

OPENSOURCE MATTERS

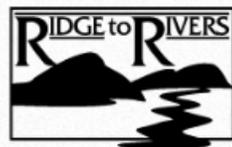
City of Boise Reserves Management Plan



BOISE PARKS & RECREATION

Administrative Office
1104 Royal Blvd., Boise ID 83706
bpr@cityofboise.org

> www.openspacematters.org



This plan was developed by the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Department
with assistance from the Ridge to Rivers partnership,
and with support from Agnew::Beck (www.agnewbeck.com).

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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR/DIRECTOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayor & City Council

Mayor David Bieter

Council President Maryanne Jordan

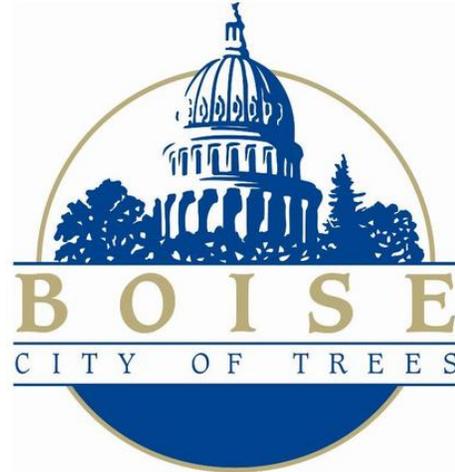
Elaine Clegg

Scot Ludwig

Lauren McLean

Ben Quintana

TJ Thomson



Parks & Recreation Department

Doug Holloway, Director

Sara Arkle, Foothills and Open Space Manager

Parks & Recreation Commission

Shelly Alder

Scott Raeber

Thomas Chandler

Jon Ruzicka

Stacie Curry

Stephen Smith

Angela Johnson

Erik Stidham

Harvey Neef

Brad Turpen

Patricia Whipps

The following individuals dedicated many hours to the development of this plan through their regular participation in the planning process:

Open Space Reserves Management Plan Working Group

Ester Ceja	Wendy Irwin
Sheri Davis	Laura Johnston
John Daly	Kelly Jorschumb
Pat Durland	Jon Krutz
Amy Fackler	Roger Malinowski
Joanie Fauci	Susan Mason
Tom Flynn	Dean Nygard
Angela Gilman	Jack Patek
Chris Haunold	Terry Rich
Pine Irwin	Rob Studebaker
	Bob Waldher

City of Boise Planning Team

Scott Beecham	Dee Oldham
Daren Fluke	Pete Ritter
David Gordon	Amy Stahl
Tom Governale	Jason Taylor
Julia Grant	Jennifer Tomlinson
Wendy Larimore	Brad Turpen
Josh Leonard	

Other Organizations

Thank you to the City of Boise for use of the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center for Working Group Meetings.

Thank you to the thousands of citizens that participated in this effort.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ecosystem services/ecosystem benefits: The conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfill human life..

Dog park: dedicated park areas with amenities developed for the specific use of dogs off-leash.

Foothills Serial Levy: a two-year property tax approved by City of Boise voters on May 22, 2001 that raised \$10 million for conservation efforts in the Boise Foothills. For more information on the levy and the lands protected through use of the funds, go to <https://parks.cityofboise.org/about-us/foothills/> or <http://www.openspacematters.org/>

Foothills Management Area: the foothills along northeast Boise that are within the City of Boise and Ada and Boise Counties. The area is 85,000 acres and contains a mix of public (approximately 43,000 acres managed by seven different public land managers) and private lands. The area also includes 150+ miles of trails in the Ridge to Rivers trails system. The Foothills Interagency Management Plan provides policies for the overall management and direction for the Foothills Management Area.

Gateway: the primary passage by or point at which an open space may be entered and is more prominently marked than a neighborhood access point or trailhead. A gateway is typically a landmark that may include access to multiple trails; some infrastructure, such as a parking lot and restrooms; visitor or learning center, and interpretive signs.

Green infrastructure an interconnected network of open space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations, such as increasing quality of life through recreation in and around cities.

Neighborhood access point: an official or unofficial entry way from a neighborhood to an official trail. It typically serves as the closest or most convenient place local residents may access a trail.

Off-leash area: multi-use facilities in developed parks where dogs are allowed to run off leash during specified periods of time but are not granted preferential use.

Open space: any open piece of land that is largely undeveloped , consists primarily of natural or native habitat, provides recreational opportunities, and helps to enhance the beauty and environmental quality of neighborhoods..

Open Space Reserve: an area of protected or conserved land that has become City property via purchase, donation, easement, or trade

Pathway: Paved connections designed to enhance access and accommodate heavy recreational use.

Rogue trail: a non-system trail created by trail users. Different than a social trail, rogue trails are created to access new areas or form new loops, not to provide simple shortcuts or access from one area to another.

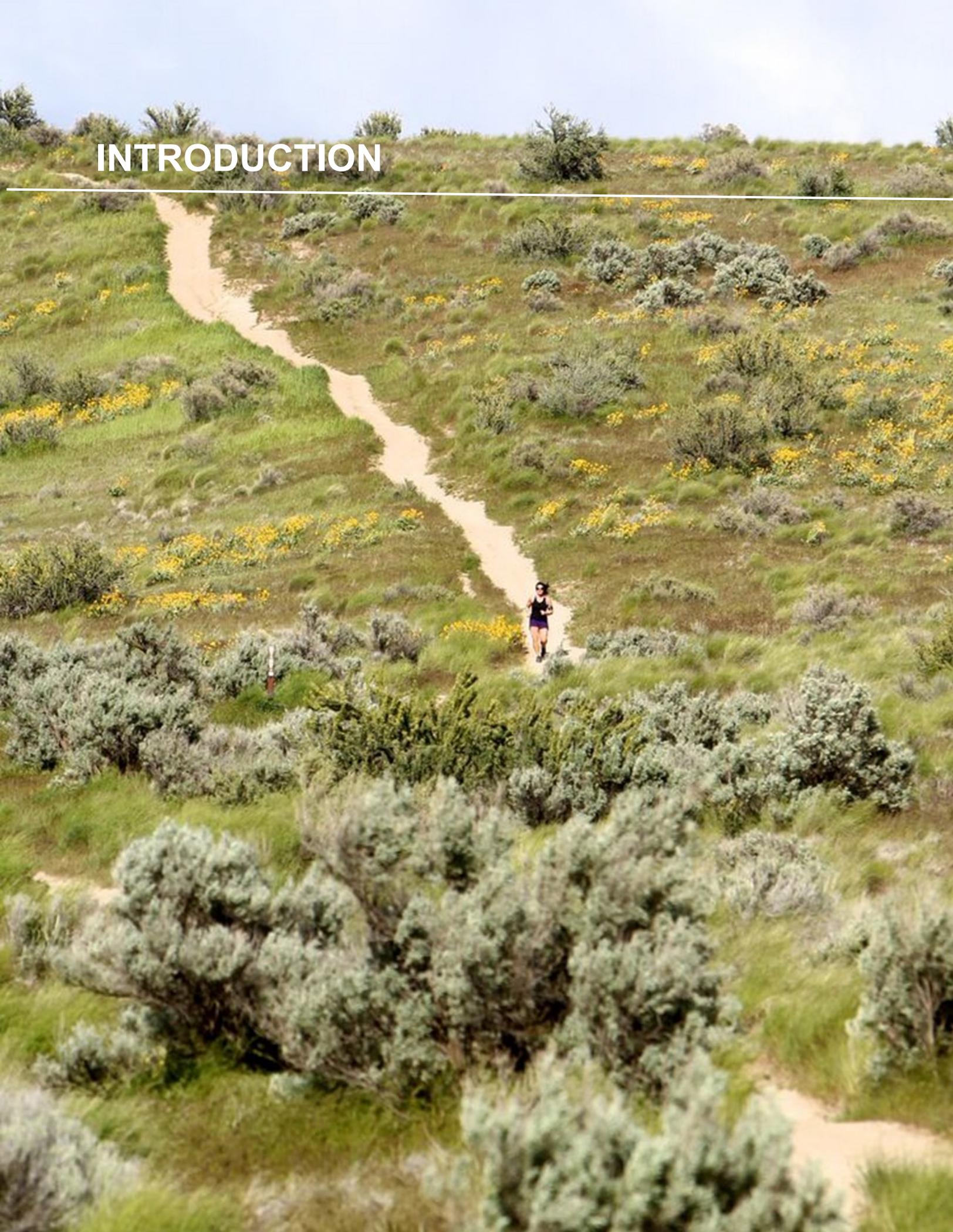
Social trail: unplanned trails resulting from regular foot traffic and are almost always the most direct path -- or at least the path of least resistance -- to some goal.

Trail: routes on the land, ranging from meandering pathways to destination hiking and passive recreational trails. Trails will be designed and constructed to protect native ecosystems and to minimize impacts on the natural landscape

Trailhead: a marked official entry point to a trail.

Trail widening: the unplanned widening of a trail due to heavy use, erosion, or users walking around obstructions, such as overgrown vegetation, fallen tree limbs, puddles, and mud.

INTRODUCTION



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Open Space Matters contains the management principles, goals and strategies for the City of Boise's first-ever reserve management plan. As our community grows, our environment changes, and the amount of reserve acreage increases, it is vital that Boise adopt a framework to address issues that have arisen or may arise, and to strengthen the wonderful and valuable characteristics of these very special places. With such a framework, we can, as a community, understand what our collective goals and intentions are for these spaces, and make coordinated decisions that will be to the best benefit of our reserve lands and all who enjoy them.

The purpose of a management plan is to clearly describe the vision and intent that should guide decisions about managing our open space reserves. This type of plan is intended to give strong guidance about how to address the challenges and opportunities we currently face, and ones we anticipate facing in the near future. At the same time, the plan must be resilient, flexible and suitable for the future. To this end, this plan aims to capture important, broad ideas about management and to provide high-level direction that will guide many different types of decisions; while not providing specific details about exactly how and where strategies should be implemented. This plan is meant to set the stage for action.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the reserves governed by this plan, and Figure 2 shows how this plan segues with other, related planning documents. The bibliography in Appendix A, along with the accompanying table, identifies other plans which were reviewed to ensure alignment among governing documents.

The structure and content of this plan reflects public input provided by more than 3,000 responses from citizens during three different month-long survey periods, and input from a 24-person citizen Working Group and an interdisciplinary team of City of Boise staff. In a "listening" process that began in August 2014, surveys were provided at trailheads and online, and public workshops were conducted in November, 2014, and April, 2015. The comment period for the draft plan was open from March to April, 2015 and generated input from about 100 citizens and civic organizations. All of this public comment and expert advice was used to develop this document.

Citizen input has been a driving factor in this process. The policies articulated in this document were derived not only from citizen input, but also from expert opinions of land managers, a review of existing plans and lessons learned from other places, and a review of demographic, land use, environmental and related data.

The *Open Space Matters* plan is a living document, and is intended to be adjusted, amended and updated as the need arises over the next 5-10 years to ensure that it is a document that reflects the ideas and needs of our community, and that it can guide the management of our open spaces for the future.

"The only thing that stands in our way is...a failure of imagination. We need to imagine what Boise will be and then get to work building it... Look at our greatest successes – the Boise rail line and the Depot, the Greenbelt, the Foothills. These are all successes of our collective imagination."

I. Mayor David Bieter,
State of the City Address, 2014

Figure 1: City of Boise Open Space Reserves

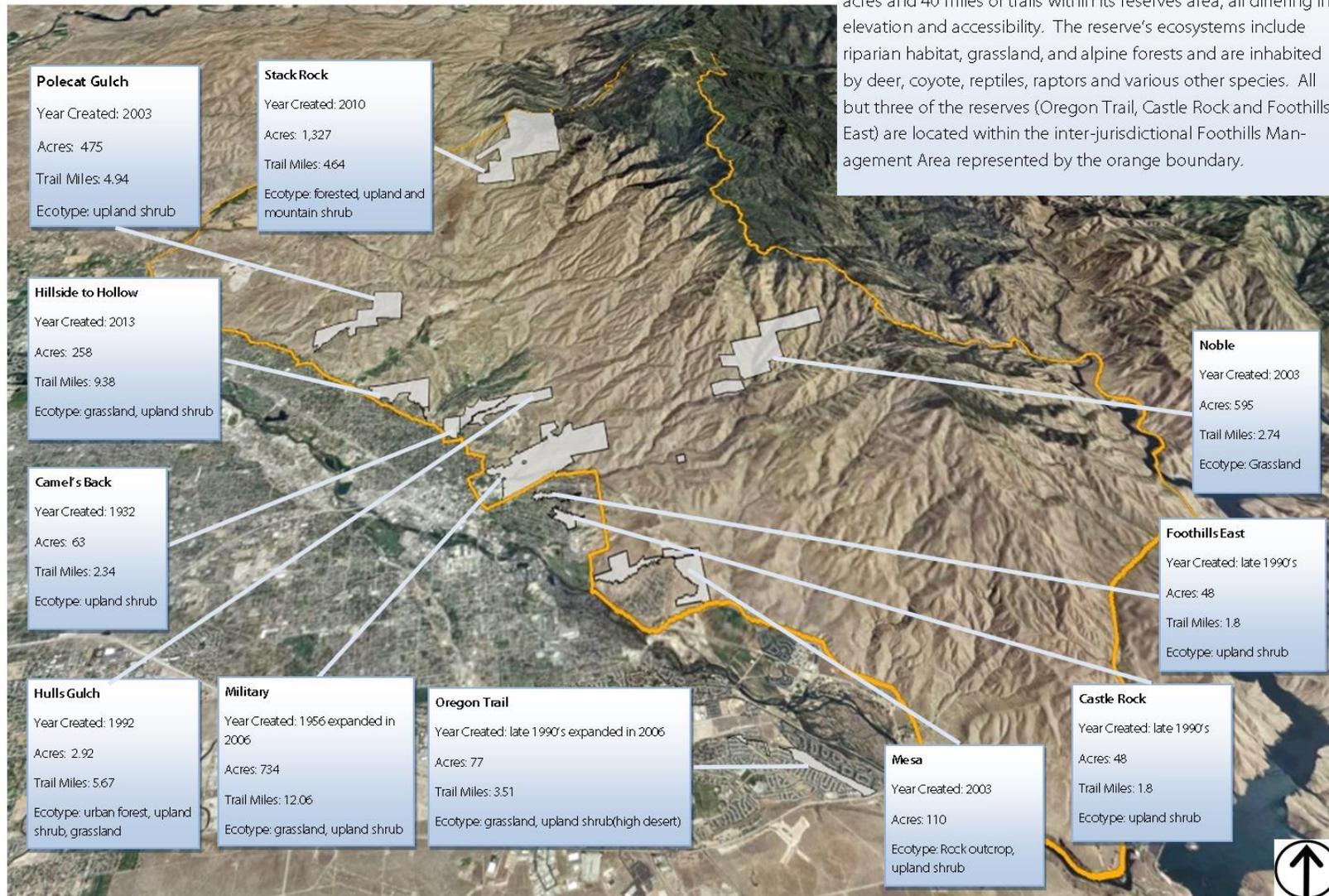
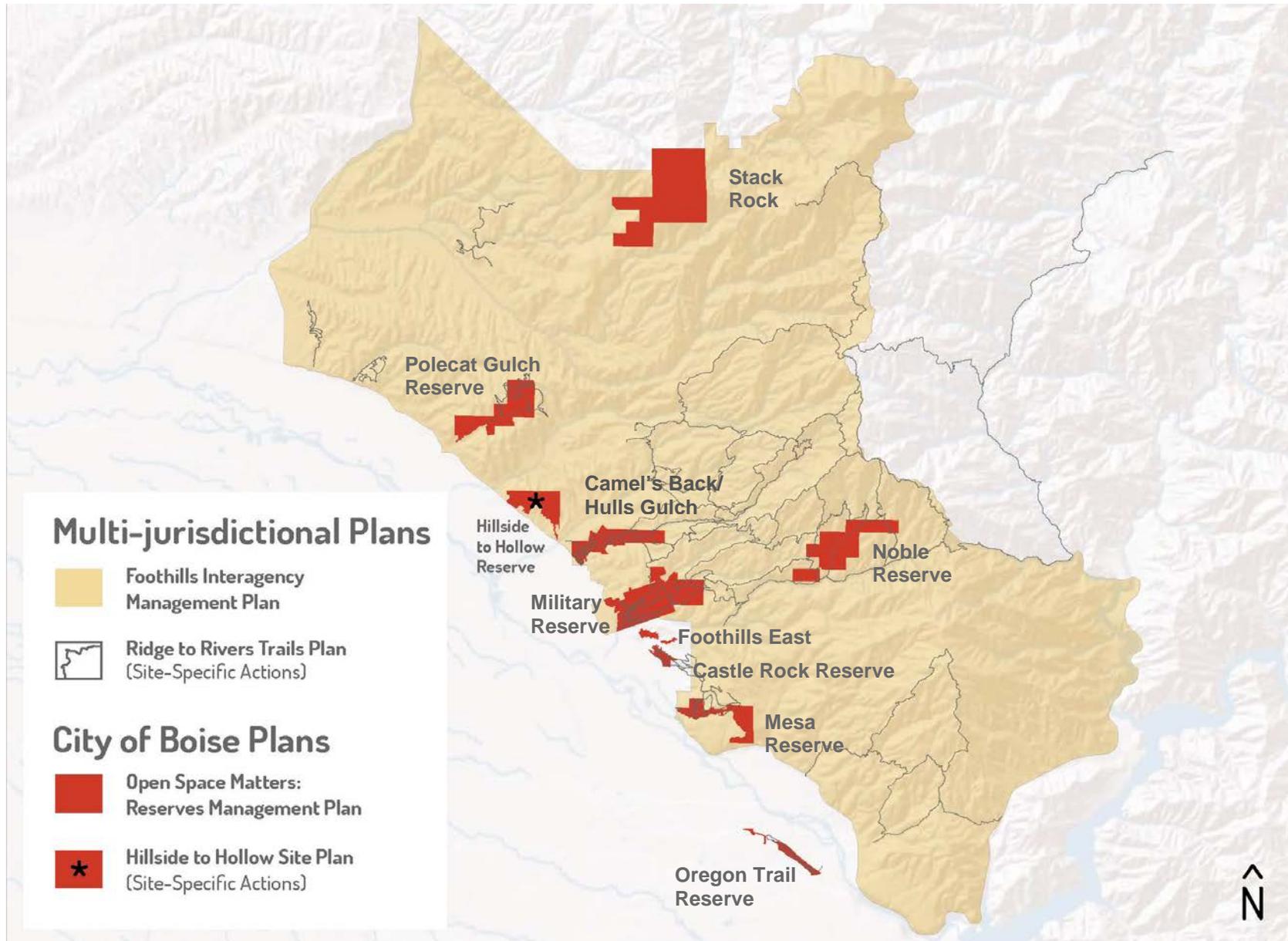


Figure 2: How Plans Fit Together

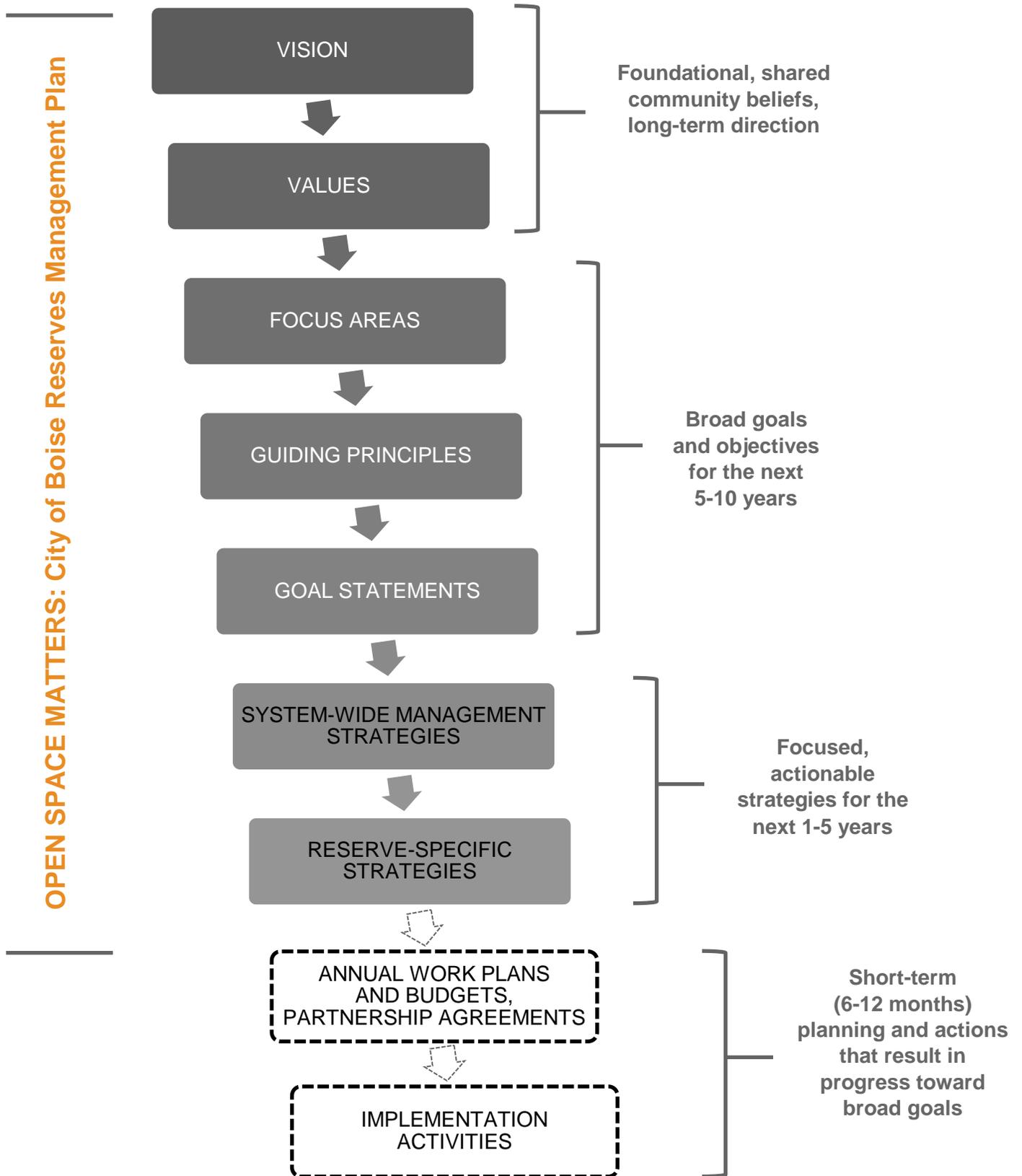


PLAN STRUCTURE

The purpose of *Open Space Matters* is to provide guidance to City of Boise elected and appointed officials, the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Department and other City team members, partner organizations, other governments with overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions, private land owners, community groups and citizens on how to care for, sustain, and develop Boise's open space reserves. The framework provided here is intended to connect big picture vision, values and goals with more detailed, actionable strategies. The plan has five sections including:

1. **Introduction** – Provides an overview of the document purpose, the locations included in the scope of the plan, and description of the plan development process, including the public engagement process.
2. **Management Framework** – Articulates the vision and values for the open space reserves that are the foundation of plan goals and strategies. This section also describes the main management focus areas, guiding principles, and goals and strategies to support each principle. This section of the document articulates management policies that are broadly applicable across all reserves and should be understood as the overall management framework. Figure 3 on the following page provides additional detail about the structure of this section and how it relates to plan implementation.
3. **Reserve Snapshots** – Contains a section for each of the ten reserves listed in alphabetical order. Each snapshot highlights specific characteristics of a reserve and also identifies priority management strategies by reserve. These strategies consist of a brief list intended to point readers to corresponding strategies described in the previous plan section for more detail. The "Snapshots" sections consist of:
 - a. Brief overview of the reserve (size, trail mileage, location, history, ecotype)
 - b. Reserve map
 - c. Management intent (specific valued characteristics, most pressing management challenges and management strategies, by reserve)
4. **Data Context** – Compiles relevant environmental, population and related data and sources. This section connects existing conditions and data with management implications.
5. **Appendices** – Supporting documentation
 - a. Bibliography
 - b. Environmental GIS data (map series) showing existing conditions in the Foothills Management Area relevant to reserve management
 - c. Conceptual management models for possible adaptation (e.g., "green infrastructure model," "get outdoors stair step continuum," and "open space levels of service transect")
 - d. Documentation of citizen input and public engagement process (working group, listening survey, plan development feedback)

Figure 3: Plan Structure and Relationship to Implementation



PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The plan development process had three main phases – “Listening,” “Drafting” and “Review and Approval” – and incorporated knowledge provided by a variety of informants. The three phases of the planning process are identified in Figure 4, along with the timeline of public engagement. Appendices E-H provides further documentation of the public engagement.

The “Listening” phase entailed extensive outreach to organized groups (See Appendix D for a roster of organizations contacted and invited to participate in the process) as well as in-person interviews and online survey distribution at a variety of locations. It also included meetings with an interdisciplinary planning team to identify key issues to address. The “Drafting” phase was highly iterative and entailed returning to citizens and citizen groups, as well as the planning team to refine the draft. The “Review and Approval” phase is the formal adoption process.

Groups of contributing experts are identified in Figure 4, below. A variety of citizens and citizen groups participated in the planning process, and provided contextual knowledge about what they value and how they use the reserve lands. This information was combined with content knowledge about environmental, infrastructure and related conditions and policies, as well as advice from the interdisciplinary planning team, to develop a well-rounded plan. Additional research included:

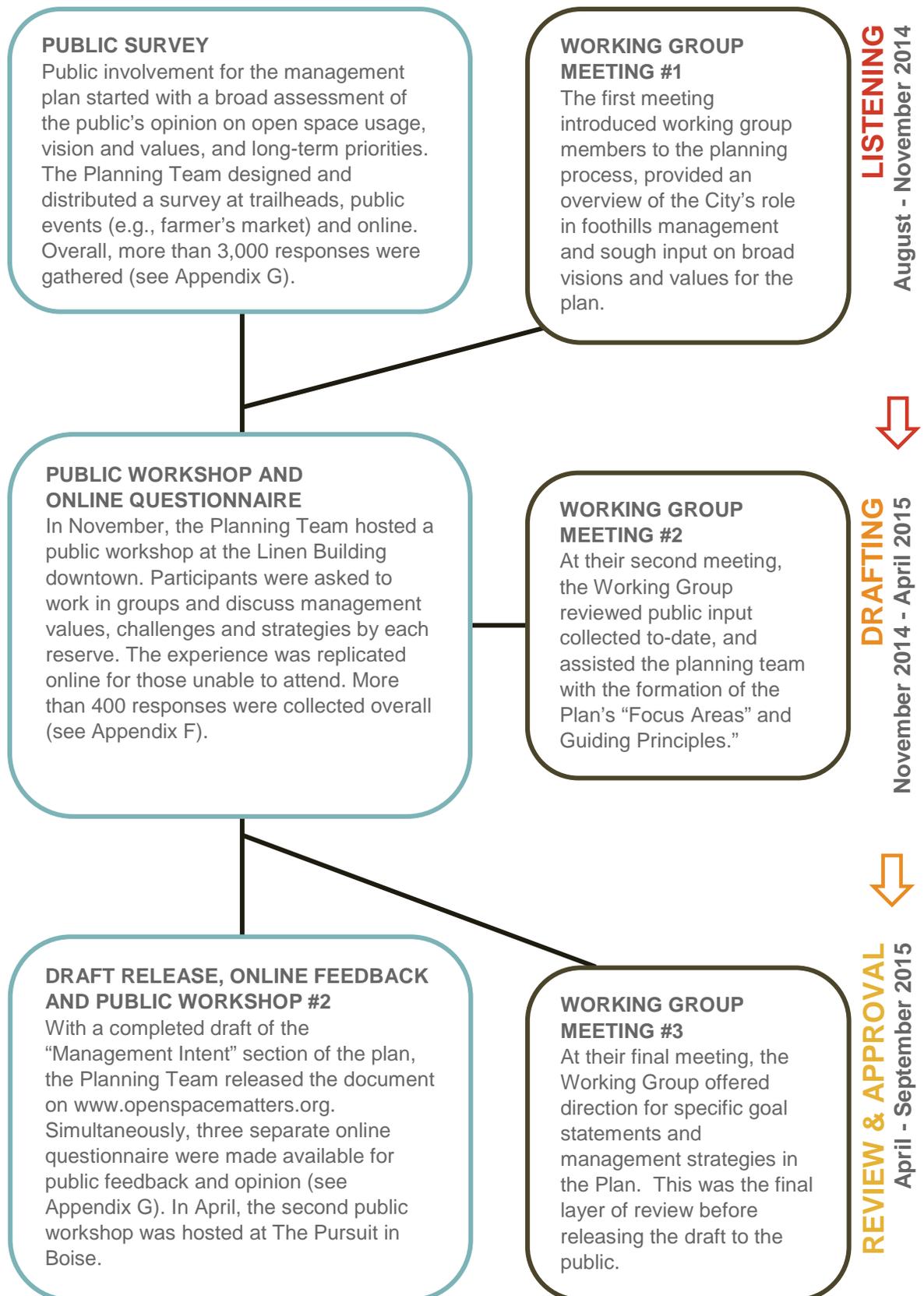
1. **Existing plan review**, such as Blueprint Boise, City of Boise Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, City of Boise LIV Initiative, Foothills Interagency Management Plan and neighborhood plans from throughout Boise.
2. **Comparable plans research**, reviewed similar plans completed for City of Lafayette, Colorado; Adams County, Colorado; City of Fort Collins, Colorado; Jefferson County, Colorado; City of Missoula, Montana; City of Albuquerque, New Mexico; City of Reno, Nevada.
3. **Current conditions, trends and use patterns analysis**, from past City of Boise trail user surveys, environmental data (from City of Boise GIS), and demographic data (from sources such as the U.S. Census), and economic conditions (Idaho Department of Labor), as well as other published reports.

A complete bibliography is included as Appendix A. A summary of the data collected and analyzed is included in section 4: “Data Context,” which identifies connections between existing conditions, data points and management implications.



Figure 4: Open Space Matters Contributors

Figure 5: Public Engagement Timeline



MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

MISSION STATEMENT

The Boise Parks and Recreation Department's mission is to enhance Boise's quality of life by working in partnership with the community to foster and support citizen well-being and healthy community environments.

OPEN SPACE MATTERS VISION STATEMENT

The reserves are a growing and increasingly interconnected open space system that provides environmental, social, health, economic and related benefits. They are actively managed by the City of Boise in partnership with the community to encourage stewardship and investment in open space. They are also managed to improve ecosystem health, provide a wide range of sustainable, high-quality recreation and outdoor education experiences, offer opportunities for research and learning, and create connections to other public lands and open spaces. They provide clean water, native wildlife habitat, and are accessible. They contribute to the unique character of Boise and provide future generations with the opportunity to experience clean water, wildlife and native habitat.

OPEN SPACE RESERVE VALUES

Wellness & Recreation

An active lifestyle is a key component of mental and physical well-being. The 150-plus miles of Ridge to Rivers trails and 4,000 acres of City-owned open space reserves are amazing recreational assets. They are also places to experience quiet, get away from City life, take a photo or paint a picture.

Ecosystem Health

Boise's open spaces protect important wildlife corridors, waterways and rare plant areas by creating large expanses of intact habitats and ecosystems. This benefits Boise by maintaining and improving water and air quality, and native wildlife habitats.

Economic Vibrancy

Open space reserves enhance Boise's competitive edge by drawing visitors, employers and new employees to invest in Boise – from home buying to shopping in restaurants and outdoor retailers and ecotourism businesses. Reserves also improve property values, buffer against wildfires, and limit infrastructure costs associated with urban sprawl.

Culture, Learning & History

Our open spaces make a significant contribution to our understanding of our past and present. They protect resources such as cultural sites and help strengthen our community's understanding of the natural world, our heritage and ourselves.

Sense of Place

Boise is a unique collection of natural places adjacent to neighborhoods and communities. Our open spaces give Boise its character and help showcase the vibrant, livable place it is.

Social Connections

Open spaces are part of our identity, a connection to where we live, work and play. Neighbors meet neighbors, kids can run, dogs greet dogs and we all get a little closer to nature when we interact outdoors. Open spaces help foster important connections and create a scenic backdrop giving Boise character and charm.

FOCUS AREAS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOCUS AREA 1

Sustain and Grow Public Open Spaces

Guiding principle: Identify and enhance high-value areas within and beyond current reserves, focusing on areas of unique environmental, recreational, historical, economic, social, and cultural importance. Where appropriate, create new open space reserves to ensure special areas are preserved for public benefit, focusing on the Foothills, but also including open spaces outside the Foothills Management Area.

FOCUS AREA 2

Create Connections

Guiding principle: Enhance connectivity between urban areas and open spaces, and among open spaces, including land in other ownership. Work to create a sustainable “green infrastructure” system for Boise, to improve connectivity of open spaces.

FOCUS AREA 3

Enhance and Protect Ecosystem Benefits and Conservation Values

Guiding principle: Protect and enhance the conservation values and ecosystem benefits of open spaces, focusing on clean water, fire adaptation/mitigation, wildlife habitat and native vegetation. Anticipate and respond to issues affecting the health and character of reserves, including locally generated activities and broader impacts such as climate change. Model how well managed reserves can sustain vibrant ecosystems while supporting a range of beneficial public uses.

FOCUS AREA 4

Ensure the Reserves are Accessible and Enjoyable

Guiding principle: Work to ensure users and potential users feel encouraged, comfortable and safe across a wide spectrum of experiences. Provide a diversity of non-motorized recreation opportunities, and expand accessibility to underserved populations. Act in partnership with users to enhance experiences and mitigate potential use conflicts.

FOCUS AREA 5

Strengthen Partnerships and Investment through Outreach and Education

Guiding principle: Develop and maintain effective outreach and education programs, and partnerships to create an active open space advocacy community that works with the City to preserve, maintain and enhance reserves and reserve programs. Be transparent and inclusive in reserve-related decision-making, as well as accountable and responsive to community needs and desires. Inspire citizens and businesses to invest time and energy in the future of the reserves; increase volunteer opportunities and forums for public input and participation in order to foster a sense of community ownership. Quantify and strengthen the economic benefits the reserves provide to residents and businesses.

FOCUS AREA 6

Increase Capacity to Sustainably Acquire and Manage Open Spaces

Guiding principle: Build City of Boise capacity to sustainably operate and manage the open space reserve system. Secure funding and resources to meet current and future needs and enable appropriate expansion of the system's land base, amenities, services and programs on a scale that matches their level of use and value to residents, businesses and visitors.

MANAGEMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES BY FOCUS AREA

FOCUS AREA 1: Sustain and Grow Public Open Spaces

Guiding principle: Identify and enhance high-value areas within and beyond current reserves, focusing on areas of unique environmental, recreational, historical, economic, social, and cultural importance. Where appropriate, create new open space reserves to ensure special areas are preserved for public benefit, focusing on the Foothills, but also including open spaces outside the Foothills Management Area.

Goal 1.1 **Clearly articulate open space values, and the criteria and process for determining when and how City reserves may be expanded or new reserves created, and work to create these areas as opportunities arise.**

Strategy A Clarify and make explicit, using the values outlined in this plan, the values that open space reserves provide to the community, and the rationale/criteria for their creation and maintenance (see Open Space Matters Values Section for more on this topic). Use clear criteria to guide future acquisitions, possible land trades, easement negotiations, and new types of reserves such as agricultural reserves, etc., so that limited resources are used most effectively.

Strategy B Determine and clarify how the public will participate in acquisition processes (for example, through a citizen advisory committee, existing Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, etc.).

Strategy C Actively investigate conservation values that open space reserves may provide in non-Foothills settings to guide potential creation of new reserves outside of the Foothills.

Strategy D Maintain and increase, as appropriate, the current "acres-per-capita" for open spaces, to anticipate and help address future growth and use pressure.

Strategy E Existing open space reserves, and/or those added to the system in the future, will be managed with the intent of perpetuity of protection.

Strategy F As opportunities arise, utilize land exchanges with a variety of partners – government agencies, non-governmental organizations and private landowners – to protect and manage more acreage and/or higher-value land. Be explicit about this intent with the public when exchange options are being considered and request public input, as appropriate.

Goal 1.2 **Continue to act as a convener of and partner with public land management agencies, nonprofits and NGOs, and other public partners to coordinate protection of existing and new open space reserves and other public lands.**

Strategy A Work to implement the broad goals of the Foothills Interagency Management Plan, for example, carrying out conservation initiatives like wildlife habitat enhancement or water quality improvement that are only fully possible working with an interagency team. (see more in Focus Area 2)

Strategy B Work with a broad range of partners (public agencies, nonprofits, NGOs, etc.), by meeting on a regular basis (annually or biannually), to discuss collective goals, potential land and easement acquisitions and coordinate public lands campaigns.

Strategy C Ensure open space values are protected when impacts occur on public lands, such as transportation or utility corridor maintenance or improvements. In particular, when reserve areas are disturbed by this activity, work to restore natural vegetation and enhance the return of these areas to a natural state.

Goal 1.3 **Partner with private entities to address open space issues; take steps to protect open space values as private land is developed.**

Strategy A Continue to work in partnership with landowners to provide options for managing undeveloped, private land in accordance with the same principles and practices public lands are managed to protect conservation, recreation and other values. Additionally, continue to provide options for and benefits to private landowners who desire to grant conservation and/or recreation easements on their lands, or make land donations to the City or other land management partners.

Strategy B Work with private landowners and appropriate city or county departments (e.g., City of Boise Planning and Development Services) to ensure protection of open space values when property is subdivided or developed, and to identify the possible need for new or different land use development policies and procedures aimed at protecting open space.

Strategy C Periodically evaluate City of Boise parks impact fees and how the fees affects "brown vs. green" parks. Study the impact of new growth and development on the use of the reserve system, and how fees may be adjusted to fairly respond to these demands.

Strategy D Create guidelines for the plan review process that defines access requirements for development adjacent to reserve lands.

Strategy E Develop a clear process for enforcing encroachment from private property that is standard across all reserve lands. Implement preventative programs to educate property owners about the definition of and penalties for encroachment.

Goal 1.4 **Manage existing and new reserves in a way that protects their most valued characteristics and uses.**

(See reserve-specific management strategies in "Reserve Snapshots" section of this plan)

FOCUS AREA 2: Create Connections

Guiding principle: Enhance connectivity between urban areas and open spaces, and among open spaces, including City reserves and open space lands in other ownerships. Work to create a sustainable "green infrastructure" system for Boise, to improve connectivity of open spaces, for wildlife, watersheds and trails, and to improve, where appropriate, proximity and access to open space for residents and visitors.

Goal 2.1 **Create recreation connections among reserves and open spaces.**

Strategy A Continue seeking appropriate easements and access points that enhance reserve connectivity.

Strategy B Strategically acquire land and permanent easements that create recreation connections among reserves and between reserves and other public lands. (See Focus Area 1 for more on land acquisition)

Goal 2.2 **Develop and implement a “level of service” system in the reserves to provide appropriate types of access points, trails and infrastructure to support varying levels of use, and to protect and enhance ecosystem benefits and conservation values in different contexts (see Appendix D).**

Strategy A Define “levels of service” appropriate to the reserves and identify which level of service should be implemented in specific areas. Use the level of service model to concentrate uses in places that can more easily support it, and to lessen use impacts in other areas intended to remain more natural in character with lower levels of use.

Strategy B Ensure all reserves intended for recreation use have a basic level of access, including road and pathway access and associated parking.

Strategy C Where appropriate and possible, create gateways at some reserves, to invite and support a wide range of users, including those who come by bike, private vehicle or transit. Design these gateways for user safety, sustainability, and to reflect the unique character and uses of each reserve. Amenities that make up these gateways likely include adequately-sized parking lots and bike lock-ups, water, restrooms, waste cans, interpretive signage and posted use policies, and the option for a shuttle stop. Where possible, locate gateways near park facilities to create a bridge from parks into open spaces (examples: Camel’s Back Park and the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center).

Strategy D Maintain and expand where appropriate, a dispersed system of neighborhood-level access points linking neighborhoods with adjoining reserves. Avoid creating or allowing the proliferation of social and/or non-system trails and access points that degrade the landscape. Facilities at neighborhood level gateways will be limited - e.g., simple trail head signage (examples: Hillside to Hollow and Castle Rock).

Goal 2.3 **Create and preserve connections to open spaces from urban areas, where appropriate, and ensure appropriate mobility options for access.**

Strategy A When evaluating options for new or expanded reserves focus on areas with good access, by existing or planned pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes, or transit corridors. Work with City of Boise Planning and Development Services and Ada County Highway District to create a proximity map that displays travel times to reserves by neighborhood, as one important factor when considering reserve system expansion.

Strategy B Explore partnerships with ValleyRide, Boise School District or private vendors to pilot service routes or shuttle services for neighborhoods located outside walking/biking distance of reserves.

Strategy C Work with the City of Boise's Energize Our Neighborhoods initiative and other neighborhood planning processes to determine how well and how often residents in targeted neighborhoods access the reserves, and how and if neighborhood residents

would improve access to them. (See Focus Area 4 for more on citizen access to the reserve system).

Goal 2.4 **Create habitat connections, in order to enhance ecosystems' overall sustainability and benefits (see Appendix D).**

Strategy A Compile data describing existing and potential habitat connections and wildlife corridors within Boise and adjacent communities (e.g., Ada County, etc). Use this inventory to protect existing critical areas, inform partnerships, and to prioritize conservation efforts on existing and future reserves.

Strategy B Create a restoration plan to guide system-wide efforts that enhance wildlife corridors, including riparian and upland habitat, to guide management decisions and inform future acquisition or easement efforts.

FOCUS AREA 3: Enhance and Protect Ecosystem Benefits and Conservation Values

Guiding principle: Protect and enhance the conservation values and ecosystem benefits of open spaces, with a particular focus on watershed protection and water quality, fire adaptation/mitigation, wildlife habitat, native plant communities, air quality and views. Anticipate and respond to issues affecting the health and character of reserves, from locally generated activities to system-wide impacts of climate change. Exemplify how well managed reserves can sustain vibrant ecosystems while supporting a range of beneficial public uses.

Goal 3.1 **Work to enhance waterways and healthy habitats for native plant communities and wildlife. Manage invasive species through innovative, sustainable and responsible practices.**

Strategy A Map key habitat areas which support intact native plant communities, wildlife, and/or rare plants. Identify specific threats to these areas and implement management efforts to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate those impacts.

Strategy B Create a habitat management and restoration plan, aimed at sustaining and/or re-building intact native plant communities, wildlife habitat, and rare or protected species. Include schedules for restoration activities in key habitat areas impacted by invasive species, grazing, recreation, or other activities.

Strategy C Map and monitor waterways and drainage systems, and use this information as a reference in decisions on reserve management. Emphasize and prioritize clean water and the protection of water sources and waterways throughout the reserves and when considering new acquisitions.

Strategy D Ensure that all hunting, trapping and vegetation harvesting ordinances are enforced within the City's reserves.

Strategy E Identify and address sources of pollutants, such as illegal dumping and other nonpoint source pollutants to protect water and land resources. Identify and address air quality pollutants, such as dust and smoke.

Goal 3.2 **Actively manage wildland fire to enhance ecosystem health and minimize damage from unwanted wildfires.**

Strategy A Partner with Boise Fire Department, Idaho Department of Lands, Bureau of Land Management and others to develop, display and enforce user actions that actively reduce unwanted ignitions and wildfire damage.

Strategy B Consider ways to develop and maintain strategic fire breaks that impede wildfire entry into open space reserves and enhance effective firefighter access. Ensure that the design and placement of fire breaks does not encourage off-trail use, and/or consider ways in which trails can double as fire breaks.

Strategy C Utilize wildfire public education programs, including Fire Adapted Communities, Firewise, and Ready, Set, Go! to train and motivate residents to actively reduce fuel hazards on private property that threaten open space reserves.

- Strategy D** Develop and maintain firebreaks where adjacent development is at risk, and/or allow landowners to create fire breaks. Develop a clear City of Boise fire break management policy and institute ways to inform and guide property owners adjacent to reserves. Where fire breaks are created, work to find ways to prevent invasive species from re-vegetating cleared areas.
- Strategy E** Develop partnerships and processes to effectively rehabilitate wildfire burn areas and minimize damage from flooding, erosion and other post-fire events.
- Strategy F** Consider methods to establish more fire-resistant, preferably native vegetation, to help control the spread of fire.
- Strategy G** Create a work plan to incorporate the use of prescribed fire, as appropriate, to maintain ecosystem health and diversity in fire-dependent environments, and monitor these sites over time. Work with stakeholders to manage fire where appropriate.
- Strategy H** Adopt City of Boise Wildfire Mitigation Plan, and update interagency wildfire mitigation Memorandum of Understanding every five years.
- Strategy I** Actively participate in the interagency wildfire mitigation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and work to update the MOU every five years.
- Strategy J** Work with Planning and Development Services to incorporate sustainable fire breaks into new development planning.
- Strategy K** Assist with identifying wildfire related initiatives for the Ada County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, Boise Annex, and update every five years.

Goal 3.3 **Manage reserves to balance recreational and other uses with conservation values and to minimize impacts on the ecosystem. (also see Focus Area 4 for additional strategies related to recreation impacts)**

- Strategy A** Work with Ridge to Rivers partners and the community to develop a Ridge to Rivers Trails Plan. The plan should, among other things, incorporate established best management practices as identified in the current Ridge to Rivers Operations Plan, and aim to develop the trail system to balance recreation and conservation values and keep the trail experience enjoyable and as natural as possible.
- Strategy B** Continue to implement the latest techniques for erosion control, drainage and separation from water sources and wet areas for trails along riparian corridors or near wetlands. Relocated and/or redesigned existing trails to reduce impacts on water quality, native plant communities, and/or wildlife.
- Strategy C** Balance natural and essential physical and ecological functions with recreation needs and expectations.
- Strategy D** Continue to include education elements along trails, pathways, websites and trail maps to convey the sensitivity of certain areas such as steep slopes, waterways and rare plant areas, and to encourage respect from users.

Strategy E Consider keeping large sections of reserves free of trails, or concentrating trails in targeted areas to allow some large, undisturbed tracts to remain natural (see also Goal 2.2).

Goal 3.4 **Develop research programs to obtain baseline data and track trends about the reserves' environmental resources and conditions. Pilot and support innovative research programs.**

Strategy A Establish baseline ecological and environmental indicators, including resource inventories as appropriate. Regularly assess such indicators to monitor changes in the reserve system over time.

Strategy B Promote and coordinate partnerships for ongoing research in the reserves to inform management goals and strategies. Seek out partners that bring expertise to the research process. Share research findings with partners and the public, where feasible.

Strategy C Incorporate existing and relevant climate change research and predictions in reserve management decision making.

Strategy D Determine potential for City of Boise to partner with other agencies to develop an "Open Space Reserve Science Grant," to reduce the cost of scientific study involving reserve ecosystems and encourage innovative research and partnerships with research institutions.

Strategy E Involve citizen scientists, historians and volunteers, such as members of the Native Plant Society and the Idaho Botanical Garden, in the research and monitoring process (see Focus Area 5 for details).

FOCUS AREA 4: Ensure the Reserves are Accessible and Enjoyable

Guiding principle: Work to ensure users and potential users feel encouraged, comfortable and safe. Provide a diversity of non-motorized recreation opportunities, and expand accessibility to underserved populations. Work with partners to enhance experiences and mitigate potential use conflicts.

Goal 4.1 **Maintain and improve opportunities for a diverse range of non-motorized, active and passive recreational activities.**

Strategy A Working with Ridge to Rivers, other partners and the community, conduct a trail planning process that will identify: (1) locations for new amenities and access points, (2) needed changes to the trail system, (3) ways to improve habitat protection and conservation, (4) policy recommendations, and (5) other details as identified.

Strategy B Working with Ridge to Rivers and other partners and the community in a trail planning process to review signage policies and utilize best practices in sign design, location, and intent.

Strategy C Provide improved, limited day use recreation support facilities where appropriate, to invite and accommodate all users. For those seeking easy-to-moderate exercise and outdoor experiences, ensure that the reserves have adequate support facilities. Design these improvements to be sustainable and to complement the natural setting. Consider

possible methods for providing water, such as drinking fountains, at more locations within the reserves.

Goal 4.2 Use a range of management techniques and strategies to reduce potential recreation user conflicts and environmental impacts, including the location and design of facilities, user education, and policies on the timing, type and intensity of recreation uses.

- Strategy A** Balance the intent to maximize multi-use recreational opportunities throughout the reserves with the option to develop specialized recreation areas in select reserves, where appropriate. Where possible, design and develop activity areas within reserves where this meets specific recreation needs, and helps attract and concentrate uses in locations where impacts and user conflicts can be minimized – for example, hardened trails to better serve people with limited mobility, horse trailer turn-arounds, bike parks or specialized bike trails, and off-leash dog areas.
- Strategy B** Develop a system that identifies levels of services (e.g., parking areas, maintenance, amenities, trailheads) within reserves, that responds to the desired levels of activity and visitation. Intentionally design higher-use areas so that other areas might remain less heavily used, quieter and experience minimal impacts. Design lower-use areas to minimize the human “footprint,” e.g., maintain “singletrack”-sized trails, limit signage, etc.
- Strategy C** Continue to maintain dog off-leash areas within the reserves, and work with the community to investigate options and identify new incentives, infrastructure, and education to more successfully promote responsible dog ownership.
- Strategy D** Address issues of dog waste removal and mitigate impacts of dog waste on habitat and user experiences. Consider piloting programs such as dog waste composting sites, sponsored trails and facilities, and other innovative programming and campaigns. Consider new locations for waste receptacles, where appropriate and feasible.
- Strategy E** Work to prevent the development of social trails, which are often “shortcuts” or redundant trails. Where these trails develop, close them and rehabilitate the impacted area, and determine if any measures are needed to address use patterns (e.g., reroute a trail, additional signage, etc.).
- Strategy F** Working with Ridge to Rivers, other partners and the community in a trail planning process, review existing operational practices and methods to address issues of trail widening, drainage, erosion, impacts to native species etc. Inventory and prioritize locations where these issues should be addressed. Continue to employ trail management practices that best minimize impacts on the land and maintain a quality user experience in the reserves. Consider seasonal, wildlife and weather-related trail closures, as needed, and continue crowd-sourced trail conditions reporting.
- Strategy G** Identify and implement practices to increase safety for all users in higher-traffic areas (for example, "SLOW" or "TRAILS MERGE" signage or separated or one-way pathways and signage, etc.), as appropriate to the context. In such areas, also consider use-designated trails, one-way directional trails, and/or alternate day use systems.

Goal 4.3 Provide outdoor experiences to the full range of Boise residents and visitors to encourage healthy lifestyles and economic benefits to the community. Continue to build upon and improve information available to residents and visitors about recreational activities and programs available in the reserves.

Strategy A Take a "stair step" approach to encouraging healthy lifestyles and providing recreation opportunities to residents, a spectrum that starts with "out the backdoor" access to green parks, and ultimately extends to opportunities in more outlying locations, such as the reserves. Ensure coordination among park planners and Foothills and open space staff, as well as other partners, to help create this continuum of experience.

Strategy B Work to make reserves available and inviting to Boise visitors. Focus on opportunities that will increase the time visitors spend in Boise and the economic benefit, such as attractive walking and biking trails with good views for a range of abilities - from beginner to expert. Improve information about open space opportunities for visitors, for example, by developing brochures or other informational pieces through partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, lodging operators and outdoor recreation businesses to tell the story of the reserves, help direct visitors into appropriate areas, and foster stewardship.

Strategy C Continue to build upon and improve information about open space recreation opportunities for residents, for example, through public information campaigns, websites (including the openspacematters.com website), social media and events, and partnership network. (see Focus Area 5 for more on specific outreach strategies)

Strategy D Further investigate the impact of the reserves on the local economy, and share this information broadly with the public. Investigate the economic impacts of different types of recreational and other open space amenities; develop strategies to sustainably increase the local economic benefit of the open spaces reserves. (see Focus Area 6)

Strategy E Develop a program that encourages the visitation of reserves by City of Boise staff. For example, a program tied to a healthy workforce initiative that also provides an opportunity to become familiar with the reserves and understand management priorities.

Goal 4.4 **Strengthen services and amenities for underserved/underrepresented residents and visitors, including people with physical limitations and disabilities, youth and seniors, low-to-moderate-income populations, and ethnic communities that may be less frequent users. Ensure that residents who don't live in the immediate vicinity of the reserves can access them easily. (See Focus Area 2 for more on connectivity to reserves).**

Strategy A Identify ways to incorporate use of the reserve system with local health initiatives that support minorities, children, disabled persons, veterans and the elderly.

Strategy B Work with the array of prospective special population users; ask to be invited to talk with groups or representatives to listen and aim to better understand their unique needs. Focus in particular on real and perceived barriers to expanded use and enjoyment of the reserves.

Strategy C Based on outreach to underserved residents, and working in partnership with schools, health organizations, nonprofits, NGOs and other groups, provide improved options for these populations to enjoy the reserves. As needed, develop specific outreach plans to help guide and implement community recommendations.

Goal 4.5 **Develop research programs to obtain baseline data and track trends about the reserves' recreational resources, conditions and uses. Pilot and support innovative research programs.**

Strategy A Build on existing trail user surveys data to develop an active recreation use research program, to better understand the amount and types of recreation use in the reserve system, and how it may change over time. Also focus on researching techniques to mitigate or eliminate these impacts in different contexts.

Strategy B Involve recreation users and other volunteers in the research and monitoring process (see Focus Area 5 for more details).

FOCUS AREA 5: Strengthen Partnerships and Investment through Outreach and Education

Guiding principle: Develop and maintain effective outreach and education programs, and partnerships to create an active open space advocacy community that works with the City to preserve, maintain and enhance reserves and reserve programs. Be transparent and inclusive, where feasible, in reserve-related decision-making, as well as accountable and responsive to community needs and desires. Inspire citizens and businesses to invest time and energy in the future of the reserves; increase volunteer opportunities and forums for public input and participation in order to foster a sense of community ownership. Quantify and strengthen the economic benefits the reserves provide to residents and businesses, and awareness of these benefits.

Goal 5.1 **Continue to invest in robust outreach to meaningfully involve residents, businesses, health care providers and other partners in management decisions and to encourage stewardship. Outreach efforts should create opportunities for two-way communication, regular feedback and positive interactions between residents and City land and program managers as well as among different user groups.**

- Strategy A** Maintain and develop targeted online resources so that visitors are able to learn, share feedback and ask questions about reserves.
- Strategy B** Continue to regularly survey reserve system users to gauge satisfaction, amount and type of use, user characteristics, and changing perceptions of the status and value of the reserve system. Expand data collection to gather more comprehensive user data, drawing on examples from elsewhere as appropriate.
- Strategy C** Actively engage the community in management decision making, such as this reserve-wide plan, and future plans for individual reserves. Consider hosting or co-hosting regular Open Space Matters community forums to create ongoing opportunities to listen to new ideas and address important issues together.
- Strategy D** Consider hosting or co-hosting an annual community event to raise awareness of and celebrate the reserves (and other public lands) and the benefits they bring to the community. Design the event to promote sustainable practices and leave minimal impacts on the reserves.
- Strategy E** Continue to collaborate across jurisdictions and with land managers to address shared management issues such as invasive species management, trail planning and maintenance, special events policies, funding and watershed protection.

Goal 5.2 Maintain and expand education programs to promote healthy lifestyles, and encourage stewardship.

Strategy A Continue to provide education programs, for all ages, to inform residents and visitors about the open spaces. Focus on programs for school-aged children and underserved populations. Use a range of outreach media and methods, from classroom settings, to social media, interpretive signage and guided outdoor experiences. Promote stewardship by providing participants with a strong understanding of reserve management issues and sustainable management and use practices.

Strategy B Work to expand programming in the reserves and at the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center through the Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, and continued partnerships with Let's Move Boise, Boise School District and related organizations. In particular, for youth and teen age groups, focus on promoting active lifestyles and encouraging youth to become comfortable in and enjoy the outdoors.

Goal 5.3 Encourage and facilitate strong community investment and support for open spaces through volunteer programs, citizen engagement in open space management and giving opportunities.

Strategy A Regularly meet with organizations interested in volunteering and investing in the reserves. Where possible coordinate efforts and ensure management needs are met.

Strategy B Encourage citizen involvement in management activities, responsible use and education, funding, and ongoing advocacy. Support efforts that foster a sense of stewardship and responsibility among users.

Strategy C Investigate options for creating a Boise reserves foundation - a nonprofit partner that can add to the capacity of the City of Boise through fundraising, program development, coordinating volunteers, and outreach efforts.

Strategy D Consider additional ways citizens can give or make donations to maintain or expand the reserves, such as memorial dedications, participating in an "adopt a reserve" donation program and continuing voluntary programs such as Heritage Trust Fund, TrailSmart and the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley's Foothills Fund.

Strategy E Identify additional ways to involve and encourage citizens, businesses, user groups and their organizations to supplement and extend City of Boise management resources. For example, require local organizations and/or businesses promoting a reserve-related/trail-related event to engage volunteers in activities such as trail maintenance, removal of invasive plant species, dog waste pick-ups, etc., before and after the event, as part of the use permit. Other ideas include "reserve clean-up day" programs, etc., to encourage engagement in land management.

Goal 5.4 Work to gather and share information about the reserves' economic benefits to the community, and how these benefits can be expanded.

Strategy A Periodically (e.g. every five years) sponsor an "Reserves Impact Report" that describes the economic contribution from the reserves– including ecosystem services, health benefits, social capital and economic impacts – perhaps as part of a larger assessment of the overall park system.

- Strategy B** Work with the Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, Boise Valley Economic Partnership, City of Boise Economic Development staff, the Idaho Department of Commerce, and local businesses to promote the reserves as a recruitment tool for employers, and as an attraction for visitors from outside the Treasure Valley.
- Strategy C** Consider establishing a fee structure for various types of private business uses, such as filmmaking, commercially-guided activities, sponsored events or dog walking.

FOCUS AREA 6: Increase Capacity to Sustainably Acquire and Manage Open Spaces

Guiding principle: Build City of Boise capacity to sustainably operate and manage the open space reserve system. Secure funding and resources to meet current and future needs and enable appropriate expansion of the system’s land base, amenities, services and programs on a scale that matches their level of use and value to residents, businesses and visitors.

Goal 6.1 **Continue to pursue and expand strategic land acquisition and easement opportunities, consider various public financing measures (such as levies and bonds), and explore funding and investment options for capital investment.**

Strategy A Evaluate public interest and willingness to support efforts to acquire additional reserve lands.

Strategy B Work with partners to evaluate options for obtaining outside assistance, such as sponsorship of reserve lands, grants or major donor gifts to help with acquisition, amenities, and capital investment.

Strategy C Develop a model showing the true cost of managing reserve lands, which includes capital costs and ongoing operation and maintenance expenses for each reserve area. This will provide the City of Boise with greater fiscal predictability when considering additions to the reserve system and subsequent, related budgetary requests for operations and management.

Goal 6.2 **Ensure adequate funding levels for staffing, operations and maintenance of the open space reserve system.**

Strategy A Conduct a gap analysis to develop operational guidance and inform resource requests and resource allocations.

Strategy B Consider fees for certain types of commercial uses (see also Focus Area 5).

Strategy C Ensure City of Boise Parks and Recreation has adequate conservation and education staff to implement research, outreach, and education goals identified in this plan. Consider creating positions, for example an outreach coordinator and a “naturalist”, to meet growing needs and expectations for educational programming and land management.

Goal 6.3 **The reserves, and management thereof, will be supported by clear, identifiable policies and procedures easily available to the public, and supported by Boise City Code, where needed.**

Strategy A Review relevant sections of Boise City Code and consider developing language or adding sections specific to open space reserve lands to address or clarify needed reserve-specific policies and practices. For example, special fines for vandalism, arson, encroachment or pollution, illegal dumping and dog waste.

Strategy B Working with the community, the Parks and Recreation Commission and Boise City Council and Mayor's office, develop clear, written policies and review procedures for special uses in the reserves, such as events, allowable commercial activities and races.

Strategy C Consolidate online information relating to the City of Boise's open space reserves (trails, facilities, management and use guidelines, etc.) into a centralized online location with appropriate portals and connections to other partner sites.

Goal 6.4 **Maintain and build partnerships that allow the City to leverage partner resources and expand funding options to bolster long-term sustainability and enhancement of the reserve system, and the public's access to open spaces.**

Strategy A Continue to build partnerships with entities (such as the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, Neighborhood Associations, Idaho Conservation League and various user-based organizations), to acquire and manage land, fundraise for needed infrastructure and coordinate volunteers (also see Focus Area 5 for more on outreach to the community and partners).

Strategy B Utilize collaboration and partnerships to build efficiencies and reduce reliance solely on tax-funded efforts.

RESERVES SNAPSHOTS



SECTION 3: RESERVE SNAPSHOTS

The previous chapter (the **Focus Areas, Guiding Principles, Goals Statements, and Management Strategies**) provides short- and long-term direction for the management of the entire reserve system. In this section, direction goes beyond the system wide approach to offer specific management strategies for each reserve. These reserves include:

- Camel’s Back/Hulls Gulch
- Castle Rock
- Foothills East
- Hillside to Hollow
- Mesa
- Military
- Noble
- Oregon Trail
- Polecat Gulch
- Stack Rock

Before presenting these specific management elements, each reserve includes an overview of its history, location, and relevant characteristics such as acreage, trail mileage and primary ecotypes.

Reserve strengths, issues and challenges, and targeted management strategies follow the overviews. The unique qualities of reserves that provide value, and traits that necessitate management practices to preserve these values were identified through the public outreach process and with input from land managers.

Each “Reserve Snapshot” ends with two elements: 1) a **management intent** that outlines the management objectives for the reserve, and 2) **management strategies** for reserve-specific action items. These **management strategies** were identified by land managers, through public feedback from the November 19th public workshop, and the reserve questionnaire hosted on openspacematters.org. Management strategies represent focused objectives for each reserve, and go beyond the level of specificity in the reserve-wide section.

CAMEL'S BACK AND HULLS GULCH RESERVES

History and Attributes: Camel's Back – This land along with the Camel's Back Park was acquired by the City of Boise in 1932 from Bernard Lemp, a relative of a former mayor.

Hulls Gulch – The majority of this reserve was acquired through a citizen effort from 1991 to 1993. The initial parcel of land – 99 acres – was purchased in the early 1990s through a land trade with United Water. Additional acres were acquired through grass roots fundraising efforts, Boise City general funds, and Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars. In 1997 the City purchased the McCord house and surrounding acres. The most recent addition of 40 acres was purchased in 2003, from the Orida Investment Corporation and the City used 2001 Foothills Serial Levy dollars.



Hulls Gulch Pond

The name "Hulls Gulch" comes from the ephemeral creek that runs from higher up in the foothills through the middle of this property. The creek is surrounded by healthy riparian shrubs and cottonwood trees. Common wildlife seen throughout the year in Hulls Gulch includes great horned owls, kestrel, coyotes, mule deer, red fox, and species of snakes and lizards.

The reserve is also home to the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center (FLC), operated by the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Department. The FLC sits on the site of the former McCord house. The FLC focuses on education

and information about the Boise foothills and the surrounding high-desert environment. This center was envisioned in the 2000 Foothills Open Space Management Plan, and became a reality when its doors opened on April 22nd 2005. It is a place for learning by direct experience with the outdoors. The heart of the FLC program is school-age education, which offers a wide range of lessons for kindergarten through sixth grade students in their classrooms and at the FLC. Service learning opportunities for all ages and abilities, and special family and community events are also available regularly. Over the years public art pieces have been added to the FLC grounds according to the landscape plans: Aero Agoseris (Mountain Dandelion) representing Air at the East Node, Cat's Face Revival representing Fire at the South Node and Medicine Wheel at the North Node.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION

– The backside of Camel's Back Park, contiguous to the Halls Gulch Reserve.
Halls Gulch – North of downtown Boise at the base of the foothills.

ACRES

Camel's Back – 63 acres
Halls Gulch – 292 acres

YEAR PROTECTED

1932

TRAILS

Trail miles:

Camel's Back – 2.34 miles

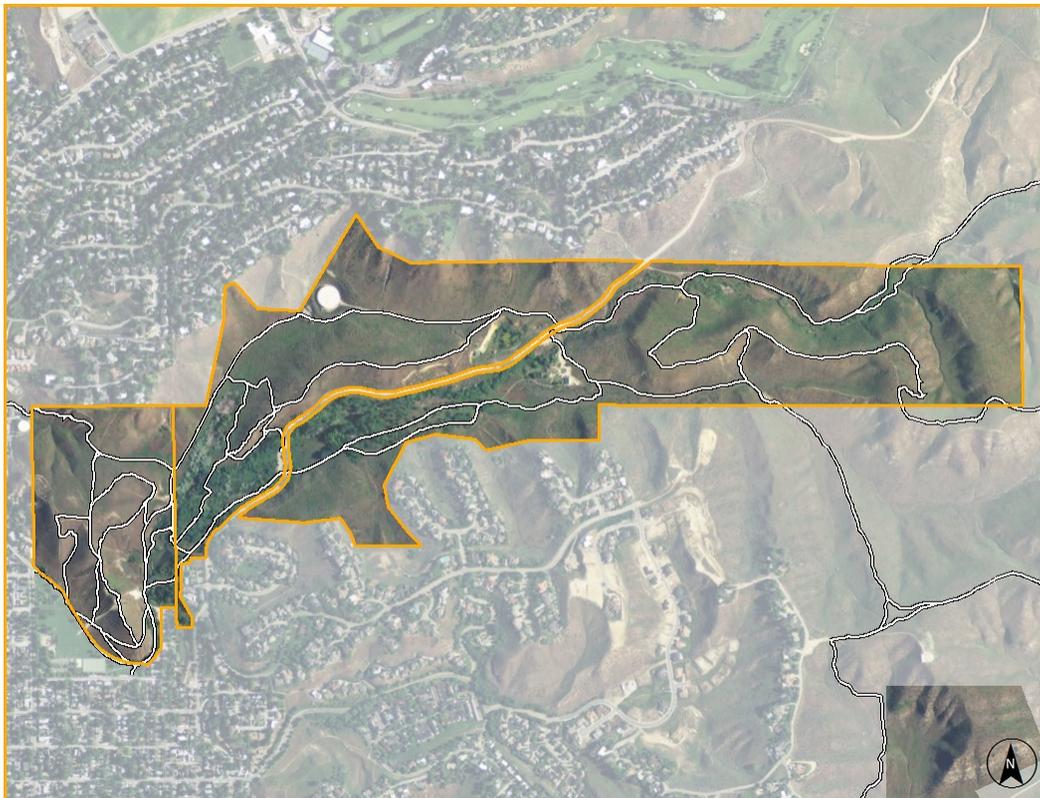
Halls Gulch – 5.67 miles

Camel's Back Reserve is home to three trailheads (The grove, 9th Street and Lower Halls Gulch) that act as the starting point for some of the 150 miles of Ridge to Rivers trails in the foothills. Halls Gulch has trailheads along 8th Street, including Owl's Roost and the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center, and a number of roadside parking spots. Hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, runners, and horseback riders enjoy the trails in this area.

ECOTYPES

Camel's Back – Upland shrub

Halls Gulch – Urban forest, upland shrub, riparian and grassland



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Connectivity with other reserves and other public lands
- Diversity of scenery/paths (geologic features, creeks, views, pond, ridges, forested areas, etc.)
- Recreation (trail) options and variety for different uses and experience levels
- Proximity to neighborhoods and urban core and accessibility

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Heavy use
- Invasive weed control and rare plant conservation
- Responsible dog ownership (dog waste pickup, on-leash in designated areas, etc.)
- Preventing trail widening and erosion
- Wildfire and wildfire mitigation
- Encroachment enforcement and education
- Long-term viability of cottonwood forest
- Illegal or incompatible uses – partying, vandalism, camping and non-system trail creation
- Location and number of local/unofficial access points – too many in some places (e.g., top of Camel’s Back); should be spread around or closed.

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Camel’s Back and Hulls Gulch reserves will continue to experience high use in the future. The level of service in the reserves will respond to user demand while maintaining the qualities that make the reserves unique. If demand reaches certain thresholds that create conflicts among users, land management will consider implementing innovative use mitigation measures, such as directional trails and alternate day use designations. Future management of the reserve will continue a joint management approach for this combined reserve.

- Increase awareness of trail etiquette and responsible user behavior to mitigate heavy use.
- Innovative wildfire mitigation strategies.
- Focus on solutions to dog waste and encourage responsible dog ownership.
- In congested areas, consider trail management options such as dedicated use trails, one-way trail designations, and/or alternate day use trails.
- Identify additional parking areas to address higher demand for parking than is available at Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center.
- Given the proximity to available access (parking and trailheads), consider this area as an opportunity for expanding the system of trails for persons with disabilities.

CASTLE ROCK RESERVE

History and Attributes: Acquired in the mid to late 1990s. Native Americans who once inhabited the Boise Valley are said to have gathered at a remote site, known as Castle Rock, in the foothills where an outcropping of rocks dramatically jets out and touches the sky. At that time, nearby geothermal hot springs fed into small creeks and formed bathing ponds frequented by the Shoshone, Bannock, and Paiute tribes.

The East End Neighborhood Association, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Boise Front Coalition were heavily involved with the protection of this property in the 1990's as part of an effort to preserve the space from new residential development.



Castle Rock

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	North of Quarry View Park in Boise's East End.
ACRES	49 acres
YEAR PROTECTED	1995
TRAIL MILES	1.8 miles
ECOTYPES	Upland shrub



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Views and geologic feature
- Recreation opportunities and connection to other public lands
- Cultural/historic site

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Heavy Use
- Invasive weed control
- Encroachment enforcement and education
- Responsible dog ownership
- Preventing trail widening and erosion
- Wildfire mitigation
- Habitat restoration
- Identify appropriate access points

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

A hallmark of Castle Rock reserve is its historic and cultural elements. As such, land management will protect cultural/historic values and highlight the geologic (Castle Rock, geothermal resource, etc.) features in the area. Address issues, such as encroachment, caused by the proximity of this reserve to neighborhoods and private residences. The reserve is situated in a growing residential and open space network (Mesa Reserve) area. As growth occurs, levels of service in the reserve and connectivity to other spaces will respect the values inherent to the Castle Rock.

- Increase awareness of trail etiquette and responsible user behavior to mitigate heavy use. Ensure that trail management controls widening of trails.
- Focus on solutions to dog waste and encourage responsible dog ownership.
- Restore the habitat (vegetation).
- Create more interpretive opportunities, such as signs and kiosks, to explain cultural and geologic significance. Such signage will be unobtrusive and respect the area's natural setting.
- Work with neighbors and visitors to reduce and mitigate risk of wildfire.
- Monitor encroachments where they are occurring and enforce accordingly.
- Post information about avoiding trail use in wet conditions, especially along widening trails.

FOOTHILLS EAST RESERVE

History and Attributes: Acquired in the 1970s through the development review process when residential development was occurring in this area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	Northeast Boise foothills neighborhood
ACRES	30 acres
YEAR PROTECTED	1970
TRAIL MILES	Trails exist, but are not part of the Ridge to Rivers system.
ECOTYPES	Upland shrub



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation
- Connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods
- Views
- Wildlife habitat

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Invasive weed control
- Encroachment enforcement and education
- Wildfire mitigation
- Lack of official public trails and trail maintenance

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

This “pocket reserve” is highly valued as open space by surrounding neighbors. Although the trails in the area are not part of the Ridge to Rivers system, they have high levels of use from nearby residents and visitors. This unique design is successful and the reserve will be maintained in its current state. As use levels increase, land managers will determine if ad-hoc walking trails can be inventoried and if they should be officially added to the trail inventory. Identify and implement strategies to reduce risk of wildfire. Consider possibility of implementing a small-scale native plant re-vegetation project in this area that could be piloted in other reserves.

- Work to ensure invasive species are removed and re-vegetation by indigenous species occurs.
- Improve surrounding residents’ understanding of the Firewise program.
- Prioritize enforcement and cleanup efforts on graffiti, illegal dumping and encroachment.
- Maintain existing, marked access points and continue to perform needed reserve maintenance.

HILLSIDE TO HOLLOW (H2H) RESERVE

History and Attributes: The Land Trust acquired the initial 59 acres in 2011, using private donations. The adjoining 258 acres was purchased by the City of Boise in 2013 for \$1.9 million with funds from the 2001 Foothills Serial Levy. Over the last few decades, the property has been used unofficially by many nearby residents. Unlike many of the other reserves, pedestrian use is the primary activity in H2H, with many dog walkers. An extensive public process to create a master plan for the property was conducted in 2014 in order to focus restoration efforts and plan a recreation and trail system for the area. The City partnered with the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley in the planning process.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION

North of Hill Road between Bogus Basin Road and North 33rd Street

ACRES

317 acres
(City of Boise owns 258 acres, the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley owns 59 acres in Harrison Hollow)

YEAR PROTECTED

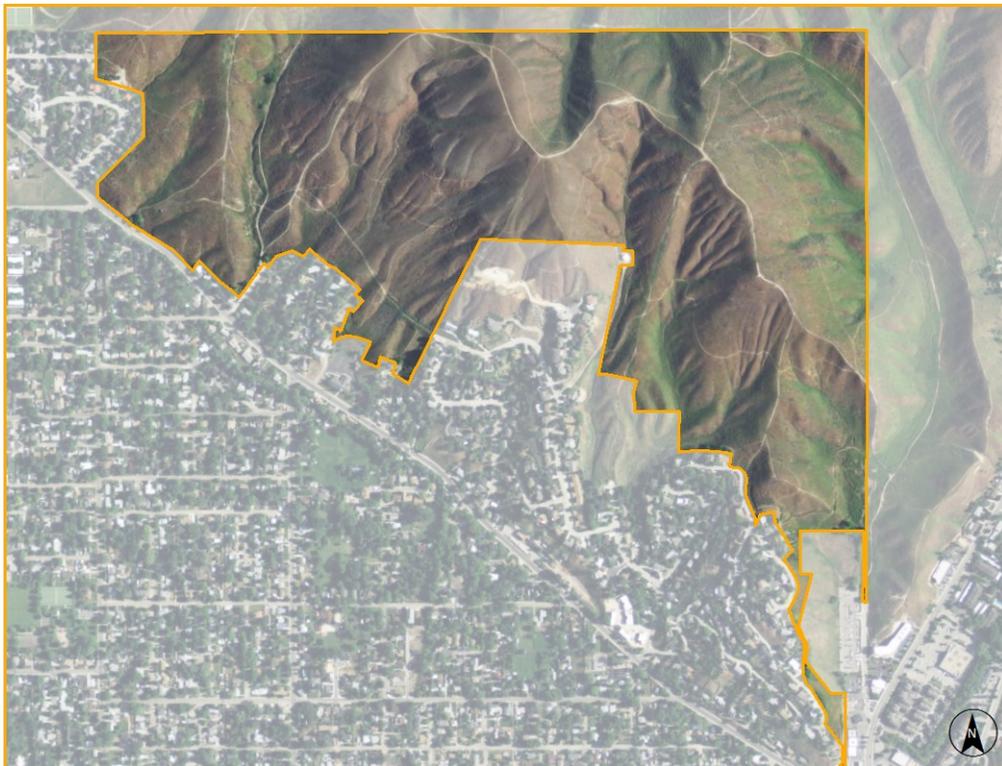
2013

TRAIL MILES

9.38 miles, including trails on The Land Trust of Treasure Valley's land.
(7.11 miles on land owned by the City)

ECOTYPES

Disturbed grasslands and some upland shrub lands, Aase's onion (*Allium aaseae*), a rare plant found in the Boise Foothills.



Note: Map shows only the land in the reserve owned by the City of Boise. LTTV land is directly to the east.

MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation, steep hills
- Scenic views
- Wildlife (particularly raptors)
- Proximity to adjacent residential areas
- Dog-friendly, neighborhood feeling
- Access, location, parking

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Invasive weed control
- Trail use management, social trails, widening trails
- Responsible dog ownership
- Wildfire mitigation
- Access points
- Encroachment enforcement and education

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

The Hillside to Hollow reserve is revered for its abundance of trails, views into Boise, and unique experiences such as steep trails and large dog off-leash area. As such, it experiences frequent use from hikers and joggers and as a place to enjoy with dogs off-leash. To maintain these qualities, land managers will continue to support these types of use. Dog privileges in the reserve are cherished by many, but warrant adherence to responsible use best practices. Land managers will consider piloting new approaches to dog waste management, and work with H2H users to encourage respectable behavior. Continue collaborative, joint management by the City and the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, and implement the 2014 Hillside to Hollow Master Plan.

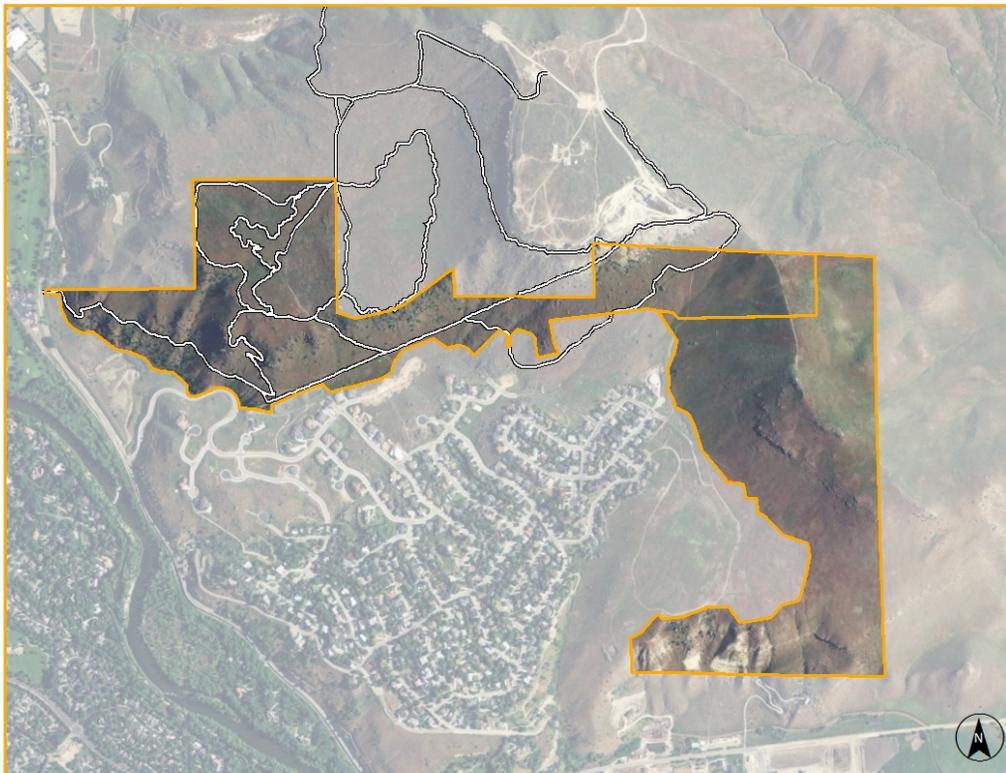
- Connect H2H to Polecat Reserve.
- Maintain primary access points and improve as-needed.
- As it becomes available, acquire adjacent, undeveloped land and incorporate into reserve, and/or secure easements.
- Evaluate options for extending existing all-weather trail and/or developing new all-weather trails.
- Improve facilities (signage, waste receptacles, etc.) to accommodate the area's high demand as a dog walking area.
- Increase education and awareness of trail etiquette and responsible user behavior.
- Increase signage regarding wildfire and prevention of the spread of invasive species, and implement strategies to control fire and re-vegetate native plant species.
- Maintain views into and from the reserve, and trails accessing viewpoints.

MESA RESERVE

History and Attributes: In 2003, the City purchased the 58-acre Boyer-Satz property on to the north of Table Rock using 2001 Foothills Serial levy funds. As a part of the City’s 2002 development agreement with Homer Wise, the developer of Boulder Heights, several other parcels adjacent to the Boyer-Satz property have been acquired by the City as each phase of Boulder Heights is completed. Currently, three other parcels totaling 76 acres have been added. Over the next decade, 207 acres will be donated to the City. In 2014, the Warm Springs Mesa Neighborhood Association completed a Neighborhood Plan. The plan suggested the name “Mesa Reserve” for the area, and the name became official upon City Council approval of the plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	On the mesa, east of Table Rock
ACRES	110 acres (total of 341 acres upon final conveyance)
YEAR PROTECTED	2003
TRAIL MILES	2.9 miles
ECOTYPES	Upland shrub, grassland



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation
- Geologic feature, unique terrain and views
- Rich and varied wildlife
- Connectivity to residential areas and other public lands
- Views

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Risk of wildfire
- Invasive weeds
- Preserve wildlife habitat and riparian areas
- Access points
- Responsible dog ownership
- Trail widening, social trail development and erosion
- Encroachment enforcement and education, future development

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Mesa Reserve is situated near the high-traffic Table Rock area (managed by the Idaho Department of Lands) and shares several trails. The Mesa Reserve provides access to open space, views and recreation within the reserve itself, and connects to the Ridge to Rivers trail system to the Boise Greenbelt in three locations. The reserve will continue to expand into the future as the development agreement for the surrounding neighborhood requires a predetermined dedication of land as lots are developed. Management will maintain and enhance connections with existing public lands and look for opportunities that might arise for creating connections to other areas, for example on the eastern side of the reserve. Because of the reserves proximity to a residential neighborhood, additional access and/or parking will respect this setting.

- Continue to direct users to official, inventoried trails and address ad hoc creation of social trails.
- Enforce and educate nearby residents of encroachment policies.
- Increase signage educating users about wildfire and prevention of the spread of invasive species, and implement strategies to control fire and re-vegetate native plant species.
- Coordinate the use of the Warm Springs Golf Course for needed trail access parking.

MILITARY RESERVE

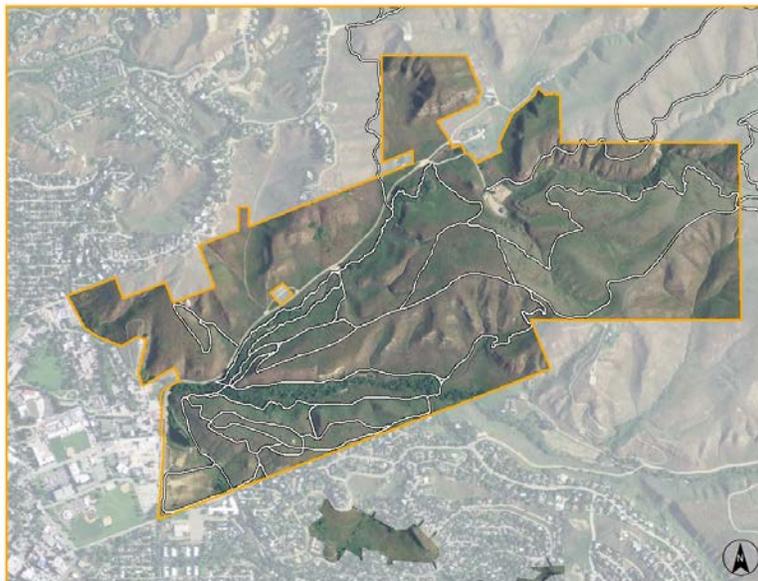
History and Attributes: 474 acres were granted to the City of Boise by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in March 1956. The access road and cemetery were also transferred to the City to ensure the maintenance for these areas. In 2006, \$2.5 million from the Foothills serial levy funds was used to purchase the adjacent 260-acre Hawkins property to expand Military Reserve.

The amenities in the area include an archery range, an old military cemetery, trails, a vault toilet, and several small parking areas. The reserve includes a sandstone feature adjacent to a police shooting range known as “Elephant Rock.” The southern portion of the reserve along Reserve Road contains access to an undeveloped off-leash dog park and includes flood mitigation infrastructure, including a spillway and overflow pond.

Flowing through the reserve are sections of Freestone and Cottonwood creeks, which includes one of the few wooded areas in all of the reserves. From these creek valleys, hill masses rise on moderate to steep slopes to heights of 100 feet or more. A military cemetery is on a hillside approximately one-half mile east of the U.S. Veteran's Administration Hospital. Veterans of the Mexican War, Civil War, Indian Wars, and Spanish American War are interred here. Several civilian graves are also located in the cemetery.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	Northeast of downtown
ACRES	734 acres
YEAR PROTECTED	1956
TRAIL MILES	12 miles
ECOTYPES	Predominantly upland shrub and grassland with approximately 1.2 acres of forest.



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation
- Connectivity
- Wildlife habitat
- Views
- Variety of experiences for many user groups
- Special areas such as riparian corridors and historic military sites (currently on National Historic Register)

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Heavy use
- Invasive weed control
- Widening of trails
- Long-term viability of cottonwood forest
- Responsible Dog Ownership
- Wildfire
- Illegal uses – Encroachment, camping
- Education about trail etiquette

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Military Reserve is one of the largest, most popular reserves. Maintain the areas' ability to accommodate a wide variety of recreation activities. Maintain public lands and private easements that provide critical connections to Hulls Gulch. The reserve houses several historic military sites that could be connected through interpretive elements and closer, more seamless connections with Fort Boise and/or the VA campus. Consider improving parking and signage to direct use and access, and review trail system management to identify improvements that will reduce potential user conflicts.

- Users will generally have equal accessibility, though limited or specialized use (e.g., dog park) should be allowed in some areas, if needed to reduce use impacts and sustain habitat.
- Consider increased access and vehicle parking near trailheads; include connection to Military Reserve area in master planning efforts for Fort Boise and St. Luke's campus.
- Conduct wildlife management, invasive weed control, trail maintenance.
- Enhance trail signage to orient new users, explain responsible trail use behavior and signify historical value and assets.
- Conduct wildfire education and mitigation.
- Provide enhancements at dog park and nearby trails for improved off-leash use and to encourage more responsible dog ownership.
- Implement interpretive elements that explain the area's historic elements, such as a history of Fort Boise and the toll road.

NOBLE RESERVE

History and Attributes: The land was donated to the City by Allen and Billie Dee Noble in 2003. The Nobles had allowed the public to access the land since it was purchased in 1972. The property is surrounded on all sides by federal land. Five thousand dollars from the Serial Levy Funds were spent on land transaction costs. The market value of the land at the time of the transaction was \$6 million. Portions of the reserve do not have public access due to terrain and lack of roads in that area of the foothills.

In 2008, the City used \$800,000 of Land & Water Conservation Funds (royalties given to the U.S. government based on off shore drilling receipts) to assist the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in purchasing the 110-acre Oberbillig property. The City spent \$20,000 from the Foothills serial levy fund to purchase 10 acres from the Oberbilligs' and swapped this land with the Johnston family in order to have a total of 120 contiguous acres. There is no public access to the Johnston parcel or the Oberbillig land that is now owned by the BLM due to the terrain and the lack of roads.

The reserve is of historic significance because the old toll road from Boise to Idaho City passed through the property, one of the old toll booths is still standing on the property.

NOBLE RESERVE EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION

Northeast of downtown, Five Mile Creek in the foothills east of Rocky Canyon and covers a few prominent ridge tops in the East Foothills.

ACRES

598 acres

YEAR PROTECTED

2003

TRAILS

Overview: The trail access point for the Five Mile Gulch and Watchman trails is located on the reserve, just off of Rocky Canyon Rd. These trails are not as heavily used as other trails on city reserves located in similar proximity to the urban core of Boise.

Trail miles: 2.7 miles

ECOTYPES

Due to the lack of heavy use, many species of wildlife such as black bear (*Ursus Americana*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), and elk (*Cervus canadensis*) have been known to frequent the area. Noble reserve is also home to Five Mile Creek which has large cottonwood and locust trees growing alongside it. Many species of animals use this creek for its water and shade during the summer months. Grassland is the predominant vegetation, with approximately 5.7 acres of upland shrub.

MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation
- Connectivity
- Views
- Wildlife habitat

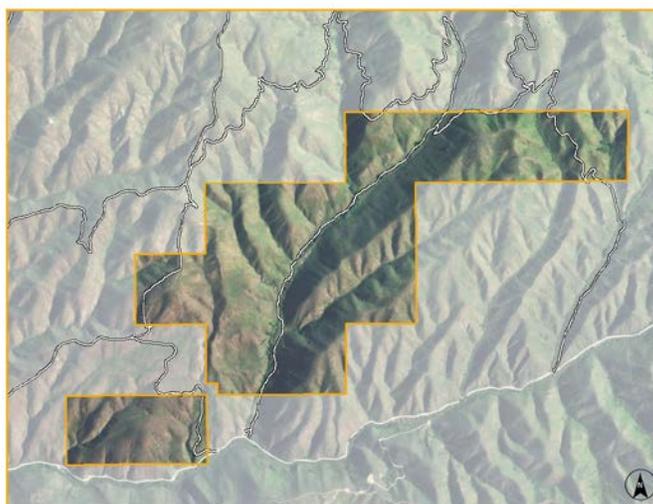
MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Wildfire mitigation
- Invasive weed control
- Access points and adequate parking
- Illegal dumping, unauthorized use of the area
- Grazing

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Noble Reserve is unique in that it provides a very remote experience, influenced by the reserve's isolation and lack of developed access routes and/or parking areas. These qualities reduce the amount of visitation, but create a setting that many enjoy and desire to maintain. As such, management of the reserve will preserve the rural and remote environment while enhancing access for non-motorized users. These efforts will maintain "low-level" access, with parking areas that accommodate a limited number of vehicles or a small number of trailers for horseback riders.

- Implement wildfire mitigation strategies and invasive weed control
- Examine potential for improved access to parking areas and turnarounds (on Rocky Canyon Road) that increase road safety and accommodate horse trailers in select locations. Share results with the community.
- Enhance trail head signage and education to assist new users and to explain responsible use behavior.
-
- Maintain good connections to other public lands.



OREGON TRAIL RESERVE

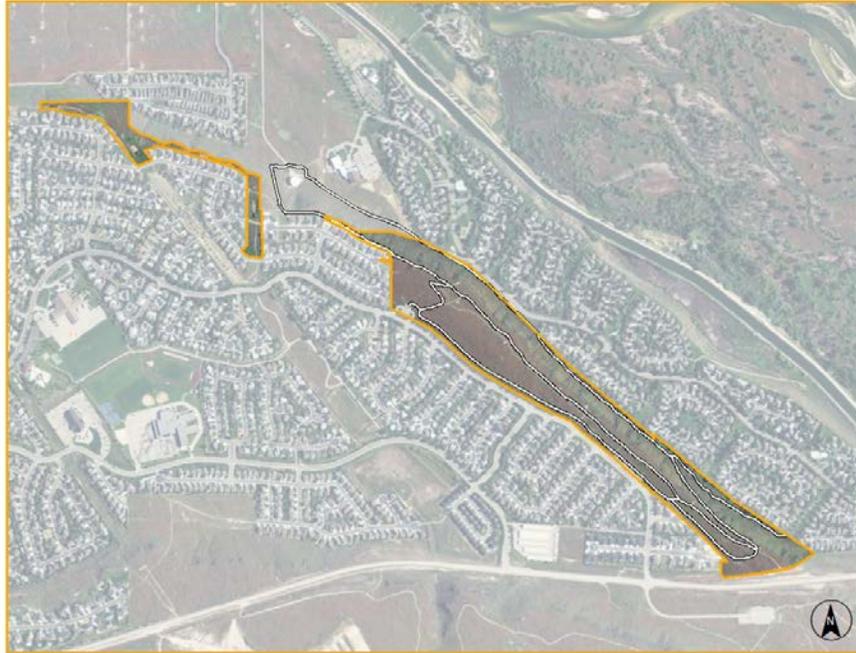
History and Attributes: This site was made a reserve with the goal of preserving remnants of the Oregon Trail and educating the public about this valuable historic resource. A partnership between Boise City, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the residents of Surprise Valley was forged during the creation of the reserve. The Boise Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for maintenance of trails and restrooms. The BLM assisted with the production and installation of interpretive signage. Surprise Valley residents help with upkeep of trails below the rim.

Thanks to a land exchange in 2006, the boundaries of the Oregon Trail Historic Reserve were expanded by 13 acres and a trail connection was completed between the reserve and surrounding neighborhoods. Columbia Development, LLC added a .4-mile gravel trail connecting the west end of the reserve to surrounding residential neighborhoods in the Columbia Village, Surprise Valley, and Homestead Rim subdivisions. Located on the rim of the basalt cliffs separating Surprise Valley and Columbia Village, the new trail provides spectacular views of the Barber Valley and Boise Foothills.

The area features a scenic view of the Boise Front and the historic Kelton Ramp, a path forged by overland travelers heading down the rim to the Boise River.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	Southeast Boise
ACRES	77 acres
YEAR PROTECTED	1990
TRAIL MILES	3.5 miles
ECOTYPES	Grassland, upland shrub



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Historic site
- Recreation
- Views, geologic feature and wildlife habitat
- Accessibility
- All weather trails (gravel)
- Parking and full facilities

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Invasive weed control
- Wildfire/wildfire mitigation
- Dogs and dog waste
- Social trails
- Wayfinding
- Historic preservation

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

The City will work to promote and share more broadly the historic significance of the reserve, and consider ways to increase the reserve area and/or connect to other nearby public lands. Parts of the Oregon Trail reserve are adjacent to land managed by Ada County. While managing the reserve the City will continue to jointly manage the area with the County.

- Invasive weed control and trail maintenance.
- Wildfire education and mitigation.

- 
- Enhance interpretive signage and increase education regarding the area's unique historical resources, trail etiquette and appropriate usage and wayfinding.
 - Work with Ada County to preserve historic integrity, reduce erosion and illegal trash dumping while jointly managing the area.
-

POLECAT GULCH RESERVE

History and Attributes: Polecat Gulch Reserve was created in 2002 with an acquisition from the Blessinger family of 120 acres of undeveloped land. Subsequent additions include purchases of 40 acres from Bluegrass LLC in 2005; 80 acres from Linda Dengler in 2005; a 360-acre Bureau of Land Management parcel acquired in 2008 via a land exchange; and 80 acres from Sterling Savings Bank in 2010, including a 70-acre conservation easement previously donated to the City. In 2007, a trailhead parking lot off Cartwright Road was built with a \$46,000 grant awarded by the Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation. There is currently a small home built in the 1930's on the property where a caretaker lives.

Polecat Gulch features 7.5 miles of trails and is home to mature vegetation that supports mule deer year-round and a substantial population of Aase's Onion (*Allium aaseae*), a rare plant found in the Boise Foothills. Polecat gulch is the only reserve that requires dogs to be on-leash to help protect these rare plants. In 2014, a trailhead and parking area were built at the north end of Collister Drive. This access was built with \$88,000 of city funding.

The Dry Creek Area/West Boise Foothills is one of the three priority areas identified for Foothills land preservation prior to the passage of the \$10 million Foothills Levy in 2001. The entire Polecat Gulch Reserve totals 834 acres between Cartwright and Collister Roads. The city has allocated a total of \$3 million in serial levy funds for property acquisition in this area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	Accessed from the Polecat Trailhead on Cartwright Road, .25 miles east of its junction with Pierce Park Road. The reserve is also accessible at the north end of Collister Drive.
ACRES	475 acres City of Boise, 359 acres BLM
YEAR PROTECTED	2003
TRAIL MILES	7.5 miles
ECOTYPES	The predominant vegetation is upland shrub.

MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Recreation
- Views and wildlife habitat
- Connectivity to nearby neighborhoods

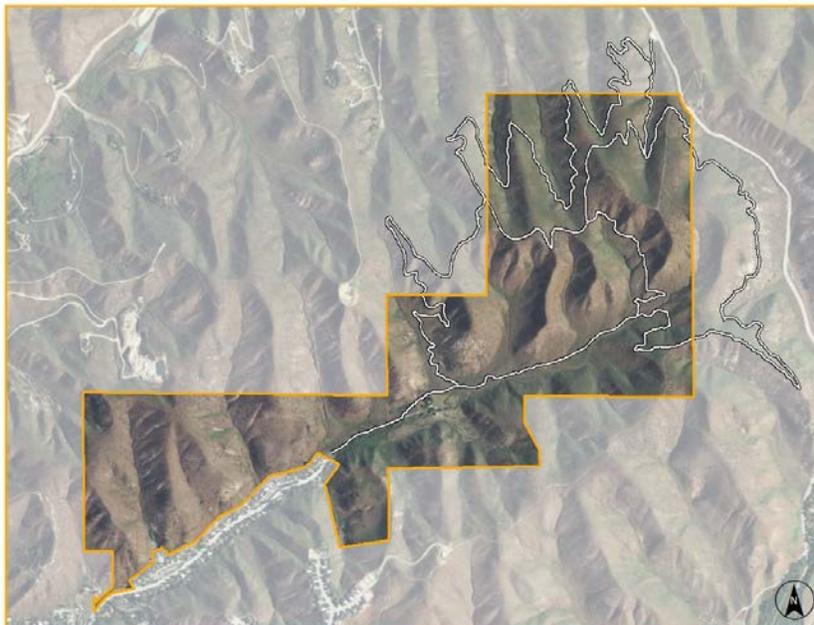
MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Invasive weed control
- Wildfire mitigation
- Responsible dog ownership
- Maintaining rare plants and protecting wildlife habitat

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Polecat Gulch is the westernmost reserve in the City's inventory. It provides great views of the surrounding valley, and has a system of trail loops that are enjoyed by all users. The reserve will be managed to protect these values, and opportunities to enhance Polecat Gulch's connectivity to other open spaces/reserves will be explored. The historic ranch use and wildlife in the area will be explained to visitors through practical interpretive elements.

- Increase connectivity to nearby public, private land, and nearby reserves.
- Through increased education, signage and enforcement, encourage trail etiquette/responsible trail use, and to protect habitat.
- Increase awareness of the area's ranch history through appropriately placed and sized interpretive signage.
- Protect native plant species and mitigate invasive weeds.
- Maintain viewshed.



STACK ROCK RESERVE

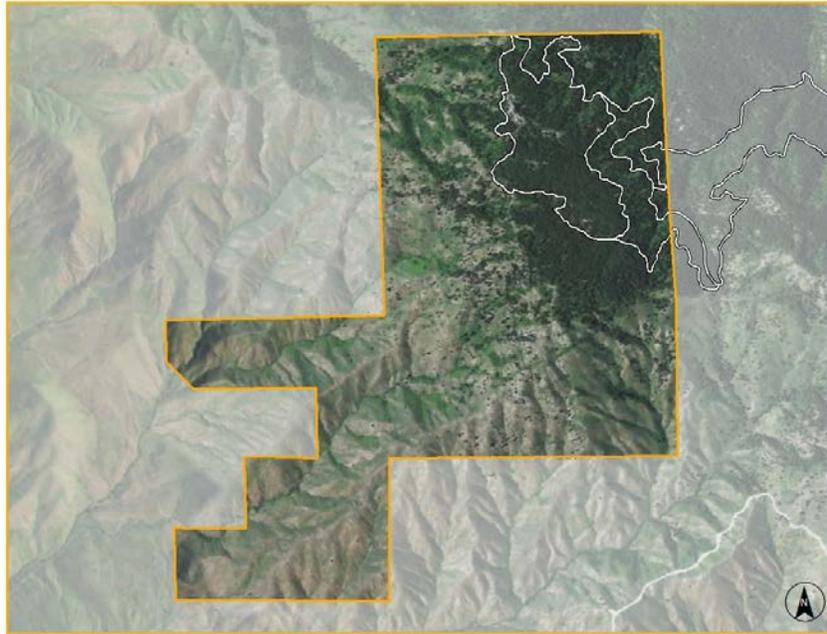
History and Attributes: Stack Rock Reserve is located in a forested area with steep slopes and old logging roads. It primarily lies in Boise County and includes the prominent Stack Rock geologic formation. The reserve is a desirable destination for multiple recreational uses, including hiking, mountain biking and rock climbing. Freddy's Stack Rock Trail was completed in 2010, and meanders through the reserve. It links up with the current Ridge to Rivers trail system in the Shafer Butte area. Direct access from Bogus Basin Road is possible as a result of agreements between the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley and 3 private landowners.

This reserve offers visitors a trail system that is surrounded by forested landscapes that are dominated by Ponderosa pine and Douglas Fir. This reserve differs from all of the other City of Boise owned reserves because of its relative long distance from the city and the fact that it is a forest dominated landscape instead of an upland shrub/grassland dominated landscape.

In 2010, Boise City purchased 1,320 acres near Bogus Basin ski area for \$1.32 million. Fred Alleman, a Boise citizen and avid Ridge to Rivers trail user, donated \$1 million of this amount. In 2013 the Land Trust secured a term easement across the private land.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

LOCATION	Near Bogus Basin ski area about 9 miles from downtown Boise, west of Bogus Basin Road.
ACRES	1,327 acres
YEAR PROTECTED	2010
TRAIL MILES	4.6 miles
ECOTYPES	Forest (dominated by Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir), mountain shrub and upland shrub



MANAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

STRENGTHS

- Views, scenic areas, geologic feature (Stack Rock)
- Connectivity
- Feeling of “remoteness”
- Wildlife, forest ecosystem

MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Forest pests (including bark beetles)
- Access points
- Managing diversity of uses
- Rogue trail development

MANAGEMENT INTENT AND SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

The management of Stack Rock Reserve will prioritize unique multi-use experiences in a higher elevation, forested setting. Maintain the reserve’s natural forested and “remote feeling” while providing safe, sufficient access to users. Build connections with Bogus Basin, other public lands and increasingly popular areas such as Dry Creek and Daniel’s Creek, trails around Avimor, etc.

- Maintain “single track,” limited footprint type trail system.
- Provide sufficient access – for example, provide several smaller parking sites along Bogus Basin Road or connect to existing, larger parking areas. Acquire legal access from west side of the property.
- Wildfire mitigation.

SOURCES:

November Public Workshop

Online Reserve-Specific Questionnaire (Dec, 2014-Jan, 2015)

Input from City staff, including land managers

DATA CONTEXT



SECTION 4: DATA CONTEXT

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Existing Condition	Data Point	Management Implication
<p>Climate: Boise is getting hotter and wetter.</p>	<p>Average temperature in Idaho has increased one percent in the last century. From 2010 to 2060, Treasure Valley could increase an average of two to four degrees, or a half a degree per decade. Precipitation could increase an average of four inches, or between a three percent decrease and 36 percent increase. Snowmelt timing is predicted to shift earlier. [1]</p>	<p>Climate projections have implications for incidents of wildfires, mudslides, and die-offs of native species. Plan for resilience and adaptation as much as possible.</p>
<p>Soils: Soil composition and low organic matter make the Foothills generally susceptible to erosion.</p>	<p>Over 75 percent of the foothills land area have a slope (16%+) that is considered susceptible or highly susceptible to soil erosion. [2]</p>	<p>Trails built in these types of soils require regular, more costly maintenance. Other areas outside the Foothills or at higher elevations might be less constrained or costly to develop. Re-vegetation and coordination with neighboring land owners should be a priority. Seasonal restrictions could reduce impact.</p>
<p>Invasive species: Foothills are disturbed by various uses, floods, fires and trail vectors, which over the years have made invasives proliferate. Prevalence of invasive species such as cheat grass and skeleton weed harm sensitive native plants and increase the potential for wildfires.</p>	<p>Rangelands that used to burn about once every 25 years may now burn every five years—or even less. [3]</p>	<p>Depending on existing plant species and the local environment, recommended means for weed control include physical removal, reintroduction of native plants, and use of herbicides.</p>

<p>Water + Wildlife: Creeks are itinerant and important to keep the ecosystem intact.</p>	<p>Riparian areas are essential for continued preservation of foothills wildlife as it is estimated that 80 percent of the species in the Western U.S. utilize riparian areas during their lives. [4]</p>	<p>Identify and protect riparian areas. Provide bridges and trails to protect riparian areas and stream channels, rehabilitate with native plants, prohibit swimming and educate users.</p>
<p>Water + People: Sensitive riparian vegetation is important for water quality protection and flood control. Flooding risks increase with increased development and recreation as the watershed's ability to absorb precipitation is decreased.</p>	<p>Eighty percent of the drinking water in Boise comes from ground water wells, while the remaining 20 percent comes from the Boise River. April 2012 inflow was the highest since 1952; temperature that year was four degrees above average (new record highs). Storm water flows untreated into the Boise River. [5]</p>	<p>Establish development "maximums," conservation subdivisions or water retention on site to protect watersheds.</p>
<p>Water + People: Water flowing out of the foothills feeds the Boise River, providing drinking water, irrigation and recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>The Boise River provides drinking water for 55,000 people, irrigates 300,000 acres of farmland, and hosts over 100,000 recreational floaters a year. [6]</p>	
<p>Wildlife: The foothills are all that remain for many species as development encroaches into their once vast home range.</p>	<p>Boise Foothills support over 290 wildlife species. Approximately 203 species of birds use the Foothills at various times of the year. [7]</p>	<p>Identify and secure key habitat areas and create corridors to preserve space for wildlife. Trail systems can help to reduce recreation impacts to wildlife habitats when they limit intrusion.</p>

[1] University of Idaho, 2011. Indicators of Climate Change in Idaho; Jin, Xin and Venkataramana Sridhar, 2012. Impacts of Climate Change on Hydrology and Water Resources in the Boise and Spokane River Basins. Journal of the American Water Resources Association (JAWRA) 48(2): 197-220. DOI: 10.1111/j.1752-1688.2011.00605.x via Boise State News

[2] Boise City Community Planning and Development Department, 1994. Foothills Plan Background Report; Harkness, Alan. 2000. Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Personal communication to David Kordiyak, Special Dynamics. January 20; Harkness, Alan. 1997. Soil Survey of Boise Front Project, Idaho. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[3] Bureau of Land Management, 2013; A Field Guide to Plans of the Boise Foothills, 2013

[4] Chaney, E., W. Elmore, and W. S. Platts. 1990. Livestock grazing on western riparian areas. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 45 pp.

[5] Boise WaterShed, City of Boise

[6] Sierra Club Middle Snake group via the Boise WaterShed. Journey through the Watershed.

[7] Scholten, 2000.

POPULATION AND USERS

Existing Condition	Data Point	Management Implication
Population: Boise's population continues to grow.	Boise's population is 217,730. The City has seen a 1-1.5 percent annual growth rate over the past ten years. [1]	Boise's growth rate is likely to remain steady and, subsequently, use of the reserves is likely to grow. Boise's reserve system is an attraction for new residents and visitors. The reserve system will need to accommodate growing use and new users.
Users: The reserves directly serve more than one third of Boise's population.	37 percent of the population visited the reserves at least once per month; 14 percent visited more than once per week. [2]	
Access: Neighborhoods adjacent to the reserves tend to show higher use of the reserves than from other parts of the City. These neighborhoods are more affluent than the general public.	The median household income is \$55k in Ada County and \$48k in Boise City. While Foothills East borders one neighborhood with a median income of \$37k, the majority of the reserves are directly adjacent neighborhoods with a median household income of \$80k-\$100k. The neighborhood adjacent to Mesa Reserve has a median household income of \$111k. [3]	Identify strategies to ensure and/or increase access for populations who do not live close to the reserve system. The neighborhoods just beyond adjacent neighborhoods tend to have more moderate incomes. Reducing transportation barriers could increase access for more residents.
Millennials: The millennial population has different travel tendencies and priorities, and trends toward valuing more walkable, mixed-use, concentrated neighborhoods.	Millennials (born early 1980s to early 2000s) make up a quarter (27%) of the total population of Ada County. [4]	Connecting reserves to a walkable urban core via corridors will respond to this growing demographic and help ensure access and appreciation of this Boise amenity by Millennials.
Senior boom: More seniors are using the Boise foothills.	The percentage of people age 60 and older increased 36 percent between 2007 and 2013. Trail users age 60+ increased from two percent of users in 2000 to 11 percent of users in	Ensuring and increasing ADA accessibility to the reserves will benefit people who want to continue to access the Foothills as they age, as well as seniors who relocate to Boise for retirement.

2014. [5]		
<p>Types of use: There are a large number of people walking and enjoying nature in the Boise Foothills. Other uses include biking, horseback riding and running.</p>	<p>The number of hikers/walkers increased from 35 percent in 2000 to 53 percent of users in 2014. [6]</p>	<p>Address the need to accommodate growing use by at-times conflicting uses. Adjust trail management strategies and/or acquire more land for connectivity between reserves to reduce pressure on existing reserves.</p>
<p>Dogs: Dog walking is a substantial use of the Foothills.</p>	<p>Approximately 30 percent of trails users bring a dog (2000-2014). [7]</p>	<p>Expand access to dog off-leash areas to prevent conflict in existing areas. Identify additional strategies to promote responsible dog ownership.</p>
<p>Education: Many people's only experience of intact ecosystems is through the reserves system. The Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center (FLC) provides education and outreach about the reserves.</p>	<p>FLC, which opened in 2008, provides lessons and programming and consistently reaches over 10,000 students and community members. The FLC is somewhat limited by staff and capacity. [8]</p>	<p>Explore strategies to increase the educational capacity of the FLC through additional resources, including partnerships and funding.</p>

[1] Idaho Department of Labor

[2] 2009 Comp Plan Survey (statistically valid)

[3] American Community Survey 2013 Estimates, block group level

[4] American Community Survey 2013 Estimates

[5] American Community Survey 2013 Estimates; Ridge to Rivers 2013 Annual Trail User Survey

[6] Ridge to Rivers 2014 Annual Trail User Survey

[7] Ridge to Rivers 2014 Annual Trail User Survey

[8] Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Existing Condition	Data Point	Management Implication
Exercise: Residents and visitors of Boise use the Foothills for exercise.	According to survey respondents, exercise is the favorite attribute about the reserves for 12 percent of foothills users, an increase from nine percent in previous years. [1]	Ensure that trail and recreational facilities support cardiovascular and strength building opportunities.
Physical activity: The reserves offer opportunities for a variety of free physical activity.	Fifteen percent of adults 20 years of age or older reported no leisure time physical activity. Seventy-three percent of the population has access to exercise opportunities. Obesity is caused by multiple factors, but can be lowered with diet and exercise. [2]	Increase access and consider expanding the reserve system to incorporate areas closer to the City.
Physical health: The nationwide trend of increasing childhood obesity is also happening in Boise.	Twenty five percent of Ada County adults are obese. 27 percent of 3rd graders in Health District 4 (includes Ada County) are overweight (17%) or obese (10%). [3]	Continue to improve access to the reserve system for young people to create lifelong connections to the Foothills, exercise and opportunities to increase health.
Mental health: Rates of mental health illnesses are high in Idaho.	Idaho has the third highest rate of any mental illness in the country, at 22.5 percent. [4]	Partner with behavioral health providers to showcase the potential mental health benefits the reserves can provide to existing and potential users.
Health savings: The reserves provide health benefits and cost savings to users.	Health care savings in 2011 dollars for physically active users is equal to \$390,312. [5]	Partner with health organizations to fund outreach efforts that get people into the Foothills to exercise.

[1] Ridge to Rivers 2014 Annual Trail User Survey

[2] County Health Rankings, 2010, 2012

[3] Let's Move Boise, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare 3rd grader study; St. Luke's Boise/Meridian 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment

[4] St. Luke's Boise/Meridian 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment

VALUE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Existing Condition	Data Point	Management Implication
<p>Ecosystem services: The reserves provide valuable benefits in terms of pollination, climate control, habitat provision, aesthetic and recreational values.</p>	<p>The low value estimate of the ecosystem services of the Foothills is around \$9 million. Forest land is valued at \$371.51 to \$5,552.67 an acre. [1]</p>	<p>Prioritize forested areas for additional protection or reserve status.</p>
<p>Property value: Property values increase adjacent to the reserves.</p>	<p>The average household living half a mile from open space would be willing to pay \$4,104 more for a home (in 1992 dollars) to live a quarter mile closer to the open space. [2]</p>	<p>Public investment in the reserves can result in increased property values and tax revenue. Benefits are greater the larger the park, as well as when there are direct paths from homes to the park, and when parks are bordered by a road, rather than private lots.</p>
<p>Assets: The reserves are a significant financial asset to City of Boise and citizens.</p>	<p>The current estimated market value of the Foothills is \$33 million. [3]</p>	<p>Advocate for the continued protection and financial investment in the reserve system.</p>
<p>Volunteers: Volunteers contribute substantial value to the reserve system.</p>	<p>“Thousands of volunteers contributed 65,039 hours to Boise Parks & Recreation’s operations in FY 2014, saving the department over \$1,242,850 in labor costs. This level of contribution is equivalent to the department having nearly 31 additional full-time employees on staff.” 426 hours were donated at the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center. [4]</p>	<p>Ensure volunteers’ time is appreciated, used wisely and leveraged to acquire additional resources.</p>
<p>Land Ownership. A majority of the land in the Foothills is in private ownership and still at risk for limiting access to the foothills.</p>	<p>43 percent of the land in the Foothills Management Area is in public ownership and 57 percent is in private ownership [5]. Slopes less than 25 are developable.</p>	<p>Work with developers and land owners to negotiate public access to key places in the Boise Foothills. Purchase of easements, land or development agreements are all tools that can be used to</p>

[6]

provide access.

[1] Niall Garrahan 2012, Open Land Utility: A Study of Conservation, Ecosystem Services and Recreation in Boise, Idaho.

[2] This is one study in a location other than Boise cited as part of a review of the Economic Benefits of Trails and Open Space. More available at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/Economic-Benefits-Trails-Open-Space-Walkable-Community.html>

[3] Foothills Conservation Advisory Committee Annual Report 4

[4] City of Boise Parks and Recreation FY 2014 Volunteer Services Report

[5] City of Boise GIS

[6] Blueprint Boise



BOISE PARKS & RECREATION
Administrative Office
1104 Royal Blvd., Boise ID 83706
bpr@cityofboise.org

**OPENSOURCE
MATTERS**