

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES OPEN SPACE AND MOUNTAIN PARKS VISITOR PLAN

From BMA website:

It's been seven years since the Open Space and Mountain Parks department (OSMP) of the City of Boulder began the Visitors Master Plan process, and we have finally come to the end of the beginning. On April 12 the Boulder City Council amended and approved the final draft of the plan (you can view details of the process and the relevant documents at the Boulder Area Trails Coalition's Visitor Master Plan.).

Since the draft Visitor Master Plan was published in 2004, BMA met with OSMP staff and representatives of many other groups to discuss and attempt to resolve various issues and concerns raised by the draft plan. BMA's comments on draft plan are available at BMA VMP Comments.

Although the final plan imposes new restrictions on hikers, dog walkers and equestrians, we are happy to report that from a mountain biking perspective the plan offers promises of new access and trail opportunities.

Highlights include:

- A positive view of outdoor recreation experiences as desirable goals.
- A least restrictive tool policy for addressing problems that means the agency's actions to solve problems should minimize impacts to recreation.
- A capital improvement budget of 5 million dollars in the next four years for trails planning, trails, parking lots, and general infrastructure.
- A promise of trail planning reviews for large areas of OSMP lands, including both areas currently open to the public and others that currently don't have public access.
- A commitment to consider mountain biking access west of Highway 93, and a trail connection to the County's Walker Ranch.

Why is this just the end of the beginning? Because any plan is only as good as its implementation. So it is not yet time to stand and rejoice. Vigilance will be necessary to ensure that present promises become future actions.

The Visitor Master Plan will guide OSMP recreational management for years to come. The plan will trigger capital improvements and a trail infrastructure that will shape our public lands into a form that may not change again for decades.

Just as we've participated in the development of the Visitor Master Plan, BMA will continue as a voice for mountain biking during its implementation. You can help us by volunteering to support BMA activities.