



To: Dave Kuntz, Don D'Amico, Mike Patton
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department
Re: The Eldorado Mountain/Doudy Draw TSA Public Review Draft Trail Study Area Plan
of August 2, 2006

By and large the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance (BMA) supports the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department's Public Review Draft of the Eldorado Mountain / Doudy Draw Trail Study Area (EMDD TSA) Plan. OSMP has made significant progress in redressing the historic bias against bicyclist recreating on OSMP lands by providing new riding opportunities west of Highway 93. We are particularly pleased with OSMP's initiative in working to make critical connectors west to the Fowler Trail and Rattlesnake Gulch, and new loop trails at map locations 7, 13, and 14. The Boulder Mountainbike Alliance is committed to assisting OSMP in any cooperative agreement as discussed in section D3, and we feel confident that we can successfully address the issues identified to make the Fowler Trail demonstration project a success. However, in the interest of successfully implementing the OSMP Visitor Master Plan, BMA has several suggested amendments to the EMDD TSA Plan.

Foremost, the Public Review Draft lacks a "Vision" for recreation. On page 7, where the Plan Vision is detailed, the EMDD trails are not put into perspective within the whole open space system. The EMDD TSA, in conjunction with the recently completed Marshall Mesa/Southern Grasslands TSA, provides the only available trail system for bicycle recreation that can be accessed from town without the use of an automobile. Such a comprehensive trail system would provide significant benefits for City of Boulder residents, including the provision of an outdoor recreation experience integrated with the city's excellent paved bike path network, a reduction in Boulder mountain biking citizens' necessity to drive automobiles to find healthy outdoor recreation, and a more immediate tie between many of Boulder's citizens and the open spaces we tax ourselves to preserve. Because many OSMP lands do not provide appropriate opportunities for bicycling, this TSA is particularly critical for bicycle recreation.

However, it must also be recognized that the quality of the bicycling experience is dependent upon the quality of the trails. Although this TSA will ultimately allow biking on 13.6 miles of "trails," it should be noted that 7.2 miles of these (the existing Community Ditch and Doudy Draw "trails") amount to roads and do not provide a high-quality recreation experience. We expect the additional 6.4 miles of new bike accessible trail to provide a high-quality recreation

experience, but such a small mileage of new trails will provide only an hour or less of ride time for most bicyclists. We believe that OSMP is missing an excellent opportunity to proactively address the recreational needs of Boulder citizens by also constructing a trail on the Flatirons Vista Mesa (Section C4). We anticipate designation of this trail will be required in the future as Open Space visitation increases and social trails proliferate in the area. Rather than waiting two years and then repeating the present discussion, BMA encourages OSMP to designate this trail now to provide a high-quality recreation experience, to provide access to the positive control points and excellent views along the mesa rim, and to proactively address the recreational needs of Boulder citizens.

Finally, BMA strongly opposes the language in section E4 on page 32. This seemingly biased and emotional stereotyping of bicyclists stands in stark contrast to the balanced and fair treatment of bicyclists in the rest of the Public Review Draft. We are strongly opposed to the suggestion that bicycles do not belong in Habitat Conservation Areas as a rule, viewing this as a form of unwarranted discrimination. Please replace or eliminate this biased language and its suggestion of discrimination.

Again we congratulate OSMP staff on the many positive steps taken to integrate recreational considerations into the TSA process. BMA believes OSMP is on the cusp of becoming a proactive organization in the management of humans on open space. Being proactive, however, must include providing the recreational opportunities that Boulder citizens want and need in addition to protecting our valuable natural resources. BMA believes these goals are mutually reinforcing. Achieving this balance for the EMDD TSA requires only the approval of a one more singletrack trail on the Flatirons Vista Mesa (Section C4).