


RESOLUTION OF THE PITKIN COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION
FORWARDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REGARDING THE LITTLE ANNIE/RICHMOND RIDGE/PEARL PASS
MANAGEMENT PLAN
Resolution No. PZ 2000- 5

RECITALS

1. The Little Annie/Richmond Ridge/Pearl Pass Planning Group consisting of citizens, USFS and County staff, completed a draft recreation management plan for the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge/Pearl Pass area (study area identified in Exhibit "A"). The study area contains both U.S. Forest Service lands and private lands that are accessed by County Roads.
2. The Plan strives to balance the recreational uses of the area with the residential uses and the Rural Remote "backcountry" county zoning for the area.
3. The Plan is broken into a three-phased approach.
 - ⇒ *The first phase implements education and efficient use of existing facilities to ensure a quality experience in the study area.*
 - ⇒ *Phase 2, which incorporates new regulation and a limited, self-enforcing permit system will only be implemented if Phase one is not a successful strategy for management.*
 - ⇒ *Phase 3, which initiates a mandatory, all-user pay permit system is the most restrictive and regulatory means of controlling numbers of people if and when the area continues to have significant increases in conflicts between users, degradation of the environment and/or quality of experience.*
4. Because this is a *recreation activity management plan* rather than a land use master plan, there is no land use code requirement or state statute mandating adoption of the plan by the Planning Commission or the Board of County Commissioners. Nonetheless, the citizens who have worked on the Plan would like to see it implemented and used by elected and appointed officials as a guiding document.
5. While no formal action is required for adoption of the Plan as a whole, the County Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the Plan at noticed public hearings on October 19, 1999 and April 18, 2000, and is forwarding comments and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners relative to policy, further study and action items identified in the Plan.
6. The approved draft of the plan is attached as Exhibit "A".


443086 05/08/2000 12:17P RESOLUTI DAVIS SILVI
1 of 10 R 0.00 D 0.00 N 0.00 PITKIN COUNTY CO

7. In addition to recommendations for specific revisions to the draft Plan, the Planning Commission forwards the following general comments regarding the Plan:
- ⇒ *A recreation management plan for the Little Annie Richmond Ridge/Pearl Pass area is needed and the Commission generally endorses the process for management that's been outlined in the Plan.*
 - ⇒ *The Plan should establish a balance between the right of public access and the preservation of the study area.*
 - ⇒ *As more data is obtained for the area, plan recommendations may need to be revised.*
8. The Planning Commission recommends that the Board of County Commissioners adequately fund the data gathering efforts of this plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Pitkin County Planning Commission that it does hereby forward comments to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge/Pearl Pass Recreation Management Plan.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS PUBLISHED in The Aspen Times Weekly on the 18th day of September, 1999 and the 14th day of March, 2000.


APPROVED AND ADOPTED on the 18th day of April, 2000 .

PITKIN COUNTY PLANNING AND
ZONING COMMISSION

By 
Peter Martin, Chair

Date _____

ATTEST:


Tenley Taylor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


John Ely,
County Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

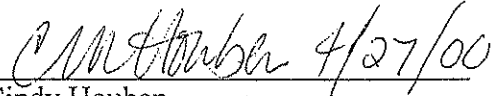
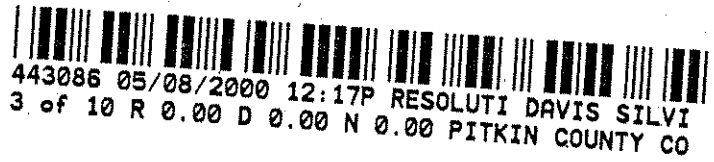

Cindy Houben,
Community Development Director

Exhibit "A"



**THE LITTLE ANNIE/RICHMOND RIDGE
PEARL PASS
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Approved
By

Pitkin County Planning & Zoning

April 18, 2000

April 21, 1999
Revised June 9, 1999
Revised February 24, 2000
Approved April 18, 2000

The Management Plan has been broken into a three-phased approach. The first phase implements education and efficient use of existing facilities to ensure a quality experience in the study area. Phase 2, which incorporates new regulation and a limited, self-enforcing permit system will only be implemented if Phase one is not a successful strategy for management. Phase 3, which initiates a mandatory, all-user pay permit system is the most restrictive and regulatory means of controlling numbers of people if and when the area continues to have significant increases in conflicts between users, degradation of the environment and/or quality of experience.

It is recommended that there be a public review of data collected and goals achieved after Phase 1 to evaluate whether it is necessary to pursue phase 2 or any subsequent phase.

Phase 1 April 99-June 2001 – Education and Data

Gathering *The purpose of this phase is to emphasize efficient use of, rather than expansion of or change to existing facilities in the study area. It is recommended that data continue to be collected during this phase in order to better define specifically how the area is being used and by whom. Finally, education is recommended as the key tool for resolving inefficiencies of use and/or conflicts in the study area during this phase.*

Overall Policies:

1. Determining and understanding existing use levels is a critical element of this Plan.
2. Establishing acceptable balanced capacity is a critical element of this Plan.
 - ⇒ Social capacity and physical capacity relative to recreational use in the study area are both equally important. Both aesthetic and ecological implications of uses must be considered in determining acceptable capacity standards for the area.
3. Strive to maintain a sustainable use level. The current level of combined recreational and residential use, particularly on roads in the study area is too high. No future expansion or increase in recreation levels within the study area should be encouraged and no further approvals for recreational activities within the study area are recommended unless the activities are found to have negligible impacts. Also look at remaining residential buildout potential based on existing zoning to determine whether residential use levels at buildout will be sustainable, given overall use of the area.
4. It is recognized that the Study area is located within the Pitkin County's Rural/Remote Zone District.
5. Create no new (net) parking; make efficient use of existing parking;
6. Eliminate illegal parking on private lands and along County Roads
7. Regulate traffic on Little Annie and Midnight Mine Roads. Enforce County road regulations



443086 05/08/2000 12:17P RESOLUTI DAVIS SILVI
4 of 10 R 0.00 D 0.00 N 0.00 PITKIN COUNTY CO

8. Educate users of Richmond Ridge to stay on designated Roads and to respect private property by not trespassing. Private property owners should collaborate with commercial users on education strategies.
9. Encourage private property owners and commercial users to look out for one another and communicate
10. The only commercial recreational uses which should be operating at this time in the study area are those for which permits from the County or Forest have been obtained.
11. Maintain status quo of motorized uses on both County (Pearl Pass) and Montezuma (Forest) roads; *or*

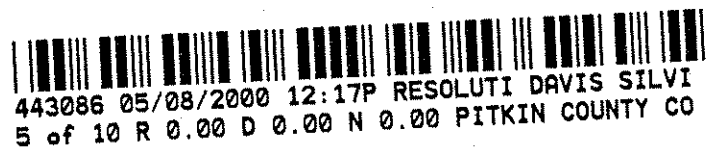
Further Study

1. In order to recognize, manage and control existing uses on private property and/or public lands, the Richmond Ridge Planning Group should identify those areas where easements would be beneficial.
2. Revise county rental car lease contracts to advise vendors to discourage use of Little Annie and Midnight Mine Roads
4. 3. Limit motorized use to periods of the year when the Montezuma and Pearl Pass roads are discernable in order to assure that motorized vehicles remain on designated roads, and out of designated wilderness areas; Establish standards for regulation and/or review of motorized and non-motorized special events within the study area. Consider regulating number of events, duration of events and/or group size. Guidelines should address mitigation of unacceptable noise, dust and pollution levels, safety implications for other road users, trespassing concerns, environmental damage issues, weather and road conditions, and how much an event promotes use of the area (for better or for worse). Don't over-regulate these events, and be sure to allow for exceptional events to occur, though they may not comply with established standards.
5. Consider creation of a self-regulating users club for educational purposes and to monitor uses.
6. Consider having an open bid for commercial recreational permits on a semi-annual basis...

Action Items:

Midnight Mine Road

1. Define and sign existing public parking for both summer and winter;
2. Review availability of Castle Creek Valley Ranch trailhead parking;
3. Consider improving (but not increasing) existing parking below Midnight Mine Inn
4. Place signs along public roads to indicate where public lands begin and end in order to direct dispersed camping to public areas and away from private property.
5. Continue to have motorized and non-motorized access share the roadway (as opposed to creating a separate non-motorized trail).



Little Annie Road

1. Place adequate signing and enforce a 72 hour parking restriction on the lower Little Annie Road parking lot on U.S.F.S property above Castle Creek Road.
2. Create a legal parking lot at Lower Hurricane. Allow for day-use-only parking for visitors and permanent parking for residents of the study area at the Lower Hurricane parking lot
3. Install adequate signing to inform people that they are entering a quiet zone and private property; that where private property exists, owner's permission is required for use of land; and that users must stay on the road as they cross through private lands
4. Place signs along public roads to indicate where public lands begin and end in order to direct dispersed camping to public areas and away from private property.

Express Creek

1. Efficiently manage parking on the Express Creek bridge, road and at the public parking lot at Toklat by posting a 96 hour parking limit and developing a parking plan. Do not enlarge the existing parking area.
2. Place signs in the parking area on the Express Creek Road, bridge and in the public parking lot at Toklat that educate users about avalanche (and other) risks associated with winter use of the backcountry.
3. Place signs along public roads to indicate where public lands begin and end in order to direct dispersed camping to public areas and away from private property.
4. Limit the size of commercial uses to the extent that the business does not generate more customer and employee parking than can be accommodated on site.
5. Keep Pearl Pass and Express Creek Roads as travelways for general public motorized and non-motorized use during the summer months.

Pearl Pass Area

1. Place signs in the Ashcroft area along Castle Creek, Pearl Pass and Montezuma Roads to educate users about *existing* U.S.F.S Management Plan backcountry regulations that effect use of the Pearl Pass area, as well as the risk of backcountry travel year-round.. Existing Forest Management Plan policy limits motorized use in the Pearl Pass and Montezuma Basin to designated Forest and County Roads only.
2. Maintain *existing* Cooper Basin Rd. closure dictated by the Forest Travel Management Plan.

Within Study Area in General

1. Continue to survey and monitor use in order to establish solid baseline data and determine capacity.
2. Eliminate illegal parking and/or undesignated parking on private lands and along County Roads
3. Eliminate illegal houses within the study area.
4. (Note: The Board of County Commisioners considered the recommendation for a moratorium and concluded that it would be a better more efficient use of time to immediately pursue establishment of a joint County/USFS review process for outfitter/guide permitting. Establish a common permitting system as quickly as feasible.



443086 05/08/2000 12:17P RESOLUTI DAVIS SILVI
6 of 10 R 0.00 D 0.00 N 0.00 PITKIN COUNTY CO

5. Make special review criteria and/or standards for permitting of commercial uses on county roads, private property, and public lands uniform. Make standards simple, rather than more complex.
6. Take the physical and social carrying capacity of the Richmond Ridge area into account when determining the number of commercial permits, which are to be issued under the revised permitting procedure.
7. Enforce unpermitted commercial recreational uses; Determine in each phase who will be responsible for enforcement, and how enforcement will be funded.
8. In order to limit pollution and impacts, use revegetation material to protect high-alpine areas along Pearl Pass and Taylor Pass; to identify the road corridor and deter off-road use
9. Address the issue of trespass on private property through signage, education and enforcement.
10. Place signs along County roads in the study area to delineate where public lands end and private lands begin.
11. Disperse snowmobile use between Midnight Mine and Little Annie Roads to reduce overloading on either one and also to recognize that Little Annie does not hold snow in late winter/early Spring. Parking availability at both roads may help to distribute use.
12. Limit the size of commercial uses to the extent that the business does not generate more customer and employee parking than can be accommodated on site.
13. Continue to have the County do periodic traffic counts on all of the roads within the study area to determine a baseline traffic level.

Phase II – (Date) – If education, elimination of un-permitted commercial recreational uses, and more efficient use of existing facilities don't result in a sustainable level of activity in the study area, initiate a Self-Enforcing Permit System. Also make some regulatory and/or physical changes to separate motorized and non-motorized uses to maintain a "quality experience."

Policies:

1. If use in the study area exceeds 1998-1999 baseline data, begin self-enforcing permit system to maintain a 98-99 use level.
2. Allow for a variety of motorized and non-motorized uses on Richmond Ridge, but provide for separation of motorized and non-motorized use whenever environmentally and economically feasible.

Further Study:

1. Consider creation of a self-regulating users club for educational purposes and to monitor uses; initially require fees and permits for limited commercial and unlimited

non-commercial uses; Locate fee stations at the base of Little Annie and Midnight Mine Roads, at Ashcroft, the Gondola and on the ridge south of the private property boundaries;

2. Consider creation of a specific area for snowmobiles on the south portion of richmond ridge (see winter map). This separation of uses will address the touring snowmobiler by setting aside an area south of Fall Creek for snowmobile use. This is a change in management direction for this portion of National Forest. The current travel management direction is to allow motorized uses ONLY on designated routes. The only designated routes in the planning areas are the county roads. No off-road motorized travel (summer or winter) is currently allowed on the U.S. Forest lands except the authorized Powder Tours.
3. Consider restricting motorized access on certain routes near the north portion of richmond ridge. Three roads have been identified for non-motorized use near the ridge: Loushin, Red Hill, and Hurricane. In general, the group finds that the proliferation of roads makes for a chaotic situation and that the use of these 3 roads for non-motorized travel exclusively will give non-motorized users a less congested place to travel near the Sundeck. In the south portion of the study area, Cooper Creek Road is already closed to motorized use in the winter.
4. Consider creation of motorized and non-motorized routes on top of the ridge. In an effort to give non-motorized travelers a safer and more pleasant experience, a non-motorized, off-road trail corridor is being recommended to travel the length of the ridge in the study area. It is likely that snowmobile grooming will take place on an-as-needed basis.
5. Consider requiring snowmobile skiers to use cat tracks for snowmobile travel. In the powder skiing area, snowmobilers that are towing skiers or traveling in the area for other reasons will be required to stay on the cat tracks so that powder will be preserved for skiing. This is in recognition that a quality experience should be available for guided powder tour clients and non-guided skiers.
6. Consider creation of non-motorized, off-road winter recreation areas. Generally, this alternative identifies two areas for off-road winter recreation: the powder skiing area off of Richmond Ridge and the Pearl Pass area. Currently, motorized uses are allowed on the county road. The current Forest management direction prohibits motorized uses off of designated routes (the county road and the Forest development road, Montezuma Basin Road). It has been noted that there are periods during the winter, when snowmobiles cannot stay on the county road because of terrain and avalanche hazard. There are documented and reoccurring problems of motorized intrusions into the adjacent Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness.
7. Consider creation of parallel trails (motorized and non-motorized) from Markley Hut to two miles above Castle Creek Road.

Action Items: *(Further study will be necessary to determine whether action items are appropriate and/or necessary).*

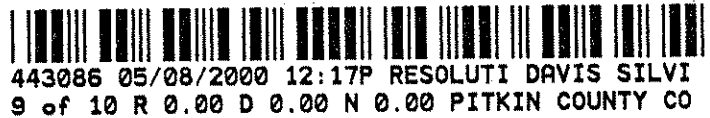


Phase III – (Date) – If a Self-Enforcing Permit System, regulatory and/or physical changes to separate motorized and non-motorized are not enough to maintain a “quality experience” in the Study area, initiate a mandatory fee to monitor and regulate use.

Policy:

1. In the event that phases 1 and 2 are unsuccessful in maintaining a sustainable level of use in the study area, it may be necessary to implement a mandatory fee or permit requirement to monitor and regulate use. It is recognized that this is the most restrictive and regulatory means of controlling numbers of people when and if the area continues to have significant and/or dramatic increases in users and a significant increase in conflicts between users, degradation of the environment and/or quality of experience.

Further Study



Action Items

1. Issue commercial and non-commercial permits through a Lottery system
2. Implement an all-user pay permit system
3. Place fee stations at the base of Little Annie and Midnight Mine Roads, at Ashcroft, the Gondola and on the ridge south of the private property boundaries.

Add maps – winter, study area and parking

Add other exhibits id'd by Paula and include recommended wording for signs


Additional Recommendations and Questions from the May 3rd, '99 meeting of the Large Richmond Ridge Planning Group.

- Who and What determines whether a “further study” item becomes an “action item?”
- The document should contain a definition section to clarify terms. Define a “sustainable” use level. Define “negligible” use levels, and use levels that are “too high.”
- Who collects baseline data to determine impacts, and what factors are considered?
- How do you measure the level of conflict between users, and decide when a perceived conflict requires a change in

Phases, continued.

management (for example)? Complaints are not necessarily a good measure...

- When considering "further study" item #4 on page 2, consider whether Castle Creek Road would be included as part of the motorized-free area, and who would enforce the two-day motorized-free designation. (Several people have indicated that they don't support the two-day motorized-free designation, and the USFS has made it clear that they could not support such a recommendation.)


443086 05/08/2000 12:17P RESOLUTI DAVIS SILVI
10 of 10 R 0.00 D 0.00 N 0.00 PITKIN COUNTY CO