

**CITY OF DURANGO  
OVEREND MOUNTAIN PARK  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**UPDATED to reflect Name Change March 2, 2010  
REVISED by the PARKS and FORESTRY ADVISORY BOARD on JULY 17, 2003  
ADOPTED by the DURANGO CITY COUNCIL on JANUARY 2, 1996  
As recommended by the  
DURANGO PLANNING COMMISSION on DECEMBER 18, 1995**

**Available From:  
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**MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**(FINAL EDITION)**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

A group of recreation-minded citizens first proposed the creation of the Mountain Park in 1992 as a means of preserving the recreational open space opportunities that existed on the private lands immediately west of Crestview. In 1993 Trails 2000 formalized this dream by negotiating a reduced sale price on 151 acres and then began a public fund-raising program to provide the seed money for the project. In December of 1994 the City of Durango (through the joint cooperative funding effort of the City of Durango, Trails 2000 and La Plata Open Space Conservancy who obtained a matching grant from Great Outdoors Colorado [GOCO]) acquired title to approximately 151 acres of land bordering the west side of the City. In January 1995 an additional adjoining 67 acres was acquired with City funds.

In December of 1995, an additional 51.7 acres (Overend property) was acquired at a reduced price (by another joint cooperative funding effort of Trails 2000, City of Durango and La Plata Open Space Conservancy obtaining another GOCO grant). In 1999, the Peregrine Creek Addition dedicated 28.1 acres to the City and in 2007 an additional 3.8 acres from Ella Vita Canyon was dedicated. The combination of land acquisitions and dedications resulted in the total acreage of the Overend Mountain Park at 301.6 acres.

The intent of these acquisitions was to preserve through public ownership as a natural mountain park the recreational, open space, scenic and wildlife habitat uses of the property. A specific provision of the GOCO grant, reflected as a provision in the conservation easement on the property granted by the City to the La Plata Open Space Conservancy, required the development of a land management plan to assure that the property be operated and managed in accordance with the intent of its acquisition. The area encompassed in the Park is indicated on the attached map.

Subsequent to the initial park acquisitions, an ad hoc “stakeholder’s advisory committee” was formed to develop recommendations to be incorporated in the

management plan. Representatives of various agencies and organizations including City staff, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, US Forest Service, State Forest Service, La Plata County, La Plata Open Space Conservancy, Trails 2000, San Juan Audubon Society, as well as private citizens and residents of the Crestview area formed the nucleus of this advisory committee. A formal survey was developed to solicit opinions from the committee as to the future of the area. This management plan has been developed based upon the input of the advisory committee and the results of the survey.

## **II. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA**

The Overend Mountain Park is a 301.6-acre parcel bordering the West Side of the City of Durango. The site is adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to the west and a parcel of County-owned land (closed county landfill) to the south. Parcels of City-owned open space, dedicated as part of the Park and Highland Park Additions to the City of Durango, are included in the Mountain Park. There is private property to the east, north and south.

Although the property has been in private ownership, it has historically been used by Durango residents and visitors for walking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, sledding, bird watching, and enjoying the outdoors. A variety of hiking and biking trails have evolved over time which have been used year-round by local neighbors, area residents, school field trips, and school athletic team training. The recreational utilization of this area has been crucial in the development of Durango as a home and training area for many of its world-class athletes.

The area and surrounding land is hilly and vegetated largely with pine, fir piñon, juniper and oak. The area provides forage and covers for wildlife and is designated as severe deer and elk winter range by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), supporting deer, elk and other big game, as well as small mammals and birds. The adjacent BLM land contains nesting areas for Peregrine falcons, managed cooperatively by CPW.

## **III. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND GOALS**

It is the intent of the City of Durango to manage the Overend Mountain Park in order to:

- preserve and protect the area in an undeveloped and natural state as a recreational open-space area while providing continued non-motorized recreational opportunities and enjoyment of the outdoors.
- provide opportunities for local outdoor education;

- maintain or restore the vegetation composition and structure to a healthy biological condition more resembling the historical natural conditions;
- maintain its viability as wildlife habitat; and
- minimize impacts to or a conflict with the adjacent lands both publicly and privately-owned.

#### **IV. SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

1. The City shall annex those areas of the Mountain Park, which are currently outside the City limits. Zoning of the property shall reflect its public ownership and/or designation as open space/park area.
2. Management authority for the Overend Mountain Park shall be the City of Durango, by and through the Parks and Recreation and Police Departments. The City shall consult “Stakeholders Advisory Committee” consisting of representatives from agencies or organizations, and members of the general public having a specific and demonstrable interest in the management of the Property when considering significant improvements to the Park. The purpose of the Committee shall be to assist the City and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in its operation and management of the Property by advancing recommendations in that regard which it may from time to time deem appropriate. Any proposed changes to the Management Plan shall be circulated to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for its review and recommendation prior to adoption by the City Council.
3. The park shall be maintained in its natural state with public recreational use limited to non-motorized trail-oriented activities (walking, hiking, jogging, mountain biking, horseback riding, enjoyment of the outdoors, environmental education, etc.).
4. Once annexed to the City of Durango, all uses/activities within the park will be subject to the City Code, and the City will be responsible for enforcement of all regulations. The following uses/activities shall be specifically prohibited within the Overend Mountain Park:
  - overnight camping
  - fires of any kind
  - hunting or discharge of firearms/weapons
  - dogs not on a leash
  - injury to or molestation of birds, game or wildlife
  - motorized vehicles (except for employees or agents of the City, engaged in the conduct of official business)
  - destruction of natural vegetation (except for purposes of wildfire hazard mitigation or forest and/or trail management, pursuant to

recommendations of the State Forest Service and City Arborist, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board).

5. Substantial development of facilities within the Mountain Park is not intended. Within budget constraints, anticipated development within the park area shall be limited to:
  - Trail improvement/development (see 6 below), including drainage improvements
  - Minimal signage, which will bear a GOCO logo, and which will include:
    - identification of park rules/regulations at established public access points
    - trail markings and, as appropriate, length and degree of difficulty
    - interpretive signs to educate users on flora/fauna, etc.
    - identification of perimeter boundaries
    - identification of uses or restrictions (closures) affecting adjacent BLM/CPW lands
  - Wildlife observation area(s) (designed and located with the assistance of CPW and BLM)
6. The general public shall have access to the property in accordance with this Management Plan as adopted, and from time to time amended, by the City of Durango. The existing, non-paved trail network will continue to be available for non-motorized recreational activity. Within budget constraints, existing trails may be improved and new trail segments may be established as use and/or demand warrant. The City will coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in the evaluation, design and location of specific trail segments. Connection of the Mountain Park trail system and the Colorado Trail is considered a high priority.

Some existing trail segments that are subject to unacceptable levels of erosion may be rerouted along alignments that provide gradients that allow for better management of erosion problems. Any closed portions of trails shall be signed as such and revegetated to the greatest degree possible. The entire trail system shall be subject to regular trail maintenance that incorporates water bars and other features that minimize environmental and erosion impacts.

7. The City, at its discretion, may elect from time to time to temporarily close selected areas of the property when it deems it necessary to prevent personal injury and/or damage to the property or for the protection and/or rejuvenation of specific resources, including wildlife and vegetation.

8. The City will seek to secure multiple points of public access to the Mountain Park. However, developed trailheads (with parking and restroom facilities) will not be established in a way that would negatively impact existing residential neighborhoods. Potential locations for developed trailhead facilities that have been identified include the former Van Dal landfill area (now in County ownership) and City property on Avenida del Sol. Establishment of developed trailhead facilities shall occur only following review in a public forum such as before the City Planning Commission.

#### **IV. AMENDMENT/UPDATE**

This Management Plan may be amended as necessary due to significant changes in park use patterns and/or changes in land use policies on adjacent public lands, provided the Plan continues to protect the intent of the original Park acquisition. Notwithstanding periodic amendments, the overall management plan shall be updated as necessary. The City will consult with Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in this amendment/update process.

It is anticipated that additional lands will be added to the Overend Mountain Park. As these properties are acquired and formally designated as part of the Park, they shall be automatically subject to this Management Plan.

# Overend Mountain Park

