

EL PASO COUNTY
**NORTHERN
NATURE CENTER
FEASIBILITY
STUDY**

DECEMBER 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks Board Members
El Paso County Parks Advisory Board
2002 Creek Crossing
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

December 11, 2019

Dear Park Advisory Board Members,

It is our privilege at Altitude Land Consultants to present the following report and graphics for the Feasibility Study for a Northern Nature Center for El Paso County. Upon reviewing multiple reports and documents prepared for El Paso County and visiting several sites, both those owned by El Paso County and those that may have merits for purchase, we are proud to present a recommended location and a preferred alternate location for the new Northern Nature Center.

On the following pages, we have detailed the process including a summary of the Public Meetings, a meeting with staff of the existing Nature Centers in El Paso County, the community survey, and observations from the numerous site visits.

Given the assembled matrix, enclosed in this report, two existing El Paso County Parks for the future Northern Nature Center became obvious:

- Black Forest Regional Park
- Fox Run Regional Park

In the following report, you will note the analysis that not only provided the background that narrowed the focus to these two parks, but also the analysis internally to each park that provided an optimal location within the selected park. The ultimate conclusion of this Feasibility Study is that while both properties would be an excellent locations, Fox Run Regional Park has several advantages that may make it the most successful home for the new Northern Nature Center.

Thank you all for this opportunity, it has been a pleasure for all of us!

Sincerely,

Jeffery Webb, MLA | Project Manager



TremmelDesignGroup

CIVIL | SURVEY | PLANNING | LANDSCAPE

RELATIONSHIP TO EL PASO COUNTY MASTER PLAN

A new Northern El Paso County Nature Center, educating, inspiring and serving citizens across the Pikes Peak region, has been a goal of community members, County Parks, and advocates for many years.

The vision of a new Nature Center is built on many years of successful operation, management, and community service at El Paso County's Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. The record of impact of these existing facilities illustrates the potential of a Northern Nature Center to educate and inspire a new generation of outdoor stewards in El Paso County.

This vision is supported by several important El Paso County planning documents. The 2017-2021 El Paso County Strategic Plan identified Nature Centers as an important component of the park system. A key strategy within this guiding document is to *"continue to improve and update...Nature Centers"*. Strategy G3.D.4 additionally identifies *"Complete(ing) a feasibility study for a northern El Paso County nature center"* as a high priority goal for El Paso County.

The 2013 El Paso County Parks Master Plan further supports the vision for a Northern Nature Center when it states, *"the Master Plan proposes the addition of a new nature center in northern El Paso County....once funding can be secured."*

As significant as these guiding documents are to the vision for a new Northern Nature Center, it could be argued that the will of the community has been most important in creating the support and momentum for a new Nature Center. In a recent survey, nearly 85 percent of respondents agreed that, *"Nature Centers are a public amenity that is an important part of a well-rounded park system."*

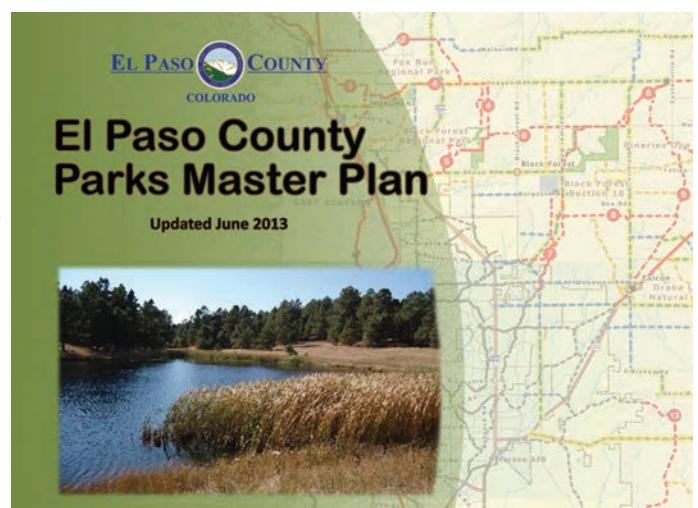
This Feasibility Study will build on the goals of El Paso County Strategic Plan, the El Paso County Parks Master Plan, and the desire of so many in the community, to help realize the vision for a new Northern El Paso County Nature Center.

"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 once current facilities have been upgraded and funding can be secured. Goals include building on existing successful programs, expanding opportunities that focus on natural and cultural resources and agricultural heritage, and increasing partnership and collaboration as a programming strategy."

-El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013)



EXISTING EL PASO COUNTY NATURE CENTERS

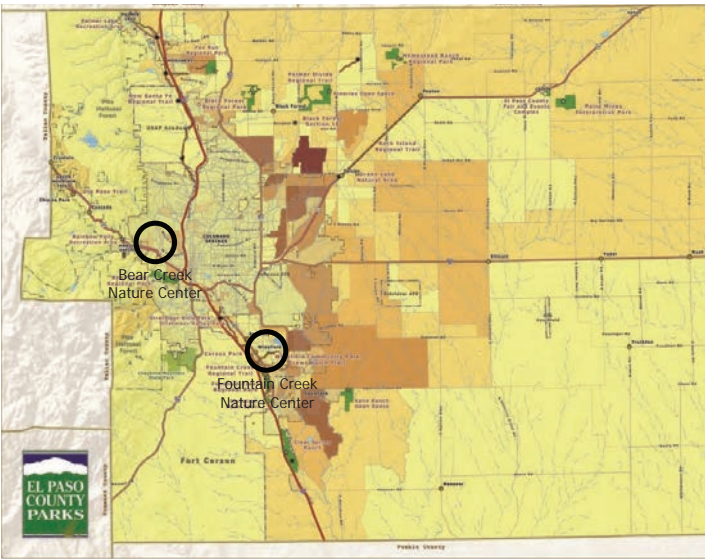
The Colorado Springs Independent has described Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers as, *"oases on the edges of Colorado Springs,"* and argues they are, *"not just places to breathe fresh air and see wildlife-they're investments in future generations."* The existing nature centers are public amenities that have served citizens of El Paso County for over 40 years.

In any given year, nearly 30,000 individuals participate in organized programs at the centers. Many multiples of that number visit the centers each year. County staff is supplemented by more than 7,000 hours of annual volunteer time at the two Nature Centers. The popularity of the nature centers is a reflection of their ability to serve the community and to connect people to their natural world.

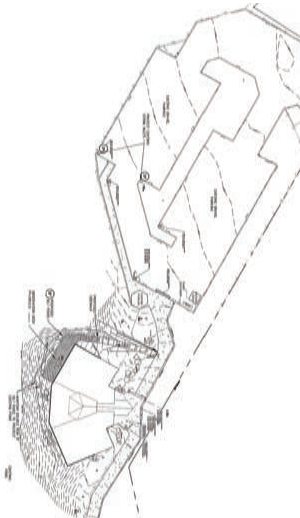
However, El Paso County's population has more than doubled in the years since the last nature center

was opened. Further, citizens of northern El Paso County must drive for a half an hour or more to visit a nature center. In an era defined by a growing disconnect between people and their environment, the importance of nature centers in El Paso County continues to grow.

The Northern Nature Center seeks to build on the success of the existing nature centers and will provide new opportunities for education, inspiration, and outdoor access to citizens across El Paso County.

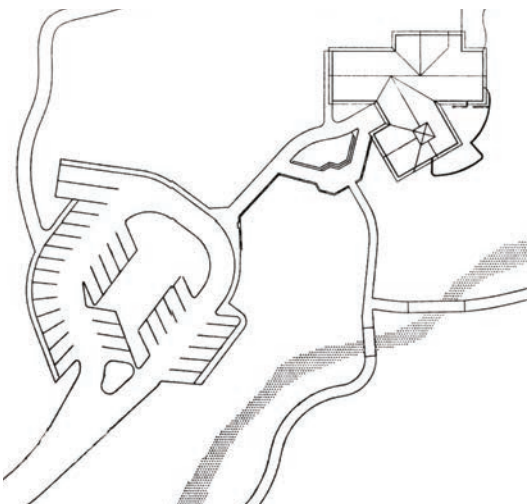


EXISTING NATURE CENTER LOCATIONS



FOUNTAIN CREEK NATURE CENTER FLOOR PLAN

| Fountain Creek | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Room (sqft) | Current |
| Public Spaces | |
| Entry | 105 |
| Reception | 428 |
| Exhibition Space | 1400 |
| Media Room | 1210 |
| Multi-Purpose | 0 |
| Bathrooms | 200 |
| Public Spaces Total | 3343 |
| Private spaces | |
| Offices | 263 |
| Conference Room | 156 |
| Library | 0 |
| Work Room | 378 |
| Private Spaces Total | 797 |
| Utility Spaces | |
| Mechanical | 30 |
| Janitor Closet | 13 |
| Storage | 90 |
| Projector room | 0 |
| Circulation | 86 |
| Stairs | 72 |
| Garage | 0 |
| Basement | 450 |
| Utility Spaces Total | 741 |



BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER FLOOR PLAN

| Bear Creek | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Room (sqft) | Current |
| Public Spaces | |
| Entry | 850 |
| Reception | 150 |
| Exhibition Space | 1500 |
| Media Room | 0 |
| Multi-Purpose | 1000 |
| Bathrooms | 540 |
| Public Spaces Total | 4040 |
| Private spaces | |
| Offices | 228 |
| Conference Room | 0 |
| Library | 114 |
| Work Room | 500 |
| Private Spaces Total | 842 |
| Utility Spaces | |
| Mechanical | 50 |
| Janitor Closet | 66 |
| Storage | 111 |
| Projector room | 44 |
| Circulation | 715 |
| Stairs | 112 |
| Garage | 273 |
| Basement | 1470 |
| Utility Spaces Total | 2841 |

EXISTING EL PASO COUNTY NATURE CENTERS

Bear Creek Nature Center

Year Established: 1976, Rebuilt 2002

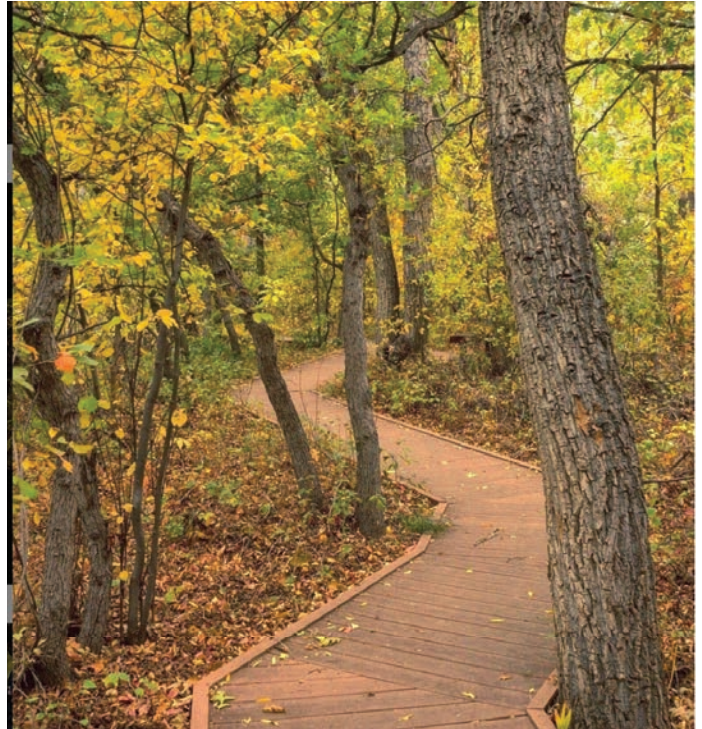
Park: Bear Creek Regional Park

Park Visits (By Reservation): 72,062

Eco-System: Foothills Montane

Building Square Footage: 8,900 SF

Set in the scrub-oak covered foothills of Pikes Peak and Colorado's Front Range, Bear Creek Nature Center supports a variety of wildlife and bird species. Scrub oak thickets, ponderosa pine forests, a mountain creek, and lush meadows give this site its Rocky Mountain foothills character that attracts children and adults of all ages. Visitors find Bear Creek Nature Center, its exhibits and programing, and the surrounding two miles of nature trails to be enjoyable, exciting, and fascinating.



BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER

Fountain Creek Nature Center

Year Established: 1992

Park: Fountain Creek Regional Park

Park Visits (By Reservation): 12,151

Eco-System: Riparian Wetland

Building Square Footage: 4,900 SF

The Fountain Creek Nature Center is located at the edge of a riparian zone in the central portion of Fountain Creek Regional Park. Set in the mature cottonwood forest and flood plain along Fountain Creek, numerous species of waterfowl and other riparian wildlife are attracted to the park by several meadows, spring-fed ponds, marshes, and the creek itself. As an oasis on the plains, the nature center serves visitors of all ages as a gateway to discovery and features interpretive exhibits that emphasize life in, on, and around the water.



FOUNTAIN CREEK NATURE CENTER



FOUNTAIN CREEK NATURE CENTER

COUNTY OWNED-PROPERTY INVENTORY

In the search for a location for a new nature center in northern El Paso County, it is important to first assess the properties that are owned by El Paso County. When considering cost and availability of property, currently owned properties are more feasible sites.

The following are properties owned by the County in northern El Paso County that were reviewed and analyzed for a future nature center:

Elephant Rock Open Space

Elephant Rock is located west of Interstate Highway 25, north of Monument and east of Palmer Lake. The property, which is approximately 65 Acres, was purchased by the County in 2017.

Fox Run Regional Park

Fox Run Regional Park is located east of Interstate Highway 25, northeast of the Gleneagle community. The property is 409 acres and has been a beloved community park, highly used for both active and passive recreation in northern El Paso County.

Black Forest Regional Park

Black Forest Regional Park, as the names infers, is located in the Black Forest of Northern El Paso County with 382 acres. Black Forest Regional Park, today includes active recreation and 14 miles of existing trails. Much of the park was heavily burned in the Black Forest Fire in 2013.

Pineries Open Space

The Pineries is a relatively new property under ownership by El Paso County, not yet open to the public. It was acquired by the County in 2010 as a dedication by the developer. It is approximately, 1,067 acres, of which the majority of the property is under a conservation easement, held by the Palmer Land Trust.

Homestead Ranch Regional Park

The Homestead Ranch Regional Park encompasses 450 acres of land to the northwest of Peyton, Colorado. Park amenities include a large playground,

athletic fields, pavilions and a fishing pond.

Falcon Regional Park

Falcon Regional Park, located north of Falcon High School, is a predominantly active regional park featuring multiple athletic fields, a playground, dog park and trails. The Park covers 215 acres of land.

Peyton Pines

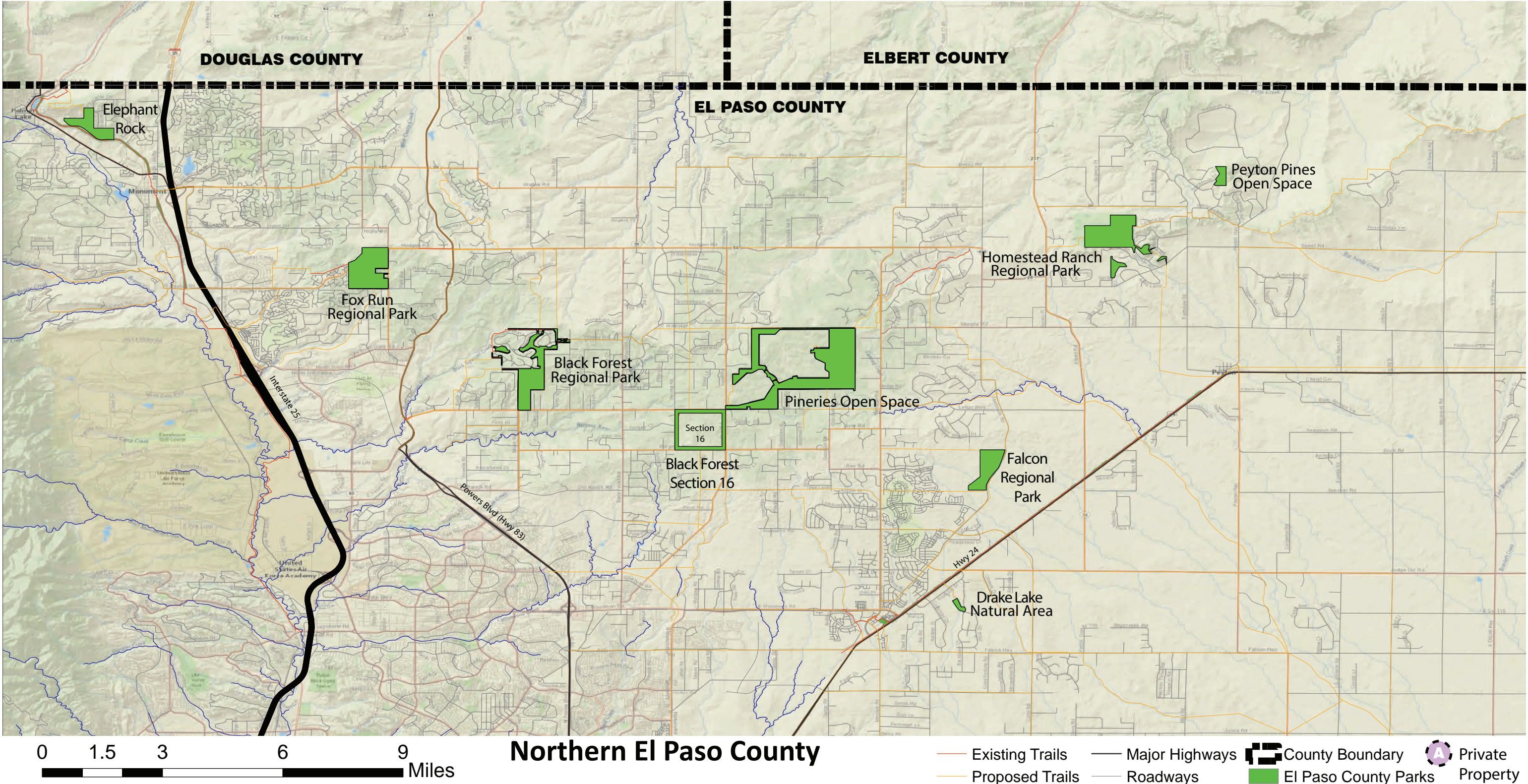
Peyton Pines Open Space covers 48 acres and is located to the northeast of Homestead Ranch Regional Park. Today, it is not open to the public.

Drake Lake Open Space

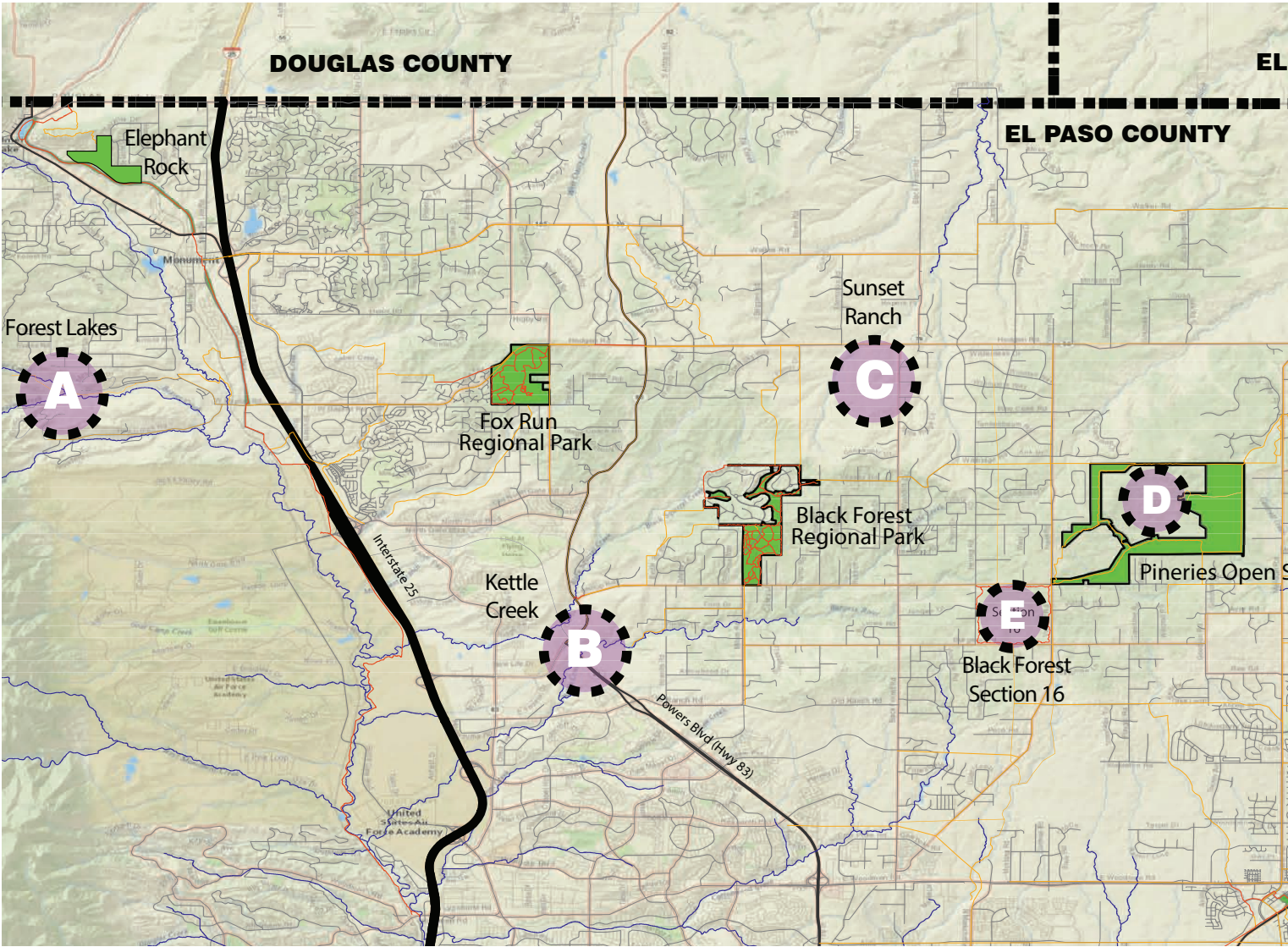
The Drake Lake Open Space is located south of Highway 24, off of Mallard Drive and west of Meadow Lake Airport. It is used for passive recreation.

Black Forest Section 16

Black Forest Section 16 is a 640-acre parcel of land to the southwest of the Pineries. The property has limited use as a trail around the perimeter of the property and features Academy School District 20's School in the Woods.



PRIVATE AND NON-COUNTY OWNED PROPERTIES



On the prior pages, we provided a summary of the properties that are owned by El Paso County. While those properties are critical for consideration, privately-owned properties offer their unique opportunities for a new Nature Center. In the prior decades, El Paso County has secured several critical pieces of land for its residents due to their natural attributes and conservation efforts.

In the search for a Northern Nature Center, we believe the following sites are worth consideration for acquisition specifically for a Northern Nature Center:

Forest Lakes

The Beaver Creek property is located west of I-25 in the foothills south of Monument and north of the Air Force Academy. The several hundred acre property is defined by Beaver Creek and its healthy riparian ecosystem, beaver ponds, and rolling foothills. Despite not being representative of a classic ‘Black Forest’ ecosystem, the site has

impressive resource value and high potential for a Nature Center.

Beaver Creek’s private ownership and the advancing residential development (and real estate values) of the area pose significant challenges for acquiring this property for a new Nature Center.

Kettle Creek

Kettle Creek is a 154 acre property located in north-east Colorado Springs. The property is comprised of a plains ecology with deeply incised riparian drainageways and isolated stands of ponderosa. The property is also home to a large area of prebbles jumping mouse habitat. Notably, the property is under consideration for purchase by the City of Colorado Springs.

The property, though rich in environmental amenities, poses challenges as a Nature Center location. For example, the presence of the endangered prebbles jumping mouse limits development opportunities and could hinder the creation of a new Nature Center. Further, the property is privately owned and may soon be acquired by the City of Colorado Springs. The uncertain ownership and management situation at Kettle Creek limits the feasibility of the property.

Sunset Ranch

Sunset Ranch is a 360 acre property located several miles north of Black Forest Regional Park near the County line. The property is a rolling grassland prairie notable for the presence of several well-fed ponds and numerous bird species. The property has limited stands of trees but is indicative of a typical short grass prairie ecosystem.

The high costs of acquisition and the more limited environmental diversity at Sunset Ranch limit the potential of this property to serve as the home of the new Nature Center.

Black Forest Section 16 (Publicly-Owned)

Black Forest Section 16 is located immediate south west of the Pinerias Open Space in the heart of the Black Forest. The 640 acre property is owned by the State Land Board and leased, in part, to El Paso County Parks. The property features an existing perimeter multi-use trail administered by El Paso County as well as the renowned School in the Woods outdoor school. The property is comprised primarily of rolling hills of ponderosa pine, similar to what is found at the nearby Fox Run Regional Park.

Black Forest Section 16 is an intriguing property that has significant challenges as a Nature Center location. The primary challenge is that this property is owned by the State Land Board of Colorado. As a historic ‘school section’, it is extremely unlikely (and perhaps even impermissible) that this property would be sold to the County. While the State Land Board could choose to lease the land for a new Nature Center, the arrangement would not be permanent. The additional costs and jurisdictional uncertainties, coupled with a site that is similar in character to Fox Run Regional Park, make Black Forest Section 16 a less than ideal Nature Center location.

Pinerias Private Parcels

The 1290 acre, interior portion of the Pinerias Open Space, is privately owned parcel of outstanding environmental quality. This parcel will be discussed in more detail on the following page.

PRIVATELY-OWNED PROPERTIES

Private vs Publicly Owned Properties

The purpose of this plan is to explore the feasibility of a Northern El Paso County Nature Center and determine the most advantageous site for the new facility. One of the most critical factors in the long-term success of the new Nature Center will be funding. From construction costs to operating expenses, establishing a new Nature Center will be a capital intensive effort.

After much deliberation, consultation with County staff, and detailed budget analysis, it was determined that a potentially million dollar plus acquisition of a private property would have significant ramifications for the feasibility of a new nature center. Every dollar spent on acquisition would be one less dollar that could be spent developing a Nature Center.

Given El Paso County's limited acquisition budget and the bounty of outstanding open space properties owned by the County, it was determined that the most feasible, practicable, and successful path forward is to focus on County-owned properties as the home for the new Northern Nature Center.



FOREST LAKES



KETTLE CREEK



BLACK FOREST SECTION 16



SUNSET RANCH

PINERIES DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Pineries Open Space

For those who have had the privilege to visit the Pineries property and see its beauty, it's a property that at first glance seems like a logical site for a Nature Center. The property is quite large, at 1,069 acres, and wildlife is commonplace throughout its diverse wetland areas, large natural open meadows and heavily forested areas. The property includes some areas of burned vegetation from the Black Forest Fire in 2013, which can be an interesting component to a nature center in understanding the role and impact that fire has for an area.



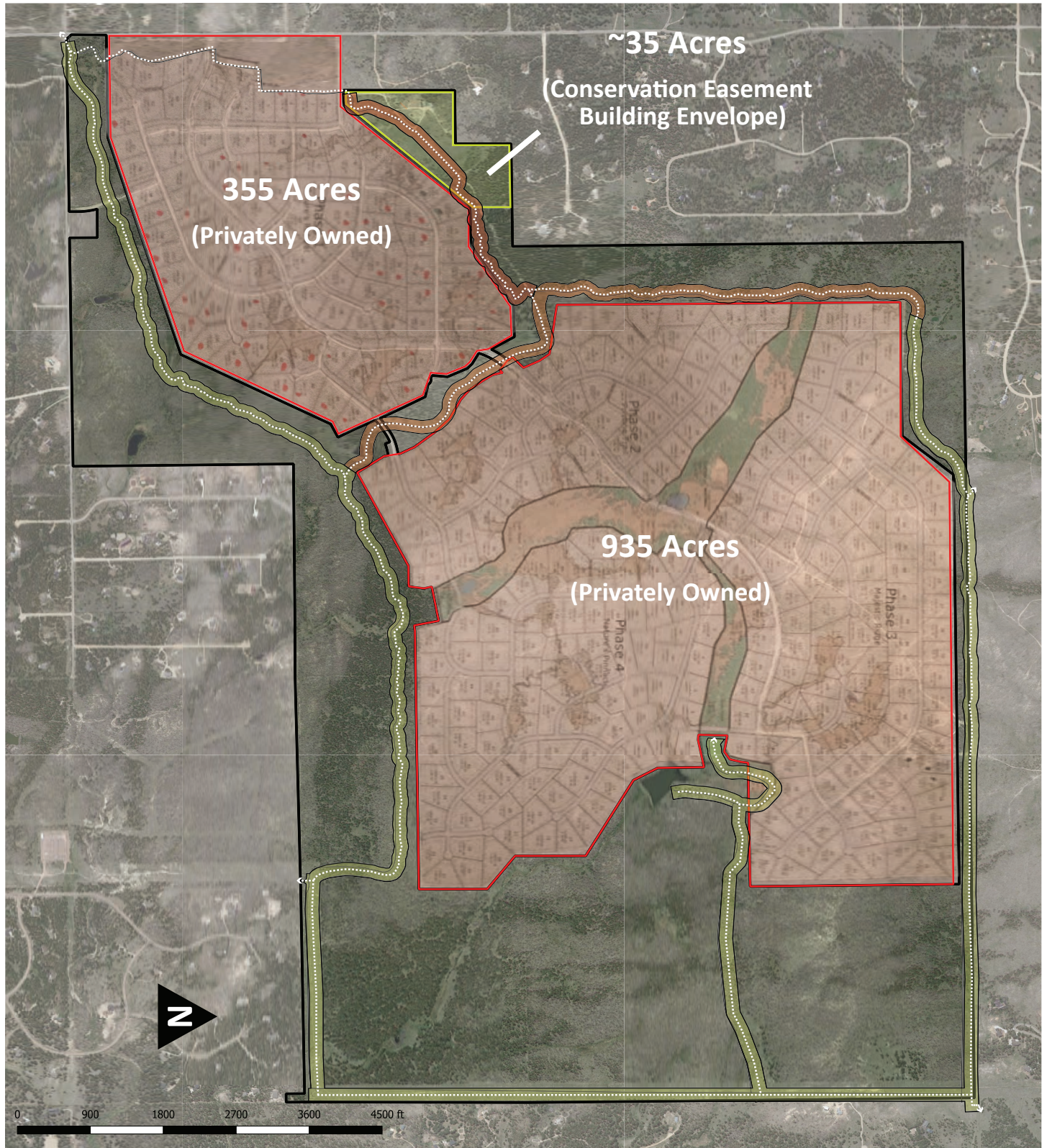
However, the Pineries property has many characteristics that add great complexity for a Nature Center. Two factors in particular greatly limit the feasibility of the Pineries to serve as a Nature Center location. First, a permanent conservation easement establishes a 35 acre portion of the property as the sole buildable area for a Nature Center. This area (identified in yellow on the adjacent map) has limited environmental characteristics for a Nature Center. Additionally, the area is located on the extreme periphery of the property, creating great challenges for accessing the more unique and special areas of the property.



The second major limitation of the Pineries Open Space is that interior 1,200+ acres of the property is privately owned (identified in red on the adjacent map) and planned for residential development with hundreds of 2.5 acres lots. Should this development occur, many of the natural qualities that make the Pineries appealing will be lost.



Consequently, this report does not recommend the Pineries property for the Northern Nature Center. However, in the interest of conservation, strong consideration should be given to acquiring portions of the private property currently slated for development.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY MEETING #1

The first public meeting for the Northern Nature Center Feasibility Center was held on January 31, 2019 at the Black Forest Fire and Rescue Station. Approximately 60 community members gave two hours of their time to learn about the project, share ideas, and give feedback on the Northern El Paso County Nature Center.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Northern Nature Center project; discuss potential nature center locations; and brainstorm about the amenities, site conditions, and building architecture that make a great nature center.

The public meeting participants were presented with a variety of planning materials include a presentation by the Planning Team and County staff, design boards showing potential amenities, activities, and building architecture, and a variety of site maps of potential Nature Center locations.

Meeting participants shared their desire for a Nature Center that provides a rich setting for environmental education and ample opportunities for outdoor recreation. They expressed desire for a property that was convenient and easy to access but also provided opportunities for solitude and relaxation in nature. Finally, the public expressed a strong desire for a nature center building that is sustainable, inspiring, and complimentary and harmonious with its setting.

Participants also shared their opinions about several of the potential nature center locations. In general, the public found merits with many County-owned properties. In particular, the Pinerias Open Space, Fox Run Regional Park, and Black Forest Regional Park received praise for their potential as a Nature Center locations. Participants also suggested several private properties as promising candidates for a new nature center.

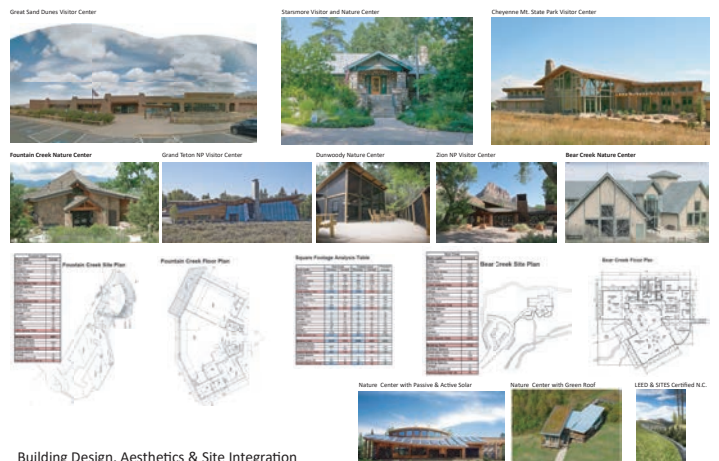


El Paso County considers adding third nature center for northern residents

By: By William J. Dagendesh Feb 6, 2019



MEETING PARTICIPANTS



SAMPLE OF MEETING MATERIALS

Public input received at this meeting was extremely valuable and helped to inform the later phases of the Feasibility Study. By understanding the community's goals and desires, the recommendations of this plan can better reflect the shared community vision for the Northern Nature Center.

SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH NATURE CENTER STAFF

Over a period of weeks following the first community meeting, a great deal of time was spent at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers with staff visitors to understand the goals, vision, operations, successes, and opportunities for improvement at the existing County nature center facilities. The success and decades-long community impact of the existing Nature Centers is the foundation that makes a Northern Nature Center possible so it was important to learn as much as possible about what makes these facilities successful.

Exhibit layout, visitor circulation, environmental stewardship, operating budgets, building design, and educational programming were among the factors investigated to learn what will help to make the Northern Nature Center a success.

Following these investigations, a workshop was held with County Staff to dive deeper into potential Northern Nature Center locations. County staff with backgrounds in nature programming and education, recreation, planning, management, and stewardship and maintenance were invited to share their thoughts and opinions.

The workshop participants reached several important conclusions. First, the importance of an accessible Nature Center located closer to schools, neighborhoods, and major roadways was identified as a critical element for the success of the new Nature Center. Secondly, the clear merits and challenges of wildfire impacts at a location like Black Forest Regional Park was debated. It was agreed that environmental restoration and interpretation on fire recovery would be critical for that location. Finally, the existing use and popularity of Fox Run Regional Park was discussed in detail. Participants agreed that finding a building location removed from areas of high park activity would be critical to ensure a high-quality visitor experience that benefits from, rather than is limited by, the popularity of the park.

Participants in the workshop came away with a clearer vision of the opportunities for a Nature Center

in northern El Paso County. The questions, concerns, and opportunities identified by County staff helped to inform the next phases of public outreach, giving the public an chance to share their opinion on these topics.



COMMUNITY INPUT ON DESIRED NATURE CENTER LOCATION



BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK SITE VISIT

COMMUNITY SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

The Gazette

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING JOURNALISM, EST. 1872

El Paso County weighs third nature center



Muriel Evans and her dog, Kringle, stand on a rock and look out over a pond in Fox Run Regional Park on a beautiful fall day.
the Gazette file

In the Spring of 2019, an on-line community survey was conducted to solicit in-depth input from the public on their vision for a new Nature Center. The survey was open for approximately one month and was advertised through email notification, social media, El Paso County Newsletter, traditional news outlets, and word of mouth.

At the survey's conclusion, 302 members of the public from more than 30 Colorado Zip Codes, had completed the survey. The input these community members shared was invaluable in the development

of this Feasibility Study.

The community survey helped to identify:

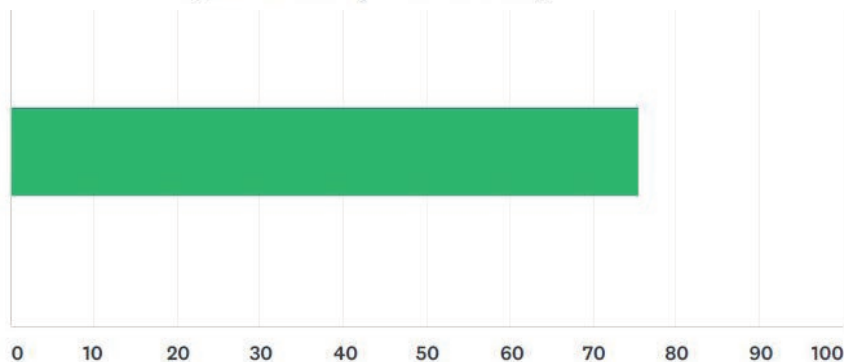
- The level of support for a new Nature Center
- Important Site Characteristics
- Preferred Nature Center Amenities
- Programming and Education Themes
- Building Program/Architectural Opportunities
- Preferred Nature Center Locations

The data collected during the public survey provided critical insights into the community's goals for a new Nature Center. Additionally, data collected from the survey was incorporated into a 'site analysis matrix' that was used to analyze potential Nature Center locations based on the qualities and conditions that were most important to the community.

By incorporating input from the survey, the Feasibility Study is able to ensure that the wisdom and perspective of the community helps shape the vision for a new Northern El Paso County Nature Center.

Selected survey results are as follows:

Q8 How important is a new Northern El Paso County Nature Center to you and your family?

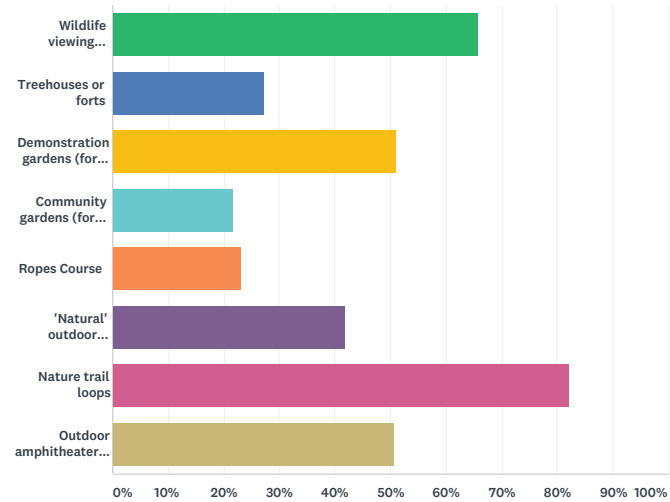


COMMUNITY SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

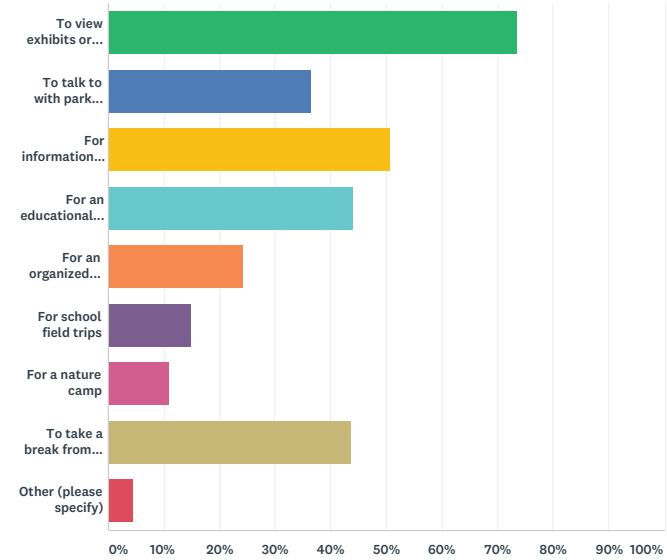
Q7 The park or open space my family and I visit most often is:



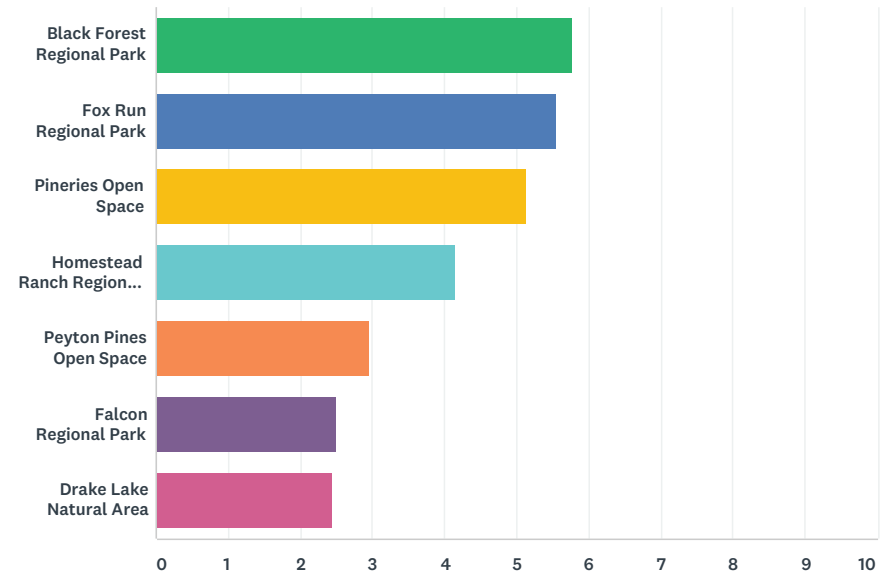
Q11 Which of these amenities would enrich your experience at a new nature center? (Please select up to three choices)



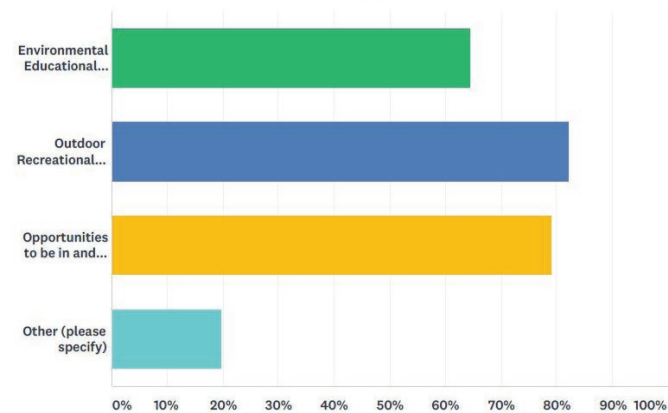
Q15 When you or your family visit a Nature Center building it is most often: (Please select up to three choices)



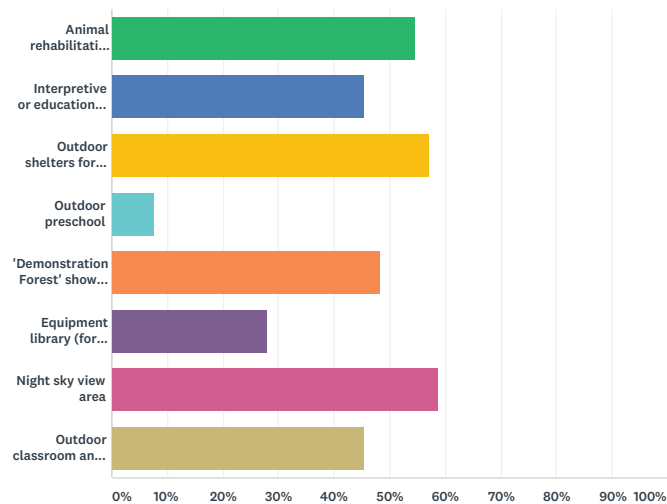
Q30 Of the El Paso County-owned properties in the area, my preferred location for a new Northern Nature Center is: (Please Rank)



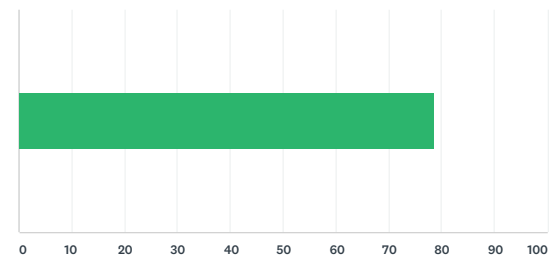
Q10 When you think about a new Nature Center, which of the following opportunities are most important to you and your family? (Please select all that apply)



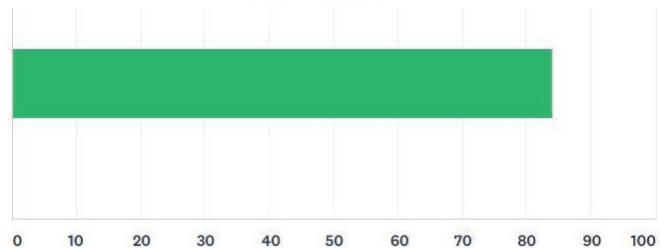
Q12 Which of these additional amenities would enrich your experience at a new nature center? (Please select up to three choices)



Q17 It is important the Nature Center building is a beautiful, inspiring place to visit:



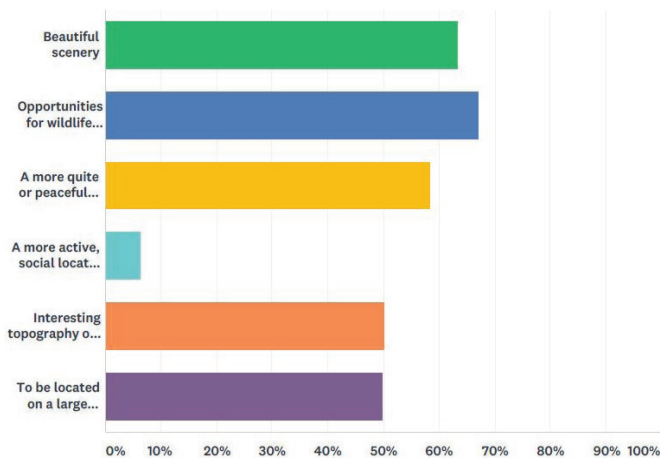
Q14 How strongly do you agree with the following statement: "Nature Centers are a public amenity that is an important part of a well-rounded park system"?



Q13 Are there any additional amenities or programs you believe would be important for a new Nature Center?



Q25 Of the options listed below, what are the most important site characteristics for a new Northern Nature Center? (Please select up to three choices)



Q32 If there is a location for a Northern Nature Center that you would instead of the choices listed in Question 31, please tell us where it is and why you think it would be the best Nature Center location:



TremmelDesignGroup

SITE ANALYSIS MATRIX

The Site Analysis Matrix is an analytical tool that was used to help determine the potential of site to be a successful Nature Center location. Various site characteristics were ranked, weighted, and given a value to create an overall feasibility score for each property.

Input from the public, stakeholders, and County staff; along with site analysis studies and research into nature center trends, helped to identify the most important characteristics for a successful Nature Center.

- These characteristics include:
- Environmental diversity
 - Scenic qualities
 - Passive recreation opportunities
 - Potential cost of construction
 - Existing site amenities
 - Public support
 - Accessibility
 - Educational opportunities

The Site Analysis Matrix was one of several methods used during the Feasibility Study to evaluate the suitability of properties for new Nature Center.

Site Analysis Matrix scores are included below:

BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK

OUTDOOR RECREATION SCORE: 15.5

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SCORE: 11.0

ENJOYMENT OF NATURE SCORE: 12.6

PUBLIC SUPPORT & COST: 14.6

SITE ANALYSIS MATRIX SCORE: 53.9

| | Property Size <i>Acreage</i> | Recreational Opportunity | Existing Trail Network | Regional Trail Connections | Plant Diversity | Wildlife Diversity | Environmental Education | Wildfire Burn Area | Proximity to Population | Scenery & Views | Public Support | Lower Cost of Development |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | | <i>Potential & Allowed Recreation Uses</i> | <i>Existing Trail Network</i> | <i>Potential Regional Trails Near Property</i> | <i>Unique & Diverse Plant Species</i> | <i>Unique & Diverse Wildlife Species</i> | <i>Opportunities for Enviro. Education</i> | <i>Diverse Ecosystem due to Wildfire</i> | <i>Ease of Access for Visitors</i> | <i>Beautiful Views & Scenery</i> | <i>Support based on Public Survey</i> | <i>Potential Cost of Developing Nature Center</i> |
| Black Forest Regional Park | 382 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fox Run Regional Park | 409 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Homestead Ranch Regional Park | 450 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pineries Open Space (Easement Only) | +/- 34 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pineries Open Space (Full Property) | 1069 | | | | | | | | | | | |

FOX RUN REGIONAL PARK

OUTDOOR RECREATION SCORE: 16.9

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SCORE: 8.2

ENJOYMENT OF NATURE SCORE: 13.6

PUBLIC SUPPORT & COST: 15.8

SITE ANALYSIS MATRIX SCORE: 54.5

HOMESTEAD RANCH REGIONAL PARK

OUTDOOR RECREATION SCORE: 13.5

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SCORE: 11.8

ENJOYMENT OF NATURE SCORE: 12.6

PUBLIC SUPPORT & COST: 13.7

SITE ANALYSIS MATRIX SCORE: 51.6

PINERIES OPEN SPACE (CONSERVATION EASEMENT)

OUTDOOR RECREATION SCORE: 7.2

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SCORE: 8.7

ENJOYMENT OF NATURE SCORE: 10.3

PUBLIC SUPPORT & COST: 13.7

SITE ANALYSIS MATRIX SCORE: 39.9

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Based upon a detailed site analysis of multiple properties, including publicly and privately owned properties, extensive input from members of the community and key stakeholders, a detailed investigation of successful nature centers across Colorado and the nation, and a reliance on the findings of the Site Analysis Matrix, several conclusions became clear. These conclusions helped to identify the most promising Nature Center locations as well as the types of programming, architectural designs, potential partnerships, and site-specific qualities that will help the new Northern Nature Center become a success for the citizens of El Paso County. The conclusions include:

Publicly Owned Property

Given the enormous additional costs, complexity, and potentially years-long time constraints associated with acquiring private property, it has been determined that the most feasible, successful location for a Nature Center will be at one of the outstanding County-owned parks in northern El Paso County.

Balanced Opportunities for Education, Enjoyment of Nature, and Outdoor Recreation

Public input from El Paso County residents as well as research into successful nature centers shows that the most successful facilities offer rich opportunities to learn, play, and enjoy being in nature. A Nature Center focused solely on education and interpretation, for example, can be a success, but will often struggle to attract repeat and year-round visitors. Conversely, a nature center that offers a beautiful location but lacks in meaningful environmental education, will struggle to create the deeper connection between visitors and their environment that is so vital to a successful nature center.

Inspiring Architecture and Site Design

The public again spoke with a unified voice when they described how important it is for the Nature Center to be an inspiring place to visit. At successful nature

centers, the building becomes the 'portal to discovery' that frames the experience visitors will have upon arrival. A focus on flexible spaces, sustainable design, outstanding views, and creating a sense of harmony between building and site is essential.

Funding and Partnerships

The critical funding considerations for a new Nature Center are ongoing operational costs and capital construction costs. These funding considerations have been central to many of the recommendations within this plan. For example, selecting a site that will have high visitation rates and strong program participation will help to support the continued operation of the Nature Center. Likewise, selecting a location that is inspiring and community-supported will offer opportunities for fund raising during the construction phase of the project. In both instances, a reliance on outside partnerships from donors, granting agencies, program providers, and the community at large, will be critical for the success of the Nature Center.

Recommended Locations

The preliminary conclusions of the feasibility identify four extremely promising Nature Center property in Northern El Paso County. At each property, two building locations have identified as well. The recommended properties are:

- **Black Forest Regional Park**
- **Fox Run Regional Park**
- **Homestead Ranch Regional Park**
- **Pinerias Open Space**

El Paso County Park Advisory Board

On August 14th, 2019, the Consultant Team and El Paso County staff presented preliminary conclusions and initial recommendations to the El Paso County Parks Advisory Board for their consideration and input. The input of the Advisory Board was thoughtful, well-considered and constructive for the development of the final Feasibility Study recommendations.

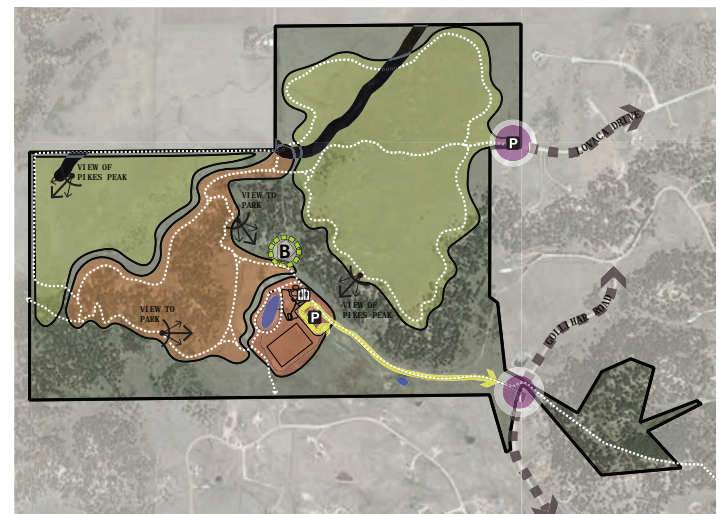
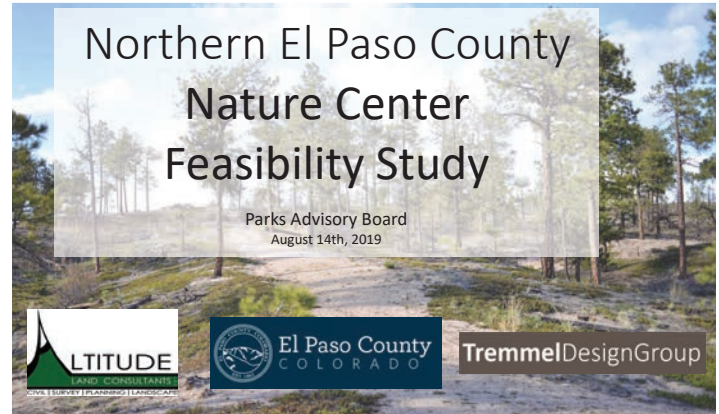
The presentation included an update on the goals of the project; a summary of the input received an analysis of the top four potential Northern Nature Center locations; and architectural concepts for the four properties. The meeting concluded with a robust debate by Board members of the merits of each site.

At this meeting, the four potential locations discussed were:

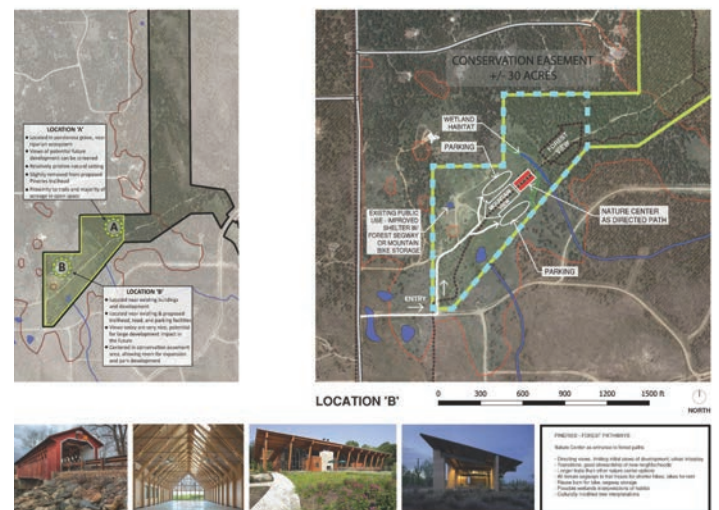
- 4) Pineries Open Space 3) Homestead Ranch Open Space 2) Black Forest Regional Park 1) Fox Run Regional Park

There was a consensus among the Parks Advisory Board members that the challenges of future development and limited building areas at the Pineries Open Space limited the potential of the property for a Nature Center. The Board further agreed that Homestead Ranch is an excellent property, but its more remote location in eastern El Paso County limited its feasibility as a Nature Center location.

The Board generally expressed strong support for both Fox Run and Black Forest Regional Parks as the location for the new Nature Center. Black Forest was viewed favorably for its abundant educational opportunities and Fox Run for its beauty and ability to attract visitors.



HOMESTEAD RANCH OPEN SPACE SITE ANALYSIS



PINERIES OPEN SPACE SITE AND ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

On October 7th, 2019, a second public meeting was held to discuss the potential of Black Forest Regional Park and Fox Run Regional Park as nature center locations.

Following a summary of the planning process, preferred building locations, architectural opportunities, and a discussion of how the parks came to be viewed as the most advantageous nature center locations, the meeting concluded with a series of small and large group discussions. Public input collected during these discussions is as follows:

General Comments:

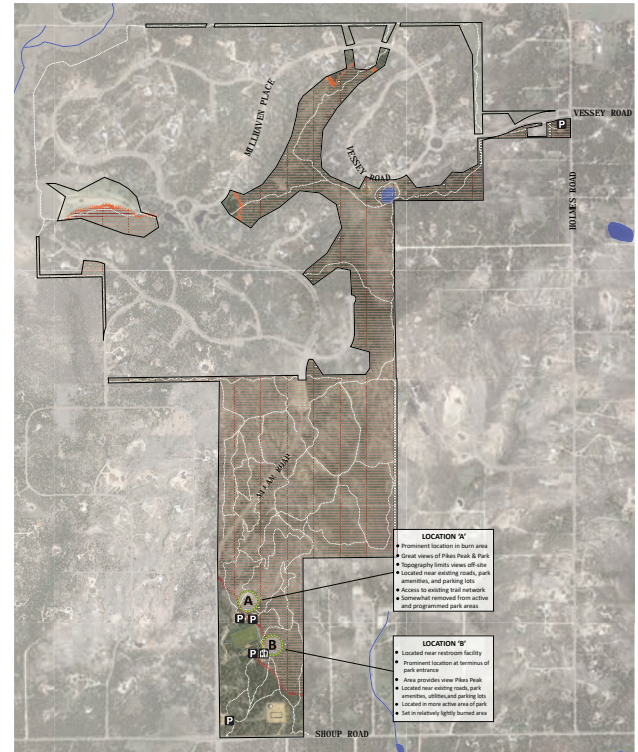
- Both properties would be excellent locations
- Ecology, geography, geology, and cultural history should be a focus of the Nature Center
- The facility should compliment existing Nature Center programming and education
- Consider 'outposts' where multiple properties are linked as larger nature center complex
- Education and interpretation about the impact of the Black Forest Fire would be beneficial

Black Forest Regional Park

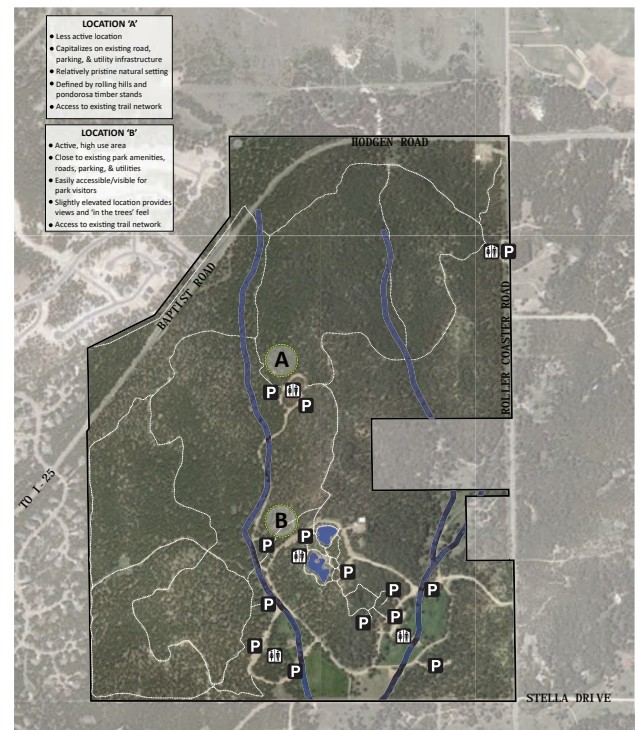
- Location 'A' was preferred building location
- Dynamic property with great educational opportunities (due to the impact of wildfire)
- Not as obviously beautiful as Fox Run Regional Park
- Will people be willing to visit a burned site?
- Environmental restoration is essential
- Will be a great location in years to come, but perhaps not as successful on day one

Fox Run Regional Park

- Location 'A' was preferred building location
- It is a beautiful property but has lower plant and wildlife diversity than Black Forest Regional Park
- A popular park that will bring visitors, but perhaps also crowding challenges
- Architecture should be vertical and inspiring
- Proximity to schools and neighborhoods is an advantage
- People would visit multiple times per year



INITIAL BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK SITE ANALYSIS



FOX RUN REGIONAL PARK SITE MAP

TremmelDesignGroup

FOX RUN REGIONAL PARK



During community meetings, from input collected during the public survey, and from results of the Site Analysis Matrix, the 409 acre Fox Run Regional Park scored consistently high for its value as a Nature Center location. The popular property offers beautiful rolling hills of ponderosa timber stands; an extensive and well-designed trail network; abundant bird and wildlife habitat; an easy to access location, and numerous park amenities including playing fields, ponds, restrooms, and playgrounds.

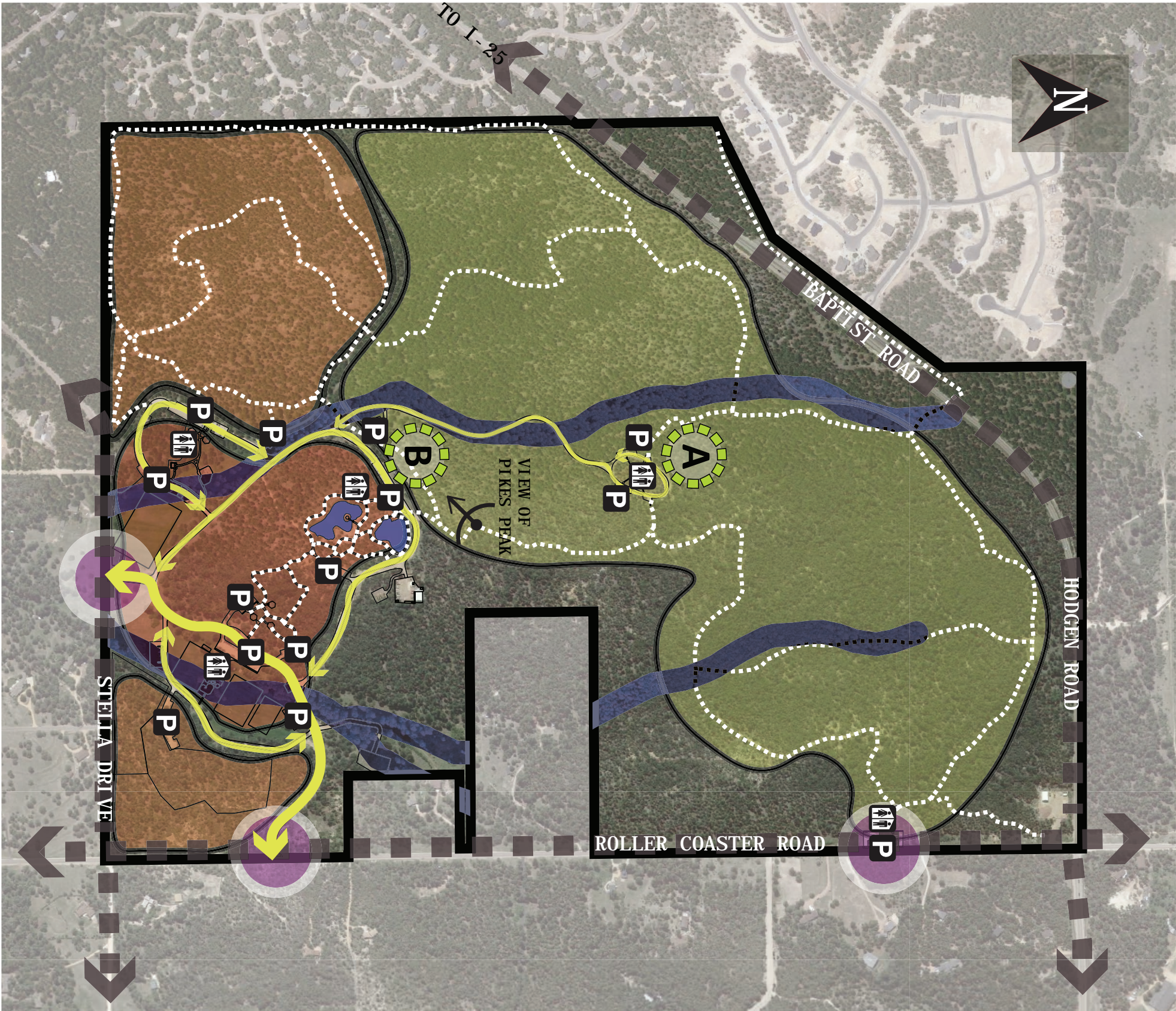
Together, these elements create the conditions for a superb Northern Nature Center location. Based on the results of the community survey, the public agrees. Fox Run Regional Park received the most first placed votes (just edging out Black Forest Regional Park) in the survey. Additionally the Site Analysis Matrix shows that Fox Run has the highest combined score with exceptional opportunities for recreation, enjoyment of nature, and partnership and funding opportunities.



However, Fox Run Regional Park is not without its challenges. As any visitor to the park knows, Fox Run Regional Park is an extremely active park. Throughout the planning process, some community members expressed concerns that the high levels of park use would detract from a Nature Center. Others worried about overloading the park with more visitors. However, as the site analysis graphic on the adjacent page shows, the northern half of Fox Run Regional Park typically sees very few visitors relative to the southern half of the park. In this regard, Fox Run Regional Park is very similar to Bear Creek Park where the nature center and busy park coexist successfully.



The adjacent graphic identifies two Nature Center locations. Location 'A' is located in the northern half of the park in a beautiful stand of timber. This is the recommended Nature Center location due to its close access to nature and secluded park location.



FOX RUN REGIONAL PARK SITE ANALYSIS

Fox Run Regional Park

- Acreage: 409
- Ownership: El Paso County
- Existing Use: County Park
- Location: Black Forest
- Environment: Mixed Conifer Ecosystem
- Trail Network: 6.8 Miles
- Park Features:
 - Ponds
 - Playing Fields
 - Playgrounds
 - Pavilions
 - Trails
 - Restroom Facilities
 - Existing Roads/Parking Areas

LEGEND

CIRCULATION PATTERNS

- VEHICULAR - WITHIN PARK LIMITS
- VEHICULAR - OUTSIDE PARK LIMITS
- MULTI-USE TRAILS
- ENTRY POINTS INTO PARK

AREA ACTIVITY

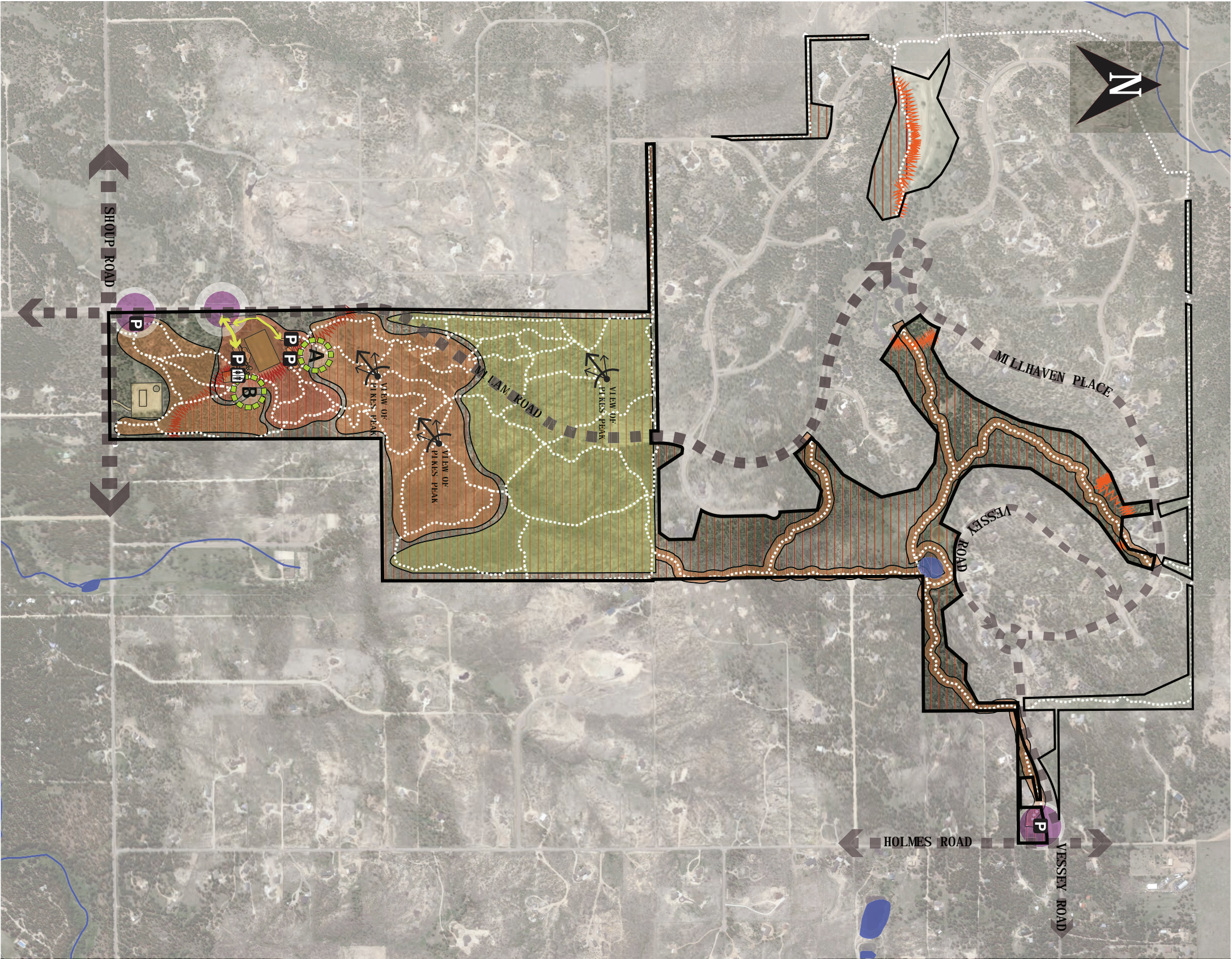
- HIGH USE - ACTIVE RECREATION & CONCENTRATED USE OF PARK FACILITIES
- MEDIUM USE - MODERATE ACTIVE & PASSIVE RECREATION
- LOW USE - PASSIVE RECREATION & DISPERSED USEAGE

OVERLAYS

- BOUNDARY OF 2013 BLACK FOREST FIRE
- WATERBODIES
- VIEWSHED
- PARKING LOTS
- RESTROOMS

TremmelDesignGroup

BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK MAP



- Black Forest Regional Park**
- Acreage: **382**
 - Ownership: **El Paso County**
 - Existing Use: **County Park**
 - Location: **Black Forest**
 - Environment: **Mixed Conifer Ecosystem, Recovering Wildfire Landscape**
 - Trail Network: **14 Miles**
 - Park Features:
 - Trail network
 - Ongoing environmental restoration
 - Playing Fields
 - Playgrounds
 - Pavilions
 - Restroom Facilities
 - Existing Roads/Parking Areas

LEGEND

CIRCULATION PATTERNS

- VEHICULAR - WITHIN PARK LIMITS
- VEHICULAR - OUTSIDE PARK LIMITS
- MULTI-USE TRAILS
- ENTRY POINTS INTO PARK

AREA ACTIVITY

- HIGH USE - ACTIVE RECREATION & CONCENTRATED USE OF PARK FACILITIES
- MEDIUM USE - MODERATE ACTIVE & PASSIVE RECREATION
- LOW USE - PASSIVE RECREATION & DISPERSED USAGE

OVERLAYS

- BOUNDARY OF 2013 BLACK FOREST FIRE
- WATERBODIES
- VIEWSHED
- PARKING LOTS
- RESTROOMS

BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK SITE ANALYSIS

BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK



Black Forest Regional Park is an exceptional park offering outstanding opportunities for environmental education and interpretation. The defining characteristic of the 382 acre property is the impact of the Black Forest Fire that burned eighty percent of the property in 2013 (illustrated on the adjacent site analysis map) The wildfire impact created a dynamic recovering landscape that is quite unique.

During the planning process, many community members identified Black Forest Regional Park as an excellent Nature Center location because of the opportunities to learn about the role of fire in an ecosystem, the chance to view the renewal and recovery of the park, and the growing diversity of plant species at the property.



In the public survey, Black Forest Regional Park received the second most first place votes, and the highest overall score for public support for locating the Northern Nature Center at the park. The Site Analysis Matrix gave Black Forest Regional Park the second highest score with some of the highest ratings for education opportunities, public support, and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The unique character of Black Forest Regional Park also presents some unique challenges as a Nature Center location. First, a sustained and focused effort on environmental restoration would be critical for the long-term success of the park and for a Nature Center. Sustainably managing the property as a fragile recovering landscape would provide the greatest opportunities for education and interpretation-but these efforts can come at a high financial cost.



The second challenge will be to attract visitors from across El Paso County. Some visitors may view the park as 'damaged' or less beautiful and this may inhibit visitation in the first years of operation. Additionally, it will be important that the Nature Center is about more than just wildfire-it cannot be viewed as a singly-focused facility. Finally there are practical concerns about exposure to the elements, poor off-site views, and a fragile ecosystem that must be addressed for a Black Forest Nature Center to be a success.

RECOMMENDED NATURE CENTER SITE

Based on detailed site analysis, extensive public input, discussions with key stakeholders, thorough financial analysis, and a desire for a site that inspires and captivates, the Feasibility Study recommends Fox Run Regional Park as the new location for the Northern El Paso County Nature Center.

Fox Run Regional Park offers exceptional opportunities for environmental discovery and meaningful outdoor experiences for visitors of all ages. The property is representative of a prototypical Black Forest ecology and the beauty of the park is apparent to anyone who visits. Despite Fox Run Regional Park's incredible popularity, it is easy to find solitude and refuge in the remote, less-visited northern portion of the park.

These areas of ponderosa timber stands, rolling hills and small meadows provide an outstanding setting for a new Nature Center. The popularity of the park will help ensure the new nature center is well-used, frequently visited, and financially viable. The Nature Center will compliment existing park uses and will create a new environmental focus for Fox Run Regional Park.

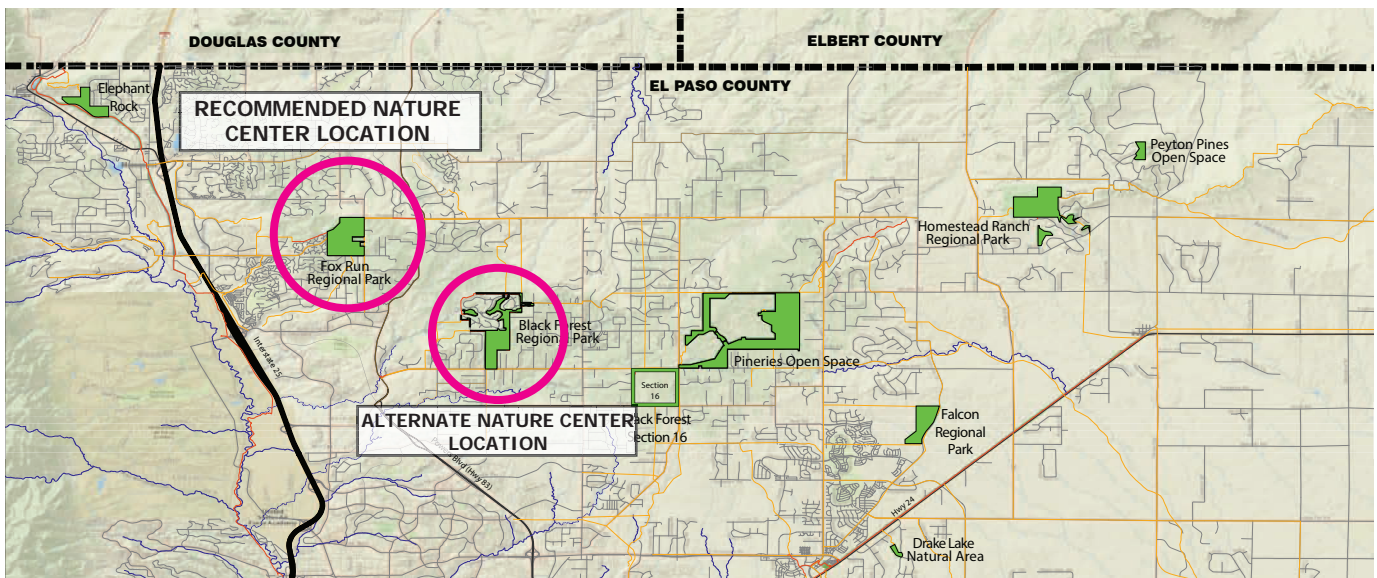
This Feasibility Study also recognizes the incredible potential of Black Forest Regional Park as a location for the Northern Nature Center. The opportunities

for education, discovery, and a deeper connection to nature at Black Forest Regional Park cannot be ignored. The Feasibility Study strongly recommends Black Forest Regional Park as an alternate location for the new Northern Nature Center.

El Paso County Parks will shortly begin an interpretive master plan process for the Northern Nature Center. This will be followed by a fundraising campaign for the new Nature Center. These efforts may provide additional information or opportunities to support Fox Run or Black Forest Regional Parks as the ultimate home for the Northern Nature Center.

El Paso County residents are blessed to have two excellent locations for a new Nature Center. The recommended Fox Run Regional Park location has potential to be a popular Nature Center in the County. A Black Forest Nature Center could become a state-leading example of how environmental education can be used to create a new generation of outdoor stewards.

In both cases, the long-term feasibility, the opportunity for success, and the potential for a Northern Nature Center to serve citizens and inspire visitors for decades to come is exceptional.



RECOMMENDED NATURE CENTER SITES

FOX RUN NATURE CENTER SITE CONCEPT

The Feasibility Study recommends that the Northern Nature Center at Fox Run Regional Park be located in the north-central portion of the park at Location 'A' identified below. This is near the current location of the restroom facilities located at the turnaround loop of the existing dirt access road.

This area offers separation from existing park uses and is located in a very scenic area of Fox Run Regional Park. The recommended location has the advantage of nearby utilities infrastructure for the new Nature Center, existing road access, and parking areas that could be expanded with little environmental disturbance. In addition, this location offers access to existing trails and to areas of the park that would be ideal for nature center programming.

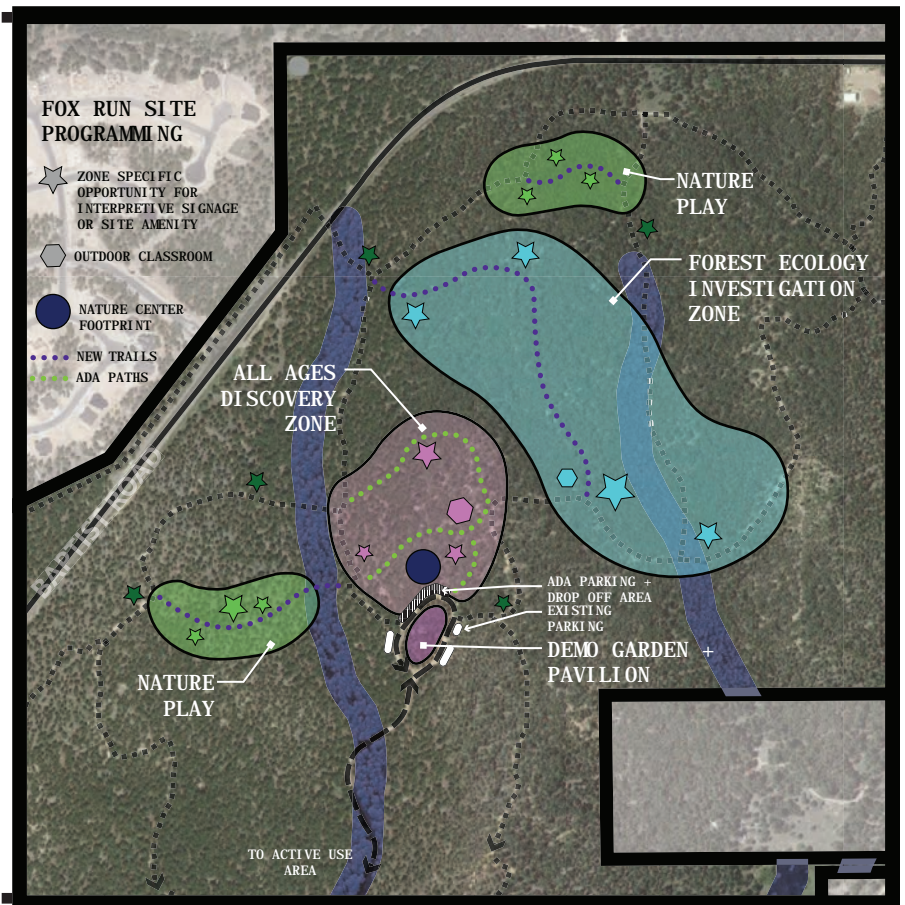
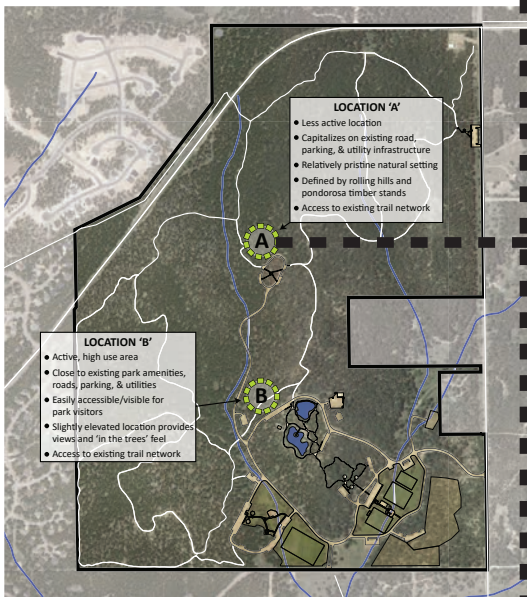
The concept shown below illustrates a potential site design for the Northern Nature Center. The Nature Center building is shown in blue. The concept identifies zones for Nature Play, Forest Ecology, and All Ages Discovery. Interpretive Nodes themed to each zone would provide opportunities for education, play, and programming. The concept incorporates community input

collected during the planning process and seeks to build on the most successful aspects of Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers.

Additional elements of the design concept include additional parking areas, ADA trails, a demonstration garden, and a drop off zone to accommodate buses and large numbers of visitors.

The goal of this concept is to illustrate the potential of a Fox Run Nature Center to provide high quality programs, education, and opportunities for youth and families.

FOX RUN NATURE CENTER SITE CONCEPT



NATURE CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

Building Concept

The Fox Run Nature Center allows the park to be itself – it emphasizes the strengths of the existing park and promotes what has been loved, cherished, visited, and actively used by the community for years. The building will link directly with existing nature trails extending into the northern areas of the park, leading the visitors into the forest.

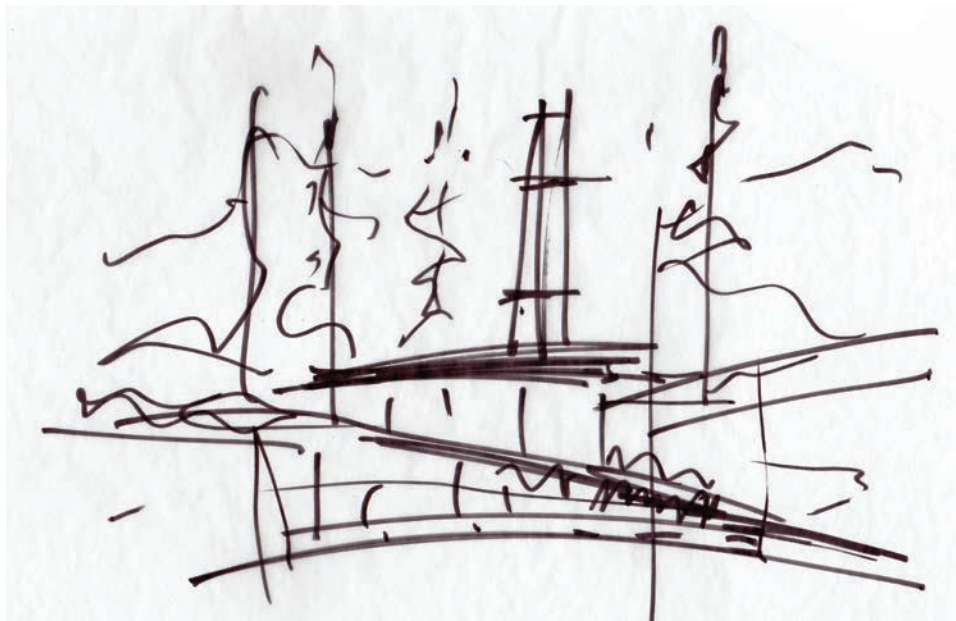
The ideal form for the Nature Center building should 'grow' from the unique character of the rolling hills and pine trees in the park. Tucking into one of these hills, the earth sheltered building is imagined to start the educational journey of the visitor with a window into the foundational soil to emphasize the ground-dwelling animals of Black Forest region. The curious visitor's path would continue to expand into the site for further understanding of the ground cover and life it creates and nurtures. If all goes as planned, the inspired visitor's learning will be further directed vertically into the trees and up to the tree tops to explore the reason for the forest's name and the abundant life not seen near the ground.

Ideally the nature center will be a reflection of the nature of the forest itself with visitors getting a full understanding from the rocks and roots to birds eye glimpse of the area above the trees.

The tower will appear planted into the site, with the trunk of its form growing out of the earth, up into the trees; the structure, like a conifer, reaching toward the sky; its viewing platforms like branches, catching the light. In this way the building will not be in the trees, but of the trees, and it will allow the visitor to climb the building, as if a tree, and experience along the way every layer of the forest, vertically – from subterranean root system to leafy canopy.

The tower will be a destination for lovers of both the natural world and design – it will describe to its visitors how design can both inform and expand an individual's perspective, illustrating for the community how human development can engage with the natural world in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way that promotes its value and beauty.

The Nature Center will generate interest over time, providing a distinct and unique experience that will inspire return trips. As the building will be integrated, totally, into its natural context – the forest canopy, living and breathing – the experience of the building, its tower and the exhibits contained within, will live and breathe, evolving and changing with the seasons and the years.



FOX RUN NATURE CENTER CONCEPT SKETCH

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NATURE CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

Project Completion Approach

To fulfill the goals of the Nature Center as part of the land, core services of the structure that contain workspaces, staff uses and accessible toilets could be 'rooted' into the earth with other spaces and paths extending HORIZONTALLY AND/OR VERTICALLY from it. Exhibits, gathering areas, and exploration experiences can take various forms depending on funding and desires of the programs offered.

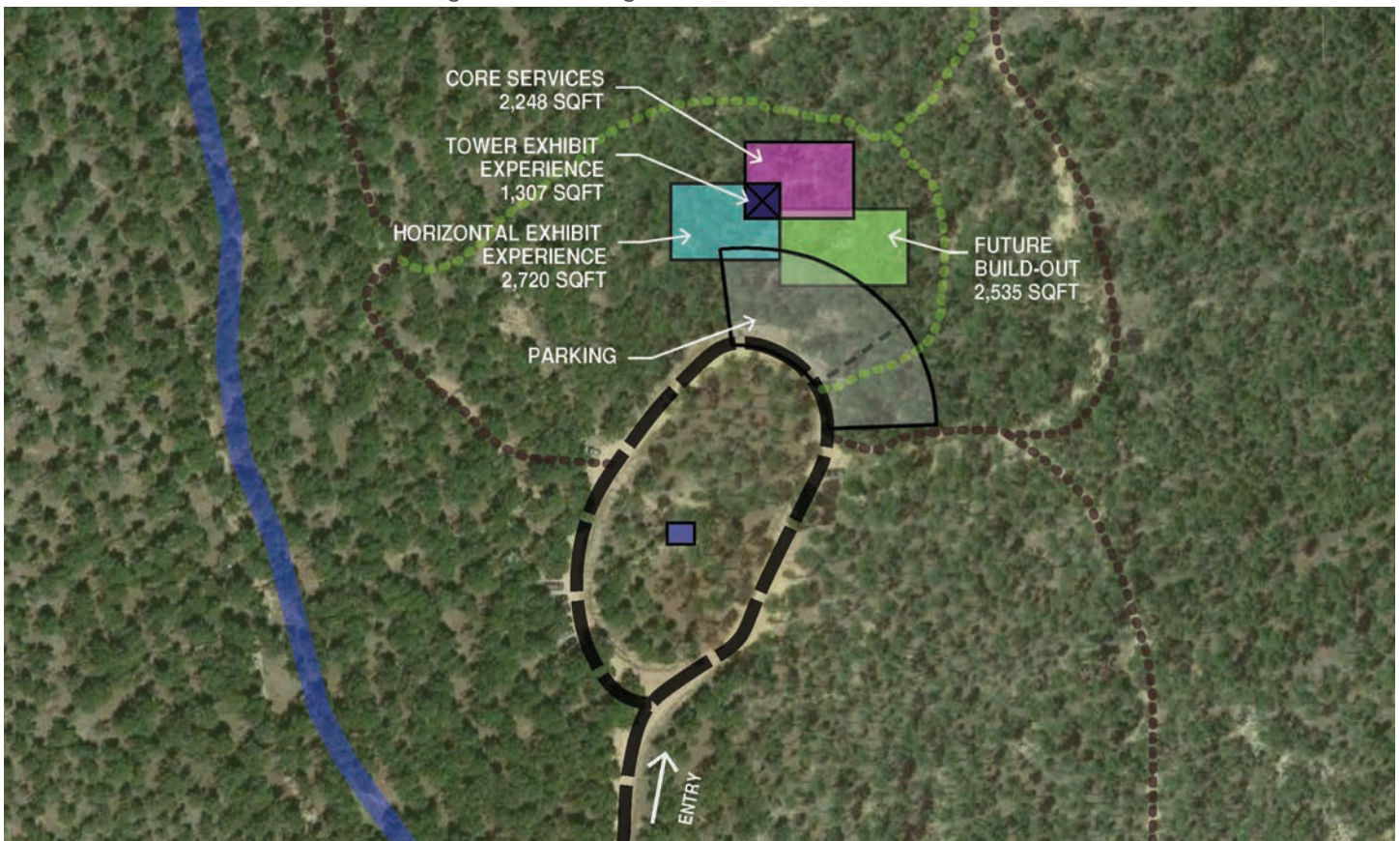
The goal of the nature center is to be an educational attraction that would be visited time and again by the community. In order to provide the best center possible, two different approaches to proposed budget have been provided.

A - The first version of the building would bring in the 'core functions' of the center including a meeting space, offices and accessible restrooms that would be 'rooted' into the earth. The building would then grow

VERTICALLY from there to include a vertical tower element to change the perspective of the learning experience. This tower would inspire return visits with the vertical approach to the educational path for the Nature Center. While the approach is vertical, it will still be accessible to persons of all abilities and mobilities.

B – Another budget option for the building would be to provide the core functions and grow the building HORIZONTALLY with the more familiar horizontal display of educational exhibits like the current nature centers.

Either of these approaches would lead to a final build out of the Nature Center to its full potential with the core services, tower experience and horizontal functions of the building.

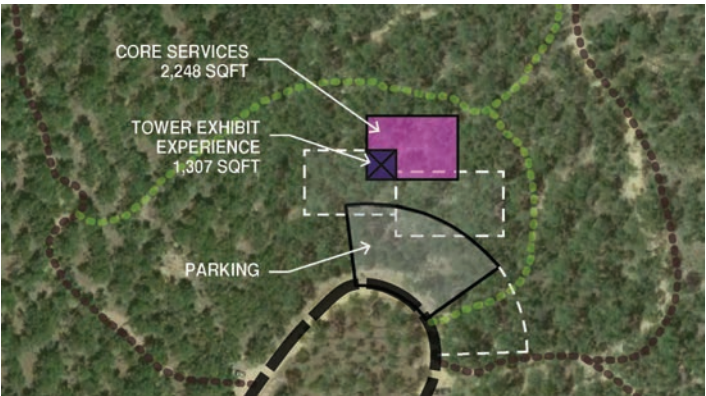


FOX RUN NATURE CENTER PHASED CONCEPT DIAGRAM

NATURE CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

A - TOWER OPTION

The building will consist of two elements: an earth sheltered core services base that contains public spaces and park offices, and a vertical tower element that will provide a venue for such activities as bird watching, viewing of the forest canopy wildlife, tree canopy viewing, and night sky activities.



TOWER OPTION PHASING CONCEPT

CORE SERVICES + TOWER EXHIBIT EXPERIENCE

CORE SERVICES

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | | |
| | Entry | 375 SF | |
| | Multi-Purpose Space | 1,000 SF | |
| | Accessibly Restrooms | 325 SF | |
| Private | | | |
| | Offices | 265 SF | |
| | Mechanical | 50 SF | |
| | Janitor Closet | 30 SF | |
| | Subtotal | 2,045 SF | \$653,250 |

TOWER EXHIBIT EXPERIENCE

| | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | | |
| | Tree Top Deck | 144 SF | |
| | Immersion Platforms | 750 SF | |
| | Experiential Exhibits | | |
| | Elevator | 38 SF | |
| | Stairs | 375 SF | |
| | Subtotal | 1,307 SF | \$653,200 |

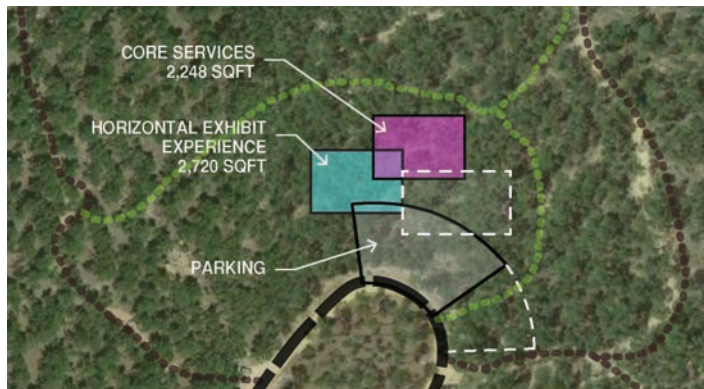
| | | |
|----------------|----------|-------------|
| CORE + TOWER = | 3,352 SF | \$1,306,450 |
|----------------|----------|-------------|



NATURE CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

B - NO TOWER OPTION

As an alternate approach to the first phase of the project, the building would again contain the core services 'rooted' in the earth, but the building would expand horizontally to include the recognizable ground level expression of the exhibit spaces and meeting areas which would emanate out into the landscape.



HORIZONTAL OPTION PHASING CONCEPT

CORE SERVICES + TYPICAL HORIZONTAL INTERPRETATION

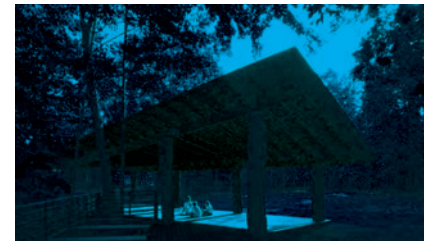
CORE SERVICES

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | | |
| | Entry | 375 SF | |
| | Multi-Purpose Space | 1,000 SF | |
| | Accessibly Restrooms | 325 SF | |
| Private | | | |
| | Offices | 265 SF | |
| | Mechanical | 50 SF | |
| | Janitor Closet | 30 SF | |
| | Subtotal | 2,045 SF | \$653,250 |

TYPICAL HORIZONTAL INTERPRETATION

| | | | |
|--------|------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | | |
| | Reception | 225 SF | |
| | Interior Exhibit Space | 800 SF | |
| | Interior Exhibits | | |
| | Subtotal | 1,025 SF | \$659,375 |

CORE + HORIZONTAL = 3,070 SF \$1,312,625

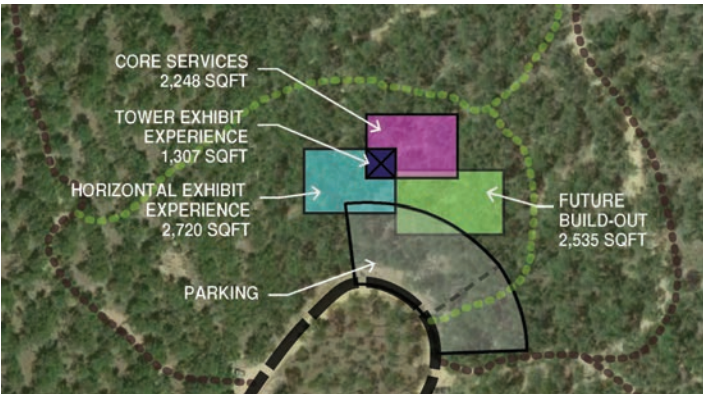


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NATURE CENTER ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

C - FINAL BUILDOUT

The final phase of the project would complete the center regardless of the which budget option was selected creating an complete nature center integral with its surroundings.



FINAL FOX RUN NATURE CENTER PHASING CONCEPT

CORE SERVICES + TOWER EXHIBIT EXPERIENCE + FINAL BUILD OUT

CORE SERVICES

| | | |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | |
| Entry | 375 SF | |
| Multi-Purpose Space | 1,000 SF | |
| Accessibly Restrooms | 325 SF | |
| Private | | |
| Offices | 265 SF | |
| Mechanical | 50 SF | |
| Janitor Closet | 30 SF | |
| Subtotal | 2,045 SF | \$653,250 |

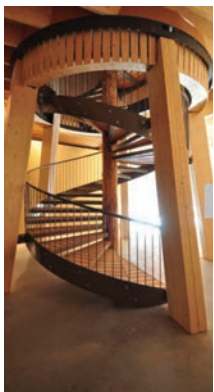
TOWER EXHIBIT EXPERIENCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Public | | |
| Tree Top Deck | 144 SF | |
| Immersion Platforms | 750 SF | |
| Experiential Exhibits | | |
| Elevator | 38 SF | |
| Stairs | 375 SF | |
| Subtotal | 1,307 SF | \$653,200 |

FINAL BUILDOUT

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Public | | |
| Reception | 150 SF | |
| Interior Exhibit Space | 800 SF | |
| Interior Exhibits | | |
| Presentation Patio – Outdoor | 725 SF | |
| Private | | |
| Library | 75 SF | |
| Work Room | 375 SF | |
| Storage | 75 SF | |
| Circulation | 275 SF | |
| Garage | 273 SF | |
| Subtotal | 3,700 SF | \$1,495,625 |

CORE + TOWER + FINAL = 7,052 SF \$2,802,075



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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. This relationship is often made possible through collaboration and partnerships, and is the key to creating an inspiring, well-loved, and highly-utilized Nature Center.

A successful Northern El Paso County Nature Center will depend, in large part, on creating collaborative and complimentary partnerships to support programming, to create opportunities for revenue generation, to expand services, and to increase financial support for capital improvements and operations.

The Feasibility Study recommends the following partnership opportunities for the Northern Nature Center:

PROGRAMING PARTNERSHIPS

Each year, El Paso County benefits from more than 7,000 hours of volunteer time to support programming and operations at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek nature centers. Cultivating a base of dedicated volunteers at the Northern Nature Center will be a critical step in delivery high-quality programming to visitors. Relying on the Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers, black forest area residents, and parks Friends Groups is anticipated to provide a strong volunteer base of support.

Creating additional partnerships between non-profit organizations, private service providers, and educational/research institutions, all of whom can supplement and deliver programs and services at the Northern Nature Center, is highly recommended.

Examples of partner organizations include:

- Outdoor Preschool Providers
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Non-Profit Environmental Organizations
- Camp/Activity Providers
- Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Land Preservation & Conservation Organizations

- State and Federal Agencies

DONORS AND SPONSORSHIPS

The financial viability of the Northern Nature Center will be greatly enhanced through a targeted capital campaign that seeks the support from corporate, foundation, and individual donors. Opportunities for giving include both capital and operational support at the Nature Center.

More specifically, promising sponsorship opportunities include building, program, and exhibit naming rights; 'donor bricks'; and trail and outdoor amenity sponsorship opportunities. A strategy many nature centers have had great success implementing is tying financial giving directly to specific needs.

The excitement, visibility, and community impact a new nature center at Fox Run Regional Park will generate in the public will also make the center extremely attractive to donors. The Northern Nature Center should capitalize on this excitement by creating a robust giving campaign to support construction and operation of the new facility.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The grant opportunities available to a Northern Nature Center located at Fox Run Regional Park or Black Forest Regional Park are immense. Colorado is blessed with outstanding granting organizations like Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Health Foundation, and the Gates Family Foundation. These, and other organizations, focus on broad spectrum of needs such as ecological stewardship, environmental education, outdoor recreation, community building, and public health.

Highlighting how the Northern Nature Center will provide community benefits in each of these areas will be the key to creating a successful grant plan. Further, by using donations and sponsorship as matching funds for grants, El Paso County can leverage funding and demonstrate the strong base of community support that is so essential to successfully securing grant funding.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

| AGENCY | GRANT | GRANT FOCUS | POTENTIAL FUNDING |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
| Anschutz Family Foundation | General Grant | Youth Development & Community Building (Capital & Programming Funding) | Up to \$75,000 |
| Activating Places and Spaces Grant | Public Health Grant | Enhancing places to improve public health and increase access to the outdoors (Capital Funding) | Amount Varies |
| Colorado Parks and Wildlife | Non-Motorized Trail Grant | Trail construction and improvements (Capital Funding) | Up to \$250,000 |
| Colorado Parks and Wildlife | Fishing is Fun Grant | Fox Run pond enhancements that support fishing and outdoor access (Capital Funding) | Up to \$400,000 |
| Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | Environmental Education Regional Grant | Environmental education and programming projects (Programming Funding) | \$15,000-\$100,000 |
| Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) | Local Park and Outdoor Recreation (LPOR) | Environmental education facilities and park improvements (Capital Funding) | Up to \$350,000 |
| Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) | Planning Grant | Planning for park, nature center, trail, and recreation project (Planning & Design Funding) | Up to \$75,000 |
| Colorado Health Foundation | Multiple Grants | Community health grants supporting access to nature, recreation, education and the outdoors (Capital & Programming Funding) | Amount Varies |
| Trust For Public Land (TPL) | Funding Available on Project by Project Basis | Funding to support conversation, education, public health, access to the outdoors, and recreation (Capital Funding) | Amount Varies |
| The Kettering Family Foundation | Funding Available on Project by Project Basis | Support for education and the environment in Colorado. (Capital & Programming Funding) | Amount Varies |
| The Gates Family Foundation | Parks & Recreation Capital Grant | Environmental Education, Stewardship, and Park Development (Capital & Programming Funding) | \$20,000+ |
| Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation | General Grant | Public health, education, environmental preservation, and public welfare in the Pikes Peak Region (Capital, Planning & Programming Funding) | Up to \$100,000 |
| Cornell Douglas Foundation | General Grant | Funding for support of environmental causes including education, preservation, and access (Capital, Planning & Programming Funding) | \$10,000 |
| El Pomar Foundation | Multiple Grant Programs | Funding for health, education, and civic or community improvements in Colorado (Capital, Planning & Programming Funding) | Less than \$100,000 |
| Corporate Sponsorships | Non-Grant Funding | Corporate sponsorship of programs and facilities in exchange for branding or recognition (Capital & Programming Funding) | Amount Varies |

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TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Northern Nature Center Next Steps (Anticipated Project Schedule)

Feasibility Study Adopted by El Paso
County Park Advisory Board:
Winter 2019

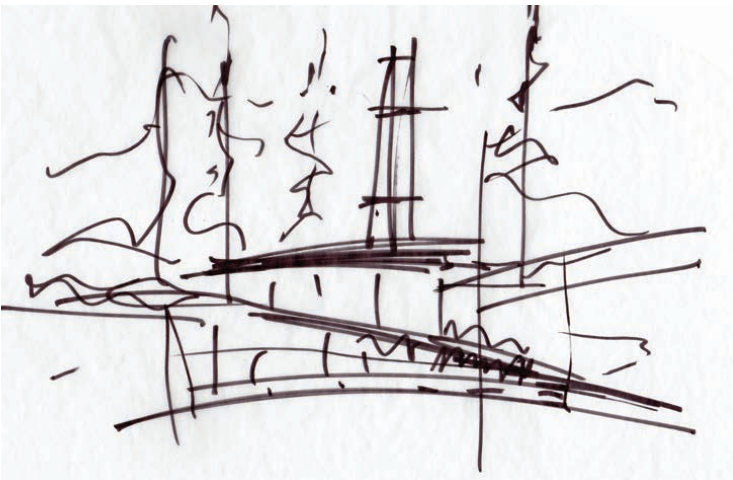
Northern Nature Center Interpretive
Master Plan
Winter 2019 - Spring 2020

Capital Campaign
Fall 2020 - Spring 2022

Architectural Design and Site Plan
Spring 2021 - Fall 2021

Northern Nature Center Construction
Spring 2022 - Spring 2023

Grand Opening
Summer 2023



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Northern Nature Center Feasibility Study Acknowledgments

El Paso County Board of County Commissioners

District 1, Holly Williams
District 2, Mark Waller
District 3, Stan VanderWerf
District 4, Longinos Gonzales, Jr.
District 5, Cami Bremer

El Paso County Park Advisory Board

District 1, Julia Sands de Melendez
District 1, James Cassidy
District 2, Susan Jarvis-Weber
District 3, Edmund Hartl, Jr.
District 3, Terry Martinez
District 3, Anne Schofield
District 4, Alan Rainville
District 4, Kiersten Steel
District 5, Bob Falcone

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**Special Thanks to the Citizens of El Paso County
that Participated in the Creation of this Plan**