

COLORADO FRONT RANGE

TRAIL CORRIDOR PLAN

*Trails are still a symbol of freedom
for many Americans –
the freedom to roam,
the freedom to escape
the constraints of society,
the freedom to lose ourselves
in the natural world.*

*In our cities,
trails provide an outlet
just as important:
the freedom to run, walk, or ride
through the urban fabric,
the freedom to leave vehicles behind,
the freedom to enjoy parks and greenways
that belong to all of us.*

Stuart Macdonald

Recreation Trails Program Manager
Colorado State Parks

COLORADO FRONT RANGE

TRAIL CORRIDOR PLAN



A P R I L

2 0 0 2



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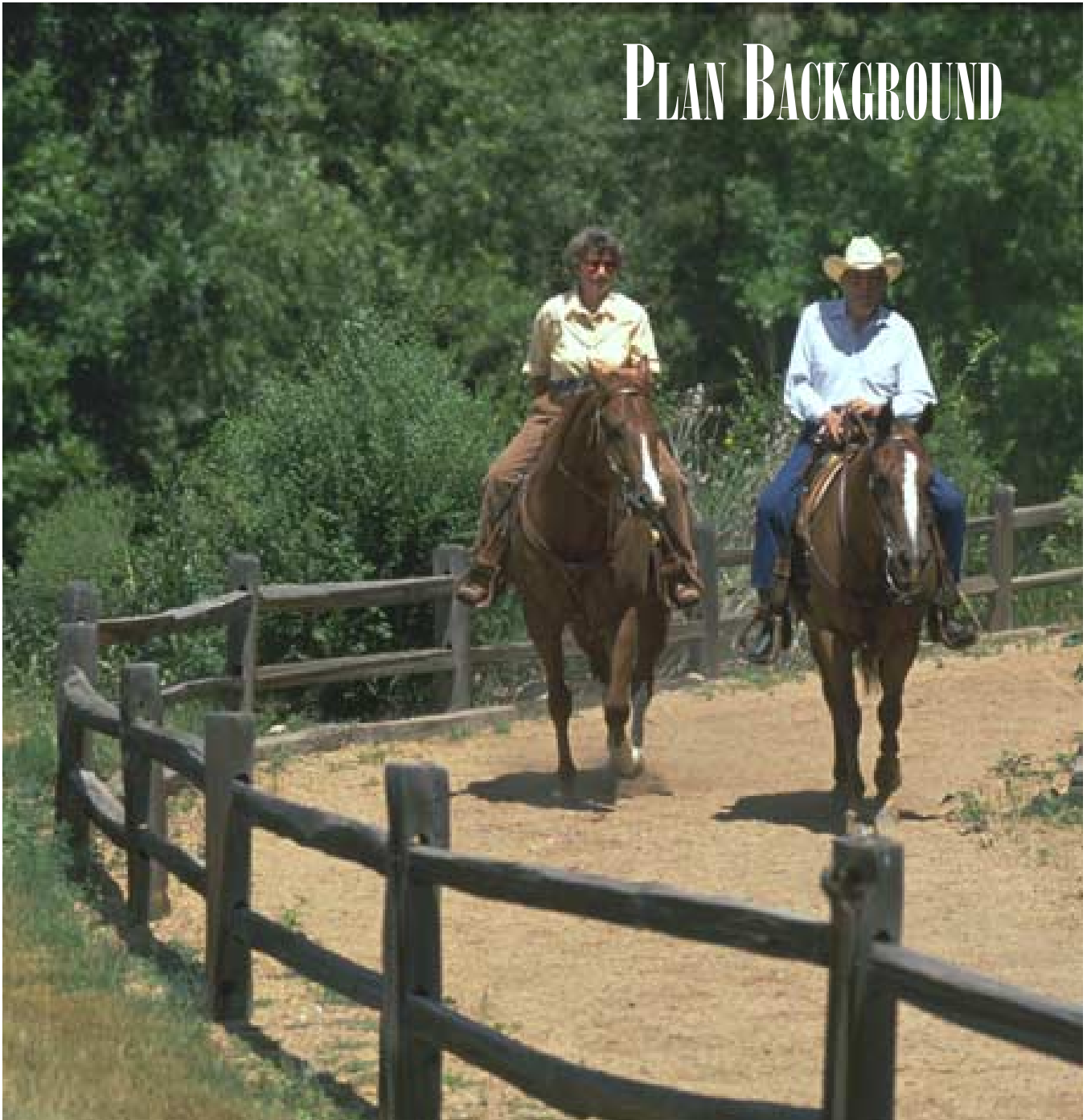
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PLAN BACKGROUND



A trail offers its users awareness of surroundings.

Trails preserve vistas. Trails preserve ecosystems which allow natural sounds to drown out urban sounds.

Trails invite touch and discovery. Trails protect & preserve fragrance.

The trail experiences offer users feelings of bigness & connection with the earth.

Trails unfold mystery, offer surprise, preserve the detail.

In fact, well designed trails offer the hikers, bicyclists, skaters or other adventurers new sensations each time they are used.

DAN BURDEN

Florida Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Handbook, 1997

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado State Parks, with support from many counties and communities, has embarked on an ambitious plan to create a continuous trail that will link the Colorado Front Range's diverse communities and scenic landscapes with a multi-use trail from New Mexico to Wyoming. The Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT) will link existing and planned trail systems with new trail corridors to create an extensive pathway system that connects Colorado's burgeoning population centers.

The Colorado Front Range Trail will enhance trail opportunities for all state residents and visitors. The trail will bring users and local government partners together to create a model for linking trail systems that expand recreation opportunities while enhancing local economies and preserving natural, cultural and scenic resources.

The trail will traverse beautiful mountain, foothill and plains landscapes. Trail users will have the opportunity to experience large cities as well as rural communities. They will be able to experience the vast diversity of historic, cultural and natural resources along the Front Range as they pass through historic towns and districts, distinctive cultural and natural areas, as well as unique parks, vacation areas and other points of interest. Services and facilities will be available so that users can rest, eat, obtain supplies and enjoy local lodging.

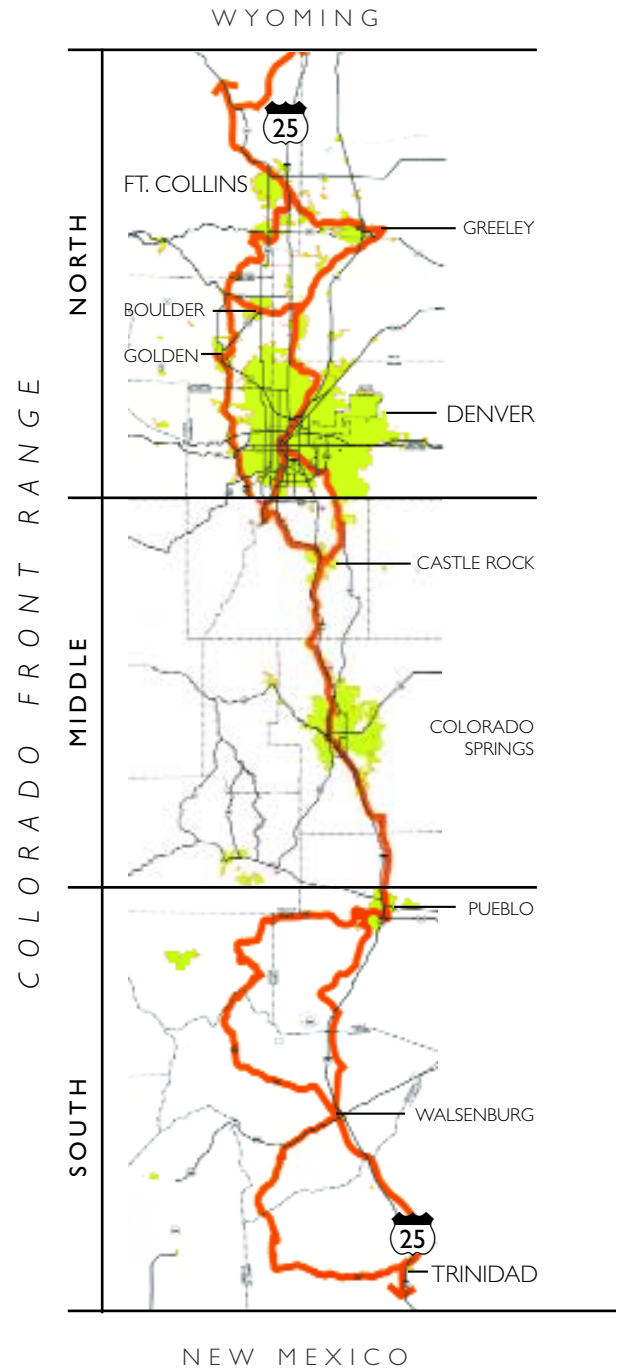
Through a collaborative planning effort, stakeholders from across the Front Range identified a trail system that will



connect about 15 cities, 13 counties and many smaller towns and communities along a fairly north-south route. However, sections will include loops and alternate pathways to diversify the visitor experience and integrate many Front Range communities. While the actual distance from the New Mexico border to the Wyoming border is about 300 miles, the main trail will be approximately 725 miles long, taking into account the proposed routes and trail loops. The majority of the trail system will follow existing and planned trails with approximately 190 miles of existing trails and about 260 miles of approved trail corridors integrated into the system. Low-use roads in some areas, such as through national forest lands, may serve as the trail corridor. Interim steps may also be taken to temporarily use back roads with little traffic while acquisition and construction of missing links proceeds.

Trail corridor acquisition, design, uses, regulations and maintenance procedures will be determined by local jurisdictions. Due to local regulations, the vast majority of the trail will be for non-motorized uses such as hiking and biking. Large sections of the trail, primarily outside urbanized areas, will also be open to horseback riding. Some sections of the trail in rural areas could provide opportunities for certain motorized uses. This decision will be left up to local jurisdictions.

Phase I of the CFRT is scheduled to be completed within five years. At the end of this phase, the CFRT will connect the City of Trinidad all the way across the Front Range to the City of Fort Collins. Other key corridor links will also be completed during this phase. A map and guide book that indicates the location of this Phase I trail alignment, plus important related information, will be produced.



A distinctive signage system will be developed with signs carefully placed along the entire Phase I route. During Phase II, which is expected to take ten to 15 years, the entire CFRT should be completed. Trail gaps will be developed and roads used temporarily as trails will be phased out. The map and guide will be frequently updated as trail sections are completed and CFRT signs will be placed throughout the system.



Funding for the CFRT will focus on finding additional funding sources that build upon Colorado's current trail-funding sources. Given the nature of the potential partnerships that are emerging, funding will likely include local, state and federal components.

The cost estimate for Phase I is \$14-16 million. The cost for Phase II will be determined once decisions are reached by local trail planners regarding trail surface types, on-road or separated trail routes, and other factors.



SUPPORT FOR THE COLORADO FRONT RANGE TRAIL

Even though the Colorado Front Range Trail is still in the planning stages it has already attracted strong support. Nearly 160 people attended the public gatherings held throughout the Front Range to provide suggestions and identify the most appropriate trail routes. Nearly everyone at those meetings expressed support for the trail; many provided thoughtful recommendations on ways to protect natural values and avoid safety concerns along the routes.

In addition, stakeholder group members from counties and cities along the Front Range have shown strong support for the plan. Resolutions of support from communities across the corridor form a powerful statement to mount a fund-raising campaign among state, federal and private sector sources. Together with Governor Owens' endorsement of the project, this strong depth of support has a promising potential to attract support from Colorado's congressional delegation.



PLAN PURPOSE & PROCESS

PLAN PURPOSE

This corridor plan is the first planning effort for the Colorado Front Range Trail. The purpose of this effort was to:

- **See if local jurisdictions and the citizens of Colorado would be supportive of the Colorado Front Range Trail concept, and if so;**
- **Listen to all interested citizens' desires and concerns, and give them ample opportunities to help establish the program, parameters and general trail route; and**
- **Begin to establish partners to help support, fund and implement the plan.**

PLANNING PROCESS

The entire plan is based upon public and stakeholder input. Stakeholders helped develop each section of the plan and local citizenry provided meaningful input that helped define the trail's location, uses and qualities. To ensure local constituents were deeply involved in the planning effort, a stakeholder group was established. This group included a trail representative from each county and major urban area along the Front Range, as well as representatives from



specific agencies and interest groups such as Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and Bicycle Colorado. The stakeholder group met at key times throughout the process and provided input during every phase of the planning effort.



Each stakeholder group meeting was exceptionally well-attended. Besides providing input during established meetings, group members spent time in the field with CFRT planners, provided needed maps and reports, specifically reviewed plan drafts and helped determine local trail alignments. Stakeholder members also played a key role in explaining the trail concept to their local citizenry, obtaining public comments and garnering local support.

To ensure that local citizens throughout the Front Range had ample opportunities to provide input to the planning effort, Colorado State Parks sponsored a major field trip. The planning team went from Trinidad, at the southern end of the state, to Fort Collins at the northern end of the state, and then circled back to Denver, in order to include all potential CFRT areas. Fifteen public gatherings were held along the

way. Each gathering occurred outside, near a section of trail that was being considered as part of the CFRT system. At each public gathering, the concept of the CFRT was explained and team members were available to answer questions and work one-on-one with the public to take their comments and give them the opportunity to illustrate where the trail should be located.

A local stakeholder was available at every public gathering. Many stakeholders used the field trip as a special opportunity to explain the project to their constituents and obtain public input. Some representatives brought large numbers of local representatives to the public gatherings and spent several hours showing the group potential trail opportunities. Other stakeholders created special events and gathered large diverse groups of local officials and citizenry and used the gathering as a meaningful time to express support. Many stakeholder representatives also took the time to travel with the planning team to help establish locations for the trail, and to define critical parameters for trail development. The stakeholders' willingness to work together was instrumental in determining regional connections across county lines.

Some gatherings, in the more rural parts of the state, had only a few attendees while others had many representatives. The gatherings, whether small or large, always consisted of a diverse range of trail users, although the vast majority were non-motorized recreationists. Horseback riders showed exceptional support for the trail and had representatives at many of the meetings, especially at the meetings in Douglas County and the northern areas of the Front Range. Elected officials were also well-represented with city council members and mayors at many of the meetings.

Support for the CFRT was strong all across the corridor. At the same time, it was clear that local citizens want trail routes located to avoid sensitive habitats and intrusions on local residents.

At key times throughout the process, meetings were held with the State Parks Board to ensure they were kept abreast of the plan's development and had timely opportunities to provide input. In addition, State Park Board members attended Stakeholder Group meetings and public gatherings. The State Trails Committee was also kept informed as the plan developed. The chair of the State Trails Committee was a member of the Stakeholder Group and played an active role in developing the plan.

An important part of the planning process involved obtaining a resolution of support from the local jurisdictions that would have sections of the CFRT in their area. This was a vital step in the process, being that all sections of the trail must be determined and approved by the local jurisdiction through which they pass.



VISION

TO LINK THE COLORADO
FRONT RANGE'S
DIVERSE COMMUNITIES
& SCENIC LANDSCAPES
WITH A MULTI-USE TRAIL
FROM NEW MEXICO TO WYOMING



PRINCIPLES

All trail routes comprising the Colorado Front Range Trail must be determined and approved by the local jurisdictions through which they pass. All acquisition and trail development decisions will be determined by the local jurisdictions' land use decision processes.



The Colorado Front Range Trail should be funded through a variety of long-term funding sources that build upon, rather than take away from current trail funding sources. Additional sources that can be dedicated to the trail's completion should be pursued.



GOALS

Form a spine trail corridor along Colorado's Front Range that links communities, points of interest and public lands.

Create a safe, fun, attractive, continuous, interesting, diverse and educational trail.

Utilize existing and approved proposed trails as the basis for the corridor.

Create a fairly direct north-south route.

Link to other trails, especially major east-west trails, along the corridor.

Have a separated trail, away from highways and roads, when possible.

Incorporate cultural, historical and environmental themes that enhance educational opportunities.

Identify and protect sensitive natural, cultural and scenic resources when planning and constructing the trail.

Create a trail corridor that enhances eco-heritage tourism along the Front Range.

Incorporate alternatives and loops, so the trail offers a diverse range of trail uses.

Involve youth from the mixture of corridor communities in trail construction through local youth corps.



POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Respond to the outdoor recreation needs of Colorado's expanding population, 80% of which resides along the Colorado Front Range Trail corridor. Surveys conducted by the State Trails Program found that over 90% of Coloradans use trails, with high priorities placed on diverse, close to home opportunities and on-trail systems that link communities together.

Contribute to Colorado's economy through stimulation of businesses such as trailside hotels, lodges, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and bicycle rental/repair shops. The trail will also enhance Colorado's image as a desirable place to locate or expand business opportunities. The rapidly expanding sector of eco-heritage tourism will be enhanced as visitors explore significant historic sites and outstanding natural features along the route. The trail will parallel portions of the historic Cherokee Trail, and will be a key link for two converging branches of the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail.

Provide places that help enhance one's mental and physical health, and reconnect with one's self, family, and community, as well as with Colorado's cultural heritage and natural environment.

Serve as an alternate transportation route for commuting and day to day travel as Colorado's highways struggle to maintain the capacity to serve the expanding population.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

The Front Range has a highly varied landscape that includes mountains, foothills and plains. The area features unique towns and urban centers with special historic sites and local cultural traditions. The land is highly diverse with miles of natural landscape, as well as distinctive cultural landscapes including ranches, farms, mining areas, resorts, public parks and highly unique destination areas. Some areas have extensive trail programs and miles of existing trails while other areas have minimal trail development.



The corridor has been divided into three sections (see *Colorado Front Range Trail Existing Conditions map*). The trail sections include the:

- **South** *New Mexico border to the City of Pueblo*
- **Middle** *Northern Pueblo County to Chatfield State Park*
- **North** *Northern edge of Douglas County to the Wyoming border*

The trail maps include the existing and planned trails in all the local jurisdictions. The maps indicate where major trails exist, where trails have been planned and approved and where key east-west trail connectors exist or are planned. In addition, the section of the American Discovery Trail that passes through the Front Range is shown. The American Discovery Trail is planned to reach from coast-to-coast with specific sections proposed along the Front Range of Colorado.

SOUTH SECTION

The south section of the Front Range has two main urban centers, the cities of Pueblo and Trinidad. Much of the rest of this area is rural with an expansive natural landscape and many culturally unique small towns. There are exceptional historic resources both within the two major cities and in many of the rural communities. Interstate Highway 25 is the main highway in the area and passes through an open plains environment which affords excellent mountain views. There are several highways off Highway 25 to the west, that provide access to extraordinary scenic, historic and natural resources. These roads extend into the foothills and mountains and pass through many rural communities, San Isabel National Forest, Lathrop and Trinidad state parks, scenic ranchlands and unique mountain resorts.



The southern section has the fewest constructed trails or trail plans of any section along the Front Range. The City of Pueblo has the main concentration of constructed and planned trails along the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek. The City of Trinidad is in the process of constructing its first section of greenway along the Purgatoire River. Beyond these trails, the only areas with built trails are within the national forest and Trinidad and Lathrop state parks.



The south section will require the most extensive trail planning, trail easement acquisition and construction of any section along the corridor. However, this section has some of Colorado's most beautiful, rural, historic and culturally diverse landscapes and communities.

MIDDLE SECTION

The middle section of the study area extends from the edge of the City of Pueblo, through the cities of Colorado Springs and Castle Rock to Chatfield State Park. Major portions of the trail system exist in this section and the remaining trails being considered for the CFRT have approved trail plans.

El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs have completed miles of trail that run from south of the Town of

Fountain through the City of Colorado Springs and the Air Force Academy, all the way north to the Town of Palmer Lake. These are the Pikes Peak Greenway and New Santa Fe Trail systems. Much of these trail systems have the benefit of being near water or passing through the beautiful foothill landscapes of the Air Force Academy and Palmer Lake.

Douglas County and the City of Castle Rock have several sections of existing trail that could be used for the CFRT and both have approved trail plans. Mountain outcrops, tree covered slopes, and unique landforms make the area a beautiful place for recreationists. In addition, historic ranches, rural communities and extensive areas of preserved open space add to the user's experience. Plum Creek is planned as a trail corridor with several sections of existing trails. However, issues related to the endangered Prebles Jumping Mouse could significantly alter or slow down future trail construction near this creek.



To the west, Plum Creek links the City of Castle Rock to Chatfield State Park, a key linkage site for many area trails. At Chatfield State Park one can connect to the Colorado Trail, American Discovery Trail, C-470/Columbine, Highline

Canal and Plum Creek trails, Mary Carter, Platte River and South Platte River greenways and several Highlands Ranch and Jefferson County trails.

The Cherry Creek trail system runs east of the City of Castle Rock. Only a few sections of that trail would need to be constructed to link Douglas County all the way to Confluence Park in the heart of Denver.

NORTH SECTION

The north section encompasses the most populated area along the Front Range. This section includes the City of Denver and its adjacent communities. The area also includes a multitude of communities to the north of Denver such as the cities of Longmont, Fort Collins and Greeley. In addition, rural portions of the Front Range near the Wyoming border are within this section.

The western portion of this area includes the cities of Golden, Boulder and the Town of Lyons. Each community is at the base of the foothills and has a close relationship to the mountain backdrop. The eastern portion of the area is in the plains and has large expanses of agricultural land dotted with many rural, urban and suburban communities.

The north section has significant sections of trail that have been built and all other trail sections that will be considered as part of the CFRT are in the planning stage. Some of the major existing trails include the South Platte River and the Platte River greenways, C-470/Columbine Trail, Cache la Poudre River Trail, Clear Creek Trail, Broadway Trail, Boulder Creek Trail and St.Vrain River Trail.

*Americans are seeking trail opportunities
as never before.*

*No longer are trails only for
the ‘rugged individualists’ pursuing
a solitary trek*

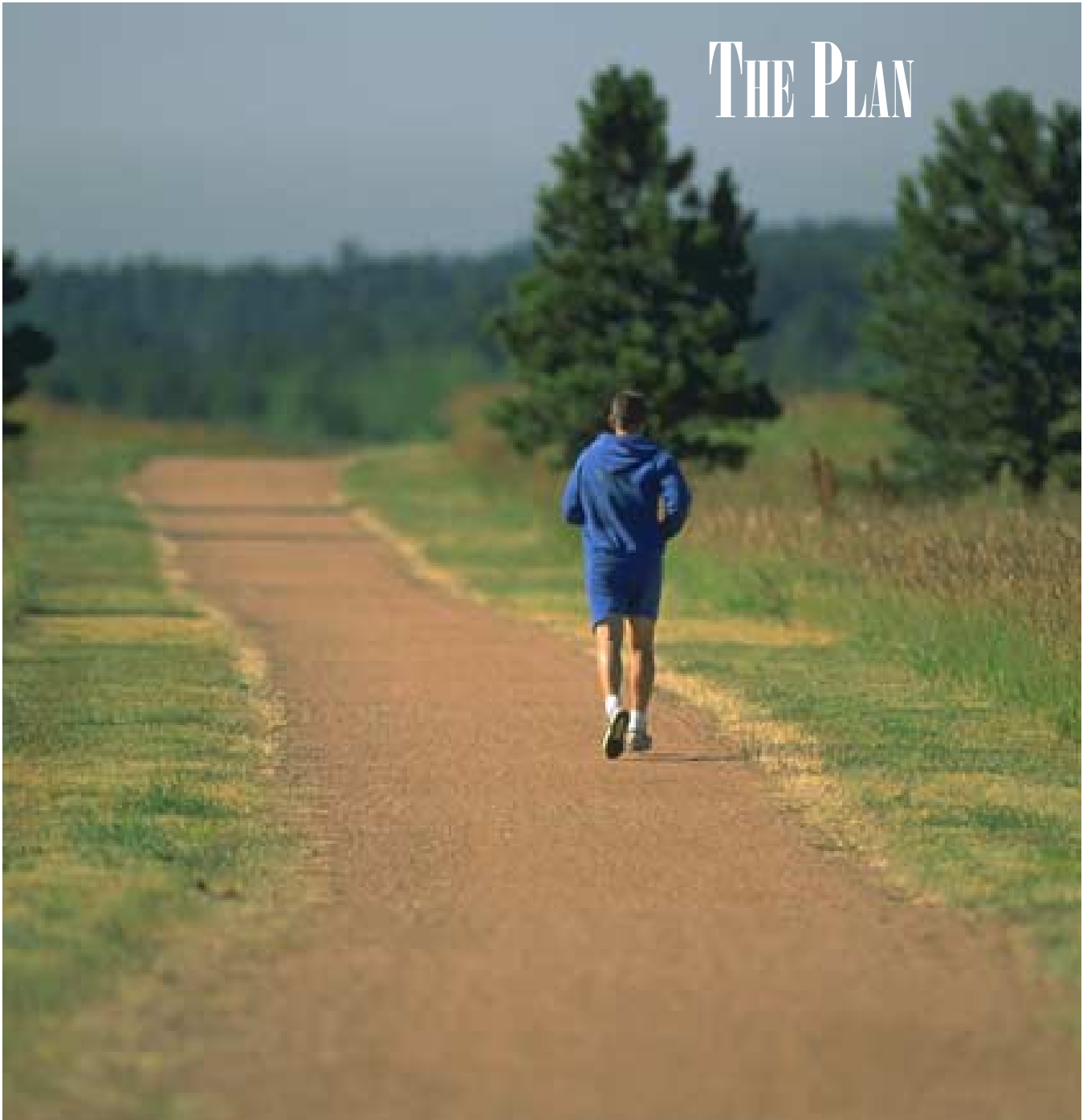
through breathtaking wilderness...

*users include young people & senior citizens,
families, individuals & organized groups,
people with disabilities & the physically fit.*

—AMERICAN TRAILS,
Trails for All Americans Report, 1990



THE PLAN



*Few actions can do more to make urban areas safer,
healthier, prettier & more environmentally balanced
than setting aside corridors or trails
for walking, biking, wildlife watching,
and just plain breaking up the monotony of cars & concrete.*

JAMES SNYDER
Publisher of Environment Today, 1990

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIL

The CFRT will connect many communities and diverse landscapes along the Front Range of Colorado, from the New Mexico border to the boundary of Wyoming. The trail system will run generally in a north-south direction utilizing existing and planned trails wherever possible. There will be a main trail and areas of alternate trail. In some areas the trail will diverge into two corridors to diversify recreation opportunities, to take advantage of trails already in place and to include the full diversity of Front Range communities. The trail will be sited to ensure that users have a fun, safe and varied experience. It will pass through a multitude of communities so recreationists can obtain needed services and partake in the local culture. Low-use roads will

be used as part of the trail system in some areas. During the early phases of trail development, low-use roads may also be used temporarily while acquisition and construction of missing links proceeds.

The entire trail will be about 725 miles long once all the proposed loops and alternative trails are taken into account as they wind their way among the foothills and plains. About 190 miles of trails have been built, about 260 miles are to be built by local jurisdictions and about 160 miles of the CFRT is planned for low-use roads. Therefore, only about 115 miles will require new plans.



COLORADO FRONT RANGE TRAIL SUMMARY

Total Miles	Built Miles	Trails On Roads	Remaining Miles to Build	Planned Miles	Unplanned Miles
725	190	160	375	260	115

Note: The numbers shown are approximate due to the conceptual nature of this planning effort.

THE ROUTE

A broad, generalized corridor defines the CFRT (see the *Front Range Corridor Plan maps*). This is a potential corridor and is conceptual in nature. This was done purposefully to ensure that local jurisdictions have flexibility in the future when they plan and construct specific trail sections in their area. The CFRT will need to be carefully developed to ensure that constructed trails meet local needs and tie appropriately to other trails, surrounding neighborhoods and communities, while striving to protect natural and cultural resources.

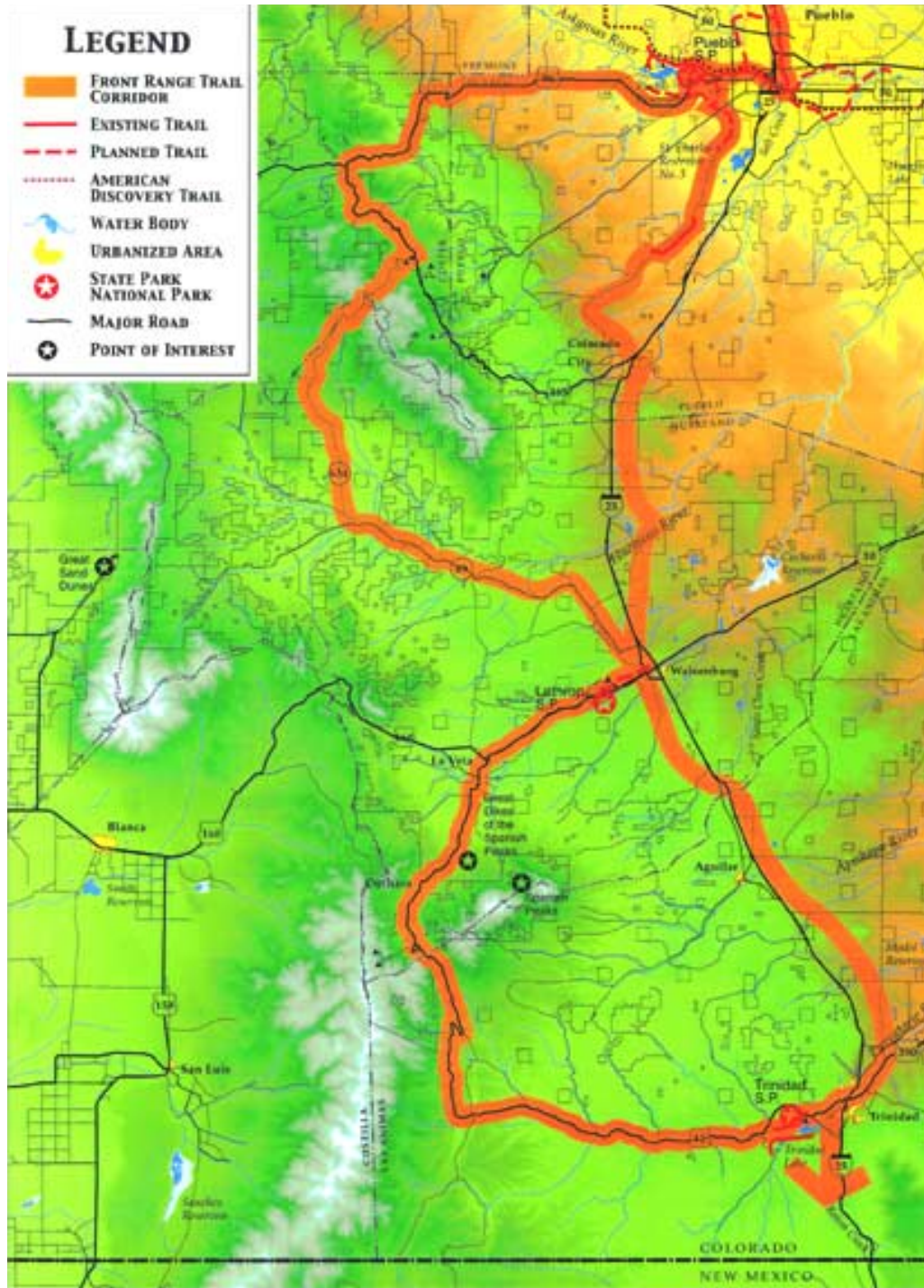
The description of the CFRT route has been divided into the same three sections as shown on the maps. Please refer to the maps to more clearly understand the route of the CFRT.

**SOUTH SECTION [CONCEPTUAL ROUTES] OVERVIEW**

In this area, the CFRT has been planned to provide a wide diversity of experiences as it passes through mountain, foothill and plains environments. This southern portion of trail is envisioned to include two connecting corridors so that recreationists will be able to loop back to their starting point, take challenging or easy trails and have a variety of experiences. Substantial additional planning will be necessary before final decisions can be made for many of the routes described for the South Section.

**Mountain & Foothills Trail (western section of loop)**

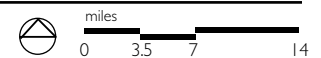
Starting at the New Mexico border the trail may follow Highway 25 to the City of Trinidad's Purgatoire River Front Trail. From there the trail could swing westward and follow Highway 12 (*Highway of Legends Scenic Byway*) over Cucharas Pass to the junction with Highway 160, then eastward to Lathrop State Park and the Town of Walsenburg. The vast majority of this portion of the CFRT will need to be planned and developed. Since sections of this corridor have high speed or truck traffic and passes through mountainous country, the corridor should either be developed as a



COLORADO FRONT RANGE *Trail Corridor*

SOUTH AREA

NOTE: The Front Range Trail Corridors represent conceptual routes only. Final trail alignments will be determined subject to land use decision processes of the local jurisdictions through which they pass.



separated trail or have clearly defined bike lanes. Low-use roads exist parallel to Highway 160, and may be suitable for use as the trail corridor, at least in the short-term.

At Lathrop State Park the trail could wind north and westward following Highway 69 and several roads within San Isabel National Forest. These roads are low-use and would provide a quality experience for CFRT users. This part of the forest features the historically significant site of a visionary plan for the forest's interface with urban populations. Designed by the famed Arthur Carhart, this site is slated for a 100-year anniversary celebration in 2003. The CFRT could be an effective means to carry forward and highlight Carhart's innovative leadership.

From the forest service roads, the trail could link to Highway 96 (Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway) and connect to Lake Pueblo State Park and the City of Pueblo's existing trail systems, along the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek. The section which may need a separated trail or bike lanes would be along Highway 96 where more traffic occurs. If agreed to by local entities, this section could be designated as part of the CFRT in the short-term since most of it would be along existing low-use roads and trails.



Plains Trail (eastern section of loop)

Although the Foothills Trail in this south section traverses highly attractive and interesting country, it requires a relatively advanced ability level and could take years to develop. To diversify the options available to trail enthusiasts, an easier and more direct eastern loop through the plains was conceptualized. This route may use low-use unpaved roads or abandoned rail lines paralleling Interstate Highway 25 to link the City of Trinidad to the Town of Walsenburg and the City of Pueblo. If approved by local entities it could be established in the short-term, being that no trails should need to be built.



MIDDLE SECTION [CONCEPTUAL ROUTES]

OVERVIEW

In the middle section, the CFRT will stretch from Pueblo, through Colorado Springs, to the Denver Metro area along existing and planned trail alignments. The majority of the trail will be along Fountain, Monument, Plum and Cherry Creeks. A major portion of the trail in this section is existing and all the remaining trails are planned. A Foothills-Plains loop is also planned for this section. Diverging at Castle Rock, trails along Plum Creek to the west and Cherry Creek to the east will link again at Confluence Park

in Denver. The eastern part of the loop will likely be completed sooner than the trail construction along Plum Creek. This loop will significantly diversify recreation options in this urbanizing area.

Foothills Trail (western section of loop)

From the City of Pueblo the trail would head north along the existing and proposed Fountain Creek Trail. Although a few miles of this trail exist in the City of Pueblo, large sections will need to be constructed in the northern portion of Pueblo County and the southern portion of El Paso County. In the short-term, until the Fountain Creek Trail is complete, the trail could follow Overton, Hanover and Old Pueblo roads until it reaches the existing Fountain Creek Trail near the Town of Fountain. From here the trail will follow the existing Pikes Peak Greenway and New Santa Fe Trails all the way through the City of Colorado Springs to the Town of Palmer Lake. These are attractive trails that follow shady creeks, pass through the historic district of Colorado Springs and wind through the foothills with exceptional views of Pikes Peak. This is one of the longest existing trail sections in the Front Range and, with local approval, it could be opened for use when the CFRT is initially dedicated.



From the Town of Palmer Lake the trail will enter Douglas County and pass through Greenland Ranch and Columbine open spaces until it links to the City of Castle Rock's Plum Creek Trail. This is a beautiful and interesting section of trail. It passes through unique landforms, the historic Greenland Ranch town site and the Plum Creek area. After leaving the Town of Castle Rock the trail will shift westward on its western loop along Plum Creek to Chatfield State Park. Although all of these sections of trail are planned, only a few miles are constructed.

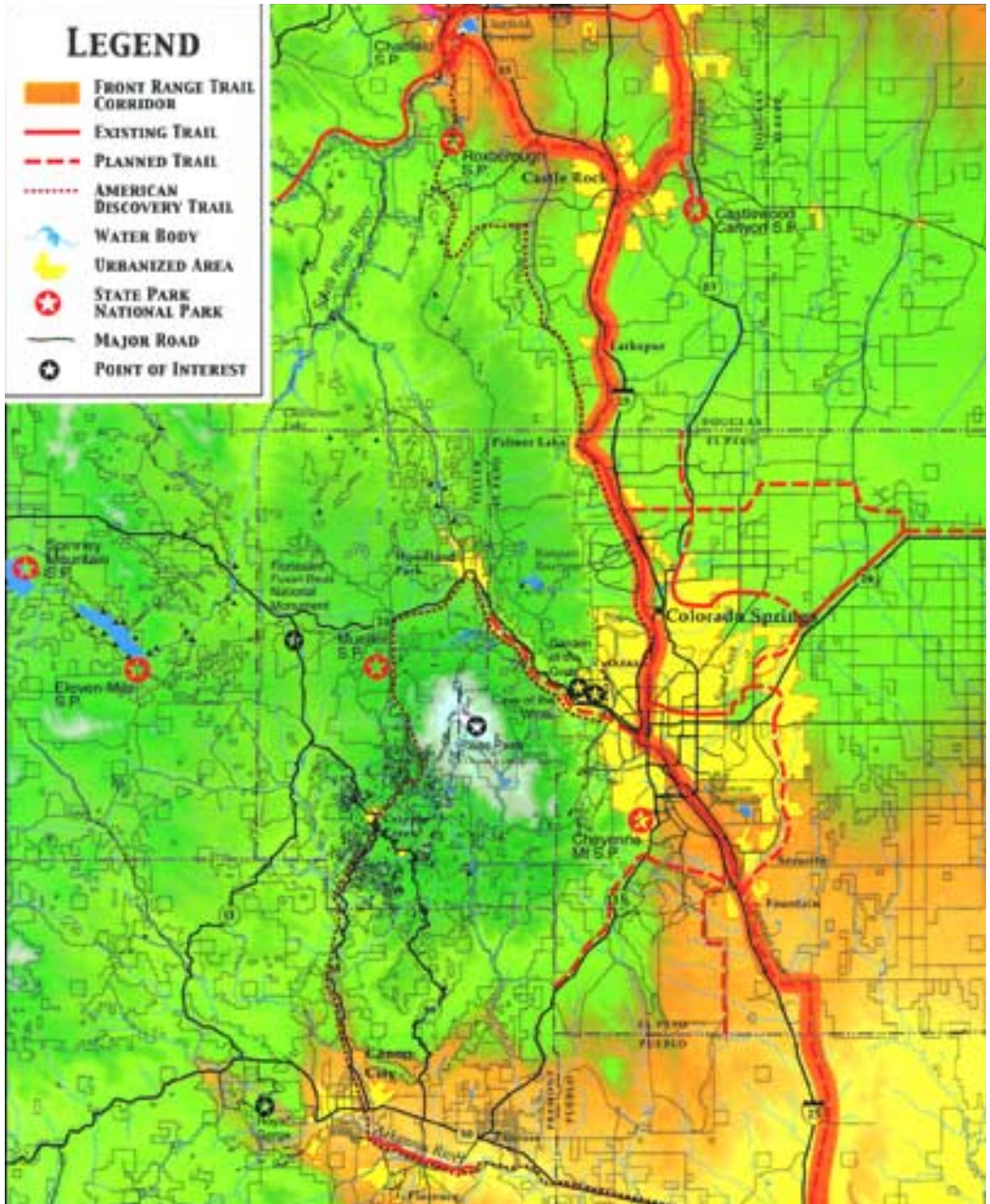


Plains Trail (eastern section of loop)

An eastern loop will link the City of Castle Rock, through McMurdo Gulch to the Cherry Creek Trail system, which links to the South Platte River Greenway at Confluence Park in the City of Denver. Only a few short sections of trail will need to be developed in order to complete the entire linkage of this side of the loop. Completion of this trail could be accomplished in the short-term while the Plum Creek trail to Chatfield State Park could take much longer.

NORTH SECTION [CONCEPTUAL ROUTES]

The north section also features a loop system, connecting many densely populated communities and the two distinctive -



COLORADO FRONT RANGE *Trail Corridor*

MIDDLE AREA

NOTE: The Front Range Trail Corridors represent conceptual routes only. Final trail alignments will be determined subject to land use decision processes of the local jurisdictions through which they pass.



foothills and plains landscapes. Key junctures along the loop will be Chatfield State Park in the south and the City of Fort Collins in the north. A connector trail along the St.Vrain River will be provided in approximately the middle of the loop.

Foothills Trail (western section of loop)

From Chatfield State Park the foothills section of the CFRT will follow the C-470/Columbine Trail to the proposed Highway 6 trail. From here the trail will link to the Clear

Creek Trail in the City of Golden. The trail will then head north to the existing Fremont Trail or follow Highway 93. As the trail crosses into Boulder County, it will follow Highway 93, along the east side, and tie into the Broadway Trail in the City of Boulder. In downtown Boulder, the trail will follow the Boulder Creek Trail and head east and north to the Foothills Parkway Trail and Boulder Reservoir. An alternate route could connect the Boulder Creek Trail to Boulder Reservoir through Valmont Park and trails running north. Many portions of this section of trail exist and all are in approved plans.

However, there are several missing sections that will need to be constructed.



SUMMARY CHART OF TRAIL ROUTES

COMMUNITIES	CONCEPTUAL ROUTES
SOUTHERN ROUTE	
Foothills Loop	
Trinidad -New Mexico	South along Highway 25, use off road corridors where feasible
Trinidad – Walsenburg	North on Hwy 12 to La Veta east on Hwy 160 to Lathrop State Park and on Into West end of Walsenburg
Walsenburg – Pueblo	NW out of Walsenburg on Hwy 69 to Gardner; north on Gardner Rd (USFS Rds 634, 360) to Fairview. Head North on Hwy 165 to McKenzie Junction (Intersection 165/96). East on Hwy 96 to Pueblo State Park. Follow existing State Park trails to Arkansas Riverwalk Trail
Pueblo – Fountain	Arkansas Riverwalk Trail to the Fountain Creek trailhead north on existing and Proposed trails to Fountain. Short term use Overton to Hanover roads to Old Pueblo Road to Fountain Creek trail
Fountain – Colorado Springs	Pikes Peak Greenway and New Santa Fe Trail
Plains Loop	
Trinidad – Walsenburg	Proposed Purgatoire Riverwalk trail to east end of town, north on old RR Grade to county line, go west on CR240, cross under I-25 at interchange, go North on Burlington RR grade (CR330) into Walsenburg
Walsenburg – Pueblo	Follow old RR grade (101.1) north to CR 670- go north on CR 670 (274, 229), thru Colorado City. CR 229 turns into 230, head NE on CR 778 (Burnt Mill Rd) to Prairie Ave, tying into Arkansas Riverwalk trail- go east to Fountain Creek trail
MIDDLE ROUTE	
Colorado Springs - Palmer Lake	Existing Pikes Peak Greenway and New Santa Fe Trail into Palmer Lake
Palmer Lake - Castle Rock	Douglas County proposed trails through Greenland Ranch & Columbine Open Spaces
Foothills Loop	
Castle Rock – Chatfield State Park	Douglas County proposed Plum Creek Trail
Plains Loop	
Castle Rock - Cherry Creek State Park	Mc Murdo Gulch to Cherry Creek Trail system
NORTHERN ROUTE	
Foothills Loop	
Chatfield State Park – Golden	Existing C-470 trail out of Chatfield going north tying into proposed Hwy 6 Trail that will connect into Clear Creek Trail
Golden – Boulder	East on Clear Creek trail that connects north to Fairmount Trail, tying into Hwy 93, Alternate route Clear Creek to Hwy 93. Follow Hwy 93 along the east side, tie into separated Broadway Trail, at Boulder Creek Trail intersection with Broadway go east on Foothills Parkway trail, follow North along diagonal trails to Boulder Reservoir; alternate could be to Valmont Park and North and trails north
Boulder – Lyons	At Boulder Reservoir; follow proposed trail along Northern Water Conservancy Canal north to Lyons- from Lyons go east on St.Vrain Greenway
Lyons - Ft. Collins	Proposed St.Vrain Trail to County Rd 53 to Rabbit Mountain Open Space. Stay on CR 53 west of Rabbit Mountain to link to proposed Larimer County trails; go north to Welch Reservoir on to Boedecker Lake to Big Thompson River Trail through Loveland, go north to Boyd Lake to Fort Collins Cache la Poudre River Trail Ft. Collins to Wyoming Cache la Poudre River Trail west then north toward Hwy.14; North along Hwy 287 to Laramie, WY or go east to section of old Trappers Trail to Cheyenne, WY
Plains Loop	
Ft. Collins – Greeley	Existing and proposed Cache la Poudre River Trail to Northern Platte River Greenway
Greeley – Firestone	Follow proposed South Platte River existing trail at Evans and Milliken to trail on old Union Pacific Railroad grade linking Firestone, Frederick, and Dacono Firestone – Proposed C 470 (Adams Co.) South to proposed C470 trail to existing and proposed South Platte River Greenway to Confluence Park
Confluence Park - Chatfield State Park	Existing Platte River Greenway
East/West Connector	
Lyons - Longmont – Firestone	Proposed St.Vrain River-Trail to Union Pacific RR grade trail

From Boulder Reservoir, the CFRT could follow the Northern Water Conservancy Canal to the Town of Lyons and then head eastward along the proposed St. Vrain River Greenway. CFRT recreationists would then have two options. They could either continue east along the St. Vrain Greenway to the City of Longmont and Weld County or head northward to Larimer County. Both the St. Vrain River Greenway and a trail corridor through Larimer County will be part of the CFRT.

Moving northward, the Foothills Loop could follow County Road 53 near Rabbit Mountain Open Space and link to proposed Larimer County trails. In Larimer County the CFRT will go north to Welch Reservoir and Boedecker Lake and then tie into the Big Thompson River Trail through the City of

Loveland. From here, the trail will go to Boyd Lake State Park and tie

to the City of Fort Collins' Cache la Poudre River Trail. At Fort Collins the CFRT will split and go north and east. The northern trail would ultimately link Colorado to the cities of Laramie and Cheyenne, Wyoming. The eastern trail will follow the Cache la Poudre River Trail to the City of Greeley. Only a few sections of trails in this area are complete although all are part of the counties' and cities' plans. The main sections of trail that are complete run along the Big Thompson River in the City of Loveland and along the Cache la Poudre River in the City of Fort Collins and Weld County.

Plains Trail (eastern section of loop)

The CFRT will head eastward from the City of Greeley along the Cache la Poudre River to a proposed section of the Northern Platte River Greenway. At this point the trail would head south near the South Platte River to the proposed St. Vrain River Greenway. Almost none of this section of trail is constructed, but it is planned.



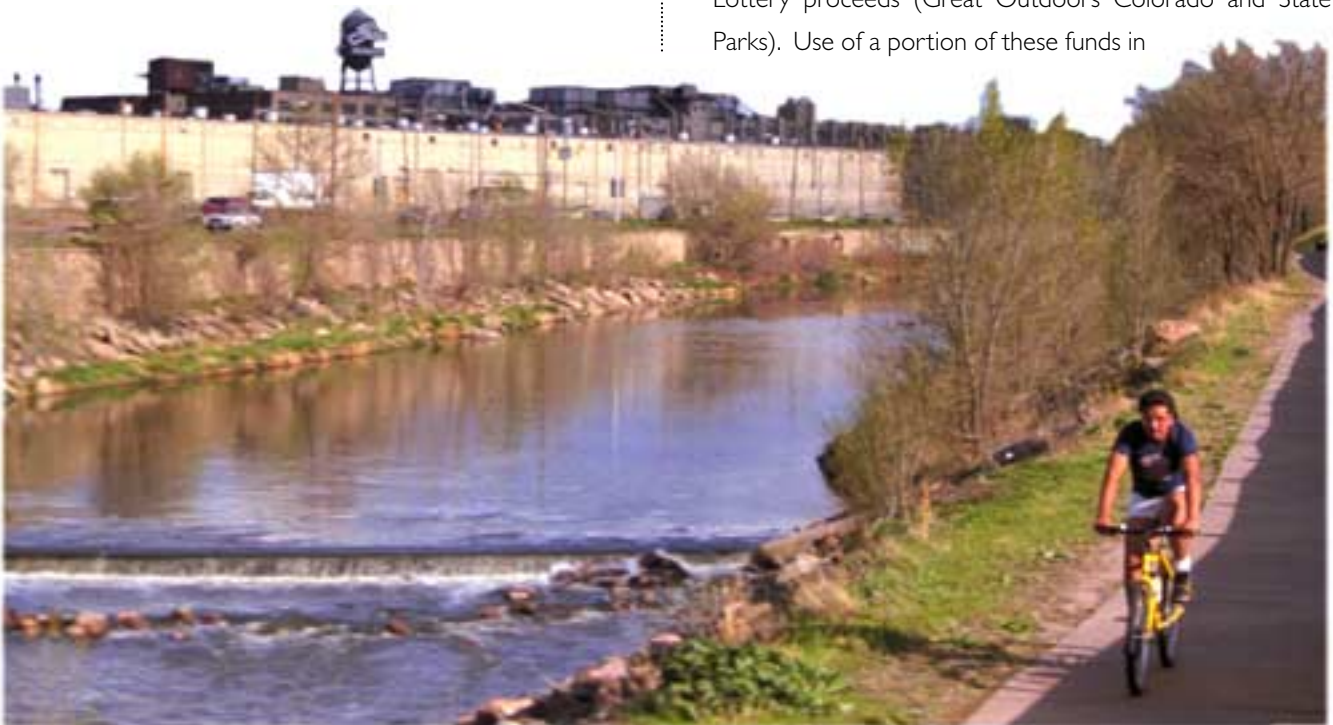
The CFRT would then connect to a trail along an abandoned section of Union Pacific Railroad grade that links the towns of Firestone, Frederick and Dacono. From here the trail will head south and tie to the proposed C-470 trail and to the existing and proposed South Platte River Greenway in Adams County. The CFRT will continue along the South Platte River Greenway to Confluence Park in the heart of the City of Denver. From here the trail will continue south along the Platte River Greenway to Chatfield State Park. At the S. Platte River/Cherry Creek confluence, the eastern loop branches towards Cherry Creek and Castlewood State Parks and then to Castle Rock. Most of these urban trail sections are already complete, and could be opened for use at the initial CFRT dedication.

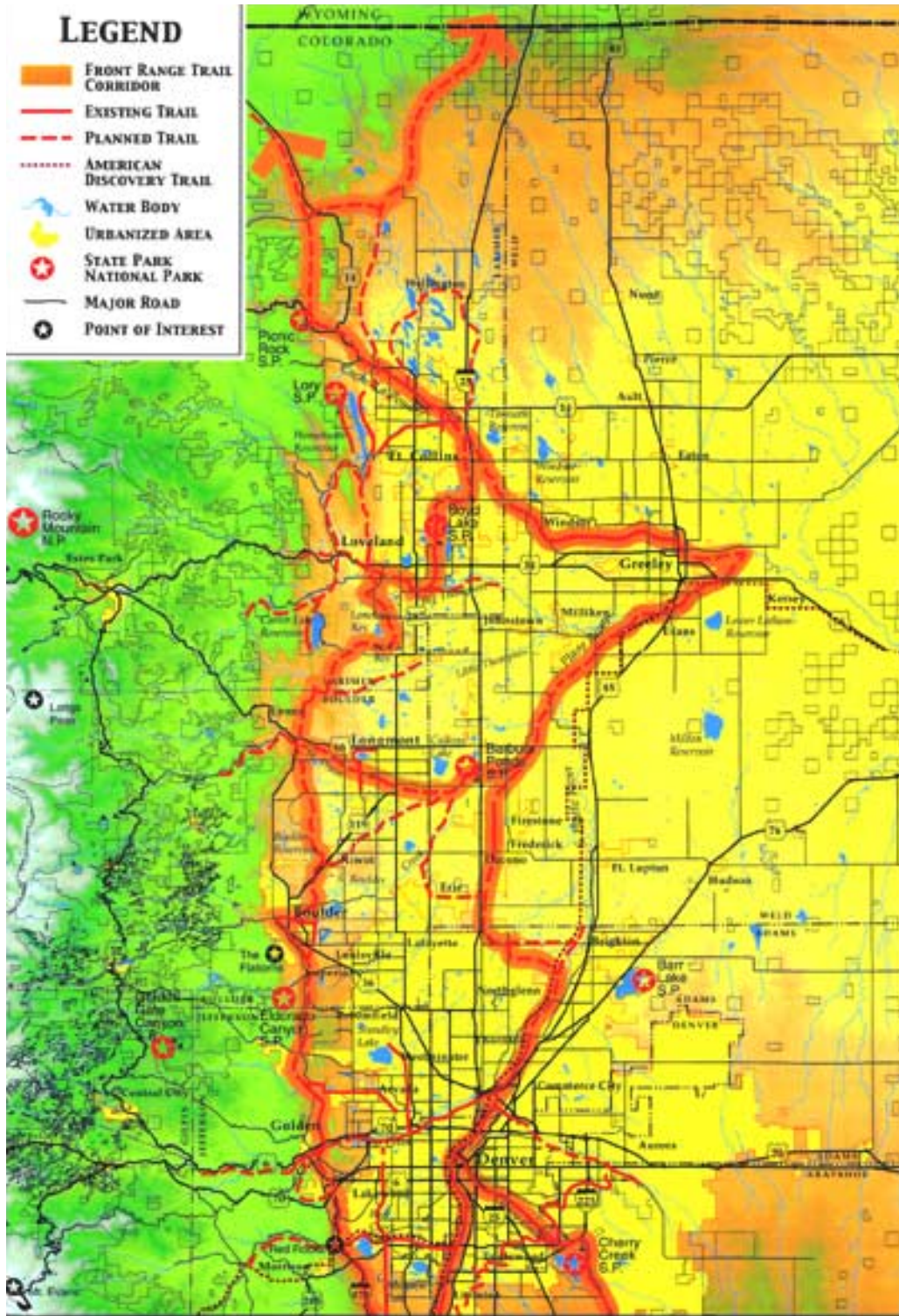
FUNDING

The first and most crucial implementation step will be to find the funding to make the Colorado Front Range Trail a reality. Given the extent of the potential partnerships emerging for this project, funding will likely include local, state and federal components. The planning team identified the following list of potential funding options for consideration during the implementation phase of the trail.

State Trails Program Grants

In 2002, the State Trails Program will award a total of about \$2.6 million through its Recreational Trails Grants program. This consists of about \$1.7 million in federal funds (Recreational Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund) and of about \$0.9 million in Colorado Lottery proceeds (Great Outdoors Colorado and State Parks). Use of a portion of these funds in





COLORADO FRONT RANGE *Trail Corridor*

NORTH AREA

NOTE: The Front Range Trail Corridors represent conceptual routes only. Final trail alignments will be determined subject to land use decision processes of the local jurisdictions through which they pass.



future years for CFRT projects would be consistent with past Trails Program grants to projects that have become components of the Front Range Trail.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

Since its start-up in 1994, GOCO has placed a high priority on trails. GOCO's first round of grants to its Local Government sector was made through the State Trails Program grants process, and GOCO has supported Trails Program grants in each year since through its Local Government and State Parks funding plans. In addition, many of GOCO's signature Legacy Projects have involved regional trail connections, such as the S. Platte River, Sand Creek, Clear Creek, Poudre/Big Thompson, Yampa River and Colorado River Legacy Projects.

GOCO is currently considering additional funding for Legacy- type projects. The CFRT could be eligible for funding as a new project or through existing Legacy Projects. In addition, the potential exists for additional funding through the Local Government and State Parks annual funding cycles. GOCO is also considering continuation of Mid-Range grants for large multi-year regional projects, which would be well-suited to the CFRT.

Federal Funds

In addition to the federal Recreation Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars already distributed through the State Trails Program, there are potential additional sources of federal funds. These include:

- LWCF funds normally used for State Parks projects
- Transportation Enhancement Funds (currently known as TEA-21), which are accessed through the Colorado Department of Transportation and are typically used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Scenic Byways

are also funded through Transportation Enhancement funds, providing another source of potential CFRT funds on segments that follow Scenic Byways. Congressional reauthorization of these funds is slated for 2003, which could be an opportunity to spotlight the CFRT as a model transportation enhancements project.

- Special appropriations, which can be included in federal department annual appropriations bills. The most likely candidates are the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service section) appropriations processes.

State Historical Fund

Created by the constitutional amendment allowing limited gaming in three Colorado towns, the State Historical Fund grants approximately \$14 million annually for historic preservation projects. Those grants could be a source of funding for either acquisition of registered historic sites or education and interpretive signing along the Front Range Trail.



Local Governments

Most of the CFRT trail segments already in place have been funded primarily through local government sources. Local governments are accustomed to leveraging their resources through

state and federal grant sources, which can require up to 50% of total project costs in matching funds from local sources.

A promising funding source for CFRT segments needing additional planning is the Colorado Department of Local Affairs' new Colorado Heritage Planning Grants. Created to help implement Governor Owens' Smart Growth Initiative, these grants are awarded to recognize and reward communities that cooperatively plan for and manage growth.

Private Fundraising

Once momentum is gained from the initial funding efforts, the CFRT's high visibility and public appeal will make it a prime candidate to attract private sector funding. Sources might include foundations, the nonprofit sector, or contributions from businesses, especially the large outdoor retail businesses that thrive in Colorado. As has often been the case for long distance trails nationwide, a non-profit organization created for the exclusive benefit of the CFRT could eventually emerge to take on the challenge of long term funding.

Trails help humans make sense of a world increasingly dominated by automobiles & pavement. They allow us to come more closely in touch with our natural surroundings, to soothe our psyches, to challenge our bodies, & to practice ancient skills.

WOODY HESSELBARTH,
Trail Construction & Maintenance Notebook, 1999



IMPLEMENTATION & PHASING

To gather momentum and support for the CFRT, it is important to establish, sign, and open the trail across the vast majority of the Front Range within the next five years. It is therefore recommended that the implementation plan be separated into two phases. Envisioned for Phase I is completion of a continuous trail connecting the City of Trinidad to the City of Fort Collins.



By opening major portions of the trail already in place at the outset, the project will become a reality, greater support can be generated, and funds to help ensure the entire trail system is completed will be easier to secure. It will also provide an opportunity for recreationists to use the trail while funds are being secured to complete the overall system.

During Phase II, the remainder of the trail should be completed cross-state from New Mexico to Wyoming during the next ten to fifteen years to provide a world-class system with a multitude of options.

PHASE I : START UP (0 – 5 years)

During the initial phase of the project, the CFRT will connect across the Front Range and link the City of Trinidad to the City of Fort Collins. The entire length of trail should be signed as the CFRT and a map with a guide should be widely distributed and updated as additional segments are completed. During this early phase, low-use roads and the alternate CFRT routes will need to be used in combination with existing trails. Plans for use of these roads should be prioritized for early completion. In addition, some sections of existing trail may need to be improved to ensure they are safe. Colorado State Parks' State Trails Program will provide the focus for an integrated approach towards completion of the Phase I goal of a continuous Trinidad to Fort Collins route. State Trails Program grants earmarked for the CFRT will be prioritized according to four main criteria:

1. *Key trail segments that require additional planning & design.*
2. *Completion of trail links that best contribute to establishing the continuous Trinidad to Fort Collins route.*
3. *Trail links that already have locally-approved plans and are ready to go on the ground.*
4. *Projects strongly leveraged with significant funds from other funding sources.*



Trail Development

An important first step in getting the trail on the ground will be to ensure that each local jurisdiction along the route is extensively involved in route planning, siting and signing. Trail gaps in the Phase I system will be developed to meet the specifications of each local jurisdiction. Therefore, some sections of trail will be concrete or asphalt while others will be crusher fines or natural surface. Safety hazards that exist along any of the existing trail sections within the Phase I alignment should be corrected.



Colorado Front Range Trail Logo & Signage System

An attractive, easily identifiable CFRT logo and signage system should be planned and implemented throughout the first phase corridor. The logo should be highly recognizable and distinctive. The signs should be consistent, obvious, and appropriately located so that the first-time user can easily find his or her way. They should be ready to go as soon as CFRT trail segments are opened for use.

Map & Guide

A detailed map and guide should be produced. During the first phase the map and guide should clearly define segments open for use and identify logical connector trails, points of

interest and service locations. The guide should offer user-specific information such as safety and climate tips, distances, and trail difficulty, as well as services such as accommodations, restaurants and points of interest. The map and guide should also indicate the location of segments yet to be completed so the public has a clear picture of the entire route and can look forward to using future sections of the CFRT. Maps should be updated as new segments are opened for use.

Plans

Assistance will be given to local jurisdictions to complete trail plans for sections of the CFRT that have no approved plans, so that future CFRT sections can be constructed. Plans should include trail route details, surface materials and fee title or easements acquisitions. Plans for on-road routes should be targeted for early completion. Routes that cross national forests should be integrated into forest planning and environmental review processes.

Phase I Summary

- Create a continuous trail route from Trinidad to Fort Collins by using existing trails, low-use roads and prioritizing planning and development of key missing links. Create a map and guide of Phase I routes open for use and with the complete CFRT routes identified. Update the maps as significant new segments are opened for use.
- Assist local jurisdictions to complete plans for sections of the trail that have no approved plans.
- Develop a CFRT sign plan, logo and sign design, and place signs along all Phase I routes open for use.
- Improve sections of Phase I trails that constitute a safety hazard.

PHASE II : LONG-TERM (5 – 15 years)

After the initial start-up phase, the focus will be on completing the CFRT system. This will take time and additional funding to make the entire corridor continuous, safe,

attractive and a world-class trail system. During this phase, linkages that will connect communities along the entire CFRT will be completed so that users can bike and hike across the entire Front Range on the CFRT. Sections of trail along roads that were intended as temporary trails should be phased out. Phasing for CFRT construction should be carefully coordinated with local jurisdictions to ensure this trail is approved as part of each local jurisdiction's planning efforts.

The map and guide should be frequently updated to include the entire CFRT route with interest points, services and other relevant information included.

The entire corridor should be well signed so that the CFRT is easy to identify and find.

Phase II Summary

- Continue land acquisitions/easements for CFRT trails.
- Construct remaining sections of the CFRT.
- Move the trail off roads that were temporarily used for the CFRT.
- Update the map and guide to include needed information along the entire route.
- Complete CFRT signs throughout the entire system.



COST ESTIMATES

The CFRT will be about 725 miles long. Approximately 350 miles are either built or are along roads that will function as trails. About 375 miles of trail will need to be constructed. Of these 375 miles, about 260 have been planned and could be part of future funding requests made by local jurisdictions as part of their local trail systems. The estimated costs include proposed trails that are within local jurisdictions' approved plans, as well as trail sections that require additional planning and approvals.

The Phase I estimated costs must be regarded as conceptual due to the nature of this planning effort. Broad costs per mile were used to generate costs. Since not all the design and construction of the trail will be the same, differences in trail surfacing and construction were considered. Since trail design and surfacing will be based on the regulations of local jurisdictions, some sections of trail will be separated concrete or asphalt;

some sections will be asphalt bike lanes adjacent to roads; some will be separated trails with crusher fine or natural surfaces, and some will merely be signed routes along low-use roads. The types of trails that will be constructed have not been determined in all sections of the corridor; therefore costs will vary.

PHASE I & II ESTIMATED COSTS

The estimated cost for Phase I is about \$14-16 million. This includes development of gaps in the trail system, related trail-planning and design and placement of CFRT signs all

along the Phase I corridor. This estimate includes trails that are in local jurisdictions' trail plans, as well as trails not fully planned. The estimated cost includes planning, design and construction, as well as the map with a guide and signage. The estimated cost includes about \$100,000 for maps and guides and about \$150,000 for the logo and signs.

The cost for Phase II will be determined once decisions are reached by local trail planners regarding trail surface types, on-road or separated trail routes, and other factors.

