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Mission of the La Plata County Trails Plan

To promote the ongoing development and maintenance of a strategic, well-designed network of trails that provide safe, convenient and enjoyable recreation and transportation experiences for all trail users.

CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Trails in La Plata County: Past, Present and Future

Trails play a vital role in the life of La Plata County residents; many people use them for many purposes throughout the county. Trails help to make the county a safe and enjoyable place to live and visit. They connect neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and recreation areas and they provide access to the county's abundant public lands.

Trails in the county have undergone an interesting historical evolution. Many trails that we use today were established by pioneers, who began settling here more than 130 years ago. The driving force behind the early settlement was the search for precious metals; many miles of roads and trails were built to access mineral deposits in the mountains.



To support mining, lumber and food were needed. Therefore, loggers, ranchers and farmers followed the miners; they, too, built roads and trails.

Efficiency determined the road and trail designs of these settlers. Cattle were driven to summer pasture on the most direct route possible; their trails followed the stream bottoms, where there was water and grass. Loggers brought timber to the valleys as directly as possible, with little concern for erosion. Farmers drove their crops to market along narrow roads.



Now, 100 years later, these historic routes throughout the county still function as roads and trails. We have inherited a trails and transportation system that was created by many hard years of grubbing by our predecessors. Unfortunately, many of these routes were not designed with today's uses in mind. Trails in the mountains often follow steep grades or fragile river bottoms. Roads are often narrow with abrupt shoulders.

Today, much like the mining boom of years past, our County is in the midst of another transformation. The population has increased 73% in the past 30 years, growing from 19,000 in 1970 to 44,500 in the year 2000. Growth in the

unincorporated parts of the county has been particularly high, increasing 98% from 1970 to 1998.

The influx of new residents and new patterns of travel and recreation are evident throughout the county, and trail use by residents and visitors is steadily increasing.

Today's challenge is to incorporate trails into the fabric of our developing communities, preserve access to our public lands, maintain existing trails, and provide accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists along our roads and highways. This plan provides guidance for addressing this challenge.

The Trails Plan

Prepared following an evaluation of trails and trail needs in the county, the plan emphasizes strategic additions and improvements to the county's existing trail system in order to promote safety, reduce conflicts; and better connect schools, neighborhoods, business and recreation areas. The plan recognizes the need to respect the rights of private property owners while taking into account the legitimate public need for safe roads and trails, and reasonable access to public lands. The plan is an active, living document, identifying trail needs and opportunities with an eye to the future. Periodic updates to the plan should reflect changing conditions, thereby preserving its relevance.

Major Themes of the Plan

The following major themes emerged during the preparation of this plan. They should be promoted through trail planning and development, and management activities in the county.

Theme 1: Trails are vital to safe, livable neighborhoods and communities

- ❖ Trails should safely take people where they need to go; they can connect schools, neighborhoods, businesses, parks and public lands.
- ❖ Promoting safe shoulders along county roads and state highways is integral to an overall trails program.
- ❖ Identification of potential trail corridors prior to land development is key to integrated trails planning.
- ❖ Trails serve multiple purposes: promoting health, recreation and as realistic alternatives to automobiles.
- ❖ Trail proposals should consider all relevant users, including accessibility for people with disabilities.
- ❖ Good trails and facilities enhance the quality of our lives.

Theme 2: Thoughtful integration between public and private lands is central to meaningful trails planning in La Plata County

- ❖ While there are developed trails on public lands, access is limited in some areas.
- ❖ Respect for private property rights and reducing trespass problems on private property must be addressed.
- ❖ Strategic evaluation of potential access points is required.
- ❖ Upgrading existing trail heads, access points, parking and signage are important considerations.
- ❖ Sensible hunting, fishing and recreation access on public lands is needed.
- ❖ Respect for sensitive plant and animal habitats is vital to proper trails planning.
- ❖ Encourage public and private sectors to work together towards good trails.

Theme 3: Proper trail design is critical to a successful trails system

- ❖ Trails must accommodate a variety of users and be designed to minimize conflicts.
- ❖ Safety must be emphasized. This includes establishing appropriate grades, widths, sight distances and vertical clearance.
- ❖ Trails should minimize significant impacts to wildlife and ecosystems.
- ❖ Trail designs should minimize vegetation removal and erosion.

Theme 4: Trail maintenance is critical to a successful trails system

- ❖ Ongoing trail maintenance is essential to preserving trails. This includes:
 - Rerouting steep trails
 - Rerouting trails to minimize impacts to sensitive natural areas and critical wildlife habitat
 - Improving drainage and limiting erosion

Objectives of the Plan

- ✓ Identify general principles and issues relevant to trails and transportation planning in the county
- ✓ Describe who uses trails, how they are used, and, in general and specific terms, how they can be improved
- ✓ Identify and map major existing trails and routes in the county (primarily those on public lands and along county roads and state highways)
- ✓ Describe specific trail and access needs and opportunities throughout the county
- ✓ Propose the development/completion of four specific trail projects that are of countywide significance
- ✓ Discuss the various entities involved with trails in the county and present recommendations to improve the effectiveness of these entities
- ✓ List sources of information on relevant trail issues (planning, design, maintenance, etc.)
- ✓ Present recommendations and action steps to further the mission and guiding principles of the plan, increase coordination of trail planning efforts, and guide citizen action
- ✓ Provide a document which promotes planning and development of trails and related facilities in the county

The Purpose of the Plan

The Trails Plan is a guide for the planning, development and management of pathways, trails and roads in La Plata County. The plan is an information resource, a policy document, a vision statement and a guide for future action.

Information resource

The plan serves as an **information resource** by describing the patterns and needs of trail users in the county, and discussing the types of trails in the county and where they are located.

Policy document

As a **policy document**, the plan provides guidance to the numerous entities involved with trails and transportation in the county on issues such as: trail planning, design, development, maintenance, and management activities. The plan's guiding principles form the foundation of the plan by establishing broad goals, and specific trail management and planning objectives. Topics identified in the guiding principles are referred to and expanded upon throughout the plan.

Vision statement

As a **vision statement**, the plan presents generalized and specific discussions about the future of trails in La Plata County. Included in the plan are discussions on the role of trails in neighborhoods, and public lands, and their integration with the county's transportation system.

Guide for future action

As a **guide for future action**, the plan identifies more than 100 area-specific trail needs and opportunities, as well as four priority projects of countywide significance. Additionally, the plan contains specific recommendations for future action by the many parties involved in trail issues in the county. It also lists sources for trail assistance and information.

How the Plan Was Created

The plan was created through the combined efforts of: a 46 member stakeholders group; a 3 member steering committee; a team of planners, trail experts, and geographic information systems specialists; and a considerable number of county residents at public forums and working meetings. The La Plata County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission provided oversight for the preparation of the plan.

Stakeholders group

The stakeholders group met on a monthly basis for almost two years providing substantive guidance, review and hands-on participation. The stakeholders group consisted of representatives

from various trail user groups including: cyclists; hikers; hunters; outfitters; private landowners; farmers and ranchers; snowmobilers; ATV riders; motorcyclists; equestrians; residents from various areas of the county; staff members from local governments, land and wildlife management agencies, trail and open space groups; and other dedicated citizens. The stakeholders group membership roster is contained in the acknowledgements section in the front of the plan.



Throughout the preparation of the plan, the stakeholders group gathered information regarding existing trails and made suggestions for improvements. The process was extensive and the stakeholders reached out well beyond their group to solicit input from trail users, landowners, agency specialists and many other county residents.

Steering committee

The steering committee was composed of representatives of the plan's two major sponsors: La Plata County and Trails 2000. The La Plata County Geographic Information Center provided technical assistance.

Public input

As a supplement to citizen guidance provided by the stakeholders group, there were many opportunities for the public to contribute its ideas and concerns.

Public outreach was extensive; it included:



- ✓ Three well-publicized, countywide public meetings/open houses
- ✓ Fifteen local focus group meetings to identify trail needs and opportunities in various parts of the county
- ✓ Eleven public hearings or work sessions before the La Plata County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission, the Southern Ute Tribal Council, and the Bayfield Planning Commission
- ✓ Distribution of 300 copies of a draft plan

Major steps in the preparation of the plan

Following is a sequential listing of the major steps in the planning process:

- ✓ Convene stakeholders group in January, 1999
- ✓ Develop mission statement and guiding principles
- ✓ Data collection and analysis
- ✓ Evaluate existing trail system
- ✓ Identify, evaluate and research area specific needs and opportunities
- ✓ Prepare and circulate two draft versions of the plan and review for final adoption in June, 2000

Mission and Guiding Principles

The plan's mission statement and guiding principles establish a set of basic values and priorities that should be used to guide trail planning, development and management. Covering general and specific topics, they address basic values such as the creation of safe, livable communities and the respect for private property rights. At the same time, the guiding principles also identify factors to consider when actually designing, building and managing trails. The mission statement and guiding principles are listed below in their entirety. Individual guiding principles are inserted throughout the text to emphasize their role in shaping particular sections of the plan.



Mission

To promote the ongoing development and maintenance of a strategic, well-designed network of trails that provide safe, convenient and enjoyable recreation and transportation experiences for all trail users.

Guiding principles

1. Trail development efforts should be carried out in a manner that respects the rights of private property owners while also realizing the legitimate public benefit associated with trails and the provision of access to and from public lands, schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and other developed areas.
2. Trail development should be correlated to population density and trail demand; trail networks should be more extensive in developed areas and/or where there is greater demand for trail use.
3. Trails should be developed where they can legitimately play a role in reducing motor vehicle use, such as close to population centers and along busy roads.
4. Trails should be developed on a proactive basis. Ideally, trail corridors should be identified prior to land development. Trail easements and alignments should be secured and established in advance of, or concurrently with, development of an area.

5. The county's trail network should be strategically developed. Development efforts should concentrate on trails that perform essential functions. Trails should take people where they want and need to go - e.g. from one neighborhood to another; from homes to schools, parks, stores and employment centers; to and from public lands; and to high points and vistas.
6. Road rights-of-way throughout the county should be developed to accommodate non-motorized uses through shoulder widening and striping and/or separated paths. The County Road and Bridge Department should maintain a prioritized list of roadways most in need of such improvements.
7. Trails should accommodate a variety of users. Conflicts among users should be minimized through appropriate designs and the availability of alternate routes to separate severely conflicting uses as opposed to outright bans on certain uses.
8. Trails should be designed such that grades, widths, drainage systems, water crossings, sight distances and vertical clearance are appropriate for the types of uses anticipated.
9. Trails should be designed and managed to minimize significant impacts to wildlife and ecosystems.
10. In order to minimize the impact of new trails on the surrounding environment, removal of soil and vegetation should be limited to what is necessary to provide a safe and well-designed trail.
11. Trails should be adequately signed and routinely maintained.
12. Poorly placed or built trails should be redesigned, rerouted or closed and revegetated.
13. Trail building plans should be grounded in financial reality.
14. Accesses and trail heads should be established to connect public roads to public lands.
15. More trail connections should be established between the developed areas (front country) and undeveloped areas (back country).
16. Trails that connect public roads to public lands should have trail heads, access points and parking areas sufficient for all users, whenever possible.
17. When feasible, design trail systems as looped systems, offering users the opportunity to complete multiple loops of varying lengths and difficulty; e.g. Horse Gulch/Grandview Ridge trails.

CHAPTER 2. TRAIL USERS

Most trails in the county serve a variety of users.

Understanding the needs of the numerous trail user groups helps to provide direction and guidance for trail planning efforts. The plan strives to identify and address the needs of as many different trail users as possible. Following are discussions about the county's primary trail user groups and some of their specific needs. Strategies for minimizing conflict among user groups as well as between humans and wildlife are included.



Pedestrians and Hikers

In many cases, walkers and hikers are the primary user group for which trails are designed. People on foot are sometimes vulnerable to conflicts with other trail users such as cyclists and motorized users who travel at higher speeds. Many trail walkers are accompanied by their dogs. Conflicts can occur if dogs are not properly controlled. It is also an important courtesy for dog owners to assume responsibility for cleaning up after their dogs. Most neighborhood trails and trails to activity centers such as schools and businesses should be oriented toward pedestrians. Considerations for pedestrian and hikers include:

- ❖ Maintaining adequate separation from automobiles (5 feet minimum for separated paths)
- ❖ Maintain gentle grades and adequate width to accommodate anticipated volumes of users. (3 feet minimum width on soft surface trails and between 8 feet to 12 feet for heavily used, hard-surface trails)
- ❖ Provide adequate shoulders along roads and highways when feasible, per AASHTO standards

Guiding Principle:

Trails should accommodate a variety of users. Conflicts among users should be minimized through appropriate designs and the availability of alternate routes to separate severely conflicting uses as opposed to outright bans on certain uses.

Cyclists

The county's cycling community spans all age and ability levels. Significant numbers of cyclists reside in the county and many visitors come to this area to cycle. Large, organized rides pass through the county each year and the county is known among cyclists nationwide for its mountain biking opportunities. The two primary issues associated with planning for cyclists are safety and the creation of strategic routes to provide variety, utility, and challenge. Chapter 4 addresses on-road issues for cyclists and pedestrians. Appendix 1 contains a detailed analysis of the county's road network. It identifies the major routes in La Plata County used by bicyclists and pedestrians, and outlines recommendations for future actions to improve the safety of those routes and reduce interference with the flow of vehicular traffic. Considerations for cyclists include:

- ❖ Designing trails that have adequate sight distances around curves and at intersections
- ❖ Maintaining gentle grades and adequate clear zones
- ❖ Education programs to inform cyclists and motor vehicle drivers about the "Rules of the Road" and the unique responsibilities of cyclists and drivers

Commuters

Commuting trails and on-road routes should link neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and towns. Given the relatively low densities of development that exist in the county, most commuting is done on bicycle between the county's outlying neighborhoods and the business areas in and around Durango, Bayfield and Ignacio. As such, the primary need of commuters is for adequate shoulders along roads and highways. Chapter 4 and Appendix 1 discuss road design considerations for cyclists, and Chapter 5 identifies specific connections intended to improve linkages between the county's municipalities and outlying neighborhoods. Considerations for Commuters include:

- ❖ Adequate shoulders
- ❖ Bicycle lane striping through intersections and merge lanes
- ❖ Bicycle-responsive traffic signals
- ❖ Availability of separated trails in high-use areas

School Children

The goals of school children are similar to those of adult commuters - that of getting safely and efficiently to their destination. There needs to be a great awareness of safety when planning school trails. Ideally, trail routes should be separated from motor vehicles. Road and highway crossings must be carefully planned. Considerations for school trails include:

- ❖ Trails should be separated from motor vehicles
- ❖ At-grade crossings should be minimized and carefully planned
- ❖ School trails should be accessible to people with disabilities

People with Disabilities

Few “accessible” trail opportunities currently exist for disabled trail users in the county. Accessible recreational trails should provide a variety of challenge levels; they do not all have to be level and smoothly paved. Abandoned railroad lines often provide excellent accessible trail opportunities due to their gentle grades. Appendix 7 contains a description of accessibility standards for ensuring trail design compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Considerations for accessible trails design include:

- ❖ Gentle grades, necessary parking areas, and appropriate railings, surface, signage
- ❖ Providing a variety of challenge levels – not all accessible trails need to be smooth, flat, paved trails; a firm and stable natural surface may be adequate
- ❖ Trails should be designed to meet accepted accessibility standards

Horses: Equestrians, Ranchers and Outfitters

Many trails are heavily used by equestrians, particularly in rural areas and on public lands. Equestrian use of trails is mostly recreational; however, trails are also used by ranchers for stock drives and by backcountry outfitters to haul supplies and equipment. Appendix 2 contains a focused discussion of equestrian trail needs and concerns. Considerations when designing trails and facilities for equestrians include:

- ❖ Adequate parking and trailer turnaround areas at trail heads
- ❖ Hitching rails at trail heads, and at strategic locations along trails
- ❖ Signage describing trail destinations and rules, and warnings about motorized users
- ❖ Adequate trail width and vertical clearance

- ❖ Establishment of water troughs at springs and streams, and frost free hydrants at trail heads
- ❖ Education of other users regarding potential encounters with equestrians

Motorized Users: ATV, Motorcycle, Snowmobile

These uses normally take place on public lands. The public land agencies have on-going travel management programs for addressing motorized uses on trails and roads. The Trails Plan primarily defers to these agencies plans to address motorized uses and issues. Important motorized issues to consider include:

- ❖ Providing adequate parking at key trail heads
- ❖ Coordinating trail access restrictions with adjacent public lands trail restrictions
- ❖ Acknowledging that many roads on public lands function as a part of the motorized, off-road trail system.

Sportsmen: Hunters and Fishermen

Many hunting and fishing areas are accessed via trails on public lands. Meeting the needs of sportsmen is an important consideration in planning trails and public access points. Chapter 5 identifies opportunities to improve hunting and fishing access through the development of new trails or public lands access points.

A question that has been raised among members of the hunting community is whether hunting access on public lands can be managed in a manner that reduces the migration of game animals from higher elevation public lands onto lower elevation private lands and across roads and highways where they often damage crops and fences and cause traffic accidents. To date no conclusions have been reached concerning this question; however, it is recommended that the Division of Wildlife, land management agencies and the hunting community work together to develop ways to reduce game damage and mortality. Hunting access management may be a component of such a program. Considerations for Sportsmen include:

- ❖ Adequate parking and turnarounds for vehicles and trailers at trail heads
- ❖ Coordination of access and use restrictions on adjacent lands
- ❖ Buffering/separation from nearby residences at trail heads

CHAPTER 3. TRAIL TYPES IN LA PLATA COUNTY

This chapter describes the different types of trails in the county and outlines how they can be improved. Trail types in this chapter include:

- ❖ Public lands trails
- ❖ City and town connections
- ❖ School connections
- ❖ Neighborhood and commercial areas
- ❖ Outlying agricultural areas
- ❖ Mountain and resort communities
- ❖ Private trail systems
- ❖ Road routes



Public Lands Trails

The majority of trails in the county are located on public lands managed by a variety of federal and state agencies. More than 40 percent of the county is in public ownership, with 36 percent of land in the county managed by the United States Forest Service. Trail routing and maintenance issues are among the major issues associated with trails on public lands. Many of today's existing trails began as stock drive routes, and mining and logging roads. In some instances, they are steep, poorly routed and not suited for recreational uses that they now mostly serve.

Access is another important issue on public lands. There are many large expanses of public land that have little or no public access. Problems exist in these areas as people trespass across private land in order to access public lands. The plan identifies the need to manage forest access in a manner that reasonably meets public demands for access while also minimizing trespassing problems. Trespassing is not likely to decrease unless legitimate access alternatives are created. Chapter 5 identifies a number of areas currently experiencing access problems and/or lacking in public access including:

- ❖ Cherry Creek
- ❖ Mayday
- ❖ Lightner Creek
- ❖ HiddenValley/Falls Creek
- ❖ Animas River/Electra Lake
- ❖ 'Tween Lakes Area (CR 240)

- ❖ Middle Mountain
- ❖ Beaver Meadows
- ❖ Saul's Creek
- ❖ H-D Mountains
- ❖ Black Ridge

Guiding Principle:

Trail development should be correlated to population density and trail demand; trail networks should be more extensive in developed areas and/or where there is greater demand for trail use.

City and Town Connections

Areas in and around the county's three municipalities have the highest population densities and experience the greatest trail demands. Trail use in these areas is high and trails serve many purposes. For example, many existing routes in and around these communities offer real alternatives to motor vehicle travel, and use them to travel between home, school, work and recreation areas.

Following is a brief discussion of some of the trail issues near Durango, Bayfield and Ignacio. Separately from this plan, each of these municipalities have their own trail planning efforts. Accordingly, this plan focuses primarily on trail linkages between the municipalities and adjacent unincorporated areas.

Durango

Durango has a substantial network of trails and trail use in the city is proportionately high relative to many other parts of the County. The city's Animas River Trail (ART) functions as the spine of the city's trail system and many of the city's neighborhoods have sidewalks, trails, and on-street bicycle routes that connect with the ART. The city has plans to eventually complete the Animas River Trail, from CR 203 in the north, to Farmington Hill in the south. The city also has an impressive system of trails around its perimeter that connect to many of the public lands adjacent to the city.

The Trails Element of the City's 2000 Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Plan is a comprehensive document that details the city's existing and proposed trail system. This plan includes many strategic links to unincorporated neighborhoods surrounding Durango. This plan also identifies a number of strategic opportunities to link trails identified in the POST Plan. These include:

- ❖ Colorado Trail extension to Durango
- ❖ Separated path paralleling Hwy 160 East connecting to the Animas River Trail
- ❖ Safety accommodations along CR 204 (Junction Creek Road)
- ❖ Separated path paralleling Hwy 550 N through Animas Valley
- ❖ Separated path along CR 237, if reopened and improved (Horse Gulch Road)
- ❖ Additional trail heads and linkages serving the Telegraph Trail and Grandview Ridge trail networks

Bayfield and Ignacio

The communities of Bayfield and Ignacio have recently begun to incorporate trails into their development and transportation plans. Bayfield adopted its Pedestrian and Bicyclist Connections Plan in December 1998, and the town is now emphasizing the planning and development of pedestrian and bicycle linkages, including connections to all of its schools.

Ignacio, together with La Plata County and the Southern Ute Tribe, recently completed its Transportation Nexus Plan 2020 that includes a layout for a non-motorized pathway system for Ignacio. The system consists of sidewalks, paths, trails, more visible street crosswalks connecting, schools, parks, activity centers and employment areas, and trails for leisure and recreational use. The town is also attempting to coordinate their trail-planning efforts with the Southern Ute Tribe because the tribe owns much of the land surrounding the town and is pursuing a number of nearby development projects. The connection of the town's Shoshone Park Riparian Natural Trail with trails along the Pine River on Tribal land is an example of cooperation between the two.

Chapter 5 of this plan identifies several trail opportunities in and between the Bayfield and Ignacio areas that will integrate with the trail plans of these towns. They include:

- ❖ Trail connection along Pine River between Bayfield and Ignacio
- ❖ Development of neighborhood trails in and around the town of Ignacio
- ❖ School trail connections between Bayfield schools and adjacent neighborhoods
- ❖ Separated path and other non-motorized accommodations along Highway 160
- ❖ Public land access and trails in the Saul's Creek area

School Connections

Developing and maintaining safe trail connections between schools and adjacent neighborhoods is one of the most pressing trail needs in the county. Many schools have adjacent subdivisions with no formal linking trails. In many instances, students must travel along busy roads and highways in order to reach their schools because little or no trail access exists. By way of example, there are four public elementary schools in unincorporated parts of the county. All four are located on or very close to a state highway.

The lack of school trails compromises the safety of students who walk or ride to school and creates a hardship on parents who are required to drive their children to school or escort them on foot. This, in turn, contributes to congestion on roads and highways. At most schools throughout the county, it appears a number of short trails to connect schools with adjacent subdivisions could vastly improve student access and safety. Schools located in unincorporated areas of the county that could benefit from better trail connections include:

- ❖ Animas Valley Elementary
- ❖ Florida Mesa Elementary
- ❖ Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary
- ❖ Sunnyside Elementary
- ❖ Escalante Middle School

Neighborhoods and Commercial Areas

Established neighborhoods and business areas in unincorporated parts of the county are experiencing the highest rates of development and possess some of the most urgent needs for trails. Many of these neighborhoods lack trail linkages between residences, schools and businesses. These areas include:

- ❖ Animas Valley
- ❖ Sunnyside
- ❖ Florida Mesa
- ❖ Forest Lakes Subdivision
- ❖ Florida Road
- ❖ Durango West Subdivisions
- ❖ Rafter J and Shenandoah Subdivisions
- ❖ Animas Air Park/Koshak Mesa
- ❖ La Plata County Airport
- ❖ Cascade Village/Purgatory/Needles/Tamarron
- ❖ Vallecito

Guiding Principle:

Trails should be developed on a proactive basis. Ideally, trail corridors should be identified prior to development. Trail easements and alignments should be secured and established prior to, or concurrently with, the development of an area.

These once rural areas now contain many established neighborhoods that continue to grow. Finding ways to proactively identify and develop viable trails and linkages in and around neighborhoods and subdivisions is a critical issue. Past failure to establish trails during the development of such areas have resulted in lost opportunities and a lack of connections between neighborhoods, schools, businesses and public lands.

Outlying Rural/Agricultural Areas

The rural portions of the county, such as the southwest and southeast, currently have fewer trail demands. In many ways, the network of unpaved county roads in these areas functions as a trail system. A running joke among the Trails Plan Stakeholders Group was that some of the county’s unmaintained dirt roads were not so much “bad roads” as they were “good trails.” Land ownership in rural parts of the county is predominantly private or tribal. Development pressures are generally lower in the rural areas, but they will likely continue to increase over time. County roads, abandoned railroad lines and irrigation canals may

provide future trail opportunities as discussed below. Recommendations for pedestrian and cyclist accommodations along county roads and state highways are addressed in Chapter 4.

Rails to Trails

Several abandoned railroad lines exist in rural parts of the county. Historically, railroads connected Durango with Dolores, Chama, and Farmington. Spur lines existed in places such as Perins Peak and Grandview Ridge. While it may be difficult to re-establish public access to old railroad rights-of-way, several of these abandoned routes have been identified as potential trail alignments. Railroad grades usually provide excellent accessible trail opportunities for disabled trail users due to their consistent width and gentle grades. Considerable research will be required to gain a better idea of the feasibility of which abandoned railroad lines may serve as potential trail alignments include:

- ❖ Montezuma County Line to Mayday, Hesperus and West Durango
- ❖ South Durango to Grand View, Florida Mesa and Ignacio
- ❖ South Durango toward Bondad, Aztec and Farmington

Irrigation canals

In some instances, irrigation canal alignments may present an opportunity to double as trail corridors. Irrigation canals traverse many rural parts of the county where few trails exist. Generally, canals are safely separate from roadways, contributing to their attractiveness as trail corridors. Some of the larger canals have dirt service roads that parallel the canals, and the potential may exist to accommodate trail users along these service roads. Canal trails have been successfully developed across the United States and there are several examples in Colorado. Notably, the Highline Canal in Denver and its surrounding suburbs has popular multi-use trails paralleling it. Issues to be addressed when researching trail potential along irrigation canals include:

- ❖ User safety
- ❖ Landowner liability along canals
- ❖ Trespass and conflicts with agricultural operations and adjoining landowners

Addressing landowner and canal management concerns is particularly critical when studying trail feasibility along irrigation canals. Traditionally the custom and culture of water providers and landowners is resistant to providing access to canal roads. Nevertheless, as the county's agricultural areas continue to develop, the potential to utilize canal roads for trails should not be overlooked.

Mountain Areas and Resort Communities

Trails in the mountain and resort areas in the northwest (Purgatory/ Highway 550 North) and northeast (Vallecito/Lemon Reservoir areas) are heavily used by residents and visitors. Issues in these areas include neighborhood links and connections as well as a strong emphasis on public lands access and trail head parking and signage. Another suggestion heard from residents in these communities was the need for gentle grade routes and loops in the more rugged areas. Examples of recommended trail enhancements in these areas include:

- ❖ Completing the Vallecito Reservoir loop trail
- ❖ Neighborhood trail connectors along the east and west sides of Highway 550 N
- ❖ Public access, trail and trail head improvements at:
 - Purgatory Flats
 - Elbert Creek
 - Mitchell Lakes
 - Animas River – Rockwood and Electra Lake
 - Middle Mountain

Guiding Principle:

Trail systems should have trail heads, access points and parking areas sufficient to provide for the access and parking needs of all users, whenever possible.

Private Trail Systems

Some residential subdivisions and private resorts possess private trail systems for their residents and guests. Examples include Durango West II and Edgemont Ranch. These systems supplement the county's trail system but are not considered part of it. Subdivision trail systems should provide links between subdivisions and adjacent schools, neighborhoods and businesses. Trail systems in and between subdivisions should be accessible to the public.

Road Routes

County roads and state highways in the county function as routes for cyclists, pedestrians and even equestrians often because no other options exist. Demands for safe and usable alternatives to motor vehicle travel are growing, and it will become increasingly important to address safety issues along roads in the county. Of paramount consideration is the provision of adequate shoulders along all roads as well as the striping and cleaning of shoulders on paved roads. Developing separate bicycle and pedestrian paths along some major roads and highways is another important consideration. Chapter 4 contains a more detailed discussion of roads and highways in the county and strategies for accommodating non-motorized users.

CHAPTER 4. ROAD SAFETY

The word “trails” generally brings to mind backcountry paths. However, it is clear that in La Plata County “trails” encompass a wider definition. This chapter takes into account that roads play a major role for non-motorized travel in the county. Two major U.S.



highways provide the only true east-west (U.S. 160) and north-south (U.S. 550) transportation corridors through the county. The development of a more balanced transportation system can improve safety on roads as well as reducing automobile dependency. This is consistent with county, state, and federal highway transportation plans, all of which address the need for a balanced multi-modal system that includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

This chapter identifies some general improvements that should be applied to roads and highways as they are constructed, improved and maintained. Specific recommendations for improvements to U.S. Highway 160 from Durango to Bayfield are also detailed in this Chapter.

As traffic levels on roads in the county continue to rise, roads and highways become increasingly difficult and dangerous to travel for pedestrians and cyclists and the potential for conflict between motorized and non-motorized users increases. This conflict can be lessened by common sense, courtesy among users and an understanding of the “rules of the road”. Given the importance of these factors in improving safety on paved roads in the county, a brief section at the end of this chapter reviews some of the basic “rules of the road.”

Chapter 5 identifies various needs and opportunities relative to the county. Appendix 1 contains an inventory of major routes in La Plata County used by bicyclists and pedestrians. It is intended to assist the county and state in planning road improvements. The objective of this assessment is to provide a list of road needs that, if met, could markedly improve the safety of bicycle riders and pedestrians, while reducing interference with the flow of traffic and the safe operation of motor vehicles.

Objectives for Roads as Trails

- ❖ To allow pedestrians and cyclists to safely travel along major roadways throughout La Plata County particularly along routes that link residential areas to population centers, jobs, schools, shopping centers, parks, trail systems and other destinations.
- ❖ To ensure that pedestrian and bicycle facilities are fully integrated in the planning, design, and engineering phases of all road projects in La Plata County.

General Design Concepts for Roads and Highways

Non-motorized travel tends to receive limited attention during road maintenance and reconstruction activity. The following design and maintenance recommendations are intended to improve the safety of roads and highways in the county:

- ❖ Paved shoulders should be at least 4 feet wide in order to accommodate non-motorized users and provide clear zones for motorized users.
- ❖ Rumble strips should only be installed in places that will not significantly impede bicycle travel.
- ❖ Intersections should be designed to safely accommodate non-motorized users; design considerations may include:
 - Widened curb lanes (12 to 14 feet), if a bicycle lane is impractical or unnecessary due to low traffic volumes
 - Striped bicycle lanes, with appropriate signage and pavement markings
 - Bicycle safe drainage grate inlets
 - Traffic signals that are responsive to bicycles
 - Safe railroad crossings
 - Merge lanes allowing unimpeded motor vehicle merging from one roadway to another should be marked so motorists are aware of the potential for approaching bicycle traffic
- ❖ Shoulders should be regularly cleaned and maintained
 - A sweeping program should be initiated
 - Pavement overlay should maintain a smooth surface across the entire shoulder
- ❖ “Share the Road” signage should be installed in areas of heavy interaction between motorized and non-motorized traffic.

Design Considerations for the Highway 160 East Corridor

In 1999 and early 2000 the Colorado Department of Transportation was planning major improvements for the Highway 160 corridor between Durango and Bayfield. The Trails Plan Stakeholders Group took particular interest in this project because it is the only major east-west highway through the county and there are no viable alternatives for travel between Durango and Bayfield. Development along the corridor continues at a rapid pace, and there is a significant need to plan for non-motorized uses along this corridor. The following design considerations should be incorporated into the highway's reconstruction:

- ❖ A hard-surfaced, separated, multi-use path should be constructed between Durango and Bayfield. The inclusion of such a facility should not result in the closure of the highway shoulders to non-motorized users. In areas where significant development has already occurred and frontage roads are proposed, a separate path may be physically impractical. As such, frontage road shoulders, striped as bike lanes, may serve as an alternative to a separate path.
- ❖ Underpasses should be provided at several locations along the highway corridor. At a minimum, an underpass should be located near the existing Farmington Hill alignment to link the Animas River Trail to properties on the north side of Highway 160. Ideally, underpasses should also be located in areas of higher-density development.
- ❖ All intersections and underpasses should be designed, constructed and marked in a manner that will not discourage non-motorized use. Major intersections that include merging, turning and/or through-traffic lanes should also be designed and controlled in a fashion that maintains continuous, safe and convenient access for non-motorized users.

Guiding Principle:

Road rights-of-way throughout the County should be developed to accommodate non-motorized uses through shoulder widening and striping and/or separated paths. The County's Road and Bridge Department should maintain a prioritized list of roadways most in need of such improvements.

Specific planning areas

Dominquez Drive to Highway 172:

The Highway 160 corridor from Dominquez Drive to Highway 172 is an important link between the Florida Mesa community and the expanding commercial and public-use areas near Wal-Mart as well as points north and the City's Animas River Trail. This area includes a significant amount of residential and commercial development, two schools (Escalante Middle School and Florida Mesa Elementary School) and access points to a large and highly utilized recreation area (Grandview Ridge and Horse Gulch).

A linkage should be established between the proposed terminus of the Animas River Trail near the bend of Highway 550/160 with the proposed separated path heading east along Highway 160. This linkage would allow for safe, non-motorized travel off the mainline of Highway 160, stretching from Durango and Bayfield. This linkage would also provide safe and convenient access between the residential areas on the Mesa, and the middle school and commercial areas near Wal-Mart.

It is envisioned that the multi-use path would run east from its connection with the Animas River Trail along the southern side of Highway 550/160, then passing under the highway near the existing alignment of the intersection at Farmington Hill. It would then follow the north side of the highway, eventually connecting with the frontage road system in Grandview; and continue on the north side of the highway to the intersection of Highway 160 with CR 234 and Hwy 172.

Additionally, on the north side of Highway 550/160 between Dominquez Drive (Wal-Mart intersection) and High Llama Lane (Grandview) is a segment of abandoned railroad line. Segments of this old rail line could serve as a northern route of the multi-use path connecting homes, businesses, and Bureau of Land Management trail heads located on the north side of the highway corridor.

An underpass near the existing alignment of Farmington Hill will link all sides of the Highway 550/160 corridor, allowing non-motorized users to avoid at-grade crossings at this very difficult point. It will also provide a functional connection of the Highway 160 multi-use path with the existing Farmington Hill (Highway 550) roadway, which should be converted to a multi-use path if it is abandoned.

County Road 234/Hwy 172 to Bayfield:

Currently, this is the most rural section of highway along Highway 160 East. This area is expected to experience significant development pressure in the future. It is envisioned that once the proposed frontage road system terminates east of Grandview, the multi-use path would continue to Bayfield. As long as there are safe access points at mile intervals, the location of the path can be dictated by highway design considerations, geography and other constraints. No specific locations were identified for underpasses. However, given the amount of residential development occurring on both sides of the highway along County Roads 222/223 and the Florida River, this area may warrant consideration for an underpass. The town of Bayfield's Trails Plan also envisions a pedestrian underpass at the Pine River.

County Transportation Plan Policies

The La Plata County Transportation Plan contains a set of non-motorized policies that are intended to help the county successfully address such uses on County roads. The policies are as follows:

- ❖ The county will promote the planning and construction of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations that function as an integral part of the transportation system. Such accommodations will be provided in new developments to promote safety and reduce motor vehicle use. Bikeways and walkways should be designed to link residential areas and employment areas, commercial centers, recreational areas and schools, and provide circulation within a development. In some rural areas it may be prudent to develop trails that can accommodate equestrians and ATVs in addition to bicycles and pedestrians.
- Guiding Principle:

Trails should be developed where they can legitimately play a role in reducing motor vehicle use, such as close to population centers and along busy roads.
- ❖ When possible, road rights-of-way throughout the county should be developed to accommodate non-motorized uses via shoulder widening, striping and/or separated paths. The county should maintain a prioritized list of the roadways most in need of such improvements.
 - ❖ Caution must be taken to accommodate non-motorized users, such as the careful use of rumble strips and adequate cleaning of special lanes or shoulders.
 - ❖ Specific high use bicycle routes have been identified. These are listed in the inventory in Appendix 1. These corridors may deserve special consideration for the development of accommodations for cyclists.
 - ❖ Specific funding sources for bicycle lanes and pedestrian and equestrian accommodations should be identified and pursued.
 - ❖ In rural areas, non-maintained County Roads may be allowed to function as trails for bicycles, pedestrians and equestrians.
 - ❖ Design standards for collector and arterial roads should incorporate sufficient shoulders to accommodate bicycle traffic.

Rules of the Road

Common Sense + Courtesy = Less Conflict

The vast majority of motor vehicle operators and cyclists operate in a manner that is safe and courteous toward other users. Unfortunately, a very small minority of each can create an environment that endangers lives and increases the already stressful road experience. On-going education of cyclists and drivers, and continued self-policing by major road cycling groups can help defuse potentially dangerous situations. Some of the basic “rules of the road” are provided here as reminders of proper conduct. Sections below are cited from *The Colorado Bicycling Manual* produced by the Colorado Department of Transportation (7th edition, 1999), which includes a detailed discussion of the rules of the road for both cyclists and drivers. Overall, “in Colorado, motorists and cyclists share the road. Both have equal rights and responsibilities to obey all traffic laws. All users should show respect and consideration when sharing the road.”

For bicyclists

- ❖ Bicyclists have all the rights and duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle and can be penalized for violating traffic laws.
- ❖ Ride on the right; never ride against traffic. Ride in the right lane, except when passing another vehicle, preparing for a left turn, or avoiding hazards. Always ride with the flow of traffic. Ride on the paved shoulder whenever a paved shoulder suitable for bicycle riding is present.
- ❖ Ride single file. You may ride two abreast only when no motor vehicle traffic is approaching within 300 feet (front or rear) or when all cyclists are on the shoulder. On curving canyon roads, play it safe and ride single file.
- ❖ Obey traffic laws, signs and signals. Use hand signals to indicate left or right turns, slowing or stopping.
- ❖ Use a headlight, taillight, and reflectors at night; make eye contact with drivers. Never assume motorists see you or that you have the right-of-way. Expect the unexpected; your first responsibility is to avoid a crash.
- ❖ Always wear a helmet.

For motor vehicle drivers

Motorists also have a responsibility to act in ways to make the roads safer for all users. They should consider the following points when they encounter pedestrians and bicyclists:

- ❖ Scanning for pedestrian and bicyclists should be a normal part of your driving routine as is scanning for other cars and trucks.
- ❖ Extra care should be taken when exiting alleys and driveways since pedestrians and bicyclists may be using the sidewalk and approaching from the left and right.
- ❖ Allow at least three feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist.
- ❖ Be patient and wait until it is safe to pass, as you would any other slow-moving vehicle.
- ❖ If it is necessary to sound your horn in advance of passing, please do so from a friendly distance (several hundred feet).

Implementation

This chapter provides recommendations and guidance regarding the provision of safe and accessible non-motorized facilities along the roads and highways throughout La Plata County. The recommendations are based upon the understanding that a significant portion of the road and highway network in the county will receive either major safety improvements or reconstruction in the coming years. Major reconstruction projects provide prime opportunity to address non-motorized facilities.

CHAPTER 5. TRAIL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

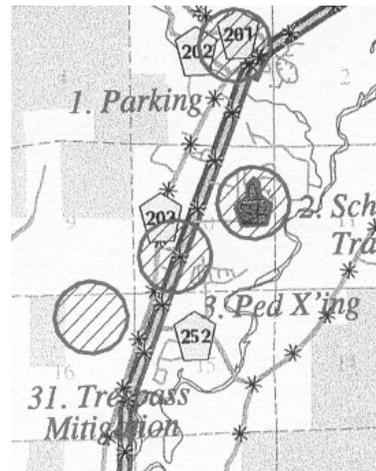
This chapter presents more than 100 area-specific trail needs and opportunities that were identified through an extensive public outreach and research program. Existing needs such as upgrading facilities at trail heads and rerouting steep trails are categorized; and potential opportunities such as improved public lands access, roadway safety improvements, and neighborhood trail connections are identified.



Care was taken to make the analysis as realistic as possible. However, detailed feasibility studies were not performed for each need or opportunity. Subsequent analysis will be required before any of the plan's needs and opportunities are implemented. The Trails Plan Map and accompanying Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables catalog each specific need and opportunity.

Trails Plan Map

The Trails Plan Map identifies land ownership categories, major existing trails and over 100 area-specific needs and opportunities. The map is reproduced herein as one composite map of the entire county and as seven 11 x 17- inch map panels excerpted from the countywide map. The seven panels contain the same information as the countywide map, but are printed at a larger scale. Following is a description of the trail and route classifications shown on the Trails Plan Map:



Trails

Solid lines on the map delineate existing formally established trails. These trails are primarily located on public lands. On Forest Service lands, only designated “system” trails are depicted. System trails are those that the Forest Service regularly maintains. Many other “non-system” trails exist, some of which are regularly used. However, the Forest Service does not maintain them so they are not outlined on the map.

Routes

Some non-maintained trails and some dirt roads on Forest Service lands are depicted as “routes”. This designation distinguishes them from “trails” in that they function as trails, but may not be officially recognized as such or they may technically be roads that also receive “trail-like” use. For example, a Forest Service road used by cross-country skiers and snowmobilers in the winter, or ATVs, mountain bikers and hikers in the summer may be designated on the map as a route.

On-road cycling routes

Outlined on the Trails Plan Map with a string of stars, these routes consist of county roads and highways regularly used by cyclists. Of course, other roads are used by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians; however, they were not identified as preferred or heavily used routes.

Needs and opportunities

The generalized location of each specific need or opportunity is identified on the map with a hatched circle or polygon that is numbered and titled. In some cases several hatched circles may be used to identify a single need or opportunity. This infers that the need to be addressed may exist in several nearby areas, such as a public land holding that may have several potential access points.

Insert Trails Plan Map -- composite

Back of map

Needs and Opportunities

An extensive series of focus group meetings were conducted with trail users and landowners throughout the county to identify specific trail needs and opportunities. Guiding principles were used to focus attention on specific types of trail needs and opportunities. For instance, guiding principle 4 discusses the need to be proactive and identify potential trail corridors before an area develops extensively. This principle helped to identify needs and opportunities that address trail potential in developing areas such as the North County District, Koshak Mesa and La Plata County Airport. The needs and opportunities fall into one of the following nine general categories:

- ❖ Public lands access
- ❖ Neighborhood trail connections
- ❖ School trails
- ❖ Rails to trails
- ❖ Parking / trail heads
- ❖ Roadway improvements - bicycle/pedestrian accommodations
- ❖ Trails
- ❖ Trail work/reroutes
- ❖ Trespass mitigation

Guiding Principle:

The County's trail network should be strategically developed. Development efforts should concentrate on trails that perform essential functions. Trails should take people where they want and need to go - e.g. from one neighborhood to another; from homes to schools, parks, stores, and employment centers; to and from public lands; and to high points and vistas.

Due to the varied nature of trail issues in the county and the various options available to address them, nearly every need and opportunity involves a unique set of circumstances, calling for an equally unique solution. The needs and opportunities analysis describes the various issues associated with a particular need or opportunity. However, detailed solutions for each need and opportunity were not developed during this effort and specific trail alignments or exact locations for public land access points have not been proposed.

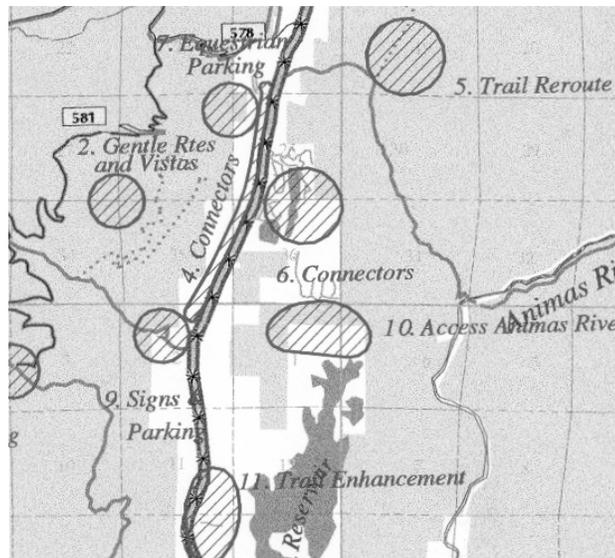
How several needs and opportunities were developed:

A route called the Elbert Creek Trail exists near Purgatory Resort in the north county District. Most of the trail is in the San Juan National Forest, with only the trail head on private land, and possibly, within CDOT right of way. In a neighborhood meeting, a resident identified the Elbert Creek Trail as a popular and much-appreciated route; it leads into the forest and to other trails, and offers solitude and views.

However, the neighbor suggested there were problems at the trail head: signage is poor and parking is insufficient, creating conflicts with businesses in the immediate area. Another neighbor suggested that a short, new connector trail could be built, linking the Elbert Creek Trail to a much larger parking area with room for proper signage and horse trailers. Furthermore, the connector may also be used to connect local neighborhoods, an idea that has been discussed for years.

The following “needs and opportunities” were identified in connection with the issues described above. Their generalized location is depicted on Map 1 and they are discussed in the Map’s accompanying analysis table.

- 1-4. Connectors, West Side of Highway 550
- 1-7. Equestrian Parking
- 1-9. Signs and Parking, Elbert Creek Trail head



Map 1. Excerpt (north county- Purgatory/Needles)

Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables

The generalized location of each need and opportunity is depicted on the Trails Plan Map. Analysis tables accompanying the seven map panels describe each need or opportunity in detail. Each description includes:

- ❖ Numerical identifier and descriptive title from Trails Plan Map
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Narrative description of project and issues to consider
- ❖ Likely partners and likely “lead partner”

The plan’s needs and opportunities analysis is intended to be an evolving list that will grow or shrink as new issues arise and others are resolved. Over time, the plan should be amended to reflect such changes. Four specific needs and opportunities are identified as priority projects of countywide significance, but otherwise the needs and opportunities are not prioritized. Each one generally represents an independent issue that may involve a unique solution that is unrelated to the other needs and opportunities. The pursuit of one project is not meant to impede or diminish the importance of another need or opportunity that may be equally important, yet entirely unrelated.

Countywide Priority Projects

Among the Stakeholders Group there was strong, nearly unanimous support for the four specific projects listed below:

- ❖ School Trail Connections
- ❖ Highway 160 East - Pedestrian/Bicycle Accommodations.
- ❖ Vallecito Reservoir Loop
- ❖ Colorado Trail Extension

These projects fill particularly important needs and they will play valuable roles in promoting public safety, building livable communities, quality recreational experiences and providing realistic transportation alternatives.

School trail connections

Schools are the main activity centers in many parts of the county. Safe, usable trail connections between schools and nearby businesses and residential areas are key to the creation of safe, livable communities. Trail connections to schools are important because children are particularly vulnerable to conflicts with motor vehicles and have limited transportation options for getting to and from school. Children, their families and the entire community benefits if students who live near schools can safely walk or ride their bicycles to get to them. School trails should also be designed and maintained in a manner that makes them accessible to disabled users.

There are 19 public schools in the county and most of them lack adequate trail linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas. The few schools that do have trail connections, such as Riverview Elementary, have found that students and neighborhood residents heavily use the trails. Developing school trails should become a countywide priority.

A variety of initiatives and partnerships will be necessary to improve school trail connections. As a first step toward planning school trails, a prioritized needs assessment and action plan should be prepared. The study should include:

- ❖ Analysis of the geography, ownership, development and student travel patterns at each school.
- ❖ Survey of existing trails, including existing deficiencies and constraints
- ❖ Potential new trail connections and:
 - What purposes they will serve
 - What will be required to establish them
- ❖ Prioritization of trail needs at and among different schools, including:
 - Where the most significant problems exist
 - What improvements will be most useful/cost effective
- ❖ Strategies for establishing new trails and improving existing ones
- ❖ Role of following entities in developing trails:
 - County and municipal governments review of methods for developing trails in conjunction with new land development
 - School District, parent/teacher organizations
 - Area Landowners and Residents
- ❖ Potential funding sources

Highway 160 East, pedestrian/bicycle accommodations

Highway 160 between Durango and Bayfield traverses the fastest growing area of the county. The Colorado Department of Transportation is developing plans to expand the highway into a 4-lane divided expressway with limited access throughout the corridor and frontage roads in developed areas such as Grandview and Gem Village. Without accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians, it will be extremely difficult and potentially hazardous for them to move along or across this corridor once the highway is improved. Chapter 4 outlines recommended design consideration for non-motorized users along this corridor.

As of May 2000, a partnership was developing among the Colorado Department of Transportation, La Plata County, the City of Durango, trail and cycling groups, and area residents and landowners to pursue the cooperative development of this project. These groups should continue to pursue this project as a countywide priority due to the important role that it will play in improving safety and providing an essential transportation link for non-motorized users.

The primary issues to be resolved are:

- ❖ Cooperative arrangements for maintenance and cleaning of separated path sections and bicycle lanes
- ❖ Routing and design features of separated path alignments and frontage road shoulders
- ❖ Funding and acquisition of easements or right-of-way for separated path sections that are outside the highway right-of-way

Vallecito Reservoir loop

The Vallecito Service League, in cooperation with the Pine River Irrigation District, has completed four independent trail sections around different parts of the reservoir's shoreline. The trail is located primarily on lands managed by the Pine River Irrigation District and the U.S. Forest Service. It is envisioned that the trail may eventually be completed entirely around the Lake. Vallecito is a very popular destination for tourists and county residents alike. Existing portions of the trail are highly used recreationally and for transportation between developed areas. Completing the trail will improve recreational opportunities and promote public safety by providing an alternative to travel along the roads that encircle the lake. The trail also has the potential to be accessible to people with disabilities if designed accordingly.

The trail has not been completed around the reservoir for a variety of reasons including: Topographic constraints, access issues, potential conflicts with private land holdings and potential flooding of trail alignment when reservoir levels are high. Further study will be required to determine the feasibility of completing the trail and to develop necessary partnerships. Other issues to be addressed include trail maintenance and provision of trail facilities such as signs and benches. The Vallecito Service League and the Pine River Irrigation District should continue to work together, calling on other groups or agencies as necessary to assist their efforts to complete the trail. Other likely partners may include the Forest Service, the Vallecito Chamber of Commerce and the Vallecito Land Use Association, Trails 2000 and La Plata County.

Colorado Trail extension

The 473-mile long Colorado Trail runs from Denver almost to Durango. Currently the trail ends at the head of County Road 204, along Junction Creek. Completing the gap from the existing trail head to downtown Durango has been consistently expressed as a priority for local trail users and Colorado Trail supporters throughout the state. Completing the trail will allow direct access to the National Forest from Durango and will give hikers completing the entire trail a more fitting sense of accomplishment if they start or finish their trek in Durango itself.

Efforts to complete the trail have been complicated, in part, by management restrictions on Division of Wildlife lands between the existing trail head and the Durango Mountain Park. Current Division of Wildlife policies do not allow for the construction of trails across their properties due to the potential for trail

users to disturb wildlife. Several options exist for routing the trail within the Dry Gulch/Junction Creek drainages or the Lightner Creek drainage. However, each alignment will likely require crossing Division of Wildlife properties.

Involved parties such as the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, La Plata County, City of Durango, Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Colorado Trail Foundation, Trails 2000 and area residents and landowners; should continue their ongoing efforts to identify a preferred trail route and obtain the necessary approvals and environmental clearances to complete the Colorado Trail into Durango.

Categorized Needs and Opportunities

Following is a list of the needs and opportunities contained in the Trails Plan categorized by project type. This list is intended to provide a summary of the projects in the analysis tables. The numbers to the left of each item correspond to the project's numbering on the Trails Plan Map, i.e. 1-10 refers to Map 1, Need and Opportunity No. 10 - *Access Animas River: North of Electra Lake*. Additional information on each item is contained in the analysis tables that accompany each of the seven maps.

Public lands access

- 1-1 Access & Land Trade: Harris Ranch, West Cross Creek
- 1-10 Access Animas River: North of Electra Lake
- 1-12 Animas River
- 1-17 Hunting & Fishing Access: Rockwood Train Depot
- 1-19 Buck Creek Trail
- 2-2 Red Creek (Coolwater Ranch)
- 2-4 Middle Mt. Access/CR 501 (above Vallecito)
- 2-7 Enchanted Forest Subdivision
- 2-8 Tween Lakes Subdivision
- 2-10 Texas Creek
- 2-11 Texas Creek
- 2-12 BLM Lands north of Forest Lakes
- 2-13 Beaver Meadows access from Forest Lakes
- 3-2 Connect: Mayday
- 3-4 La Plata and Lightner Creek drainages
- 3-5 BLM lands south of Hesperus Ski Area
- 3-6 BLM land west of CR 139 (Cherry Creek)
- 3-7 Old Fort Lewis College site
- 4-4 Falls Creek
- 4-5 CR 203 (West Animas)/Hidden Valley Forest Service lands
- 4-7 Lightner Creek/La Plata River Drainages
- 4-10 West side of Animas Mountain
- 4-11 East Animas Climbing Area
- 4-14 BLM lands east of Florida Road (Vosberg Pike)
- 4-16 BLM lands along CR 237 (Horse Gulch)
- 4-17 Explore public access potential to BLM lands east of CR 225 Vosberg Pike, state lands
- 4-29 Ridges Basin
- 4-32 CR 234 connection to Grandview Ridge & Horse Gulch trails
- 7-1 BLM lands south of CR 502
- 7-2 Loops/Gentle Slope: State Land Section north of Bayfield
- 7-5 Access/Gentle Slope: BLM lands south of Highway 160
- 7-8 Access/Loop: west side H-D Mountains CR 528
- 7-11 Access/Parking: west side HD Mountains
- 7-12 Access/Parking: west side HD Mountains

Neighborhood trail connections

- 1-4 West of Highway 550 between Cascade, Purgatory, Needles and Tamarron
- 1-6 East of Highway 550 between Purgatory Resort, Lake Purgatory, Lake of the Pines, Two Dogs, Needles, and Tamarron
- 2-1 Reservoir Loop: Vallecito Reservoir
- 4-3 Pedestrian crossing: Highway 550 N near Animas Valley
- 4-9 Separated trail: CR 204 - Junction Creek Road
- 4-20 Between current/future subs: Rafter J, Shenandoah, DWI and DWII
- 4-21 Connect: Trail Connection between Highway 160 and Rafter J
- 4-23 From La Posta Road to Trappers Crossing
- 6-2 Neighborhood Trails: Koshak Mesa/Animas Air Park
- 6-4 Loop & Connects: Pastorious Reservoir to Florida Mesa School
- 6-6 Neighborhood trails: La Plata County Airport
- 6-8 River crossing: Animas River
- 7-6 Local ditch trails: irrigation canal between Highway 160 and 160B
- 7-10 Bayfield/Ignacio: Pine River between Bayfield and Ignacio
- 7-13 North/South contour trail: west side HD Mountains
- 7-15 Ignacio/Southern Ute Trails Plan: Ignacio

School trails

- 4-2 Animas Valley Elementary School
- 4-24 Escalante Middle School
- 4-26 Florida Mesa Elementary School
- 5-1 Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School
- 6-7 Sunnyside Elementary School
- 7-3 Bayfield Elementary School
- 7-7 Bayfield High School

Rails to Trails

- 3-3 Hesperus/Cherry Creek Area
- 3-8 South of Hesperus along Highway 145
- 4-19 South of CR 125
- 6-3 Florida Mesa to Ignacio
- 6-5 South Animas River corridor
- 7-14 Between Florida Mesa & Ignacio
- 7-17 Between Ignacio & Arboles

Parking/trail heads

- 1-7 Equestrian parking: Purgatory auxiliary parking lot
- 1-8 Parking: Strawberry Patch
- 1-9 Signs & parking: Elbert Creek Trail Head
- 1-14 Climber parking: Golf Wall Climbing Area
- 1-16 Signs & parking: Goulding Creek Trail Head
- 1-18 Signs & parking: Mitchell Lakes Trail Head
- 2-9 Shearer Creek Trail
- 4-1 Base of Hermosa Creek Road (CR 201) Hermosa Creek Trail Parking
- 4-11 East Animas Climbing Area

- 4-13 Edgemont Ranch (north of Florida Road)/Durango Hills
- 4-28 Mountain Park & Colorado Trail trail heads: Old VanDal Landfill site
- 4-29 Ridges Basin
- 4-33 CR 250/Stevens Creek Trail Head

Roadway improvements - bicycle/pedestrian accommodations

- 7-9 CR 509
- 4-6 Highway 550 N
- 4-15 CR 237 (Horse Gulch)
- 4-22 CR 211
- 4-27 Highway 160 from Durango - Bayfield
- 6-9 BIA Road: Southwest side Black Ridge
- 7-4 Highway 160

Trails

- 1-10 Access Animas River: north of Electra Lake
- 1-19 Access Buck Creek Trail
- 2-3 Reservoir Loop: Vallecito Reservoir
- 2-5 Loop: East side of Vallecito Reservoir, near Old Tymers Campground
- 3-1 Colorado Trail extension to Mancos
- 3-4 Access La Plata and Lightner Creek drainages
- 3-5 BLM lands south of Hesperus Ski Area
- 3-7 Access/trails: Old Fort Lewis College site
- 4-5 CR 203 (West Animas)/Hidden Valley Forest Service lands
- 4-8 Colorado Trail extension to Durango: Junction Creek, Dry Fork/Lightner Creek drainages, or north side Animas Mountain
- 4-10 West side of Animas Mountain
- 4-11 East Animas Climbing Area
- 4-12 Songbird Subdivision (Florida Road)
- 4-13 Edgemont Ranch (north of Florida Road)/Durango Hills
- 4-23 Connection from La Posta Road to Trappers Crossing
- 4-25 Grandview Ridge BLM land
- 4-30 Smelter Mountain Trail
- 6-1 Local loops: Access from La Posta Road: West Side Black Ridge
- 7-2 Access/loops/ Gentle Slope: State Land Section north of Bayfield
- 7-8 Access/loops: West side H-D Mountains, CR 528
- 7-13 North/south contour trail; west side HD Mountains
- 7-16 Stock drive trail: Piedra Stock Drive Trail
- 7-18 Forest Service - Sauls Creek Trail Plan and east of Bayfield

Trail work/reroutes

- 1-2 Gentle routes with vistas: Electra View Trail
- 1-3 Vistas: Dutch Creek and Pinkerton Flagstaff trails
- 1-5 Trail reroute: Purgatory Flats Trail
- 1-11 Trail enhancement: West side of Electra Lake
- 1-13 Identify gentle loops: Haviland Lake
- 1-15 Pinkerton – Flagstaff Trail, from Dutch Creek to Jones Creek Trail
- 2-1 Bridge: Upper Florida River (above Lemon Reservoir)
- 2-6 Nordic Ski Trails: Vallecito Reservoir

Trespass mitigation

- 1-10 Access Animas River: north of Electra Lake
- 1-12 Animas River
- 1-17 Hunting & Fishing Access: Rockwood Train Depot
- 1-19 Access Buck Creek Trail
- 2-2 Reservoir Loop: Vallecito Reservoir
- 2-7 Enchanted Forest Subdivision
- 2-8 Tween Lakes Subdivision
- 2-13 Beaver Meadows access from Forest Lakes
- 3-2 Connect: Mayday
- 3-4 Access La Plata and Lightner Creek drainages
- 4-4 Falls Creek
- 4-5 CR 203 (West Animas)/Hidden Valley Forest Service lands
- 4-7 Lightner Creek /La Plata River drainages
- 4-11 East Animas Climbing Area
- 4-31 Hidden Valley/CR 203 connection

Maps and Analysis Tables

Table 1 – Needs and Opportunities Analysis: Northwest

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Access & Land Trade	Harris Ranch, West Cross Creek	Establish public access and/or through traffic along old Rico Toll Road. FS interested in acquisition of private inholding. Also, may be possible to connect south of inholding on FS property.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Land Trust Partner
2. Gentle Routes with Vistas	Electra View Trail	Utilize existing routes and reroutes to provide vista trail along Hermosa Cliffs atop Purgatory. Add top of mountain trail head with parking and signage. Provide a return loop as well as a connection to the Elbert Creek trail. Take care to route trail in a manner that protects Peregrine Falcons. Seasonal closures possible.	Forest Service North County Service Groups Trails 2000 Purgatory Resort
3. Vistas	Dutch Creek and Pinkerton Flagstaff Trails	Reroute trails to provide vistas from high meadows. Existing trail routed through dense forest, with few vistas. Adequate buffers from edges of Hermosa Cliffs should be maintained to protect Peregrine Falcons.	Forest Service Trails 2000
4. Connectors	West side of Highway 550 between Cascade, Purgatory, Needles and South to Tamarron	Create community connection between and through neighborhoods. Discuss creating trail connection parallel to but separated from Highway 550. Likely route along parts of old stagecoach road between Purgatory and Needles. Trail could be used in conjunction with developed equestrian parking area near Purgatory to provide equestrian alternative access to Elbert Creek. Address potential loss of privacy to residents.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners HOA - Various Cascade Resort CDOT Purgatory Resort North County Service Groups Trails 2000
5. Trail Reroute	Purgatory Flats Trail reroute	Relocate trail head to Lime Creek Road; existing trail head at old Purgatory Campground will be closed due to land transfer. Discussion re: potential for Purgatory Resort to keep existing trail open.	Forest Service Purgatory Resort Local Residents and Businesses Trails 2000
6. Connectors	East side of Highway 550 between Purgatory Resort, Lake Purgatory, Lake of the Pines, Two Dogs, Needles, and Tamarron	Establish pedestrian/bicycle connection between and through neighborhoods. Discussion about creating trail connection parallel to but separated from Highway 550.	Local Residents and Businesses Purgatory Resort Forest Service Trails 2000 Lake of the Pines Lake Purgatory Two Dogs Subdivision North County Service Groups

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
7. Equestrian Parking	Purgatory auxiliary parking lot	Allow non-winter equestrian trail parking at Purgatory's auxiliary lot. Facilitate equestrian access to Elbert Creek trail via proposed west side connector (see # 3 above).	Forest Service Purgatory Resort
8. Parking	Strawberry Patch	Expand parking at trail head Potential conflict with Peregrine Falcons; seasonal closures possible.	Forest Service Four Corners Back Country Horsemen Trails 2000
9. Signs & Parking	Elbert Creek Trail head	Expand parking and properly sign trail head.	Forest Service CDOT? Pvt. Landowners
10. Access Animas River	North of Electra Lake	Establish public access to Animas River. Existing trespass issues near ecologically fragile N. end of Electra Lake. Potential for looped trail from Highway 550 North of Electra Lake to Animas River looping north to Purgatory Flats Trail. Design trail in a manner that provides views of Electra Lake, but discourages access to lake. Maintain Electra Lake front gate as primary public fishing access point to Lakeshore for fishing/hiking. Potential conflict with nesting Bald Eagles along west shore; seasonal closures possible. "Accessible" trails potential.	Forest Service Electra Lake Sporting Club Two Dogs Subdivision Public Service Company of Colorado Pvt. Landowners
11. Trail Enhancement	West Side of Electra Lake	Create a formal trail along West side of lake from entrance gate to north end of lake. Potential to connect with Animas River access (#12) Trail may focus users, mitigating impacts from scattered recreation and access.	Electra Lake Sporting Club Forest Service Trails 2000
12. Access	Animas River	Establish public access to National Forest from railroad stop.	Forest Service
13. Identify Gentle Loops	Haviland Lake	Maze of informal trails exists. Simplify existing maze of trails, establish main routes, and reclaim unnecessary trails, "Accessible" trails potential.	Forest Service Outfitters Trails 2000
14. Climber Parking	Golf Wall Climbing Area	Establish formal parking area for Golf Wall Climbing Area.	Forest Service CDOT Pvt. Landowners Climbing Comm.
15. Trail Segment Reroute	Pinkerton – Flagstaff Trail, from Dutch Creek to Jones Creek Trail	Reroute trail to avoid hills and maintain constant gentle grade; existing trail has many elevation gains and losses. This is a goal of hiking groups and the Forest Service.	Forest Service Trails 2000

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
16. Signs & Parking	Goulding Creek Trail head	Expand parking and properly sign trail head. Potential conflict with Peregrine Falcons; seasonal closures possible.	Forest Service CDOT Pvt. Landowners
17. Hunting & Fishing Access	Rockwood train depot	Improve public access to Forest Service Lands (Animas River). Create relatively gentle trail to river.	Forest Service Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Pvt. Landowners
18. Signs & Parking	Mitchell Lakes Trail head	Expand parking and properly sign trail head. Trail is too steep and rocky for bicycles; otherwise it could be an excellent loop from Jones Creek Trail. FS interested in acquisition of private inholding.	Forest Service La Plata County
19. Access	Buck Creek Trail	Establish public access to east end of trail on FS land. Safety issue because people get too tired at the bottom to backtrack up to Junction Creek. They then trespass to get out. Problems with trespassing need to be resolved.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000

Map 1 – Northwest

Back of map

Table 2 – Needs and Opportunities Analysis: Northeast

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Bridge	Upper Florida River (above Lemon Reservoir)	Establish safe crossing across Florida River to Young's Canyon. Discussion re Forest Service plans to construct bridge.	Forest Service
2. Access	Red Creek (Coolwater Ranch)	Establish public access to forest service trail. Landowner issues must be resolved. Access likely to be developed only in conjunction with development of property.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
3. Reservoir Loop	Vallecito Reservoir	Complete trail around reservoir; existing Vallecito Trail does not completely encircle reservoir.	Forest Service PRID Vallecito Ladies Auxiliary BuRec Pvt. Landowners
4. Access	Middle Mt. Access/CR 501 (above Vallecito)	Establish public access between Middle Mt area and CR 501 (Upper Pine). Potential for conflict with motorized users must be addressed.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000
5. Loop	East side of Vallecito Reservoir, near Old Tymers Campground	Establish trail connection between two trails east of Vallecito Reservoir. Discussion regarding creating looped trails by connecting two existing trails on Forest Service land.	Forest Service Trails 2000
6. Nordic Ski Trails	Vallecito Reservoir	Continue grooming Nordic Ski Trails.	Pine River Ski Group Forest Service La Plata County
7. Access	Enchanted Forest Subdivision	Establish public access to Forest Service Lands, discussion regarding development of trails and establishment of access. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
8. Access	'Tween Lakes Subdivision	Establish public access to Forest Service Lands, discussion regarding development of trails and establishment of access. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
9. Parking	Shearer Creek Trail	Expand parking area; road widening further reduced size.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners County Road & Bridge

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
10. Access	Texas Creek	Unknown access opportunity to BLM lands in Texas Creek. Research potential for public access to BLM lands. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc. Potential winter conflicts with Elk.	BLM Pvt. Landowners County Road & Bridge
11. Access	Texas Creek	Unknown access opportunity to BLM lands in Texas Creek. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc. Potential winter conflicts with Elk.	BLM Pvt. Landowners County Road & Bridge
12. Access	BLM Lands North of Forest Lakes	Unknown access opportunity to BLM lands near Forest Lakes. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc. Potential winter conflicts with Elk.	BLM Pvt. Landowners
13. Access	Beaver Meadows access from Forest Lakes	Establish public access to existing trails on Forest Service lands east of Forest Lakes. Care must be taken to address potential trespass issues, parking, etc. Potential winter conflicts with Elk.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Forest Lakes Metro District

Map 2 – Northeast

Back of map

Table 3 – Needs and Opportunities Analysis: West Central

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Connect	Colorado Trail extension to Mancos	Establish connection to Mancos, research route potential across Forest Service lands. Difficulty will be in identifying route from Transfer Park Campground to Mancos.	Forest Service Montezuma County
2. Connect	Mayday	Establish connection to Mayday area from trail along old railroad ROW. Address potential trespass issues; need to acquire easements.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Ute Mtn Ute Tribe La Plata County
3. Rails to Trails	Hesperus/ Cherry Creek Area	Establish connection to Hesperus area from trail along old railroad ROW. Address potential trespass issues; need to acquire easements. Winter closures for motor vehicles in effect.	Forest Service Ute Mt. Ute Tribe Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
4. Access and Colorado Trail extension	La Plata and Lightner Creek Drainages	Establish access to FS lands between La Plata Canyon and Lightner Creek. Address potential trespass issues; need to acquire &/or reestablish easements.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
5. Access and Trails	BLM lands south of Hesperus Ski Area	Establish public access to BLM land south of Hesperus Ski Area. Research suitability for trails and availability of access. Address potential trespass issues on adjacent private lands. Research potential for access from Hesperus Ski Area lands.	BLM Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
6. Access	BLM land west of CR 139 (Cherry Creek)	Research public access potential to BLM lands from adjacent County Roads.	BLM La Plata County Pvt. Landowners Landowner
7. Access/ Trails	Old Fort Lewis College Site	Establish trails and public access, and accessible trail opportunities. Potential trail along irrigation canal through college property on east side of Highway 140, connecting to CR 141. Private lands issue between state lands and CR 141.	State of Colorado Trails 2000 La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
8. Rails to Trails	South of Hesperus along Highway 145	Establish trail along abandoned Railroad ROW; research access and ownership and potential conflicts with private landowners.	La Plata County Ute Mt. Ute Tribe Pvt. Landowners

Map 3 – West Central

Back of map

Table 4 – Needs and Opportunities Analysis: Central

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Parking	Base of Hermosa Creek Road (CR 201) Hermosa Creek Trail Parking	Establish parking to accommodate the motor vehicles of cyclists completing Hermosa Creek Trail. Existing arrangement of cars parking along CR impacts residents along the road.	La Plata County Forest Service CDOT Pvt. Landowners
2. School Trails	Animas Valley Elementary School	Establish trail connections between school and neighboring subdivisions. Safety and trespassing concerns to be considered.	La Plata County 9R School District Pvt. Landowners
3. Pedestrian Crossing	Highway 550 near Animas Valley Elementary School	Establish safe pedestrian crossing of Highway 550; discussion regarding potential for pedestrian underpass.	CDOT DSNG Railroad Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000
4. Access	Falls Creek	Establish public access to existing trail between Falls Creek and FS Road 171 (Junction Creek). Existing trail from Falls Creek lacks public access. Trespassing is an ongoing problem that needs resolving. Potential Peregrine Falcon Mitigation. Proposed Winter closures for big game. Archeological Area Closures.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners DOW La Plata County
5. Access	CR 203 / Hidden Valley Forest Service Lands	Establish trail connection across FS Land connecting CR 203 (West Animas) and Hidden Valley. Discussion regarding creating a trail on Forest Service land, which does touch the County Road. Winter closures for big game. Archeological Area Closures.	Forest Service Trails 2000 DOW La Plata County
6. Trail along Highway	Highway 550 North	Establish separated bicycle path and pedestrian accommodations through the Animas Valley. Potential may exist for a trail within the CDOT &/or Railroad ROW. CDOT ROW may be easiest to work in; RR ROW is not necessarily consistent ownership.	CDOT DSNG Railroad La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
7. Access	Lightner Creek /La Plata River Drainages	Establish public access to public lands between Lightner Creek and La Plata Canyon.	Forest Service Pvt. Landowners La Plata County

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
8. Colorado Trail Extension to Durango	Junction Creek and/or Lightner Creek Drainages – North side Animas Mountain	Create Colorado Trail extension to Durango. Discussion regarding several possible alternatives along east side of existing DOW lands near Junction Creek. Extending to BLM lands and Mountain Park would likely require land exchange between DOW and BLM. DOW concerned regarding impacts to wildlife lands. Other potential routes include via Dry fork and Lightner Creek drainages, or around north end of Animas Mountain crossing CR 204 and joining existing trail head.	Forest Service Division of Wildlife BLM La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
9. Separated Trail	CR 204 - Junction Creek Road	Create separate path along east side of Junction Creek Road connecting to Durango. Wildlife and private lands issues to be addressed.	La Plata County BLM Pvt. Landowners Trials 2000
10. Access Trails	West Side of Animas Mountain	Establish public access to Animas Mt from its west side. Several options exist for routing trail. County-owned power line parcel or route across private land connecting to City & BLM-owned land.	BLM La Plata County City of Durango Pvt. Landowners
11. Parking & Access	East Animas Climbing Area	Establish formal access and parking for climbers. Informal access arrangement exists with private landowner. Formal easements need to be acquired and parking considerations addressed.	Climbing Groups BLM Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
12. Construct Trail	Songbird Subdivision (Florida Rd.)	Establish trail to BLM lands via existing public access easement. Trail needs to be constructed across easement and through BLM lands.	BLM Trials 2000 La Plata County Developers
13. Parking/ Connection	Edgemont Ranch (North of Florida Rd.)/Durango Hills	Establish trail connection from CR 240 (Florida Rd.) to Durango Hills/Missionary Ridge across existing Forest Service easement through Edgemont Ranch (North side of Florida Rd.). Need to delineate route and address potential trespassing from easement onto private lands would need to be addressed. Winter closures for big game.	Forest Service Trials 2000 Edgemont Ranch Durango Hills Road Imp. District BLM
14. Access	BLM lands east of Florida Rd. (Vosberg Pike)	Explore public access opportunities to BLM lands. Ascertain potential for wildlife impacts. Winter closures for big game.	BLM Pvt. Landowners La Plata County

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
15. Bike / Pedestrian Accommodation	CR 237 (Horse Gulch)	Construct bicycle/pedestrian accommodations along CR 237 (Horse Gulch Road) if road is opened to through motor vehicle traffic.	La Plata County BLM Landowners in Horse Gulch
16. Access	BLM lands along CR 237 (Horse Gulch)	Establish public lands access from CR. Address potential for trespass onto adjacent private lands.	BLM La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
17. Access/Trails	BLM lands east of CR 225	Establish public lands access from CR. Address potential for trespass onto adjacent private lands.	BLM La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
18. Access	Vosberg Pike, State Lands	Establish public access to state lands.	State Land Board Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000
19. Rails to Trails	South of CR 125	Rails to Trails Potential along abandoned Railroad ROW.	
20. Neighborhood connections	Rafter J, Shenandoah, DWI & DWII	Create trails between existing subdivisions. Address potential trespass and privacy issues, and the need to acquire trail easements.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000
21. Connect	Trail Connection between Highway. 160 and Rafter J	Trail exists; address status of easements and potential for trespass.	Subdivision Residents CDOT Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
22. Bicycle / Pedestrian Accommodation	CR 211	Ensure bicycle/pedestrian accommodations are included in any improvements to CR 211, may involve creation of separated path or widened shoulder. Address wildlife and land management issues across DOW properties.	La Plata County Bureau of Reclamation Division of Wildlife
23. Connection	Connection from La Posta Road to Trappers Crossing	Research ownership and easement status along existing road connection to enable public use of road between La Posta Road and Trappers' Crossing.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners Southern Ute Tribe
24. School Trails	Escalante Middle School	Establish trail connections between Escalante Middle School and surrounding neighborhoods.	City of Durango La Plata County CDOT 9-R School District Pvt. Landowners

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
25. Trails	Grandview Ridge BLM lands	Construct trails. Trails intended to be compatible with BLM management plans for the area. Winter closures for big game.	BLM Trails 2000
26. School Trails	Florida Mesa Elementary School	Establish trails between school and neighborhoods. Address trespass issues and easement acquisition.	La Plata County CDOT 9-R School District Trails 2000 Pvt. Landowners
27. Bike / Pedestrian Accommodation	Highway 160 between Durango and Bayfield	Establish safe bicycle/pedestrian accommodations including separated path &/or adequate shoulders. Potential for routing within CDOT ROW being researched. Address funding constraints.	CDOT La Plata County 9-R School District SMART 160 Town of Bayfield City of Durango
28. Mountain Park & Colorado Trail trail head	Old VanDal Landfill Site	Develop trail heads at old county landfill for access to Mountain Park and at Colorado Trail.	City of Durango La Plata County BLM Forest Service
29. Access and trail opportunity	Ridges Basin	Establish trails and public land access to BuRec lands in Ridges Basin.	BuRec Trails 2000 La Plata County DOW
30. Trail	Smelter Mountain Trail	Potential trail from Smelter property up east side of Smelter Mountain; likely to occur only if DOW exchanges or sells property.	BLM La Plata County DOW City of Durango
31. Trespass Mitigation	Hidden Valley/CR 203 Connection	Resolve trespass issues along private lands between CR 203 and Hidden Valley via Church Camp Road.	Pvt. Landowners La Plata County Forest Service
32. Access	CR 234 Connection to Grandview Ridge & Horse Gulch Trails	Establish access from Grandview/CR 234 area to BLM lands along Grandview Ridge.	BLM La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
33. Parking	CR 250/ Stevens Creek trail head	Improve trail head parking.	Forest Service La Plata County Pvt. Landowners

Map 4 – Central

Back of map

Table 5 -- Needs and Opportunities Analysis: Southwest

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. School Trails	Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School	Establish trail connections to area neighborhoods.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners 9-R School District Trails 2000

Map 5 – Southwest

Back of map

Table 6 – Needs and Opportunities Analysis: South Central

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Local Loops; Access from La Posta Road	West Side Black Ridge	Establish looped connections among various roads up canyons on west side of Black Ridge. Address potential issues regarding crossing of Ute Lands as well as access along roads across Southern Ute land. Research potential to cross Black Ridge via existing roads.	Southern Ute Tribe Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000
2. Neighborhood Trails	Koshak Mesa/ Animas Air Park	Create trail connections between neighborhoods.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
3. Rails to Trails	South Animas River Corridor	Establish trail along abandoned railroad ROW. May combine with East Mesa Ditch alignment to create a trail connection to Durango’s Animas River Trail. Need to address private property issues.	Area Residents La Plata County Pvt. Landowners Ditch Companies City of Durango
4. Loop & Connects	Pastorious Reservoir to Florida Mesa School	Create trail around reservoir and connections to neighborhoods and Florida Mesa School. Address potential to reduce existing vandalism, partying problems at reservoir. DOW has concerns re increasing use.	Division of Wildlife Area Residents Pvt. Landowners City of Durango (water right holders) La Plata County
5. Rails to Trails	Florida Mesa to Ignacio	Create trail along abandoned railroad ROW.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners SUIT
6. Neighborhood Trails	La Plata County Airport	Establish trails in business/industrial area at/near airport. Address potential to incorporate trails into development plans of airport and surrounding properties; contact area landowners.	La Plata County City of Durango Pvt. Landowners
7. School Trails	Sunnyside Elementary School	Establish trail connections to area neighborhoods.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners Trails 2000 9-R School District
8. River crossing	Animas River	Create river crossing to connect neighborhoods along Animas River.	Area Residents Pvt. Landowners La Plata County
9. BIA Road	SW side Black Ridge	Clarify status of public access rights along BIA road.	La Plata County SUIT

Map 6 – South Central

Back of map

Tables 7 -- Needs and Opportunities Analysis: Southeast

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
1. Access and Trails	BLM lands south of CR 502	Explore access and trail opportunities on BLM lands adjacent to county road. Elk winter range.	BLM Trails 2000 La Plata County
2. Access/ Loops/ Gentle Slope	State Land Section north of Bayfield	Establish public access to state land. Accessible trail potential? Research status of existing lease and current use of land (grazing)? Elk winter range.	Town of Bayfield State Land Board Lease holder
3. School Trails	Bayfield High School	Establish trail connections between school and neighborhoods.	Town of Bayfield Bayfield School Dist. Pvt. Landowners
4. Bike/ Pedestrian Accommodation	Highway 160	Establish bicycle pedestrian accommodations along highway.	CDOT La Plata County Smart 160 Town of Bayfield
5. Access/Gentle Slope	BLM lands south of Highway 160	Research access and trail issues. Accessible trail options? Lands may be identified for trade or sale by BLM. Elk winter range. Habitat improvements have been made by BLM and DOW.	BLM CDOT
6. Local Ditch Trails	Irrigation canal between Highway 160 and 160B	Establish connection between highway and town. Address potential liability issues along canal as well as potential conflicts with private landowners.	Town of Bayfield Canal Company Pvt. Landowners
7. School Trails	Bayfield Elementary School	Establish trail connections between school and neighborhoods.	Town of Bayfield La Plata County Bayfield School Dist. Pvt. Landowners
8. Access/Loop	West side H-D Mts., CR 528	Establish access and trails. Elk winter range and winter closures.	Forest Service La Plata County
9. Road Upgrade	CR 509	Incorporate pedestrian/bicycle accommodations into any road reconstruction plans for CR 509.	La Plata County
10. Bayfield/ Ignacio Connection Trail	Pine River between Bayfield and Ignacio	Establish trail connection between the two towns. Address wildlife issues along Pine River Corridor. Requires cooperation with Tribe and probably some private landowners.	La Plata County SUIT Pvt. Landowners Town of Ignacio Town of Bayfield
11. Access/ Parking	West Side HD Mountains	Establish access and parking. Elk winter range and winter closures.	Forest Service La Plata County

Map # and project type	Location	Actions and Issues	Likely Partners
12. Access/ Parking	West Side HD Mountains	Establish access and parking. Elk winter range and winter closures.	Forest Service La Plata County
13. North/South Contour Trail	West Side HD Mountains	Improve trail along west flank of HD's. Elk winter range and winter closures.	Forest Service
14. Rails to Trails	Abandoned RR ROW between Florida Mesa and Ignacio	Establish trail along abandoned RR ROW. Address private property issues.	La Plata County Pvt. Landowners SUIT Town of Ignacio
15. Ignacio/SUIT Trails Plan	Ignacio	Implement trail plans of Ignacio and the Southern Ute Tribe. Bald eagle roosting areas along Pine River.	Town of Ignacio SUIT La Plata County Pvt. Landowners
16. Stock Drive Trail	Piedra Stock Drive Trail	Improve/maintain access to historic stock drive trail across HD Mountains; much of trail is in Archuleta County.	Forest Service La Plata County SUIT
17. Rails to Trails	Abandoned RR ROW between Ignacio and Arboles	Establish trail along abandoned RR ROW. Address private property issues.	Pvt. Landowners SUIT La Plata County
18. Forest Service Sauls Creek Trail Plan	F.S. East of Bayfield	F.S. proposed trail plan.	Forest Service
19. Vallecito/Forest Lakes/Bayfield Connection	Neighborhood connector parallel to CR 501 or CR 502	Trail connection between Vallecito, Forest Lakes, and Vallecito connecting these developed areas. Trail may function as transportation route as well as potential stock driveway. Private landowner concerns. Wildlife and riparian habitat concerns along Pine River.	La Plata County Forest Service Pvt. Landowners Ranchers

Map 7 – Southeast

Back of map

CHAPTER 6. TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The following section is intended to provide general guidance concerning trail maintenance, design, routing and management issues. Such issues are not unique to La Plata County and many outside reference sources exist. Appendix 4 contains references for detailed guidance and information regarding trail development and management.



Trail Design

Proper design of a new trail or the rerouting of an existing trail is necessary to ensure that a project will be successful and well used. Thoughtful design is also crucial to help address issues of privacy, security, safety, wildlife and environmental impacts, and durability of the trail. Several “big picture” design issues deserve mention here as they pertain to most trails:

Gentle grades

As simple as this may sound, gentle grades are one of the most critical aspects of good trail design. Gently sloping trails are better for people and the environment. Such trails serve the broadest range of trail users and provide the most enjoyable experiences. Gradually sloped trails wear slower, require less maintenance, and are less susceptible to erosion because water is more likely to drain off the sides of the trail rather than down the middle of it.

Guiding Principle:

Trails should be designed such that grades, widths, drainage systems, water crossings, sight distances, and vertical clearance are appropriate for the types of uses anticipated.

Design for anticipated use

Evaluating a trail’s purpose and identifying the predominant user groups will aid in determining appropriate trail widths, grades, surfaces and routing. Trail designers should ask who will be the predominant users of the trail and what type of experience they will be looking for, e.g. is this a trail for mountain bikers or a children’s nature walk?

Design to address opportunities and constraints

Trail designers should address specific opportunities and constraints associated with a trail and its surrounding landscape. Examples of such opportunities and constraints include:

- ❖ Mitigation of trespass or loss of privacy to private landowners
- ❖ Separating trail users from busy roads
- ❖ Avoiding sensitive natural areas, critical wildlife habitat and hazards such as steep slopes or loose rocks
- ❖ Accessing scenic areas or historic sites
- ❖ Providing accessibility for people with disabilities
- ❖ Design for aesthetic trail experiences
- ❖ Routing trails to scenic viewpoints

Signage

Signs can be an important trail management tool. Effective signs help users stay on desired routes, follow rules and have more enjoyable outings. Proper signs enhance safety and make it easier to identify trails and to educate trail users about particular management goals, such as efforts to minimize trespassing, reduce soil erosion or avoid disruption of wildlife. Signs do not have to be elaborate, in fact, given the potential for any sign to be destroyed by vandals or deteriorated by the elements, it often makes sense to use signs that can be easily and cost effectively replaced. In addition to aiding the trail user and land manager, signs also help search and rescue personnel in the event of an emergency. Signage types include the following:

- ❖ Trail head identification
- ❖ On-trail directional signs
- ❖ Trail intersection signs
- ❖ “You are here” orientation
- ❖ Uses allowed, precautions & warnings
- ❖ User education & trail etiquette
- ❖ Seasonal wildlife closures
- ❖ Location for emergency response
- ❖ Private property/trespass warnings
- ❖ Trail supporter acknowledgement

Guiding Principle:

Trails should be adequately signed and routinely maintained.

Education

Trail user education programs can address a variety of trail use and management issues. Educational strategies include the use of maps; brochures; radio, print and television advertisements; volunteer trail patrols; and advocacy group efforts and events such as the "Share the Trails Team Triathlon." Issues to address include trail safety and etiquette, as well as rules and regulations:

Trail safety and etiquette

Being courteous and following some simple rules make trail use a safe and enjoyable experience for all users sharing trails. Some of these important rules to remember include:

- ❖ Be courteous to other trail users.
- ❖ Plan ahead. Know your equipment, your ability, the trail you're using and prepare accordingly.
- ❖ Ride, skate and walk on the right. Stay in single file when in groups.
- ❖ Control your speed; slow down or stop and use caution when approaching or overtaking other trail users.
- ❖ Be aware of curves, corners and blind spots; use caution when approaching them.
- ❖ When passing other trail users, do not surprise them and never spook animals. Know the right-of-way (who yields to whom) rules:
 - Equestrians always have the right-of-way. All other trail users must yield to them. If you are unsure of what action to take, ask the riders.
 - Bicyclists and skaters yield to walkers.
 - Bicyclists yield to skaters.
 - Downhill users yield to uphill users.
 - Faster users yield to slower users.
- ❖ Restrain use of muddy trails to minimize maintenance.
- ❖ Minimize trespassing and trail impacts by staying on trails.
- ❖ Help minimize erosion by not shortcutting switchbacks.
- ❖ Respect wildlife laws and the safety of other trail users by leashing dogs and cleaning up after them.
- ❖ Running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses. Do not harass animals, nor allow your pets to do so.
- ❖ Leave gates as you find them or as marked.
- ❖ Leave No Trace/Tread Lightly ethics:
 - Stay on existing trails and don't create any new ones.
 - Avoid wet or muddy trails.
 - Pack out whatever you pack in (don't litter!)
 - Respect trail and road closures – ask if you're not certain.
 - Obtain permits and authorization as appropriate.
 - Federal and state wilderness areas are closed to cycling. The way you ride will influence trail management decisions.

Trail rules and regulations

Different trails may have different rules and regulations governing them. Be sure to know the rules for the trails you use. Such regulations may include:

- ❖ Closure periods
- ❖ Prohibited uses
- ❖ Speed limits
- ❖ Trespass cautions

Maintenance

A major issue that arose during the preparation of the plan was the need to properly maintain trails. Members of the public consistently ranked maintenance of existing trails as very important. Correspondingly, a significant number of the plan's needs and opportunities address trail and trail facility maintenance.

Guiding Principle:
Poorly placed or built trails should be redesigned, rerouted, or in some cases, closed and revegetated.

Trail maintenance needs vary according to the type and location of the particular trail. Backcountry recreation trails typically need clearing of fallen trees, tread work, installation and maintenance of water drainage structures, and removal of loose

rocks. On the other hand, soft surface trails between neighborhoods may be built and maintained by volunteers using hand tools, and hard surface asphalt or concrete paths require more specialized treatment, including mechanical sweeping, snow removal and asphalt patching. These maintenance procedures require expenditures that are often justified by the high levels of use of hard surface trails.

Since sweeping of shoulders is critical in order for shoulders to be usable by cyclists, maintenance of on-street shoulders or bicycle lanes on city streets, county roads and state highways should be performed in conjunction with routine road work. Another issue associated with the maintenance of road shoulders is the need to create an even edge between old and new layers of pavement. Uneven edges can be hazardous to bicycle riders.

Wildlife Considerations

Trails can play a variety of roles in relation to wildlife, and wildlife considerations have rated high among the priorities expressed in public input. The presence of humans along trails may impact wildlife species during certain times of the year (e.g. winter and nesting periods) and

Guiding Principle:
Trails should be designed and managed to minimize significant impacts to wildlife and ecosystems.

cause animals to relocate to a new area. Conversely, impacts to wildlife can be reduced by concentrating users along trails as opposed to dispersing them throughout a broader area along informal paths. Although some scientific research has been conducted regarding the impacts of trails to wildlife, it has proven difficult to quantify the extent of these impacts. However, it is not unreasonable to conclude that trails will often have some level of impact (positive or negative), and that wildlife considerations should always be taken into account when planning and managing trails.

A variety of generalized “rules of thumb” for managing wildlife impacts exist. These rules and other valuable information on trails and wildlife are contained in a booklet published by the Colorado State Parks Division. The booklet is titled *Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind*, September, 1998, Colorado State Parks. Trail planners and advocates are encouraged to use this book for assistance and advice when making trail planning and management decisions. It is available for downloading on the Internet at www.dnr.state.co.us/parks/

Ecology and the environment

Considerations for protecting ecosystems and the environment are similar to those necessary to minimize wildlife impacts. Poorly managed trails can harm sensitive environments. However, trails can also serve as management tools to protect sensitive areas by routing people onto trails and discouraging dispersion through a broad area.

Major points to consider when addressing wildlife and environmental issues include:

- ✓ Think big: Look at the broad landscape where a trail is envisioned and identify potential impacts to wildlife and the environment.
- ✓ Think thin: In constructing or upgrading a trail, disturb as narrow an area as possible to help minimize the zone of influence.
- ✓ Think edges: Align a trail along or near an existing edge or disturbed area rather than cutting through the middle of an undisturbed area. Strive to leave an undisturbed area intact.

Guiding Principle:

In order to minimize the impact of new trails on the surrounding environment, removal of soil and vegetation should be limited to only that amount that is necessary to provide a safe and well-designed trail.

- ✓ Pay particular attention to potential impacts to riparian (streamside) and wetland habitat areas. Consider routing a trail to a point along a stream rather than parallel the entire stream corridor.
- ✓ Trails need to be carefully planned and developed when constructed near riparian areas and wetlands in order to protect sensitive habitat and reduce fragmentation of habitat and vegetation.
- ✓ Consider seasonal trail closures (as necessary) and the use of educational/interpretative signage

Funding, Donations and Volunteerism

The need for funding or donations of labor and materials is crucial to any trail effort. Even the most modest trail projects will require some sort of financial assistance, while the cost of larger projects such as hard-surface paths can be considerable. Funds can be required for many different items and services including:

- ❖ Maintenance and trail building tools
- ❖ Planning and design
- ❖ Rights of way acquisition
- ❖ Grading and earthwork
- ❖ Trail surfacing materials
- ❖ Project management and coordination of volunteers
- ❖ Signs, maps and brochures

Guiding Principle:

Trail building plans should be grounded in financial reality.

Sources

Many sources of funding exist for trail planning and development, but competition for trail funds can be extensive. Major trail funding sources in La Plata County include:

- ❖ Federal transportation funds
- ❖ Federal land management agencies
- ❖ Colorado state lottery grants (Great Outdoors Colorado)
- ❖ Colorado energy impact assistance grants
- ❖ County and municipal governments
- ❖ Local businesses and individuals (cash and in-kind donations of labor, materials and trail easements)

Appendix 3 contains an outline of major trail funding and assistance sources. It is important to keep in mind the following general strategies when searching for funds.

Strategic need

Demonstrate the strategic need for the project. Identify how the project fits within the bigger picture of trails in the state, region, county or local neighborhood. Conformance with the goals of a plan such as this one can help demonstrate the strategic value of the project in the context of the community's broader vision for trails.

Establish partnerships

Demonstrate a broad range of support for the project: Strive to obtain cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions from a variety of groups, agencies or individuals. Spreading a project's financial burden among a variety of sources helps to improve the project's viability and it assures contributors they are participating in a team effort.

Long-term issues

It is critical to address how a trail project will be supported and maintained over time. Determine who will be responsible for maintenance and management of the project and identify probable funding sources for these activities up front. This is necessary to ensure donors that the project will maintain its viability and usefulness over time.

Access

When establishing new trails or public lands access, formal access rights must be obtained in order to properly manage trails use and avoid conflicts between landowners and trail users. Methods for ensuring access vary between private and public lands. On public lands such as BLM or Forest Service, new trails or accesses are generally required to comply with the management objectives of the particular area and they must be evaluated for potentially significant environmental impacts (National Environmental Policy Act compliance). If a trail or access crosses private lands, a formal access arrangement must be made with the landowner. Three of the most common methods for securing access are: fee simple acquisition, dedication, and easements. Following is a discussion of each of these strategies along with some general suggestions for making access arrangements.

Guiding Principle:

Trail development efforts should be carried out in a manner that respects the rights of private property owners while also realizing the legitimate public benefit associated with trails and the provision of access to and from public lands, schools, businesses, neighborhoods and other developed areas.

Fee simple acquisition

Fee simple acquisitions transfer full title of the property via cash purchase. This offers the most comprehensive form of access and protection, but it is often the most expensive form. In some instances, property owners will be willing to donate fee simple title, sometimes receiving tax benefits for doing so. A related approach is the bargain sale, which is a combination sale and donation. In a bargain sale, a landowner transfers title at a price below market value. This may provide the landowner with tax benefits for the price differential, as well as a direct cash return. When a government entity assumes fee simple title it eliminates any liability risk for the landowner by transferring it to the government entity, which is usually better positioned to assume liability risks.

Dedication

When property is developed or subdivided, trails can be incorporated into the project through dedicated easements established during the county or municipal development approval process. It can be particularly worthwhile to incorporate trails into projects when they will enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and when they will provide viable alternatives to automobile travel. Trails can be voluntarily dedicated by the developer, negotiated via a development agreement, or required as a condition of approval by the governing body.

Easements

Negotiated easements are often used to protect open lands and provide trail access. Easements are based on relinquishing development potential in exchange for tax considerations. Easements can be donated by a landowner (usually with a tax benefit for the value of development that is precluded) or purchased by a public or nonprofit entity. The landowner retains ownership of the land and is able to exercise the uses that are not restricted in the easement. Easements should be established on a cooperative basis working with willing landowners.

General strategies

Regardless of the methods used to acquire access, it is important to be forward and upfront when working with landowners. Listen carefully to their concerns and, above all respect their rights. Strive to build partnerships and obtain their cooperation or move on to find an alternative solution.

CHAPTER 7. COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION OF EFFORTS

Introduction

The success of many trail projects often depends upon effective and efficient partnerships and coordination among the many entities involved. This chapter aims to further such coordination by highlighting the relationships between local governments, state and federal agencies, citizen groups and individuals. The agencies, groups and individuals that may be involved in a specific trail project will vary according to factors such as, type of trail, land ownership and location. Discussion of the listed main agencies follows:



- ✓ La Plata County
- ✓ Municipal Governments
- ✓ Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- ✓ Federal Land Management Agencies
- ✓ Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)
- ✓ Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners
- ✓ Southern Ute Tribe
- ✓ Non-Profit Land Trusts
- ✓ Private Advocacy Groups
- ✓ Neighborhood Groups, Property Owners Associations, Individual Landowners, and Residents

La Plata County

The county plays a central role in guiding development and providing services within unincorporated portions of the county. The provision of trails and roads are among the many issues considered by the county when reviewing public and private development proposals.

The Trails Plan identifies guiding principles for trail development and identifies specific needs and opportunities. Some of these may have relevance to projects being considered during the county's development review process. In particular, as a commercial or residential project goes through the county's review process, opportunities may exist to incorporate trails, pedestrian facilities or public lands access into the project. Particular emphasis should be placed on the creation of trail connections that promote public safety, reduce automobile use and provide connections between neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks and public lands.

In addition to the development review process, the county plays a variety of roles in the development and management of trails in the county. Examples include:

- ❖ Participation in the leasing of federal lands for recreational use
- ❖ Acceptance of fee title ownership of trails
- ❖ Acceptance of trail easements
- ❖ Co-sponsorship of trail planning and development grant applications
- ❖ Partnership with advocacy groups to further trails projects
- ❖ Construction of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along county roads
- ❖ Participation in the planning of trails in conjunction with public and private development and infrastructure projects

A variety of the county's plans, regulations and activities relate to trails. Following is a discussion of these plans accompanied by recommendations for improving or clarifying them.

A Collaborative Success Story:

The establishment in 1998 of over 11 miles of recreational trails in Horse Gulch, was an outstanding example of La Plata County working with a private landowner and trail advocates to secure a trail access. The landowner donated the to county fee title to a narrow swath of land, which was used for 11 miles of trail. The trails are now among the most popular in the county, and trespassing, which had been a problem on other portions of the landowner's property, has virtually been eliminated, because recreationalists now have a legitimate trail alternative.

Comprehensive Plan

The Trails Plan is incorporated by reference as part of the county's comprehensive plan, which addresses a variety of countywide growth and development issues with trails being only one of them. As a component of the comprehensive plan, the Trails Plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the La Plata Land Use Code, District Plans and Transportation Plan to direct county decision making.

La Plata Land Use Code (County Code)

The county's subdivision requirements and development review standards are contained within the county code. Appendix 5 includes excerpts from the county code that pertain to the provision of "sidewalks and pedestrian facilities" and "access to public land". These excerpts are the primary sections of the code that deal with trails and public lands. The code could clearly benefit from a more detailed treatment of trails and their role within new developments. There is no mention of or reference to the term "trails" within the county code's development standards, although the term "pedestrian facilities" can certainly be interpreted to include trails.

It is recommended that the county code be amended to define trails and to clarify requirements for the inclusion of trails and pedestrian improvements in new developments. In many cases, trails can significantly enhance the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The need for such safety improvements is implied in code section. 102-103, which states that sidewalks or pedestrian walkways shall be required when, among other things, a proposed development will generate pedestrian use, such as to a school or bus stop, or if a school site is present within a subdivision.

Section 82-162 of the county code is an “encouraged” (optional) standard, addressing the development of potential public lands access points. This standard discusses the preparation of a “public access needs analysis” when potential public access points exist on land to be developed. If the analysis indicates that public access is desired, agencies and landowners are directed to work together to provide a mutually acceptable access arrangement. However, this standard has rarely been applied due to its optional nature. The county should consider converting this to a required standard.

Maintaining public access to public lands emerged as a major goal during the Trails Plan public input process and converting this to a required standard will help further this goal.

Guiding Principle:
More trail connections should be established between the developed areas (front country) and undeveloped areas (back country).

The Trails Plan should be utilized when the county is reviewing specific development proposals. The major themes, Guiding Principles, and Needs and Opportunities should be used to determine trail and public lands access issues within a project.

District Land Use Plans

The county has adopted seven district land use plans that guide development decisions in seven of the county’s nine planning districts. These land use plans address trails in a variety of ways and Appendix 6 contains relevant excerpts from the various district plans. Topics addressed in the district plans include:

- ❖ Pedestrian safety
- ❖ Providing information to trail users on topics such as wildlife protection, trail etiquette and loose dogs
- ❖ Maintenance of appropriate recreational access and use of public lands
- ❖ Expansion of bike paths to increase safety
- ❖ Providing incentives to build trails that provide connections to public lands
- ❖ Connecting communities and neighborhoods
- ❖ Providing public access to public lands

Additionally, five of the county's seven district plans contain density incentives for the granting of easements to public-use trails and/or public lands. These incentives provide residential density bonuses for density increases between 10 percent and 25 percent above the minimum allowable densities. The county should actively encourage the granting of trail easements and the development of trails and public land access points per the incentive provisions of the district plans.

The county should also assist in the fulfillment of the district plans' trail-related goals (See Appendix 6). To achieve this, the county should strive to make project applicants and district residents aware of each plan's goals and promote efforts to fulfill them. Such efforts may include:

- ❖ Applying for trail planning and development grants
- ❖ Acceptance of conservation and trail easements or fee title to trail rights of ways from willing landowners
- ❖ Dedication of county property or road rights-of-way for trail purposes
- ❖ Trail maintenance efforts, trail education materials, and trail signing projects

Transportation Plan

The Transportation Plan identifies roads that receive heavy bicycle use and recommends shoulder widening on specific routes to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety. The plan also contains a number of important policies for non-motorized uses. These policies have been incorporated into the Trails Plan and are included in Chapter 4.

The county should continue to pursue the construction of such improvements to the fullest extent possible. The county should also continue to partner with other entities as a method to secure funding and other resources for safety improvements.

Development Review

In order to assist applicants, and county planners and decision makers to utilize the Trails Plan during the review of development proposals, a trails plan checklist or summary sheet should be prepared. The checklist should summarize the major themes and guiding principles of the plan as they relate to issues such as project design, pedestrian safety, and neighborhood connectivity. The checklist should also provide guidance for use of the Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables relative to a specific proposal.

Municipal Governments

The county Trails Plan is intended to complement the trail planning efforts and mesh with the trail plans of Durango, Bayfield and Ignacio. The county Trails Plan focuses on links and connections between trails in these municipalities and adjacent unincorporated areas. The boundaries of the City of Durango's Trails Plan are superimposed on the county Trails Plan Map, and the Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables focus on projects that link with Durango's existing and proposed trail system.

The Trails Plan includes a variety of trail needs and opportunities that involve the coordination of planning, development and management between these municipalities, the county, and other entities. It is recommended that these municipalities continue to pursue their trail-planning and development efforts, and do so in a manner that acknowledges the value of connecting core development areas with outlying developing areas in the county. The potential for trails to provide real alternatives to motor vehicle travel is very high in and around Durango, Bayfield and Ignacio. Such goals should be actively pursued as these municipalities continue to develop.

Guiding Principle:

Trails should be developed where they can legitimately play a role in reducing motor vehicle use, such as close to population centers and along busy roads.

Federal Land Management Agencies

The vast majority of trails in the county are located on public lands managed by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec). Agency representatives were actively involved in the preparation of the Trails Plan, which is intended to complement the land management plans of these agencies. Information contained in the document should provide land managers with valuable perspectives on public preferences for trails and related facility improvements. Some relevant issues addressed in the plan include:

- ❖ Identification of potential new access points in areas lacking access to public lands
- ❖ Rerouting segments that are steep, and connecting trails to provide loops
- ❖ Development of trails along canals
- ❖ Improving substandard trails, trail heads and parking areas
- ❖ Mitigating trespass problems in areas lacking public access
- ❖ Improving signage and facilities at trail heads

These federal agencies have a long history of closely working with other entities and the public. They should continue this coordination and utilize the Trails Plan in their efforts. It is also recommended that federal land management agencies routinely update their travel management and recreation plans.

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

The Trails Plan provides recommendations for highway design features intended to safely accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Priority bicycle routes on state highways and county roads have been identified and are included in this plan. CDOT should continue its efforts to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists along state highways. CDOT should also continue to pursue the construction of separated multi-use paths along state highways. Such paths are likely to be most successful if pursued in collaboration with other agencies and private groups.

Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)

The CDOW oversees management of more than 10,000 acres of land in the county, some of which they own. They also assist in the management of wildlife on other public and private lands throughout the county. Trail and access issues differ significantly on public lands managed by the CDOW vs. most other public lands, which are managed for multiple uses. The CDOW manages their lands primarily for wildlife, wildlife habitat, fishing, hunting, and watchable wildlife opportunities. Trails and public access are only accessory considerations.

The Trails Plan generally avoids discussion of trails on CDOW lands because their lands are generally not available for trail development. However, there are several areas such as the desired extension of the Colorado Trail to Durango, where some potential trails are discussed because few other alternatives exist. The CDOW was actively involved in the preparation of the Trails Plan. It is recommended that the CDOW continue to provide assistance regarding the design and management of trail projects to minimize impacts to wildlife. CDOW should also continue to work with land management agencies, the public and landowners to explore options for creating and managing hunting access onto public and private lands.

Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners

Isolated sections of Colorado School Trust lands exist throughout the county. These lands are owned and managed by the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners. Often, these are comprised of Sections 16 & 32 in each township/range. Presently, trails and public access are not a major use of school trust lands. In several locations, the Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables

identify specific school trust lands that possess trail development opportunities. These lands represent a significant public access opportunity that should be explored. Interested parties in the county should begin working with the State Board of Land Commissioners to explore the potential for trail development on suitable trust lands.

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

The Southern Ute Tribe controls a vast amount of land in the southern half of the county. Several potential trails contained in the Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables will require cooperation and participation from the tribe. The tribe's land use planner participated in the stakeholders group and the tribal council was directly consulted during the preparation of the plan. Pursuit of any trail opportunities on tribal lands will have to occur with the active participation and consent of the tribe.

Non-Profit Land Trusts

Several non-profit land trusts are active in the county, including the La Plata Open Space Conservancy, the Animas Conservancy, the Cattlemen's Association Agricultural Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land. These groups have been responsible for securing easements and purchase of lands for agricultural, recreational, open space, and wildlife purposes. Properly planned trails can enhance the value of open space areas. When appropriate, public trail easements should be included with easements or land purchases made by land trusts in the county.

Private Advocacy Groups

Several private groups in the county are very involved in trail and recreation issues. Many of these groups, including Trails 2000, Four Corners Back Country Horsemen and the Durango Wheel Club, actively participated in the preparation of this plan. Trails 2000 was one of the primary sponsors of the Trails Plan and has played an extensive role in county trail planning.

Private groups play a crucial role in focusing the energy and resources of citizens in the county, and by building and maintaining trails through volunteer efforts. They are also a valuable source of input in the local government and agency planning and decision-making process. Advocacy groups in the county should continue to pursue grants and build coalitions and partnerships, this often provides the catalyst to make things happen.

Neighborhood Groups, Property Owners Associations, Individual Landowners and Residents

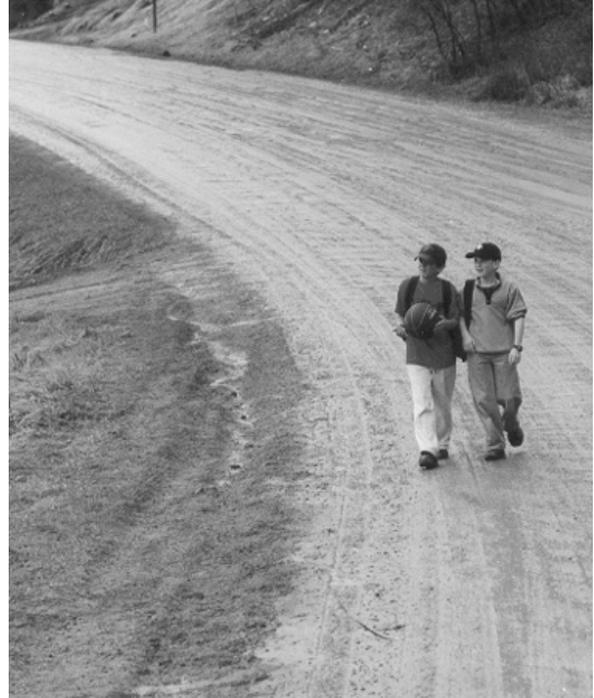
Various local groups and individuals have specific trail projects worthy of pursuit. In many respects, these can be the most satisfying and productive types of trail projects because they are pursued by the groups or individuals who will use them the most. Examples may include a connection between a subdivision and a school or a new public lands access point.

The very popular Vallecito Reservoir Trail is a great example of an ongoing project initiated and constructed through the efforts of local residents. Groups and individuals should use this plan for guidance and reference, when pursuing local trails projects.

CHAPTER 8. IMPLEMENTATION

The Trails Plan assesses trail needs and opportunities in La Plata County. It also provides considerable background and recommendations for addressing trail issues. However, adoption of the plan does not initiate any specific actions or projects. The key to successfully addressing trail issues will depend on the individuals, groups, agencies and local governments involved with trails in the county.

This chapter outlines 11 major “action steps” that should be taken to implement the plan. Each action step is described along with a list of responsible parties. Also included is a section that outlines actions and strategies for effective citizen action.



Action Steps

Action 1: Address specific needs & opportunities identified in the plan

Likely Partners: Numerous and varied

Discussion: The plan’s needs and opportunities analysis identifies over 100 area specific needs and opportunities. This list is expected to evolve over time; some needs and opportunities will be addressed, and new ones will inevitably emerge. Addressing a specific issue will involve a unique set of actions. It is envisioned that various parties throughout the county may initiate action on a specific project at any given time. Four specific projects are called out due to their countywide significance. But aside from these four projects, the other needs and opportunities are not prioritized, because they are not intended to be mutually exclusive. That is, the pursuit of one project is not meant to impede or diminish the ability of another group to pursue a project that may be equally important, yet entirely unrelated.

Action 2: Identify potential trail corridors

Likely Partners: County residents, local governments, land management agencies, advocacy groups

Discussion: Neighborhood planning and trail development efforts are most effective if they are initiated prior to or concurrently with new development. The Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables identify specific neighborhoods and areas where trail connections and/or public lands access may be desirable. The plan recommends revisions to the county's development review procedures in order to better facilitate trail planning in conjunction with land development. Such revisions will be key to the successful implementation of the plan. In developed areas, neighborhood residents and advocacy groups must continue to work together to establish safe trail connections.

Action 3: Development of trails and public lands access points

Likely Partners: Neighborhood residents, advocacy groups, land trusts, local governments, land management agencies

Discussion: Nowhere is the need to work cooperatively greater than in the establishment of new trails or public lands access points. Trail projects must be managed carefully and decisions should be made in a manner that allows all interested parties to participate. It is important to clearly present the strategic need of a project, and to identify and address potential concerns.

Action 4: Minimize wildlife and environmental impacts of new and existing trails

Likely Partners: Colorado Division of Wildlife, United States Forest Service and BLM, neighborhood residents, advocacy groups

Discussion: The plan contains a variety of recommendations for managing and designing trails with wildlife and environmental considerations in mind. The booklet, *Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind*, published by Colorado State Parks, should be referenced when developing trail prescriptions. A listing of references and resources on the subject is also included in Appendix 4. Biologists and wildlife managers from state and federal land and wildlife management agencies may also be consulted for suggestions regarding wildlife and environmental management strategies.

Action 5: Coordinate trail and transportation planning among local governments and land, wildlife, and transportation agencies

Likely Partners: More than 20 groups, agencies and governments are involved in trail and transportation issues in the county, and many neighborhood groups and individuals also play an important role.

Discussion: The need for coordination of trail efforts is essential because seldom is only one constituency or agency involved in a trail issue. Many of the entities involved with trails came together very successfully during the preparation of this plan through the stakeholders group. These groups may wish to develop a trails committee or council that meets on a regular basis to achieve the objectives of this plan. The group could review progress that is being made toward addressing the current needs and opportunities, discuss new or revised needs and opportunities, and otherwise collaborate on trail projects in the county. Another avenue for continued coordination may be the existing Urban Interface Task Force. This interagency group already meets on a regular basis; they may wish to include a review of the Trails Plan implementation as one of their semi-regular agenda items.

Action 6: Develop safe connections between schools and adjacent neighborhoods

Likely Partners: Neighborhood residents, businesses, and landowners; parent teacher organizations; school administrators; local governments; state and federal agencies (e.g. CDOT); and advocacy groups.

Discussion: The need for creative and collaborative solutions is critically important as it pertains to school trail issues. The circumstances surrounding the development of safe routes are unique at each school. If new residential or commercial development is occurring near a school, the county or appropriate municipality should take steps to ensure that safe connections are incorporated into the project's initial design. In developed areas that lack safe connections, local residents must work together with the school administrators, parent teacher organizations, trail advocates and local governments to address trail needs.

Action 7: Plan for trails to safely take people where they need to go, connecting schools, neighborhoods, businesses, recreation areas, and public lands

Likely Partners: Neighborhood residents, businesses, and landowners; local governments; state and federal agencies; and advocacy groups

Discussion: The Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables identify many neighborhoods in the county that will benefit from better trail connections. Specific needs and opportunities will vary depending upon location. The development review process can be an important avenue for planning trails as neighborhoods develop. Local governments should refer to the Trails Plan when reviewing development applications to address potential trail issues. In established neighborhoods; residents, land management agencies, local governments and advocacy groups must continue to work together to refine the trail systems. The need to work cooperatively with private landowners cannot be overstressed. Landowners are often the key players in many neighborhood projects. Their concerns should be identified and their partnership should be sought as early as possible in the neighborhood and trail planning process.

Action 8: Provide safe accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists along roadways

Likely Partners: County Road and Bridge Department, Colorado Department of Transportation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, U. S. Forest Service, local property owners associations, and metro districts.

Discussion: The entities responsible for road improvements vary according to the type of road and its location. It is critical that all agencies continue to consider non-motorized users when planning road improvements. Vigilant public participation in road improvement planning and budgeting process is often required to ensure that proper accommodations are made for non-motorized users. Agencies and groups responsible for developing and maintaining roads in the county must be encouraged to follow the non-motorized transportation policies and recommendations contained within the Trails Plan, County Transportation Plan, and state and federal highway plans. Projects that utilize state and federal funding are often mandated to include accommodations for non-motorized uses; such mandates must be followed. Advocacy groups such as the Durango Wheel Club, Trails 2000 and Bicycle Colorado should continue to advocate for safety improvements.

Action 9: Ensure that trails are properly designed, routed, and built

Likely Partners: local, state, and federal governments and land and wildlife management agencies, user groups, and individual trail advocates

Discussion: Proper trail design is necessary to meet the needs of multiple user groups and it is necessary to minimize wildlife and environmental impacts and trail degradation. Many resources are available for assistance and guidance regarding trail design considerations. Land management agencies, such as the Forest Service and BLM and advocacy groups such as Trails 2000, have exceptional experience designing trails. Many printed resources also exist (See Appendix 4). It is also important to remain open to creative, customized solutions that address the nuances and intricacies of a specific local issue.

Action 10: Ensure that trails are maintained on a regular basis

Likely Partners: local, state, and federal governments and land and wildlife management agencies, user groups, and individual trail advocates

Discussion: The need to provide upkeep and maintenance on existing trails is critical. Trail maintenance varies according to the type and location of a particular trail. Soft surface trails can usually be maintained with hand tools, while hard surface trails often require specialized machinery. In any case there is a duty to maintain trails, and there is usually a cost associated with such maintenance. All trail efforts must build routine maintenance responsibilities into their trail activities and budgets.

Action 11: Pursue ongoing education programs to promote and encourage safe and responsible trail and road use

Likely Partners: Local, state, and federal government agencies, trail users and advocacy groups

Discussion: Education of trail users and the general public is an important tool for minimizing conflicts and environmental impacts, and promoting respect and tolerance. Public education efforts should be a component of trail management programs throughout the county.

Summary of Recommendations

Chapter 7 addressed the role of numerous agencies, groups and individuals involved in trails planning in the county and it contains recommendations for future action. Fulfillment of these recommendations is a major component of the plan's implementation. Following is a summary of the recommended actions, categorized by agency or entity:

La Plata County

The County should:

- ✓ Amend the county code to clarify requirements for the inclusion of trails and public lands access within new developments.
- ✓ Continue to assist in trail development and management, including the acceptance of title to trails or trail easements, and partnering with other entities to pursue trail funding grants.
- ✓ Continue to pursue the construction of road improvements, with an aim toward improving pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- ✓ Consider the establishment of an annually funded line item in the budget for trail planning, development, and maintenance.
- ✓ Prepare a checklist or summary sheet to assist applicants, and county planners and decision-makers to appropriately incorporate the Trails Plan into the site planning and review of development proposals.
- ✓ Assist in fulfillment of trails-related goals listed in the various district land use plans.

Municipal governments

Durango, Bayfield, and Ignacio should:

- ✓ Continue to pursue trail planning and development efforts in a manner that includes trail connections between core, developed areas and outlying unincorporated neighborhoods and public lands.

Federal agencies

The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation should:

- ✓ Continue to coordinate with each other and incorporate this plan in their trail planning efforts.
- ✓ Routinely update their travel management and recreation plans.

Colorado Department of Transportation

CDOT should:

- ✓ Continue its efforts to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists along state highways through the construction of separated paths, underpasses, and cyclist-friendly merge lanes, intersections, and shoulders.

Colorado Division of Wildlife

It is recommended that the CDOW continue to:

- ✓ Provide assistance to design and manage trail projects that minimize impacts to wildlife.
- ✓ Work with land management agencies, the public, and landowners to explore options for creating and managing hunting access onto public and private lands.

Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners

Interested parties should:

- ✓ Work with the State Board of Land Commissioners to determine the potential for trail development on suitable trust lands.

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

- ✓ Pursuit of any trail opportunities on tribal lands will have to occur with the active participation and consent of the tribe.

Non-profit land trusts

- ✓ When appropriate, public trail easements should be included with easements or land purchases made by land trusts in the county.

Advocacy groups

Advocacy groups in the county should:

- ✓ Continue to pursue trail-funding grants.
- ✓ Continue to build coalitions and partnerships, this often provides the catalyst to make things happen.
- ✓ Continue their active roles in volunteer trail building and maintenance.

Neighborhood groups, property owners associations, individual landowners and residents

Groups and individuals should:

- ✓ Use this plan for guidance and reference when pursuing local trails projects.

Guide for Citizen Action

While there are many entities involved with trails in the county, most often action on a project is initiated because an individual or group in the community takes an interest and decides to pursue a solution. In fact, most of the needs and opportunities contained in this plan will likely be addressed in response to the actions of the public rather than a particular agency or government. This section provides guidance for initiating citizen action. It outlines typical actions that may be necessary when undertaking a trail project.

Topic 1: Clearly identify and define the scope and intent of your project

Describing a proposed project provides a necessary focus on the desired outcome and defining the project's scope and intent provides a goal by which to measure its success. An example of a clear definition and intent may be: "Rerouting of the Pinkerton –Flagstaff Trail from Dutch Creek to Jones Creek Trail in order to reduce the trail's undulating grades, making it easier to travel and reducing trail erosion", vs. a more vague description such as "working on the Pinkerton – Flagstaff Trail."

Topic 2: Identify the specific sequential steps necessary to fulfill your objective

Prior to beginning work on a trail project, it is often necessary to gather information, funding and approvals. Identifying each step of a proposed project is essential for scheduling, budgeting and planning a project. In many cases, on-the-ground actions such as establishing a parking area, erecting signs or building a new section of trail will be the simplest and most straightforward part of a project. Conducting research, obtaining access and funding are often the biggest issues to resolve when undertaking a trail project. A typical project sequence may contain steps such as these:

- ✓ Research land ownership records and rights of way
- ✓ Contact property owners
- ✓ Develop project design
- ✓ Obtain necessary approvals
- ✓ Secure necessary funding/donations of labor and materials
- ✓ Obtain construction materials and trail building tools
- ✓ Schedule volunteer labor parties for trail construction and maintenance

Topic 3: Coordination of efforts

Coordinating a group's efforts will include assigning responsibility for specific actions. This avoids duplication of effort and conflicting messages. For instance, if a landowner needs to be contacted, designate one person to be in charge of that task and ensure that any attempts to contact the landowner are initiated by the assigned person.

Topic 4: Resources and budgeting

Identify necessary resources, their anticipated cost and potential sources. Examples of frequently required resources include:

- ✓ Legal counsel
- ✓ Land surveying services
- ✓ Trail building tools and materials
- ✓ Trail signs
- ✓ Volunteer labor

Topic 5: Likely partners

Identify likely partners by asking- what groups, agencies, businesses, governments and individuals are likely to have an interest or concern in the project? Determine what support or funding they may provide, or what concerns they may have and enlist their participation early in the planning process. Reach out to as broad a cross section of the community as possible, and work to build strong relationships with elected officials and government agencies.

Topic 6: Follow-up

When planning a trail project, make provisions to monitor the progress of the project once it is completed. Routine maintenance and upkeep are almost always necessary to keep trails usable. If there are long-term maintenance costs associated with the project, make sure to include them into your budget.

Topic 7: Publicity, celebration and thanks

Once a project is completed, ensure that its success is publicized through outlets such as the local media, newsletter publications or other appropriate means. Make certain that those who participated and provided support are given proper thanks and credit. Finally, create an opportunity for a celebration to recognize the accomplishments that have been made and have a little fun. A picnic or barbecue is an enjoyable contrast to the endless hours of organizing and decision-making that often accompanies trail projects.

CHAPTER 9. UPDATING THE PLAN

The Trails Plan and the Needs and Opportunities Analysis Tables will require periodic updating and revision. It is recommended that the county and the agencies and groups involved in the preparation of the plan convene on at least an annual basis to review progress that has been made to implement the Plan and to consider the need for revision. The County Planning Commission should review proposed amendments to the plan and hold a public hearing before adopting any formal changes.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 -- Inventory and Priority of Paved Roads in La Plata County for Improved Bicycling and Pedestrian Safety; Durango Wheel Club

Appendix 2 -- Equestrian Recommendations; Four Corners Backcountry Horsemen

Appendix 3 -- Funding Sources

Appendix 4 -- Trail Design, Development, and Management References

Appendix 5 -- La Plata Land Use Code, Relevant Excerpts

Appendix 6 -- La Plata County District Land Use Plans, Relevant Excerpts

Appendix 7 -- Discussion of Proposed Regulations for Trail Development to Comply with ADA

Appendix 8 – La Plata County Planning Commission Resolution 2000 – 5, adopting the Trails Plan

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Appendix 3 – Funding Sources

Appendix 4 -- Trail Design, Development, and Management References

Colorado Bicycling Manual; Colorado Department of Transportation Bicycle / Pedestrian Program; 7th Edition; 1998

Colorado Greenway Planning Guide; Colorado State Parks; 1994

Colorado Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Guide; Colorado Department of Transportation Bicycle / Pedestrian Program

Bayfield, A Town Divided; Town of Bayfield; Bayfield, Colorado
Town of Bayfield Pedestrian and Bicyclist Connections Plan; Town of Bayfield; Bayfield, Colorado; 1998

Draft Durango Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan, City of Durango, 2000

Trails for the Twenty-First Century; Planning Design and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Edited by Karen-Lee Ryan, Island Press, 1993

Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook; United States Department of Agriculture Technology of Development Program; Revised 1997

Trails Design and Management Handbook; Pitkin County, Colorado; Revision 1.0; 1993

Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind; Trails and Wildlife Task Force; Colorado State Parks; 1998

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