

Rose Canyon Open Space Master Plan

Revised Issue Statements

The Rose Canyon Open Space Master Plan Issue Statements present the issues and opportunities, identified through public and agency scoping that will be addressed and solved through the course of the planning process. Although the Issue Statements provide a necessary foundation for the master plan by representing both public and agency opinions, some of the statements may reflect “perceptions” rather than factual data. The Issue Statements are intended to clarify the scope of each concern and to provide the foundation for the development of the master plan Goals and Objectives.

The contents of these Issue Statements were based on comments received (1) from the Advisory Committee Meetings held on November 13, 2008; (2) from the BLM IDT Meeting held November 17, 2008; (3) from the general public at the Public Workshops held in January 14, 2009, in Herriman City, Utah; and (4) from the Advisory Committee Meeting held January 21, 2009. The Advisory Committee is comprised of approximately 30 individuals who represent nearby residents, management agencies, conservation organizations, and resource user groups that have a significant interest in the future management and use of the Rose Canyon Open Space Master Plan study area. The Advisory Committee has provided the primary input for the development of these Issue Statements.

Issue 1: Public Access and Parking

Currently, public access and parking within and adjacent to the study area is limited. Many have suggested that the existing parking area at the Yellow Fork Canyon trail head needs to be re-designed and expanded to allow for appropriate use by horse trailers and other vehicles. Additionally, the number of parking and access areas needs to be increased throughout the study area to help disperse use, especially in Butterfield Canyon where potential access locations are currently gated. Input from the public included suggestions to improve and widen Rose Canyon and Butterfield Canyon roads and to consider additional access points through High Country Estates and the BLM Wild Horse Facility.

Gates that belong to private landowners adjacent to the study area have become problematic for nearby private property landowners who need access to their property. At the same time, private property owners are concerned about trespass and vandalism activities that have occurred on their properties in the past. There are a series of gates on Rose Canyon road that are locked, even though the road itself has a public access easement. There may also be a question as to who owns Butterfield Canyon Road: Salt Lake County or Kennecott. It has been stated that public access may be the most important and difficult aspect of the master plan project.

Issue 2: Butterfield Creek

Kennecott has spent millions of dollars to clean up Butterfield Creek and monitoring is ongoing. The creek is intermittent and does not support a fishery. Suggestions have included fencing stream segments to protect their riparian values and installing bridges at potential trail crossings.

Issue 3: Property Acquisition

Should Salt Lake County acquire adjacent and/or in-holding properties to expand the current study area open space and park boundaries? County acquisition of private in-holding lands is an issue that

should be addressed in the master plan document. Consideration should be given to public safety, funding, maintenance, access, and environmental issues in all land acquisition proposals. Some adjacent landowners have approached the County about selling their land, but currently the County does not have designated funding to support these efforts.

Issue 4: Minerals Development

There are U.S. Government owned minerals that are unpatented within the study area that could be developed in the future. Salt Lake County is interested in acquiring these mineral rights to prevent mineral development within the study area. The unpatented mineral lands include approximately 1200 of the 1700 acres in the Rose Canyon Open Space portion of the study area and another 80 acres in Yellow Fork Canyon Park portion. Kennecott has filed mining claims and can develop the area if economically viable minerals are found in sufficient quantities. Kennecott is in the middle of Phase 1 testing through May 2009 to determine the mineral potential on these lands. If no minerals are found in sufficient quantities and quality, then mineral development would not proceed. Salt Lake County has applied to BLM for acquisition of the mineral estate within the study area.

There are two exploratory mine shafts in the north area by Butterfield Canyon that are twenty plus feet deep. These mineshafts need to be closed or researched as a possible habitat for bats.

Issue 5: Motorized vs. Non-motorized Uses and User Conflicts

Salt Lake County regulations currently prohibit motorized uses on County lands while the BLM currently allows for motorized uses on BLM lands on existing designated roads and trails. There is some interest from local residents to allow for off highway vehicle (OHV) access to the study area, while others have suggested that the entire study area be designated as non-motorized. In order to close the area to motorized uses, the BLM would need to modify their current Pony Express Resource Management Plan. Keeping hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, and motorized uses separate is of high concern to each user group to reduce conflicts.

Issue 6: Camp Williams

The Utah Army National Guard's Camp Williams shares a common boundary with the southern portion of the study area. Some of the land within the study area used to be part of the Camp Williams property. Currently, there is no boundary fence between the study area and Camp Williams but there are warning signs posted every 100 feet. There have been instances of unexploded ordnance from Camp Williams being found in the study area. The Army National Guard is undertaking a feasibility study to determine the nature and extent of munitions and explosives of concern across the study area and to evaluate potential treatments for performance and costs. The study should be completed this summer (2009). Public safety is of primary concern and signage at trail heads warning of this potential has been suggested.

Issue 7: Public Education

There is a need to educate the general public on the role of the various management jurisdictions involved in the planning process. The master plan public meetings and committee meetings can be tools to disseminate information and to help create consensus, openness, and understanding. Following adoption of the master plan, there needs to be several mechanisms to distribute information to civic organizations, county commissions, city councils, and study area users. On site interpretive signage, web-sites, brochures, local newspaper (South Valley Journal), municipal water bills,

community councils, and other volunteer organizations could be used to disseminate such information. In addition, the planning process should engage residents from throughout the County since the study area is intended to serve everyone.

Issue 8: Wildfires and Fuel

Wildfire is a concern to nearby residents whom live down-slope from the study area. The BLM has implemented a number of fuel reduction projects (e.g., juniper removal) on approximately 600 acres of land within the study area over the last 5 years. In addition, Camp Williams spends over \$200,000 per year on fuels reduction projects along the south study area boundary. The County, Utah FFSL, Herriman City, Camp Williams, and the BLM need to be partners in fuel management on study area lands to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire conditions. A Community Wildfire Plan for the High Country Estates area has already been prepared and should be incorporated into the master plan document. The nearest fire station is in Herriman City, within approximately 5 miles from the study area.

Issue 9: BLM Horse Center

The BLM currently leases land from Kennecott for the horse center located at the north end of the study area. The lease has an approximate 30-year term and was established in the 1990's. This area has been mentioned as a possible access point for the study area, but potential proposals would need to take into consideration the protection and safety of the horses.

Issue 10: Winter Uses

Are there opportunities for winter uses such as cross country skiing, yurt rentals, and/or snowmobiling in the study area? Winter use is limited at the present time to some snowmobiling on existing roads within the BLM portion of the study area and cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the County portion of the study area. However, there is a high possibility of winter use intensifying in the future with population growth in the area. There have been requests for the County to install yurts to rent and also to groom some ski trails within the study area. Many in the public do not want the area open for snowmobile use and current County ordinances prohibit snowmobile use on park lands.

Issue 11: Wildlife Habitat and Hunting

There is a healthy deer herd and large number of wild turkeys found in the study area. A portion of the study area is crucial winter range for deer. Hunting within the study area is regulated by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Some County residents would like to hunt within the study area, especially bow hunters. However, fire arms and hunting are currently prohibited on County owned land. Allowing hunting in the study area would require a change in the County ordinance. Many residents feel that the study area is not large enough to allow hunting and they are concerned about safety. Off-leash dogs that accompany visitors are also a concern for their affect on wildlife within the study area.

Issue 12: Law Enforcement

The Salt Lake County Sheriff and BLM law enforcement officers are responsible for law enforcement on their respective lands. Herriman City currently has a contract with Salt Lake County for law enforcement, but many complain that law enforcement within the study area is lacking. With increased public use of the project area, there will be an even greater need for rules and regulation

enforcement to provide for public use, enjoyment, and safety. One of the keys to the successful implementation of this master plan project is the presence of law enforcement officials. Some have suggested collaborating with volunteer user groups to help patrol the study area.

Issue 13: Agency Cooperation

Multiple agencies have management responsibilities for different portions of the study area (i.e. Salt Lake County, BLM, and Kennecott). This situation sometimes results in discrepancies between land management agencies as to how regulations are enforced or how resources are managed between different jurisdictions. Communication between resource management agencies, land owners, stakeholders, and users needs to be consistently maintained. Implementing consistent rules and regulations across the study area would be helpful to users.

Issue 14: User Fees

Currently there are no fees charged for access to study area lands or use of existing facilities. If facilities are provided (e.g., parking, restrooms, picnic pavilions, day camps), should fees be charged for their use? Many residents do not want fees charged for use of study area lands while others have suggested a fee to park in designated areas. These fees could be used to maintain and upgrade facilities, or used as support for additional law enforcement. Organizing volunteer groups and using existing volunteer organizations to implement management or maintenance projects within the study area have also been suggested as ways to reduce costs.

Issue 15: Invasive Species

The introduction and spread of noxious and invasive weeds and pests within the study area are major concerns. An Integrated Pest Management Plan is needed to address the control problematic plant and animal species.

Issue 16: Utility Corridor and Utilities Access

There is a possibility that Rocky Mountain Power will develop a new powerline corridor through the study area. A Draft EIS is currently being prepared and is due for release in April 2009. There are also a number of communication equipment sites to the west of the study area and maintaining access to these sites is an issue.

Issue 17: Recreational and Trail Head Facilities

Appropriate facilities at designated trail heads need to be provided, as well as accessible facilities for handicapped visitors. The proposed master plan should determine what recreational facilities are needed for public access, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian activities, as well as facilities for motorized users if those activities are permitted. There are also suggestions for posting trail use, access, and safety signage for study area users at all trail head locations.