BEAR CREEK DOG PARK MASTER PLAN

EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND LEISURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

2008

Terry Putman & Associates, Inc. Land Planning and Development Consulting Park Planning and Design



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Bear Creek Dog Park is a very unique dog park located in Bear Creek Regional Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Dog Park is operated and maintained by the El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services Department. The Dog Park is located within the 513 acre Bear Creek Regional Park and contains 25 acres.

El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services Department currently own or manages approximately 5,900 acres of park land, 83 miles of trail and approximately 2,100 acres of conservation easements. Most of the parks managed by the Parks Department are regional parks and are predominately natural areas with some active recreation facilities such as playgrounds, picnic facilities and playfields.

Located in western Colorado Springs, Bear Creek Regional Park is in the foothills life zone and because of its location and facilities offered it is one of the most popular county parks. The park contains three miles of Bear Creek and has 24 of the 513 acres developed for active recreation. In addition to the dog park, Bear Creek Park offers a community garden, picnic pavilions, playground, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, three playfields, archery range and eight tennis courts.

The Bear Creek Dog Park was established in 1997 in response to citizens and park users as an off-leash voice command dog park. The Dog Park encompasses approximately twenty-five acres and is fenced on all sides. Located along Bear Creek, the Dog Park is situated in a natural setting with native vegetation and adjacent riparian habitat. The creek provides a natural source of water for the large dog area.

In 2005, through fund raising efforts of the Lovers of Off-Leash Parks (LOOP), the Dog Park received a \$2,500 grant from Novartis Animal Health. This funding provided a separated fenced area of two acres to allow small dog and senior or arthritic dog owners an option of using an area that did not have large dogs present. This option prevents conflict potential of different size or overly friendly dogs.

The Bear Creek Dog Park was named one of the 2006 Deramaxx Top Ten Dog Parks. This acknowledgement was due to the dedication by the Dog Park Advisory Committee and El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services Department to local dogs and the good of the community.

Amenities provided in the Dog Park include: dog waste dispensers and disposal containers, benches and resting places, a three quarters of a mile loop trail, four access points, double-gated entry vestibules for

safe entry, information kiosk, picnic tables and a donated ball dispenser.

In 2007, the Dog Park Advisory Committee (DPAC) applied for and received a grant from the Joseph Henry Edmonson Foundation to produce a master plan for the Dog Park. This master plan scope was to be based on available funds and funding strategies. The goals of the master plan were to address concerns of existing users.





BEAR CREEK DOG PARK MASTER PLAN GOALS

- The long term maintenance and sustainability of Bear Creek Dog Park.
- Consideration of environmental factors and stormwater management to protect Bear Creek and water quality.
- A maintenance and improvement plan for Bear Creek.
- Feasibility of creating small ponds along Bear Creek for dog use.
- Investigate recommendations on the feasibility of fencing structure options across creek to prevent dogs from escaping from the dog park along the two creek openings. This fencing would have to meet the zero rise criteria of the Corps of Engineers and Regional Flood Plain Administrator approval for construction as required.
- Investigation of the need and feasibility of adding a creek crossing and additional trail along the south side of the creek.
- Investigation and recommendations on best cost for long term site landscape and surfacing material that minimizes operation and maintenance cost, improves drainage and reduces or eliminates muddy spots. This should include soil types, slope, draining, existing vegetation and future landscape design and maintenance issues proposed in the master plan.
- Addition and placement of drought tolerant trees or shade structures and benches on which pet owners can rest during use of the park.
- Design and cost analysis of installing a potable drinking water fountain and area for washing dogs near parking area.
- Development of off-leash dog park rules and policies which promotes the safety, long-term operation, maintenance and well being of both dogs and park patrons.
- Investigation and recommendations on need for after daylight hours lighting including options and cost estimates.
- Investigation and recommendations on future development and cost analysis of a permanent restroom verses continued use of portable restroom.
- Assist the Parks Department in identifying possible endowments or user-fee structure for the development and ongoing operation and maintenance of the dog park.

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IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CREEK AREA EROSION

There is erosion occurring along Bear Creek in the large dog area. This is a result of overuse by dog owners and dogs freely accessing the creek. The erosion is along the steeper banks of the creek bed and the adjacent areas. This overuse has denuded the area of vegetation. The bare areas allow rain water to flow across the ground at a higher rate of flow and erosion is a result. Also, the bare creek banks are subject to higher erosion during storm events. The El Paso County Stormwater Division has expressed concern about this situation and are in agreement with the proposed recommendations.



It is recommended that measures be taken to revegetate these areas. A recommended grass mix is included in the appendix section of this plan. Erosion mats should be used initially to provide protection of the seed and prevent further erosion during the revegetation process. Minor grading will be required to lessen the severity of the slope and existing erosion areas. Other measures such as terracing, steps, and gabion baskets should be considered if the reseeding does not solve the issue. The gabion baskets could provide a natural shape to the bank and openings could be provided to allow steps for access to the creek. Other features such as rock rip-rap and landscaping with native shrubs and trees will also provide stability for the creek. Landscape features could be designed to also provide barriers and direct usage of areas to prevent access of steeper areas and areas being revegetated.

PARKING

Parking for the dog park is located along the east side of the park parallel to 21st Street and is accessible at Rio Grande Street. The existing parking lot was expanded in 2007. The parking lot is at capacity during peak hours on weekday evenings and weekends. The best way to limit carrying capacity is to limit parking. The dog park appears to be at capacity for use. Overflow parking is available at the soccer fields to the south.





If measures implemented in this master plan are successful in solving some of the problems of overuse, erosion, etc, additional parking could be considered. If the existing parking lot was paved, this would increase the efficiency by delineating parking spaces.

It is not recommended that additional parking be provided for the dog park. If the dog park is expanded in the future, additional parking could be added adjacent to Lower Gold Camp Road. Paving of the parking lot should be considered in the future to increase efficiency. Consideration should be given to use of alternative paving methods. Use of paving materials that allow absorption of rainfall and minimize the runoff into Bear Creek should be used. The use of "water harvesting" techniques is another option for minimizing runoff by capturing the rainwater and filtering it through landscape areas or natural grass areas.

RESTROOM/DRINKING FOUNTAIN

Currently a handicapped accessible portable restroom is provided for dog owners using the dog park. The portable restroom is plastic and is unprotected from tipping over by vandals and is unsightly. Three options are being considered for providing restroom facilities for the dog park.

Option one would be an accessible portable restroom that will be surrounded by a metal screen enclosure. This enclosure will provide screening to make it more aesthetic pleasing, prevent tipping and provide some shade for the portable restroom. This option will



require pumping and cleaning weekly by the portable restroom provider and is an ongoing yearly expense.

Option two would be to have a prefabricated concrete permanent restroom placed over a concrete vault. This restroom should be unisex and placed over a minimum 750 gallon concreter vault. Detailed information is provided in the appendix section. This building would require pumping twice monthly by a sanitation service and daily cleaning by staff.

The third option is to provide a permanent restroom with water and sewer hook-up. This restroom would be a unisex single unit constructed of pre-cast concrete. This option would require electricity for lighting and heating in order to provide year-round use. On going costs will be daily cleaning by staff and utility monthly charges.

It is recommended that a permanent restroom with water, electricity and sewer is constructed within the dog park area adjacent to the parking lot as shown on the Master Plan. A dog drinking fountain should be provided with this option.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS. CONTINUED



RULES/AND REGULATIONS

The current posted rules and regulations were evaluated and approved by the Bear Creek Dog Park Advisory Committee, El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services Department staff, El Paso County Security staff and officials from the Pikes Peak Human Society.

> It is recommended that new rules be provided for the dog park. The proposed new rules and regulations are listed the appendix section.



FENCING

Fencing around the perimeter of the dog park has been an ongoing project. Currently the park is almost totally fenced. There are two areas that need to be fenced better in order to keep dogs contained within the dog park.

One area that presents challenges for fencing is crossing the creek. In discussion with the Pikes Peak Regional Floodplain Administrator, fencing across the creek is possible provided the fence section is designed by an engineer and permitted through the Floodplain Management office. The fence section should be designed with breakaway capability during a minimum twenty-five year storm event.



The use of additional fencing will be recommended to close the gaps across Bear Creek to prevent dogs from exiting the dog park along the creek. The design of the fence sections must be approved by all governing jurisdictions including El Paso County Stormwater Department, City of Colorado Springs Stormwater Department and possibly the Corps of Engineers.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS. CONTINUED



WATER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT STRUCTURES

During the public input process and in discussion with the Bear Creek Dog Park Advisory Committee, it was requested that some form of structure be placed in the creek to pool water for dog use. In discussion with various agencies it was determined that a water enhancement structure could be constructed that would be multi-use in scope.

The structure would slow down the creek flow, provide a crossing with boulders and aerate the creek



water as it flows over the structure. This structure should be constructed from concrete and natural granite boulders. The design of the structure should be done by an engineer and permitted through the Floodplain Administration Office.

It is recommended that a water enhancement structure be placed in the creek that would also allow access across the creek.

FEES AND/OR PERMIT SYSTEM

The subject of instituting a fee and/or permit system for users of the Bear Creek Dog Park was suggested during the public input process and discussed by the DPAC. It was decided to implement a voluntary membership program instead.

A Dog Park membership program would be similar to the program at the Bear Creek Nature Center. The Bear Creek Dog Park Association should be a 501c3 nonprofit organization and structured with various tiers of membership. Being a voluntary member of



the Bear Creek Dog Park Association would provide funding for maintenance and upkeep of the park, improvements to the park and possibly training sessions or educational sessions at the Dog Park. The Association membership levels and donation levels should be determined by the Dog Park Advisory Committee and El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services Department staff.

This membership program would provide benefits such as possibly a newsletter, program and event brochure and invitations to social events. Membership would also provide for advocacy for the dog park and provide much need funding for improvements.

It is recommended that a Bear Creek Dog Park Association be established to provide a membership program to provide a tier membership level donation program to provide additional funding for the dog park.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED



REVEGETATION AND TREE PLANTING

Due to the extensive use and popularity of the dog park, a significant amount of denuding of vegetation on the site has occurred in areas primarily along the creek. A plant list and grasses mix is provided in the appendix section.

There are existing tree species in the dog park area that provide some shade for dog owners. The existing tree species are primarily Gamble's Oak (Scrub Oak), Siberian Elm and Cottonwood. There is



a need for additional tree planting to provide more shade areas for dog owners to rest during use of the dog park. The tree species recommended are adaptable to the dry conditions of the dog park but will require supplemental watering for the first year of establishment. Recommend tree caliper for planting should not exceed 1-1/2".

It is recommended that additional trees be planted in the dog park as per the planting plan. It is also recommended that reseeding occur in the areas along the creek and other bare areas using either of the grass mixes listed in the appendix.

SITE LIGHTING

There is currently no lighting provided for the dog park or the parking lot. Colorado Springs Utilities has the obligation to provide power for this location. There will be a cost for connecting from their source to the lighting. There has been discussion of providing lighting either in the parking lot or the dog park or both. Lighting the parking lot would serve both as a safety factor for dog park users that are entering or leaving the dog park early in the morning or late in the afternoon. This security lighting would also reduce misuse of the area after park hours. Staff and the Dog Park Advisory Committee had



determined that lighting the trails in the dog park is not necessary. The current park hours are 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. but trail hours in the rest of Bear Creek Park are dawn to dusk. Staff is considering making the dog park hours also dawn to dusk. This would eliminate use of the park at night or early morning.

It is the recommendation that lighting be provided on the proposed permanent restroom and security lighting in the parking lot and that the dog park hours are posted as dawn to dusk. It is not recommended that lighting be provided along the dog park loop trail.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED



OVERALL MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mowing

It is recommended that the area be mowed on an as needed basis. It is not recommended that the entire 25 acres be mowed to allow for grass species to reseed annually and to encourage dog handlers to stay on the trail. This also allows the area to maintain the natural area appearance.

<u>Clean-up</u>

Clean up of dog waste is on a voluntary basis. Each dog owner/handler is expected to pick up after their dog(s). This is done by most of the users. Some of the waste is not picked up for various reasons. In order to assist the dog owners, currently there are two organized volunteer dog waste clean up days per year. The first one is in April and is known as "April Stools Day" and the second one is in October and is known as "Stools and Ghouls". There are also periodic clean up days organized by the Dog Park Advisory Committee. It is a recommendation of the El Paso County Environmental Health Department that more clean up days are scheduled each year to remove waste. This will have a positive impact on water quality of Bear Creek. A log should be provided to the Health Department and the El Paso





County Stormwater Coordinator of any clean-up days that occur.

Restroom Maintenance

Currently there is a rented portable restroom that is cleaned weekly by the service provider. Staff also checks and stocks the portable restroom on a daily basis, during normal work week hours. A permanent restroom is recommended to be constructed at the dog park. This restroom will require staff to clean and restock toilet paper on a daily basis.





Vegetation Management

Recommendations have been made to revegetate several areas along the creek and other areas as necessary. In order to sustain vegetation along the creek, temporary fenced areas may be needed to be constructed. Other methods of sustaining vegetation during re-vegetation could be used such as shredded wood matting, hydro mulching or crimping with hay.



Design Guidelines

There are currently several bench types, picnic tables, trash containers and dog waste containers. There should be a consistent style and color of all of the site furnishings. The recommendations for these are included in the Appendix section (starting on page 20). It is also recommended that

the picnic tables be removed to discourage owners/handlers from eating in the dog park.



OVERALL MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED



APPENDIX



INTERVIEWS

Phil Wuthier-Regional Floodplain Administrator-11/2/07 2880 International Circle, 327-2938

- Fencing across creek is possible as long as it is break away and is designed by a licensed engineer and approved by his office.
- Bank stabilization and/or terracing is possible. It is permissible to remove bank but not add or decrease creek profile. Any change to the creek profile will require design by a licensed engineer and approved by his office.

Barbara Dallemand-El Paso County Stormwater Coordinator 3460 Marksheffel Road, 520-6460

• Concerns about not effecting 100 year flood plain, sediment issues due to bank erosion and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in relation to pollution of the water that reached Fountain Creek.

Tim Mitros-City of Colorado Springs Stormwater Division-10/31/07

• It is possible to layback the slope of the banks to assist in access, re-vegetation and stabilization. Possibly use ritter-rings as a stabilization method.

Steve Kuester-City of Colorado Springs Stormwater Division-11/6/07

• A fence is ok if it is break away and meets Regional Floodplain Administrator requirements and approval. Riffle drops are permissible but must be designed by a licensed engineer and approved by Regional Floodplain Administrator.

Matthew Williams-Project Engineer, Colorado Springs Utilities Water Services Division- 11/2/07 111 South Cascade Avenue, Suite 105, 668-7211

- Permanent restroom with septic system is not permitted due to sewer line, must hook up to sewer and water system. A portable restroom is permitted in the area. There is a 16 inch water main under 21st Street on the east side. It is tappable but will require 6" tap fee, ³/₄" meter and fire hydrant. Will require cutting 21st Street and putting in three isolation valves.
- It is not possible to run a line from the meter in Bear Creek Park at the soccer fields due to restrictions of using the right-of-way and crossing Bear Creek, therefore a new tap must be made in the 21" line. The water line for the drinking fountain must be copper pipe.
- There is an 8 inch sewer main that runs through the parking lot and is available for use. Connecting to the sewer line will require development fees and possible recovery fees. If a dog wash is constructed it has to drain into the creek or a sump.
- Contact Richard Plush at Utilities Contract Administration at 668-8113.



Jerry Westling and Graham Haller- El Paso County Parks and Leisure Services-11/29/07 2002 Creek Crossing, 520-7647

The following issues were identified:

- Extending the fence across the creek to keep dogs in the dog park.
- Bare ground next to creek from dogs running along creek.
- Owners want access to creek.
- Can the creek be dammed up in order to pool water for dogs?
- Possibly construct an agility course.
- Ways to control mud on dogs from the bare ground areas.
- Ways to preserve vegetation or rotate areas.
- What type of mowing should occur in the area?
- Can we provide water for washing and/or drinking (dogs and people)?
- Need for overflow parking?
- Better porta-potty or permanent restroom?
- Review rules and regulations-coordinate with Human Society.
- Should there be a fee or permit system- how much and who administers.
- Should coordinate all issues with Dog Park Advisory Committee (DPAC).

Mark Johnson and Juliet Glass-El Paso County Environmental Services-11/16/07 2880 International Circle, Suite 110. 520-7819

- Dog access to creek is a concern due to pollution from urine and feces, would prefer no access to creek but some limitation or rotation areas are alright.
- Would like to see re-vegetation of bare areas especially along creek.
- Would encourage more frequent cleanup events that just the current two events.
- Maybe more signage explaining the problems with pollution and encouraging owners to pick up better after pets would help.
- Overall desire to minimize pollution.

Bear Creek Dog Park Advisory Committee (DPAC)-11/7/07

Ron, Carl, Karen, Gretchen

Issues identified are:

- Ability to pool water for dog use.
- Access to creek is important.
- Restroom would be nice but portable restroom is OK.
- Small dogs vs. big dog areas- feel the areas are OK as is.
- Possible institute a memorial donation program for benches, trees, etc.
- Would like to look at expanding the trail on the north and west side.
- Would like a drinking fountain but dog wash isn't important.
- Open south side of creek more if possible.

INTERVIEWS, CONTINUED

Andre Brakin-County DOT Stormwater Division

Neil Katz, and Brian Kay-El Paso County Parks-11/26/07 2002 Creek Crossing, 520-7647

- Check with City Planning, Ryan Tefertller, to see if the developer of the Pinello property, Bonicelli, will be extending water service from 21st Street through the park.
- Discussed coordination of dog park master plan with overall Bear Creek Park Master Plan.

Ryan Tefertiller-City Planning

The developer of the Pinello property will be using a sixteen inch water main in Lower Gold Camp Road for his development.

Mike McCarthy-El Paso County Health Department-12/4/07 301 S. Union Blvd., 578-3131

• It could be possible to get a permit through a waiver to install a vault toilet. This would require a letter from Colorado Springs Utilities authorizing the vault without connecting to the wastewater system. The waiver would depend on building a case to demonstrate a need or hardship depending on some factor such as prohibitive costs to expand water service to the area.

Jamie Norris, Leslie Yoder-Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region Officer Andrew Routh-El Paso County Security April Champion, Graham Haller, Jerry Westling-El Paso County Parks

• Purpose of meeting was to discuss rules for the dog park. A final list of rules was completed by the group and is included in this report on page 19.

INTERVIEWS, CONTINUED



RESTROOM DETAILS AND OPTIONS

1. ZERBEL PORTABLE RESTROOM SCREEN

Uses rented portable restroom, provides visual screening, prevents tip over.

	\$7,500	for portable restroom screen
	<u>\$ 240</u>	installation of screen with slab
Total	\$ 7,740	

Annual Costs

Portable restroom rental and servicing - \$135 per month x 12 mths = \$1,620 Cleaning two times per week

2. ROMTEC SST ASPEN 1011, PRECAST SINGLE SELF-CONTAINED TOILET

Precast concrete, vandal proof, aesthetically pleasing, vault tank requires pumping similar to portable restroom.

- \$13,363 for restroom structure
- \$ 4,634 for 750 gallon vault
- \$ 1,603 freight
- <u>\$ 4,490</u> installation of vault and setting restroom

Total \$20,090

Annual Costs

Total

Monthly pumping by portable restroom service -\$265 monthly for 12 months= \$3,180 Daily cleaning and stocking

3. PERMANENT RESTROOM

Will require water and sewer connection, no monthly pumping, utility charges required

\$ 17,653	for building
(\$19,392	building with stainless steel fixtures, light package and heater)
\$ 10,897	water service connection and development/tap fees
\$ 5,033	sewer service connection and development/tap fees
<u>\$ 2,250</u>	electrical service connection
\$ 35,833	
(\$37,572)	

<u>Annual Costs</u> Daily cleaning and stocking Utilities-Water and Sewer

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TREE AND GRASS SPECIES RECOMMENDATIONS

TREES

Hackberry - *Celtis occidentalis* Hybrid Elm - *Ulmus-hybrid* Burr Oak - *Quercus macrocorpa* Western Catalpa - *Caltalpa speciosa*

All trees planted should be no greater that $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch caliper to allow for establishment. Supplemental water should be provided for the first year after planting.

GRASSES

Foothills Mix - (Arkansas Valley Seed)

A mixture developed for the elevations of 3,000 to 8,000 feet to provide natural cover under dryland conditions. Contains both cool and warm season grasses adapted to the Western Great Plains and Southwest regions. Has excellent cold and drought tolerance. Good for soil stabilization on poor soils.

Seeding Rate: Broadcast: 20-25 lbs/acre

Drilled: 15-20 lbs/acre

15% Annual Ryegrass
10% Crested Wheatgrass
10% Thickspike Wheatgrass
10% Slender Wheatgrass
10% Canada Bluegrass
10% Canada Wildrye
10% Hard Fescue, Durar
10% Sideoats Grama
5% Blue Grama

Low Grow Mix - (Arkansas Valley Seed)

A mixture of low growing (8-12"), drought tolerant grasses suitable for areas where mowing is difficult or not desirable.

Seeding Rate: Dry Land: 20-25 lbs/acre

30% Ephraim Crested Wheatgrass
25% Perennial Ryegrass
20% Blue Fescue
15% Canada Bluegrass
10% Chewings Fescue



RULES AND REGULATIONS

BEAR CREEK DOG PARK ETIQUETTE

This area is dedicated to park users with dogs off leash. Please help keep this area safe and clean by observing the following rules:



Use at your own risk.

Handlers must always clean up after their dogs and dispose of waste properly. City Ordinance 01-42

Handlers are responsible and liable for the actions and behavior of their dogs at all times.

For your safety, runners, bicyclists and equestrians shall not use the dog park.

Dogs must be on leash in the parking lot and until inside the designated off leash areas.

Do not bring dogs younger than 4 months. Dogs must be wearing proof of current inoculation and license. Female dogs in heat are prohibited. City Ordinance 01-42

If your dog becomes unruly, please leash your dog and leave the dog park.

Young children must be supervised at all times.

In case of dog related emergency, please contact the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region at (719) 473-1741.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following are suggested site furnishings to standardize the design concepts:

PORTABLE RESTROOM SCREEN ZERBEL MANUFACTURING



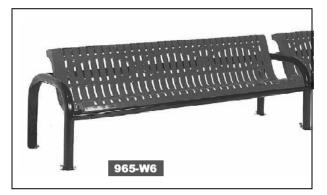


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BENCHES



Existing Diamond Pattern Bench



Proposed Diamond Pattern Bench in Brown Color Ultra Coat Thermoplastic coated 965-V6



Proposed Diamond Pattern Brown Color Trash Receptacle With Dome Top Ultra Coat Powder Coated



PERMANENT RESTROOM BUILDING



Romtec Sierra I-Title 24 Model 2003 Restroom



Pet Drinking Fountain



Dog Waste Bag Dispenser



BEAR CREEK BANK EROSION



Bank Erosion



Makeshift Creek Crossing Log



Bank Erosion



Steps Down to Creek



EXAMPLES OF GABION BASKET CREEK EROSION CONTROL



Gabions are partitioned, wire fabric containers, filled with stone at the site of use, to form flexible, permeable, monolithic structures for earth retention.





VARIOUS BENCH TYPES





Red Vinyl Coated Metal Bench

Dog Park Committee Log Bench



Brown Vinyl Coated Metal Bench

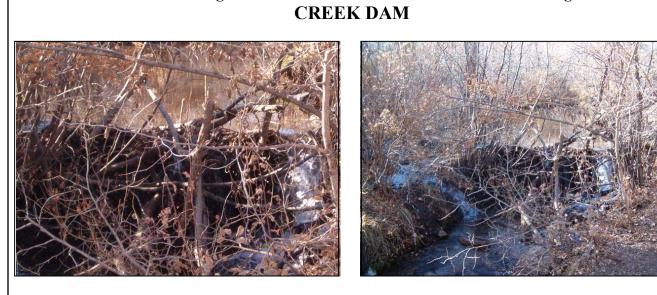


FENCE BARRIER ISSUES



Creek Fencing





Man-made tree branch dam to pond water for dog use



VARIOUS TRASH CONTAINER TYPES







TYPICAL WATER ENHANCEMENT STRUCTURES







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BEAR CREEK DOG PARK LOCATION

