

Final Quicksilver Trail Management Plan

**Including Portions of
Golden Farm LLP, Keyes (North),
Quicksilver Farm, and Campbell
Open Spaces**

**A Section of the City of Longmont's
St. Vrain Greenway Trail System**



**Boulder County Parks & Open Space
Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 24, 2008**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Site Description

This management plan covers those portions of the City of Longmont's St. Vrain Greenway Trail that occur on Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) properties (Quicksilver Trail). This includes an approximately 17-foot wide trail corridor (wider at underpass crossings at 119th Street and East County Line Road) that extends across Golden Farm LLP, Keyes (North), Quicksilver Farm, and Campbell Open Spaces (Appendix A). The west end of this section of the St. Vrain Greenway Trail begins immediately south of St. Vrain Creek on the east side of 119th Street and extend approximately 1400 feet south to Quicksilver Road, where it will make an at-grade crossing to get to the south side of Quicksilver Road. Once on the south side, the Quicksilver Trail will parallel Quicksilver Road for approximately 1 mile between 119th Street and County Line Road. In most locations, the trail corridor is positioned immediately outside of the road right-of-way.

The total length of the Quicksilver Trail is approximately 1.25 miles. The approximate total area covered under this management plan is approximately 3.0 acres. Elevation ranges from approximately 4915 feet above sea level at the intersection of Quicksilver Road and 119th Street to 4900 feet at the intersection of Quicksilver Road and East County Line Road.

The property is primarily surrounded by land owned by Boulder County including land owned by BCPOS as well as Boulder County Transportation Department right-of-way along 119th Street and Quicksilver Road. The adjacent BCPOS agricultural properties are leased to private individuals and managed under the terms of lease agreements administered by BCPOS. A small number of private residences as well as a Boulder County Housing Authority building are in the vicinity of the trail corridor.

1.2 Project Background

The St. Vrain Greenway Trail is a multi-jurisdictional project that will ultimately run the length of the St. Vrain Creek from Lyons to Firestone. This project is also part of the Front Range Trail, a statewide trail plan that will reach from Wyoming to New Mexico. The City of Longmont has been working on the St. Vrain Greenway project since the early 1990's. The trail's original alignment was established in the 1993 *St. Vrain Greenway Master Plan* (Wenk 1992) and the 2001 *St. Vrain Greenway East Corridor Update* (Design Workshop 2001). Over five miles of trail have been constructed in Longmont and Boulder County as of fall 2008, including four trailhead parks. Longmont's current efforts are to provide a trail connection between the City and Sandstone Ranch by the end of 2009.

In 2006, a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nest was discovered along St. Vrain Creek between 119th Street and County Line Road adjacent to a section of the trail corridor already designed and in the bidding process. Numerous meetings with Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, consultants, county and city officials, and public groups were held following this discovery. The City developed a number of alternative trail routes (Routes A-D) that avoided the bald eagle nest (Appendix A). Routes A, B, and D all extended the trail to the north across City and private property. These routes were removed from consideration because of private property issues, safety concerns, and concerns of CDOW that the alignments were still too close to the eagle nest.

In spring 2008, it became clear that CDOW would only support the trail if moved significantly away from the creek to better protect the nest site. To that end, the City contacted the County to discuss an alternative trail route, which would be placed on BCPOS land south of St. Vrain Creek. Route C was selected by Longmont as the preferred trail route and was subsequently supported by BCPOS and CDOW. Figure 1 in Appendix A shows the final alignment of Route C, which was slightly realigned from its original proposed location at the intersection of 119th Street and Quicksilver Road (Figure 5). At its closest, the Quicksilver Trail is approximately a quarter mile south of the bald eagle nest, but is partially screened at this distance by a private residence and the Boulder County Housing Authority building on the north side of Quicksilver Road.

BCPOS and the City presented the proposed trail route to the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) on August 28, 2008, and to the Board of County Commissioners during a public hearing on September 23, 2008. At these public meetings, BCPOS and the City presented the proposed trail route and requested approval to enter into a joint management agreement to allow the construction of the trail corridor across portions of Golden Farm, Keyes (North), Quicksilver and Campbell Open Spaces, with Longmont agreeing to build, maintain, manage, and patrol the trail.

POSAC unanimously supported BCPOS and City's request for a recommendation to BOCC for approval to enter into a joint management agreement. Subsequently, BOCC voted in favor of the project.

Some of the key provisions to be included in the joint management agreement are:

- Supersede the *Keyes North Open Space Management Agreement*, dated October 25, 2005,
- Set the boundaries of the trail corridor,
- Allow only passive recreational use along the trail,
- Limit the impacts of the trail on agricultural operations on adjacent open spaces,
- Designate the City as solely responsible for the construction, maintenance, and patrol of this trail,

- Require the City to install and maintain a County approved high-tensile fence between the trail and County open space,
- Require the City to install and maintain a County approved prairie dog barrier fence north of Quicksilver Road and east of 119th Street to prevent further prairie dog movement into BCPOS agricultural lands south of Quicksilver Road and to protect the trail.,
- Require the City to pay the County for moving all ditches within the footprint of the trail and ensure that all ditch infrastructure is functioning properly following construction of the trail, and
- Require the City to assume all liability and other management expenses associated with the trail.

With BOCC approval to enter into the joint management agreement for the trail corridor, Boulder County Parks & Open Space in conjunction with the City of Longmont committed to prepare a concise management plan for the Quicksilver Trail corridor. This management plan includes a brief overview of existing resources and provides management direction for the corridor.

It is the City's desire to finalize design of the trail this fall and winter and to bid the project by early 2009. The anticipated construction completion would be in fall 2009.

2.0 Purpose and Goal of Management Plan

The purpose of the *Quicksilver Trail Management Plan* is to outline the necessary maintenance and management of the Quicksilver Trail corridor. This plan provides a brief summary of existing resources and a summary of future management and maintenance of the corridor, which the City of Longmont will be responsible for under terms of the *Management Agreement for Golden Farm LLP, Keyes North, Quicksilver Farm, and Campbell Open Spaces*. The overall goal of this management plan is to provide safe and enjoyable multiple use trail across BCPOS land that limits interference with management of adjacent BCPOS agricultural lands and sensitive wildlife. This trail corridor will provide a vital link from the City of Longmont and points west to Sandstone Ranch and beyond, thus providing an important regional trail link.

3.0 Existing Conditions and Potential Impacts

The Quicksilver Trail includes portions of Golden Farms LLP, Keyes (North), Quicksilver Farms, and Campbell Open Spaces. All of these properties are irrigated agricultural properties and are currently closed to the public. Many of the area's resources were documented in *St. Vrain Creek Corridor Open Space Management Plan* (BCPOS 2004) and *St. Vrain Greenway East Corridor Update* (Design Workshop 2001). Below is a brief summary of those resources.

3.1 Soils

The majority of the site consists of McClave clay loam soil. In the northeast corner of the trail corridor within Golden Farms LLP and Keyes (North), Loveland soil exists. Both soil types occur along floodplains and terraces, are formed of loamy alluvium, consist of clay loam in the upper horizon, and are poorly drained. The soils within the Quicksilver Trail corridor are classified as *Agricultural Land of National Importance*. All soils within the trail corridor will be taken out of agricultural production.

3.2 Hydrology

Overall, surface water flows to the north and northeast toward St. Vrain Creek. A number of irrigation ditches occur along the Quicksilver Trail corridor. These ditches are used to transfer water to and away from the irrigated agricultural lands associated with Golden Farm LLP, Keyes (North), Quicksilver Farm, and Campbell Open Spaces. All ditches within the footprint of this corridor will be impacted by the construction of the trail and will need to be moved and reconstructed to ensure their continued use and functionality.

An approximately 0.5 acre tail water pond is located approximately a quarter mile west of East County Line Road on the south side of Quicksilver Road. Cattails (*Typha* sp.) and bulrush (*Scirpus* sp.) are present around the perimeter and in shallow portions of the pond. The trail design will attempt to avoid this pond. However, if trail construction impacts the pond, a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be required if the pond is determined to be a jurisdictional wetland. The City of Longmont will be responsible for any permits or mitigation required for this project.

3.3 Vegetation

Within sections of the trail corridor north of Quicksilver Road, the vegetation is primarily composed of pasture grasses and other non-native species. Common plant species include smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), kochia (*Kochia scoparia*), bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), and alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*). On the Golden Farm LLP property, a number of elm (*Ulmus pumilla*) and blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) occur. Within the footprint of the trail, the non-native and invasive elm will be taken out for the trail, but if possible, the blue spruce will be saved. Currently, on the south side of Quicksilver Road, the area is primarily cultivated agricultural land. At the east end of Quicksilver Road, the trail will be placed on a disturbed earthen mound, which primarily supports bindweed and kochia. Potential impacts due to the trail will be an increase in non-native invasive species adjacent to the trail corridor.

Two federally listed threatened plant species potentially occur within wetland and riparian habitats within the vicinity of the Quicksilver Trail. These include Ute

ladies'-tress orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) and Colorado butterfly plant (*Gaura neomexicana* ssp. *coloradensis*). Based on previous surveys, these species have not been found in the area (Paula Fitzgerald, City of Longmont, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

3.4 Wildlife

One federally listed threatened species, Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), potentially occurs within riparian habitats within the vicinity of the Quicksilver Trail. Based on previous surveys, this species has not been found in the area (Paula Fitzgerald, City of Longmont, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

A bald eagle nest is located north of the Quicksilver Trail along the St. Vrain Creek. The bald eagle selected its nest site amongst the current ongoing human activity, and therefore it is possible that the eagle is somewhat adapted to this type of activity within the vicinity of its nest. At its closest, the Quicksilver Trail is approximately a quarter mile south of the bald eagle nest, but is partially screened at this distance by a private residence and the Boulder County Housing Authority building on the north side of Quicksilver Road. The bald eagle was removed from the list of federally threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in 2007, but is still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. These laws prohibit the killing, selling, or otherwise harming of the eagles, their nest, or their eggs or causing a disturbance resulting in abandonment of the nest.

A large black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) colony occurs within Keyes (North) and Quicksilver Open Spaces north of Quicksilver Road. Individuals do cross over Quicksilver Road and have expanded into portions of the Quicksilver Open Space south of Quicksilver Road. In particular, prairie dogs inhabit the earthen mound on the south side of Quicksilver Road that starts at East County Line Road and extends west approximately a quarter mile. These prairie dogs will be removed from this "No Prairie Dog" designated property to build the trail. Installation of an effective prairie dog barrier on the north side of Quicksilver Road will be done to keep prairie dogs from recolonizing the property on the south side and interfering with trail use and maintenance.

Other potential wildlife species within the vicinity of the Quicksilver Trail include coyote (*Canis latrans*), eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), house mouse (*Mus musculus*), meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), red fox (*Vulpes fulva*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), garter snake (*Thamnophis* sp.), and bullsnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*). Likely bird species include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), and western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*).

Overall, the trail will increase the level of human interaction with wildlife. However, the trail is not expected to significantly reduce wildlife use of the area as much of the site is already being cultivated, is adjacent to the roadway, and adjacent to other developed areas.

3.5 Agriculture

All properties with the exception of Golden Farm LLP are currently under agricultural lease with BCPOS. Land north of Quicksilver Road is irrigated pastureland, while land south of Quicksilver Road is irrigated cropland. Approximately 2 acres of agricultural land will be taken out of production for the Quicksilver Trail. This excludes approximately 1 acre on the east end of Quicksilver Road that is currently an earthen mound and the portion of the trail on Golden Farm LLP, which is not in agricultural production. Amendments to existing leases will be required prior to construction of the Quicksilver Trail.

3.6 Cultural Resources

Approximately 400 feet east of the Quicksilver Trail within Golden Farm LLP, a World War II-era barracks building is currently standing. This barracks was subsequently used for migrant worker housing, but is now vacant. The trail should have no impact on this site as the trail is over 400 feet away and a fence will be placed adjacent to the trail to keep people from walking over to it.

3.7 Recreation and Visitor Use

Currently, all open spaces included in the *Quicksilver Trail Management Plan* are agricultural properties and are closed to the public. The Quicksilver Trail will provide a vital link between the City of Longmont and the City's Sandstone Ranch. In addition, this trail is part of the Colorado Front Range Trail system, an initiative of the Colorado State Parks to create a system of connected trails between Wyoming and New Mexico along the Front Range.

4.0 Trail Corridor Management Plan

The following provides the management actions for the Quicksilver Trail. Underneath each action, the responsible party is noted.

4.1 Trail Design and Construction

- All design and construction documents will be reviewed and approved by BCPOS prior to construction of the project including trail design, necessary trail structures, water management plan, access points for adjacent fields, prairie dog barrier, fencing, and irrigation infrastructure.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS

4.2 Natural Resources

- All disturbed soils will be reseeded with an appropriate native grass seed mix immediately following construction of the trail.
Responsible Party: City
- All noxious weeds within the trail corridor will be controlled using an integrated pest management approach.
Responsible Party: City
- A County approved prairie dog barrier will be installed and maintained north of Quicksilver Road and east of 119th Street to prevent further prairie dog movement into BCPOS agricultural lands south of Quicksilver Road and to protect the trail.
Responsible Party: City

4.3 Agriculture

- Agricultural operations on adjacent BCPOS lands will not be hindered or interfered with by public use of the Quicksilver Trail.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS
- The Quicksilver Trail may need to be temporarily closed at times to allow for agricultural operations such as aerial spraying of pesticides.
Responsible Party: BCPOS will notify City of need to close trail
City will post and enforce closure
- All ditches and ditch infrastructure impacted by the construction of the Quicksilver Trail will be replaced and be in good working order following the construction of the trail
Responsible Party: City will be responsible for all costs associated with ditch replacement
BCPOS and/or tenants will be responsible for moving ditches
- The tenants of adjacent BCPOS lands will be allowed at any time to cross the Quicksilver Trail at designated access points to gain entry to their agricultural fields.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS

4.4 Recreational Facilities

- The Quicksilver Trail will be a clean, safe, and enjoyable trail corridor and will be maintained in good condition, including all trail surfaces and the adjacent 2-foot edges.

Responsible Party: City

- Trash along the trail corridor will be picked up regularly.

Responsible Party: City

- The City will be providing trailheads immediately east and west of the trail on the City owned Golden Farm (west of 119th Street) and Peschel (west of East County Line Road) open spaces.

Responsible Party: City

- Access to the Quicksilver Trail will be from the City of Longmont's connecting trails on the east and west and from designated trail access points off of 119th Street, Quicksilver Road, and County Line Road.

Responsible Party: City

- As the City will have trailheads at either end of the Quicksilver Trail, no restrooms, picnic areas, kiosks, or other facilities will be provided along the Quicksilver Trail, with the exception of interpretive panels and other facilities and amenities approved by BCPOS.

Responsible Party: City

- With the exception of access to adjacent agricultural fields and for trail maintenance, patrol, and emergencies, no vehicular traffic will be allowed on the Quicksilver Trail.

Responsible Party: City

- Safety signs (e.g. STOP, YIELD, SLOW, etc.) may be installed within the trail corridor as deemed necessary.

Responsible Party: City

- To limit impacts to agricultural operations on adjacent lands, a County approved high tensile fence will be installed and maintained on the east side of the trail along 119th Street and on the south side of the trail along Quicksilver Road.

Responsible Party: City

4.5 Interpretation

- BCPOS or the City in conjunction with BCPOS may install interpretive signs along the Quicksilver Trail. These signs may highlight:
 - the WW II-era bunker, which was subsequently used as housing for migrant workers
 - agricultural production within Boulder County
 - bald eagles and their associated habitats

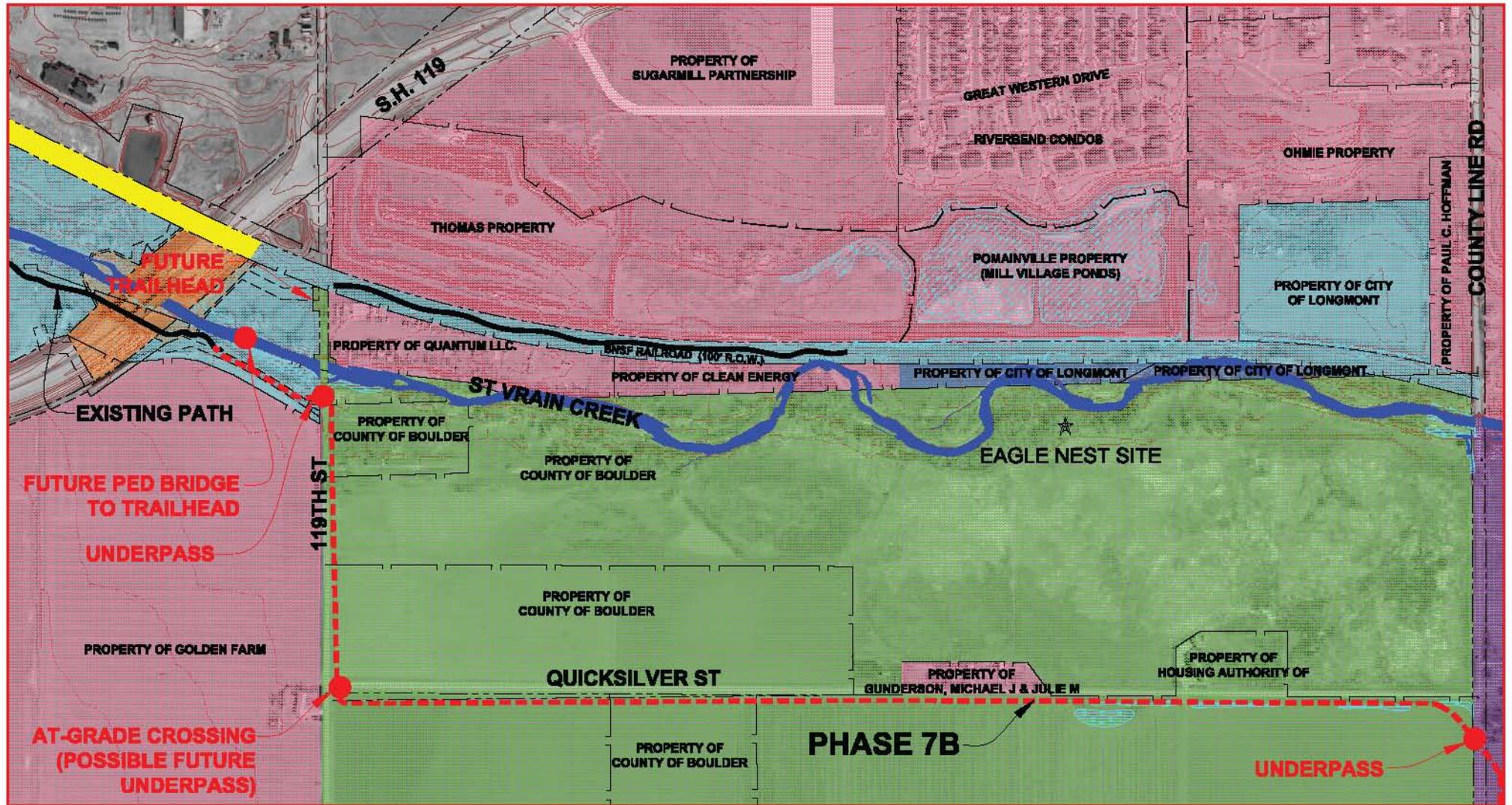
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS

4.6 Rules and Regulations and Patrol

- BCPOS's rules and regulations will be enforced on the Quicksilver Trail. These rules and regulations will reflect those of the City's rules and regulations along the remainder of the St. Vrain Greenway to ensure consistency of enforcement along the trail corridor.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS
- Regular patrol and enforcement will occur along the Quicksilver Trail.
Responsible Party: BCPOS will primarily be responsible for patrol until the City Ordinance regarding where City rangers can patrol is changed to allow City staff to patrol this area.
- Steps will be taken immediately to change the City Ordinance to allow City staff to patrol the Quicksilver Trail.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS
- Events and programs for large groups (i.e. greater than 25 people) will require a permit from BCPOS per BCPOS's group/special use guidelines.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS
- BCPOS and the City may modify the trail rules and regulations if such changes are allowed by each agency and the changes are mutually agreed upon.
Responsible Party: City / BCPOS

Appendix A – Figures

ST VRAIN GREENWAY - PHASE 7B





Loris and Associates, Inc.
 3585 Trail Ridge Drive East
 Lafayette, Colorado 80025
 303.444.2075
 www.LorisAndAssociates.com

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
|  | CITY OF LONGMONT |  | PRIVATE |
|  | BOULDER COUNTY |  | BNSF RAILROAD ROW |
|  | CITY OF LONGMONT/WELD | | |

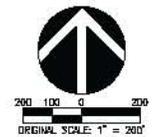
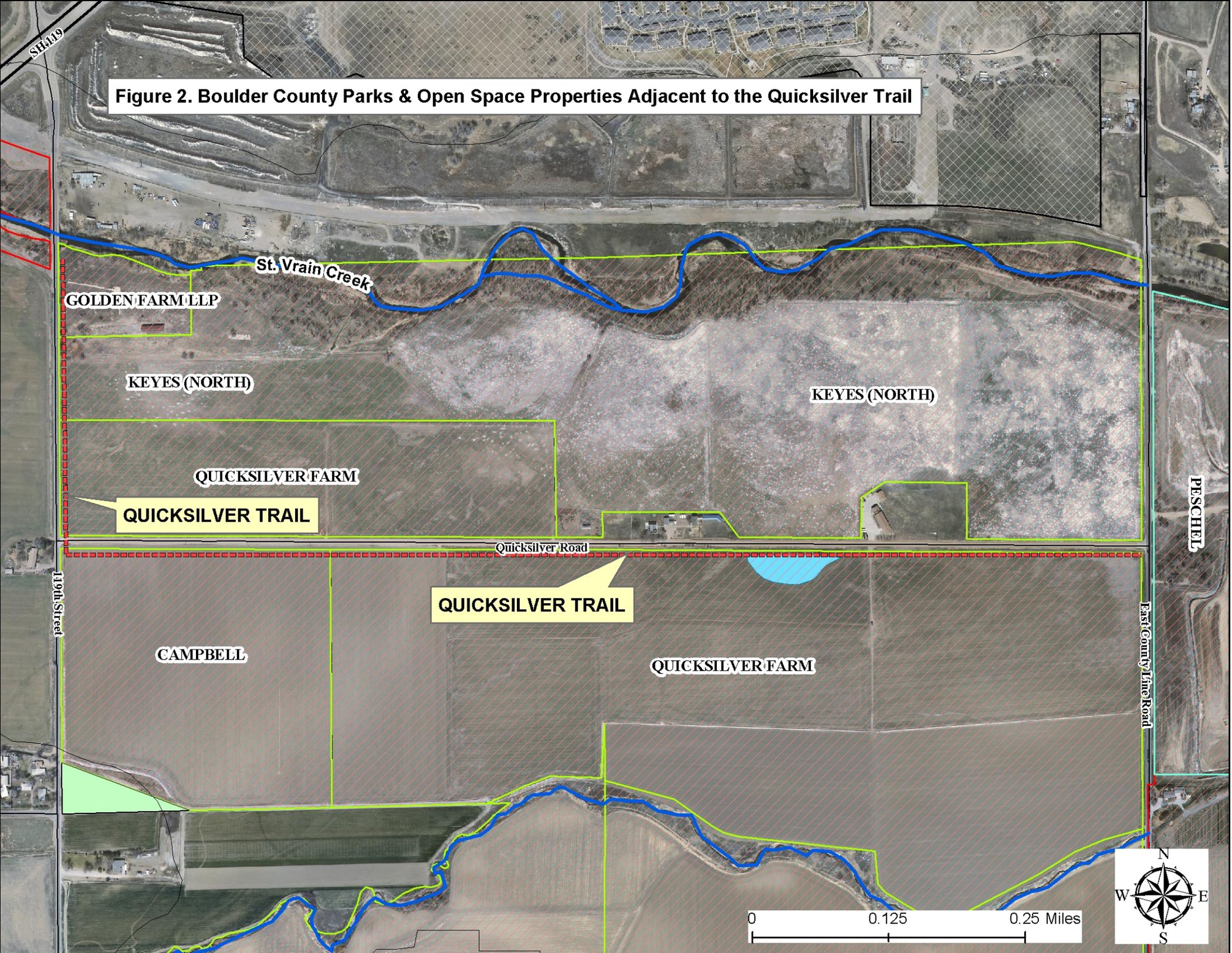
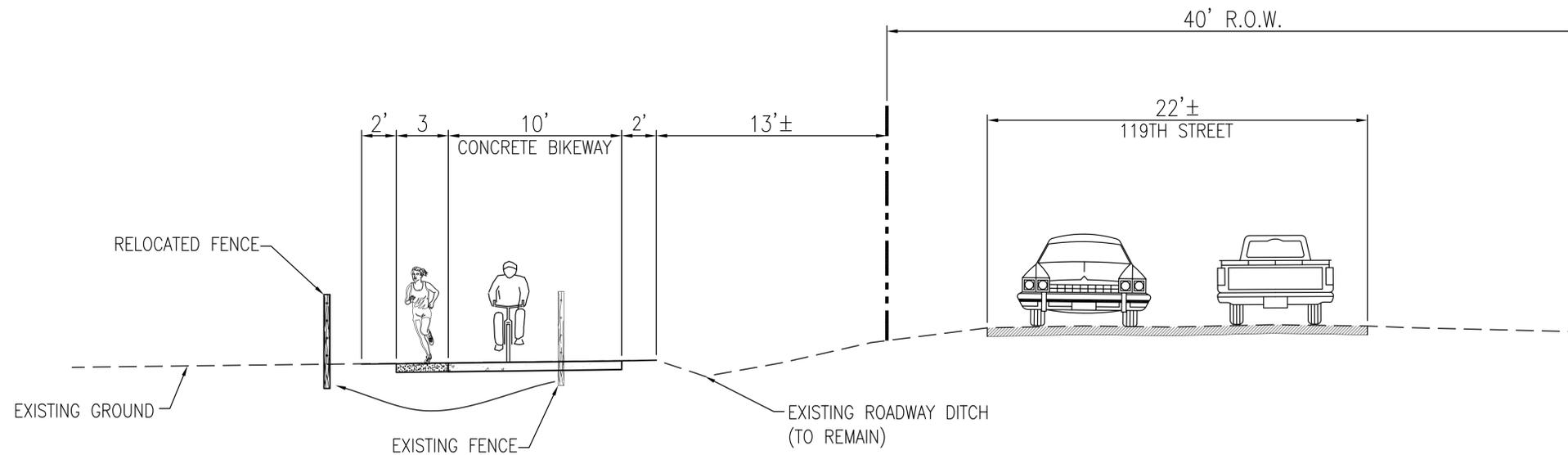


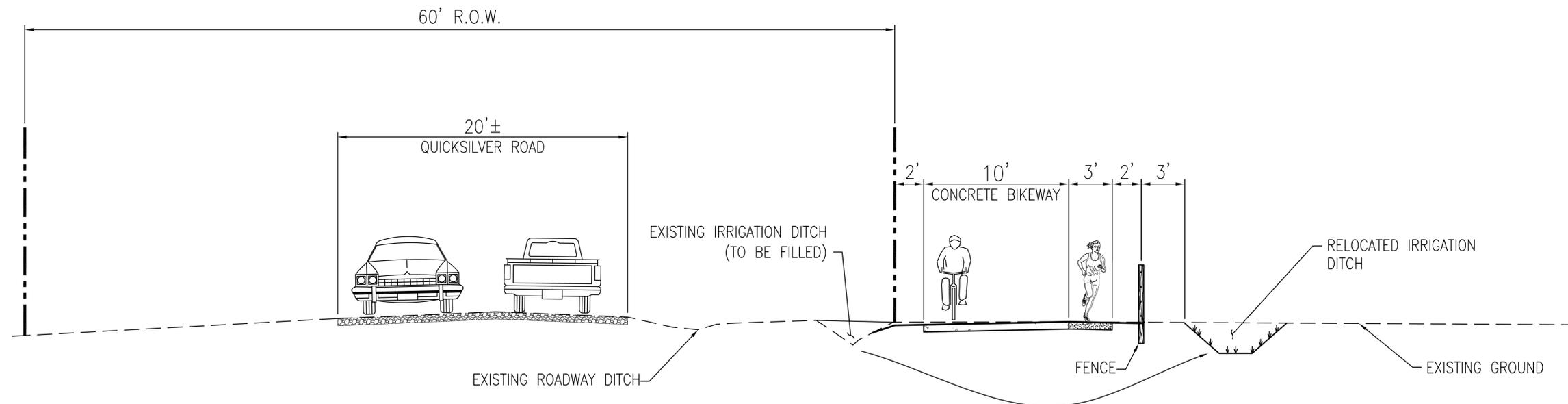
Figure 2. Boulder County Parks & Open Space Properties Adjacent to the Quicksilver Trail



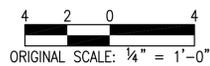
ST VRAIN GREENWAY - PHASE 7B



**TYPICAL TRAIL SECTION ALONG 119TH STREET
(LOOKING SOUTH)**



**TYPICAL TRAIL SECTION ALONG QUICKSILVER ROAD
(LOOKING EAST)**

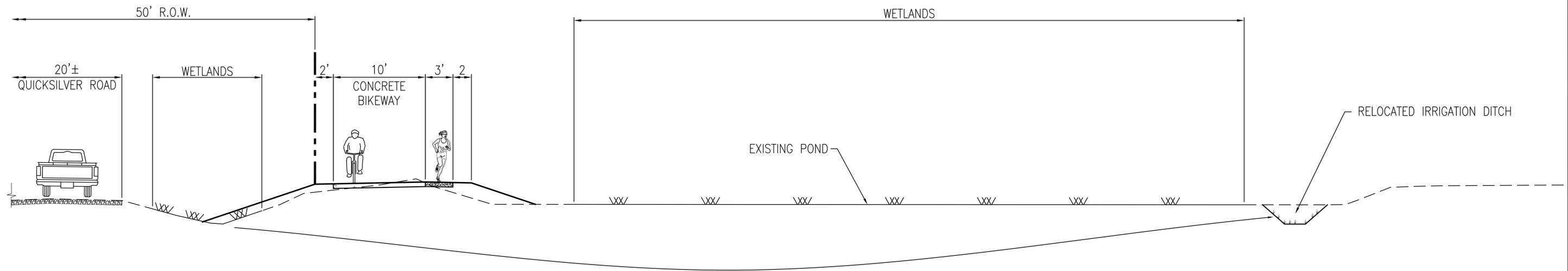


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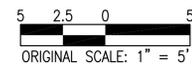
2585 Tralridge Drive East
Lafayette, Colorado 80026

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ST VRAIN GREENWAY - PHASE 7B



**TYPICAL TRAIL SECTION ALONG QUICKSILVER ROAD
(LOOKING EAST)**



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Figure 5. St Vrain Greenway – Alternative trail routes A-D as originally proposed by the City of Longmont
 (Note: Route C is the selected route for the Quicksilver Trail. Final alignment was moved south of Quicksilver Rd at 119th St.)

