



RAFTER J OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

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## Project Overview

Rafter J is comprised of roughly 340 acres, of which 168 acres is commonly owned by the residents through the Home Owner's Association (Open Space). The Open Space is made up of small parcels with playgrounds, multi use pathways, riparian areas, grasslands, irrigation ditches and Flat Creek. These spaces are loosely connected by an informal, user created trail system. The physical and mental health of residents of Rafter J is enhanced by the Open Space. Depending on the season, residents can constantly be found in the open space on tubes, bikes, paddle boards, foot or skis. This is the area in Rafter J where neighbors get to know each other.

The Open Space is centered on the Flat Creek riparian corridor, which provides cover, water and shelter in a condensed high value habitat. It is home to many species of wildlife including migratory birds, large game animals, cutthroat trout and the occasional predator such as a mountain lion or bear.

Improvements in the Open Space have been undertaken when repair was needed or when a group of residents was passionate enough about an improvement to propose it to the board and implement (the play structure by the south east mailboxes). Trails have been laid out by repeated foot traffic with infrastructure being installed by residents (with or without HOA approval or knowledge). This has resulted in an incomplete picture of the trail system or how it impacts the lives of residents, wildlife and the natural resources present in Rafter J.

## Project Goals and Methodology

The goal of this phase of the project was to find out the exact location of all the user created trails in Rafter J and to analyze their connectivity, accessibility, function and physical relationship to private property and natural resources. Trails were mapped using GPS\* and overlaid onto wetland and vegetative cover maps. Field observation was used during the mapping process to identify use, locations of overuse, wildlife presence, and environmental damage caused by the trail proximity.

This study will provide the HOA board with information needed for future planning efforts of the trail system that balance the needs of wildlife and residents in a careful manner that protects natural resources. A neighborhood trail system should connect neighbors, provide easy recreation access close to home and inspire stewardship.

\*Note that GPS can have an error factor of 9'.

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TRAILS MAPPING AND ANALYSIS • PAGE 2



## Definitions

A **two-track** is a road that has been driven enough times to form a passage, but has not been graded. Surface for the tire tracks are typically dirt or rock with a vegetation hump between the two tracks.

**Pathways** are asphalt surfaced sidewalks for pedestrian or bike use.

**Main trails** are 12-36" wide single track paths of compacted earth or grass. These are the major trails used for recreation.

**Access trails** are 12-24" wide single track paths of compacted earth or grass. Many are redundant and are used simply to connect trails to other trails.

**Social trails** are user created foot paths that short cut main trails. These are often put in to avoid muddy or wet areas. They cause erosion, fragment habitat and damage vegetation.

**Recreational programming** entails activities that focus around an installed feature such as a skills bike track or a playground.

## Overview of Existing Conditions

There are three types of pedestrian infrastructure in the Open Space: asphalt pathways, two tracks and trails. This study focuses on trails, however, most of the trails are accessed via the pathways or two tracks so they are mapped and referenced. Main trails are shown in thick dashed brown with access trails shown in thin dashed brown on the adjacent map. Two tracks are solid gray and pathways are solid light gray.

Trails are concentrated in the Flat Creek corridor and along the perimeter of the property of Rafter J. Trail surface is uneven with mostly flat grades (1-4%) and sporadic stretches of steeper grade. There are occasional signs of vegetation removal to implement the trail, but is mostly limited to light pruning. There are four benches on concrete pads, all located within the Flat Creek corridor. Invasive species are thriving throughout the Open Space. Thistle, knapweed, tall buttercup and cheatgrass were all observed throughout the mapping process.

The trails in the Flat Creek Corridor have a wild character to them with often tight and narrow singletrack and uneven, occasionally muddy or wet surfaces. Roughly half of the trails travel through dense riparian shrub areas, and half travel through riparian grasslands. Corners in shrub areas are often blind. In some locations the trail is less than 18" wide and is directly adjacent to Flat Creek. The trails have outstanding views of the Snake River Range, Southern Tetons, the Wilson Front, Munger Mountain and Flat Creek. There are five foot bridges across irrigation ditches within the Flat Creek corridor.

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TRAILS MAP • PAGE 3



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One (near the osprey nest) has been recently washed away or removed. Encroachment on the Open Space is limited to a few footbridges and mown paths from private property to trail on the north end of the Flat Creek corridor.

The Flat Creek Trails intrude on private property in two locations:

- The north two track intrudes on the northeast corners of Lots 201 & 200
- A significant portion of NE Flat Creek trail intrudes on Lot 330 B

Other than the south perimeter trail, the perimeter trails appear less used than the Flat Creek Corridor trails. They vary greatly in surface consistency and size. The south perimeter is generally wide with a firm stable surface; trails along the west end consist of little more than a path through the grass utilizing a discarded two track.

## West Perimeter Trail

The perimeter trails typically travel through grassland adjacent to the fenceline of Rafter J. Occasional riparian or wet areas are crossed, usually over one of 4 footbridges. Views are predominantly of the Snake River Range, Teton Range and surrounding ranch land.

## Footbridge across irrigation ditch

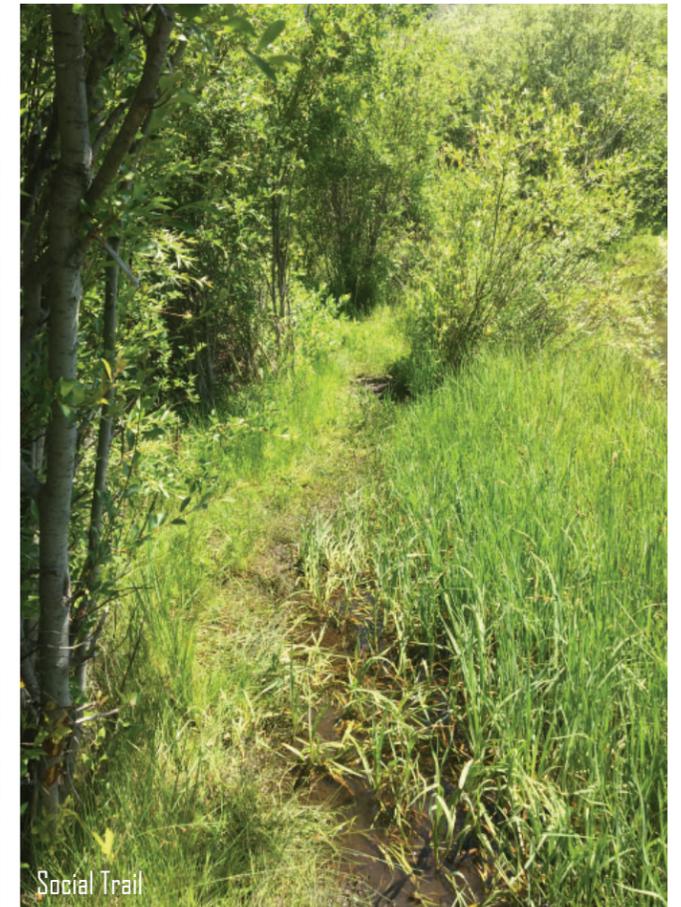
Private property is more dominant along the perimeter trails than adjacent to Flat Creek and there is more of a sense of intrusion. Encroachment on the Open Space by private property owners is common here. Typical encroachments include mowing a path from private property to the trail and the installation of small foot bridges across ditches. More concerning encroachments are expanding landscaping into the Open Space and vegetation removal in the Open Space.



Typical SE Flat Creek Corridor trail through riparian grassland



Example of damaged shrubs along West Perimeter Trail



Social Trail

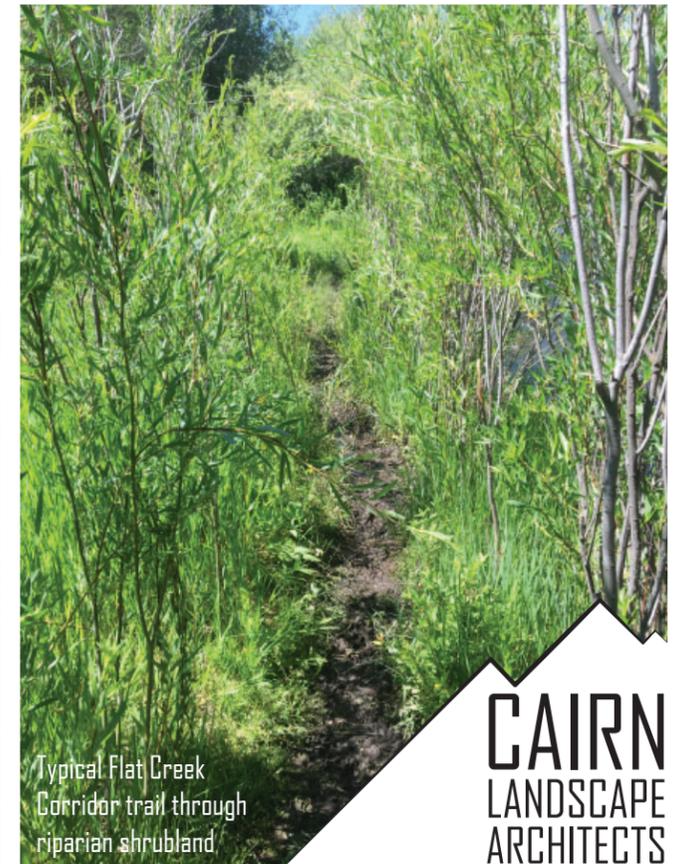


Footbridge across Irrigation Ditch

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West Perimeter Trail



Typical Flat Creek Corridor trail through riparian shrubland

## Vegetative Cover

The Flat Creek Corridor Trails travel through riparian shrub and riparian grasslands, while the Perimeter Trails generally bisect upland grassland. Much of the Flat Creek Corridor has been designated as a wetland and a detailed mapping is likely to turn up more. A 30-50' setback from designated wetlands and water ways will likely be applied to any development that requires permitting.

The Flat Creek Corridor is likely the highest value area to wildlife including the migratory birds, raptors, coyotes, and moose that are present in the area. A detailed wildlife study was not part of the scope of this mapping. The NE corner of the Open Space is inside of Critical Elk Range.

## Flood Risk

The trail system, apart from portions of the North and South Perimeter Trails, is entirely within the flood plain of Flat Creek. Many of the trails experience frequent flooding or muddiness. The southeast portion of the Flat Creek Corridor Trails is frequently flooded during the spring and summer months.

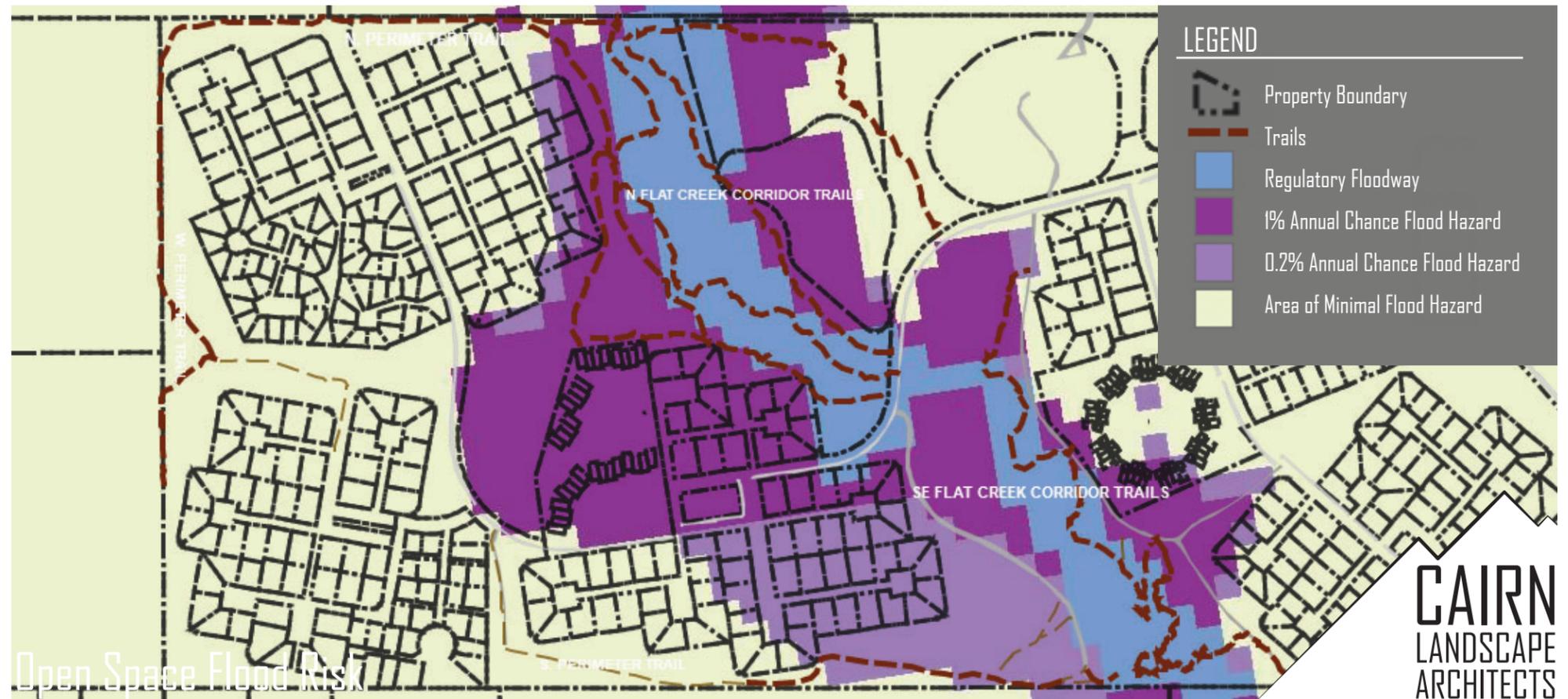


Open Space Vegetative Cover



Flooding on the SE Flat Creek Corridor Trail

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Open Space Flood Risk

## Description and Observations

The South East Flat Creek trails are spurs off of the southeast two track that begins in the SE 40 Townhomes cul-de-sac and terminates at Big Trails Drive. The “trailhead” to this access road requires a walk through the SE 40 Town Homes access road. The southern half of these trails travels through wetland and riparian shrubland, while the northern portion raises in elevation and is more upland. The southern segment is accessed via a series of small bridges into a dense willow forest. This section of the trail is frequently muddy and occasionally submerged due to flooding from Flat Creek and the irrigation ditches. Native willows were clearly pruned by users to make this trail more passable. The trail is almost at water level in some places, and in a few locations has fallen into Flat Creek. Portions of this trail are uneven with a cross slope towards Flat Creek.

The Creek experience is the main highlight of this trail, with minimal peak views. This trail mostly winds through wetland and dense shrubs and contains a true sense of “adventure in our backyard”. This segment of trail is most suitable for hikers who are prepared to get their feet muddy or wet. Private property is not crossed or visible from this trail.

The northern portion of the trail gains elevation into a mixture of upland grassland and riparian grassland along the Flat Creek bank. The user is generally 2-3’ above the water level. Trail along raised bank of Flat Creek

Trail surface here consists of compacted earth and grass. Flat Creek’s bank is eroding in a few locations. This should only be a concern in areas where the erosion threatens infrastructure such as access roads or homes. Moose, raptors and coyote are frequently seen in this area. Views are incredible with the combination of faraway peak and proximal waterways.

## Osprey Nest

The trail continues north following a riverine intermittent streambed that winds past the osprey’s nest. The surrounding ecology here is a mixture of willow shrubland and upland Grassland. Migrant songbirds move into this area in early spring and are present throughout the spring, summer and fall. The trail ends in the access road a few feet south of the intersection with Big Trails.

## Connectivity

For short-to medium-length outings, this area is well connected with several varying loops possible. For those desiring longer outings, the only connection to other trails is via the pathway along Big Trails. Other than the “trailhead” by the SE 40, each trail returns to either a two track or a pathway, allowing

pedestrians to access the trail with minimal vehicle encounters. Cars backing out of driveways along the access road to the SE “trailhead” could present a hazard to pedestrians.

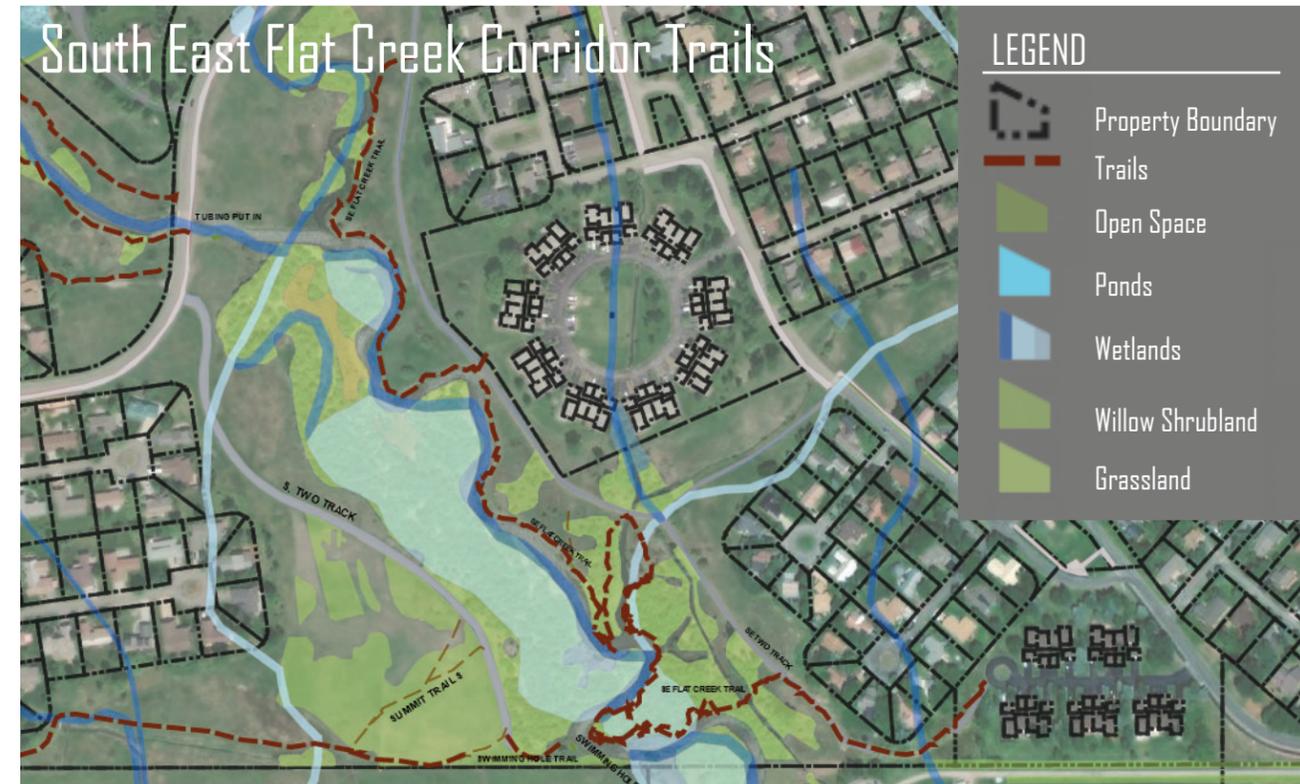
The trails here are most suitable for running, walking or fishing although some users do mountain bike here. The two track is a pleasant bike ride that serves as a shortcut to different parts of the neighborhood.

## Accessibility

With the exception of the Southeast trail, the major barriers to accessibility in this section are a lack of resting points, uneven surfaces, tight trails and no accessible means to access Flat Creek. The single bench is accessed via an uneven trail, roughly 800’ from the nearest pathway. The Southeast trail is an inappropriate candidate for accessibility due to it being frequently muddy or wet and the dense shrub land it passes through. The two track is the easiest method to enter this area of the Open Space, but it does not provide direct access to Flat Creek.

## Function

Muddy trails are common in the southern portion of these trails and this has led to additional vegetation damage as users attempt to avoid mud by taking alternate paths. Social trails are common. Installing short segments of boardwalk or bridges in key areas could prevent additional vegetation damage. Social trails should be reclaimed and restored. The overall layout is excellent for walking as a wide variety of views and experiences are presented to the user with excellent access to Flat Creek.



## Description and Observations

These trails are accessed either directly off of Big Trails or off of the two track to the north of Big Trails. A user wishing to link these trails to other areas must cross Big Trails at an unsigned juncture.

The east side of Flat Creek trail begins to the north of the bridge. This trail is mostly grass and does not see enough traffic to turn this into compacted earth. The trail travels east of Flat Creek terminating in the north perimeter fence line. A small grassy spur continues east and into Lot 330B north of the Habitat Restoration Pond.

The highlight of this trail are views into the pond north of the church, as the trail quickly swings south, passing through a dense shrubland and tall grasses eventually exiting in a meadow just north of Big Trails.

The trails along the west side of Flat Creek split off from the two track at a juncture with a bench and two bridges. One trail follows along the west bank of Flat Creek while the other continues to follow an abandoned two track closer to the homes to the west.

The eastern trail winds through riparian shrubland ending in the Tubing Put-In and North Perimeter trail. There are signs of vegetation removal to accommodate the trail. The trail has shifted locations to avoid perennially muddy / wet areas.

There is a small grass path around the Habitat Restoration Area. No signs were observed of users entering the Habitat Restoration Area. Signs indicating the Habitat Restoration Area are illegible or destroyed.

## Connectivity

Connectivity issues exist in this area. The East Flat Creek trail is accessed via the north side of Big Trails, which has no pathway or shoulder and crosses into private property. This trail is faint and somewhat unpleasant in mid summer due to dense vegetation. The two track crosses private property on two lots here. An easement or physical remedy should be sought. The connection between the two tracks on either side of Big Trails presents a safety issue and crossing indicators / traffic calming mechanisms should be considered.

The loop around the Habitat Restoration Area is somewhat redundant and provides no unique experiences. The west portion could be abandoned and the southern portion transformed into a spur trail that connects to the west perimeter trails past the Ponds.

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## Accessibility

The two track here provides a reasonable accessible experience. It is a firm, flat and stable surface that leads to a bench which is directly adjacent to Flat Creek and provides mountain and water views. An additional resting area between Big Trails and this bench could be considered as the bench is over 1/4 of a mile from Big Trails.

## Function

Similar to the SE Flat Creek Corridor trails, the trails here provide a wide variety of experiences and views for walkers and easy water access for tubers or anglers. Social trails are common here and additional small bridges over known muddy areas could reduce the creation of new ones. Cycling value here is minor as the two track ends in trails that would be difficult to cycle.





Bench on west bank of Flat Creek



Grass path around Habitat Area



Views into the Habitat Area

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Flat Creek access at north fence line

## Description and Observation

The North Perimeter Trail travels westward from the Tubing Put In along the fence line on the north side of an irrigation ditch. Surface is a mix of grass and compacted earth, generally traveling through upland grassland. A few foot bridges have been installed across irrigation ditches. Occasional signs of vegetation removal are present where the trail crosses into shrubs. This trail does not appear to cross private property, although a survey would be needed to verify that it does not trespass onto Lot 299.

The trail joins the West Perimeter Trail and swings south to follow the west fenceline\*. Many shrubs have been damaged or removed along this section of trail. The trail crosses a short section of riparian shrub land and a small footbridge to meet up with a two track that begins at the north end of Barb Wire Drive. There is a small grassy foot path that continues south on the perimeter. Evidence of use is minimal along this path and it likely only is used by the homeowners who live south of the West Perimeter Trail.

This trail segment has excellent views of the surrounding ranches, Tetons, and Snake River Range. The ranchlands and ponds invite unique experiences.

## Connectivity

Accessing this trail from the south requires use of both asphalt pathways and paved roads, an undesirable user experience. The West Perimeter Trail currently dead ends in no where, ending what could be an excellent perimeter loop. The North Perimeter Trail connects well to access points in the neighborhood and North Flat Creek Corridor Trail. A connection between West Perimeter Trail and the southern spur of the Habitat Restoration Area (through the Ponds) would enable a greater variety of outings.

## Accessibility

This trail is inaccessible. The majority of the footbridges on the North Perimeter Trail require a 2-8" step up. This trail contains no resting points and uneven surfaces westward from the Tubing Put In.

## Function

The encroachment of private property on this trail has degraded its overall value as a walking trail. While peak views are abundant and beautiful, the close proximity of private landscaping makes the user feel that they are trespassing. Shrub removal in the Open Space (presumably to enhance views from private property) enhances this feeling. The majority of this trail is typically dry and footbridges have been located in key locations to allow easy passage over wet or muddy areas. The surface of this trail and step ups to use bridges make this trail better suited for walking than cycling.

\*Note that the GPS track indicates that that the trail crosses the property line, it was field verified that it does not.

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Termination of West Perimeter Trail

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Geese on the pond



Livestock on Valley Springs Ranch

The south perimeter trail is accessed via a two track south of Big Trails. This two track heads due south before turning east past the Sledding Hill transitioning into a 3' wide trail. The trail travels along the fenceline, crossing over a footbridge with a guardrail before widening and terminating in Big Trails. A short spur leads to the Swimming Hole and recently completed bank restoration project.

This trail traverses introduced grassland occasionally crossing or traveling along the edge of riparian areas. Views are of Munger Mountain, the Wilson front and the southern ranch lands. The western portion of this trail travels close to private property, but there is not the same sense of intrusion as along the western perimeter. Access to the Sledding Hill and Swimming Hole make this a frequently traveled trail in all seasons.

### Connectivity

The two track in this section provides cycling and walking access to important recreational features in the Open Space: the Sledding Hill and the Swimming Hole. The northern segment of the two track is quite bumpy and a replacement material could be considered. It is unfortunate that the S. Perimeter trail does not link with the W. Perimeter trail. Winter access to the Sledding Hill and beyond could be improved through the introduction of a groomed track. The introduced grasslands and presence of cycling access make this area a candidate for other programmed recreational features. A non-road connection to the SE Flat Creek Corridor Trails would provide more options for users to vary their outings.

### Accessibility

This general area has a high potential to improve its accessibility. Major existing barriers are the bumpy surface on the northern end of the two track and the lack of resting areas. The Swimming Hole bench is currently 1,135 linear feet from Big Trails. The S. Perimeter trail is relatively wide, with a firm and stable surface except just west of the Swimming Hole. Enhancing the accessibility of this area, when coupled with the current conditions north of Big Trails, could create a variety of accessible experiences within a short area.

### Function

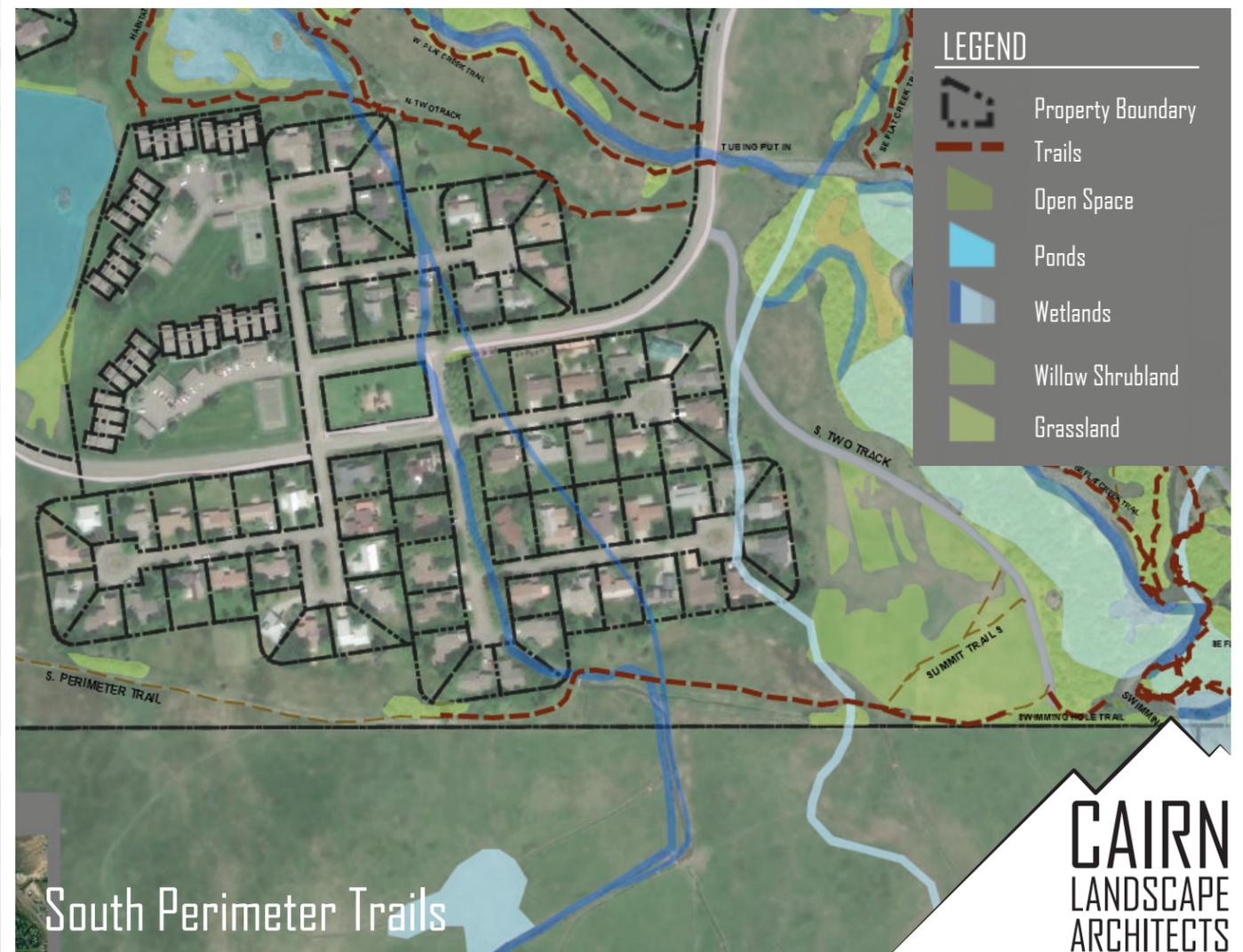
As a recreational access point, this section of trail functions well providing swimming / tubing access in Flat Creek and sledding access in the winter. Winter access could be improved to enhance access to the sledding hill and other areas of the neighborhood via grooming a portion of the path on Big Trails and the Southeast Two Track. A groomed track is the easiest snow covered surface to walk on.



Climbing the sledding hill in winter



Swimming Hole Bench



South Perimeter Trails

## Accessibility

Uneven surfaces and lack of resting points (benches) are the major barriers to providing a diversity of accessible experiences. Given that this is a relatively small private neighborhood trail system, restrooms and parking areas were excluded from this analysis as they are likely inappropriate.

The two tracks are prime candidates for accessible improvements given that they are already man made, relatively flat and access key existing destinations along Flat Creek. Concentrating the accessible improvements on the two tracks would create a variety of accessible experiences in a central location outside of the wilder Flat Creek Corridor, while still providing multiple access points to Flat Creek. Currently the trail system does not have an access point that allows a user of different abilities to get into the water. This should be explored.

Minor surface improvements such as replacing the cobbly portion of the south two track with a compacted earth / gravel would enable easier wheeled access. A few rustic benches could be added along the two tracks to provide resting areas along the way to the existing Flat Creek access points. Benches could be installed on compacted flat earth or in grass rather than concrete to keep a wilder, more ranch like character.

Winter accessibility and connectivity could be improved through the implementation of a grooming program in key areas such as the SE Flat Creek Corridor Two Track or the S. Perimeter trail.

## Preserving Character

Throughout the planning of any improvements, preserving the unique character of the Rafter J Open Space must be a priority. The Open Space is not a park and it shouldn't become one. It's wild, untamed nature and proximity to wildlife is what makes it such a treasured place to residents. Any improvements need to be appropriate to the context of Rafter J as a former working ranch and a present wildlife corridor in northwest Wyoming.

“Native” materials that are consistent with the ranching history in Rafter J should be used for all accessibility improvements, i.e. compacted earth, grass paths or crushed gravel. No materials should be selected for the Open Space that take away from the wild character, specifically asphalt and concrete. Moose in the SE Flat Creek Corridor

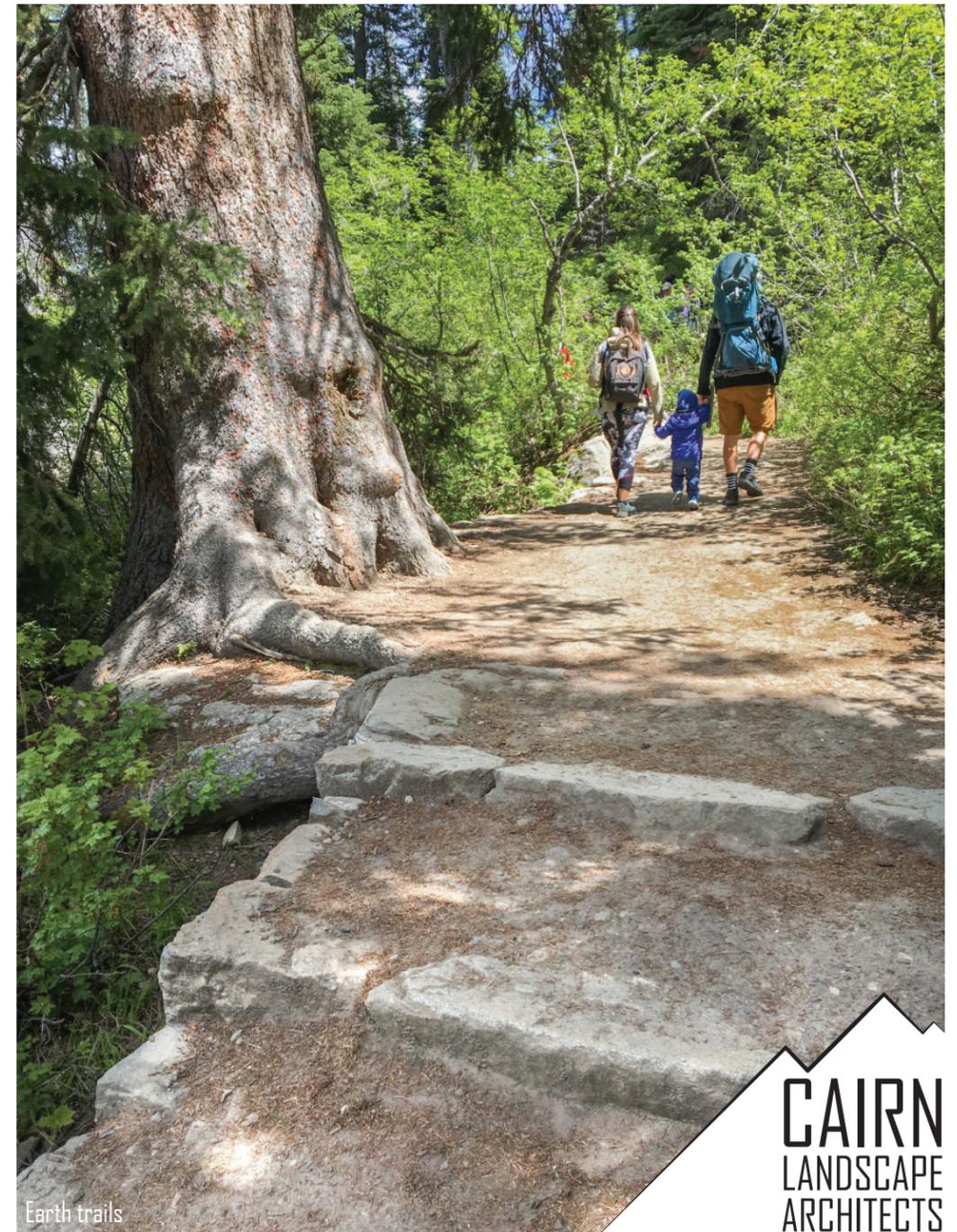
## Wildlife / Habitat

The majority of the trails are concentrated within the Flat Creek corridor / flood plain, which is likely the highest value wildlife habitat. A wildlife study is outside of the scope of this study, however undertaking one should be

considered, given the importance of the Flat Creek Corridor as a connection between the Valley Springs Ranch and the valuable winter habitat in South Park. Improvements in the Flat Creek Corridor should be mainly limited to efforts that would stop the additional creation of social trails and limit the further fragmentation of habitat. Closing access to trails in this area is likely to be unpopular, impossible for the HOA to enforce (fences are likely to deter more wildlife than humans) and detrimental to the goal of inspiring stewardship. Education and providing set trails that avoid muddy areas or have small foot bridges over muddy areas is likely to be the best course to limit additional vegetation damage.

Small boardwalks could connect over muddy areas which would eliminate the need for users to walk on mature vegetation. Redundant trail spurs could be reclaimed.

Other improvements such as fixing any erosion along Flat Creek should be undertaken in a manner that improves habitat. Invasive species are thriving in the Open Space and the existing invasive weed management program should be re-evaluated.



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## Connectivity

Making longer trail loops requires the use of an asphalt pathway or road, which detracts from the wilderness experience. Connecting existing trail groupings with small segments of trail would enable the user to limit the use of a road or pathway and complete larger loops entirely on trail. This could also limit the creation of new social trails and direct users away from valuable habitat such as the Habitat Restoration Area or the built wetland on lot 330B. Where trails cross Big Trails or other roads, visual indicators or traffic calming measures should be considered.

Adams Canyon and Tract 3A Parcel

While the main purpose of this study has been the trails within Rafter J, there is an opportunity to link the Rafter J trails to Friends of Pathways proposed Wilson to Adams trail connector on the east side of Highway 89 via the existing cattle tunnel east of Legacy Lodge. A short section of singletrack could link to this off of the Rafter J pathway. Providing residents with car-free access to the mountain trails would transform the Rafter J trail system into a world class one.

Trail encroachment on private property is not common. Throughout the whole trail system, the trail only trespasses onto three private lots.

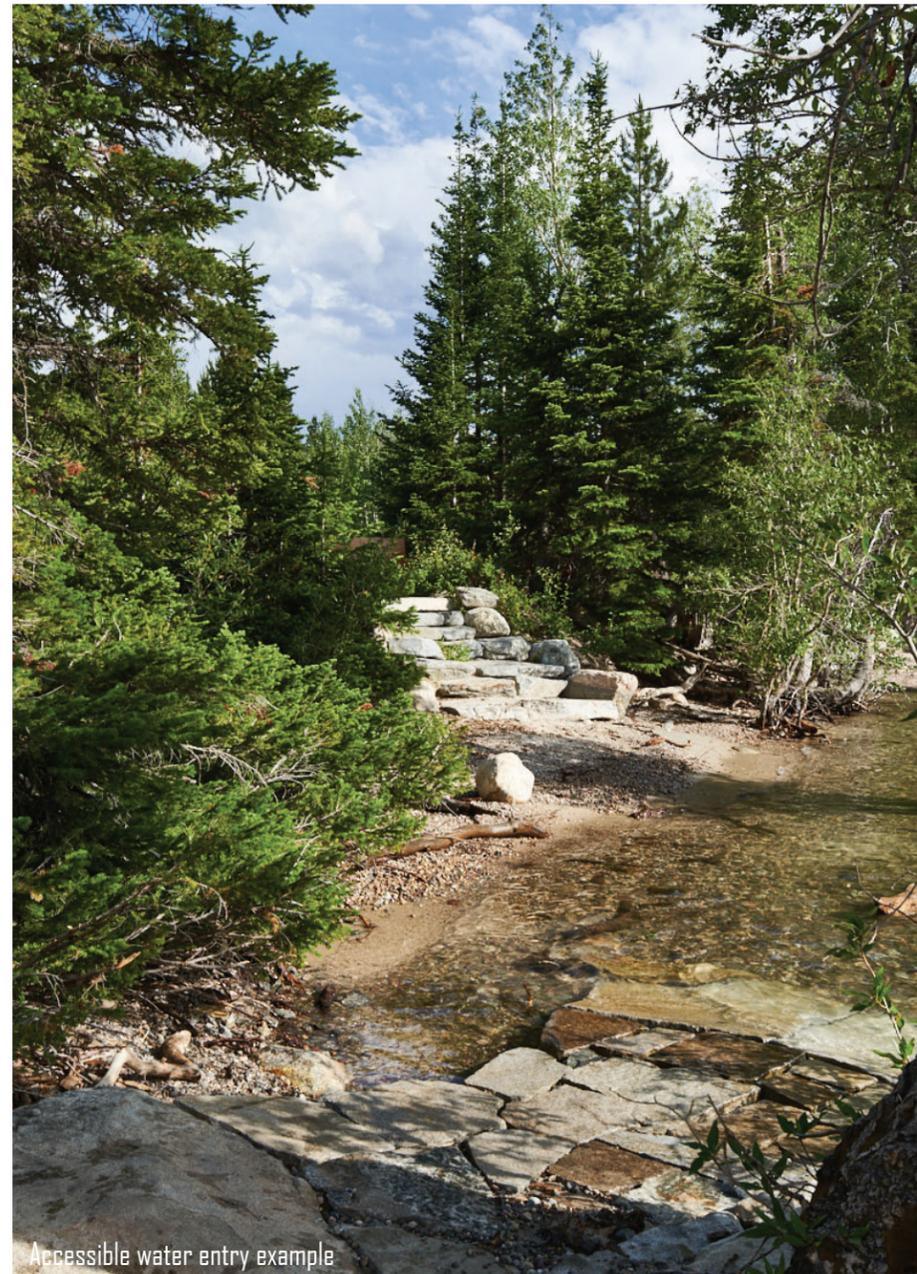
Individuals expanding their private landscaping onto the Open Space is common. Small footbridges and mown paths to access the Open Space do not degrade the Open Space / Trails experience and should be allowed / ignored. However, extending private landscaping into the Open Space (in some cases, doubling one's lot size) and removing vegetation does degrade the Open Space / Trails experience, damages the ecosystem and blocks potential trail connections between areas of trails. It also takes a piece of the property that is owned by all of the HOA members and makes it private.

## Function

Without a resident survey having been completed, it's not possible to get a complete picture of the trail's function at this time. For those that do not need accessible trails, the trails appear to provide excellent opportunity and a variety of experiences for walking, fishing, swimming, Flat Creek access and some cycling. No true mountain biking opportunities are provided, however the addition of a connection to trails across Highway 89 could resolve that.

The creation of social trails appears to be linked to avoiding muddy or wet areas. Functionality could be improved and user damage limited through the addition of boardwalks or small bridges across muddy or perennially wet areas.

Programmed recreation is not offered within the Open Space, which is appropriate given the wild character and important habitat. Having a wild area to explore is important for residents of all ages. The vacant mailbox parcels are prime locations outside of the wild areas that could be reviewed for additional recreational programming if the resident survey reveals a desire. Other than the two playgrounds, these areas are under utilized and various ideas have been discussed that would be appropriate. Small investments could improve these areas and potentially reduce overall maintenance costs. Other areas that could be studied for greater programming are the introduced grasslands near the Sledding Hill or Lot 332. The addition of a winter grooming program along the two tracks could help provide more recreation opportunities with minimal infringement on wild character or habitat.

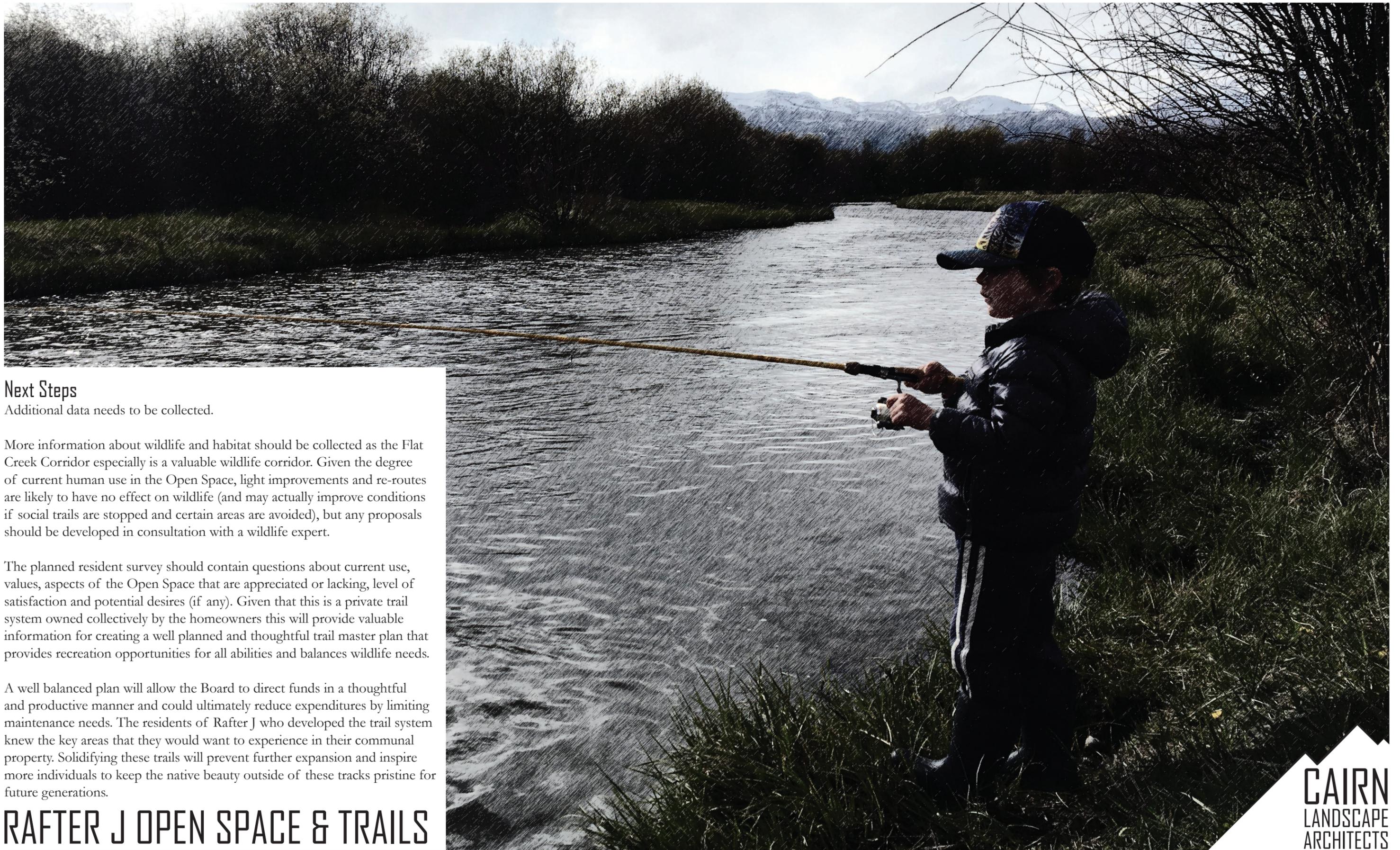


Accessible water entry example



Invasive species





## Next Steps

Additional data needs to be collected.

More information about wildlife and habitat should be collected as the Flat Creek Corridor especially is a valuable wildlife corridor. Given the degree of current human use in the Open Space, light improvements and re-routes are likely to have no effect on wildlife (and may actually improve conditions if social trails are stopped and certain areas are avoided), but any proposals should be developed in consultation with a wildlife expert.

The planned resident survey should contain questions about current use, values, aspects of the Open Space that are appreciated or lacking, level of satisfaction and potential desires (if any). Given that this is a private trail system owned collectively by the homeowners this will provide valuable information for creating a well planned and thoughtful trail master plan that provides recreation opportunities for all abilities and balances wildlife needs.

A well balanced plan will allow the Board to direct funds in a thoughtful and productive manner and could ultimately reduce expenditures by limiting maintenance needs. The residents of Rafter J who developed the trail system knew the key areas that they would want to experience in their communal property. Solidifying these trails will prevent further expansion and inspire more individuals to keep the native beauty outside of these tracks pristine for future generations.

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## Survey Results

In a survey made available to Rafter J residents, 173 households responded in a one-month period. The survey questions attempted to illuminate reasons for use or lack thereof of the shared open space and trails throughout Rafter J, as well as the overarching values and desires of residents for these spaces.

Rafter J Ranch is an enticing neighborhood in which to live. Residents enjoy a plethora of outdoor opportunities within their immediate vicinity. The trails and open space enhance residents' quality of life; they provide both social opportunities and solitude. The majority of residents who responded to the survey use trails multiple times each week, with the greatest number of those frequenting the trails or water access near Flat Creek south of Big Trails. Walking, with and without dogs, is the most likely use of the trails, regardless of season. Wildlife viewing is a prominent reason for trail use as well.

Because most trails were created out of necessity rather than planned as an entire network, their communal use meets with several hurdles. Dogs, personal agility, and maintenance (or lack thereof) impede many from utilizing the trails and open space. Other issues that trail users site include vegetation (overgrowth and weeds), lack of wayfinding/delineation, seasonally wet conditions, wetland degradation, irregular trail surfaces and materials, and a need for more benches. Residents are particularly concerned with dog feces, weed control, Flat Creek water quality, and ensuring the trails and open space remain for the use of Rafter J residents only. Homeowner encroachment into adjacent open space also warrants attention.

Residents have a variety of ideas to enhance the trails and open space in Rafter J. Winter is limited to the same uses as the summer months, but many respondents expressed the reasoning for that is lack of trail grooming. Desired winter uses included cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and walking on groomed trails along with the potential for ice skating in the community open space. Proposed changes to summertime use of the trails and open space include a perimeter trail, trail connectors, tennis courts, soccer fields, a golf course, erosion control, picnic tables and benches (destinations along the trail system), a pump track for kids, a free little library, bike trails, a connector to Wilson and Adams Canyon, a community garden, and additional trash cans and mutt mitt stations. Wildlife protection and habitat enhancement are year-round expectations for many of the residents.

### Most Requested Improvements per Survey

1. Consistent and reliable trail surfaces
2. Access/protection in seasonally wet areas
3. Weed management
4. Perimeter trail network
5. Trail connections
6. Groomed winter trails
7. Benches
8. Picnic tables
9. Additional trash receptacles
10. Wayfinding signage

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"We enjoy having access to the trails so we can observe birds and animals. Last winter we observed a mink on the north Flat Creek Trail and frequently we see moose. We have a dog so we are very disappointed when we run across others who do not pick up poop or who allow their dogs to chase the ducks or geese."

"continuing to look at...overall picture of existing trails and how it could be shaped into a better system that meets human and natural resource needs"

## "... you always get to see something interesting"

"The open space should be proactively planned and managed and cautiously improved to enhance wildlife and the quality of life in Rafter J. Balancing the protection of wildlife habitat while accommodating walking/running/fishing is the right paradigm."

"Trails need to be better maintained. There is no maintenance of trails at all that we are aware of."

"Decent. But this is our own neighborhood and would be incredible to expand the network system so we can enjoy all the common space in the neighborhood. Rafter J is awesome, better trail network will only make that better."

"Yes, we love these trails and use them frequently. They are a huge part of why we love living here."

"Yes, the rustic nature and quiet draw me to the the trails. I can see birds of prey doing what they do and exercise my dogs without too many encounters with people. If I want a more social experience and more accessible path I can go to the bike path. Which I do at times."

"These trail add significant quality of life for my family. When expressing my appreciation for living in Rafter J to friends the 1st thing out of my mouth is these spaces. These shared spaces that every member of this community should get to enjoy. I do feel a concern for flat creek water quality and think we should hold a high standard of our community to ensure our impact isn't affecting it; ie dog waste, lawn treatments etc."

"Develop some kind of overall vision statement about how we want to treat/protect/develop these areas."

"Would be awesome to have a longer connected running loop. I am always stringing together lots of different sections. A clear running loop around the perimeter would be great."

"With a bit of investment, it seems we could create a nice network of trails throughout the neighborhood with a variety of ability/access levels while also minimizing the impact on the natural open space - animal and plant habitat."

"I would like to continue to improve our parks and develops more community features; ski trails, basketball courts, ice rink, fish habitat development, stream bank stabilization, bike/pump park. So much potential."

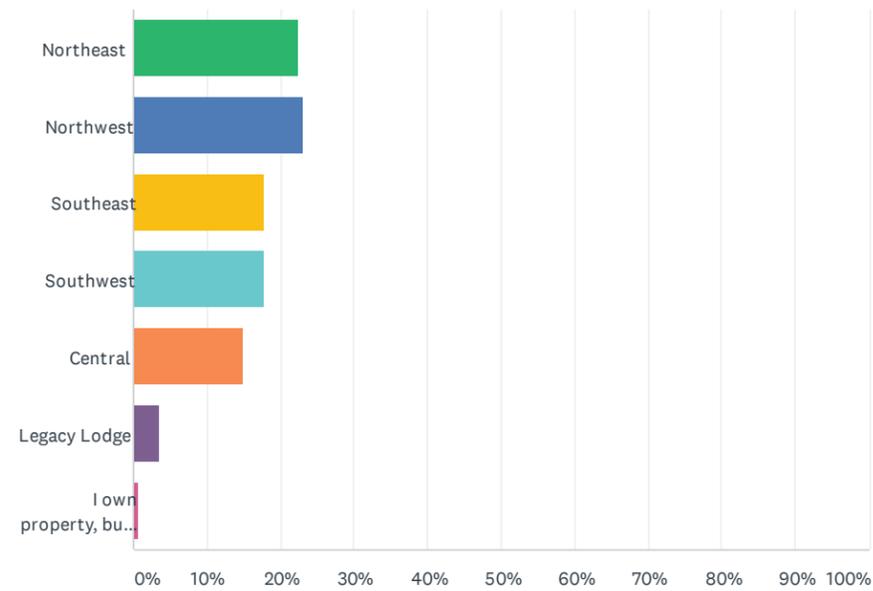
"I use the trails 365 days a year, all weather, day and night. It's a great benefit of living in Rafter J. I am glad you are looking to make some improvements."

"Rafter J has a great opportunity to make itself a model for other subdivisions in terms of balancing wildlife and human needs and providing opportunities for all ages and abilities to enjoy its pathways and open spaces."

## "A "map" of all the possibilities"

### Q1 What part of Rafter J do you live in?

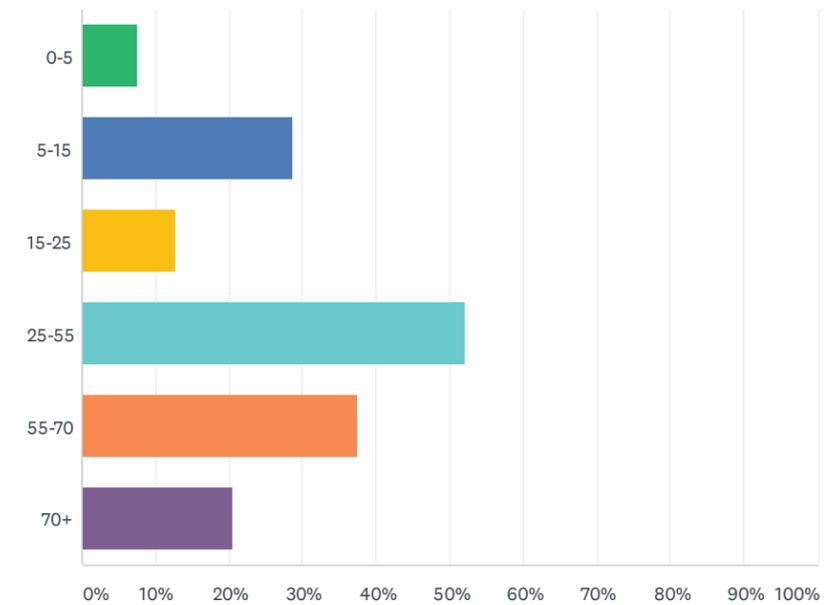
Answered: 169 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Northeast	22.49% 38
Northwest	23.08% 39
Southeast	17.75% 30
Southwest	17.75% 30
Central	14.79% 25
Legacy Lodge	3.55% 6
I own property, but do not currently live in Rafter J	0.59% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>

### Q2 What age groups are in your house hold (select all that apply)?

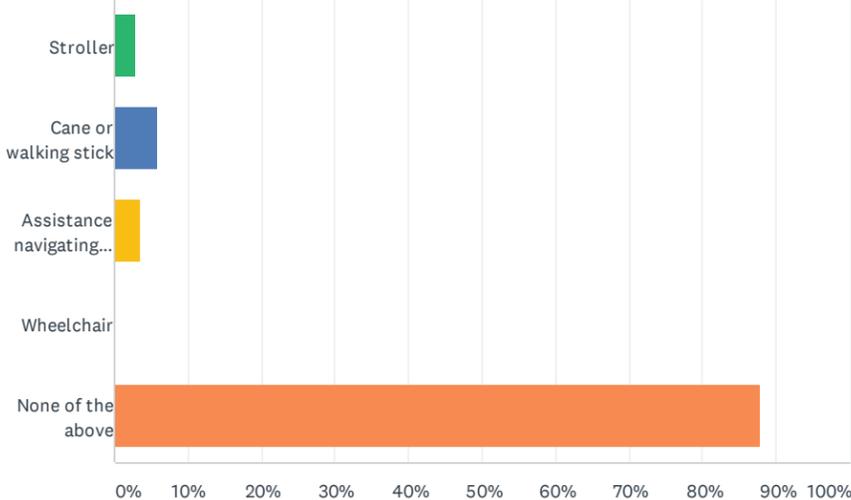
Answered: 171 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0-5	7.60% 13
5-15	28.65% 49
15-25	12.87% 22
25-55	52.05% 89
55-70	37.43% 64
70+	20.47% 35
<b>Total Respondents: 171</b>	

Q3 Do you, or any of the people in your household, require any of the following to access the Open Space (select all that apply)?

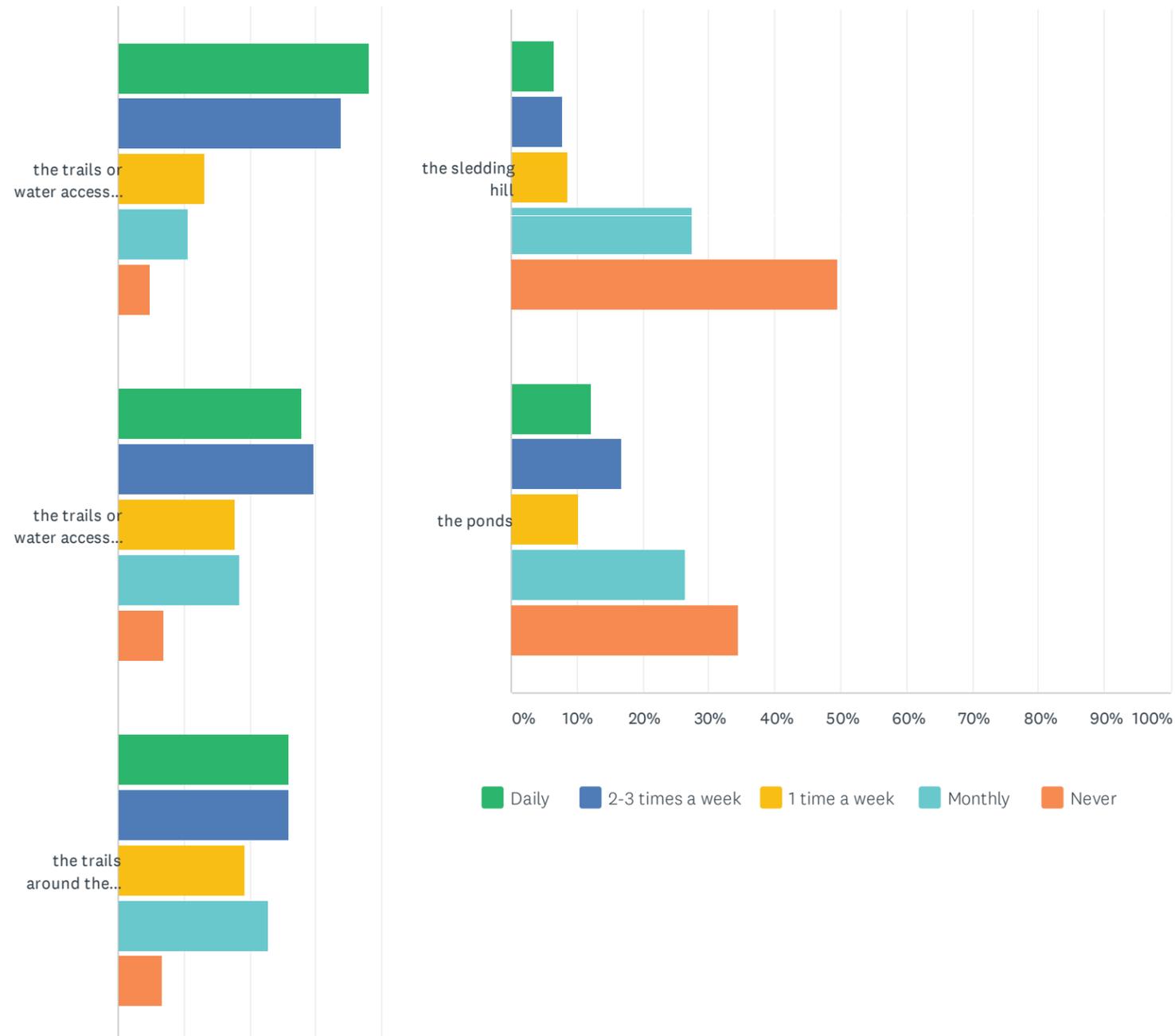
Answered: 172 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Stroller	2.91%	5
Cane or walking stick	5.81%	10
Assistance navigating uneven ground	3.49%	6
Wheelchair	0.00%	0
None of the above	87.79%	151
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>172</b>

## Q4 How often does your household use the following sections of the Rafter J Open Space?

Answered: 172 Skipped: 0



	DAILY	2-3 TIMES A WEEK	1 TIME A WEEK	MONTHLY	NEVER	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
the trails or water access near Flat Creek south of Big Trails	38.10% 64	33.93% 57	13.10% 22	10.71% 18	4.76% 8	168
the trails or water access near Flat Creek north of Big Trails	27.85% 44	29.75% 47	17.72% 28	18.35% 29	6.96% 11	158
the trails around the perimeter	25.90% 43	25.90% 43	19.28% 32	22.89% 38	6.63% 11	166
the sledding hill	6.54% 10	7.84% 12	8.50% 13	27.45% 42	49.67% 76	153
the ponds	12.18% 19	16.67% 26	10.26% 16	26.28% 41	34.62% 54	156

## Q5 In the summer, how often does your household use the trails for the following?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 1

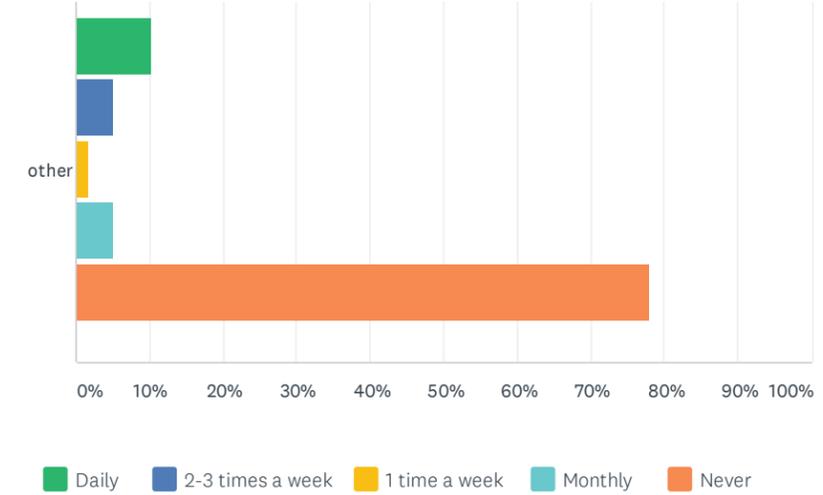
■ Daily
 ■ 2-3 times a week
 ■ 1 time a week
 ■ Monthly
 ■ Never



	DAILY	2-3 TIMES A WEEK	1 TIME A WEEK	MONTHLY	NEVER	TOTAL
walking	53.33% 88	30.30% 50	7.88% 13	6.06% 10	2.42% 4	165
dog walking	51.32% 78	13.82% 21	0.66% 1	1.97% 3	32.24% 49	152
running	5.76% 8	16.55% 23	15.83% 22	6.47% 9	55.40% 77	139
biking	11.33% 17	34.00% 51	20.00% 30	8.67% 13	26.00% 39	150
fishing	1.45% 2	2.90% 4	7.25% 10	19.57% 27	68.84% 95	138
tubing	1.41% 2	10.56% 15	16.90% 24	24.65% 35	46.48% 66	142
bird / wildlife watching	30.97% 48	17.42% 27	8.39% 13	16.77% 26	26.45% 41	155
Other:	13.46% 7	11.54% 6	5.77% 3	7.69% 4	61.54% 32	52

## Q6 In the winter, how often does your household use the trails for the following?

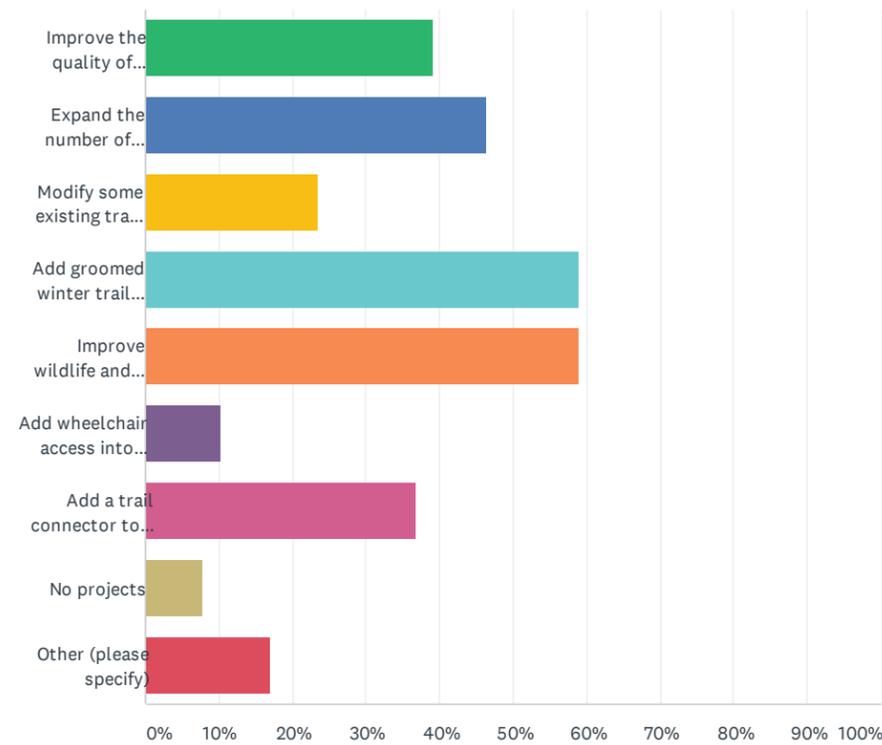
Answered: 167 Skipped: 5



	DAILY	2-3 TIMES A WEEK	1 TIME A WEEK	MONTHLY	NEVER	TOTAL
walking	37.74% 60	23.27% 37	20.13% 32	10.69% 17	8.18% 13	159
dog walking	45.39% 69	12.50% 19	4.61% 7	1.32% 2	36.18% 55	152
running	5.80% 8	7.25% 10	6.52% 9	10.87% 15	69.57% 96	138
biking	3.68% 5	1.47% 2	5.15% 7	8.82% 12	80.88% 110	136
skiing	2.07% 3	15.17% 22	15.86% 23	24.83% 36	42.07% 61	145
snowshoeing	1.47% 2	2.94% 4	8.09% 11	16.18% 22	71.32% 97	136
sledding	0.74% 1	3.70% 5	15.56% 21	20.00% 27	60.00% 81	135
bird / wildlife watching	21.92% 32	12.33% 18	10.96% 16	17.12% 25	37.67% 55	146
other	10.17% 6	5.08% 3	1.69% 1	5.08% 3	77.97% 46	59

Q16 If the HOA were to direct funds to specific projects in the Open Space, how would you like to see the funds used? (Select all that apply)

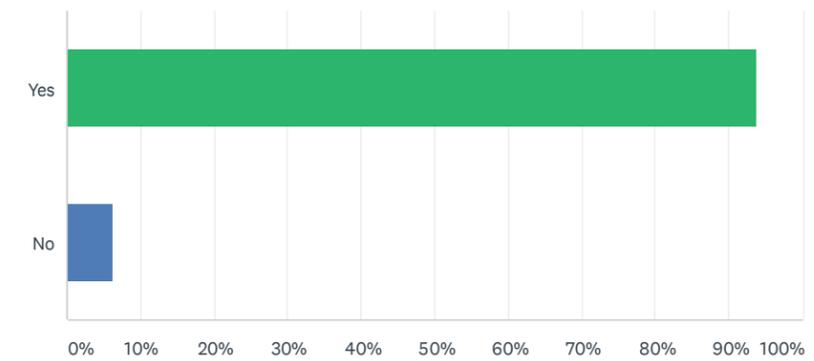
Answered: 166 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Improve the quality of existing trails	39.16% 65
Expand the number of trails to allow more loops	46.39% 77
Modify some existing trails to enable easier access by differently abled individuals	23.49% 39
Add groomed winter trails for walking, cross country skiing and/or snowshoeing	59.04% 98
Improve wildlife and bird habitat, protect water quality in Flat Creek and combat invasive species	59.04% 98
Add wheelchair access into Flat Creek	10.24% 17
Add a trail connector to the Adams / Wilson Canyon trails	36.75% 61
No projects	7.83% 13
Other (please specify)	16.87% 28
Total Respondents: 166	

Q19 Due to the high value to wildlife of the Flat Creek Corridor, do you agree we need to consider the needs of wildlife as we recreate in the Rafter J Open Space?

Answered: 161 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.79% 151
No	6.21% 10
TOTAL	161