

Casper Mountain

Resource Management Plan







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## Background and Introduction

KLJ Engineering, Kay-Linn Enterprises, Applied Trails Research, and Single Track Trails have collaborated to bring the Natrona County Parks Department a comprehensive Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Casper Mountain. The Plan involves an inventory of the Natrona County recreational assets on the Mountain and recommendations on steps that can be taken to enhance trails, campgrounds, picnic areas and other destinations to make Casper Mountain an even better recreational asset for the community and visitors to the area.

Casper Mountain has long been a popular place to recreate for residents of the area and visitors to central Wyoming. The importance of convenient access to recreation from a health and wellness standpoint, as well as the economic benefit of attracting businesses and professionals who value recreation as a lifestyle choice is well recognized. The economic impact of drawing athletes and enthusiasts from around the country, if not the world, to enjoy what Casper Mountain has to offer is significant.

## Approach

Discussions were held with County representatives and stakeholders on the need for the study and the scope. The extent to which the plan focuses on upgrades and expansion as opposed to maintenance was addressed. Early in the process a listing of the users and facilities was developed to ensure that the consultants achieve a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted aspect of recreation on Casper Mountain.



The inventory phase of the plan provided a detailed summary of the Natrona County recreational facilities on the Mountain and how they are used. The Inventory covers campgrounds, picnic and other day use areas, and trails. The information gathered on these facilities includes:

- Campgrounds (Archery Range, Beartrap, Deer Haven, Elkhorn Springs, Skunk Hollow, Tower Hill), covering the number of sites and characteristics including access, general slope and drainage, restrooms, shelters, trailheads, trash receptacles, signage, barriers, vegetation/screening, and fences.
- Picnic and Day-use (Beartrap, Archery Range, Crimson Dawn, Ponderosa Park, Rotary Park, Trails Center)



- Past plans and past planning efforts
- Events and users
- Tables, shelters, playgrounds, bridges, buildings, potable water, restrooms, trailheads, trash receptacles, and signage
- Trails (Nordic skiing, biathlon, mountain bike, fat bike, running/hiking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, sled dogs/skijoring, equestrian, and ATV)
- Extent, characteristics, general condition of trails
- Vision and existing plans
- Ownership (county, state/federal, private, organizations)
- Single or shared use
- Parking and trailheads
- Signage
- Connectivity



Casper Mountain is a big part of the recreational fabric of central Wyoming. The consultant's assessment of the multiple facilities covers their condition, strengths and limitations. The review of strengths and limitations identified challenges in the areas of:

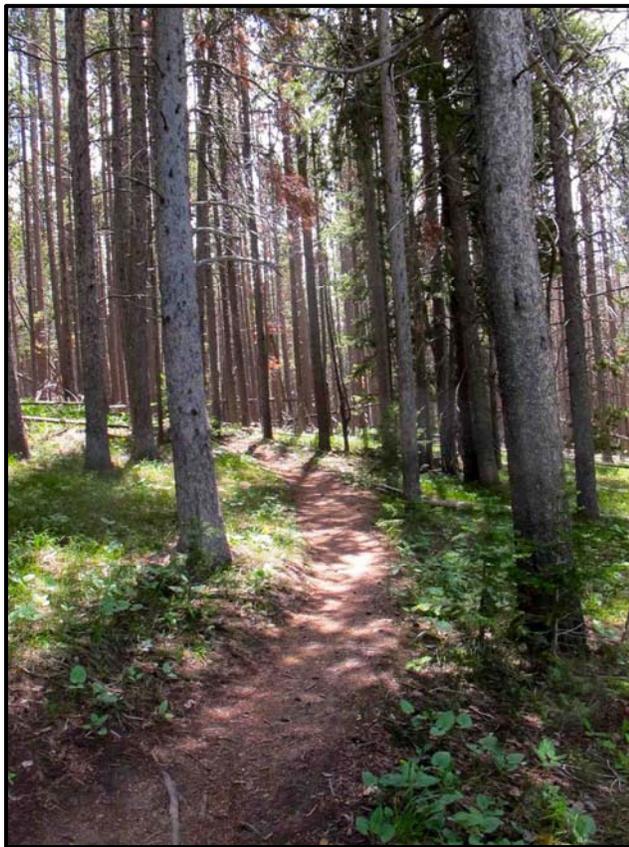
- Property ownership
- Rights and easements
- Mapping and signage
- Coordination and management
- The level of investment required for facility upgrades
- Through traffic
- Well defined use areas
- Connectivity
- Slope, access and drainage

## Casper Mountain Trails

Extensive work is underway to map out and evaluate current trails and associated facilities. New routes that offer different levels of difficulty help develop alternatives for the County staff and user groups to evaluate. While the actual design of a trail is key, the purpose of the trail in terms of destinations, connections, points of interest, and the quality of the experience must be considered.



Property ownership and licenses or agreements have a major impact on where trails can be placed. The consultants have reviewed ownership data to identify where key links to create a desired trail or network must be secured. The consultants are not negotiating easements, leases, property purchases or exchanges, but are identifying locations where the County or user groups may wish to focus their outreach efforts. Building public trails on private property has been accomplished elsewhere. Strategies exist which can be used to gain the trust and support of key property owners.



Well defined and maintained trails are desired by some. Other users simply want to know where they can freely ride, ski or hike. Through maps, signage and fences, parcels or tracts that are open for general public use can be defined, and the trails that provide access to such areas identified.

## Overall Recommendations

Following site evaluations of the recreational facilities and discussions with stakeholders, general observations and recommendations were formulated. These apply to most of the sites and represent overall considerations.

### *Circulation*

One of the key issues that surfaced through this process is circulation. Finding your way and being able to get where you want to go is a real challenge. Clearly defined trails, good signage and wayfinding, and well-designed trailheads must be established to improve access to all the recreational facilities. It must be easy and convenient for motorists to reach their destination and walkers, hikers, cyclist, skiers and other recreationists to achieve their goal. Whether you are hiking to a summit or walking to the bathroom you need to know how to get there.



## *Property Boundaries*

Public/private property conflicts are a big issue on Casper Mountain. Those wishing to enjoy the less developed areas on the mountain must be clear about where the public or quasi-public lands that they can visit or cross are located, and where the property that they must avoid is situated. Park and public land boundaries must be well marked as well as roads and trails that are open for public use.

## *Visitor Information and Fee Station*

A visitor center kiosk at the head of Strube Loop has existed for many years. Some of the information is out of date and the way the information is presented is poor. An upgraded Center where users can learn about the



facilities, get directions, find rules & regulations, and pay their fees is needed. With the building of the Trails Center, the lower parking lot at Strube Loop is no longer the first facility you reach when looking for a place for recreation. A Visitor Information Center is proposed as a pull-out on Circle Drive before your reach the Trails Center.

## *Unwanted Through Traffic*

The campgrounds and day-use areas are surrounded by private property. Many residents and area property owners cross park property to reach their homes or cabins. While their right of access must be honored, steps should be taken to allow them to get to their lots with as little disruption as possible for campers, picnickers or others on an outing.



## Individual Site Improvements

Once you reach a campsite or picnic area you want a quality experience. The facilities must be functional and either new or in good repair. Steps must be taken to make improvements such as upgraded tables, acceptable garbage containers/stations, good drainage, and screening for more privacy.

In addition to general upgrades or enhancements, individual areas require some specific improvements. Many of the improvements are fairly minor while others represent significant changes. The goal is to improve the experience for all the area users.

### BEARTRAP

Beartrap gets more year-round use than any single facility on the Mountain. In addition to use by individuals, families and small groups, there are major events that create unique challenges and opportunities. The proposed improvements are intended to satisfy the broad range of users in a manner that will enhance the experience and lessen the conflicts.

One of the most significant changes is to isolate campers from picnickers. It is recommended that the area to the west of the meadow be upgraded and expanded to create a quality campground while the area east of the meadow be made into a picnic and day-use area. By allowing picnickers to use designated campsites, some campers are forced to look elsewhere while the picnickers occupy the desired space for just a few hours. Having designated campsites will provide assurance to more campers who wish to spend a few days on the mountain that a site will be found. The goal of separating campers and picnickers was strongly supported by the attendees at the concluding public meeting on the Plan.

Restricting campers to the west side of the park would reduce the number of sites. To address that, it is recommended that more sites be added and that they be pull-throughs that would accommodate large RVs, trailers and 5<sup>th</sup> wheels. Introducing pull-through campsites was not supported by a majority of those at the public meeting. Though there may be a sense that inviting large RVs with tow vehicles to the campgrounds may change the character of the mountain, such units are increasingly common and providing for them can be a financial benefit for the County. Access for larger units will be improved by making the campground road one-way. It currently serves residents and property owners to the south, making it a busy, two-way road. A direct road from Circle Drive to the lots to the south is proposed which will greatly reduce the traffic in the campground.

The road on the east side of the park that will serve the day use area will remain a two-way road. The new south shelter and amphitheater will be accessed by this road, and they will all have adequate parking facilities for modest sized events. An additional bathroom will be needed by the new south shelter. There will be new playgrounds nearby and formal paths to provide easy access from all areas of the park.

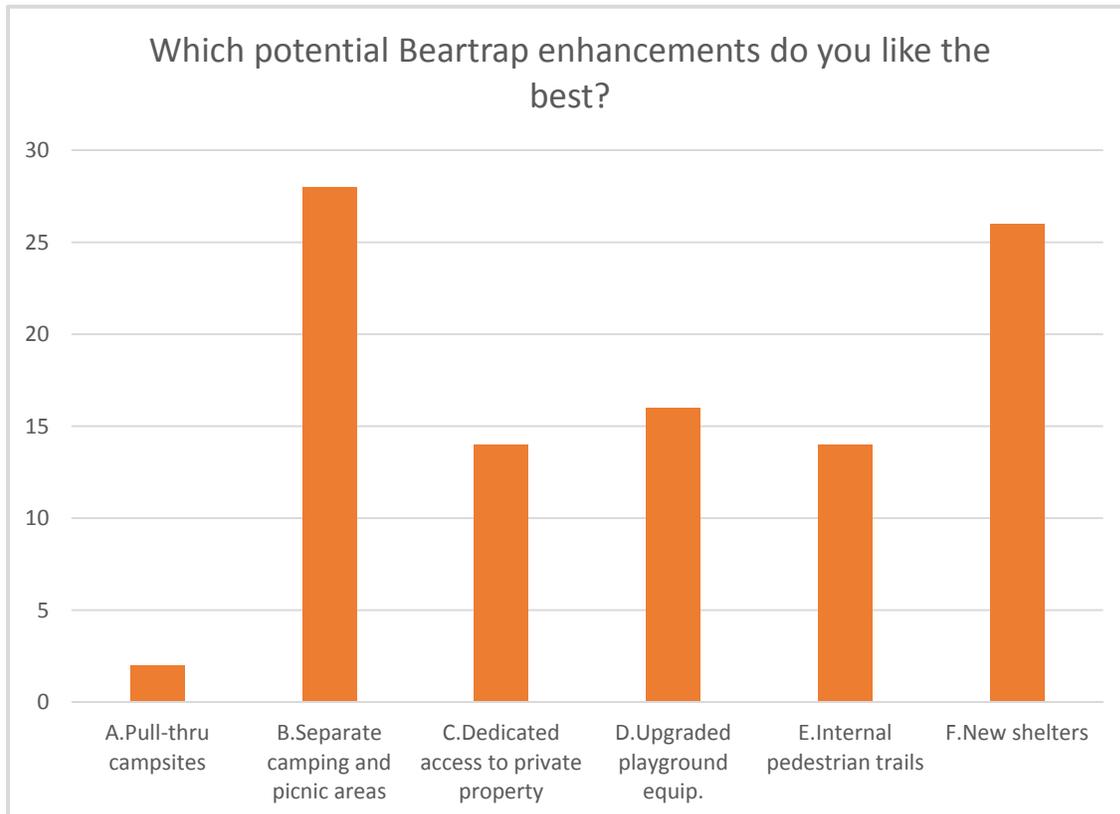


The Beartrap Festival is the largest event that takes place in the park. It has unique needs that can be better served with modifications to the east side of the park. Rather than installing an amphitheater large enough for the festival, the organizers are moving toward a large, mobile stage at the north end of the meadow. The amphitheater that is replacing the middle shelter will be sized for smaller performances, weddings, etc. The north shelter will be moved to the south end of the parking lot. A shelter at this location can better support those who wish to enjoy the meadow, and could be configured to provide a gathering place for snowmobilers and other winter recreationalists. The shelter could also serve as the entrance gate for the Festival. The current north entrance to the picnic area does not function well.

Finally, the depression in the middle of the meadow that is fenced off represents a level of risk for snowmobilers and other park users. However, it is a unique section of the park and should be available for children and others to explore and enjoy. It is recommended that the fence around the south half of the depression be removed and openings be provided at the north end and south end for access. These can be closed off with temporary fencing in the winter to protect snowmobilers.

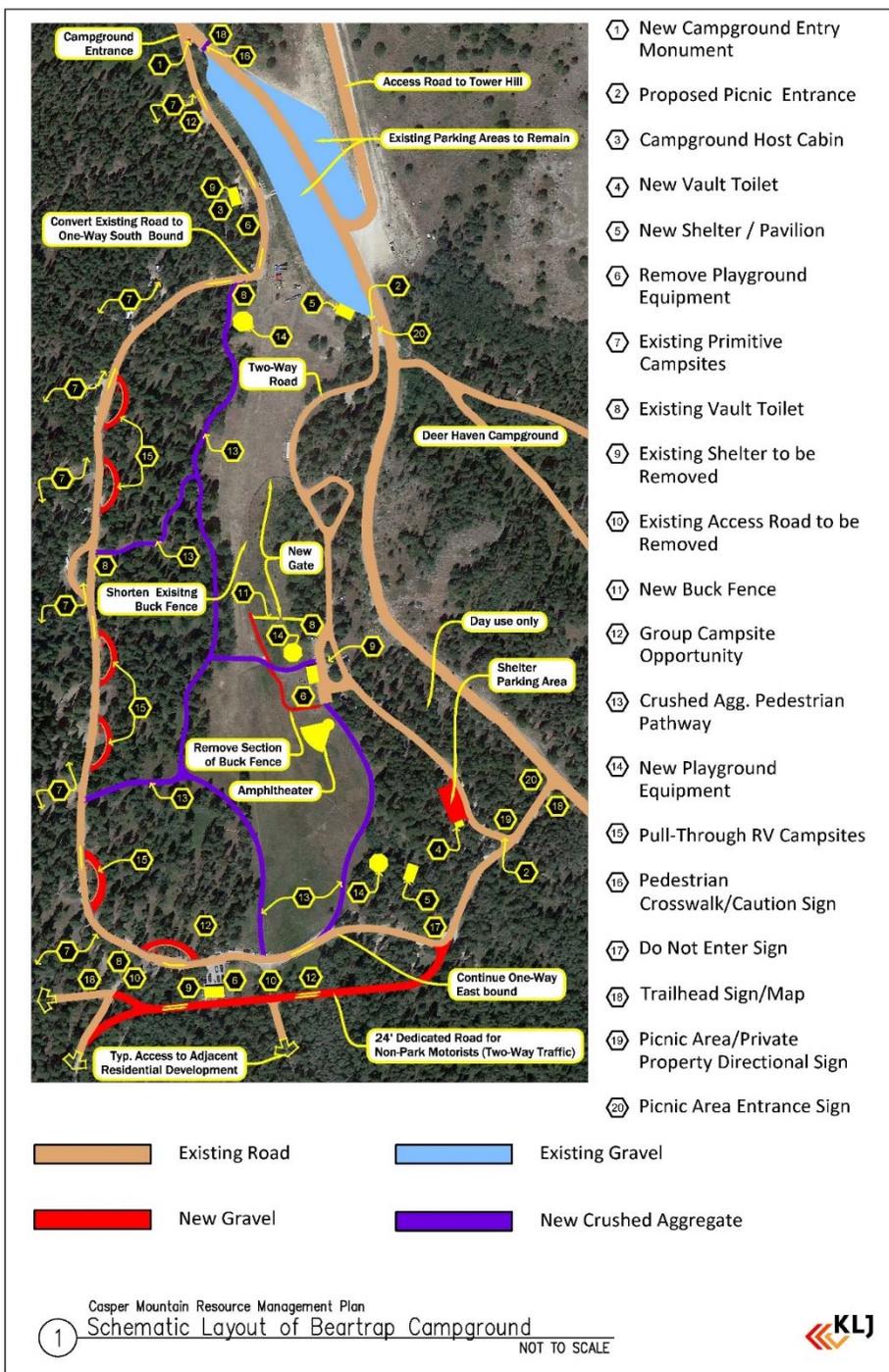
As noted above, the public meeting attendees were asked about separating camping and picnicking, and accommodating large RVs. Views on new playgrounds, shelters, internal trails and alternate access routes for neighboring property owners were also discussed. Adding new shelters and an amphitheater was strongly supported but internal trails were not.

*Figure 1- Beartrap Meadow Preferred Improvements*





Map 1 - Beartrap Meadow Concept Plan





## DEER HAVEN

Deer Haven is a smaller, more isolated campground. It works well for tents, campers and small trailers. It is recommended that this area be maintained as a quieter campground for smaller units. Little is needed in the way of improvements. Three campsites can be added and one site (#23) should be closed due to the excessive slope and its value as a trailhead.

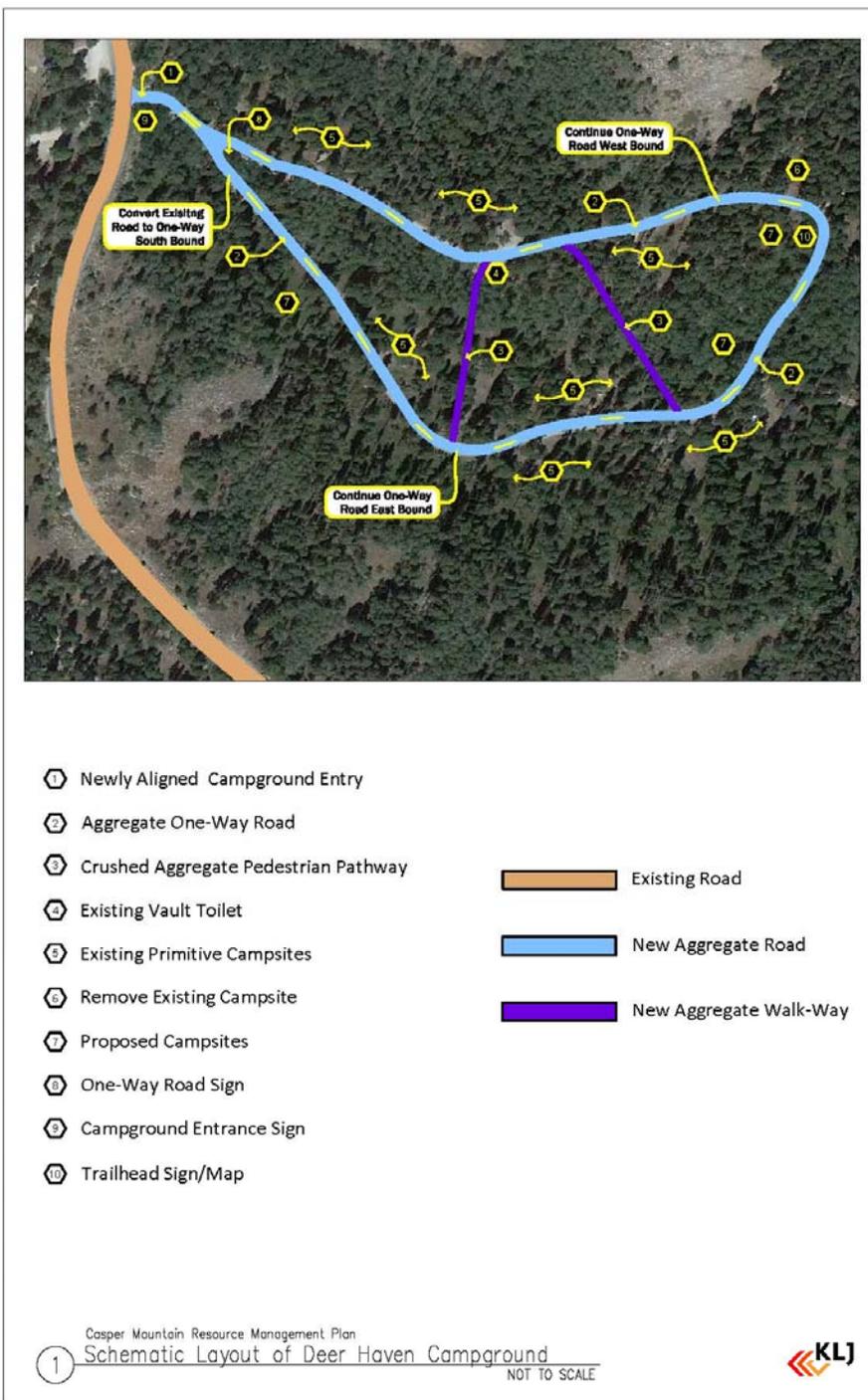
An internal pathway system similar to Beartrap is needed. Established paths leading to the bathroom and water spigots should be improved as well as a trail connection to Beartrap and the Tower Hill Campground.

The campground entrance is aligned to favor campers approaching from the north on Circle Drive. The entrance should be realigned to make it more accessible from the south. The internal road would function better as a one-way rather than a two-way loop.





Map 2 - Deer Haven Concept Plan





## TOWER HILL

The Tower Hill Campground has the potential to accommodate at least six additional campsites. This would be accomplished by creating a roadway loop to the south and installing a number of pull-through sites. The pull-through sites will accommodate large units which is fitting since they are more self-contained and less dependent on an available source of potable water.

A number of the existing sites are large and used as group camps. This can be permitted by improving access and parking at one or more of these sites. If group camping is to be discouraged, these sites may need to be reconfigured. The resulting individual sites can be close together which can work for family members or friends who wish to camp nearby. Public meeting attendees supported the development of group sites at the campgrounds, with only 8% stating it was a poor idea.

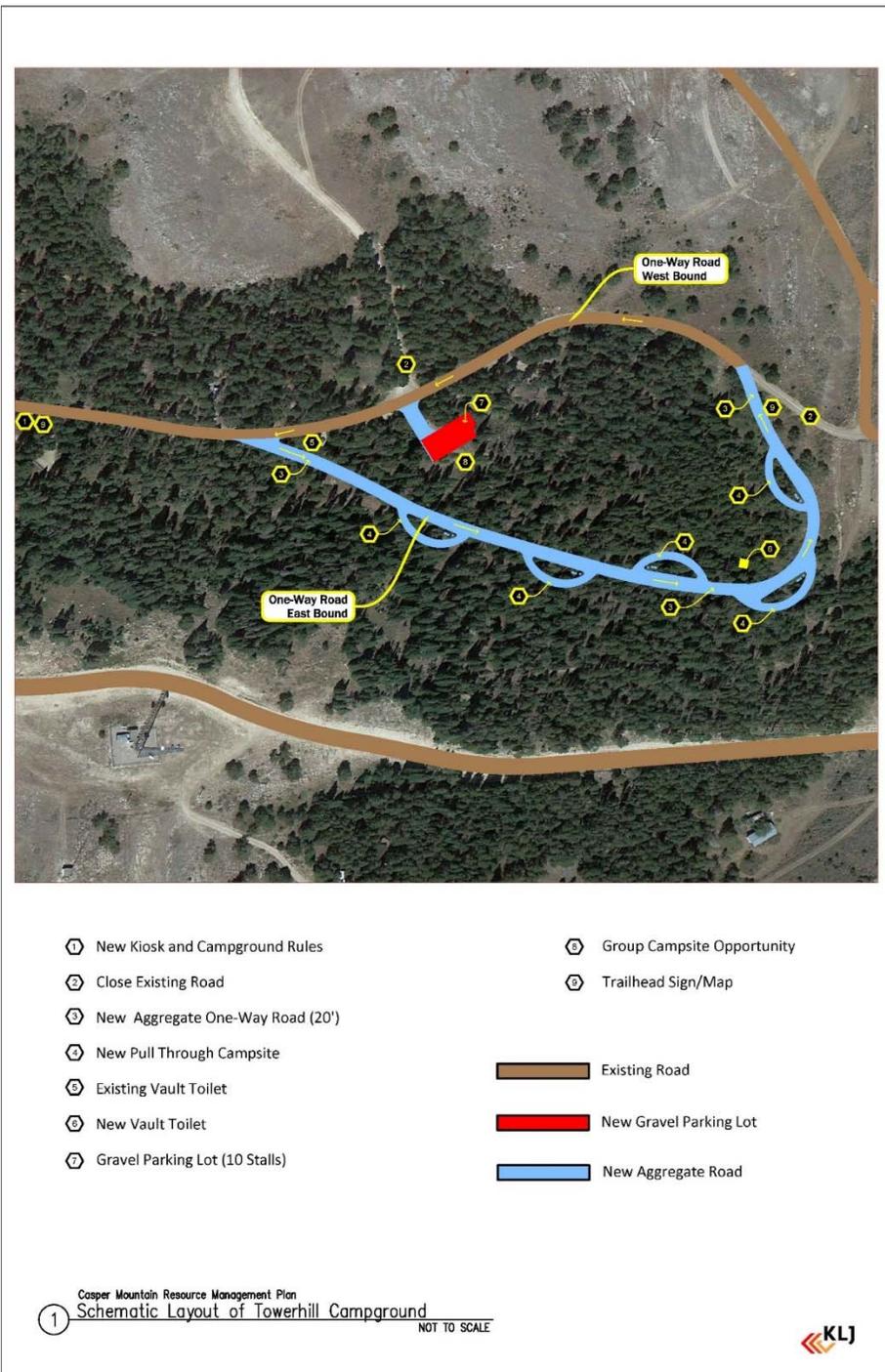
Nordic ski trails have been established in the Tower Hill Campground. These trails should be incorporated into a year round trail system between the campgrounds for hikers, cyclists and snowshoers.

There are currently access roads connecting the campground to properties to both the north and east. Since these areas can be accessed directly from East End Road, the campground access roads can be closed and through traffic greatly reduced.





Map 3 - Tower Hill Concept Plan



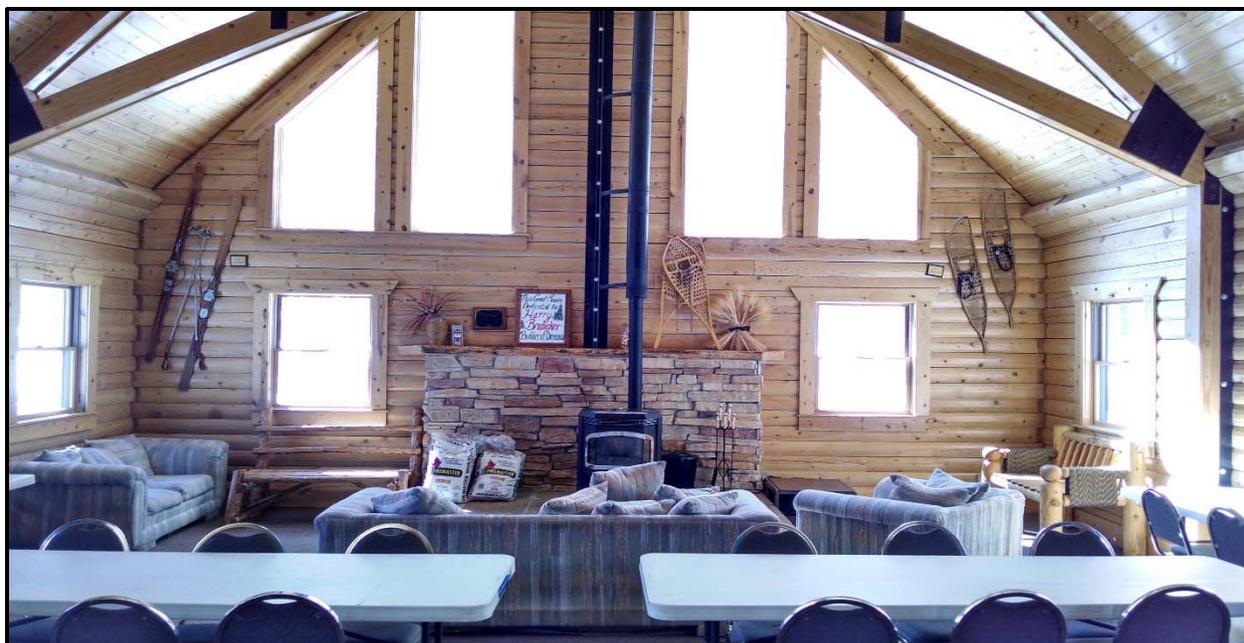


## TRAILS CENTER

In a relatively short period of time the Casper Mountain Trails Center has become a well-used, year round facility. It is the most popular destination for skiers and snowshoers in the winter and hikers and cyclists in the summer. The trail system is extensive, including a lighted 1 kilometer loop, and is connected to the overall mountain trail system.



The growing demand for trails for skiing, snowshoeing and cycling in the winter has resulted in an increased need for better overall management or the development of complementary trail systems. It is recommended that additional trails be created in or around the Maze for cyclists and snowshoers, or existing ski trails be converted for their use. Reducing the number of wide ski trails can free up staff time that can be used to groom trails elsewhere. Adequate signage and information on the proper way to share the facilities must be added.



When the Trails Center was constructed, the County oversized its sanitary sewer system to accommodate a number of cabins. Adding cabins and full service RV pads was considered. Given the number of events that take place in and around the Center through the summer months, it was suggested that an active campground with access near the Trails Center would make it a less desirable location for gatherings. As an alternative, it is recommended that three yurts be installed in the vicinity of the Stadium. Yurts may be more in keeping with the character of the area around the Trails Center than cabins. A direct connection to Circle Drive would be established for summer access, and those using the yurts in the winter would have to ski or snowshoe in. The yurts would have electricity but no gas or plumbing.

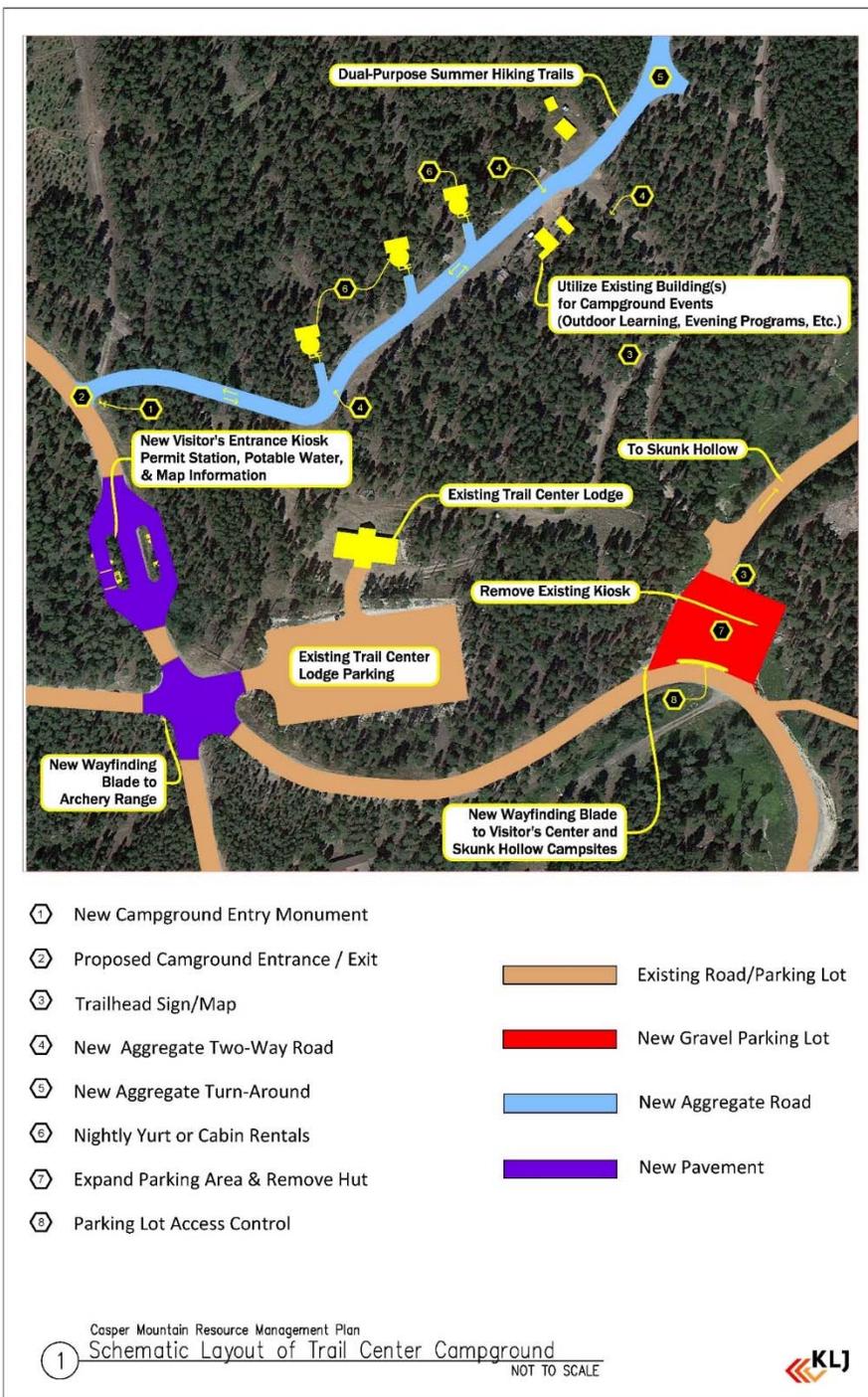
#### ELKHORN SPRINGS/SKUNK HOLLOW

Both Elkhorn Springs and Skunk Hollow are marginal areas for camping. The access is poor in many cases and the proximity to Circle Drive makes a number of the sites uninviting and hazardous. It is recommended that, with the exception of a group camp at the base of Powder Hill, these two areas be converted to day use. Barriers could be added at some sites to make them inaccessible for trailers or large RVs. It is recommended that the three Elkhorn Springs sites on the west side of Circle Drive be eliminated altogether to improve safety.

With the development of a new visitor center in the vicinity of the Trails Center, the old information center in the lower parking lot at the head of Skunk Hollow can be removed. Relocating the hut that is near the current information center will allow for the expansion of this parking area. Controlled access into the parking area would permit the establishment of a larger capacity, more functional parking area.



Map 4 - Elkhorn Springs/Skunk Hollow Concept Plan



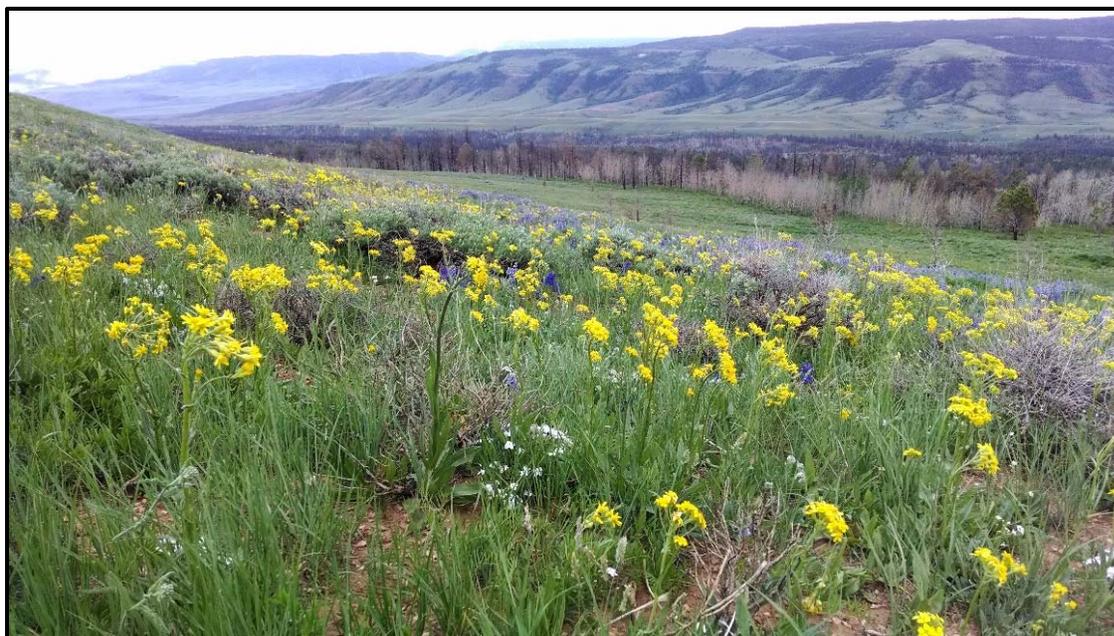


## CRIMSON DAWN

Crimson Dawn Park receives some use through the summer months. The occasional use that occurs is dwarfed by the extremely popular Mid Summer's Eve event where hundreds of visitors, some from out of state, gather for the performance. That evening, parking is at a premium with all of the spectators parking along East End Road. While parking along the road creates problems, developing a large parking area for one event a year is not worth the expense.

Changes and additions are recommended for the park to improve its use through the rest of the summer. None of the proposed improvements described hereinafter will be built without first addressing the 1973 Deed between the Forsling "heirs at law" and Natrona County. The caretaker residence is slated to be torn down. With the building gone, the limited parking area can be reconfigured and enlarged to accommodate modest size groups. Moving the gate to the south end of the parking lot would allow visitors to enjoy the park but not drive to the museum/cabin unless an attendant was there and the gate was open.

Crimson Dawn Park is not a suitable location for camping. A few picnic tables have been placed to the east of the cabin/museum. This picnic area could be enhanced with a few more tables and a shelter. The view of Muddy Mountain and the mountains to the east from Crimson Dawn is spectacular. The views are best from the top of the bluff and at each end of the park. To capitalize on the view, it is recommended that a reasonably sized picnic grounds with a shelter be established at the west end of the park. The picnic ground would be accessed from Crimson Dawn Road and not through the current entrance to the park. The picnic area would be



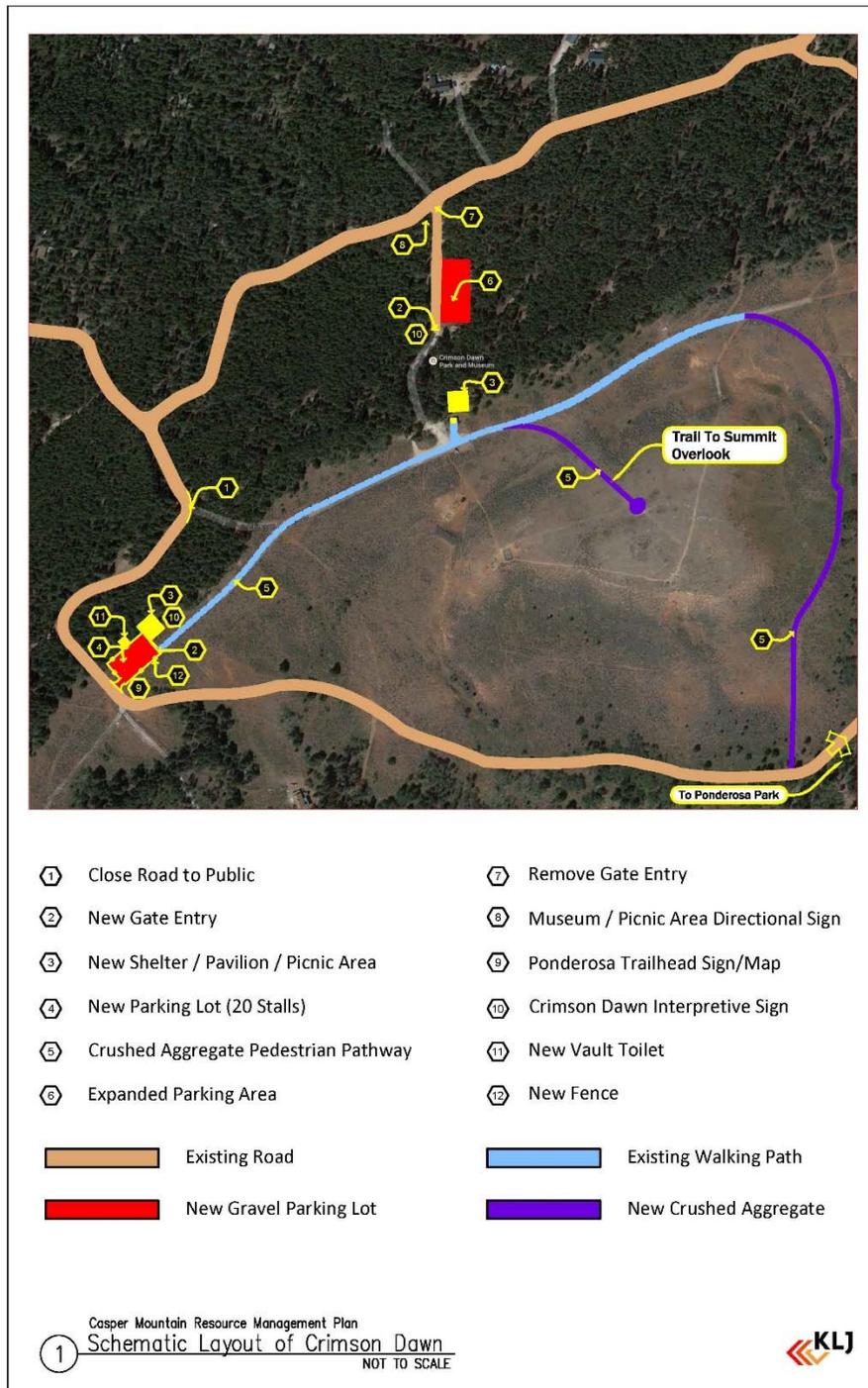


near the first shrine on the woodland walk which would permit visitors to take a self-guided tour.

Crimson Dawn is a place where many love to go for a walk. It is recommended that an aggregate trail be established around the perimeter of the park to accommodate walkers. The trail should connect to Ponderosa Park. The parking area at the west end picnic area would serve as the trailhead for the Ponderosa Trail. A trail just for hikers should be developed up the north side of the bluff as well, to a new viewing area at the summit.



Map 5 - Crimson Dawn Concept Plan





## ARCHERY RANGE

The Casper Mountain Archery Range is a challenging facility with stationary targets and field ranges. The Lost Arrow Archery Club hosts many events at the range, often attracting large groups. While the range is a draw, it is difficult to get to. A key recommendation is to widen and upgrade the road to the range.

To accommodate larger groups the archery club has suggested that a large pavilion be constructed. This requested should be honored. The smaller shelter should remain and another small shelter added at the range.

The parking at the range is inadequate. A large, relatively level, area of bedrock lies south of the current parking area. It is recommended that this area be covered with aggregate to create a large, all weather parking lot.

A small campground maintained by the Natrona County Parks Department is located north and east of the range. This campground is full during events and receives regular use at other times. The campground should be enlarged by adding pull through sites for larger units and a group parking area for six units. The current sites should be upgraded. In addition, two shelters and a restroom should be added at the campground.

The archery range was well used by the public meeting attendees. Most park users hike in the park. Of those who actually use the park, only 18% practice archery. Currently there are no sanitary sewer facilities at the Natrona County Parks on Casper Mountain. Because the archery range is so isolated, it was recommended that the County consider installing a sanitary sewer system to accommodate the RVs and trailers in the expanded campground. This suggestion was not supported by the meeting participants.

*Figure 2 - Archery Range Activities*

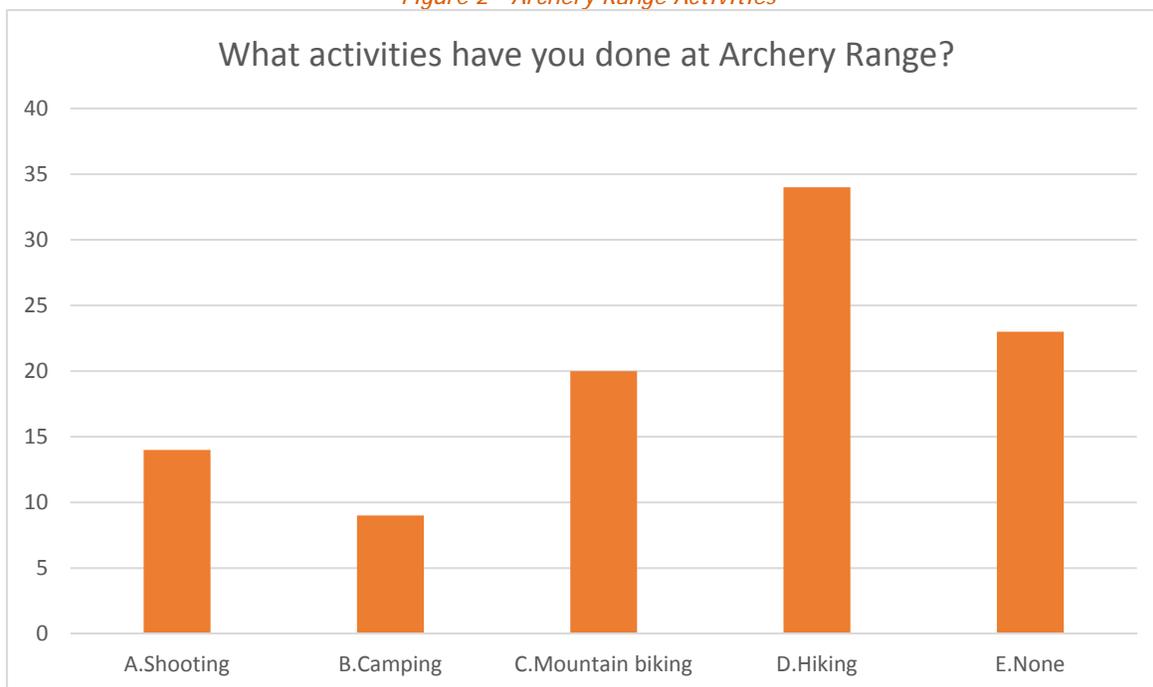
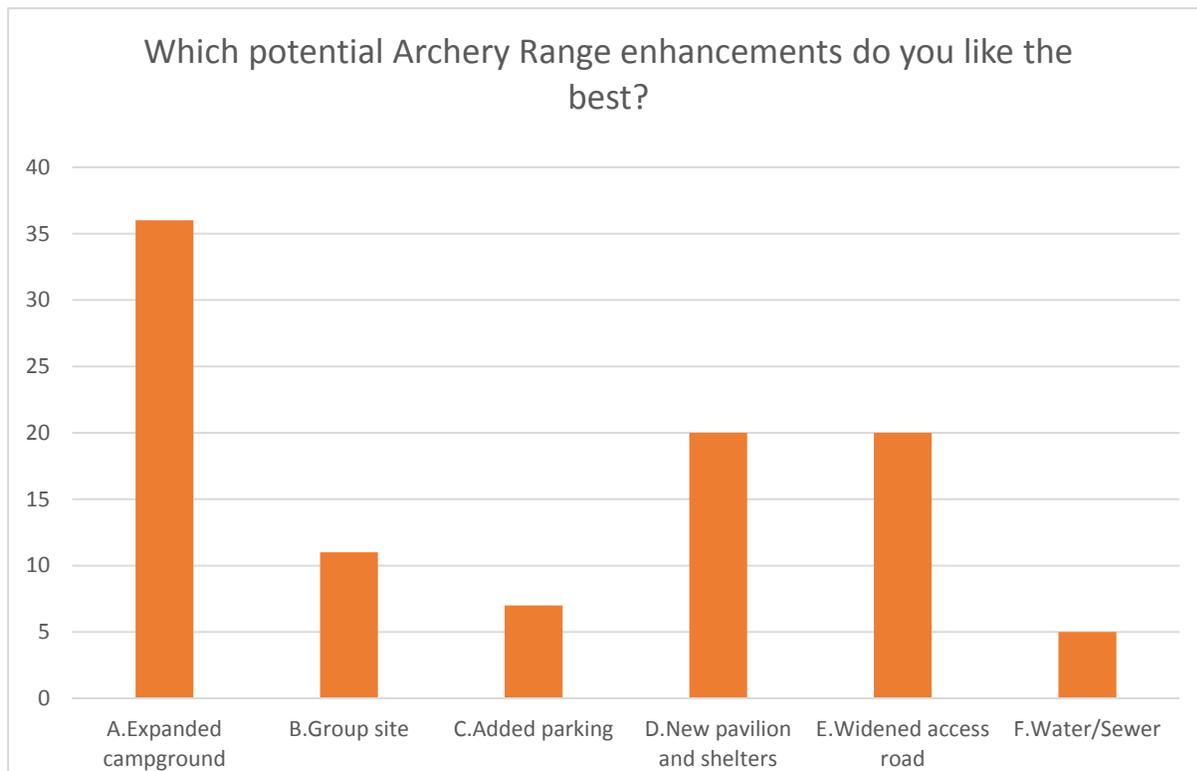


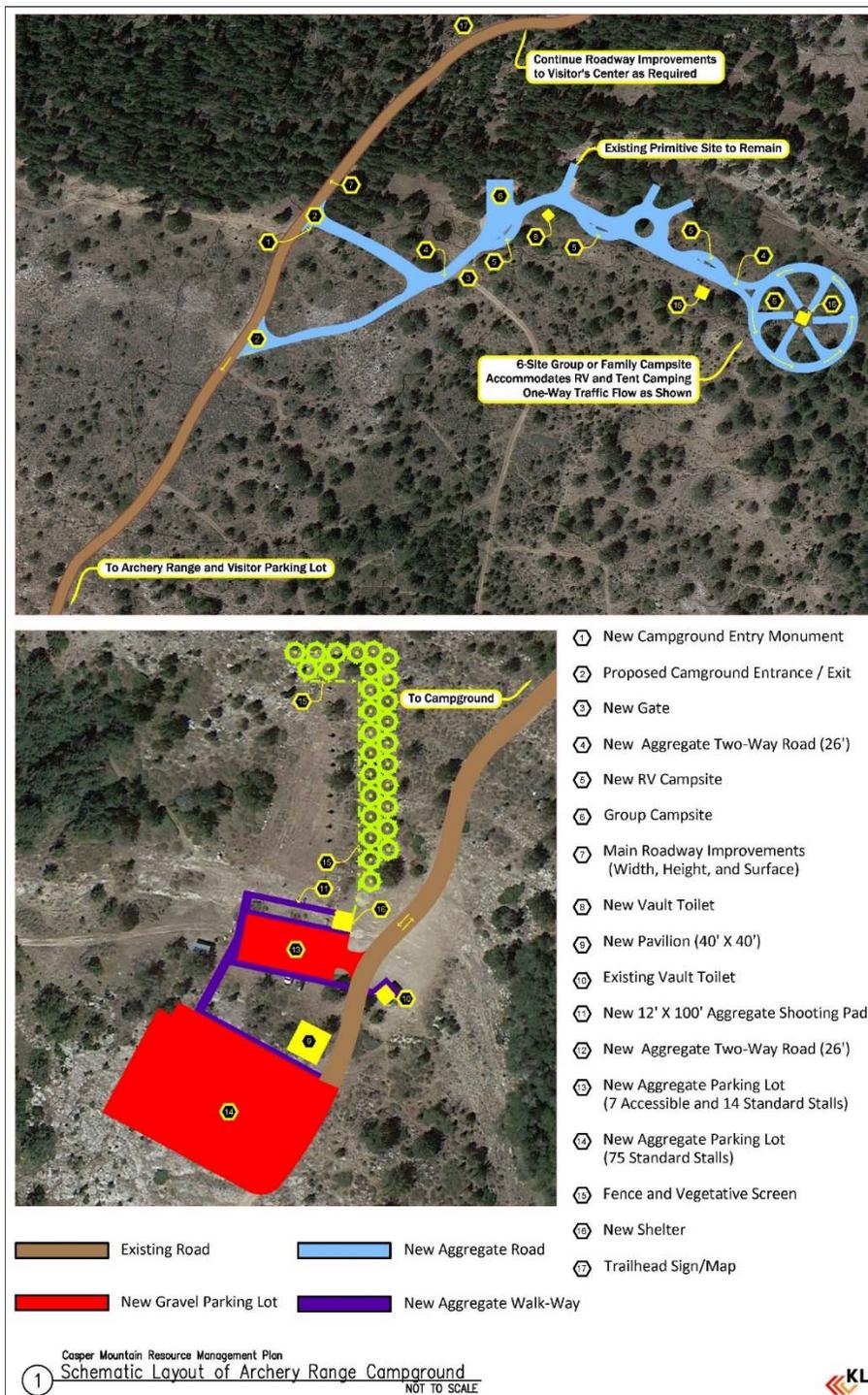


Figure 3 - Potential Archery Range Enhancements





### Map 6 - Archery Range Concept Plan



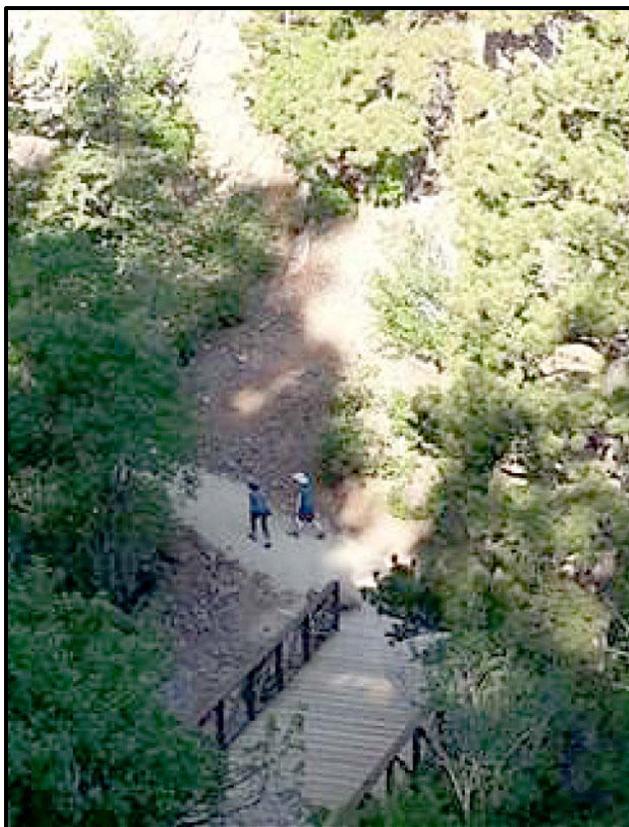


## ROTARY PARK

Rotary Park on the north face of Casper Mountain has been a popular destination for decades. Most visitors enjoy a hike to Garden Creek Falls, while the adventuresome strike out on the more challenging Bridle Trail. The park also provides a few picnic sites, a small pavilion and restrooms.

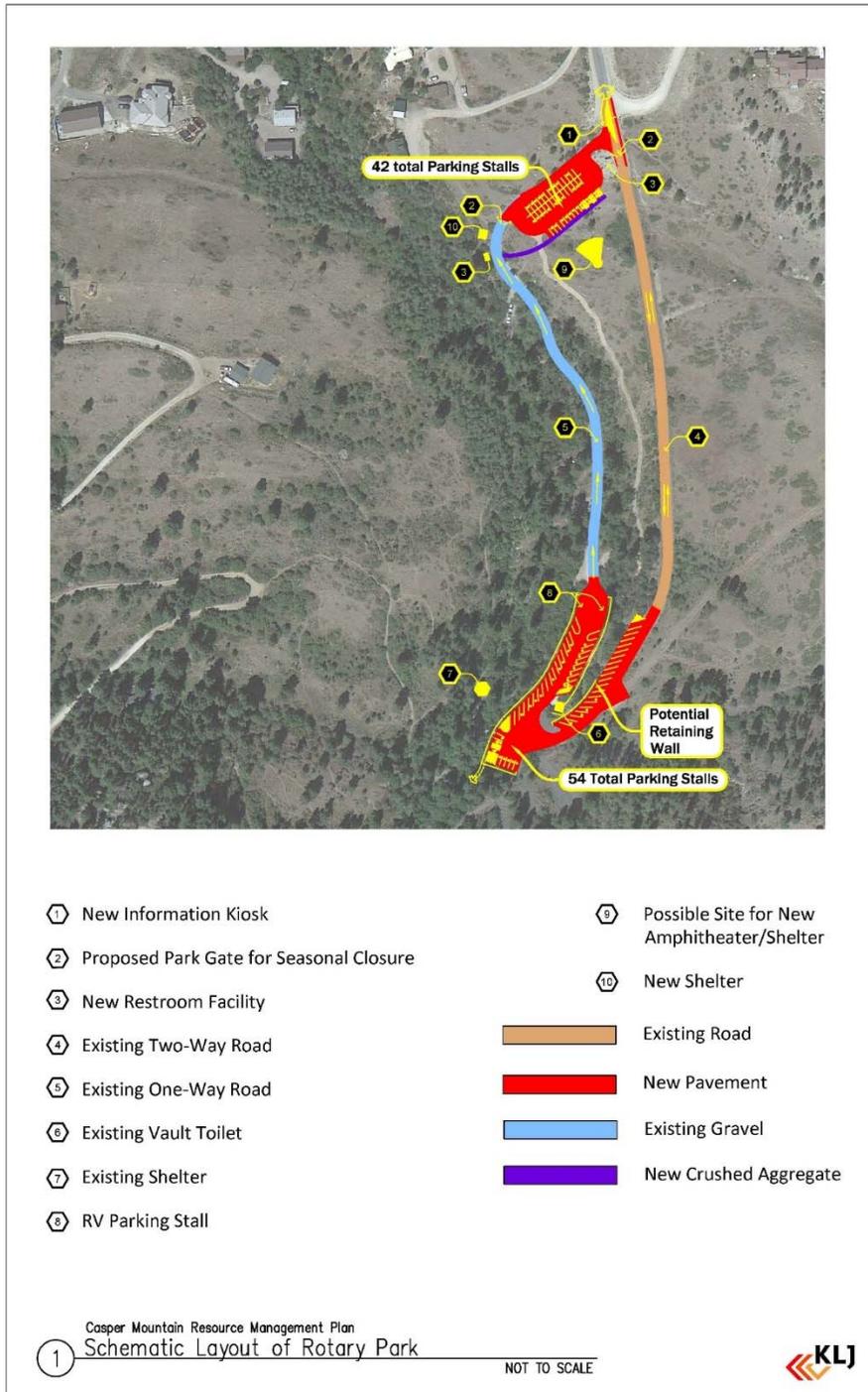
The park was originally developed by the Casper Rotary Club then transferred to the City of Casper and eventually to Natrona County. A masterplan for the park was prepared a number of years ago. The Casper Rotary Club has been a good steward for the park since its inception, and has put a significant amount of time and money into park improvements in recent years. The Club is maintaining that effort and has dedicated in excess of \$150,000 for additional improvements.

Currently parking is limited to less than 35 spaces. KLJ has been asked to examine the parking situation at the park and prepare recommendations for increasing the number of available spaces. Though it would involve some expense for retaining walls and the loss of two picnic sites, as many as 54 parking stalls could be developed near the trailhead to the falls. More space is available for expansion near the parking area at the north end of the park, near a proposed amphitheater. Adding a second loop for parking to the north of the current parking area could bring the number to 42 at the north end of the park for a new park total of 96 spaces.





Map 7 - Rotary Park Concept Plan





## PONDEROSA PARK

At 1,920 acres, Ponderosa Park is the largest Natrona County park property on Casper Mountain. It is located at the east end of the mountain and is accessed off of East End Road and the Ponderosa Lateral. The park is irregular in shape with an 11.75 mile perimeter. Just over half of the park boundary abuts either State of Wyoming or BLM land with the balance abutting private property. Given the sizeable state and federal holdings abutting the park (12,019 acres or 18.8 square miles), a large area of contiguous public land for recreation exists at and adjacent to Ponderosa Park.

The park generally slopes from northwest to southeast and is bisected by three large ravines that run west to east which are major tributaries of Muddy Creek. The ravines cut into the parent Casper Formation, exposing limestone and sandstone features. The soils that have developed are generally loose, sandy soils that are easily eroded. Most of the Park is open, with trees restricted to the ravines and areas around the park entrance. The park was involved in the September 2012 Sheepherder Hill Fire, damaging or destroying most of the trees.



The park is unimproved with the exception of a primitive road that provides access to a vault toilet and a 15 x 30 warming shelter used principally by snowmobilers. The structures were damaged or destroyed by the fire. The block walls of the vault toilet are standing and appear to be in good condition but the roof, doors, and stools are gone. The warming shelter fireplace chimney is still standing but is in poor condition and must be removed. The concrete pad is in good condition and can be reused.



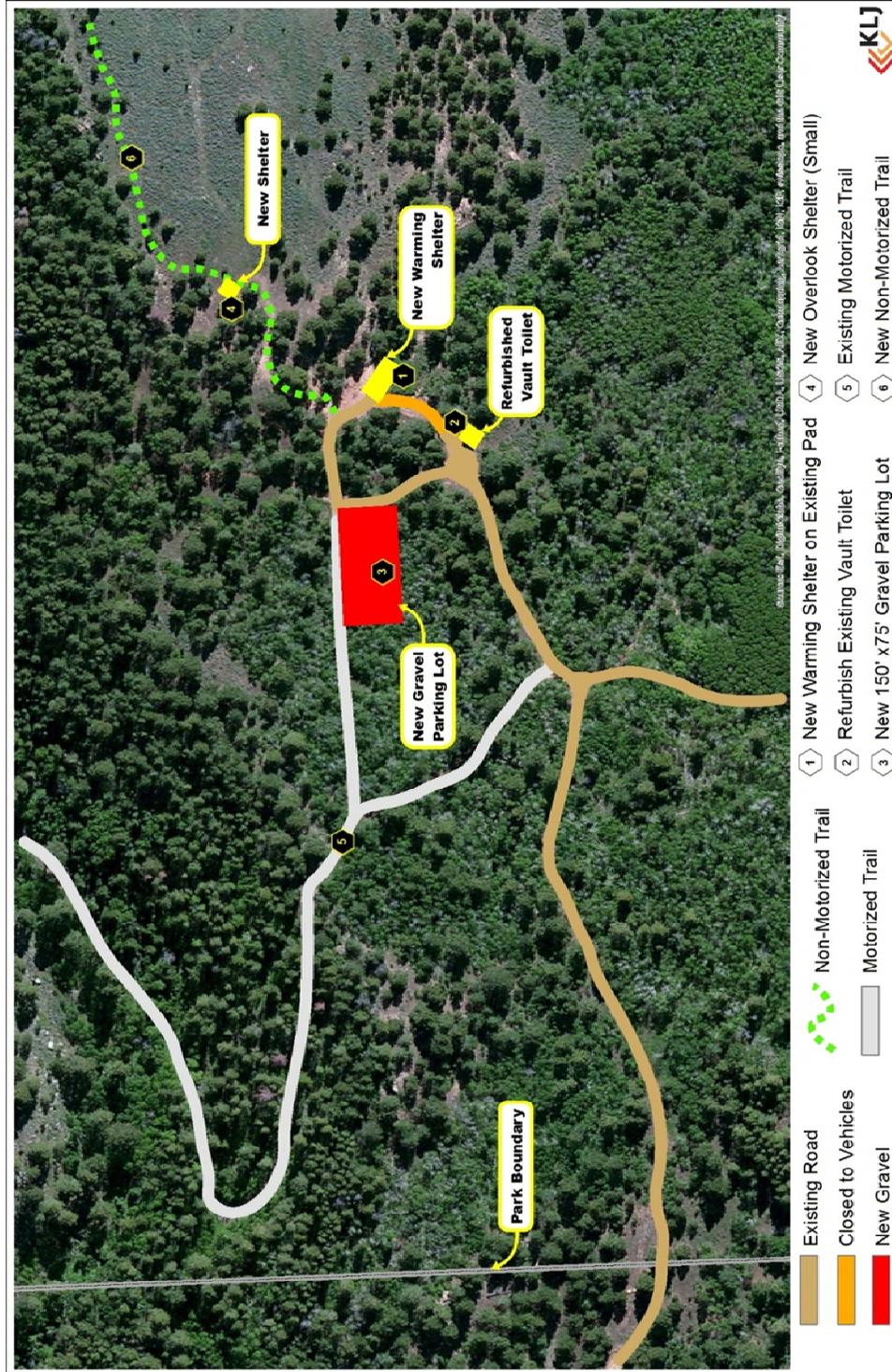
Snowmobilers have been the principal user group of Ponderosa Park. The road to the park is not plowed in the winter and most snowmobiles use State Trail D which begins in Casper Mountain Park to access the park. Driving an ORV to the park in the summer or fall is not difficult, however, hauling one on a trailer may be problematic. In recent years the park has gained in popularity with the mountain biking and hiking community. It is only accessible by all-wheel drive vehicles with adequate clearance and involves a 1.95 mile rough and rutted road that connects to the terminus of East End Road.

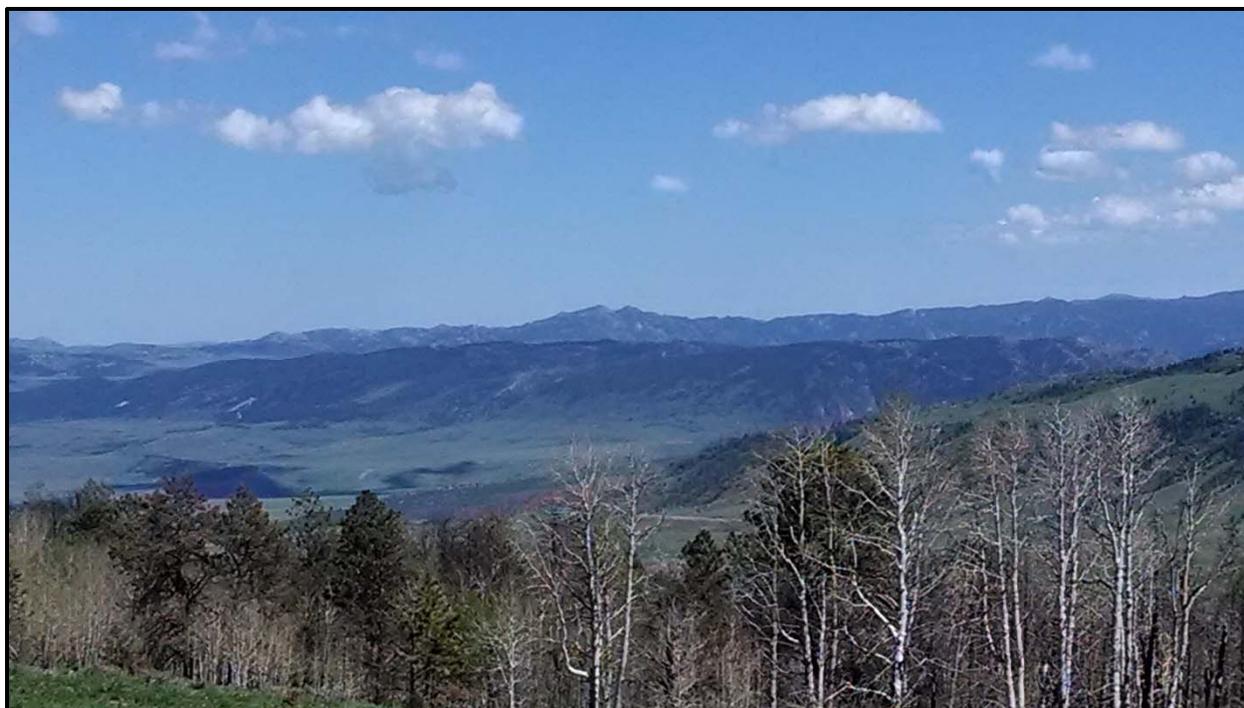
Due to the remote location and general inaccessibility of the park, it does not lend itself to a high level of development. It is believed adequate to repair the current vault bathroom, build a new shelter on the existing pad, a new overlook shelter on the top of the bluff, and an improved parking area. The previous warming shelter was 30' x 15' in size which was viewed as very adequate. It is recommended that the enclosed shelter be reduced to 20' in length with a 10' x 15' covered patio on the east end of the pad. The stone fireplace needs to be demolished in favor of a more efficient wood burning stove. The stove that is currently anchored to the pad may be considered adequate. Ponderosa Park is not served with power. If a minimal amount of security lighting is desired, a self-contained photovoltaic system may work well.





Map 9 - Ponderosa Park Concept Plan





The Ponderosa Park users are drawn by the exceptional views to the south and east, and the extensive trail system. It is envisioned that there will be few if any groomed trails; they will be backcountry two-track and single-track trails. The construction and maintenance activities will involve the removal of obstacles, erosion control, and the introduction of fill material and rock retaining walls where required. The key improvement required for snowmobiling is clearing and widening the Trail D corridor to accommodate the State trails grooming equipment. Much of the trail building and maintenance work will involve hand labor or small equipment, and can be accomplished by volunteers from the user groups.



## Project Cost Estimates per Campground and Division of Work

The Resource Management Plan is a planning scale report that does not involve site or facility design specifics. However, it should serve as a support document that can help in the preparation of a capital budget. To serve that purpose, 2015 cost estimates for improvements such as a new campsite, shelter, restroom or trail are provided. The prioritization of alternatives will facilitate the creation of annual park upgrade costs on an area by area basis.

Based on the assessment of the camping and day use areas, roughly \$1,000,000 in improvements have been identified. The improvements include internal trails or paths within the parks but not trails that connect the campgrounds or picnic areas, or connect with other destinations on Casper Mountain.

The following table provides a breakdown of costs by type of improvement. With the improvements organized in this manner, it is easy to get a sense of the number of picnic tables, for example, that would be needed to implement the recommendations provided herein. As would be expected, the most costly items are larger structures, paving, and soft surface trails and gravel lots and roads. The cost of removing trees and rough grading for roads, paths, parking areas and structures has not been included.

*Table 1 - Improvement and Installation List*

### CASPER MOUNTAIN RMP IMPROVEMENT AND INSTALLATION LIST\*

Improvement	Location	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Installed Cost
Small Shelter	Rotary (1), Crimson Dawn (2), Archery Range (3), Ponderosa (1)	7	\$5,455	\$76,370
Large Shelter	Beartrap (2), Archery Range (1)	3	\$15,000	\$90,000
Warming Shelter	Ponderosa (1)	1	\$40/sq.ft.	\$18,000
Amphitheater	Rotary (1), Beartrap (1),	2	\$15,000	\$60,000
Yurt	Trail Center (3),	3	\$20,000	\$60,000
Picnic Table	Beartrap (18), Deer Haven (3), Trail Center (3), Tower Hill (6), Crimson Dawn (8), Archery Range (15), Ponderosa (4)	60	\$666	\$39,960
Playground	Beartrap (3),	3	\$15,000	\$45,000
Fire Pit	Beartrap (7), Deer Haven (3), Trail Center (3), Tower	34	\$150	\$10,200



	Hill (6), Crimson Dawn (2), Archery Range (13)			
9' Aggregate Trail	Beartrap (2,600'), Deer Haven (560'), Crimson Dawn (1,242'), Trail Center (360')	6,004 lf	\$3.75 ft.	\$22,605
Backcountry Trail	Ponderosa	13.1 miles	\$5,000/mile	\$65,500
Directional Sign	Beartrap (4), Deer Haven (1), Tower Hill (1), Crimson Dawn (3),	9	\$100	\$1,800
Wayfinding Signs	Various Locations	Up to 40	\$60	\$2,400
Information Board/Map	2 per campground, Ponderosa(1)	13	\$600	\$7,800
Entrance Sign	Beartrap (1), Deer Haven (1), Tower Hill (1), Trails Center (1), Crimson Dawn (1), Archery Range (1),	6	\$4,000 - \$7,000	\$33,000
Boundary Markers	Ponderosa (20)	20	\$15	\$300
Welcome Center/Kiosk	Trail Center (1)	1	\$41,780	\$41,780
New Restroom	Rotary (1), Beartrap (1), Tower Hill (1), Crimson Dawn (1), Archery Range (1)	5	\$25,000	\$125,000
Restroom Repair	Ponderosa (1)	1	\$2,000	\$2,000
Trailhead	Beartrap (3), Deer Haven (1), Trail Center (3), Tower Hill (2), Crimson Dawn (1), Archery Range (1), Ponderosa (3)	14	\$750	\$10,500
Vehicle Gate	Crimson Dawn (2), Archery Range (2)	4	\$300	\$2,400
16' Gravel Road / Parking Lots / Parking Pads	Beartrap (38,590), Trail Center (37,674), Archery Range (56,815), Deer Haven (2,860), Tower Hill (41,450), Elkhorn Springs (13,800), Ponderosa (11,200)	202,389 sq.ft.	\$0.42 sq.ft.	\$85,000
20' Paved Road / Parking Lot	Rotary (42,204), Entrance Kiosk (12,735)	54,939 sq.ft.	\$3.10 sq.ft.	\$170,300
Retaining Wall	Rotary (1,800 sq.ft.),	1,800 sq.ft.	\$35 sq.ft.	\$72,000
Fence	Crimson Dawn (1,000 lf),	1,000 Lf.	\$2.50	\$2,500
				\$1,044,415



The County does not have the funds or personnel needed to undertake all or most of the improvements recommended in a single year. To assist with the programming of upgrades or additions, a second table listing infrastructure improvements by area and priority is provided. The new facilities that represent safety and the most beneficial improvements are found at the top of the list. Installing pedestrian facilities, realigning entrances, and improving access are top considerations. Adding campsites and playgrounds are further down the list. Installations including picnic tables, fire pits, wayfinding signs and directional signs are not included.

*Table 2 - Project Priorities and Costs*

PROJECT PRIORITIES AND COSTS

Archery Range	Cost
1. Surface lower parking lots	\$23,865
2. Construct Pavilion	\$30,000
3. Install gates on east road	\$1,200
4. Install new entrance sign	\$5,500
5. Install small shelter by range	\$10,800
6. Construct 12 campsites	\$18,900
7. Install campground restroom	\$25,000
8. Install 1 trailhead	\$750
9. Install 2 campground shelters	<u>\$21,600</u>
	<b>\$137,615</b>
Deer Haven	
1. Re-align entrance	\$2,860
2. Install new entrance sign	\$5,500
3. Decommission problem campsite	\$400
4. Construct 3 additional campsites	\$4,725
5. Install internal paths	\$2,100
6. Install 1 Trailhead	<u>\$750</u>
	<b>\$16,335</b>
Tower Hill	
1. Install 2 trailheads	\$1,500
2. Construct loop road	\$17,410
3. Construct 6 campsites	\$9,450
4. Close connecting roads	\$500
5. Construct 2 <sup>nd</sup> restroom	\$25,000
6. Install new entrance sign	<u>\$5,500</u>
	<b>\$59,360</b>



### Beartrap

1. Install ped crossing at north end of parking lot	\$500
2. Modify buck fence in meadow	\$625
3. Modify north access to picnic area	\$1,500
4. Install new north shelter	\$30,000
5. Install north playground	\$15,000
6. Install new south shelter	\$30,000
7. Construct south shelter parking lot	\$1,190
8. Install new south playground	\$15,000
9. Install new south restroom	\$25,000
10. Construct 6 campsites	\$11,025
11. Construct internal paths	\$8,900
12. Construct 3 trailheads	\$2,250
13. Install middle shelter/amphitheater	\$30,000
14. Install middle playground	\$15,000
15. Signs	<u>\$9,400</u>
	<b>\$195,390</b>

### Trail Center

1. Improve path from lower parking lot to Trails Center	\$1,240
2. Signs	\$5,500
3. Construct access road	\$15,825
4. Install 3 yurts	\$60,000
5. Install entrance kiosk on Circle Drive	<u>\$41,780</u>
	<b>\$124,345</b>

### Crimson Dawn

1. Expand north parking lot and install perimeter fence	\$3,430
2. Move north gate	\$300
3. Improve picnic area by museum	\$12,460
4. Develop west end picnic/trailhead area	\$16,125
5. West end restroom	\$25,000
6. Signs	\$5,500
7. Construct perimeter and summit trails	<u>\$4,250</u>
	<b>\$67,065</b>

### Elkhorn Springs

1. Close campsites on the west side of the road	\$400
2. Realign east entrances	\$2,000
3. Remove welcome center and hut	\$200
4. Expand lower parking lot	<u>\$5,800</u>
	<b>\$8,400</b>



### Rotary Park

1. Expand and upgrade south lot	\$108,260
2. South lot retaining wall	\$72,000
3. Expand and upgrade north lot	\$58,715
4. Restroom	\$25,000
5. Shelter	\$10,910
6. Amphitheater	<u>\$30,000</u>
	<b>\$304,885</b>

### Ponderosa Park

1. Repair restroom	\$2,000
2. Construct warming shelter	\$18,000
3. Construct parking lot	\$4,700
4. Improve trails	\$65,500
5. Overlook shelter	<u>\$10,900</u>
	<b>\$101,100</b>

**\$1,014,495**

## Conclusion

Casper Mountain is an outstanding recreational resource for Natrona County residents, and visitors from throughout Wyoming, the nation, and the world. While the mountain has been a popular area for many years, the number of users and range of activities has increased dramatically. To keep abreast of the demand, Natrona County needs to upgrade the facilities that are there and provide for the new interests and activities.

The campgrounds and day use areas in Casper Mountain Park, at the Archery Range, Crimson Dawn, Ponderosa Park, and Rotary Park were evaluated by the consultant. Discussions were held with stakeholders and user groups to gain an understanding of their concerns, goals and desires. Two public meetings were held to hear from general users and gain feedback on the conclusions and recommendations formulated.

General objectives to be addressed in formulating the improvements were identified. The objectives include: better circulation for trail users, well defined public area boundaries, improved information center for visitors, and better motorized traffic management. The improvements outlined for the individual areas took into account these objectives.

The study did not look at general maintenance but at system upgrades and expansion. Specific improvements like campsites, shelters, internal trails, and parking areas have been identified for the areas studied. The typical cost of the recommended improvements is provided. The estimated overall cost of installing the identified improvements is \$1,000,000. This does not include the cost of removing trees and rough grading that may be significant if handled by contractors. If



volunteer groups or fire suppression dollars can be used to prepare the sites for the improvements the overall cost can be much less.

Finally, project priorities have been provided by area. Safety issues are found near the top of the list and signage and wayfinding systems are generally toward the bottom. It will take a period of years to implement the plan and the priorities will likely change. Discussions need to be ongoing regarding the changing recreational needs of area residents and visitors to ensure that the limited dollars are spent in the most effective manner.

