

## TRAILS ON BOULDER OPEN SPACE (THE BLUE LINE)



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As Blue Line readers know, a tremendous amount of citizen work has gone into establishing Boulder's Blue Line and also into the acquisition of our Open Space. We, who came here later, appreciated and supported our exceptional environment. Through our 40 years here we voted to tax ourselves and we voted for all the bond issues to purchase open space.

To preserve and conserve has never been easy, but it has become more difficult recently. Our beloved mountain trails are overused. Conservation of the natural environment is compatible with low impact recreation, but it has never been intended that trails be created for mechanized travel routes through designated open space.

Until recently the Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance (BMA) website stated their goal of no trails closed to mountain biking. When new trails were constructed south of Eldorado Springs the BMA successfully persuaded Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) to open all but 1.2 miles of the new trails to mountain bikes. Bikes were to yield to hikers and equestrians, but that rarely happens. As a result, few hikers frequent these lovely trails. Bikers and runners use the Spring Brook Loop (SBL) trails but families with children or hikers in search of quiet walks abandoned them. As a result, not surprisingly, OSMP staff reports minimal conflicts between bikers and hikers.

Hikers and conservationists need to be considered. On narrow trails biking and hiking are not compatible on the same trail at the same time.

Some Boulder County trails are closed to biking one weekday and one day on the weekend. This still allows bikes 70% of the time, a possible solution for the SBL trails.

The Parks and Recreation Department has begun constructing a new 45-acre Valmont Bike Park at the cost of \$ 4.1 million. According to the department, 85% of the cost is borne by Boulder taxpayers.

Most of us have not been aware of these changes until the BMA demanded a trail through the Open Space in an area west of Broadway from Chautauqua to Eldorado Springs. As studied by environmental professionals, this is an area of unusual natural flora and beauty. Those of us who spoke to hikers at the various trailheads found that 90%, some mountain bikers themselves, were opposed to this idea.

At a time when money is short and open space purchases are difficult it is important that our city departments consider public opinion and help conserve Boulder's unique beauty for which so many worked so hard to preserve.

<https://www.boulderblueline.org/?p=3238>