

SPONSORED BY: MAYOR DOWNING

COUNCILMAN'S RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO.

No. CR-63  
Series of 2010

10-60  
Series of 2010

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2010 REVISED OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The 2010 Revised Open Space Management Plan, a copy of which is attached hereto and marked as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted by the City Council of the City of Northglenn, Colorado.


DATED at Northglenn, Colorado, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2010.

  
JOYCE DOWNING  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
JOHANNA SMALL, CMC  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
COREY Y. HOFFMANN  
City Attorney

# NORTHGLENN OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN



A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

NORTHGLENN,  
COLORADO



2010

# Northglenn Open Space Management Plan

## A Framework for the Future of Open Space in Northglenn



Winburn Park Ponds

**The vision for Northglenn's Open Spaces is to enhance the quality of life of Northglenn residents and future generations by conserving and managing open space to provide a continuing community resource for ecosystem education and wildlife -- places where wildlife thrives and people enjoy and experience it.**

### Quiet Places and Open Spaces

Have you seen the first rays of the sunrise reflecting on the ponds at Winburn Park?

Or sat on a bench to observe a red-winged blackbird swoop and clutch a reed in the marsh while clouds drift lazily across the sky at Croke Reservoir?

Isn't it amazing to hear the sound of leaves rustling in the trees while waves of prairie grasses roll in the wind at the Oscar Arnold Nature Area?

Have you watched a hawk circle an open space, watching for the movement of its prey?

Isn't it refreshing to see an oasis of natural landscape in the midst of urban development?

Do you appreciate walking down a trail toward the sun setting over the Rocky Mountains?

In the City of Northglenn, there are several parcels and corridors of land that undoubtedly improve the quality of our lives by providing quiet places and open spaces. These spaces include the Oscar Arnold Nature Area, the ponds at Winburn Park, Croke Reservoir, Fox Run Open Space, the Farmers' Highline Canal trail corridor, and Grange Hall Creek/Grant Ditch. Northglenn has intentionally established guidelines for the long-term care and preservation of these valuable resources.

These places have aesthetic, recreational, cultural, educational and natural resource values that need to be conserved for today, tomorrow and for future generations of Northglenn residents.

Northglenn is a land-locked community and, therefore, unable to purchase additional open space land.

Responsible stewardship must be practiced in the spaces that we have in order to properly care for them.

Within these pages, discover the location and features of Northglenn's open spaces and learn more about the issues, benefits, opportunities and challenges facing those charged with its stewardship: *All of us.*

This plan outlines a management plan for each open space or nature area, including a brief history of past maintenance, a proposed plan for current and ongoing maintenance, and a list of proposed future amenities.

### The Value of Open Space

The beauty of Northglenn's natural gifts is everywhere—the shady trees, an array of vibrant plants, refreshing bodies of water. Open spaces do many things for the natural environment and the human spirit:

- **Maintain people's connection to the land**
- **Minimize the loss of critical wildlife habitat and restore habitat that is in decline**
- **Provide passive recreation opportunities for Northglenn and area residents**
- **Provide opportunities for Northglenn Residents to learn about the environment**
- **Enhance quality of life through the preservation of a dwindling local resource**



## Open Space in Northglenn is defined as:

*Outdoor areas of vegetation and other natural features that can support a diversity of wildlife and expand people's opportunities to move about, relax and experience their relationship with the earth.*

As defined by Council Ordinance CBI562, the purpose is stated as: "The current open zone district provisions do not include the preservation of property in its natural state as a use by right in an open zone district. This provision allows for such a use by right on both public and private property in open zone districts. The ordinance further defines the term "Nature Area"." The term "nature area" shall mean an area established primarily as a conservation district to preserve the environment and natural character of the landscape within the district. Land within the district shall be protected from development, but may also be used for unimproved trails, buffering between land uses, defining the edges of urbanization and the preservation of valuable natural features and ecosystems. Utilities and existing improvements located in a nature area may be maintained as necessary, but reasonable efforts should be used to minimize environmental impacts.

## What is an Open Space Management Plan?

An open space management plan allows open space in Northglenn to be viewed as a whole rather than as several individual unrelated parcels. This view supports continuity in planning and management of open space as a collective resource. Each parcel was evaluated and examined to establish its unique position as open space and to determine what is appropriate in each area, what the neighbors want, and what the issues and opportunities are associated with each of the open spaces. Conservation is defined as:

*The act of preserving, guarding or protecting; preservation from loss, decay, injury or violation.*

The benefits of developing an open space management plan are numerous. A broad-based public involvement approach has been taken to allow for a participatory decision-making environment where residents and other interested parties are able to offer their input into the shape of their natural surroundings. The participatory approach also allows for dialogue between the City of Northglenn staff, City Council, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, residents, and other agencies and organizations. It is hoped that continuing dialogue will lead to a constituency that is informed about challenges with open space and a planning team that is aware of the concerns of citizens.

## Why Manage Open Space?

Some people think that open space manages itself. Experience teaches us otherwise. For example, based on resource inventories conducted on Northwest Open Space, it is apparent that the general trend of vegetation has been one of decline. As noxious weed species proliferate in each Northglenn Open Space parcel, favorable vegetation is threatened, as are the animals that the favorable plant species support. The human impact on the parcels must also be managed. Because they are rare and valued lands, they get significant use. If we do not intervene and manage open space, the values that we associate with it will soon disappear. In addition, Adams County, the City of Northglenn and the State of Colorado have noxious weed management ordinances which direct the City to manage invasive species. Healthy open space ecosystems in urban settings cannot exist without management.



Farmer's Highline Canal Trail



Grant Ditch



Grange Hall Creek

Urban wildlife depends heavily on water resources. Eighty percent or more of animal species rely on riparian areas to fulfill all or part of their habitat needs. As such, special attention and management consideration must be given to the many riparian areas and water sources in Northglenn's open spaces: Croke Reservoir, Farmers' Highline Canal, Grange Hall Creek/Grant Ditch, Winburn Park Ponds and the wetlands in the Oscar Arnold Nature Area.

## The Parcels

### Farmers' Highline Canal Corridor

The Farmers' Highline Canal enters Northglenn at the western city limits at Northwest Open Space Recreation Area near Pecos and 112th Avenue and flows north and east to E.B. Rains Jr. Memorial Park at 120th Avenue, then on into Thornton. A greenway trail runs parallel to the canal, providing over three miles of trail, including a pedestrian underpass at I-25. Water typically flows in the canal from mid-April through October. Homes line much of the corridor on both sides. People and wildlife co-exist, enjoying the long stretch of tree-lined trail. A respite from traffic and commotion, the canal and trail system provides an accessible corridor for wildlife, as well as habitat and a seasonal water source. In many segments, mature cottonwoods stretch their limbs to shade the trail. People use the trail to walk, run, bicycle roller blade, stroll baby carriages, relax and rehabilitate.

### Winburn Park Ponds

Located along the east side of Huron Street, south of 112th Avenue, the park features an inviting oasis for passive enjoyment. Willows and cottonwood trees, cattails and marsh surround two ponds. Picnic tables, benches and a gazebo provide resting places to soak up the environment. Youth are invited to fish in the ponds, catching bass, blue gill and carp. A trail loop takes visitors on a quiet stroll around the nature area.

## Grange Hall Creek

Grange Hall Creek flows across the southeast side of the city, and wanders through the Fox Run residential development. The Greenway Trail runs adjacent to the creek for much of its path. In the Fox Run development, the creek has two tributaries that run through grassland from west to east.

## Fox Run Nature Area

The trail loops around a wetland area and runs past award winning erosion control structures, then meanders past the old Thede homestead, a historical site. This trail segment has very few trees. The only vegetation that is mowed is directly adjacent to the trail. The Grange Hall Creek open space is approximately 50 acres and is the most recent addition to the open space parcels.

## Grant Ditch

A railroad track separates the Fox Run area of Grange Hall Creek from the western area known as Grant Ditch. A pedestrian underpass has been completed to link trails from the Fox Run side to the Grant Ditch trail west of Irma Drive. The Greenway Trail runs from Irma Drive west to I-25 and connects with the Farmers' Highline Canal trail, providing a continuous trail from the western city limits adjacent to Westminster. An underpass will lead to the eastern city limits shared with Thornton. Storm-water drainage appears to be one source of water in Grant Ditch and it runs nearly year-round. Homes border much of this wide corridor on both the north and the south. Historically, most of the vegetation along this corridor is mowed several times each year; this practice is harmful to wildlife habitat. There appears to be great potential to enhance the waterway and habitat.

## Croke Reservoir

Croke Reservoir, located at Huron and Naiad, is home to a variety of wildlife:

fish, snapping turtles, water fowl, heron and red-winged black birds, muskrats, raccoons, and an occasional fox.

Willows and cottonwoods surround the area on three sides, providing a peaceful place of rest. Cattails provide a wetland habitat. Fishing is permitted from April 1 through October 15. Fishing is prohibited on the north side of the reservoir for environmental reasons. Fish species include bass, perch, carp and blue gill. There is a handicapped accessible fishing pier. Dogs, boats, skateboards and bicycles are prohibited in order to restrict the disruption of the wildlife. The reservoir is manmade. In 2009, rehabilitation of the Croke Reservoir Nature Area took place, including repairs to the shoreline erosion. Homes border the north side of the property.

## Oscar Arnold Nature Area

The Oscar Arnold Nature Area is located at 112th and West 111th Way. This parcel was named in honor of the homesteader who settled there and eventually deeded the land to the city. The Farmers' Highline Canal runs along the south border of the property, providing a trail from which to observe the area. An informal trail has been worn through the center of the property. This area has a unique blend of wildlife habitat including a wooded area with mature cottonwoods, cattail marshes, and other wetland plants. The site hosts a variety of wildlife including foxes, coyotes, raccoons, hawks, and owls. The wooded area is often vandalized by illegal dumping, parties and paint-ball games. Vegetation was disturbed as soil was excavated from the south side of the property in the late 90's to build berms for the adjacent soccer fields. Homes border the east and west sides of the property. After resource inventories were completed in spring 2001, management activities which as weed control and wetland delineation began.

## Goals & Actions

Individual management plans were developed for each property. Each plan details needed improvements, including specific management recommendations and a schedule for implementation. The goals of management and stewardship in Northglenn's open spaces are to:

- Promote ecosystem sustainability
- Enhance and protect natural, cultural, educational and scenic resources
- Provide safe and enjoyable passive outdoor recreation activities.

Each of these goals will be achieved through specific management actions that may include:

- Control of noxious invasive weeds through an integrated Pest Management plan
- Monitoring of vegetation, wildlife and water
- Planting of favorable plant species
- Maintaining trails
- Maintaining amenities such as fences, signs and benches, and introducing them as appropriate for enhanced management
- Working to provide educational opportunities through on-site informational materials and guided nature hikes where appropriate.
- Targeted enhancement based on public input

## Prairie Lessons

“The prairie, although plain, inspires us. It teaches us that grandeur can be wide as well as tall. The prairie is a community. It is not just a landscape or the name of an area on a map, but a dynamic alliance of living plants, animals, birds, insects, reptiles and micro-organisms, all depending on each other. When too few of them remain, their community loses its vitality and they perish together. The prairie teaches us that our strength is in our neighbors. The way to destroy a prairie is to cut it up into tiny pieces, spaced so that they have no communication.

The prairie is tolerant. There are thousands of species of living things on the prairie, but few of them are natives. The prairie teaches us to see the virtue of ideas not our own and the possibilities that newcomers bring.

The prairie is bountifully utilitarian, but it is lovely, too in a hundred thousand ways and in a million details, many of them so finely wrought that one must drop to one’s knees to appreciate them.”

From “What the Prairie Teaches Us,” by Paul Gruchow in Grass Roots: The Universe of Home

## Opportunities & Benefits

Open space presents many benefits. The benefits are certainly environmental in nature, but are also social, physical, emotional, educational and economic. A well managed open space can contribute to a sense of peace, provide opportunities for wildlife viewing as well as passive recreation, protection and rehabilitation of ecosystems, filtration of storm water run-off, increased property values, and a strengthened sense of community - to name but a few. Other opportunities articulated by the 2004 task force and agreed to by the 2009 Open Space Master Plan review committee include:

- Peaceful places/restoration of the spirit
- “Quiet Places and Open Spaces”
- Sense of stewardship for the land
- Natural places for future generations
- Observation and enjoyment of wildlife
- Relief from development
- Purification of air & water
- Educational resource
- Corridors for wildlife
- Ecosystem education
- Protecting the balance
- Connections between communities
- Encouraging favorable vegetation
- Developing a sense of “place”
- Conservation of a rare urban resource
- Public understanding & involvement
- Working with other municipalities
- Volunteer involvement & ownership
- Increased property values
- Educating the public about the benefits of management

## Challenges

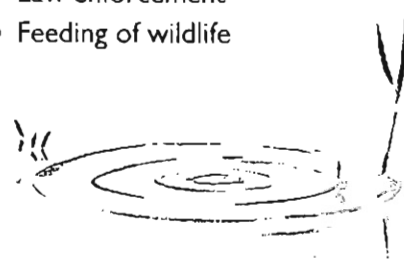
Along with benefits come challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the presence of highly aggressive invasive non-native plant species in the open spaces. Those species negatively impact vegetation and, consequently,

the wildlife that the plant habitat supports. If steps are not taken to manage the threat, the natural environments that Northglenn residents have come to value could be irrevocably compromised. Noxious weeds identified in Northglenn to date include: Canada Thistle, Scotch and Musk Thistle, Field Bindweed, Yellow Toadflax, Purple Loosestrife and Poison Hemlock.

Another challenge lies in the officially recognized use of the properties. City ordinance classified these parcels as “Open Zones,” along with parking lots, cemeteries, golf courses, and many other uses that are not consistent with the vision articulated in this document.

Other challenges have been identified through public meetings and by the Open Space Task Force in 2004, and agreed to by the 2009 Open Space Master Plan review committee, include:

- Noxious weed management
- Staffing/funding for maintenance
- Public education & input about open space management techniques, etc.
- Domestic pet waste & wildlife disturbance
- Informal trails—good or bad?
- Community consensus on vision
- Prairie dogs
- Off-trail uses
- Dumping
- Drainage
- Mosquitoes
- Fire
- Water to establish favorable vegetation
- Wetland delineation & management regulations for open water
- Working with other municipalities
- Law enforcement
- Feeding of wildlife



## Alternatives

In the management of open space, three options emerge

1. Do Nothing
2. Integrated Pest Management
3. Integrated Pest Management and targeted resource enhancement

Doing nothing is not a viable alternative. Inaction will allow undesirable species to choke out favorable plant species and consequently wildlife species. The State of Colorado and Adams County require a program for noxious weed management, for which the City has developed the Noxious Weed Management Plan, which was most recently revised and adopted in July 2008 (CR-105)

The minimum course of action is likely to be a program of Integrated Pest Management which focuses heavily on weed management. However, due to the stronghold of noxious weeds in some areas, more invasive practices such as mechanical and chemical treatments may be required as a means

to establish control. Based on public input, there is also an opportunity to enhance both wildlife habitat and the recreational and educational opportunities for people in Northglenn's open spaces. A continuing program of public involvement will help determine which course of action community members would like to take in each open space site.

## How Can You Get Involved?

- Respond to this document
- Attend public meetings, which are advertised through the City's website, park message boards, postings at the Recreation Center and City Hall, and other sources of public information
- Volunteer to help in the maintenance or enhancement of the parcels
- Help educate your family, friends, and neighbors about the values of open spaces and how each of us can help maintain them



Northwest Open Space



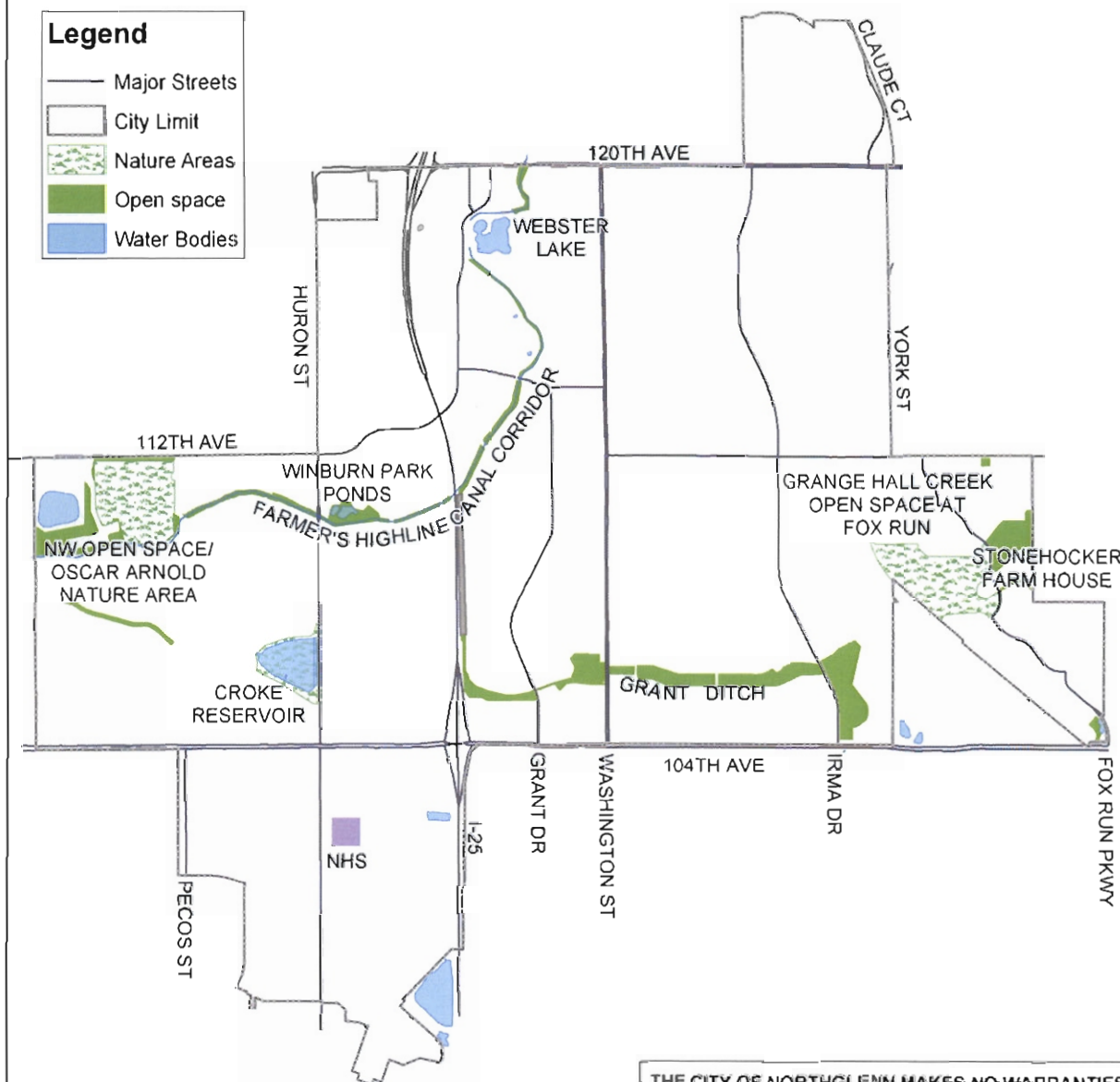
# Designated Open Space & Nature Area Parcels in the City of Northglenn



Designated Open Space Parcels  
in the City of Northglenn  
111.5 ACRES

## Legend

- Major Streets
- City Limit
- ▨ Nature Areas
- Open space
- Water Bodies



0 0.5 1 Miles

THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED CONCERNING THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, RELIABILITY OR SUITABILITY OF THIS DATA. THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN DOES NOT ASSUME ANY LIABILITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OR MISUSE OF THIS INFORMATION, AND THE USER FURTHER AGREES TO HOLD THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN HARMLESS FOR ANY LOSS, DAMAGE, OR INJURY ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF THE GIS MAP AND ANY OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS.

Prepared: January 26, 2009  
File: OpenSpace2.mxd

# Management Highlights

## Farmers' Highline Canal

### Goal

To control noxious weeds and promote desirable vegetation along the corridor for the enjoyment of the trail corridor users.

### Past Maintenance

Areas around the canal and pathway have been mowed regularly. Trees and shrubs have been trimmed to keep the trail clear of hazards.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

2011: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

2012: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to evaluate trees along the corridor to identify and remove hazards
- Trim trees and shrubs to maintain clearance along trail
- Continue mowing and trimming regularly

### Proposed Amenities

- Continue replacement of wooden benches with plastic-coated metal benches and add new benches in appropriate areas
- Install nesting boxes in larger trees for birds
- Assess areas that may be viable for planting of trees, based on the highest likelihood of sustainability
- Replace the asphalt section of the trail east of I-25

*If only we would remember to turn our gaze to the awe of a child, we would, we should recall that such a place exists within our grasp—in a garden, in a woods, by a stream...in nature, we would find what we're longing for: a beauty and stillness that lets the extraneous fall away and allows the essence of who we really are to emerge.*

**-Prevention Magazine**



# Management Highlights

## The Ponds at Winburn Park

### Goal

To manage the native part of the park as an open space and improve the water quality of the wetlands.

### Past Maintenance

Wooden boardwalk was installed through the area by Boy Scouts. Ponds have been dredged periodically. Trees have been cleared and dead wood has been trimmed around the pond and along the pathway.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Treat noxious weed infestation. Remove dead wood in trees over pathways. Continue to treat ponds with biological and/or chemical controls for algae and mosquitoes.

2011: Continue to treat any noxious weed infestations. Continue to treat ponds with biological and/or chemical controls for algae and mosquitoes.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to mow along pathways
- Periodically test water quality in the ponds
- Ensure a viable and healthy fish stock

### Proposed Amenities

- Stock fish in large pond
- Install bird houses or bat boxes in larger trees
- Install more benches/shelters around native area
- Formalize the dirt trail around the large pond

# Management Highlights

## Grange Hall Creek and Fox Run Nature Area

### Goal

To establish a native open space setting for the residents of Fox Run and the users of the Greenway Trail System.

### Past Maintenance

Mowing was discontinued on this site in 2003, except along pathways, streets, parks and fences. Chemical and mechanical treatments used to manage the noxious weeds. Salt Cedar, Russian Olive and Purple Loosestrife were controlled in this area.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Spot treat any remaining infestations of noxious weeds chemically and mechanically. Assess control efforts and recovery of desirable vegetation. Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low.

2011: Spot treat any remaining infestations chemically and mechanically. Assess control efforts and recovery of desirable vegetation. Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing along pathways, streets and residential fence lines
- Specifications will be 6-8' along pathways and streets, 15' along residential fences and Central Park
- This practice will make these areas more susceptible to re-infestation and weed control measures will be more frequent

### Proposed Amenities

- Signage for the trail system
- Nesting boxes for birds
- Access to Stonehocker from Grange Hall Creek



# Management Highlights

## Grant Ditch

### Goal

To incorporate open space management techniques in those areas of Grant Ditch where it is appropriate and enhances the experience of the Greenway Trail users.

### Past Maintenance

This area has been mowed regularly in past years, this practice currently continues.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Continue to mow the area regularly. Assess the condition of desirable vegetation. Inventory and start controlling noxious weed infestations. Investigate areas (hillside, ditch banks) that would benefit from reduced or discontinued mowing.

2011: Continue to mow the area regularly, except for the areas between the trail and the ditch channel and steep hillsides. Control any noxious weed infestations. Assess control efforts and need for reseeding.

2012: Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low. Continue to mow the area regularly, except for the area between the trail and the ditch channel and steep hillsides. Control any noxious weed infestations. Assess control efforts and seeding.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing will continue from the trail to the residential fences
- The concrete trail will be edged to keep vegetation off the trail as needed
- Tree plantings will be maintained along the ditch

### Proposed Amenities

- Replace old benches and install new benches, tables and/or shelters in other locations throughout the trail corridor
- Install bird nesting boxes in larger trees
- Assess possibility of additional tree plantings and/or shrub and flower beds

# Management Highlights

## Croke Reservoir

### Goal

To maintain the natural condition of the site. Continue to manage the site as an urban fishery and waterfowl/wildlife habitat.

### Past Maintenance

The pathway around the reservoir has been mowed, Hazard trees have been identified, and removal has begun. In 2008, a significant rehabilitation of Croke Reservoir was completed. The reservoir was drained, the shoreline stabilized, additional trees planted, additional annual and perennial beds installed and new benches, tables, signage, shelters and pathways were added.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Mow sodded areas, monitor the trees on the site, and inventory and treat any noxious weed infestations. Remove highest priority hazard trees.

2011: Treat any noxious weed infestations. Assess control measures and desirable vegetation recovery. Assure preservation of the natural habitat. Remove moderate priority hazard trees.

2012: Treat any noxious weed infestations. Assess control measures and desirable vegetation recovery. Assure preservation of the natural habitat. Remove hazard trees that were identified as lowest priority in 2009.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to assess trees for liability hazards and trim as needed
- Mow all sodded areas
- Ensure a viable and healthy fish stock by monitoring the aquatic habitat and make improvements when necessary to the lake
- Maintain aeration system
- Continue to identify and evaluate hazard trees, and prioritize their removal based upon safety standards
- Wildlife habitat preservation

### Proposed Amenities

- Install nesting boxes for birds
- Install additional benches/shelters
- Coordinate occasional fish stockings with the Colorado Division of Wildlife



# Management Highlights

## Oscar Arnold Nature Area

### Goal

Reduce weed infestations to a level that does not impact the natural environment of the site.

### Past Maintenance

Treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Russian Olive. Mowing of weeds along the north entry drive.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Mow all areas infested with weeds outside of wetland and riparian areas ahead of chemical treatment. Biologically control infestations inside of wetland and riparian areas with weed control insects. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

2011: Discontinue mowing pretreatment for weed control to allow desirable vegetation to recover and compete. Chemically treat remaining large infestations, release weed control insects for weed control in wetland and riparian areas. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

2012: Monitor control efforts. Reseed areas not successful from previous seeding. Continue to spot treat weed infestations chemically and mechanically in dry land areas, mechanically and biologically in wetland and riparian areas. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing along pathways, streets and residential fence lines
- Specifications will be 6-8' along pathways and streets, 15' along residential fences
- This practice will make these areas more susceptible to reinfestations and weed control measures will be more frequent

### Proposed Amenities

- ADA compliant Nature trail or formal path through the area
- Nesting boxes for birds
- Interpretive signage

# Management Highlights

## Northwest Open Space (north of Farmer's Highline Canal, exclusive of Athletic Fields)

### Goal

Reduce noxious weed infestations, maintain the open area to safe and aesthetically pleasing standards..

### Past Maintenance

Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Weeds in open area mowed regularly.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Weeds in open area mowed regularly.

2011: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Reduce mowing to post and cable area only.

2012: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Continue mowing to post and cable area only.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing
- Noxious Weed management through the use of chemical and biological controls, including insects for Canada Thistle and spraying of Thistle and Yellow Toadflax.

### Proposed Amenities

- No new amenities are proposed for this area







# Acknowledgements

This plan represents the combined efforts of a variety of individuals whose time was generously contributed in many ways including: attending public meetings to provide information about the community's priorities for open space properties, contributing technical assistance and participating on the Open Space Management Plan Revision committee. Each of these groups and individuals provided crucial input into the direction of this plan.

**City of Northglenn**

**Northglenn Residents**

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

**National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation**

**Assistance Program**

**Colorado Division of Wildlife**

**Natural Resource Conservation Service**

**Adams County Weed District**

**Photography - City Staff**



For more information, please contact::

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303.280.7807

# NORTHGLENN OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN



A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

NORTHGLENN,  
COLORADO



2010

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Do you appreciate walking down a trail toward the sun setting over the Rocky Mountains?

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- **Enhance quality of life through the preservation of a dwindling local resource**



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As defined by Council Ordinance CBI562, the purpose is stated as: "The current open zone district provisions do not include the preservation of property in its natural state as a use by right in an open zone district. This provision allows for such a use by right on both public and private property in open zone districts. The ordinance further defines the term "Nature Area"." The term "nature area" shall mean an area established primarily as a conservation district to preserve the environment and natural character of the landscape within the district. Land within the district shall be protected from development, but may also be used for unimproved trails, buffering between land uses, defining the edges of urbanization and the preservation of valuable natural features and ecosystems. Utilities and existing improvements located in a nature area may be maintained as necessary, but reasonable efforts should be used to minimize environmental impacts.

## What is an Open Space Management Plan?

An open space management plan allows open space in Northglenn to be viewed as a whole rather than as several individual unrelated parcels. This view supports continuity in planning and management of open space as a collective resource. Each parcel was evaluated and examined to establish its unique position as open space and to determine what is appropriate in each area, what the neighbors want, and what the issues and opportunities are associated with each of the open spaces. Conservation is defined as:

*The act of preserving, guarding or protecting; preservation from loss, decay, injury or violation.*

The benefits of developing an open space management plan are numerous. A broad-based public involvement approach has been taken to allow for a participatory decision-making environment where residents and other interested parties are able to offer their input into the shape of their natural surroundings. The participatory approach also allows for dialogue between the City of Northglenn staff, City Council, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, residents, and other agencies and organizations. It is hoped that continuing dialogue will lead to a constituency that is informed about challenges with open space and a planning team that is aware of the concerns of citizens.

## Why Manage Open Space?

Some people think that open space manages itself. Experience teaches us otherwise. For example, based on resource inventories conducted on Northwest Open Space, it is apparent that the general trend of vegetation has been one of decline. As noxious weed species proliferate in each Northglenn Open Space parcel, favorable vegetation is threatened, as are the animals that the favorable plant species support. The human impact on the parcels must also be managed. Because they are rare and valued lands, they get significant use. If we do not intervene and manage open space, the values that we associate with it will soon disappear. In addition, Adams County, the City of Northglenn and the State of Colorado have noxious weed management ordinances which direct the City to manage invasive species. Healthy open space ecosystems in urban settings cannot exist without management.



Farmer's Highline Canal Trail



Grant Ditch



Grange Hall Creek

Urban wildlife depends heavily on water resources. Eighty percent or more of animal species rely on riparian areas to fulfill all or part of their habitat needs. As such, special attention and management consideration must be given to the many riparian areas and water sources in Northglenn's open spaces: Croke Reservoir, Farmers' Highline Canal, Grange Hall Creek/Grant Ditch, Winburn Park Ponds and the wetlands in the Oscar Arnold Nature Area.

## The Parcels

### Farmers' Highline Canal Corridor

The Farmers' Highline Canal enters Northglenn at the western city limits at Northwest Open Space Recreation Area near Pecos and 112th Avenue and flows north and east to E.B. Rains Jr. Memorial Park at 120th Avenue, then on into Thornton. A greenway trail runs parallel to the canal, providing over three miles of trail, including a pedestrian underpass at I-25. Water typically flows in the canal from mid-April through October. Homes line much of the corridor on both sides. People and wildlife co-exist, enjoying the long stretch of tree-lined trail. A respite from traffic and commotion, the canal and trail system provides an accessible corridor for wildlife, as well as habitat and a seasonal water source. In many segments, mature cottonwoods stretch their limbs to shade the trail. People use the trail to walk, run, bicycle roller blade, stroll baby carriages, relax and rehabilitate.

### Winburn Park Ponds

Located along the east side of Huron Street, south of 112th Avenue, the park features an inviting oasis for passive enjoyment. Willows and cottonwood trees, cattails and marsh surround two ponds. Picnic tables, benches and a gazebo provide resting places to soak up the environment. Youth are invited to fish in the ponds, catching bass, blue gill and carp. A trail loop takes visitors on a quiet stroll around the nature area.

## Grange Hall Creek

Grange Hall Creek flows across the southeast side of the city, and wanders through the Fox Run residential development. The Greenway Trail runs adjacent to the creek for much of its path. In the Fox Run development, the creek has two tributaries that run through grassland from west to east.

## Fox Run Nature Area

The trail loops around a wetland area and runs past award winning erosion control structures, then meanders past the old Thede homestead, a historical site. This trail segment has very few trees. The only vegetation that is mowed is directly adjacent to the trail. The Grange Hall Creek open space is approximately 50 acres and is the most recent addition to the open space parcels.

## Grant Ditch

A railroad track separates the Fox Run area of Grange Hall Creek from the western area known as Grant Ditch. A pedestrian underpass has been completed to link trails from the Fox Run side to the Grant Ditch trail west of Irma Drive. The Greenway Trail runs from Irma Drive west to I-25 and connects with the Farmers' Highline Canal trail, providing a continuous trail from the western city limits adjacent to Westminster. An underpass will lead to the eastern city limits shared with Thornton. Storm-water drainage appears to be one source of water in Grant Ditch and it runs nearly year-round. Homes border much of this wide corridor on both the north and the south. Historically, most of the vegetation along this corridor is mowed several times each year; this practice is harmful to wildlife habitat. There appears to be great potential to enhance the waterway and habitat.

## Croke Reservoir

Croke Reservoir, located at Huron and Naiad, is home to a variety of wildlife:

fish, snapping turtles, water fowl, heron and red-winged black birds, muskrats, raccoons, and an occasional fox.

Willows and cottonwoods surround the area on three sides, providing a peaceful place of rest. Cattails provide a wetland habitat. Fishing is permitted from April 1 through October 15. Fishing is prohibited on the north side of the reservoir for environmental reasons. Fish species include bass, perch, carp and blue gill. There is a handicapped accessible fishing pier. Dogs, boats, skateboards and bicycles are prohibited in order to restrict the disruption of the wildlife. The reservoir is manmade. In 2009, rehabilitation of the Croke Reservoir Nature Area took place, including repairs to the shoreline erosion. Homes border the north side of the property.

## Oscar Arnold Nature Area

The Oscar Arnold Nature Area is located at 112th and West 111th Way. This parcel was named in honor of the homesteader who settled there and eventually deeded the land to the city. The Farmers' Highline Canal runs along the south border of the property, providing a trail from which to observe the area. An informal trail has been worn through the center of the property. This area has a unique blend of wildlife habitat including a wooded area with mature cottonwoods, cattail marshes, and other wetland plants. The site hosts a variety of wildlife including foxes, coyotes, raccoons, hawks, and owls. The wooded area is often vandalized by illegal dumping, parties and paint-ball games. Vegetation was disturbed as soil was excavated from the south side of the property in the late 90's to build berms for the adjacent soccer fields. Homes border the east and west sides of the property. After resource inventories were completed in spring 2001, management activities which as weed control and wetland delineation began.

## Goals & Actions

Individual management plans were developed for each property. Each plan details needed improvements, including specific management recommendations and a schedule for implementation. The goals of management and stewardship in Northglenn's open spaces are to:

- Promote ecosystem sustainability
- Enhance and protect natural, cultural, educational and scenic resources
- Provide safe and enjoyable passive outdoor recreation activities.

Each of these goals will be achieved through specific management actions that may include:

- Control of noxious invasive weeds through an integrated Pest Management plan
- Monitoring of vegetation, wildlife and water
- Planting of favorable plant species
- Maintaining trails
- Maintaining amenities such as fences, signs and benches, and introducing them as appropriate for enhanced management
- Working to provide educational opportunities through on-site informational materials and guided nature hikes where appropriate.
- Targeted enhancement based on public input

## Prairie Lessons

“The prairie, although plain, inspires us. It teaches us that grandeur can be wide as well as tall. The prairie is a community. It is not just a landscape or the name of an area on a map, but a dynamic alliance of living plants, animals, birds, insects, reptiles and micro-organisms, all depending on each other. When too few of them remain, their community loses its vitality and they perish together. The prairie teaches us that our strength is in our neighbors. The way to destroy a prairie is to cut it up into tiny pieces, spaced so that they have no communication.

The prairie is tolerant. There are thousands of species of living things on the prairie, but few of them are natives. The prairie teaches us to see the virtue of ideas not our own and the possibilities that newcomers bring.

The prairie is bountifully utilitarian, but it is lovely, too in a hundred thousand ways and in a million details, many of them so finely wrought that one must drop to one’s knees to appreciate them.”

From “What the Prairie Teaches Us,” by Paul Gruchow in Grass Roots: The Universe of Home

## Opportunities & Benefits

Open space presents many benefits. The benefits are certainly environmental in nature, but are also social, physical, emotional, educational and economic. A well managed open space can contribute to a sense of peace, provide opportunities for wildlife viewing as well as passive recreation, protection and rehabilitation of ecosystems, filtration of storm water run-off, increased property values, and a strengthened sense of community - to name but a few. Other opportunities articulated by the 2004 task force and agreed to by the 2009 Open Space Master Plan review committee include:

- Peaceful places/restoration of the spirit
- “Quiet Places and Open Spaces”
- Sense of stewardship for the land
- Natural places for future generations
- Observation and enjoyment of wildlife
- Relief from development
- Purification of air & water
- Educational resource
- Corridors for wildlife
- Ecosystem education
- Protecting the balance
- Connections between communities
- Encouraging favorable vegetation
- Developing a sense of “place”
- Conservation of a rare urban resource
- Public understanding & involvement
- Working with other municipalities
- Volunteer involvement & ownership
- Increased property values
- Educating the public about the benefits of management

## Challenges

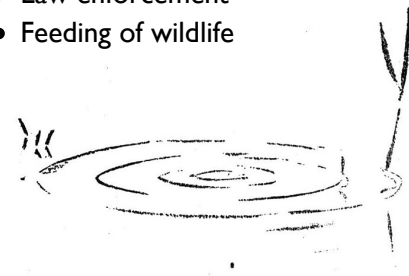
Along with benefits come challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the presence of highly aggressive invasive non-native plant species in the open spaces. Those species negatively impact vegetation and, consequently,

the wildlife that the plant habitat supports. If steps are not taken to manage the threat, the natural environments that Northglenn residents have come to value could be irrevocably compromised. Noxious weeds identified in Northglenn to date include: Canada Thistle, Scotch and Musk Thistle, Field Bindweed, Yellow Toadflax, Purple Loosestrife and Poison Hemlock.

Another challenge lies in the officially recognized use of the properties. City ordinance classified these parcels as “Open Zones,” along with parking lots, cemeteries, golf courses, and many other uses that are not consistent with the vision articulated in this document.

Other challenges have been identified through public meetings and by the Open Space Task Force in 2004, and agreed to by the 2009 Open Space Master Plan review committee, include:

- Noxious weed management
- Staffing/funding for maintenance
- Public education & input about open space management techniques, etc.
- Domestic pet waste & wildlife disturbance
- Informal trails—good or bad?
- Community consensus on vision
- Prairie dogs
- Off-trail uses
- Dumping
- Drainage
- Mosquitoes
- Fire
- Water to establish favorable vegetation
- Wetland delineation & management regulations for open water
- Working with other municipalities
- Law enforcement
- Feeding of wildlife



## Alternatives

In the management of open space, three options emerge

1. Do Nothing
2. Integrated Pest Management
3. Integrated Pest Management and targeted resource enhancement

Doing nothing is not a viable alternative. Inaction will allow undesirable species to choke out favorable plant species and consequently wildlife species. The State of Colorado and Adams County require a program for noxious weed management, for which the City has developed the Noxious Weed Management Plan, which was most recently revised and adopted in July 2008 (CR-105)

The minimum course of action is likely to be a program of Integrated Pest Management which focuses heavily on weed management. However, due to the stronghold of noxious weeds in some areas, more invasive practices such as mechanical and chemical treatments may be required as a means

to establish control. Based on public input, there is also an opportunity to enhance both wildlife habitat and the recreational and educational opportunities for people in Northglenn's open spaces. A continuing program of public involvement will help determine which course of action community members would like to take in each open space site.

## How Can You Get Involved?

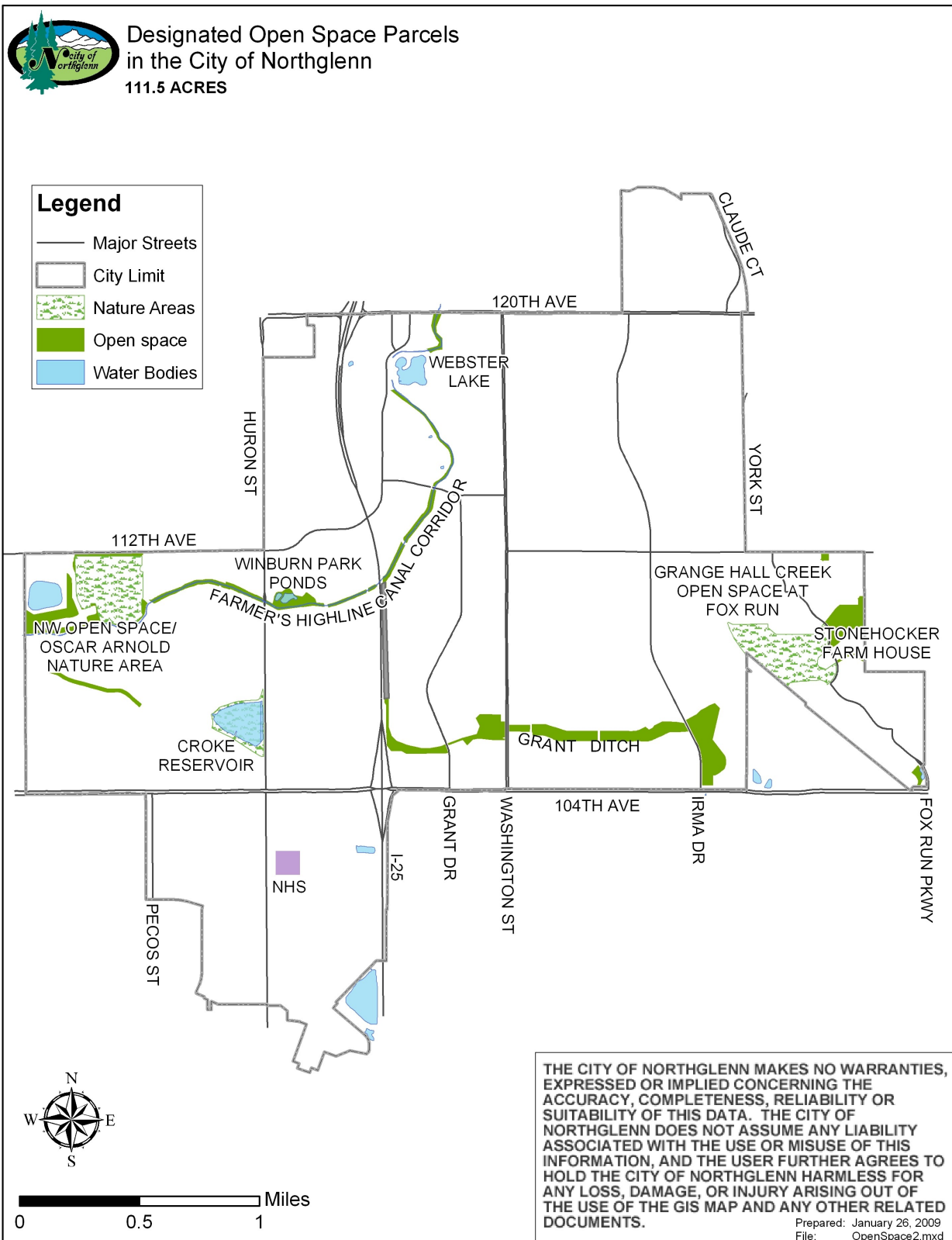
- Respond to this document
- Attend public meetings, which are advertised through the City's website, park message boards, postings at the Recreation Center and City Hall, and other sources of public information
- Volunteer to help in the maintenance or enhancement of the parcels
- Help educate your family, friends, and neighbors about the values of open spaces and how each of us can help maintain them



Northwest Open Space



# Designated Open Space & Nature Area Parcels in the City of Northglenn



# Management Highlights

## Farmers' Highline Canal

### Goal

To control noxious weeds and promote desirable vegetation along the corridor for the enjoyment of the trail corridor users.

### Past Maintenance

Areas around the canal and pathway have been mowed regularly. Trees and shrubs have been trimmed to keep the trail clear of hazards.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

2011: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

2012: Spray the ditch for poison hemlock twice/year. Continue to trim trees and shrubs, evaluate and remove hazard trees and mow regularly.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to evaluate trees along the corridor to identify and remove hazards
- Trim trees and shrubs to maintain clearance along trail
- Continue mowing and trimming regularly

### Proposed Amenities

- Continue replacement of wooden benches with plastic-coated metal benches and add new benches in appropriate areas
- Install nesting boxes in larger trees for birds
- Assess areas that may be viable for planting of trees, based on the highest likelihood of sustainability
- Replace the asphalt section of the trail east of I-25

*If only we would remember to turn our gaze to the awe of a child, we would, we should recall that such a place exists within our grasp—in a garden, in a woods, by a stream...in nature, we would find what we're longing for: a beauty and stillness that lets the extraneous fall away and allows the essence of who we really are to emerge.*

**-Prevention Magazine**



# Management Highlights

## The Ponds at Winburn Park

### Goal

To manage the native part of the park as an open space and improve the water quality of the wetlands.

### Past Maintenance

Wooden boardwalk was installed through the area by Boy Scouts. Ponds have been dredged periodically. Trees have been cleared and dead wood has been trimmed around the pond and along the pathway.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Treat noxious weed infestation. Remove dead wood in trees over pathways. Continue to treat ponds with biological and/or chemical controls for algae and mosquitoes.

2011: Continue to treat any noxious weed infestations. Continue to treat ponds with biological and/or chemical controls for algae and mosquitoes.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to mow along pathways
- Periodically test water quality in the ponds
- Ensure a viable and healthy fish stock

### Proposed Amenities

- Stock fish in large pond
- Install bird houses or bat boxes in larger trees
- Install more benches/shelters around native area
- Formalize the dirt trail around the large pond

# Management Highlights

## Grange Hall Creek and Fox Run Nature Area

### Goal

To establish a native open space setting for the residents of Fox Run and the users of the Greenway Trail System.

### Past Maintenance

Mowing was discontinued on this site in 2003, except along pathways, streets, parks and fences. Chemical and mechanical treatments used to manage the noxious weeds. Salt Cedar, Russian Olive and Purple Loosestrife were controlled in this area.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Spot treat any remaining infestations of noxious weeds chemically and mechanically. Assess control efforts and recovery of desirable vegetation. Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low.

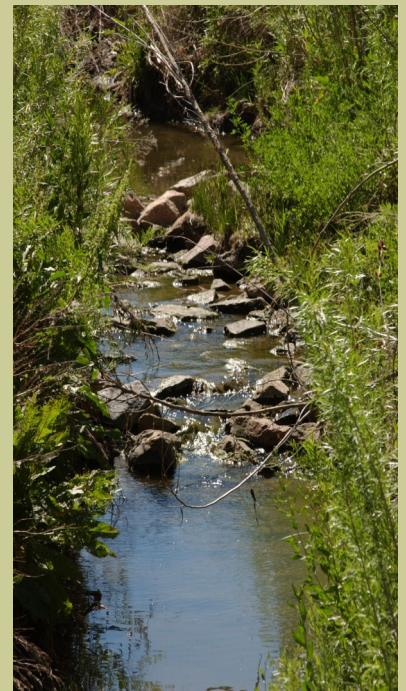
2011: Spot treat any remaining infestations chemically and mechanically. Assess control efforts and recovery of desirable vegetation. Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing along pathways, streets and residential fence lines
- Specifications will be 6-8' along pathways and streets, 15' along residential fences and Central Park
- This practice will make these areas more susceptible to re-infestation and weed control measures will be more frequent

### Proposed Amenities

- Signage for the trail system
- Nesting boxes for birds
- Access to Stonehocker from Grange Hall Creek



# Management Highlights

## Grant Ditch

### Goal

To incorporate open space management techniques in those areas of Grant Ditch where it is appropriate and enhances the experience of the Greenway Trail users.

### Past Maintenance

This area has been mowed regularly in past years, this practice currently continues.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Continue to mow the area regularly. Assess the condition of desirable vegetation. Inventory and start controlling noxious weed infestations. Investigate areas (hillsides, ditch banks) that would benefit from reduced or discontinued mowing.

2011: Continue to mow the area regularly, except for the areas between the trail and the ditch channel and steep hillsides. Control any noxious weed infestations. Assess control efforts and need for reseeding.

2012: Reseed areas where populations of desirable vegetation are low. Continue to mow the area regularly, except for the area between the trail and the ditch channel and steep hillsides. Control any noxious weed infestations. Assess control efforts and seeding.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing will continue from the trail to the residential fences
- The concrete trail will be edged to keep vegetation off the trail as needed
- Tree plantings will be maintained along the ditch

### Proposed Amenities

- Replace old benches and install new benches, tables and/or shelters in other locations throughout the trail corridor
- Install bird nesting boxes in larger trees
- Assess possibility of additional tree plantings and/or shrub and flower beds

# Management Highlights

## Croke Reservoir

### Goal

To maintain the natural condition of the site. Continue to manage the site as an urban fishery and waterfowl/wildlife habitat.

### Past Maintenance

The pathway around the reservoir has been mowed, Hazard trees have been identified, and removal has begun. In 2008, a significant rehabilitation of Croke Reservoir was completed. The reservoir was drained, the shoreline stabilized, additional trees planted, additional annual and perennial beds installed and new benches, tables, signage, shelters and pathways were added.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Mow sodded areas, monitor the trees on the site, and inventory and treat any noxious weed infestations. Remove highest priority hazard trees.

2011: Treat any noxious weed infestations. Assess control measures and desirable vegetation recovery. Assure preservation of the natural habitat. Remove moderate priority hazard trees.

2012: Treat any noxious weed infestations. Assess control measures and desirable vegetation recovery. Assure preservation of the natural habitat. Remove hazard trees that were identified as lowest priority in 2009.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Continue to assess trees for liability hazards and trim as needed
- Mow all sodded areas
- Ensure a viable and healthy fish stock by monitoring the aquatic habitat and make improvements when necessary to the lake
- Maintain aeration system
- Continue to identify and evaluate hazard trees, and prioritize their removal based upon safety standards
- Wildlife habitat preservation

### Proposed Amenities

- Install nesting boxes for birds
- Install additional benches/shelters
- Coordinate occasional fish stockings with the Colorado Division of Wildlife



# Management Highlights

## Oscar Arnold Nature Area

### Goal

Reduce weed infestations to a level that does not impact the natural environment of the site.

### Past Maintenance

Treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Russian Olive. Mowing of weeds along the north entry drive.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Mow all areas infested with weeds outside of wetland and riparian areas ahead of chemical treatment. Biologically control infestations inside of wetland and riparian areas with weed control insects. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

2011: Discontinue mowing pretreatment for weed control to allow desirable vegetation to recover and compete. Chemically treat remaining large infestations, release weed control insects for weed control in wetland and riparian areas. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

2012: Monitor control efforts. Reseed areas not successful from previous seeding. Continue to spot treat weed infestations chemically and mechanically in dry land areas, mechanically and biologically in wetland and riparian areas. Assess control efforts and desirable vegetation recovery.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing along pathways, streets and residential fence lines
- Specifications will be 6-8' along pathways and streets, 15' along residential fences
- This practice will make these areas more susceptible to reinfestations and weed control measures will be more frequent

### Proposed Amenities

- ADA compliant Nature trail or formal path through the area
- Nesting boxes for birds
- Interpretive signage

# Management Highlights

## Northwest Open Space (north of Farmer's Highline Canal, exclusive of Athletic Fields)

### Goal

Reduce noxious weed infestations, maintain the open area to safe and aesthetically pleasing standards..

### Past Maintenance

Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Weeds in open area mowed regularly.

### Proposed Maintenance

2010: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Weeds in open area mowed regularly.

2011: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Reduce mowing to post and cable area only.

2012: Continue treatment of Canada Thistle, Yellow Toadflax and Field Bindweed. Continue mowing to post and cable area only.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Mowing
- Noxious Weed management through the use of chemical and biological controls, including insects for Canada Thistle and spraying of Thistle and Yellow Toadflax.

### Proposed Amenities

- No new amenities are proposed for this area







# Acknowledgements

This plan represents the combined efforts of a variety of individuals whose time was generously contributed in many ways including: attending public meetings to provide information about the community's priorities for open space properties, contributing technical assistance and participating on the Open Space Management Plan Revision committee. Each of these groups and individuals provided crucial input into the direction of this plan.

**City of Northglenn**

**Northglenn Residents**

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

**National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation**

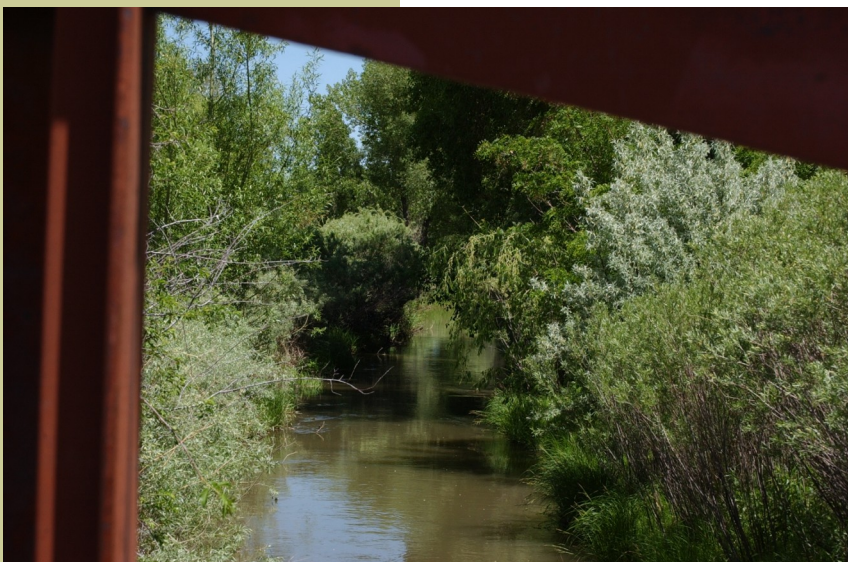
**Assistance Program**

**Colorado Division of Wildlife**

**Natural Resource Conservation Service**

**Adams County Weed District**

**Photography - City Staff**



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