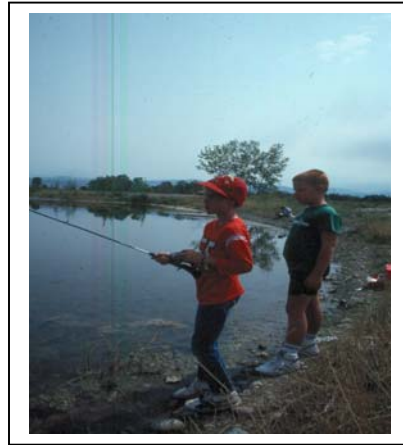


# **PELLA CROSSING AND MARLATT OPEN SPACE RECREATION AND VISITOR USE PLAN**

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners  
May 13, 2003



**Boulder County Parks & Open Space**

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## SUMMARY

The Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space properties are located west of Longmont near the St. Vrain Creek. The properties were acquired in the early-mid 1990s and offer outstanding opportunities for conservation and passive recreation. Both properties provide significant habitat to waterfowl and other wildlife and offer recreational opportunities, primarily in the form of fishing and trail use. Ponds on both properties were the result of previous gravel extraction and contain warm water fisheries that support smallmouth and largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish, with some cool aspect species such as yellow perch and walleye.

Pella Crossing consists of 90 acres and contains three ponds (Sunset, Heron, and Webster). Pella Crossing was opened to public use in 1996 and contains a parking lot, trailhead, restroom, picnic area, and 2.1 miles of crusher fine trails. The property receives an average of about 61,000 visitors per year. The majority of visitors use the property for fishing and hiking. Minimal recreational enhancements are proposed, including a parking lot expansion, development of a small section of trail, and the addition of trailside benches.

The Marlatt property consists of 161 acres and contains five ponds, three of which will be open to fishing. The St. Vrain Creek flows through the property and generally divides it between its Recreation/Visitor Use Area and Conservation Area. Access to, and fishing in, the St. Vrain Creek is prohibited. The property contains significant habitat for the federally threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM). Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to minimize any impacts to PMJM habitat. BCPOS has planned and designed recreational facilities for the property that will offer opportunities for fishing and trail use. No suitable locations exist for parking on the Marlatt property, therefore an expansion of the existing parking lot at the Pella Crossing property was designed to accommodate the increase in visitation associated with the opening of the Marlatt property. The Marlatt property will be accessed by a trail connection that uses an at-grade crossing of 75<sup>th</sup> Street and continues west to the ponds. The property is scheduled to be open for public use by the summer of 2004. Recreational development includes trails with benches, an accessible restroom, picnic areas, shoreline fishing areas, and an overlook.

Interpretive and environmental education opportunities are characterized by both natural and cultural elements, including pond ecology, riparian habitat, an award winning cottonwood tree, and mining history. Interpretive information is conveyed through signs, kiosks, and naturalist led presentations at the Pella Crossing property, and similar information is planned for the Marlatt property.

Natural resource management has consisted primarily of weed control, revegetation, tree protection, bank stabilization, and fish stocking. Fisheries are managed cooperatively with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

This management plan is meant to guide only the recreation and visitor use components of the two properties. The plan was developed to adequately plan for visitor management needs and recreational improvements prior to the opening of the Marlatt property. Natural and cultural resource issues will be addressed in a separate document.

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Site Description**

The Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space properties consist of 90 acres and 161 acres, respectively. These two properties are located in Section 36, Township 3 North, Range 70 West of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian approximately one mile west of Longmont in Boulder County, Colorado. The Pella Crossing property is bounded to the north by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad and to the south by the Golden/Fredstrom mining area. The Marlatt property is bounded to the north by the Mill Ditch, just south of Hygiene Road, and to the south by Crane Hollow Road. The St. Vrain Creek flows through the center of the property. The two properties are separated by N. 75<sup>th</sup> Street (Exhibit A). Elevations range from 5055 to 5100 feet. Lower portions of the properties are located within the St. Vrain Creek floodplain. The properties are generally flat and contain numerous ponds that resulted from gravel extraction and support warm water fisheries. Ponds on the properties are unlined and fed by ground water. The properties contain significant wildlife habitat, including a Mouse Management Area for the federally threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM), and offer recreation opportunities, namely fishing and trail use.

### **1.2 Background**

Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) was contacted by Frontier Materials, Inc. in November 1991 regarding the proposed gift of the Pella Crossing property. Boulder County agreed to accept the donated property and closed in April 1992. Frontier Materials retained the right for water storage on the property. The site was permitted by the State of Colorado and Boulder County for gravel extraction in 1975 (SU-75-10, with subsequent amendment in 1986, SU-86-2). Gravel extraction and reclamation were completed in 1991. The site was historically used for row crop farming and prior to mining had been used for several years as pastureland. BCPOS staff developed a preliminary management plan for the Pella Crossing property in 1995. This plan was never completed nor adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. In 1996 and 1997, recreational facilities were constructed on the property that included a parking lot, trails, a picnic shelter, restroom, and an informational kiosk. Pella Crossing Open Space was officially dedicated and opened in the summer of 1996.

In May 1995 the adjacent Marlatt property was acquired. Prior to BCPOS ownership, the property was mined for gravel, reclaimed, and leased for private fishing. The fishing club stocked the largest pond (#3) and used it as its main fishery. Ponds #1 and #2 were recently stocked by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW). BCPOS has planned and designed recreational facilities for the property that include a trail extension, fencing, angler access, a restroom, and other amenities. In order to open the Marlatt property to the public and meet its visitor use needs, an expansion of the parking lot on the Pella Crossing Open Space is planned. Due to the trail extension's potential impact on the PMJM and its habitat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has required BCPOS to submit an Environmental Assessment/Biological Assessment that addressed mitigation measures for any potential takings action. This document was submitted to USFWS on February 1, 2003 and BCPOS is currently awaiting the agency's response. Construction of recreational improvements is expected to occur throughout 2003 and the spring of 2004, with the opening of the Marlatt Property planned for the summer of 2004.

Natural resource management performed by BCPOS has consisted primarily of weed control, revegetation, fish stocking, and bank stabilization. Weed management has occurred on both properties, including the control of diffuse knapweed and removal of Russian-olive trees. Bank stabilization has been performed on Heron Lake at the Pella Crossing property, in addition to the reseeded of uplands and dam faces on the property. Trees were planted on the shores of Ponds #1 and #2 at the Marlatt property, and existing trees at Pond #3 were protected with wire from beaver damage. Revegetation was performed in the area where trees were planted and also west of Pond #1. Horse grazing was also removed from the Marlatt property. An old concrete restroom facility, a remnant of the former fishing club operation, was also removed.

Prior to BCPOS ownership of the Pella Crossing property, there were issues with contamination on the site. The main contaminants of concern were oil and grease and acetone. Drums had been stored on site and leaked oil based fluids. These materials had contaminated roughly three acres of backfill and caused water quality problems in the adjacent ponds, primarily in Heron Lake. The site was remediated and in an August 1995 inspection report the ponds showed no sign of contamination. The site has been cleared by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

This management plan is meant to guide the recreation and visitor use components of the two properties. This plan was developed to adequately plan for recreational improvements and the opening of the Marlatt property, and is not intended to address natural and cultural resource issues. These issues will be addressed in the St. Vrain Creek Corridor Management Plan that is currently being developed for all BCPOS properties that lie within the corridor. For purposes of this Recreation and Visitor Use Plan, recommendations are specific to those areas targeted for developed recreation.

### **1.3 Existing Conditions and Current Uses**

Both of the properties are largely defined by the St. Vrain Creek, which flows through or near the properties, and numerous gravel ponds. The properties provide habitat for a wide variety of waterfowl and other wildlife while also providing public recreation opportunities.

The Pella Crossing property is open year-round and used by bicyclists, equestrians, hikers, and anglers. The fishing season generally lasts from May to September of each year.

In 2000, visitation at Pella Crossing totaled 48,887 users, the majority of which occurred in the summer. In 2001, visitation totaled 74,081 users: 16,165 in spring, 16,319 in summer, 14,313 in fall, and 27,284 in winter. In 2002, visitation totaled 60,808 users: 17,066 in spring, 17,478 in summer, 17,173 in fall, and 9,091 in winter.

Visitor use of the Pella Crossing property is dominated by anglers and hikers. According to interviews conducted in 2000, the property was used in the following ways:

- 40% fished,
- 33% hiked,
- 12% walked their dogs,
- 10% picnicked,

- 8% boated (associated with fishing),
- 4% relaxed/were doing nothing special,
- 4% were looking for wildlife,
- 5% were doing something else.

The Marlatt property, currently closed, is scheduled to be open to the public by the summer of 2004. In support of this opening, construction of the trail will take place throughout 2003 and additional improvements will continue through 2004. Some improvements have already begun, including fencing. Many of the planned recreational improvements to the Marlatt property are supported by an approved grant of roughly \$63,000 from the federal Fishing-Is-Fun program and will provide significant new recreation opportunities. This federal aid is administered by CDOW and will help the agency meet its urban angling goals. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant funding may also be used on the property.

In August 2001, a baseline inventory was completed for the Marlatt property by ERO Resources. This document provided initial resource information for the property that helped inform management decisions and recreational plans. A field survey for the federally threatened Ute ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) was also performed for that portion of the property (generally north of the Creek) where the trail development is planned. No occurrences of this rare plant were found in the study area. BCPOS is currently working with USFWS to secure the necessary approval for the planned Marlatt trail extension while ensuring protection of PMJM habitat.

## **2.0 Goals and Policies**

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan outlines numerous goals and policies that are relevant to the Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space Recreation and Visitor Use Plan. These goals and policies are documented in Exhibit C and provide direction for natural resource and recreation planning and management. Relevant topics include environmental resource protection and management, parks and open space, recreational use, and trails.

## **3.0 Management Objectives**

In support of the previously mentioned and adopted goals and policies, the visitor use management objectives for the Property include:

- Provide passive outdoor recreation opportunities that do not adversely impact sensitive resources,
- Provide opportunities for environmental and cultural interpretation,
- Provide a good neighbor policy to adjacent landowners.

## **4.0 Management Areas**

Management areas define specific areas that are suitable for resource protection or visitor use. Management areas for the properties include both Recreation/Visitor Use Areas and Conservation Areas. Following are descriptions of the management areas:

### Recreation/Visitor Use Area

These areas are suitable for public recreation and typically contain developed recreation facilities such as parking lots, trailheads, restrooms, picnic areas, shelters, and interpretive facilities.

Other than the southwest corner of the property which is permanently closed, including the south and west shorelines of Webster Pond, all of the Pella Crossing property is currently classified as a Recreation/Visitor Use Area. Other than areas adjacent to the St. Vrain Creek and the eastern shorelines of Ponds #2 and #3, the northern half of the Marlatt property is classified as a Recreation/Visitor Use Area (Exhibit A).

### Conservation Area

Conservation Areas serve as a refuge for significant plant and/or animal communities. These areas are sensitive to human impacts and influence. Recreational use should be directed away from these areas and they should be considered for seasonal or permanent closure.

Both properties contain significant wildlife habitat and/or riparian corridors and as such these areas should be permanently closed. Currently, the southwestern corner (including the western and southern shorelines of Webster Pond) of Pella Crossing is permanently closed. This area contains critical wildlife habitat which includes grassland and pond shorelines that are significant for waterfowl and shorebirds. Temporary closures are in place on the northwestern and eastern shorelines of Heron Lake for revegetation purposes.

Several areas on the Marlatt property are recommended for permanent closure due to vegetation, wildlife, and visitor safety concerns. These areas are outlined below and identified in Exhibit A.

- The area both along and south of the St. Vrain Creek. This large unit is defined by the St. Vrain Creek and includes a forested riparian area, wetlands, and suitable habitat for the federally threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) and Ute ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*). This effective habitat unit is also important to birds, including raptors, and mammals. A County Natural Landmark is located within the extreme southern portion of the closure area.
- The eastern shoreline of Pond #2 and the northeast, east, and southeast shorelines of Pond #3. These shorelines contain significant habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as numerous trees and shrubs used by songbirds and raptors. Furthermore, the property boundary in these locations is extremely close to the shoreline, causing both concern for visitor access and safety and respect for adjacent private lands.

## **5.0 Recreation Facilities**

### **5.1 Access and Parking**

Access to the properties is by way of N. 75<sup>th</sup> Street, approximately 1.5 miles west of Longmont and immediately south of Hygiene. A parking lot that will serve both the Marlatt and Pella Crossing Open Space properties is located east of 75<sup>th</sup> St. on the Pella Crossing property (Exhibit B). A paved asphalt apron leads to the lot that consists of compacted gravel and currently contains designated spaces for 19 vehicles and about two horse trailers. The lot has historically served anglers and trail users for only the Pella Crossing property. With the planned opening of the adjacent Marlatt property and current constraints on weekend parking at the Pella Crossing property, additional parking capacity is needed. BCPOS staff recommends expanding the existing lot to a maximum of 20 spaces (for a total of 39 vehicle and two horse trailer spaces) in order to

accommodate the increase in visitation and related demand for parking. Ten spaces are needed immediately to accommodate the opening of the Marlatt property. Visitation and parking demand will be monitored and the remaining ten spaces can be added as conditions warrant. Development of the St. Vrain Creek Regional Trail and use of the Pella Crossing property as a major trailhead are factors that will have a substantial bearing on parking capacity. Expanding the existing lot will have less impact than creating a new parking lot on the Marlatt property. Furthermore, geographic issues, deed restrictions, and private property concerns generally limit the opportunities for parking on the Marlatt property.

The Marlatt property will be served by the Pella Crossing parking lot and will be accessed by a trail connection with an at-grade crossing of 75<sup>th</sup> Street. This crossing has been approved by the County's Transportation Department and it will handle the installation of necessary signs and road striping.

Park users are currently parking illegally on the privately owned land just south of the railroad tracks and east of 75<sup>th</sup> Street (directly adjacent to the Pella Crossing property). This open, roadside area is owned by the BNSF Railroad Company and serves as their maintenance access. Rather than park in the existing parking lot at Pella Crossing, visitors often park here to conveniently access the northwest corner of the property. It is likely that the opening of the Marlatt property could compound this problem, since the nearest access to the Marlatt property is via the trail connection due west of the privately owned parcel. BCPOS staff will monitor this issue and work cooperatively with applicable law enforcement agencies and BNSF to address this issue, including the use of signage and enforcement.

Future development of the St. Vrain Creek Regional Trail, including the N-S trail easement that connects the Marlatt property with Hygiene Road, could cause some parking and access concerns. Visitors may be tempted to park along Hygiene Road in order to access the Marlatt property. BCPOS staff should monitor this evolving issue and work to address any concerns.

Maintenance and emergency access for the Pella Crossing property is the main entrance road off of 75<sup>th</sup> Street. Eastern reaches of the property can be accessed by utilizing the trail corridors which are wide enough to accommodate vehicles. The Marlatt property has a maintenance and emergency access that runs west from 75<sup>th</sup> Street towards Pond #3 through the conservation easement property. A second access gate also exists next to the trail corridor at 75<sup>th</sup> Street. Planned trails on the property will accommodate emergency vehicles. Emergency access to the portions of the Marlatt property that are closed to the public can be achieved from Crane Hollow Road.

## **5.2 Trails**

Trails are a dominant recreational feature of the properties. Pella Crossing contains 2.1 miles of crusher fine trails that generally wind around its three ponds. These trails have an average width of eight feet and average grade and cross slopes of 0 %. For accessibility purposes, trails on the Pella Crossing property are rated as easy, with one half-mile section rated as moderate.



Just over one mile of eight foot wide crusher fine trails are planned for the Marlatt property. These trails will wind around the ponds in the western portion of the Marlatt property (Exhibit B). Trails on the property will be accessed via an at-grade crossing of 75<sup>th</sup> Street. The trail connection will run northwest from the Pella Crossing parking lot across N. 75<sup>th</sup> Street into the Marlatt property (Exhibit B). From there, the trail continues west (just south of the BNSF rail line and north of the conservation easement property) until it reaches the ponds and connects into the planned loop trail system. This section of new trail within the fenced corridor may be constructed to a width of ten feet in anticipation of being a component of the St. Vrain Creek Regional Trail system. Several ditches also exist inside this corridor. There may be an opportunity to close and fill a section of the historic lateral in this area, and if so, this should be pursued for visitor safety. No trails are planned or recommended for the eastern and extreme southwestern portions of the Marlatt property in order to limit impacts to the adjacent private property and sensitive wildlife habitat area, respectively. Trails on both properties will be a component of and link to the St. Vrain Creek Regional Trail system planned from Longmont to Lyons.

A social trail exists on the Pella Crossing property just east of the shelter near Webster Pond. This trail continues east along the shoreline and then runs north across the ditch to an intersection with the existing trail around Heron Lake. This trail crosses the headgate for the Zweck & Turner Ditch and presents safety concerns. Typically, anglers will use this route to access the south side of Heron Lake without having to traverse back towards the trailhead. Furthermore, the property's site design funnels visitors to this point where the trail ends and there is no access to the loop trail system. Formalizing this social trail is the best management option. A crusher fines trail should be extended east from the shelter and then across the ditch to tie into the Heron Lake loop. A footbridge or some form of ditch crossing is necessary and permission will be required.

Maintenance of trails on the properties is and will be performed by BCPOS according to departmental standards. Boulder County Youth Corps members will assist BCPOS with the construction of planned trails and improvements on the Marlatt property. Volunteers for National Trails Day may also participate.

### **5.3 Restrooms**

Existing accessible restrooms are located on the Pella Crossing property near the parking lot. Another accessible restroom is planned for the Marlatt property near the loop trail west of Pond #3 (Exhibit B). These two restrooms should adequately serve the trail users and anglers on both properties.

### **5.4 Picnic Areas**

Picnicking is a popular activity on open space lands. Currently, one picnic area is established on the Pella Crossing property at Webster Pond and contains a shelter, two picnic tables, a charcoal grill, and a trash receptacle (Exhibit B). Most of the use at this site is by groups that are fishing nearby. Three small picnic areas are planned for the Marlatt property and will contain picnic tables and trash receptacles (Exhibit B). Existing and planned picnic areas should be adequate to meet expected visitor use needs. Additional picnic areas may be added if visitation increases and there is a demonstrated need.

## **5.5 Fishing Ponds**

Ponds on the properties contain warm water fisheries that support smallmouth and largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish, with some cool aspect species such as yellow perch and walleye. These fisheries are self-sustaining and only catfish have been recently stocked. In the past, gizzard shad were periodically introduced to serve as a food fish. BCPOS and CDOW cooperatively manage these ponds. CDOW provides technical assistance and performs electroshocking surveys about every 3-5 years.

Pella Crossing contains three ponds: Sunset, Heron, and Webster. The south and west shorelines of Webster Pond are fenced and closed to public access for resource protection purposes. Currently, these ponds are unlined and are fed by precipitation, groundwater, and irrigation return flows and are consistently full. Water storage rights in these ponds are jointly owned by the County and Frontier Materials, Inc., a private company that could, at some future date, exercise its right to line the ponds for water storage purposes. Consequently, minimum water levels necessary for fisheries, recreation, and vegetation management may not be ensured. BCPOS is currently working with Frontier to preserve minimum water levels for these purposes. This may include the County's acquisition of Frontier's remaining interest in the existing storage rights.

The Marlatt property contains five ponds. Three are located north of the St. Vrain Creek and are scheduled to be opened to the public by the summer of 2004. These ponds are unlined and water rights owned on the property are associated with augmentation requirements for the ponds. These three ponds, once opened, will provide 1500-2000 new angler days on over 30 surface acres of water. The largest pond (#3) was managed as a sport fishery by a private fishing club prior to County ownership and is an excellent resource. The eastern shorelines of Ponds #2 and #3 will be fenced and permanently closed to public access for resource protection and visitor management purposes.

The northeast shoreline of Pond #1 is currently unarmored and at risk of continued erosion. Bank construction and enhancement will be performed in this area providing needed shoreline protection and cover for young fish. Fish habitat structures consisting of logs and trees will be added to Ponds #1, #2, and #3 in order to provide hiding cover for fish and targeted fishing opportunities along the shoreline.

The other two ponds are located south of the St. Vrain Creek in a sensitive wildlife habitat area that is closed to the public. These ponds are dominated by sunfish. BCPOS is currently working with CDOW on evaluating these two ponds for use in rearing small native fish, such as killifish and topminnows. The ponds provide ideal conditions for slow water species. These native fish could be used for reintroduction and restoration on BCPOS properties and in other areas of the state.

All five ponds on the Marlatt property should be named for staff reference and visitor use purposes.

## **5.6 Other Amenities**

In order to make the Marlatt property ready for public fishing and trail use, certain additional amenities are necessary. Six shoreline benches, some with gravel paths, will

be installed to provide user comfort, direct targeted fishing, and protect shoreline vegetation. A graveled put-in point will be established for each pond on the Marlatt property to facilitate water access for belly boaters. Four large cottonwood trees will be planted along the shores of Ponds #1 and #2 to provide shade, and existing trees will be armored with wire for protection from beavers. Several ditch crossings are needed to provide access to Pond #3. Most of these items will be supported by federal aid through the Fishing-Is-Fun grant program administered by CDOW.

Only one bench exists along the trail near Heron Lake at Pella Crossing. This property is used heavily by hikers, many of whom are seniors. The addition of trailside and shoreline benches (approximately two per lake) are recommended as they will provide needed rest areas for users and may also be used for wildlife viewing. Graveled put-ins for boater access, similar to what is planned for the Marlatt property, are recommended for Sunset and Heron Lakes at Pella Crossing in order to prevent further bank erosion and damage. An established boater access point for Heron Lake is of higher priority.

## **5.7 Signage**

Signs are a management tool that inform visitors about the appropriate use of the properties and educate them about significant features. Currently, signage is located at the parking lot and major trailhead on the Pella Crossing property. Signage (regulatory and interpretive) is planned for the Marlatt property near the 75<sup>th</sup> Street crossing and by the ponds and overlook. A few signage suggestions include the following:

- In conjunction with the rules and regulations posted at the entrance to the trail connection, a “dogs on leash” placard should also be displayed.
- In conjunction with the spur fences planned to eliminate access to the eastern shores of Ponds #2 and #3, signs should also be posted at these locations indicating a permanent closure area.
- In conjunction with the fencing planned to eliminate access to the St. Vrain Creek and wildlife habitat closure area, signs should be posted along the fence near Pond #3 and west of the overlook indicating a permanent closure area.

In order to inform park users and protect resources, a property brochure and signage plan should be developed for the Marlatt property.

## **5.8 Accessibility**

Developing facilities that are accessible to disabled persons is important and required by federal law. Existing accessible facilities at Pella Crossing include parking, a restroom, and trails. The lip that exists at the Pella Crossing restroom should be improved. Additional material should be added and compacted to ensure an unobstructed ingress to the restroom facility. Accessible picnic tables should be added to both properties. If two accessible tables were purchased, one could be used to replace an existing table at Pella Crossing and the other for a picnic area at Marlatt. Planned accessible facilities for the Marlatt property include a restroom, trails, picnic area, and a shoreline fishing area. The shoreline fishing area should be accessed by a spur (with an accessible grade) from the main trail and provide a pad that enables disabled users to fish near the shore. Collectively, these facilities will allow disabled persons to enjoy the trail and fishing experiences offered at both sites.

## **5.9 Fencing**

Fencing is a land management tool that can help delineate property boundaries, focus access onto open space land from public trailheads, reduce casual access points from private land, control trespass onto private land, and control grazing animals. Fencing may also have adverse impacts on animal movement.

Currently, all boundaries of both properties are fenced. Fencing exists in closure areas west of, and around, Webster Pond and along the dam of Heron Lake at Pella Crossing. Fencing has also been constructed on both sides of the trail connection between the Pella Crossing and Marlatt properties. Internal fencing is planned for the following locations on the Marlatt property to help manage recreational access and prevent resource damage:

- Post and dowel fencing along designated shorelines,
- Spur fences (small sections of fence running perpendicular to the shoreline) on the eastern shoreline of Ponds #2 and #3 to delineate closure areas,
- Post and dowel fencing south of the southern trail loop to delineate the wildlife habitat closure area,
- Post and dowel fencing to the south of Pond #2 to facilitate a safe ditch crossing.

Temporary fencing may at times be utilized on both properties for vegetation management and restoration purposes.

Existing and planned fencing should be adequate to meet expected visitor use and resource management needs. Additional fencing may be needed in the future to address developing problems.

## **6.0 Interpretation and Environmental Education**

Interpretation and education enhance the visitor's experience. Interpretive and educational opportunities on the properties are characterized by both natural and cultural elements, including pond ecology, riparian and wildlife habitat, an award winning cottonwood tree, and mining history. Interpretive information can be conveyed through signs and kiosks and also through naturalist led presentations. Printed materials such as brochures and maps should also be developed or updated.

An interpretive kiosk exists on the Pella Crossing property near the parking lot and trailhead. Another mini-kiosk is planned for the Marlatt property. Occasionally, naturalist-led presentations are requested by community groups and BCPOS staff has used the Pella Crossing property to offer such programs. Both properties provide an opportunity to accommodate such requests and have sufficient amenities to host groups with little to no impact. Volunteer naturalists are used to provide interpretive and educational services, and opportunities to use park hosts also exist. Nonprofit conservation organizations, mostly birding groups, also lead hikes at Pella Crossing and will likely be interested in utilizing the Marlatt property for similar activities.

### **6.1 Champion Cottonwood Tree**

The southern portion of the Marlatt property contains an award winning cottonwood tree. This tree stands some 105 feet tall and 8.8 feet in diameter and has been listed as the

largest Plains Cottonwood on the National Register of Big Trees since 1967. The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the tree as a Natural Landmark. The tree is located in a proposed permanent wildlife habitat closure area that is currently closed to the public as an agricultural area. Historically, individual members of the public and small groups have requested to visit the champion tree and BCPOS has accommodated this request through staff-led visits. Visitation to the site is estimated at less than 100 persons a year. The area around the site has experienced some vandalism and additional fencing was constructed in 2001 to eliminate access and further resource damage.

Due to the public interest in this natural feature and the interpretive opportunity it provides, but with respect for the sensitivity of the resource and the surrounding area, BCPOS staff recommends that the site remain closed and offer staff-led visitation only. This approach provides limited public use and eliminates the need for a parking area. It also takes into consideration visitor safety by eliminating the visitor's exposure to potentially hazardous conditions from falling tree limbs. A locked pedestrian gate provides access to accompanied visitors. A discrete sign should be placed near the gate providing the necessary contact information to arrange a staff-led visit.

In order to improve the interpretive experience, a small viewing area should be created for the visitor to see the tree without having to inflict additional damage to it or be subjected to safety concerns. A suitable site may be located on the north side of the ditch, just before heading down the steep bank to the tree's base. This site could be developed using a small, rustic ditch crossing and possibly some minimal, visitor friendly fencing. This site would allow the visitor to easily witness the grandeur of the tree and would also serve as a location for interpretive discussions. A small interpretive panel may also be added to the viewing area. The goal of this approach is to provide a quality interpretive opportunity while minimizing any view of the improvements from the road.

## **7.0 Rules and Regulations**

The following general rules and regulations, which apply to all BCPOS properties according to Resolution 2001-50, are applicable to both Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space:

- Properties that are open for public use are open from sunrise to sunset. Overnight camping is prohibited.
- Collecting, removing, destroying, or defacing any natural or manmade objects within parks and open space is not permitted.
- Discharging or carrying firearms, crossbows, fireworks, or projectile weapons of any kind is not permitted (except law enforcement officials and as allowed by the Board of County Commissioners to carry out a wildlife management program).
- Ground fires are not permitted. Fires may only be built in established grills and fireplaces in picnic areas. Fires may be prohibited entirely by order of the Board of County Commissioners, the Boulder County Sheriff, or the Director of Parks and Open space by posting of special notices or notification through the press.
- Feeding, disturbing, trapping, hunting, or killing wildlife is not permitted (except as allowed by the Board of County Commissioners to carry out a wildlife management program).
- Motorized vehicles are not permitted (County, emergency, and agricultural lessees on official business are excepted; exceptions may also be granted to persons with disabilities, by written

permission from the Parks and Open Space Department, for the use of single-rider, motorized vehicles adapted for recreational use by people with disabilities).

- All dogs or other domestic animals shall be restrained by a leash, cord, rope or chain and under physical control of a person, except as otherwise provided for or specially posted.
- Swimming, diving, wading (except as required for fishing), ice skating, ice fishing or boating (operating a vessel or a single-chambered device) in or on any lake, pond or stream, unless the area is specifically posted to allow such activity, is prohibited.
- Trail use shall be limited to officially designated trails and roads only and trail right-of-way rules shall be obeyed.
- Vehicles must be parked in designated areas only.
- It is unlawful to place rock bolts, install gates, establish or construct trails or other facility for public or private use without the written permission from the Parks and Open Space Department.
- The Parks and Open Space Department may temporarily close areas to public use for repairs or due to wildlife, vegetation, and/or public safety concerns. It shall be unlawful for the public to enter such areas.
- The Board of County Commissioners may adopt use restrictions on trails or park and open space areas for resource protection or public safety. Such restrictions shall be posted and it shall be unlawful to violate these restrictions.
- It is unlawful to consume, possess, or serve alcoholic beverages, as defined by state statute.
- Activities that unduly interfere with the health, safety, and welfare of the users or the neighbors in the area, or that create a nuisance or hazard to the use and safety of persons using or neighboring such areas are prohibited. Disorderly conduct (including amplified sound) shall be prohibited.
- Fishing is permitted in accordance with the Colorado Wildlife Commission's land and water regulations, except in areas designated and posted with special county parks and open space regulations.

In addition to the previously listed general regulations, the following specific rules and regulations apply to both Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space:

#### Pella Crossing

- All ponds are designated as catch and release fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Anglers must use terminal tackle, such as flies and lures. Creel limits for all species other than largemouth and smallmouth bass must adhere to the Colorado Wildlife Commission's regulations.
- Non-motorized, portable vessels are allowed on Sunset and Heron Lakes. Such use is allowed only for the purpose of fishing.
- All vessels and single-chambered devices are prohibited on Webster Pond.

#### Marlatt

- All ponds are designated as catch and release fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Anglers must use terminal tackle, such as flies and lures. Creel limits for all species other than largemouth and smallmouth bass must adhere to the Colorado Wildlife Commission's regulations.
- Non-motorized, portable vessels are allowed on all ponds open to the public (Ponds #1, #2, and #3). Such use is allowed only for the purpose of fishing.

## **8.0 Emergency Services**

Emergency response is provided by a host of agencies, organizations, and fire protection districts. These activities are initially coordinated through a call to the Boulder County Sheriff's Department, Dispatch Division. From here, depending on the nature of the emergency, appropriate response agencies are contacted.

## **8.1 Law Enforcement**

Primary law enforcement responsibility for the properties rests with the Boulder County Sheriff's Department, as the properties are located within the unincorporated county. Commissioned Sheriff's Deputies are assigned full-time to patrol open space properties, as are County Open Space Rangers who have limited commissions and enforce BCPOS rules and regulations only.

The properties are patrolled generally daily. In 2002, law enforcement staff logged 176 patrol hours at Pella Crossing and issued a total of 35 violations. Nearly half of those violations were issued for dogs off leash. Other prominent issues included the violation of fishing regulations and park use after sunset.

## **8.2 Fire Protection**

Fire potential on the properties is generally limited to wildland fire, probably in the form of a grass fire. Illegal fires or escaped grill fires could be contributors. Primary fire protection responsibility rests with the Hygiene Fire Protection District, as the properties fall within its initial attack jurisdiction. BCPOS has staff trained in wildland fire response and can assist with coordination and firefighting resources.




# EXHIBIT A

PELLA CROSSING /  
MARLATT OPEN SPACE

## MANAGEMENT AREAS PLAN



 Areas Open for  
Public Use

 Closed  
Conservation Areas


 Temporarily Closed  
Revegetation Areas

Note:  
Closed Areas east of 75th  
Street are existing, west of  
75th Street are proposed.



DISCLAIMER  
This map is for illustrative purposes only, and is not suitable  
for parcel-specific decision making. The areas depicted here  
are approximate. More site-specific studies may be required  
to draw accurate conclusions.

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400 0 400 Feet  


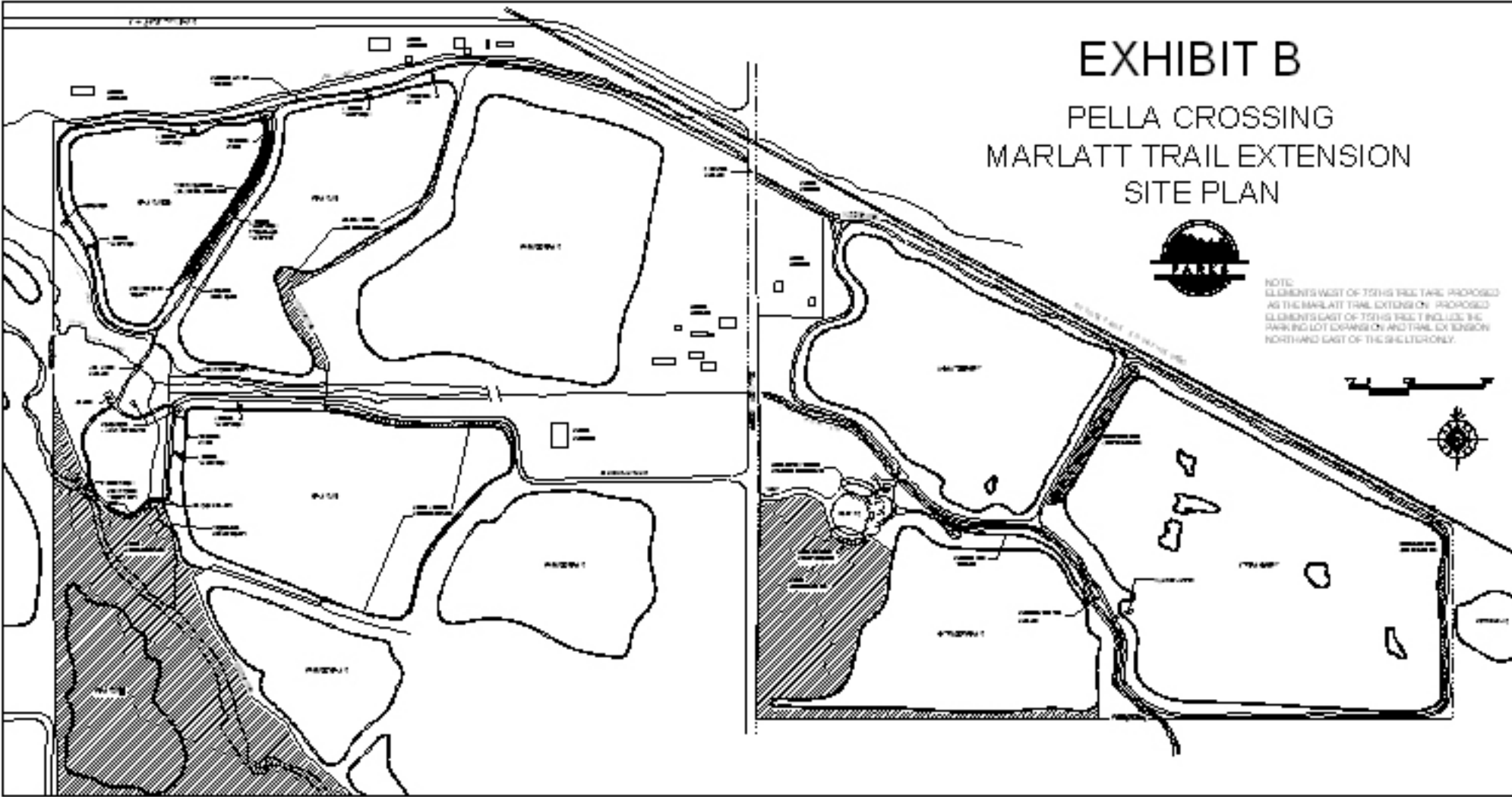


# EXHIBIT B

## PELLA CROSSING MARLATT TRAIL EXTENSION SITE PLAN



NOTE:  
ELEMENTS WEST OF TDSHS TRAIL: PROPOSED  
AS THE MARLATT TRAIL EXTENSION. PROPOSED  
ELEMENTS EAST OF TDSHS TRAIL: INCLUDE THE  
PARKING LOT EXPANSION AND TRAIL EXENSION  
NORTHWARD EAST OF THE SHED ONLY.



## **Exhibit C**

### **Relevant Goals and Policies**

Those goals in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (as amended, 1999) of particular relevance to the Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space Recreation and Visitor Use Plan include:

- **Environmental Management**

**B.4** Significant communities, including significant riparian communities and rare plant sites, should be conserved and preserved to retain living examples of natural ecosystems, furnish a baseline of ecological processes and function, and enhance and maintain the biodiversity of the region.

**B.5** Wetlands which are important to maintaining the overall balance of ecological systems should be conserved.

**B.6** Unique or critical environmental resources [identified pursuant to Goals B.1, B.3, B.4 and B.5] shall be conserved and preserved in a manner which assures their protection from adverse impacts, with the private sector, non-county agencies and other governmental jurisdictions being encouraged to participate.

**B.9** Riparian ecosystems, which are important plant communities, wildlife habitat and movement corridors, shall be protected.

- **Parks and Open Space**

**C.1** Provision should be made for open space to protect and enhance the quality of life and enjoyment of the environment.

**C.2** Parks, open space, and recreation facilities should be encouraged throughout the county and should be integrated whenever suitable with public facilities.

**C.3** Open space shall be used as a means of preserving the rural character of the unincorporated county and as a means of protecting from development those areas which have significant environmental, scenic or cultural value.

**C.4** A county-wide trail system shall be promoted to serve transportation and recreation purposes.

Those policies in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (as amended, 1999) of particular relevance to the Pella Crossing and Marlatt Open Space Recreation and Visitor Use Plan include:

- **Environmental Resources**

**ER 2.07** The county shall identify and work to assure the preservation of critical wildlife habitats, Natural Areas, environmental conservation areas and significant agricultural land.

**ER 2.08** The county shall use its open space program as one means of achieving its environmental resources and cultural preservation goal.

**ER 6.02** The county shall work toward minimizing human impacts to riparian ecosystems from development, roads and trails.

**ER 6.05** Management of riparian areas shall encourage use or mimicry of natural processes, maintenance or reintroduction of native species, restoration of degraded plant communities, elimination of undesirable exotic species, minimizing human impacts, and development of long-term ecological monitoring programs.

**ER 8.01.01** The county shall work with landowners and other entities to promote sound conservation practices and, where appropriate, to establish cooperative management plans.

- **Open Space**

**OS 2.01** The county shall identify and work to assure the preservation of Environmental Conservation Areas, critical wildlife habitats and corridors, Natural Areas, Natural Landmarks, significant areas identified in the Boulder Valley Natural Ecosystems Map, historic and archaeological sites, and significant agricultural land.

**OS 2.03** The county shall provide management plans and the means for the implementation of said plans for all open space areas that have been acquired by or dedicated to the county.

**OS 2.03.02** Management of county open space lands shall consider the regional context of ecosystems and adjacent land uses.

**OS 2.03.03** Management of individual open space lands, including those under agricultural leases, shall follow good stewardship practices and other techniques that protect and preserve natural and cultural resources.

**OS 2.04** The county, through its Parks and Open Space Department, shall provide appropriate educational services for the public which increase public awareness of the county's irreplaceable and renewable resources and the management techniques appropriate for their protection, preservation, and conservation.

**OS 2.04.02** The Parks and Open Space Department shall seek to meet the needs of diverse populations in the county by providing information and programming to accommodate special groups such as disabled persons, young people, senior citizens, and Spanish-speaking citizens.

**OS 2.04.04** The Parks and Open Space Department shall utilize trained volunteers, cooperating groups, and private individuals to assist in the delivery of environmental education and interpretive services.

**OS 4.02** Except as the county may establish a regional park, such as the Boulder County Fairgrounds, or others similar facilities, the county will provide only a minimum level of maintenance or development on park land (consistent with policy OS 2.03).

**OS 4.03** Recreational use of county open space land may be permitted where such use is consistent with the management plan for the property and does not adversely impact natural and cultural resources or other management objectives of the property.

**OS 4.03.01** Recreational use shall be passive, including but not limited to hiking, photography or nature studies, and, if specifically designated, bicycling, horseback riding, or fishing. Only limited development and maintenance of facilities will be provided.

**OS 4.03.02** Accessibility for special populations such as disabled persons, young people, senior citizens, and Spanish-speaking people shall be addressed on a system-wide basis.

**OS 4.04** Requests for special uses or events on county open space shall be evaluated for their impacts to natural and cultural resources as well as other management objectives and maintenance considerations.

**OS 4.05** Any development of regional county facilities or of county park or open space land shall be based on a plan approved by the County Commissioners after review by the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee.

**OS 6.01** Trails and trailheads shall be planned, designed, and constructed to avoid or minimize the degradation of natural and cultural resources, especially riparian areas and associated wildlife habitats.

**OS 6.02** Adverse effects on private lands shall be minimized insofar as possible by trail and trailhead placement, posting of rules and signs against trespassing, installation of containing fences where critical, and any other appropriate measures.

**OS 6.04** Trails shall provide for pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, and/or other non-motorized uses, where each is warranted. Incompatible uses shall be appropriately separated.

**OS 6.08** Trails constructed by the county Parks and Open Space Department shall be soft-surface except where necessary to prevent erosion and/or other resource damage.

**OS 8.03** In developing management plans for open space areas, Parks and Open Space staff shall solicit public participation of interested individuals, community organizations, adjacent landowners and the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee. Plans shall be reviewed by the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, including public comment, and recommended for adoption after public hearing by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **Exhibit D**

### **Plan Advisory Team**

Patrick Malone, Natural Resource Planner and Project Manager

Ron Stewart, Director

Rich Koopmann, Manager, Resource Planning Division

Peter Conovitz, Water Resources Specialist

Brent Wheeler, Manager, Park Operations Division

Kathy Clark, Landscape Architect and Project Manager for the Marlatt Trail Extension

Al Hardy, Trails Supervisor

Therese Glowacki, Manager, Resource Management Division

David Bell, Lead Ranger

Dave Hoerath, Wildlife Specialist

Mark Brennan, Wildlife Specialist

Claire DeLeo, Plant Ecologist

Pascale Fried, Interpretive Specialist Supervisor