



HIDDEN SPRINGS TOWN ASSOCIATION

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS CONCEPT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

November 2016

Hidden Springs Town Association

Open Space and Trails

Concept Master Plan Update

September 2016

Why a Concept Master Plan Update?

The town founders of Hidden Springs set out to create a community that people would be proud to live in. They established a set of Founding Principles, several of which mention and embrace the concept of open space set aside for wildlife, scenic values and recreation enjoyment.

A previous community planning effort conducted in 2009 helped establish specific priorities for improvements that would benefit the open space. Many of those improvements have been accomplished.

This Concept Master Plan Update is intended to revisit the open space and trail system, and set out a list of possible projects that can be considered by the Open Space Committee for recommendation to Town Council for implementation.

Process

To gather a comprehensive set of ideas from as many Hidden Springs residents as possible, the Open Space Committee took the following steps in generating input from the community:

1. An online survey was created and promoted throughout the community. This helped inform and focus the community workshop.
2. A community workshop was conducted on May 3, 2016 to generate additional ideas and provide feedback on core elements of the plan.
3. Further input and outreach occurred at the Great Outdoors of Hidden Springs event held May 21, 2016.
4. Continued review of project ideas occurred via the Open Space Committee's monthly meetings.

How to Use This Document

The list of projects that were identified during the various public input opportunities are contained in this document. They help set a general direction for the future of our open space. Upon adoption of this plan by the Hidden Springs Town Council, some projects may be able to move ahead, while others may need more analysis and follow up approval from Town Council and possibly Ada County as the Conservation Easement Holder. It is important to understand the current status of each project by checking with the Hidden Springs Town Association office.

NOTE: Just because a project is included in this document does not necessarily mean the project has been fully vetted and approved for implementation. Similarly, just because a project does not appear in the list does not preclude a community resident from proposing and championing the project as an additional community activity to the Open Space Committee, including a purpose and need statement.

Natural Open Space of Hidden Springs

One of the defining attributes of the Hidden Springs Community is how homes are nested around natural open space and close to trails. This was done by design. To assure that the future care and use of the natural open space was consistent with the original development plans and founding principles the developers of Hidden Springs established conservation easements on the natural open space that is owned by Hidden Springs. A da County holds the conservation easement and is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the terms of the conservation easement.

Most of the natural open spaces have a conservation easement attached to the property. Two areas are not encumbered by the conservation easement. One near Cougar Field and the other the Eastern Upland, east of Cartwright Road. Even though the two parcels are not encumbered by the conservation easement, it is intended that those lands be managed in a similar manner as the rest of the conservation open space lands.

Conservation Easement Management Plan

A management plan for the conservation easement lands was created in 2009. And revised slightly in 2015. The plan provides general guidance on managing specific attributes of open space in the following geographic areas:

1. Wetlands
2. Dry Creek Corridor
3. Currant Creek Corridor

4. Uplands
5. Farm and Orchard

Included in the Conservation Easement Management plan was detail on each of these areas. The trail system received much less attention at the time the management plan was created. Thus this Concept Master Plan update will focus on creating a more robust set of projects for the trails, while other natural resource attributes and geographic areas will be less emphasized to avoid covering the same ground as the Conservation Easement Management Plan. The two documents are meant to be complimentary.

Open Space Is An Important Community Asset, But We Love Our Trails

The founders of Hidden Springs identified open space and trails as important community assets during the initial planning of the project. To emphasize this importance the trail system was constructed in the very early phases of the development. The Conservation Easement Management Plan created in 2009 with slight revisions in 2015 did not identify specific goals for the trail system. At the same time the trails have become one of the most loved aspects of the Hidden Springs Community. Thus this document takes a closer look at the trail system than was done in the Conservation Easement Management Plan.

Due to the lack of stated goals for trails in the Conservation Easement Management Plan, this document will articulate specific goals, which were taken from the draft Ridge to Rivers 10 year management plan.

Trail System Goals

Due to the lack of stated goals for trails in the Conservation Easement Management Plan of January 2009, this document will articulate specific goals, which were based on those appearing in the draft Ridge to Rivers 10 year management plan. With the popularity of the Hidden Springs trails growing, it seemed important to address this missing component of the Hidden Springs open space.

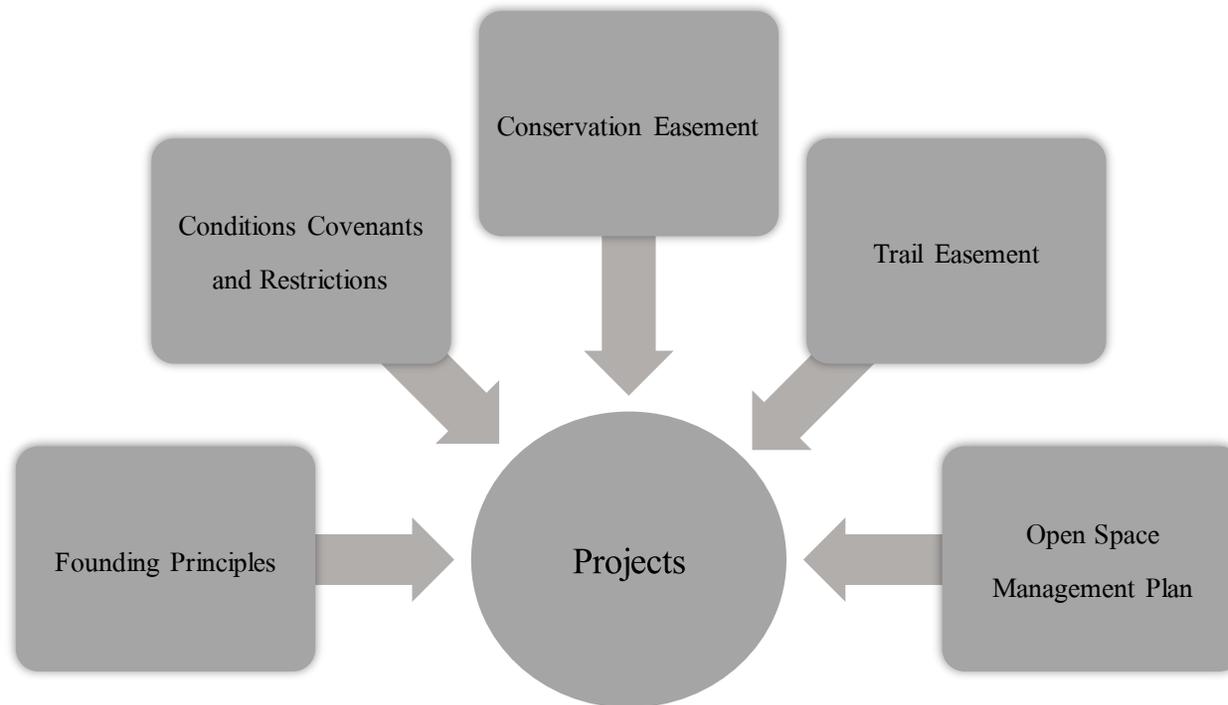
Hidden Springs Trail System goals:

1. *Provide a variety of trail experiences that welcome a range of recreational activities.*
2. *Ensure that trails allow for the enjoyment of and protection of natural ecologically healthy areas.*
3. *Make it easy for people of all abilities to access and enjoy trails in close proximity to where they live.*

4. *Promote partnerships, shared responsibility and a sense of community.*
5. *Maintain a safe and sustainable system balancing demand and expansion with available resources.*
6. *Encourage interconnection of the Hidden Springs Trail System with existing and future trails in the Dry Creek Valley and beyond.*
7. *Ensure that adequate provision is made for vehicle parking at or near trail access points while also minimizing the impact on nearby residents.*

Regulatory Framework

Open space projects do not exist in isolation. Requirements imposed in a number of documents blend together to provide the framework in which projects must be conceived and evaluated:



Project Implementation Process

For a project to move forward from initial conception these things are required:

1. A clear definition of the projects purpose and need as well as its scope.
2. Identification of project criteria articulated in this plan [see the list in paragraph I] .
2. Is consistent with the regulatory framework and HSTA Conservation Easement management plan.
3. Has dedicated resources or a champion willing to secure the resources to implement the project.
4. Has commitment/resources to maintain the completed project.
5. Is reviewed by the Open Space Committee with a positive recommendation to Town Council.
6. Be approved by the Hidden Springs Town Council. If project is within the scope of previous Town council direction, can be approved by Town Manager.

Setting Priorities

With limited resources to maintain open spaces, recreational trails and facilities it is important to have criteria that can be used to measure the viability and importance of various projects. The list below is intended to help guide community discussion and provide the Open Space Committee and Town Council with criteria to help weigh projects that may compete for limited staff attention and community resources. Each project should address how it:

1. Improves a safety hazard.
2. Protects habitat, reduces erosion.
3. Fixes an existing asset (trail, parking, signs).

4. Creates a new opportunity with a stated purpose and need.
5. Helps open space become more resilient or sustainable.
6. Has dedicated funds or resources to develop and maintain it.
7. Is generally supported by residents. [It is expected that there may be some level of opposition for every project. This should not dissuade decision makers from moving forward on a sound project that has been well vetted.]

Potential Projects

From the Open Space Survey and during the Open Space Workshop, the project ideas from community members gravitated toward several categories:

1. Connect trails of Hidden Springs to other parts of the foothills.
2. Make the internal trail system function better by adding additional trails that create more stacked loops, becoming more proactive in maintaining existing trails and fixing badly eroded or misaligned trails.
3. Improve habitat and combat noxious weeds.
4. Other ideas and policy suggestions.

Project Analysis

In the following section we present the ideas put forth by community members and provide some further analysis of how these projects fit into the overall regulatory framework of responsible open space management.

A. Connectivity Beyond Hidden Springs

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
1.Connect to Avimor	Connects HS to trails of Avimor	Generally yes. Needs further detail to assure minimal disturbance.	Does not conflict	3 Needs further detail.
2. Connect to Peggys Trail along Dry Creek	Connects HS trail system up Dry Creek.	Yes. Needs other owners approval	Does not conflict	3 In Cartwright Ranch plan.

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
3. Connect to Polecat, Seaman Gulch	Connects HS to other public trails and lands.	Yes. Needs other owner approval. Portions exist off HS. Will need to determine how to guide public use through HS open space.	Does not conflict.	3 Needs other landowners approval/easements
4. Cartwright Ranch to Cartwright Ridge.	Creates additional loops but is not on HSTA land	Yes. Involves other owners	Does not conflict	3 Needs other owner's approval.

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
5. Connect to Eagle Bike Park	Provide trail access to Eagle Bike Park from HSTA trails.	Is not contradictory. Involves other owners.	No reference.	3 Needs other owner's approval.
6. Downstream on Currant Creek	Connects to McFarland Crk Rd and north to future access to Avimor and south to Dry Creek	This is not on HSTA land and is a long range dream. It is privately owned as single residence and not likely to be opened.	NA	3 Needs other owners approval.

B. Southern Uplands - Trails

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
Repair or reroute portions of upper ridge and South Trail. Consider routing to access further north of Humphreys Way	Erosion prone and steep. Consider best option including leaving the currant alignment and providing maintenance.	Yes. Avoid unnecessary disturbance to rare plants and steep slopes. Make sure neighbors on Humphreys Way are supportive of South Trail reroute.	Yes.	1 Move ahead with analysis. If reroute, would need TC and Ada County approval.
Re-establish tread on Humphreys Trail	Trail was never bladed and is bumpy.	Yes, will make trail more enjoyable.	Yes.	1 Ready to implement.

Sewage lagoon whitetop	White top is taking over	Yes	Yes	1 Ready to implement
New trail near sewage lagoons.	Existing trail drops close to lagoons. A new sustainable trail will guide use away from lagoons and create additional loop.	Yes. Improves safety issue	Yes. Needs further refinement to avoid rare plants.	2 Concept Ready for detailed design and rare plant review. Design approved by Ada County
4. Re-establish Town Ridge trail	Trail was used and is on map, but needs realignment	Yes, will create more enjoyable trail for nearby residents	Yes.	2 Seek input from neighbors when detailed alignment is determined. If significant disturbance or new route, get Ada County approval.

C. Southern Uplands - Weeds / Habitat

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further
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				refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
Upper Ridge Aasae Onion protection	Assure trail reroute of upper ridge does not impact onion sites	Yes	Yes	1 Ready to implement

D. Dry Creek

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others

Weed control and habitat plantings	Cornerstone open space needs care. Consider shrub plantings in area where Id Power cut trees.	Yes	Yes	1 Continue weed control. Consider re-planting where Id Power cut trees.
Repair bridge south of parking lot	Bridge surrounded by water during high flows and inaccessible. Needs to be done in manner that does not require permits or large structures	Yes	Yes	2 Needs detailed design and funding approval.
Continue trail upstream and downstream	Dry creek and its trail are the heart of <u>H</u> idden Springs and continuing the trail will make it function better	Yes	Yes	3 Inquire with Cartwright Ranch as to timing of the trail development.

E. Wetlands

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others
HS Dr and Dry Creek Rd wetland weed abatement	The wetlands are being impacted by noxious weeds, Canada thistle, purple loosestrife.	Yes	Needs a detailed strategy.	1 Possible TC approval and allocation of resources
HS Drive Wetland management near homes	Reduce encroachment of cat tails onto adjoining lots.	Yes.	Needs a plan to avoid impact to wetland values	2 Details need to go to TC and resources allocated

Pond – Consider enlarging for fishing. Stock with fish	This would provide a unique feature to HS and its youth	Yes if done correctly	Needs a plan and further info.	2 Details need to go to TC and resources allocated. Ada county approval needed.
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F. Northern Upland - Trails

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others

Connect to Chuckar Butte trail from Currant Crk	Connects HS to trails of Daniels/Dry Creek. Creates more stacked loops	Yes. Needs to avoid road easement	Yes.	1 Has been approved by TC. Move ahead.
New trail from bottom of Redtail at Dry Creek Rd to near Bitterbrush at Cartwright Rd.	Mid-slope connection could provide better access to Chukar Butte Trail from existing parking area.	Generally yes, but visual impact should be reviewed.	Does not conflict. Need to refine purpose and need which could also determine what is built.	2 Revise final alignment and get TC and Ada Co approval and resource allocation
Connection from N Humphreys way to Landslide Meadow trail, south of Dry Creek Road.	Provides an off road access that is safer.	Yes.	Yes. Has potential for opposition. Refine purpose and need.	2 Determine if needed, refine alignment for TC and Ada Co. approval and resource allocation
'Slope Failure Spur' off Redtail to west.	Creates an additional loop in the northern uplands.	Yes. Will need Ada County approval on HSTA property and adjoining Ada County property.	Yes	2 Need T and. Ada County approval. Resource allocation.
Currant Creek wagon road and spur to Redtail	North of and parallel to Currant Creek. Helps create new stacked loop	Yes	Yes. Needs to be sensitive to visual values and the historic route which it may share above	2 Revised alignment for TC

	alternatives and makes Currant Creek trail function better		and parallel to Currant Creek.	approval. Ada County approval. Resource allocation.
Make the section of Red Tail trail between Deerpath and Sage Cr. Dr. an all-weather trail	Allows area residents to use this trail section when current dirt trail should be avoided. Highly used throughout the year.	Yes. Improves safety and sustainability of trail.	Does not conflict	3 May require some realignment. Needs approval from R2R. Resource allocation.

G. Northern Upland - Weeds and Habitat

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others

1. Significant white top on the front range of Rolling Hills and other spots within the Phase 8 development.	Combat invasive noxious weeds at opportune times	Yes	Needs a refined strategy	1 Resource allocation and then move forward
2. Significant infestation of sweet clover throughout Rolling Hills and in immediately adjoining common areas.	Combat invasive noxious weeds at opportune times.	Yes	Needs a refined strategy	1 Resource allocation and then move forward

H. Wildland Fire Threat Prevention and Mitigation - Firewise

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan 1= shovel ready 2=needs further refinement and OSC/HSTC/Ada Co approval 3= Needs action by others

No specific projects were identified				
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I. Other Projects or Identified Needs

Project Name	Purpose and Need	Complies with Regulatory Framework	Consistent with Conservation Easement Mgmt Plan	Status upon approval of this plan
1. Amphitheater in Orchard	Create a community gathering place for events.	Not specifically permitted or restricted in easement document.	No reference	2 Refine site plan for TC and county approval. Resource allocation.

2. Exercise course	Some find these helpful in staying active.	Yes	No reference	2 Refine site plan for TC and county approval. Resource allocation.
3. Increase awareness about responsible pet behavior. Dogs leashed where required, waste picked up, cats not allowed to roam freely.	Unmanaged pets have been reported. Owners need to better understand the rules and methods of being a responsible pet owner.	Yes	Yes	2 Need strategy and resource allocation
4. Frisbee golf course	Creating opportunities for youth and adults that encourages getting outdoors is consistent with HSTA desires and national movement to get more exercise and have fun.	Can easily comply, depending on location. Consider existing grassy areas in parks or in the Orchard	Does not conflict	2 Need a plan and location to start the discussion.

J. Projects that need more clarity

There were two other ideas proposed during the Open Space Workshop, but these ideas were not sufficiently detailed to allow inclusion in the analysis presented above. They were:

1. **Landslide Meadow dog loop or dog off leash park.** Better define purpose and need. Establish criteria for an appropriate place. This is not included on the map.
2. **Flow Trail:** Better define Flow Trail for those who may not know what this is. Define purpose and need. Establish criteria for an appropriate place. This is not included on the map.