

**Betasso Preserve Management Plan
Including the Benjamin Property**

**Summary of Initial Public Comments
(February – March 2008)**



Boulder County Parks & Open Space



April 2008

Project Background

Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department is in the initial phase of preparing a combined management plan for Betasso Preserve and the recently acquired Benjamin property (Figure 1). The combined management plan will be an update to the 1985 *Betasso Preserve Management Plan* and set the future management direction for both properties, which will be managed as one unit following completion of the plan. The purpose of the management plan will be to establish the vision, goals and objectives, and implementation strategies for the properties. These will be based on an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the existing natural and cultural resources, existing and potential future public use, public sentiment, the goals and policies of the *Boulder County Comprehensive Plan* and other relevant planning documents, and additional opportunities and constraints that come to light during the planning process.

Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property encompass a total of 1,175 acres of lower montane habitat within the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and offer a variety of open space values. The property consists of a mosaic of native plant communities and important wildlife habitat and movement corridors. Mule deer, mountain lion, black bear, and Abert's squirrel are just a small handful of the wildlife species that inhabit this landscape that is blanketed with Ponderosa pine woodlands, mixed Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests, open meadows with a mix of native and introduced pasture grasses, and riparian vegetation. On-site drainages include sections of Arkansas Gulch, Fourmile Creek, and a number of other unnamed, intermittent streams. In addition, the diverse and rugged topography, abundant scenic vistas, and the relative peace and quiet have made Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property a hub for recreational activities, especially for hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, and local equestrians. The open space also provides a piece of Boulder County history with its mining and ranching roots, as well as a grand outdoor classroom.

Currently, Betasso Preserve is open to the public seven days a week, sunrise to sunset. Three multi-use trails exist including the 3.2-mile Canyon Loop Trail, the 0.25-mile Bummer's Rock Trail, and the 1.25-mile Link Trail. Trails are open for hiking, mountain biking, trail running, and horseback riding. The Canyon Loop Trail is presently closed to mountain biking on Wednesdays and Saturdays to mitigate user conflict on the trail. Existing Betasso Preserve facilities include four parking areas, five picnic tables, one restroom, two informational kiosks, four benches, and a group shelter, which can accommodate 50 people.

For more information on Betasso Preserve, visit:

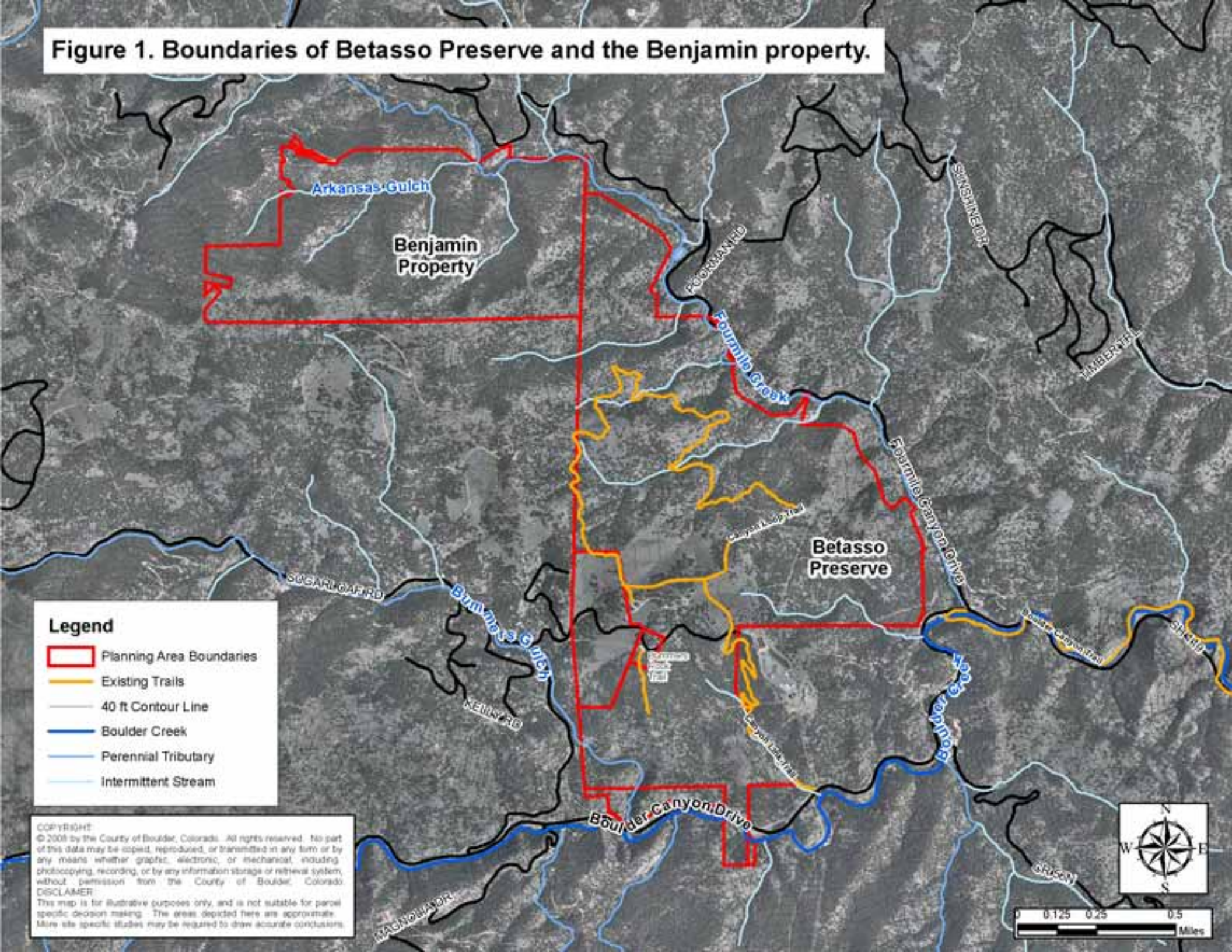
http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/recreating/public_parks/betasso.htm

To view the 1985 *Betasso Preserve Management Plan*, visit:

http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/management_plans/mgmt_plans.htm

Per the 2007 *Benjamin Property Interim Plan*, the Benjamin property is currently closed to the public pending the adoption of the combined management plan. Presently, the property has no official Parks & Open Space designated trails. However, a number of non-designated "social" trails exist on-site, which were created prior to the acquisition of the property by the County. These social trails are in fair to poor condition with many instances of erosion, downcutting, and

Figure 1. Boundaries of Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property.



braiding, especially on steeper slopes. The future of these social trails and the designation of new sustainable trails will be determined through the management planning process.

For more information on the Benjamin property, visit:

http://www.co.boulder.co.us/openspace/management_plans/Benjamin.htm

Project Timeline

Completed to Date: The first internal interdisciplinary staff meeting regarding the Betasso Preserve Management Plan including the Benjamin property occurred on December 18, 2007. Staff reviewed background information and discussed possible management directions for the properties, as well as brainstormed opportunities and constraints. Following this meeting, staff developed a draft vision statement, draft management goals and objectives, and a list of opportunities and constraints (Appendix A). These drafts were presented to the public along with other background information via Parks and Open Space's website and at two public open house meetings during February and March 2008 (see below for details).

Upcoming Events: During spring and summer 2008, staff will be conducting natural and cultural resource surveys and assessments of the project site. A consultant will also be selected to help determine potential new trail alignments based on the numerous opportunities and constraints for trails that the site presents. In addition, staff will begin preparation of the draft management plan during this time. It is anticipated that this draft plan including a draft trail layout will be completed in September 2008. At that time, a second public meeting, as well as a public comment period, will be scheduled to solicit comments on the draft plan. Following the public comment period, the draft plan will be presented to Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC), and then the final plan will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners. At this point, it is expected that the final management plan will be approved by January 2009.

Public Involvement to Date

Two public open house meetings were conducted and initial public input was gathered during February and March 2008. The first open house meeting took place on February 26th at the Boulder County Clerk & Recorder's office and was attended by 25 people. The second meeting occurred on March 4th at the Sugar Loaf Fire Protection District, Station #2, and was attended by 28 people. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the public with background information on the existing natural and cultural resources and public uses at Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property and to solicit comment on the draft vision, goals and objectives, and opportunities and constraints for the combined management plan. Parks and Open Space staff were on hand to answer questions and discuss issues with the public. In addition to receiving initial public input during the open houses, comments from the public have been received via e-mail and letters mailed to Parks & Open Space. As of April 1, 2008, a total of 277 comments have been received. The following is a summary of these comments.

Public Comments

Between February and March 2008, Boulder County Parks & Open Space solicited initial public comment on the management direction for Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property. Staff reviewed all 277 written comments that were submitted and transcribed all substantive comments that provided a recommendation, suggestion, request, or critique of the current and future management of the properties (Appendix B). The purpose of this summary is to provide Parks & Open Space staff involved with the preparation of the management plan and the general public with a list of the public's ideas, concerns, and other recommendations. All public comments will be taken into serious consideration during the preparation of the Betasso Preserve Management Plan (Including the Benjamin Property).

To help staff sort and analyze the initial public comments, comments were divided into the following ten comment categories:

- Management Plan – Draft Vision / Draft Goals and Objectives
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Public Use / Opportunities
- Trail Layout and Design
- Access
- Public Safety / Patrol
- Neighboring Properties
- Education and Outreach
- Facilities / Signs

Summary of Findings

The following are summaries of public comments for each of the ten comment categories.

Management Plan – Draft Vision/Draft Goals and Objectives. Many of the comments received regarding the management plan, including the draft vision and draft goals and objectives, were based on two questions that were asked on the public comment form distributed at the public open houses:

1. Do you agree with the draft vision for Betasso Preserve including the Benjamin property? If not, what is your vision for the future management of this property?
2. Do you have any specific comments regarding the draft management goals and objective?

The public's vision for the property ranged from keeping Benjamin property "natural" and "pristine" with little to no trail development to maximizing recreational opportunities to the extent possible. A number of citizens agreed with Parks & Open Space's vision of finding a balance between sustainable recreation and resource protection. One comment suggested that the properties not be managed as one, and therefore, have two separate management plans. A couple of people recommended not making any changes to the current Betasso Preserve

Management Plan. Several comments provided a vision for more regional trails including better connections from the City of Boulder to Betasso Preserve without the use of a car.

Natural Resources. A number of concerns were raised regarding the site's natural resources. Primary topics of concern were impacts of additional trails on wildlife species (especially mountain lions, black bear, foxes, and raptors), potential increase in human-wildlife conflict, and erosion from new and existing trails. One comment requested a multi-year study of the wildlife on the Benjamin property prior to moving forward with the management plan. A number of comments requested Parks & Open Space wait until the Colorado Division of Wildlife's (CDOW) "Front Range Cougar-Human Interaction Pilot Study: Feasibility Assessment of Field Techniques and Protocols, Phase II, Enhancing Assessment of Aversive Conditioning Techniques for Cougar-Human Interactions" is complete before preparing the management plan. One person refuted the idea that the area is "a pristine wildlife sanctuary" stating, "this area has seen European disturbance longer than any other area in Boulder County." Others noted that natural resources should be "paramount" in any management decision.

Cultural Resources. Two comments were received regarding the protection of the top of Arkansas Mountain, which is adjacent to the Benjamin property on the west boundary. The site, which is owned by the Running Horse Foundation and has a County-held conservation easement, is considered to be "sacred Native American land."

Public Use / Opportunities. "Public Use / Opportunities" includes comments that concern the management of users. A number of diverse comments, suggestions, and ideas on this topic were obtained from the public. These were divided into general management considerations, comments on specific user types, comments in favor of multiple use trails, comments in favor of single use trails, input on use and directional restrictions, and concerns regarding visitor numbers.

Suggestions on how to reduce trail congestion and user conflict were made in the written public comments. These included creation of single use trails, longer trails, continuing the one-way designation for mountain bikers and potentially including hikers and equestrians in this regulation, continuing the day use ban, and dispersing users over a well designed trail system. Multiple use trails were supported by a number of respondents. One comment stated, "Managed, fair, and equitable opportunities for multiple user groups must be implemented."

Although the current directional regulation for mountain bikes was praised by a small number of public comments, the closure of the Canyon Loop Trail to mountain bikers on Wednesdays and Saturdays had mixed response. Some want this regulation reversed, while others want it expanded. A few suggested alternative management schemes (e.g. bike-only days, hike-only days, etc.).

Finally, a couple of citizens raised concerns about increase use of Betasso Preserve and its impact on the trails and the surrounding roadways. Another person felt that increasing trails will spread the users out over a larger area, thus reducing conflict.

Trail Layout and Design. The public provided a diversity of options for trail layout and design. These included new single-track trails, a new loop trail, stacked loop trails, a “spider-work” of trails, and connector trails to adjacent roads (e.g. Fourmile Canyon Drive). One comment stated, “Connector trails can be of fairly short length and impact, yet provide access opportunities far beyond their length due to their ability connect and “multiply” the available options.” Some comments requested more technical trails especially on steeper terrain with switchbacks and “lots of climbing and descending”. One commenter asked that the Benjamin property and Betasso Preserve have separate trail systems. A couple of comments suggested the Boulder Canyon Link Trail be reassessed and improved to make it more sustainable and safe.

Access. Several comments focused on alternative access points into the property. The majority of these comments were in favor of additional access points, while others were not in favor of them at specific locations. Those that were in favor suggested access points at Fourmile Canyon Drive, Alaska Road / Logan Mill Road, and in the vicinity of Arkansas Mountain. Reasons for wanting additional access points included reducing the number of social trails and providing access from Betasso Preserve to a larger network of regional trails. In addition, many requested the County consider locating a safer access point from Boulder Canyon into Betasso Preserve compared to the current access point at the Boulder Canyon Link Trail.

Public Safety / Patrol. A number of public safety and patrol issues were raised. These included ensuring an emergency plan of operation was in place including an ingress and egress plan and roles and responsibilities. A number of comments dealt with wildfire and the use of prescribed fire. In particular, the public requested that Parks and Open Space conduct fire mitigation prior to opening the site to the public. Another patrol issue brought up by the public was enforcement of the mountain bike ban on Wednesday and Saturday. Other public safety concerns included the occurrence of abandoned mineshafts, potential mountain lion encounters by the public, very steep terrain, and the lack of enough space for equestrians to allow mountain bikers to safely pass.

Neighboring Properties. Several people expressed concern regarding impacts of trails on neighboring properties. Some suggestions for reducing impacts included placing trails a set distance from private property boundaries, installing property boundary signs, acquiring trail easements from private property owners, and educating trail users about private property boundaries.

Education and Outreach. A small number of comments were made regarding education and outreach. There were requests for classes on wildlife and vegetation as well as naturalist hikes. In addition, a couple of comments suggested volunteers could be used for trail construction, maintenance, and patrol.

Facilities / Signs. Some members of the public provided comments regarding facilities and signs. Many equestrians expressed concern about the lack of adequate space for horse-trailer parking. Others requested permitted camping sites, covered picnic areas, open firepits, a playground, and additional signs to help users better understand regulations. However, one citizen commented, “Does anyone realize that putting signs at “social trails” just draws tons of attention?”

Project Contact

For more information regarding the planning process for the Betasso Preserve Management Plan including the Benjamin property, contact:

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Appendix A

**Draft Vision
Draft Goals and Objectives
Opportunities and Constraints**

DRAFT

A Vision for the Future of Betasso Preserve Including the Benjamin Property

Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, provides a mosaic of native plant communities, important wildlife habitat and movement corridors, diverse and rugged topography, a hub for recreational activities, a piece of Boulder County history, a grand outdoor classroom, abundant scenic vistas, and a place to seek out peace and quiet. Its location between Boulder Canyon and Fourmile Canyon makes it one of Boulder County's most easily accessible open spaces. People from the surrounding communities, throughout the County, and beyond regularly use the site for hiking, mountain biking, trail running, picnicking, nature study, and horseback riding. With so many unique values and varied uses, Betasso Preserve has over the past 30 years provided a high level of visitor satisfaction and has helped preserve the rural landscape, cultural history, and natural state of Boulder County. With the addition of the Benjamin property, the open space will continue to be a unique and important piece of preserved land in the County, set aside for the preservation of natural and cultural resources, as well as public use and enjoyment.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space's vision for Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, is to protect, preserve, interpret, and restore the site's native ecosystems and significant cultural resources, while providing passive, sustainable, and satisfying recreational opportunities.

Parks and Open Space envisions core habitat areas provided at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, that are of sufficient size to help maintain and perpetuate native plant and wildlife populations, wildlife movement across the property and beyond, and the ecological processes that have shaped the area's landscapes and the species that inhabit them. It is Parks and Open Space's intent to manage the site based on the best available science and an adaptive management approach. Management activities will be selected that help perpetuate and restore healthy native ecosystems.

Integrated with resource protection, Parks and Open Space envisions high quality, passive recreational experiences that meet the needs of multiple user groups. The open space will continue to provide public access, picnic areas, and other developed facilities at the Canyon Loop and Bummer's Rock trailheads that are accessible for a wide diversity of individuals, families, and groups. As part of Parks and Open Space's vision, any potential new designated recreational trails will be designed and constructed to be safe and sustainable and to minimize environmental impacts, as well as limit impacts to neighboring properties. All trails will be managed and maintained to ensure their longevity and sustainability, as well as a high level of visitor satisfaction by multiple user groups.

The public will take pride and ownership in Betasso Preserve through Parks and Open Space's outreach and education efforts. Parks and Open Space envision educational programs that highlight the area's native flora and fauna, geology, hydrology, fire ecology, and Boulder County's ranching and mining history. Historic buildings and structures will continue to be preserved and interpreted. Finally, volunteers will play an important role at Betasso Preserve by helping to interpret and preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the site and with the management of the trail system.

Draft Goals and Objectives

Acquisitions Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Preserve key parcels of land adjacent to or within the vicinity of Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, wherever possible for wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and trail connections.

Objectives

- A. The potential for preservation of lands adjacent to or within the vicinity of Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, through acquisitions or conservation easements will be evaluated as opportunities arise.
- B. Acquisition of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) parcel located on the northeast corner of the Benjamin property will be considered as part of on-going land trade negotiations with the BLM.

Natural Resource Management Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Protect, preserve, maintain, and restore the ecological integrity of Betasso Preserve's including the Benjamin property's native ecosystems and the natural ecological processes that sustain them.

Objectives

- A. Natural resource management decisions and assessment of impacts to the resources from management activities and public use will be based on the best available science and accepted standards and practices.
- B. Viable populations of existing native plant and wildlife species will be maintained throughout the site by using appropriate management tools.
- C. A matrix of habitat types and movement corridors will be provided for wildlife species.
- D. Maintenance of native plant communities will be dependent on natural ecological processes, or prescriptions based on these processes, to the extent possible to allow ecological systems to function within their natural range of variability, thus encouraging healthy native plant communities.
- E. Plant communities that have been significantly disturbed or degraded by past or current land uses will be restored with appropriate native species where feasible and desirable.
- F. An adaptive management approach will be utilized to ensure the most effective management of natural resources.

- G. Sensitive resource areas, including any known or discovered nest sites for sensitive bird/raptor species, den sites for large mammals, or rare plant communities, will be protected from impacts from recreational use, trails, and other infrastructure.
- H. Prior to any land management activity, the effects of the activity on existing native plant and wildlife species will be taken into consideration to ensure negative impacts are limited.
- I. Excessive soil erosion along trails, facilities, and elsewhere will be kept in check via appropriate erosion control measures to minimize impacts to habitats and water quality.
- J. Biological data will be collected and analyzed on a regular basis to document existing plant and wildlife species, track trends in species composition and numbers, and assess the effects of management decisions.

Goal 2. Manage forested ecosystems within Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, within their natural range of variability, while ensuring public safety.

Objectives

- A. The density of woody vegetation within forested systems will be managed based on historic density levels and desired future conditions utilizing mechanical thinning and prescribed fire treatments.
- B. Mitigation measures will be pursued on-site to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire spreading to and from the site, while maintaining the site’s ecological integrity.
- C. Work with fire protection districts, adjacent landowners, and other agencies on cross-boundary wildfire mitigation.

Goal 3. Manage State and County listed noxious weeds and other undesirable non-native species throughout Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property.

Objectives

- A. An integrated pest management approach will be utilized to control and suppress non-native invasive species.

Cultural Resource Management Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Preserve historic buildings and structures within Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, important to the cultural heritage of the property and Boulder County.

Objectives

- A. Historic buildings and structures will be inspected and evaluated regularly for necessary repairs to prevent excessive deterioration.
- B. Historic buildings and structures will be protected from vandalism and looting.

Recreation/Trails Management Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Provide sustainable, passive recreational trails at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, for the use and enjoyment by multiple user groups, while limiting recreational impacts to natural and cultural resources and neighboring properties.

Objectives

- A. Potential new recreational trails will be designed and constructed to be safe and sustainable using recognized sustainable trail building standards and practices.
- B. All designated trails will be maintained to ensure their longevity and sustainability for the long-term use and enjoyment by the public.
- C. Impacts to neighboring properties from designated trails will be limited through the use of signs, fencing, and other means.
- D. User conflict on the trails will be monitored and assessed on a regular basis, and if it reaches an unacceptable level, addressed with appropriate measures such as additional educational programs, signs and brochures, regulations, and trail closures, among others.
- E. Although outdoor recreational activities carry some risk to the user, recreational trails will be designed, constructed, and maintained to ensure the highest level of safety possible, while still allowing for diverse and enjoyable trail experiences.
- F. Abandoned mine sites with open adits, shafts, or other dangerous conditions will be evaluated and if necessary properly closed with consideration for wildlife use prior to any public use of the Benjamin property to protect visitor safety.
- G. All social trails will be evaluated and potentially closed to the public and rehabilitated using generally practiced methods.
- H. The construction of non-designated social trails will not be permitted.
- I. Connections to regional trail systems will be considered as opportunities arise, and if desirable and feasible, will be pursued.

- J. Views along the trail system will be enhanced and preserved to the extent possible.

Goal 2. Maintain facilities and trailheads at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, in good condition so that they are accessible and usable by the general public.

Objectives

- A. Trailheads and parking access will continue to be provided at the current Canyon Loop and Bummer’s Rock trailheads.
- B. Upgrades to existing restrooms, picnic areas, kiosks, benches, and parking lots will minimize impacts to the environment and will maintain a natural and minimally developed look and feel.

Education and Outreach Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Provide natural and cultural history educational programs and information on-site for the public to help create understanding and an appreciation of the history and resources at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, and beyond.

Objectives

- A. Interpretive and outreach programs will be conducted on a regular basis highlighting the site’s flora, fauna, ecological processes, natural resource management activities, Betasso Homestead, and ranching and mining history.
- B. Additional interpretive materials and information will be provided to the public via kiosks, brochures, and interpretive signs.

Goal 2. Recruit and utilize volunteers to interpret and preserve the cultural and natural resources and help with the management of the trail system at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property.

Goal 3. Maintain open communication amongst Boulder County staff, outside agencies, neighbors, fire districts, and the public regarding management of Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property.

Patrol Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Ensure public safety at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, as well as the protection of natural and cultural resources.

Objectives

- A. Conduct regular patrols to mitigate violations and user conflicts.
- B. Identify, map, and regularly inspect all emergency access points and roads.

- C. Work with other emergency response personnel to identify possible landing zones and other evacuation routes.
- D. Work with neighbors and adjacent landowners to minimize trespass and social trails that cross private lands not otherwise granted by easement.

Research Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Encourage research at Betasso Preserve, including the Benjamin property, by POS staff and/or outside researchers to help formulate a better understanding of the resources present on-site and their response to various management scenarios.

Opportunities and Constraints for Management of Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin Property

The “opportunities and constraints” for management of Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property is a brainstormed list developed by staff and the public prior to developing the final management plan. It is a planning tool, whose purpose is to outline all possible management considerations (i.e. the opportunities) and all possible limitations and restrictions to this management (i.e. the constraints). The opportunities and constraints do not necessarily equate to goals and objectives or future management activities. However, they provide guidance and direction in developing the management plan, which in the end is a balance between the opportunities and the constraints.

Opportunities

Through Parks and Open Spaces’ ownership and management of Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property, the following opportunities arise...

Acquisitions

- The potential for additional acquisitions or conservation easements within vicinity of property for trail and habitat connections and protection of rural lands and scenic vistas
- The potential to acquire adjacent BLM parcel through ongoing land trade negotiations

Natural Resources

- The potential to preserve large blocks of intact, relatively undisturbed wildlife habitat
- The chance to protect wildlife movement corridors
- The opportunity to restore the structure, function, and species composition within disturbed or degraded sites including forests, grasslands and riparian areas
- The chance to control existing and introduced State and County listed noxious weeds and other undesirable non-native species
- The ability to continue to reintroduce fire where appropriate as a natural process and management tool
- The opportunity to protect water quality on site
- The potential to reduce erosion from designated trails, non-designated social trails, and other developed facilities
- The chance to conduct on-site vegetation mapping and wildlife surveys

Cultural Resources

- The potential to protect and preserve existing cultural resources
- The chance to conduct on-site cultural resource surveys and interpretation

Recreation/Trails

- The possibility to extend the Canyon Loop Trail into the Benjamin property as either a loop, out-and-back, or through trail.
- The possibility to evaluate a new loop trail through the historic complex of cabins, corrals, and barns.

- The chance to work with multiple user groups to develop a sustainable, equitable, and enjoyable trail system
- The option to reassess existing trail conditions within Betasso Preserve and improve any areas of concern
- The potential to assess the existing trailheads and parking areas for redevelopment.
- The option to reassess existing trail regulations including one way restrictions for mountain bikers and trail closure days for mountain bikers
- The potential to close and/or stabilize all unsustainable trails within the Benjamin property and Betasso Preserve
- The opportunity to potentially link Boulder Canyon Drive and Fourmile Canyon Drive via existing and potential new trails within Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property.
- The opportunity to evaluate future link to regional trail system
- The possibility to ride or hike to Betasso Preserve from Boulder without driving

Education and Outreach

- The possibility to interpret the natural history of both properties and the surrounding area including the area's native flora and fauna, geology, hydrology, and fire ecology
- The chance to interpret the cultural history of both properties and the surrounding area including Boulder County's ranching and mining history
- The potential to utilize volunteers to interpret and preserve the cultural and natural resources and help with the management of the trail system
- The opportunity to work cooperatively with the local fire protection districts and neighbors to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires
- The ability to work with neighbors, the public, and other agencies to improve management of the property

Patrol

- The chance to combine patrols at both Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin property
- The opportunity to work to minimize trespassing from and to neighboring private properties through signage and trail management.
- The potential to increase patrol in response to new or hazardous use patterns.

Constraints

Despite the many opportunities provided by Parks and Open Spaces' ownership and management of the properties, a number of constraints also exist including...

Acquisitions

- Key parcels for trails and/or wildlife habitat corridors may not be available for acquisition or easement from private landowners

Natural Resources

- Existing data on vegetation and wildlife at both properties is currently limited
- Initial vegetation mapping and wildlife surveys will not be completed until mid to late summer 2008 at the earliest

- Some impacts to natural resources due to trails and public use are unavoidable
- Stream/drainage crossings will be unavoidable if new trail is constructed
- Introduction of non-native plant species is likely unavoidable
- Majority of slopes within Benjamin and north portion of Betasso are greater than 20 degrees (>35%)
- Many of the more moderate slopes capable of supporting a sustainable trail including portions of the former Switzerland Trail grade are along riparian habitats
- Majority of soils have a “severe” erosion hazard rating for roads and trails per the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soils map

Cultural Resources

- Cultural resource survey on Betasso has not been completed and is not anticipated to be completed until mid to late summer 2008 at the earliest

Recreation/Trails

- Impacts to neighboring properties needs to be planned for and managed
- Limited ability to construct another trailhead, especially around Benjamin, based on ownership, topography, and road conditions
- New trail across the northern portion of Betasso Preserve and throughout much of the Benjamin property may be difficult and costly to construct, especially a loop trail, due to the topography and amount of rocks and boulders across the site
- Limited access points onto trail system may lead to the creation of additional illegal, unsustainable, and unsafe social trails
- Public use of existing social trails and creation of new social trails will need to be monitored and managed
- User conflict on trails will need to be monitored and managed through proper trail design, public education efforts, and staff patrol
- Safety of trail users can not be guaranteed due to the nature of outdoor recreation

Education and Outreach

- Interpretation activities involving Benjamin will be limited using only the current Betasso trailheads, due to the distance.

Patrol

- Limited access into Benjamin for patrol and emergencies
- Limited ability to control all trespass and social trail use

Appendix B
Public Comments Table

Table 1. Public Comments Received between February and March 2008 during the Initial Scoping for the Betasso Preserve (Including the Benjamin Property) Management Plan

COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Management Plan – Draft Vision / Draft Goals and Objectives (Note: The following questions were asked on the public comment form distributed at the public open houses: 1. Do you agree with the draft vision for Betasso Preserve including the Benjamin property? If not, what is your vision for the future management of this property? 2. Do you have any specific comments regarding the draft management goals and objective?)</p>	<p><u>Preservation Vision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My vision would be to leave it open for the animals, i.e. bear, mountain lion, and bobcats that <u>already</u> live there. • Keep it as natural and wild as possible. • I would like to see Benjamin kept pristine • I would prefer to see more natural & pristine areas. • I would like to say that it is my wish that the (Benjamin Property) be preserved as a mountain lion/bear/deer habitat. <p><u>Balance of Trails and Preservation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Betasso and Benjamin properties are large and can likely accommodate human users in a way that causes minimal disruption to wildlife. • I would enjoy continued appropriate development as possible proposed in the draft vision. • It is not purely a recreational area, it is not purely a wildlife preserve. It is both! <p><u>Recreational Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am very supportive of balance between preservation and recreation. • I hope to be able to have a long mountainous bike ride experience from home (including portions of Betasso and Benjamin) • I think the area should be available but promoted as a “remote” more rustic trail for more adventurous users! • Promoting more riding with more accessible trails to bikes, promotes the “Boulder Lifestyle”. • BCPOS should maximize the recreation experience in the area deemed appropriate (225 comments) • I see this property as Boulder County’s most significant opportunity to give the City of Boulder residents a quality mountain bike experience without the use of a car. (226 comments) • Looks good in principle – especially the possibility of connecting multiple trails in the area (Betasso, Switzerland, etc.) together • It remains an incredible park & I am sure the addition of Benjamin property & potential access for hikers / mtn bikers will truly be an asset and appreciated by trail users. I am confident that Boulder County Open Space can make a usable trail for all to access the Benjamin property. <p><u>Maintain Present Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would very, very much like the Betasso management plan to remain as it is. • Maintain present plan on Betasso. <p><u>Other Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management plan as drafted is hard to object or agree with due to the lack of specifics and broad generalities. • Sounds like if done right this could be wonderful. • Strongly agree with (draft vision) – I think you have done a great job • The language in the “Draft Vision for Betasso Preserve and the Benjamin Property” is a bit overly directive “The public will take pride and ownership in Betasso Preserve...” My vision is very habitat based. • Broad strokes but thoughtful considerations • I do not agree that the two properties should be managed as one property. They are very different pieces of land and should each have their own management plan. • The two properties are vastly different in character and the Benjamin land can not sustain the type of recreation i.e. biking that is on Betasso
<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p><u>General Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe in the “Natural Resource Opportunities” section as paramount. You cannot have both natural resource and recreational opportunities equally developed. By developing fewer trails and less access you can protect the resources. • These uses (horses and mountain biking) are not really passive & can have negative impact on plant, wildlife, & terrain • Please keep our natural resources – natural • I would also like to suggest that even if you put all new trails in there (Benjamin), please leave some areas alone for a nature preserve. • Maybe create a board walk for pedestrians only so that the vegetation won’t be disturbed. • I want to point out that this area has seen european disturbance longer than any other area in Boulder County. To characterize the area a pristine wildlife sanctuary is ludicrous. This is public property in a semi-rural area.

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Natural Resources (continued)</p>	<p><u>Wildlife</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin: This should be left as a nature preserve with <u>no users</u>. This is mountain lion breeding ground. • Don't wish to see the loss of more habitat. This leads to animal / human conflict. • Why put the animal / human factor in any more close proximity than it already is. Your own maps show the Benjamin property as where all 3 of these animals (black bear, mountain lion, and bobcat) live or move thru. We do not need to add humans. • I feel you are setting up the animals & recreationalists for more interaction if you open up this property to the public. Unfortunately the animals always <u>lose</u>. Please protect the land & animals & let them have this place unencumbered by us. • It is important to note that wildlife can and does exist even within the city limits and does flourish • As for wildlife, hopefully the trails could be constructed with minimum impact to wildlife. • This area is habitat for lions, bear, foxes, rabbits, eagles, hawks and other wildlife citizens of the Colorado foothills. Any new trails should avoid proximity to habitats of mountain lion and bear and other wildlife • Bear families make their homes in various parts of the Benjamin property, hibernating in mine shafts and other sequestered places on the property, and foraging for food during the summer months. They should not be disturbed. • The Benjamin Open Space Property is residence to a number of mountain lions, and non-resident mountain lions regularly cross this property. Lions lairs are also found throughout the Benjamin property, in abandoned mine shafts and elsewhere. These should not be disturbed. • I suggest that if possible the Benjamin Open Space Property be left as mountain lion habitat, or at a minimum that any decision about the management of the Benjamin Open Space Property be made only after the CDOW Mountain Lion Study is completed. • Both the Benjamin and the Betasso areas are home to rabbits, foxes, eagles, hawks, and numerous other wildlife. It is an invaluable and irreplaceable habitat for them and I hope that it will not be altered in any way that adversely affects them. • The Benjamin land is very steep and heavily wooded. It is still home to mountain lions, bears, and deer. As such, the Benjamin Property (BP) should not be developed with a system of trails. The wildlife have to have their own sanctuary. • There would be numerous encounters with dangerous wildlife, resulting in either harm to humans, or the wildlife being driven towards more populated areas. • Boulder County Open space spent many years studying the elk herd on Caribou ranch. I think this was a prudent decision and equal care should be given to the Benjamin property. • The wildlife will be threatened (by trails on Benjamin) and move even closer to homes and pets and represent a threat to them and people. • While it was stated that occupied dens would be left in place, it was also noted elsewhere that existing mines would be closed. Since some of these mines serve as dens, I'm curious as to how both of these intentions can be served. <p><u>Soils / Erosion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have seen extensive erosion on the Benjamin Property due to misuse by bicyclists and motor bikers riding roughshod over the hillsides. • Consider whether more bike traffic will accelerate trail erosion on the Betasso Loop, making it more <u>rocky, ankle-twisting</u> over time. • The terrain (within Benjamin) is not conducive to building trails...due to the steepness of the land, it would quickly deteriorate with erosion. • We must consider erosion, and manage it to the best of our ability. <p><u>CDOW Mountain Lion Study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing should be done until the wildlife studies including the DOW mountain lion study are completed. It is well known and clear that the Benjamin property is home to many wild animals and trail cutting and opening should take this into consideration. • I would like to request that Boulder County Parks and Open Space delay formulating a plan for the Benjamin property until the CDOW Mountain Lion Study is complete... With the hysteria and concern of residents within Boulder about encounters with lions it only seems logical to study the lions movements on the Benjamin property BEFORE spending millions of dollars putting in a trail in this area which is known to be heavily used by lions and bears. • Wait for the results of the study on the wildlife before introducing changes to their home. • Has anyone asked the gentleman in charge of the mountain lion study how working on trails in the Benjamin Property will affect his study? • I understand that the county is studying the wildlife with radio collars. I can only ask that you wait until this study is done, and to please keep the wildlife's best interests at the forefront of any decisions about the use of this land. • The results of (the CDOW Mountain Lion Study) may be critical for the design of any plans to reduce human-mountain lion interaction in the Boulder County area, including incursions of lions into the local cities and towns. These results would surely be corrupted by a change in the populations visiting the Benjamin and the Betasso properties.

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<p>Cultural Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the top of Arkansas Mountain is the Running Horse Foundation land, which abuts the Benjamin Open Space. This is sacred Native American land and it should be protected from violation. Two county signs are presently in place adjacent to the Running Horse Foundation land and the private property adjoining. These signs are vague and misleading, as there is no mention that the tiny piece that the county owns is landlocked by private property. • The top of Arkansas Mountain is the Running Horse Foundation land and it must be protected.
<p>Public Use / Opportunities</p>	<p><u>General Management Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed, fair, and equitable opportunities for multiple user groups must be implemented. • Increasing the riding area like that and having multiple access points would certainly reduce the congestion of bikers making it much more pleasurable for all involved and will also make it less impactful to the land. • Making the trail a one-way is a huge improvement in reducing trail conflicts not only between cyclists, but most of all between cyclists and hikers. • In its current configuration Betasso is fun but too short. This causes riders to do multiple laps in order to get a good ride in. The addition of a rideable route from town and a loop in the Benjamin property would eliminate this need and spread out trail users. • As a regular of Betasso, most riders have to do multiple laps and additional mileage will lessen the congestion on the current trails. • Dispersing users across a well-designed trail system is the best way to reduce user conflict. Stacked loop trails are a great way to do this. • I also believe a stacked loop system incorporating new trails in the Benjamin section greatly reduce the number of encounters and potential for conflict. • Increase use may also widen the Loop trail, since people tend to ride and walk around exposed rocks and muddy spots. • Trails are a management tool; they take people where they want to go, and if properly designed, they keep people away from areas we don't belong. Trail design can go a very long way towards reducing user conflict and providing a high quality user experience for all. • The views from Arkansas Mt are the best ones on the property. Having access to them is something that should be a priority of the new management plan. <p><u>Comments Regarding Use Type</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The less mountain bikers the better. • Please consider the impacts on the Betasso Loop Trail of connecting mountain bike trails from the Benjamin property, in terms of hiker experience and also trail condition. • Please do not add any more reasons for mtn bikers to encroach on these trails. • Please consider allowing mountain bike use on the newly acquired Benjamin property near Betasso Preserve. There is a critical shortage of trails open to mountain bikers in the county and additional mileage will be used and appreciated by the large cycling community. • I encourage you to keep provisions for Hiking and Mountain Biking trails in these areas. • Boulder County is a great destination for outdoor enthusiasts and trail systems, both existing and proposed, should be kept accessible to all user groups. • Betasso is the only real mountain biking in Boulder accessible via bike, and I very much would like to see it managed in the future as an important recreational resource for local mountain bikers. • I think Boulder residents should have a mountain biking experience straight from town. Betasso seems to be the only option. • I would still like to ask that you consider equestrians in your planning. • As a BMA member I want to see bikers have the ability to ride from town North and West to other trails and dirt roads. • Access to Open Space by equestrians <p><u>Multiple Use Trails</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really want to see multiple use trails that connect to other trail systems and provide a great environmental and recreational experience for bikers, horses, hikers, and dog walkers. • First consideration for trail development should be multi-use (bike, ped, horse) • Use non-motorized – mountain bike / hike / equestrian /cross country skiing • Please consider unrestricted multi use for the Betasso / Benjamin property. • Please add new shared-use trails on the Benjamin Property. Ideally, these would replace the unsustainable social routes currently in use. I see this as an opportunity to mitigate environmental impacts of poorly designed trails and disperse users over greater miles of trail.

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Public Use / Opportunities (continued)</p>	<p><u>Single Use Trails</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider single use trails. • Why not use all this wonderful property to create <u>separate</u> trails for the bikers? • If one can dream big, separate trails would be <u>ideal</u>. • (Consider) creating bike-only and hike-only trails at Benjamin and Betasso • I would like to suggest that two trails be built so that mountain bikers can have (and maintain) their own trail and not conflict with hikers and equestrians at all. • The preferred characteristics of a mountain bike trail are not necessarily the same as the preferred characteristics of a horse and / or hiking trail. Mountain bikers like to go up and down steep trails, while horses and people prefer to zigzag up and down a hill. • I would like to see the creation of several biking-only trails, ie no horses...and no pedestrians. • Single-use trails should be equitable – if no bike on one trail, then no ped on another. <p><u>Restrictions / Regulations</u></p> <p>Use Restrictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider Weds/Sat bike exclusion • Not sure if already in place, but ban horses • Please restrict hikers 2 days a week just to be fair to all users. • Not in favor of bike-exclusions from local trails. • Really appreciate days when mt. bikers don't have access – would like that to <u>continue</u>. • Betasso: <u>No</u> bikes on <u>Wednesday</u> & <u>Saturday</u>. This has worked well. • Benjamin: <u>no users</u> • Do not restrict public access on the public lands. • I like the present management plans for Betasso, especially no bikers on Wednesday and Saturday • I understand that Boulder County Parks and Open Space is reconsidering this policy and considering going back to the dark ages of allowing mountain bikers to use Betasso and the Benjamin property 7 days a week. This is a HUGE MISTAKE. • If it is not possible to build another trail in Betasso, then PLEASE KEEP THE MOUNTAIN BIKER RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE, for safety and recreational pleasure of hikers and equestrians. • My biggest concern is the possibility of you removing the restrictions that closes Betasso to mountain bikers for two days each week. • I would like to propose that the days closed to mountain bikers be increased to three so it's more of a fair split than just two. • We would like to encourage BCPOS to eliminate the day bike ban which closes the area to cyclists two days a week. Trail design does a better job of managing user conflict than restriction. We encourage BCPOS to disperse the users to reduce the conflict (222 comments) • I do not have an issue with the current 2-day limitation on bike access - as long as it remains only 2-days per week • Look at Centennial Cone, where hikers and bikers are given alternate weekend days all to themselves. It's a great plan and works out well. • The delimiting of certain days where I can hike without bikes works for me, but I do not want to see any expansion of the limitation of bikes using the property. • Betasso should be open to bikes 7 days a week. • If you have to keep the Bikes off the trails 2 days a week (or lessen them) then maybe consider a no-parking-you-have-to-ride up policy? That would encourage alternative transportation and spread the trail users out. • Separating in time, (mountain biking) use of the trails as was done in Betasso is mandatory. I have heard that you may be changing the Betasso rules. Don't do it! • I would also like to see an elimination of the ban on bikes on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I believe that user conflicts would be alleviated with trail design rather than bans. • I do not believe bikes should be restricted from the trails at Betasso. • The plan should not allow for mountain bikers to encounter horses on established horse trails. Perhaps the plan should allow access on separate days, or on separate trails. • Since this is an opportunity to start from a blank slate would recommend limiting or preferentially excluding entirely the use of horses & mountain bikes in the Benjamin property. • I suggest that the current restrictions on the use of the Benjamin/Betasso area be maintained, or even increased, that access by mountain bikers be limited to two or three days a week, and further that the rules be enforced.

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Public Use / Opportunities (continued)</p>	<p><u>Restrictions / Regulations</u> Use Restrictions (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wed/sat closure is not helping the conflict between users, and only concentrates cyclists during the other 5 days of the week. • I support the mountain biking ban on certain days for this property. I am not sure it will minimize the potential conflict, but it is a measure of good faith for mixed uses for the trail. • If the County must continue with a restrictive schedule for access, I urge adoption of the policy used by Jefferson County at the Centennial Trailhead. In this system, one weekend day is only for hiking and the other weekend day is only for bicycling. • There are numerous hiking trails in Boulder and only one place to mtn. Bike. Please make it available on Saturdays, since I go to church on Sundays. • It was disheartening when Betasso became closed to biking two days a week, yet remained always open to pedestrians. It seems only fair that if you close a resource completely to one user group for some of the week, that user group should get exclusive access some other time in the week. • Please reassess the current policy prohibiting bicycling on Wednesdays and Saturdays. • When there is more "open" space, i.e. when the horse and cyclist can see each other, the interaction does not present as much of a problem (e.g. when riding in open space in north Boulder). But due to the limited sight distance in Betasso, I truly think it is best to allow some days when the bicyclists don't have to worry about pedestrians or riders and days when the pedestrians and riders don't have to worry about cyclists. • I also strongly believe that this policy (mtn. bike ban) should be instituted with the Benjamin property in order to keep consistency and avoid confusion. • I would like to request that the current closures to bikes on Betasso Open Space be continued and perhaps even increased. <p><u>Directional Restrictions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-direction on Cyn Loop is fine w me! • I really like the 1-way biking rule. • First, I would like to say that the directional travel requirements that change periodically are a great step. <p><u>Visitor Numbers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will likely be demand for mountain bike use on the Benjamin Property and a desire to connect to the Betasso Loop Trail. The effect would likely be more mountain bike use on the Betasso Loop and a concomitant increase in "rogue" riding on the Loop on no-bike days. • The idea of expanding the trail system at Betasso will not only provide a great outlet for all types of cyclists, it will ease the amount of traffic on the current Betasso trails. • The introduction of new populations of visitors to this open space will likely cause traffic problems on Four Mile Canyon and on Sugarloaf Road. These are narrow mountain roads with little opportunity for widening, and any further congestion will degrade their usability and cause traffic jams. One solution is to allow classes of users on alternate days.
<p>Trail Layout and Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do not bring the trails down to "your" level, please bring "your" level up to the trail (don't dumb down trails!!!) • New trails should be narrow single track (not cut with a bulldozer but hand built – just ask BMA for volunteers) • Switchbacks and lots of climbing and descending would be good – the slopes on the Benjamin lend themselves to this. • Please consult professional trail builders when planning the trail so that you build something that is technical, fun, and sustainable. • New trails: nested loop system – also safe, sustainable • Use extensive local trail design & construction knowledge to deal w potential erosion, steep slopes, etc • Definitely in favor of developing connections w other OS properties & regional trails • Need loop trail on Benjamin – open to horses! • Expanding & connecting the MT bike accessible <u>single track</u> (not dirt road) in this area would be fantastic. • I would prefer that a mountain bike / hiking trail be added to the Canyon Link Trail, so that the property could be enjoyed by these groups • Loop trails to decrease congestion over out and back trails • Construction / restoration of a loop trail • (Consider) not connecting Benjamin bike trails with Betasso Loop • Can trails (within Benjamin) be opened without addressing all the "unsustainable" pieces immediately?

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Trail Layout and Design (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Benjamin property should have a reasonable balance of trails. • I would like to lend my support to allowing bikers to access certain, sustainable sections of the Betasso Preserve and Benjamin Property. Particular attention should be given to “connector” trails; ones that allow the Benjamin property to connect between Betasso and Arkansas Mountain. • Connector trails can be of fairly short length and impact, yet provide access opportunities far beyond their length due to their ability connect and “multiply” the available options. A connector trail to 4 Mile Canyon would allow remarkably long loop journeys, but only minimal/moderate trail length in Benjamin. • Build new sustainable singletrack trails to the North and West to the Benjamin property and connect Betasso trails to these to create a greater experience (see Heil Valley Ranch for example); stacked loops are fun (229 comments). • It is important to consider that users value connecting one trail system to another. (such as what is currently happening at Heil Valley Ranch with the Picture Rock Trail) (226 comments) • There are a few sections (of existing trails in Benjamin) that are in need of some erosion control but most of it is fine as is. The trails are difficult but mountain bikers actually like technical challenge. Please do not let trail difficulty become a limiting factor to bike access. • Currently, social trails exist on the Benjamin property that may be able to be converted to managed trails. • Capitalize on the technical challenge that steeper trails in the Benjamin property can provide to trail users. Trails can be built in a sustainable manner in these areas utilizing switch backs and other techniques. Steeper technical trails utilizing these techniques discourage excessive speeds for mountain bikers and can thus allow for multiple user groups in a safe manner. • When planning new trails and the reclamation of existing trails, consider connections between trail systems as a way to increase quality user experience on BCPOS trails. • Make the connections clean and multiple, a certain spider-work of trails can make the development very interesting and can provide many alternative routes. • Please consider building a connector trail between the Canyon Loop Trail and any future trail network in the Benjamin Property...An additional benefit of this connector would be a reduction in the number of laps most bicyclists ride on the Canyon Loop Trail. Again, another method of reducing the number of encounters. • I'd like to see BCPOS build new singletrack to connect the Benjamin property to Betasso for more riding. • I would love to see expanded opportunities for narrow (singletrack) shared-use trails at Betasso. • The lower section of the connector trail badly needs a redesign and improvements. • The Benjamin property should be developed with a system of stacked loops, allowing a variety of experiences. They should be designed in a way that is sustainable, and safe. No long downhill straights, etc. (The Pipeline Trail (Boulder Canyon Link Trail) is a classic example of an unsustainable and unsafe trail.) • Create new sustainable trails onto Benjamin property that are technical and challenging, to not only fit in with what the historic use was, but to allow users that want to seek out a longer journey something that is rewarding to them. This will also disperse users throughout the entire area, helping to alleviate any user conflict. • The best way to eliminate concerns about cyclists shuttling to the top using a vehicle is to create trails that have elevation gains along with losses from one access point to the other. This way it is not possible to access the trail at one point and descend all the way to an exit point, such as what is currently possible on the Betasso Link trail.
<p>Access</p>	<p><u>Alternative Access Points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent excessive traffic at the Betasso Park Preserve it would be ideal to have at least 1 or maybe 2 access / parking points • Connection to Betasso/Benjamin via 4 mile canyon drive would be good – safe riding from Boulder. • Trail access from Betasso, Alaska, Logan Mill / Arkansas mtn, and 4 mile if possible • I urge you to provide as much access as possible on this newly acquired land • It would also be nice to have more than one access point for the trails so that you can link up different rides. • I believe there is potential for additional access points along Four Mile Canyon Road, on either side of Poorman Road. Please consider adding primitive trailheads (parking spots unnecessary) at one or two locations along Four Mile Canyon. These trailheads could provide access to the Canyon Loop Trail and future trails in the Benjamin section. • I would really appreciate the opportunity to jump onto the trail system at a point from four mile canyon, or a safer access point than the current “connector” trail provides. (Boulder) Canyon is always busy with traffic, and while a few do drive there, it is really not necessary. • Considering that I am in favor of new access points to Betasso to allow bikers and hikers different and closer points to access the property. • As a long term goal, BCPOS should pursue a ‘no parking’ access point from the top of Arkansas Mountain (227 comments) • If additional trails / access is developed on the Benjamin property I would actually prefer no official trailhead / parking lot be built

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<p>Access (continued)</p>	<p><u>Alternative Access Points (continued)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create alternate access points. This gives users the opportunity to create a varied experience rather than one that is always the same. The "historic use" of the Benjamin property's social trails was part of a much greater trail system that included the use of county roads, old mining roads, forest service trails and roads, and others, that not only enabled riding from your house without the use of a car, but also allowed for a connection between Nederland and other ridding options to the West & North of Boulder. Alternate access points create differing usage patterns. These points of entry to the new sustainable trail system need to be designated as legal access points. We encourage BCPOS to eliminate parking at these points to relieve neighborhood concerns. (229 comments) • Alternative access points are needed to allow the surrounding area residents, in the Crisman area and the top of Arkansas Mt, legal access and reduce the number of social trails that could possibly arise if they are not given access options. They have historically been use to accessing this area in the past and I do not see it stopping. • The pursuit of 2 access points in the Crisman area seems unnecessary, if a trail could connect Alaska rd with Betasso. Historically the reason for the trail onto Fourmile rd at the bend was because the trail along Arkansas Gulch ended at that point. One access point in the Crisman area is all that is needed to satisfy access issues in that area. Alaska rd makes the most sense, being that it is a legal access point to the property and no other property would have to be aquired, and it is a historic access point to the property. <p><u>Boulder Canyon Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten the gap between the Boulder Canyon Trail and current Betasso access. The section of canyon road (CO119) that cyclists have to travel is dangerous. The Pipeline Trail is unsustainable in its current configuration. Please investigate and develop an access point(s) that gets bikes off the highway and on to open space sooner. (227 comments) • Find a way to connect the end of the Boulder Canyon bike path with the Betasso trail system via trails instead of roads. • Safe bike / hike / bus access from Boulder will reduce need for parking @ trailheads. • Consider trail access from Boulder Canyon via the route of the old Sugarloaf wagon road that came up from near the intersection of 4-mile canyon and Boulder canyon. • Betasso is the <u>only</u> MT bike trail available in Boulder that one can ride to, and hence access without a car. • I would highly value better access from town, with minimal cycling on the dangerous Boulder Canyon roads. • I would love to see a connector trail that allowed Betasso to be ridden from town without having to ride the road in Boulder Canyon. The more trails that can be safely ridden without driving the better. • Improved access for cyclists should also be developed as I have many friends who do ride from town to access the trails at Betasso Preserve. <p><u>No / Limited Alternative Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do not connect trails from 4mile to Betasso. • Keep all access points away from Arkansas Mountain Rd and all Sugarloaf properties. • All parking and access from Betasso. • We live on Alaska Rd. and want to make sure that there is <u>no</u> auto traffic on our road leading to the Benjamin Property.
<p>Public Safety / Patrol</p>	<p><u>Emergency Access / Situations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency ingress and outgress...This is naturally of general and specific concern. There are very few opportunities available given the nature and placement of the Benjamin property. I'm not sure how users can be protected and served given a very specific lack of emergency ingress and outgress. • Users of this area are subjected to various hazards, such as steep terrain, hidden mineshafts, predators, etc. Because of the inaccessibility of many areas, rescue efforts will be seriously impaired. The placement of areas open for public access and the feasibility of emergency rescue operations in those areas should be carefully considered. Rescue efforts in this area are currently done by the Sugarloaf Volunteer Fire Department, which is paid for by the Sugarload property owners. This puts the burden of rescuing mountain bikers and others unfairly on the Sugarloaf residents. A very thorough and complete rescue plan of operations needs to be considered and vetted prior to the reopening of the Benjamin property. <p><u>Wildfire / Prescribed Fire</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfires are a big concern in the mountains and policing the area will be essential service (as) the added use brings additional problems • One of the opportunities listed in the presentation was the opportunity for working with natural fire burn. As a local resident and property owner, this is, as I'm sure you imagine, of HUGE concern!! This concept needs to be thoroughly vetted and explained to residents before ANYTHING like this can be implemented!! • The Benjamin Property has many north slopes with heavy fuel loads. I didn't see any planning for fire mitigation or concern for this potential hazard.

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
<p>Public Safety / Patrol (continued)</p>	<p><u>Wildfire / Prescribed Fire (continued)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of the steep and heavily wooded terrain on the Benjamin/Betasso property, especially on the Benjamin property, extreme fire hazard exists, which will only increase with human access and the invasion of pine beetles. This presents a serious threat to the residents of the Four Mile Canyon and Sugarloaf areas. A request was made by the Four Mile Fire Chief that proper fire mitigation be done in these areas before any public access is allowed, which work was started but never completed. No trails should be put in until proper fire mitigation is completed by the county • With the influx of additional people utilizing Betasso and the Benjamin property I believe it is of vital concern for Open Space to rethink the current approach being used for controlled burns. I believe it needs to be part of the Management Plan, and I also believe that meetings on this topic need to be held between Open Space and Sugarloaf and Four Mile residents. <p><u>Enforcement Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From what I have seen you have not been able to manage / control bikes on Betasso. How can you manage them on this additional land. They should have some repercussion for being there on Wed/Sat. • More supervision on Wed & Sat of amongst bikers themselves to not abuse the guidelines. • Creating more entry points to the Betasso Loop will likely make the no-bike day rule <u>more difficult to enforce</u> <p><u>Other Potential Hazards</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Benjamin property in particular is pitted with abandoned mine shafts, which pose potentially lethal hazard to anyone who should fall in. Thus any new trails should avoid proximity to the numerous mine shafts that populate this area. • If the mountain lions are disrupted local residents, especially children, are placed in very real danger. And so will anyone utilizing the Betasso/Benjamin Property. I would suggest that it be considered that the areas where mines are known to exist, as well as the areas where dens are known, be made OFF LIMITS to hikers, bikers, humans in general. Needless to say, any paths or picnic areas should be placed as far away as possible from these areas. • If trails are put through the Benjamin property, children, bikers, and hikers using the trails on this property will inevitably come into contact with mountain lions. The design of any areas of public access should minimize the opportunity for such contacts. These areas are best placed in the region between Four Mile Canyon and Betasso, as the other end of the Benjamin property is pitted with mine shafts and populated by mountain lions. • It (the Benjamin property) is very steep terrain that opens it to more injuries or incidents by its nature. • As an equestrian, there is no place to get a horse out of the way of a mountain biker speeding down hill on that narrow steep loop trail.
<p>Neighboring Properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish private property boundaries with signs. • Allowing bikers on Benjamin will lead to conflicts between bikers & homeowners. • This is now public property and the neighbors should not have undue influence regarding the uses of the property. • If we allow the BP (Benjamin property) to be developed with biking and hiking trails, the residents of Weaver Rd. will be impacted greatly. • All private property easements should be purchased! No lawsuits or right of way claims! • We know that our neighborhood (Mountain Meadows/Mountain Pines) is an access to Betasso and the Benjamin property since as residents we have been using trails to access these properties for decades. We do not want people who do not live here to be using our neighborhood to access these properties because they have no respect or consideration for those of us who live here. • You will need to find ways to manage the private land that is adjacent to Benjamin and prevent bikers from choosing Weaver Dr. as an alternative trail to Sugarloaf. • An education plan must be in place to delineate public & private property with signage visible to mark the borders of properties. Maps need to be made clear about the borders. • Any complaints from local residents can be easily mitigated through educational programs and environmentally sound trail design. • The property owners adjacent to the Betasso and Benjamin properties oppose bike paths almost universally, but should Open Space nonetheless choose to build such paths, it would be best if the paths be designed in such a way that would make it impractical for mountain bikers to exit these paths and cross private property. • Those of us living in the Mountain Meadows/Mountain Pines subdivisions do not want mountain bikers to be parking their cars on our narrow neighborhood streets • The Interim Plan adopted 9/11/07 is flawed. On page 6 it says 2.2 <u>Property Access Alaska Road</u>...A proliferation of vehicles in this area could potentially complicate access to nearby residences.” It <u>would</u> complicate access on Alaska which is a one and a half lane road in the best of times. • I hope that the plan takes care not to cause or invite any kind of damage to the Benjamin or neighboring properties, such as public invasion, soil erosion, trash, injury, or other damage • I would hope that any Open Space management plan would maintain a status that is at least as favorable to neighboring properties as the status they enjoyed under the Benjamin ownership. • Where the Benjamin and Betasso properties share boundaries with private property, the POS should post clear signs showing clearly where property is private. • If trails are set distant from private property lines, intrusions on the privacy of properties neighboring the Betasso and Benjamin open space will be minimized.

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COMMENT CATEGORY	PUBLIC COMMENTS
Neighboring Properties (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the neighbors on Weaver Road, in Four Mile Canyon and in Mountain Meadows have diminished use of their properties due to the removal of the Benjamin or Betasso areas as buffers against public invasion, owners in these areas may have to be compensated by Open Space and the County. Such arguments would surely be brought in court, and the County and POS should guard against such damages. • We need more signage right now to help these people (mountain bikers) to know where open space ends and private property begins. • What ever you decide to do, you need to make certain that you do not further increase the temptation for people to use private property to access the land.
Education and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes on wildlife & vegetation for this area • Education – naturalist hikes / classes • I'm sure the various user groups in Boulder County would be more than willing to assist with construction of new routes. • The Boulder mountain bike community readily offers volunteer trail maintenance and bike patrols.
Facilities / Signs	<p><u>Parking Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there is not enough parking for anyone who has to trailer their horse to the trails. • I would like to see consideration for equestrians – especially safe parking for limited number of trailers (horse trailers) • Adequate horse trailer parking please! (w/ turning radius sufficient for horse trailers) • Equestrians are currently a smaller user group since there isn't adequate horse trailer parking at Betasso. If you make more horse trailer access to Betasso, you will find much more equestrian use since it would become an easily accessible mountain trail area available to equestrians. • Adequate and safe parking for trailers • Safe parking for limited number of trailers (horse trailers) • Many (horseback) riders I know do not deem the parking adequate for trailers – and therefore do not utilize this beautiful area. • No additional parking lots – ok, maybe a horse trailer lot or expand Betasso lot for hikers • I also believe that trailer parking should remain at Betasso <p><u>Other Ideas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about permitted camping sites w/ permits? • Covered picnic areas? • Open firepits? • Would love to see a playground – especially even an all-natural one with climbing boulders. • Signage would be very helpful for all (user groups?) considered. • Restroom facilities at trail heads are nice • Does anyone realize that putting signs at “social trails” just draws tons of attention?