

## **BOULDER STAFF RECOMMENDS ANEMONE HILL MOUNTAIN BIKE CONNECTOR TRAIL (DAILY CAMERA)**

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*The recommended bike trail at Anemone Hill*

Boulder open space officials are calling for a new configuration to two planned pedestrian and equestrian loops on Anemone Hill, as well as a new connector trail for mountain bikes that would link Settlers' Park to Fourmile Canyon Drive.

But the staff recommendation, which was unveiled Tuesday, would continue to ban bike access on the two main loops on Anemone Hill.

The recommendation is at odds with a recent vote by the Open Space Board of Trustees, which supports creating a new five-mile loop on the hill that would be open to mountain bikes.

The open space department's proposal includes developing a new five-mile "Ridge Loop" on Anemone Hill that would be open to pedestrians and equestrians. A new 2.9-mile connector trail would allow bike access along the southern edge of the loop before cutting off to the west and ending at Fourmile Canyon Drive.

Open space officials said in a memo to the council that they reached a deal with a private property owner to allow for the connection.

"This connection has long been sought as a partial off-road connection to the Betasso/Benjamin trail system," the memo reads.

Mike Patton, Boulder's director of open space and mountain parks, called the staff proposal "kind of an in-between" option for the council to consider.

"We heard the community interest," he said. "We tried to respond to a broad range of community values."

Still, Patton expressed serious concerns about the potential environmental impacts that even a connection trail for mountain bikers would have on the area.

“This is all high-quality habitat,” he said, including pristine habitat for black bears.

The council will have the last word on which option to go with during a special meeting scheduled for Oct. 25.

The competing recommendations come several months after the council upheld a ban on mountain biking in the vast majority of the West Trail Study Area — the 11,250-acre swath of open space west of Broadway that stretches from Linden Avenue south to Eldorado Springs Drive. The leaders asked open space officials to reconsider ways of providing access to mountain bikers on Anemone Hill.

Jason Vogel, president of the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance, encouraged the leaders to take time to consider all points of view before making up their minds on the proper use of the Anemone Hill area.

“I fear some of you may be coming to conclusions,” he said. “This could be a tremendous recreational asset for the Boulder community.”

Vogel has said he expects a large contingent of cyclists and other supporters of bike access to show up at the Oct. 25 meeting.

<https://www.dailycamera.com/2011/10/18/boulder-staff-recommends-anemone-hill-mountain-bike-connector-trail/amp/>