

# University Park Open Space

## Preliminary Management Strategies

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*This summary is based on high-profile or high-priority issues identified in the initial field reviews and public input.*

### Vegetation

- Complete comprehensive noxious weed inventory and mapping on an annual basis
- Complete and implement a noxious weed management plan, including specific treatment timing approaches (e.g., chemical, mechanical, or biological), strategies, and costs
- Conduct immediate removal of all Russian olive
- Conduct all forest health management with an integrated noxious weed strategy
- Continue to monitor for forest pathogens (i.e., dwarf mistletoe)
- Consider refining forest management methods:
  - Use large-diameter material to facilitate any recommended trail closures
  - Dispose of slash off site when practicable
  - Ensure chipped materials are well dispersed to avoid impacts to desirable vegetation
- Integrate ongoing management practices to minimize noxious weed infestation:
  - Reclaim disturbed areas to reduce chance of further weed infestation
  - Use weed-free materials in trail maintenance
  - Monitor trail project areas to minimize new weed infestations
  - Clean all equipment used in maintenance before it is used on a new project

### Wildlife

- Avoid disturbance (e.g., tree removal) during the breeding season for songbirds
- Continue to close and reclaim social trails to maintain and improve unfragmented habitat for wildlife

### Visitor Use

- Monitor trail system on an annual basis, documenting trail conditions, problem areas, and social trails
- Implement ongoing trail maintenance efforts throughout the property, emphasizing erosion and hazard areas, braiding trails, and developing social trails
  - Close unsustainable and redundant trails using closure standards in this management plan. Prior to closures, evaluate social, system and reroute options to determine the sustainable alignment. Install fencing to enforce closures until vegetation re-establishes.

- Emphasize trail management and maintenance efforts in the following locations (TBD)
- Coordinate with UCCS regarding trail projects, access, and shared maintenance opportunities
- Develop a comprehensive master plan for trails and public access that includes the University Park, Austin Bluffs, and Pulpit Rock Open Space properties, in coordination with UCCS;
  - Address system and non-system trails, trail realignments and closures, possible new trails, trailheads, neighborhood connections, UCCS campus connections, trail standards for this open space and wayfinding signage
  - Develop an annual work plan for volunteer, staff, and contracted trail maintenance efforts
- Implement wayfinding system to enhance visitor orientation to minimize off trail shortcutting
- Implement signage system to inform visitors of open space regulations and information
  - Clarify all park regulations including dog leash and waste removal regulations at the trailhead and any new neighborhood connections
  - Assess and repair park signage on a regular basis
- Pursue narrowing and restoration of the City Public Works access road along the drainage

## **Discussion of Key Issues**

**Trail and Access Management** – University Park Open Space includes a network of designated and undesignated trails, with a range of quality and condition. Trails and access patterns cross boundaries between open space parcels and UCCS land. The overall layout and circulation of trails needs to be considered in a future master plan that incorporates these multiple properties. In the interim, ongoing management of problematic social trails needs to continue to prevent erosion and protect habitat resources. This management plan will include general trail management guidelines and several specific recommendations to address these issues.