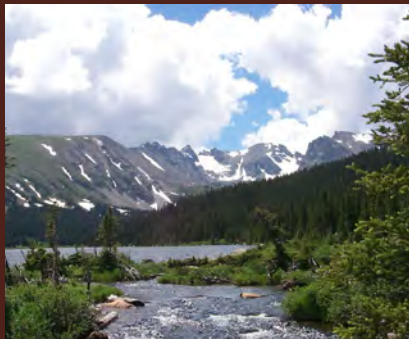
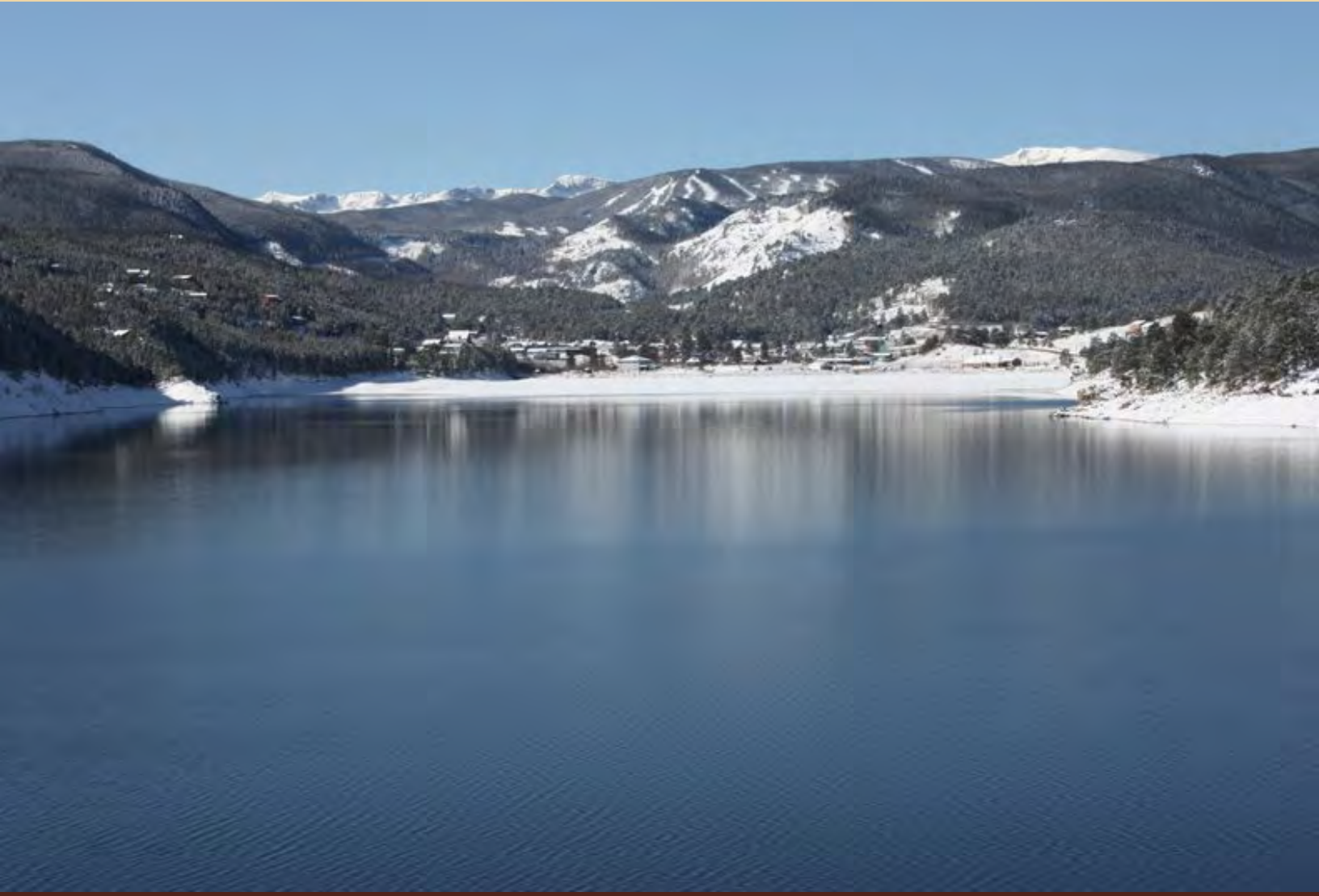


**NEDERLAND AREA
PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE,
AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN**



FEBRUARY 2013



Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1. Executive Summary

Introduction

Nederland takes great pride in its heritage, surrounding natural beauty, and unique character. It is a community made up of engaged residents and committed volunteers and organizations that come together to voice their opinions and get things done. This community ownership and hands-on approach is reflected in this **Nederland Area Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan**, an update of the previous plan, developed in 2001. Through an extensive public input process throughout 2012 that included public meetings, focus groups, and a survey, community members have articulated their concerns and aspirations and helped shape this Master Plan.

Purpose of Plan

The purpose of the **Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan** is to:

- Articulate a vision for parks, recreation, open space, and trails as it relates to *Envision 2020*.
- Guide sustainable planning for parks, recreation, open space, and trails for the next 5 to 10 years.
- Identify strategies to address community needs and interests in a sustainable way.

Eighty-three percent (83%) of survey respondents said that local parks and recreational opportunities in the Nederland area were very important to their household.

Throughout the planning process, members of the community repeatedly voiced their support for the value and benefits of parks, recreation, open space, and trails. This plan will help the Town of Nederland manage the natural, cultural, and recreational assets now and into the future.

Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.
- Residential and commercial property values may increase if public spaces are well-planned.
- Value may be added to community through economic development.
- Trees improve air quality, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency can be reduced by offering recreation for youth.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created when public spaces are maintained.

Source: The Trust for Public Land, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," January 11, 2003.

Contents of the Plan

The Master Plan consists of seven chapters.

1. *Executive Summary*
2. *The Planning Context*
3. *Community Profile and Needs Assessment*
4. *Inventory Assessment*
5. *Gateway Park Area Planning*
6. *How We Manage – Services and Operations*
7. *Recommendations and Implementation Plan*

The first chapter is the Executive Summary and is meant to stand alone as a brief synopsis of the plan. Chapters 2-4 provide a review of the planning process and context, the needs assessment which included a statistically-valid survey, and the inventory and level of service analysis. Planning for the gateway park area is found in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 focuses on topics including administration, programs and services, and funding. The final chapter details the plan recommendations and implementation.

Summary of Findings and Analysis

Following are highlights of findings and analysis that have helped shape the Master Plan recommendations.

Community Profile and Needs Assessment

Nederland grew through successive mining booms in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the 1920s, tourism helped Nederland rebound from the bust that followed the tungsten boom of World War I. Today, Nederland has a population of over 1,400 and serves a larger area population. The Town attracts tourists and is a popular jumping off point for outdoor recreation activities. Residents, as well as tourists, enjoy outdoor recreation – hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and horseback riding in summer and skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing in winter.

Through the public meetings and focus groups held as part of master planning process many strengths of the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system were identified: surrounding open space and trails, diversity of facilities in Town, and dedicated volunteers and non-profit organizations. Interest was expressed in balancing active and passive recreation, better managing visitor use of recreation areas and facilities, and identifying stable capital and operational funding to support the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system.

The survey conducted as part of the master planning process provided some insights into community priorities. The *activities and programs* that were identified by survey respondents as most important to be added, expanded, or improved include the following.

- Biking/hiking/running
- Indoor swimming/aquatics
- Non-motorized boating
- Events (e.g., movies, concerts, festivals)
- Cultural/arts/dance/music/crafts
- Snow and ice activities

The top ranked facilities to be added, expanded, or improved by survey respondents include the following.

- Pedestrian/bike paths (soft surface)
- Community gardens
- Indoor swimming pool
- Community greenhouse
- The proposed gateway park area at the end of Barker Reservoir
- Boating on the Reservoir
- An outdoor amphitheater

The following list highlights responses on the two separate questions. The first measures top priorities of Nederland area households and the second question evaluates the extent to which residents feel their needs are being met. There are distinct differences in results – needs for biking/hiking/running, events, and snow and ice activities are generally being met. In contrast, needs for indoor swimming and non-motorized boating are largely unmet, as indicated by the bold font.

	Percent indicating that it is <u>among their Top 3 Priorities</u>	Needs Being <u>Completely Met (4 or 5)</u>
• Biking/hiking/running	36%	82%
• Indoor swimming /aquatics	32%	23%
• Non-motorized boating	28%	29%
• Events (e.g., movies, concerts, festivals)	26%	74%
• Cultural/arts /dance /music /crafts	25%	52%
• Snow and ice activities	22%	76%

Additional resources and partnerships would be needed to help realize any new improvements.

Inventory Assessment

The Town of Nederland and neighboring public lands provide a host of open space areas, trails, parks, and recreational opportunities. Nederland's close proximity to Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest, Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, and Boulder County Open Space areas offers residents and visitors unique opportunities to hike, bike, fish, horseback ride, and ski in or within a short distance of Town.

For a small town, Nederland offers a wide assortment of recreational opportunities. The Town, in partnership with many other groups, has added new amenities in the decade since the last master plan. New recreation facilities include the Nathan Lazarus Skatepark and Ice and Racquet Park. In addition, the renovation of the Nederland Community Center (2005-2007) has allowed this facility to thrive as a hub of community activity and recreation and cultural opportunities. New recreation uses that have been discussed as part of this master planning process include boating, sledding, and community gardens/greenhouse, to name a few. Enhancing trail connectivity and walkability remain central goals to encourage alternative transportation and healthy, active lifestyles.

Gateway Park Area Planning

The Nederland gateway park area refers to the lakeshore areas near the east entrance to the Town of Nederland, Colorado. This area is well-used by community members and is highly visible. As such, it is effectively the front yard of the community, a site where a well-considered plan is critical.

The gateway park area includes the shoreline of Barker Reservoir west to East Street, bounded on the north by Highway 119 and by Middle Boulder Creek to the south. The gateway area also includes East 1st Street, Middle Boulder Creek, and Chipeta Park to ensure these areas function as a singular recreation area well-integrated with Nederland's downtown.

The gateway park area offers tremendous opportunity for recreational activities in Nederland. It is presently being used for recreational purposes, but the quality of these experiences could be greatly enhanced by improving the ecological and environmental value of the site.

The Nederland gateway park area has the potential to become a truly special place, a treasure to residents, and a destination for visitors. The *Nederland Gateway Park Area Master Plan*, a site plan that was developed as a component of this ***Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan***, includes many concepts well-supported by the community and intended to enhance the gateway area, add to the vitality of downtown Nederland, and encourage environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

Management – Services and Operations

Parks and recreation services are provided through collaborative efforts of the Town of Nederland and many other organizations. The Town of Nederland does not have a separate parks and recreation department or budget. There is one staff person who oversees the Nederland Community Center, and a portion of the Public Works Department's staff time is devoted to helping maintain parks and trails along with volunteer efforts such as the Adopt-a-Park program. However, the Town has an active Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Board (PROSAB) that is charged with implementing Town's master plan for parks, recreation, open space, and trails.

Recreation programs and activities are provided by volunteers and other organizations, often in partnership with the Town. There is an interest in expanding the partnership with the school district, especially for mutual use of recreational facilities. While much has been accomplished through community initiatives, the public input process revealed concern about fragmented recreation services as well as marketing and communication to get the word out about these offerings.

The Town will need to assess its ability to continue to achieve a more sustainable parks, recreation, open space, and trail system with existing resources, volunteers, and partnerships. During the public input process for this plan, many expressed a concern that continued growth of such a system was not sustainable and that additional Town resources would be necessary to achieve the desired improvements towards a more sustainable system. With no identified budgetary relief in sight and other Town budget priorities, achieving a more sustainable parks, recreation, open space, and trail system will likely depend on citizen initiatives or perhaps creation of a special parks and recreation district. Public support was expressed for a special district through the survey and public input opportunities, though the financial viability remains unknown. This is an attractive option, as it could allow more centralized and planned oversight of recreational projects and a reliable revenue stream.

Themes of the Master Plan

There are several themes that emerged from the planning process that are woven through the **PROST Master Plan** recommendations. These guiding themes include:

- Highlighting the unique natural features of Nederland and outdoor recreational opportunities
- Caring for the land and promoting sustainable practices
- Improving trail connections
- Fostering lifelong recreational enthusiasts and environmental stewards
- Prioritizing projects that focus on the greatest community needs and interests
- Managing visitor use of assets and balancing these with the needs of residents
- Leveraging resources through partnerships and alternative funding

In addition, the 2012 *Nederland Area Open Space, Trails, Parks, and Recreation Survey* results shows the following value statements for parks and recreation activities in the Nederland area:

- Maintaining what we have
- Promoting healthy active lifestyles
- Promoting environmental stewardship
- Providing connectivity/alternative non-motorized transportation
- Providing positive activities for youth
- Strengthening sense of community

These themes provide a framework for the Master Plan recommendations.

Recommendations – Goals, Objectives, and Actions

The **Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan** recommendations are shaped by extensive public input, a needs assessment, and sound planning practices. Master Plan **Goals, Objectives, and Actions** are summarized below. There are a total of five recommended goals and 29 objectives in the following categories: Overall Vision, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails. **Chapter 7** includes an implementation plan that identifies responsibility, basis/rationale, and timing for each of these recommendations.

Over the next 5 to 10 years, many influences will have an impact on the success of this plan. Funding availability, staff resources, and political and community support will play significant roles in the implementation process.

On March 20, 2012, with passage of Resolution 2012-12, the Nederland Board of Trustees approved the Nederland Planning Process (NPP). Projects identified in this **PROST Master Plan** will be examined through the NPP Process before implementation.



GOAL 1: Overall Vision for Nederland-Area Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails

Nederland's parks, recreational opportunities, open space, and trail system together fulfill the needs of residents of the greater Nederland area for local facilities, programs, and natural areas that support their well-being, their active lifestyles and their needs for indoor and outdoor recreation, their cultural and educational interests, and their desire to interact with the natural environment and with each other, while supporting the environmental, social, and economic sustainability goals of the community.

Objectives:

- 1.1. Address funding and staffing needs for Nederland parks, recreation, open space, and trails, including current inventory, maintenance schedules, and costs in order to create a more sustainable system.

Actions:

- a. Conduct a feasibility study for a parks and recreation district and move forward with formation of the district if financially feasible, (and pursue alternative options, if not).
- b. Develop and implement a sustainable maintenance plan for all existing Nederland parks, recreation, open space, and trails.
 - i. Identify and detail all existing amenities and conditions relative to how well the amenity serves its intended purpose.
 - ii. Identify how each amenity impacts ecosystem functionality.
 - iii. Identify and detail actions required for improving current recreational and environmental conditions.
- c. Look creatively at user fees and other potential funding mechanisms, while continuing to pursue grants from outside funding sources.
- d. Continue to promote fee reduction or scholarship programs to ensure that residents who do not have the ability to pay full user fees have access to public programs and services.
- e. Encourage efforts to cultivate, support, and relieve stress from the demands of the Nederland-area volunteer community.
- f. Collaborate when possible with local and regional non-profit organizations, local governments, and governmental agencies.

- i. Reach an agreement with Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) for expanded mutual use of recreational facilities. (Also see *Objective 3.4.*)
 - ii. Explore feasibility of a volunteer coordinator.
 - iii. Partner with regional volunteer groups for trail repair and maintenance.
 - iv. Explore the expansion of the Adopt-a-Park program into other areas of parks, recreation, open space, and trails (PROST).
- 1.2. Endeavor to follow the principles of the *Sustainable Sites Initiative* or similar sustainability guidelines in the implementation of all PROST projects to the greatest extent possible in order to promote sustainable land development and management practices.

Actions:

- a. Prioritize projects based on sustainability analysis and community recreational needs not being met by current conditions.
 - b. Improvements to recreational amenities should take into consideration multi-functionality. Additional functionalities could include habitat restoration, preservation and protection of natural areas, and improved ecosystem service like stormwater management.
- 1.3. Pay particular attention to the recreational needs of youth – the future of our society – and seniors – a rapidly expanding demographic.

Action:

- c. Give youth and senior accommodations high values in evaluation criteria for project priorities.
- 1.4. Seek to make facilities ADA-compliant to increase accessibility of public facilities.

Actions:

- a. Develop evaluation criteria for new facility and program proposals that incorporate assessments of these elements.
 - b. Evaluate existing PROST facilities for the feasibility of retrofitting for ADA compliance.
 - c. Incorporate consideration of special needs groups into all facility management plans.
- 1.5. Assure that all Nederland PROST facilities are adequately maintained. (Also see *Objective 1.1.b.*)

Actions:

- a. Complete management plans for all Town recreational assets. (Also see *Objective 2.3.*)
 - b. Seek funding for PROST maintenance.
- 1.6. Recognize the vulnerability of the Nederland area and its PROST assets to wildfire and proactively plan to reduce risks.

Actions:

- a. Emphasize forest health, including forest floor/soil health, and wildfire mitigation in the management plans for all Town property.

- b. Work to implement wildfire mitigation in the greater Nederland area using the *Nederland Community Wildfire Protection Plan* as a guide to promote fuel reduction activities by area land owners.
 - c. Support and help coordinate wildfire mitigation efforts by Saws and Slaws, the USDA Forest Service, Boulder County, and others.
 - d. Actively pursue funding opportunities for forest health, including forest floor/soil health, and wild fire mitigation efforts in the greater Nederland area.
- 1.7. Make PROST-related community outreach and education a priority to promote a well-informed public.

Actions:

- a. Continue and expand efforts to develop printed resources that educate and inform the public (e.g., trails maps, forest health, noxious weeds).
 - b. Continue to improve electronic communication efforts, including PROST pages on the Town of Nederland website.
 - c. Collaborate with local environmental education programs (e.g., TEENS, Inc., Wild Bear Mountain Ecology Center, and BVSD).
- 1.8. Consider parking, bicycle, and pedestrian needs for PROST assets, and encourage sustainable transportation at all PROST facilities.

GOAL 2: Parks

Nederland-area parks are well-maintained and provide a diverse and abundant variety of environmentally and financially sustainable park facilities that adequately accommodate residents' needs for indoor and outdoor recreation, social gathering places, and local and regional cultural events on a scale that is appropriate for the size and character of the town.

Objectives:

- 2.1. Implement the *Gateway Park Area Master Plan* in order to expand social and recreational opportunities and enhance environmental stewardship.

Actions:

- a. Name the gateway park area.
 - b. Identify existing conditions that require immediate attention for satisfying intended recreational purpose and improving ecosystem functionality.
 - c. Identify opportunities to protect and improve ecosystems and use sustainable strategies to improve existing recreational facilities.
 - d. Prioritize gateway park area improvements based on unmet recreational needs, ability to cost effectively improve ecosystem functionality, measured community priorities, availability of funding, partnership opportunities, etc.
 - e. Partner with local non-profit organizations (e.g., NedRec) to construct gateway park area improvements.
- 2.2. Improve safety and operation of Nederland Ice and Racquet Park for all users, including ice quality issues to alleviate skater safety concerns and extension of the effective ice season.

Action:

- a. Support the efforts of Racquets and Ice for Nederland Kids (R.I.N.K.) to identify and pursue funding for the construction of a shade structure that can accommodate both tennis and ice usage or other means including separate facilities for tennis and ice.
- 2.3. Continue to create and implement management plans for all Town parks to enhance sustainable operations. (Also see *Objective 1.5.*)
- 2.4. Standardize Town park fixtures to promote ease of maintenance and replacement and uniform appearance.

Actions:

- a. Select standard designs for trail signs, interpretive signage, kiosks, benches, picnic tables, etc.
 - b. Develop selection process and set of guidelines for PROST amenities that encourage use of local recycled or rapidly renewable material and result in the lowest life cycle cost to the community.
- 2.5. Support efforts to provide facilities for community gardening to expand locally grown food and enhance community health.

Actions:

- a. Identify suitable locations for community gardens and greenhouse.
 - b. Identify opportunities to partner with a local group to provide community gardening facilities.
- 2.6. Support efforts to create sustainable recreational opportunities for dog owners and their pets.

Actions:

- a. Explore the feasibility of a community dog park.
- b. Promote responsible dog guardianship by expanding availability of dog waste bag dispensers and evaluating Nederland park areas for off-leash suitability.
- c. Develop a compostable dog waste program.

GOAL 3: Recreation

Nederland-area recreational activities and programs address the expressed recreational needs and preferences of the Nederland-area community and promote healthy, active, and culturally-rich lifestyles in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Objectives

- 3.1. Support the measured need for indoor aquatic recreation by creatively exploring ways to compensate for Nederland's lack of a pool.

Actions:

- a. Seek to negotiate agreements with area pools for a community discount.
- b. Support a reestablishment of the Gilpin Connector.
- c. Explore options to promote car-pooling among pool users.

- d. Explore a partnership opportunities to build a community pool.
- 3.2. Institute a boating program on Barker Meadow Reservoir that meets the demonstrated need for local boating and enhances local recreational opportunities.

Actions:

- a. Negotiate with the City of Boulder to define a safe, environmentally and economically sustainable program for non-motorized boating that is acceptable to both parties.
 - b. Partner with NedRec for program fundraising and management.
- 3.3. Develop the Nederland Community Center site to its full potential as a community gathering place for recreational, cultural, and social enrichment, in partnership with the Community Center Foundation Board when appropriate.

Actions:

- a. Complete a site plan for the Community Center property, including a plan to utilize or replace the west wing and return the outbuildings to active use.
 - b. Collect and assess information to help identify opportunities to use sustainable strategies to guide the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the site.
 - c. Explore increasing hours of operation.
 - d. Seek funding for construction of energy efficient, renewable-powered locker rooms and showers.
- 3.4. Negotiate a mutual use agreement with BVSD for outdoor recreational facility use to maximize and leverage public resources. (Also see *Objective 1.1.*)
- 3.5. Support area non-profit organizations offering critical recreational programming to the fullest extent possible (e.g., R.I.N.K., Peak to Peak Soccer, Nederland Youth Hockey Association, Nederland Tennis Association, TEENS, Inc.). (This is included in feasibility study for a district – see *Objective 1.1.a.*)

Actions:

- a. Explore feasibility of insurance coverage.
 - b. Support the establishment of a common venue for local program registration.
 - c. Explore providing Town support for facilities where possible (e.g., utilities, equipment, and expertise).
- 3.6. Support community demand for additional gardening opportunities (both communal and individual) to promote the health of the community.

Actions:

- a. Explore partnerships with local businesses to provide backyard gardening materials (e.g., composters, greenhouses) at a discount.
- b. Sponsor educational gardening presentations (e.g., by the State Extension Service or by successful local gardeners).
- c. Support creative approaches to mountain gardening (e.g., hugelkultur, vermicomposting).

- 3.7. Address the need for safe venues for recreational sport shooting. Acknowledge the negative community impacts of shooting at the old dump site off Magnolia Road, by supporting the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service to lead a multi-county task force to locate appropriately-sited venues for this activity.

Actions:

- a. Maintain close contact with the U.S. Forest Service and Boulder County to encourage their efforts and to feed progress reports back to the community.
- b. Communicate with state and national elected officials to support this effort.

- 3.8. Support a mix of recreational and cultural activities and programs responsive to the interests and needs of Nederland-area residents to support healthy, active, and culturally-rich lifestyles.

Actions:

- a. Enhance programs of interest to various age groups (e.g., music, talent night/open mic).
- b. Continue to support special events such as races, concerts, and festivals.
- c. Identify strategies to enhance fitness, cultural arts, multi-generational, and family programs through contract instructors, partnerships, or volunteers.
- d. Promote environmental education, interpretation, and stewardship through interpretive signage and stewardship activities such as those offered through the Wild Bear Mountain Ecology Center.
- e. Promote awareness of the history of Nederland through the Nederland Area Historical Society, incorporation of interpretive signage throughout Nederland, and historical walking tours.

Goal 4: Open Space

The Nederland community's desire for open space preservation is recognized by creative pursuit of land preservation opportunities that arise with a priority placed on preserving sensitive natural resources, viewsheds, and riparian areas and by responsible management of the Town's open space property.

Objectives:

- 4.1. Establish Town documentation for acquiring desirable open space property in order to pursue land preservation opportunities.

Actions:

- a. Compile list of potential open space acquisitions that score highly when evaluated according to the evaluation criteria in **Appendix H**.
- b. Maintain a list of potential funding partners for open space acquisition.

- 4.2. Develop Sustainability Analysis for current town-owned open space property for:

- Increasing ecosystem functionality
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Improving stormwater management by use of natural passive systems
- Water, natural resources, and current land use data

- 4.3. Implement management plans for current open space that emphasize best practices for forest health, including forest floor/soil health, wildfire mitigation, and site-appropriate public access. (Also see *Objective 1.6.*)

Goal 5: Trails

The Nederland-area trails system provides safe, accessible, and well-maintained multi-modal, non-motorized pathways that link Nederland's commercial district, neighborhoods, schools, area parks, recreational facilities, and regional trails; encourage physical activity; and provide opportunities for alternative transportation.

Objectives:

- 5.1. Update the 2005 *Town of Nederland Trails Master Plan* to guide enhancements to the trail system.

Actions:

- a. Gather public input regarding needs for additional area trails and linkages.
 - b. Encourage rebuilding plans for recreational trails and adjacent soil restoration in areas impacted by forest mitigation work.
 - c. Update maps for existing trails, trail opportunities and constraints, and proposed trails.
 - d. Revise trail design standards in keeping with current Town sustainability goals.
- 5.2. Find resources for effective trails maintenance and new trail construction.

Actions:

- a. Partner with groups such as the Mountain Youth Corps, Nederland Area Trails Organization (NATO), and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers to repair and maintain local trails.
- b. Seek grant funding for trails maintenance and construction.

- 5.3. Improve trail safety.

Actions:

- a. Identify needs for ground-level trail lighting (e.g., Community Center Connector Trail, Tungsten Trail) and find funding for installation and maintenance.
- b. Identify needs for safe roadway crossings (e.g., near Community Center) and seek funding for appropriate crossing solutions (that could include underpasses or overpasses).
- c. Make trails maintenance a priority.

- 5.4. Continue working with surrounding public and private land holders for increased linkages to area trails and attractions.

Actions:

- a. Participate in the management plan update process for Boulder County's open space lands in the Nederland vicinity.
- b. Collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service and Boulder County to identify desirable trail linkages.

- 5.5. Develop the Tungsten Trail along Middle Boulder Creek and the western shoreline of Barker Reservoir as a riverwalk, with sensitivity towards both public needs for water access and preservation of riparian habitat.

