

APPENDIX A

# Public Input and Partner Comments

NORTH STAR NATURE PRESERVE  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

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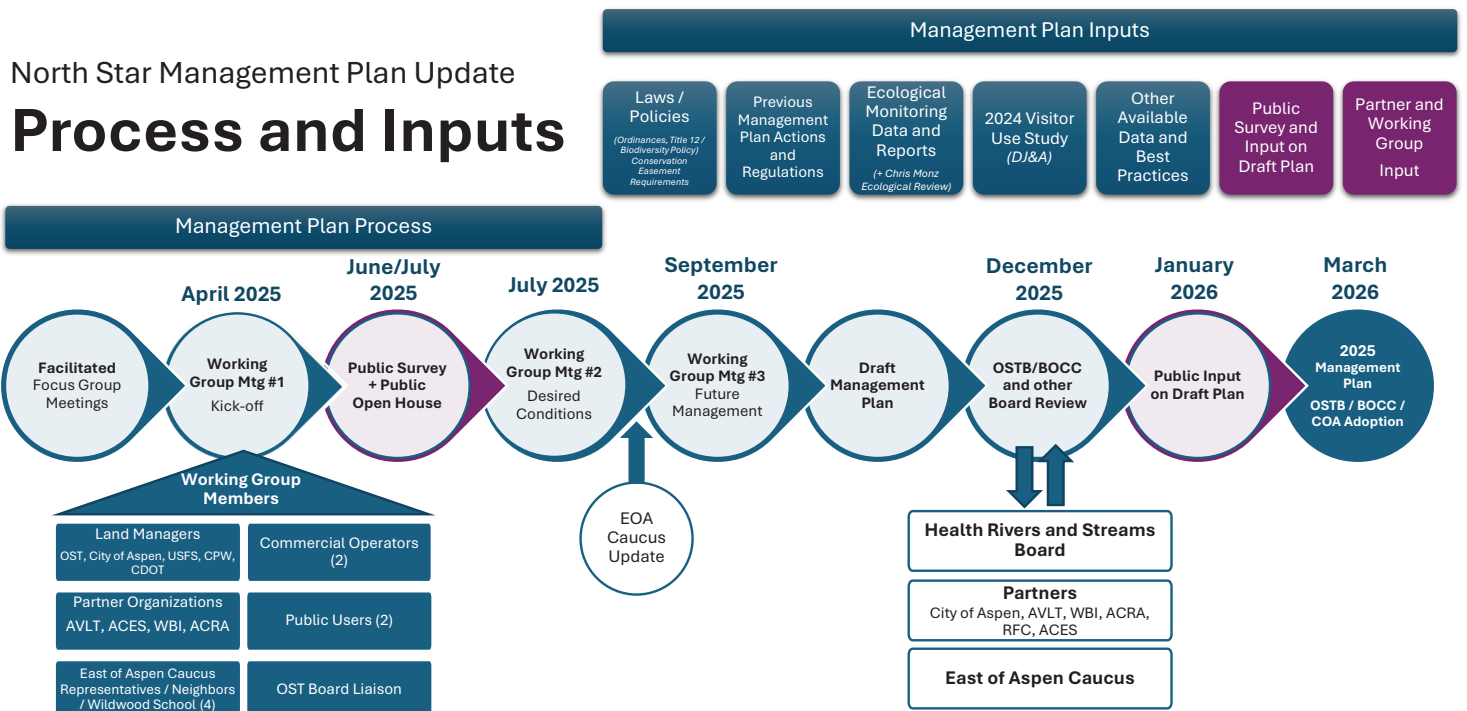


PARKS &  
OPEN SPACE  
CITY OF ASPEN

# 1. PLAN PROCESS AND INPUTS

The North Star Management Plan update launched with a review of relevant plan inputs, including relevant policies, previous management plans, ecological monitoring and data reports, visitor use studies, and best practices. An extensive public outreach process accompanied the data collection and review. First, focus group meetings gathered initial feedback from neighbors and commercial operators. A formalized “working group” of land managers, partner organizations, neighbors, commercial operators, public users, and an Open Space and Trails Board member met three times in 2025 in a facilitated setting with a neutral engagement expert. An initial online questionnaire, accompanied by a public open house, sought feedback on visitation and use patterns, current conditions, support for current management, and preferences on future management. It should be noted that both questionnaires used in the process relied on convenience sampling, which is not a statistically valid sampling method. In September, existing conditions staff presented the existing conditions to the Open Space and Trails Board and Board of County Commissioners, and in December, staff presented the draft plan update. A second online questionnaire, linked to the draft plan, sought feedback on future management, synthesized from plan inputs and the public process.

This appendix augments the information in Section 3: Planning Process of the North Star Management Plan update by summarizing public input themes, providing working group notes, documenting plan refinements made in response to feedback, and providing full records of public questionnaires.



# 2. SUMMARY: INITIAL PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

770 TOTAL RESPONSES

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

An online questionnaire gathered community feedback from June to July 2025. Questionnaire respondents were primarily local residents, with the large majority living in Aspen (66%). A resounding 99% of respondents reported having visited North Star. Most participants reported visiting North Star regularly, reflecting a user-based sample rather than a visitor-tourist sample. Respondents were adults aged 35–74, predominantly 51 and older (50%), with relatively fewer younger respondents. Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the questionnaire largely reflects the perspectives of frequent local users and nearby residents, rather than occasional visitors. The most popular activities or respondents include floating the river (65%), walking/running on the East of Aspen Trail (65%), viewing scenery from Highway 82 (90%), and wildlife viewing (52%). Less frequent but notable activities included birding, Nordic skiing, e-biking, and educational programs.

## VISITATION AND USE PATTERNS

**Top reasons for visiting** natural scenery, tranquility, and wildlife.

- 92% visit to enjoy natural scenery.
- 78% for tranquility.
- 77% for observing wildlife.

Only 9% visit to test physical abilities, highlighting that most visitors are not seeking an adrenaline or challenge-based recreation experience, but rather one of quiet enjoyment and immersion in nature.

**The most-used access points** are Wildwood (57%), East of Aspen Trail (52%), and Stillwater Bridge Takeout (45%).

- Most float users use a single vehicle (63%) or a bike (46%) to access the Nature Preserve.

**Timing and strategy adjustments** are used by many try to avoid parking issues by timing visits carefully. 84% plan visits around low-use times: weekdays, early/late season, or off-peak hours.

Multiple write-in responses emphasized a desire to limit car traffic and congestion at key entry points.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

4+ Stars: The average visit was rated highly, with 81% describing their experience with 4 stars, “Excellent”,

or 5 stars, “Very Good”, on a 5-star rating scale.

## Shared Concerns

Many expressed concerns about crowding, overuse, and loss of solitude, especially during peak season.

- 47% believe traffic on Wildwood Lane and at the Stillwater Bridge Takeout is a big problem.
- 43% view wildlife disturbance as a big problem, flagging audible music (42%) and loud noises (41%) as related big problems.
- Vegetation trampling (40%) and Highway 82 traffic (40%) were other big concerns.
- More than half of the respondents do not consider human alterations to beaver dams or human waste to be problems.

## Overcrowding & Peak Season Pressure

47% said the Wildwood parking area is frequently overcrowded, along with the beach area (34%) and river corridor (25%).

A visual test using images showed escalating discomfort with increasing numbers of river users.

- 85% would not feel crowded in an image with 2 people in the viewscape.
- At 6 people in the viewscape more responded that they would feel crowded (60%) than would not (37%)
- 91% felt 12 people in a viewscape was too busy.

## Strong Support for Current Management Strategies

Questionnaire participants overwhelmingly support a range of river management tools currently in use:

- 91% support required training for commercial guides.
- 90% support limiting the size of commercial groups.
- 88% support limiting the number of commercial groups per hour.
- 84% support education and outreach about “How to Float” in a way that shows respect for the environment and other users
- 83% support managing the number of commercial operator permits (currently limited to 5 operators per season)
- 82% support mandatory ecological and river use education to all commercial group participants before they float the river
- 80% support zero-tolerance policies for dogs and loud music.
- 73% support current voluntary wildlife closures
- 71% support voluntary low flow closures for the public (Mandatory for commercial groups)
- 61% support limiting availability of parking to manage river use
- 61% support closing North Star and river use from dusk to dawn

## FUTURE MANAGEMENT

A clear preference was set for a desired condition for North Star that reflects both ecological and social components. Overall, responses reflect a shared desire to protect the natural character of North Star, manage human impacts thoughtfully, and ensure the preserve remains a refuge for wildlife and a place for quiet nature-based recreation.

- 90% or more said it’s ‘Very Important’ or ‘Important’ that North Star provides effective **wildlife habitat, is biologically diverse, regulates/preserves water flows, and hosts healthy riparian areas, and provides a place where people can connect with nature, develop an appreciation for environmental stewardship, and experience tranquility.**
- 70% or more said it’s ‘Very Important’ or ‘Important’ that North Star serves as a living classroom and offers access to the water for river recreation.

## Mixed Views on Regulating Public Use

Respondents agree on visitor use management tools, such as education and group size limits. There is a clear divide in support for accessing the river freely versus regulating and/or limiting access through timed-entry permits, reservations, or other strategies

- 87% support river group size limits, and 71% support requiring ecological education for private users.
- 42% support the ability to freely access the river, while 49% prefer regulating use through permits, reservations, and other strategies.
- Specifically at Wildwood, opposition was noted to paid reservations/ permits (58%) and paid parking (49%), with respondents supporting a vehicle turnaround (67%) and real-time parking fees (59%) instead.

## Feedback Themes from Open Comments

- Strong Public Support for Habitat Protection
- Commercial Use/Commercialization concerns
- Concerns About Overuse and “Water Park” Atmosphere
- Favor for “Rewilding” and Beaver Habitat Restoration
- Divided Views on Permits and Access Management
- Locals vs. Tourists Tension
- Requests for Better Enforcement and Education
- Desire for Non-Motorized and Low-Impact Access
- Appreciation for management efforts
- Misinformation About Past Planning Efforts

# 3. RESPONSE TO INITIAL PUBLIC FEEDBACK

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Overall, the first public questionnaire showed strong support for a management plan centered on habitat protection and ecological restoration, accompanied by requests for clearer visitor-use management tools, monitoring-based decision-making, evaluation of commercial use levels, and strategies that reduce parking congestion while maintaining river access. The draft plan update released for public comment emphasizes that the majority of recommended actions focus on ecological protections and restoration, supported by long-term monitoring and monitoring-based adaptive management.

Below are measurable ways that the plan update was drafted in response to public input.

- **Majority of actions focus on ecological protection and restoration.** More than two-thirds of the management actions (69%) in the North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan update focus on natural resource protection, restoration, ecological monitoring, or ecosystem function, demonstrating that the majority of management efforts are directed toward improving habitat conditions and ecological resilience.
- **Multiple long-term ecological monitoring programs inform adaptive management.** This plan lays out a clear ecological monitoring program to scientifically track conditions over time using best practices in the fields of hydrology, botany, forestry and biology. It represents a significant investment in ground-based knowledge and data that is used to evaluate conditions and inform adaptive management responses.
- **Thresholds guide visitor-use management decisions.** The plan update does offer a visitor use capacity range. Visitor-use decisions are informed by monitoring indicators and defined management thresholds, allowing appropriate recreation management tools (peak use protocols, closures, education, parking controls) to be utilized as resource conditions approach or exceed acceptable limits.
- **Management tools, reviewed by experts, address both ecological protection and visitor behavior, offering a state-of-the-art plan.** Through an adaptive management framework, rooted in conservation values, the plan offers management goals and actions, policies and regulations, and safeguards through an indicator-and-threshold-based monitoring program. This approach is considered the best practice for protected areas nationwide today.

# 4. SUMMARY: DRAFT PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

200 TOTAL RESPONSES

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

An online questionnaire gathered community feedback from January to February 2026. Questionnaire respondents were primarily local residents; 60% live in Aspen, and only 1% identified as visitors. This may mean the results are more reflective of local residents than tourists or occasional users. Over half of respondents (51%) are aged 61+, and more than three-quarters are 51 or older. This suggests the questionnaire reached an older demographic, which may influence perspectives on management priorities. Most participants reported experiencing North Star through walking/running/hiking (70%), viewing scenery (57%), and floating the river or birding/wildlife viewing (both 50%).

## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT PLAN

### Desired Conditions Statement

Strong agreement for the Desired Conditions Statement. 94% of respondents either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the overarching statement that guides management now and into the future.

### Goals and Actions

Strong support for the Updated Plan's goals and supporting actions. There is near-unanimous support for biodiversity, river system, and riparian area, wetlands, and beavers goals, with very little opposition.

- Biodiversity: 94% 'Strongly Support' or 'Support' the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity goals and actions.
- River System: 96% 'Strongly Support' or 'Support' the River System goals and actions.
- Riparian Area, Wetlands, Beavers: 93% 'Strongly Support' or 'Support' these goals and actions.
- Wildlife and Habitat: 82% 'Strongly Support' or 'Support' Wildlife and Habitat Goals; 12% 'Oppose' these goals and actions.

Overall support for the Plan Update's goals and supporting actions related to the Community Value. While most goals received overwhelming support, the Community Goals question showed a split, with 67% 'Strongly Support' or 'Support', but 28% 'Strongly Oppose' or 'Oppose'. This is a higher

level of opposition than for other goals, indicating community-related issues are more contentious.

Most accept the policies and management actions that may limit access to, or change how people access, the river at North Star during certain times or conditions to protect wildlife and habitat.

- 85.8% find the proposed tradeoffs 'Very acceptable', 'Acceptable', or 'Somewhat acceptable'.

### Open-ended Comments

Open-ended feedback was offered by about half of respondents, but those who offered additional feedback primarily offered negative (43%) and neutral (42%) sentiments, with relatively few positive remarks (14%). This "negativity bias" is common in our open-ended comment opportunities: individuals who feel strongly, particularly those with concerns, are more likely to submit written comments, while satisfied respondents often select structured responses without providing additional narrative. Top themes of concern focused on restrictions, enforcement, and ecological protections.

## SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN PROCESS

Most support the input opportunities throughout the plan update process. 70% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they had the opportunity to provide input and understood how it would be used.

## FEEDBACK FROM RIVER USERS

### Respondent Profile

Respondents who float the river or use the beach made up 50% of respondents. Of those, most are aged 51 and older (65 of 101 respondents) and primarily live in Aspen (64 respondents).

### Summary of Feedback

#### Support for the Desired Conditions Statement:

Nearly all 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the Desired Conditions statement (157 of 195 respondents) and find the proposed tradeoffs acceptable (146 respondents).

**Support for Goals and Actions:** Overall support for the Plan Update's draft goals and actions was high.

- Two-thirds, or more, of all respondents identified as river users 'Support' or 'Strongly Support' the goals and actions aligned with each conservation value.
- The goals and actions aligned with the community value received overall support, but it is worth pointing out that they also received the most 'Strongly Opposed' responses (21%). Open-ended comments of river users that oppose the goals and actions aligned with the community value (9 responses) list these outstanding concerns:
  1. Management actions do not match perceptions of a 'nature preserve'.
  2. A perception persists that wildlife disturbance, loss of quietude, and declining habitat quality are occurring.
  3. A perception persists that recreation is occurring in areas or seasons that should be protected for breeding, migration, or habitat recovery.

**Themes from Open-ended comments:** Among river and beach users, comments were mostly neutral (28 respondents), with some negative (14 respondents) and positive (7 respondents) sentiments. Top themes included recreation access management, commercial recreation restrictions, prioritizing local users, support for recreation management, enforcement, and wildlife protection.

**Opportunity to provide feedback during the plan update:** 71% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they had the opportunity to provide input and understood how it would be used.

## FEEDBACK FROM NEIGHBORS

*(East of Aspen residents)*

### Respondent Profile

East of Aspen residents made up 25% of respondents. Of those, most are aged 51 and older, and they strongly support biodiversity, river, riparian, and wildlife goals.

### Summary of Feedback

#### Support for the Desired Conditions statement:

Nearly all 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' with the Desired Conditions statement (40 out of 42 respondents) and find tradeoffs acceptable.

**Support for Goals and Actions:** Overall support for the Plan Update's draft goals and actions was high.

- Half, or more, of all respondents identified as neighbors 'Support' or 'Strongly Support' the goals and actions aligned with each conservation value.
- The goals and actions aligned with wildlife, habitat, and community values received overall support, but they also received the most 'Opposed' or 'Strongly Opposed' responses (23% and 41%, respectively). Open-ended comments of neighbors that oppose the goals and actions aligned with these values (5 responses) list these outstanding concerns:
  1. A perception persists that the plan is recreation-focused rather than conservation-focused
  2. A concern is evident that ecological conditions are declining despite statements that conditions are stable
  3. Current visitation levels are considered incompatible with wildlife protection, and there are requests for stronger limits on river use (including commercial).

**Themes from Open-ended comments:** Neighbors' comments were mostly negative (13) or neutral (9). Top themes included wetland and ecological restoration, wildlife protection, recreation access management, scientific study requirements, commercial recreation restrictions, and concerns about managing river use. Supportive comments and enforcement issues were also noted.

**Opportunity to provide feedback during the plan update:** 48% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' they had the opportunity to provide input and understood how it would be used; 25% 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree'.

# 5. DRAFT PLAN REFINEMENT

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Across all questionnaire responses, demographic comparisons, and open-ended comments, consistent themes emerged regarding how the draft plan and its public rollout could be strengthened. First and foremost, there is strong support for the Desired Conditions Statement and the plan's goals, particularly those focused on habitat conservation, biodiversity, ecosystem health, beaver restoration, and ensuring opportunities for quiet, nature-based recreation.

However, river use management remains a point of division among respondents. The most common concerns center on crowding, river use levels, visitor capacity, and the social and ecological impacts of river use, especially during peak periods. Open-ended comments on these topics tend to be more negative than positive, reflecting the typical pattern that those with concerns or dissatisfaction are more likely to submit written feedback in opt-in public questionnaires. This is known as the "negativity bias" and recognizing the non-response, respondents who do not answer open-ended questions, is as important as those respondents may be satisfied or neutral. In this case, 49% of respondents did not submit a written response to the open-ended question soliciting details on topics of concern. Quantitative responses across the survey indicate broader support for the plan's management direction. These results suggest strong alignment around the conservation values, alongside differences in perspective regarding how visitor use should be managed.

The draft plan directly addresses the most frequently raised concerns. It implements 42 substantial actions, with accompanying response options, and 39 monitoring indicators to manage crowding and capacity, mitigate the impacts of river use, protect beavers and ecosystem health, and respond to wildlife disturbance and changing ecological indicators. This is a significant increase in effort, costs, and transparency related to managing North Star into the future. The plan acknowledges legal, jurisdictional, and practical barriers that currently prevent the deployment of certain tools, such as a river-use permit system, because Open Space and Trails does not control the Wildwood put-in. Even if management authority were expanded, current monitoring shows no ecological need for a permit system, and there is limited public support for such regulation at this time. Nonetheless, the plan is structured to adapt: it maintains options for future tools, including land exchange or other mechanisms, should ecological conditions or public sentiment shift.

North Star is designated as a nature preserve, and this plan reaffirms its conservation-value framework. At the same time, North Star was acquired and continues to function as part of a broader open-space system intended to provide sustainably managed opportunities for people to connect with nature. Public access to nature and respectful recreation are conservation values that were among the reasons for the property's original purchase. Management decisions here consider ecological protection with a responsibility to both wildlife and the entire public. While this plan may not meet every individual's vision for North Star, it demonstrates a clear commitment to responsibly stewarding a shared public resource with integrity, transparency, and a focus on both ecological health and the public benefits of access to nature. The update underscores North Star's positive ecological trajectory by pairing strong wildlife protections, including the continued closure of 188 acres to public access, with adaptive, evidence-based management to improve habitat and visitor use. Together, these measures establish a forward-looking standard that reflects innovative best practices for managing a nature preserve of this scale, advancing both ecological integrity and meaningful public access.

This list summarizes the direction for final plan revisions and its public rollout:

### **Stronger emphasis on the conservation value-first management direction and policy alignment in the plan update.**

**Why?** While many respondents supported the Desired Conditions and high-level goals, some comments, especially from neighbors, requested clearer evidence that all management actions maintain ecological protections at the forefront. Public presentations of the management framework could better emphasize the conservation-value-first direction.

### **Transparent and routine updates on monitoring, restoration outcomes, and ongoing implementation.**

**Why?** Respondents place strong emphasis on ecological monitoring and indicate a desire for greater transparency into how monitoring results inform management decisions and adaptive actions. The plan update includes actions to improve riparian habitat, address legacy land-use impacts, and enhance hydrologic and ecological function through building ecological resilience and integrity. Routine/more frequent public updates on ecological reports and implementation milestones will give the community and partners a clear view of progress, challenges, and next steps for North Star's ecological condition.

### **Clearer public and partner communication of visitor-use management tools included in the plan to address crowding, capacity, and wildlife disturbance.**

**Why?** Concerns about river use levels, crowding, and wildlife disturbance were recurring themes in both questionnaires. The plan sets forth new tools to manage peak-use days, mitigate crowding, and implement new closures to benefit wildlife. It also defines a visitor capacity range, clarifies how People-Per-Viewscapes (PPV) and seasonal river use counts are used, and links ecological thresholds to management response options. It may be necessary to allow time to adjust following the implementation of new tools, understand how they work, and monitor for any unintended consequences. Public education that shows these responsive tools in action is important for demonstrating progress and accountability on this community concern as well as buy-in toward a mutually agreeable solution.

### **Greater transparency of the comparatively large investment of time and resources in managing North Star, and overwhelmingly positive impact of its presence on the community.**

**Why?** Calls for better enforcement of rules, reduced "party atmosphere," and increased user compliance were common. North Star remains the most patrolled Open Space and Trails property in our County, with enforcement patrols conducted by Open Space and Trails, the City of Aspen, and the U.S. Forest Service every day during the summer months. Additional educational support is provided by ACES Naturalists. Compliance with posted regulations is improving, and further communication about enforcement, education, and outcomes, will build awareness of the investment in responsible recreation.

## **Clearer public and partner demonstration of how ecological indicators and thresholds are to be used.**

**Why?** A resounding majority (94%) of respondents support the desired conditions statement, describing a collective future for North Star. Some respondents expressed concern that monitoring alone may not demonstrate progress toward desired conditions, specifically improved ecological conditions. The term “thresholds” needs to be better explained: thresholds set the minimum acceptable conditions for each indicator. Thresholds are not the targets for improvement. They are the “stop sign” that lets managers know things may be heading in a clearly undesirable direction and that corrective actions must be taken. Progress, instead, is tracked through the completion of management actions and through reporting on changes over time in indicators such as invasive species reduction, wetland and riparian recovery, beaver-supported hydrologic function, and habitat complexity.

## **Increased emphasis on communicating plan limitations and the rationale for decisions.**

**Why?** Some actions, such as permit systems or river access restrictions, cannot be implemented now due to jurisdictional or legal constraints, or lack of public support or ecological need. Other actions, such as converting Wildwood Put-in to drop off only or reducing commercial use to one operator, may have unintended consequences that warrant study before implementation. These example actions, however, are still included as response options in the plan for transparency about long term potentials for North Star. Clearly communicating what can and cannot be accomplished under current conditions, and how future response options may be considered if supported, is essential to managing expectations and building long-term credibility.

## **Greater invitation for ongoing public involvement and dialogue.**

**Why?** The plan recognizes that not all stakeholders will agree on every issue, but emphasizes the value of ongoing public participation. Inviting continued engagement and creating clear channels for dialogue will help foster shared stewardship and mutual understanding, even where consensus cannot be reached.

# 6. HOW THE PLAN UPDATE ADDRESSES KEY PUBLIC FEEDBACK

## PLAN COMMITMENTS & MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan includes measurable, science-based tools to evaluate ecological condition, manage visitor use, and adjust management actions through an adaptive framework to protect North Star’s conservation values over time. The following table illustrates how the plan will track progress in addressing the community’s key concerns regarding ecological health, visitor capacity, and recreation impacts.

Feedback	Plan Commitments	Management Tools (Policies and Actions)
<p><b>Beaver habitat and continued interest in impacts of river users crossing dams</b></p> <p><i>Response:</i> Monitoring and management tools protect beaver complexes and wetland hydrology.</p>	<p>Track beaver activity every 2–4 years (since 2018).</p> <p>Assess riparian vegetation and condition every 10 years (since 2017).</p> <p>Provide public updates on restoration projects that support wetland and beaver habitat.</p>	<p>Updated Beaver Dam Policy instructs river users to go around dams at active dam sites and protect ground disturbance (Action 13.1).</p> <p>Protect and enhance riparian tree and shrub regeneration and maturation (Action 5.1).</p> <p>Updated Downed Trees Policy prioritizes leaving woody debris in place to the greatest extent practicable to support a healthy, evolving river system.</p>
<p><b>Ecosystem health and use of indicator species to inform management</b></p> <p><i>Response:</i> Collected data shows that ecological conditions are stable or improving. Robust monitoring program, including indicator species in key habitats, tracks ecological health and guides management decisions.</p>	<p>Monitor six habitat types (aspen forests, riparian shrublands, emergent wetlands, riparian woodlands, broad riparian areas, general habitat) at set intervals for seven indicator species.</p> <p>Track bird and mammal diversity index scores every 10 years (since 2017).</p> <p>Conduct annual noxious weed monitoring per protocols.</p> <p>Engage scientific surveys and prepare monitoring reports with outside experts.</p> <p>Use the best available science and practices to guide management.</p>	<p>Evaluate the overall conservation value of plants at North Star (Action 3.1).</p> <p>Assess habitat function, identify needs, and implement habitat improvements (Actions 11.3 and 11.4).</p> <p>Include aquatic nuisance species (ANS) surveys in river monitoring as needed (Action 2.2).</p> <p>Monitor river channel changes and use best practices for river and riparian management; prioritizing natural dynamics (Action 6.2).</p> <p>Participate in regional conservation and wildfire resilience partnerships (Action 1.1).</p>

Feedback	Plan Commitments	Management Tools (Policies and Actions)
<p><b>Recreation impacts on wildlife</b></p> <p><i><b>Response:</b></i> Annual river use counts, along with over 28 independent scientific studies, provide a clear picture of the scale and timing of river use. Wildlife surveys at higher frequency that typical for natural areas, reveal continued and increasing wildlife presence and use of North Star throughout the year.</p>	<p>Track species-specific wildlife presence, habitat use every 3-5 years (since 2014).</p> <p>Track ratio of human-sensitive species to species not sensitive to humans to ensure North Star continues to favor sensitive species.</p> <p>Track total number of annual river users.</p> <p>Track number of river use regulation violations, and number and type of Ranger citations.</p> <p>Share results of independent ecological surveys and studies</p>	<p>Use the Wildlife Closures Policy to protect sensitive habitat from recreation impacts. Ability to employ Wildlife Closures and/or Flow Level/ River Temperature Closures based on snowpack, nesting or calving seasons, and low river flows.</p> <p>Protect ground-nesting birds and terrestrial wildlife with Designated Access Corridors, the West Side Public Access Closure, and the No Beaching Policy.</p> <p>Monitor vegetation and soil at access points and heavily used areas to prevent expansion of the recreation footprint (Action 13.1).</p> <p>Strengthen wildlife movement protections through neighboring land-use development referrals (Action 4.2).</p> <p>Concentrate and regulate visitor use so that activity stays within designated areas and predictable timeframes (Action 13.1).</p>
<p><b>River use capacity</b></p> <p><i><b>Response:</b></i> The plan actively monitors and manages river use to stay within defined thresholds.</p>	<p>Establish a river use capacity range using People-Per-Viewscope (PPV), Vehicles at One Time (VAOT), seasonal river-use counts, and observation data.</p> <p>Track river use counts seasonally, daily, and during peak hours.</p> <p>Report total commercial river trips each year.</p> <p>Use peak-use monitoring to trigger real-time management responses.</p> <p>Set visitor capacity using both ecological and experience-based indicators.</p> <p>Publish annual summaries of the river use season.</p> <p>Review management plan progress every five years to ensure ecological conditions are improving.</p>	<p>Enforce regulations to improve Takeout and Put-in congestion, including storing gear, loading/unloading in parking space and travel lanes.</p> <p>Apply the Peak Use Policy to respond quickly when crowding or capacity thresholds are approached.</p> <p>Implement additional management tools if thresholds are exceeded. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute set timeframes for public river access at all put-ins, including Wildwood, based on wildlife needs, and coordinate enforcement (Action 13.1).</li> <li>• Test limiting or eliminating commercial use on peak days such as holidays and weekends (Action 13.2).</li> <li>• Explore a vehicle turnaround with designated staging spaces at Wildwood, and coordinate with the USFS to close public parking at Wildwood on peak-use days (Action 15.3)</li> </ul>

Feedback	Plan Commitments	Management Tools (Policies and Actions)
<p><b>“Water park” atmosphere and user behavior concerns</b></p> <p><i>Response:</i> Public feedback indicates visitor behavior and compliance is improving in recent years. Continue to prioritize and invest in North Star specific enforcement, targeted education, and compliance monitoring help reduce noise, large group impacts, and other behaviors that don’t fit the natural setting.</p>	<p>Track patrol hours and enforcement contacts each season.</p> <p>Monitor compliance with key regulations (music, dogs, group size).</p> <p>Track the number of educational contacts by rangers or naturalists</p> <p>Track trends in citations or violations over time.</p> <p>Measure visitor satisfaction, aiming for at least 80% reporting a good or excellent experience.</p> <p>Manage river use so that, for all but 30 minutes of the day, fewer than six people appear in any single view along the river.</p> <p>Monitor Vehicles At One Time (VAOT) in parking lots and overflow areas.</p>	<p>Develop and track communications and outreach to address key concerns, identify priority topics, and find effective strategies for different audiences. Work with stakeholders to encourage behavior that supports North Star’s conservation values. (Action 12.3)</p> <p>Fund positions such as OST Rangers, USFS Forest Protection Officers, or other related staff or contractors. (Action 14.3)</p> <p>Support partnerships that provide educational opportunities for youth and students. (Action 12.2)</p> <p>Educate the public about the preserve’s natural resources and encourage responsible behavior through ACES programs. (Action 12.1)</p> <p>Reduce large groups through the voluntary Group Size Limits policy.</p>
<p><b>Management actions and perceptions of a ‘nature preserve’</b></p> <p><i>Response:</i> The plan update continues significant investment in regular ecological stewardship and maintenance with annual actions and approaches that support biodiversity. It also provides a conservation value management framework that prioritizes biodiversity and mitigates recreation impacts as needed.</p>	<p>69% of plan actions are dedicated to ecological protection and restoration, upholding the intent to improve ecological conditions from past plans.</p> <p>25 of 39 monitoring indicators (64%) track and assess changes in ecological conditions over time</p> <p>11 of 15 management goals (73%) offer management actions with adaptive response options for the benefit ecological conditions.</p>	<p>The conservation values (river system, riparian areas, wetlands and beaver habitat, wildlife and habitats, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, and community) inform the desired future conditions, goals, and measurable indicators, which are translated into policies, regulations, and management actions.</p>

# 7. WORKING GROUP

## MEETING NOTES

### North Star Nature Preserve 2025 Management Plan Update

#### WORKING GROUP MEETING AGENDA

April 9, 2025 | 11am - 3pm | City Council Chambers

**MEETING PURPOSE:** Discuss goals for the 2025 North Star Management Plan Update and provide opportunity for the group to share their vision for North Star. Share Visitor Use Management Framework concepts and definitions, and utilize the framework to provide in-depth feedback to the planning team regarding key issues and opportunities.

#### MEETING AGENDA:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Working Group Scope
- Input To-Date
- Review Visitor Use Management Framework
- North Star Visioning Activity / Desired Conditions
- Indicators
- Invitation for Public Survey Review
- Next Steps

#### ATTENDEES:

- **OST Staff:** Carly O'Connell (Senior Planner/Landscape Architect), Gary Tennenbaum (OST Director), Rick Norman (Ranger Supervisor), Jessie Young (Planning and Outreach Manager)
- **Consultants:** Melissa Bade, Steve Lawson
- **Working Group Members:** Andre Wille, Bud Tymczyszyn, Evan Cree, Eliza Voss, Frank Arenella, Graeme Means, Janet Urquhart, Jim Kravitz, John Spiess, Jordan Curet, Kendra Head, Kurtis Tesch, Lange Adams, Morgan Boyles, Sallie Bernard, Shelly Braudis, Tina Person
- **Not in Attendance:** Joshua Cullen, CDOT; Tom Cardamone, WBI

#### Welcome and Introductions:

Jessie Young, Pitkin County OST, opened the meeting with a brief welcome and thanked participants for attending. Consultants Steve Lawson, DJ&A, and Melissa Bade, CDR Associates, introduced themselves to the Working Group. The group agreed to the following discussion guidelines to ensure efficient meeting conversations:

- Silent cell phones
- Listen to understand
- Critique ideas, not people
- Respect each others' thinking and value their contributions (even if you disagree)
- Allow every voice to be heard (raise name tents as to not speak over one another)
- Ask "what's possible?" not "what's wrong"? (And keep asking!)
- State your point of view with a supportive rationale

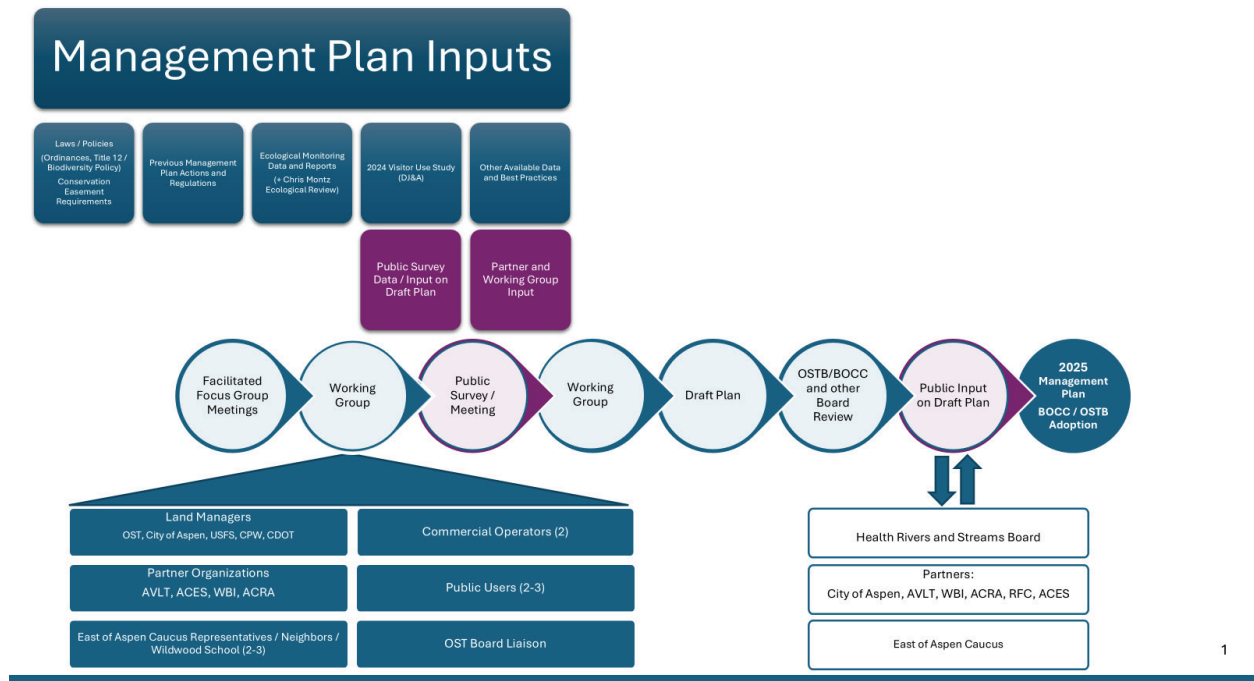
Melissa led the group through an initial introduction activity where the group looked at photos provided by their co-group members and discussed the importance of North Star. Key takeaways from this introduction activity included:

- **Wildlife & Ecological Integrity**
  - Moose were identified as key species on the site.
  - Emphasis on riparian habitat, wetlands, and maximum biodiversity.
  - Beavers were highlighted as natural stewards, helping to create and maintain vital wetland ecosystems.
  - North Star is seen as a refuge for all wildlife, from large to small.
- **Tranquility, Peace, & Nature Connection**
  - Repeated emphasis on tranquility, peaceful experiences, and the serenity of the site.
  - Described as a place for unwinding, immersion in nature, and multi-generational enjoyment.
  - Importance of maintaining quiet times of year and recreational opportunities that occur during times when wildlife is less active (e.g., Nordic skiing).
- **Human-Nature Coexistence**
  - Focus on coexistence between humans and nature.
  - North Star as a place to model harmonious interaction between different recreation users as well as recreation users and wildlife.
  - Importance of having efforts to rewild parts of North Star while still providing opportunities for low-impact recreation.
- **Mental & Emotional Wellbeing ("Blue Health")**
  - Access to water is seen as important not only for ecology, but also for mental health and wellness.
  - Lack of nearby public water spaces makes North Star uniquely valuable.
  - Concept of "blue health" highlighted: connection to water improves emotional wellbeing.
- **Education, Inspiration, & Stewardship**
  - Vision to inspire love and care for the land through experience.
  - The transformation that occurs pre and post river float as a metaphor for increased awareness and stewardship.
  - North Star sits in a unique area and serves as a "welcome to Aspen" sign for visitors.
- **Long-Term Vision & Management Challenges**
  - North Star is a complex property with many stakeholders.
  - Recognition of changing environmental conditions (e.g., less water, climate pressures).
  - Focus on developing a resilient, adaptive plan that manages for wildlife, public use, and community needs.
  - Recognition of homeowners' concerns and community impacts along the river.
- **Community Engagement & Institutional Commitment**
  - Deep community passion and participation noted as inspiring and an important foundation for this management plan update.

- Acknowledgment that education, enforcement, and collaboration are critical to the site's future success.

**Working Group Scope**

Jessie reviewed the North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan update process, timeline, and expectations of the working group. Jessie noted the importance of multiple inputs to the management plan update, and provided a description of how these inputs will all work together. For the first time at the preserve, the Visitor Use Management Study provides a scientific foundation for understanding visitor use at the preserve, which accompanies over 25 years of data collection about natural resources and wildlife. The Working Group will work with both the VUM study and natural resource information to provide inputs that will be incorporated into the final report.



The following were listed as important goals of the Working Group meetings:

- The group is tasked with bringing diverse, local perspectives to the management planning process.
- This group will be asked to review data and reports, discuss and provide feedback to help inform management actions.
- The group will convene in person two times in 2025. Additional subgroup meetings will be added if needed.
- Group members should be able to represent the broader interests and perspectives of the group they are representing and provide a two-way line of communication between their "interest group" and the Working Group.

**Input To-Date**

Melissa reviewed input received to-date through the Community Webinar in January and subsequent focus group meetings with land managers, operators, and neighbors. Input themes include:

- Managing Traffic/Parking, Use, and User Behavior
- Commercial Operator Presence
- Importance of Wildlife, Managing Wildlife-Human Conflicts
- Data-Oriented Decision-Making
- Continued Partner and Public Collaboration
- Future-Orientation

The working group added context, including highlighting the importance of wildlife on the site and emphasis on restoration. Ultimately, the working group members noted the importance of optimizing both recreational and natural resource values, including habitat quality, at North Star for future generations. The working group also highlighted educational programming as a core purpose the site was preserved. At present, group size limitations impact some potential educational programming on the site, and this is something to consider for future management.

### **Desired Conditions**

Steve provided a primer on visitor use management, reviewed the pre-meeting handout ([link](#)), and discussed the definitions of desired conditions and indicators, emphasizing the importance of ecological, experiential, and managerial / operational goals in desired conditions.

**Visitor Use Management:** A process to identify, implement, and adapt strategies and actions to balance opportunities for recreational use in an area with protecting ecological conditions and the quality and character of visitors' experiences there.

Desired conditions are a foundational component of applying an indicator-based, adaptive visitor use management framework. They are followed by indicators, thresholds, monitoring, and management.

Based on these definitions, the working group broke into small groups to reflect on the pre-meeting prompts and discuss desired conditions for the site. Following small groups, the full working group discussed key themes, highlighted below:

- **Tranquility**
  - Importance of user behavior and etiquette in fostering a **tranquil** environment.
  - **Tranquility** integral to opportunities for people to experience connection with and respect for nature and for harmony between recreational use and wildlife protection.
- **Access to Water**
  - A place where people of all ability levels, from novice to expert, can access the water for enjoyment and nature appreciation.

- Safety / floatability of the river while also supporting beaver dams and other natural debris/process that occur within the river's channel.
- **Appropriate Visitor Use Levels**
  - Levels of recreation are in balance with infrastructure for access, in harmony with natural systems, and in support of a tranquil setting in which to experience the river environment.
- **Desired Ecological Conditions**
  - Preservation of a **healthy riparian corridor, biological diversity, and connectivity** for wildlife is paramount.
  - Protecting **natural resource** conditions and promoting recreational access that is aligned with conservation goals.
- **Education & Behavior Change**
  - Public behavior is linked to understanding the "**why**" behind regulations (e.g., quiet zones, dusk-to-dawn closures).
  - **Education** is seen as a **conduit for conservation**, especially for youth and new users.
  - Messaging should aim to create **empathy**, inspire users to ask: "How can I get this where I live?" and advocate for protection.
- **Beach Use & Habitat Protection**
  - Ensure designated human-use beach remains while continuing to maintain others as **wildlife habitat**.
  - Obeying **signage** and **voluntary closures** are viewed as effective tools.
- **Beavers, Ecosystem Services & Coexistence**
  - **Beavers** are key to habitat creation (wetlands, biodiversity, water storage).
  - There's a need to **balance beaver activity with floatability** and recreation.
  - Suggestions to set **thresholds** that allow both to coexist.

Additional Information Provided by the Group:

- Avoid returning to COVID-era use levels; those created **dysfunction** and **overwhelmed** infrastructure, especially at Wildwood.
- Recognized need for **organized river use** and "friction" mechanisms (like parking limits or regulations) to control high use.
- Targeting **future-proofed management** with a 20-year outlook, informed by data and visitor behavior trends.
- Sandy beaches are **ecologically sensitive** (e.g., nesting birds) and need continued protection.
- Learn from other communities managing similar challenges.
- 80-90% of the time, **desired conditions are being met**.
- Focus should be on **identifying and managing pinch points**.
- Management must account for **changing baselines, species interactions, and ecosystem services** like water retention and fire breaks.

As a next step, the planning team will take this information and draft desired conditions for the working group to discuss.

## **Indicators**

As a final activity, working group members considered indicators to serve as the basis to assess the health of ecological conditions as well as to assess the quality and character of visitors' experiences. Indicators suggested by the working group included:

*Visitor Experience:*

### **1. Crowding & Congestion (Noted by 3 Sticky Notes)**

- High use at **peak times** and **overcrowding at entry/exit points** (e.g., put-in/take-out areas) are key concerns.
- Indicators like "**visitor use per hour/day**" and **volume of use** signal a need to monitor and manage crowd density.

### **2. Noise & Tranquility (Noted by 1 Sticky Note)**

- **Noise levels** are a direct indicator of the loss or maintenance of tranquility.
- Desire to protect the **peaceful, quiet character** of North Star that supports both human experience and wildlife wellbeing.

### **3. Human Pressure & Behavior (Noted by 2 Sticky Notes)**

- Evaluation of **visitor compliance** with etiquette or rules (e.g., respecting zones, behaving appropriately) is crucial.
- Monitoring **number and type of ranger interactions per day** (e.g., enforcement vs. education) reflects both use intensity and ranger workload.
- Presence of disruptive behavior.

### **4. Quality of Experience & Emotional Impact (Noted by 4 Sticky Notes)**

- Indicators include whether visitors experience **peace, a sense of connection to nature**, or **a mindset shift** during their visit.
- Positive transformation from **pre- to post-experience** is seen as a sign of success (e.g., "did visitors experience a sense of peace and connection?").

### **5. Viewscape & Visual Quality (Noted by 2 Sticky Notes)**

- "People/viewscape" was noted as an indicator—suggesting that **visual congestion or presence of others** can affect perceived quality.
- Protecting natural aesthetics remains important for visitor satisfaction.

*Ecological:*

### **1. Riparian and Wetland Health (Noted by 7 Sticky Notes)**

- Strong emphasis on the **health and quality of riparian zones** and edges.

- Importance of **wetland functioning**, particularly in relation to **water storage, fire resilience**, and **habitat connectivity**.

## **2. Species Diversity & Wildlife Monitoring (Noted by 4 Sticky Notes)**

- **Species diversity** is a core ecological value to track.
- Importance of **ongoing monitoring of plant and animal populations**
- Detailed tracking includes the presence of animal presence (**bird calls, nesting sites, and wildlife camera data**).

## **3. Human Pressure on Ecosystems (Noted by 4 Sticky Notes)**

- Several notes refer to **“human pressure”** and its impact on ecological conditions.
- This includes **ecological-recreational interfaces** like nesting birds being affected by recreation (e.g., floating, beach use).

## **4. Beavers and Habitat Engineering (Noted by 6 Sticky Notes)**

- **Beaver activity and stable populations** is noted as both an indicator and a contributor to ecological health.
- Measuring **presence of beaver dams** and broader influence on wetland creation.

## **5. Environmental Conditions & System Capacity (Noted by 1 Sticky Note)**

- River **flow levels and water quality** as indicators of system health and capacity to support use.

## **6. Shorebird Nesting & Sensitive Habitat (Noted by 2 Sticky Notes)**

- **Nesting shorebirds** are a specific ecological focal point.
- Indicates the need to **monitor sensitive nesting sites** and create buffers or seasonal protections.

### **Survey and Wrap Up**

The meeting wrapped up quickly, with an ask for group members to let the planning team know if they would like to be part of a public survey review committee and share if they have any additional insights or ideas as it relates to today's discussion. The team will send out a poll for the next working group meeting.

**ACTION:** Working Group members let Jessie or Melissa know if they would like to review the public survey before distribution. Share any additional insights around desired conditions or indicators with the planning team.

## Appendix A: Transcribed Desired Conditions Flip Charts

### Group 1

- **Habitat**
  - As refuge, no further development
  - Baseline always changing
  - Biological diversity
  - Being able to float = “pristine”
  - Tranquil, quiet → healthy riparian corridor
- **Behavior & Experience**
  - Respect other experiences
  - “How can I get this where I live?”
  - Advocate for protection
  - Recreation as conduit for conservation
    - Includes educational component (students, users, etc.)

### Group 2

- **Ecological Values & Ecosystem Services**
  - Who is habitat for? Species interaction
  - Passageway – wildlife
  - Water storage, fire break
- **Beavers**
  - Establishment of thriving beaver habitat → then broader habitat
  - How does this impact rec/floating
  - What thresholds can exist together
  - Previously river delta, not as much now
- **User Experience & Safety**
  - (Safety) of users
  - “Floatability”
  - Consider adaptability of humans
    - Try not to breach dams
    - Beavers & paddlers
- **Learning from Others**
  - Learn from other communities

### Group 3

- Definitions of nature have evolved
  - Connectivity for wildlife
- **Sandy Beaches**
  - Need protection
  - Consider additional human beaches, then keep rest as habitat
- **Public Messaging & Regulations**
  - Messaging what’s off limits & why
  - Beach areas can thrive without disturbance from recreational users
    - (Beach use – don’t land on beach)
  - Obey signage, understand rationale → quiet zones
  - Dusk to dawn regulation ✓
    - Wildlife is impacted, most active
  - When people understand “why” → more likely to alter behavior

- Voluntary (heron nest comes back)

#### Group 4

- **"Safety"**
  - Tranquil, quieter, smoother water
  - Consistent ranger presence
  - Perception of safety
  - Lower barrier to entry to inexperienced users (mild risk)
  - Highlighting ongoing collaboration
- **"Total Use"**
  - Don't want to return to COVID-era use levels  
Total use has high impact → operational dysfunction @ Wildwood
  - Planning for the future - 20 yrs
  - Accessibility of N.S. (North Star)
- **Management Strategies**
  - Introduce "friction" to help manage total use  
Address bad parking experiences
  - Be prepared
  - Want Wildwood to function
  - Organized use on river → don't want waterfall effect
- **Additional Notes**
  - What is optimal target for landscape - from wildlife perspective
  - Trash, noise, partying - 100% no issues → what's the tolerance level?
  - Address future high numbers
  - 80-90% of the time we are meeting "desired conditions"
  - ID pinch points & mgmt strategies

# North Star Nature Preserve 2025 Management Plan Update

## WORKING GROUP MEETING #2 NOTES

July 17, 2025 | 9am - 1pm

### MEETING PURPOSE:

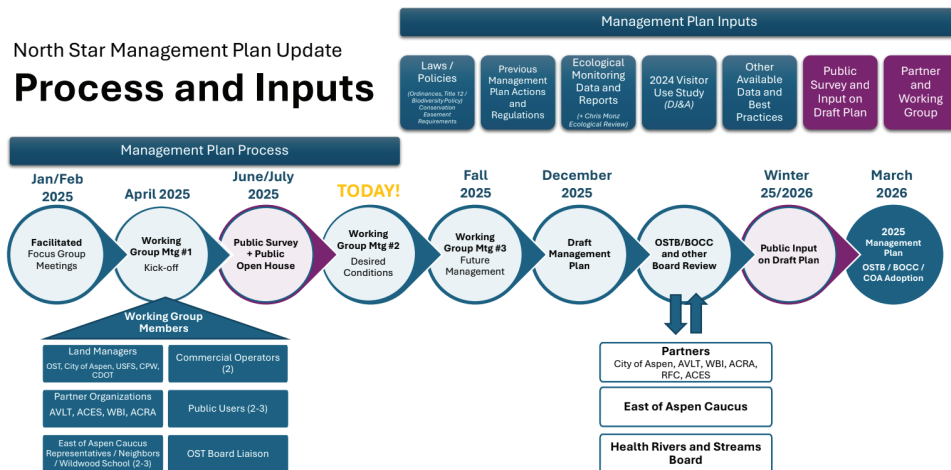
- Review conservation and ecological reports.
- Review management actions.
- Review and discuss public survey results.
- Discuss ecological values.
- Discuss desired conditions and provide initial ideas on future management actions to be included in management plan update.

### MEETING AGENDA:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Ecological Context
- Status of Current Management Actions
- Review Survey Results and Open House Input
- Ecological Values Discussion
- Desired Conditions Discussion
- Next Steps

### Welcome and Introductions:

Melissa Bade, CDR Associates, welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting agenda. Jessie Young, Pitkin County OST, highlighted an updated project schedule that reflects feedback from the first Working Group meeting and an additional opportunity for the Working Group to meet. The working group members introduced themselves (full attendance list included at the end of the notes) and expressed excitement to dive into the day's discussions.



### **Ecological Context:**

As a direct outcome of the first Working Group meeting where group members indicated an interest in learning more about the ecology of the area, Liza Mitchell, Pitkin County OST, presented to the group on ecological components of the North Star Nature Preserve. The presentation (full slides included as an attachment) highlighted the following themes:

- Historical Context
- Ecological Data Standards
- Terrestrial Wildlife
- Beavers
- Birds
- Hydrology
- Vegetation / Habitat
- Conservation Values

Group members were provided a brief opportunity for questions after the presentation, with a fuller discussion on priorities planned for later in the meeting. Questions themes included:

- Providing more context around the purpose and ecological benefit of beavers and beaver dams
- Further clarifying what it means for the river to be well connected to its floodplain, including highlighting the importance of river movement
- Confirming the slides and information will be distributed after the meeting (OST will post meeting materials to the project website)

### **Management Context**

Jessie Young, Pitkin County OST, provided a historical look at management of North Star. Highlights include:

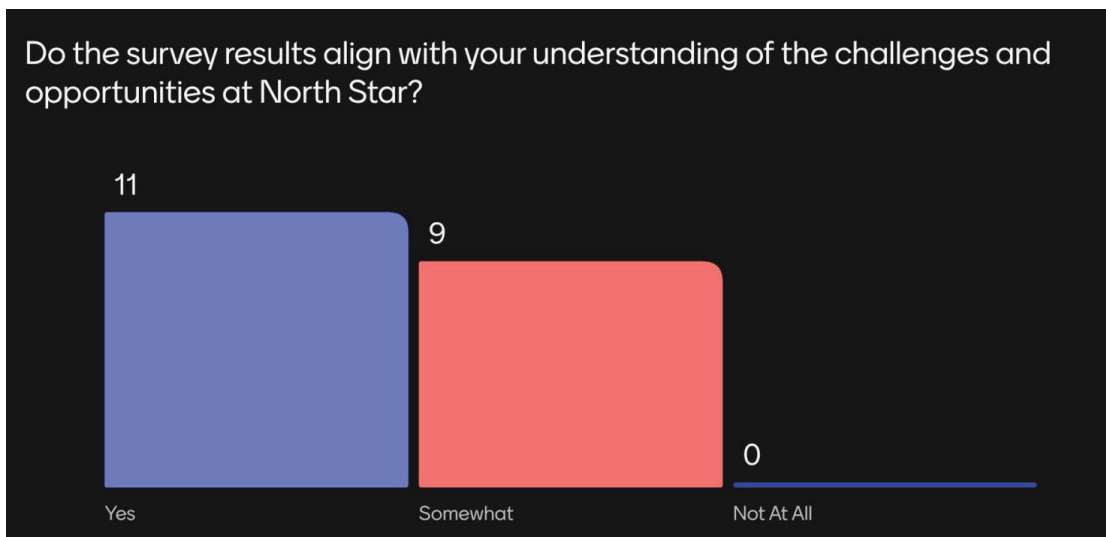
- The top challenges facing the Preserve have evolved over time as development and recreation pressures have changed (e.g., shift from tubing to paddle boarding).
- Key management tools employed include dog bans, audible music prohibition, parking enforcement, and commercial permit system.
- The 2015 plan addressed tubes, which were creating trespassing issues, and safety of Wildwood Lane through commercial permits to reduce single-occupancy vehicle traffic and establish parameters for uncontrolled commercial use.
- The 2020 plan addressed safety, litter, and overuse through education, enforcement, and engineering improvements.
- Since 2020, work with CDOT has occurred to formalize parking areas and address highway safety.

### **Public Survey Results:**

Carly O'Connell, Pitkin County OST, provided an overview of the recent opt-in online public survey that was conducted in June and July, 2025. These survey results were also compared with the intercept survey conducted in June and July, 2024 at North Star. All survey results can be found in the slide packet included with these meeting notes. Key survey themes included:

- There was largely synergy between the two surveys and their results
- The most popular activities include: viewing scenery from Highway 82 (90%), floating the river (65%), walking/running on the East of Aspen Trail (65%), and wildlife viewing (52%)
- Across both surveys, the top reason for visiting the Preserve was the natural scenery
- Public users were more likely than commercial users to report feeling crowded at the put-in
- North Star Nature Preserve was acquired to manage the following open space values: natural, scenic, habitat, wildlife and recreation. Most online respondents believe these values meet their expectations
- The ecological values that North Star provides – wildlife habitat, biological diversity, hydrological function, healthy riparian areas – were the most important values
- Survey respondents provided input around potential management strategies such as commercial operators, personal use regulation, people per viewscape

Group members had an opportunity to reflect on the survey results through a series of Mentimeter questions and discussions. Full Mentimeter responses are included as an attachment to this document.



*Question: What was the most surprising survey finding?*

- Importance of wildlife as a priority on the site – survey responses didn't lean towards as much recreational use as expected
  - This indicates broader county-wide values that exist
- Perception of public use regulation and education as important until it directly impacts an individual's experience
- Some dislike for commercial operators but simultaneously recognition that they can be an effective management tool
  - Uncertainty over how the term "commercial" is understood by the public
  - Acknowledgement that a requirement to have a guide can support a level of resource protection

- “Equipment renters” could also be considered “commercial”
- Concern over “loving it to death”
- Disconnection between desires and what some experience at North Star
- Survey respondents might be looking for a scapegoat
- Us vs. them mentality - to some, “commercial” might equate to “tourist”
- Suggestion to consider how to manage high use days as the first low hanging fruit
- Importance to balance future use
- Survey was written with a bias towards learning more about paddling and recreation uses - don’t want to lose the wildlife and habitat thread
- Need to address vehicles / traffic that contribute to congestion

*Question: What are the most crucial findings that require attention or action?*

- Consider how to manage high-use days (holidays, summer weekends, etc.)
- Distribute ecological information more broadly to provide further education (reality vs. perception)
- Overcrowding with vehicles
- Further define “commercial” use vs “public” use and combat misinformation
- Consider visioning for “rewilding” North Star

### **Conservation / Ecological Values:**

Given this information, the group reflected on Liza’s ecological values presentation and was prompted to identify *which ecological values stand out as most important for North Star?* The group had a robust discussion about the floodplain and river connectivity. Highlights from the discussion included:

- **Hydrology:** The group emphasized the importance of hydrology and instream flow to maintain a healthy landscape. The group was particularly interested in concepts to increase the river flow (and renegotiate the existing diversion) at certain points in the year to support the riparian habitat and find opportunities to ensure high water quality.
- **Biodiversity:** The group was interested in having further discussion about how to optimize biodiversity on the site and defining an ultimate goal. This included concepts such as “rewilding” and “reintroduction of species” to support the ecosystem.
- **Experience:** Continue to provide a serene, safe environment to aid in the experience people have at North Star. This can support further education of why places like North Star are an important part of the landscape and connect people to nature in a unique way.
- **Habitat and Species:** All species are important, but the group highlights a few to consider in future management practices: large ungulates (human-moose conflicts), pollinators, and beavers.
- Consider additional concepts such as working with private landowners and managing large debris along the river.

### **Desired Conditions Discussion:**

As a final activity for the day, the group was provided a draft of the desired conditions statements for the site. Members were asked to reflect on the language and provide feedback via Mentimeter and group discussion.



**ACTION:** Project team members will distribute a post-meeting survey to gather official consensus of the group for the desired conditions and collect final input on desired condition changes. At this time, group members will also have an opportunity to provide input on future management actions.

**Next Steps:**

The group will meet again in the fall to discuss future management actions and the draft management plan. The public will also have the opportunity to review the draft management plan once more before finalization.

**Attendance List:**

Jim Kravitz, ACES	Tom Cardamone, WBI
Eliza Voss, ACRA	Morgan Boyles, Wildwood Road Association
Bud Tymczyszyn, AVL T	Tina Person, Wildwood School
John Spiess, COA	
Shelly Braudis, COA	<i>OST</i>
Evan Cree, Commercial Operator	Jessie Young, OST
Lange Adams, Commercial Operator	Liza Mitchell, OST
Andre Wille, McFarland Lane	Carly O’Connell, OST
Sallie Bernard, North Star Preserve HOA	Jami McMannes, OST
Wayne Ives, OSTB	
Frank Arenella, River User	<i>Consultants</i>
Andrea Tupy, Roaring Fork Conservancy	Steve Lawson, DJ&A
Kevin Warner, USFS	Melissa Bade, CDR

**Attachments:**

- Full Meeting Slides
- Mentimeter Results

# North Star Nature Preserve 2025 Management Plan Update

## WORKING GROUP MEETING #3 NOTES

September 23, 2025 | 10am - 2pm

### MEETING PURPOSE:

- Provide an update on how Desired Conditions connect to Conservation Values and Management Goals.
- Gather Working Group feedback on Management Goals and Actions to inform the Management Plan update.

### MEETING AGENDA:

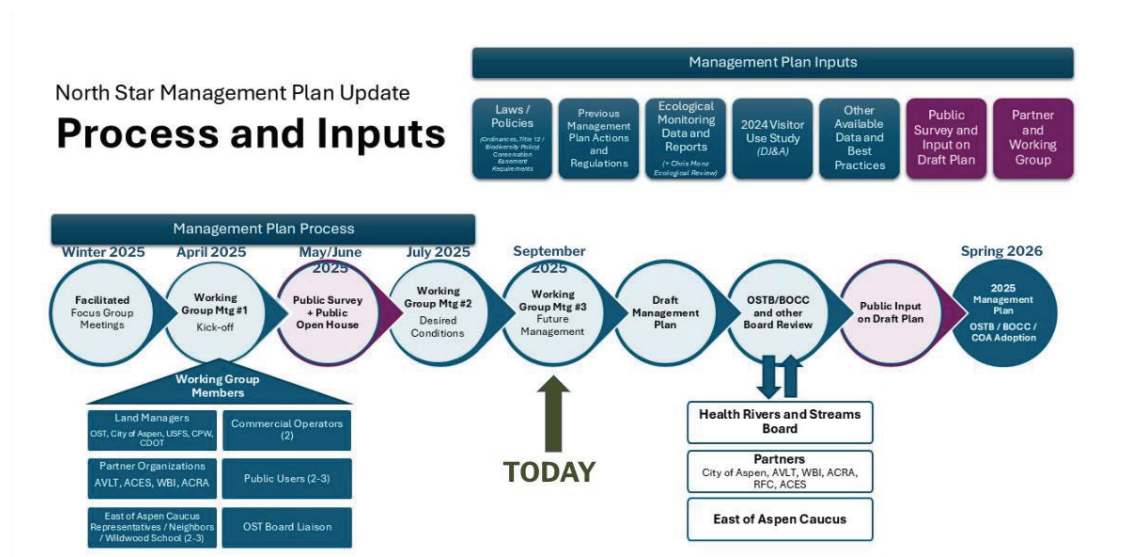
- Welcome and Introductions
- Process Update
- From Desired Conditions to Management Actions
- Prioritization Exercise
- Discussion on Management Goals and Actions
- Next Steps

### Welcome and Introductions:

Daniel Estes, CDR Associates, welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting agenda. The working group members introduced themselves (full attendance list included at the end of the notes) and expressed excitement to dive into the day's discussions.

### Process Update:

Jessie Young, Pitkin County OST, shared an updated project schedule via the graphic below.

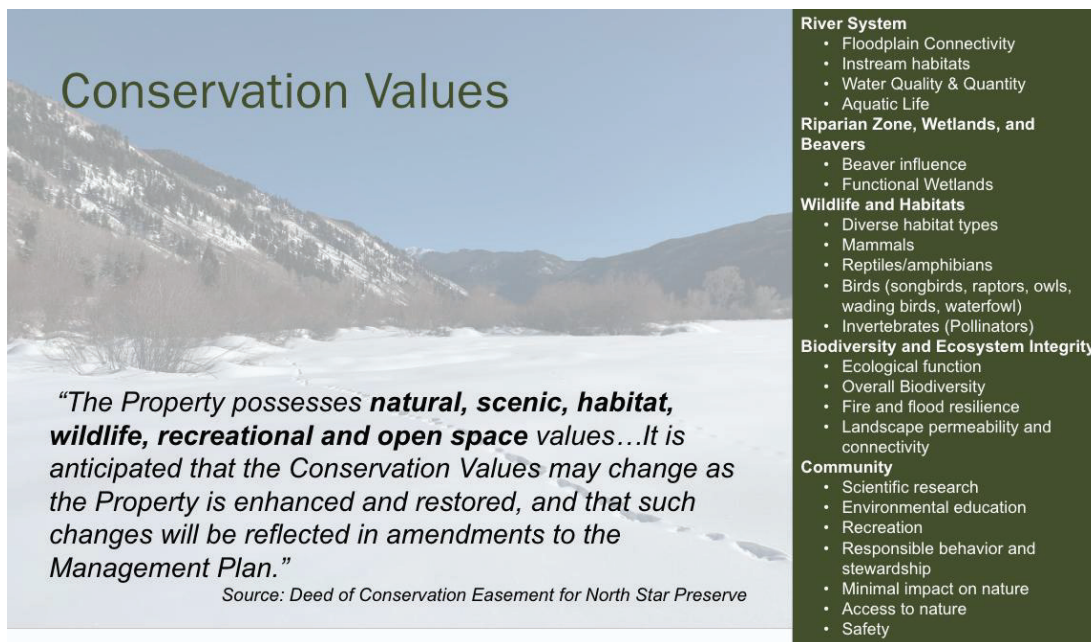


## From Desired Conditions to Management Actions:

Daniel Estes reviewed the main topics and outcomes from the previous two Working Group meetings.

- **Meeting 1:**
  - Participants shared photos of what was important about North Star
  - Recounted special experiences and the natural world at North Star
  - Discussion about desired conditions where you highlighted things like: tranquility, access to water, ecosystem services, importance of riparian habitat, and appropriate visitor use levels
- **Meeting 2:**
  - Presentations provided on current ecological knowledge, scientific studies, and ecological enhancements/protections and history of adaptive management actions through time
  - Participants reviewed survey results from the public survey that occurred over the spring/early summer
  - When discussing ecological values, some of the important issues that arose were: hydrology of the site, biodiversity, experience, and habitat
  - Participants reviewed the draft desired conditions statements and provided feedback

**Conservation Values:** Liza Mitchell, Pitkin County OST, reviewed the Conservation Values, noting the current meeting's forthcoming discussion would be organized using the Conservation Values as categories.



**Conservation Values**

*“The Property possesses **natural, scenic, habitat, wildlife, recreational and open space** values...It is anticipated that the Conservation Values may change as the Property is enhanced and restored, and that such changes will be reflected in amendments to the Management Plan.”*

*Source: Deed of Conservation Easement for North Star Preserve*

- River System**
  - Floodplain Connectivity
  - Instream habitats
  - Water Quality & Quantity
  - Aquatic Life
- Riparian Zone, Wetlands, and Beavers**
  - Beaver influence
  - Functional Wetlands
- Wildlife and Habitats**
  - Diverse habitat types
  - Mammals
  - Reptiles/amphibians
  - Birds (songbirds, raptors, owls, wading birds, waterfowl)
  - Invertebrates (Pollinators)
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity**
  - Ecological function
  - Overall Biodiversity
  - Fire and flood resilience
  - Landscape permeability and connectivity
- Community**
  - Scientific research
  - Environmental education
  - Recreation
  - Responsible behavior and stewardship
  - Minimal impact on nature
  - Access to nature
  - Safety

**Management Plan Update Structure:** Carly O’Connell, Pitkin County OST, then reviewed the structure of the Plan update. She described a layered structure in which the conservation values inform the desired conditions statements, which in turn inform the regulations, policies, management goals, and management actions.

## Conservation Values and the Plan Update

**Conservation Values:** The significant biological, ecological, social, or cultural resources of an area, often used to guide conservation planning and prioritize actions.

**Desired conditions statements:** Aspirational statements that outline the resource conditions, visitor experiences, and facilities that an agency aims to achieve. They describe the future conditions without addressing how to maintain or achieve those conditions, focusing instead on what the conservation values will look, feel, sound, and function like.

**Regulations:** Authoritative rules created and enforced by OST and partners.

**Policies:** High-level principles that provide a framework for decision-making, ensuring consistency and alignment with conservation values.

**Management Goals:** Broad goals, or desired outcomes, aligned with the conservation values.

- **Management Actions:** Specific management activities to achieve the goals.
  - **Indicators:** Specific resource or experiential attributes that can be assessed and tracked over time to evaluate change in condition.
  - **Thresholds:** The minimum acceptable condition for each indicator that takes into consideration the qualitative descriptions of the desired conditions, data on existing conditions, relevant research studies, staff management experience, and public preferences.
  - **Proposed Steps and Response Options:** Specific, actionable, and adaptable steps taken to implement the action and the response options when thresholds are exceeded and more action is warranted.



- River System**
  - Floodplain Connectivity
  - Instream habitats
  - Water Quality & Quantity
  - Aquatic Life
- Riparian Zone, Wetlands, and Beavers**
  - Biodiversity hotspot
  - Beaver influence
  - Functional Wetlands
- Wildlife and their Habitats**
  - Diverse habitat types
  - Mammals
  - Reptiles/Amphibians
  - Birds (Songbirds, raptors, owls, wading birds, waterfowl)
  - Invertebrates (Pollinators)
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity**
  - Ecological function
  - Overall biodiversity
  - Fire and flood resilience
  - Landscape permeability and connectivity
- Community**
  - Environmental education
  - Scientific research
  - Recreation
  - Responsible behavior and stewardship
  - Minimal impact to nature
  - Access to nature
  - Safety

### Discussion Prioritization Exercise:

Participants next engaged in a prioritization exercise to determine which goals and actions within the draft plan were most important to discuss, given the limited time available. Each participant received 5 votes to be distributed across the different categories. Results of the exercise are as follows:

Conservation Value	Stars
Community	33
Riparian Areas, Wetlands, and Beavers	14
River System (Hydrology/Geomorphology)	8
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity	7
Wildlife Habitat	7
Policies	3

## Discussion on Management Goals and Actions:

The group used the remainder of the time to systematically work through each of the Conservation Value categories, discussing the most important issues, clarifying questions, and sharing ideas on how to enhance the draft plan. The questions the group was asked to consider throughout the discussion included:

- *What are the tradeoffs associated with this goal and/or action?*
- *What do you support about the management goal and/or its associated actions?*
- *Does this goal align with the interests of the groups/agencies you represent?*
- *What changes would you suggest?*
- *Is anything missing from this list?*

The following notes represent the main takeaways from the discussion. The compiled list of action items and agreements from the discussion can be found at the end of this document.

**Note:** *Not all goals and actions from the draft Management Plan are referenced below; rather, the goals and actions are referenced that elicited the most discussion. For the full list of goals and actions, see the draft actions in the pre-meeting materials.*

## Discussion Themes and Takeaways

### VALUE: RIVER SYSTEM (Hydrology/Geomorphology)

**Goal 1: Meet the needs of diverse aquatic and terrestrial species and contribute to the overall health and resilience of the stream ecosystem through instream habitat complexity.**

- Clarification of plan's **fallen tree/woody debris policy**, including when and how debris is managed.
- Importance of considering **ecological benefits** (habitat, stream function) and **river user safety**.
- Concern about potential hazards from woody debris and the need for clear, safe passage for river users at all skill levels.
- Interest in understanding the **hydrological impacts** of debris removal.
- Suggestion to consider **alternative management strategies**, such as directing users to exit points when hazards exist.
- Recognition that tree falls are a **natural and relatively infrequent occurrence** in the river system.
- Observation that the **extent of willow vegetation is increasing** over time.

**AGREEMENT:** Ensure that fallen trees/woody debris management prioritizes both ecological benefits and user safety.

**ACTION:** Ensure that the associated policy adequately communicates the process for woody debris removal, including criteria for intervention and safety considerations.

**Goal 2: Allow the river system to operate in a dynamic state appropriate for an unconfined floodplain river reach in this region. Maintain floodplain connectivity as natural channel meander occurs via streambank erosion and sediment deposition processes.**

- Desire for **clarity on thresholds for intervention** – when and under what conditions action would be taken.
- Distinction was made between **active interventions** (e.g., machinery, structural changes) and **passive approaches** (allowing natural processes to continue).
- Recognition that **interventions may be necessary if the channel ceases to function dynamically**.
- Commitment to **ongoing monitoring and incorporation of best practices** to guide when and how interventions occur.
- Limited interest in heavy-handed or intensive interventions, reflecting past management philosophy (e.g., 2020 plan).
- Emphasis on a **long-term, steady management approach**, not short-term fixes.
- Agreement that best practices should be **amended into the plan as appropriate**, rather than waiting indefinitely or avoiding action altogether.

**AGREEMENT:** Management will prioritize a long-term, process-based perspective, with interventions guided by geomorphological monitoring, thresholds, and best practices.

**ACTION:** OST will continue to monitor the system and incorporate current best practices into decision-making and plan updates.

**Goal 4: Keep water quantity in the Roaring Fork River as close to natural, undiverted levels as possible. The hydrograph (seasonal streamflow) mimics that of a natural stream system even under diverted conditions.**

- Broad **support for the goal**, with recognition of its ecological importance.
- Interest in **exploring opportunities to secure additional water for North Star**, including potential strategies for water acquisition.
- Acknowledgment of the role of **upstream water management**, particularly at Grizzly Reservoir and Upper Independence Pass.
- Interest in encouraging the **Twin Lakes Canal Company to manage releases** in ways that better support the health of North Star.
- Exploration of whether water could be **stored and released as a simulated flood event** to mimic natural seasonal flows.
- Recognition that flows of approximately **200 cfs represent an overbanking flowstate** for the property.
- Recognition that this goal includes **significant political and legal challenges** and is nevertheless worthy of including.

**ACTION:** Explore opportunities to secure additional water and work with upstream water managers, including Twin Lakes Canal Company and continue to pursue the feasibility of simulated flood releases to mimic natural peak flows.

## **VALUE: WILDLIFE**

**Goal 1: Maintain diverse habitat types (aspen forests, riparian areas, wetlands, open water, meadows, and shrublands) in good condition across the Preserve, hosting native plant communities and local fauna.**

- Consideration of how **recreation quantity and intensity may impact sensitive species**, as well as heron activity.
- Some interest in the possibility of **reintroducing other species** (e.g. Wyoming Ground Squirrel).
- Support for adaptive management action stating that heron nesting activity will be studied (including its relationship to human activity) if such activity is documented at North Star.

**Goal 2: Provide habitats for diverse wildlife species, including songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, wading birds, herpetofauna, and large and small mammals.**

- General support expressed the goal.
- Request from East of Aspen Caucus representatives to make sure indicator species include some species that are sensitive to human presence, with moose and herons of particular interest.
- Recognition that monitoring to date has emphasized species that are indicators for **broad ecological conditions and specific habitat types**.
- Emphasis on the importance of tracking **long-term population trends** and thresholds.
- Questions about opportunities for monitoring or supporting **additional species** (e.g., snakes, chorus frogs, boreal toads). Observations noted a historical decline in frogs, attributed more to the impacts of private property than to Preserve management.
- Interest in potential collaboration with the **Denver Zoo on Boreal toads**; CPW has indicated this is not a current priority, though the species is present at North Star.
- Recognition from CPW that **species absences may reflect landscape realities**, and that reintroduction efforts may be ineffective.

**Potential Action: Monitor and assess the status of avian species occurring at North Star.**

- Support for this action, with interest in ensuring that monitoring includes **species sensitive to recreation impacts**.
- Acknowledgement that past monitoring does include metrics that look at sensitive and non-sensitive bird species.

**Potential Action: Monitor and assess status of terrestrial wildlife species occurring at North Star.**

- Support for this action, with additional interest in monitoring amphibians and reptiles (e.g., frogs, snakes).
- Recognition that **habitat conditions and human activity** influence species presence and viability.
- Acknowledgment that amphibians and reptiles are already included in terrestrial wildlife surveys.

**VALUE: BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY**

**Goal 2: Control invasive species to the greatest extent possible with the least environmental impact.**

- Concern about the potential introduction of **aquatic nuisance species** (e.g., zebra mussels) into the Roaring Fork River.
- Request to incorporate **education about invasive species** into the site's educational goals, with CPW identified as a potential partner for program development and outreach.
- Interest in using **more active, action-oriented language** (e.g., enhance, expand, increase) throughout the plan to emphasize proactive management.
- Interest in seeing OST prioritize weed control on protecting areas with little invasive weed species present currently as more important than mitigation after establishment.

**Potential Action: Monitor and manage Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) if concern or likelihood of presence in the Upper Roaring Fork arises.**

- General support for this action, with recognition of mussel threats and agreement that monitoring and readiness are important.

**ACTION:** Incorporate invasive species education into site programming in partnership with CPW.

**Goal 3: Protect and support the overall biodiversity of plants and animals.**

- Strong agreement with the overall goal.
- Interest in using **stronger, action-oriented verbs** rather than passive phrasing.
- Importance of explicitly acknowledging both **protection and enhancement** of biodiversity, with emphasis on prioritizing protection first.
- Recognition of the **riparian corridor as one of the most ecologically significant areas** to highlight within the plan.
- Recognition that the West Side provides the best protection of biodiversity and benefit to wildlife and closure of that side is paramount
- General support for **minimizing disturbance** that could compromise biodiversity.

**Potential Action: Monitor overall native plant biodiversity.**

- Broad support for this action, with interest in ensuring monitoring is paired with proactive protection and prevention strategies.

**AGREEMENT:** Protecting existing biodiversity is the highest priority, with enhancement as a secondary goal.

**ACTION:** Strengthen goal language with proactive verbs (e.g., protect, enhance, prevent).

**Goal 4: Maintain and enhance landscape permeability for animal movement across North Star, preserving and improving migratory corridors.**

- Interest in supplementing current monitoring methods by adding **game cameras and counters** rather than relying primarily on vehicle-wildlife collision data.
- Recognition that, although the Preserve is only **200 acres**, it plays a critical role in connectivity with **surrounding protected lands**.
- Acknowledgment that **small acreage can still hold high ecological value**, particularly as a keystone property within the broader landscape.

- Suggestions for using **signage** and other tools to support wildlife movement and reduce conflicts in the highway corridor.
- Interest in considering **acute or seasonal wildlife needs** and using existing **partnerships** to strengthen connectivity and management.

**ACTION:** Monitor movement of wildlife more intentionally to inform adaptive management, for example temporary signage during peak migratory periods.

## VALUE: RIPARIAN

**Goal 1: Promote the recovery of riparian areas toward a more naturalized state, characterized by increasing habitat complexity that supports local biodiversity.**

- Noted as an important goal by the working group

**Goal 2: Preserve wetlands to ensure the provision of ecosystem services and habitat for diverse flora and fauna.**

- Noted as an important goal by the working group
- Fen restoration project was commended alongside interest in acting on other similar opportunities if they exist

**Goal 3: Beavers are present and effective as ecosystem engineers, influencing the river channel, hydrology, wetlands, and vegetation in a natural, dynamic way.**

- Agreement that the verb “**support**” **feels too low of a goal**; interest in stronger language emphasizing a **more robust beaver population and healthy beaver complexes**.
- Recognition of the existing **Beaver Complex** and its ecological importance.
- Exploration of the **relationship between flows and beaver presence**, with acknowledgment that they are not mutually exclusive.
- Acknowledgment that **some manipulation or intervention may be necessary** in the future, particularly if the river becomes so incised that side channels or braided areas are cut off.
- Interest in ensuring language reflects **support for natural beaver complexes**.
- Recognition of **changing legal and management contexts** over the past few years regarding beaver-related work.

**AGREEMENT:** Management should emphasize fostering robust, natural beaver complexes.

**ACTION:** Strengthen language in the plan to emphasize robust beaver populations rather than use of the word “support.”

**ACTION:** Explore opportunities to secure seasonal high flows to sustain beaver habitat.

## VALUE: COMMUNITY

**Goal 1: Serve as a living classroom, fostering and facilitating scientific research, community connection, and environmental education.**

- Support for the goal, with recognition of **potential inconsistencies** (e.g., group-size limits vs. broader education values).
- Interest in **exploring partnerships to expand educational opportunities**, including potential integration of guides on the river.
- Need to **separate river use programs from terrestrial educational programming** for clarity.

**Potential Action: Facilitate and support educational programming partnerships.**

- Support for expanding partnerships, with **emphasis on ensuring alignment with recreation management** practices.

**Goal 2: Allow visitor access for low-impact, peaceful, nature-based experiences compatible with ecological integrity and maintain the long-term protection of biodiversity, natural processes, and landscape connectivity. Ensure visitors understand the value of the preserve and how to take care of it.**

- Emphasis on distinguishing between **disturbance events vs. ecological impacts**, and on understanding timing, frequency, and consistency of disturbances.
- Recognition that total use may contribute to a **“fun park” atmosphere**, perceived as diminishing wildlife protection and user/neighbor experience.

**Goal 3: Ensure the volume, type, and distribution of recreational and river use remain within a realistic, manageable, and predictable range, allowing wildlife to adapt and thrive and utilize the river corridor during times with minimal (recreational) disturbance by tracking key indicators and adjusting management strategies as conditions change.**

**Potential Action: Monitor river use, including river use season duration, peak season, daily river use, and commercial use.**

- Broad concern about **river use intensity**, particularly during peak days.
  - Questions about whether management should focus on **peak days versus total seasonal use**.
  - Recognition that **access capacity issues** (e.g., parking, take-out) contribute to conflicts.
- Interest in tracking not only volume but also **spatial extent and best practices** of use.
- Recognition that **management judgment** will be needed to interpret data and set appropriate targets.
- Support for exploring **adaptive tools**, such as shoulder season, voluntary and/or temporary closures, to relieve pressure during sensitive periods and peak-use days.

**Potential Action: Monitor crowding on the river and the quality of visitors’ experiences.**

- General support for this action, with interest in **using parking capacity and congestion** at access points as measurable indicators.

- Support for a **systematic and objective approach** to monitoring and evaluating recreation impacts (e.g., surveys, trend analysis).
- Broader acknowledgment that outdoor recreation management challenges are widespread, not unique to North Star.

**Potential Action: Concentrate and regulate visitor use so that activity stays within designated areas and predictable timeframes – reducing the spread of recreational disturbances into sensitive habitats while avoiding unsafe or overly crowded conditions.**

- Seen as **central to many of the group’s concerns**, advancing both wildlife needs (concentrating use) while addressing community concerns (reducing congestion on peak days).
- CPW noted that wildlife impacts do not change significantly between 100 to 300 users, as animals have already been disturbed.
- Agreement that dusk to dawn is a key ecological protection.

**AGREEMENT:** Educational programming should be strengthened through partnerships while aligning with recreation management.

**AGREEMENT:** Peak day congestion presents both ecological and community concerns.

**ACTION:** Develop objective monitoring tools (e.g., surveys, trend analysis) to assess the impacts of recreation.

**ACTION:** Explore adaptive tools such as shoulder season closures .

**Next Steps & Wrap Up:**

Jessie Young closed the meeting by reiterating the next steps in the process, which include OST Staff further developing the draft management plan by reviewing and implementing changes from the Working Group meeting and developing a new iteration of the plan for board review and public comment. The final plan is anticipated for spring 2026.

**Attendance List:**

Chris Lane, ACES

Wayne Ives, OSTB

Eliza Voss, ACRA

Heather Tattersall Lewin, Roaring Fork Conservancy

Jonathan Rose, AVL T

Kevin Warner, USFS

John Spiess, COA

Tom Cardamone, WBI

Shelly Braudis, COA

Morgan Boyles, Wildwood Road Association

Evan Cree, Commercial Operator

Tina Person, Wildwood School

Lange Adams, Commercial Operator

Andre Wille, McFarland Lane

Sallie Bernard, North Star Preserve HOA

*OST*

Jessie Young, OST

Liza Mitchell, OST

Carly O'Connell, OST

Jami McMannes, OST

*Consultants*

Steve Lawson, DJ&A

Daniel Estes, CDR

# 8. PARTNER LETTERS

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February 11, 2026

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (OST):

Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES) is happy to partner with OST on the education and management of the North Star Nature Preserve over the past 10 years. During that time, we have seen marked improvement in the management of visitors to the preserve. ACES has been involved with the 2025 North Star Nature Preserve Draft Management Plan (DMP) process as part of the working group and through partnership meetings. Having read and reviewed the plan, we are impressed with the inclusive, collaborative process employed to create it and with the hard work of the OST staff. We endorse the DMP and will offer some additional comments.

We appreciate the adaptive management strategy applied in these plans, which allows for flexibility. The last plan, approved in 2021, led to many improvements at North Star. Over the past five years, improvements that have resulted in a more appropriate use of the preserve include: the delineation of valid parking spots, a ban on dogs, glass, and audible music, increased ranger presence, the “float through only” tagline, and improved outfitter management and education. We believe that ideas for reducing congestion at Wildwood, including signs and communication technology, will help further reduce impact. Since 2021, the North Star fen was restored, aspen tree browser exclosures were piloted, and the management of noxious weeds was continued. Through these adaptive management measures, many undesirable recreation issues that erupted at North Star around 2015 are now on the decline.

The current DMP will help address issues that still require improvement. The visitor experience at North Star remains an important goal. The 2000 management plan included Key Recreation Concepts which lists opportunities for *solitude* and *quiet*. These terms, along with *peaceful*, appear in all early documents when referring to recreation at North Star.

We feel strongly these terms should be included in the Community section of Conservation Values 4.2 and Desired Conditions statement 4.3, and we also suggest including them as goals on pages x and xi of the new DMP.

The DNP implies that the river is most often not “crowded.” When it is crowded (63% of survey respondents said it was frequently or occasionally crowded), quiet and solitude are not achieved. **We are encouraged that the DMP will emphasize identifying the characteristics of crowded days and times and setting triggers for action through the Peak Use Policy to reduce undesirable conditions.** Therefore, successfully identifying the triggers for action on these days will be key to reducing impact, restoring the peaceful experience desired by the community, and ensuring the long-term protection of the preserve’s natural inhabitants and resources.

In addition to using metrics outlined in section 13.1 (visitor use indicators), **we suggest using the knowledge and reports of naturalists and rangers to qualify what makes days and times either: (1) peaceful, quiet, and providing opportunities for solitude, or conversely, (2) undesirable, loud, party-like.** By defining what these experiences are, OST can determine which actions can be taken to alleviate bad behavior before it happens. Comparing these reports with actual use data could help us get closer to identifying appropriate river use numbers. These could be hourly, daily, and seasonal numbers.

By focusing management efforts on the busy days and times and establishing an ethos of group size limits, OST can directly address the conditions that lead to a lack of quiet and opportunities for solitude at North Star. These high-use periods that often include large groups are the primary driver of undesirable, loud, and party-like atmospheres, which compromise the very community and conservation values that the preserve seeks to uphold.

When the goal of peace, quiet and the opportunity for solitude is achieved, it necessarily supports the other conservation values indicated by a significant majority of surveys, letters, and meetings, e.g. biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, riparian areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

After managing a nature preserve for over 55 years, ACES has learned this: a nature preserve and its inhabitants are at their best when the above goals and conservation values are achieved.

We appreciate the hard work and dedication shown during this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.



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Chris Lane, CEO



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Jim Kravitz, VP of Programs



 **ACRA** DEFY ORDINARY

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**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION**  
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT | MEMBER SERVICES | SPECIAL EVENTS | VISITOR SERVICES

Tuesday January 13, 2026

Dear Pitkin County Open Space and Trails & BOCC,

Aspen Chamber Resort Association participated in the North Star Management Plan working group meetings throughout 2024. It was an enriching experience, which really highlighted the importance of this particular open space throughout the community. The depth of knowledge from County staff, coupled with the passion from the selection of well-rounded community members and their individual expertise underscored the challenging role of managing open space for both recreation and conservation. I really appreciate the thoughtful manner in which the members of the working group were selected, and then subsequently listened to by staff and facilitators. I believe the updated plan takes into consideration the varying viewpoints and competing interests and provides us with a plan that is in alignment with the conservation values and the agreed upon desired conditions. It is no easy feat to manage a beloved parcel of land, under various public land entities; however, I believe the process conducted was collaborative and we are in support of the plan, which is also in alignment with ACRA's desire for responsible & respectful visitation and use by all those that live, work and play in our community.

We look forward to further collaboration and watching the great work and strategies of this plan unfold as it is adopted and implemented.

Sincerely,

*Eliza Voss*

Eliza Voss  
Senior Vice President Destination Marketing  
Aspen Chamber Resort Association



February 10, 2026

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails  
530 E. Main St., Suite 202  
Aspen, CO 81611

Re: North Star Nature Preserve – 2025 Management Plan Update

Dear Pitkin County OST Staff,

Thank you for your dedication and exemplary work in updating the 2025 North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan. North Star is recognized as an invaluable open space resource for both the community and the wildlife that resides in the Roaring Fork Valley. The efforts that you put into this management plan update are greatly appreciated and we are providing this letter in support of adopting the updated 2025 North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan.

As you are aware, Aspen Valley Land Trust (AVLT) holds a conservation easement (CE) over 175 acres of the North Star Nature Preserve, recorded on September 3, 2002, at reception number 472502. The stated purpose of this CE is:

*It is the essential purpose of this Conservation Easement to preserve and protect, in perpetuity, the natural, ecological, wildlife habitat, scenic, open space, recreational and aesthetic features and values of the Property. In furtherance of the forgoing, this Conservation Easement is intended to establish permitted uses of the Property which are consistent with the purposes of the Conservation Easement and to prevent any use of the Property that will significantly impair or interfere with the Conservation Values of the Property. Grantor intends that this Easement will confine the use of the Property to those activities consistent with the purpose of this Easement.*

Furthermore, the CE provides provisions on how the property is to be managed in accordance with a management plan that is to be updated every 5 years, and how AVLT has the obligation to recommend modifications to the management plan to ensure the protection of conservation values:

**Section 8. Management Plan:** *The Property shall be operated and managed by Grantor in accordance with the Management Plan. The Management Plan shall be updated by Grantor no less than once every five (5) years. As further provided in paragraph 2(d), Grantee may participate in any North Star Users Group meetings and may recommend changes to the Management Plan. No amendments or changes to the Management Plan may increase the type or intensity of recreational, commercial, or public use beyond what is specified in the existing Management Plan.*

***Section 2 (Rights and Obligations of Grantee) d:*** *To recommend modifications to the Management Plan for the Property to accommodate Grantor’s permitted uses as well as provide for measures to enhance or protect the habitat, stream, wetlands or riparian viability or other natural features of the Property, and to veto any future change in the Management Plan which would allow for a level of use that may threaten the Conservation Values of the Property.*

Involving vested interests through a collaborative effort, resulting in the formation of the North Star Working Group, has been a valuable process in this iteration of the management plan update. After reviewing the management plan, we believe the input from the working group is well represented and incorporated into the management plan. As it relates to the 175 acres under CE held by AVLTL, we support the adoption of this plan. Specifically, we commend the continued application of science-based studies and management objectives to enhance and protect the biological diversity and ecological processes that are foundational to North Star Nature Preserve. As stated in Section 2d of the CE, it is the right and obligation of AVLTL as the grantee to **“provide for measures to enhance or protect the habitat, stream, wetlands, or riparian viability or other natural features of the property.”**

We also recognize that while recreation is a stated conservation value and an invaluable experience for the community, it has been clearly omitted from Section 2d of the CE. It is our interpretation that the original intent of the CE is to ensure the protection and viability of the ecological processes and wildlife of North Star while also providing public benefit to access the preserve through passive recreation, with recreational interests deferring to ecological needs.

The management plan and objectives are intentional in the protection and enhancement of the ecological values of the property and also address the realities of the constraints and opportunities for thoughtfully managing recreational pressures. As OST staff continue to be adaptive in their management approach for North Star, AVLTL recommends that, with regard to land protected under CE, ecological processes and function should not be harmed for the sake of improved recreational amenities or experiences. To that effect, we were able to meet with OST staff to discuss the plan and provide the following feedback. These suggestions are not requirements of our approval but recommendations that we believe would enhance management of the natural resources of the CE:

1. Consider voluntary wildlife closures for elk production, bird nesting, and other wildlife closure needs. Being more proactive than reactionary with wildlife closures may help to raise awareness and continue to educate the public on wildlife use of the property.
2. Implement an alternatives assessment for removal of beaver dams to protect Highway 82 infrastructure, with removal of dams as a last resort and considering other mitigation measures first.
3. Highlight actionable items to support beaver and ecological restoration. Concur with the more passive approach to restoration but identifying key locations to implement some low-tech and other small scale restoration activities could improve the plan.
4. Explore the opportunity to involve partners and implement monitoring efforts at a larger scope (watershed level) to help direct and assess management actions.
5. Rely on rangers and naturalists’ capacity to comfortably handle and educate users at the put-in as a gauge in use metrics and guide capacity discussions.



We look forward to our continued participation in the North Star Nature Preserve and ongoing partnership with Pitkin County Open Space and Trails.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Rose", is positioned above a horizontal line.

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**Jonathan Rose**  
Natural Resources Director  
Aspen Valley Land Trust  
Jonathan@avlt.org



**COLORADO**  
**Parks and Wildlife**  
Department of Natural Resources

Glenwood Springs Office, Area 8 Service Center  
0088 Wildlife Way • Glenwood Springs, CO 81601  
PH: (970) 947-2920

1/26/2026

Carly O'Connell  
Pitkin County Open Space and Trails  
530 East Main St. Suite 202  
Aspen, CO 81611

### **North Star Draft Management Plan Update**

Dear Carly,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the North Star Draft Management Plan.

Based on CPW's Species Activity Maps (SAM) North Star Preserve contains portions of an Elk Migration Corridor and Fall Concentration Area, Moose Winter Range and Concentration Area, Black Bear Fall Concentration and Human Conflict Areas as well as Great Blue Heron Nesting Area.

CPW is inline with the key updates listed and their intents for Ecological Restoration and Support of Natural Processes, Nature Accessibility, Concentrated Recreational Use for the Benefit of Wildlife, Respectful User Behavior and Measurable Indicators to



Laura Clellan, Acting Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Parks and Wildlife Commission: Richard Reading, Chair • James 'Jay' Tutchtton, Vice-Chair • Eden Vardy, Secretary • Jessica Beaulieu  
• Frances Silva Blayney • John Emerick • Tai Jacober • Dallas May • Jack Murphy • Gabriel Otero

ensure Desired Progression. CPW appreciates the Management Direction including the Conservation Values, Desired Conditions, Indicators and Thresholds.

CPW appreciates the West Side Public Access Closure and recognizes it is a key component of North Star and their effort to protect wildlife in a valley that is evergrowing. It is evident in this update that Pitkin County values the wildlife that utilize North Star and is committed to protecting that wildlife for future generations while balancing the ever increasing human presence and use.

CPW supports the North Star Management Plan Update and looks forward to future collaborations.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project. If there are any questions or need for additional information don't hesitate to contact District Wildlife Manager, Kurtis Tesch at (970) 948-1662.

Sincerely,

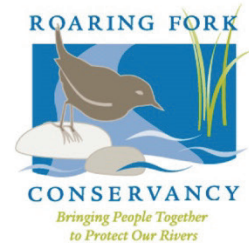
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Yamashita', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Matt Yamashita, Area Wildlife Manager

Cc. Kurtis Tesch, District Wildlife Manager  
John Groves, Assistant Area Wildlife Manager

January 22, 2026

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails  
Attn: Carly O'Connell  
530 E Main, Suite 202  
Aspen, CO 81611



RE: North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan Update

Dear Carly and Pitkin County Open Space and Trails,

Please accept this letter of support for the North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan (Plan) Update as submitted by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Program (OST).

Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC), a non-profit watershed organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the rivers of the Roaring Fork Valley through wetlands and riparian habitat preservation, environmental education, water quality monitoring, scientific research, and community outreach, appreciates the opportunity to contribute in the collaborative effort to update the North Star Management Plan. RFC values the immense work by OST to put forth a comprehensive plan for this highly prized region of our watershed.

The updated Plan's policies, goals and actions support RFC's mission to preserve the conservation values of the watershed which include biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, river, riparian and wetland ecosystem health, wildlife and habitat protection, and community outreach. Situated near the headwaters of the Roaring Fork River in an area that is threatened by increased recreation and development the continued protection and management of the conservation values of North Star ensures this valuable and diverse ecosystem will be available to wildlife and support the health of our watershed for the future. RFC agrees that the support necessary to preserve the health of our watershed and the conservation values of North Star are reinforced by the guided near- and mid-term adaptive management of the Plan to achieve the long-term vision presented by OST.

Thank you for allowing RFC to be a part of the process in creating an updated Plan that supports these treasured conservation values of the North Star Preserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Tupy', written in a cursive style.

Andrea Tupy  
Ecologist  
Roaring Fork Conservancy



**File Code:** 1920

**Date:** 02/05/2026

Carly O'Connell  
530 E Main St.  
Aspen, CO 81611

Dear Carly,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Updated North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan. It appears that you have incorporated the changes per our request.

We greatly appreciate the work that has gone into creating the Management Plan and how the update has been built on decades of conservation, monitoring, and community involvement.

The management plan largely aligns with land management priorities on National Forest System lands. Specifically, the plan aligns with recreation, wildlife and their habitat, Riparian and Wetlands while preserving a mosaic of high-quality native ecological communities that support biological diversity while allowing public access. The plan also ensures that North Star will continue to be managed responsibly amid changing conditions.

If there are any questions or need for additional information don't hesitate to contact the district's Recreation Manager, Kendra Head at [kendra.Head@usda.gov](mailto:kendra.Head@usda.gov), or the districts Lands Specialist, at [michael.braudis@usda.gov](mailto:michael.braudis@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

**JENNIFER  
SCHULLER**

Digitally signed by JENNIFER  
SCHULLER  
Date: 2026.02.05 12:09:10  
-07'00'

JENNIFER SCHULLER  
Acting District Ranger



# 9. PUBLIC LETTERS

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Dear Carly,

I really appreciate being a part of this process. It is amazing to see our community's concerns and ideas put into an actionable plan.

Each meeting was met with fairness, listening, and an abundance of education/perspective. We all have our lens, and getting to this plan has required an investment of time and energy from the Open Space team and community.

We all agree that Northstar is an integral part of the health of our community and retaining a rich, biodiverse system and its inhabitants.

Thank you to everyone who has put their comments forward, those who consider all angles, and to those who share the passion to continue working for generations to come.

Tina Person,  
Wildwood School Director  
(970) 925-5678

**Date:** February 17, 2026

**To:** Carly O’Connell, Jessie Young, Liza Mitchell  
Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

**From:** Sallie Bernard, Elizabeth Boyles, Morgan Boyles, Jayne Poss  
East of Aspen Caucus and Neighbors

**RE:** **East of Aspen Caucus and Neighbor Recommendations for the North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan Draft**

Attached is the response to the North Star Nature Preserve (NSNP) 2025 Management Plan Draft (MPD) from the East of Aspen Caucus and neighbors. The overall sentiment of this sector of the public is that the MPD falls short of managing the NSNP as a nature preserve, lacks sufficient efforts for ecological restoration, and continues to allow recreation that is impeding ecological restoration and public enjoyment of the resource. We ask that modifications be made to the Draft so it complies with the purpose of the NSNP Conservation Easement, reflects community sentiment, and aligns with OST policy.

Incorporation of public feedback, especially from citizens residing in the area surrounding the NSNP, is a critical component of management plan development. The most essential points of our input, delivered during the Working Group process, when you were present at the East of Aspen Caucus meeting, and from the June 2025 public survey, are absent in the management sections of the Draft. The recommendations which follow are detailed. All of the details included in our response are necessary to clarify what must be changed in the MPD so that it fulfills its purpose to manage the NSNP for the public good for which the Conservation Easement was granted.

Adoption of our recommendations into the final Management Plan will also bring the management of North Star into alignment with the East of Aspen Caucus Master Plan, the existing Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan and the proposed Pitkin County 2050 Vision Plan. The policies and values in these Plans direct Pitkin County to insure land use is compatible with preserving and restoring riparian wetlands and stream flows, protecting ecosystems for wildlife habitat, and maintaining harmony with existing adjacent neighborhoods.

# Recommended Changes to the 2025 North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan Draft

## I. Summary of Recommended Changes

To align the North Star Nature Preserve (NSNP) Management Plan (MP) with the NSNP statutory purpose, public sentiment, and OST guidelines, changes to the Draft of the 2025 MP (Draft or MPD) (<https://www.pitkincounty.com/1581/North-Star-Management-Plan-Update>) need to be made in these 4 key areas, each of which is explained in more detail in the sections which follow.

- ✓ **Reduce total river user numbers and establish a user capacity**
  - Establish a maximum river user capacity per season, per day, and per hour for monitoring use and informing any future permit system.
  - These capacity limits must be in line with the original intent of the NSNP, the impact on wildlife, and community concerns over crowding, parking and user behavior detrimental to the ecology.
- ✓ **Minimize human impact on wildlife**
  - Commission an independent scientific study by ecologists and riparian biologists of the impacts of recreation on wildlife and ecological restoration at NSNP.
  - Make management decisions that favor ecology over recreation when the two are in conflict.
  - Expand and enforce closures for nesting and calving seasons, low flows, and beaver activity.
- ✓ **Initiate proactive river hydrology and habitat restoration efforts**
  - Contract with scientific experts to restore the river hydrology and improve habitat and overall biodiversity by eliminating management policies which hinder restoration and through the use of low tech processes.
  - Rewet the historic pre-agriculture wetlands and aquifer which are critical to mitigate climate change, create healthy river flows during dry periods, and provide a wildfire break between the forest and the surrounding neighborhoods and the City of Aspen.
- ✓ **Revise language in the Draft to prioritize ecological values**
  - Revise action triggers, policies and management actions which fail to support progress on reaching the Desired Conditions and which conflict with the conservation easement, other statutory documents, public sentiment, and OST guidelines.

## II. Basis for the Recommended Changes

1. The NSNP MPD allows river recreational use that is incompatible with the primary ecological and wildlife purposes of the property. The Draft perpetuates the under-resourcing of actions promoting ecology and wildlife. The imbalance between continued excessive river recreational use and insufficient progress on ecological improvement conflicts with the statutory purpose of the NSNP, community sentiment, and OST goals.
2. The governing documents of the NSNP easement - *North Star Nature Preserve 2002 Deed of Conservation Easement* (the Easement) and its formally attached *North Star Nature Preserve Resource Management Plan of July 26, 2000* (2000 RMP) (see Attachments A & B) - which legally define the area's purpose and reason for establishment, require that it be managed for ecology and wildlife, with only light passive recreation as existed in 2002, and that its ecological conditions be improved.

The foundation of this management plan is **ecology and conservation** biology and the conservation imperative at North Star is to preserve a mosaic of high quality **native ecological communities** that support a high level of **biological diversity**. (2000 RMP. 1.02 CONCEPTS)

...the following rights are conveyed by Granter to Grantee:...To recommend modifications to the Management Plan...to...provide for measures **to enhance or protect the habitat, stream, wetlands or riparian viability or other natural features** of the Property... (Agreement Section 2(d), p2)

It is the intention of the parties that the Management Plan may be modified in the future as necessary to **preserve the ecology and biological diversity** of the Property as described in the Management Plan, including modifications that are **more restrictive in terms of public use** than the uses permitted in the Management Plan, but that the permitted uses shall be limited to the types **and levels of use** set forth in the Management Plan and specifically incorporated below... (Recital (D), p1)

**No amendments or changes to the Management Plan may increase the type or intensity of recreational, commercial, or public use** beyond what is specified in the existing Management Plan [of 2000]. (Agreement Section 8, p5.) *[emphasis added]*

3. Incorporating community values is a critical component in developing public land management plans. Community sentiments as expressed through the June 2025 public survey of 770 respondents “are primarily motivated by nature-based values rather than recreation or challenge” (p52 of the Draft; and see Pitkin County website for the full comments from the survey).

*We all love North Star! It’s beautiful and supports a number of wildlife species. There are far too many people floating the river in the summer. The place becomes a zoo and in my opinion completely violates the charter and spirit of the place.*

*There are plenty of river opportunities in this valley that don’t involve degrading wetlands! Wetlands are fragile and support 40% of the biodiversity on earth? The wetlands are far more important than human recreation! People come to our valley for the Rocky Mountains and beautiful alpine setting, we must be stewards of this precious ecosystem.*

*North Star is a gem but it is being loved to death and current use patterns are not consistent with habitat protection and enhancement.*

*I hope this timely important survey will generate the necessary data to limit out of control river traffic and increase the critical preservation for this extraordinary beautiful place.*

4. OST properties are managed “to preserve and protect native biodiversity”, to identify opportunities “to restore natural, healthy functions in degraded habitats”, and “to protect sensitive habitats from recreational impacts” (MPD, p55). The OST Policy *Protection of Natural Biodiversity and Management of Human Use (Adopted 8/4/16)* (see Appendix C) privileges management for biodiversity over recreation in environmentally sensitive lands.

*Whereas the Pitkin County Home Rule Charter sets out the purposes of the program in Section 13.5.1 in a manner that creates absolute goals related to the protection and preservation of*

wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and public lands (Subsections 2,3,5) and gives a qualified goal of “promoting” recreation “not inconsistent with the forgoing purposes...”, **it is incumbent on the Open Space program to manage human uses in a manner that preserves and protects native biodiversity...**

5. While the Conservation Values and the Desired Conditions of the Draft (p60-61) describe a vision and goals that are strongly ecological with minor recreational aspects, consistent with the Easement/2000 RMP, community values and OST policy, the Thresholds and Indicators (p62-65) and the Management Policies and Actions (p66-80) are contradictory to the vision and goals. These sections form the essence of the plan, and they perpetuate the practices of the last 25 years of permitting high levels of recreation, allocating insufficient investment for ecological improvements, and allowing poor accountability for progress in realizing the Conservation Values and Desired Conditions.

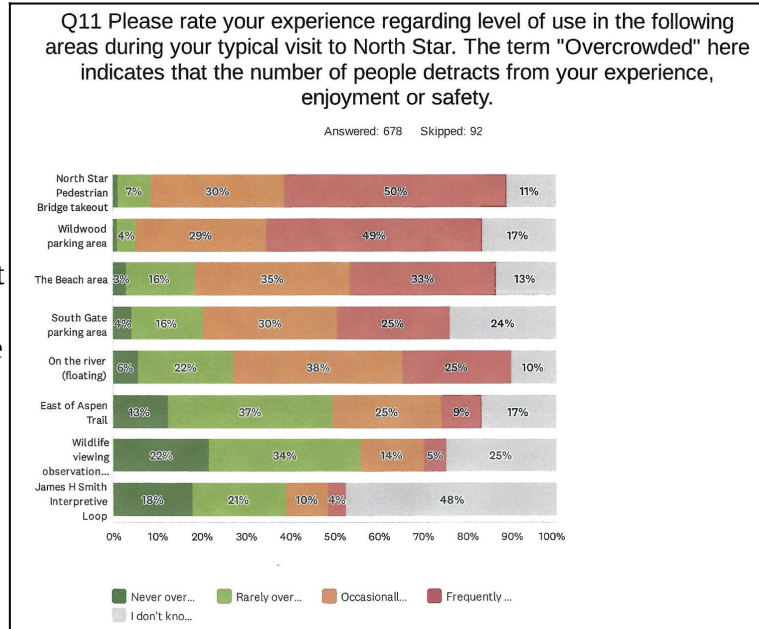
### III. Requested Changes to the MPD - Details

#### (A) Reduce Total River User Numbers and Establish a User Capacity

##### Background

- The MPD allows for the current level of river use to continue, that is, 8,000-9,000 trips in an average season and up to 15,000 trips in heavy demand seasons.
  - The Draft focuses on “proactive peak use strategies” (p58) that target user numbers in hourly increments to keep users per viewscape to under 6. While important, this measure ignores the other key problems of the number of users in a day, month and a season.
  - Under the hourly peak use metric, as captured from the river user survey, the County concluded that “overall river use is within acceptable limits”, with only a few days showing overcrowding.
  - This finding conflicts with the broader community survey, the experiences of the onsite rangers who report overcrowding, and East of Aspen neighbor observations of chronic overuse. It also violates the Easement.
- The MPD recognizes that river use has shown a ‘significant increase’ from pre-2015 levels (p35), even though the Easement/2000 RMP states that the intensity of recreational use cannot exceed the levels which existed in 2002.
  - The 2000 RMP was emphatic on this point: it describes “**limited canoeing and kayaking**” (RMP, p8) and states “*No commercial or recreational activity shall be permitted on the North Star Nature Preserve except as set forth in this plan.*” (RMP p20)
- When ACES managed the North Star as a nature preserve from 1984-2000, river use was limited to one kayak instructor with fewer than 200 students per summer season.
  - Use increased with the introduction of paddle boards, coordination with hotels and online promotion.
  - Use also increased with the 2015 Management Plan which eliminated the restriction that permits only one commercial river guide to obtain a permit.
  - With the expected added residents and visitors to the RFV from down valley housing and hotel developments, the number of users could easily rise back to the 15,000 users recorded for 2020 unless steps are taken now to reduce total trips.

- The current level of river use has negatively impacted the community’s enjoyment of the resource, which is contrary to the stated priority of the MP and of Pitkin County (see page v of the Draft) to be responsive to the community.
  - The community survey of 770 respondents was one of the largest responses of any County survey, reflecting the high engagement of the public on NSNP management.
  - 78-80% of the public reported occasional or frequent crowding at the put-in or takeout, 68% at the Beach, and 63% while floating the river. (see chart → )
- The Draft notes that recreation at NSNP can encourage visitors to support conservation (p58), but the current level of river use has led to a community perception of over-commercialization and a water-park atmosphere (p53) rather than a peaceful, tranquil, meditative nature experience as envisioned by the Easement and as preferred by the public (p52).
- Another metric in the Draft, Vehicles at One Time, shows that on weekends and holidays parking is far over capacity especially at Wildwood creating congestion and safety issues for the neighbors and the Wildwood School. (p42) While parking is currently a limiting factor, alone it may be insufficient to reduce total river use since users can be dropped of by shuttles and peak use can be spread out over more hours or more days rather than reducing total trips in a season.
- The MPD must include methods that will start to reduce total trips to the 2000/2002 levels.



### **Recommendations for the MPD**

- A comprehensive carrying capacity study of river use should be conducted which employs a wider set of metrics than viewscape or vehicles. The study should be designed to support the Desired Conditions and Conservation Values (p60), as per Visitor User Management best practices.\*
  - The Draft MP states (p4) that it follows the strategies established by the Federal Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC). The process and a wider set of tools of the IVUMC should be employed in the Draft.\*
    - \* [https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/lowres\\_Visitor%20Capacity%20Guidebook\\_Edition%201\\_IVUMC.pdf](https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/Content/documents/lowres_Visitor%20Capacity%20Guidebook_Edition%201_IVUMC.pdf), p45 and [https://visitorusemanagement-test.nps.gov/Content/documents/IVUMC\\_DC\\_layout\\_2025\\_0418\\_508\\_v3.pdf](https://visitorusemanagement-test.nps.gov/Content/documents/IVUMC_DC_layout_2025_0418_508_v3.pdf), p15
- The following MPD activities should be modified. While each individual action may reduce overall numbers modestly, collectively they may bring numbers down to the nondiscretionary Easement requirements.
  - ✓ Do not allow the beach to be used for put-in or takeout as this only adds to user numbers, and it violates the Easement - *“Putting-into and taking-out from the river will be restricted to access corridors one and three”*, ie Southgate and Takeout Bridge (2000 RMP, p18).

- ✓ Institute a permit or reservation system with enforcement at the takeout. This could be put in place now, prior to or instead of the proposed land exchange at the put-in which will take several years and incur significant expense.
- ✓ Reduce the number of commercial operators back to one, as required by the Easement - “No more than one commercial kayaking/canoeing operator will be permitted to operate at North Star in a given season” (2000 RMP, p19).
- ✓ Institute mandatory closures (not just voluntary closures) for wildlife (see below) and low flows which will lead to lower user numbers in May, June and August.
- ✓ Promote river restoration actions (see below) that as a byproduct will introduce skill demands on some river users which may lead to lower demand.

## **(B) Minimize Human Impact on Wildlife and Ecological Processes**

### **Background**

- The MPD states that management practices for ecological monitoring meet scientific standards. (p42) However, as Dr. Chris Montz pointed out at the BOCC meeting in January, the MPD meets standards if the goal is to privilege recreational needs over wildlife needs. The intent of the Easement is clearly to prioritize ecology over human use, employing robust ecological restoration practices and allowing only minimal passive recreation at the intensity level occurring in 2002.
  - River user volume concerns have been evaluated from the human user perspective of crowding (p42). The impact of the thousands of trips on wildlife has not been addressed.
- The community survey of 770 respondents indicated a strong preference for wildlife and scenery (p52. 3.2) Nearly half were concerned about wildlife disturbance, and 3 in 10 were concerned about human interference with beavers. Responses stated an openness to closures for wildlife and low flows.
- The MPD (p58) notes that most of NS (west side) is closed to human activity, while minimizing the role of the river as the most vital habitat area for wildlife. It says the river zone comprises “only 5% of North Star’s total area”, as if it plays only 5% of the importance of the property. It bears noting that the river is an integral part of the Easement and must be managed for wildlife as much as any other zone, as per the Easement. Managing the river for wildlife is equally if not more critical as managing the west side for wildlife.
  - *North Star is a vital link in the Roaring Fork Watershed ecosystem. Plans for the preservation of the health of natural systems in North Star will not be effective unless they are supported throughout the system.* (2000 RMP, 1.02.A.1)
  - *[Riparian] communities support a disproportionately greater number of wildlife than their upland counterparts.... over 60% of the vertebrates are obligates to riparian ecosystems and approximately 85% require riparian habitat for some aspect of their life history.*(2000 RMP, 1.03.01, p8)
  - *The river will be managed to maintain semi- natural flood regimes and promote wildlife habitat.* (2000 RMP, A.1. Management Actions, p8-9)

### **Recommendations for the MPD**

- Initiate a comprehensive scientific study by independent experts of ways to reduce human user impact on wildlife and restorative ecological processes.

- ✓ Such a study would benchmark progress against properties with similar biodiversity and wetland potential such as Difficult and Ashcroft, rather than against current conditions or conditions at land transfer since they reflect the ecology of retired agricultural land.
- ✓ Such a study can identify human use levels and patterns that are ecologically destructive or limit ecological restoration and how to minimize them.
- Modify these MPD activities:
  - ✓ 4.6 Policies. P68. Downed Trees. The MPD policy allows for removal of downed trees and woody debris if it interferes with river users. Since woody material is critical to river and wetlands restoration and is a key component of beaver structures which also restore the river hydrology and wetlands, its removal is in conflict with the Easement/2000 RMP and progress towards the Desired Conditions. The policy should be changed to retain all woody material and to either close that section of the river to users or warn users of the hazard. Consideration should also be given in the Management Actions to a proactive plan for the introduction of woody material into the river channel(s) to increase the rate of river recovery (see below).
    - *“After centuries of deforestation and active wood removal from stream corridors, large wood is now recognized as a beneficial feature of stream corridors and the retention and reintroduction of large wood are increasingly incorporated in river management and restoration...”*
    - *“The flow obstructions and erosionally resistant points associated with wood accumulations can increase channel-floodplain hydrologic and sediment connectivity, as well as altering channel migration rate and floodplain turnover time. Finally, channel and floodplain large wood can enhance aquatic and riparian habitat and biological productivity.”*
    - *“Organic matter and fine sediment that is present for even a few hours, let alone a year or more, can provide nutrients and habitat for microbial communities and aquatic macroinvertebrates and thus help to sustain stream biota. The diverse habitat provided by secondary channels associated with a logjam also benefits stream biota...”*

- Wohl, E., & Iskin, E. P. (2022). The transience of channel-spanning logjams in mountain streams. *Water Resources Research*, 58, e2021WR031556.
  - ✓ 4.6 Policies. P68. Beaver Dams. The MPD allows river users to go over or around beaver dams. Stepping over dams may require touching the bottom of the river which is not allowed. Portaging around dams is also not allowed under the Easement - *“Walking along the riverbanks outside of the access corridors is prohibited”* (2000 RMP, p20).
    - If beaver structures, or the 50 foot buffer around lodges and runs as required under the Easement, impede river users, river use should be closed in that section of the river.
  - ✓ Understand the impact of river user craft introducing invasive species to NSNP, ie, zebra mussels, and how to eliminate the risk.
  - ✓ Make a determination of whether the Wildwood put-in is allowed since it is located in a wetland, and whether a NEPA is required.
  - ✓ 4.5 Regulations. p66. The County can take actions for the welfare of wildlife. This authority should be used to enforce mandatory closures (not just voluntary).
  - ✓ P67. Low Flow Closures. Closures should be mandatory (not voluntary) whenever the flow leads to humans walking on the bottom or the riverbank, since the river is no longer navigable. Be more stringent with closures as users are walking on the bottom when there is no closure.
  - ✓ Follow the 2000 RMP guidance to avoid disturbance to wildlife during nesting and calving by prohibiting river and beach use in June.

- *“Use, other than authorized research and management, shall be restricted to the East of Aspen Trail and access corridors 1 and 3 during the height of the bird breeding season and elk calving season— June 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>”.* (2000 RMP, p20, #19)
- ✓ Dawn to dusk river closure is essential to wildlife. (p26) “Dawn” and “dusk” can have various interpretations. The 2000 RMP (p20) states that *“Use shall be restricted to the East of Aspen Trail between 6:00 PM and 8:00 AM”*. Consider this time window as the rule rather than dawn/dusk.

## **(C) Initiate River Hydrology and Habitat Restoration Efforts**

### **Background**

- The Easement and 2020 RMP are clear that NSNP must be managed for the benefit of wildlife and it outlined a robust program for ecological promotion and restoration of the existing agricultural landscape.
  - *Although the composition of the current vegetational mosaic at North Star was largely dictated by human intervention future management will focus on management actions that assist the natural ecosystem processes that support the representation of North Star's vegetational communities and hydrological regimes.* (2000 RMP, CONCEPTS)
  - *The river will be managed to maintain semi-natural flood regimes and promote wildlife habitat.* (2000 RMP, A.(1) Management Actions. p8-9)
- 30% of the historical wetlands on North Star have been lost due to past agricultural modifications and lower flows from transbasin diversions. Restoring wetlands is critical for habitat as well as wildfire protection for the surrounding neighborhoods and City of Aspen.
- Climate warming and drying predictions have us on course for the Roaring Fork River to run dry. The alluvial layer at North Star is 600 feet deep. Its capacity to store water is enormous. With hydrology restoration, North Star will flood every year. A few years of productive beaver activity will refill the aquifer which is largely dried out now. The aquifer will then slowly release the stored water over the summer and fall, preventing the river from running dry.
- The community survey placed a high value on the NSNP providing wildlife habitat and riparian areas and protecting water quality. (p53)
  - ✓ The community valued these conservation qualities over having river access.
  - ✓ They expressed enthusiasm for rewilding, wetland restoration and beavers.
- OST policies state (p55) that “OST properties are managed to preserve and protect native biodiversity” using best available science, to identify opportunities to restore natural, healthy functions in degraded habitats, and “to protect sensitive habitats from recreational impacts”. This policy should apply to NSNP.
- The Draft emphasizes “monitoring” for wildlife and habitat, saying this reflects “scientific best practices” and the “best use of resources”. (p56) The management practices need to be more proactive towards enhancing and expanding hydrology, habitat and wildlife, and not just passive monitoring as if the status quo was sufficient.
  - ✓ Restoration of the fen is a model of proactive restoration activities that are possible. (p20)
  - ✓ The 2000 RMP listed numerous actions for implementation in order to restore the property to high ecological value. These actions included extensive native tree and shrub planting in the uplands and along the riverbank to reestablish willows; *“promoting river processes that result in meanders, oxbows, and a functional floodplain”*; proactive reduction in invasive species;

filling culverts and eliminating drainage ditches; adding woody material to the river; and raising the water table.

- ✓ Scientific best practices are showing that a host of management practices can be employed for rewilding of altered rivers and agricultural lands. Past studies of NSNP ecology have spelled out many possible actions which have not been implemented. Among these reports is the 2000 *Preliminary Hydrologic and Biologic Characterization of the North Star Nature Preserve* (<https://pitkincounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/16392/2000-Prelim-Hydro-Bio-report-North-Star>), which stated that focusing on restoration of the hydrology would produce the greatest gains for biodiversity. The management recommendations from this report included filling in the drainage ditches which had destroyed the wetlands and adding drop structures (which can include large woody debris) to restore incised channels and raise the water table.
- Indications that management practices which “monitor” are falling short of restoring the NSNP to its potential include:
  - ✓ The current low score for the Floristic Quality Assessment (p21).
  - ✓ Invasives now comprise ~90% of the grasslands and this percentage has held steady.
  - ✓ Harmful herbicides are used to manage invasives.
  - ✓ Key native shrubs like sagebrush have not returned (p22).
  - ✓ The willows which used to cover most of the property prior to ranching are still gone.
  - ✓ The sinuous meander of the river that was present in 1900 (p17) is still absent today.
  - ✓ Current wetlands reflect a 30% reduction since 1900. (p21)
  - ✓ Major sections of the channel are incised.
  - ✓ The water table is low.
  - ✓ The soil drying observed by AGCI (p17), which could be reversed by improved hydrology.
  - ✓ Current indicator species being monitored are not showing consistent improvement in numbers (p27).
    - Avian species diversity has remained the same since 2001. (p29)
    - Beaver activity exists at NS but observations show they are not thriving (p28), especially when compared to Difficult and Ashcroft.
- Most of the funding in the last 5 years has gone to manage and support recreation (capital improvements). Modest investment has gone to its ecological mission. (see chart → )

North Star Nature Preserve Investments 2020-2025	
Ecological Studies and Restoration	\$371,133
Outreach and Education	\$190,283
Capital Improvements and Maintenance	\$1,455,018
Visitor Use Management Study	\$143,710
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>\$2,160,144</b>

### **Recommendations for the Draft MP**

- Contract with independent researchers to restore the hydrology of NSNP, including expanding its wetlands, meanders and braids and raising the water table.
  - Colorado has many outstanding scientists who should be involved, for example, CNHP, EcoMetrics, CSU.
- Modify these MP activities -
  - ✓ Establish pre-1900 riparian extent as a target (i.e., show progress from the current 30%), adjusting for reduced flows from diversions.

- ✓ Remove the drainage ditches on the east side of the river.
- ✓ Remediate the incised channel through use of large woody debris, beaver dams, beaver mimics, and strategic revegetation. (see Michael Pollock et al. Using Beaver Dams to Restore Incised Stream Ecosystems. BioScience. 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biu036> [https://www.academia.edu/14056644/Using\\_Beaver\\_Dams\\_to\\_Restore\\_Incised\\_Stream\\_Ecosystems](https://www.academia.edu/14056644/Using_Beaver_Dams_to_Restore_Incised_Stream_Ecosystems))
- ✓ Add thresholds for overall biodiversity and species counts which should show a steady increase overall, even if certain individual species decline due to extraneous factors.
- ✓ Include beaver counts as indicator species and establish a target of expanding the beaver population and their complexes. According to scientists who have worked on NSNP:
  - Remnants of the old meanders are currently supporting willows and cottonwood. There is enough material now to build dams. If beavers can build just a few dams across the river, they can raise the water table enough to rewet the meanders, create braids and immediately increase the amount of willows to support creating a larger complex across the valley.
  - The effects of just a few dams can be seen within 1-2 years. The water table will rise and the past drying of the area will be reversed. Within 5-10 years, willows and cottonwoods will spread across the valley, as they did before being cleared for agriculture.
  - To expedite the dams, it might be helpful to install some BDAs. EcoMetrics has experience using BDAs and establishing beavers in single thread incised channels like at NSNP.
- ✓ Add sensitive birds and waterfowl that primarily use wetlands to the indicator species list, not just non-wetland sensitive bird species. (p29) Follow the guidance of the Audubon Society for best practices monitoring of bird populations.
  - Include the full suite of riparian obligate and dependent species: Belted Kingfisher, Common Yellowthroat, Lincoln's sparrow, Wilson's snipe, Spotted Sandpiper, Song Sparrow, Willow Flycatcher, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow Warbler, black-capped chickadee, black-headed grosbeak, Bullock's oriole, cordilleran flycatcher, fox sparrow, MacGillivray's warbler, red-naped sapsucker, Swainson's thrush, tree swallow, warbling vireo, and western wood pewee.
  - Recent surveys show some of these species are now missing. Many of these species are not being monitored at all.
- ✓ Add bats to species monitoring as they are not being surveyed right now. (p26-27) Bats are indicator species for thriving wetlands and insect population health and are important for natural insect control.
- ✓ Institute a more effective invasive species management plan.
- ✓ Implement the ecological management actions specified in the 2000 RMP.

## **(D) Revise Conflicting Language in the Draft MP**

- The Draft contains statements and action items which are in conflict with the Easement, community sentiment, and OST priorities. A number of statements and action items conflict with the Conservation Values and Desired Conditions that are supposed to drive the management actions, plus gaps exist in the management actions needed to support the Conservation Values or realize the Desired Conditions.
- A thorough review of the Draft is needed to remove conflicting statements and to revise thresholds and indicators, policies and management actions so they collectively support the Desired Conditions and do not violate the Easement.

- A few examples of the problematic language follows. There are many others.
  - Table 9 (Indicators and Thresholds, p62) calls for “No increase in invasive species” but the Easement specifies that invasive species should show a decline.
  - Table 9’s threshold for wetlands is “no chronic or preventable **decline** in overall proportion of wetland habitat” when the need to **expand** wetlands from its pre-agriculture state has been identified.
  - Table 9’s threshold for terrestrial species is “do not trend downward” rather than specifying that the trend should go **upward** to achieve the Desired Condition of rewilding.
  - Table 11 (p72) calls for “monitoring overall native plant biodiversity” through “evaluating” and “mapping” while failing to provide actions to actually **increase** plant biodiversity.
  - Table 11 (p75) allows a response option only “if beaver activity **declines**”, when beavers are recognized as ecosystem engineers who should be managed for **increasing activity**, not a decline.

## (E) Additional Recommendations

- Increase enforcement at the take out bridge for compliance with the 10 minute waiting time and no impeding traffic flows. Put up a no u-turn sign at the small pull out just below the put in parking and enforce the rule. Instruct drivers heading north where they can legally turn around.
  - Provide instruction for drivers heading south where they can turn around when they need to head north for a pick up or go back to town.
  - Instruct users where they can find a restroom and remind them the environs of the take out and put in are not places to relieve themselves.
- P54. 3.3. Please add the East of Aspen Caucus and East of Aspen Neighbors to the list.
- P55. Nordic Trails Plan. Evaluate whether expanded parking is really needed.
  - A priority of NSNP for Nordic Trails should not involve more machinery to move snow around other than what is being done now.
  - Nordic Use and Grooming (p69). If grooming impacts emerging wetlands the grooming trail should be moved to avoid habitat damage or hydrology restoration.
  - Be cautious around initiatives that add to the recreational intensity of winter use in the future.
- Slower traffic. Work with CDOT to enforce 25 mph limits, install speed tables like they have by Country Day and the hospital, and implement a no revving or horn honking rule. This is for the safety of pedestrians/bicyclers and wildlife and for noise reduction that disturbs both humans and wildlife and interferes with the peace/serenity goal.
- Increase e-bike enforcement of allowing only Class 1, no Class 2 or 3 bikes, for safety and the goals of serenity and peaceful enjoyment of nature. safety of pedestrians/bicyclers and wildlife and for noise reduction that disturbs both humans and wildlife and interferes with the peace/serenity goal.

## Addendum

In separate attachments

- A. 2002 Deed of Easement
- B. 2000 Resource Management Plan
- C. OST Policy on Biodiversity

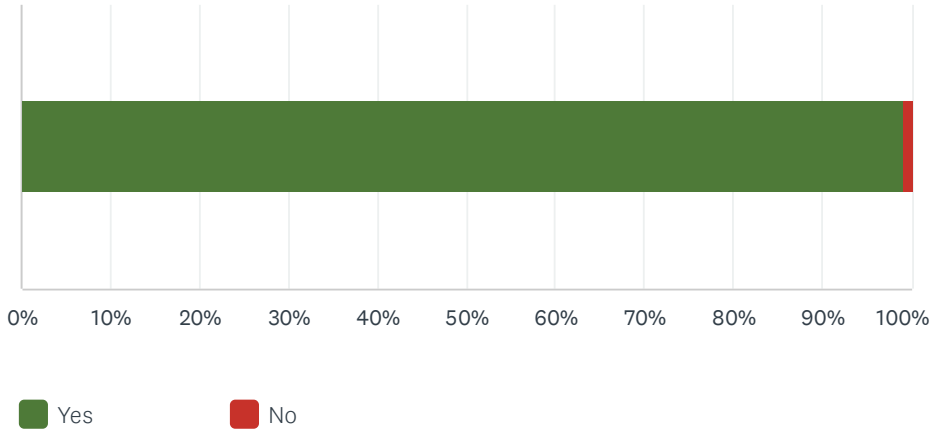
# 10. INITIAL PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

## FULL RESULTS

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## Q1 Have you ever visited North Star Nature Preserve?

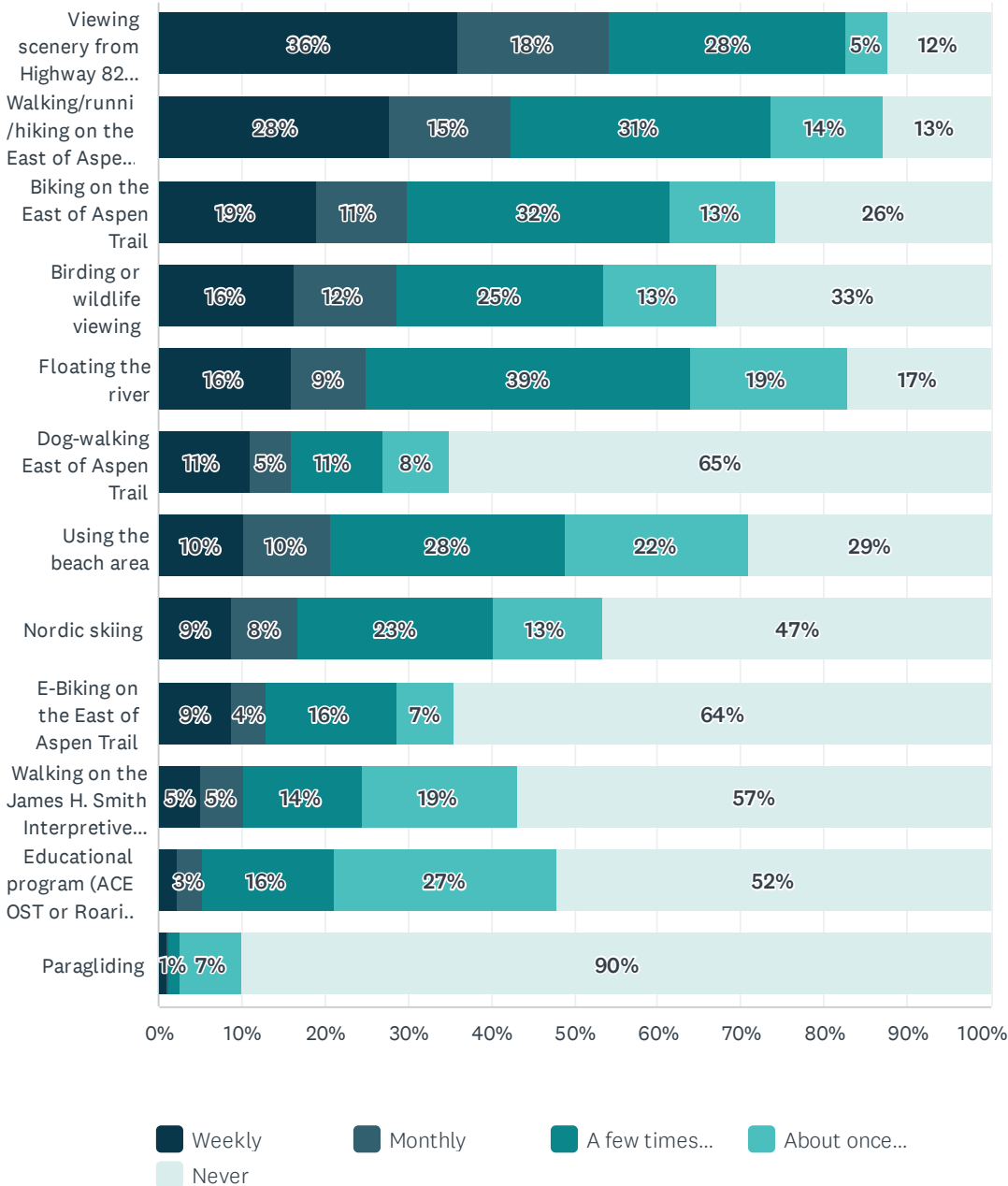
Answered: 770 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	99.09%	763
No	0.91%	7
TOTAL		770

## Q2 How frequently do you participate in the following outdoor activities at North Star when they are in season?

Answered: 762 Skipped: 8



North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	A FEW TIMES PER SEASON	ABOUT ONCE PER SEASON	NEVER	TOTAL
Viewing scenery from Highway 82 Corridor	36% 265	18% 134	28% 209	5% 38	12% 90	736
Walking/running/hiking on the East of Aspen Trail	28% 207	15% 109	31% 233	14% 101	13% 96	746
Biking on the East of Aspen Trail	19% 137	11% 79	32% 229	13% 91	26% 186	722
Birding or wildlife viewing	16% 120	12% 90	25% 182	13% 98	33% 241	731
Floating the river	16% 118	9% 67	39% 291	19% 140	17% 128	744
Dog-walking East of Aspen Trail	11% 79	5% 36	11% 79	8% 57	65% 466	717
Using the beach area	10% 75	10% 75	28% 206	22% 161	29% 211	728
Nordic skiing	9% 64	8% 59	23% 172	13% 95	47% 342	732
E-Biking on the East of Aspen Trail	9% 63	4% 29	16% 114	7% 50	64% 462	718
Walking on the James H. Smith Interpretive Trail	5% 37	5% 36	14% 103	19% 134	57% 409	719
Educational program (ACES, OST or Roaring Fork Conservancy)	2% 17	3% 22	16% 114	27% 194	52% 379	726
Paragliding	1% 7	0% 2	1% 10	7% 52	90% 635	706

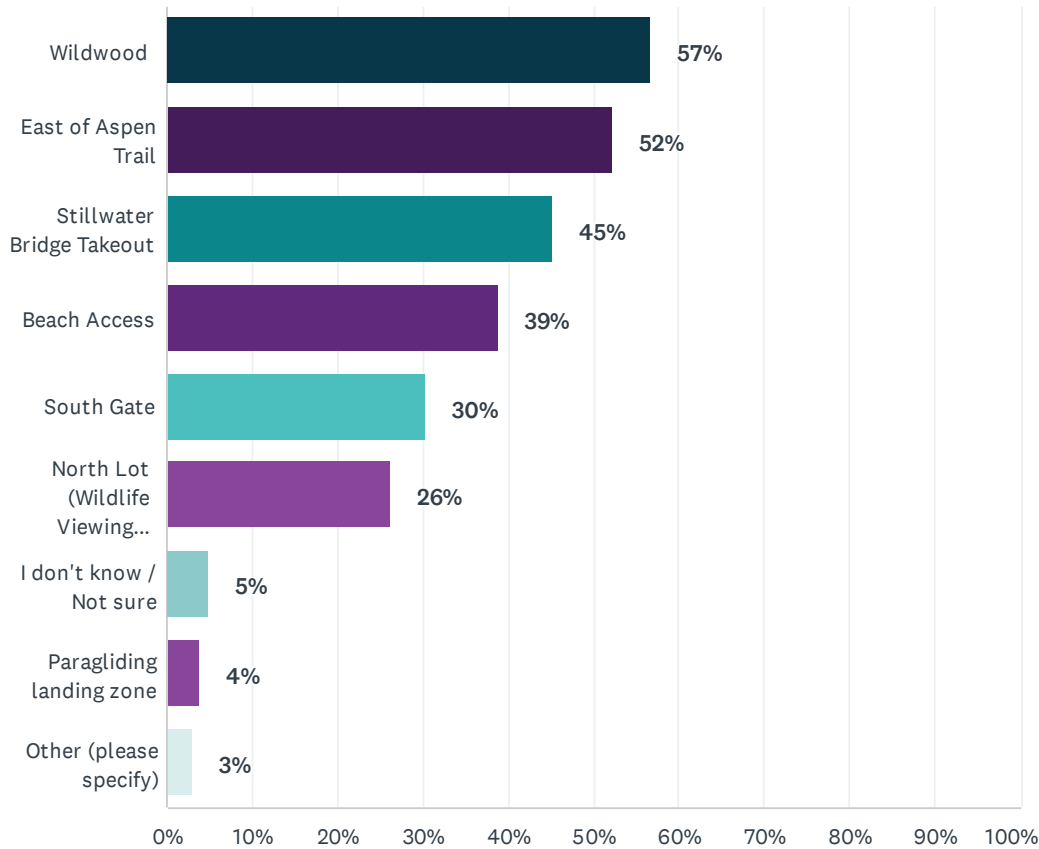
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	My use was much more frequent 1975 - 2005 when I was ACES Exec Director. Now I live in Emma and use is infrequent.	7/6/2025 3:55 PM
2	Prefer to see nature and natural setting preserved	7/6/2025 10:12 AM
3	As a homeowner in Mountain Valley, we have the luxury of accessing the East Trail directly across our neighborhood entrance. Our view is unobstructed from our home up the Pass & down to the town of Aspen. It's a quiet neighborhood & the closure of the Pass in the winter makes is very quiet and desirable for all animals and humans.	7/6/2025 8:24 AM
4	We need moose/wildlife crossing signs!!!! Too many roadkill on the preserve and just above it!	7/5/2025 7:51 PM
5	I have floated the river, walked, birding, nordic skiing over the years. It is so crowded anymore I rarely go there. It is almost impossible to find a place to park.	7/5/2025 6:23 PM
6	Restoration/environmental mitigation activities when RFOV does them	7/5/2025 4:14 PM
7	Roaring Fork Audubon working on bird survey or bird trip in public area	7/5/2025 4:03 PM
8	I am a birder and nature lover and enjoy the North Star preserve for its quiet and wildlife	7/5/2025 8:42 AM
9	I was friends with Jimmy Smith family	7/5/2025 8:22 AM
10	Birding about 7 times per spring and summer	7/4/2025 9:08 PM
11	Cycling Highway 82	7/2/2025 8:08 PM
12	paddle boarding on the river	7/2/2025 2:06 PM
13	fishing	7/2/2025 12:32 PM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

14	Paddle up and float down. I never just float down	6/24/2025 10:31 PM
15	Constantly as my house overlooks	6/23/2025 7:15 PM
16	I no longer wish to go to both star because it has become a totally inappropriate ecologically irresponsible shit show!	6/23/2025 11:37 AM
17	for the items I marked monthly, bi-monthly would be more accurate	6/22/2025 8:59 PM
18	it's not just about "activities." It's a longstanding amenity that needs to be protected from overuse.	6/22/2025 7:44 AM
19	SUP up and then down	6/21/2025 7:55 PM
20	Too over run with people to add myself to the problem	6/21/2025 6:55 PM
21	I do not support the type of recreation and development for human usage in a Wildlife protection area, so I rarely use the space	6/20/2025 10:10 AM
22	Running along the East Aspen Trail	6/16/2025 1:24 PM
23	It was not gifted to the county as a party spot perhaps you should change its name from preserve. The degradation and impact to site continues to compound!	6/16/2025 10:23 AM
24	Swimming at the take out bridge.	6/15/2025 11:10 PM
25	Once paddle boarding before it became very popular.	6/9/2025 10:23 PM
26	I'm on the East of Aspen trail nearly daily during the summer.	6/9/2025 10:15 AM
27	Sitting in one of the parking lots as a quiet get away	6/7/2025 10:01 AM
28	This is the view from my house so more than weekly	6/6/2025 9:42 PM
29	wont float or beach because of wildlife	6/6/2025 2:37 PM
30	Our home overlooks North Star Preserve and we see it all day everyday and cherish the intention of it being a preserve and not overused and abused.	6/6/2025 8:45 AM
31	visiting friends on wildwood drive/daughter attended wildwood school years ago	6/6/2025 6:29 AM
32	Our house overlooks the whole Preserve.	6/6/2025 6:21 AM
33	Sitting by the river at intervals in summer along East of Aspen Trail.	6/5/2025 1:32 AM
34	Just to make it clear I do float after I paddle against the current	6/4/2025 5:38 PM
35	A daily column is needed as those of us that live in the east end of Aspen are daily users of the trail. I have been for 31 years.	6/4/2025 5:00 PM
36	Enjoying seeing the ecosystem slowly being re-established.	6/3/2025 2:41 PM
37	Paddleboard often during runoff and stop when water levels get too low	6/2/2025 8:57 AM
38	Plein air painting	6/2/2025 8:47 AM
39	Ebiking tends to be when I am paddleboarding	5/29/2025 12:28 PM
40	Daily- on the drive to Wildwood.	5/27/2025 9:09 PM
41	I paddle upstream and then back again to the takeout bridge weekly	5/27/2025 3:32 PM
42	You completely fckd up North Star "Nature" Preserve by allowing the paraglider	5/24/2025 8:22 AM
43	Does driving thru and admiring count?	5/24/2025 7:52 AM
44	Cross Country Skiing	5/23/2025 12:29 PM
45	Almost every day	5/21/2025 5:36 PM

### Q3 At which of the following locations do you typically access North Star? Select all that apply.

Answered: 761 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Wildwood	57%	431
East of Aspen Trail	52%	397
Stillwater Bridge Takeout	45%	344
Beach Access	39%	296
South Gate	30%	230
North Lot (Wildlife Viewing Platform)	26%	200
I don't know / Not sure	5%	37
Paragliding landing zone	4%	30
Other (please specify)	3%	23
Total Respondents: 761		

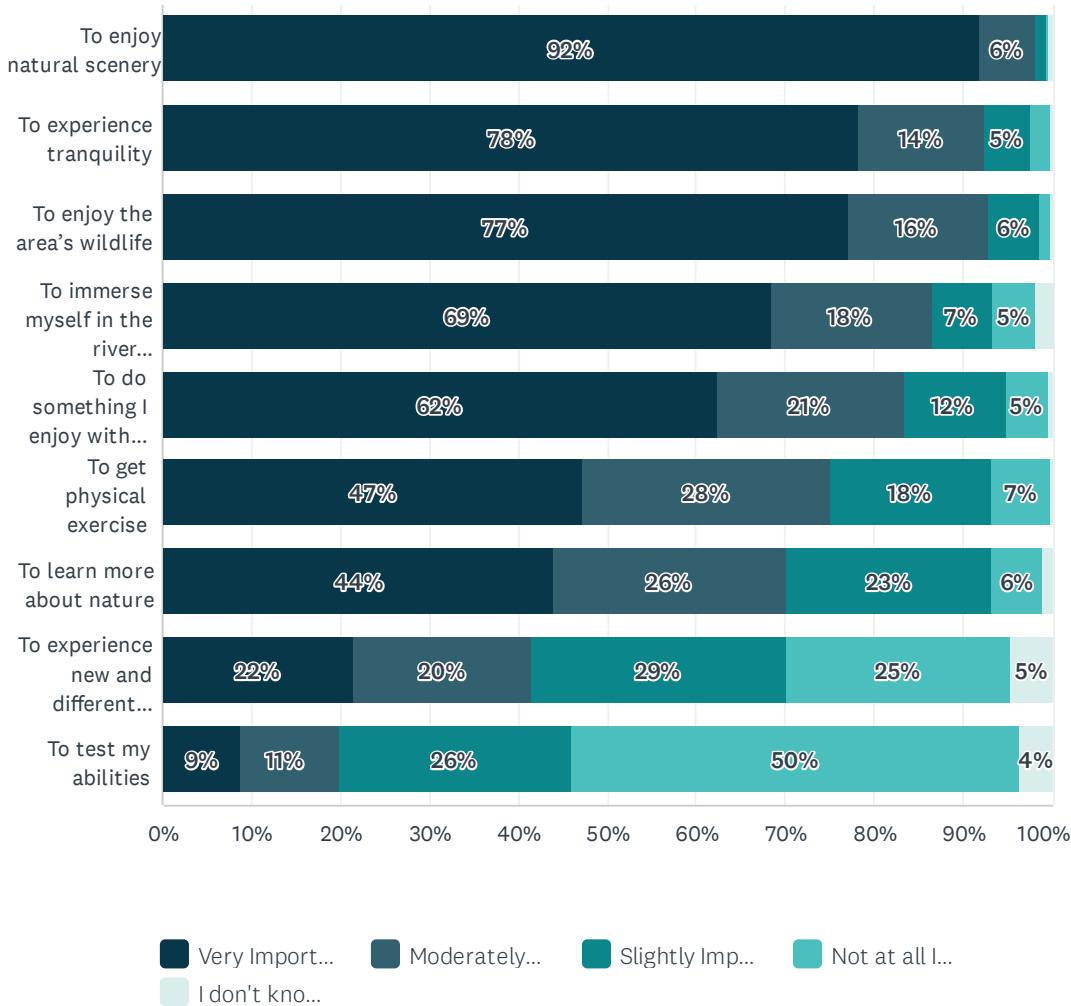
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
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## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

1	All points.	7/6/2025 3:55 PM
2	Preferred to access it before it was over run in the summer with tourists	7/6/2025 10:12 AM
3	Private home	7/5/2025 3:58 PM
4	Only with bird guide	7/5/2025 8:22 AM
5	A few different spots	6/30/2025 8:33 PM
6	run or walk from town and winter park at the XC parking lot	6/25/2025 8:54 AM
7	Nordic skiing	6/24/2025 11:01 AM
8	Friend's house	6/23/2025 4:55 PM
9	You	6/23/2025 8:17 AM
10	None	6/21/2025 6:55 PM
11	I generally just don't. Its a wildlife area, not a human recreation area	6/20/2025 10:10 AM
12	All of the above	6/9/2025 6:16 AM
13	Easternmost parking	6/8/2025 8:08 PM
14	we live in the Preserve	6/5/2025 9:44 AM
15	My home, 43151 E. Highway 82	6/5/2025 8:33 AM
16	fishing	6/4/2025 6:54 PM
17	Along the edge of the Preserve HOA	6/3/2025 2:41 PM
18	walking/running from town	6/3/2025 9:49 AM
19	I avoid Wildwood. It's disruptive to the neighbors and to the wildlife- so why go there?	5/31/2025 11:30 AM
20	Across from Mountain Valley	5/28/2025 9:01 PM
21	What a joke all of you are. You did this completely against the wishes of James Hopkins Smith who donated this land	5/24/2025 8:22 AM
22	James Smith trail	5/22/2025 3:55 PM
23	I like to paddle up & then down, no shuttle required	5/22/2025 2:51 PM

## Q4 How important to you are each of the following reasons for visiting North Star?

Answered: 761 Skipped: 9



North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

	VERY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
To enjoy natural scenery	92% 697	6% 48	1% 10	0% 1	0% 3	759
To experience tranquility	78% 588	14% 106	5% 38	2% 16	0% 2	750
To enjoy the area's wildlife	77% 575	16% 118	6% 42	1% 9	0% 2	746
To immerse myself in the river environment	69% 512	18% 134	7% 51	5% 36	2% 14	747
To do something I enjoy with friends and/or family	62% 466	21% 157	12% 86	5% 35	0% 3	747
To get physical exercise	47% 350	28% 206	18% 134	7% 49	0% 1	740
To learn more about nature	44% 328	26% 196	23% 173	6% 42	1% 8	747
To experience new and different things	22% 157	20% 146	29% 209	25% 183	5% 34	729
To test my abilities	9% 65	11% 81	26% 192	50% 371	4% 27	736

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	To attend ACES birding classes	7/6/2025 6:07 PM
2	I accessed NorthStar primarily in the context of managing and restoring North Star's natural values throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This included ACES adjacent lands.	7/6/2025 3:55 PM
3	For the older population of aspen residence in east aspen, it is quick and easy access to a low risk/high reward area for exercise and open nature.	7/6/2025 8:58 AM
4	Don't let too many people ruin the wildlife aspect of the preserve	7/5/2025 7:51 PM
5	No e-bikes on the trail, please; they never play nice	7/5/2025 4:14 PM
6	Paddle boarding the river is extremely important to me.. it gives me peace and serenity... there has been an extreme improvement in the music/ dog issues... please don't take away paddle boarding! It seems everyone's being very conscientious!! If anything maybe take the commercialOperations of van load of people away...	7/2/2025 9:43 AM
7	To be a part of community experiencing and loving this place.	7/2/2025 8:24 AM
8	To enjoy the nature and the wildlife with minimal human encounters	7/1/2025 5:07 PM
9	I live there so I walk every day x 2	6/30/2025 9:07 PM
10	Although I have had several close encounters with moose which has made me uncomfortable and sometimes scared to be in the area.	6/24/2025 10:22 PM
11	serenity - observe trout in a protected area -	6/24/2025 6:57 AM
12	We see and love the bears moose deer and elk very often	6/23/2025 7:15 PM
13	I love to come here to connect to nature, though feel somewhat poorly for doing so as it seems to disturb wildlife (birds fly away, fish dart, etc.)	6/22/2025 8:59 PM
14	Again, these questions are silly. It's a longstanding beautiful area close to town.	6/22/2025 7:44 AM
15	I refrain from North Star because it is over run	6/21/2025 6:55 PM
16	Kayaking	6/20/2025 5:44 PM
17	It's the best place to calm myself after a stressful day at work!	6/18/2025 6:57 PM

North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

18	The wildlife needs a place of tranquility free of dogs and human excrement	6/16/2025 10:23 AM
19	Wildlife and ecosystem health are the most important. If NS needs a break from humans 3 days a week or every other day or scientifically whatever works, I am in favor of closures.	6/7/2025 10:01 AM
20	View the river, not float the river	6/5/2025 2:58 PM
21	get away from the tourists	6/4/2025 6:54 PM
22	to introduce new things to friends/family who are visiting	6/4/2025 6:18 PM
23	To see how the ecosystem is being restored. To observe the work of the beavers in creating another wetland.	6/3/2025 2:41 PM
24	For tranquil nature silence	6/3/2025 2:36 PM
25	The parking & noise has made the experience much less enjoyable recently	6/2/2025 11:02 AM
26	to get away from people and noise	5/28/2025 9:01 PM
27	From the river to the road was supposed to be the only place that humans were allowed to be	5/24/2025 8:22 AM
28	The highway noise - motorcycles and modified cars diminish the experience	5/21/2025 5:36 PM
29	Forest bathing	5/21/2025 5:34 PM

North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

Q5 Please rate your experience during your typical visit to North Star.

Answered: 763 Skipped: 7

4★

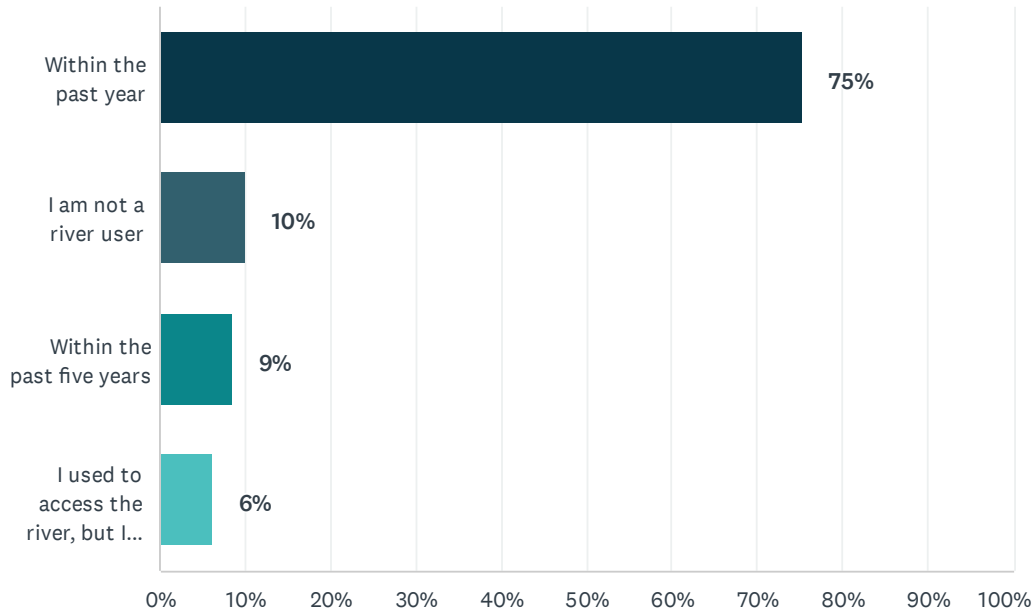
average rating



	POOR	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	2.23% 17	5.24% 40	11.40% 87	30.14% 230	50.98% 389	763	4.22

## Q6 Approximately when was the last time you visited North Star to access the river?

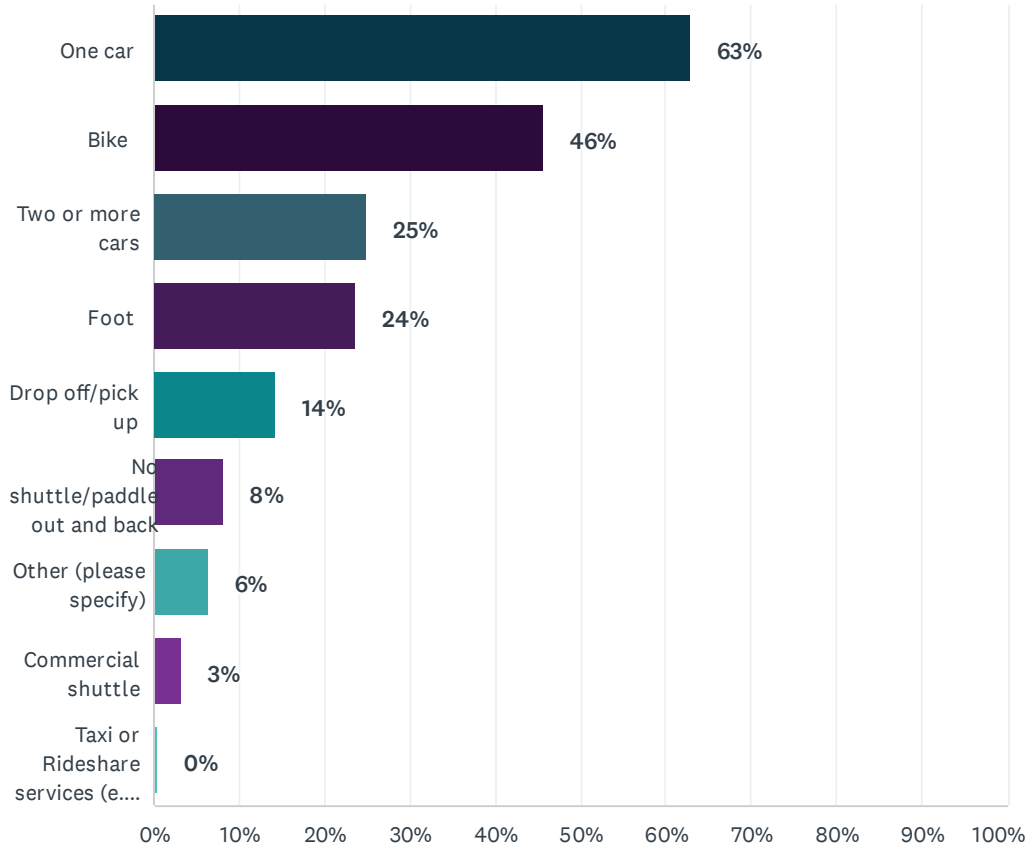
Answered: 763 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Within the past year	75%	575
I am not a river user	10%	76
Within the past five years	9%	65
I used to access the river, but I do not anymore	6%	47
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>763</b>

### Q7 How do you typically travel to North Star and shuttle your group or equipment between the start and end of your float? Select all that apply.

Answered: 641 Skipped: 129



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
One car	63%	403
Bike	46%	292
Two or more cars	25%	160
Foot	24%	152
Drop off/pick up	14%	92
No shuttle/paddle out and back	8%	52
Other (please specify)	6%	41
Commercial shuttle	3%	20
Taxi or Rideshare services (e.g. Uber/Lift)	0%	3
Total Respondents: 641		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
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## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

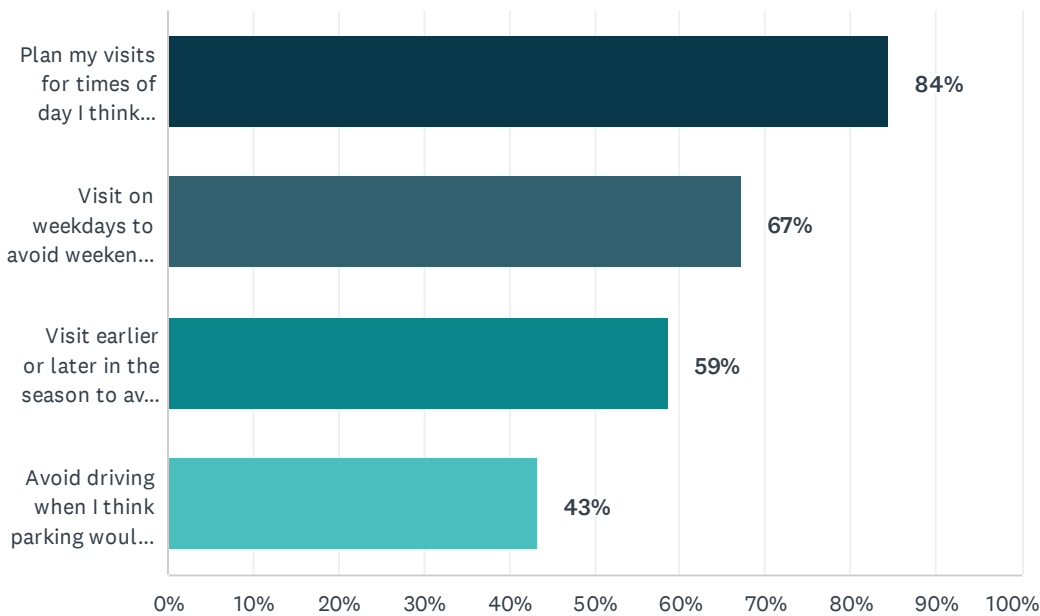
1	I try to avoid the river due to the impact to the wildlife	7/6/2025 6:07 PM
2	Not a current user.	7/6/2025 3:56 PM
3	I live there	7/6/2025 3:36 PM
4	Scooter to the put in	7/6/2025 11:50 AM
5	Don't float	7/6/2025 11:28 AM
6	I don't anymore	7/6/2025 11:26 AM
7	Have not used in years.	7/6/2025 8:21 AM
8	do not float	7/5/2025 4:03 PM
9	Blazing Adventure/RFC program lead	7/1/2025 8:09 PM
10	I do not use it	6/30/2025 11:00 PM
11	No floating	6/30/2025 10:47 PM
12	I'm	6/30/2025 2:53 PM
13	I don't	6/30/2025 9:01 AM
14	One car, one moped	6/25/2025 9:33 AM
15	this is thge reason i dont visit the river so much anymore- too many people.	6/25/2025 8:56 AM
16	Scooter	6/24/2025 2:08 PM
17	dropping off, and then meeting when they are done	6/24/2025 11:04 AM
18	Either two cars or one car and a bike	6/24/2025 8:22 AM
19	We take a bike to the bridge take out and drive to put in. Then bike back to get car when finished	6/22/2025 11:48 PM
20	NA	6/21/2025 6:55 PM
21	I dont use the river anymore. Too much disturbance to the wildlife and I dont want to he part of thr problem	6/20/2025 10:11 AM
22	Scooter	6/17/2025 10:41 PM
23	i don float anymore. if i did early season late afternoon/eve one car/bike	6/17/2025 7:25 AM
24	I no longer use river - too busy	6/6/2025 12:45 PM
25	park at friends house but honestly rarely float the river - used to - its too busy	6/6/2025 6:31 AM
26	I only use the river for fishing and wading	6/6/2025 4:47 AM
27	or one car + a bicycle	6/5/2025 12:14 PM
28	I don't float the river	6/4/2025 12:39 PM
29	it's not letting me continue these survey	6/3/2025 3:53 PM
30	I am not a river user by floating in the river but use it by walking in it around the take out bridge. There is more to "river use" than floating. More ways to enjoy the river than a float trip.	6/3/2025 2:45 PM
31	scooter	6/3/2025 9:50 AM
32	I like upstream from the bridge, unless h2o low times when it is difficult to paddle the shallow parts	6/2/2025 9:01 AM
33	motorcycle	5/26/2025 10:45 AM
34	Hitch hike	5/24/2025 9:20 PM
35	We use our scooter and car mostly	5/24/2025 5:08 PM
36	What a cluster fck you'll created by blowing this type of abuse, not use.	5/24/2025 8:23 AM

37	Hitch hike	5/23/2025 2:53 PM
38	I don't float Northstat anymore, too crowded	5/23/2025 2:26 PM
39	Hitchhiking	5/22/2025 2:19 PM
40	I don't believe floating should be allowed	5/22/2025 6:33 AM
41	I don't float in the preserve, so this doesn't apply	5/22/2025 3:07 AM

North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

### Q8 Please indicate whether you have ever done each of the following when visiting North Star:

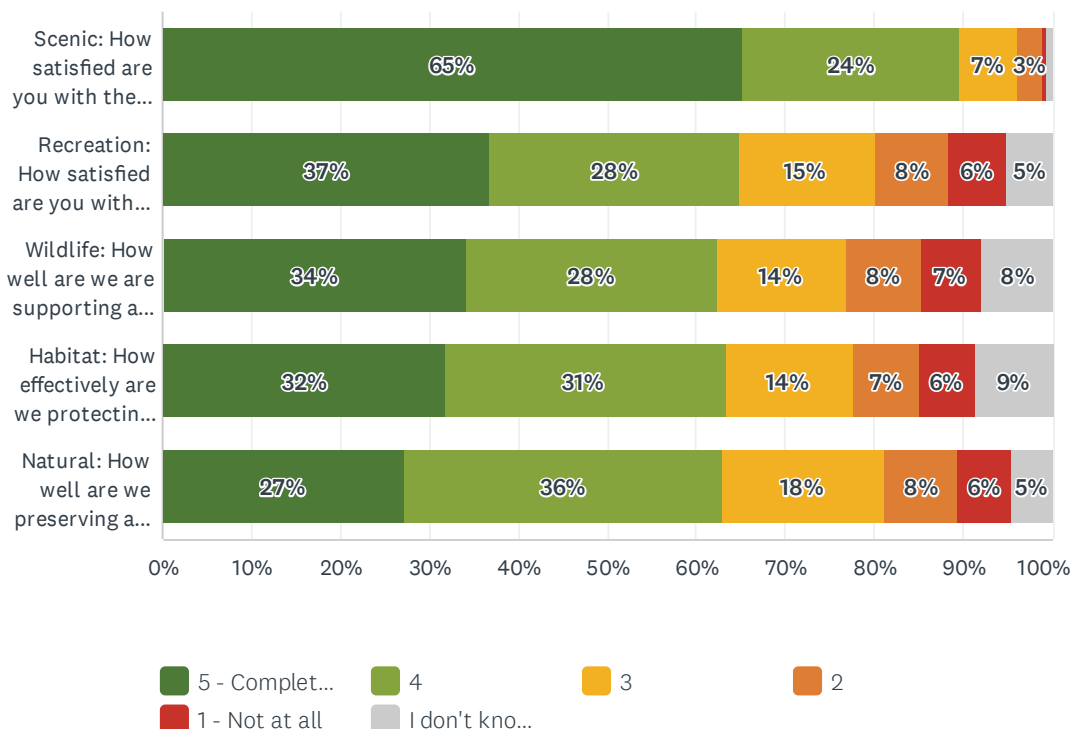
Answered: 605 Skipped: 165



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Plan my visits for times of day I think will be less busy	84%	511
Visit on weekdays to avoid weekend crowds	67%	406
Visit earlier or later in the season to avoid crowds	59%	355
Avoid driving when I think parking would be difficult to find	43%	262
Total Respondents: 605		

Q9 North Star Nature Preserve was acquired to manage the following open space values: natural, scenic, habitat, wildlife and recreation. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think we are meeting your expectations for these values at North Star? (5 being 'Completely' and 1 being 'Not at all')

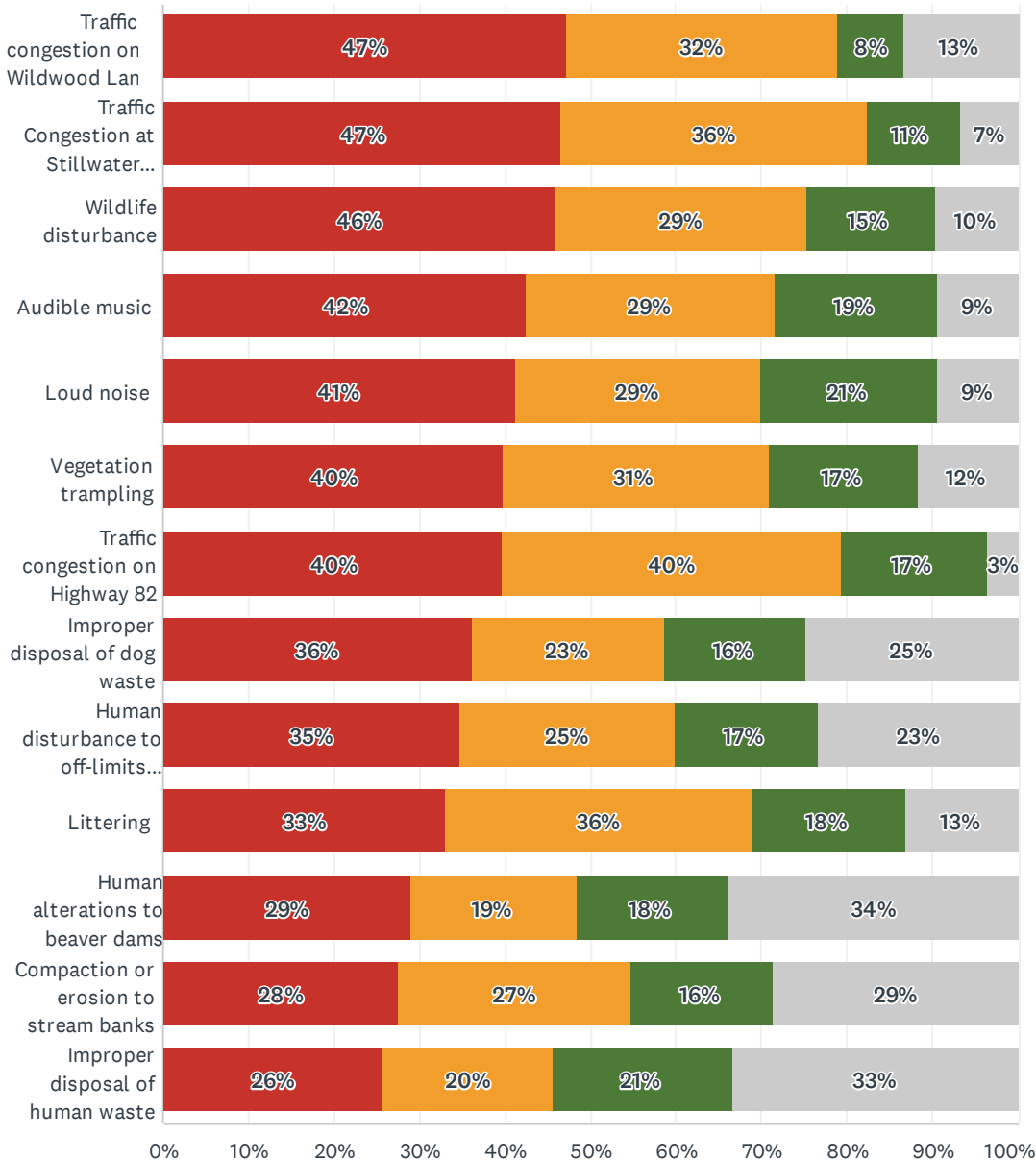
Answered: 721 Skipped: 49



	5 - COMPLETELY	4	3	2	1 - NOT AT ALL	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
Scenic: How satisfied are you with the aesthetic beauty and views in the area?	65% 471	24% 175	7% 47	3% 21	0% 3	1% 4	721
Recreation: How satisfied are you with the availability and quality of recreational activities?	37% 263	28% 199	15% 110	8% 58	6% 46	5% 37	713
Wildlife: How well are we supporting and conserving local wildlife?	34% 244	28% 203	14% 103	8% 60	7% 49	8% 57	716
Habitat: How effectively are we protecting and restoring area habitats?	32% 230	31% 226	14% 104	7% 53	6% 45	9% 62	720
Natural: How well are we preserving and enhancing the natural environment?	27% 195	36% 258	18% 131	8% 58	6% 44	5% 33	719

## Q10 To what extent do you think each of the following potential impacts of recreational river use is or is not a problem at North Star during the peak summer season?

Answered: 683 Skipped: 87



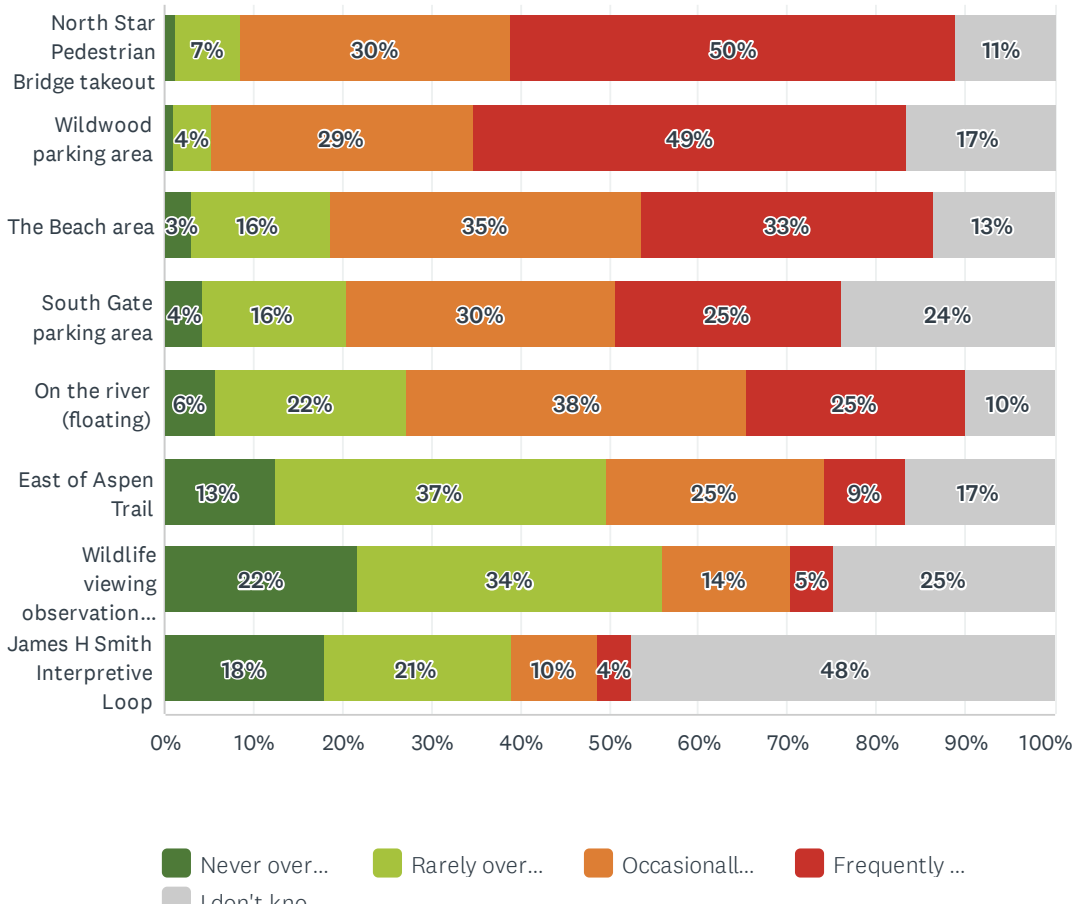
■ Big problem    
 ■ Small probl...    
 ■ Not a probl...    
 ■ I don't kno...

North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

	<b>BIG PROBLEM</b>	<b>SMALL PROBLEM</b>	<b>NOT A PROBLEM</b>	<b>I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Traffic congestion on Wildwood Lane	47% 321	32% 215	8% 53	13% 90	679
Traffic Congestion at Stillwater Bridge Takeout	47% 316	36% 244	11% 73	7% 46	679
Wildlife disturbance	46% 314	29% 199	15% 103	10% 66	682
Audible music	42% 289	29% 199	19% 129	9% 64	681
Loud noise	41% 279	29% 195	21% 139	9% 64	677
Vegetation trampling	40% 270	31% 211	17% 118	12% 79	678
Traffic congestion on Highway 82	40% 269	40% 268	17% 117	3% 23	677
Improper disposal of dog waste	36% 243	23% 152	16% 111	25% 167	673
Human disturbance to off-limits beaches	35% 236	25% 172	17% 114	23% 158	680
Littering	33% 225	36% 245	18% 122	13% 89	681
Human alterations to beaver dams	29% 197	19% 132	18% 119	34% 230	678
Compaction or erosion to stream banks	28% 187	27% 185	16% 112	29% 195	679
Improper disposal of human waste	26% 173	20% 134	21% 143	33% 224	674

# Q11 Please rate your experience regarding level of use in the following areas during your typical visit to North Star. The term "Overcrowded" here indicates that the number of people detracts from your experience, enjoyment or safety.

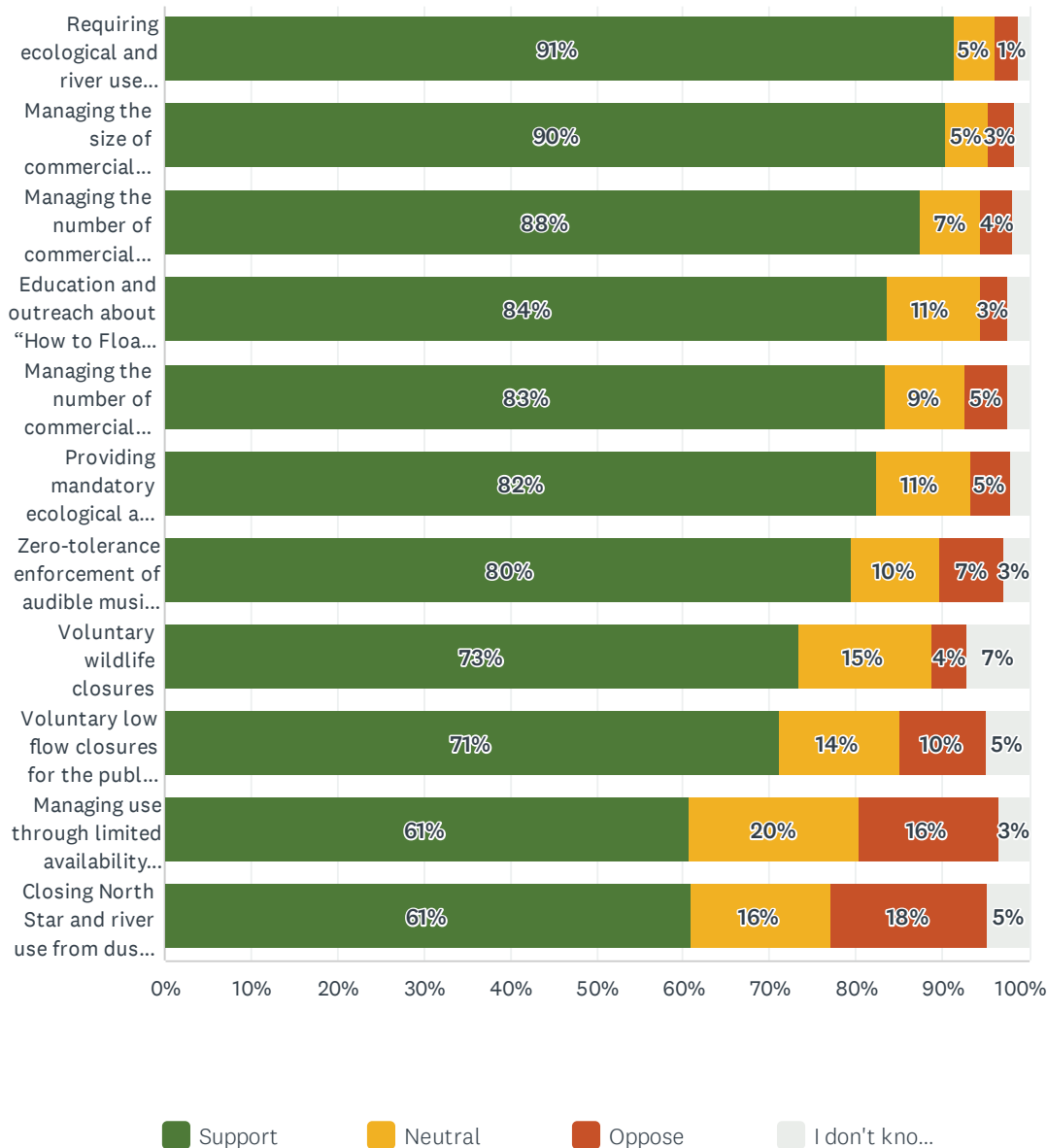
Answered: 678 Skipped: 92



	NEVER OVERCROWDED	RARELY OVERCROWDED	OCCASIONALLY OVERCROWDED	FREQUENTLY OVERCROWDED	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
North Star Pedestrian Bridge takeout	1% 8	7% 49	30% 202	50% 334	11% 74	667
Wildwood parking area	1% 7	4% 29	29% 196	49% 326	17% 111	669
The Beach area	3% 20	16% 105	35% 234	33% 222	13% 90	671
South Gate parking area	4% 28	16% 107	30% 201	25% 167	24% 159	662
On the river (floating)	6% 38	22% 144	38% 255	25% 164	10% 67	668
East of Aspen Trail	13% 84	37% 249	25% 165	9% 59	17% 113	670
Wildlife viewing observation deck	22% 146	34% 231	14% 96	5% 33	25% 166	672
James H Smith Interpretive Loop	18% 121	21% 141	10% 64	4% 26	48% 319	671

**Q12 To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following recreational river use management strategies CURRENTLY being used at North Star? Note: OST has limited ability to manage non-commercial / public recreational use of waterways and use on non-OST properties (e.g. Private parcels, Wildwood Put-in)**

Answered: 683 Skipped: 87

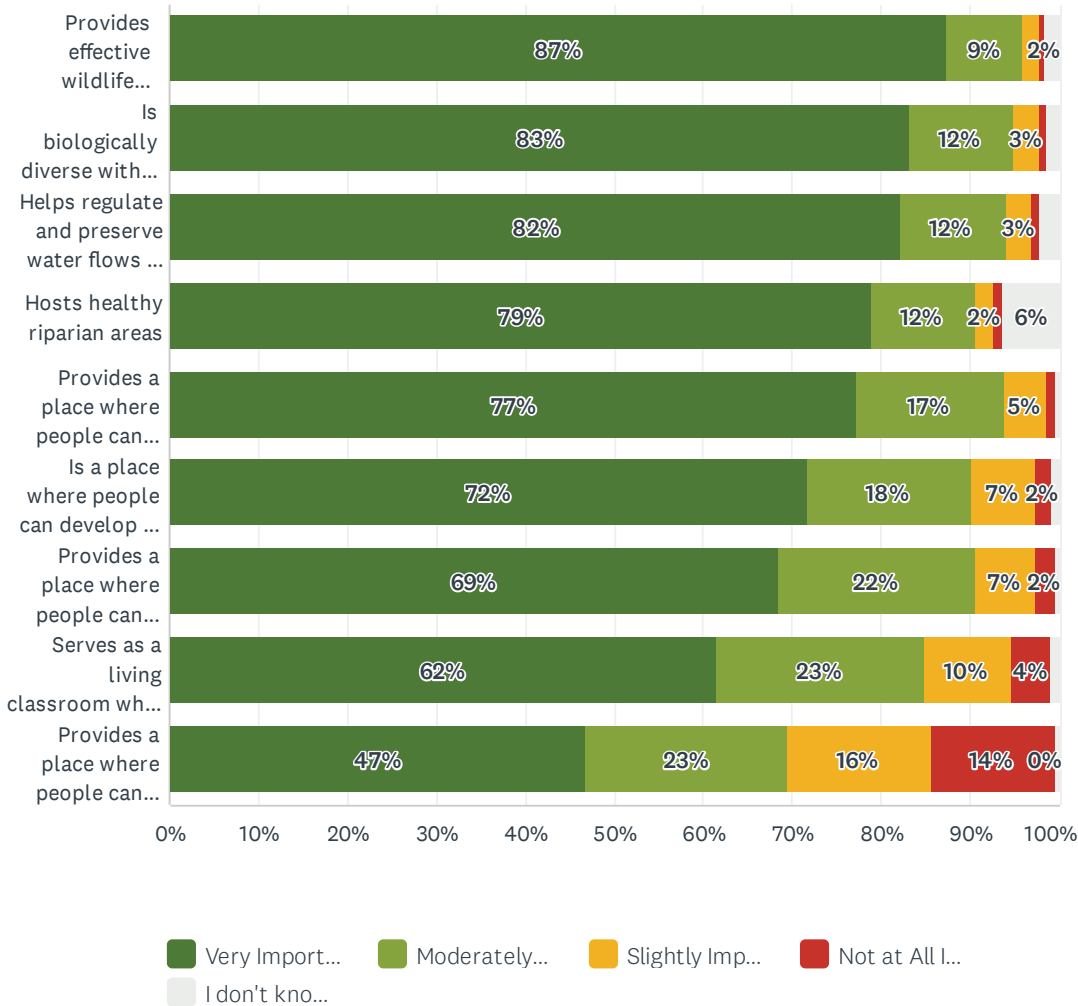


North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

	SUPPORT	NEUTRAL	OPPOSE	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
Requiring ecological and river use training for all commercial guides taking clients on the river	91% 621	5% 33	3% 17	1% 9	680
Managing the size of commercial groups who float the river	90% 616	5% 34	3% 21	2% 11	682
Managing the number of commercial groups who float the river per hour	88% 595	7% 48	4% 25	2% 12	680
Education and outreach about “How to Float” in a way that shows respect for the environment and other users	84% 568	11% 74	3% 21	2% 16	679
Managing the number of commercial operator permits (currently limited to 5 operators per season)	83% 566	9% 63	5% 34	2% 16	679
Providing mandatory ecological and river use education to all commercial group participants before they float the river	82% 560	11% 73	5% 32	2% 14	679
Zero-tolerance enforcement of audible music and dogs	80% 543	10% 70	7% 51	3% 19	683
Voluntary wildlife closures	73% 500	15% 105	4% 27	7% 49	681
Voluntary low flow closures for the public (Mandatory for commercial groups)	71% 484	14% 96	10% 67	5% 34	681
Managing use through limited availability of parking	61% 413	20% 133	16% 110	3% 23	679
Closing North Star and river use from dusk to dawn	61% 413	16% 110	18% 123	5% 32	678

### Q13 How important are the following desired conditions statements for ecological and social conditions at North Star Nature Preserve to you?

Answered: 656 Skipped: 114



North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

	VERY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
Provides effective wildlife habitat	87% 569	9% 56	2% 12	1% 4	2% 11	652
Is biologically diverse with native wildlife and vegetation	83% 544	12% 76	3% 18	1% 6	1% 9	653
Helps regulate and preserve water flows in the Roaring Fork Valley	82% 534	12% 78	3% 18	1% 5	2% 15	650
Hosts healthy riparian areas	79% 516	12% 76	2% 14	1% 7	6% 41	654
Provides a place where people can connect with and appreciate nature	77% 505	17% 108	5% 30	1% 7	0% 3	653
Is a place where people can develop an appreciation for environmental stewardship	72% 470	18% 120	7% 46	2% 12	1% 6	654
Provides a place where people can experience tranquility	69% 446	22% 144	7% 44	2% 15	0% 2	651
Serves as a living classroom where people can learn about the ecological and social benefits of the Preserve	62% 402	23% 151	10% 65	4% 27	1% 7	652
Provides a place where people can access the water for river recreation	47% 306	23% 148	16% 105	14% 91	0% 3	653

#	OTHER DESIRED CONDITION (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I think that the river traffic in the last years is awful	7/7/2025 6:49 AM
2	No human disturbance of bird nesting and Elk Calving areas	7/6/2025 6:07 PM
3	Enhance riparian values by continuing efforts to allow the river to meander through old gooseneck channels and form braided channels across the landscape. Beyond the habitat benefits, increasing the dwell time of water on that landscape recharges the groundwater system.	7/6/2025 4:09 PM
4	Lessen Human impact by limiting people's usage	7/6/2025 11:26 AM
5	This is a nature preserve and commercial activity should be prohibited, with limited human access.	7/5/2025 9:10 PM
6	Protect the wildlife, get the loud disrespectful humans out of there	7/5/2025 7:51 PM
7	Slow and encourage riparian bird life and wildlife use unstressed by human recreation and interaction	7/5/2025 4:14 PM
8	The preserve is being overused by commercial companies	7/5/2025 3:33 PM
9	STOP ALL COMMERCIAL USE!!!!	7/5/2025 10:30 AM
10	A free shuttle service would be amazing	7/5/2025 8:42 AM
11	Enhance protection for birds during nesting season.	7/5/2025 6:46 AM
12	I would like to see much less recreation in summer. It is a wildlife preserve.	7/4/2025 9:08 PM
13	Noise control is essential !!!!!	7/2/2025 4:54 PM
14	Floating has benefited my mental health immensely	7/2/2025 9:43 AM
15	Provide a safe and healthy space for wildlife and natural growth. Not a Disneyland for human beings. Provide a place for people who are interested in wildlife to be up close and personal	7/1/2025 5:07 PM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

with natural things. Not a place to party and interrupt the natural flow of nature and wildlife. Maximize an environment for animals and less intrusion by humans who come in groups.

16	Please keep commercial rafting companies at a minimum!!!	6/30/2025 4:19 PM
17	let nature be as it is..	6/24/2025 11:16 AM
18	Reduce litter and institute steep fines	6/24/2025 7:08 AM
19	floating the river and beach use seem to be at odds with the original gift....commercial use in any form seems dubious	6/24/2025 7:01 AM
20	Stricter enforcement of drone ban. I saw 2 today and one kept following me up close while on my paddle board	6/22/2025 11:53 PM
21	I support protecting the area for wildlife protection and water preservation over human river use, but I would still love to be able to use it with as little hassle as possible as a local.	6/22/2025 4:18 PM
22	1) Provide a policy structure that doesn't only limit the use of Stillwater for floating purposes by the most educated and chaperoned group (commercial groups with guides). 2) Promote and solidify partnerships/deals with the forest service to develop an enforcement package that allows for controlled private use through permits only accessible after taking the same education and introduction as commercial participants.	6/22/2025 1:24 PM
23	No more recreation in this sensitive areas. There are so many other places within town where human impact is acceptable already	6/21/2025 7:00 PM
24	Some of my complaints about vegetation, tramline, loud music and dogs, erosion, etc. are based on previous years information. These conditions may have improved vastly since then.	6/21/2025 2:15 PM
25	Limit access for the public to certain time slots. The area may benefit from increased use of commercial outfitter shuttle and guiding services. They enforce education requirements.	6/20/2025 3:14 PM
26	Close it a let the wildlife be wild it. Would be better preserved if private you have enabled it to be overrun.	6/16/2025 10:29 AM
27	Very important to no commercial use	6/10/2025 12:07 PM
28	Upmost importance is the animals and the nature preserve.	6/7/2025 7:25 AM
29	Nature comes first in a nature preserve. Parks are for recreation not nature preserves.	6/6/2025 9:50 PM
30	Cannot highlight enough the need for the nature preserve to first and foremost maintain wildlife sanctuary and limit recreational activity, squatting, etc	6/6/2025 3:04 PM
31	questions are open ended-provide guided educational trips yes-tons of people on their own-no	6/6/2025 2:43 PM
32	No e bikes	6/6/2025 8:55 AM
33	Eliminate E Bikes on the East Aspen Trail	6/5/2025 3:00 PM
34	NO E bikes on trails please. WAY TOO FAST and DANGEROUS	6/5/2025 1:36 AM
35	No Commercial groups over 6 people. Must qualify and pay for a special use permit that can be revoked with review,	6/4/2025 7:02 PM
36	Expand the xc ski trail further east. The maintenance of the winter ski trail has been great. It's a lovely place to ski.	6/4/2025 5:09 PM
37	Very important to restore the area to its state before it was altered for agriculture so that the beavers can create wetlands and the oxbows and meanders come back.	6/3/2025 3:13 PM
38	Very very important to have this as a river recreation access point. We live so close to so many rivers but they are very hard / impossible to access - North Star is a highlight of living in Aspen for me.	6/3/2025 1:37 PM
39	close the river to human use -- it is a NATURE PRESERVE!!!!	6/2/2025 3:56 PM
40	I am not opposed to people learning & appreciating what North Star Preserve offers, but there are TOO MANY people	6/2/2025 11:14 AM
41	Ban comercial use, and go clothind optional, will help reduce overuse.	6/2/2025 9:10 AM

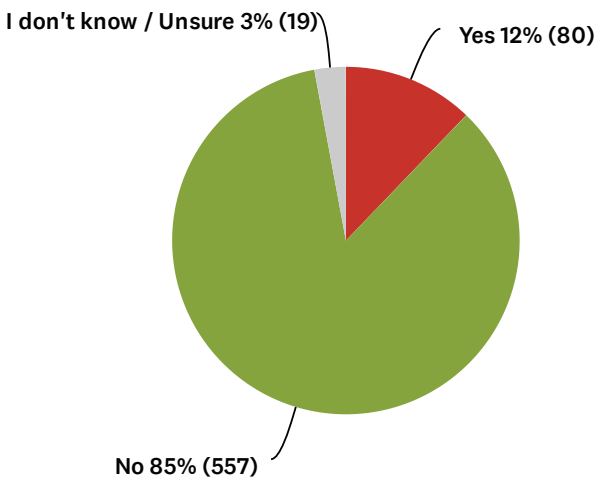
## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

42	I would like NO access to river for floating/paddleboarding	6/2/2025 8:17 AM
43	The NS experience should not be marketed actively the way ACRA is doing it now. We can accomodate limited use, but DO NOT PROMOTE IT. Tell ACRA/Aspen Snowmass and the hotel marketers, concierges and river companies to stop!	5/31/2025 11:36 AM
44	Eliminate all SUPs and you will get rid of most of the issues	5/28/2025 9:06 PM
45	North Star serves as a Nature Preserve, not a commercial recreation area. We need to substantially reduce the commercial presence at North Star. 46% of use is commercial. The 30% of use by guided clients needs to be dramatically reduced. The surveyed 16% of use with rental boards is more difficult to regulate but must be included when considering the total levels of commercial use. Support the re wilding and recovery of the wetland areas of North Star so that it serves as the most effective wildfire break between the forest and town.	5/27/2025 2:30 PM
46	Only allow locals to access and charge outside of Pitkin Cty residents	5/26/2025 8:27 PM
47	Better recreation with dogs and friends.	5/25/2025 12:37 AM
48	Remain a nature preserve, not a recreation area!	5/24/2025 10:04 PM
49	North Star does not regulate or preserve any flows. It was for the animals and the fact that you're considering opening up to commercial use, please fck all the way off	5/24/2025 8:28 AM
50	I'm not a fan of "voluntary" closures. Either open or closed, and enforce closures.	5/23/2025 12:32 PM
51	permits	5/22/2025 8:29 AM
52	Protecting the flora and fauna should be the primary priority.	5/21/2025 10:16 PM
53	Ban paddle boarding all together	5/21/2025 7:01 PM
54	The traffic on highway 82 will increase exponentially in the next 10 years. It is critical that traffic be limited - or the environment will suffer.	5/21/2025 5:42 PM
55	No Ebikes on East of Aspen Trail, it is too narrow for bike vs pedestrian safety, and I say this as a cyclist.	5/21/2025 5:42 PM



Q14 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image A.

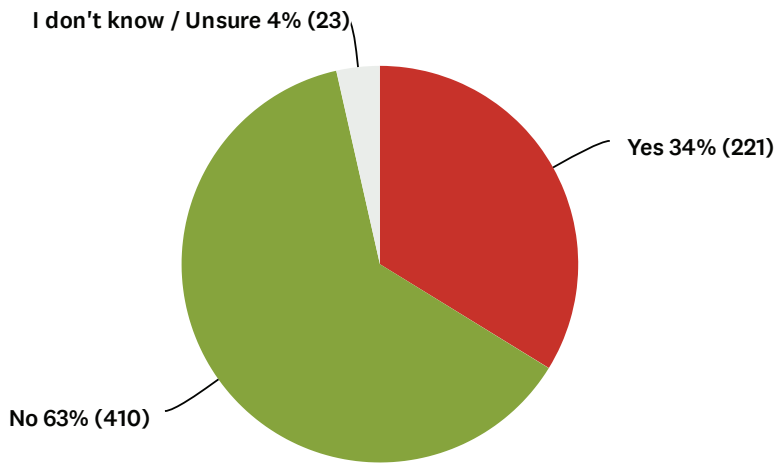
Answered: 656 Skipped: 114



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12%	80
No	85%	557
I don't know / Unsure	3%	19

# Q15 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image B.

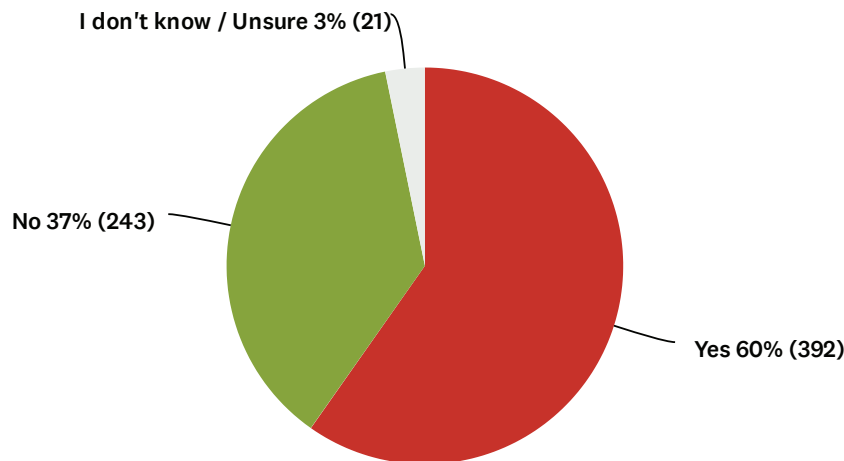
Answered: 654 Skipped: 116



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	34%	221
No	63%	410
I don't know / Unsure	4%	23

# Q16 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image C.

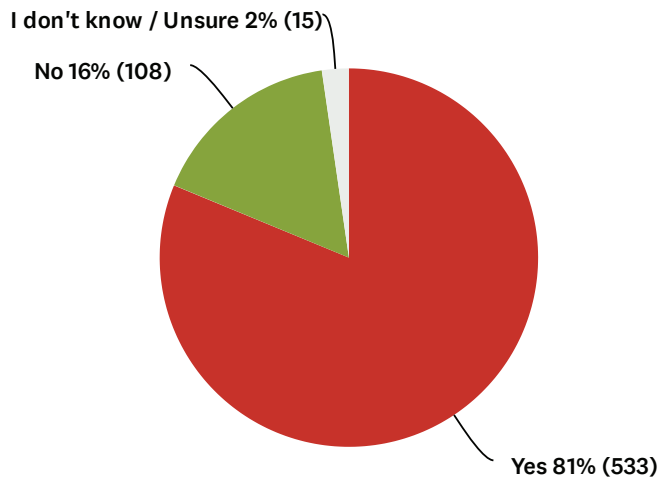
Answered: 656 Skipped: 114



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60%	392
No	37%	243
I don't know / Unsure	3%	21

# Q17 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image D.

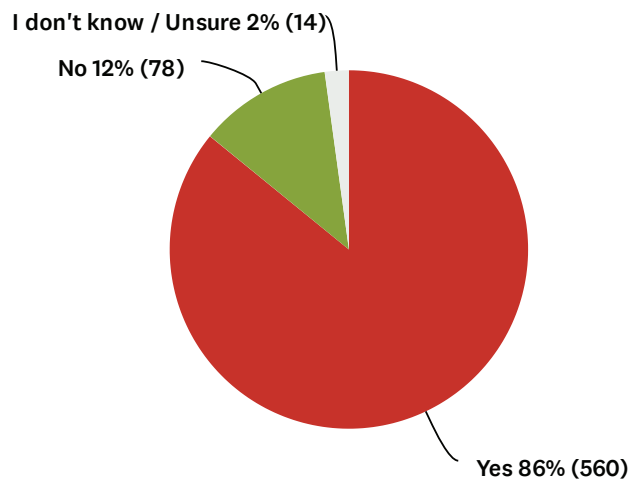
Answered: 656 Skipped: 114



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81%	533
No	16%	108
I don't know / Unsure	2%	15

# Q18 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image E.

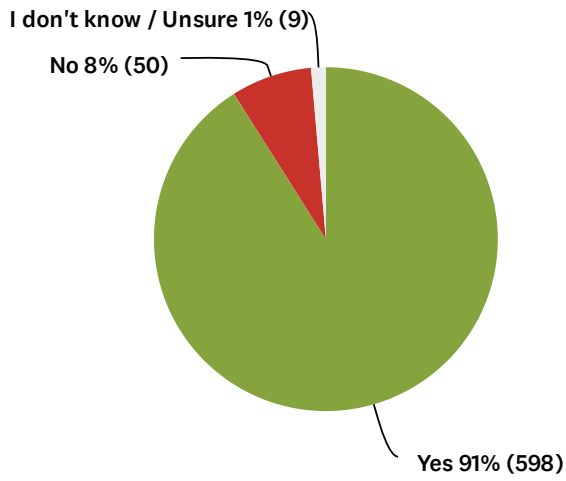
Answered: 652 Skipped: 118



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86%	560
No	12%	78
I don't know / Unsure	2%	14

# Q19 I would feel crowded with the number of people in the view of Image F.

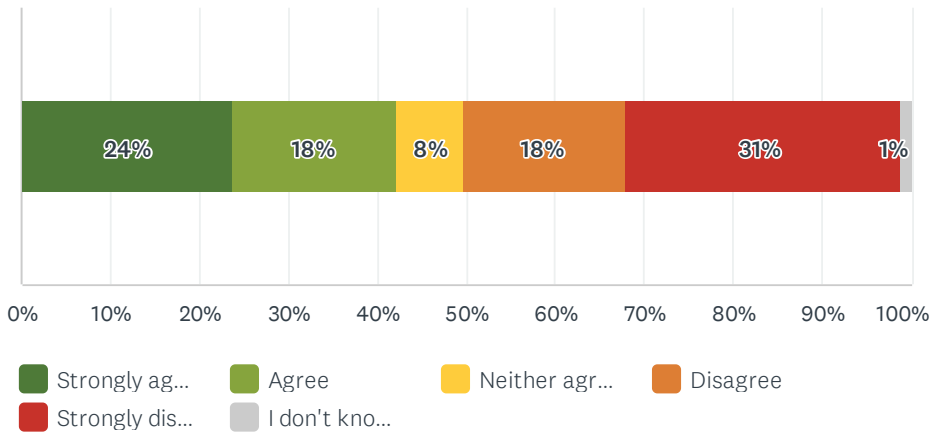
Answered: 657 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91%	598
No	8%	50
I don't know / Unsure	1%	9

## Q20 It's more important to me that people can access the river freely than to regulate and/or limit access through timed-entry permits, reservations or other strategies.

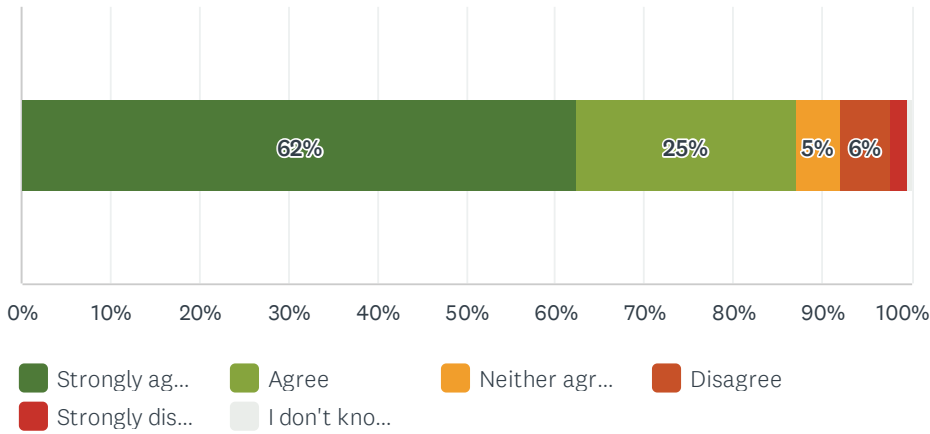
Answered: 655 Skipped: 115



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	24%	155
Agree	18%	121
Neither agree nor disagree	8%	50
Disagree	18%	119
Strongly disagree	31%	202
I don't know / Not sure	1%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>655</b>

## Q21 I support group size limits on the river.

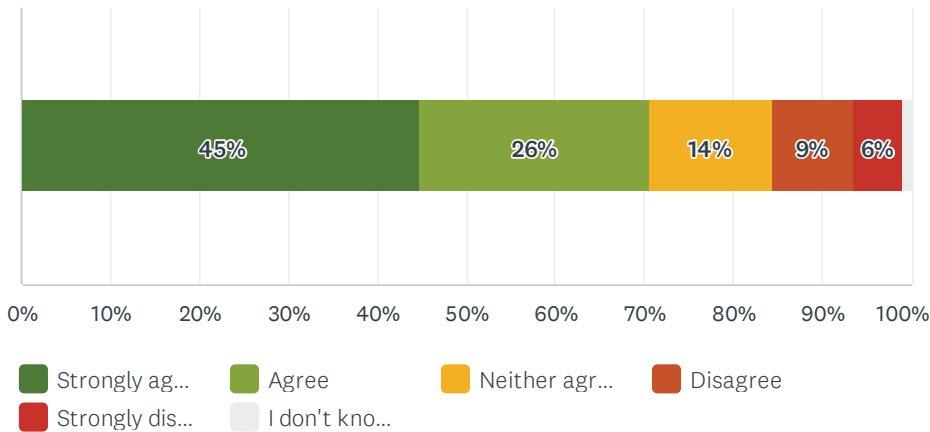
Answered: 653 Skipped: 117



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	62%	407
Agree	25%	162
Neither agree nor disagree	5%	32
Disagree	6%	37
Strongly disagree	2%	12
I don't know / Not sure	0%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>653</b>

## Q22 I support requiring education of the ecological value of North Star and key regulations to non-commercial, personal groups/individuals before they float the river.

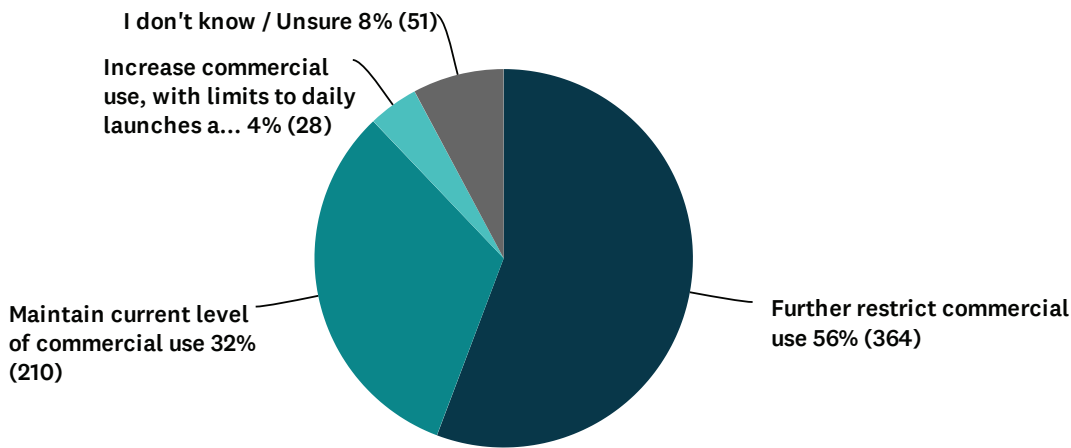
Answered: 653 Skipped: 117



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	45%	292
Agree	26%	169
Neither agree nor disagree	14%	90
Disagree	9%	59
Strongly disagree	6%	36
I don't know / Not sure	1%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>653</b>

## Q23 What is your preferred level of commercial use?

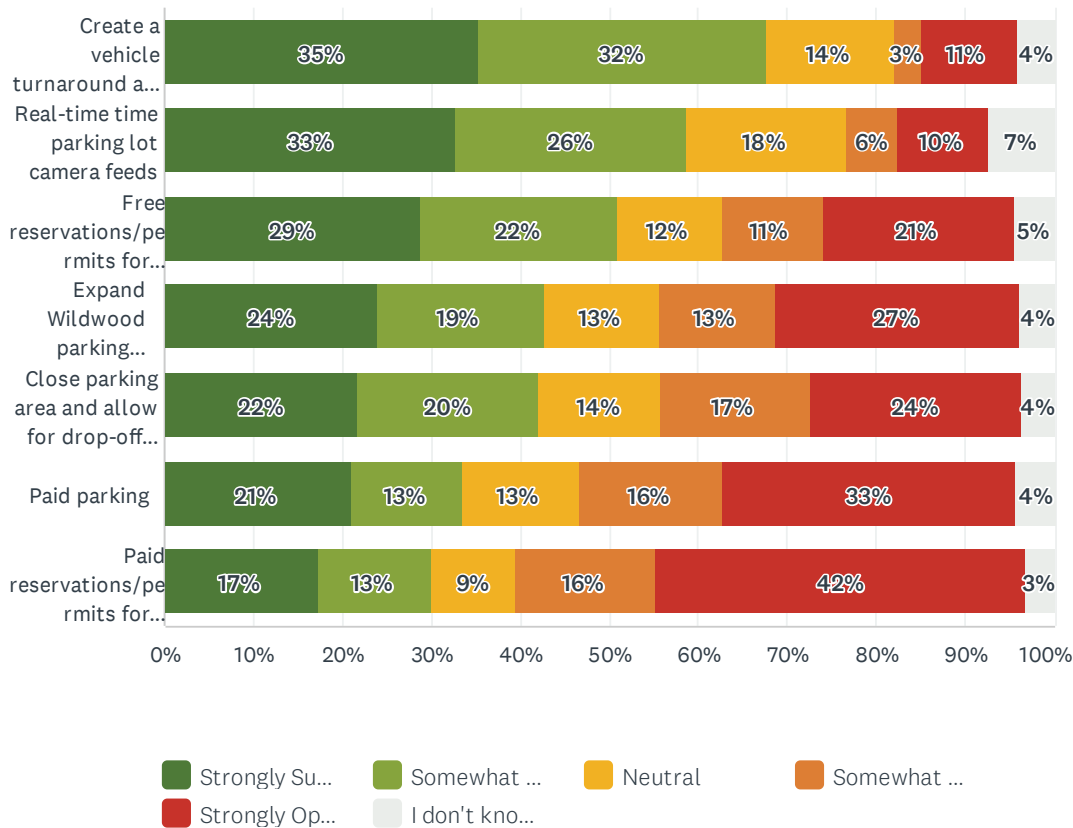
Answered: 653 Skipped: 117



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Further restrict commercial use	56%	364
Maintain current level of commercial use	32%	210
Increase commercial use, with limits to daily launches and overall use	4%	28
I don't know / Unsure	8%	51
TOTAL		653

## Q24 If the Wildwood land exchange is secured, to what extent would you support or oppose the following management strategies for the parking and river launch at the Wildwood put-in?

Answered: 649 Skipped: 121



	STRONGLY SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	I DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE	TOTAL
Create a vehicle turnaround and drop-off zone	35% 226	32% 206	14% 92	3% 20	11% 69	4% 26	639
Real-time time parking lot camera feeds	33% 209	26% 166	18% 114	6% 37	10% 65	7% 47	638
Free reservations/permits for public users	29% 182	22% 140	12% 76	11% 71	21% 135	5% 29	633
Expand Wildwood parking capacity	24% 153	19% 121	13% 82	13% 84	27% 176	4% 25	641
Close parking area and allow for drop-off use, bicycle or foot only	22% 140	20% 131	14% 88	17% 109	24% 152	4% 24	644
Paid parking	21% 134	13% 80	13% 84	16% 103	33% 210	4% 28	639
Paid reservations/permits for public users	17% 109	13% 81	9% 59	16% 99	42% 262	3% 20	630

## Q25 Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about North Star?

Answered: 324 Skipped: 446

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I have lived here for years and lament the fact that North Star Preserve is being ruined by overuse. Commercial companies should not be able to do this.	7/7/2025 6:49 AM
2	You have turned this place into a water park!! It is a Nature Preserve!	7/6/2025 7:04 PM
3	It is already impacted by construction on residences and hwy 82. Keep it wild and preserve natural tranquility. Limit commercial use.	7/6/2025 6:43 PM
4	The North Star was designated as a Nature Preserve for the preservation of habitat for obligate and migratory wildlife species. ACES managed the North Star for 15 years as a Nature Preserve. PCOST has violated the terms of the Conservation Easement by not adhering to Wildlife closures for nesting birds, calving ungulates, or beaver habitat requirements and by issuing multiple commercial operator permits, which have promoted exponential use of the fragile riparian habitat.	7/6/2025 6:07 PM
5	Commercial use also needs a fixed limit of client user days especially for the busiest days and times. There should be a comprehensive scientific study of the impacts of recreation on the preserve that develops habitat and species indicators for future monitoring. We need to support the rewilding of North Star as a wetland beaver habitat. This is a key for the area to serve as the most effective wildfire fire break between the forest and town. Huge thank you to the Open Space Staff for their work on the North Star!	7/6/2025 6:00 PM
6	I strongly support protecting the wildlife's habitat for their well being, and survival capacity. I am strongly AGAINST expanded commercial use!	7/6/2025 5:05 PM
7	I applaud ongoing "rewilding" projects by OST at North Star and encourage using the willow wetlands and riparian zone at the entrance to Difficult Campground as a base line model to guide rewilding. The NorthStar of 25 and 50 years ago was ecologically impoverished by James Smith's use of the land for cattle grazing and haying meadows. Baseline studies of that diminished landscape cannot provide an accurate model to guide rewilding. Use the Difficult area or other similarly biodiverse model to truly go wild!	7/6/2025 4:26 PM
8	Conserve it! And restrict / reduce commercialization.	7/6/2025 2:52 PM
9	Restrict commercial river use inline with the one operator outlined in the conservation easement. Commercial use also needs a fixed limit of client user days especially for the busiest days and times. Have a thorough outside scientific study of the impacts of recreation on the preserve. Support the rewilding of North Star as a wetland beaver habitat. This is a key for the area to serve as the most effective wildfire fire break between the forest and town. I like to thank the work of the Open Space Staff for their work on this process, it helps how your comments are received.	7/6/2025 2:49 PM
10	Seeing the number of people on the beach, in the water, and the amount of cars parked every weekend, makes it very difficult to call it a nature preserve, it's preserving nothing but a place for people to party and act entitled. Rangers might be present now and then but it doesn't seem like people are being held accountable when they brake the rules, especially the commercial users - someone always knows someone at OST that can get a ticket dismissed or talk there way out of it. More signage and education won't always help because people have felt so entitled for so long that they do what they want. If you want to call it a nature preserve then the number of people allowed access needs to be extremely limited - especially visitors from out of town, because they don't give one shit about preserving the nature or tranquility of the location. It used to be a nice area but now it is overcrowded and I tend to avoid it.	7/6/2025 1:02 PM
11	No	7/6/2025 11:50 AM
12	I remember a time that North Star was a true treasure for the flora and fauna. People cannot help themselves that without Education that their mere usage destroys that which they seek.	7/6/2025 11:26 AM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

13	We need to protect this wonderful place, a priceless gift to people and wildlife, now and in the future. Don't forget that the conservation easement clearly states: No amendments or changes to the Management Plan may increase the type or intensity of recreational, commercial, or public use beyond what is specified in the existing (2000) Management Plan.	7/6/2025 10:21 AM
14	I wish this had happened sooner. It's been out of control out there for years. It's ridiculous to assume that people will comply with rules and regulations without consequences and barriers in place.	7/6/2025 10:16 AM
15	Strong desire to make it less commercial and restore the emphasis on nature and preservation of the natural setting as the Smith Family originally intended. It was not intended as a Disneyland for tourists,	7/6/2025 10:12 AM
16	As our nature areas are overlooked, management is the key. Educating all who use this area is a must.	7/6/2025 9:38 AM
17	Are there sufficient trash receptacles? Are the Aspen/Roaring Fork Schools promotion stewardship & education about this area? Have an informative day/program for tourists/2nd home owners to inform them how fragile this area is..... impress on them the impact on our local Nature Preserve & how they can inform their families who visit/extended visits...or future visits have. Locals are generally not the problem.....	7/6/2025 8:24 AM
18	Restrict commercial use. Monitor better. It's like an amusement park.	7/6/2025 8:24 AM
19	USFS did not consider the connected actions or foreseeable future actions when they authorized OST to issue Outfitter/Guide permits. This will be a point of litigation should the land exchange process ever go through the NEPA process. Before ANY change to the management plan that addresses river use be proposed, a capacity analysis needs to be done. You have done a social capacity analysis, ie user perception of crowding. To my knowledge, you have not done an analysis that addresses all of the other potential issue areas. This will need to be done before or during any land exchange NEPA process. I appreciate OST trying to provide (react) to the increased demand for recreational use. Unfortunately, the popularity of the area has exceeded the capacity of the area. Like so many other things in Aspen, it's time to reel things in!	7/6/2025 8:21 AM
20	I think by requiring permits will make access more difficult to locals who like to use this area for exercise or quiet time after a long day at work. Requiring permits means that locals will no longer really have the time to enjoy the preserve. I feel like the same thing can be seen with the 4 Pass Loop and other permitted areas within our valley. These permits are used by mostly people from out of town and visitors. Locals don't necessarily have time to plan to get their permit depending on their work schedules. I also think people will just quickly scoop up all the permits, whether they use it or not by having their assistants make reservations. I like the idea of not being able to park at Wildwood and everyone can drop off and find other means to get there via bike or walking. Thanks for all of your hard work on keeping the preserve amazing	7/6/2025 7:53 AM
21	It's a beautiful place to walk and sit to see wildlife. I enjoy walking my dogs. Bike riders are often bad about letting a person know they are coming behind. More places to view and sit would be nice.	7/6/2025 7:49 AM
22	We all love North Star! It's beautiful and supports a number of wild species. There are far too many people floating the river in the summer. The place becomes a zoo and in my opinion completely violates the charter and spirit of the place. Thank you for your attention to this.	7/6/2025 7:22 AM
23	I feel like the commercial operators do a great job of having their groups respect quiet and the sensitive habitat and they understand the shuttling/drop off/pickup process. The private parties on the other hand bring music, leave litter, trample the habitat, and don't understand the parking, drop off and pickup process. I think the current parking spots, pull offs, drop offs, signage, bike racks and board storage racks are wonderful and adequate. I don't want a world with more paid parking, reservation systems, or video cameras.	7/6/2025 7:18 AM
24	I'd like to Restrict commercial river use inline with the one operator outlined in the conservation easement. Commercial use also needs a fixed limit of client user days especially for the busiest days and times. I'd like to Have a thorough outside scientific study of the impacts of recreation on the preserve. I Support the rewilding of North Star as a wetland beaver habitat. This is a key for the area to serve as the most effective wildfire fire break between the forest and town. I like to thank the work of the Open Space Staff for their work on this! It's very helpful	7/5/2025 10:00 PM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

25	locals using North Star Preserve are degrading the area, and using it as a place to party, which was NOT THE INTENTION of the preserve designation. If you strictly limit commercial operators, and severely limit use by others, then wildlife and damage to the local environment can be minimized. This should be a quiet place, not another extension of the party scene in Aspen. Enough is enough! Stop the madness.	7/5/2025 9:10 PM
26	It is a nature preserve, not a river recreation park. I do like the nordic skiing. The summer recreation is very disruptive to the natural habitat and local residents.	7/5/2025 8:35 PM
27	I enjoy that it helps protect the wildlife , specifically the moose , and wish humans would stop disrespecting it and being clueless about it, while adding dangerous traffic nonstop, especially since nobody will install moose/wildlife crossing warning signs, even after it's been offered to be paid for.	7/5/2025 7:51 PM
28	Protect wild values as much as possible... work to enhance biodiversity... greatly limit human impacts... North Star is a gem that deserves protection. I applaud efforts to curb some of the abuses we've witnessed in the past 20 years, but still am shocked at the playground mentality, rather than that of safe guarding & restoring wildlife habitat.	7/5/2025 7:33 PM
29	The thing I value most about the North star nature preserve is the plant and animal biodiversity and riparian habitats.	7/5/2025 7:33 PM
30	Restrict commercial river use inline with the one operator outlined in the conservation easement. Commercial use also needs a fixed limit of client user days especially for the busiest days and times. Have a thorough outside scientific study of the impacts of recreation on the preserve. Support the rewilding of North Star as a wetland beaver habitat. This is a key for the area to serve as the most effective wildfire fire break between the forest and town. And thanks very much for all the work you do!!	7/5/2025 6:55 PM
31	If you start charging for parking and access you might as well admit that StubHub has a place in your use management structure and that the AI will secure all the spots all at once and then scalp Ames to those who can afford to pay. Keeping at least some access and parking FCFS is essential to maintaining equality in our valley community	7/5/2025 4:14 PM
32	Since North Star Preserve was created to protect wildlife and is an IBA (Important Bird Area), the recreational overuse needs to be seriously re-evaluated and diminished. The bird numbers in the preserve have plummeted since the 1997 surveys and will continue to do so with the ongoing disturbance in the riparian areas.	7/5/2025 4:03 PM
33	Northstar is in my view currently being poorly managed. The extensive commercial operations are damaging the wildlife and spoiling the areas tranquility. I believe that commercial operations should be banned entirely especially pertaining to paddle-boarding, or restricted as much as possibly allowed. In particular, the volume of traffic around Wildwood has become preposterous; at some point this is going to cause serious injury or fatality given that this is the location of a school for very young children. Meanwhile, dogs are being far too aggressively monitored; locals with well-behaved dogs should be allowed to enjoy the trail in peace without loud and obnoxious music playing at all hours of the day. The recreation of loud and littering visitors is currently being prioritized over and above the conservation of this very special area and enjoyment of tax-paying locals.	7/5/2025 3:54 PM
34	I've been here since 1988 and have seen way too much damage and wild behavior and misuse of the river. I would like it curtailed.	7/5/2025 3:33 PM
35	I know that there is a groundswell of dissent regarding the commercial use of North Star. I do see the advantage of limiting commercial use and group size, but I oppose curtailing all use of the Preserve. I personally float the river by getting dropped off and picked up by family and I regularly shuttle my kids to float the river. We truly enjoy having this access to a beautiful place. thank you	7/5/2025 3:25 PM
36	I support strict management.	7/5/2025 3:19 PM
37	I am in favor of use of the North Star preserve for public use, not business. I believe the over crowding has come from businesses not the individual use. We must preserve the land for the way it was donated. I so enjoy the quiet, and beauty of the preserve !!	7/5/2025 3:18 PM
38	Leave it alone. Parking restricts use and tourists can pay tour operators	7/5/2025 10:46 AM
39	OWNERS ACROSS THE STREET HAVE THREE BARKING DOGS! NEGOTIATE LIMITING THEIR DOGS' MORNING OUTDOOR BARKING.	7/5/2025 10:30 AM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

40	“Float” is ambiguous. I put my SUP in at South Gate and paddle upstream ~45 minutes, then turn around to float back.	7/5/2025 9:45 AM
41	The river is being overused by paddle boarders on a daily basis too long into the summer season when the river is too low. Paddle boarders tend to dock on the shore illegally on my floats compared to kayakers or rafters. I support closing the river access during August and September when the flow is not conducive to floating and to give the wildlife a break. The commercial use is still too high and does not match the agreement well enough to not profit from north star. We do not need to be commercializing this river. I witness on my floats how river otters, herons, and swallows are repelled by human activity, and this rare flood plane is more vital for their species existence than mine. More needs to be done to prioritize this.	7/5/2025 9:06 AM
42	Ban commercial operators. The preserve should not be a place for profiteering and it has become a tourist trap because of them.	7/5/2025 9:00 AM
43	I love paddle boarding on the river and I feel I am completely appropriate and would like to be able to continue. I think commercial should be eliminated. Over crowding is ruining it for the rest of us who are quiet and appreciative of the use of the river.	7/5/2025 8:57 AM
44	A free shuttle service would provide access, discussions, limited number and no cars.	7/5/2025 8:42 AM
45	Keystone species beaver restoration should be a key component of conservation planning, with no significant exceptions.	7/5/2025 8:41 AM
46	I love it when it becomes a shallow lake in early summer in years of heavy runoff	7/5/2025 8:22 AM
47	Loud barking dogs from across 82 can be heard far into the Preserve. This diminishes the experience of solitude and is disruptive to wildlife that lives there.	7/5/2025 6:46 AM
48	It's not so much that I would feel crowded with the level of useage on the river, but of great concern to me is how much wildlife and habitat are disturbed. If it is not vibrant habitat for birds, beaver, and other wildlife anymore, then I am opposed to the river recreation. If trying to maintain some kind of balance between river useage and bird and wildlife habitat and sanctuary, then I come down strongly in favor of helping all the animals to thrive as they always have in North Star.	7/4/2025 9:08 PM
49	We canoe, but only in the late fall and always in memory of Bob Lewis. For Bob, keep the place special...please!	7/4/2025 7:10 PM
50	Do something! You are mismanaging this area.	7/4/2025 3:37 PM
51	I think vehicle turnaround and no parking at wildwood is a great idea!	7/2/2025 10:06 PM
52	Always encouraging people to not be lazy and use human powered or low impact vehicles to shuttle. I've walked the shuttle many times and it's truly a magical way to start the day - heat up and burn some calories then casually float and cool off. So nice! Bike too! But still you end up driving too and fro to pickup the bike. Bleh.	7/2/2025 8:08 PM
53	Tranquility should rule over noise and crowd size	7/2/2025 4:54 PM
54	Supportive of equitable access to the preserve, but limiting advertising at hotels for shuttle services that cycle high volumes of visitors through the property who might not otherwise bother with it. Protect the carpuscular hours (dawn and dusk) for wildlife and continue regulating operator and visitor behavior through education and enforcement.	7/2/2025 2:50 PM
55	Please protect locals' access to North Star!	7/2/2025 12:42 PM
56	I primarily use North Star for running and skiing (several times a week), and only float occasionally when the conditions are grey/rainy/cold and I know the river will be quiet. I love the preserve but do feel that the increase in river usage over the past decade has been a struggle to manage and makes the preserve less pleasant for other users. The changes to parking a few years ago improved conditions on 82 immensely, and I think good steps have been taken by OST to improve conditions for all users/locals/visitors.	7/2/2025 12:41 PM
57	Please don't let NIMBY rich neighbors limit the average local from accessing Northstar!	7/2/2025 12:23 PM
58	Beautiful place to find peace	7/2/2025 12:08 PM
59	I think it's currently being managed very well!	7/2/2025 10:04 AM

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60	I strongly support keeping North Star river access open (non-regulated) and free to the Aspen "local resident", non-commercial, guests. The locals are respectful to the environment and wildlife, educated on the rules and regulations, and understand the sense of community, importance and beauty of the North Star Preserve.	7/2/2025 10:00 AM
61	I love north star... I'm a 45 yr resident... please don't close to paddle boarding	7/2/2025 9:43 AM
62	I actually enjoy going out there and seeing other people responsibly enjoying nature together. Most of the preserve is off limits and I love that. The places that are on-limits are heavily protected and I love that too. Some people treat it as their own private powder stash where outsiders don't belong, and that rubs me the wrong way. Let's all love and responsibly enjoy this place together.	7/2/2025 8:24 AM
63	For me, Northstar preserve is such a special place to just be with the river with the vegetation to hear the birds sing and to have sweet lovely, quiet interaction with all of the wildlife. To disturb them as little as possible and enjoy them without interrupting their life. It is not an entertainment place for large groups and not a place for commercial interests to make money. It is a place for wildlife to prosper not for human beings to intrude upon.	7/1/2025 5:07 PM
64	Thank you, Rangers!	7/1/2025 11:31 AM
65	It has gotten out of control.	7/1/2025 11:03 AM
66	North Star is above all a nature preserve. This was the intent of the original gifting of the preserve by the Smith Family to the Nature Conservancy. The conservation easement of 2000 that became part of the 2002 master plan was also crystal clear that there be only 1 commercial operator and that this could not be amended. Finally, it should be made clear that anyone who seeks to remove a beaver dam is breaking the law and subject to a major fine. In addition, if it is found that the river is not navigable due to beaver dams or any other form of nature that blocks it, the Roarkng Fork will be closed to river use.	7/1/2025 9:09 AM
67	You have turned a nature preserve into an amusement park. More parking only encourages more overuse.	7/1/2025 7:35 AM
68	OST should honor its commitment to one commercial operator on the river. The current level of commercial permits is too high, resulting in overuse of the river by too many people, compromising the experience for all.	6/30/2025 10:09 PM
69	I live along the river and am a very responsible user, I do not want to see people who are not shutting down my rights to paddle where I live and am responsible	6/30/2025 9:14 PM
70	I love seeing the young people enjoying the river. Let's keep it intact for future generations.	6/30/2025 5:50 PM
71	Please don't allow more commercial tours. This is a treasure that should be protected and cared for by the locals who treat it with tender, love, conservation, and care.	6/30/2025 4:22 PM
72	Too many commercial operators	6/30/2025 3:14 PM
73	Last Tuesday we 3 locals had a super peaceful float! It was very enjoyable and uncrowded. We launched at 10:30 AM from Wildwood. However, we did not see the moose, unfortunately.	6/30/2025 2:37 PM
74	it is there like a National park and it will NOT be here in 50 years if you don't better protect it as was the original intent	6/30/2025 2:12 PM
75	The area south of the river that is "closed" to the public is a tangle of willows that hardly anybody would care to penetrate in the absence of a trail. The idea that people would somehow disturb whatever animals might be using it displays an ignorance of the habits of people as well as the ability of animals to use natural cover to avoid contact with them if they choose to do so. I am like most outdoor users and enjoy viewing wildlife without "terrorizing" animals, and resent being told that I can't enter public lands where I might be able to view wildlife, so that "environmental experts" can conduct studies for which plenty of knowledge already exists.	6/30/2025 1:14 PM
76	I feel strongly we adhere to our values and preserve this for the animals and for human solitude, which means much restriction -- timed reservations, much limitation. Thank you for doing as much as you can. People will find alternatives.	6/30/2025 10:16 AM
77	North Star Nature Preserve is a treasure for our community. Protecting, preserving, and managing it at the right level is crucial. Promoting environmental education is essential.	6/30/2025 10:10 AM
78	It is difficult to reconcile the conflict between the 2 stated goals for managing northstar. At its	6/30/2025 9:10 AM

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start, it was strictly for wildlife/natural values. As paddle boarding became popular recreation access has taken over in the public perception of the overriding value. I am in support of limiting commercial permits and doing some sort of limits to unfettered recreational access-and dogs.

79	Longtime Mountain Valley resident. I do not support any expansion as the Preserve is not being maintained as agreed and floating/paddleboarding is out of control	6/30/2025 5:54 AM
80	Love it! Manage it wisely.	6/27/2025 10:58 AM
81	No	6/26/2025 4:32 PM
82	We need to shift the focus from people thinking they're going to the beach to appreciating that they're in a nature preserve. Thanks for all of the effort!	6/26/2025 7:50 AM
83	The area is a gem and I feel very lucky to be able to use it. I feel strongly that it shouldn't get over loved and over used but also would hate to see permitting go in and make it so locals like me can't just go and enjoy a paddle or sit on the beach on a nice day without months of advanced planning like what has happened to the bells, hanging lake, difficult campground etc.	6/26/2025 6:16 AM
84	Please don't take another locals benefit away for the convenience of the tourist! It's happening at the City golf course, maroon bells and conundrum hot springs.	6/25/2025 10:59 PM
85	When creating new signs I think you should consider creating bilingual signs that can provide accessibility to the Spanish community members	6/25/2025 9:56 PM
86	Make sure to maintain its status as a place where locals can get away from all the chaos of downtown. By implementing paid parking and increased commercial use this place will become a zoo, its habitat will be disrupted by tourists who are unaware of the environmental impact there are causing and less people that are local will use it because of this.	6/25/2025 5:19 PM
87	Ever since the rise of recreational river use at North Star, I have made it a point to only access it in the early morning hours via the East Aspen Trail, when it is at its most serene. It IS a nature preserve, after all, and that is why I'm so grumpy about the ramped up usage and the problems that have ensued. Where are the herons? It's still a wonderful resource in the winter for Nordic skiing, if you can keep everyone on the tracks and not bushwhacking, walking their dogs etc. Thank you for your efforts!	6/25/2025 1:55 PM
88	It's amazing how it is! The only thing that concerns me is that there have been incidents of lost dogs going over there and I think it's not right that someone can't be sent over to retrieve the animal.	6/25/2025 1:22 PM
89	I strongly oppose commercial use of North Star for floating and think that the Wildwood put in should only be bike and foot traffic and drop off only. Thank you for the work you are doing!	6/25/2025 1:18 PM
90	It feels like most people are respectful of the area. For me, the biggest concerns are litter left by larger group gatherings and audible music. I think if you start doing parking reservations it negatively impacts and in fact takes away from the spontaneous nature of using the river which so many locals do. I think the number of parking spots is self limiting which is a great way to keep numbers manageable	6/25/2025 11:32 AM
91	It's My Zen place 😊	6/25/2025 11:07 AM
92	Let us enjoy the beauty , too many regulations .	6/25/2025 10:24 AM
93	it was given to us. protect it as it is waiting for abuse to occur as there are just too many people who consider it their property and right. It is up to each of us to preserve this before it is gone.	6/25/2025 10:13 AM
94	I strongly oppose a reservation or permit system because it will hurt locals who try to fit in a float or beach day when they can, while tourists can schedule and plan. If you decide to use permits, I hope you will have some exceptions for working locals.	6/25/2025 9:35 AM
95	Protect the wild game and habitat. But allow access	6/25/2025 9:22 AM
96	45 years in Aspen- used to go up there with my family a lot but no more. At some point we have to say- Aspen is full! Pls dont expand parking to allow more people to come. Enjoy the river in peace on foot or bike. How about P boarding / floating only allowed like 3 days a/week?	6/25/2025 9:15 AM
97	less is more. promote nature and tranquility. NO MUSIC OR LOUD GROUPS.	6/25/2025 8:08 AM

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98	no	6/25/2025 7:40 AM
99	Eliminate commercial use. It's a small part of the river to be used as recreation area.	6/25/2025 5:29 AM
100	Thank you for caring for this beautiful area!	6/25/2025 12:08 AM
101	Less tourism	6/24/2025 10:59 PM
102	I believe the priority of the 2025 North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan should be for the preservation of wildlife, which was the original intent. I don't want North Star to continue its increasing trajectory as a recreational waterpark playground. We must conserve and protects this area.	6/24/2025 10:59 PM
103	Its been a most wonderful place for many years but the past five years or so have taken away from the experience by the number people and non respectful usage of this wonderful place	6/24/2025 10:45 PM
104	Don't allow people to rent boards and float without a guide. Only allow people to paddle up to float down, the one way partiers are problematic.	6/24/2025 10:39 PM
105	I believe that the current usage seems adequate. I do not think that further limitation is needed, however I also believe that if we created more ease of access it would cause overcrowding. I believe there would be some small benefit to additionally regulation and management however the benefit would be small and not completely necessary as the way it is currently being run I believe works pretty well	6/24/2025 10:34 PM
106	Seems fine as is Floating it every week	6/24/2025 10:26 PM
107	It's an amazing area and has certainly gotten very busy over the years. Restricting dogs is a good thing - and maybe tickets or citations for excessive and loud noise and groups not following rules would be appropriate	6/24/2025 10:16 PM
108	This year for the first time ever, cdot or someone came through and sprayed oil or a similar product that stunk lime chemicals to keep the dust down on the road. I was shocked as that will run right into the wetlands and river. Please help stop this from happening again.	6/24/2025 10:15 PM
109	Continued management is very important as that section continues to get more usage.	6/24/2025 10:03 PM
110	Would love to see improved winter grooming. Increase the length of the trails and better compaction of the snow and more frequent grooming	6/24/2025 9:56 PM
111	let well behaved dogs join in on the fun and allow music at a mellow level.	6/24/2025 9:49 PM
112	Please keep the river as is. Local family enjoys it as is.	6/24/2025 6:50 PM
113	Keep it as a place for responsible recreation. It's been heavily modified due to water flow to front range, so keep it nice, leave the pool following the rules alone, and come down hard on rule breakers.	6/24/2025 3:30 PM
114	Love it! Keep it free to all, no restrictions!	6/24/2025 3:07 PM
115	It is a wonderful place that deserves a thoughtful balance between humans, nature and wildlife.	6/24/2025 3:03 PM
116	North Star rules 🙌	6/24/2025 3:01 PM
117	Need less tourists visiting local places	6/24/2025 2:59 PM
118	You guys are doing a great job! Thank you! The only thing I would like to see is parking allowed at the Northstar takeout in the mornings and evenings say before 10 AM and after 6 PM so that people who want to do an up river paddle as a workout Can leave their car there .	6/24/2025 2:17 PM
119	Having some sort of a timer system available/visable at the 7 parking spots at the South load in area parking lot. Would help to keep things moving and help others looking to time their parking/loading time.	6/24/2025 1:35 PM
120	Education is paramount. To few people these days seem to understand the impacts of their behavior on the natural environment and those others also trying to recreate at Northstar. If you want music, wear headphones. If you want to yell or "party" go down to John Denver Park or No Problem Joe park (can't remember the name). Like many places that can get overcrowded, we can love this place "too much" and can/have already caused damage. Let's try and slow down the use and level it off or even reduce it by 10%	6/24/2025 1:32 PM
121	i do not want it over regulated or overly commercialized .	6/24/2025 11:23 AM

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122	My survey aims to establish only one thing. Commercial operations should not exist at all. People can rent paddle boards from local shops and work out how to get there on their own. As we have seen with e bikes on the Maroon Bells, commercial operators change the entire dynamic. However the North Star preserve is a delicate eco system. The numbers show that commercial operators have increased traffic by 4 times. Whether it is one or five operators, they will continue to cause irreparable harm. The demand for commercial operation will continue, so one, two, or five operators will fill that void. If commercial operation is going to continue then it should be regulated to a small and finite number of drops in a day, and the drops should be timed. No more than 20-30 paddle boards (commercially) should be allowed on a given day. Commercial control is the only control that the plan has control over, so it should be strongly applied and enforced. The use numbers clearly show the impact of commercial operators. If the North Star Preserve is going to remain a "preserve" then commercial operation must be dramatically reduced immediately.	6/24/2025 9:30 AM
123	At roadside parking near stillwater takeout I don't understand why there are "No Parking" signs along half the pullout where it is plenty wide enough for vehicles to stay off highway that seems to be rarely if ever enforced. Either allow people to use those spots or actually enforce the no parking.	6/24/2025 8:31 AM
124	Northstar is a unique natural area that needs to be preserved. My observation is that river users are often disrespectful and oblivious to the beauty and fragility. Hoping that usage will continue to be regulated and that commercial entities be required to provide generous financial support for preservation and restoration. Future generations depend upon today's decisions. Thank you!	6/24/2025 7:15 AM
125	lessen the use - thats the best you can do - floating at all could be banned - commercial operation in any form invites degradation of the place....think about what the gift was meant to do .	6/24/2025 7:04 AM
126	I am shocked that the county has let this situation get to this point. My daughter studied the importance of this riparian habitat across the country in NY and knows more about it than many locals. Conservation and preservation don't sync well with recreation. One commercial operation was approved in the original conservation easement deed. Why dishonor the intentions of the donors? If it were up to me, the one commercial operation would be a company offering guided tours education people to the importance of this habitat not floating down the river for fun. There are plenty of fun opportunities without this. I also don't hear about how this habitat when in balance acts like a sponge holding water. With the increased risk of fire, it would seem this would be more on the forefront. I hope that the county has the integrity to right this wrong.	6/24/2025 4:29 AM
127	We live at 42179 Hwy 92 and have watched the tragic deterioration of North Star w campers on 92 /near terrible accidents /loud noise/taunting of wildlife. For God's sake stop this misuse and return North Star to its restricted use. Our animal friends are entitled to their home to. This is worse than a commercial water park with the Moose and Elk frightened off by joy's thoughtless environment killers. Ashamed of what has happened. Folks will soon be killed by illegal roadside parking and wrong side passing on Hwy 92 (which has nearly killed me twice over the past 4 years).	6/23/2025 7:34 PM
128	Idea: Restrictions could be added only for peak days/times.	6/23/2025 6:56 PM
129	Please do everything possible to preserve this beautiful area for wildlife viewing and preservation.	6/23/2025 6:33 PM
130	Limit commercial. Don't make full time locals pay anything. Bike shuttle! Or Wecycle stations!	6/23/2025 6:08 PM
131	The priority should be on education and responsibility. It should be a privilege to use the space. Paddle boarders should pay a license fee after taking a class.	6/23/2025 5:19 PM
132	I love it there so much! Please do all you can to protect it as best you can!!!	6/23/2025 5:06 PM
133	I would love for residents to have priority over the usage of North Star	6/23/2025 3:13 PM
134	I used to go by myself before it got super popular and put in at the bridge and paddle up river then float back down—it seems to me that it's not possible now—I like to go by myself before—it seems like again we are catering to the commercial part of this not to the locals	6/23/2025 2:51 PM
135	There are plenty of river opportunities in this valley that don't involve degrading wetlands!!! Wetlands are fragile and support 40% of the biodiversity on earth! The wetlands are far more	6/23/2025 11:52 AM

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important than human recreation!!! People come to our valley for the Rocky Mountains and beautiful alpine setting, we must be the stewards of this precious ecosystem.

136	North star is such an amazing spot to have access to as a local. It is a weekly or daily event for myself and my friends to unwind and enjoy the beauty. Thank you to OST and all who manage this! Really appreciate you all	6/23/2025 10:14 AM
137	Thank you for your ongoing efforts to keep North Star a refuge for wildlife while balancing use by the public. I am also thrilled that expanding the Nordic trail is being considered. More prominent educational signage is needed to keep people from walking on the Nordic trail, including with their dogs. But I know resources are limited. We are blessed to have such wonderful stewardship!	6/23/2025 8:41 AM
138	It should be closed for river use! What a giant shit show in a place that should remain wild and support our wildlife.	6/23/2025 8:30 AM
139	Keep up the great work! I can definitely see the positive difference from recent changes.	6/23/2025 7:24 AM
140	Enforce regulations of drones and speakers please	6/22/2025 11:56 PM
141	Recently saw a commercial (?) kayak instructor standing where it is not permitted to provide a lesson to his group.	6/22/2025 10:45 PM
142	no more parking lots! having easier access just promotes more traffic and crowds. thank you for protecting the land :)	6/22/2025 10:08 PM
143	I strongly support reducing or eliminating the loud party groups. North Star is for appreciating the serenity and wildlife of a nature preserve.	6/22/2025 9:53 PM
144	Hello, I am glad to see this survey. All of the neutral to poor management feedback I selected (how well the space is being preserved, how well wildlife was being protected) was all due to behaviors I've personally witnessed at North Star by visitors (including earlier today). My feedback reflects my woe at seeing trash in the river, screaming through quiet zone, drone over a heron, etc. I think all of the proposed strategies to cultivate compliance and/or respect for the preserve are wonderful, and can see that even community members would be thrilled to help support those causes. It is wonderful to have the option to go put in there anytime, and the idea to have timed entry seems like a great one, though I can't see that it would control for the speed each person goes. For instance, there might be someone who likes to paddle the entire time who puts in behind a leisurely group who does not paddle except around occasional obstacles, and eventually the fast paddler would end up on top of the leisurely couple. The photos with increasing number of people in the rivers were difficult for me to rate- because if there were 30 respectful people caught up in reverence for the preserve within sight, I would think that was awesome, while there might be a situation which I am near a 2-person-group where 1 was flying a drone and they were both obnoxious, I would feel the river was crowded. PitCO understands our impact on the open space. I would rather the open space thrive than contribute to it's demise. I hope your agency is able to make it's decisions with the land and the animals at the heart, rather than let public pressure persuade any planning. Thank you.	6/22/2025 9:22 PM
145	It's a great spot and we love going spontaneously, so any need for permits with time slots would NOT be good for me and my family	6/22/2025 8:49 PM
146	Access for locals is important and requiring paid parking or permits for locals further increases the cost of living associated with this area. I'm not opposed to paid parking or permits to limit use, but only if there is a solution to keep it free for locals - especially people employed by local businesses!	6/22/2025 5:31 PM
147	The ability to float the river is a huge part of summer in Aspen and has been for as long as I have lived here but in recent years big groups especially commercial groups leave trash and loud and don't respect the rules. Don't ruin it for the locals because new people don't understand how to act properly.	6/22/2025 5:01 PM
148	It's beautiful and I love how as a local, I can use it for free. I'm okay with paying for parking and walking back to my car as a friend waits with our stuff. I do not live in Aspen, so driving a car and parking at one end is needed. I support protecting the land and wildlife over human use. I think commercial operations are okay as long as they do not take up all the parking and space on the river for locals to use.	6/22/2025 4:24 PM
149	Instead of building fences or selling access, previous generations of Aspen elites like Fritz and Fabi Benedict, donated large areas of open space along Stillwater east of Aspen, they ensured	6/22/2025 1:40 PM

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the community's physical—and philosophical—connection to nature remains unbroken. I believe that preserving free, meaningful access to this pristine habitat is itself a vital community asset. Instead of imposing pay-to-play permits, we should protect North Star by valuing local guides, embedding robust education into every encounter, and prioritizing residents and workers—empowering them, in turn, to welcome visitors as knowledgeable stewards of the land.

150	I love North Star preserve and as a local want to support the preservation of it while also maintaining my access. I don't think it would be fair to charge locals to use it!	6/22/2025 10:39 AM
151	Let locals enjoy it for free! Charge the tourists to use our backyard. Maybe it will help maintain and keep the area preserved	6/22/2025 10:15 AM
152	I love the public use for the locals, I have not attended a float this year because of the water levels and crowds.	6/22/2025 8:35 AM
153	I'm a local so my answers are based off my preference and how it would affect me, though I wish certain things could apply only to tourists haha	6/22/2025 8:03 AM
154	This survey is not well done. Showing various people paddle boarding in the river and asking how many is too many is dumb. It's not that simple. Whether you do a specific activity is not the point. The Preserve needs to be protected from overuse and commercialization. It should not be another Aspen selfie/influencer destination ruined by over tourism/partying/wedding groups. Roll up your sleeves and protect this asset. Your dragging your feet is not condoned by locals who actually live here.	6/22/2025 7:55 AM
155	The recreation use of this area is very overdone, the conservation and wildlife protections have been lost. I support bringing that back into balance.	6/22/2025 6:26 AM
156	I appreciate the ongoing effort and applaud the evolution of management. I learned to kayak in middle school on the Northstar stretch of the Roaring Fork. My desire to float there has definitely diminished over the years due to the ridiculously overcrowded experience these days.	6/22/2025 3:06 AM
157	It's a great place. It will only get more popular. I hope surveys will help guide us & the animals to enjoyment.	6/22/2025 12:03 AM
158	Love it. Thank you	6/21/2025 10:22 PM
159	Haiku: Summer in Aspen Let's go paddle at North Star A weekly event	6/21/2025 10:05 PM
160	Drop off and pick up area expanding would solve much parking woes!	6/21/2025 8:36 PM
161	Rangers on the water. They're not seeing the on water infractions.	6/21/2025 8:06 PM
162	No commercial, or minimal commercial. Locals and the community wants to keep this space natural and less crowded, but don't restrict us from going there like The Bells and Hanging Lake and Beaver Lake. Make the tourists get the permits and pay for the parking. Let us enjoy our community. More education about the area is always a win, how about some signage on how this is indigenous land we are recreating on? And ask the tribal group to write what will be on the signage. And ask that group how they would like to preserve this area?	6/21/2025 7:47 PM
163	Wildlife needs this quality of landscape more than humans do, especially in a place like Aspen. It crushes me every time I see the atmosphere represented by humanity. We treat nature like an amusement park and have lost the reverence that we had for a decades ago. It's just one more vector for entertainment. Our impacts on wildlife here in the mountains are causing biodiversity decline.	6/21/2025 7:05 PM
164	My feeling is six commercial operators with each of them allowed three launches per hour is too heavy. 3 launches each for each operator EACH day would be more appropriate to the environment and accommodate private/non commercial floaters.	6/21/2025 2:20 PM
165	I like the idea of limiting people but I find that the two systems in place that I know of in the valley have had the effect of essentially banning me from those areas because it is too expensive or requires too much advanced planning. Those two areas are hanging lake and the Maroon bells wilderness area. I just don't go anymore and that's sad. In the other hand, there were too many people in those areas before so I don't really know what the answer is. But I do find it sad that us regular locals can't use these areas easily. I haven't been to North Star	6/21/2025 1:03 PM

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because I have no idea where I would park and access the area. Have you thought about shuttles?

166	Thank you	6/21/2025 11:26 AM
167	Shorter survey in future	6/21/2025 11:13 AM
168	It's great that people enjoy the preserve, but in the summer it sometimes feels like it has become more of a water park than a nature preserve	6/21/2025 10:21 AM
169	Thank you for protecting and managing this irreplaceable resource.	6/21/2025 6:39 AM
170	Beautiful area. Hard to know the best way to preserve it without adding another cost to the price of living here...	6/20/2025 10:38 PM
171	Zero commercial trips, zero tolerance for dogs, music, human waste.	6/20/2025 10:04 PM
172	Please preserve nature!	6/20/2025 9:11 PM
173	I think managing use is important, but putting in paid systems could be a barrier to people. I think exploring other options that promote equity is important. I'm up for a paid commercial permit holder to pay for parking with their permits.	6/20/2025 6:30 PM
174	Thank you for doing your best to manage this precious place and keep it the tranquil gem it had been. Less commercial use; keep it accessible for locals please.	6/20/2025 4:56 PM
175	An education and behavioral component is important. Increasing the requirement and enforcing limited access could be beneficial. I believe that increasing the reliance on commercial outfitters and increasing the amount they have to share with guests could help protect the area for the future.	6/20/2025 3:18 PM
176	No for now	6/20/2025 2:50 PM
177	No	6/20/2025 1:39 PM
178	Get the commercial groups off the river. They have zero place here at North Star.	6/20/2025 1:29 PM
179	Close it to all commercial use and limit recreational use. Its ridiculous how overused this wildlife space is by humans	6/20/2025 10:20 AM
180	Northstar has become incredibly more beautiful and more heavily used by wildlife over the last 25 or so years despite the explosion of River Recreation. Please keep protecting this incredibly valuable ecological resource. Excellent work, Pitkin County open space and trails!	6/20/2025 8:57 AM
181	I love being able to use the river for a float through experience! All the changes that have occurred over the past few years have been very positive. I like that there are rangers and open space people there to educate other others. I also like the restrictions on no dogs and no audible music And no stopping on random beaches. Those rules have really helped protect the preserve and limit the crazy parties and large , loud groups, etc., that used to go on the river. Thank you for all you have done and are doing!	6/19/2025 12:13 PM
182	Prohibit all commercial operations.	6/18/2025 10:11 PM
183	As a local, we get squeezed out of back yard access to the place we call home because tourists come in and mess it up for everyone. Have rules, permits, and reservations for everyone who visits but let the locals who care for and respect this precious land come and enjoy it without jumping through hoops. I'll stop coming if I need to wake up at 8am to book a permit and I'll probably think about moving because this town is slowing stealing joy out of everyday life. Have permits and paid parking for folks without a local ID and curb the parties that way. I take my bike and kayak there at 6pm after a long and stressful work day and, as the only person in sight, it brings me such joy and needed calm after dealing with rich jerks all day. Don't make me jump through hoops to be the only car in the lot just because the 12pm crowd is loud and trashy and forcing rules upon us locals who leave no trace and just want a calm float. You'll never see me there at noon on a Saturday. I know better. Thanks for putting this survey together and listening to folks who make this town spin.	6/18/2025 7:12 PM
184	I love the Norstar area and would like to continue to use it and continue to have it not overused	6/18/2025 4:40 PM
185	My family and I are respectful and frequent users of the preserve by water. You guys have done a really great job in the last few years with the new infrastructure around the take out, the beach, the South Gate and the put in. We generally recreate at low traffic times and it feels	6/17/2025 5:46 PM

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manageable. Although I think the commercial floaters tend to be more respectful, I think they greatly increase the traffic in the water. Most of them are first time users who either wouldn't know about the Stillwater or wouldn't put in the effort to be out there. I think the commercial outfitter permits should be dialed back and education increased at the put in for the general public. I'm also a fan of improving the wildwood area somehow to make it more tolerable for the neighbors there but please don't take away the ability to park at the put in. At least not at less busy times. Thanks for listening.

186	Nordic skiing should continue to be supported. No parking, dog or noise problems exist. Not near any homes. No commercial operations are needed or should be allowed for nordic. And I feel that the 30% of use by commercial operations in summer is exacerbating the crowding problem. Educating public users becomes more important with no commercial use. No safety issues seem to make commercial use necessary.	6/17/2025 4:38 PM
187	As a prior member of the East End Caucus I find what they are attempting to do as self serving. This is public land for the enjoyment of all not solely the residents. I do agree that limited commercial use could be a good idea but I believe the residents of this valley should be able to freely use this section of the river. It's filled with natural beauty and one of the few places families can take young children to enjoy the river safely. Thank you for your work and time	6/17/2025 10:57 AM
188	i agree that commercial users are well behaved. I disagree that commercial use reduces vehicle traffic. It might have at first, before concierges and outfitters began working efficiently with each other. In recent years i submit that marketing and guest services combined with outfitters are promoting this activity to visitors, who would not ordinarily have rented a car and paddleboard and floated North Star. With behavior improving each year the issue now is crowding and loss of the feeling you expect to have in a Nature Preserve.	6/17/2025 7:56 AM
189	my biggest complaint is the noise from speakers. It is so peaceful but there is always one person who wants to break it with their music.	6/16/2025 7:28 PM
190	Please stop paddlers from paddling "off river" into the natural fens that develop every few years east of the river. Paddling in this area is illegal, and yet there is no signage to warn paddlers. Install a small two-rail fence over the old irrigation channel that allows paddlers to access the fen area, with signage indicating "no paddling". This area must be preserved to support the struggling Red Wing Blackbird population in the preserve, since the fen areas are the natural breeding and feeding habitat of this diminishing species. Please also install passive boulder barriers along select portions of 82 where vehicles may be tempted to drive off the highway and into the preserve, which has occurred in the past (probably late at night).	6/16/2025 1:38 PM
191	Close it to recreationally use and use as the Benedict's intended and the givers- It is being loved to death. Prioritize the intended use of conservation over recreation and making money on the natural environment at enormous costs again. It's not too late to close it and use as intended which was not destination tourism and instagram but to preserve the fragile wetlands.	6/16/2025 10:39 AM
192	I've always loved my time spent up at North Star preserve. Even though it has unarguably become busier and more frequently utilized I am in support of the numerous improvements to the infrastructure of public access points and stewardship from OST/White River FS/ACES facilitators that are out by this publicly accessed land enforcing and educating people whom may be unaware or needing reminder of the purpose for this lands preservation and its countless importances. I think a continued push for education on stewardship and sustainability for any and all public users of this land will be a stronger driving force to its preservation in contrast to further gate keeping/permit restricting the future visitors and recreationalist's to come whether local or visitor.	6/16/2025 10:33 AM
193	Increase commercial use, they are normally not the groups causing the problems.	6/16/2025 7:30 AM
194	Would love to see a lot at the top or bottom, and a cheap shuttle service (RFTA partnership?). I think the work done in the past few years is exceptional, and commend you guys for dealing with the general public, especially the "this ain't how it used to be" crowd.	6/15/2025 4:37 PM
195	Beautiful place	6/15/2025 3:59 PM
196	It is one of my favorite places on earth, thank you for taking care of it!	6/14/2025 5:30 PM
197	I am a dawn river user ... usually very quiet I am a dawn and dusk wildlife viewer	6/13/2025 1:54 PM
198	There is a very fine line in ensuring the environmental and ecological health of this preserve,	6/12/2025 10:45 AM

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while still providing the public with use of our public lands, I believe that you guys are doing a pretty good job, the only issue with reservation systems that I have found working for the forest service is that a lot of the time it stops locals from visiting and recreating in that area, and in general locals are the people who care for the land the most.

199	I love recreating at NSNP. My friends and I enjoy drinking beers while checking out the wildlife from the river. The Beach is a nice relaxing, sunny place to hangout after work. I find the only stressful part is Wildwood and the Takeout. I plan my float to be able to quickly drop at Wildwood. I usually park my car in the pull-offs past the takeout so I can walk my board for 5min. The takeout is always full with highschoolers tanning and jumping off the bridge or idiots just taking forever. I do my best to avoid Wildwood and the Takeout. I don't feel crowded anywhere else and am pretty chill most of the time. Sometimes the Beach is packed with families. I'd love a WeCycle station at the Beach if possible! I frequently WeCycle around town and love going up there. If they had WeCycles for the shuttles somehow, that'd be cool. I like hanging at the Beach and leaving from there too so I'm glad the new sign says we can takeout the boats there too. The parking spots at South Gate are way too narrow to park a truck or big car that we use to have our bike and boards on. It's rarely that busy, could we take out a few spots to make them wider? I like learning from the ACES people and the rangers about the moose and birds.	6/11/2025 2:47 PM
200	The takeout situation at Stillwater bridge us dangerous. There needs to be more space for cars and bikes and people. The signs and wayfinding are difficult for people who are unfamiliar with the area. The east of aspen trail is now too narrow for the amount of e bikers going too fast on the trail. It would also be so cool to extend the Nordic trail all the way up to difficult if the trail was widened.	6/11/2025 2:47 PM
201	I use the space for running especially, and would be really disappointed if the trail were closed in the early mornings.	6/11/2025 11:20 AM
202	Noise on the river is a problem. Amplified music and drink loud mouths ruin the experience. Too many people on the takeout bridge and they block the trail with their crap. Dogs everywhere. Your poor rangers don't stand a chance. Too many people and over use must stress the wildlife. The whole situation makes me sad.	6/10/2025 4:58 PM
203	The trail should be realigned to be further away from the highway.	6/9/2025 12:13 PM
204	I would prefer that commercial trips be banned. Our local wildlife and community do not need the additional wear and tear—let's value, preserve and respectfully enjoy the amazing environment that nature has provided while protecting it, rather than chewing it up and spitting it out for a profit.	6/9/2025 11:12 AM
205	Limiting numbers on the river would help address the parking and other prevalent issues.	6/9/2025 10:36 AM
206	Wildlife first - recreation second	6/9/2025 6:29 AM
207	Commercial needs regulation. Takeout parking needs to be larger and more convenient.	6/8/2025 8:34 PM
208	Post speed limit and ask people to drive slowly on Wildwood Lane. Thank you	6/8/2025 8:55 AM
209	North Star is a gem but it is being loved to death and current use patterns are not consistent with habitat protection and enhancement.	6/7/2025 2:31 PM
210	I think it should be more regulated than it is now	6/7/2025 9:07 AM
211	Having lived on the East side of town for over 21 years, I remember the days when we would occasionally access Wildwood for kayaking and we would see a bear float down the river on its back. Realizing that we have to respect their environment made us not use the kayaks anymore. We have to protect their environment. There is so much development everywhere and these poor animals, deer, bears, foxes coyotes, birds etc. are in great need of open space too. It is disturbing to hear how commercialized the river has become.	6/7/2025 7:39 AM
212	North Star Nature Preserve is a nature preserve. The only people off of the bike path should be researching or learning about nature. No commercial businesses should be granted river or land access. This is a Nature Preserve not a Park. Keep it wild please!	6/6/2025 10:01 PM
213	Please don't turn our beautiful backyard in to Six Flags!	6/6/2025 5:26 PM
214	There is a lot of frustration with new private river users (not commercial) who do not respect the river ecosystem, wild-life, and are loud and obnoxious on the water (more than would be	6/6/2025 3:29 PM

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expected from a group having a good time). With more and more extremely wealthy people moving to Aspen and engaging in the outdoors (as we all love to do), I don't know how to balance money and ease of use with disrespect and willful ignorance of our outdoor spaces. Going through the Aspen School District, we were raised and educated to respect all aspects of our community (people and wildlife equally) - I wish everyone could experience the education I grew up with before accessing these spaces!

215	Wonderful area. I love it. Seems like a very small number of people can ruin it for everyone at times.	6/6/2025 3:17 PM
216	North Star nature preserve has always been a safe haven for wildlife and the natural beauty of the rockies and Aspen in particular. If anything threatens that by way of increased commercial use and public or homeless camping along easement or other protected nature areas, we completely support actions considered to rebuke encampments and preserve the wildlife sanctuary, prioritizing nature and conservation over movements to further increase recreational activities.	6/6/2025 3:09 PM
217	too many people-it was created to be a wildlife area-MAKE IT -KEEP IT THAT WAY!	6/6/2025 2:46 PM
218	No	6/6/2025 10:33 AM
219	The Roaring fork valley has made recreation a priority over wildlife for far too long. There should be NO commercial use of any of our Open Space. Because we have allowed it, we are at this point once again. Another gem over-run and out of control. More tax dollars to manage the mayhem. When will we learn? If you build they will come.	6/6/2025 10:17 AM
220	It's a nature preserve. This should guide all decisions, not recreation. There is a balance here but we need to protect the original intention and charter for these hallowed grounds.	6/6/2025 10:09 AM
221	keep it for nature not people	6/6/2025 9:30 AM
222	This area was never intended for commercial recreation use. I hope we can honor those who donated it and conceptualised the area as a habitat for wildlife and quiet nature viewing and education.	6/6/2025 9:06 AM
223	Run a shuttle service so people don't have to drive out for paddleboarding. That would help with traffic. Also I don't have a car so I'd be able to paddle boarding more easily	6/6/2025 8:59 AM
224	I love it!	6/6/2025 6:31 AM
225	No. About the survey: It would be great to add a box for an small comment in several questions.	6/5/2025 4:54 PM
226	The North Star Nature Preserve is the only Nature Preserve we have and as the posted signs say it is a "Fragile Refuge." We now have an opportunity in the in the 2025 Management Plan to get back on the right track and get it right by prioritizing wildlife as the 2000 Management Plan thoughtfully outlined. The last 10 years it appears the management has prioritized recreation over wildlife which has open the floodgates to allow annually increasing numbers of recreational floaters and it is now totally out of control. Any person with a reasonable mind can easily calculate that 8,000 to 9,000 people floating the river in a 2 month period of time definitely impacts the health and livelihood of the wildlife. Parking lots were expanded, paddle board racks added all to enhance the visitor experience, but what did you do to preserve and protect the wildlife? If we are to save the North Star Nature Preserve for the generations to come, we must prioritize the wildlife and limit, control and properly manage the recreational use or it all will be lost in just a matter of years. The North Star Nature Preserve's essence is wildlife, its their home and only we can become the best stewards and protect it for them. Let's do it together..	6/5/2025 3:01 PM
227	Speed bumps in the larger parking areas that were created a few years ago.	6/5/2025 2:33 PM
228	We love the Preserve, it's a main reason that we chose to live there	6/5/2025 9:50 AM
229	NO parking at all past the still water bridge east towards mile marker 43. This is a massive problem and very disrespectful to the homeowners near still water bridge take out. The parking areas of NorthStar must be enforced vigorously by the Pitkin County Sheriff's office.	6/5/2025 8:41 AM
230	Thank you for taking care of this beautiful corridor!	6/5/2025 7:32 AM
231	Please PLEASE forbid, ban and fine EBIKE use on East of Aspen trail. They are too fast and it's too narrow. Its a danger to dogs on leashes and people alike, Thank you.	6/5/2025 1:39 AM

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232	Stop the commercial raft companies from selling trips to groups larger than 6. Schedule only 1 morning and afternoon float times. Limit Commercial companies to 2 days per week only to sperad the business. Require a high cost special use license that can be canceled with 3 strikes rulespermit	6/4/2025 7:11 PM
233	Educate people, no dogs allowed at all (being full time resident since 1992 I have seen it all). Absolutely no alcohol, loud music etc. I am against commercial tours.	6/4/2025 5:56 PM
234	OST employees at Wildwood putin are informative, polite, knowledgable. That seems to work. That being said we usually drop off and because we live near by we choose times when the river isn't as busy. Rarely on the river on weekends. Mostly we use the East Aspen Trail & Northstar trails for walking in the spring, summer, fall and ski on the xc trail in winter. What ever happens please don't pave the trail. Also, the signage for motorized bikes is confusing - are the allowed or not? I believe electric bikes should not be allowed at all at any time (sorry Ian Long). My family have used the beach for over 30 years now. In the beginning years there were rarely people there. The locals that did go there were very respectful of the environment and wildlife. I do notice (when on my walks) that the beach can get busy and there seem to be groups of all kinds. The rangers do a wonderful job managing that space. Alcohol should be prohibited on the trail, beach, on the water. I do not want to see the area over regulated as sometimes the beauty is to go out and enjoy the area a the spur of the moment. Commercial use should be prohibited at all times in all areas of Northstar. I believe this would address the over crowding and over use. Property taxes contribute to county and city OST and I don't know if commercial businesses do as well. The National Parks service seems to have an active volunteer program for busy places like the Bells. I wonder if Northstar might benefit from a similar but smaller program.	6/4/2025 5:32 PM
235	Fine first time offenders/owners of unleashed dogs and dogs being in prohibited areas.	6/4/2025 5:30 PM
236	Providing more parking will only make further over use problems. Do not expand parking	6/4/2025 5:24 PM
237	I believe preserving this PRESERVE is critical. If that means that there are restrictions on people floating I would support that.	6/4/2025 5:11 PM
238	Control access at Wildwood to drop off and limit vehicle off loading areas, having the turn around for the vehicles within the current disturbed areas to keep from blocking fire protection access to Wildwood School Control of the North Star resource is best accomplished through the use of several simultaneous non aggressive regulations. Model The Teton National Park and Yellowstone	6/4/2025 3:09 PM
239	Pitkin County and all our residents are extremely fortunate to have the North Star Nature Preserve and we should do everything possible to preserve and protect the wildlife habitat, animals, birds and fish that live there. That is the highest and best use of this Preserve.	6/4/2025 1:00 PM
240	North Star preserve is a special place and I think Aspen locals take care of the area, ever since 2020 it has become more popular but I think we have done a good job of preserving it. It would be nice otherwise have a little bit more parking or the cameras to see if there are spots.	6/4/2025 12:37 PM
241	This is ridiculous that 12 entitled homeowners are trying to control the enjoyment of everyone who lives and visits here.	6/4/2025 8:09 AM
242	I love North Star! This is really the only accessible recreational water space in the area. Slaughterhouse and further down the Roaring Fork have too many kayakers and river rafters, and it is not calm. Otherwise you have to go to Twin Lakes or Ruedi Reservoir. I think it is extremely important to keep North Star open and usable for floating, paddling AND beach access.	6/3/2025 6:04 PM
243	I love North Star!	6/3/2025 6:04 PM
244	i hear homeowners along the river are trying to shut down public use. i think that's awful. doing so will privatize the river for homeowner use only and will take away one of the special activities we get to enjoy by living in Aspen. To me it's like closing the beach in miami because the property owners in the area don't like the people using it. It's absurd and any homeowner campaign to shut down public use of the river should be shot down.	6/3/2025 5:59 PM
245	It's a great place, wonderful to visit. People usually pick up after themselves. I don't really seen any garbage on the river. The beach area everybody's polite. I would restrict jumping off the bridge at the takeout point because there's a lot of rocks under there and it's not that deep.	6/3/2025 5:59 PM

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246	The North Star Preserve is a special place throughout all seasons. At the moment it seems there are too many summer visitors going there as a place to party either on the beach or river, so limiting group numbers may help to limit that recreational desire. I am hopeful that if users received a lesson about ecological importance then they will be better stewards and have greater integrity in terms of use. Having commercial groups profit off of the preserve seems wrong in any capacity. If there is a pay to park could locals attend a wetlands ecology seminar and earn a season pass?	6/3/2025 4:34 PM
247	Ecological restoration should be optimized. The optimal ecological state for North Star should be defined and concrete steps taken to achieve this state. A study should be done to assess how in-river recreation is impacting ecological restoration, in particular (a) the interference with beaver dam building and removal of in-channel material needed for beaver structures and water slowing and spreading, (b) disturbance of wildlife which needs access to water, especially during May and June, and (c) diversion of county resources and attention towards making river paddlers happy and away from enhancing critical wildlife habitats. Attention should also be paid to Highway 82 and the ability of wildlife to safely cross the highway and for humans using the East of Aspen Trail to enjoy their experience. Speed limits should be reduced and enforced. Consider speed bumps. Consider adding tunnels for smaller animals. Put some plant barriers between the East of Aspen Trail and the highway so trail users have a better experience away from traffic. Add more water amenities in other areas of the County so there is less pressure on the North Star as the only place to go to enjoy a tranquil water experience. People like this type of experience. Why not create ponds or a separate water channel where people can paddle board, do SUP yoga, have a beach etc. It all doesn't have to be at North Star.	6/3/2025 4:32 PM
248	It should return to being a Nature Preserve not a commercial profit center.	6/3/2025 2:36 PM
249	This is a HUGELY valuable recreational asset for Aspen - please please keep it open and easy to use for the public. Restricting it to only the few wealthy families who live on the Reserve would be a travesty and completely against what I love about Aspen.	6/3/2025 1:40 PM
250	Very concerned about limiting use for those of us who live there	6/3/2025 9:46 AM
251	I would like to emphasize that under current Colorado River usage rules, people have the right to float thru privately owned lands, and can fish those waters as long as they don't touch the banks and stream bottoms. Pitkin county open space does not have absolute control over the use of this section of river	6/2/2025 7:29 PM
252	THE NORTH STAR NATURE PRESERVE IS A NATURE PRESERVE. THE LAND WAS NOT INTENDED TO BE A PADDLEBOARD PARK FOR PEOPLE. CLOSE THE RIVER TO ALL HUMAN USE!	6/2/2025 3:58 PM
253	Beavers & Moose have top priority !	6/2/2025 2:51 PM
254	I think if there is a better way to manage the wildwood lane parking area it would be better. The South Gate take out by the bridge new system I think is working great. The drop in area by wildwood is just a mess, I think if you can figure out a way to expand the parking situation there that would be great. Having people drop off and park a mile down the road is not very helpful and it makes floating much more difficult when it is a free fun activity everyone should be able to enjoy. I think if you start enforcing payment there, especially for locals, it will rub people the wrong way.	6/2/2025 2:02 PM
255	I am totally against floating on the creek. Walking and biking on the East Aspen Trail is ALL the encroachment on the wildlife that i think is necessary. Please shut it down, water users can go to Ruedi Reservoir if they must paddle, or tube, or wade. Leave the moose, beavers, deer, herons, geese, ducks, etc, etc, alone.	6/2/2025 10:43 AM
256	Thank you OST for all you do!!	6/2/2025 10:33 AM
257	I paddle May and June and go Ruedi when it get low, it's usually uncrowded. I have been paddling it for 35 years. I would like to see comercial use banned except for aspen kayak school instruction. The paddleboard comercial guides and drivers are the rudest users i have encountered, hogging space running engines in the pick up areas excessively (we need the ac for the guests) and blocking access at the put in with large vans. Allowing nudity would help keep numbers down also, skinny dipping at the beach is an Aspen tradition. I agree with the messages on the signs but there are too many and many people ignore them.	6/2/2025 9:32 AM
258	Seems like the bigger issue is non-commercial/public users with noise and crowding. Although	6/2/2025 9:04 AM

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I still support further commercial restrictions. For noncommercial users - I would think improved mandatory education, more restrictions with group size, better/bigger signage about adhering to and educating about all the rules. Tranquility and peace and respecting nature and wildlife is key. big Signage on 82 about entering and exiting a natural preserve area and see signage for rules may help with awareness.

259	It's an important natural place. Our visiting it is a low priority if we can't behave.	6/2/2025 8:55 AM
260	North Star is a NATURE preserve. It was NEVER intended to be a Paddleboard park. The land was conveyed specifically to be a NATURE PRESERVE. Stop ALL people from floating through a nature preserve!	6/2/2025 8:21 AM
261	The Aspen locals like us LOVE and respect the North Star Preserve. Limit outsiders and tourists who don't always follow the rules, disrespect wildlife or have no common sense by limiting commercial use. Thank you!	6/1/2025 7:55 PM
262	We must accommodate river users, as far as letting them access the river at some point. But ACRA should not market Northstar. South Gate is good enough for all puBlic use. Let the section from wildwood to Northstar revert to wild and private- for nature, and the quiet enjoyment of the few neighbors, who Must also follow the rules. -	5/31/2025 11:44 AM
263	I believe that restricting commercial use on busy weekends (June-August) is warranted, at a minimum.	5/30/2025 3:28 PM
264	Stop allowing SUPs. If you eliminate private or commercial SUPs you will eliminate most of the garbage, noise, animal and human caused waste violations	5/28/2025 9:12 PM
265	We think that the C dot designed pull off in parking at the takeout bridge and at Southgate and the beach are too small, crowded, and the entrance and exit to all of those parking lots makes things almost more dangerous because you have to do a multi point turn When exiting Southgate and headed back towards town	5/28/2025 7:00 PM
266	Contact and work with private landowners and residents of properties between Wildwood and Northstar to help protect river values, habitat and wildlife such as beaver, moose, elk. Inform/educate users to respect private property, stay in the river.	5/28/2025 1:18 PM
267	There needs to be a proper environmental assessment of the North Star. The last one was between 1997 and 2000. Visitor use studies continue but actual scientific studies of the impact of 10,000 river users have not been done.	5/28/2025 9:40 AM
268	It such a beautiful part of our valley, and I hope it stays that way. I am worried about the moose and other wildlife out there being disturbed by the paddle boarders especially up by wildwood. The groups putting in are often packed 6-8 people in a car and not sharing the space with others.	5/27/2025 9:18 PM
269	It used to be so much easier to park at the takeout bridge and go paddle upstream. Now it is such a hassle to drop off board, find parking and walk back instead of utilizing the parking that was available. It is only about the floaters!	5/27/2025 3:50 PM
270	Commercial use accounts for about 46% of total river use at North Star. The North Star was intended as a Nature Preserve, not a commercial recreation area. About 30% of use is guided commercial which can be regulated. The remaining 16% of commercial use (surveyed in 2023) is rental board use which can not be easily regulated. We need to restrict commercial river use in adherence to the one operator outlined in the conservation easement, or at least the intention of this very limited commercial presence. Commercial use also needs a fixed limit of client user days especially for the busiest days and times. The six person group limit has been a successful management action but we need a total user day cap as well. Commercial use should have a greater focus on environmental education and kayaking/sup instruction for locals and school aged children, rather than just another expensive amenity attached to the hotel concierge pipeline. Commercial recreation has significant impact. All of these uses are additive and overwhelm the very limited capacities of the parking areas most notably for egress and safety at the put in and take out. I hope that next steps from this management plan will be collaboration with a group like CNHP who can work with Liza and build on her excellent work and the many North Star studies. The next step would be to follow the recommendations from Christopher Monz's 2025 ecological review of these studies including a monitoring protocol with specific indicators that track the impact of recreation. His observation was that "The current monitoring process focuses well on assessing broad indicators of ecological health but lacks specificity on how recreation is affecting the corridors and adjacent areas	5/27/2025 2:30 PM

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where recreation is occurring.” Management that supports the re wilding of North Star as a wetlands (with improved beaver habitat) is a key for the area to “rewet the sponge” and enhance ground water hydrology. Also this will help the area serve as the most effective wildfire fire break between the forest and town. Thank you so much to the Open Space and Trails staff for all of your hard work on this very complicated issue. We are seeing great improvements at North Star from your work and look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues. North Star is such a special place that we all care so deeply about. Thank you!!

271	I am a long time resident of Aspen. I moved here in 2009. I think the changes and improvements over the years have been great. The maps, rangers and new parking areas have been very helpful. The signs on the river, no stopping are also a good addition. I only struggle with parking at wildwood and wish there were more spots. We usually take one car and a e-bike because there's limited parking there. I think any type of reservation system will ruin North Star forever. Keep monitoring and let people enjoy this special place freely!!!!	5/26/2025 10:05 PM
272	Pitkin residents free , charge visitors and eliminate Commercial	5/26/2025 8:31 PM
273	I believe the North Star preserve should not be used for any commercial operations, and all non commercial visitors should be restricted to a minimum to reduce the effects of their presence in the area.	5/26/2025 12:39 PM
274	I do not support any type of water craft in North Star Nature Preserve. That is not what is meant to be. GIVE IT A REST!!!!	5/25/2025 4:07 PM
275	Let us bring dogs and make it more of a fun experience. Not allowing music is outrageous	5/25/2025 12:39 AM
276	If we are going to restrict people to it, locals and true locals not second homeowners should have priority because this is why we LIVE here and not vacation here. Prioritize the local who care for our habitat.	5/24/2025 10:45 PM
277	It's called the Northstar preserve, not the north star recreation area!!! We need to put the wildlife first. There are other areas where people can play in the river. Let them go there.	5/24/2025 10:05 PM
278	manage use by limiting access	5/24/2025 9:28 PM
279	The parking spaces are poorly organized making limited parking	5/24/2025 5:29 PM
280	There are too many commercial groups that ruin it for everyone else. They should find a less fragile place to make their money	5/24/2025 5:26 PM
281	It seems as North Star will basically be inaccessible to locals really soon. You people should be ashamed of yourself restricting public lands	5/24/2025 8:39 AM
282	Really sad how you, Pitkin County, was to be a steward of this land but instead have created its downfall. It was to be for the animals, you've turned into a fckng mess. That's why Mr. Smith donated it to the Nature Conservancy instead of Pitkin County, he knew he couldn't trust the county and you have proved him right. Fck you for what you've done to this property!!!	5/24/2025 8:33 AM
283	I would support all limitations on Wildwood if there were a satellite parking area within walking distance	5/24/2025 8:04 AM
284	The name says it all. It's a preserve. Everything should be done to protect the environment and the wildlife. Would love to see the preserve limited to foot traffic. Overuse of our natural resources is slowly destroying this magical place.	5/24/2025 1:25 AM
285	It's overused and more effort should be put into preserving the native habitat.	5/23/2025 8:15 PM
286	The people at wildwood who over saw the lot last year were mean and unfriendly. It's really not okay. We pay their salary with tax \$ and to be like that is not acceptable. It's a common discussion with locals how mean they are. Be kind we just want to get a sop off the top of our car and leave doesn't mean they need to be yelling at people especially locals. Wish I got it on camera, happens often to locals. Be nice people!!!	5/23/2025 3:01 PM
287	It's a nature preserve, recreation is secondary and should be considered by its impact	5/23/2025 2:36 PM
288	Much better care and close attention are rather desperately needed and should not be delated	5/23/2025 12:54 PM
289	North Star is awesome in the winter. The cross country skiing is fantastic, and gives skiers an appreciation for nature. Walking around the allowed areas at North Star is also amazing. I'm not a river person, but I think swimmers and floaters are contaminating the water with	5/23/2025 12:36 PM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

sunscreen. They are loud and disturbing wildlife. Overall, I'm more interested in preservation and conservation than access.

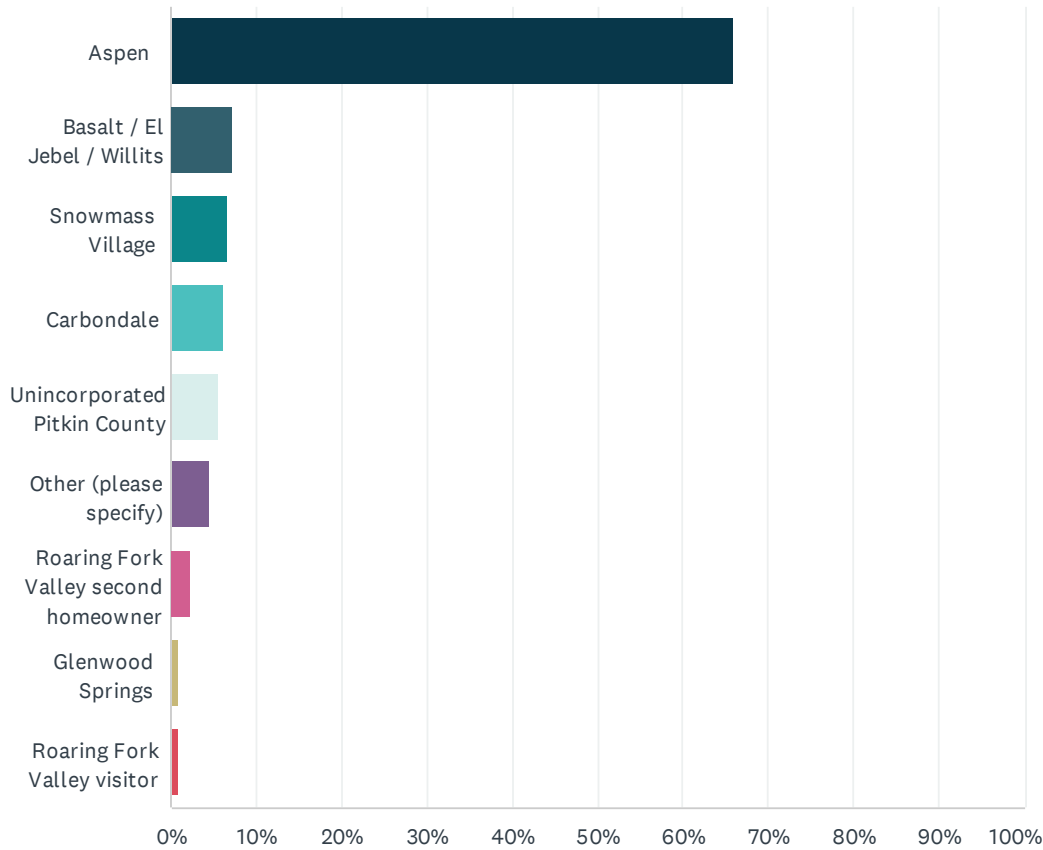
290	AVLT documents restrict the quantity of commercial operators to one. The Management Plan should adhere to the one commercial operator limitation per AVLT documents.	5/23/2025 10:06 AM
291	Eliminate commercial use!	5/23/2025 12:14 AM
292	I paddle upstream 2-3x week in the summer and make a pt to pick up trash in the water. Most of the time I avg 1 pc per trip; which i think is good. Last July 3rd I picked up 9 items. Not good. Biggest issue I see is amplified music. Happens all the time and it carries such a long and impactful way.	5/22/2025 10:11 PM
293	Allow local residents to use without imposing restrictions or provide resident permits (river access & parking). Thank you!!!	5/22/2025 9:48 PM
294	Drones flying and launching from personal houses that live along NorthStar should not be allowed to fly in the Preserve. Keep everything the same as it is now.	5/22/2025 9:47 PM
295	People need to respect the beavers and id say close it off above the beaver dam. People just trample over the dam with their boards. Don't get me started on People with dogs in an area full of moose too	5/22/2025 6:45 PM
296	It's a valuable community amenity. Remember that it is a Nature Preserve, and not really a recreation park.	5/22/2025 6:26 PM
297	I stopped going there a couple of years ago due to the negative behavior of the users and groups on the river. It is not a lazy river attraction from Vegas, it is an important wildlife and habitat preserve.	5/22/2025 4:28 PM
298	I feel like you guys are making this so difficult. The biggest issue up there is parking and you have been taking away spaces over the last few years and limiting commercial shuttles. People should have access to the river and if the preserve is crowded when town is crowded. It is really not that big of a deal. I would like to see more commercial shuttles to minimize vehicles. The commercial companies are can literally bring up 30 people an hour MAX!!! The whole preserve would feel less busy with less cars. You don't need huge groups of 20 people up there but increasing the number your commercial companies can bring up per hour would help minimize vehicle traffic. Please stop making it hard for people to access the river. It belongs to all of us not just the rich homeowners who live near the presever.	5/22/2025 3:27 PM
299	Just ban loud music/commercial groups	5/22/2025 2:33 PM
300	The amount of users should be reduced and regulated.	5/22/2025 1:54 PM
301	no dogs should be allowed	5/22/2025 1:37 PM
302	The words Nature Preserve should imply a place where nature is preserved, not a recreational playground where birds stop nesting, animals are bothered and plant life is trampled. The noise and crowds that are not in what is a Preserve is not right.	5/22/2025 12:14 PM
303	I hope this timely important survey will generate the necessary data to limit the out-of-control river traffic and increase the critical preservation for this extraordinarily beautiful place.	5/22/2025 11:42 AM
304	protect it	5/22/2025 8:33 AM
305	Too many people....	5/22/2025 8:30 AM
306	Stop the commercial outfitters allow locals access to this beautiful amenity. Stop letting commercial operators profit off of our open space. Do not limit access for locals. Limit access for out-of-town people.	5/22/2025 8:02 AM
307	Thank you for managing this resource	5/22/2025 6:46 AM
308	Again, I do not think the river should be used for floating, it's too small, and the logistics are a nightmare!	5/22/2025 6:41 AM
309	Area needs to be protected from people that are ruining it....it's a disgrace....amout of people, noise and carelessness	5/22/2025 6:34 AM
310	I am a birder so I am at North Star in the early morning and do not see the floaters traffic. I appreciate all you are doing to maintain wildlife in this valuable area of Aspen. Thank you	5/22/2025 5:05 AM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

311	This isn't a place to party, it's a place for humans to connect with our natural world via respectful means/modes. Recreation should always take a backseat to stewardship, and to doing the right thing for our wildlife and wild lands. Don't feel pressure to accommodate the SUP crowd, do the right thing. Thanks for the survey and the opp to speak my mind.	5/22/2025 3:22 AM
312	Thank you for your hard work protecting this community treasure for the flora and fauna.	5/21/2025 10:20 PM
313	Prevent people jumping off the bridge!	5/21/2025 8:20 PM
314	Maybe permitting individuals to use the river would make sense. Obviously have a separate local permit price and tourist price.	5/21/2025 7:27 PM
315	Northstar is being ruined by commercial use. Not the agreement for which the land was given nor is it being maintained as a wildlife preserve in perpetuity. The agreement was one permit for educational purposes, not a city amenity to advertise to tourists. AVLTT is not conforming to NEPA Regulations or permits required are not being sought after or approval received by current management and that is required by law.	5/21/2025 7:18 PM
316	I have been floating from Wildwood since we were kids. We had regular classes in school about protecting our environment and why we didn't get out anywhere but at the takeout. It should be required education just as our fishing license is required. Wildwood should be drop of only.	5/21/2025 7:09 PM
317	It is a wonder gift having this Beauty almost in my back Yard. It irritates me when it is abused. There are enough places to bike and mt. bike, but a mix of clueless Tourist bike riders, dogs, and hikers seeking tranquility doesn't work.	5/21/2025 5:53 PM
318	I have loved this area for 60 years. I have seen the gradual degradation of the natural diversity fist hand. The highway department could be coerced to keep the pass closed for longer. The Forest Service could shorten the dates that Difficult Campground is open. The noise ordinance could be far better enforced. Still it is one of the best places on earth and I commend you on yout efforts to make it better.	5/21/2025 5:49 PM
319	I was one of the first people in the valley with a SUP. I think I was the 5th. I miss how it used to be. I think commercial use is a problem, as are the concierge who encourage drunk party floats to tourists.	5/21/2025 5:38 PM
320	It is suppose to be a NATURE PRESERVE - NOT A WATER PARK. This was never meant to be Aspen's Disneyland. The management of this area has historically been poor to pathetic. I am happy to see at least some efforts are being make to correct this ridiculous situation.	5/21/2025 5:29 PM
321	This survey beautifully describes North Star. Therefore, all floating right smack down the middle of the preserve states the opposite. How is this protecting the environment and wildlife? It's not. I would like to see paddle boarding banned through this beautiful preserve. It's a huge disruption to the environment and wildlife. Let's keep North Star a preserve and not a amusement park. It's time to protect this pristine preserve.	5/21/2025 5:20 PM
322	No drinking parties should be banned as well as drinking parties. ACES does a good job of programs to view areas that are not open to give an idea of the past use & wildlife is free of people	5/21/2025 5:15 PM
323	Too many signs along the river. Looks like Vail	5/21/2025 4:49 PM
324	It would be great if there was better flexibility for locals than for tourists. Where I'm from there is locals only parking at beaches.	5/21/2025 4:48 PM

## Q26 Where do you live?

Answered: 641 Skipped: 129



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Aspen	65.99%	423
Basalt / El Jebel / Willits	7.18%	46
Snowmass Village	6.55%	42
Carbondale	6.24%	40
Unincorporated Pitkin County	5.46%	35
Other (please specify)	4.52%	29
Roaring Fork Valley second homeowner	2.34%	15
Glenwood Springs	0.94%	6
Roaring Fork Valley visitor	0.78%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>641</b>

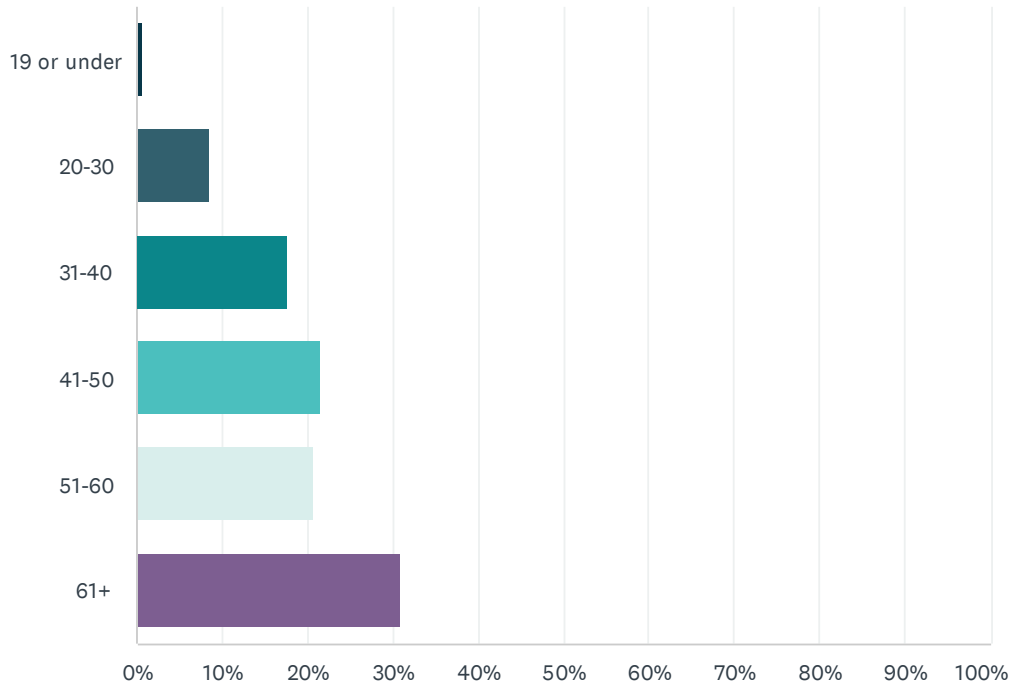
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Grand junction	7/6/2025 1:30 PM

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan – 2025 Update

2	Our neighborhood is across the street from Stillwater St.	7/6/2025 8:24 AM
3	East of Aspen	7/5/2025 8:35 PM
4	Born in Aspen, lived there 50+ years, now live in Basalt area.	7/5/2025 7:33 PM
5	Littleton, CO 80123	7/5/2025 2:45 PM
6	Leadville. Used to live in Aspen for 51 years.	7/4/2025 9:08 PM
7	out of state but visit often	7/2/2025 2:06 PM
8	Grand County	7/2/2025 12:32 PM
9	Oregon	7/2/2025 11:40 AM
10	Downvalley	7/2/2025 8:24 AM
11	Silt Mesa	7/1/2025 8:09 PM
12	San Diego	6/30/2025 8:44 PM
13	Lived in Aspen/Snowmass for the past 40 years but just lost housing and am presently in Fruita.	6/26/2025 7:51 AM
14	Woody Creek	6/25/2025 1:54 PM
15	CO-visiting family in Basalt	6/24/2025 6:51 PM
16	Mountain Valley.	6/24/2025 11:25 AM
17	Woody Creek	6/23/2025 4:05 PM
18	Woody Creek	6/22/2025 4:24 PM
19	Woody Creek	6/21/2025 4:31 AM
20	Pitkin county near Redstone	6/20/2025 4:57 PM
21	EMAIL	6/20/2025 10:20 AM
22	Aspen is our second home	6/6/2025 10:02 PM
23	Live in East Aspen May through October.	6/6/2025 6:32 AM
24	Silt	6/4/2025 12:31 PM
25	North Carolina	6/3/2025 12:04 PM
26	Woody Creek	6/2/2025 9:34 AM
27	Boulder	5/26/2025 4:39 PM
28	old snowmass	5/22/2025 4:05 PM
29	'old' snowmass	5/21/2025 4:47 PM

## Q27 What is your age?

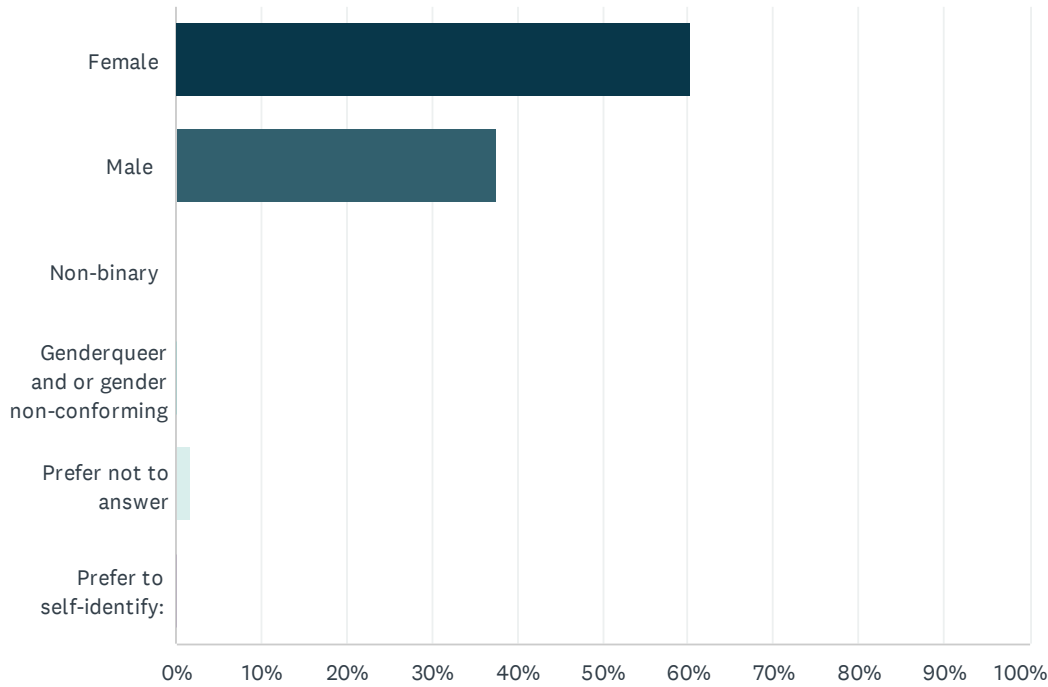
Answered: 639 Skipped: 131



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
19 or under	0.63% 4
20-30	8.61% 55
31-40	17.68% 113
41-50	21.60% 138
51-60	20.66% 132
61+	30.83% 197
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>639</b>

## Q28 What is your gender?

Answered: 637 Skipped: 133



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	60.28%	384
Male	37.52%	239
Non-binary	0.00%	0
Genderqueer and or gender non-conforming	0.16%	1
Prefer not to answer	1.73%	11
Prefer to self-identify:	0.31%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>637</b>

#	PREFER TO SELF-IDENTIFY:	DATE
1	Hedgehog	7/5/2025 4:14 PM
2	NAME	6/24/2025 11:25 AM

# 11. DRAFT PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

## FULL RESULTS

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**The plan update is organized around the Conservation Values. The diverse and interrelated components that contribute to North Star’s ecological and social value include:**

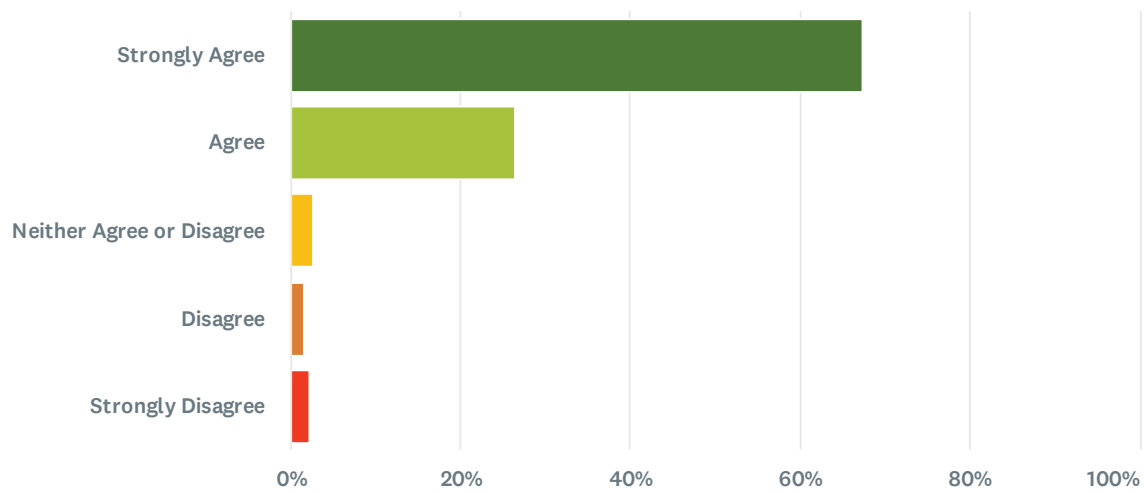
- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity
- River System
- Riparian Area, Wetlands, and Beavers
- Wildlife and their Habitats
- Community

Management direction at North Star Nature Preserve begins with a statement of desired conditions. This aspirational vision aligns with the conservation values and describes the long-term ecological and social outcomes that Pitkin County Open Space and Trails and its partners seek to achieve. The following desired conditions statement for North Star Nature Preserve was developed by a working group of land managers, non-profit partners, neighbors, commercial operators, and river users:

***North Star Nature Preserve provides long-term protection of biodiversity, natural ecosystem processes, landscape connectivity, and opportunities to connect with nature. Management efforts restore natural processes and promote ecological resilience in the face of challenges, including climate change, upstream water diversions, and agricultural land use legacies. Habitat complexity exists across the property to benefit diverse wildlife species as well as the continued provision of ecosystem services for the Roaring Fork Watershed, including flood protection, hydrological function, wildfire fuel break, and air and water quality. North Star in its entirety is managed first and foremost for ecological integrity and resilience, while allowing human presence in limited areas for environmental education, research, respectful recreation, and access to nature.***

## Q1 To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Strongly Agree	67.36%	130
● Agree	26.42%	51
● Neither Agree or Disagree	2.59%	5
● Disagree	1.55%	3
● Strongly Disagree	2.07%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>193</b>

The desired conditions statement informs broad management goals and is supported by specific actions. The goals in the draft plan are listed below, organized by conservation values. Refer to Section 4 of the Plan or the Plan Summary for more information, including the supporting policies and actions, as well as the monitoring plan.

**Value: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity**

Goal 1: Provide ecosystem services for public benefit, such as flood protection, fire protection, and clean air and water.

Goal 2: Control invasive species to the greatest extent possible with the least environmental impact.

Goal 3: Protect and support the overall biodiversity of plants and animals.

Goal 4: Maintain and enhance landscape permeability to allow animals of all sizes to move through and across North Star Nature Preserve. Preserve and improve the migratory corridors for elk and deer.

**Value: River System**

Goal 5: Instream habitat contributes to the overall health and resilience of the stream ecosystem, meeting the needs of diverse aquatic and terrestrial species.

Goal 6: Maintain floodplain connectivity as natural channel meanders occur through streambank erosion and sediment deposition, allowing the river system to operate in a dynamic state.

Goal 7: Maintain good water quality and continue efforts to maintain and/or increase water quantity, ensuring this stretch of the Roaring Fork River has adequate flow, temperature, pH, and oxygen levels, and limited harmful pollutants to support native aquatic life.

**Value: Riparian Area, Wetlands, Beavers**

Goal 8: Promote riparian area recovery toward a more naturalized state, with increasing habitat complexity, and protect beaver complexes across North Star as effective ecosystem engineers.

Goal 9: Preserve wetlands to ensure the provision of ecosystem services and habitat for diverse flora and fauna.

**Value: Wildlife and Habitat**

Goal 10: Maintain diverse habitat types (aspen forests, riparian areas, wetlands, open water, meadows, and shrublands) in good condition across the Preserve, hosting native plant communities and local fauna.

Goal 11: Provide habitats for diverse wildlife species, including songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, wading birds, herpetofauna, and large and small mammals, to use, live, and thrive.

**Value: Community**

Goal 12: Serve as a living classroom, fostering and facilitating scientific research, community connection, and environmental education.

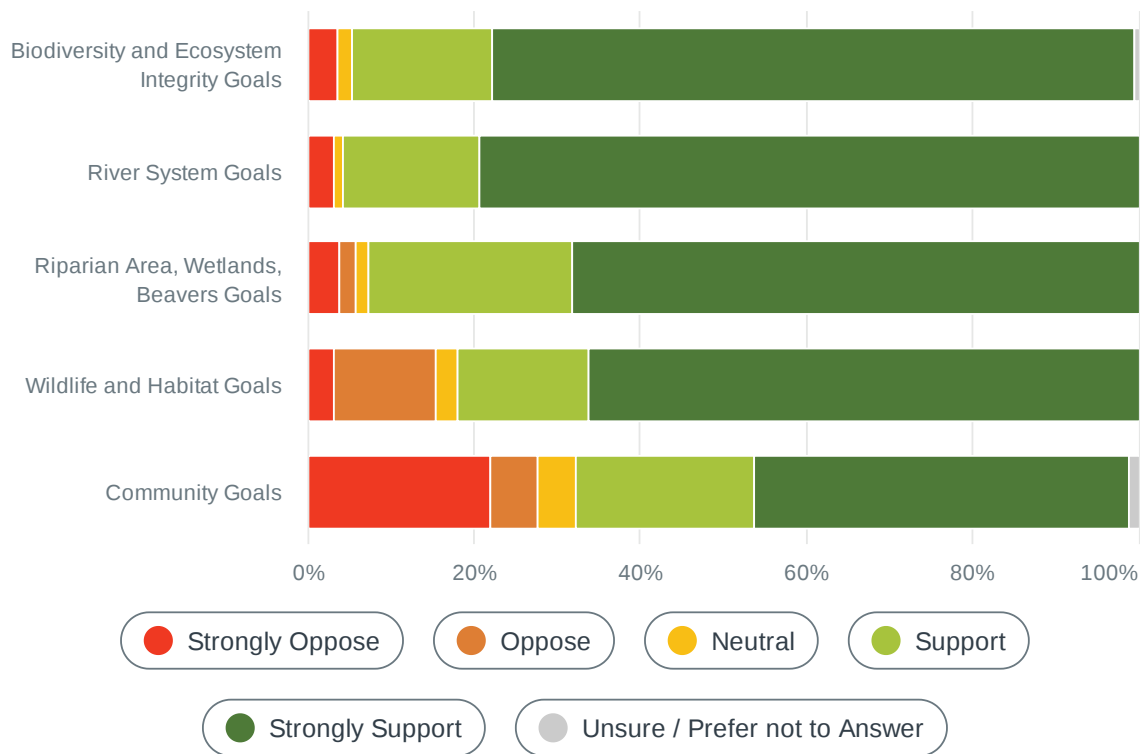
Goal 13: Ensure the volume, type, and distribution of recreational and river use remain within a manageable and predictable range, allowing wildlife to adapt and thrive and utilize the river corridor during times with minimal (recreational) disturbance by tracking key indicators and adjusting management strategies as conditions change.

Goal 14: Ensure user behavior supports the desired conditions, reflecting environmental awareness and respect for wildlife, by maintaining a seamless system of clear, consistent, and enforceable rules with strong compliance.

Goal 15: Maintain limited, functional and safe access points, parking, and trails, while minimizing ecological impacts, reducing congestion, and promoting respectful use.

## Q2 To what extent do you support these goals and supporting actions?

Answered: 194 Skipped: 6



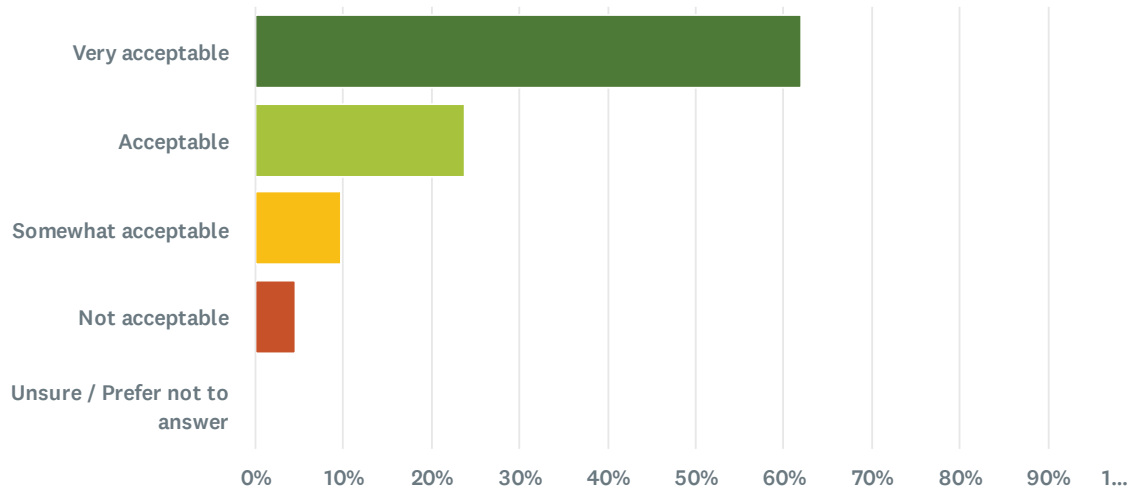
	STRONGLY OPPOSE	OPPOSE	NEUTRAL	SUPPORT	STRONGLY SUPPORT	UNSURE / PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	TOTAL
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Integrity Goals	3.61% 7	0.00% 0	1.55% 3	17.01% 33	77.32% 150	0.52% 1	194
River System Goals	3.16% 6	0.00% 0	1.05% 2	16.32% 31	79.47% 151	0.00% 0	190
Riparian Area, Wetlands, Beavers Goals	3.65% 7	2.08% 4	1.56% 3	24.48% 47	68.23% 131	0.00% 0	192
Wildlife and Habitat Goals	3.16% 6	12.11% 23	2.63% 5	15.79% 30	66.32% 126	0.00% 0	190
Community Goals	21.88% 42	5.73% 11	4.69% 9	21.35% 41	45.31% 87	1.04% 2	192

The draft plan proposes policies and management actions that may limit access to, or change how people access, the river at North Star during certain times or conditions to protect wildlife and habitat

- Examples of policies: voluntary river-use group-size limits, wildlife closures, and peak-use policies
- Examples of actions: concentrate and regulate visitor use to ensure activity remains within designated areas and predictable timeframes.

### Q3 How acceptable are these tradeoffs to you?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Very acceptable	61.93%	122
● Acceptable	23.86%	47
● Somewhat acceptable	9.64%	19
● Not acceptable	4.57%	9
● Unsure / Prefer not to answer	0%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>197</b>

**Please share any comments you have about the management plan update, or use this space to provide any additional information and specifics about any of your responses above.**

Answered: 102 Skipped: 98

Responses	Sentiment	Thematic Analysis (auto-tagged)
Restricting access is essential. I would restrict commercial use entirely or almost, and close the beach on the weekends as it is impossible to happily regular families noise/disruptions. Don't invite community conflict/trouble. Just close it during possible high-use time. Assign limited time-slotted use, if necessary. Add public awareness campaign about flourishing species in NSP as a way to bolster community pride in what we are doing, as a community, by not overusing this place. Offer that donors can "adopt" certain sections or species (?) so there is a sense that this is producing some community revenue? I'd like to go sometimes, but I would be okay with singing up for a slot or two and having that be my own visit time, if that what it takes to protect the wildlife, habitat, and share with the community. I would NOT exploit this for profit for people to just make money off tourists. It is a local community asset, and a point of locals' pride and cherishment.	Neutral	Recreational Use Impact, Community and Land Stewardship, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
The management plan must reflect long term stewardship for future improvement of ecological conditions, not recreational trends. Invest significant dollars in ecological restoration and stop investing in recreational amenities. Management actions need to reduce total river users numbers to restore the Easement intent and community desire of peaceful, passive and serene experiences. Initiate a comprehensive scientific study on how to restore river hydrology and expand riparian habitat. We need to protect and preserve the wildlife and habitat so the North Star Nature Preserve is forever first and foremost a Nature Preserve.	Neutral	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management, Wetland and Ecological Restoration
We need a total user capacity number, seasonal wildlife closures, and a study of how recreation is impacting wildlife. Thank you for all of your work on the plan.	Neutral	Recreational Use Impact, Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access
It's a nature preserve! The plan does not address capacity. The community has been asking for this for years! It is sad how many friends I know say that they no longer go up there because it has been overrun by too many people (including residents, visitors, and commercial users). This is a tragedy of the commons problem and limiting the number of people per day would solve these issues and give the wildlife a break! We all have provided feedback please take action now.	Negative	Recreation and Conservation Balance, Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management
It is very concerning that management plan does not address the need for capacity number. From the community survey this summer respondents found the following places to be frequently or occasionally over crowded: 80% at the take out, 78% at the put in, 68% at the beach, and 63% on the river. The parking study also showed that the put in and take out are over capacity on weekend days. This is all very clear so please do not ignore these facts. The 6 ppv threshold is arbitrary and would enable much higher levels of use, we experienced higher numbers of people during covid and no one wants number to creep back up to those levels. When the preserve is overwhelmed the experience of quiet, tranquility, and solitude is lost. The hectic parking lot scene makes for a very difficult job for the rangers and naturalists to make educational contacts with visitors. Education is currently the main tool for protecting the preserve and beyond a certain threshold of people these contacts are not made.  A maximum capacity per season, per day and per hour needs to be established. The experience of the preserve would be greatly improved for humans and animals alike if this were created. At the very least this capacity needs to not overwhelm the limited parking, and more importantly this number needs to be in line with the original intent of this area as a Nature Preserve and take into consideration the seasonal nesting and calving needs of the wildlife.  A study of the impacts of high numbers of people has on wildlife especially for riparian obligate and dependent bird species is very important and could inform voluntary nesting and calving closures. Habitat restoration efforts that improve the hydrology and help rewet the sponge of the 30% of wetlands that have been lost are critical especially as the North Star is not just habitat but a wildfire break between the forest and town.	Negative	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, Recreation Access Management, Parking Management
Please make these changes to the management plan, it is very important for us to be in a proactive position and not a Goal 13: Ensure the volume, type, and distribution of recreational and river use remain within a manageable and predictable range, allowing wildlife to adapt and thrive and utilize the river corridor during times with minimal (recreational) disturbance by tracking key indicators and adjusting management strategies as conditions change. ALLOWING WILDLIFE TO ADAPT?? STOP THE GREENWASH B.S. YOU BROKE THE INTENT OF THE PRESERVE, ALLOWED COMMERCIAL USE, HAVE NO LIMIT TO USERS, DID A \$145,000 STUDY TO ASK WHETHER PADDLE BORDERS FELT CROWDED? BUILT MULTI MILLION DOLLAR PARKING LOTS TO ACCOMMODATE HUMAN USE BUT WON'T DO A REAL ECOLOGICAL STUDY TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THE HUMAN USE. YOU HAVE IT BACKWARDS. WELL CRAFTED NEWSPEAK BUT YOUR ACTIONS SHOW YOUR TRUE INTENT: A RECREATIONAL ZONE.  while allowing human presence in limited areas for environmental education, research, respectful recreation, and access to nature. 10,000+ PADDLE BOARDERS A SEASON?  "No amendments or changes to the Management Plan may increase the type or intensity of recreational, commercial, or public use beyond what is specified in the existing Management Plan [of 2000]." FROM THE CONSERVATION EASEMENT	Negative	Founding Intent and Compliance, Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, Management Critique and Concerns

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION: North Star Nature Preserve SHOULD provide long-term protection of biodiversity, natural ecosystem processes, landscape connectivity, and opportunities to connect with nature WHICH DO NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT WILDLIFE SPECIES. Management efforts OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS SHOULD HAVE restoreD natural processes and promoteD ecological resilience in the face of challenges, including climate change, upstream water diversions, and agricultural land use legacies AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Habitat complexity WOULD exist across the property to benefit diverse wildlife species as well as the continued provision of ecosystem services for the Roaring Fork Watershed, including flood protection, hydrological function, wildfire fuel break, and air and water quality, IF PCOST HAD PRIORITIZED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, RATHER THAN SPENDING 1.45 MILLION ON PARKING AND TOURISM IMPROVEMENTS. North Star in its entirety SHOULD BE managed first and foremost for ecological integrity and resilience, BY PROTECTING THE FRAGILE RIPARIAN HABITATS FOR 85% OF THE SPECIES WHO RELY UPON THE RIVER AND WETLANDS FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. Human presence SHOULD BE limited TO areas AND SEASONS OF THE YEAR THAT DO NOT STRESS SPECIES for environmental education, research, AND ACCESS TO NATURE THAT DOES NOT IMPACT THE HABITATS AND SPECIES OF THE RIPARIAN ECOSYSTEM. GOAL 13: THE NORTH STAR IS LEGALLY DEDICATED AS A NATURE PRESERVE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HABITAT AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE. IT SHOULD NT BE MANAGED AS A PARK FOR PEOPLE. PCOST HAS NOT LIMITED RECREATIONAL USE APPROPRIATELY.	Neutral	Recreation and Conservation Balance, Management Critique and Concerns, Wildlife Protection Priorities
Wildlife and habitat are being diminished every day. We need to do everything we can to improve their situation. They shouldn't have to adapt, we should. We have flourished many years here without the stand up paddle board industry. River use should be reduced.	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, River Use Restrictions, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
Your paragraphs under Emphasis on Respectful user behavior continues with proactive peak use strategies on page 58 sadly confirms what many community members expressed in the July Public survey that your primary lens is recreation, recreation and more recreation. That "current daily river-use counts indicate that overall river use is within acceptable limits, and monitoring data indicate that wildlife presence and use of North Star are stable" is totally oblivious with the reality that the North Star Nature Preserve in the past 10 years is no longer a Nature Preserve but has become an overused, over abused recreational water park. And the mere fact that you actually write that the wildlife needs to adapt to human use instead humans adapting to wildlife is heartbreaking, but unfortunately reflected in your current draft. Your draft is insufficient in its actions to restoring the ecology of NSNP and getting it back on track as envisioned in the 2000 Management Plan. Your indicators, thresholds, policies and actions reflect management that says, "Everything at North Star is copacetic" We have more recreational opportunities in this county that anyone could dream of, but we have only one Nature Preserve and that you overwhelmingly heard in the July Public Survey....You now have an opportunity in the 2025 Management Plan to restoring the Crown Jewel of the OST acquisitions with a new vision and proactive, innovative management that protects and preserves the North Star Nature Preserve "first and foremost" as a Nature Preserve. Let's work together to make this happen.	Negative	Founding Intent and Compliance, Wetland and Ecological Restoration, Management Critique and Concerns
The conservation values and desired conditions of the draft management plan are excellent. However, the monitoring activities, policies and management actions will not lead to the desired conditions and they do not align with the conservation values. The monitoring allows ecological conditions to stay as they are rather than requiring an improvement in the wildlife, wetlands and habitat. The actions do not reflect any real effort to restore and improve the ecology. There are no steps to facilitate beavers, to increase the bird population, to bring back the wetlands, etc. The draft allows the same amount of river recreation as there is now, which is well beyond the capacity of the nature preserve. North Star was designated to be for wildlife and the intention of the land donation was to have sustained efforts to restore the land from its agricultural past. None of the intentions have really been fulfilled. Please create a management plan that will bring in scientific experts to improve the ecology so the desired conditions actually come to pass. Make a goal to reduce the number of river users to when river use was modest (eg 2000-2010). Slow down the traffic on Hwy 82 and enforce e-bike rules on the trail so that it is peaceful and safe.	Negative	Wetland and Ecological Restoration, Recreation Access Management
If anything I believe that enhancing the wildlife and habitat since it is a preserve, as opposed to it adapting to recreational activity.	Positive	Wildlife Protection Priorities
We continually see decrease in the natural wildlife due to human expansion. The more we take over the natural environment the more barren the landscape will become of natural wildlife habitats. Many come to this area to enjoy the mutual harmony of the area we live in with the wildlife. When we expand for simple pleasures, we lose what originally have drawn us here without even knowing it. Each time we creep a little at a time to expand, we look back years down the road and question how did we get to this point. Original guidelines were set and if the current direction were proposed when the original plan was developed it most likely would have never passed. Guidelines (guardrails) were originally developed to prevent human encroachment in an extremely valuable natural resource and this should be maintained at all costs.	Negative	Founding Intent and Compliance, Wildlife Protection Priorities
acceptable only if set up to truly favor "Preserve" over recreation. The Preserve is getting trampled.	Negative	Recreation and Conservation Balance
The beaver buildups make it really hard to paddle upstream	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities
The management plan is not sufficiently addressing river overuse. North Star is a Nature Preserve. The goal should not be to just maintain it. It needs to be restored. The Beaver dams are a step in that direction. They must be protected from river users.	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, River Use Restrictions, Wetland and Ecological Restoration
Please consider running a shuttle to bring river users up and down this corridor. The upgrades to the parking in the area have been great, but they still require many users to bring an extra car to run a shuttle, and with parking being limited at Wildwood, most users still can't access the river easily. If a shuttle were in place, users can park at any of the designated parking areas and still have great access to the preserve. This would limit the constant mess at Wildwood and allow for a much more positive user experience.	Negative	Parking Management
Recommend stronger enforcement of dog-leash rules. The first statement is unanswerable because I do not know if those statements are true. If they are proposed, I agree.	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement

I also love running the Roaring Fork River through North Star, but it has become too overrun with humans. I totally support restrictions on human use in order to optimize wildlife, habitat, and ecological flourishing. These places and animals do not get to vote or speak for themselves - we have plenty of places to recreate, let's leave some spaces quiet and undisturbed.	Neutral	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management
Overall support your goals; however, during peak holidays (ex. July 4) enforcement of policies and "wildlife adaptation" may not be realistic.	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement
I think locals who want to come to a training to respect the hours parking and ecosystem get a certificate /license after being educated Tourists can only go with guides and tour groups that are trained	Neutral	Environmental Education Initiatives, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
The Draft plan is insufficient in its actions in restoring the ecology of the North Star Nature Preserve. Indicators, thresholds, policies and actions reflect passive monitoring rather than establishing a set of practices which will restore the ecology to a healthy state. The river is in poor condition and the place is full of invasives. Many animal species are declining or not increasing. The amount of wetland area has not increased. We need a robust and expanding beaver population to bring back the wetlands that the wildlife needs to survive. A comprehensive scientific study, by recognized experts (Colorado has many - CSU, CNHP, Ecometrics, etc) should be undertaken to provide concrete actions on how to restore the hydrology, habitat and wildlife at North Star. Goal 13 is terrible. The amount of river use should be reduced considerably. A study of how the recreation impacts the wildlife needs to be undertaken. Visitors-per-viewscape is a poor choice to identify river overuse. North Star Nature Preserve must be managed in compliance with the purpose, provisions and actions described in its original easement, which clearly established it as a nature preserve and called for robust ecological restoration and minimal passive,peaceful human use. We are not seeing this with past actions and will not see this with the current draft unless modified.	Negative	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, Wetland and Ecological Restoration, River Use Restrictions
Goals should do more than maintain but rather improve and reverse loss of historic wetlands. Wildlife and Habit goals likewise should do more than maintain. Goal 13 should reduce overcrowding and animals in a wildlife preserve should not be expected to "adjust to humans". I think community sentiment from the July survey was dissed. Any plan should prioritize stewardship of nature not human recreation. The 2000 deed od conservation should be honored. The number of river users is excessive and should be limited. Overuse by commercial outfitters is antithetical to community values of protecting and improving Northstar.	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Commercial Recreation Restrictions, Wetland and Ecological Restoration
prioritize local users	Neutral	Local User Prioritization
Limiting access is important, I think that limiting commercial access is more important, I do not think businesses should be allowed more access than individuals in public lands.	Neutral	Local User Prioritization, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
Too recreation oriented. Protection of the wildlife and wetland restoration needs to be in the forefront	Negative	Wetland and Ecological Restoration, Management Critique and Concerns
I like these new goals and hope that Pitkin County Open space adopts these guidelines and acts less in the recreation interests and more in line with riparian resiliency and stewardship of these goals. Last comment is more staff going to be dedicated to help these goals?	Neutral	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, Community and Land Stewardship
stop letting commercial operations use the area	Neutral	Commercial Recreation Restrictions
I do not see the survey as valid. You state your goals but do not provide any information about exactly how you plan to achieve them. I have know this property for many, many years and have watched the degradation since it was made a nature preserve. It is common knowledge that, for one, the overuse of the waterway by commercial and private use has heavily impacted wildlife. If you truly want the community to respond to how you manage the North Star Preserve, you must offer options in the survey, not ask the community to respond to your goals.	Negative	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements
I am not sure if the "voluntary"luse will work. I have seen, many people in large groups on the preserve. If there are limits they may need enforcement and the companies that provide guiding will have to perhaps have permits?  We have been going birding on the preserve and were restricted by moose closures which we honored...others did not.	Negative	User Compliance and Enforcement, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
No commercial operators	Neutral	Commercial Recreation Restrictions
People are the problem. People cannot help themselves in breaking rules of nature for their benefit. How will they be kept from harming the environment?	Negative	User Compliance and Enforcement
if access to recreation is limited in response to ecological policy implementation, then priority for river based recreation should be focused on locally-based, individual users not outfitters and those seeking to profit from recreation. limiting the number and frequency of recreational visitors is fine, but allowing limited numbers to be taken by for-profit users not locals diminishes yet another natural experience that locals once enjoyed quietly and casually. the ability for locals to casually and spontaneously engage with outdoor recreation in our own community is an important local value and experience. permitting systems which require advanced notice and prioritize for-profit users eliminate locals' ability to use the resources when and how they desire. bottom line: prioritize locals recreating spontaneously and responsibly over groups of tourist.	Neutral	Recreation Access Management, Local User Prioritization
As a frequent daily trail user I would love to share my thoughts with someone in person on the trail.	Neutral	Environmental Education Initiatives
On one hand I do not understand why all of this is being debated....the original contract/Northstar position paper and management rules and regulations are very clear....those who are trying out of self-interest and personal monetization should be stopped and told to stand the hell down! Let's get back to and honor the spirit and initial rules and guard rails of the founding documents. Rodney	Neutral	Founding Intent and Compliance, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
Northstar is for public recreation. Any attempt against that is very unfavorable for the long-term.	Neutral	Recreation Access Management
Please help us to work together to maintain this essential wildlife area, using it for research but limiting recreational use to permits and effective oversight.	Neutral	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, User Compliance and Enforcement

Locals treat the river and the environment with respect. It's tourists and the outfitters that are the biggest problem. They should be limited without limiting locals. We also need more parking at wildwood.	Neutral	Local User Prioritization, Parking Management, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
We are guest on this property and should always defer to what is best for the ecosystem and its indigenous inhabitants.	Neutral	Recreation and Conservation Balance
I keep thinking that the people that show up with a lack of the local social and environmental conditions. How can the rules around management access and parking encourages these folks to learn more about our great resources as oppose to turning against us?	Negative	Environmental Education Initiatives
It seems as though the river use itself has gotten a bit out of control and perhaps it would be good to limit usage if possible so that the goals are not compromised by the level of usage of the river	Negative	River Use Restrictions
Excellent work, thank you for a comprehensive plan focussing on the ecosystem needs. Reservation suggestion: on a recent trip to Hawaii (I was fortunate), I experienced the difficulties of accessing state lands. One can get immediate and no-fee access to state parks if one is a resident, proved by drivers license. Otherwise, one must get a reservation, pay a fee. sometimes it was difficult, as cell service did not exist, but too bad, leave and return another day. The state park agents did not budge. Once I got into a remote state park, I was delighted. The resource was extremely well managed, ecosystem offered memorable experiences in the natural world, and crowds were non-existent. I recommend such a reservation system for North Star.	Positive	Recreation Access Management, Local User Prioritization
continue to limit access to North Star during peak weekends and seasons for recreation. Wildlife and biodiversity first!	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management
Nature by nurture Control crowds & unconscious human partying Educate to enforce awareness	Neutral	Environmental Education Initiatives, Recreation Access Management
I believe it important to not severely limit public recreational use. People only want to protect what they love so allowing people to use the river is an important educational tool in itself that should translate to more support to protect the property and wildlife.	Neutral	Recreation Access Management
Limit commercial use - it's too much.	Negative	Commercial Recreation Restrictions
It's not clear what type of limits on recreation and access are under consideration. There are not many beautiful simple floats in Aspen or the RFV and I don't support cutting access to Northstar	Negative	Recreation Access Management
I know this is a challenge to meet all these goals, and I like them all. I am most in support of the land and animals. For people, I am in support of education more than recreation.	Positive	Recreation and Conservation Balance, Wildlife Protection Priorities
It's so sad the vision of Mr. Smith is not being realized. The overuse of the river area by so many people ruins the natural experience. Seeing paragliders drop into a nature preserve is appalling. What is happening to this property should be a red flag to donating land to Pitkin County. The county has not been good stewards of this precious area. The property should be treated as the nature preserve it was meant to be.	Negative	Recreational Use Impact, Management Critique and Concerns, Founding Intent and Compliance
If this land had stayed in the hands of the Nature Conservancy we would not even need to discuss this. We would instead be enjoying the wonderful gift Mr. Smith gave and the glory of the nature he tried to support. It is only because of the gross mismanagement of this land by Pitkin County/ACES that we are here. By ignoring the wishes of the Mr. Smith you've brought this mess onto what should have been a NATURE PRESERVE. The destruction you've unleashed on this very special piece of land is a travesty. Ignoring the wishes of the donor while also ignoring the junk that was approved in the (mis)management plan of the 2000 RMP. Shame on all of you that have done this!!!!	Negative	Community and Land Stewardship, Management Critique and Concerns, Founding Intent and Compliance
It's a wildlife preserve and the Entrance to Aspen from the east. It should not be packed with recreationists.	Neutral	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation
I am in full support of the actions and mitigations necessary to put biodiversity, wildlife protection, and river system protection first and foremost. Recreational use should be a privilege, not a guarantee.	Positive	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management
Still in favor of wildlife first, always. Human use and connection is important, but should always be secondary in my opinion. Education opportunities for humans is key. Showing people how to respect and interact with sensitive ecosystems is a valuable opportunity with a place like N Star.	Positive	Environmental Education Initiatives, Wildlife Protection Priorities
its pretty clear that the initial intent of the gift is not being honored. Any changes must move Northstar back towards being a preserve first - its not a a recreation zone where animal are tolerated. Best practices are only valid within the scope of the gift.	Negative	Founding Intent and Compliance, Wildlife Protection Priorities
get the paddle boards, etc out of the river	Neutral	River Use Restrictions
The volume of daily traffic for stand up paddle boarders MUST be limited.	Neutral	River Use Restrictions
The North Star Preserve is grossly overused by tour operators that ruin the experience of the pristine habitat.	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities,
Wildlife needs a voice!	Neutral	Wildlife Protection Priorities
It would be helpful to have some deterrents in place during the peak usage times and days. Signage, messaging...free	Neutral	Recreation Access Management
North Star Nature Preserve should always be for wildlife first and humans last.	Neutral	Wildlife Protection Priorities
I support strong restriction of group size limits floating on the river, restriction of number of groups floating, noise restriction enforcement, restriction of commercial groups - I think these cause the greatest impacts on the wildlife and environment.	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement, Commercial Recreation Restrictions, Noise and Conduct Management
How do you propose to enforce voluntary group size limits and peak use policies?	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement
This is an example of "push polling" not a valid survey. Why not ask if the previous mgmt plan was actually adhered to by Pitkin County? County residents may overwhelming wish to see North Star preserved for wildlife and the environment but OS&T seems determined to make it a theme park and much more about recreation. Gary Tannenbaum need to stop empire- building and take a more ecologically balanced approach!	Negative	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements, Recreation and Conservation Balance, Founding Intent and Compliance
Y'all have all done such a great job with this land management and this is EXACTLY what we need to fight against climate change or Global Warming! Thank y'all SO much for doing all of this because it was getting out of hand. I used to work for a river guide that did these trips and they were just getting so crowded and definitely doing damage! Lazy rivers are all over the place and we don't need one in North Star, since there is so much biodiversity and so many animals and birds rely on it. Without nature, we have nothing	Positive	Recreational Use Impact, Wildlife Protection Priorities
I think you're gonna find that ANS is getting to be a bigger deal given the "infestation" of local reaches of the Colorado and Roaring Fork rivers. You might consider what decontamination protocol/facilities will be in place at North Star.	Negative	Commercial Recreation Restrictions

I think the emphasis should be on the fact that this place is set aside for the animals and it should be a privilege not a right for people to be there when they are partying and in large groups making a lot of noise. I am absolutely against commercial groups being on the river for the profit of companies. I think that is totally contrary to what this area is for. It is not Disneyland. It is a place for animals to have for their own without the disturbance of people. ideally, I would like to see no commercial groups be allowed on the river. There are plenty of places that aren't preserved for animals for that kind of activity to happen.	Neutral	Commercial Recreation Restrictions, Noise and Conduct Management
I lived on the Roaring Fork river adjacent to North Star in the 1980's and it seems to me there is too much traffic on the river in current day use. This should be monitored and restricted....	Negative	River Use Restrictions
Six people in sight at any point of the day is a excessive pressure on the wildlife pushing them out of this area. People should have to adapt to wildlife. Wildlife should not have to adapt to humans overtaking their preserve. The current number of people on the river is too high for wildlife to thrive. It forces them out.	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Recreation Access Management
Unknown if you can control people who do not follow the rules to preserve our beautiful area.	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement
Conservation and recreation can occur together with thoughtful management. In certain situations, recreation may need to be reduced, minimized, or otherwise managed to promote conservation.	Neutral	Recreation and Conservation Balance
Well done! Regulation of visitor use is necessary.	Positive	User Compliance and Enforcement
Thank you to OST for limiting outfitter licenses and the frequency of their outings. Special thanks to the Rangers and all the great work they do communicating, de-escalating, and advocating for the space.	Positive	User Compliance and Enforcement, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
We need to exclude the "river left" from human access	Negative	Recreation Access Management
Humans are like weeds, and I appreciate your efforts to help reset the balance of disturbance, prioritizing ecological and	Positive	Wetland and Ecological Restoration
Ban the commercial operations.	Neutral	Commercial Recreation Restrictions
I do understand the need/desire properly manage public use of Northstar. I remain concerned that a new management plan will make it much more difficult to float the river, which I greatly enjoy. It is hard to tell the specifics of how use will be regulated based on the info on this questionnaire. (sp?)	Negative	Recreational Use Impact, Scientific Study and Plan Requirements
It is extremely short sighted to put the Aspen tourist industry ahead of needs to preserve such an ecological gem so close to town. I was as part of the organization that helped to preserve this land for ecological reasons many years ago. To think that it is ok to overrun the place with local paddlers, tourists and users now is just plain wrong and completely against the conservation intention that we outlined clearly when this property was purchased many years ago. It needs to be Managed for wildlife enhancement not destruction. All users will appreciate it more if the number of people in the preserve is limited. Thank you for doing the right thing with our dwindling wildlife conservation lands	Negative	Wildlife Protection Priorities, Commercial Recreation Restrictions, Founding Intent and Compliance
I've seen countless people walking across the preserve with their rafts or paddle boards. You must either limit access or increase enforcement. Commercial activity must be severely limited or banned. Large groups are very disruptive, and they will ruin access for those of us who treat the preserve with the respect it deserves.	Negative	User Compliance and Enforcement, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
More focus on goal of quiet and solitude oriented human use. With this as a metric the other desired outcomes are most likely to occur.	Neutral	Recreation Access Management
What regulations pertain to the use of bikes on the trail?	Neutral	Recreational Use Impact
Stronger regulations in groups/commercial use of North Star. Limit group sizes and commercial users must have very limited number of permits	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement, Commercial Recreation Restrictions
Single users or small (2-3) groups should be able to paddleboard early and late to avoid the crowds to enjoy the quietness of the preserve. Large groups should be limited.	Neutral	User Compliance and Enforcement, Recreation Access Management
We are looking forward to an improvement plan that supports your proposed goals.	Positive	No applied theme*
Currently there is a school bus parked on HWY 82 near North Star Preserve. Overnight & long term parking should not be allowed along this corridor that is across from this valuable habitat. Multiple "disposal issues" can damage this precious environment. The bus has been a nuisance all summer & now a permanent sight along the east end of HWY 82.	Negative	Parking Management, Community and Land Stewardship
The biggest risk to the wildlife and habitat is the private homeowners in the corridor who will see this and their proximity as a priority	Negative	Local User Prioritization
The residents of our community should have access to their public lands and not regulated because of private property owners.	Neutral	Local User Prioritization, Recreation Access Management
x	Unknown	No applied theme*
The management plan enables excessive recreational use and is thus insufficient to protect wildlife and ecosystem function	Negative	Recreational Use Impact, Wildlife
Thank you, this all sounds great.	Positive	No applied theme*
The North Star preserve is a great amenity for all of the community and shouldn't be limited by landowners living in the area. It's a great preserve and recreation area. Paddle boarding and recreation along the river corridor should be top priority for the management plan. We co exist with nature on the ski slopes why can't we do that here. There is no other place for this type of recreation within an hour of aspen. Please stop trying to take it from the community for the complaints of the few. Nature should be preserved in this area but so should recreation. If you don't want it here, provide another area where it can happen close to home.	Neutral	Recreation and Conservation Balance, Local User Prioritization
Goal 15: please create a thorough plan to improve the safety and viability of the bike path that follows Hwy 82 for access to Wildwood area in order to promote additional access as an alternative to driving a motor vehicle.	Neutral	Recreational Use Impact
Thank You for the comprehensive management plan update .	Positive	No applied theme*
I can't believe that people are allowed to float through the reserve!	Negative	River Use Restrictions
This didn't provide enough specifics. Are you going to stop the crazy dangerous parking along HWY 82?	Negative	Scientific Study and Plan Requirements,
Boating down the Fork through the preserve should be minimized. Commercial licenses should be eliminated and parking should be limited to reduce #'s. This is a preserve not an amusement park!	Negative	River Use Restrictions, Commercial Recreation Restrictions, Parking
The narrow trail is not compatible with walkers and bikes at the sme time, especially e bikes.	Negative	Recreational Use Impact

## Q5 How do you experience North Star Nature Preserve? Check all that apply.

Answered: 177 Skipped: 23



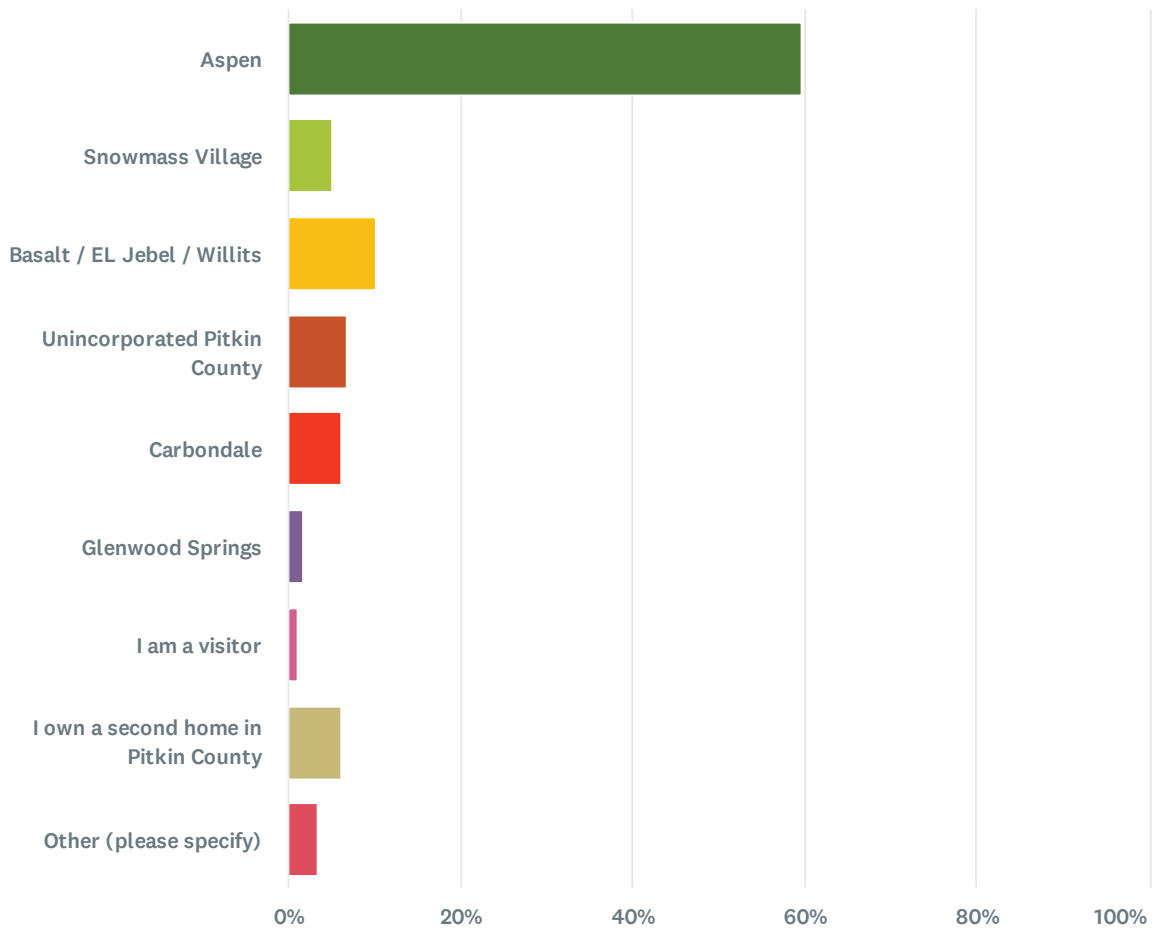
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Floating the river	12.17%	88
<span style="color: lightgreen;">●</span> Using the beach area	8.02%	58
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Paragliding	0.55%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>723</b>

## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan Update

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● East of Aspen resident	6.09%	44
● Walking/running/hiking on the East of Aspen Trail	17.15%	124
● E-biking on the East of Aspen Trail	4.43%	32
● Dog-walking on the East of Aspen Trail	3.73%	27
● Birding or wildlife viewing	12.17%	88
● Nordic skiing	11.62%	84
● Walking on the James H. Smith Interpretive Trail	4.01%	29
● Education program (ACES, OST, Roaring Fork Conservancy)	5.53%	40
● Viewing scenery from Highway 82 Corridor	13.97%	101
● None of the above	0.55%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>723</b>

## Q6 Where do you live?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 22



^ Collapse

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Aspen	59.55%	106
● Snowmass Village	5.06%	9
● Basalt / EL Jebel / Willits	10.11%	18
● Unincorporated Pitkin County	6.74%	12
● Carbondale	6.18%	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>178</b>

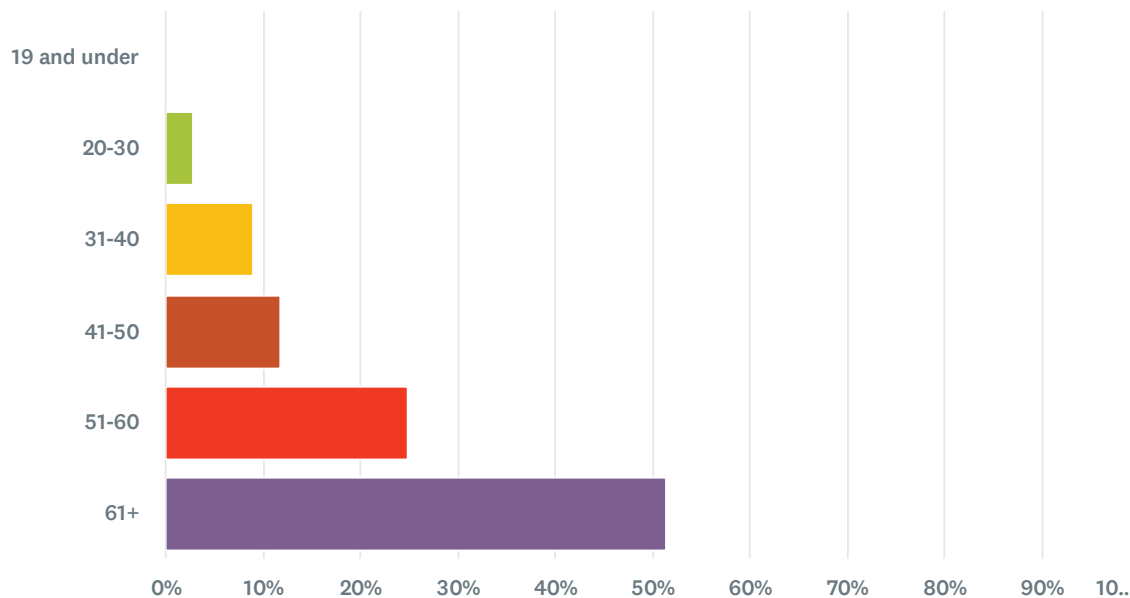
## North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan Update

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Glenwood Springs	1.69%	3
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> I am a visitor	1.12%	2
<span style="color: gold;">●</span> I own a second home in Pitkin County	6.18%	11
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Other (please specify) <a href="#">Show responses</a>	3.37%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>178</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I won two games in the RFV and spend about 40% of the year there. My daughter lives in Basalt. We have friends throughout the valley and adjacent to NSP	2/1/2026 10:27 AM
2	Crystal River Valley	1/20/2026 1:42 PM
3	Old Snowmass (don't forget us!)	1/16/2026 11:23 AM
4	Ohio, Aspen is my second home	1/15/2026 7:56 AM
5	Old Snowmass	1/13/2026 1:29 PM
6	Unincorporated Garfield County	1/12/2026 2:26 PM

## Q7 What is your age?

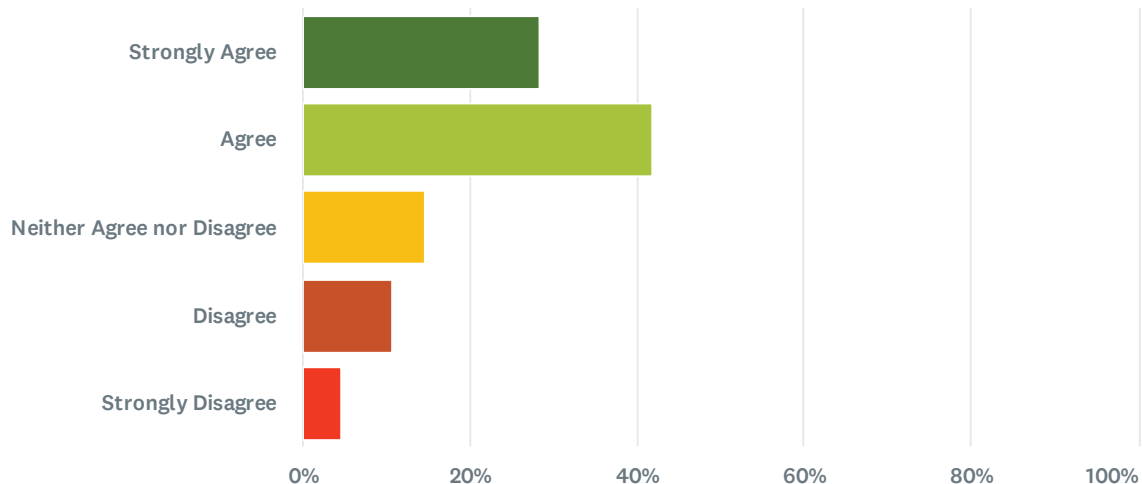
Answered: 177 Skipped: 23



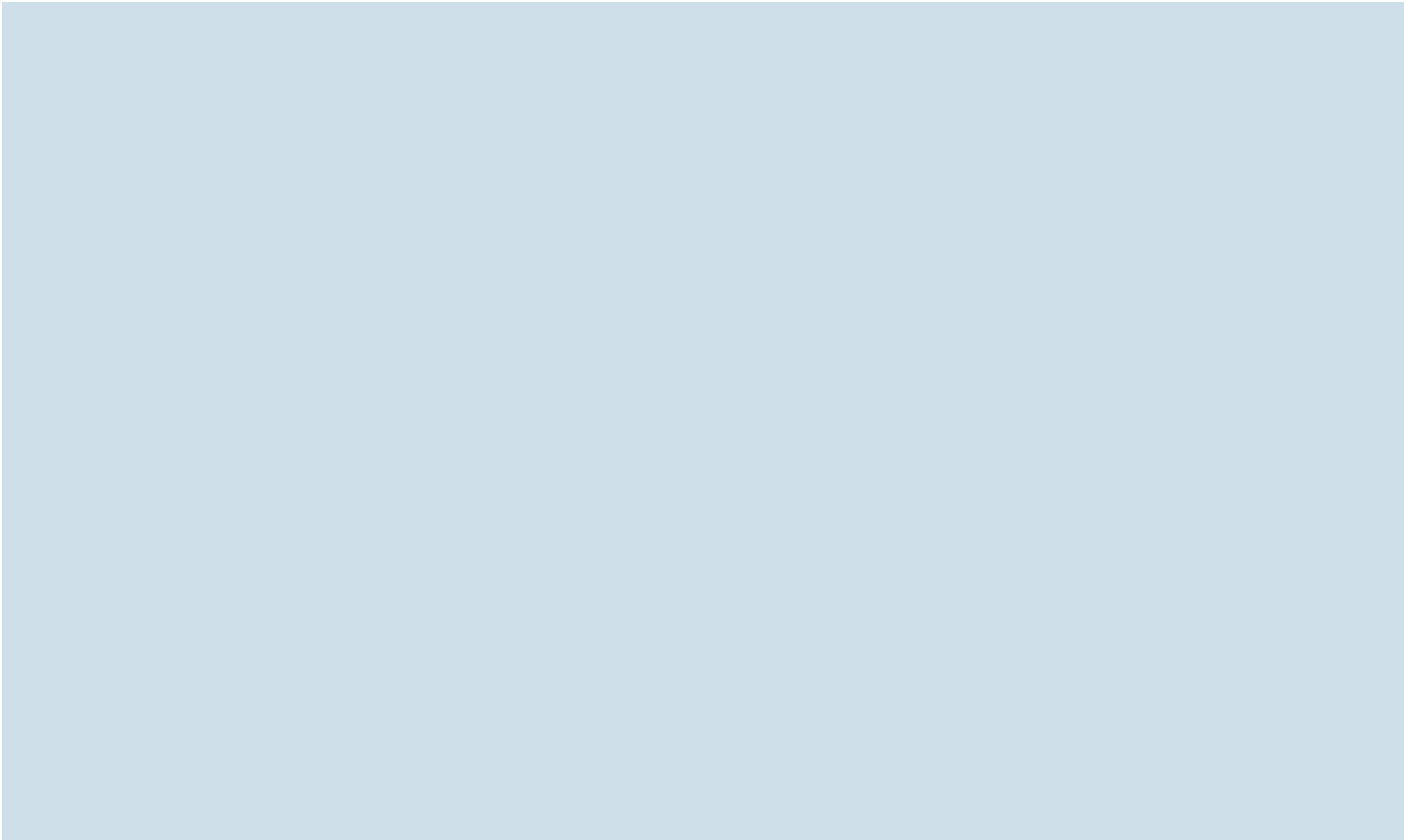
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● 19 and under	0%	0
● 20-30	2.82%	5
● 31-40	9.04%	16
● 41-50	11.86%	21
● 51-60	24.86%	44
● 61+	51.41%	91
<b>Total</b>		<b>177</b>

### Q9 Did you feel like you had the opportunity to provide input and were clear about how your input would be used to draft the plan?

Answered: 177 Skipped: 23



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Strongly Agree	28.25%	50
● Agree	41.81%	74
● Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.69%	26
● Disagree	10.73%	19
● Strongly Disagree	4.52%	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>177</b>



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CITY OF ASPEN