RFVHC
Light Hill Trail Improvements	Improve singletrack trail to connect Basalt High School, Old Snowmass and East Sopris Creek, work with BLM and CPW to review.	Pitkin	Basalt, USFS, BLM, MVTC, RFMBA, RFOV, RFVHC

Providing routes for people walking, biking, and non-motorized users (including e-bikes where permitted) is a common and accepted responsibility of governance at the local, state and federal levels.

Jurisdictional partnerships are common in regards to right-of-way needs, funding and long-term maintenance. In the Mid-Valley area, local and state jurisdictional partners that have an interest in provision of walking and biking infrastructure include:

- Eagle County
- Eagle County Open Space
- Town of Basalt
- RFTA
- Pitkin County
- Pitkin County Open Space and Trails
- Garfield County
- Crown Mountain Recreation District
- Mid-Valley Metropolitan District
- CDOT
- CPW



Crown Mountain Trail Maintenance. Photo: Laurel Smith / Sopris Media

The Willits Lane Trail is an example of a successful trail construction project that was a cooperative effort between the Town of Basalt, MVTC and Eagle County. The El Jebel Road Trail was the result of a construction and maintenance agreement between Eagle County and Crawford Properties.

The Glassier Open Space, physically located in Eagle County, was acquired through joint funding by Pitkin County, Eagle County and Great Outdoors Colorado and is now owned and managed by Pitkin County, while Eagle County holds the conservation easement. PCOST has since funded trail construction, a trailhead and a parking lot for Glassier Open Space improved access. PCOST has also partnered with RFOV and RFMBA on several trail projects in the Mid-Valley area.

11.1 Primary Route Paved Trails – Existing and Proposed

“Primary Route” paved trails serve as arterial or main routes with significant use by people walking, biking and horseback riding. In the Mid-Valley there are three significant routes that transport users for multi-mile distances, enabling efficient commuting to work or school, utility trips such as shopping, or recreating for healthy, outdoor exercise. The primary route trails in the Mid-Valley are typically 10 to 12-feet wide and surfaced with asphalt or concrete.

Existing Mid-Valley Primary Route Paved Trails
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rio Grande Trail 2. Willits Lane Trail 3. Old Emma Trail

At this time, new primary route trails are not proposed or envisioned in the Mid-Valley area. Some enhancements are recommended through this Plan. Secondary paved routes are the focus for additions or upgrades. The completion of the Rio Grande Trail through the Mid-Valley in 2008 very successfully addressed the demand and need for a large-scale primary route running the length of the Roaring Fork Valley for walking, biking and horseback riding and connecting all communities in the valley.

Where existing primary route trails are located within a road right-of-way, they are typically detached and separated from the road surface. Separation by grade, distance or physical barriers are desirable for increased safety. Where space allows, a soft surface trail may parallel a primary hard surface trails for use by runners or horseback riders, such as the soft-shoulder alongside the RGT in Emma, and for passing opportunities in more densely populated areas.



Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:19:57 AM
There is a relatively new "equestrian trail" from Hooks Ln TH to Glassier Open Space, which is a crushed gravel, soft surface trail which travels between the county rd and the RGT.

1. Rio Grande Trail

Location: Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County



The Rio Grande Trail near Emma in Eagle County. Photo: RFTA

Trail Description:

- The Rio Grande Trail (RGT) is the central spine of the Roaring Fork Valley trail network.
- Completed in 2008, this 42-mile paved trail follows an historic railroad grade linking Glenwood Springs to Carbondale, Basalt and Aspen. The rail corridor was purchased by a consortium of local and state agencies in 1997.
- 3.2 miles of the total trail length is located in Eagle County.
- The RGT is currently "railbanked" through federal laws that allow for use as a trail with possible reversion to railroad use at some time in the future if an exceptional demand and need for rail service.
- The trail is generally 10-feet wide throughout its length and well maintained by RFTA trail department staff.
- The RGT is enjoyed by user groups of all levels and modes including walking, running, recreational and training biking.
- Horseback riding occurs in limited numbers on certain sections more proximate to rural properties and wide gravel shoulders have been constructed in the Emma area to accommodate equestrians.
- According to a 2015 RFTA bike and pedestrian access study as well as the draft 2018 RGT management plan, there are RGT sections where surface conditions could be improved due to aging asphalt, drainage and vegetation impacts (i.e. roots), and other areas where the trail popularity and shared uses warrant future

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- Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/31/2020 12:08:27 PM
 Note: I need to provide an updated photo to show current management practices of compacted multi-use snow conditions
- Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/31/2020 12:02:12 PM
 while we don't "groom" and lay down a specific XC ski track...staff has been using a snowmobile to compact the snow from Emma Rd to Rock Bottom Ranch during the winter, as conditions permit. This is a pretty crude form of grooming, but it does allow winter use for XC skiing and perhaps fat biking. Previously we would plow this section for the walkers, but using the snowmobile to compact the snow seems to be a good compromise and it allows more diverse user groups access during the winter months.
- Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/31/2020 12:03:21 PM
 Sounds like we need to educate them about the equestrian trail connecting Hooks Ln TH to Glassier Open Space.

widening. Trailheads and parking lot improvements were supported by participants in the RFTA planning processes.

- Additionally, a future trail bridge connection from the RGT from Crown Mountain Park was strongly supported by plan participants.
- The RGT Rock Bottom Ranch to Catherine Store segment (located in Eagle and Garfield Counties) is seasonally closed for wildlife habitat needs from December 1 – April 20.
- When snow cover allows, portions of the RGT are groomed for Nordic skiing by PCOST.

Trail Ownership & Management:

RFTA owns the entire trail corridor in its role as a regional authority comprised of several local governments including Eagle County. Maintenance is shared among RFTA (19 miles), Pitkin County (20 miles) and Glenwood Springs (3 miles).

Proposed Trail Improvements:

1. Continue to consistently maintain the RGT monthly and seasonally. Tasks include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections, snow removal.
2. Support RFTA's work to widen Mid-Valley areas of substandard trail width, upgrade pavement quality and expand trailheads and parking areas.
3. Construct a trail connection from the RGT to Crown Mountain Park, crossing the Roaring Fork River. The project implementation would involve RFTA, CMRD, BLM and private property owners at minimum.
4. Work with RFTA to evaluate the potential to accommodate increased or improved equestrian use of the corridor in the Mid-Valley, with trailhead parking and provision of new or improved (wider) soft-tracks for equestrian use, adjacent to or separated from the paved trail.

2. Willits Lane Trail

Location: Eagle County

Trail Description:

- This 2-mile trail is located within the right of way of Willits Lane and travels along the eastern edge of the Willits PUD development, terminating at the intersection of Highway 82 and Willits Lane.
- Portions of this trail are 10-foot wide concrete, other sections are 8-foot wide asphalt, with the entire trail in good condition and well-maintained.
- Standard and raised "speed-table" crosswalks are provided at various locations along the route.
- This trail provides connection to Hook Spur Trail, the Rio Grande Trail and Emma Trail, and also to trails within the Willits Town Center and Sopris Meadows PUD's.

Trail Ownership & Management: Town of Basalt

Proposed Trail Improvements:

1. Consistently maintain the Willits Trail monthly and seasonally. Tasks include sweeping, surface repairs, drainage management, vegetation and litter control, marking and sign repairs, wayfinding additions, inspections, snow removal.

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Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/30/2020 10:16:46 AM
dates are incorrect for RGT wildlife closure

should read...closed Nov. 30 at 5 pm through April 30 at 5 pm

Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 1/31/2020 12:05:00 PM
and RFTA! We groom a short section from Snowmass Dr to Catherine Bridge

See previous comment about winter maintenance from Emma Rd down to Rock Bottom Ranch

Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:22:59 AM
RFTA only owns 33.4 miles of the 42

RFTA maintains ~21 miles
PCOST maintains ~19 miles
GWS maintains ~2 miles

Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:24:39 AM
Pitkin County has a trail easement from Emma to Woody Creek. Pitkin County owns a portion from woody Creek up to Aspen ans Aspen owns a portion inside the City limits

Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:49:30 AM
 RFTA is in the process of upgrading the existing stops and CDOT is in the process of improving this signalized intersection. Stay tuned for updates to the Sagewood stops.



Looking north from above location to north side of Original Road intersection with SH 82, and transit stop. Photo: Eagle County



Short segments of unpaved "social" trails and paved sidewalks connect to transit stops in this area. Photo: Eagle County

10. Aspen Junction-Sagewood Trail

Location: Eagle County

Trail Description:

- The route consists of 2,300-feet of native surface trail from the entrance of Aspen Junction subdivision to the entrance to Sagewood Townhomes parallel to northeast side of Highway 82.
- This trail serves as a connector route between the two residential areas as well as a connector trail to access the RFTA north-bound transit stop at Sagewood and the signalized intersection at Original Road.
- The Sagewood transit stop has been identified by RFTA for possible relocation to nearer the Original Road light in 2020 to improve passenger accessibility, transit vehicle access and will make other safety-related improvements.
- At the Original Road signalized crossing, trail users can cross SH 82 to access the southbound RFTA transit stop on the south-bound side of SH82.

Recommended Trail and Shared Roadway Maintenance Schedule:

The maintenance standards below are recommended as a minimum level that all managing jurisdictions should strive to achieve monthly and annually. These standards are nationally accepted for paved or unpaved trail networks.

MONTHLY:

Sweeping:

- Sweep paved surfaces, to anticipate higher use levels in early April through mid-November.
- Sweep trail sections that are heavily impacted by debris from adjacent road gravel or hillsides more frequently, and inspect after storm events.
- Sweeping is often cited in trail-user surveys as the most deficient item in trail maintenance.
- Sweep road shoulders annually in the spring, March or April if possible.

Surfacing:

- Repair hazardous surface conditions as soon as possible upon discovery. Root heaves, settled areas and holes are very wide cracks are paved surface hazards that can have serious consequences if not corrected.

Drainage:

- Clean culverts as needed.
- Correct adjacent areas of poor drainage causing gravel or water to wash over trail surface
- Deflect water from singletrack trails to prevent erosion or gully development due to water flow

Vegetation:

- During the growing season, perform weed and vegetation control including mowing and clipping up to 2 feet on each side of the trail as needed.
- Maintain a 10-foot minimum overhead clear zone on paved trails, 8 feet on singletrack trails.

Litter:

- Empty trash containers as needed.
- Remove trash from adjacent ground as needed.

Inspections:

- Inspect trail surface, shoulders and structures such as bridges, walls, signposts every two weeks or each month at minimum. A checklist is a common tool and ensures consistency by varied staff and jurisdiction.

SEASONALLY:

- A meticulous inspection should take place in the spring after the snow has fully melted and the paved trail has been swept for the first time.
- Perform seasonal inspections of unpaved routes to remove debris and restore trail tread.
- Repaint trail or road crosswalk or bike lane striping as needed.
- Install or replace signs
- Inspect and repair (or add) trail furniture and fencing as needed.
- Repair and retrofit general trail surface cracks or holes, shoulder erosion, structure damage.
- Seal-coat to protect asphalt surface to the extent possible. Even 5 years is encouraged to prolong asphalt life.
- Plow trails identified as 4-season routes as soon as practicable after each snow-event.
- In the case of widened shoulders or specially designated bike lanes on Town, County, State or Federal roads, seasonal maintenance should include restriping, debris clearing, pavement repair of edges and potholes, and chip seals.
- Clear snow from roadways to edge of asphalt if possible, to accommodate the use of roadways by pedestrians or winter-bicyclists as linking routes between disconnected trail segments or sidewalks.
- Seasonally, inspect the roadway for hazards that may not affect motorists but could pose challenges for bicyclists. Focus shoulder inspection ofaveled edges, ruts and cracks and striping wear.
- Review annually the need for safety sign installation, install in the spring if possible in preparation for biking and tourism high-use seasons.
- If possible, sweep shared roadways prone to drainage or erosion issues and also popular as cycling routes on an additional monthly or

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Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:42:13 AM
RFTA does not seal coat the RFTA owned portion of the RGT

Author: ahenderson Subject: Sticky Note Date: 3/3/2020 9:52:25 AM
RFTA contracts with a structural engineer every two years, to provide a detailed inspection of the 7th Street bridge in GS, the Cattle Creek Bridge, the Roaring Fork bridge, the Sopris Creek bridge and the Wingo Junction bridge. As a result of the inspections, the Roaring Fork Bridge was re-decked. The Wingo Junction bridge was re-decked and the Sopris Creek bridge has just undergone a complete structural overhaul, both in partnership with Pitkin County. The most recent inspection was completed in 2018. The bridges are due for another full inspection in 2020



Appendix F: Electrical Assisted Bicycles in the Mid-Valley

Page: 103

Author: bmeredith Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2/5/2020 3:56:07 PM
Class 2 e-bikes ceases to provide power when the bicycle reaches a speed of 20 MPH

Class 3 e-bikes provide pedal assist power up to 28 MPH

The following information is provided on the regulated use of Electrical Assisted Bicycles (E-bikes) in the Mid-Valley of Eagle County as of December, 2019.

State of Colorado:

E-bikes are legal in Colorado. Class 1 and 2 E-bikes are not considered motor vehicles under state law, but as bicycles and can be allowed on roads and multi-use paths. As stated by the Colorado Revised Statutes: Section 42-4-1412, an "Electrical assisted bicycle" means a vehicle having two or three wheels, fully operable pedals, and an electric motor not exceeding seven hundred fifty watts of power.

Electrical assisted bicycles are further required to conform to one of three classes as follows: "Class 1 electrical assisted bicycle" means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour." "Class 2 electrical assisted bicycle" means an electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling but ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-eight miles per hour. Class 3 E-bikes can only be ridden on public roads, are not allowed for riders under age 16 and riders under age 18 are required to wear a bike helmet with safety strap in use while in motion.

Though allowed by state law, a local jurisdictions (town, county, metropolitan district) has the authority to regulate E-bikes more restrictively than state law allows. Federal jurisdictions including the BLM and USFS are not subject to state law and manage E-bikes per agency policy directives.

Eagle County:

On Eagle County owned and managed bicycle facilities and roads, E-bikes are allowed as per the state law described in the above reference to Colorado State Statutes (source: Eagle County website 12/2019).

Town of Basalt:

The Town of Basalt hasn't adopted a specific policy regarding e-bikes but adheres to state laws as required (source: Town of Basalt staff interview 12/2019).

RFTA:

Class I and Class II E-bikes are allowed on the RGT between Two Rivers Park in Glenwood Springs and Emma Road in Basalt (source: RFTA website 12/2019).

Pitkin County:

Pitkin County allows Class 1, pedal-assist e-bikes on paved trails plus the gravel East of Aspen Trail and the gravel section of the RGT. E-bike use is not permitted on any single-track trail on Pitkin County's open spaces. A Class 1 bike must be pedaled in order to operate and has a maximum speed of 20 mph (source: Pitkin County website 12/2019).

BLM:

In August 2019, the Secretary of the Interior issued an Order for the purpose of increasing recreational opportunities through the use of Electric Bikes (e-bikes). The SO directs the BLM to develop a proposed rule and associated regulations to be consistent with the Order, add a definition for e-bikes, and exempt all Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes from the definition of off-road vehicles or motorized vehicles. During the time necessary to revise BLM regulations in accordance with the SO, e-bikes may be allowed on trails limited to bicycles and non-motorized travel ONLY IF a BLM Manager issues a written decision authorizing e-bike use in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. BLM



ROARING FORK VALLEY HORSE COUNCIL

P O Box 127

Snowmass, CO 81654

www.rfvhorsecouncil.org

www.facebook.com/keephorsesontrails/

2/23/2020

**ROARING FORK VALLEY HORSE COUNCIL Response to 2nd DRAFT DATED
1/28/2020 EAGLE COUNTY MID-VALLEY TRAILS PLAN**

The Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council (RFVHC) is very excited to be included in forming this innovative Mid-Valley Eagle County Trails Plan. We welcome the opportunity to contribute.

The RFVHC mission is to keep horses on trails, facilitate equestrian parking access for trucks and trailers and to educate all users groups about kindness and respect while enjoying our shared lands. Our goal is to plan recreational opportunities incorporating land stewardship, by using science as a foundation to thoughtfully direct trail development and improvements. Because much Eagle County incorporates lower elevations, the wildlife lives and their critical habitat exists in our valley, winter and summer on the land and in the rivers. This fact creates a unique opportunity for residents and visitors to become educated about biodiversity and our supportive co-existence. People seek out and travel around the world to experience this unique opportunity to connect with nature and wildlife. Eagle County can design their recreational trail systems with careful, thoughtful planning and education to support this balance for humans, wildlife and the environment. If managed properly, this type of experience is an economic engine for many communities around the world. Consider making biodiversity and supportive human coexistence the primary goal of this plan. Please makes Eagle County and the Roaring Fork Valley a unique place to live and visit.

Please see Addendum A - OPEN SPACE BOARD POLICY Protection of Natural Biodiversity and Management of Human Use: (Adopted 8/4/16)

Please see Addendum B –

The Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity & Connectivity Initiative –

A New Paradigm for Biodiversity on a Landscape Scale.

Watershed Biodiversity Initiative (WBI) was created as a non-profit organization in March 2018 to support a comprehensive and unprecedented Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity and Connectivity Study.

<https://www.watershedbiodiversityinitiative.org/>

RFVHC PROPOSED SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GOALS FOR TRAILS AND SHARED ROADWAYS

In your current MVTC Draft Document dated 1/28/2020, pages 15 – 16, the Goals of this plan are identified. We suggest that you integrate education, biodiversity and human co-existence adding to the Environmental Sustainability Goals. Also on pages 15 – 16 is the Economic Development Goals. Please add the education, biodiversity and human co-existence goals as well, because this will be of significant economic benefit.

NO NEW TRAILS FROM THE VALLEY FLOOR & INSTEAD MAINTAIN AND ENFORCES COMPLIANCE ON EXISTING TRAILS

We are asking that no new trails be added leading from the Roaring Fork Valley floor thereby giving additional access into any existing BLM, USFS and county open space public lands. (This includes Lake Christine and all new access trails from Valley floor to Basalt Mountain as well Light Hill Trail improvements.)

Our understanding is that Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) states that human recreation is negatively impacting wildlife in our valley's natural environments.

The following areas, which are listed in the Eagle County MVTP plan, pages 19 & 20 are at great risk. These fragile areas that are identified in the MVTP for additional mountain bike trail development should be reconsidered for the following reasons. Many of these area trails have historically been used only by horseback riders and hikers and are some of the few remaining trails that are easily accessible from the valley floor without mountain bikes.

Any and all existing recreational trails should retain their current existing uses by keeping hiker and horseback riding trails for their use only.

Trails create a financial responsibility for maintenance and enforcement. The responsible governing entities are already financially struggling with the burden of maintaining existing trails and losing the battle for their enforcement.

The RFVHC stands by the principles for responsible stewardship and care-taking. We value quality over quantity.

UNDERSTANDING SINGLE TRACK TRAILS AND EQUESTRIANS

Horseback riders are our constituents. Soft track trails offer safe and hopefully a predictable experience for our over 400 members of all ages. Riding horses on asphalt, cement paths and hard surface roads is dangerous. The horse's shoes are slick on hard surfaces and horses can fall or slide into a passerby.

This is why we have been working with Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) to **add more soft track sections along the Rio Grande Trail.**

RIO GRANDE TRAIL

The Rio Grande is the valley corridor trail that provides connections throughout all the trail systems. We are working to improve or re-establish soft track trails safe for horseback riding, as well as adding equestrian parking for trail access. Many hikers, dogwalkers and runners also like soft track, which is easier on feet and legs and will not burn dog's pads like hot asphalt can.



Basalt Mountain Trail - BLM Lands Eagle County

**BASALT MOUNTAIN TRAILS - CURRENTLY NOT IN USE –
RFVHC REQUESTS TO REINSTATE THESE TRAILS FOR HIKERS AND HORSEBACK
RIDERS USE ONLY**

Basalt Mountain USFS Trail #1909. This trail was earlier a USFS trail that has fallen out of use due to lack of maintenance. Old Trail #1909 departs road FS 509 at the private property gate as a single-track trail then continues parallel to the private property boundary and, after passing the intersection with Basalt Mt Trail (now #1909), returns to Cattle Creek and then climbs gently through forest and meadows to reach Toner Reservoir. Our hope is to restore this decommissioned section of the original USFS Trail #1909 in order to offer an alternative for hikers and horsemen separate from the new #1909, which has become very popular with mtn. bikers as a long, thrilling downhill trail that is incompatible with slower and more vulnerable trail users.

The above is the trail segment that we propose be cleared and restored to use. Additional advantages for restoring this trail are that from Toner Reservoir one can travel either S/downstream on Toner Creek to the Frying Pan Rd (also not maintained) or to the west and connect with the Basalt Mt trail currently popular with mountain bikers. Another connection is NE to the USFS #514, Red Table Mountain Rd. With all these options from Toner Reservoir, having this old #1909 section restored to use would be a great trail asset to hikers and horsemen and allowing them access to the connections just mentioned.

North Fork Trail - USFS land. This trail leaves the heavily used single track along Cattle Creek and turns north, closely following the creek and reaching the Red Table Mountain Road. This trail also connects to the more used Lone Tree single track trail to make a loop. Both this trail and the previous #1909 travel through beautiful country and are safe trails once cleared. Both trails provide alternatives to trails heavily used by mechanized and/or motorized travelers. Both trails already have truck and trailer parking.

THOUGHTFUL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE OLD STAGE ROAD

The Old Stage Road leading from Basalt towards Rudi Reservoir should be investigated as to whether the impacts on the wildlife, especially the big horn sheep may be protected. We also have concerns about impacts on private property owners for their peace and privacy by improving the Old Stage Road. We understand that the Old Stage Road is visibly apparent until it reaches the Seven Castles area. It may be best to stop this trail at Seven Castles, which would save impacts on the Frying Pan River, the wildlife habitat and private property owner's rights, past that point. Regardless, the Old Stage Road should remain with the Historical Designation for hikers and horseback riders only. We understand that

signage is being disregarded and violations of existing uses is occurring. It is imperative that compliance be enforced.

CONNECTING TOWN OF BASALT TO ARBANEY-KITTLE TRAIL

The RFVHC suggests that connecting Basalt to the Arboney-Kittle Trail should use existing bike paths and walking trails leading to the current Pitkin County Trail Head. We are advocating for no new trail access points for this trail. We understand that in the future there may be opportunities to develop more trails on the valley floor, giving residents more opportunities for recreation. Our main concern is that there be only one, already existing point of access to this trail from the valley floor. This will help control additional human access, which is now negatively impacting our vanishing wildlife and their climate change, vulnerable fragile habitats.

SIGNAGE

Please consider standardized signage that is consistent across all land areas and trails. Signs need to include education regarding sharing trails, permitted users, closure dates where applicable. Closure dates might detail wildlife issues, alternate user group days, trail etiquette such as kindness among users and pack it in out/pack it out as well as trail preservation closures due to unsuitable weather. We suggest signage to educate trail users about compliance and consequences for violation of rules. The RFVHC has a resource library for equestrian trail signs.



- Your Public Open Space Trails Sign Promotes User Safety -

Look for signs where ever you go. Safe hikers, bikers and horseback riders have more fun. Smile!



LACK OF EQUESTRIAN PARKING TO ACCESS TRAILS

Truck and trailer parking giving trail access to equestrians is difficult to find. Many parking lots are parked full by recreational user cars. The RFVHC is working with County and BLM organizations to plan and include equestrian parking in their projects going forward. We ask Eagle County to include this parking initiative in this Mid Valley Trail Plan. Without parking horseback riders are unable to access trails.



Pitkin – Eagle Glassier Parking Lot

Parking Lot Specifications and Data

An appropriate equestrian parking lot accommodates trucks and trailers as they pull in, swing around in the area, and angle park, facing out. Horse trailers are 7'8" to 8'6" wide. Tow vehicles are 6' to 8'6" wide. Maximum trailer height is 13'6". Legal limit in length of a trailer is 53'. 125 feet is the bare minimum space needed to swing around modern horse trucks and trailers. Shared parking works best, when vehicles have designated parking areas separate from the horse trailers. People unfamiliar with horses may not understand that horsemen and horses need extra space by the trailer for tying, saddling and loading.

Attached to this letter is a comprehensive parking lot document that we have been given permission to use for land managers and trail groups. Please go to [https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/uploads/1/1/1/9/11199712/rfvhcequestrianparking-updated .pdf](https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/uploads/1/1/1/9/11199712/rfvhcequestrianparking-updated.pdf) for more parking information

CONNECTIVITY– Bridges & Tunnels

Connectivity for crossing highways and rivers with bridges & tunnels should benefit all trail user groups; hikers, horseback riders and bikers, with soft tract footing so that horses and wildlife can use them, where it makes sense. There are guidelines for designing tunnels for equestrian and wildlife use. Prey animals often shy away from narrow, low ceilinged, dark place, because they feel trapped.



Wildlife Travels at night video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT_1LLLmBq8

WILDLIFE CONCERNS

Our vanishing wildlife is of great concern. We support protecting our biodiverse wildlife habitats from human recreational impacts, especially during the times of seasonal critical winter wildlife closures.

Recently The Aspen Times Weekly, January 30 - February 5, 2020 recently featured a five page spread on “Our disappearing ELK” – on line -

<https://www.aspentimes.com/news/lost-in-the-crowd/?fbclid=IwAR0R4mhS3-dVqDsEWsGGAI1YOwWrLiu7OkDSKjYxcdGwppHHHpAA6uYDc-l>



**Eagle County - late afternoon shadows –
deer grazing in the shadow of Mt. Sopris & The Crown**

The RRVHC is dedicated to protect and preserve our Open Space Public Lands, our National Parks and Wilderness areas as healthy biodiverse environments for the benefit of the wildlife first. Horseback riders and hikers have historically shared these areas with the wildlife, but the exploding human population and expanding human recreation has negatively impacted our wild creatures. All human recreation disturbs wildlife and this can flush vulnerable animals from their natural calving grounds during a critical time for reproduction.

There two types of human recreationalists that are unquestionably different in their desires for open space land use.

- Hikers and horseback riders use has historical traditions of hikers and horseback riders enjoying a usually quiet and peaceful “walk in the woods.”
- The mechanized and motorized recreationalists such as mountain bikes, e bikes, motorcycles, 4 wheelers, snowmobiles and fat tire bikes in the winter are faster moving and create a different energy in the environment. The faster moving recreationalists are seeking a physical achievement by challenging the terrain and their abilities.

All human recreation negatively impacts the wildlife and their habitats.

If more human access is added to the existing, highly impacted areas by the Mid Valley Trail Plan, our wildlife will have no respite.

- It is imperative that no new trails come from the valley floor leading to Basalt Mountain, Rio Grande to the Crown, Arbaney/Kittle, Lake Christine Trail, and Light Hill.
- The Stage Road - Old Basalt to Toner Creek to Ruedi Reservoir Trail must be kept with the historic use for hikers and horseback riders only. Although signs are posted as such, the mountain bike community is violating their exclusion from this historic Stage Road.

The mountain bikes have many Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA); Sky Mountain Park; Parts of the 9,100 acres of “The Crown” and Red Hill, all with abundant mountain bike trails. Red Hill boasted 55,000 trail users in 2018. Opening day, 2019 brought hundreds of mountain bikers, inundating “The Crown” during that first day and the consumption continues. Large numbers of exercise enthusiasts flock to Sky Mountain Park for their lunch break, daily work outs. The sheer number of mountain bikers is overwhelming. Hikers and horseback riders keep company in small, slow moving groups and can easily stop to appreciate and be respectful to wildlife.

Please see Addendum C – 2015 Letter to Pitkin BOCC from Kevin Wright, retired DOW District Ranger

Please read Addendum D – 2017 letter from Perry Will regarding wildlife decline in our valley and on The Crown specifically.

Hikers and horseback riders revere our natural habitats by noticing the small precious beauties during the rhythm of footfalls on the trails.



**Hikers and Horseback riders see the small beauties of a trail
Crown Jewel Horse Trail wildflowers**



**Stopping for lunch – Crown Jewel Horse Trail
Crown Mountain - BLM**

THE OUTSIDE OF A HORSE IS GOOD FOR THE INSIDE OF A MAN
Winston Churchill



Basalt Mountain as seen from Glassier - Crown Trail

FINANCIAL CONCERNS FOR MANAGEMENT

The Lands identified as “Public Lands” are actually managed and regulated with rules and oversight, enforced by other entities. Counties, states and federal agencies are the responsible parties. Most often, extra financial aid is needed to enforce compliance. New trails would introduce additional threats for “bandit trail” building. Most of the mountain bike trails on The Crown were initially illegal, bandit trails. There were so many trails and users, that the BLM decided it was better to make the area an SRMA. Regulating and enforcing the existing SRMA areas is daunting. Adding more access will create an untenable and dangerous situation.

The Roaring Fork Valley was recently designated a gold-level ride center by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). More destination thrill seekers are bound to find our valley. How will BLM, USFS and County entities patrol and enforce user behaviors on the already existing trails?



Glassier Equestrian trail

COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

Who will oversee and enforce regulations for trespassers, who disregard signage or make bandit trails? We would submit that heavy fines be given to any and all trespassers into prohibited areas, especially during the closed periods. We would recommend cameras recording the illegal persons for prosecution. Trail Rangers

Are a necessary to enforce compliance. In addition. We suggest that Compliance and Enforcement be added as an important Goal for the MVTC Plan.

Rules without compliance and consequences are useless.

PERMITS AND USER GROUPS

Purpose of permits would be to prevent trail overuse. Permit funds could support trail maintenance, infrastructure such as signage and trash removal, wildlife and wildlife habitat and **rule enforcement**.

We humans must assume responsibility to protect certain pockets of our planet from human trespass and degradation.

9,100 acres of “The Crown”



THE RFVHC RESPECTFULLY ASKS THE FOLLOWING BE INCLUDED IN THE MVTC FINAL PLAN

- That there be no new trails leading from the Roaring Fork Valley Floor. This will prevent negative impacts to our wildlife from human recreation.
- That all existing trails maintain their existing uses for hikers and horseback riders.
- That compliance and enforcement be added into the MVTC Plan as an important and necessary goal.
- Please add financial physical responsibility as a goal listed in your MVTC Plan. There should be a coordinated, comprehensive plan using All BLM,

USFS and County partners to insure trail safety for maintenance, compliance and enforcement success.

- That education, biodiversity and human co-existence be added into your list of MVTC Plan goals.
- We ask that you adopt the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails - Protection of Natural Biodiversity and Management of Human Use as a guide for developing your MVTC Plan.
- We propose that you include the findings of The Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity & Connectivity Initiative (to be released in 2020) for the scientific foundation to guide decisions for human recreation education and human co-existence in your MVTC Plan.



Thank you for protecting our wildlife habitats for the future of their species. The RfVHC is thankful for the thoughtful considerations of all stakeholders for this Eagle County Mid Valley Trail Plan Initiative. CPW, BLM, USFS and others also stand for preserving and protecting our wildlife and their habitats.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

Aldo Leopold 1949 sand Count Almanac

Respectfully Submitted,

RfVHC Board of Directors

rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com

Addendum A - OPEN SPACE BOARD POLICY Protection of Natural Biodiversity and Management of Human Use: (Adopted 8/4/16)

Addendum B – <https://www.watershedbiodiversityinitiative.org/>

Addendum C – 2015 Letter to Pitkin BOCC from Kevin Wright, retired DOW District Ranger

Addendum D – 2017 letter (3 pages) from Perry Will regarding wildlife decline in our valley and on The Crown specifically.

The Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

OPEN SPACE BOARD POLICY

Protection of Natural Biodiversity and Management of Human Use:

(Adopted 8/4/16)

Whereas the Pitkin County Home Rule Charter sets out the purposes of the program in Section 13.5.1 in a manner that creates absolute goals related to the protection and preservation of wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and public lands (Subsections 2,3,5) and gives a *qualified* goal of “promoting” recreation “not inconsistent with the forgoing purposes...”, it is incumbent on the Open Space program to manage human uses in a manner that preserves and protects native biodiversity, and

Whereas our management actions should optimize the habitat health across a greater landscape, and,

Whereas active management of open space lands may protect and enhance native biodiversity through control of noxious weeds and insects, and to mitigate for other human induced environmental changes such as fire suppression, climate change, water diversions, and

Whereas human uses on open space lands are important in promoting the physical and emotional health of our citizens and in supplying local food, and

Whereas human activity, including the development of recreational trails, is known to impact native biodiversity thereby fragmenting undisturbed areas, and

Whereas our scientific knowledge is imperfect, caution dictates that we seek to protect and preserve as many natural habitat areas as possible, and that we continue to monitor the health of lands in our care, and

Whereas humans are more inclined to protect what they know and love, and consequently our community’s preservation ethics are maintained and enhanced by contact with the natural world, and

Whereas the public which has funded the acquisition of our open spaces deserve objectively verifiable basis for our management decisions protecting biodiversity by limiting their active uses.

Therefore the Open Space and Trails Board has determined that the following general policy is needed to guide the acquisition and management of Pitkin County Open Space and Trails properties:

The Open Space and Trails Program seeks to rely on the best available science for property-specific study of natural habitat conditions, including the role of the property in the context of larger habitat and wildlife patterns within the Roaring Fork Watershed, as the starting point for optimal allocation of use of funds or county open space lands across habitat, agricultural, recreational, scenic and other authorized open space purposes. The program will utilize such

ongoing scientific data to determine the minimum, but not the maximum, acreages that should be maintained free of human disturbance.

If such study reveals specialized habitat management needs, the program will seek to restore to healthy, natural function any degraded habitat, and will employ spatial or temporal closures or other appropriate mitigation to protect sensitive habitat from recreational or agricultural use impacts. Sensitive habitat includes those habitats defined as “constrained” in section 7-20-70 of the Pitkin County Land Use Code, and may also include those habitats used by rare and endangered species, Colorado Natural Heritage Program-ranked habitat types and protected conservation areas, as well as habitat types used by more common species that have special needs such as critical winter or summer range, breeding/nesting areas and migration corridors.

Human uses, if any, will be planned and managed to minimize intrusion in breeding/nesting areas and migration corridors. Human uses, if any, will be planned and managed to minimize intrusion into the time periods and/or places of special habitat concern. Where human uses cross adjacent boundaries between Open Space lands and those managed by other public agencies within the Roaring Fork Watershed, the Open Space Program will encourage such other agencies to support our efforts to protect biodiversity.

November 15, 2015

Pitkin County BOCC
Pitkin County OST
Dale Will
Gary Tennenbum

Dear All:

I have been contemplating writing you a letter for quite some time and decided I should do so. My name is Kevin Wright and I have lived in the Roaring Fork Valley for over 30 years. I worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife (now CPW) as a District Wildlife Manager for 31 years serving the Carbondale and Aspen Districts my entire career before retiring in July 2015. I have witnessed a lot of changes over the years and have always strived to represent wildlife and our natural values and help minimize impacts to wildlife.

I have become very concerned the way our valley is progressing with respect to recreational pressures and its impact on our wildlife resources. It seems that it has become recreation at all costs with very little regard to the impacts it is having on our wildlife resources and their habitat. The dramatic increase in recreation and endless trail building is having significant negative impacts to wildlife. Impacts are often considered but are often dismissed as non-significant or believed they can be "mitigated".

Obviously, it is not just recreational pressures that are having an impact. Our human base population has grown significantly and with that comes loss of habitat to development. Combine that with the maturation or aging of our habitat and inability to significantly manipulate it to set back succession to provide better forage conditions is having its impact. Much of our winter range is over-mature and becoming decadent but it is difficult to manipulate it due to costs, funding, and the encroachment of human development. We have made some strides with habitat work in places such as Light Hill, William's Hill, Arbaney-Kittle, Basalt Mountain to name just a few. But the most significant change in the last 5-10 years is the dramatic increase in recreational pressure.

As evidence of this observation are the declining trend of young to adult females in our mule deer and elk populations. Both populations have declined and mule deer are close to the lowest population level they have ever been in over 40 years. In the past, the DOW has always been able to recover the mule deer population after a hard winter but this is no longer the case. In addition, the elk population is at the bottom of the population objective. Please consider the following:

Mule Deer – current population is hovering around 6,050 with an objective of 7,500-8,500. This objective was lowered from the more historical objective in the 80's and 90's of 11,100, which is no longer achievable and unrealistic.

Fawn:Doe ratios are 50.4 fawns:100 does. This ratio should be closer to 70-75:100 for healthy population.

Elk – current population estimate is 3,650 with an objective of 3,800-5,400. In order to stabilize the population the calf ratio should approach 47:100 and to increase the population it should approach 50:100. Calf:Cow ratios have steadily declined:

1980's – 58.5 calves:100 cows

1990's – 49.0

2000's – 41.5

2010 – 2014 – 35.1

last 3 yr average – 33.7

This is a very disturbing trend and is indicative that something is wrong or askew in the system. It is telling us that the populations are not healthy as some believe.

As stated earlier, one of the most significant changes has been the increase in recreational pressure. We are continually building more and more trails, placing these trails where there has never been trails and fragmenting the habitat, and placing more and more people where there were few before. We now ski, snowshoe, hike, bike (with and without dogs; with and without dogs on leash) throughout our important winter ranges, production areas, and summer solitude areas. We also are now using fat tire bikes to ride winter ranges. Wildlife has little places they can go to escape the pressures.

Impacts from trail building and resulting recreational pressure include the following:

1. habitat fragmentation – carving up the habitat blocks into smaller and smaller pieces and increasing the zone of influence.
2. changes in species diversity, density, and abundance. More parasitic bird species come in to the areas along new trails displacing native species.
3. Increase in stress, disturbance, harassment, and displacement. Many believe that as they recreate, especially in winter, if the elk or deer does not flee but just stands/remains in place there is no impact. But what really happens is the animals must make a decision whether to flee or stay. Which utilizes less energy - running through 2-3' of snow or standing there with the disturbance. If they stand there, stress increases, metabolic rates increase, and more energy is utilized.
4. Decrease in reproductive success
5. Lower population levels

These impacts have been determined through various research activities such as Dr. Richard Knight, the Vail elk production study, and the various studies referenced/summarized in Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society literature review on recreational impacts, and studies referenced in the elk-roads-logging symposium just to name a few. Yet, we still seem to ignore these impacts and

information when it comes to recreational activity, its promotion, and resulting trail building.

We are always compromising wildlife values for peoples' benefit and then we compromise the compromise. Very seldom are we proactive and actually prevent these impacts. Wildlife and their habitat are always losing, piece by piece. We **MUST** start to look at the cumulative impacts, not just the impacts of one particular project.

Shouldn't it be time to take a step back and re-evaluate? The public does not need to have a trail built into every piece of public land. I propose there is already sufficient, adequate access and trails to our public lands without the need to build more and more.

It was once thought and even brought up at a meeting in Snowmass Village that if we encourage more trail building on ski areas where there is the infrastructure that it would help curtail other trail building and bandit trail building. Ski areas have become more or less sacrifice areas in terms of wildlife. But constructing more trails here has **NOT** stopped or reduced trail and bandit trail building in other areas important to wildlife.

Sometimes we justify new trail construction in important wildlife habitat by conducting habitat improvement projects to help mitigate impacts. These habitat improvement projects can be helpful to wildlife but does it really offset or "mitigate" the negative impacts of fragmentation, increased stress and disturbance, and displacement? Habitat improvement may not help that much if wildlife species are displaced from all of the new human activity. We also try to place certain restrictions on new trails such as seasonal closures. These measures are only as effective as they are **aggressively** enforced. People just do not always comply. As specific examples one only has to look at the trail closure violations in the East Village area of TOSV. There is a seasonal closure for elk production with signage, education, and physical gates. Yet, there is a fair amount of noncompliance with people going around gates, lifting bikes over gates, creating new trails around them. Almost every year in the winter there are either ski tracks or snowmobile tracks up on Sky Mountain Park as I have witnessed while conducting aerial game census.

A few of the questions that I have asked in the past:

1. When is enough enough? When will we have enough trails?
2. What trails are at or over capacity now, which should dictate if new trails are needed?
3. Where is the **NEED** versus the **DESIRE**? There may be the desire and expectation for new trails but is there really a **NEED**? Especially if one considers the negative impacts to our natural resources, wildlife, and their habitat just so we can have another trail. Is it really worth it??

4. Where is the guarantee that there will **always be adequate** enforcement and funding for this enforcement into the future 10, 20, 50 years down the road? Once a trail is built it will most likely remain forever.

Throughout my career part of my job was to review projects and recommend mitigation to help minimize impacts. Pitkin County has one of the strongest land use codes for wildlife in the Colorado and has been very good at implementing the code for private development. It has been a leader for others to follow.

But, it appears that there is a different practice in place when the county purchases a property for open space and then builds a public trail encouraging use. If a private citizen wished to do the same and construct a trail through winter range, winter concentration area, severe winter range, production areas, or riparian areas and the DOW recommended against it, it most likely would not be approved to be built. It appears the same standards are not applied.

We should not be purchasing property and then building trails through or connecting to public land if this compromises winter range or other important wildlife values. This definitely should not be done when there is no formal public land trail where the county's trail would connect. This only encourages increased impacts, bandit trail building, and pressure to build new trails on public land when there are other access points and trails. There may be a public expectation that because the county purchased the property there has to be a trail and public use. There is tremendous value to having a parcel preserved for its wildlife and open space value. There does not always have to be a new trail or active public use.

I do not say these things lightly. I am very concerned with the direction this valley is going. There needs to be a **balance** but right now there is **no balance**. I hope what I have said makes you think, sit back, and evaluate. Do not just think of the benefits to active recreation and believe it is OK if we put a few restrictions in place or do a little habitat improvement. We need to strongly consider what these actions are doing to our wildlife resource and their habitat.

I hope what I have tried to express is taken seriously and not just dismissed. If I have made a few of you hesitate and think, then that is a very good thing. Change is hard for us all, even harder for wildlife who cannot speak for themselves. Wildlife is an important resource and enhances the quality of life for us all.

Thank you for listening.

Respectively,

Kevin Wright



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Glenwood Springs Service Center
0088 Wildlife Way
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
P 970.947.2920 | F 970.947.2936

March 28, 2017

Holly McLain
Citizens for Responsible Open Space
Carbondale, CO 81623

RE: Significance of the Crown to Local Wildlife

Dear Mrs. McLain,

Thank you for your continued interest and support of Colorado's wildlife species and their habitats. In follow up to our letter dated Jan 12, 2017 we are providing population trends for Elk DAU E-15 and Deer DAU D-13. It is impossible to break down the numbers for the Crown alone as we manage these populations at a much larger scale.

Elk

1990	7046	2000	7953	2010	4694
1991	7310	2001	7840	2011	4593
1992	7105	2002	6963	2012	4448
1993	7154	2003	5872	2013	4134
1994	7495	2004	5971	2014	4288
1995	7517	2005	5313	2015	4194
1996	7806	2006	5546	2016	4170
1997	7770	2007	5385		
1998	8121	2008	4652		
1999	8217	2009	4857		

Without context, our elk population trends alone do show a steep decline since the year 1999. At that time the elk herd size was estimated to be at 8,200 animals, and today is estimated at 4100 animals. Part of that decline was intentional and wanted by CPW as our herd sizes were well above objective and thought to be over carrying capacity for the available winter range habitat.

A bigger factor that CPW is looking at is the continuing decline of young to adult females in elk populations. Calf:Cow ratios have steadily declined in DAU E-15. During the 80's ratios were 58 young per 100 cows. In the 90's those ratios dropped to



50:100. The 2000's dropped to 41.5:100. 2010-2016 those ratios declined to 34.1 with the current 3 year average at 31.7. For a stable to increasing population those ratios need to be in the range of 48-52:100.

Deer

1990	11412	2000	9704	2010	6227
1991	11521	2001	10379	2011	5681
1992	8881	2002	10962	2012	5930
1993	8119	2003	9932	2013	5880
1994	8490	2004	11092	2014	6168
1995	8380	2005	8980	2015	5740
1996	8874	2006	8325		
1997	7000	2007	7873		
1998	8198	2008	5996		
1999	9507	2009	6222		

Deer Populations in DAU D-13 have also dropped significantly since the mid 2000's. Since the winter of 2007/2008 population levels have not rebounded to levels seen before that. Even with a virtual elimination of doe hunting opportunity, which is the mechanism used to control population size, herd size has stayed stagnant which indicates something is askew in the system.

Deer fawn:doe ratios have also decreased during that time. Historical ratios showed upwards of 75 young per 100 does. Recent classifications have seen ratios in the mid 40's. This ratio should be closer to 70-75:100 for a healthy population.

It is impossible to determine all factors that may be related to these declines without a full comprehensive study. Factors can include loss of habitat from development, winter range degradation, predation, habitat fragmentation, etc. However, one of the biggest changes CPW has seen since the beginning of the 2000's is the increased demand for recreation on the landscape. Few new housing developments have been created, but the demand for trails and places to recreate has grown dramatically. While other factors seem to be relatively constant, new trails are being built at an alarming pace on winter range habitat, production areas and summer solitude areas. Such increase in demand also seems to correlate to our observed reduction in production rates for both species.

Due to these factors, CPW has recommended a motorized/mechanized closure of the Crown from Dec 1- May 1, and has consistently advocated for this throughout the BLM's RMP process. The Crown had previously been closed to winter motorized use from Dec 1-May 1 for close to 30 years before the recent travel management plan adoption. CPW still recommends an opening date of no earlier than May 1, but would appreciate

an opening date of May 15 to be consistent with the current opening of the Glassier Open Space, the access point for the north side of the Crown.

Thank you for your continued interest. If there are any questions or needs for additional information don't hesitate to contact Land Use Specialist, Taylor Elm, at (970) 947-2971 or District Wildlife Manager, John Groves, at (970) 947-2933.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perry Will", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Perry Will, Area Wildlife Manager

Cc. John Groves, District Wildlife Manager
Taylor Elm, Land Use Specialist
File



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

President SVHA <summitvistahomeownersassoc@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 21, 2020 at 5:46 PM

To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>, President SVHA <summitvistahomeownersassoc@gmail.com>

Hi Kris,

*Summit Vista HOA supports Eagle County in doing a study on Valley Road. We would like to point out that on the Forestry side of the road, there are rotting and dying trees very close to the road. Several times, we have had to remove the debris from the road since no one else will. That road also accumulates garbage from people using it as a dumpsite. I've seen mattresses, furniture, alcohol bottles, and other junk. This mostly occurs near the potential Fields site entrance down to the curve with guardrails.

*Summit Vista does not support a public access trail through our neighborhood. Instead, we recommend that Eagle County pave a sidewalk along Valley Road where no walkway currently exists. There are several pedestrians, bikers, dog walkers, baby strollers who use Valley Road to get to Crown Mountain Park and beyond, but sometimes their only choice is to walk down the road as cars go flying by. Please note that there is no shoulder on this road either. Its a dangerous area that needs attention. We think it would be ideal to create that sidewalk on the Forestry side where the land is flatter for the most part. This sidewalk should be wide enough for 2-way pedestrian traffic.

*Also, while you're considering paving a sidewalk, we would love to see the rest of that trail on Crown Mountain Park along Valley Road to be paved and not loose gravel. This section is heavily used and gets filled with solid ice and then pure mud during mud season. A paved trail would melt snow and ice faster and create safer conditions for pedestrians.

*Another suggestion would be for more mountain biking trails that allow dogs. Right now, none exist in the mid-valley. We were able to bike with our dogs in the Prince Creek area (until they put a sign up that dogs are allowed on the uphill, but not the downhill -- how is this possible???)

*More hiking trails would be fantastic too.

Let me know if you have any questions about my suggestions.

Thank you for your consideration!!

~Wendy Schultz, Summit Vista HOA President

[Quoted text hidden]





Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Andy Mishmash <andy.am2@gmail.com>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mon, Feb 3, 2020 at 6:07 PM

Kris

Thank you for keeping us in the loop!

Andy Mishmash

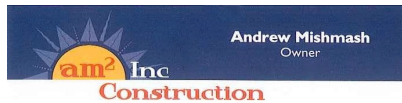
On Tue, Jan 28, 2020 at 4:26 PM Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Andrew Mishmash
AM 2.Inc Construction
970-309-7040
andy.am2@gmail.com

PO Box 2140
Basalt, CO 81621





Ellie Caryl <ellieveracity@gmail.com>

Fwd: Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral

Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>
To: Ellie Caryl <ellieveracity@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 3, 2020 at 8:25 AM

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Warner, Kevin -FS** <kevin.warner@usda.gov>
Date: Fri, Jan 31, 2020 at 4:17 PM
Subject: Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan Referral
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>
Cc: Grail, Shelly L -FS <shelly.grail@usda.gov>

Kris,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan. I can tell that a lot of hard work has gone into this planning process.

I hope to clarify our current management strategy for Trail #1909 and other routes no longer maintained by the Forest Service. The White River National Forest Travel Management Plan identifies routes (trails and roads) that are what we call system trails. These trails are maintained for public use. Trail #1909 is no longer a system trail so is no longer maintained. To construct a new trail or bring an old trail back into the system requires an environmental analysis, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (<https://www.fedcenter.gov/programs/nepa/>).

The trails mentioned in the plan that would connect the valley floor to the Basalt Mountain area would also require this analysis, and extensive public outreach work, if they were to be pursued. The outcomes of any of these NEPA analyses do not always result in approval of the proposed projects. Any trails shown on the current WRNF Visitor Map are system trails, and maintenance, upkeep etc. does not require similar analysis.

Shelly Grail, the District's Recreation Manager can discuss this in better detail if that would be helpful to this master planning process.

Please let Shelly know if you'd like to discuss this in better detail.

Cheers,



Kevin Warner
District Ranger

Forest Service

White River National Forest, Aspen-Sopris Ranger District

p: 970-404-3157
c: 970-948-3911
kevin.warner@usda.gov

620 Main Street
Carbondale, CO 81623
www.fs.fed.us



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Kris Valdez, Senior Planner, MURP, AICP
Eagle County Planning Department
[500 Broadway](#)
P.O. Box 179
Eagle, CO 81631
Phone: 970.328.8752
Fax: 970.328.7185
Toll-Free: 1.800.225.6136



February 27, 2020

Dear Kris and the Eagle County Planning Department,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your 2020 Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan. Congratulations on an extensive public process and a plan that emphasizes the community's values and identifies the need for improved safety and ease of use of the current trail system.

WE-cycle, the Roaring Fork Valley's not-for-profit bike share owner/operator, currently serves unincorporated Eagle County in the El Jebel area and the Town of Basalt with 90 bikes and 25 stations. Eagle County, a Founding Partner and annual underwriter of fare-free WE-cycle, is helping offer safe, reliable, on-demand bike transit services with the goal of providing the community with a fast, healthy, and convenient mode of travel to and from the valley's primary bus corridor, places of commerce, and residential neighborhoods.

In 2019, 995 WE-cycle riders completed 13,378 rides in the Basalt System. The Basalt System has one of the highest per capita bike share usages nationwide and it is utilized and relied-upon by the community's diverse populations. Bike share has become a desired and expected component of the Mid-Valley transportation landscape. WE-cycle sees the goals and objective of this Plan as furthering the adoption of bike share and thereby supporting the County's 2016 Climate Action Plan initiatives of reducing vehicle miles traveled, single occupancy vehicle trips, and carbon emissions.

In the 2020 Mid-Valley Trail Plan Purpose, it is underscored that Eagle County "reflects goals and strategies...that support safe, environmentally friendly transportation facilities and quality of life enhancing recreation opportunities." WE-cycle is a valuable example of a service provided by a public/private partnership that improves residents quality of life and advances the environmental and health goals of the community. Further, The Mid-Valley Trail plan states that "trail and shared roadway networks directly contribute to... inclusive accessibility." Equitable access is a WE-cycle core value. There are WE-cycle stations in lower-income neighborhoods and our Movimiento en Bici program engages the Latino community by providing extended fare-free trips and programs to teach how to ride and cyclist safety.

It would be valuable to incorporate WE-cycle as a stakeholder in the success and execution of the Plan in order to support the long-term viability of bike share in the Roaring Fork Valley corridor of Eagle County. As a supporter of the Plans objectives, WE-cycle's specific recommendations include:

- Section 4.2, Infrastructure Inventory. WE-cycle recommends that WE-cycle station locations be shown (attached).
- Section 5, The Vision for Trails and Shared Roadways. It is stated that the goal of the Mid-Valley Trail Plan is "to seamlessly connect residential, commercial and civic



destinations safely,” a goal that WE-cycle has been successfully making a reality since 2016. WE-cycle would like to be referenced as a partner in this initiative.

- WE-cycle supports all of the initiatives in Section 11, specifically as follows:
 - Section 11.2.3, Blue Lake-Eagle Dakota-Crawford. In order to encourage increased bike and pedestrian usage from Blue Lake to El Jebel, WE-cycle highly encourages trail resurfacing and improvements along JW Drive. WE-cycle would also like to explore options for a permanent WE-cycle station pad in conjunction with an enhanced bus stop.
 - Section 11.2.4, Summit Vista Trail. WE-cycle strongly supports this initiative and would like to be considered in the process, as trail improvements are made. This trail is a vital link between the highly-used Sopris View WE-cycle Station to both the El Jebel Up and Down Valley WE-cycle Stations adjacent to the RFTA bus stops.
 - Section 11.2.5, El Jebel Trail to Highway 82 Underpass. To support safe passage underneath SH 82 and encourage more bike commuting, WE-cycle would eventually like to see the underpass made more bike friendly.
 - Section 11.2.8, East Valley Road and Willits-Sopris Trail. WE-cycle would like to be engaged in this process as connections between Aspen Basalt Campground and Willits Lane are a current concern for rider safety. WE-cycle has stations located at Aspen Basalt Campground, Mid-Valley Medical and Lakeside Townhomes. Station location improvements, an improved trail, and clear right of ways would largely improve safety at this intersection.
 - Section 11.2.10, Aspen Junction-Sagewood Trail. WE-cycle would like to be a stakeholder in the planning of the Sagewood area. WE-cycle has heard a desire for expanded service to this locality, but has reservations due to safety concerns of the SH 82 crossing.
 - Section 11.2.12, Shadowrock and Tree Farm Trails. WE-cycle supports these improvements. Shadowrock is not an area we are currently able to serve with bike transit due to lacking trail infrastructure.

WE-cycle looks forward to the adoption of this 2020 Mid-Valley Trails Master Plan and being a collaborative and creative partner and ally in helping achieve the community's objectives.

Thank you for your consideration and being a leader of rural bike share.

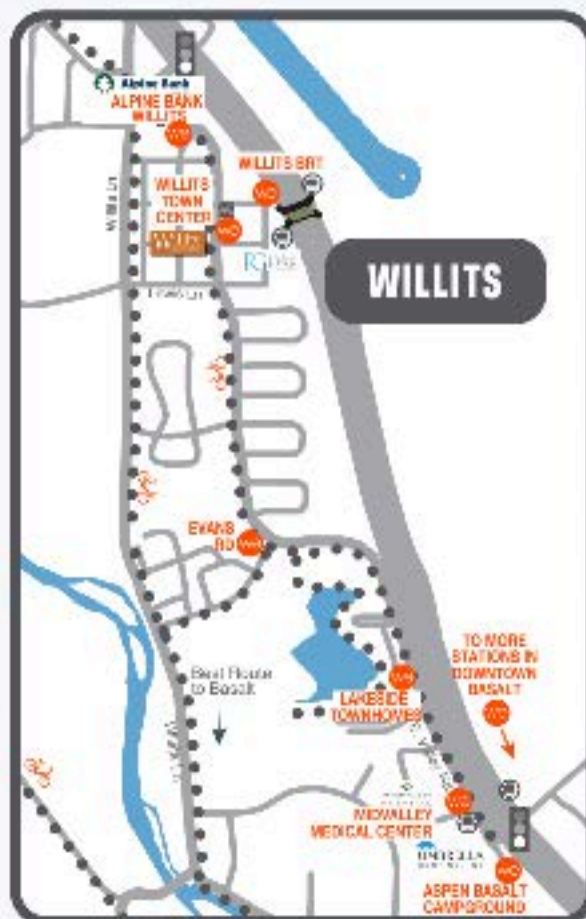
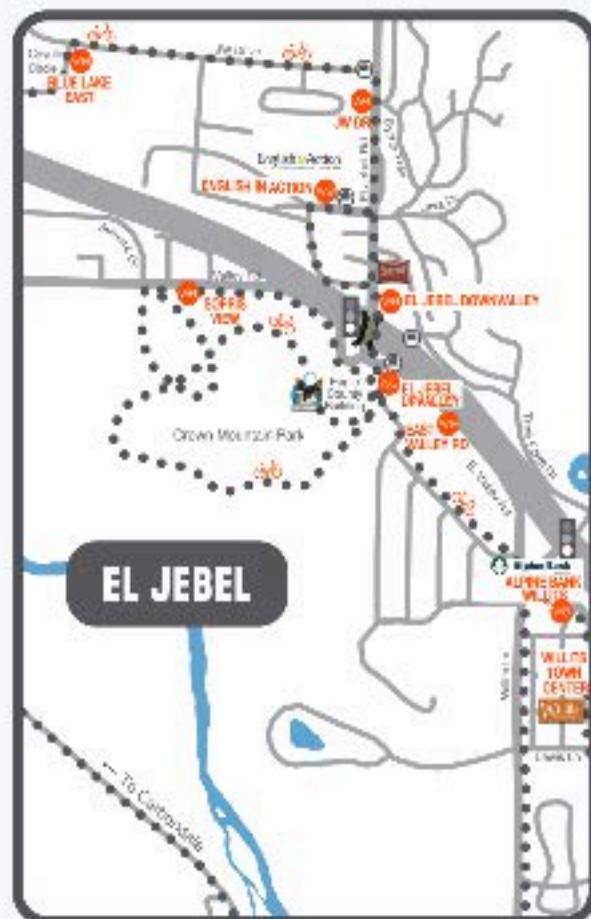
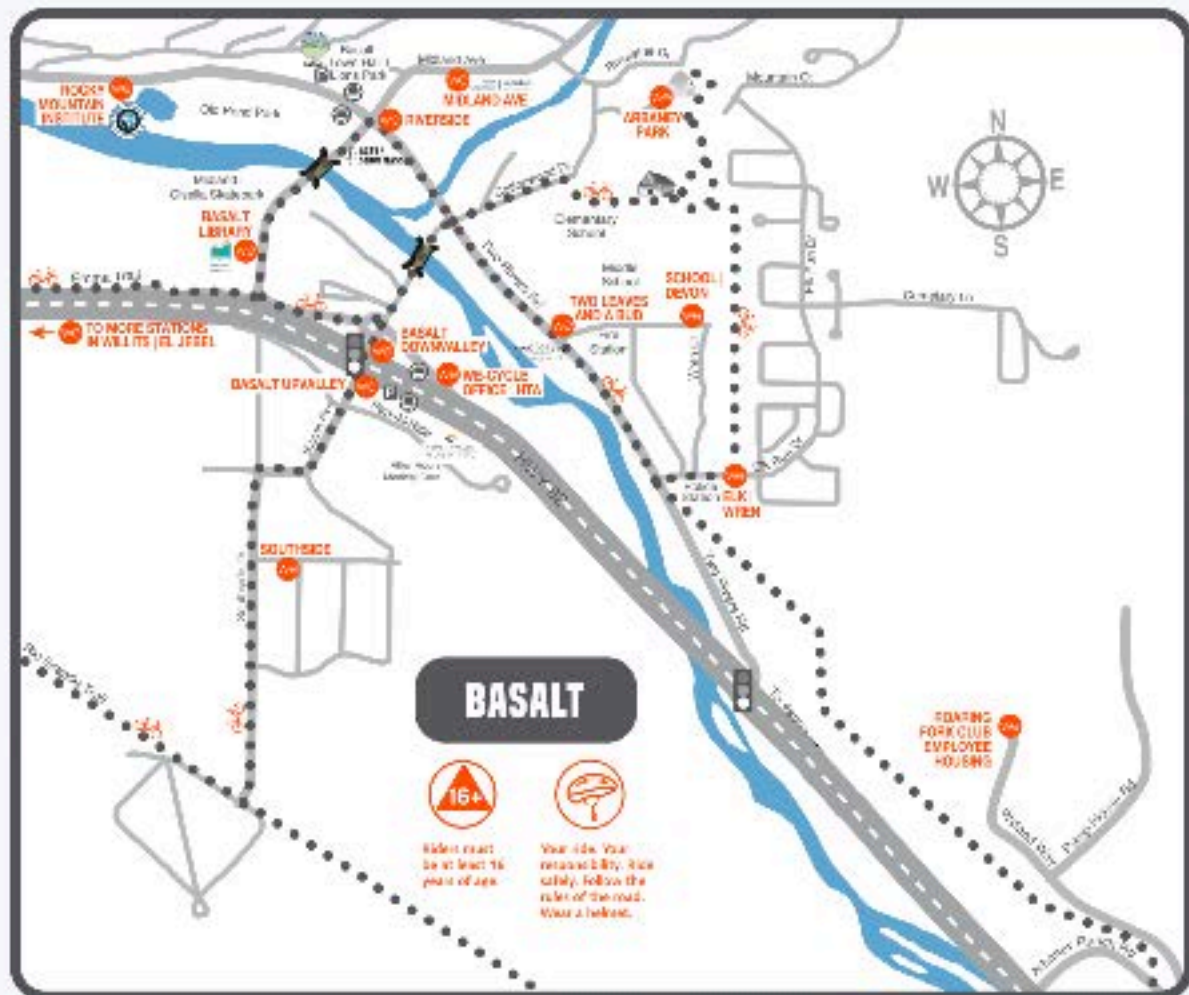
Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Currie'.

James Currie | Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mirte Mallory'.

Mirte Mallory | Co-founder and Executive Director



Public Comment on the Draft Plan

Referral comment original letters from the following Public respondents are listed alphabetically and attached:

1. Anne Austin-Clapper
2. Buddy Anderson
3. Cara and Robert Barnes
4. Sally Cole
5. Andy Davies
6. Michael Davies
7. Amy French
8. Zach Heinrich
9. Lee Ingram
10. Ronald Kinnell
11. Linda Lay
12. Catherine Maas
13. Roderick Ralls
14. Susan Ralls
15. Andrew Saltonstall
16. Bob Schultz
17. Tom Yoder



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Crown Mt Trails and Park, El Jebel

Anne Austin-Clapper <aaclapper8@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 2:22 PM

Dear Kris,

Thanks for the chance to give input on the Mid-Valley Trails Plan. I live on Hooks Lane. While I support making Hooks Bridge safer, we do not need any more trails here at Hooks Lane and Hooks Spur, and especially don't need any more trails on The Crown or over the Roaring Fork River. The wildlife in this area have already been considerably stressed since the Glassier Trails went in a few years ago. There shouldn't be any more trails here and we need more enforcement of trail limits and off-leash dog use.

Trails and wildlife should exist in balance and this plan needs to be explicit about how that will happen. Currently it does not; it only encourages expansion of trails, which often comes at the expense of wildlife and the character of the trails people liked in the first place.

The current trails on the Crown need more limits to protect the wildlife, and I am completely opposed to the Crown Mountain connector bridge over the river habitat. That project should not be in the plan at all because it will destroy the home of the birds and river animals, and it will also urbanize a sanctuary-like area that is a quiet respite. On the current trails, people enjoy this area as a quiet place with wildlife, not as dead, crowded urban trails like they have in Colorado's more urban area. Don't make a plan that we will change what we love about the area, regret in 20 years, and never be able to reverse.

Also, please give public notice of the trails committee meetings so others can attend and participate.

Thank you,
Sent from my iPad
Anne Austin-Clapper (11 Walter Rd, Basalt, CO 81621 - bordering Hooks Lane)
970-319-9588



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

mid valley trails crown mt. park-rio grande connection.

Buddy Anderson <buddyanderson52@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 2:57 PM

I do not see a need for a new trail across what is left of the wetlands and flood plain to access the rio grande or glassier trails/open space. It is only 1.5 miles down willits ln. to the existing access.

Cara & Robert Barnes
1430 Hooks Spur Road
Basalt CO 81621

February 28, 2020

Kris Valdez, Senior Planner
Eagle County

Dear Kris,

As residents of Hooks Spur Road, we appreciate that Eagle County reached out to The Hooks Spur Collective regarding future plans for our area.

We are pleased to hear that the Hooks Lane Bridge will be improved. Currently, the bridge and its sidewalk create a dangerous transition between the Rio Grand Trail, the Willits Lane bike path and various street and driveway intersections. In the winter, pedestrians using the bridge are forced to walk in the street since snow is plowed onto the bridge sidewalk. In the summer, cyclists ride into the street to avoid pedestrians on the bridge's narrow sidewalk.

Conversely, we are adamantly opposed to the construction of a bridge connecting Crown Mountain Park with the Rio Grand Trail. This bridge would put human recreation above the needs of wildlife. Wildlife are already drastically impacted by *extremely* heavy trail use on The Crown since the opening of The Glassier trailhead. When we bought our property in 2014, it was common to see a large elk herd on The Crown or on our property. We saw NO elk last winter, and this winter have only observed three cows a few times.

The proposed bridge linking Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grand Trail would intersect with the exact location of an existing bear den. Each year, a female bear raises her young there, and is often seen in our driveway and along Hooks Spur. Additionally, a flock of wild turkeys raise their young there every summer. This winter, a mountain lion has been spotted repeatedly in that area.

Our property is immediately adjacent to The Crown and we are definitely impacted by the heavy trail use. We were not notified the trails were to be expanded, and were surprised to learn of the new trails when seeing heavy equipment working there.

While we neighbors don't have any more right to the trails than other users, we do want you to understand how heavily the trails are used. We bought our property specifically because of its access to The Crown, and in previous years have enjoyed mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding on the trails. It was fun to meet neighbors and trail users along the way and to encounter wildlife. We rarely used the trails at all last summer because they were so crowded. On a typical

weekday ride, we pass 5-6 other cyclists over the course of thirty minutes. On a weekend day, that number increases to 10 or more. We *never* ride horses on the single-track bike trails any more due to the numerous blind corners and danger of having a head-on collision with a bicycle. We now limit horseback riding to doubletrack on The Crown, but even there I nearly had a head-on collision with a jeep. Also, wild turkeys and owls used to live near the bike trails, but we have not seen them since the opening of the Glassier Trail trailhead.

On a positive note, the trail wayfinding signage has been helpful in decreasing the number of lost cyclists and Jeep drivers who exit The Crown onto our property. Before the signage was installed, and before the trails were so heavily used, approximately 3 drivers per summer would knock on our door seeking assistance. Mountain bikers would often lift their bikes over our gate and ride down our driveway, sometimes refusing to even acknowledge us as we called out to them. Often the trail users are woefully unprepared and poorly equipped: there have been teenagers in flipflops hiking down to our door in need of assistance, motorists experiencing mechanical problems, mountain bikers with no water or food, and even a motorcyclist riding a Suzuki street motorcycle.

To further highlight how the trails are used, in April 2019, before the trails were even open for the season, two people in an ATV exited The Crown through our gate at 10pm and drove all over our property trying to find their way to Hooks Spur Road. I saw their headlights from my bed, was very concerned, and confronted the drivers in my driveway.

Everyone has a right to enjoy these wonderful trails, but we are worried The Crown is in danger of being “loved to death” by overuse. Wildlife are already paying the price for the heavy recreational use on The Crown. Constructing a bridge linking Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grand Trail would be disastrous for wildlife.

Sincerely,

Cara Barnes



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

The BLM Crown

Sarah Cole <scole@sopris.net>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 2:22 PM

Dear Kris,

I am writing to comment on the Mid-Valley Trails Plan and to express my concern for the lack of meaningful balance between human needs and wildlife protections in it. I am writing to speak for myself but also to speak for the riparian residents of Eagle County—the birds, including eagle and owls, the beaver, elk, deer, and others-- since they do not have a voice. The Eagle County Comprehensive Plan is explicit about the community value of protecting and preserving them and their habitat. The county's own trails plan should adhere to those values and this one does not.

In general, I think the number of trails and their use in this area is at the maximum it should be. Wildlife has already been hugely negatively impacted. I would like to see no more trails built and more patrolling for bandit use and the abuse of dogs off leash. I ask that the trails plans is revised accordingly.

Additionally, I ask the following:

- 1. Please remove the Crown Mountain-RGT Connector Project from the plan:** As I personally observe the wildlife living along the Roaring Fork River, I know the construction of any trail going across that sensitive river habitat would devastate that thriving wildlife community. This plan should not include any project that has not been vetted per the value of wildlife preservation, and I ask that you remove that project from the plan at the very least until such a study has been done. I also will say that I would be a neighbor to that trail and no one has approached me about it. It would have been better government process for that to have been done before I saw this in an official document. I would not allow such a trail on my land.
- 2. Please revise the plan to incorporate Eagle County's policies per wildlife protection:** Please add throughout the trails plan a specific plan for how to maintain the balance between recreation and wildlife protection. Without that, the trails plan goes against the wildlife policies of the Comprehensive Plan. That plan notes expressly that "Eagle County should continue to place the appropriate restrictions on recreational uses and intensities of use in areas indicated by the Division of Wildlife to be important to wildlife. As cited earlier in this section, residential, commercial and recreational development that removes critical habitat, or diminishes the use by wildlife of these habitats, should not be allowed." I ask that the county's planning staff go through the Trails Plan draft and revise it to align it with the wildlife policies in sections 3.7.4 and 3.7.5 of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 3. Add a specific mechanism for balancing metrics and assessment to the plan:** Please put in the plan a specific timeline and metrics for measuring the impact on wildlife of existing trails, with it stated that these values will stay in balance and that recreation will not overrun the wildlife. Also please put in the plan that there will be a wildlife impact assessment before any new projects are moved forward and they will only move forward if wildlife habitat is not negatively affected. Not every trail proposed is on public land so the burden should be on the county to do environmental assessments when another entity will not. Our feathered and four-legged friends need this consideration.
- 4. Please continue to forbid dogs off-leash on trails:** Please keep this policy and add to the plan that the county will increase enforcement. It is important for wildlife but also for the harmonious

co-use of trails by human citizens.

Last, I am concerned that this plan seems to have been drafted by a committee that has not publicly noticed meetings or made minutes available.

Thank you.

Sally Cole

Dear Eagle County Planning and Community Development,

I have read the Mid-Valley Trails Plan 2020 and appreciate the work put into the Plan. I am concerned, however, that the tone and projects described in the Plan place human recreation as more important than consideration of the impact these projects will have on the wildlife.

I understand that as more people move to the Valley, there needs to be space for everyone to get outdoors and recreate. I have heard this from officials and advocacy groups over the last ten years or so, and I agree to some extent. Although, it is often said, "Our weaknesses are our strengths overused." It is my belief that the Mid-Valley Trail Plan manifests this idea. Open Space and advocacy groups have done a lot of work to dramatically increase and maintain the trails in the MidValley, and I encourage the County to consider taking a moment to ascertain the effects on wildlife before approving additional trails in what has been wildlife habitat.

The bridge to connect Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grande Trail is listed as the number one priority. I find this project ill-conceived. The Plan as written fails to articulate why this project is needed at all. I assume the idea is to create a more convenient access point to the RGT, or perhaps create a nice loop for joggers. But this bridge is completely unnecessary with the Hooks Lane Bridge a mile up the road.

Traveling up to the current bridge may be more circuitous than the Trail Committee envisioned, but the sanctuary that this stretch of river provides birds, small critters, fish, otters, and large animals must be preserved. I cannot believe that anyone who claims to care about preserving some places for the animals, birds, and fish, that have made this riparian ecosystem their home long before any of us showed up, thinks the convenience of another bridge trumps the need to leave this space alone.

The purchase of Glassier Open Space and the access it provides to The Crown have benefitted people, yet the increased use has had a major impact on wildlife. Last summer, additional trails were cut on the BLM land of The Crown and use has increased each year. As a neighbor, I have observed a massive decrease in the Elk population in this area of Emma. I understand an extensive research study commenced last year, so I would expect that people interested in wildlife, which I assume the County and Planning groups are, would want more information on the impact of current use prior to supporting additional trails and traffic on The Crown.

Related to this is my concern regarding trail development on Basalt Mountain. The south facing side of Basalt Mountain has been home to mountain lions and many other species forever. We must be careful about the impact this project will have on wildlife. I understand the desire for people who live in El Jebel and Basalt to have easy access to trails. Yet, the County must also take into consideration the wildlife. The cost of either destroying habitat or stressing animals out, so they become diseased or decrease reproductivity, is not worth the convenience for humans. More research is needed on impact before this project can be approved.

Trail advocates have done a tremendous amount of work to increase and connect the trail system in the Mid-Valley. Their work to date should be applauded, and I certainly appreciate the efforts of many to create the trail system we have. Many of the projects, such as improving Hooks Lane Bridge, are excellent. My hope is that careful consideration is taken with each project to determine if the cost to wildlife is worth the desire to keep creating more trails. As they say, "Sometimes, less is more."

Sincerely,

Andy Davies



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid Valley Trails Plan Draft for Review

Michael Davies <mdavies@sopris.net>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us
Cc: Kam Davies <kam@daviesdesigngroup.com>

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 1:34 PM

Dear Kris –

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Mid Valley Trails Plan Draft for Review - January 28, 2020”.

The results this plan seeks to achieve will outlast the current people involved in the process today. It's important to get it right. Trends in recreation have shifted for generations, focusing disproportionately on human recreation now is short sighted when we consider the impact good trails could have if we focused on trails as public transportation to reduce automobile traffic, increase community interconnectivity and promote a healthy community lifestyle. This plan is right on track regarding improving links from Basalt to Willits and improving the safety of certain intersections. Where it goes sideways is its emphasis on creating more and more recreation only use trails expanding even further into land that is overused and under protected.

I am a resident of Hooks Spur Road, a member of the Roaring Fork Mountain Biking community, and I think we must start protecting the open lands and wildlife on and around the Hooks Spur area in particular. As a resident I have seen the impact of increased recreational traffic on the Crown as it relates to wildlife patterns and populations. There has been a clear decline in the resident elk herd, deer population, foxes, coyotes and Bald Eagles and Blue Herons that had frequented our property before the trails system at Glassier went live a few years back. It's not a scientific study, but it is well over 30 years' worth of anecdotal information from owning property there.

Open Space purchases have been billed to the public as a means of “protecting” these lands from development. Yet the impact of the thousands of people that now frequent the area of Hooks Spur and the Crown has had a dramatic impact. Undoubtedly, the current use is more impactful than any “development” that would be allowed under current zoning. According to RFTA, there are over 90,000 users on that section of the Rio Grande Trail alone. The lands and “open space” around Hooks Spur are seeing extreme pressure from human activity.

The Eagle County Comprehensive Plan and The Mid-Valley Area Community Plan, and this draft plan is full of references such as “preservation of habitat”, “protect summer range, winter habitat, calving areas and migration corridors”, “wildlife habitats in Eagle County should be identified and preserved” “cumulative impacts of incremental development on wildlife habitat and wildlife populations should be accounted for”, “environmental sustainability”, and “environmental stewardship”.

More specifically, the Mid Valley Area Community Plan goals and strategies must be considered and are not coherent with the Mid Valley Trails Plan Draft:

1.1.3 a) Consider **low impact** recreational and educational uses that work in harmony with the equestrian and agricultural uses and the history and character of the area.

1.1.4 a) Strive to preclude new uses that would interfere with the quiet enjoyment of residential neighborhoods in the area,

3.2 The quality of the natural environment and the function of sensitive lands and natural ecosystems is sought to be preserved and protected.

3.2 c) Discourage development or disturbances in natural areas that contribute to the quality of scenic vistas and view corridors.

3.2.4 Strive to protect and preserve the quality of wildlife habitat and the vitality of wildlife populations.

The plan to create a bridge through sensitive areas to “construct a trail connection from the RGT to Crown Mountain Park, crossing the Roaring Fork River” is a complete departure from the goals and strategies of the existing plans. Accommodating “increased or improved equestrian use of the corridor in the Mid-Valley, with trailhead parking and provision of new or improved (wider) soft-tracks for equestrian use, adjacent to or separated from the paved trail” is unnecessary and caters to the smallest group of users at great taxpayer expense. Adding more mountain bike trails to alleviate concerns of too many users on two way trails is unnecessary. As a rider, the solution is easy, make more of the existing trails one way directional. The fact that the plan is already addressing concerns of too much bike traffic on single track trails highlights the intensifying use in the area that should be mitigated through proper management instead of more impactful trails and even more usage.

I would request that the plan be altered to reflect that no new trails be constructed on the Hooks Spur Side of the Crown. References to the proposed bridge from Crown Mountain Park to the Rio Grande trail should be eliminated. No further equestrian trails or accommodations should be constructed. The Mid-Valley Trails meetings should be publicly noticed and stakeholders including neighbors should be invited. By including RFMBA and RF Horse Council, but not neighbors or HOA's or other interested parties produces a document skewed to the preferences of those groups and is not representative of all the interested parties. There should not be dogs allowed off leash in the open space area or on the existing trails. In fact having dogs on the Crown trails would be a recipe for collision and conflict, not to mention yet another negative impact to the wildlife.

It is time to act to preserve these lands and the wildlife on them rather than disrespect them with lip-service that is intended to placate those concerned.

We should not allow further development on or to the Crown and we should act to preserve habitat for wildlife by adhering to the goals and strategies of the existing plans in place.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Davies

A meta-analysis of recreation effects on vertebrate species richness and abundance

Courtney L. Larson

Sarah E. Reed

Adina M. Merenlender

Kevin R. Crooks

First published:21 August 2019

<https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.93>

Citations: 1

Funding information: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Grant/Award Number: P1582100

Despite the need to manage recreation, management agencies rarely have enough resources to adequately monitor recreational use given considerable spatial and temporal variability in visitation (Cessford & Muhar, **2003**; Larson, Reed, Merenlender, & Crooks, **2018**). Thus, even if researchers had a clear understanding of threshold levels of recreational use that result in negative outcomes for wildlife, managers may struggle to ascertain where or when recreational limits are exceeded. Public opposition to trail closures, caps on daily visitation, or reservation systems can be strong and could damage the support for conservation agencies and organizations. Therefore, we believe that the best option to minimize trade-offs between recreation and species conservation is to maintain some areas that are closed to recreation. If planning for recreational access is done at the regional level, managers could ensure that protected area networks include some areas that are closed to recreation, balancing the dual land uses of conservation and recreation at the scale of the protected area network instead of each individual protected area.

**Kris Valdez** <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid Valley Trails Plan

Amy French <amyfrenchy@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us
Cc: Robert French <rfrenchy99@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 27, 2020 at 9:16 PM

Hello Kris-

We are unable to attend the March meeting, thank you for including this letter during the work session comments.

Our home is located at 95 Hooks Lane, right next to the new Glacier Open Space Parking Lot. A parking lot next door to the home that has been in our family since the 1930's was not our dream. However, when considering the amazing opportunity the Glacier Open Space provides for outdoor enthusiasts in our community yet balancing the rural nature of our road, we reluctantly agreed on the parking lot placement.

Now reviewing the Mid Valley Trails Plan, we are disappointed to see the concept of building a bridge right through pristine animal habitat. In addition to impacting the wildlife, this bridge would be redundant to the trails that are along Willits Lane and Hooks Spur, these provide adequate access to the Glacier Open Space. Living near the dangerous double blind curve of Hooks Lane, Hooks Spur and the bridge, I see this area as an important transportation corridor that needs improvement. I suggest the sidewalk over the bridge be removed, and replaced with a painted pedestrian lane in the same location. The connection from the sidewalks at each end of the bridge is awkward for both bicyclists and pedestrians at any time of the year. But especially terrible during the winter when the snow is actually plowed and covers the sidewalks. Year round people are crossing this bridge to access Rio Grande trail and in the winter it becomes very dangerous for two cars to pass while there are pedestrians walking in the road.

Lastly, I would imagine that the cost of a bridge would be way more than the costs associated with improvements to the bridge sidewalk.

Thank you for your time
Amy & Rob French
95 Hooks Lane
Basalt, CO 81621

February 27, 2020

Dear Eagle County Planners,

It has recently come to my attention a lengthy, detailed plan to create more bicycle recreation in the mid-valley of the Roaring Fork. I am referring to the "Mid-Valley Trails Plan", "Draft for Review – January 28, 2020".

I have yet to voice my opinion publicly, but after witnessing first hand what has happened to the landscape and wildlife on The Crown mountain, as a steward of the land and animals, I can no longer sit in silence.

My family moved to Colorado in 1987, and when I moved to the valley close to 20 years ago (yes, I know there have been people here much longer), the Roaring Fork Valley was a busy place and the traffic on Hwy 82 was horrible. BUT, the wildlife in the surrounding hills and mountains was ABUNDANT!

20 years ago, was also about the time that Gary Tannenbaum started to build his legacy and achieve HIS manifest destiny of turning a historic train rail bed into a bike trail in hopes of connecting GWS to Aspen. I know this, because I helped build several portions of the trail. While my opinion of what we did with a great piece of history does not agree with Gary, I do understand the importance of outdoor recreation and exercise found through bicycling, and the RGT has provided this opportunity.

Even with all the hustle and bustle of the valley floor, the majority of the valley floor land was privately owned and provided sanctuary for a lot of animals who live here.

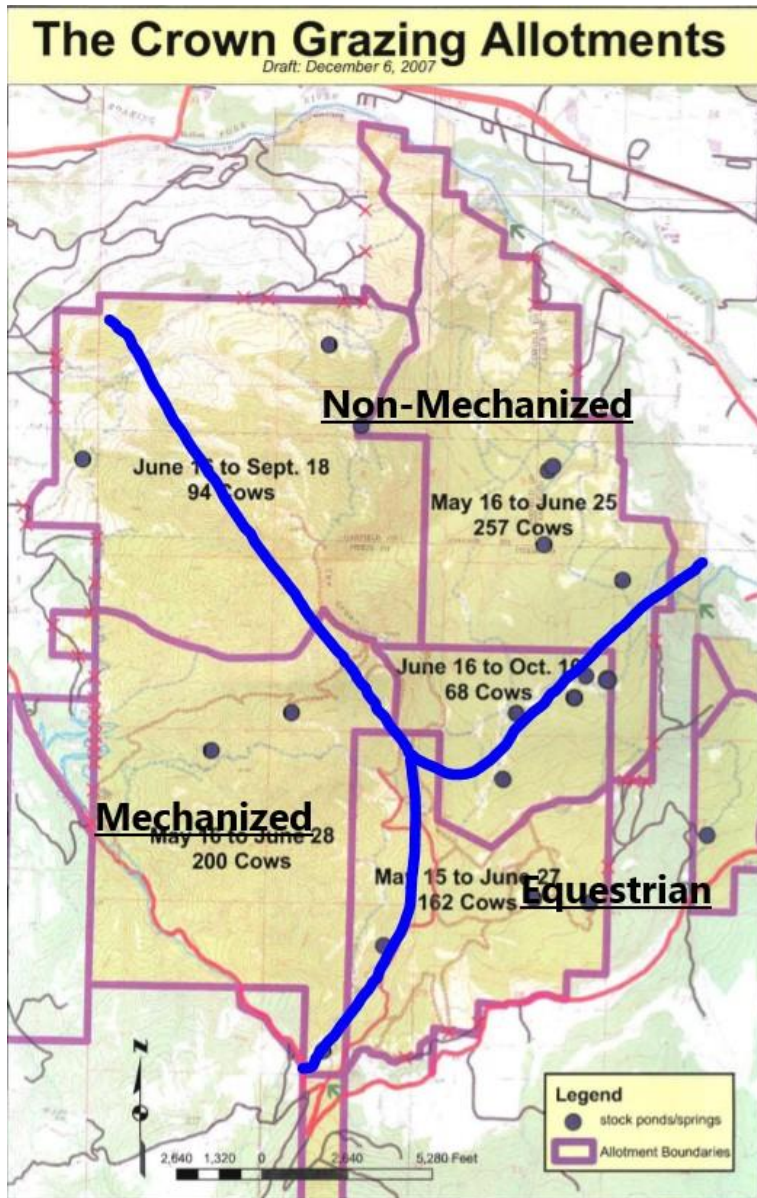
Then 2 MAJOR things started to happen. Government starting buying up private land, and then handing management and development to private groups for the building of trails. As a result, things have changed in a very short time! The mountains have not changed and the access (for the most part) has not changed. People have always had the right to the same public land for a very long time. What did change is the EASE of access. Somehow, as a society, we decided that our Creator hasn't done a good enough job and rather than learning to become "one with nature" (as some might say), meaning learning to adapt and play by the rules of nature and taking personal care and responsibility for nature, we decided that we need to create more of an amusement park type atmosphere.....like a Walt Disney World.

The purpose of this letter is to address the consequences of Walt Disney World on The Crown as I'm certain it directly relates to similar impacts of other areas in the valley, i.e. Basalt Mtn, Snowmass Mtn, Light Hill, etc.

I write to you today as an "Expert" for The Crown, and Wild Herd Animals that USED to call It home. My family has lived at the base of The Crown for 14 years, but I have had a special calling to this place since I first moved here at 23 years old. I can remember getting off of work during the week as a young man and racing to the top of Prince Creek and driving to the top of The Crown to watch the day end and reflect on my life and where I was headed. It has always been a deeply spiritual place for me personally. AND it has also been a place of adventure and exploration. I used to spend 3+ days a week on The Crown either on my horse, on foot or utv. I know every square inch of this place! The tunnel the Italian built trying to get water, the cabin where Freda Glassier and her 4 sibling were born, the numerous

wooden tree stands that the hunters built and used in the 70's & 80's, the 55 gallon steel drum that was used as a bear baiting site and now the metal chain that was used to secure the barrel is inside the tree that has grown around it, the 3 abandoned cars (I knew of the abandoned car with Texas license plates before it was lit on fire). I know it all because I have spent so much time (year-round) exploring and enjoying it!

Around 10+ years ago, the BLM stated that they were planning to rewrite the designation for The Crown (which they do every 50 years) and held numerous "public input" mtgs, which my family attended. The entire process lasted about a year and then everything went silent. At the end of the public hearing mtgs, which included several group workshops, the consensus for The Crown's next 50 years is shown below:



(Unfortunately, I cannot find the exact drawing in my archive, I have drawn the lines on the same map that was given to the public).

Essentially, the public agreed that since the Mtn Bike community had already taken the liberty of cutting fences and building bandit trails along Prince Creek, they would be forgiven and allowed to use that area to eliminate trespass and build legal trails within the BLM. The dirt bikers/jeepers would have access to this side as well as there was already a good amount of decently maintained trails and roads. This would be the "Mechanized" recreational area of The Crown.

The West Sopris Creek side would be for the Equestrian folks because it was the side with the existing ranch land, i.e. Sopris Mtn Ranch, already had public access with parking area for trailers, and it also already had (foot/horse traffic only) access via the existing Nancy's Path. This would be the "Equestrian" recreational area of The Crown.

The Roaring Fork Valley side would be left wild (since there was no public access) to protect wildlife and provide sanctuary for the herd animals that needed quiet grazing areas as well as access to water. This side holds the natural springs that fill the ponds as well as direct access through private property to the river. It was a critical area also for Winter feeding and Spring calving for herd animals. This would be the "Non-Mechanized" recreational area of The Crown.

THEN, we had silence for what seemed like years with no public hearings (that I'm aware of). NEXT, **PITKIN COUNTY BUYS LAND IN EAGLE COUNTY!!!!!!!!** Within 3 years the public input to the BLM is thrown out the window, never to be heard of again, and the flood gates are opened to the public and the ENTIRE CROWN becomes Walt Disney World for Mtn Bikers. Almost all 2 track trails are closed off with locked gates, the cattle grazing allotment is reduced significantly and SINGLE TRACK MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS ARE BUILT IN EVERY SINGLE DRAINAGLE AND HIDY HOLE. The BLM's motto is "Land of many uses", but The Crown becomes "Special Recreation Management Area"*primarily used for mountain biking.*

2. Crown Special Recreation Management Area

Location: Eagle County, Garfield and Pitkin Counties



Mountain bike riding on Lower Buckhorn on the Crown SRMA. Photo: Michael Pritchard

Trail Description:

- An extensive singletrack trail network located on BLM lands located in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties in the foothills at the base of Mt. Sopris.
- Known as "The Crown", this area has been designated as a "Special Recreation Management Area" ("SRMA") by the BLM and is primarily managed for mountain biking.
- The area consists of 98 miles of travel routes managed for a variety of modes, including open or closed to motorized and/or mechanized, open to all modes of transportation, open to non-motorized only, or open to foot, horse, equestrians and livestock.

Seems UN-CONSTITUTIONAL to me! I don't think the public has any clue the impact that the mountain bike trails have done. They switch back and forth through every single hide hole. There are large open sage areas that are critical grazing areas for deer and elk and a trail will wind back and forth through the entire area like a snake. Numerous game trails that used to serve as escape routes for herd animals across steep areas and into dark canyon hideouts, have been literally turned into Mtn Bike trails. AND the SIGNS.....OH THE SIGNS! THEY ARE EVERYWHERE!!! In fact, there are 4 at every single intersection. That does not include all the signs along the trail. If you ask Mike Pritchard, he will say the trails are built for hikers and equestrians as well. It doesn't take much common sense to know a silent bike moving at 25 miles per hour is a scary wreck just waiting to happen between a horse and rider or even a hiker. And if the bikers don't have their ear buds in, they are playing music loudly through some sort of device on their bike or in the back of their spandex shirt, so you can hear them coming from a mile away. I personally hike or ride my horse outdoors to enjoy the sounds of nature and get away from the noise of humans. If the trails are also built for equestrians (as the signs say), why is there a cattle

guard for Mtn Bikers through the fence at the West Entrance of Buckhorn Traverse and NO gate to allow for horse access?

AND the incredible volume of people, DAY AND NIGHT, is astonishing. The Buckhorn traverse is built 125 yards from my property line and I hear people on the trail ALL DAY from my back patio. I have also heard people as late as 10 pm during the summer. You can see the dual switch back scars on the hill side that Pitkin County built and now Mtn Bikers have headlights and they switch back and forth down the trails late into the night (every night in the summer). Sometimes, animals that are bothered consistently throughout the day, will become nocturnal. This often happens during the hunting season when there is constant human pressure, because hunting is not allowed after sunset. Nocturnal activity is not an option for animals on The Crown because of the summer night riding.

Each drainage/finger that leads from the Buckhorn traverse trail to the river used to hold an Elk cow with calf(s) each spring. I know this because I have personally seen it. There used to be NO roads or trails in this area and no public access from the bottom.....and the country is pretty rugged up to the benches where the cow/calves could find sanctuary and still have access to water. Calving season goes into June and The Crown opens to Mtn Bikes in May (however, Pitkin County advertises that the Buckhorn Traverse is OPEN year-round). It doesn't take much common sense to realize the cows no longer calve in this area. There was a recent article in the Aspen Times (<https://www.aspentimes.com/news/lost-in-the-crowd/>) that says Elk numbers are down 50% since the early 2000's as a direct result of human recreating, especially mountain biking. There is also a recent article in the NY Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/07/science/bears-biking-national-parks.html>) that says, ***A study last year found that elk move in response to people, more from bikes than hikers. Recent studies have shown that when a mountain bike appeared, elk fled 1,500 meters, almost as much as the 2,000 meters they ran to escape from an all-terrain vehicle. Hikers, on the other hand, caused cow elk to move only 750 meters..... One study showed that if a cow elk was disturbed 10 times during calving, no calves would survive.***

I can tell you from personal experience that when The Crown used to hold great numbers of deer, I have ridden by on my horse, with deer bedded 15 yards away and they just stay bedded, because being on a hooved animal with barnyard smells and staying quiet, they did not see us as a threat and therefore stayed put. This exact scenario has happened to me countless number of times. This is my study on equestrian impact on wildlife.

In the past **two years**, I have not seen a single buck on The Crown during summer and maybe have seen a handful of does, and absolutely NO Elk! We also find approximately 10% of the shed antlers that we used to find 10 years ago. Deer and Elk shed their antlers in the spring. This is proof that there are significantly fewer (I'm saying 90%) animals on The Crown.

Finally, I want to share a quick story with you. My brother-in-law lives in Boulder and is an avid Mtn Biker and last year he told me there is a billboard in Boulder that says, "Why drive to Moab when you can mountain bike Eagle county". I asked him, "what is wrong with Moab? I thought it had epic mountain biking?" He said, "It sucks! Too many people". While Gary Tannenbaum and Mike Pritchard seek "Gold-Level" status to invite the world to come ride their bikes in these once "Wild Places", is that really what we want as a society? To "Suck"!?

After review of the proposed Mid-Valley Plan, I have concluded that it is the Mtn Bikers goal to have bike trails and access directly from the heart of Willit's Town Center to ALL country within a 9 mile radius. The plan does not even mention concern for wildlife. I don't know about you, but I specifically moved to the mountains to enjoy the wildlife in wild places. People should have the right to their public lands, but the overwhelming number of trails that are being built to accommodate ONE user group, with absolutely NO regard for wildlife is totally unacceptable!

I thank you for your service (I'm sure it is never easy)! I understand you have an obligation to ALL the people that pay your salary. I also believe you have a bigger obligation, as a human, to your maker and mother nature.

I URGE YOU TO **DENY** ANY FURTHER TRAIL BUILDING OUTSIDE OF THE VALLEY FLOOR AND TO **REMOVE** THE TRAILS THAT HAVE BEEN BUILT IN CRITICAL WILDLIFE HABITAT WITHIN THE LAST FEW YEARS. SPECIFICALLY: HAY PARK, CROWN MOUNTAIN, BASALT MOUNTAIN, LIGHT HILL AND SURROUNDING AREAS! If you/we don't, I can guarantee our wild animals will be long gone before any of these trails will be!

Thank you for your time!

Zach Heinrich

Basalt



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails plan

Lee Ingram <pufferranch@gmail.com>
To: Kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 3:42 PM

Dear Kris,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Mid-Valley Trails plan. I think expanding the trails at this time is misguided and a bad idea. These trails have already achieved some success with impacts/ usage still growing. There is nothing like too much success to ruin the back country. What is missing from it is any sense of balance with the wildlife of this area. As acknowledged in the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan, it is important that recreational uses of the Crown and the RF River area are limited in order to balance the priorities of recreation and wildlife. The ECCP states "It would seem that an area that is over 80% public lands would have ample wildlife habitat, and indeed, Eagle County is rich in wild open lands. Unfortunately, the habitat most critical to the well being of many wildlife species is also the land where human activity and development is most likely to be found – the lower elevations along the valley floors." It goes on to flat-out state that "Eagle County strives to be a place where people co-exist in harmony with wildlife."

This Trails Plan does not acknowledge that balance and needs to be revised to have metrics and assessments that ensure this balance is protected. A plan without such metrics will simply guide more and more trail-building, regardless of impacts. Not all proposed trails are on public lands that require assessments, and even if so, NEPA is being threatened and the county should not rely on that but should have its own assurances in place.

I live near the Crown and the river and personally observe the eagles and elk and other wildlife here. When we first moved here, we used to see heron by the river, but only rarely now. This is critical elk migration area and once you chase the elk away they are not likely to come back. Let's not approve a trails plan that, twenty years from now, will have "unintentionally" eliminated the eagles and elk, too.

Please revise the plan as follows:

1. Please explicitly acknowledge that trails use on The Crown is at maximum or needs to be reduced. Wildlife experts assess that the trails use is negatively impacting wildlife. Please rewrite the plan to hold the line on any further use of these trails and to periodically assess wildlife health and adjust trails use accordingly.
2. Please add a section on how the county will balance recreation and wildlife with metrics and a timeline for assessing and revising trails use according to the results.
3. Please remove the Crown Mountain-Rio Grand Trail connector project from this plan as it goes across this sensitive river habitat—there is so little of this habitat left. It must be protected. Bikers can definitely use the trail across Hooks Bridge and don't need another trail at the cost of our river wildlife.
4. Please DO NOT allow dogs off-leash and add to the plan increased enforcement of this rule. NO ONE follows it and the dogs chase the elk and other wildlife.

Thank you for the chance to comment and hear from those other than the well-organized biking lobby, who is only in this for the money. If we do not take a conservative approach now there will be no going back.

Sincerely,

2/28/2020

Eagle County Government Mail - Mid-Valley Trails plan

Lee Ingram

734 Hooks Spur Rd.

Basalt , Co



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Fwd: Safe bike path on West Valley rd.

Ronald Kinnell <ronaldkinnell@yahoo.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Sat, Feb 15, 2020 at 5:35 AM

Ron Kinnell, area ElJebel/Summit Vista Apartments
Lived in the valley over 43 years. Over 69 years old.

With the unbelievable approval of over 100 housing units in the Fields PUD, we will need a safe paved pedestrian path west of the Eagle county building along Valley Road. Currently there is only a gravel path that ends at the Summit Vista subdivision. This path is very difficult to walk on or bike, on when covered with snow, even with their efforts to remove snow from the path.

This **road has a blind hill on it, and is very narrow and unsafe to bike, or walk on**. This valley road needs speed bumps added as well. During the summer numerous sports activities are held at the Crown park that adds a lot of fast traffic to this narrow road. People are always missing the entrance to the park, because of the parking that takes place all over the area. Another sign needs to be added stating "ENTRANCE to CROWN PARK", (with arrows), along Valley road. Eagle county commissioners have, **for years promised us improvements on this road**, but no major improvements has been made yet.

Sincerely submitted, Ron Kinnell
Sent from my iPad

February 28, 2020

Kris Valdez, MURP, AICP
Senior Planner
kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Dear Ms. Valdez,

My name is Linda Lay, and it was “Love at First Sight” when I arrived in the Roaring Fork Valley four decades ago! It started when I took that first breath of clean, fresh air that let me know how different and lovely my journey was going to be. Then, I was instantly awe-struck by the majestic snow-capped Rocky Mountains, and the glorious open spaces with brilliant sunshine highlighting every aspect of the magnificent scenery in all directions. But it wasn’t until I narrowed my focus onto the abundant fauna freely roaming the land that my heart got involved. Somehow those creatures, big and small, put the natural beauty into balance, filled my mind with wonderment, and captivated my soul. They are the irreplaceable gifts that I receive by simply appreciating what is found naturally in the Roaring Fork Valley. It was the Wildlife that caused me to fall in love in the first place, and the Wildlife is what has kept me here ever since.

From the very beginning of my mountain experience, I was stunned by the numbers of fauna that inhabited the Aspen area, and their ability to coexist in a town with residents and visitors. As a city girl, I never dreamed that one day I would live in a place where daily visits from countless varieties of wild animals was routine, and they would be drinking from my pond, hunting on my land, and even lifting fish from the river for a meal in clear view from my back door. Years later after moving down to Woody Creek, I was again enthralled by frequent wildlife encounters and their wanderings up and down the river, into our yard, and flying overhead while hunting for smaller animals, worms, insects, or berries.

However, my move up to Old Snowmass was a whole new wildlife experience—I felt like the intruder that strayed into their big open spaces of solitude and wandered on their lands. I was privileged for being allowed to watch a Black Bear with her cubs jumping in and out of Snowmass Creek; and honored to share my yard with Elk wandering off of their migrating path to escape the roads and the dogs; or grateful for the pleasure of seeing a resident Ermine poke his little white head in and out of a nearby tree hollow that always made me laugh. In fact, I even cherished the scary heart-pounding moments too (which I wouldn’t trade for anything)—like standing frozen when a curious Mountain Lion sauntered by my laundry room window and stopped to stare me down, before being distracted by a Raccoon. Or, when a Black Bear tried to open the back door in the wee hours of the morning, and I stood on the other side blasting a fog horn praying it would scare him away. Now, I knew what it felt like to be allowed to exist on their prized lands.

Then 14 years ago (after becoming a widow with an aging future), I was persuaded to give up my wildlife sanctuary and head down into the (denser) mid-Roaring Fork Valley to be closer to the services my children thought I needed. Initially, I was disappointed to find no wildlife around the old Willits Ranch that was being developed into the man-made town of Willits. But, sadness broadened my search where I lucked upon what I believe to be the perfect homestead in all of Eagle County. My property joins a group of much larger properties that are part of the nearby farming and ranching community in Emma. This Ag land sits on an ancient river bed that evolved over time into fertile pastures that sprawl out and lay reverently at the feet of a stately mountain called The Crown. These historic pastures also boast grandfathered water rights from head waters that flow down into a maze of ditches that irrigates the land for hay production and grazing Cattle, Horses, other farm animals, as well as the wildlife who journey down the distinctive red cliffs in need of a cool summer drink. It is a real-life screen where daily wildlife activity plays out for my viewing.

One late afternoon shortly after I moved into the house, my grandson and I were sitting in the sunroom watching deer drink from my neighbor’s ditch. Something caught my eye in the tall weeds off to the right, and we quickly determined it was a dark furry animal moving stealthily toward the deer. My grandson jumped up, grabbed his camera and captured a photo just before the creature leaped from the shadows and took down an unsuspecting deer. Although the act was instinctual, it was horrifying to hear the bleat like cries from the struggling victim before the kill was complete. But, what was also equally nail-biting was the backdrop of five scraggly Coyotes running down from The Crown to indulge in the banquet, before suddenly stopping in their tracks and crouching low to the ground at a safe

distance. The pack was clearly nervous, and not one dared to inch a paw closer, or take their eyes off of what looked like to me was their bigger, and darker relative feasting on his prize. As nighttime set-in, the predator left its prey, but without enough light we never knew if the hungry raiders ever found their nerve to venture closer. The next morning, we saw no remnants of the incident we had witnessed, before rushing up to Aspen Center for Environment Studies, where my grandson shared his story and photo with his wildlife instructor. The exciting news was our invader was a Coywolf—which started the research that made our rare experience even more sensational and momentous.

This extraordinary landscape where I reside is also part of an important protection habitat to wintering Deer and Elk, as they migrate across our valley. Each year, it is with thrilling anticipation and excitement for the families in our community to welcome our winter guests—a gigantic herd of huge regal Elk—who thankfully stop and rest right on the wide pastures behind our homes. During these crucial stop-overs, it is not unusual to see a few of these enormous beasts separate from the herd and lumber away to a spot nearby. But, this year a small band of these giant Elk chose to bed down for the night in my back yard—just 20 feet from a family room window—which literally took my breath away. The next morning, when my son and I peeked out of the window they had already abandoned their secret spot to rejoin the larger group, but had left behind a parting Christmas gift for us. There in the deep white snow were three gigantic scooped-out hollows in the exact shape of their warm bodies that had melted the snow that enveloped around them.

For me, there is no other place like the Roaring Fork Valley, where one can see and learn first-hand what it was like to share land and water with Black Bear, Mountain Lion, Lynx, Coyote, Deer, Fox, Porcupine, Raccoon, Badger, Weasel, Skunk, Rabbit, Hare, Gopher, Meadow Vole, Chipmunk, Squirrel, Mice, Fish, Frogs, Reptiles, endless Birds, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Vultures, Heron, Ducks, Owls, Bats, et., etc. But, as our rural areas continue to be developed with roads, houses and dogs, I am witness to and can verify that our treasured wildlife is decreasing, and the path of migration routes in some places have been altered and deprived Elk and Deer of their migratory habitat. I am trusting that you too live and work in this valley...that you too see what I see...and that you also know I am telling the truth.

Also, unless one ignores the obvious, one cannot dismiss the environmental and physical changes that are rapidly taking place all over our planet—regardless of the causes—and so much of which is sadly out of our individual control to stop. These are huge problems that will take an enormous amount of commitment and work by all peoples, in all nations, to halt the destruction before it's too late. Our Roaring Fork Valley is also not immune to these kinds of changes. Even though our valley is just a tiny Blip on the global map of destruction, it is our Blip. We did not create this special and unique place in the world, nor can we take credit for the many splendid species of living creatures that have evolved and chosen our valley for their homes. But, one thing is for sure...we have the ability to destroy all of it!

I hoping my own experience in this valley will compel you, Ms. Valdez, and every other decision-maker in authority who reads my letter, to take the opportunity to use to the full extent their influence and power to intentionally protect what is precious and distinctive in our valley. Please preserve and protect the rural and wild areas that are home to the treasured fauna found here in their natural state. We cannot stop change and growth—it's inevitable! But, we can be smart by reducing negative impacts, identifying critical habitat areas, and construct new hiking and biking trails away from them. If we fail in our job to educate and support measures that will preserve, protect, manage and monitor our summer ranges, winter habitats, calving areas, and migration corridors by allowing them to be compromised and destroyed from thoughtless and careless decisions—simply for the sake of recreational pleasures, whether from intensities of use, and over use; or most especially from the use of motorized vehicles of all kinds, and dogs off leash—they will be lost from us, and for future generations. It will take brave and responsible decision-makers to deny and restrict those things that we already know will destroy our sensitive and precious wildlife. The future and preservation of our exceptional Roaring Fork Valley rests with those noble persons who truly love this land and its wildlife and can muster the courage to defend and protect it.

Sincerely,

Linda Lay
0264 Red Rock Road
Basalt, CO 81621
linda@laylind.com



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Crown Mountain Trail review

Catherine Maas <cwmaas509@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 1:35 PM

Dear Ms. Valdez

We understand that Eagle County is reviewing trail expansion in the Crown area. As a local rancher with a lease to graze livestock during the summer months on the Crown allotments, I have a strong interest in preserving the landscape for livestock grazing and wildlife conservation. These two uses are strongly compatible and have been for over a century. Human recreational use negatively impacts both of these historic uses of the Crown Mountain wilderness area, and will have long lasting effects on our valley as wildlife is driven out of the area and it becomes more difficult to manage the grazing allotments.

Our cattle all have long horns which can be dangerous for people if they come into close proximity with the animals. In addition, people often are unaware or inconsiderate of the potential damage to themselves, other people, or the animals, when they leave gates open or otherwise interfere with the BLM infrastructure on the Crown.

We would hope that the Eagle County staff and commissioners would consider these points in making any changes to their current trail system in the area of the Crown.

Sincerely,

Catherine Maas
Emma, Colorado



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Plan

Roderick B Ralls <rod.ralls@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 2, 2020 at 8:20 PM

To: "kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us" <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Cc: Andy Davies <andy@soprisconsulting.com>

Kris, I live on Red Rock Rd which parallels Hooks Spur Road in Basalt. After reading the MVTP I'm concerned that additional traffic on the trails adjacent to Hooks Spur Rd. would greatly impact the wildlife that live in our rural area. I am especially concerned regarding the proposed RGT Bridge connection from Crown Mountain Park that would greatly increase the traffic on The Crown's trail system.

Rod Ralls

298 Red Rock Rad

Basalt, CO



Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

MVT Plan letter

susan ralls <sralls@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Thu, Mar 5, 2020 at 3:08 PM

Kris,

Thank you for inviting residents to express their opinion of the '2020 MVT Plan', and for accepting my letter past your deadline.

My name is Susan Ralls and we live at the end of Red Rock Road parallel to the Rio Grand Trail near the trail head of Crown Mountain Trail.

I agree with your common themes of safe, efficient and connected infrastructure for walking and biking are an important component of community health and economy. I personally enjoy the Rio Grand Trail for cross country skiing, walking and biking often and am thankful for the great maintenance of the pavement. I do need an ebike because of knees and hips. I leave my dog home and agree with the no dogs for wildlife preservation.

My concern is to keep the trails safe not only for our community to enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle but for the wildlife habitats.

Thank you for keeping Roaring Fork portion of Eagle County in line with the values of why we live here.

Susan Ralls

**Kris Valdez** <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Mid-Valley Trails Plan

ANDREW SALTONSTALL <saltcoff@me.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Thu, Feb 27, 2020 at 7:50 AM

Greetings and salutations,

As i will not be able to attend the meeting March 19th of the Mid Valley Master Trails Plan, i would like to express my thoughts in letter form and go on the record.

I have a few things to say about the mid valley trails ideas. I am in favor of Hooks Bridge improvements and strongly opposed to a connecting bridge from the rec area to RGT. As the landowner across the river from the Crown Mountain Recreation park as well as the individual who sold the access to crown mountain and the Glassier open Space, i think my comments should matter.

If i knew then what i do now, i never would have sold the access to open space and opened it up to mountain bikers. The wildlife that I was assured would be protected have instead been devastated. In a desire to expand their biking trails network, any other consideration was pushed aside. A bike trail was created right across a vast area where there have been found numerous Native American tools and artifacts, a known den of an untagged (native) lynx, have been sightings of wolverines (gone from Colorado for 60yrs) and a known corridor for the deer and elk to come down for forage and water at the river. There was limited or no archeological study as well as animal assessment. Both myself and our neighbor have seen the lynx on numerous occasions and this was before they were re-released into the wild. The wolverine has been spotted in the same area.

The remaining wildlife have had their habitat steadily encroached upon and now there are just a few shelters left for them to try and survive. The Crown Mountain access through the Glassier Open Space, is the corridor down which the wildlife flow down to the river bottom.

The land across the river from the rec area is in a conservation easement and is meant to be left alone so that the few creatures left have some peace. We see all kinds of birds nesting there including Horned Owls, Bald Eagles, Red Hawks, Golden Eagles, Blue Herons, Osprey, Turkeys, and many more. There are river otter, beavers, mink, bobcats, and many deer and elk. By building a bridge across the river near this area, their peace and solitude are thrown to the wind and the bikers win again. Casual and once in a while contact, animals can handle, sustained, they cannot.

I'm not sure how you can build a bridge across a protected conservation area, vast riparian areas and private land to reach the RGT, it would have to be a mile long suspension bridge because you are not going through my land, not now, not ever.

In your haste to see this all happen, you have not once reached out to me or the others on Hooks Spur who are impacted. I would think that contacting those affected would be the first thing done. I feel like the trails committee is trying to pull a fast one and sneak this all by us. I realize this is not true, but the slight has been felt.

Let the animals have some peace! Build no more trails on The Crown, Close it for a longer period each year to give the animals a chance, make the penalty for ignoring leash laws more severe (can't even count the number of times i have seen dogs chasing game) (tired of hearing how well behaved my dog is), and forget about a bridge across the river. If you want your exercise you can ride down Willits and across a rebuilt Hooks Bridge and finally, remember to inform the property owners of your ideas and plans.

Andrew Saltonstall
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Basalt, CO 81621

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Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Draft MidValley Trails Plan

Bob Schultz <rschultzconsulting@gmail.com>
To: Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

Wed, Feb 5, 2020 at 2:57 PM

Hi Kris:

I hope that you are well and staying warm.

I took a look at the draft plan and wanted to offer a comment related to priorities. The usage of Upper Cattle Creek Rd. from El Jebel to Fender Lane and to the Garfield County has been increasing at a very high rate. There are both pedestrian and bike users but the bike use has grown the most. Since Garfield County did paving up here several years ago it has become a popular ride in the biking community. I would encourage Eagle County to make creating a paved bike/ped lane on each side to the road to Fender a first priority. A later priority would be paving the road from the reservoir to the Garfield County line to connect to paved roads in Garfield County.

There is fantastic biking in this portion of Eagle County and I expect that increases in usage will continue. The current condition has conflicts between drivers and bikers as there is little or no paved shoulder on Upper Cattle Creek. As cars and trucks leave the road, they create a sunken track at the edge of pavement that is very dangerous for bikers. I was pushed into one of those ruts several years ago by a dump truck who was passing me as a car was coming uphill. I was able to bail and avoid serious injury but since then I have been aware of the danger and see the conflicts happen.

In the summer, the route is used by construction and Costco shoppers heading to Gypsum over Cottonwood Pass. The continuation of pavement would better serve those trips and connect to the paved roads in Garco for addition bike route loops around Missouri Heights. That would reduce the concentration of bikes on Fender and the portion of Upper Cattle Creek to El Jebel.

My previous review of the Eagle County Capital Improvement Plan included little investment in the Roaring Fork Valley, I would encourage staff and the Commissioners to invest in the bike pen/ improvements on Upper Cattle Creek at a minimum.

I look forward to seeing the final plan. Thanks for your efforts.

“Judge a moth by the beauty of its candle”
Rumi

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Kris Valdez <kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us>

The BLM Crown

Tom Yoder <tomyoder77@gmail.com>
To: kris.valdez@eaglecounty.us

Fri, Feb 28, 2020 at 2:00 PM

Hello Kris

I take pride in realizing that for years I have been a passionate "Friend and Protector" of the Crown ... a steward and guardian of the land. Hiking or riding a horse on the Crown are among THE most enjoyable and rewarding experiences of my life.

However, Kris, it is extremely important that you understand how sickening it is to see firsthand how devastating the mountain bike projects and developments have been to the Crown!

I am older now. I'd like to share two maxims which have been vital to my well-being:

"There is never a WRONG time to do the RIGHT thing"

"No matter how far you've traveled down the wrong road ... turn back"

I ask that you and your colleagues consider protecting the Crown. The invasion has been remarkable and may soon be irreversible ...

Tom Yoder

1432 Hooks Spur

Basalt