

FISHERS CANYON OPEN SPACE MASTER AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



Community Workshop #1
April 24, 2024 Presentation

Video Recording

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services



WELCOME



Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Background
3. Site Presentation
4. Small Group Workshop
5. Next Steps



BACKGROUND



COLORADO SPRINGS PARKS



- ❑ Colorado Springs offers incredible parks, recreational and cultural service opportunities
- ❑ Essential for promoting physical activity, social interaction, and overall well-being
- ❑ Our parks system also enhances the quality of life for our residents by generating local jobs and business opportunities, making a significant impact on the Colorado Springs economy.



COLORADO SPRINGS PARKS










- ❑ Guided by the Parks System Master Plan, we are responsible to be **good stewards** of the resources, **manage and enhance** public park lands, and **serve** the community
- ❑ We are **Champions of the Outdoors** by providing everyone with recreation opportunities and enjoyable experiences in our parks, open spaces, and trails
- ❑ We consider the demands, interests, and impacts to **find the balance** between recreational opportunities and natural resource protection

MASTER PLAN THEMES

The Master Plan recommendations reflect community values captured from the public engagement process, evaluation of current operations, analysis of existing facilities and policies, and consideration of trends. These recommendations have been organized under seven core themes, which guide the future parks, recreation, trails and cultural services actions and decision-making for the next 10 years.

The Park System Master Plan recommendations are organized around **7** key themes:

- ➔  **Take Care of What We Have**
-  **Diversify Financial Strategies, including New Methods of Funding**
- ➔  **Broaden, Enhance and Promote Recreation Opportunities**
- ➔  **Continue Open Space Conservation in Advance of Development**
- ➔  **Build our Community with the Understanding that Parks, Open Space and Trails Create Great Neighborhoods**
- ➔  **Manage Parks for Better Usability and Greater Enjoyment**
-  **Enhance and Formulate Strong and Broad Partnerships**

Parks System Master Plan, Page 10

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

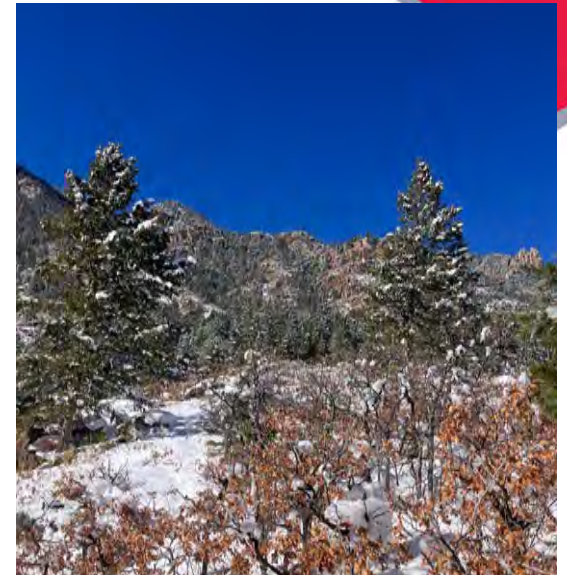


- ❑ Establish a **comprehensive long-range plan** (15-20 years) for newly acquired Fishers Canyon Open Space (343 Acres)
- ❑ Create sustainable **public access** to the Open Space
- ❑ **Balance** current and future recreational needs of the community with conservation of resources
- ❑ Establish expectations based on **resource assessment, Parks' experience, and community values**
- ❑ Guide the **enhancement and management** of the new Open Space
- ❑ Address **public access, habitat protection, resource management, public safety, and neighborhood concerns**



PROJECT GIVENES

- ❑ As defined by the City of Colorado Springs Parks System Master Plan, an open space is a natural area that can range from **10 to over 1,000 acres**.
- ❑ **Only 10 percent of open space property can be enhanced** with improvements like trailheads, picnic areas and trails.
- ❑ Open spaces provide natural areas for **passive recreation and habitat conservation**.
- ❑ These guidelines **define what enhancements are possible** at Fishers Canyon Open Space.



PROJECT GIVENS



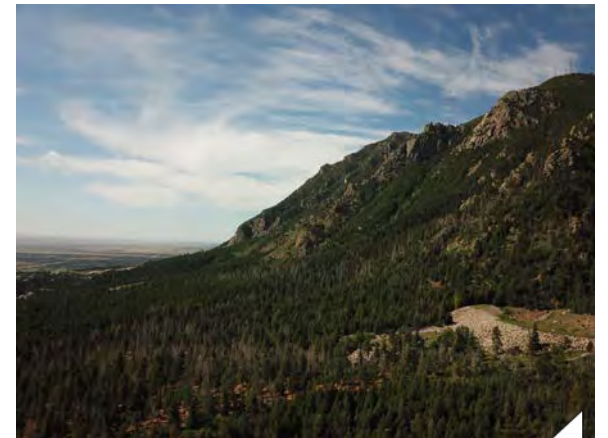
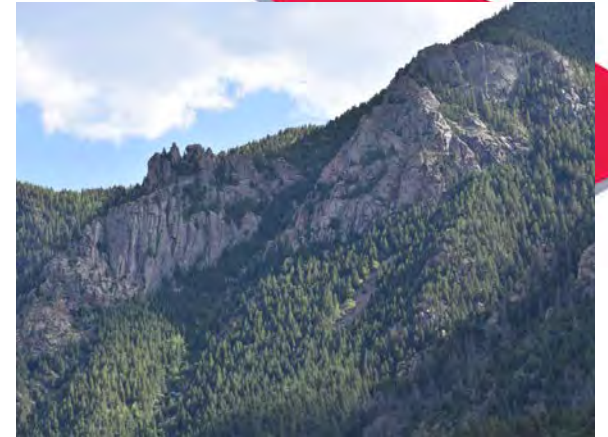
- ❑ The **City's PRCS Department is legally responsible** for design, maintenance, operations, and management of all resources for Fishers Canyon Open Space.
 - ❑ The Master and Management Plan must conform to provisions in the **Trails, Open Space (TOPS) and Parks Ordinance** and **City Regulations**.
 - ❑ The Plan must honor **HOA, utility and other easements** currently in place.
 - ❑ The PRCS Department's stewardship and recreation decisions will be based on **collected data, changing conditions, and industry best management practices**.



PROJECT GIVENES



- ❑ All decisions regarding lands under the **jurisdiction of adjacent agencies** including the United States Forest Service (USFS), Colorado State Parks (CPW) and Cheyenne Mountain Space Force Station (CMSFS) are the jurisdiction of those agencies.
- ❑ **Decisions regarding sensitive and federally protected wildlife management, habitat and protection** will be made with guidance from **Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)** and the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**.
- ❑ Many groups and individuals are interested in and encouraged to help develop the best possible Master and Management Plan; **all voices will be equal in the decision-making process.**
- ❑ Implementation of the Fishers Canyon Open Space Master and Management Plan will occur as **funding allows.**
- ❑ The recommended Master and Management Plan will be submitted to the **TOPS Working Committee** for recommendation and to the **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board** for approval.



Property History



- In October 2021, City Council unanimously approved the proposal to acquire 343 acres of open space known as Fishers Canyon.
- The property was acquired through two-phases (November 2021 and March 2022) with our partners at The Conservation Fund.
- This property was funded by revenues from the [TOPS](#) sales tax (\$2.95 million) and a \$1.25 million acquisition grant from the Land Water Conservation Fund



FISHERS CANYON SITE MAP

Pike
National
Forest

Fishers Canyon Open Space
342.98 AC

Cheyenne Mountain
State Park

Cheyenne Mountain
Space Force Station

Wellfleet St

Ellsworth St

Legend

- Fishers Canyon Open Space 342.98 ac
- Parcels
- Pike National Forest
- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Roads



Broadmoor Resort Community / Star Ranch
Private Property – No Public Access Allowed

Private Homes – No Public Access

Fishers Canyon Open Space
342.98 AC

Property Acquired by City in 2021 and
this land transaction included Public Right of Way
from Wellfleet St.

Federal Installation & NORAD Road
No Public Access Allowed

**Cheyenne Mountain
State Park**

**Cheyenne Mountain
Space Force Station**

1

2

3

4

Star Ranch Rd.

Stonebeck Ln.

Jarman St.

Balmoral Rd.

Wellfleet St.

Ellsworth St.

Ingrion Ct.

NORAD Rd.

Ellsworth St.

Buttermere Dr.



SITE PRESENTATION



COMMUNITY MEETING #1 GOALS



INFORM

- Provide snapshot of where we are in planning process and upcoming technical site studies.

INFORM

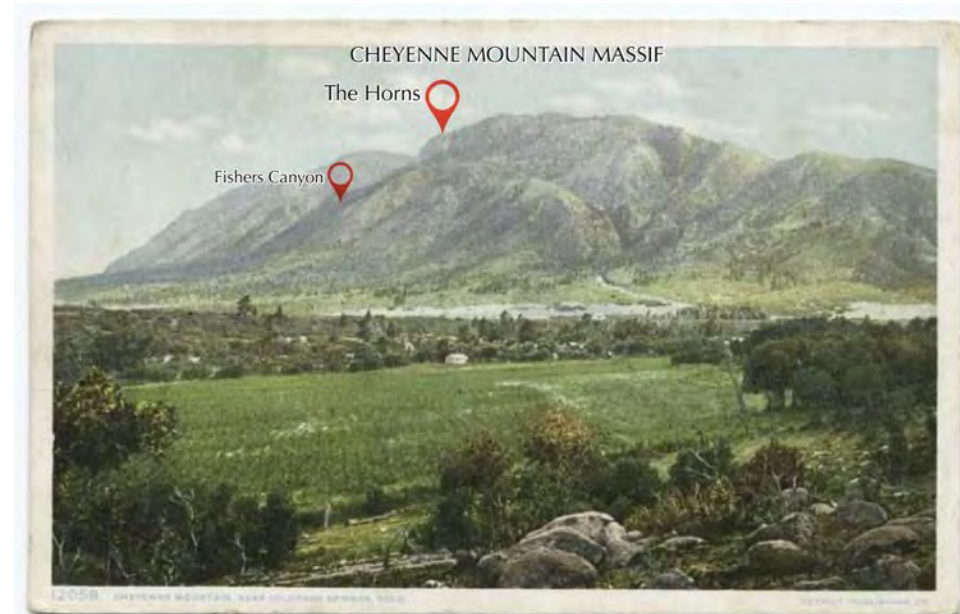
- Share information on site opportunities and constraints.

INFORM

- Share public survey #1 findings and priorities.

CONSULT

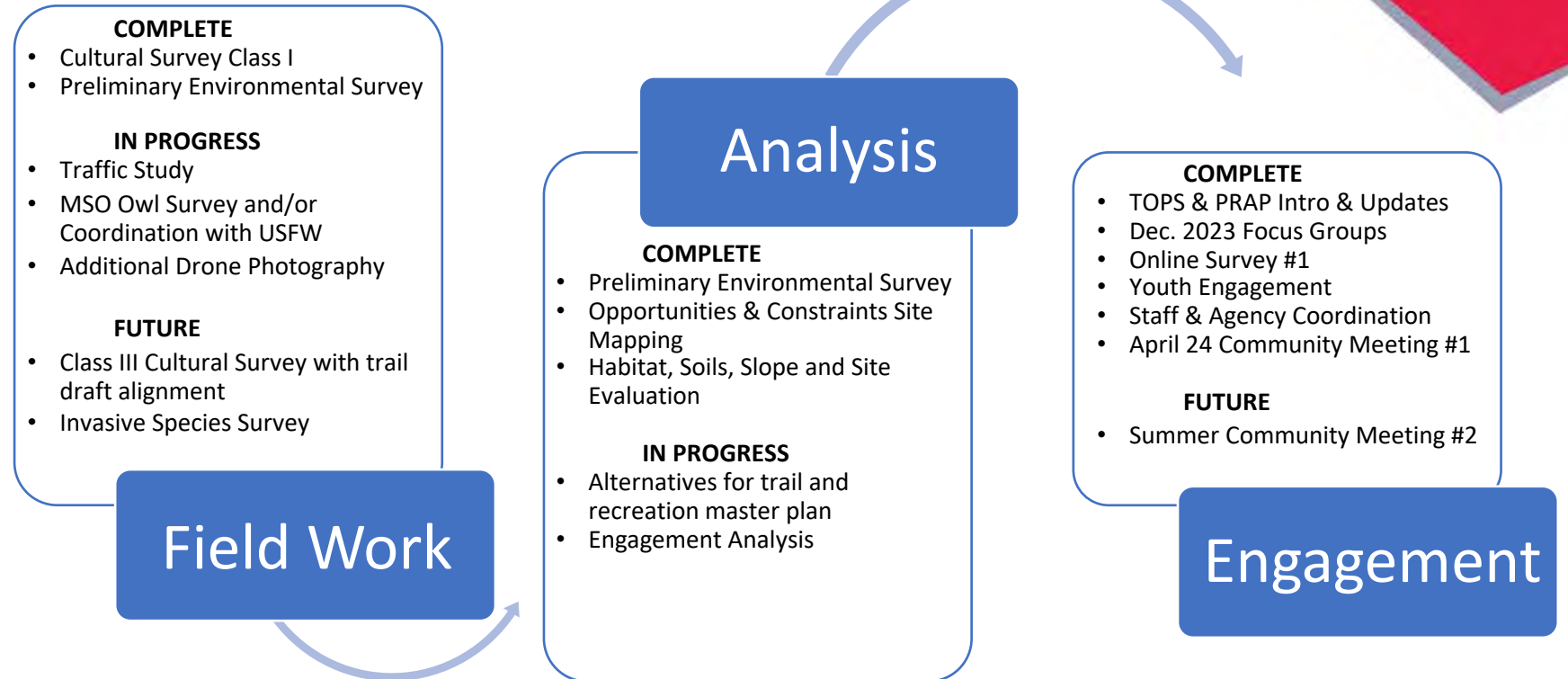
- Present emerging plan scenarios to obtain feedback on tradeoffs for access, parking and recreation experiences.



Where are we now?

- Task 1: Project Planning
- Task 2: Site Assessment
- Task 3: Env. Survey
- Task 4: Draft Master Plan
- Task 5: Final Master Plan

April-May 2024 Focus



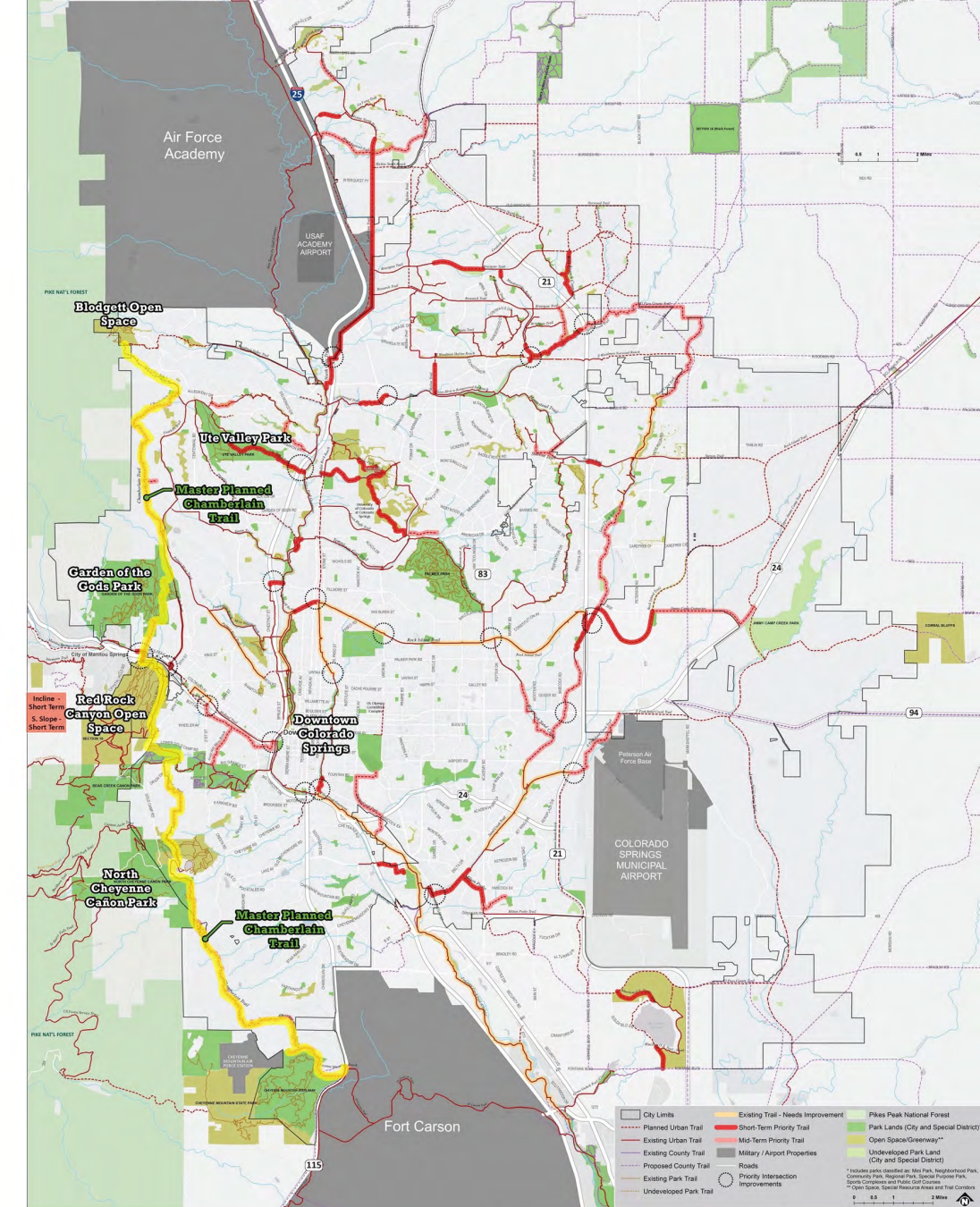
Approach Summary

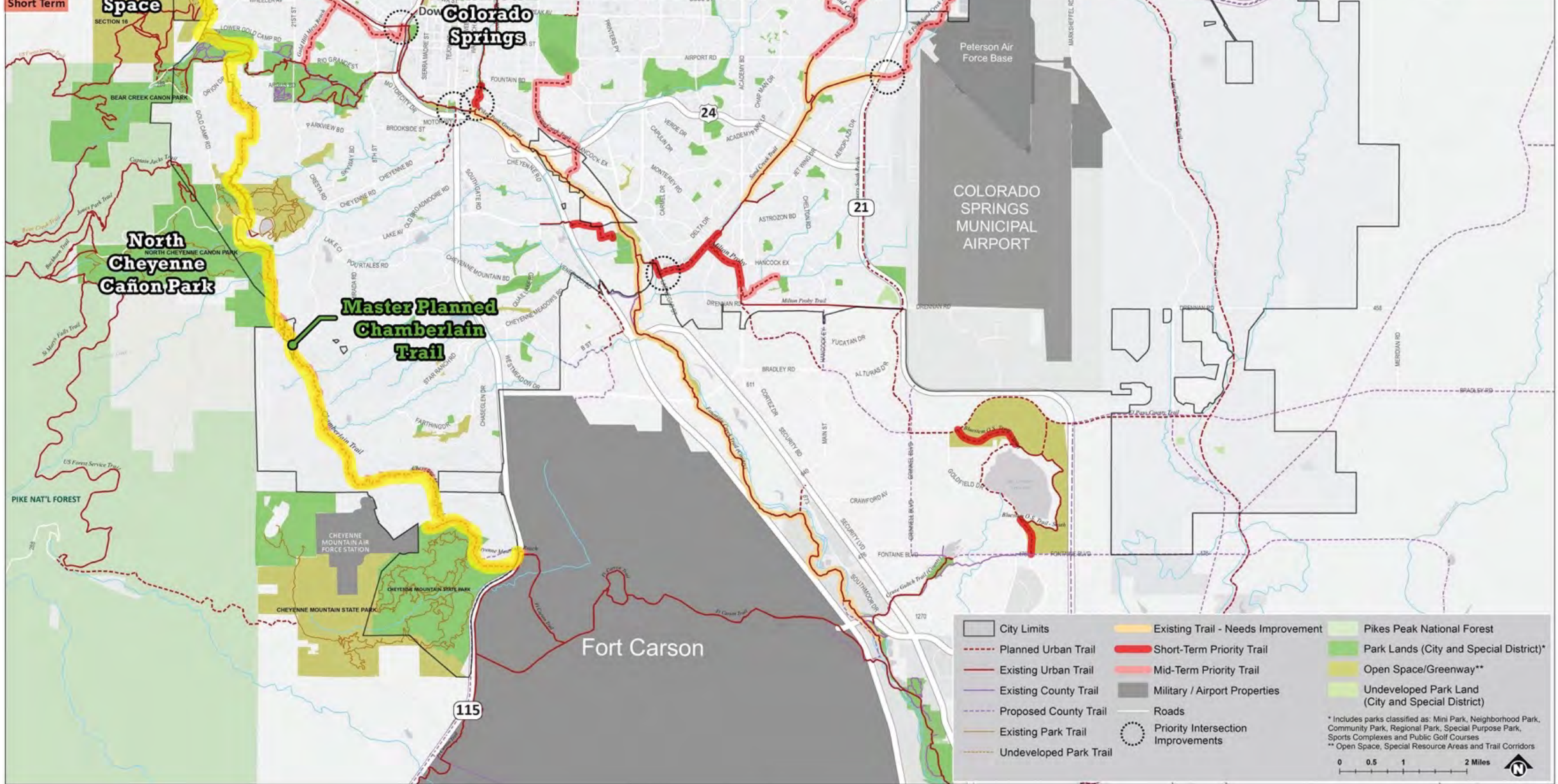


APPROACH STEPS	FISHERS CANYON EXAMPLE
1-Identify Opportunities & Constraints	Regional Trail Connections, Cheyenne Mountain - Steep topography w/ rocky outcrops, Mexican Spotted Owl Habitat, etc.
2-Select Appropriate Trail Design Standards & Best Practices	Sustainable design standards for steep slopes, specialized construction techniques, etc.
3-Identify User Group Needs & Desired Experiences	Parking at trailhead, pet station(s), interpretive signage, trash enclosure, neighborhood traffic issues, etc.
4-Create & Evaluate Trail Alignment Alternatives	Along with stakeholder & public input, key data on indigenous flora & fauna, trail planning team will use field recon time for conceptualizing a high-quality, sustainable trail system and conceptual Wellfleet trailhead design.

2014 MASTER PLANNED CHAMBERLAIN TRAIL

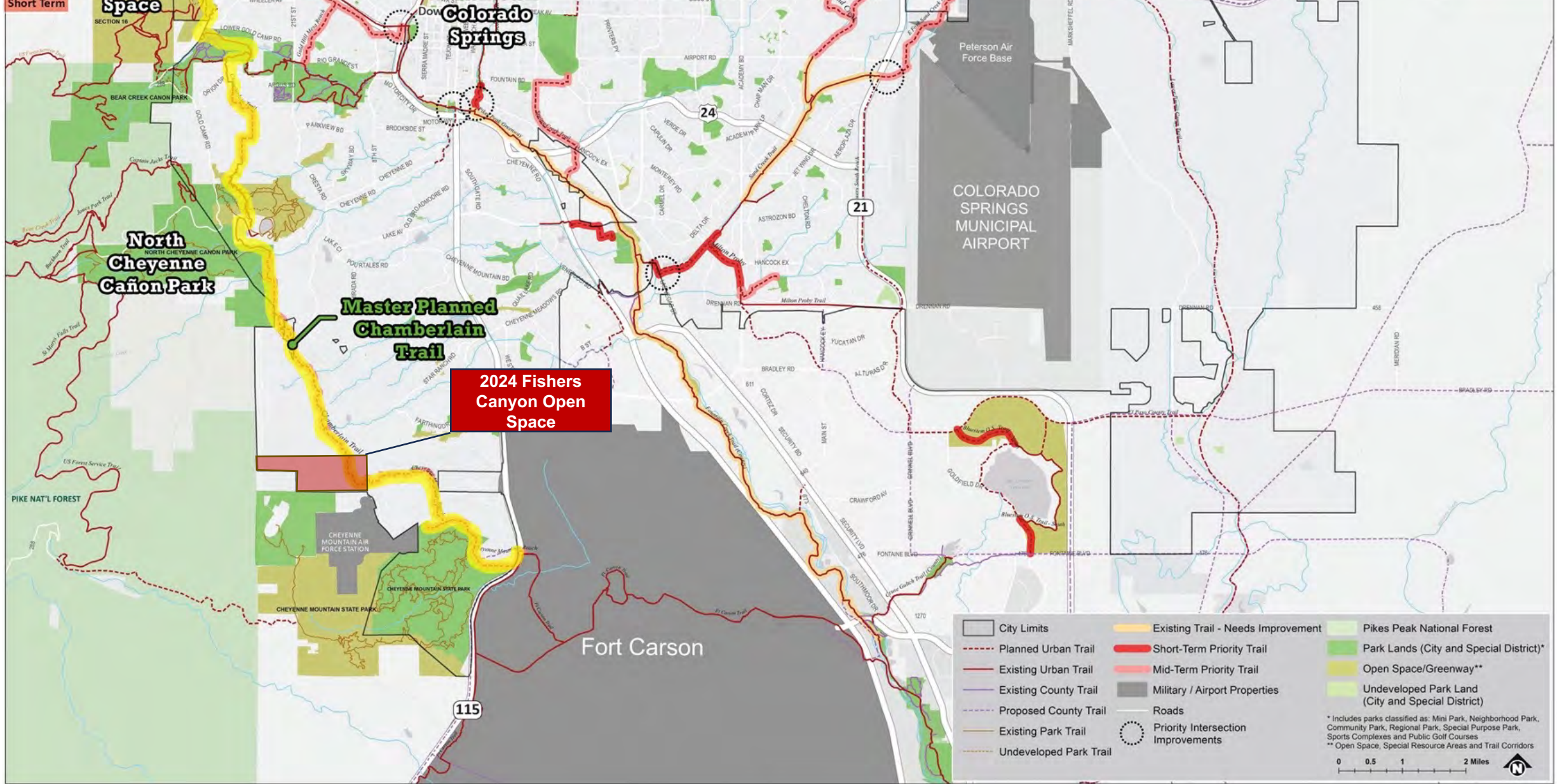
- The Chamberlain Trail is envisioned to provide a **unique backcountry experience along the foothills** of the City of Colorado Springs by eventually **connecting Blodgett Open Space all the way to Cheyenne Mountain State Park**.
- The **26-mile master-planned trail**, identified in the [2014 Park System Master Plan](#), will traverse through Blodgett Open Space, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Bear Creek Regional Park, Stratton Open Space, North Cheyenne Cañon Park and Fishers Canyon Open Space.
- Currently, the **13 miles of the Chamberlain Trail are in use** which includes approximately 7.5 miles of dedicated trail, three miles of shared trails, 1.5 miles on roadway and 1 mile on Urban trail.





COLORADO SPRINGS
PARKS, RECREATION, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
Trail Connections and Priorities







Antenna Farm

Pike National Forest

Cheyenne Mountain
State Park

CMSFS

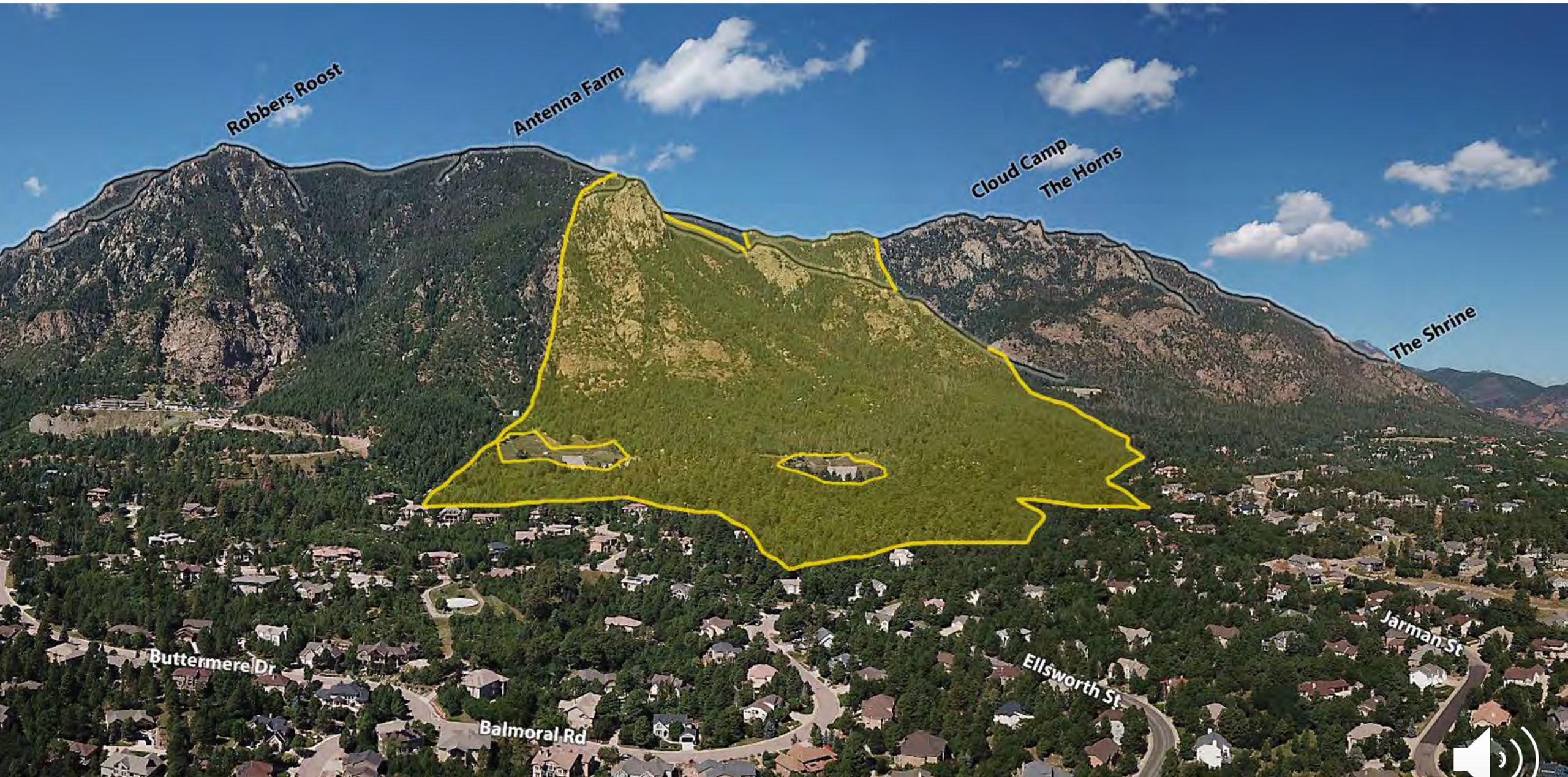
Fishers Canyon
Chamberlain Trail Easement

The Spires
Community

Broadmoor
Resort Community







Robbers Roost

Antenna Farm

Cloud Camp
The Horns

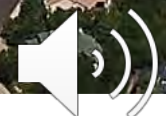
The Shrine

Buttermere Dr

Balmoral Rd

Ellsworth St

Jarman St







Cheyenne Mountain
State Park

Robbers Roost

Antenna Farm





Cultural Analysis Themes

Native American Stewardship Past & Present

- Regional history of Native Americans in Pikes Peak Region.
- Class III Cultural Survey In Progress.

Exploration & Settlement

- The site's canyon and open space bear the name of the original homesteader, Joshua Fisher.

Engineering

- Site's past and sometimes present use for community and historic resort utilities.

Conservation

- Site slated for a housing project featuring 70 homes, the TOPS Program and Conservation Fund supported acquisition of property as protected open space for public enjoyment and natural conservation.



Environmental Analysis Themes

Fire Mitigation

- 89.3 acres already treated.
- Multi-agency efforts have helped lower residential insurance premiums.
- Garnering funding for future efforts.

Slopes & Soils

- Eastern portion of site has lower slopes, while western portion of site has very steep slopes, up to 90%.
- Outcroppings support raptor habitat.

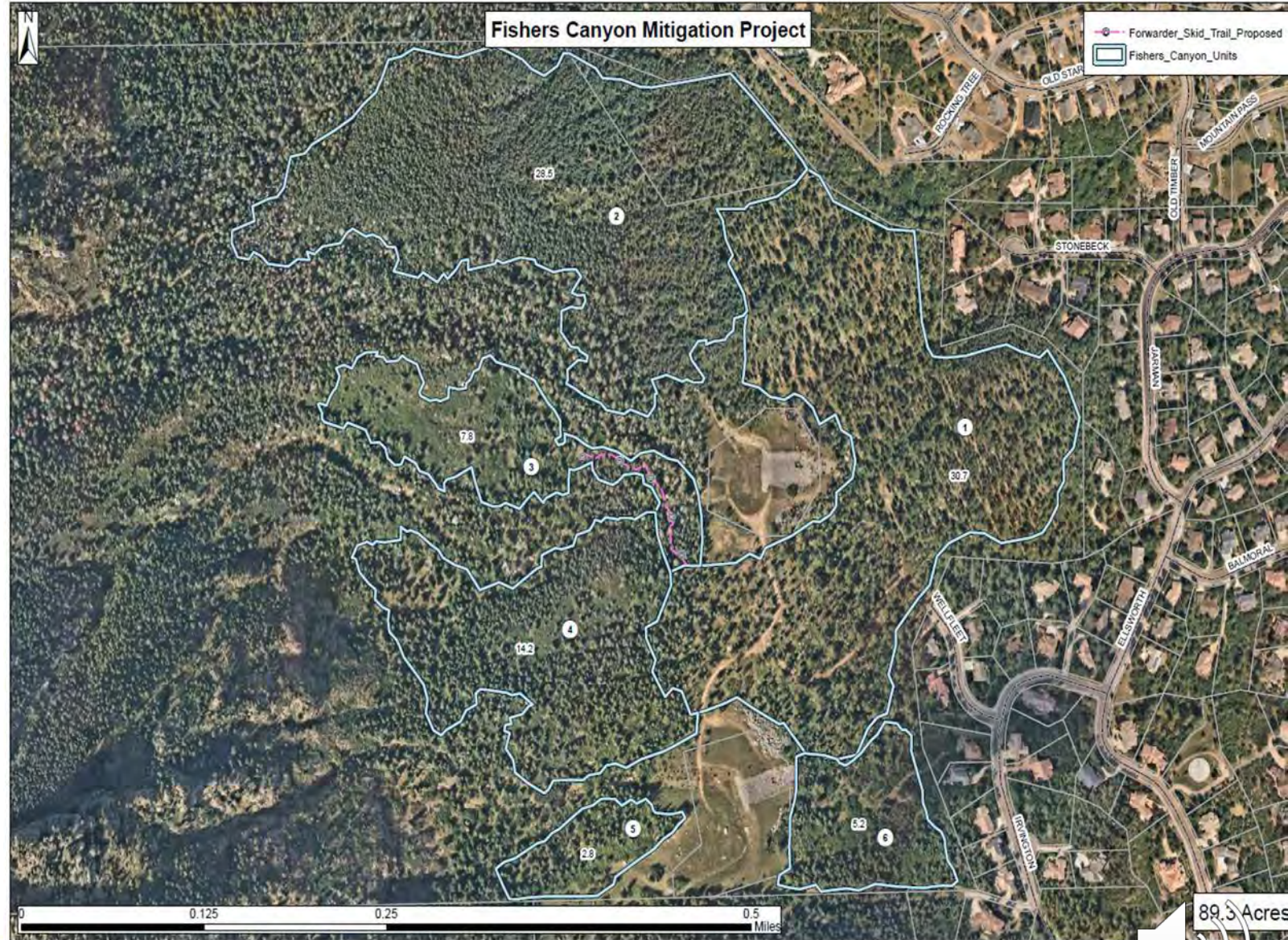
Habitats

- Grassland, shrubland and mix-conifer forests support wildlife including monarch butterfly, black bears and raptors.
- Potential presence of Mexican Spotted Owls triggering protocol site surveys.



FISHERS CANYON OPEN SPACE

- 89.3 Acres Treated
- December 2022 thru April 2023
- Wildfire Mitigation Committee #1 Priority
- Funded in partnership with TOPS, CSU, and the 2D TABOR Mitigation funds (\$510,000 project)
- Reduction of wildfire risk, improved habitat, protection of critical infrastructure, and erosion prevention
- Additional grant requests for hand thinning in drainages, and invasive weed management in 2024/25.

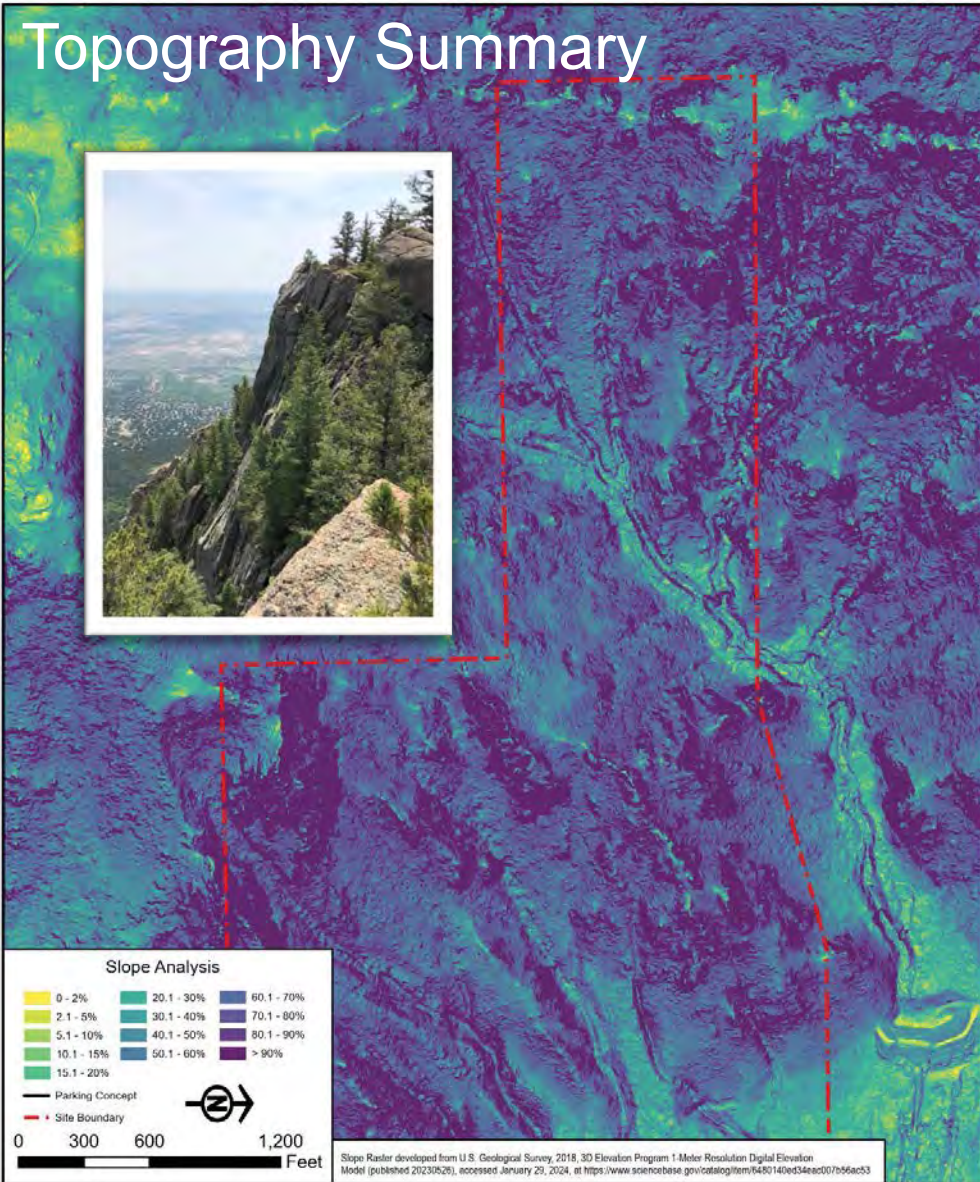


FISHERS CANYON OPEN SPACE



Fire Mitigation – Before and Right after

Topography Summary



Baseline Natural Resources Assessment
Fishers Canyon
Colorado Springs, Colorado

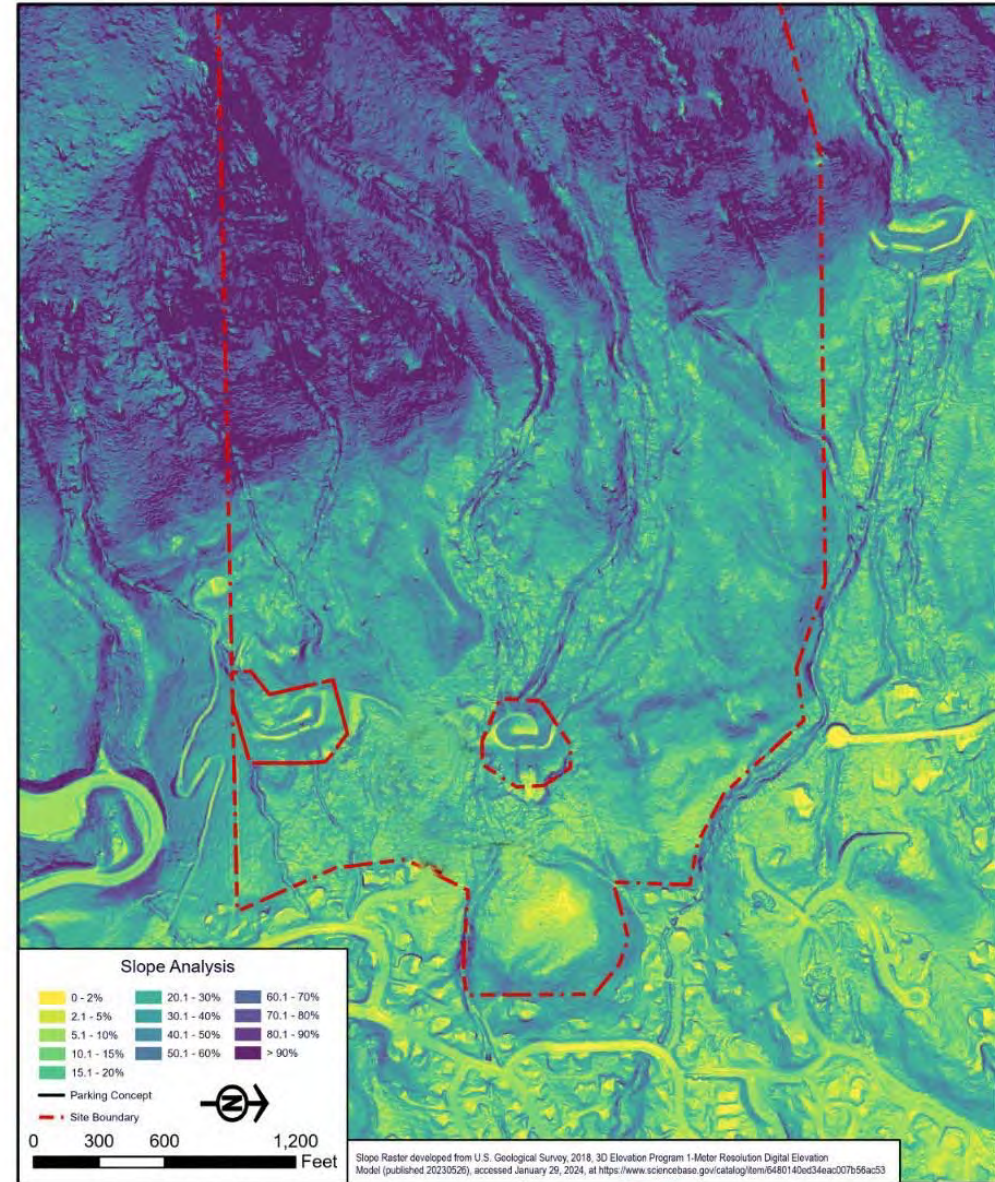
City of Colorado Springs, Colorado

GEI
Consultants

Project 2303995

**SLOPE ANALYSIS
UPPER TRAILS AREA**

February 2024



Baseline Natural Resources Assessment
Fishers Canyon
Colorado Springs, Colorado

City of Colorado Springs, Colorado

GEI
Consultants

Project 2303995

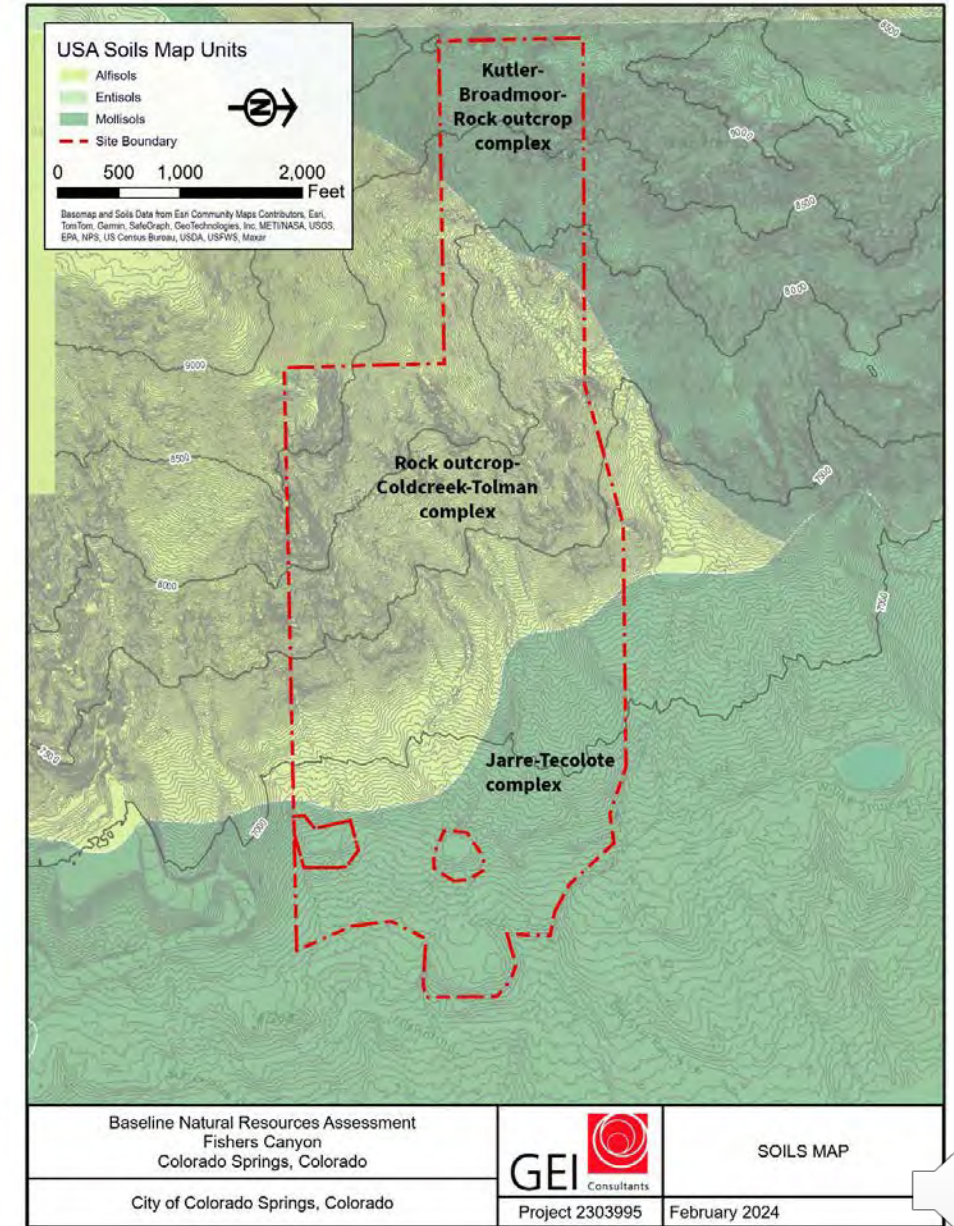
**SLOPE ANALYSIS
LOWER OPEN SPACE
TRAILS AREA**

February 2024



Soils Summary

Soil Complex Type	Slope Range	Opportunities
Kutler-Broadmoor-Rock Outcrop Complex	25-90% Slopes	Wilderness experience, destination spots & trail connections especially on flatter bedrock areas.
Rock Outcrop –Coldcreek Tolman Complex	9-90% Slopes	Expansive views and valley may present rolling contour trails. Rock outcrops create climbing and viewing opportunities.
Jarre-Telecote Complex	0-65% Slopes	Areas between 0-10% Slope located near eastern boarder opportunity for ADA accessibility, multi-use and less strenuous trails. Boulder opportunities for rock climbing.



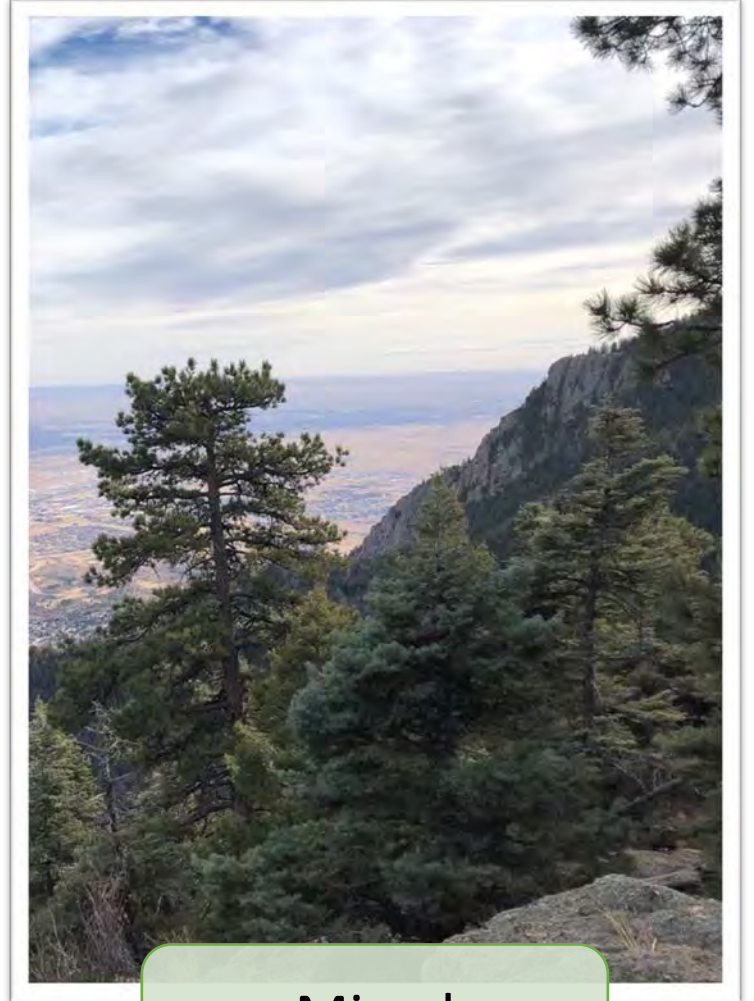
Vegetation



Grassland



Scrub Shrub



Mixed
Coniferous
Forests

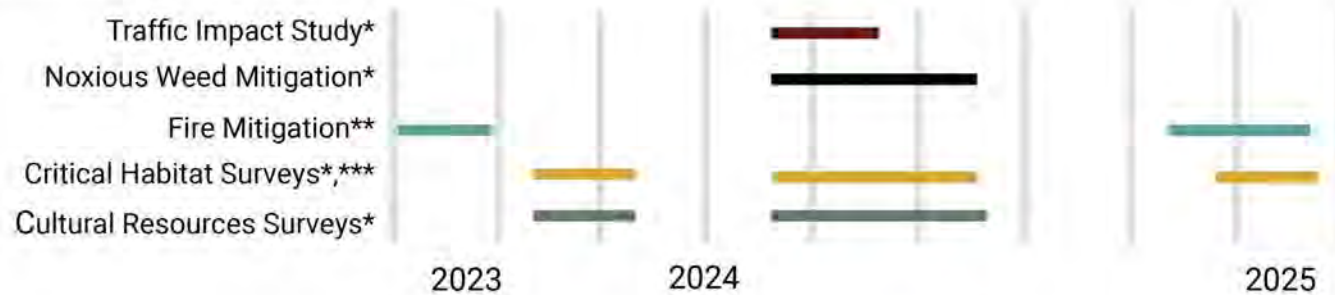


Ongoing Site Fieldwork



Mexican Spotted Owl

In conjunction with engagement, important field work activities are ongoing and will influence potential enhancements to Fishers Canyon Open Space and impact the management plan recommendations. The master and management plan is anticipated to use best-practice, adaptive strategies in order to adjust to change over time in habitat and field conditions and provide sustainable recreation access.



* Timing approximate for 2024-2025 pending weather

** Additional mitigation also dependent on funding and grants

*** The 2025 Critical Habitat Survey is associated with a confirmation survey for the upper elevations/ Fisher's Canyon proper

LEGEND

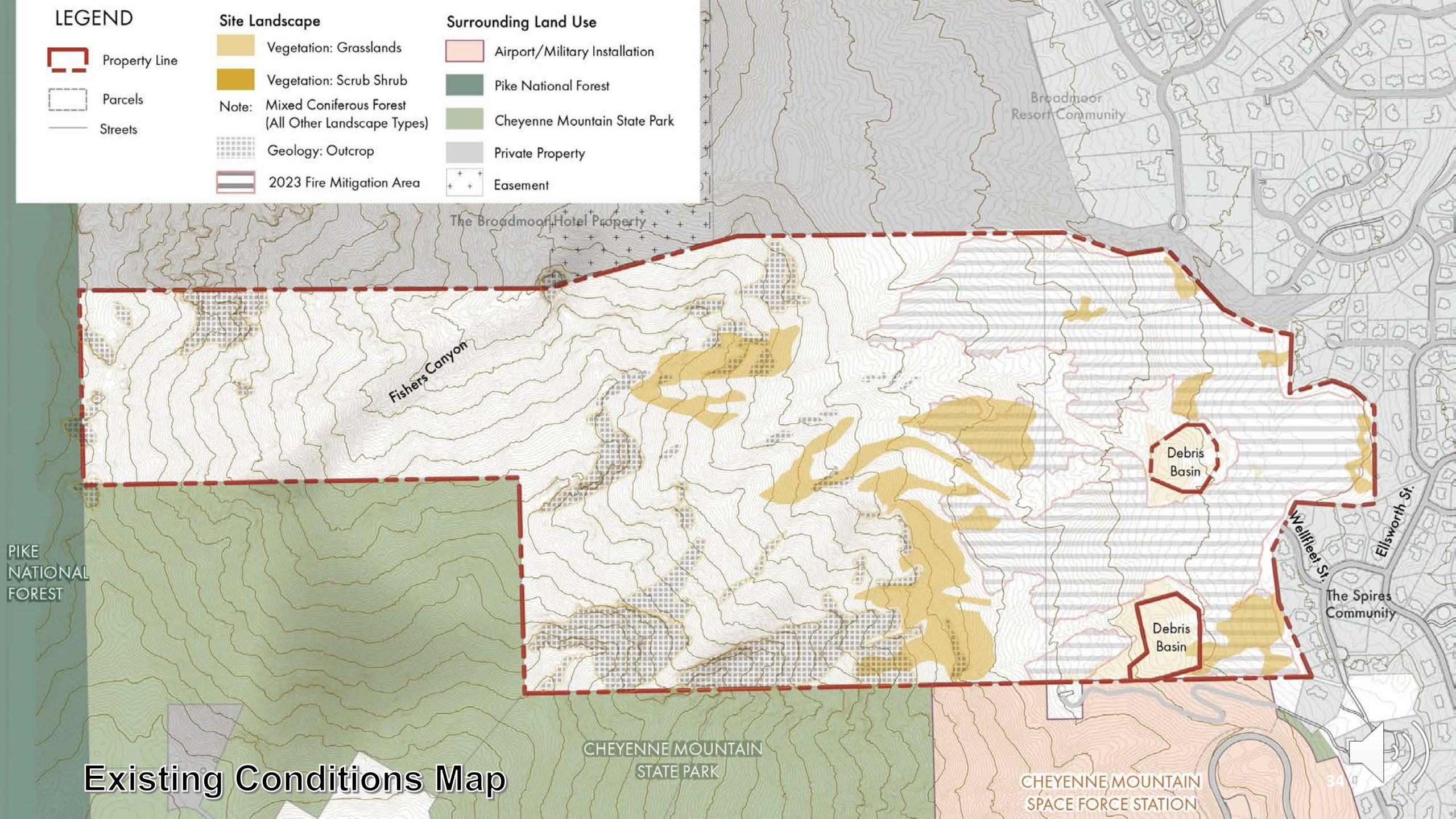
- Property Line
- Parcels
- Streets

Site Landscape

- Vegetation: Grasslands
- Vegetation: Scrub Shrub
- Note: Mixed Coniferous Forest (All Other Landscape Types)
- Geology: Outcrop
- 2023 Fire Mitigation Area

Surrounding Land Use

- Airport/Military Installation
- Pike National Forest
- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Private Property
- Easement



Existing Conditions Map

LEGEND

- Property Line
- Parcels
- Streets

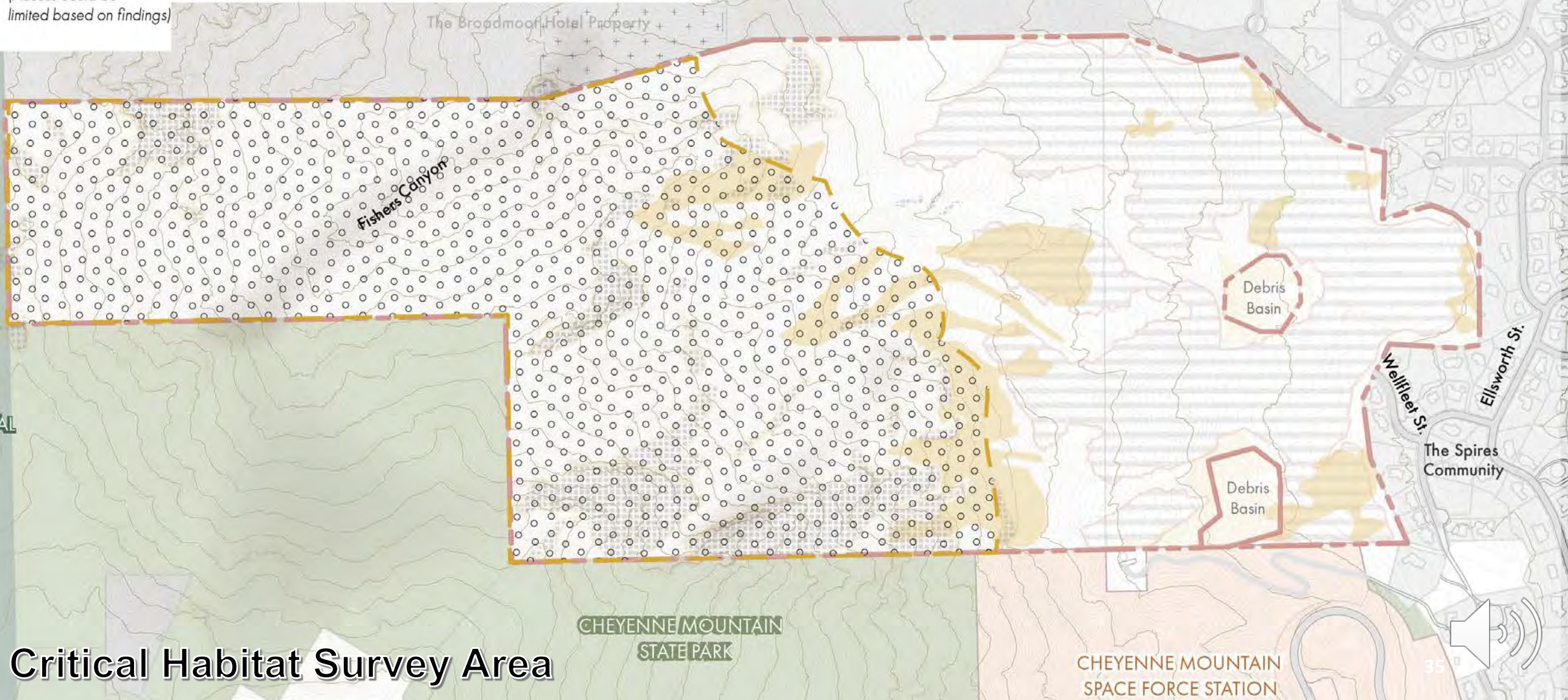
Site Landscape

- Vegetation: Grasslands
- Vegetation: Scrub Shrub
- Note: Mixed Coniferous Forest (All Other Landscape Types)
- Geology: Outcrop
- 2023 Fire Mitigation Area

Surrounding Land Use

- Airport/Military Installation
- Pike National Forest
- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Private Property
- Easement

2024-2025 Critical Habitat Survey Area
(Access could be limited based on findings)



Critical Habitat Survey Area

Engagement by the Numbers



Youth Science Fair Night

112 youth from Gold Camp Elementary completed a trail habitat activity and voted on their top open space values and priorities for Fishers Canyon Open Space.

April 11, 2024



Community Survey #1

Over 950 participants completed the first public survey to share ideas about their top open space values and priorities for Fishers Canyon Open Space.

Feb. - March 2024



Stakeholder Focus Groups

Over 60 participants from 33 organizations including neighboring agencies and HOA representatives provided input on project concerns and opportunities.

Dec. 2023



Fire Mitigation Neighborhood Communication

Multi-agency coordination to complete fire mitigation of 89 acres of Fishers Canyon Open Space lands.

2023

Engagement by the Numbers



1,349 Interactions with project StoryMap

897 Postcards Mailed to Neighborhoods

1,122 **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS TO DATE**

229 Newsletter Subscribers

Community Input Themes



Top Rated Community Open Space Values



1. TOP ANSWER: Provide access to recreational opportunities like hiking and biking*

2. Protect ecosystem health **(youth top priority)*
3. Protect spaces for solitude and connection to nature
4. Provide resilience to disturbance events like wildfire*
5. Connect to other trails and public lands
6. Protect scenic mountain views*

** Top choices from youth engagement.*

Community Input Themes



Top 10 Rated Experiences Desired at Fishers Canyon Open Space



1. TOP ANSWER: Hiking only trails*

2. Mountain biking directional trails (bike only trails)*
3. "Wilderness" experience trails with views*
4. Regional connector trails to the summit of Cheyenne Mountain
5. Non-motorized, multi-use single track trails
6. High-intensity, physically challenging trails*
7. Horse trails*
8. On-leash dog trails*
9. Trails to bouldering or rock-climbing sites*
10. Accessible trails*

** Top choices from youth engagement.*

Community Input Themes



Summary of Open-ended Comments and Questions



- Concern over increased traffic and parking
- Site amenity and trail experience requests
- Desire for sustainable recreation access
- Advocate for accessible and low-barrier trails
- Preference for open space to remain undeveloped
- Support for single use trails (especially hiking-only)
- Concern for neighborhood safety
- Concern for risk of human-caused wildfire
- Support for rock climbing, biking and horseback riding trails
- Friction between allowing dogs or not allowing dogs on trails

Small Group Workshop



Emerging Scenarios



1. **How might we balance** providing the community with the varied types of trails and passive recreation experiences that range from desires for single-use trails, regional connections and from some perspectives, limited access to Fishers Canyon Open Space?
2. Reflecting on the existing conditions and emerging scenarios, what recreation access **opportunities or concerns** does the group have?
3. What does your group **particularly like** about the emerging scenarios?
4. What suggestions **might improve** the scenarios?
5. Did your group **prefer one scenario over the other**?

LEGEND

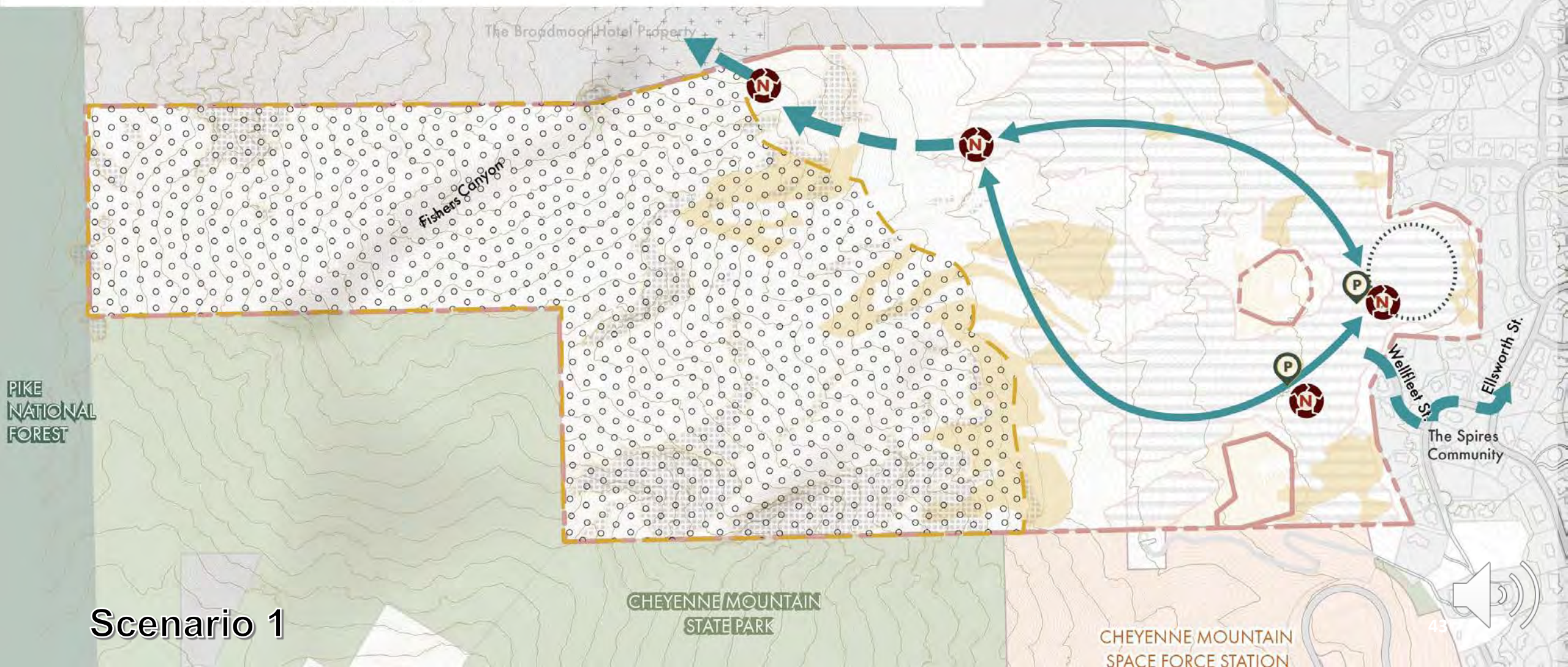
- Property Line
- Parcels
- Streets
- 2024-2025 Critical Habitat Survey Area
(Access could be limited based on findings)

Potential Enhancement

- Potential Parking Zone
- Potential Trail Node
(e.g., view, hub for trail intersection, regional connection, etc.)

Potential Trail Type Key

- Open Space Trails (including Chamberlain Trail)*
- Chamberlain Trail (Connecting Into Open Space)*
- Accessible, Low-Barrier Trail*
- *Multi-use trail





Scenario 1

LEGEND

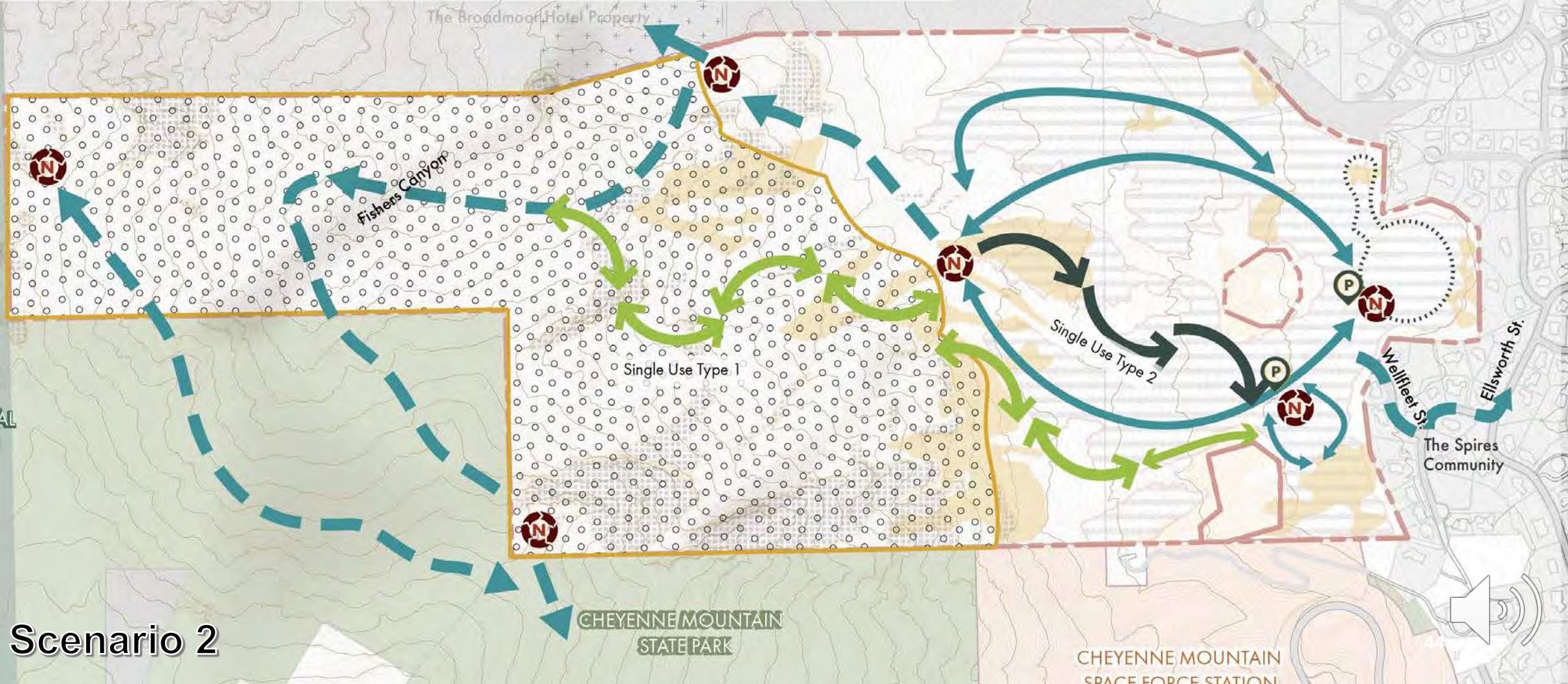
-  Property Line
-  Parcels
-  Streets
-  2024-2025 Critical Habitat Survey Area
(Access could be limited based on findings)

Potential Enhancement

-  Potential Parking Zone
-  Potential Trail Node
(e.g., view, hub for trail intersection, regional connection, etc.)

Potential Trail Type Key

-  Open Space Trails (including Chamberlain Trail)*
-  TBD Connector Trail (Including Chamberlain Trail and Fishers Canyon Trail)*
-  Accessible, Low-Barrier Trail*
*Multi-use trail
-  Potential Single Use Type 1
-  Potential Single Use Type 2



Scenario 2

Spectrum of Recreation Experiences






**Spectrum of
Recreation
Experiences**



Access and Parking

1. **How might we balance providing access to Fishers Canyon Open Space with concerns of overcrowding?**
2. Is more or less parking a small or big concern from your group's perspective?
3. What possible solutions may have come up from group discussion?



 = Potential Parking Zone

Next Steps



- MSO, Invasive Species & Cultural Site Surveys
- Traffic Impact Analysis
- Online Survey #2 April - May 12
- Community Meeting & Survey #2 Analysis
- Next Public Meeting: Summer 2024

THANK YOU



[Coloradosprings.gov/Fisherscanyon](https://coloradosprings.gov/Fisherscanyon)

