



Trail Crew at Catamount Ranch on October 1, 2005

**MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE AND AMENDMENT
TO THE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE
CATAMOUNT RANCH OPEN SPACE
AND RESOURCE PROTECTION AREA
TELLER COUNTY, COLORADO
2006-2008**

**Management Plan Update and Amendment
to the Management Plan for the
Catamount Ranch Open Space
and Resource Protection Area
Teller County, Colorado
2006-2008**

Prepared for:

The Teller County Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 959
Cripple Creek, Colorado 80813
(719) 689-2988
www.co.teller.co.us

Prepared by:

Kevin P. Tanski, Parks Coordinator
Teller County Division of Parks
P.O. Box 959
Cripple Creek, Colorado 80813
(719) 686-7955
tanskik@co.teller.co.us

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Executive Summary

This Management Plan Update and Amendment for the Catamount Ranch Open Space and Resource Protection Area affirms the Vision and general direction for the management of Catamount Ranch established in 1998 with the adoption of the original Management Plan for the property. The current Management Plan Update and Amendment was developed through a process facilitated primarily by Division of Parks staff.

The original Management Plan for the Catamount Ranch Open Space, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1998, established a vision and general direction for management of the County-owned Catamount Ranch property for a period of five years. The original plan was prepared as a joint effort of the Teller County Division of Parks, the Catamount Ranch Open Space Planning Team and a consulting team, headed by Land Stewardship Consulting of Boulder, Colorado. The Planning Team served in an advisory role to the County and developed a vision, a list of operating principles, and a set of goals for Catamount Ranch.

Following adoption of the original Management Plan, Division of Parks staff coordinated implementation steps in several areas. These included dump site cleanup, removal of former camping facilities, removal of old fencing and restoration and reclamation of degraded trail sections. Additionally, Colorado State Forest Service was contracted to assist with the preparation of a Forest Stewardship Management Plan, and a preliminary Cultural Survey was completed. To assist with these implementation steps, internship programs and relationships were established with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak Community College and, in conjunction with the neighboring Catamount Institute, Colorado College.

Division of Parks staff also investigated numerous alternatives for public recreation access into the Catamount Ranch property, including six alternatives outlined in the original plan. This included the scoping of one alternative, termed the "Limber Pine Trailhead," in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service, and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act affecting federally-owned properties. A subsequent ruling from the Forest Service District Ranger required that additional study occur before the proposed trailhead could be considered for approval. The access issue was finally resolved with the closing on a transaction with the Catamount Institute on August 12, 2005. The resulting trade of 35-acre parcels has enabled the County to pursue construction of a trailhead and link trail to enable public recreation access.

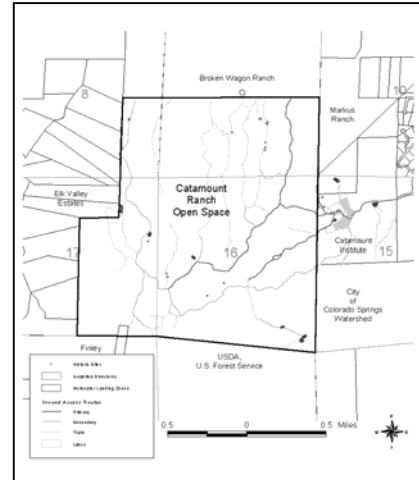
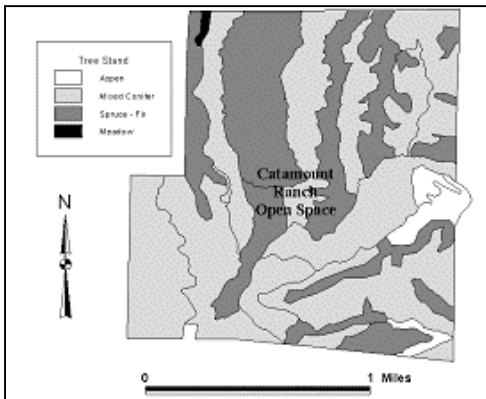
With the trade of parcels in 2005, the configuration of the Catamount Ranch Open Space and Resource Protection Area has changed, although the net area of the county-owned property remains approximately 1,320 acres (See 2006 and 2007 Workplan maps).

Except as indicated and amended herein, the Vision Statement, Operating Principles, Goals, Objectives, Management Policies, and Action Steps (workplan) as set forth within the "Management Plan for the Catamount Ranch Open Space, Teller County, Colorado, 1998-2002" and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 23, 1998 (Rec. #479265) shall remain in effect.

Management Activities since 1998

Implementation of the Management Plan for the Catamount Ranch Open Space began immediately in 1998. An Internship program was established in 1999 to aid in these efforts. Plan implementation steps achieved in the period 1998-2005 include:

- Complete inventory of all trails and light duty roads, including dimensional and maintenance data.



- Forest Stewardship Management Plan was developed under contract with the Colorado State Forest Service, including extensive mapping and inventory of 26 distinct forest stands. Data includes species composition, age structure and stand densities. The research included on and inventory/mapping high priority access alternatives.

- Clean-up and revegetation of two major dump sites. Over 60 cubic yards of refuse was removed from the sites, in addition to nearly a ton of recyclable material.
- On-site collection of native grass seed by Summit Elementary School students.
- Removal of a significant portion of derelict (“old”) barbed wire cross fencing.



Management Activities since 1998 (cont.)

- Removal of fire grates and outhouses from former camp area.
- Restoration and Reclamation of a steep and severely eroded section of trail.



- Interns develop a preliminary Cultural and Historic survey, titled “Histories and Mysteries.”

- Establishment of a support organization, the Advocates for Catamount Ranch. (the organization is currently inactive)
- In conjunction with the Catamount Institute and intern support, development of public program opportunities
- NEPA Scoping of possible trailhead on Federal Land adjacent to County Rd #28



- Other Access Options investigated
- Trade for access negotiated with Catamount Institute
- Staff and volunteers construct over a mile of new trail for public access

Management Activities since 1998 (cont.)

In addition to on-site implementation of tasks outlined in the 1998 Management Plan, staff investigated the feasibility of access options suggested by the original Planning Team. The summarized notes of that investigation are as follows:

Access Alternative	Notes on Feasibility
1) From North Catamount Reservoir on City of Colorado Springs watershed property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide feasible, secondary alternative. • Requires Teller County residents to travel to Cascade and pay a fee before accessing “their” open space. • Limited additional resource modification, if access is restricted to “Horseshoe Meadow” area in SE corner of Open Space. • May become integral, regional component upon implementation of “Pikes Peak Multi Use Plan”
2) From Edlowe Road through City of Colorado Springs watershed property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers “reasonable” access (distance and topography) to the Open Space • Potential conflict with City of Colorado Springs management policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seasonal closure - Management costs and liability - Fisherman access • Limited additional resource modification: will require construction of limited-space trailhead and “link” trail between existing City and County system trails.
3) Across private lands from the County loop trail southeast of Divide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with the principal property owner (“Clark Ranch”) in 1998. • Significant potential for land-use conflicts • Extreme topography precludes any option along margins of property
4) Through US Forest Service lands along Orchette Gulch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant potential for land-use and ownership conflicts. • Topography and land ownership patterns reduce the potential of this alternative. • Would require “System Trail” classification by USDA Forest Service for their endorsement.
5) Through US Forest Service lands from the switch back on the Four Mile Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential viable alternative • Distance to the Open Space and topography would severely limit the range of recreation modes • Potential impacts on Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp operations. • Would require “System Trail” classification by USDA Forest Service for their endorsement.
6) Through US Forest Service lands from the junction of State Highway 67 and the Four Mile Creek Road (acceptable option)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential viable alternative, although feasibility limited until cessation and reclamation of gravel mining operation. • Distance to the Open Space and topography would severely limit the range of recreation modes • Potential impacts on Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp operations. • Would require “System Trail” classification by USDA Forest Service for their endorsement.

Amended Policies

- **Horses** (and other species of livestock/pack animal defined in this policy) will be allowed to use the Teller County Access Parcel to the Catamount Ranch Resource Protection area only at such times of the year as policies on any and all of the adjoining North Slope Recreation Area, managed by the City of Colorado Springs, allow for such use. However, allowance of such use of horses and other pack animals as defined herein on the North Slope Recreation Area by policy of the City of Colorado Springs neither restricts or obligates Teller County to allow such use on either the Access Parcel or on the Catamount Ranch Resource Protection area. Such use will be at the sole discretion of the County. Further, following additional review of potential impacts of such use and compliance with the terms of the Conservation Easement by County staff, the County may allow such use, at its discretion, on the Teller County Access Parcel and at other trailhead locations and on the remainder of the County's property.

In the event an allowance for horses is made, then use of horses will be allowed only on certain designated multi-purpose trails. The use of the designated trails by horses will be confined to summer and early fall because these are periods when trails are expected to be relatively dry and able to withstand the impact of horse use. The designated trails will be designed and built to withstand horse use without suffering severe soil erosion.

Additional restrictions will be imposed to protect resource values. These include prohibitions against bringing in hay to feed horses, limiting the numbers of horses in a group, and prohibiting commercial horse use of the property. Pack horses may use designated trails to access US Forest Service land when such access is authorized by the Forest Service. Mules, burros and llamas will be treated as horses for the purpose of this policy.

- **Hunting** may be allowed on a limited basis to achieve management objectives consistent with terms Conservation Easement and the Purpose and Goals of this Management Plan. Hunting is a valid tool for managing game populations on the Resource Protection Area. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) must certify that hunting on Catamount Ranch is necessary to regulate game populations. Licenses would be granted through a mentorship program established in conjunction with the CDOW. The County could charge a fee to hunt on the Resource Protection Area property, with the fees being used to manage Catamount Ranch Open Space and Resource Protection Area. Other visitors such as hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers would be notified, with appropriate signs, of times during which hunting would be allowed to reduce conflicts between hunters and non-hunters. Details of hunting would be worked out in cooperation with CDOW and Teller County. There is currently no hunting allowed on City of Colorado Springs watershed lands.

- **Firearms** will be prohibited except by licensed hunters during hunts sanctioned and managed in conjunction with the CDOW achieve management objectives consistent with terms Conservation Easement and the Purpose and Goals of this Management Plan, and consistent with the Hunting policy (above). Team members believe that target shooting and the discharge of firearms would create a conflict with other uses of the property.
- **Motorized vehicle recreation**, including without limitation snowmobiles, motorcycles, or ATVs, is prohibited on the Property. The County shall be permitted to use motor vehicles for management and emergency operations on the Property, and in conjunction with uses allowed by this Easement, including without limitation the uses allowed hereby on the Access Parcel pursuant to Section 1.b. of the Third Amendment to Deed of Conservation Easement.

New (Added) Policies

- **Tree thinning and fire mitigation** efforts may be conducted on the Property, so long as such efforts have been approved or prescribed in advance by the Colorado State Forest Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the City of Colorado Springs (in conjunction with efforts on the North Slope Watershed), or other comparable governmental agency. Trees may be cut on the Access Parcel to accommodate the uses allowed thereon.
- **Livestock grazing** or ranching is prohibited on the Property except as may be reasonably necessary or appropriate for resource management.

- **Ecological Research**

Preamble

Programs of natural and social science research, such as biological inventories or visitor use studies, will be encouraged to support Division of Parks staff in carrying out the mission of the organization's program by providing an accurate scientific basis for planning, protection, and management decisions. Management decisions will be based on the best information available at the time. Long-term ecological research by qualified researchers will be encouraged through a focused, active outreach program. In addition, dissemination of research results to the broader public will be encouraged.

The emphasis will be on the research necessary to direct future management actions, to accomplish Resource Protection Area objectives as stated in the County Policies, the Catamount Ranch Resource Protection Area Management Plan and other planning documents, and to provide data to foster ecologically-based forest stewardship practices in the central Rocky Mountain region. The initial research focus will be on the collection of baseline inventory data. Research may be necessary to interpret resources or processes whose function and significance are not known or understood.

1. *Relationship to Planning and Management.* Research needs may be recommended in the Catamount Ranch management plan. The goal of research activities will be to:
 - Sustain the baseline conservation values subject to the terms of the Conservation Easement.

 - Provide a sound basis for policy and guidelines;

 - Determine causes of resource management problems;

 - Measure and predict impacts of resource uses and related activities;

 - Develop effective strategies to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on resources and visitors;

 - Develop methods to resolve management conflicts;

 - Develop methods to restore damaged resources; and

 - Further the understanding of ecosystems and document their components, condition and significance.

2. *Conduct of Research.* The Division of Parks will cooperate with qualified researchers in conducting and/or encouraging research. All research shall conform with Division research guidelines and applicable regulations, and will require a research permit.

In recognition of the scientific value of Resource Protection Area lands as a natural laboratory, investigators will be encouraged to undertake scientific studies when such use is consistent with management policies. Research activities that might disturb resources or human use, that require the waiver of any regulation, or that involve the collection of specimens or disturbance of resources or natural processes, may be allowed only pursuant to the terms and conditions of a research permit. Any manipulative or destructive research activities shall not be allowed to occur without prior approval by the County. Such approval may be granted if the impacts will be short-lived, Resource Protection Area land is the only area where such research can be conducted, the value of the research is greater than the resource impacts, or the research is essential to provide information for resource management.

Research that requires periodic or sustained closure of a designated research area to recreation, general public access and other uses inconsistent with the intended research may be allowed, as long as such use is consistent with the terms of the conservation easement, management plan or other applicable policies. The aggregate acreage of areas subject to such closure shall not exceed more than 30% of the total acreage of the Resource Protection Area at any one time. Further, any proposal that will recommend closure of a system trail or will otherwise unreasonably impede recreation access by the public will be considered by the County only if substantial evidence is provided to justify such closure, and it is determined by the evidence provided that the relative value of the data resulting from the proposed research is greater than the potential loss of enjoyment to the public resulting from such closure.

3. *Publication of Research Data.* The results of all scientific activities conducted on Resource Protection Area land will be made available to Division of Parks staff, the scientific community, and the public, where appropriate, through technical publications and the popular media. Researchers will be encouraged to publish their research findings in refereed journals and the local media, as well as to include such findings in public interpretive programs.
4. *Inventory and Monitoring.* Inventory data describing Resource Protection Area resources may be compiled. This information can be used to detect ecological changes that may require intervention or changes in management practices and to provide comparative reference points.
5. *Collections of Specimens and Artifacts.* Unauthorized collection of specimens or artifacts including cultural, historical, plant, animal, or mineral specimens or related materials, is prohibited on Resource Protection Area lands. Specimens or related materials collected in authorized research studies will be deposited in designated public curatorial institutions, which may include the County collection at the discretion of the Division of Parks Coordinator. Records of collected specimens and their location will be maintained by the Division.

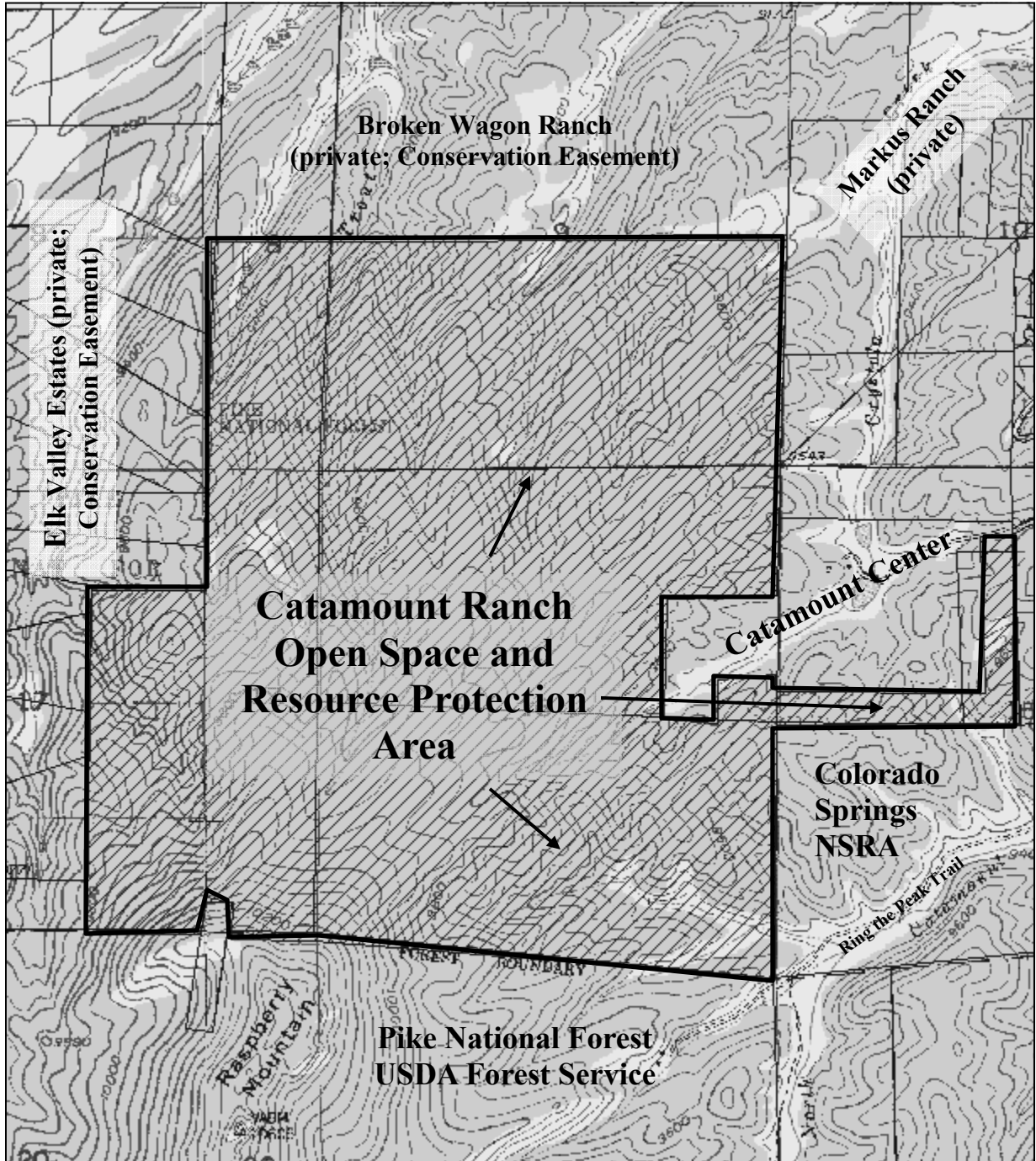
2006-2008 Workplan

Table #. Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2006.				
Action Step	Materials (\$)	Labor (weeks)	Cash (\$)	Comments
Develop & Implement Information and Education Plan		2.0		TC & TCI
Develop Wildfire & Emergency Mgt. Plan		NA		TC, Co. State Forest Service, NETFPD
Build new trailhead facilities, including perimeter security		12.0		TC, Youth Corps, TCDOT, contractor(s)
Construct new trail segments: Primary Link; Aspen-Seabee Connect; Seabee-Horseshoe Connect; Horseshoe Meadow Reroute , Portals to NSRA (See Map)		6.0		TC, Vols. For Outdoor Colo., Boy Scouts, Youth Corps
Fabricate and install trail signs		4.0		TC, Consultant
Design and produce trail maps (incl. Web based options)		3.0		TC, Consultant
Evaluate additional trail system options		ongoing		TC
Eradicate Canada thistle		0.5		Summer intern
Develop weed plan / search		2.0		Summer intern
Evaluate/Update Forest Stewardship Plan		ongoing		TC, TCI
Define Research Goals		ongoing		TC
Sign perimeter of Open Space		1.0		Parks Staff
Trail restoration		40		Summer intern; Youth Corps
Remove old fences		2.0		Summer intern; Youth Corps
Notes:				

Table #. Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2007.				
Action Step	Materials (\$)	Labor (weeks)	Cash (\$)	Comments
Implement Active Forest Stewardship				TC
Delineate elk closure areas		2.0		CDOW & TC
Monitor elk calving		4.0		Summer intern & CDOW
Open Additional Trail Loop (Deadhorse-Ghost connect)		10.0		TC
Trail restoration		20		Summer intern; Youth Corps
Local Historic Designation of Goddard's Homestead and Lander's City		3		TC & TCHPAB
Determine fate of small ponds (Goddard's, etc.)	0	0	0	TC & PT
Notes:				

Table #. Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2008.				
Action Step	Materials (\$)	Labor (weeks)	Cash (\$)	Comments
Search for noxious weeds	0	0.4	160	Summer intern
Implement seasonal elk closures	500 (signs)	1.0	400	Summer intern
Monitor elk calving	0	1.0	400	Summer intern & CDOW
Continue Active Forest Stewardship				TC
Monitor recreation activity including impacts to conservation values		0	0	TC, TCI and interns
Notes:				

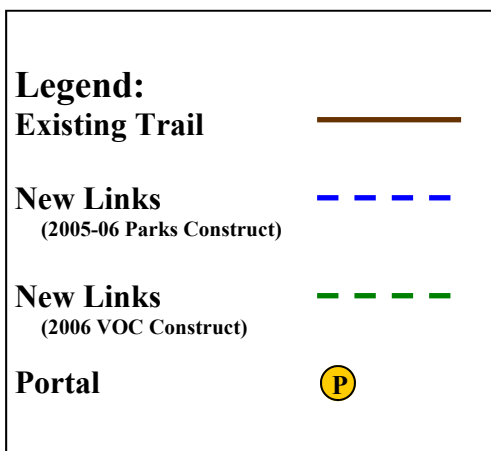
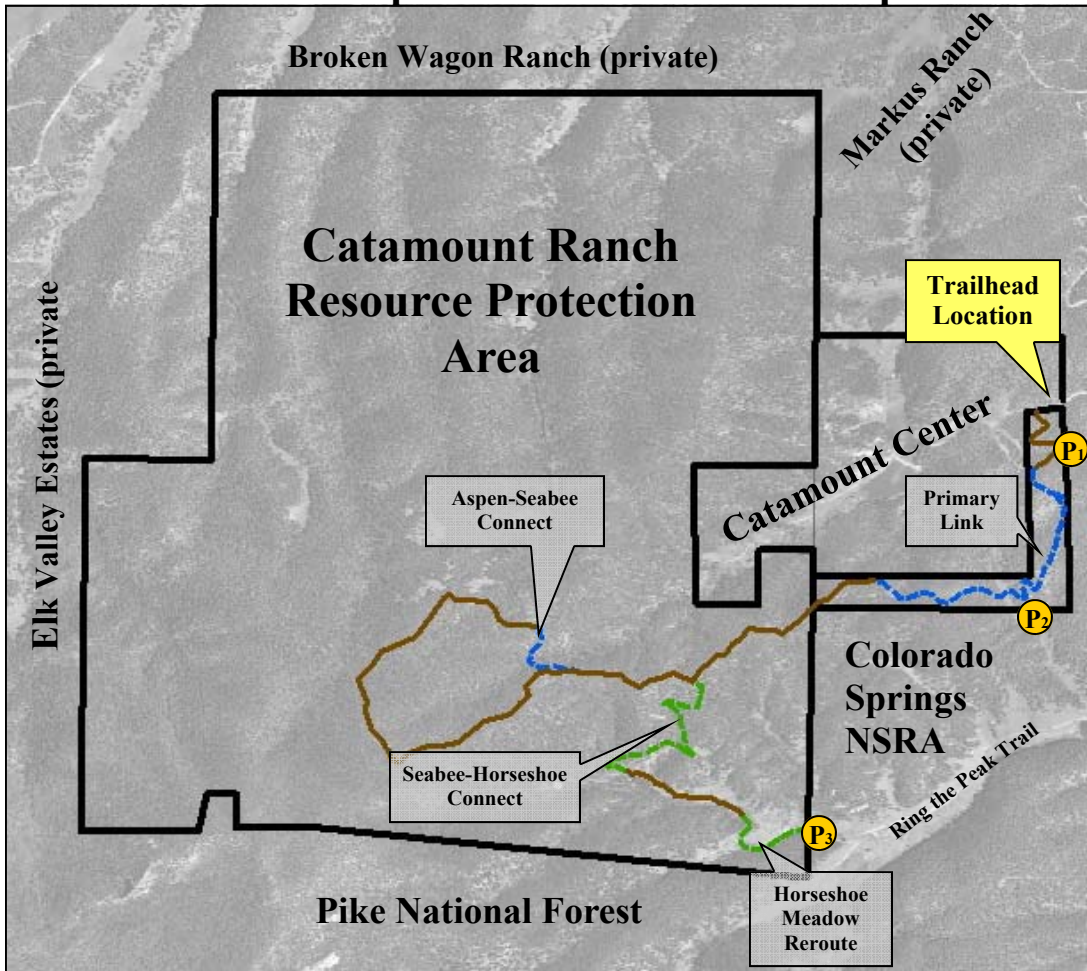
**Figure 1. Catamount Ranch Open Space
And Resource Protection Area**
(Showing 2005 Reconfigured Property)
And Nearby Properties



Prepared by Teller County
Division of Parks 12/15/05

Scale = 1:22,000

**Figure 2. Catamount Ranch Open Space
And Resource Protection Area
Teller County, Colorado
2006 Workplan and Public Access Map**



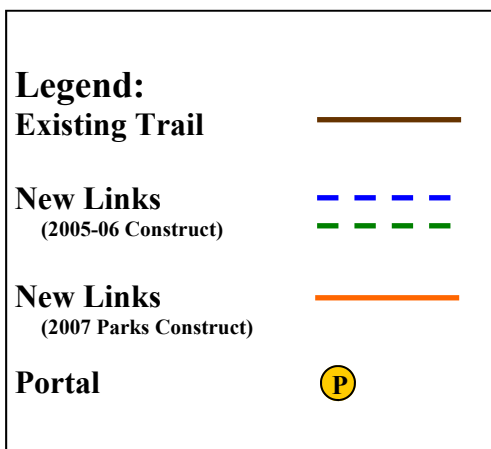
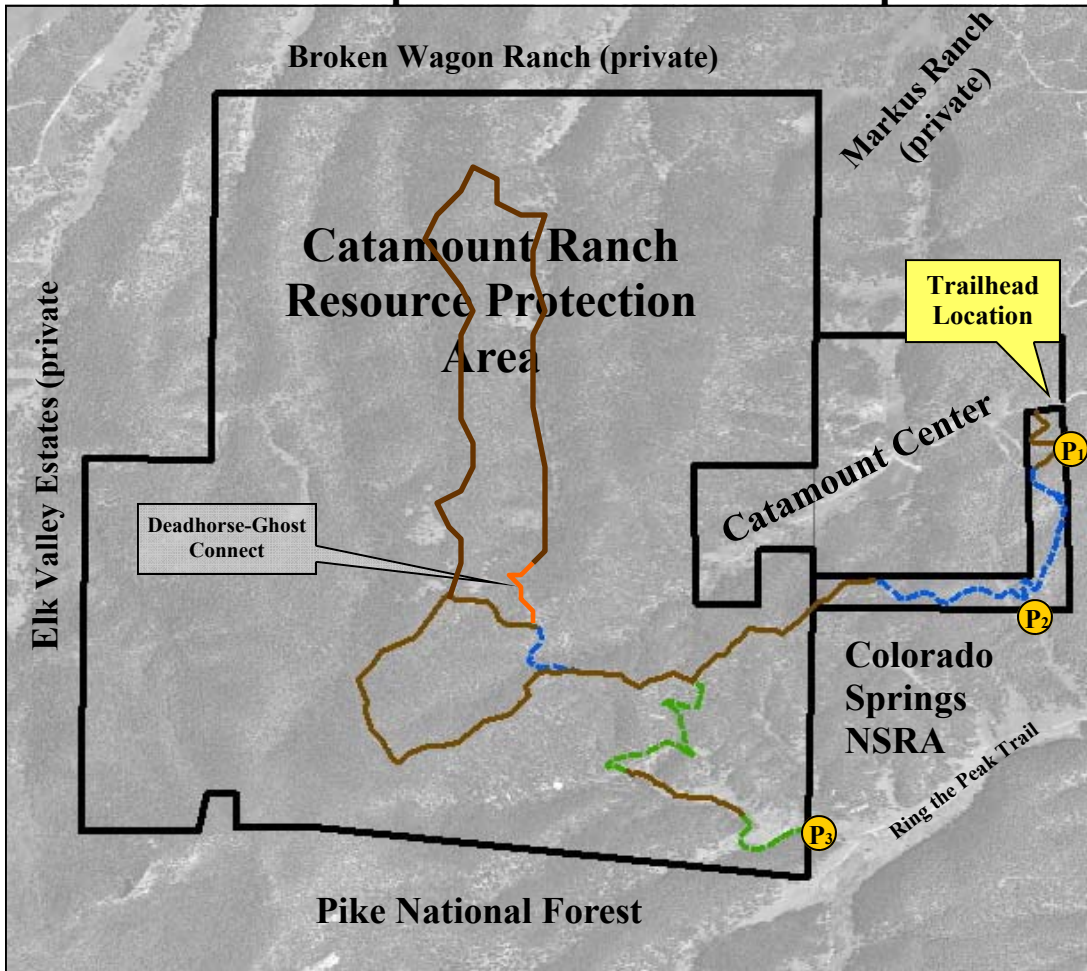
Prepared by Teller County
Division of Parks 12/15/05

Scale = 1:22,000

2006 Workplan

1. Complete construction of Primary Link trail
2. Complete design and initiate construction of trailhead
3. Construct Aspen-Seabee Connect (Boy Scout project)
4. Construct Seabee-Horseshoe & Horseshoe Meadow reroutes (Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado)
5. Construct Portals to NSRA
6. Install signs, fencing, gates as required
7. Open initial section to public recreation access
8. Continue management plan implementation steps

**Figure 3. Catamount Ranch Open Space
And Resource Protection Area
Teller County, Colorado
2007 Workplan and Public Access Map**



Prepared by Teller County
Division of Parks 12/15/05

Scale = 1:22,000

2007 Workplan

1. Complete Construction of Deadhorse-Ghost connect
2. Install signs, fencing, gates as required
3. Open Deadhorse-Ghost Loop section to public recreation access
4. Continue management plan implementation steps