

SkyRidge Open Space Management Plan

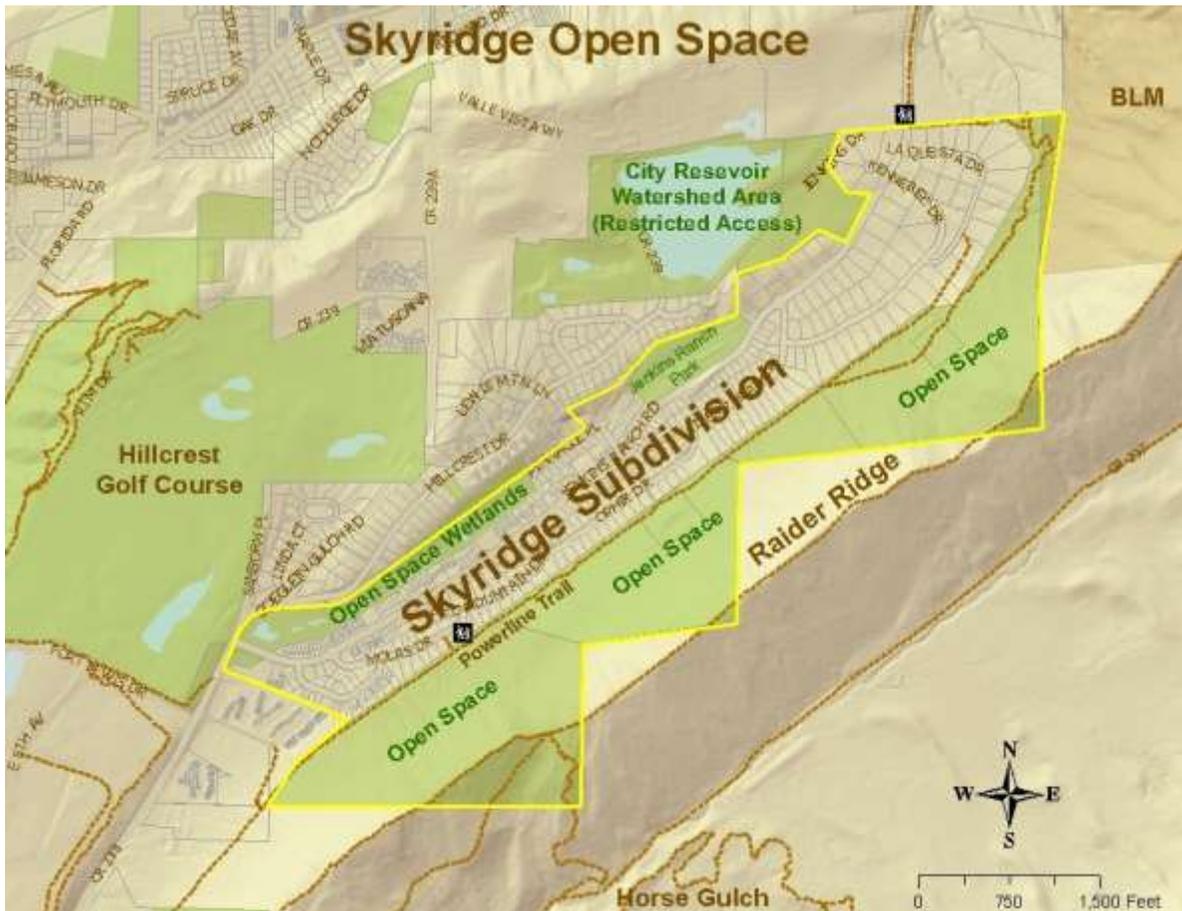
Adopted 9-10-09

I. INTRODUCTION

The Skyridge Subdivision was developed to include several hundred home sites, Jenkins Ranch Neighborhood Park, and approximately 184 acre of open space lands that include a wetlands area at the entrance to the development, and a significant portion of the northwestern facing slope of Raider Ridge behind the development.

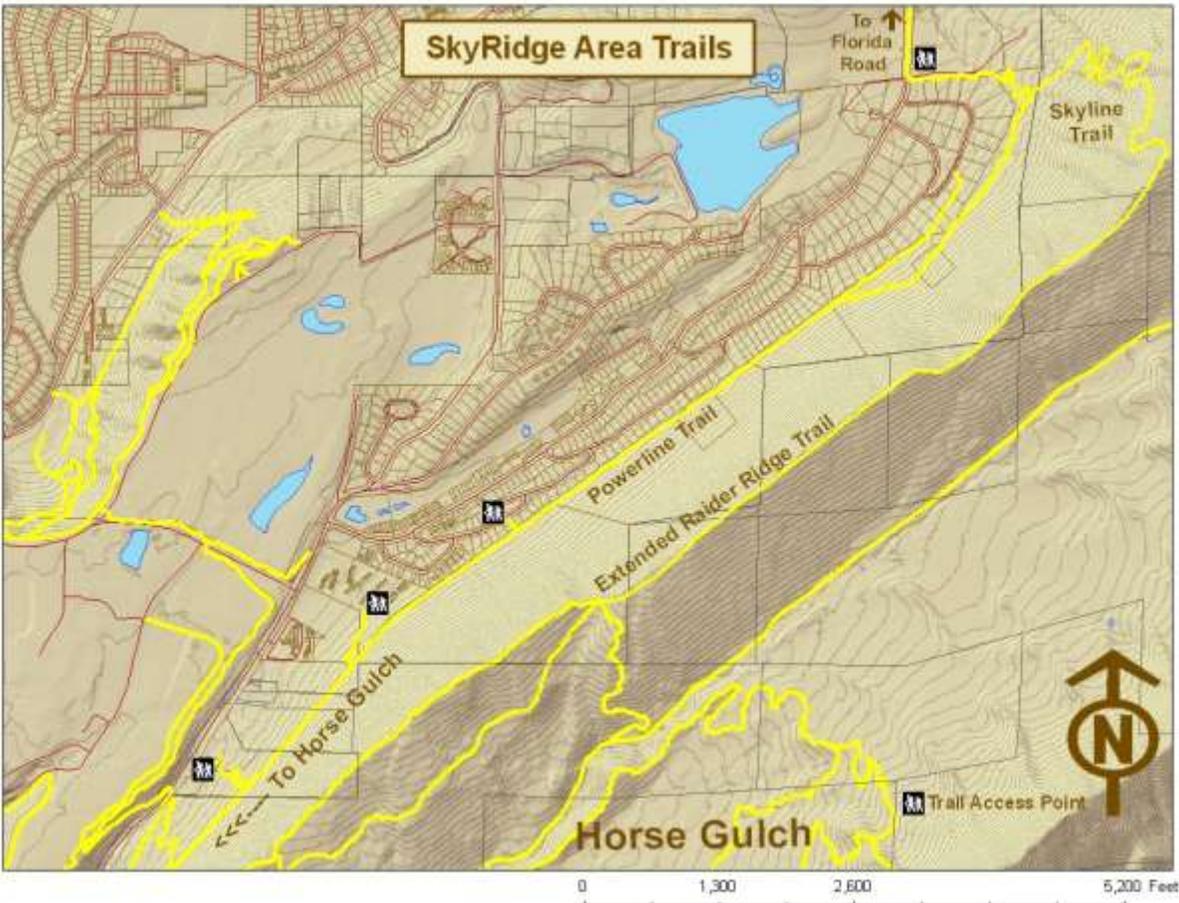
Working in coordination with the City's Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board, this plan has been prepared to provide a framework for the sound stewardship of the property.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA



As shown on the area map, Skyridge includes an approximately 15 acre mitigated wetlands area required by the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) as part of the developments original approval. In 2007, in accordance with the ACOE-approved mitigation plan and permit, the wetlands area was extensively rehabilitated. Administration of the plan and permit is the responsibility of the City of Durango Public Works Department.

The balance of the open space acreage within Skyridge includes approximately 169 acres located on the northwestern facing slope of Raider Ridge. This area includes two city-owned water tanks and associated access roads. The Powerline Trail passes through this area just above the home sites providing trail access for area residents to both the BLM lands to the northeast and Horse Gulch to the southwest. Paralleling the Powerline Trail on the uphill side is the Powerline Drainage Ditch which controls water coming off the hillside. At the top of Raider Ridge, the Extended Raider Ridge Trail and its connectors pass through the open space and private property (under an easement agreement) as it leads to the BLM property to the northeast. A map of the area-wide trail system is shown below for reference.



III. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

It is the intent of the City of Durango to manage the property to:

- Maintain the open space areas as largely undeveloped and in a natural state, as passive non-motorized recreational lands and wildlife habitat, including the riparian areas associated with the wetlands;
- Improve the condition of the property by eliminating invasive weeds along the Powerline Trail, within the wetlands area, and other areas as needed;
- Maintain and improve the Powerline Trail and other trails, as needed;
- Eliminate hillside trails on Raider Ridge that have not been approved by the City.
- Maintain the water tanks, Powerline Ditch, and associated improvements to ensure their long-term functionality for SkyRidge.

IV. SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT POLICIES

1. Specific management activities shall be consistent with this adopted Plan. Proposed activities deemed inconsistent with the management plan shall be reviewed and considered by the City of Durango's Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board.
2. Proposed changes to the Management Plan shall be circulated to the appropriate City Departments and Advisory Boards for review and comment prior to action by the Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board.
3. The site shall be maintained in its natural state with public recreational use limited to trail-oriented activities consistent with the requirements of this plan (walking, hiking, jogging, bicycling and environmental education).
4. All uses/activities on the property shall be subject to City Park and Open Space rules and regulations. The City shall be responsible for enforcement of all regulations. The following uses/activities shall be specifically prohibited on the property:
 - Overnight camping
 - Fires of any kind
 - hunting or discharge of firearms/weapons
 - dogs off leash
 - injury to or molestation of birds, game or wildlife
 - unauthorized motorized vehicles
 - Destruction or removal of natural vegetation or materials except for purposes of property maintenance consistent with the management plan.
 - Resource disturbing activities such as the construction of trails, forts, tree houses, and seating areas unless consistent with this plan and approved by the City and its pertinent advisory Board(s).

5. Improvements on the property shall be limited to:

A. **Trails:** The development, major maintenance, closing and/or rerouting of trails shall be based upon a staff evaluation and the participation and input of the Natural Lands Advisory Board; the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the public as part of regularly noticed public meetings.

B. **Signage** on the property may include:

- Rules/regulations
- Interpretive/educational signage
- Temporary, seasonal, or other signage as deemed appropriate for the protection and maintenance of the resource

C. **Wetlands Stewardship:** From time to time, there may be a need for modification to the 15 acre wetlands site in order to comply with the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) wetlands mitigation plan and permit and associated conservation easement. Administration of the ACOE permit requirements are the responsibility of the City of Durango Public Works Department. The Natural Lands Board and La Plata Open Space Conservancy will be informed of any proposed modifications to the wetlands area in advance of the maintenance occurring as part of regularly noticed public meetings;

D. **Public Works Purposes:** From time to time there may be a need to maintain or improve the water tanks, Powerline Ditch, and other associated improvements to these facilities to ensure their long-term functionality for SkyRidge.

7. The City, at its discretion, may elect from time to time to temporarily close the property, or selected areas of the property, when it is deemed necessary for the protection and/or rejuvenation of specific resources, including wildlife and vegetation.
8. Property assessments may be taken from time to time to determine the specific location, type, and quantities of unique plant and animal habitat/species, and unique natural or archeological features in advance of any stewardship activities consistent with this Management Plan.

V. STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

Annual Maintenance: Annual and ongoing maintenance will be based on routine inspection and need. Typical ongoing maintenance shall include weed mitigation, fire mitigation, trash removal, erosion control, vandalism repair, trail and road repair and improvements; and clearing of debris and siltation from the Powerline ditch, and other facility repair or maintenance as needed.

Flora and Fauna Protection and Enhancements: Based on the finding of any future property assessments or other research efforts undertaken, protection and enhancement efforts consistent with this Management Plan may be undertaken to improve the ecological and biological diversity and health of the property.

VI. AMENDMENT/UPDATE

This Management Plan may be amended from time to time as necessary due to significant changes in use patterns and/or changes in land use policies on adjacent public lands, provided the Plan continues to protect the intent of the original intent of the open space preservation. Any proposed plan amendment or update will be undertaken in consultation with the Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board and other pertinent Departments and Boards.

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RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

NATURAL LANDS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2009

ROLL CALL

The Natural Lands Preservation Advisory Board meeting was called to order Thursday, September 10, 2009 at 5:09 p.m. at the Durango Public Library, Program Room # 2. Present from the Board were Vice Chair Paul Wilbert, Connie Imig, Mark Smith, Nancy Jacques, Ed Zink, Trevor Balzer and Council Liaison, Leigh Meigs. Staff members present included Kevin Hall, Parks, Open Space and Trails (POST) Development Manager and Joanne Gantt, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Member Imig motioned to approve the August 13, 2009 minutes. Board Member Jacques seconded the motion, all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

REPORTS

The Board discussed the Capital Improvement Program pertaining to the 2005 sales tax for the Open Space, Parks and Trails Fund and the recommended allocation of \$500,000 for the preservation of natural lands in the proposed 2010 budget. The Board asked questions about the 2005 tax or 2A funds and if it could be used for maintenance and an endowment. The Board discussed the process for acquisition of new Open Space and increasing the purchase of conservation easements.

The Board was informed that the City has received grant funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) toward the purchase of the Fort Lewis College Foundation property in Horse Gulch. The Board was updated on feedback from GOCO on the Horse Gulch tour. GOCO saw a balance of uses, public access and habitat and was very interested in Horse Gulch.

OLD BUSINESS

DRAFT SKYRIDGE OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Board discussed the Draft SkyRidge Open Space Management Plan. An amendment was proposed to recognize the Fort Lewis Foundation trail easement connecting Hillcrest Estates to Jenkins Ranch Park and the proposed trail linking Hillcrest View Park to SkyRidge. Board Member Zink moved to accept the SkyRidge Open Space Management Plan as amended. Board Member Imig seconded the motion, all were in favor.

POST AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Board discussed the Parks, Open Space, Trails (POST) and Recreation Master Plan in relation to Open Space goals and policies. The consultants are preparing a draft Open Space chapter of the Master Plan, at which time the Board will review and provide their suggestions to the Steering Committee.

The Board discussed and reviewed goals and policies from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan relative to Open Space. The Board was asked to provide staff with comments via email regarding the goals and policies prior to the October 1, 2009 Board meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board entered executive session at 6:37 p.m. to discuss potential acquisition of Open Space/Natural Lands as permitted in C.R.S. 24-6-

402(4)(a) and C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e). The Board left executive session at 7:04 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2009 at 5 p.m. at the Durango Public Library, Program Room # 2. The meeting adjourned at 07:05 p.m.

Ken Francis, Chair