Axton Ranch Denver Mountain Park Donation Update

June 24, 2021
Agenda & Instructions

Agenda

• Presentation: Property & Donation Overview; Denver Mountain Parks; Proposed Use & Protections; Next Steps

• Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Instructions

• Meeting will be recorded and posted to http://denvergov.org/parkprojects

• Participants will be muted during the presentation and unmuted to ask questions during the Q&A

• Enter questions during the presentation using the chat function

• During the Q&A participants will be unmuted to ask questions using the raise hand function

• Closed captioning

• Phone instructions
Property & Donation Overview

• 450 acres in Gilpin and Jefferson Counties

• Mixed conifer and aspen stands, meadows, ponds, Beaver Creek, and a portion of a historic trail constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps

• Will become a part of a contiguous assemblage of over 14,000 acres of protected and conserved lands
Property & Donation Overview

- Denver City Council approved the donation agreement with the Axton Family on March 1, 2021

- Anticipated closing date is Fall 2021

- Real estate due diligence including compliance with applicable planning, zoning, and land use reviews in Jefferson and Gilpin Counties
Property & Donation Overview

Why Denver?

- Alvin Axton, a Denver native and North High School graduate, began assembling the ranch as it exists today in 1954 with his father, Guy Axton, spanning 4 generations.

- Denver residents’ approval of the Parks Legacy Fund in Fall 2018.

- Over a century of conserving and stewarding public lands through its Mountain Parks system.
Denver Mountain Parks

- Established in 1912
- 14,000+ acres in Jefferson, Clear Creek, Douglas, and Grand Counties
- ~10,000 acres in Jefferson County
- 22 parks totaling ~8,000 acres
- 24 conservation areas totaling ~6,000 acres
Denver Mountain Parks

- Mountain Parks have developed facilities where resource protection is balanced with recreational use such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, picnicking and wildlife viewing.

- Conservation Areas are largely undeveloped parcels valued for the protection of scenic views and natural resources, with potential for limited recreation and educational programming.
Proposed Use

• Conservation and resource protection is the primary use (forest, water, wildlife, scenic & cultural)

• Emphasis on forest health: wildlife habitat; water and air quality; resilience to fire, insects and diseases

• Inventory and assessment of natural (e.g., forest, water) and built (e.g., trail) resources and features
Proposed Use

- Initially closed to the general public with authorized use only
- Authorized use includes Denver staff and outdoor recreational, educational and volunteer programs sponsored by Denver Parks & Recreation (DPR) and/or partner organizations

Echo Lake Park
Proposed Protections

Deed Restrictions

• Protect the property as a park and open space; limit development; limit public use to passive recreation and environmental education; and designate it as a Denver park (Search Axton Ranch at https://denver.legistar.com/)

Designation

• By Denver City Charter (§ 2.4.5), all designated Denver parks require a majority of Denver voters to approve any potential sale or lease

DPR Rules & Regulations

• http://denvergov.org/parkrules
Proposed Protections

Fire Restrictions

The following actions and forms of fire are prohibited in Denver Mountain Parks:

• Building, maintaining, attending or using any fire or recreational campfire, except a recreational fire within a permanently constructed fire grate in a developed park, campground, or picnic area;

• Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area that is barren or cleared of all combustible material;

• Open burning including ground fires;

• Use or possession of fireworks; and

• All other outdoor spark or flame producing activities

Mirror Jefferson County Open Space restrictions and are in addition to any restrictions or bans in the county of jurisdiction
Proposed Protections

Mountain Parks Stewardship

- Denver Staff and Rangers
- Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
- Local Fire Protection Districts
- Partner Organizations
- Public
Next Steps

• Application to Jefferson County for Location & Extent review and public process later this summer

• Changes in use and the development of any permanent facilities (e.g., parking area; trailhead) to support that change in use would be subject to applicable planning, zoning, and land use reviews and public processes in Jefferson and Gilpin Counties

• Public engagement for any future DPR planning process

• For more information and updates please visit: http://denvergov.org/parkprojects
Questions & Answers