

Concept Plan
for
Blue Ridge
Recreation Area

Clear Creek County, CO



April, 2017



Concept Plan for Blue Ridge Recreation Area

Prepared for:



Prepared by:

**Great Outdoors
Consultants**



Published: April, 2017

Executive Summary

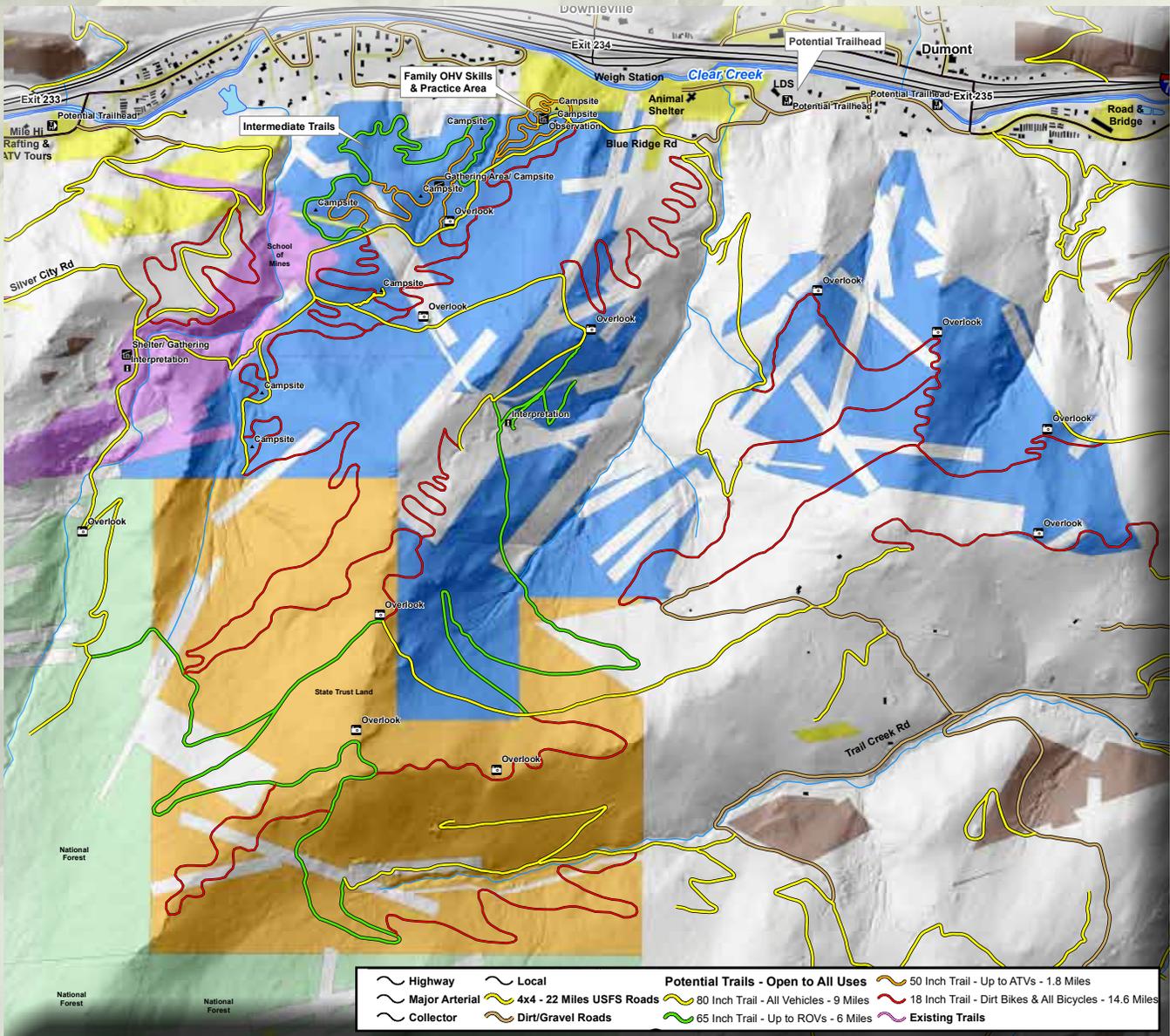
The proposed Blue Ridge Recreation Area (Blue Ridge) is located in and owned by Clear Creek County (County), Colorado. The beautiful Blue Ridge area is located just south of Interstate 70 and the Town of Dumont, about 30 miles west of Denver. The County has an opportunity to develop and manage a unique multiple-use shared Recreation Area to benefit local residents & businesses and strengthen and diversify the local economy. The Recreation Area would also draw visitors interested in a new experience. A shared motorized and non-motorized Recreation Area would create a very unique setting for people that would like diverse opportunities in one area close to where they live.

High quality trails and facilities will make the Recreation Area a valuable place for people to have exceptional experiences in a beautiful Rocky Mountain setting. The primary experience in the area will be adventurous trail-based with challenges and spectacular views. A convenient trailhead and day use area will provide a well-designed and natural setting for visitors to have quality facilities, services, areas to gather and meet, programs and information to enjoy the area. This bold new idea for a public Recreation Area will require creativity, investment, cooperation, and commitment to be a success. If you'd like to be involved in this great project, you're welcome join us for the ride!

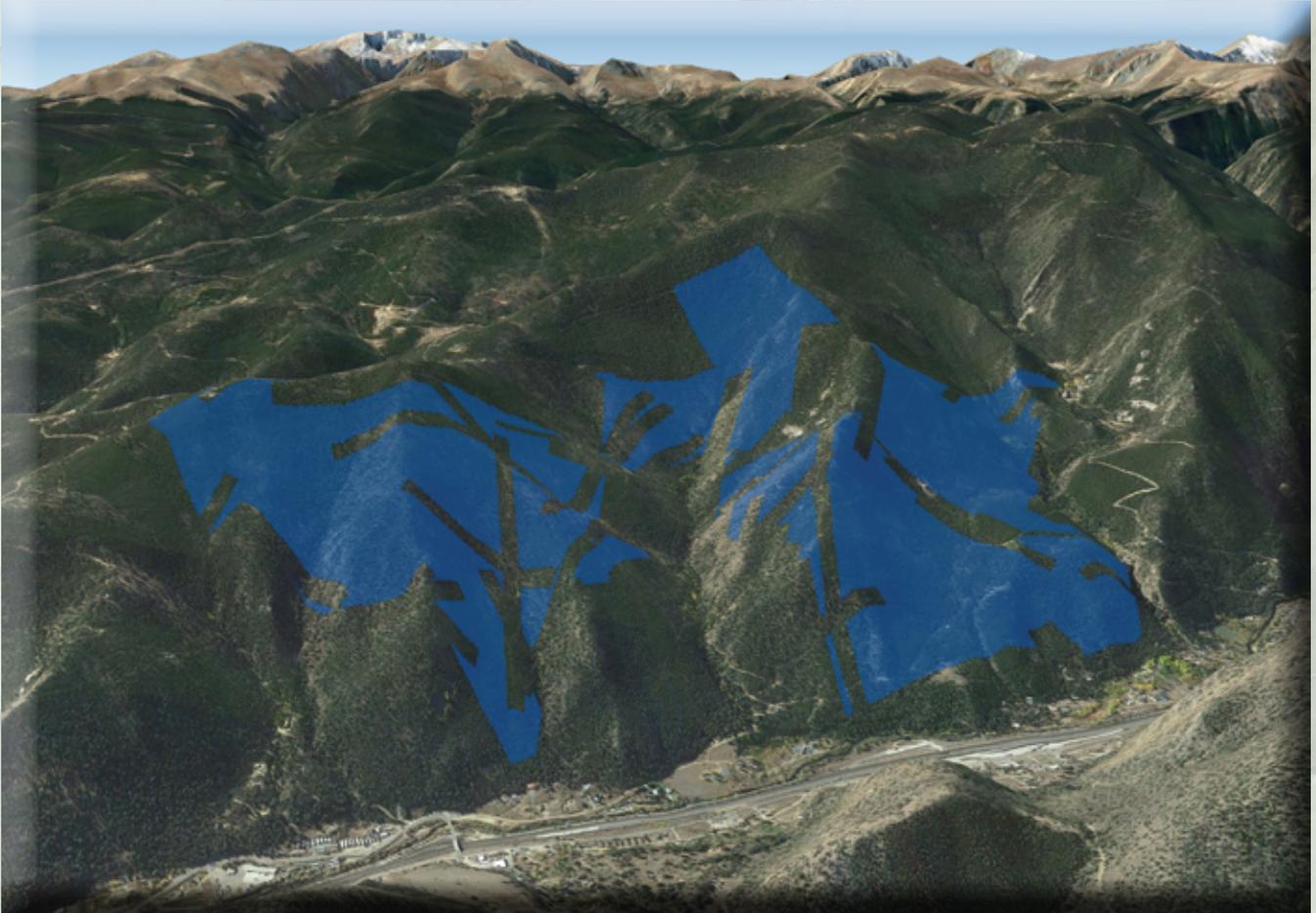




Map - Concept Plan for Trails and Facilities



Blue Ridge Property & Landscape



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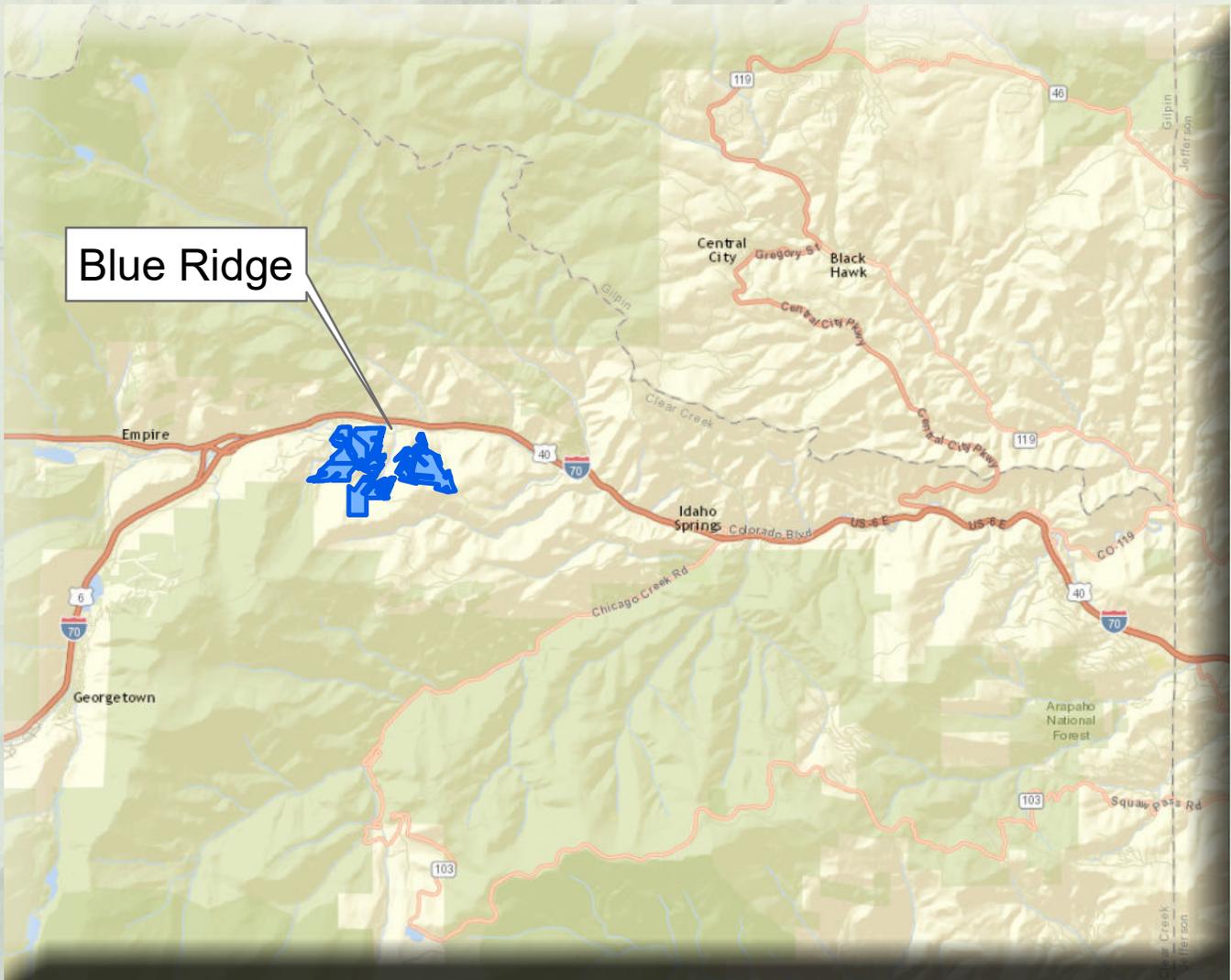
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Map - Blue Ridge Recreation Area is located in Clear Creek County near the Town of Dumont and is 30 miles west of Denver, Colorado.

Introduction

The Blue Ridge area encompasses 562 acres of land owned by Clear Creek County (County) located near the Town of Dumont, between the cities of Idaho Springs and Georgetown, Colorado. The site is located approximately 30 miles west of Denver. Blue Ridge is located in the central Rocky Mountains rising to the south from Interstate 70 and Clear Creek up to the edge of the Arapaho National Forest. The property was former Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands transferred to Clear Creek County through a recent act of the US Congress. Blue Ridge currently has unmanaged recreation use including motorized recreation, mountain biking, recreational shooting, camping, and hiking, among others.



The purpose of this project was to create a general concept plan to explore how outdoor recreation opportunities and management of the Blue Ridge property could be developed and provided. Additional inventory, analysis, outreach, planning and design are recommended to further refine solutions.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed Blue Ridge Recreation Area is to provide exceptional outdoor recreation experiences in a well-managed public land setting. Blue Ridge is intended to benefit both County residents and visitors while strengthening the local economy. The desired visitor experience for the Recreation Area is to have adventure-based trail experiences in a beautiful and natural mountain setting. The County intends to manage the Recreation Area as a multiple-use area for visitors interested in sharing facilities, trails, and programs. In this case, multiple-use means both motorized and non-motorized recreational uses. While multiple-use recreation commonly occurs on US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, this approach to recreation benefiting many unique visitors on County land is a unique and emerging opportunity.

The County is interested in providing well-designed facilities and programs to foster a diversity of recreation experiences with a focus on quality, safety and sustainability. Gathering areas and programs



in the Recreation Area should create an attractive and comfortable setting for families, groups, and individuals to share experiences and get to know each other. The County is committed to working with adjacent land owners to respect their property and manage both public use and the natural environment of the Blue Ridge area. The Recreation Area has the potential to serve as a trailhead and access to the Arapaho National Forest and nearby Colorado State Trust Lands. The USFS, Colorado State Land Board (SLB) along with the Stay the Trail organization have each communicated their interest in supporting this unique and innovative project.

Benefits

A few key benefits of a Blue Ridge Recreation Area would include:

- Improved outdoor recreation opportunities including but not limited to:
 - Motorized off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation
 - E-biking (see definition below), mountain biking
 - Hiking
 - Camping
 - Safety training
 - Hunting
 - Shared facilities and programs
 - Access to Clear Creek
- Better managed natural landscapes
- Stronger and more diverse local economy
- Create jobs for management, programs, maintenance and enforcement
- Positive social setting for families, groups, and individuals
- Facilities, settings, and programs for schools, social and recreation groups
- Improved access to public lands
- Educational and interpretive information for visitors
- Improved safety and security
- Potential to serve as a role model for multiple-use recreation in Colorado
- Training and education for safe and ethical recreation on public lands



Background Information

Blue Ridge is 562 acres of County-owned land located in Clear Creek County (County), just 30 miles west of Denver, Colorado. These former BLM properties were transferred to the County and must be managed and used as "recreation and public purpose" lands. This designation means the County must manage the property in perpetuity as land that will benefit the public and will provide recreational opportunities. The County has held several public meetings about the purpose of the Blue Ridge property. To date, these meetings have focused on using the property to provide public recreation in a well-managed setting.

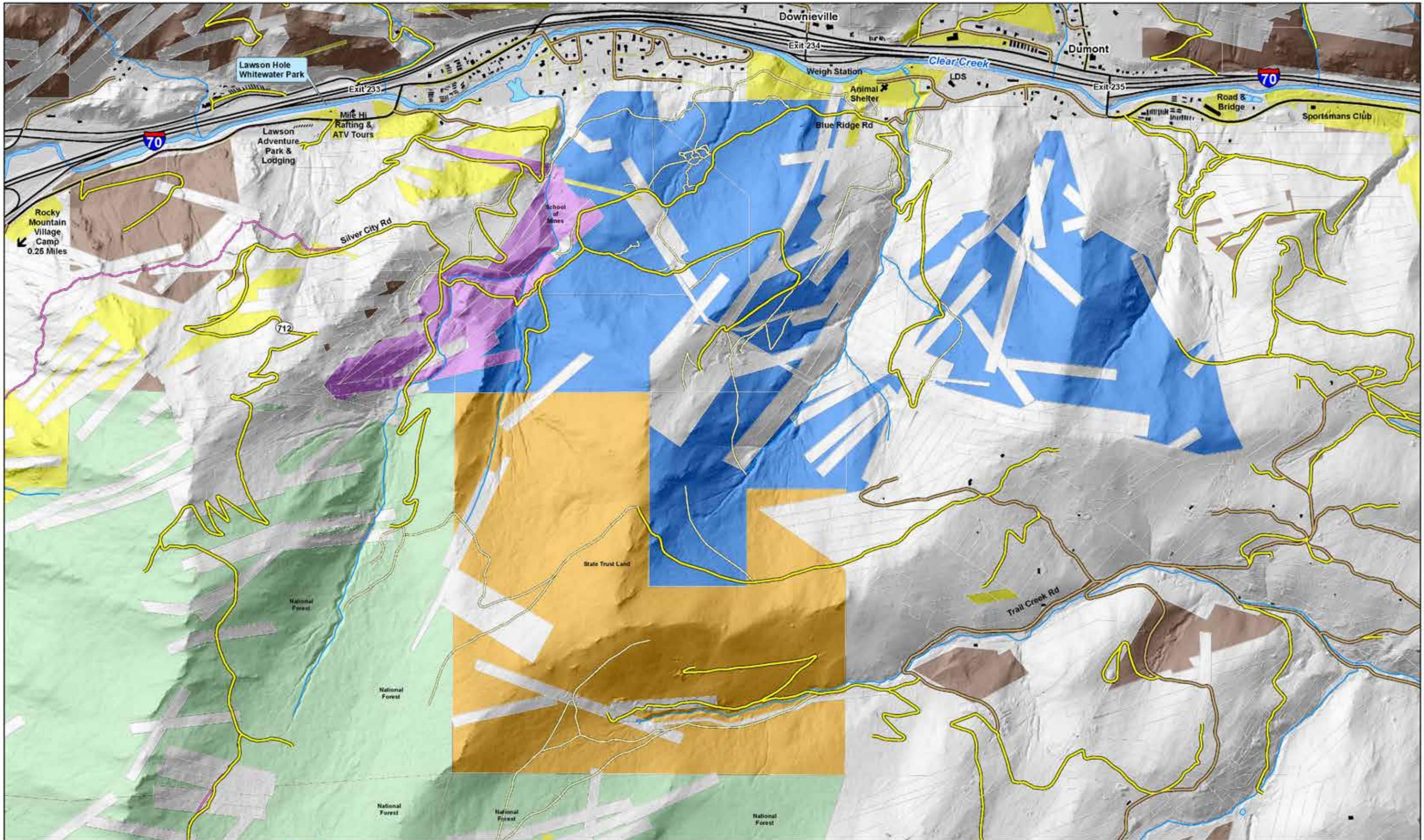


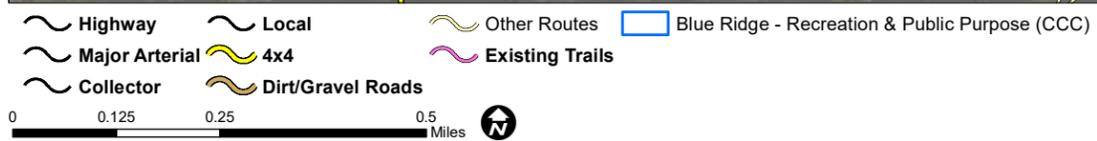
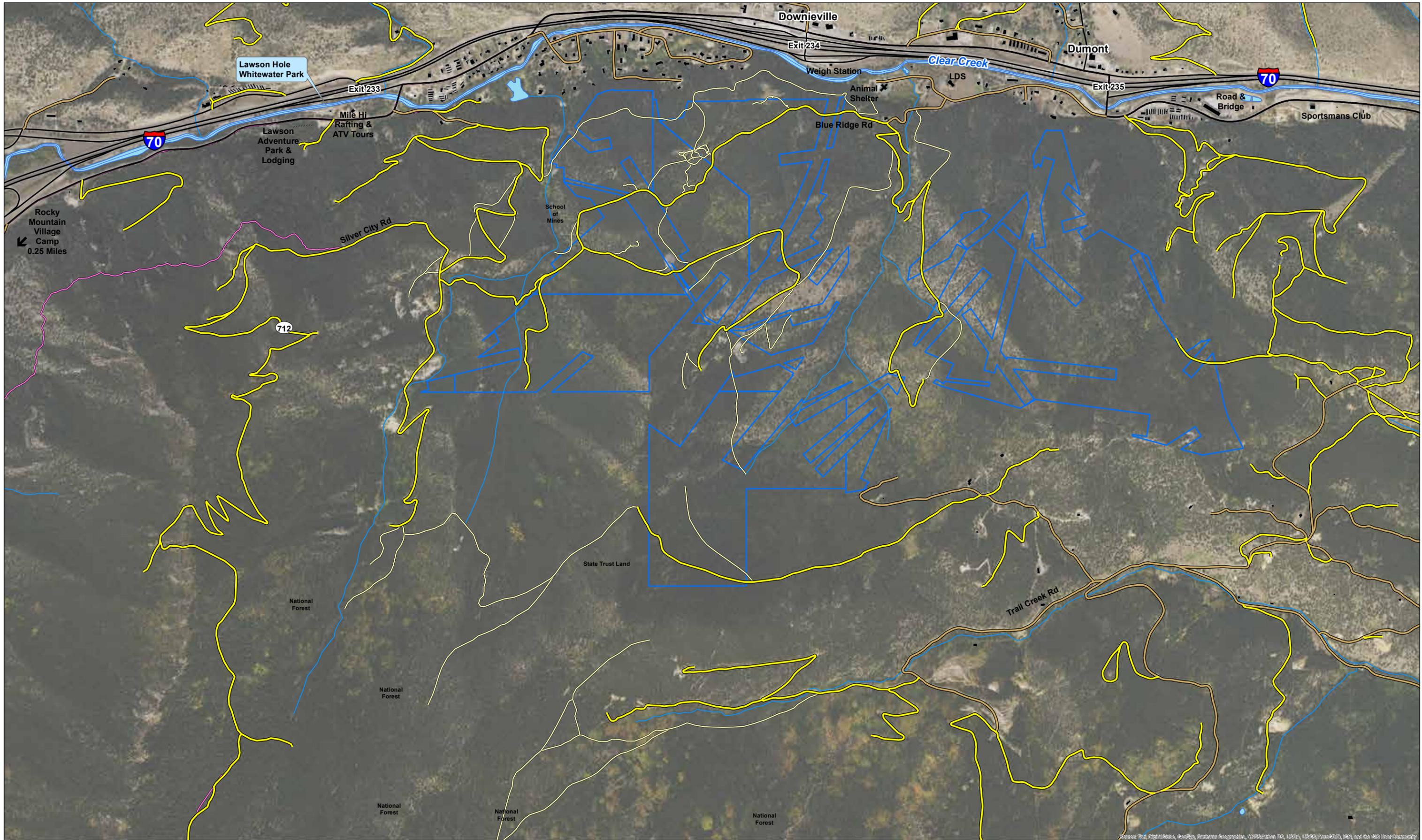
As in much of the County, mining has been a historical and common activity on Blue Ridge. The complex patchwork of land ownership in the area is due to the many historic mining claims. These parcels were delineated for mining purposes and are often narrow strips of land. The Blue Ridge property has historically been an area of multiple uses similar to other BLM and USFS lands in the County. These uses have included motorized recreation, mountain biking, recreational shooting, hunting, camping, and hiking, among others. Most of the roads in the area were originally created to provide access to the mines. Most of the roads on the Blue Ridge property are public rights-of-way, but there are a few private access roads as well.

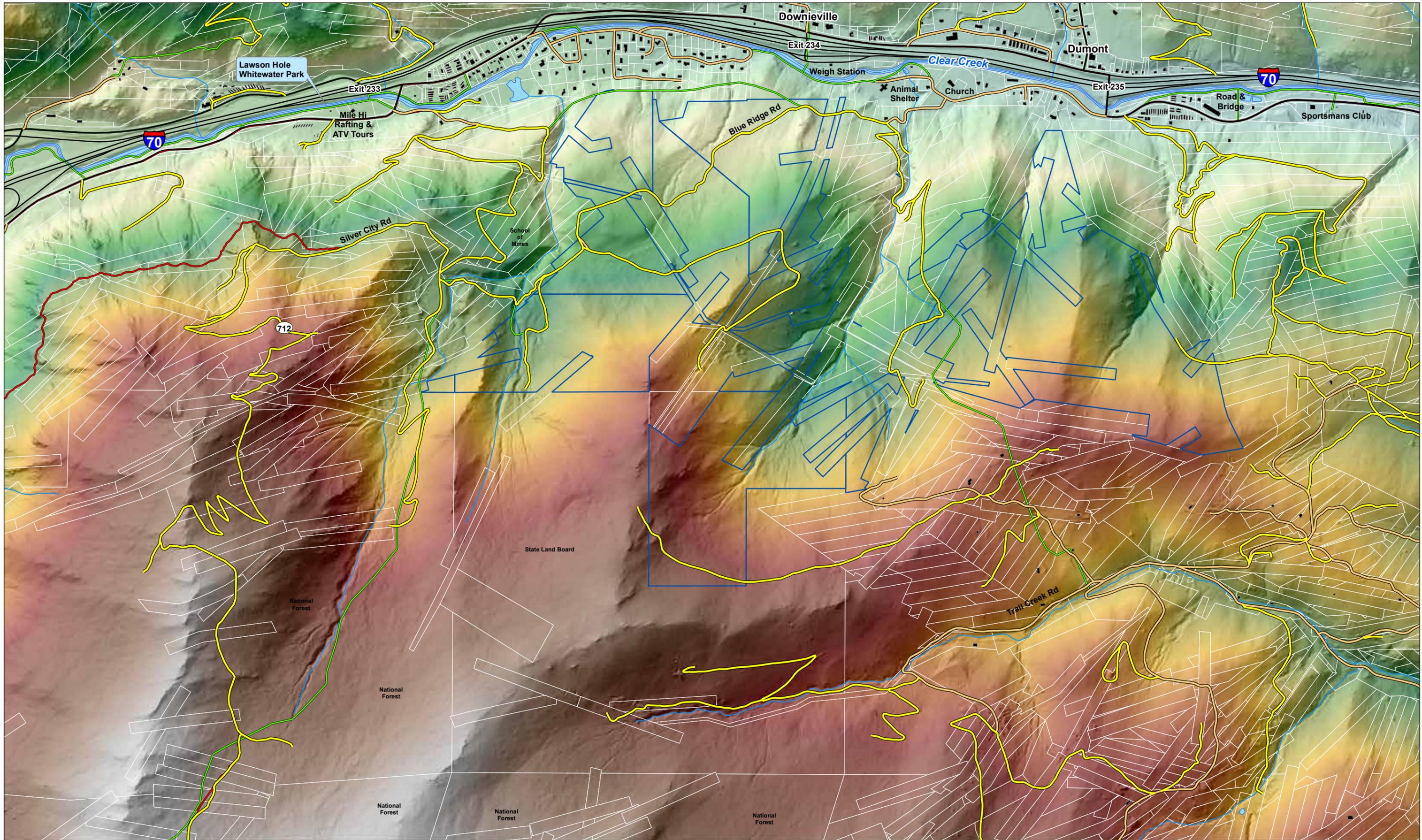
Blue Ridge has various adjoining lands that include:

- Private mining claims
- Private residential properties
- County open space
- County Animal Shelter
- Former mining claims now owned by the Colorado School of Mines
- State Trust lands managed by the Colorado State Land Board
- Arapaho National Forest lands managed by the USFS

Blue Ridge has slopes ranging from moderate to steep, including many rock outcrops and steep draws. Most slopes are north-facing providing a cool and damp environment for growth of heavy timber and flowing streams. Many springs have flowing water, sometimes year-round which can cause ice build-up at some locations on roads. Most roads and trails are snow and ice covered during the winter months. There are a few ridge-tops and east-facing slopes with drier conditions leading to pine savanna vegetation. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) data shows the area is not located within known sensitive wildlife habitat areas. Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) data also shows Blue Ridge is not located within CNHP Potential Conservation Areas. The area does provide general mountain habitat for wildlife species such as deer, elk, bear, mountain lion, rabbits, wild turkey, among others.





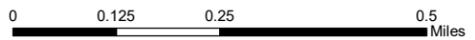
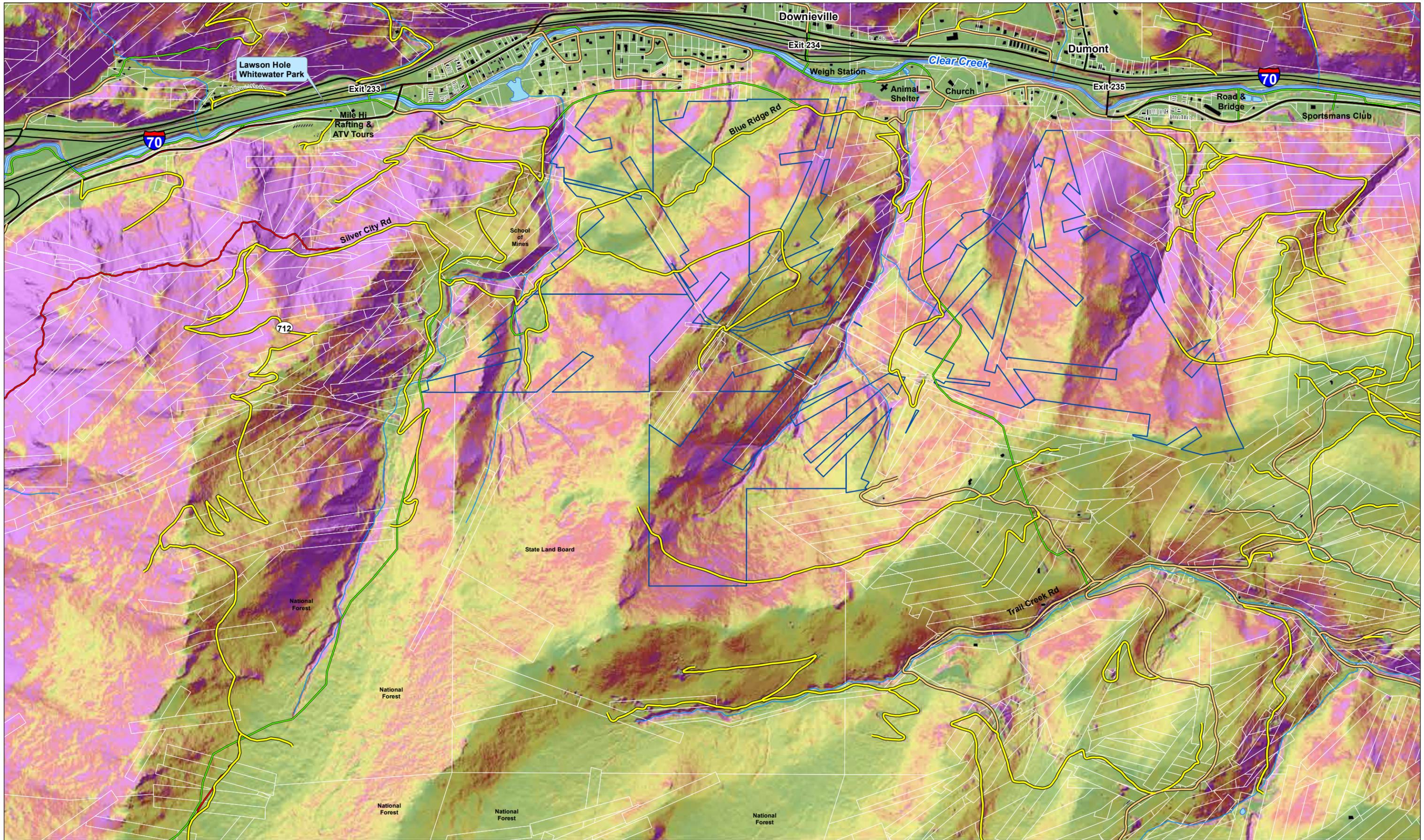


Blue Ridge Parcels	HIGHWAY	LOCAL	Existing Trails	Elevation High : 11,497 Feet Low : 7,832 Feet
MAJOR ARTERIAL	4WD	Proposed Trails		
COLLECTOR	SERVICE			

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Blue Ridge Park Concept Plan
Clear Creek County

Draft: 11/17/16



Economics & Trends

The Henderson Mine has been a very important contributor to the Clear Creek County economy for over 40 years. The Mine has plans to close which will likely have a significant negative impact on the County's economy. For this reason, and to diversify the local economy, the County has decided to explore and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism. While the County has a vast amount of public land within its boundaries, it lacks public and private recreation and tourism facilities such as trailheads, trails, campgrounds, resorts, equipment rental vendors, among others.



Motorized recreation, or off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding, has been a popular activity in the County since the invention of the combustion engine. Many County residents and visitors enjoy exploring the historic mining roads in the beautiful mountain setting. OHV riding is a very popular outdoor recreation activity in Colorado, with approximately 22.5% of all Coloradoans participating (source: CO SCORP). OHV recreation is popular because it provides an adventurous experience while immersing participants in nature. It also allows people with a wide-range of physical conditions to explore the mountains and reach the backcountry.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife reported that over 170,000 off-highway vehicle (OHV) registrations and use permits were issued in Colorado during the 2014–2015 season. Between 2000 and 2014, OHV registrations for residents increased by 219 percent while OHV permits for non-residents increased by over 1,607 percent. During the 2014–2015 season, motorized recreational enthusiasts spent an estimated \$1.6 billion while taking trips using motorized vehicles for recreational purposes. Motorized recreational enthusiasts spent more than an estimated \$724 million annually on various items to support and enhance their experiences in Colorado, including \$163 million in new vehicle purchases. In total, motorized recreational enthusiasts were responsible for \$2.3 billion in direct expenditures related to motorized recreation in Colorado during the 2014–2015 season. Source: [2014-2015 Economic Contribution of Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in Colorado, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition & Trails Preservation Alliance](#).

Traditional forms of OHV recreation have included driving 4x4s and off-road motorcycles. Today, OHV recreation has diversified to include smaller vehicle such as all-terrain vehicles (ATV, a.k.a. 4-wheelers) and recreational off-highway vehicles (ROV, a.k.a. side by side or UTV). ROV's are the fastest growing segment of the OHV market. These vehicles provide a multiple-rider social experience with more cargo capacity. A key aspect of ROV's is they allow for a passenger experience, which is diversifying who can participate in this form of adventure. There is an opportunity to collaborate with OHV groups such as Stay the Trail, OHV clubs and the OHV industry to provide training and special events. There is a need for more designed sites for safety and ethics training for youth and beginners, especially in the greater Denver area.



There are many popular forms of mountain-based outdoor recreation in Colorado. Mountain biking is among the most popular activities with approximately 22.1% of Coloradoans partaking (source: CO SCORP). Electric assist, or e-bikes, are a new form of bicycles available to

riders. These e-bikes are electric-assist bicycles providing power to the rider while climbing hills or moderate grades. As with OHVs, e-bikes allow riders with varying physical capabilities to explore the mountains and reach the backcountry. In most places, e-bikes are limited to the use of roads and OHV trails in Colorado. There's a very unique and special opportunity to provide access to both standard and electric mountain bikes on the Blue Ridge property. There is also an opportunity to partner with the e-bike industry to use the area as a location for trial rides and special events.



Participants & Outreach

This report was prepared for Clear Creek County by Great Outdoors Consultants (GOC). GOC has been advising the County on the Blue Ridge Recreation Area for several years. GOC has experience working throughout the United States and internationally for clients such as the USFS, BLM, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, state parks, department of natural resources, game and fish, divisions of wildlife, counties, along with numerous local and private organizations. GOC are specialists in planning and design for all types of outdoor nature-based recreation including parks and protected area management, private land management, recreation trails and facilities design, off-highway vehicle recreation (OHV) travel management planning, nature-based tourism, summer camps and outdoor education.

The County has had extensive outreach in regards to the Blue Ridge property since the transfer of the land from BLM. The Board of County Commissioners and County OHV Committee have had multiple meetings discussing potential recreational uses of the Blue Ridge property. A public meeting was held during the preparation of this document to seek public input on a proposed concept plan. The meeting was held on January 17, 2017 in Idaho Springs, Colorado. Land owners within 3/4 miles of Blue Ridge were invited to the meeting by notifications sent via mail. Additionally, the following organizations were invited to participate in the meeting and contribute to the project.



Organizations and Individuals Invited to Contribute

- Local & County Residents
- County Board & Staff
- Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District
- Clear Creek County Open Space Commission
- County OHV Committee
- County Animal Shelter
- Colorado School of Mines
- Mile Hi Rafting and ATV Tours
- Lawson Adventure Park & Lodging
- US Forest Service
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Colorado State Land Board
- Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition
- Trail Preservation Alliance
- Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry
- Stay the Trail – Colorado
- Mile-Hi Jeep Club
- Colorado Motorcycle Trail Riders Association



Summary of Public Input

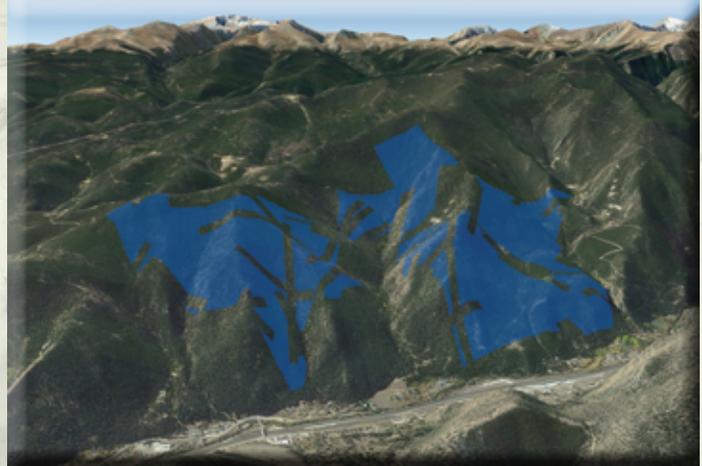
The following comments have been provided by public meeting participants and others who have emailed comments to the County. The stars to the right indicate the number of times the comment was made. There will be more opportunities to comment on the project as the County continues to refine solutions.

It will be important to continue to hold public meetings to engage recreational users, local residents and businesses in the process to find solutions to issues. This is particularly important for owners of private lands located close to the proposed recreation area.

Comments	Quantity
Development of area would pay dividends to local community	*****
Desire for motorized club to adopt a trail in the area or assist with development	*****
In-favor of recreating at the Blue Ridge area	*****
Already use the area to recreate	*****
Desire for day-trip riding options on the Front Range	*****
Desire for family activities at the recreation area like ATV training and novice routes	*****
In-favor of proper management with off-highway-vehicle use	*****
Economic analysis wanted	*****
Generally, not in favor	*****
Concern for fire mitigation	*****
Concern on noise impacts to residential area	*****
Interest in Single Track motorized riding	*****
Concern for wildlife impacts	*****
Desire for training areas at the recreation area	*****
Environmental analysis wanted	*****
Camping concerns	****
Concern for cost to manage and maintain	****
In-Favor of camping adjacent to a motorized recreation area	****
Need more law enforcement	****
Not enough public notice---should have contacted more near-by residents	****
Concern on noise impacts between users	****
Concern for limited emergency medical services access	****
Safety hazards on trails	****
Concern for more users in the area	***
Concern for overuse of the area	***
Concern of poor planning by the County on Henderson Mine closure	*
Concern on erosion impacts	*
Concern on impacts to local wells	*
Concern on using County policy to regulate the area instead of Forest Service regulations for the area	*
Concerns of squatting so close to residential areas	*
Consider business recreation development at the Georgetown Lake	*
County roads not legal to ride off-highway-vehicle. An ordinance is needed from the County to allow this	*
Desire for a responsible recreation area	*
Desire for adequate parking for truck with trailers	*
Desire for public participation before the study	*

Concept Plan Elements

The purpose of this project is to create a conceptual plan to establish an outdoor recreation area to provide exceptional visitor experiences, effective land management, and to strengthen and diversify the local economy. The proposed Blue Ridge Recreation Area provides a beautiful Rocky Mountain setting for nature-based outdoor recreation experiences with convenient access for Clear Creek County residents and the greater Denver metropolitan area. The rich mining history, beautiful views, and rough terrain combine to create a special setting for various forms of outdoor recreation.



Blue Ridge Property & Landscape

This concept plan explores several options to improve and manage the Recreation Area. The County will need to continue with an inventory, analysis, design, planning, outreach, cooperation, budgeting, assessment, and management process to further refine and improve the ideas and concepts outlined in this report. These additional tasks could be accomplished in a master plan and management plan processes.

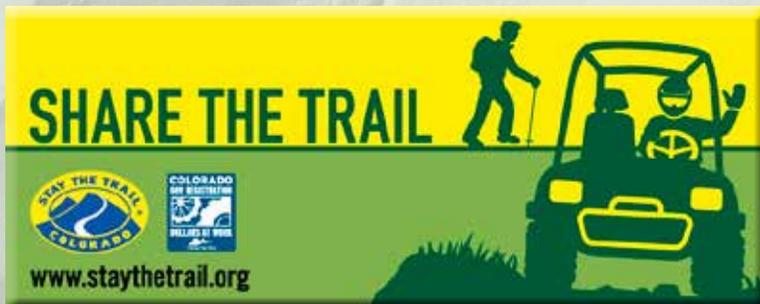
Recreational Experiences

The Blue Ridge Recreation Area provides a unique opportunity to establish a shared multiple-use recreation experience. In most public land settings, different types of outdoor recreation tend to be separated to avoid perceived conflicts between visitors. The Journal of Leisure Research defines conflict as "For an individual, conflict is defined as goal interference attributed to another's behavior". While recreation conflicts do occur, most people are concerned about it as perceived, or potential, conflict rather than an actual negative experience. There are communities that have consciously decided that sharing trails and public lands is more important to them than trying to avoid perceived or actual negative experiences.



This concept plan is exploring the possibility of creating a shared recreation experience. While this would be challenging to achieve, it is possible and desirable. There is a limited amount of public land available and collectively we need to start looking for ways to improve sharing it. Some people are not interested in sharing trails or facilities with other recreation groups. These people will not likely be interested in this type of shared recreation experience, but they also represent a small percentage of potential visitors. It is more challenging when sharing public lands for motorized and non-motorized recreation. While this is challenging, it is common place on USFS and BLM lands in other areas.

Issues will arise as they do on all public lands, especially those with a shared recreation experience. A



specialized management solution will be needed to find solutions to these issues. Some of the issues can be solved through design and rules for use, while others will need to be addressed through effective communication. It is very important to manage expectations in a shared recreation setting. Regular visitors will learn the best time and conditions to achieve their

desired experience, while new visitors will require good information before planning their experience. Most undesirable experiences can be prevented through quality and effective information sharing. Recreational experiences and facilities will benefit from adaptive management to both address competing use issues and celebrate successes.

Service Area for the Recreation Area

The service area for the Recreation area is expected to be for Clear Creek County residents as the primary visitors. In particular, the Recreation Area should provide access and bring value to County residents and businesses located in close proximity to the site. Roads and trails providing local access to the Recreation Area should be evaluated and improved to make them legal and desirable for use by OHVs, bicycles and pedestrians. This should be accomplished with a focus on safety, and to be respectful and considerate of private residences. The Recreation Area should be actively promoted as a public asset for all County residents to visit and enjoy. There are many County residents who have voiced interest in having diverse motorized and non-motorized outdoor recreational opportunities. A business advisory council could be established to explore how the Recreation Area can benefit local enterprises and how they may be able to contribute to its success.



There is a great opportunity to share the Recreation Area with enthusiasts from the Front Range of Colorado and beyond. Most visitors are expected to be day visitors but some may be attracted as over-night visitors from other parts of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and beyond. These visitors would be interested in recreating in the area if quality facilities and programs are provided. The Interstate 70 corridor passing through the County has the potential to attract people traveling to use the trailhead as a restroom stop. While this is a potential visitor group, it would be important for them to pay a use fee to support facility management, maintenance and discourage commuter parking. A multiple-use experience would also attract visitors looking for diverse experience opportunities in one place.

If the Recreation Area provides a truly multiple-use shared experience and quality facilities, it could also serve as a demonstration project that other governments and organizations could visit to gain knowledge. There is an opportunity to attract organizations to hold special events, clinics, and training which would draw these types of groups. The Recreation Area could also attract students and researchers related to outdoor recreation management and research. There is an opportunity to extend use of the Recreation Area to businesses and organizations interested in research and development



for recreation equipment such as handicap assist vehicles, electric dirt bikes, electric assist mountain bikes, specialized OHVs, safety gear, technology, etc. These uses could be permitted and bring financial as well as recognition to the Recreation Area. All of these potential visitors could bring valuable funds and support for the Recreation Area and the local economy, but this will also require a robust program to develop and manage these uses.

Recreation Programs

Visitors are looking for quality facilities, a well-managed landscape, and programs to diversify experiences. Programs also serve to attract visitors to the Recreation Area and can assist with information, monitoring and evaluation. High schools, colleges and recreation groups actively look for public lands to hold their programs such as ethics training, safety training, environmental education, skills clinics, navigation skills, technical training, volunteering, etc. In addition to the trail system, a trailhead and day use area can be designed to provide a flexible space and facilities for these types of programs. Safety and ethics training/information is an important part of providing and managing outdoor recreation. Stay the Trail – Colorado has expressed interest in partnering with the County to provide these kinds of programs and recruit volunteers to assist with management tasks. A well-managed volunteer program will bring great dividends to both management of the site and public relations.



Desired Recreation Experiences

Outdoor recreation becomes more diverse and popular every year due to the related health benefits and new experiences provided through the invention of new recreational equipment. The Blue Ridge Recreation area has the opportunity to be one of the most flexible and diverse publicly managed outdoor recreation areas in the State of Colorado! This diverse opportunity will come with challenges; however, an adaptive management approach will help to find and develop the solutions.

The Blue Ridge area has been a multiple-use recreation area throughout its history. This has included motorized recreation and related activities for many years. This concept plan has explored the following types of recreational uses and information:

- Special and group events
- Access to Clear Creek
- Day use area for gathering and parking (non-commuter)
- Off-highway vehicle motorized recreation
- Mountain biking and e-bike use
- Hiking and dog walking
- Limited backcountry camping
- Hunting
- Information about and access to State and National Forest lands
- Learn about the areas natural and historical resources
- Practice and learn about trail design and public land management



Types of OHVs

The history of OHV recreation is tied to innovation and invention. For this reason, OHV recreation continues to evolve at a rapid pace. Public lands that have the flexibility to adapt to this evolving form of recreation are in a unique position to meet public desires. The more diverse the OHV recreation experience is in an area, the more popular the destination will be. The following list of OHV types is ranked based on their popularity and number of potential enthusiasts.

1. Recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV) or side-by-sides
2. All-terrain vehicles (ATV)
3. Dirt bikes or off-highway motorcycles
4. Jeeps & 4x4s
5. Dual-sport license plated motorcycles
6. Trials motorcycles (rock crawling in limited areas)
7. Snowmobiles
8. The above vehicles with over-the-snow tracks

The above list shows the potential popularity of OHV riding types; however, it's also important to identify the types riding that are more difficult to find. These less common types of riding and well-design trails can make an area a popular destination. While these are not all appropriate for Blue Ridge, they can be explored as possible experiences.

- Single-track trails
- Technical trails
- Open riding or play areas (cross-country travel)
- Rock crawling
- Hill climbing
- Sand riding
- Motorcycle trials riding
- Trails and obstacles for practice and training
- Youth-only trails/areas
- Introductory riding and training areas
- Research plots for vegetation establishment, reclamation methods, trail building techniques, etc.



Types of Mountain Bikes

Mountain biking is the sport of riding bicycles off-road, typically over natural terrain and obstacles using bicycles that have been specifically designed and developed for rougher terrain. Common features of a mountain bike include longer-travel suspension, lower gearing options, and larger, wider tires to offer increased traction. Currently mountain biking includes the categories of cross-country, trail riding, all mountain and enduro, downhill, free riding and trick or trials riding.

Similar to OHVs, mountain bikes have evolved quite rapidly in recent years, with advanced materials and construction techniques leading to lighter bicycles with improved ergonomics, more-advanced suspension, and overall increased performance. Along with this increase in performance, comes an increase in demand for more technical trails. Mountain biking can be enjoyed in almost any location, but most users prefer riding on gravel roads, off-road trails, and the most sought-after, single-track trails—narrow paths that follow the natural flow of the land, weaving between trees and terrain.

A more recent innovation are electric-assist mountain bikes (e-bikes) with battery-powered motors. Based on bicycles, they provide assistance in stressful situations, such as steep inclines and allow the rider enjoy longer distance trails, while placing less emphasis on their physical ability. Some models are fully-electric without pedals, though still resemble the size and shape of a mountain bike. E-bikes are currently excluded on most non-motorized trails in Colorado, this leaves enthusiasts of this growing segment looking for places to ride.



Popular types of mountain biking include:

- Single-track trails
- Down-hill trails
- Terrain parks
- Technical trails
- Casual and social riding trails
- Mountain bike orienteering
- E-bikes
- Fat Tire bikes for snow and sand



Resource Conditions

The Blue Ridge area is generally a rough and steep landscape and mostly covered with evergreen forest. Historic mining activities have led to significant changes to the landscape including road construction, water diversion, mine shafts, overburden and tailings piles. While these activities have modified the area, it remains primarily a natural forested landscape. A more thorough study of the natural landscape is needed to identify potential sensitive resources and resource management issues. Review of Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Colorado Natural Heritage Program data does not show any known sensitive resources on the Blue Ridge property. A future resource management plan for the area should define specific programs and actions to manage and restore the landscape. The following are a few resource management issues that should be addressed.



Resource Management Issues:

- Stream crossings on some roads have failed and water is flowing down roads. This removes important water from a portion of the stream affecting vegetation. The water also causes erosion of the road surface and ice build-up during winter.
- Springs flowing across roads causes icy conditions during winter
- Soil erosion on roads and trails from inadequate drainage and design
- Control of weeds
- Waste from recreational shooting and camping
- Trail proliferation from an undefined trail system leading to soil erosion and vegetation loss



Trails and Facilities

Visitor experiences and programs rely in part on trails and facilities. Well-designed trails and facilities provide high-quality experiences and sustainability. In an area with shared recreation, careful thought should be put into trail design to satisfactorily accommodate the different types of trail users.

Well-designed trails and facilities provide:

- Desired recreation experiences
- Improved safety
- Lower cost to maintain
- Less impact on the environment
- Positive visitor behaviors



Standards for Facilities and Design

Clear Creek County standards for development of facilities should be used to construct Recreation Area facilities. Structures should use architectural styles and colors common to Colorado and the mountain setting. Construction documents should be prepared for engineered areas such as the roads and parking areas to ensure health and safety. Signs should be attractive, inviting, and share information with the diverse visitors.

People with physical challenges enjoy participating in OHV recreation. Accordingly, parking, viewing areas, and toilet facilities should comply with current ADA standards. Roads and parking areas should be constructed with a stable sub-grade and surface course of gravel to limit muddy conditions where full-size vehicles travel. All facilities should be constructed to maximize safety, such as making sure fencing can easily be observed by OHV and bicycle riders. The Recreation Area is intended to provide safe and positive riding experiences; for this reason, some spaces may need to be temporarily restricted for training and special events.

Trail design standards should be considered to assure the desired experiences, safety, sustainability, and cost. Trails should be designed to provide high-quality and safe experiences, and to enhance skill development. Signs should be used to make trail users aware of interpretive information, responsible use, interaction with other users, intersections, trail rules, trail numbers, private property, etc.

Multiple-Use Trailhead/ Day Use Area

A trailhead and day use area will provide basic needs such as parking and toilets, but will also create a special setting for gathering and sharing the experience. The trailhead should be designed to help visitors interact and get to know each other. This is essential in a Recreation Area with shared multiple-use experiences. We should create a "sandbox" where we can recreate cooperatively together and get to know each other. Information provided in the form of kiosks and programs should also emphasize this "shared sandbox" principle.

There are several private residents close to the Recreation Area and proposed trailhead site, which is located on West Dumont Road on the LDS church property. It's very important to respect adjacent private homes when designing the proposed trailhead. To the extent possible, active use areas of the trailhead such as parking, toilets and gathering areas should be located away from the private

residences and if possible/desirable, screened from view. Limiting the hours of use for the trailhead to daylight hours will also limit noise and activities in the evenings. One private residence owns the edge of the creek, limiting access to the creek bank.

The trailhead should be valuable to local residents as a neighborhood gathering area and nature-based play area. By providing gatherings areas such as picnic tables, shelters and lawn areas; visitors will have the opportunity to get to know each other. This would be even more likely if spaces such as a children’s play area and special event space can bring people together for shared experiences. Services such food, drinks, equipment rentals and programs can also help bring people together and provide a more complete recreation experience – like experiences at ski resorts. The Recreation Area could permit private businesses/vendors to provide these services through the existing building or options such as food trucks.

Parking at the trailhead should be designed for flexible use but also limit parking to designated areas to prevent unsafe and undesirable parking along roads and in front of private residences. During low use periods, the parking area can be used for special events such as community celebrations, OHV safety training programs and volunteer days. The parking areas should be designed to maximize use of space while allowing for easy circulation of large vehicles with trailers, and emergency vehicles. Vehicle, OHV and bicycle circulation should be carefully designed for safety and to separate them from pedestrian areas. The parking area should be properly graded with well-designed and adequate drainage to limit soil erosion, especially due to its proximity to Clear Creek. The parking area should be a gravel surface to be suitable for OHV use in loading/unloading and travel to/from the trail system.

While the trailhead will be the most developed site in the Recreation Area, every attempt should be made to keep the setting natural using local materials with a “rustic mountain style.” Native vegetation should be conserved and restored where possible to keep nature as an integral part of the experience.



Potential Blue Ridge Trailhead Site

Trailhead/ Day Use Area Elements

- Parking for pickups (25ft), vehicles with OHV trailers (45ft), vehicles with large toy haulers (70ft). Parking area can also be used for OHV safety training classes
- Event/ group shelter
- Space and facilities for food catering/ special events
- Patio and/or lawn area as a social gather space
- Children's play area using a mountain style and materials
- Access to Clear Creek, if possible through adjacent open space land
- Information kiosk
- Pedestrian pathways
- Restroom
- Children's OHV/mountain bike practice trail (if space allows). This would be limited to use during appropriate periods and would be limited to children-size vehicles. Small children need easy access to a riding opportunity with parent observation and supervision.
- Potential equipment rentals including OHVs, e-bikes, mountain bikes, etc.
- Potential camping in parking area during low use periods
- Buffer adjacent private lands
- Fencing, plantings, and signs



Example Design for an OHV Trailhead with Training, Pedestrian and Parent Observation Areas

Diversity of Multiple-Use Trails

A well-designed and diverse trail system should be the focus of the desired recreation experience in the Recreation Area. Diverse trails should include several widths of trails, varying trail difficulty, and interesting destinations such as overlooks and historic mine sites. The trails should provide connections to adjacent public lands and wherever possible, provide trail loop opportunities as opposed to dead-ends. Trails should be designed and constructed to have good “flow” and limit soil erosion through good drainage and proper grades. There should be places for trail users to gather and share the experience at places such as scenic overlooks, picnic stops, shelters, campsites, interpretive stops, etc.

To accommodate multiple-use trail activities, the trails should be designed and constructed to provide diverse experiences and shared use such as motorized recreation, mountain biking, and hiking. The trails should be designed to accommodate comfortable turning radius for all these uses but also based on the trail width. For example, dirt bikes have a wider turning radius than mountain bikes on a single-track trail. There should be frequent “pull-off” or passing areas incorporated into the trail design to allow trail users to share while avoiding conflict. While most trails should be dual-direction (two-way) travel, there may be a few trails better suited to one-way travel on challenging single-track trails with many turns and steeper grades. Dual-direction trails are generally safer as users expect to encounter others on blind corners or when traveling faster. Education and information is essential to let trail users know about etiquette for sharing trails, patience and to expect encounters with trail user types. There will be challenges with multiple-use trails, but these can be overcome if visitors genuinely are interested and willing to share!

There has been a long tradition of dispersed camping in the Blue Ridge Area. The Recreation Area should have a pilot program to allow for this continued experience. The popularity, cost, management needs and potential risks of backcountry camping would need to be evaluated over time to determine if this activity would be beneficial. The following table outlines the proposed conceptual trail system for the Recreation Area. A robust trail system would require connections to trails on adjacent USFS lands, School of Mines land, private lands, and State Trust Lands. To accomplish this, agreements would need to be formalized with each of these organizations or individuals.



Blue Ridge Recreation Area Trail System Trail Types

Full-Size Trails

A full-size trail is a single-lane road from 8 – 15 feet wide and can vary in roughness. These are primarily existing 4x4 roads that may need some improvements. Turning radius should allow for vehicles up the size of a large pickup (some larger vehicles may require multiple point turns). The trail should be maintained as a natural soil surface with good drainage. This type of trail should range in travel difficulty from easy to moderate, depending on the vehicle being used and the user's experience.



65" Wide Trails

This type of trail would be from 65 -75 inches wide (maximum) and would generally be a rough surface. These would primarily be newly constructed trails in the Recreation Area or SLB land. Turning radius would allow for vehicles up to the size of a 4-passenger recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV or side-by-side). The trail should be maintained as a natural soil surface with good drainage. This type of trail should range in travel difficulty from easy to difficult, depending on the vehicle being used and the user's experience.



50" Wide Trails

This type of trail would be from 50 - 65 inches wide (maximum) and would generally be a rough surface providing riding experiences for all-terrain vehicles (ATV), dirt bike or mountain bike. These would primarily be newly constructed trails on the Recreation Area. Turning radius would be tight and allow for vehicles up to the size of an ATV. The trail should be maintained as a natural soil surface with good drainage. This type of trail should range in travel difficulty from easy to moderate, depending on the vehicle being used and the user's experience.



Single-Track Trails

This type of trail would be from 18 - 24 inches wide (maximum) and would generally be a rough surface providing riding experiences for dirt bikes or mountain bikes. These would primarily be newly constructed trails on the Recreation Area and State Land Board Land. Turning radius would be tight and allow for uses up to the size of dirt bikes, mountain bikes and hikers. The trail should be maintained as a natural soil surface with good drainage. This type of trail should range in travel difficulty from easy to difficult, depending on the vehicle being used and the user's experience.

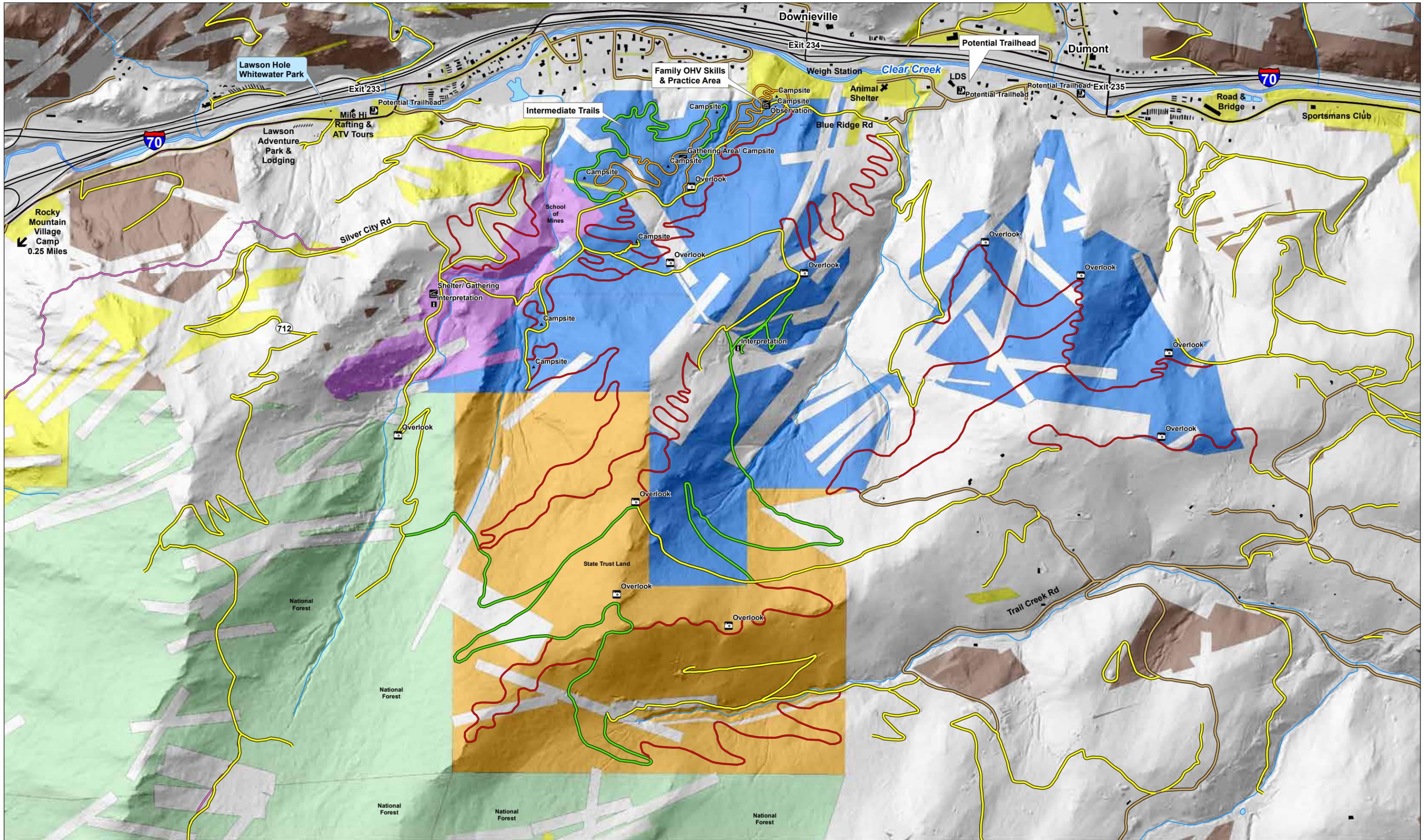


Table. Summary of Existing and Proposed Trails

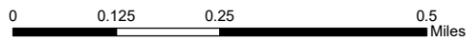
Trail Types	Trail Use Types	Miles of Existing Trails in Blue Ridge Recreation Area	Miles of Proposed Trails in Blue Ridge Recreation Area	Miles of Existing Connected Trails on Adjacent Lands	Miles of Proposed Connected Trails on Adjacent Lands	Total Miles
Full-Size Trails	4x4, ATV, e-bike, bike, hike	2.2	0.1	71.7	0	74.0
65" Wide Trails	ROV, ATV, e-bike, bike, hike	0.8	2.1	0.8	2.4	6.1
50" Wide Trails	ATV, e-bike, bike, hike	0	1.8	0	0	1.8
Single-Track Trails	Dirt bike, e-bike, bike, hike	0	6.2	0	8.5	14.7
Total Miles		3.0	10.2	72.5	10.9	96.6

Notes: This table intends to summarize the overall approximate length of existing and proposed trails and roads in the vicinity of Blue Ridge, south of Interstate 70. Some existing County full-size trails (roads) in the above table are not currently authorized for OHV use but are potential OHV routes. Some of the existing full-size trails (roads) in the above table are USFS routes open to all vehicles including OHVs. Existing routes on SLB land are not currently open for public use.





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway Major Arterial Collector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local 4x4 - 22 Miles USFS Roads Dirt/Gravel Roads 	<p>Potential Trails - Open to All Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 Inch Trail - All Vehicles - 9 Miles 65 Inch Trail - Up to ROVs - 6 Miles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 Inch Trail - Up to ATVs - 1.8 Miles 18 Inch Trail - Dirt Bikes & All Bicycles - 14.6 Miles Existing Trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Ridge - Recreation & Public Purpose (CCC) Recreation & Public Purpose (CCC) Clear Creek County Colorado School of Mines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private State Land Board US Forest Service
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Blue Ridge Park Concept Plan
Clear Creek County

Great Outdoors Consultants RPA

Draft: 1/14/17

-Preliminary-

Safety Training & Skills Practice Area

The area would be located close to the trailhead and should be used as a special space for youth, beginner (e.g. adult beginners) practice and family experiences. There should be a diversity of trails in this area that are relatively easy to ride on and be designed for safety including good visibility on turns and at intersections. These trails should be wider to make them more stable and easier to ride but have many turns to limit travel speed. Most of these trails should be 50 inches wide to provide opportunities for children and youth who generally ride ATVs and dirt bikes. It should be easy for parents and trainers to observe, supervise and coach riders in this area. Skills practice stations such as rocky sections, low bridge, small hill climb, and others can be located along these trails (with bypasses) to allow riders to develop their riding skills before traveling in the backcountry.



Signs should clearly identify this area as a youth and beginner area advising caution. An information kiosk can provide important information such as a map, rules, emergency information, contacts, and information about sharing the area. Certain trails in this area can be closed for general use during permitted classes and training events. This area can also be used by schools and groups to teach various aspects of recreation, safety, ethics, etiquette, management, etc. A limited number of campsites in this area would allow families and trainers to provide basic facilities for groups using this area. Blue Ridge Road/Trail would provide access to this area, but is one lane wide and rough which would limit the size of campers and trailers that could access it.

An OHV safety training area could be provided where participants receive instruction on how to safely ride OHVs. These types of designed safety and ethics training areas are few and far between and severely needed. This area could also be used for other recreation classes related to mountain biking, search and rescue, mountaineering, etc. The minimum size required for an OHV training area is 140 x 90 feet. The training area should be located close to the youth trails to allow convenient access following instruction. The training area should be surrounded with fencing or flagging during instruction to control access to the area, as well as prevent cross-traffic. A shade structure and tables could be provided for use during instruction. This site could be used for camping and general family use when training and other events are not being held.

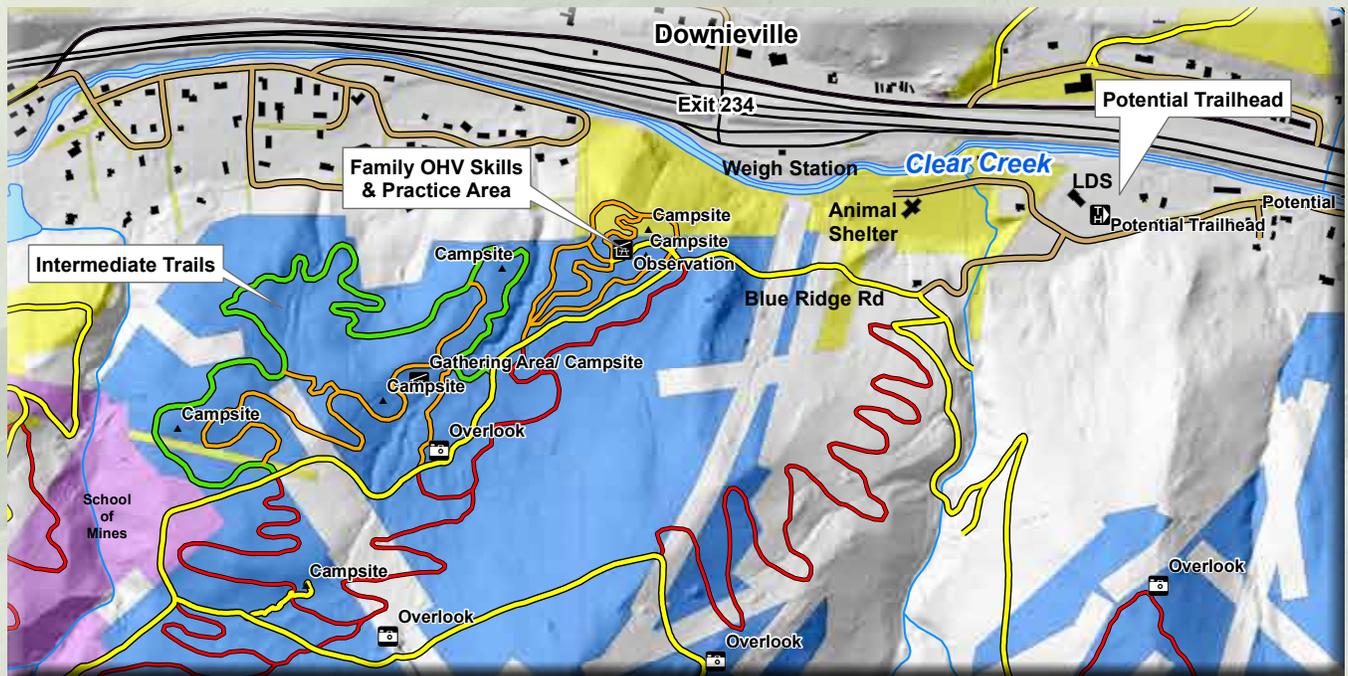


Information Kiosks and Signage

An important purpose of the Recreation Area is to educate the public about safety and ethical recreational use of public lands. As a multiple-use recreation area, visitors will also need to be educated about sharing the area. To meet this goal, the Recreation Area should feature trail signs and information kiosks consistent with public land/trail management practices to convey these messages. Trail signs should provide user information such as etiquette, trail numbers, travel challenge level, directions for access and travel. Signs will also advise users to protect natural, cultural and historic resources in the area, and information kiosks will display area/trail maps, rules, and regulations. Signs and kiosks for dedicated training spaces will serve to reinforce information provided in training classes. The Recreation Area's natural resources, history, management, and designed features can also be interpreted to convey messages and interesting information. A quality trail map should be designed for the area and used on kiosks, as a folded print map, and as geospatial PDF map for use in the [Avenza Maps App](#).



High Quality Trail Map Example



Location for Safety Training, Family Riding and Skills Practice in Blue Ridge Recreation Area

General Recommendations

The following general recommendations can be considered as part of additional planning, design, development and management of the Recreation Area.

- Clear Creek County should make a strong commitment to the project to be in a better position to receive grant funding. Grant funding could come from sources such as Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado OHV Grants Program, Recreational Trails Program, industry grants, etc.
- Gain diverse support and funding to improve eligibility for grants
- Provide a unique Recreation Area that will benefit many types of visitors
- Communicate a culture of sharing and cooperation – a sandbox for all to share
- Provide new experiences over time – keep it interesting
- Focus on quality trails and facilities
- Visitors will pay to use a Recreation Area if quality trails, facilities and experiences are provided
- Emphasis on family and beginner experiences. The Blue Ridge Recreation Area isn't large enough to be a destination based just on the miles of trails. Providing unique facilities and experiences will create interest.
- Opportunities for skills practice and safety training
- Identify long-term solutions for management and maintenance
- Engage the business community in solutions and to provide services
- Establish a volunteer organization to support the Recreation Area
- Establish an internship program to benefit youth and have access to human resources
- Create a strong education and information program to manage expectations and prevent issues
- Provide high quality maps to promote and inform (print, smart digital).
- Create a web page and on line map to promote and provide information
- County roads needed for connectivity should/must be designated and managed for OHV use
- Phased implementation – spread cost, learn lessons and build flexibility into solutions
- Host and provide facilities for Stay the Trail educational & training events
- Host recreation events & clinics to attract new visitors and expand programs
- Establish a multiple-use recreation advisory board to manage expectations, develop opportunities and resolve issues
- Serve as a demonstration site for multiple-use collaborative outdoor recreation, benefiting other agencies, communities, recreation groups, outdoor industry and others
- Identify opportunities and constraints associated with the planning Clear Creek Greenway trail



- Develop a detailed master plan and management plan including
 - NOHVCC four E's of OHV Management: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation
 - Environmental and Cultural Resource Management
 - Air Quality and Sound
 - Fire and Risk Management
 - Volunteers and Sponsors
 - Maintenance Plan
 - Rules and Regulations
 - Security
 - Emergency medical services
 - Budget & Finance
 - Promotion and Awareness



Implementation

The following table outlines a general list of tasks to establish the Blue Ridge Recreation Area. This list can be expanded in the future as more information is gained. Resources to implement the tasks have been suggested.

Table. Blue Ridge Recreation Area Implementation Phases & Tasks

Phase/ Task	Potential Resources
Phase 1 – Planning, Design & Designation	
Establish a diverse advisory group to assist with recreation experiences, planning and management of the Recreation Area	County Community Groups Recreation Groups
Establish a project web page to share information and improve communication. Keep interested stakeholders updated on tasks, information and meetings.	County Industry Grants
Create and distribute a public use map for the Recreation Area	County Industry Grants
Secure funding to continue with research, planning and design	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Finalize acquisition of a property to use as a trailhead and gathering area	County
Research similar multiple-use recreation areas to understand lessons learned, costs, and requirements	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Prepare a detailed master plan to finalize Recreation Area uses, development, sustainability, standards, budget, and management	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants
Formal establishment of the Blue Ridge Recreation Area through Clear Creek County Board of County Commissioners	County
Designated key County roads as OHV routes based on the adopted master plan	County
Explore establishment of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the USFS to provide access to National Forest roads and information to visitors	County
Explore establishment of a MOU with the Colorado State Trust Lands and develop a lease agreement to manage the section of State Land contiguous with the Recreation Area	County
Explore establishment of a MOU with Stay the Trail to assist with signs, programs and volunteers	County
Explore potential trail easements or land acquisitions through key willing private land owners	County

Table. Blue Ridge Recreation Area Implementation Phases & Tasks (continued)

Phase/ Task	Potential Resources
Phase 2 – Management & Development	
Secure additional funding for development and management	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Establish an annual County budget for management and improvement of the Recreation Area	County Staff
Hire and train staff to manage the Recreation Area	County
Create a strong education and information program to manage expectations and prevent issues	County Stay the Trail Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Prepare a detailed management plan for the recreation area	County
Develop trails and facilities	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Restore natural habitats, control weeds and conserve soils	County Conservation groups CPW Volunteers
Ongoing evaluation and research to document lessons and share information	County
Phase 3 - Adaptive Management & Innovation	
Secure additional funding for development and management	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Adapt trails, facilities and management to changing condition and uses	GOCO Colorado OHV Grants Industry Grants
Prepare annual implementation and management plans	County
Engage the business community in solutions and to provide services	County
Establish a volunteer organization	County
Establish an internship program	County
Host recreation events & clinics to attract new visitors and expand programs	County Stay the Trail
Engage the business community in solutions and to provide services	County



Contributors

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