

Northern El Paso County Nature Center Feasibility Study

Community Meeting
January 31, 2019



TremmelDesignGroup

Project Team



Team Member

Project Role

- **Jeff Webb** Project Lead
Landscape Architecture & Planning
- **John Olson** Landscape Architecture & Planning
- **Amanda Taylor** Landscape Architecture & Planning
- **Ryan Bowman** Landscape Architecture & Planning

- **Mark Tremmel** Architecture Lead, Planning and Design
- **Sharon Allen** Architecture, Planning and Design

- **Todd Marts** El Paso County Recreation & Cultural Services Manager & Project Manger



Meeting Agenda

- **Project Intro & Background** 5 minutes
- **Project Purpose** 10 minutes
 - Feasibility Study Overview
 - Why this Project Matters
 - Recommendation Process
- **Project Givens** 5 minutes
- **Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow** 10 minutes
 - Existing Nature Centers
 - Trends
 - Potential Locations
- **Public Discussion and Input** 45 minutes
- **How You Can Help** 5 minutes
- **Next Steps and Wrap-up** 10 minutes

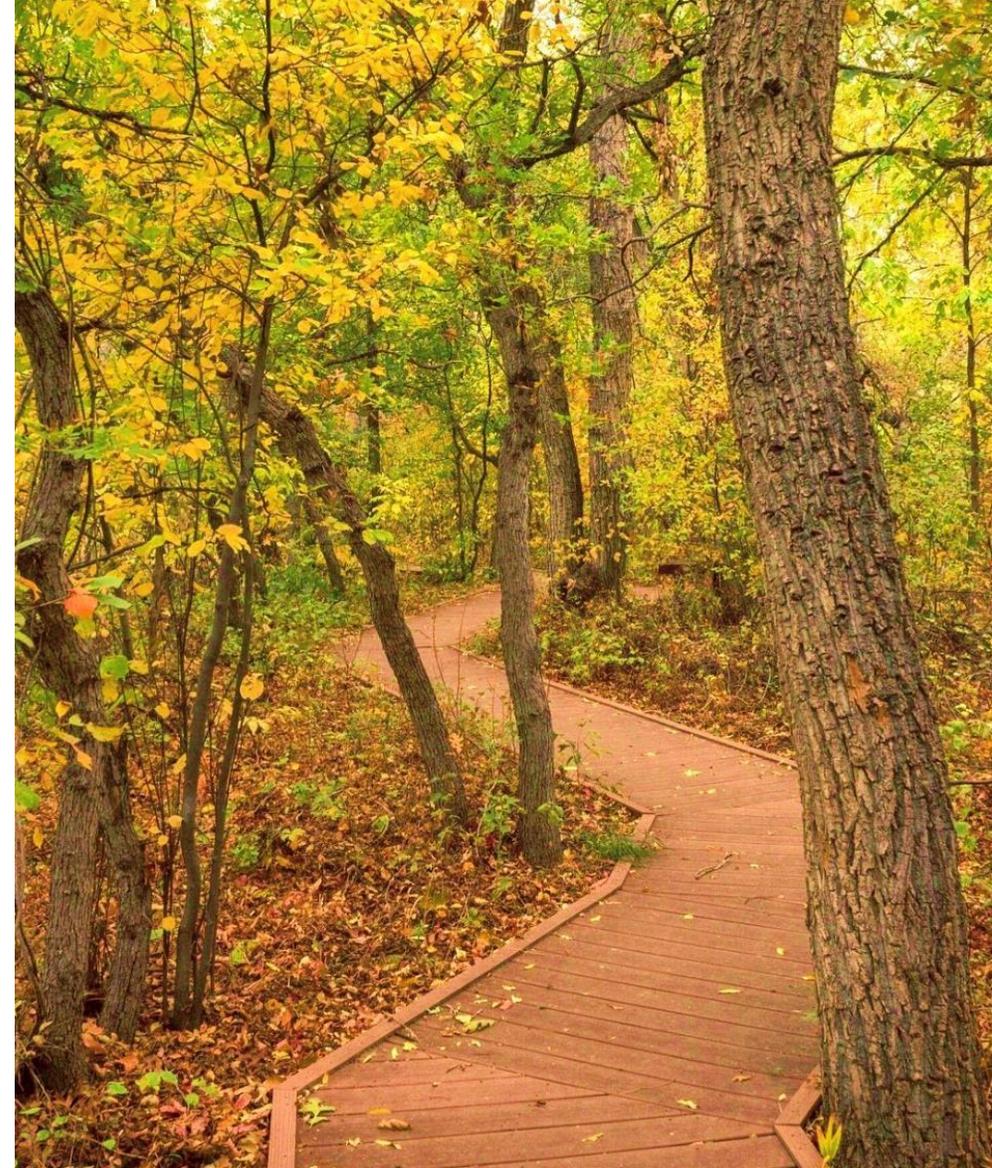


Anticipated Meeting Time: 1.5 Hours

Project Background

Why are we here?

The Mission of the El Paso County Nature Centers is to connect people to their natural and cultural resources and inspire them to become stewards for the environment



Project Background

Community Service, Community Impact

27,000 individuals participated in programs at Fountain Creek and Bear Creek Nature last year

70 Volunteers donated more than **7,000 hours** of time last year

New Exhibits opened at Fountain Creek and Bear Creek Nature Center

- Students from **15+ area schools** and multiple School Districts served
- Week-Long **Outdoor Summer Camps** served youth at Nature Centers
- Ages from **Pre-School to Active Adult** served with targeted programming
- Create lasting Outdoor Experiences, Environmental Education, and Culture of Stewardship

Project Background

The Nature Center Feasibility Study seeks to determine the most **Functional**, **Inspiring**, and **Advantageous** location for a new northern Nature Center. The study will result in recommendations for:

- Nature Center Location
- Potential Site Amenities
- Program Opportunities
- Preliminary Building and Site Concept
- Opinion of Potential Costs
- Implementation, Partnership and Funding Opportunities



Project Background

Why Now?

- “Continue to Improve and Update the County Park System Including Parks, Trails, Open Space, **Nature Centers**, Fairgrounds and Services”

–El Paso County 2017–2021 Strategic Plan (Strategy D)

- “The Master Plan proposes the addition of a **new nature center in Northern El Paso County**....[that will] provide nature–based programming and will maintain the diversity and quality of and participation in award–winning environmental education programs”

–El Paso County Parks Master Plan (Rec. & Cultural Services Goal #1)

Project Background

Why Now?

- Use of The Nature Centers, demand for services and support has grown rapidly during a time when the **El Paso County's population has more than doubled.**
- Growing awareness of Nature Deficit Disorder and the idea that many **children and families spend less time outdoors** with a potential for greater alienation from natural world.
- A **feasibility study has been funded** in 2018 to analyze and evaluate location, potential partnerships/collaborations, public support, revenue sources, construction costs, and long-term maintenance and staffing.

Project Purpose

How will Recommendations be Made?

- **Opportunity** (Land Ownership, Alignment with County Plans, etc.)
- **Environment** (Diversity of wildlife, 'quality' of environment, etc.)
- **Education** (Potential to provide rich environmental education opportunities)
- **Access** (Proximity to population, ease of access, ability to serve Northern EPC)
- **Cost** (Anticipated Costs to develop N.C., programming, and infrastructure)
- **Inspiration** (Beauty, alignment with N.C. Mission, ability to inspire)

Project Givens

Northern Nature Center Project Givens:

- Will be a community driven planning process
- Will be located in Northern El Paso County
- Will provide Environmental Education, Outdoor Programming, Outdoor Recreation, and Nature Center Building
- Will seek program partners and opportunities for community collaboration
- Does not yet have construction funding
- Will provide Recommendations to El Paso County Staff for final approval

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Bear Creek Nature Center

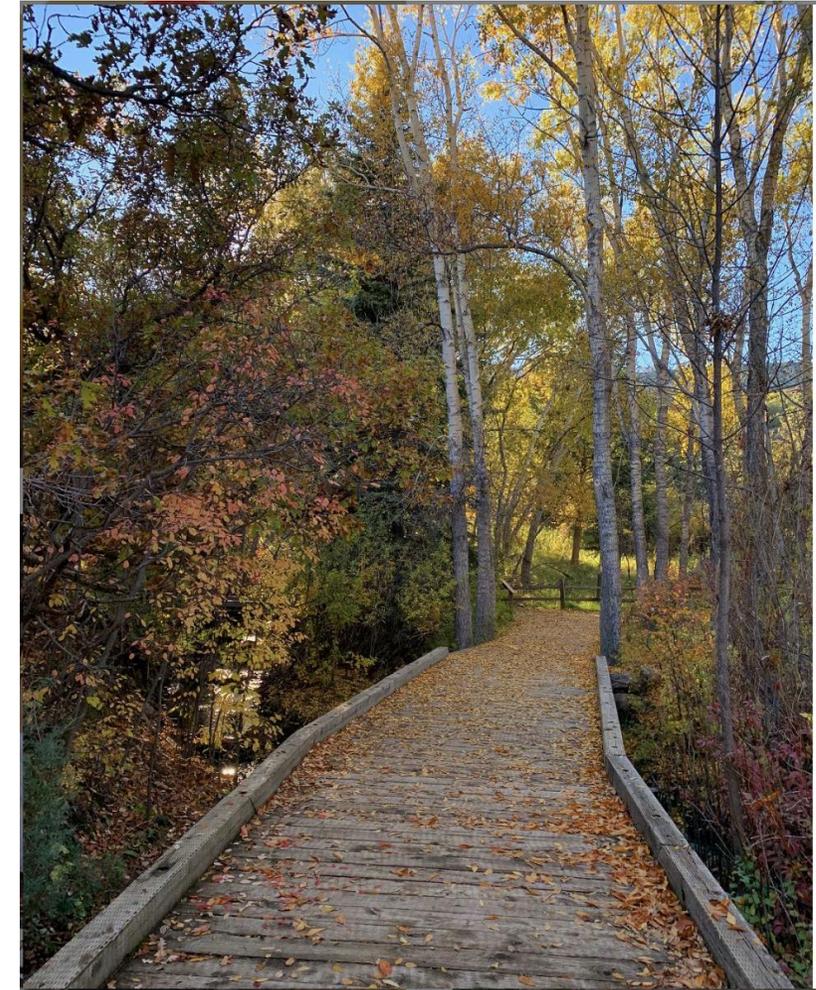


245 Bear Creek Road, Colorado Springs, CO

- 2 Miles of Trails
- 7723 sq. ft. Interior Building Space
- 736 sq. ft. Presentation Patio
- 36 total Parking Spaces

- Located in western foothills of Bear Creek Park
- Features foothills, montane, riparian ecosystems
- One of the first county-supported Nature Centers in Colorado
- Exhibits include honeybees, Greenback Cutthroat Trout, Children's Area, and taxidermy wildlife

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow



Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Fountain Creek Nature Center



320 Peppergrass Ln, Fountain, CO

- 0.8 Miles of Trails
- 4881 sq. ft. Interior Building Space
- 530 sq. ft. Observation Deck
- 46 Total Parking Spaces

- Located south of Colorado Springs along Fountain Creek
- Features wetland, riparian and prairie ecosystems
- Wetlands, ponds and other aquatic features define the property
- Plentiful wildlife include numerous bird species are present
- Building and exhibit expansion in 2014

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow



Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

The most successful Nature Centers feature a dynamic and complimentary relationship between **environmental programming, amenities and activities,** and the **Nature Center and its physical location (site).**

This relationship is the key to creating an inspiring, well-loved, and highly-utilized Nature Center.

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

Public Programs

- Master Naturalist
- Scout Program Support
- Baby + Me
- Citizen Science Training
- Gardening
- Speaker Series
- Art Programs
- Music Programs
- Seasonal Events

Environmental Education

- Home Schooling Day Camps
- Outdoor Pre-k
- After School Programs
- Outdoor Adventure Camp
- Field Trips (partnering with local schools)
- In School Programs
- High School Based Programs

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

Site Amenities

- Nature Trails and Loops
- Natural Playgrounds
- Picnic Shelters
- Universally Accessible Facilities
- Artist gallery/Workshops
- Wildlife Cam
- Wildlife Viewing Tower/Bird Blinds
- Community Garden
- Ropes Course

Activities

- Hiking and Nature Observation or interpretation, bird watching;
- Snowshoeing and X/C Skiing
- Yoga Workshops
- Wildlife and Botany Interpretation
- Geocaching
- Picnicking
- Audio Tour
- Photography

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

Integrating Nature Center and Site

- Local/Sustainable Construction Materials
- Solar Panels
- Passive Heating/Cooling
- Geo-thermal
- Native and Xeric Planting
- LEED + SITES Certifications
- Preservation of Land
- Green Roof Installation
- Grey/Black Water Systems
- Permeable Pavements
- Stormwater Swales/Rain gardens



Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

Community Partnerships

- Friends of groups
- Volunteers
- Civic and Private entities to further research and outreach
- Local Libraries
- Animal Research and Rehabilitation
- School Districts, Community Colleges and Universities
- Scout groups
- Recreation groups
- Neighborhood Associations
- Youth Service Organizations
- Membership Opportunities
- Rental and Event Spaces

BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER

Bear Creek Nature Center's 4th Annual
BEAR RUN
3k TRAIL FUN RUN & WALK

WHEN NOVEMBER 10 @ 10:00 AM

WHERE BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER
245 BEAR CREEK ROAD
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80906
719.520.6387

HOW REGISTER ONLINE @
WWW.ELPASOCO.COM/NATURECENTERS

Friends of Nature Centers
EL PASO COUNTY PARKS

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Trends in Nature Center Programming

Nature Center Funding

- Public/Private Programming and Operation Partnerships
- Implementation Grants
- Operation Grants
- Facility Rentals and Event Fees
- Naming Rights and Giving Programs
- Capital Campaigns and Private Donations
- Membership Programs



Wish List
Tangible gifts that make a difference

Wish List

Below is a Wish List that would enhance the services the Arboretum provides to the community.

CONSERVATION

- **\$100 - Sponsor One Linear Foot of Arboretum Boardwalk**
Many of the trails pass through low-lying areas, which require boardwalks so that visitors may use the trails regardless of recent rains. The boardwalks must be maintained or replaced, and in some cases widened from the current 4 feet to ADA mandated 6 feet to enable anyone to tour the trails. The Arboretum has plans to replace 539 feet of boardwalk.
- **\$250 - Sponsor a Truckload of Mulch for Trails**
In order to minimize walkers' impact upon the trails, and to reduce the trails' muddy impact on the walkers, mulch is spread over trails that are not boardwalk or gravel. One truckload covers 100 linear feet of trail, improving the appearance of the trail and reducing wear and tear upon Nature.
- **\$500 - Sponsor a Truckload of Crushed Limestone**
The Outer Loop, last resurfaced in 1992, needs 600 truckloads of stone. Erosion and normal wear have created low spots prone to standing water, which reduces the easy foot traffic normally enjoying access to the outermost areas of the Arboretum.
- **\$1,000 - Remove Invasives and Restore One Acre of Forest**
Underwrite the removal of invasive species such as privet, Japanese honeysuckle or air potato from the Arboretum grounds, and replant the area with native plants. Do your part to help us realize our mission of protecting and enhancing the native environment.
- **\$2,000 - Support a Summer Conservation Intern**
As part of their training, graduate students in conservation come to the Arboretum for experience. Your

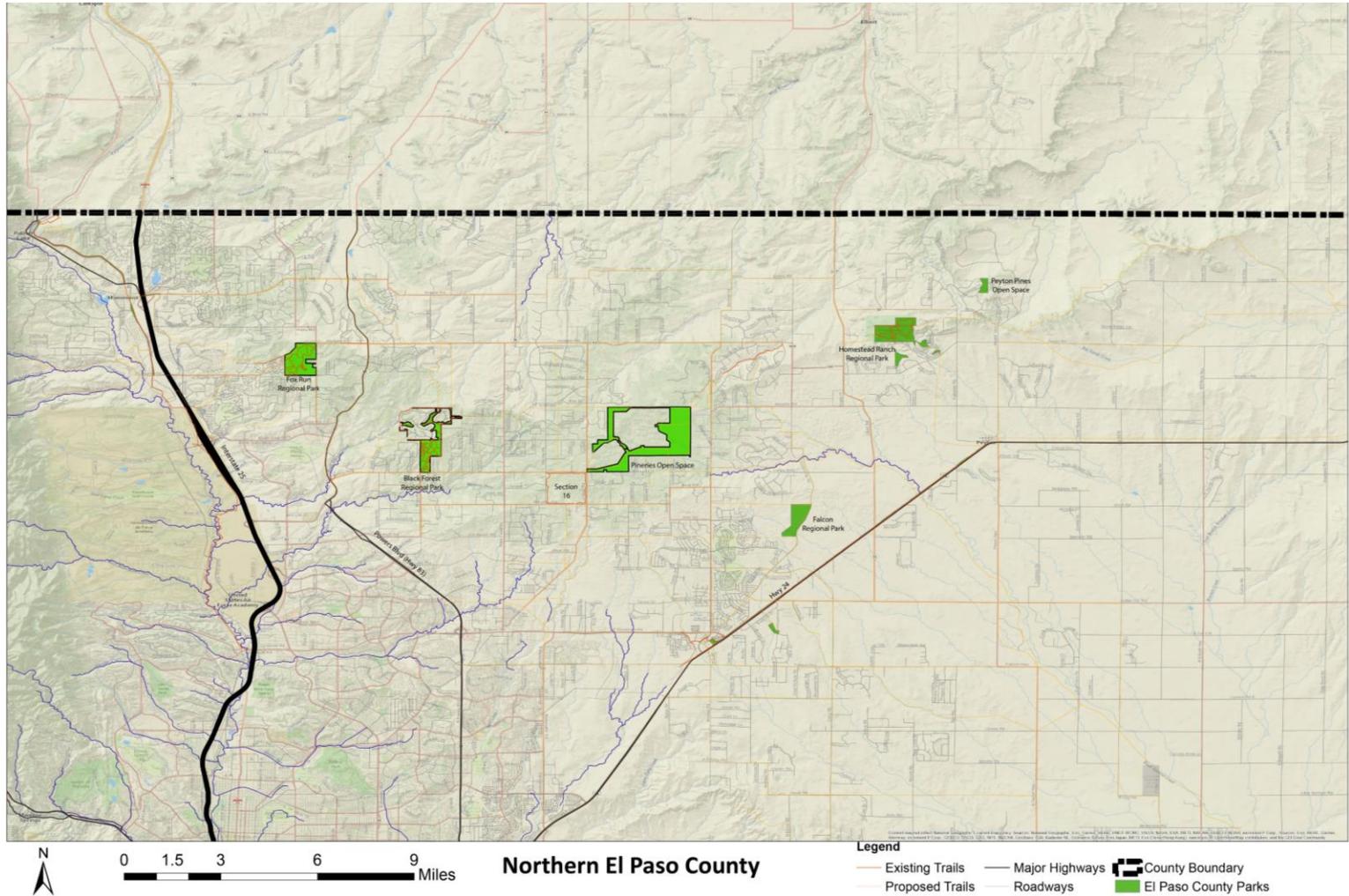


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Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Potential Northern Nature Center Sites



El Paso County has identified **Black Forest Regional Park**, **Fox Run Regional Park**, and **Pinerias Open Space** as promising potential Nature Center sites. Additional locations are being investigated as part of this Feasibility Study

Nature Centers Today & Tomorrow

Potential Northern Nature Center Sites



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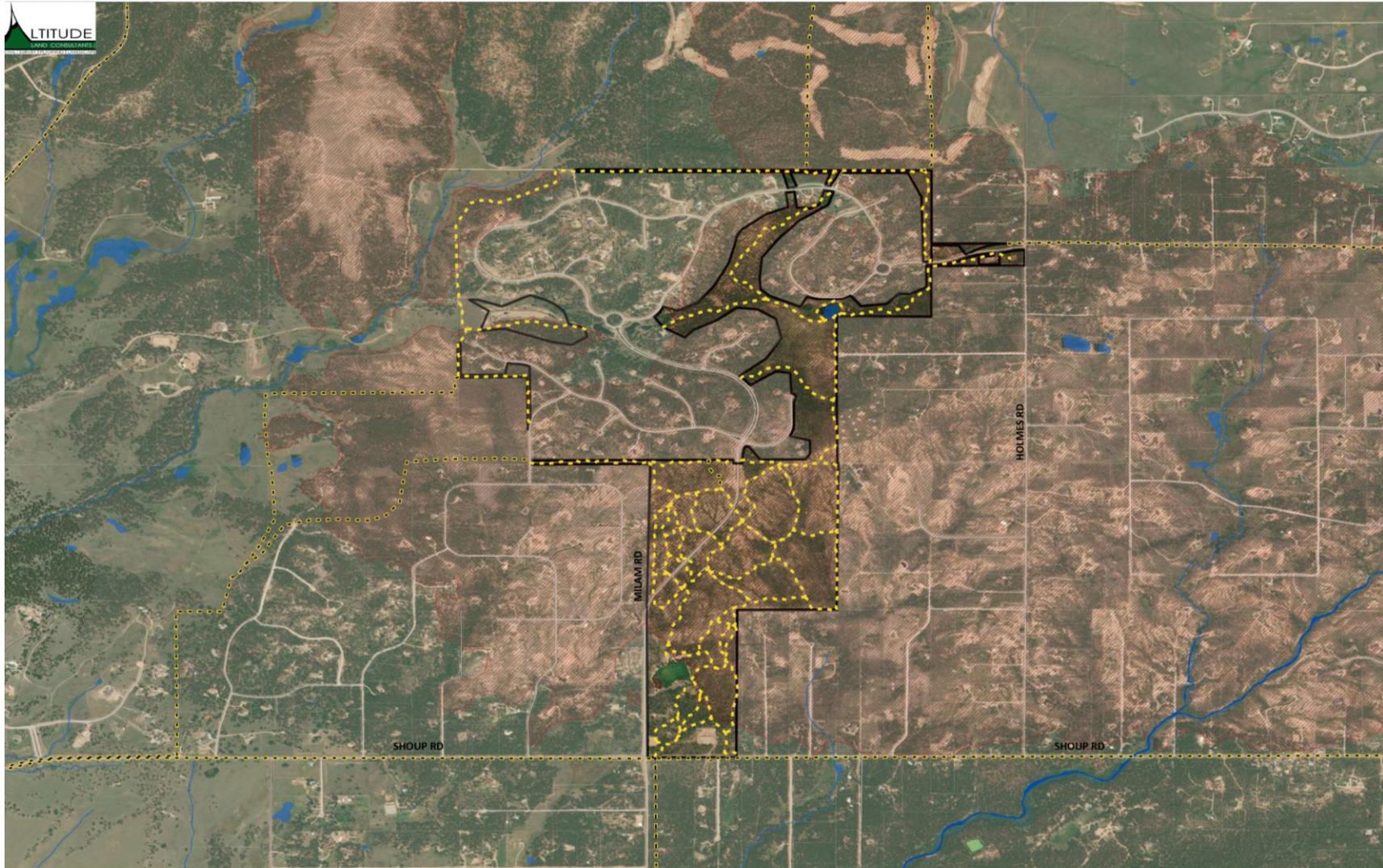
Discussion and Input

Tell Us What You Think!

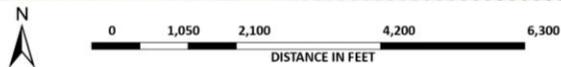
Cycle through stations to chat with us, give your input and vote!
Stations Include:

- In Depth Potential Site Information
 - Vote for your favorite and least favorite site
- Trends in Amenities and Programs
 - Tell us what you would like to see at a future nature center
- Architectural and Site Design Consideration
 - Learn about how architecture responds to its site

Discussion and Input



Black Forest Regional Park



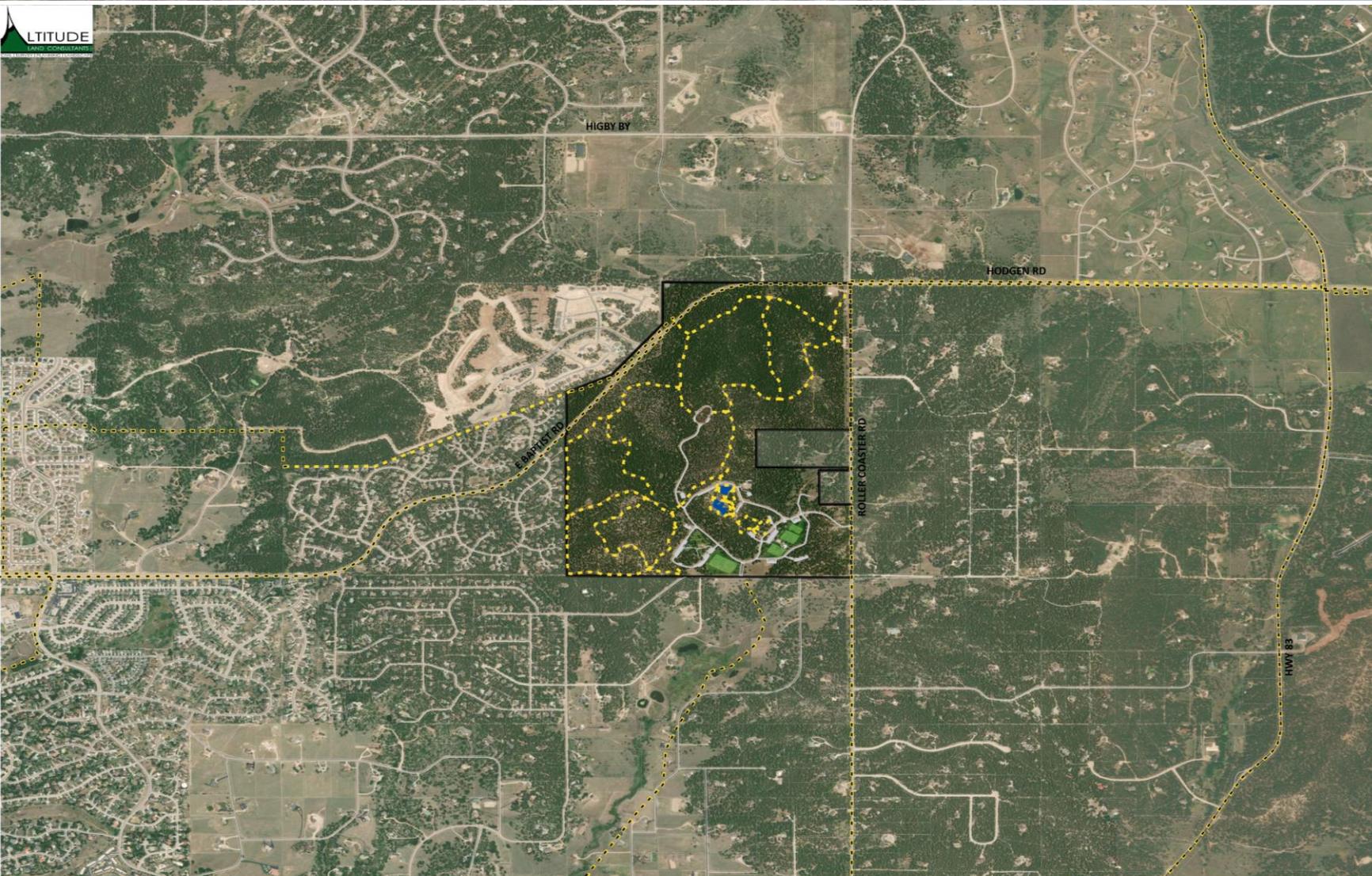
BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY 382 ACRES
- █ CREEK/WETLAND
- █ BLACK FOREST FIRE
- EXISTING TRAIL
- PROPOSED TRAIL

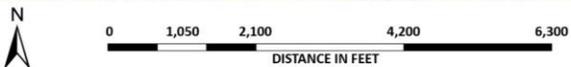
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Discussion and Input



Fox Run Regional Park



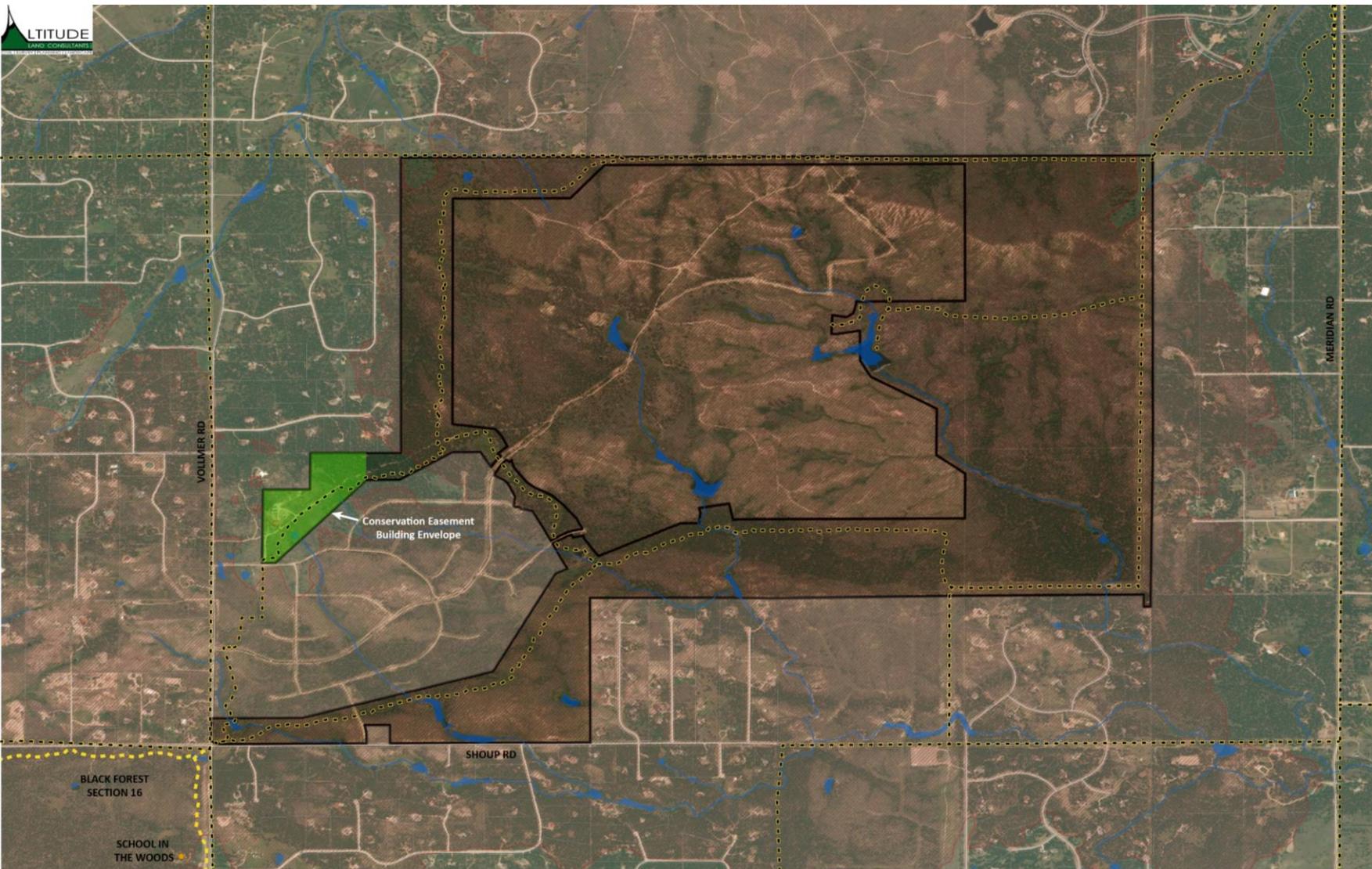
FOX RUN REGIONAL PARK

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- 409 ACRES
- █ CREEK/WETLAND
- ▨ BLACK FOREST FIRE
- EXISTING TRAIL
- PROPOSED TRAIL

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Discussion and Input

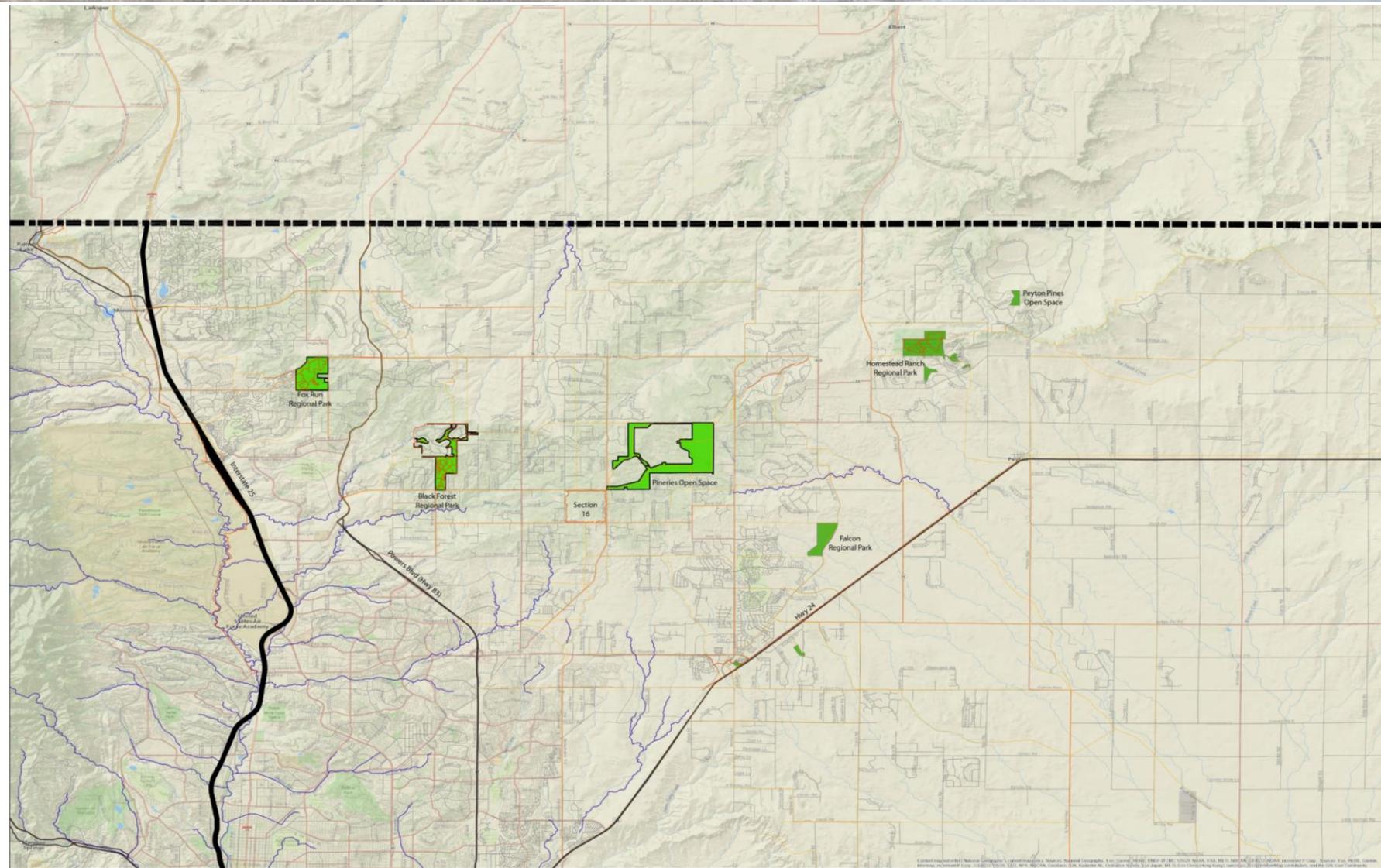


Pineries Open Space

PINERIES OPEN SPACE

— PROPERTY BOUNDARY 1,069 ACRES
■ CREEK/WETLAND
▨ BLACK FOREST FIRE
- - - EXISTING TRAIL
· · · · · PROPOSED TRAIL

Discussion and Input



Where do you think a new Northern Nature Center should be located?



Northern El Paso County

- Legend**
- Existing Trails
 - Proposed Trails
 - Major Highways
 - Roadways
 - County Boundary
 - El Paso County Parks



Discussion and Input

Potential Nature Center Site Amenities



What are the most important amenities for a new Nature Center?

How You Can Help

El Paso County Needs Your Input and Recommendations!

- Please take the Northern Nature Center Community Survey
- Tell your friends, family and neighbors about this project
- Continue to share your thoughts on programs, partnerships, and potential locations
- Check for periodic progress on the El Paso County Parks website

Thank you for your time and input!

**Questions or want to give further
comments, please email:**

Todd Marts – ToddMarts@elpasoco.com

or

Jeff Webb – jeff@altitudelandco.com



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