

HUNDREDS PACK BOULDER HIGH TO TALK ABOUT WEST TRAIL STUDY AREA (DAILY CAMERA)

March 15, 2011

More than 200 people signed up to speak before the City Council on Tuesday night to give their opinions on how the trail system west of Boulder should be managed.



[YOUTUBE LINK](#)

The Boulder City Council met in Boulder High School's auditorium to accommodate the crowd, which included more than 100 others who came to listen but not speak.

Last month, the city's Open Space Board of Trustees voted to approve a management plan for the West Trail Study Area, the 11,250-acre swath of open space land west of Broadway that stretches from Linden Avenue south to Eldorado Springs Drive. The City Council is scheduled to make a final decision on the plan March 30.

Mike Patton, director of the city's Open Space and Mountain Parks Department, told the City Council on Tuesday that the study area encompasses the most loved, most visited and most ecologically unique of the department's lands.

"It's the place where the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains meet," he said. "This system has some of the most intriguing features of both systems."

The management plan addresses which of the area's 58 miles of social trails should be closed or designated and which official trails should be repaired or rerouted. The plan also addresses more controversial issues, including dogs and mountain bikes.

Many of the members of the public who came to the council meeting addressed two specific issues: the banning of dogs on Saddle Rock and Tenderfoot/Chapman Loop trails; and the banning of mountain bikes on the vast majority of the study area. The Board of Trustees recommended two potential mountain bike connector trails -- one between Eldorado Springs and Walker Ranch, and one between Boulder Canyon and Flagstaff Mountain via Chapman Drive -- but both of those trails would require cooperation from other landowners to become a reality.

Many dog owners said dog access has been whittled away over the years. They also argued that most dog owners work to clean up after their dogs and to make sure their pets are well-behaved.

Sue DeRose, who spoke on behalf of the group Save Open-space Dog Access, said she thinks people who report negative experiences with dogs are in the minority.

"I would like to know what happened to tolerance in Boulder and respect for others," she said. "When did a few people reporting negative experiences become the majority?"

But others said dogs on trails negatively affect wildlife and those who use open space to enjoy nature.

"There are many of us who use the trails to watch birds and butterflies," said Michael Delaney, president of the Boulder County Nature Association. "Trails with dogs have fewer birds."

Many mountain bikers came to Tuesday's meeting wearing bike helmets as a show of support for more access. The Boulder Mountainbike Alliance has asked for a trail connector from Shanahan Ridge to the South Mesa Trailhead and a loop on Anemone Hill south of Sanitas.

"I'm here to support mountain biking in the West TSA because I believe sharing isn't just a concept that we just teach at home," said Kristen Butcher, who had her young son on her hip.

But others argued that mountain bikers already have plenty of other trails to use and that allowing bike access in the area would stress the ecological resources.

Jim Guerin told council members that "the added noise and confusion that an added activity like mountain biking" would bring to the trail area would be detrimental for wildlife, and he urged them to continue the current ban on mountain biking in the area.

The City Council will deliberate on the plan March 30. Public comment will not be taken, and the meeting will be broadcast on Channel 8.

By Laura Snider Camera Staff Writer Posted: 03/15/2011 10:29:36 PM MDT

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Read more: [Hundreds pack Boulder High to talk about West Trail Study Area - Boulder Daily Camera](#)

Last we knew: The Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees voted to accept a management plan for the West Trail Study Area, which lies west of Broadway from Linden Avenue south to Eldorado Springs Drive. The plan outlines which social trails should be closed or designated; where dogs, mountain bikes and horses should be allowed; and which existing trails should be repaired or rerouted.

Latest: The City Council met in Boulder High School's auditorium to hear public feedback on the plan approved by the Open Space Board of Trustees.

Next: The City Council will deliberate on the management plan March 30. Public comment will not be taken.

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2011/03/15/hundreds-pack-boulder-high-to-talk-about-west-trail-study-area/>