



El Paso County Parks

North District Parks, Open Spaces & Trails

Section 16 Black Forest



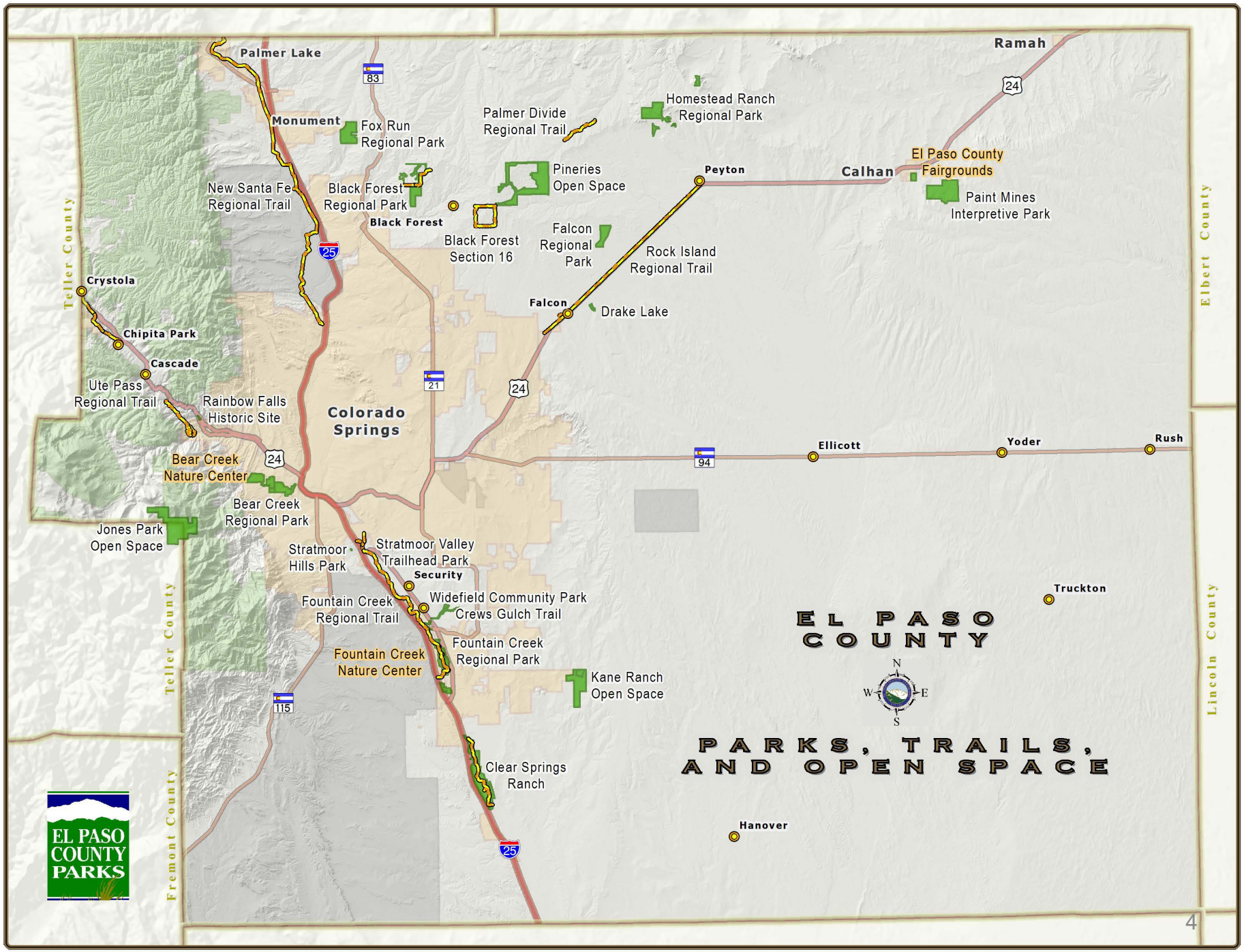
March 8, 2023

County Parks Mission

- Acquiring, developing, maintaining, and preserving regional parks, trails and open space
- Providing responsible resource management for open space lands characterized by unique natural environments
- Providing natural and cultural history interpretation, education, and information services
- Supporting major community events and festivals that celebrate our heritage and culture
- Providing and managing tourism destinations and experiences

County Parks Overview

- 8,000 acres of regional parks / open space
- 130 miles of trails
- Two nationally recognized Nature Centers offering 1,000 programs annually
- Numerous picnic shelters, athletic fields and courts
- 2,000 facility reservations annually involving over 130,000 participants
- 2,500 acres of conservation easements
- County Fairgrounds operations
- Landscape maintenance for various County facilities
- 30,000 volunteer hours annually
- Generates over \$200,000 annually in third party support for operations



PARKS, TRAILS,
AND OPEN SPACE

Black Forest Regional Park

Demo existing tennis courts and construct two new tennis / pickleball courts



Fox Run Regional Park

Complete playground renovation and accessibility improvements



Homestead Ranch Regional Park

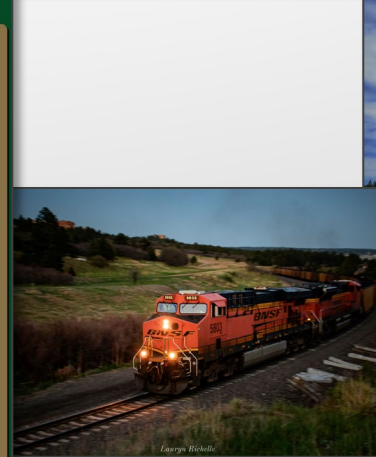
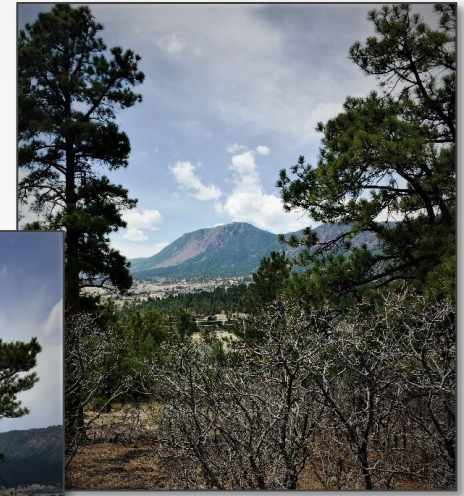
Master Plan completed in 2022

Fire mitigation and trail work in 2023



Santa Fe Open Space

- 2015: El Paso County Parks purchased 65 acres of former ranchland on the sunny southern slopes of Ben Lomand Mountain, southeast of the Town of Palmer Lake.
- 2021: El Paso County Parks completed the Santa Fe Open Space Master Plan.
- 2021-2022: Phase I Improvement Project
- April 2022: Grand Opening!



Black Forest – Section 16

t Slash Pile

School In the Woods

Black Forest
Section 16

Burgess Rd

Burgess Rd

Burgess Rd

Burgess Rd

Burge

Shoup Rd

Shoup Rd

Shoup Rd

Shoup Rd

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Vollmer Rd

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BACKGROUND

- The previous lease was signed by El Paso County and expired on December 8, 2022
- The State Land Board manages an endowment of assets for the financial support of Colorado Public Schools
- The State Land Board has the discretion to acquire or dispose of land when the reinvestment of the proceeds can provide a greater benefit to the trust
- The land is not publicly accessible without this lease
- State Land Board guideline from 2014:
 - Annual public open space leases should be no less than 5% of the property's fair market value
 - Term is typically no more than 5 years

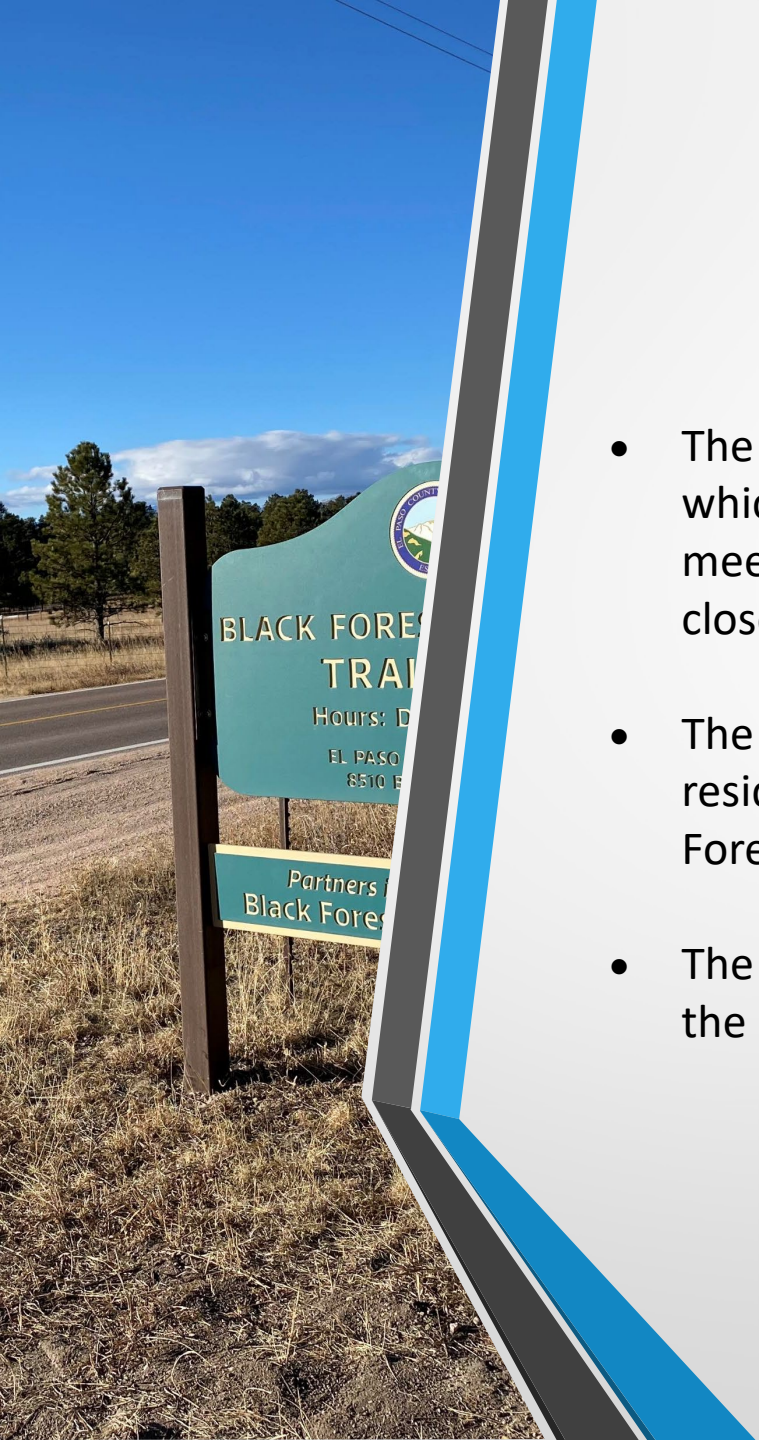
Current Situation

- Community Services, Environmental Services and the County Attorneys actively negotiated this lease starting in 2020.
- Current lease - \$21,825.00 followed by an annual 2.5% escalator
 - 2.5% of the property's fair market value
 - Term 10 years
- Current lease is between El Paso County and the State Land Board.
- Out of more than 7,000 active leases, the State Land Board only issued eight open space leases similar to the Black Forest Section 16 lease.



Current Situation

- The trail is well loved by countless residents and visitors which is evident from the response after our June PAB meeting and the fact that the parking lot is often full or close to full.
- The Slash-Mulch site is used by hundreds of Black Forest residents and is a valuable tool for fire mitigation in Black Forest and El Paso County.
- The County has submitted a first-right-of-refusal letter to the State Land Board.



Current Situation



Next Steps

Phase 1

Establish Stakeholder Group

Collaborative, Supportive, Invested

- El Paso County
- District 20 Representative
- Slash Mulch Representative
- Land Conservancy Organizations
- Trail User Organizations
- Other?



Next Steps

Phase 2 - Stakeholders

- Identify Problems and Opportunities
- Determine Objectives
- Develop & Evaluate Alternatives
- Develop & Establish Support Partners



Questions - Discussion

