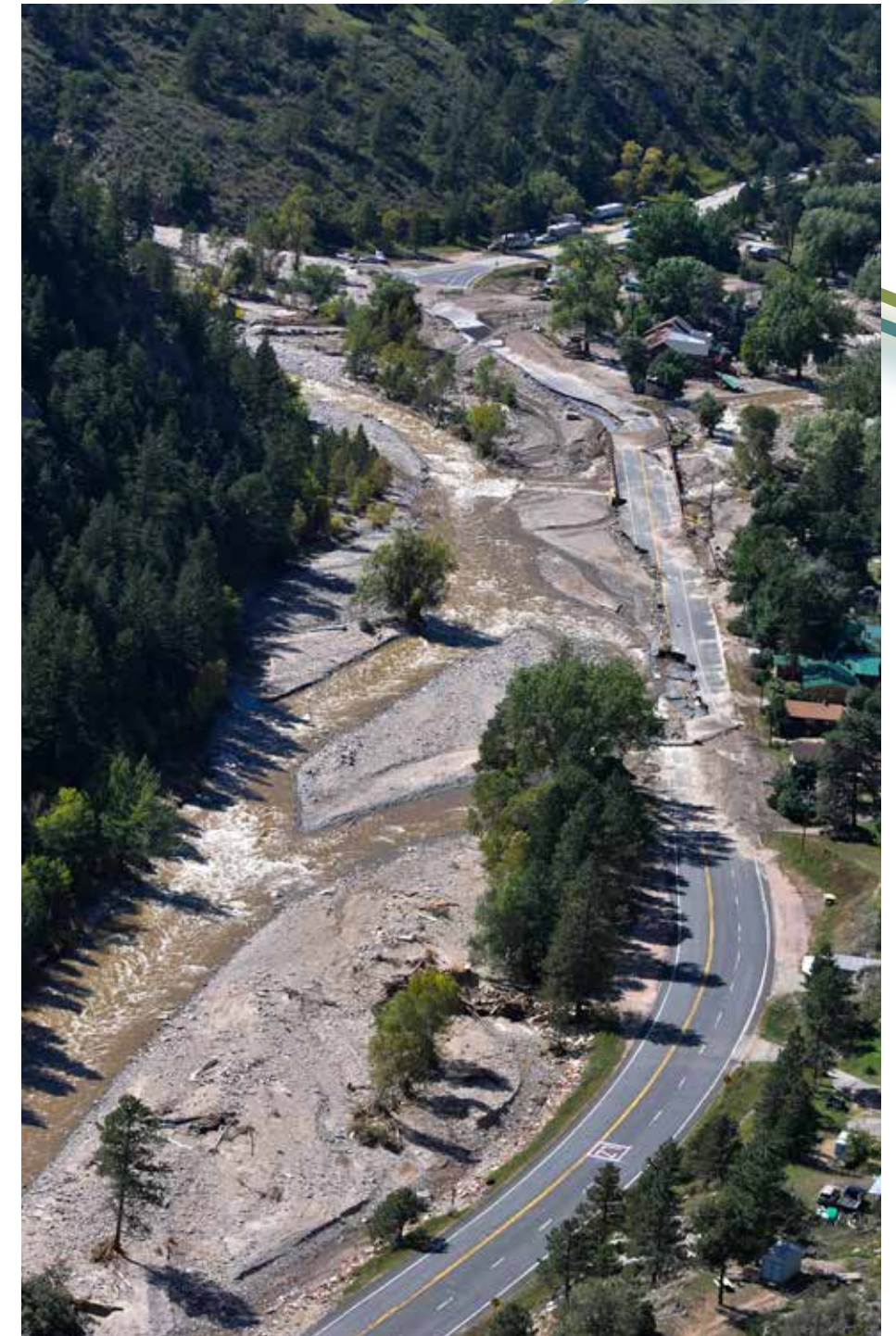


A BIGGER VISION FOR THE BIG T: A RECREATION AND CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT





Prepared for Larimer County and the City of Loveland by Logan Simpson

Cover images left to right Fishing the Big Thompson River. Photo by Jay Zimmerman; Big Thompson River at City of Loveland Natural Area pre-flood habitat. Photo by Brian Hayes; Forks Park near Drake post-flood, CDOT, September 2013.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. PROJECT PURPOSE

Imagine.....	1
Summary of 1976 and 2013 Big Thompson Flood Impacts	3
Existing Plan Direction	4
Existing Plans & Public Feedback Table	5
Planning for the Vision.....	6
Public Involvement Summary	6
Summary of Public Outreach.....	6
Recreation	7
Conservation	7
Partners Involved.....	7
Timeline.....	7
Case Study: South Platte Greenway: A Dream Come True.....	8
A Bigger Vision for the Big T	8
Project Goals and Other Outcomes	8

CHAPTER 2. PRE- AND POST-FLOOD CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Big Thompson River Natural and Recreational Resources	9
Terrestrial Habitat.....	9
Riparian Habitat	9
Fisheries	10
Aquatic Habitat	12
Hydrology	12
CR 43 and US 34 Reconstruction	13
Land Use	13
Case Study: Carrots (Land Conservation Funding) + Sticks (Floodplain Regulations) Conserve the Poudre River's Urban Floodplain	13
Conserved Lands in Big Thompson Study Area.....	15
Recreation and Tourism	16
Comparison of Pre-Flood / Post-Flood Recreation Facilities (Damage Assessment).....	17

CHAPTER 3. A BIGGER VISION

Priority Projects.....	20
Case Study: Choreographed Experiences in the Cache la Poudre River Canyon.....	20
Loveland West+ Big Thompson Multi-Use Trail.....	26
Glade Park	26
Narrows Park.....	27
Cedar Cove + Trailhead/Trail	27
Indian Village Area	28
Forks Park and Upper Drake Area	28
Fishing Pier.....	29
Sleepy Hollow Area.....	29
Estes Park Gateway.....	30
Glen Haven Downtown / Crosier Mountain Trailhead	30
Vision Plan Map.....	32
Use of Other Larimer County and Loveland Properties	33
.....	33
Off-Street Trail System Improvements	34
US 34 Bicycle Safety Improvements ..	35

CHAPTER 4. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Building Back Better Than Before	37
Recreation Best Management Practices	37
Education.....	37
Access.....	37
Signage	37
Case Study: Multiple Agency Management: the Arkansas Headwater Recreation Area	38
Partnership Resiliency	38
River and Ecosystem Resiliency	39
Land Use and Infrastructure Resiliency.....	40
River Restoration Recommendations ..	41
Funding the Future	43

ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

APPENDIX B. MANAGEMENT OF LARIMER COUNTY AND CITY OF LOVELAND EXISTING PROPERTIES

APPENDIX C. BIG THOMPSON RIVER RESTORATION MASTER PLAN CONCEPTUAL TREATMENT PLANS

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CHAPTER 1. PROJECT PURPOSE

Imagine a future storm event where intense rains, similar to those experienced in 1976 and again in 2013, bring flows in the Big Thompson River to extreme flood levels. Except this time, the effects are different. No homes or businesses are destroyed and no one is killed or injured. After the storm passes, the Big T's natural floodplain continues to provide open space, river parks, recreation, habitat for wildlife and fish, a system of hiking and biking trails, and permanently conserved working farms and ranches. Of course the river is changed by flood events, erosion and sedimentation continues to occur, and recreation facilities located in the floodplain are likely to require some level of repair and maintenance. However, the floodplain continues to store and dissipate flood waters as part of a normal flood cycle. The difference is that in this scenario, development in Estes Park, Loveland, and in unincorporated Larimer County occurred wisely and in suitable locations, and in ways that do not pass the cost of flooding on to other properties, other communities, or future generations.

This is a future envisioned by Larimer County and the City of Loveland, in concert with the Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition (BTRRC) and local and state agencies. This partnership has embarked on a careful examination of damaged recreation and conservation properties and potential new opportunities along 40 miles of the mainstem and North Fork of the Big Thompson River between the municipal boundaries of Loveland and Estes Park. In doing so, there is a keen awareness of needing to address a bigger vision for the Big Thompson, one that will involve the cooperation of a host of agencies, interests, and property owners.

The extreme flooding that occurred along the mainstem and North Fork of the Big Thompson River in September 2013 resulted in two fatalities, severe erosion and sediment deposition, 47 homes and 30 bridges destroyed with much more extensive damage to property and critical infrastructure, and loss of significant economic, riparian, aquatic, recreation and scenic resources. The river's riparian and aquatic habitat was severely damaged in most locations, impacting wildlife and devastating the recreational fishery and the ecological functions provided by vegetation. In addition, hundreds of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, and many of these properties are unsuitable for reconstruction or future development. Large portions of US Highway 34 and County Road 43 were also destroyed, severing the connections between Loveland and Estes Park, and stranding the communities of Drake, Glen Haven and Cedar Park,

as well as canyon residents. Evacuation routes and emergency services were obstructed by a lack of access. Access to Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the largest tourist attractions in Colorado and a major contributor to the local, regional and state economy, was cut off.

An estimated 1.8 million people travel through the canyon annually. Many of these are recreationists who historically fished, picnicked, or just lingered by the river at one of the Big Thompson recreation sites. This displacement is not only a lost opportunity for visitors to the region, business owners, and Colorado residents alike, it has also resulted in increased pressure on other sites on the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, such as the Poudre River Canyon.

A regional vision for restoring and enhancing public recreational opportunities and conserving lands along the river corridor is needed to prioritize strategic investment, coordinate funding strategies, and facilitate unified decision-making among stakeholders. The plan can serve to coalesce community support for future conservation and recreation initiatives and catalyze actions needed to implement strategic projects. Given the importance of the "Big T" and its role as a gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, the issue at hand is not why should we rebuild parks, restore resources, and enhance the setting. Rather, it is how can we do this most wisely and effectively while leveraging available funding.



Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, before and after the 2013 flood. Source: City of Loveland

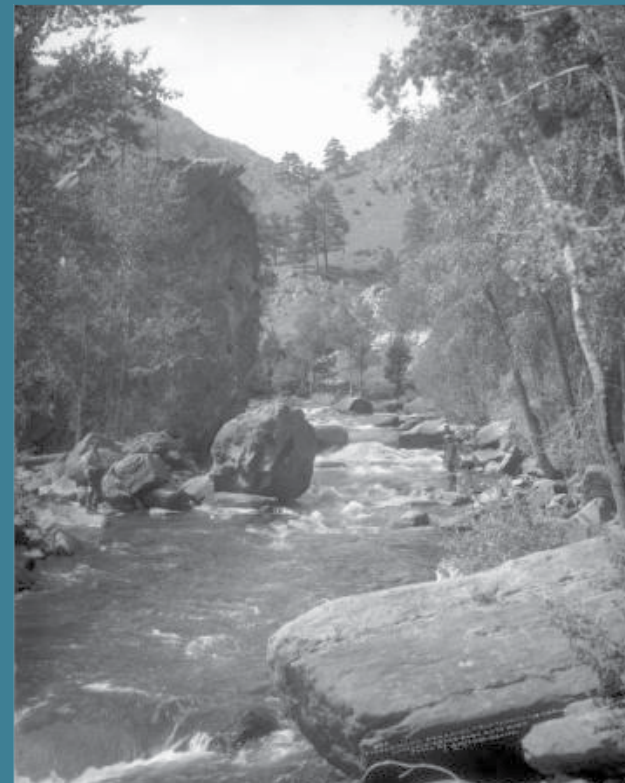
Both the Urban Land Institute (ULI) study¹ and the recently adopted Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan (2015) call for a regional Vision Plan for conservation and recreation along the Big Thompson River. Such a vision is needed to coordinate and leverage funding for improvements, operations and maintenance, and to facilitate interactions among river stakeholders. The ULI report challenged

¹ Northern Colorado Estes Park, Fort Collins, and Loveland: Connected Systems, Connected Futures: Building for Resilience and Prosperity (2014) commissioned by Loveland, Estes Park, and Fort Collins, contained a number of recommendations regarding Big Thompson River resiliency and reconstruction efforts that are cited throughout this study. The report can be accessed at http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/NorthernColorado_PanelReport_lo.pdf

Northern Colorado to “clarify the vision of the future – for each town and, more importantly, the larger region... That vision plan can help prioritize land acquisition and easements, work to integrate the river into the green infrastructure for regional resilience, coordinate funding strategies for implementation efforts... [and] provide strategic coordination of preventative measures” (ULI 2014). This study fulfills this ambition.

But it is only the beginning.

HISTORIC RECREATIONAL USE



Source: Denver Public Library, Fisherman's Paradise ca. ~1909

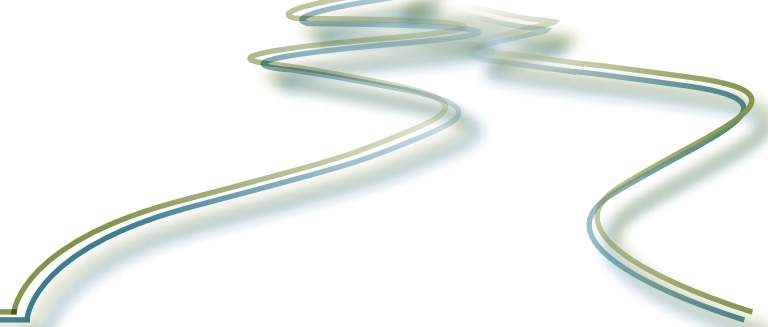


Source: Denver Public Library, Picnic along the Big Thompson ca. 1910-1920

The Big Thompson River and its canyon has long been one of the special places in Colorado. Its scenic beauty, dramatic canyon walls, abundant wildlife and flowing waters have been drawing visitors for well over a century. The canyon is renowned as a place to enjoy a scenic drive, stop for a picnic, or fish for trout.

The origin of the river's name is the subject of some debate. One theory is that it was named for David Thompson, a renowned explorer who is not known to have ever been in Colorado. Other theories identify various early day explorers, ranging from a member of John Fremont's party to a prospector killed by Indians during the California gold rush. None of these theories stand up to scrutiny. The Loveland Historical Society asserts that the most likely candidate for the river's name is Phillip Thompson, an early day fur trader who operated out of Fort Vasquez in the early 1830's (<http://lovelandhistorical.org/>). Regardless of the source of its name, the river was well documented by the second half of the 1800's. But the canyon's inaccessibility prevented many visitors from actually seeing it until the first road was developed through the Narrows in 1904. This road was primitive and narrow but began the process of road improvements that ultimately led to stage coach travel, followed by Stanley Steamers in the first decades of the 1900's. With increased travel, the demand for hotels and other services increased, leading to the development of the Forks Hotel at Drake and the Mont Rose Inn in Cedar Cove.

Even with these improvements, the road remained primitive, as described by Sharlyn Wamsley in “Reflections on the River”: “Until 1928 the road was one lane with turnouts for passing cars.” It wasn't until the late 1930's that an improved, modern highway was completed, which stimulated the development of numerous tourist facilities and summer homes, hundreds of which have since been damaged or washed away by the floods of 1976 and 2013.



SUMMARY OF 1976 AND 2013 BIG THOMPSON FLOOD IMPACTS

Flooding in the Big Thompson River watershed is part of a recurring natural cycle. Prior to the 2013 flood, the last major event occurred in 1976, a span of only 37 years. With two catastrophic floods indelibly stamped in our memory, and because of the natural course of flood events in a system such as this, we can be confident that the river will flood again. The river's position in a steep, narrow canyon makes it prone to damaging flooding, which has been exacerbated by development that has constricted the floodway even further. US 34 and residential and tourist development occupy land that was formerly part of the Big Thompson River floodplain. The constricted channel increases flow velocities and the erosive power of the water it carries. This, in turn, results in bank scouring and added sediment, which is then carried downstream and deposited at locations where additional damage may occur.

The 1976 Big Thompson flood is known as the deadliest flood in Colorado's history. On July 31st of that year, over a foot of rain fell in a period of 24 hours, producing a wall of water 20 feet high that scoured the canyon and carried away buildings, cars and the people within them. Over 140 lives were lost and an estimated \$38 million in property damage resulted.

The 1976 flood generated an estimated maximum discharge of approximately 31,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the mouth of the canyon. This flood started in the evening and was over by the next day. In contrast, the 2013 flood generated an estimated discharge of approximately 15,500 cfs at the mouth of the canyon with higher than normal flows lasting for over a week. The reduced peak flows and storm surge in 2013 resulted in far fewer fatalities. However, the extended duration of high flows of the 2013 flood event created more significant erosion and sedimentation problems through much of the canyon and areas downstream of the canyon mouth. The 2013 flood also impacted more infrastructure in the lower plains.

The 2013 flood resulted from a long-duration precipitation event, which resulted in about 10 inches of rain falling over the course of four days in Estes Park and vicinity. The 2013 flood reached record levels, wiping out dozens of businesses including almost all of the storefronts in Glen Haven and the iconic Indian Village, which had also been swept away in the 1976 flood but rebuilt.

In 2013, damages to roads and infrastructure were estimated to total between \$80-100 million, excluding impacts to private roads. More than 80 properties were determined to be over 51% damaged. Properties with this level of damage located in the regulated floodway are not eligible to be rebuilt.



Source: David Cupp, *The Denver Post*, August 2, 1976

[by the numbers]

an approximate assessment of damages from two recent floods

1976

144 lives lost
418 homes destroyed
138 homes damaged
52 businesses destroyed

2013

2 lives lost
47 homes destroyed
Approximately 88 homes in floodplain to be razed and/or removed
338 homes substantially damaged (requiring building permit for repair)
20 miles of roads damaged or destroyed
30 bridges completely destroyed
35 bridges severely damaged



MOREY WILDLIFE RESERVE

Known as an abundant oasis for birds, deer, elk and turtles and a refuge for nature lovers, Morey Wildlife Reserve was a picturesque restored gravel-mine pond in west Loveland. During the 2013 flood, the river changed course, and forged a path through the reserve and onto the Mariana Butte Golf Course, immediately east of the open space. The result is that the entire pond – covering a little more than 10 acres and 8 feet deep in places – is completely silted in. Today the landmark Morey pond resembles a moonscape. Restoring the reserve to be better than it was before means not re-excavating the silt, sediment and debris, and allowing nature to run its course, literally.

Morey Wildlife Reserve before and after the 2013 Flood. Source: City of Loveland

LARIMER COUNTY LAND USE CODE SECTION 4.2.2:

Substantial damage. Damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before-damaged condition would equal or exceed 50 percent of the market value of the structure just prior to when the damage occurred.

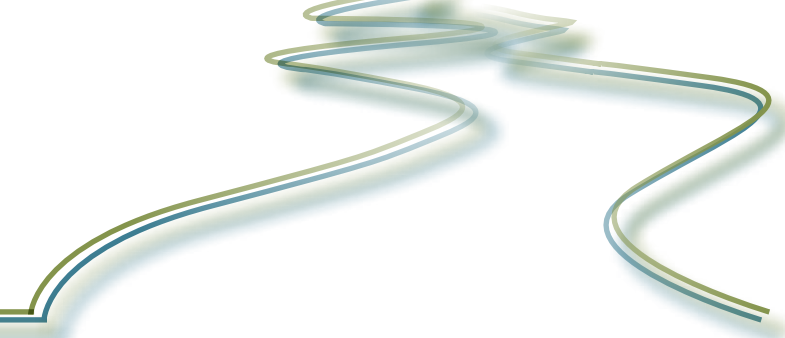
Substantial improvement. Any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure before “start of construction” of the improvement. The value of the structure shall be determined by the local jurisdiction having land use authority in the area of interest. This includes structures which have incurred “substantial damage”, regardless of the actual repair work performed. The term does not, however, include either: 1.) Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary conditions or 2.) Any alteration of a “historic structure” provided that the alteration will not preclude the structure’s continued designation as a “historic structure.”

The river corridor is a patchwork of public (City/County/US Forest Service) and private land holdings that include existing residential and commercial development, recreational use sites, agricultural lands, and active or reclaimed gravel operations. Land ownership directly adjacent to the river is primarily private; however, the US Forest Service manages the majority of the upland areas. County ownership in the corridor is a result of the acquisition of properties substantially damaged by the 1976 Flood. These county lands are managed by Larimer County Natural Resources Department, which converted four of these properties into public parks. City of Loveland ownership in the canyon dates back to the 1930’s, when the City’s first hydro-electric plant was built in the current location of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. The 1976 flood destroyed the power plant and with its reconstruction, the City developed the mountain park for public use of the site. The City also owns land near the mouth of the canyon, for municipal water treatment, storage and conveyance, as well as properties just west of the City limits, for conservation and recreation purposes.

A broad goal of this plan is to reduce potential future impacts from flooding by helping to keep high risk lands in the floodplain free of permanent structures and primarily in a natural condition through recreation or conservation uses.

EXISTING PLAN DIRECTION

Public preferences have clearly expressed a need to focus on land conservation and recreation within the Big Thompson Canyon. The Larimer County Help Preserve Open Space Ballot language, approved in 1995 and overwhelmingly extended in 2014 by an 82% approval, which provides funding to both Larimer County and the City of Loveland, specifically allows revenues to be used for trails and passive recreational facilities: “Lands considered highly desirable for preservation using revenue from Larimer County’s attributable share and in cooperative partnerships with other entities include... riparian lands and access to riparian lands along the Big Thompson River.” As a result, current master planning efforts that included public outreach by the County and City of Loveland have included the Big Thompson River as a priority.



Existing Plans & Public Feedback Table

Outreach during this study confirmed and expanded upon the significant input received in prior outreach and plans such as:

Plan	Plan Goals/Recommendations	Public Input Highlight
Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan (2015)	<p>This plan reaffirmed the Open Lands Program’s Role in continuing conservation and recreation efforts in the Big Thompson River and North Fork corridors; a commitment to partnerships to conserve lands along these rivers to enhance their long-term ecological functions, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty; and supporting regional coalitions like the BTRRC that serve as a knowledge-sharing network and strategically coordinate watershed planning and preventative measures for flooding and drought through conservation mechanisms. The master plan carries forward a regional trail along the Big Thompson River as a priority from the 2001 plan.</p>	<p>“Ecological restoration/improvement of rivers is important now and will be critical to development...and maintaining water quality to allow sustainable human population growth.” -Survey Respondent</p> <p>“Acquiring easements adjacent to or near streams and rivers (is an important priority for acquisition).” -Survey Respondent</p>
City of Loveland Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2014)	<p>This plan identifies potential open lands including the Big Thompson River 100-year floodplain, lands surrounding Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, Cedar Creek, Green Ridge Glade, and the Wild Nature Reserve/Morey Wildlife Reserve area. The Big Thompson River is Loveland’s only natural waterway and contains more than one-fifth of all the forests, ponds, riparian and upland habitat surveyed within the study City of Loveland Natural Areas Sites (2008). Thus, the river is an extremely important natural resource and this plan recommends protection techniques to improve and enhance the corridor for both wildlife and human use.</p> <p>The plan also found that Loveland provides fewer trails and pathways and less accessible open space acreage on average than peer communities of Fort Collins and Longmont. The study also concluded that Loveland would need to increase its acres of parkland and open space and miles of hard and soft-surfaced trails to maintain current service levels and be well-positioned to provide abundant recreational opportunities as it grows in the future.</p>	<p>“Although open lands are important for environmental stewardship, residents indicated that the most important reason to acquire open lands is to increase opportunities for outdoor recreation (e.g. hiking, biking, fishing, rafting, camping, etc.). In fact, “hiking/nature walks” is the top activity people would like to participate in more frequently. Access also includes views and vistas of the surrounding landscape and its natural assets. Respondents in many outreach forums noted a desire for more water access to support recreation activities such as swimming, fishing, tubing and rafting. Fishing had the highest latent demand of any recreation activity—meaning that residents would like to fish more frequently if the resources and opportunities existed to do so.” -Key Survey Results</p>
Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan (2014)	<p>This plan describes general channel stabilization and design concepts for reaches of the Big Thompson and North Fork rivers, including public lands that were used for recreation. The plan includes river restoration recommendations and identifies areas with high potential for aquatic and riparian habitat enhancements that would significantly improve the ecology of the area. The plan has data that can be used to assess threats associated with flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.</p> <p>No specific recommendations were developed regarding land conservation for natural resource, recreation or scenic values, though these activities would complement the master plan’s intent.</p>	<p>Riparian area repair, river bank restoration and stabilization were key priorities: “the loss of riverside vegetation results in a faster moving river with greater rate of erosion, impacting downstream properties.” -Survey Respondent</p>
Our Lands-Our Future (2013)	<p>Results from this study’s outreach confirmed and expanded upon the significant input received in prior studies, such as the Our Lands- Our Future county-wide surveys and outreach in 2012 and 2013. When asked “How would you allocate \$100 in public funds?” from a list of 15 categories, the number one priority was “Buy land or acquire rights to protect lakes, rivers, streams, and preserve water quality” (Larimer County 2013). Three other priorities were not far behind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy land or acquire rights to protect wildlife habitat and rare species • Buy land or acquire rights for more outdoor recreation opportunities (hiking, walking, biking, horseback riding) • Buy land or acquire rights to create greenways or trail corridors that connect communities and parks 	<p>“We used to be the #1 place to live, let’s get that back and provide more opportunities to have fun in the mountains - cleaning the river, and volunteer opportunities for people to help out in the restoration.” -Survey Respondent</p>

This table provides a brief overview of the adopted plans and public input highlighting the unique role that the Big Thompson River plays in watershed protection and outdoor recreation. A full summary of existing plans policies is available in Appendix A.

PLANNING FOR THE VISION

Developing the Vision for the Big Thompson River corridor took place over the course of six months and involved members of the community, City of Loveland and Larimer County elected officials and board members, and representatives of the partner agencies and organizations. Partners include Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), US Forest Service (USFS), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Estes Valley Land Trust (EVL), Estes Valley Recreation and Parks District (EVRPD), and the Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition (BTRRC). Outreach included interviews with recreation providers, land managers, public forums, the BTRRC steering committee and mailing lists, and online surveys.



Source: Logan Simpson

Partner agencies and organizations participated in four technical advisory committee worksessions to discuss and coordinate the plan development and plan implementation.

Public Involvement Summary

Plan Development	Review and Approval
<p><u>Planning Team</u></p> <p>Larimer County Natural Resources, City of Loveland Open Lands, Logan Simpson</p> <p><u>Technical Advisory Committee/Partners</u></p> <p>CDOT, CPW, USFS, Other Departments of Larimer County and City of Loveland, Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition</p>	<p><u>Larimer County</u></p> <p>Open Lands Advisory Board Board of County Commissioners</p> <p><u>City of Loveland</u></p> <p>Open Lands Advisory Commission City Council</p>
Public and Stakeholder Participation	
<p><u>Participants</u></p> <p>County-wide Participation Study Area Landowners and Residents Recreation Groups Conservation Interests</p>	<p><u>Events</u></p> <p>Open House and Online Survey #1: Scoping Open House and Online Survey #2: Draft Vision Plan Website and Fact Sheet OLAB and OLAC tours</p>

Summary of Public Outreach

Public meetings were attended by residents of the Big Thompson Canyon but also included residents from other parts of Larimer County and representatives of recreation groups and conservation interests.

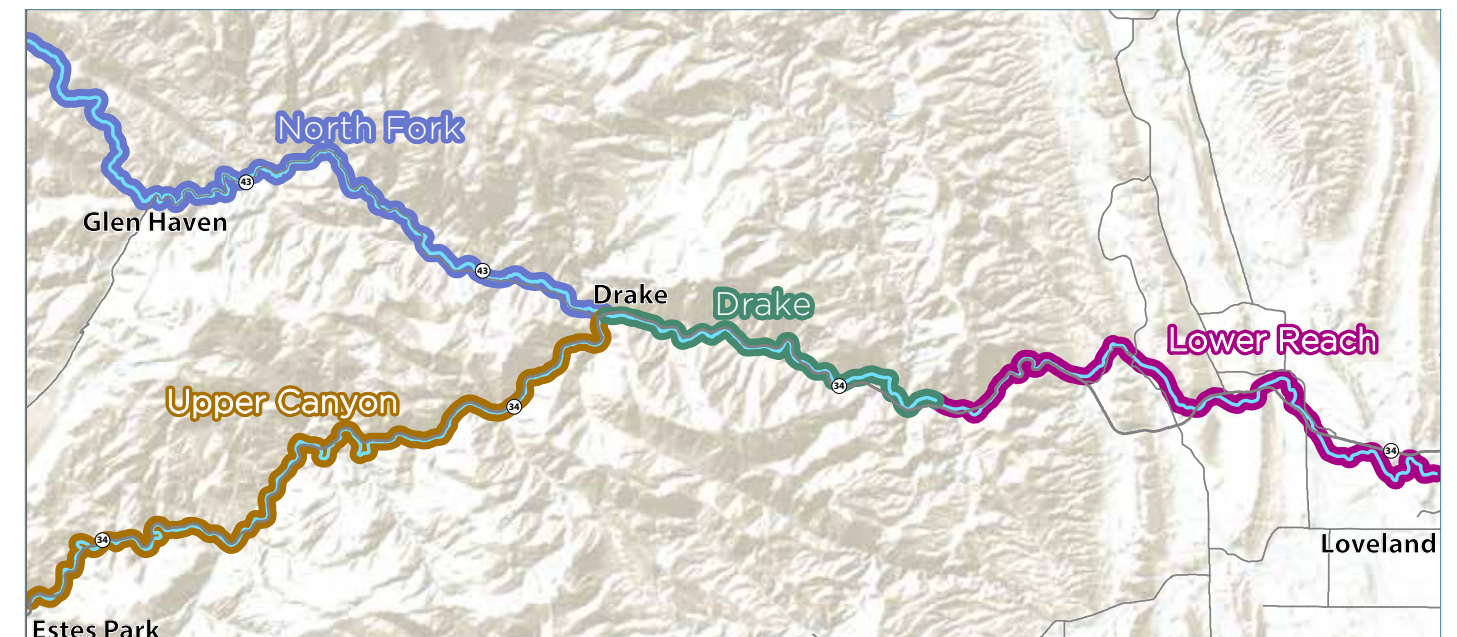
The public meetings were a one-stop-shop, public open house format held to provide information on the intent of the planning effort and the activities of various agency partners and to receive feedback from Big Thompson Corridor stakeholders on the Bigger Vision for the Big T. Project updates also included two related efforts:

- CDOT: status of the US 34 redesign effort and timeframe for constructing permanent repairs.
- Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition: presentation of the final BTRRC Restoration Master Plan and capacity-building for its implementation.



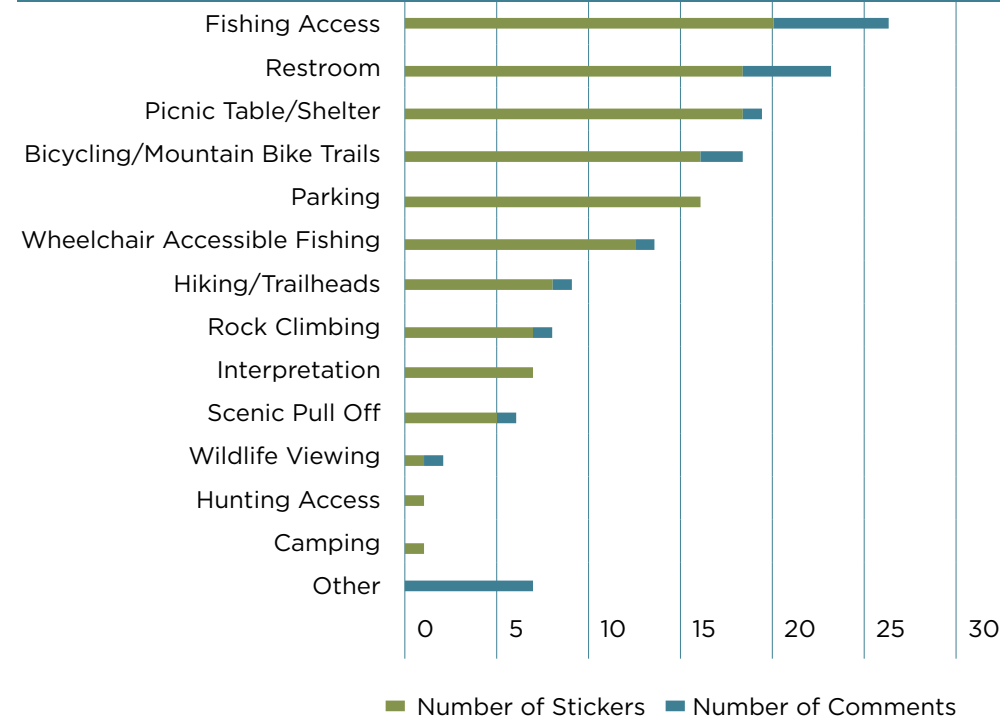
Source: Logan Simpson

Informational and interactive boards were prepared and included displays on the purpose of the meeting, goals and outcomes of the project study, and the status of conservation and recreation resources in the study area. Display materials presented at the meetings were organized by river reach, which included the North Fork, Upper Canyon, Drake, and Lower Reach.



At the February 12, 2015 public open house, participants were asked to place stickers representing desired recreation uses and facilities at their preferred locations, as well as provide comments on each type of use and the opportunities that could occur along each river reach. The majority of the feedback emphasized restoring past uses, such as fishing access, restrooms, and picnic tables. There was also strong interest in bicycle safety improvements to US 34 and in reconstructing a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier.

Public Recreation Priorities (February 2015)



Major themes expressed by meeting attendees included:

Recreation

- Importance of restoring previously existing recreation sites
- Improving access to the river for fishing, including safe pull-off locations
- Install road biking lanes along US 34 and CR 43 along with improving mountain biking on US Forest Service trails
- Support for respecting private property and strategies to minimize trespassing
- Maintaining highway safety
- Need for public restrooms along the corridor
- Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park was frequently mentioned as a top priority for rebuild. Forks Park was also identified an important location.
- Desire to construct a sustainable trail connecting the Big Thompson River to the Crosier Mountain or Round Mountain Trail Systems, along with improving the existing trails throughout the canyon.

Conservation

- Identified conservation opportunities focused on fisheries and restoration of a healthy river ecosystem. Other comments highlighted the importance of restoring vegetation and protecting floodplains from encroachment through the use of conservation easements and other protection strategies.

Timeline

Analysis of Existing Protected Land and Recreation Infrastructure

October- December 2014

Evaluate the Feasibility of Recreation and Conservation Opportunities

Public Meeting #1, January - March 2015

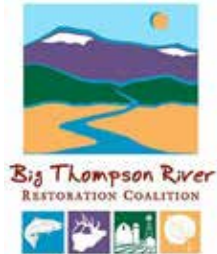
Present Draft Vision Plan

Public Meeting #2, April- May 2015

Final Vision and Assessment

June 2015

Partners Involved



CHAPTER 2. PRE- AND POST-FLOOD CONDITION ASSESSMENT

BIG THOMPSON RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES

The Big Thompson Canyon is home to a wide array of flora and fauna including trout and other aquatic species, forested uplands with extensive ponderosa pine forests, and rocky, inaccessible slopes that shelter bighorn sheep. This chapter summarizes some of the natural values that occur in this setting.

Terrestrial Habitat

Protection and enhancement of the natural environment along the river is constrained by residential and commercial land uses and recreation activities. The impact of increasing recreation levels on the river's natural environment is slowly becoming apparent. Informal trails, invasive weeds, trash, dog feces and human activity affect the habitat of the river. The level and extent of human activity may also affect sensitive wildlife habitats that support a wide variety of species, including big and small game species, as well as numerous non-game amphibian, mammal and bird species, including critical raptor nesting and roosting sites. Therefore, it is important to provide a comprehensive recreation plan that provides recommendations for area specific restoration and habitat protection practices.

Topography of the corridor is mostly canyon, with steep cliffs and mountains on both sides. The river winds through the canyon creating a unique environment where only particular wildlife can thrive.

Bighorn sheep, the state animal for Colorado, are a prominent species throughout the Big Thompson Canyon, which provides an important lambing area, water source, and migration corridor. Many people stop along US 34 to view bighorn sheep and interpretive signage that existed at the Idylwilde Reservoir rest stop prior to the 2013 Flood.

Bighorn sheep live on sunny mountain slopes, usually above 8,000 feet, where there is plenty of grass and a clear uphill escape route. Stocky-bodied with strong legs, bighorn sheep are well-designed for bounding over mountain slopes. Sheep do not pioneer new range or move to new habitats easily, even those adjacent to areas in current use. Limited habitat can lead to overcrowding, stressing the animals and spreading disease.

Riparian Habitat

An evaluation of riparian vegetation was conducted by Alpine Ecological Resources, as part of the Big Thompson Restoration Master Plan. The following summary is taken from the Restoration Master Plan (2014). The 2013 flooding removed or damaged much of the riparian vegetation along the Big Thompson River and North Fork. The report also notes that historic land use practices in the canyon had already resulted in the loss or degradation of riparian habitat at many locations.

Riparian vegetation is dependent on both surface and groundwater associated with the river and on the Big Thompson typically consists of an overstory dominated by cottonwood (*Populus* spp.) and a shrub layer dominated by willow (*Salix* spp.). At many locations above 6,000 feet, the shrub layer is dominated by water birch (*Betula occidentalis*) or thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana* spp. *tenuifolia*) instead of willow.

The headwaters of the Big Thompson River are located in Rocky Mountain National Park and then the river traverses through Estes Park and into the upper canyon. The large majority of the upper canyon segment generally lacks floodplain areas due to the narrowness of the canyon. Also, most of the small areas of floodplain remaining have little restoration potential since they contain US 34 and/or residential development. Areas with low restoration potential are confined, very rocky, and/or have exposed bedrock in and along the channel. The degree to which key services are provided depends on many factors, including the relative size of the habitat/floodplain. For instance, reaches along the North



Bighorn Sheep along US 34. Source: Charlie Johnson



Representative photographs showing change in riparian vegetation before and after the 2013 Flood (photos not taken in precisely the same location). Source: Google Earth (top); Tom Keith.

Fork and portions of the Big Thompson west of Loveland are ideal locations to restore aquatic habitat. However some sections of narrow canyons are bounded by exposed bedrock and have less potential for riparian vegetation habitat (and the resulting services) than the broad floodplain of the lower reaches.

Per the 2014 Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan, restoration potential in the lower canyon is highly varied. Areas with high restoration potential generally have a wider undeveloped floodplain with little or no riparian vegetation remaining. Such areas typically occur where the channel gradient is slightly lower and substantial sediment deposition occurred. Remaining riparian vegetation is typically limited to widely scattered cottonwoods and a few other tree and shrub species.

Reaches with a lower restoration potential in the lower canyon are similar to those in the upper canyon and have limited floodplain areas and modifications from US 34 and/or residential development. The Narrows section has a very low restoration potential due to the narrow, rocky canyon setting with extensive exposed bedrock.

Lower reaches east of the Narrows generally have a higher restoration potential. Generally, the reaches with higher restoration potential contain large areas of undeveloped land, including gravel ponds. Many areas lack riparian vegetation, either from scouring or deposition associated with the flooding. Even before the flood, some of these lacked riparian vegetation due to down-cutting and/or the installation of levees that disconnected the river from its floodplain. Typically, riparian vegetation, both pre- and post-flood, consists of a narrow band of cottonwoods and other trees. A few shrubs are present immediately adjacent to the channel.

Restoration potential along the North Fork and tributaries are highly varied with most of the upper reaches having a lower restoration potential, except for a segment of West Creek through the town of Glen Haven. The lower restoration potential is mainly due to a lack of undeveloped floodplain and the natural absence of riparian vegetation. Most of the lower reaches have a higher restoration potential, including those areas with a wider undeveloped floodplain and little or no riparian vegetation.

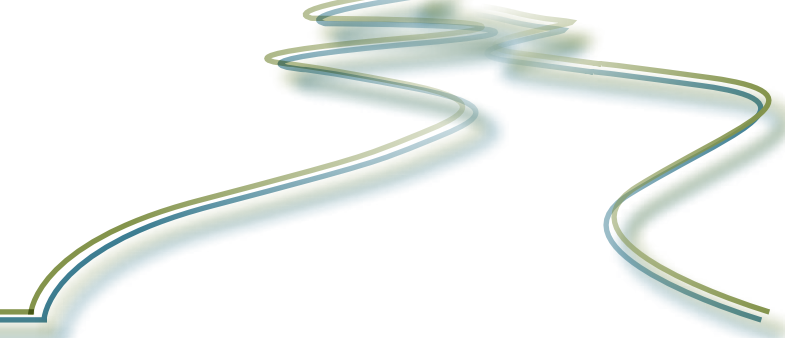
Larimer County and the City of Loveland currently manage several open spaces along the North Fork and mainstem of the Big Thompson River. Larimer County recently completed its Open Lands Master Plan that provides priorities and strategies for management. The plan specifies the importance to complete substantial river restoration work on county lands both in-stream and along the banks to re-establish and enhance a functioning ecosystem both in the canyon and below. Proper land management will benefit all wildlife species by reducing fragmentation, preserving travel corridors, and allowing wildlife to more naturally disperse.

Fisheries

The natural condition of the Big Thompson River has been dramatically altered from its natural state. Riprap, diversions, dams and other human-made features have altered the hydrological regime of the river and its floodplain, affecting both aquatic and terrestrial habitat potential. The 2013 flood scoured the river; moving large boulders, changing courses in some locations, removing vegetation and causing debris and sediment to accumulate in stream corridors. Although a natural process that provides benefits from a river function and ecological perspective, there may be places where significant debris/sediment accumulation may increase the risk or likelihood of issues during future flooding.

The Idylwilde Dam was part of a hydroelectric generating system managed by City of Loveland Water and Power, and was the only obstruction between the Olympus Dam and the water diversion at the canyon mouth. The Idylwilde Dam was located on USFS land and was damaged beyond repair by the 2013 flood. Following the dam's removal and decommissioning by the City of Loveland, the USFS has resumed management of the property. Removal of this dam returns this section of river to a more natural state to benefit the ecosystem, particularly the fisheries.

The 2013 flood caused the complete collapse of the fisheries, especially downstream of Glen Comfort (mile marker 67). Anglers flock to the Big Thompson River to fish for rainbow and brown trout. Fish counts were completed in fall 2014 revealing the drastic reduction in fish population. However, populations are strong in the upper reaches and those trout will serve to repopulate a natural/wild population. The Big Thompson River is not stocked with hatchery fish.



Channelization of the Big Thompson River, after the 2013 Flood, reduced trout abundance by 90-100% at most locations surveyed. For example, a section of the Big Thompson River at Drake contained 3,206 trout per river mile when surveyed in September 2012. No fish were found at this same location in November 2013 following channelization work. Farther upstream, near the Waltonia Bridge, trout abundance was reduced from 5,895 fish per mile in September 2012 to 130 fish per mile in October 2013. Sections of the Big Thompson River that were not artificially channelized fared much better in terms of trout abundance. The handicap fishing pier access site is located near Highway 34 mile marker 72 and yielded 3,769 trout per mile in October 2011. Following the 2013 flood, this same section contained 4,368 trout per mile, a 16% increase. Relatively little restoration work is needed for sections of the Big Thompson River where post-flood landscapes were not altered or channelized during post-flood reconstruction activities.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is the lead agency responsible for fisheries management of public waters in Colorado. The primary tool that guides fisheries management in rivers is the multiple-pass electrofishing survey. Electrofishing is a common method used to sample fish populations and determine abundance, density, species composition, and fish condition. These surveys monitor fish populations and identify the impacts of flooding, wildfire, fish disease, competition, and more. These surveys are used to evaluate fishing regulations, the need for reintroduction via stocking, the need for habitat improvement, as well as the success of stream restoration projects. Electrofishing surveys are conducted regularly in all major rivers in the Colorado Front Range, and provide a valuable dataset for evaluating the effects of both the flood and emergency reconstruction efforts on these fisheries. In general, post-flood electrofishing surveys conducted in the Cache la Poudre River and Boulder Creek revealed limited damage and very limited channelization work. As a result, post-flood fishery assessments focused on the Big Thompson River and St. Vrain Creek, as large portions of these rivers were channelized to convey spring runoff and facilitate re-construction.



Source: Jay Zimmerman



Fishing Pier at mile marker 72. No post-flood channel work; number of trout actually increased post-flood. Source: CPW



Channelization near Drake. No fish were found at this location post-flood. Source: CPW



Trout per mile. Source: CPW, Fall 2014



Idylwilde Dam pre- (middle) and post- (bottom) 2013 flood. Sources: Loveland Water and Power, CDOT



Channelization near Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park.. Trout biomass was reduced by 92% post flood. Source: CPW

Aquatic Habitat

As part of the 2014 Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan, Miller Ecological Consultants, Inc. (MEC) conducted an assessment of aquatic habitat following the flood event of September 2013. The following summary of aquatic conditions is taken from the Restoration Master Plan.

Upper segments of the river generally fared better than downstream reaches in terms of damage to the aquatic ecosystem. The Upper Canyon segment (downstream from Olympus Dam to the confluence with the North Fork) remained the most intact following the flooding and the condition of aquatic habitat in this segment is generally good. Banks remain vegetated at most locations. MEC noted that several sites in this segment with a lower gradient would benefit from restoration efforts designed to restore the braided channel to a single thread. In addition, the report notes that some segments in this reach have a lack of riparian vegetation, which has a negative effect on aquatic habitat.

The most severe damage to aquatic habitat occurred in the Drake and Lower Reach sections (from the confluence with the North Fork downstream to Glade Road). Flood flows in these reaches resulted in large areas of the channel with sediment degradation and aggradation. Viestenz-Smith Park is representative of the type of damage that occurred. The condition of in-channel habitat at this location was rated as moderate to low. MEC also states that the river channel from the mouth of the canyon downstream to Glade Road was highly modified by the flood. This segment experienced both severe degradation and aggradation. The report further notes that some restoration activities have already occurred in this segment. The majority of the stream channel in the upper portion of this reach is riffle habitat that generally lacks run or pool habitat.

On the North Fork, the MEC report states that aquatic habitat restoration is recommended only in minor, localized areas. It further notes that the most severe flood damage occurred on West Creek and the mainstem of the North Fork near Glen Haven.

CPW has a vested interest in protecting the aquatic resources and managing the fisheries of the North Fork and mainstem of the Big Thompson River. The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has designated \$300,000 in grant funding to CPW/USFS to be used to restore large continuous sections of river open to public access. These larger parcels will potentially include:

- Downstream of Glen Comfort (0.9 miles)
- Upstream of the Waltonia bridge (2.9 miles)
- Confluence - Drake (0.4 miles); in conjunction with Wildland Restoration Volunteers
- Narrows upstream of the Dam store (1.5 miles)

In-stream work on all properties (public and private) will likely require a 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Project timing for work within the 404 permit should be restricted on timing to protect spawning trout.

Hydrology

The mainstem of the Big Thompson River is highly regulated by releases from Olympus Dam, which regulates flows for water supply purposes and was not designed to provide flood control. As a result of this regulation, flows in the Big Thompson River normally fall within a more narrow range than a typical mountain stream. Nevertheless, there is a substantial amount of variation in flow. During the 2014 primary recreational use season extending from May through October, flows at Cedar Cove ranged from a high of 1,340 cfs on May 31 to a low of approximately 60 cfs. Flows in the summer months of July and August typically ranged between 150-250 cfs¹.

American Whitewater states that boating in the canyon generally requires a minimum flow of 400 cfs, which only occurred on 18 days in 2014 during the primary use season. Flows above 400 cfs occurred during a period of less than a month (May 19 to June 14). Although flows above 400 cfs were recorded again in November, conditions at this time of year probably attract only more dedicated boating enthusiasts. At flows in the 400-600 cfs range, the river is considered a Class IV, rising to Class V when flows are in the 900-1200 cfs range. Both of these ratings are indicative of difficult to very difficult boating conditions requiring more advanced boating skills. It isn't clear at this point how the 2013 flood may have affected these ratings and overall boating experience on the river. Lower reaches of the river are also used for tubing.²

As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the Big Thompson River has an established history of flooding. According to a CDOT report, before the 2013 flood approximately 13 significant floods occurred in a period extending back to 1864. Although substantially smaller than the flooding in 1976 and 2013, all but one of these flood events resulted in damages to crops, homes, and businesses in the Loveland Area.³ This history underscores the need to account for flood events in land use decisions and in the planning and design of facilities and infrastructure.



Source: Jay Zimmerman

1 (http://www.dwr.state.co.us/SurfaceWater/data/detail_tabular.aspx?ID=BTABCMCO&MTYPE=DISCHRG)

2 (<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/361/#tab-flow>)

3 (Hydrologic Evaluation of the Big Thompson Watershed Post September 2013 Flood Event, CDOT, August 2014.)

BIG THOMPSON RIVER INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

CR 43 and US 34 Reconstruction

Many efforts are underway or have been completed to restore and repair the damage that was done in 2013. Immediately following the flood, Larimer County, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other agencies began exigent work on private property to temporarily stabilize banks and re-grade the roads. At the same time, CDOT began making temporary repairs to US 34 to restore access up and down the corridor. These repairs were completed in just a matter of months and were always considered to be a temporary fix. Currently, CDOT is redesigning the road and intends to begin constructing a new, long-term design later in 2015. This Recreation and Conservation plan has been coordinated with CDOT to the greatest extent possible.

The reconstruction of portions of CR 43 by Central Federal Lands (CFL) began in the fall of 2014. The reconstruction of CR 43 involves the permanent, accelerated reconstruction of 9.5 miles of roadway between Drake and Glen Haven. The project involves building a more resilient CR 43 by shifting the roadway away from the river onto bedrock and work to be done includes rock blasting, rebuilding bridges along CR 43, embankment armoring, restoring the river in areas impacted by roadway construction and asphalt paving. Work is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.

Land Use

Land use in the Big Thompson River corridor is a mix of recreation, residential, agricultural (in the lower reach), and some commercial uses. Local businesses dot the corridor. Land management ranges from all levels of government to private individuals. The Big Thompson River meanders through the Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forest. Locations where US 34 meets Forest Service lands are often used for hunting and fishing access. Although this study discusses primarily lands managed by the respective open lands programs at Larimer County and the City of Loveland, multiple departments within these municipalities also manage lands within the study area including utilities and road and bridge departments.

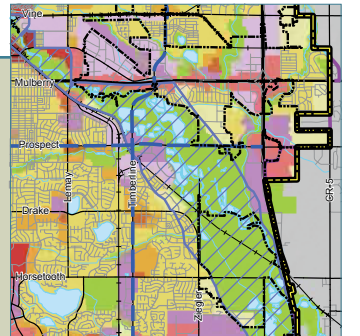
After the devastating flood of 1976, Larimer County acquired 164 substantially damaged parcels in the Big Thompson Canyon. Four of those parcels became designated County Parks and include public river access for fishing, picnicking, and general outdoor enjoyment of such a stunning canyon. Many of the remaining properties were being sold or had been sold in the 15 years prior to the 2013 Flood with building restrictions. Buyers were typically adjacent landowners.

Recreation and conservation should be compatible with County and municipal plans and land use goals, and should address new development occurring adjacent to the river. The great majority of the river corridor is zoned O-Open, which allows for residential uses and tourism-related lodging and related uses. The minimum lot size in this zone is 10 acres. Downstream of the Narrows, most of the river corridor is zoned FA-1, Farming, which allows similar uses as the O zone with the exception of most of the tourism accommodation uses. The minimum lot size in the FA-1 zone is 2.3 acres. Floodplain regulations in Larimer County require a setback of 100 feet from the centerline of the river.

In many places, existing land use is compatible with current recreational uses. In other areas, such as residential areas, conflicts from noise and trespassing occur during peak use periods.

Continued development along the river exacerbates natural resource and river function issues. Historically, adjacent land uses have channelized river segments and reduced connectivity to the adjacent floodplain, wetland and riparian areas. Federal regulations prohibit the destruction of wetlands, current county/city regulations limit development in riparian and floodplain areas, with provisions that the building is elevated above the base flood level and the required 50-foot setback <1 acre or 100 feet for more than one acre is maintained.

Case Study: Carrots (Land Conservation Funding) + Sticks (Floodplain Regulations) Conserve the Poudre River's Urban Floodplain



The community and City of Fort Collins has codified their commitment to protect the Cache La Poudre River and its floodplain that runs through the city's core. Land conservation funding (incentivizing private property owners to relocate) and floodplain regulations that discourage and prohibit development in the floodplain are credited for greatly minimizing the structural and infrastructure damage during the 2013 Flood. A system of natural areas and minimal infrastructure allowed the floodplain to do what it was supposed to do: dissipate the velocity and volume of floodwaters.

Fort Collins' Comprehensive Plan and Development Code aims to further minimize future hazards and damage and to protect the quality of streams, rivers, and water resources. For example, the city encourages a minimum buffer of development 300 feet from riparian areas of the Poudre River for public safety and to allow natural hydraulic and hydrologic processes to occur. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan emphasizes conservation of the natural features to restore and enhance the corridor for habitat, biodiversity, and aesthetic and recreational values.

For more information, see the Fort Collins, Colorado case study on pages 21-26 of "Community Case Studies 2004" available at: http://www.floods.org/PDF/NAI_Case_Studies.pdf



EVRPD's service area includes more than half of the Big Thompson Canyon

Overview of Public Land Ownership

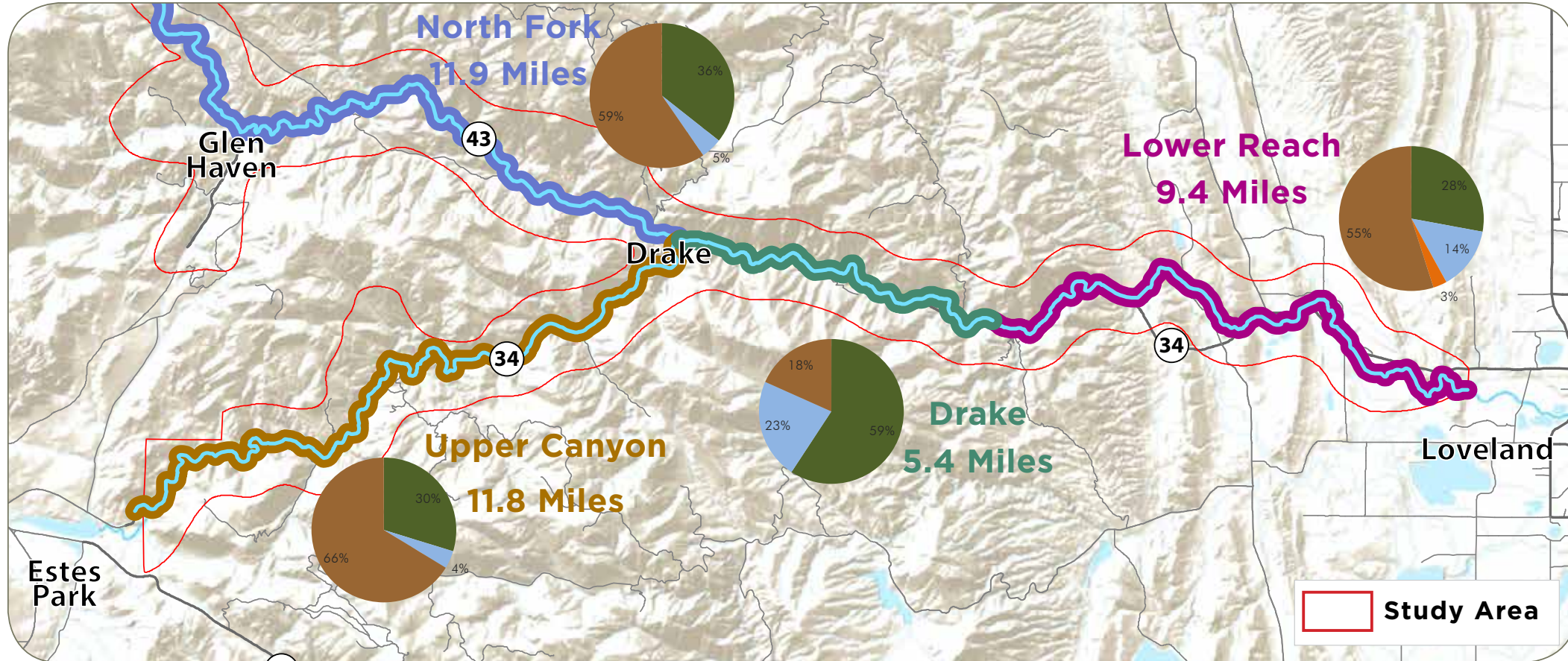
The table below summarizes the public ownership types along the Big Thompson River.

Agency	Property Type	Conservation Resources	Recreation Resources
US Forest Service	All property managed by USFS within the study area	The majority of this area is located in Management Areas 3.5 and 4.2, which primarily emphasizes wildlife habitat and scenery with management strategies to provide habitat for elk and bighorn sheep, and protect scenic resources.	Three day use picnic areas: Glen Haven, Lower North Fork Thompson, and Upper North Fork Thompson Big Thompson Fishing Pier Crosier Mountain Trails/Trailheads
	Publicly accessible lands	Riparian and aquatic habitats.	River access at 4 sites: Glade, Narrows, Forks and Sleep Hollow Parks. Public access restricted due to 2013 flood.
	All conservation easements	Riparian and aquatic habitats.	No public access.
Larimer County	1976 FEMA Parcels	Variety of uses. From vacant to maintenance.	No to Limited public access.
	City of Loveland	Parks and Open Lands Utilities	Conservation and riparian habitat Public access restricted due to 2013 flood. No public access
State of Colorado (State Land Board, CDOT, CPW)	Lands owned by the State, Lands designated SWAs		CPW has 3 State Wildlife Areas: The Narrows, The Forks, and the State Fish Hatchery. The Fish Hatchery will be decommissioned and disposed. CDOT Maintenance Facility.

In addition to the property ownership above, Estes Valley Recreation and Park District (EVRPD) takes an active role in providing recreation activities throughout the Estes Valley. The mission of the EVRPD is to plan, direct, organize, and implement recreational programs, manage facilities, and provide public park and recreation opportunities for residents of the District and visitors to the community. The District encompasses approximately 320 square miles and includes within its boundaries primarily unincorporated land and the Town of Estes Park. The permanent population of the EVRPD varies between 10,800 and 11,600 in any given year. District boundaries are generally described as two miles north of Glen Haven; one mile east of Drake; south almost to Pinewood Springs (two miles past the Boulder/Larimer County line); and the Continental Divide on the west.

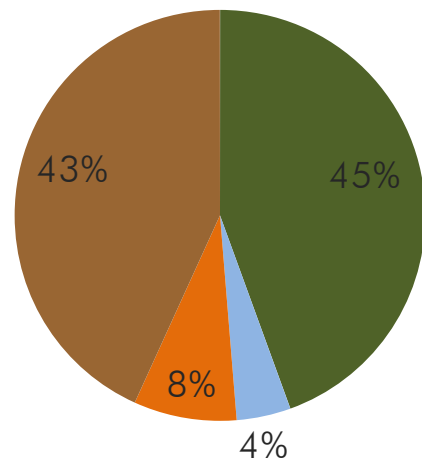
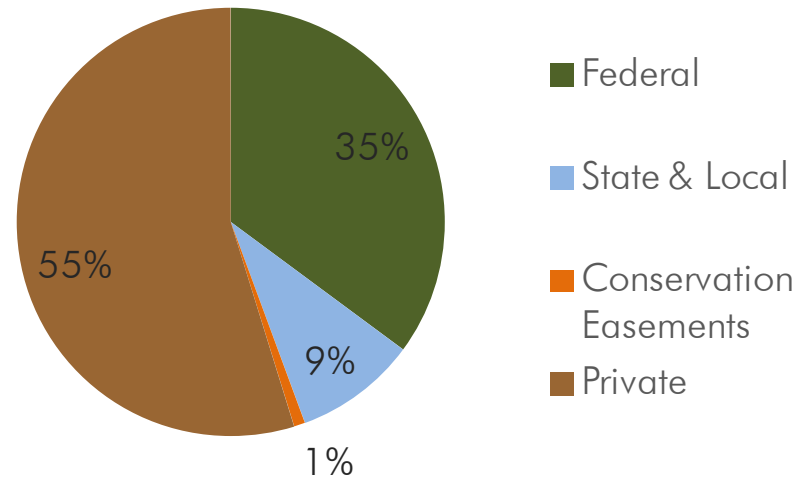
Although their facilities are primarily located outside of this plan's study area, EVRPD works cooperatively with many of the same partners including the Town of Estes Park, Larimer County Natural Resources, National Park Service, USFS, Bureau of Reclamation, CPW, EVLT, Estes Valley Improvement Association, and other agencies. EVRPD does not manage any facilities along the Big Thompson River or North Fork, except for an outdoor shooting range off of Noels Draw Lane. The trails committee has worked to promote the development and maintenance of a comprehensive and sustainable trail system throughout the Estes Valley. These trails are important assets between the Town of Estes Park and the communities of Drake and Glen Haven.

Conserved Miles of River in Big Thompson Study Area



Miles of River by Property Manager in Study Area - 38.4 Miles

Acres Conserved in Study Area - 22,182 Acres



Conserved Properties	Property Manager of River		Property Manager of Land Area	
	Miles	%	Acres	%
Federal	13.5	35.1%	9,858.9	44.4%
State & Local	3.6	9.2%	942.8	4.3%
Conservation Easements	0.3	0.8%	1,800.8	8.1%
Non-Conserved Properties				
Private	21.1	54.8%	9,580.1	43.2%
Total	38.5		22,182.6	

Conserved Properties

The study area is generally a ½ mile buffer from the river centerline but should not be taken literally given changing river conditions and professional judgment. The study area was defined for general planning purposes. The preceding conserved lands map and table lists miles and percentage of river corridor in ownership by private, conserved on private or Federal/State/Local ownership.

Private Property

Private property comprises 55 percent of the river frontage. Due to the dispersed pattern of public ownership, landowner concerns about trespass and security are ever constant.

Population

Many people call the mainstem and North Fork of the Big Thompson River home either full-time or part-time. The majority of full-time residents live in the Glen Haven, Drake, and Cedar Cove communities. Part-time residents occupy cottages and cabins during summer months.

In June 1976, just before the flood, the full-time canyon population was estimated to be 600 and the part-time residents numbered approximately twice that. Current population in the canyon is likely to be substantially lower.

The 2013 flood inflicted significantly fewer casualties than the 1976 flood, partly due to the significant reduction in residential properties that resulted from the 1976 flood and the timing of this flood. In addition, the 1976 flood occurred in July, peak summer vacation time, while the 2013 flood took place in September, after many part-time residents left for the season. The 1976 flood also occurred the weekend of the celebration of the centennial anniversary of Colorado becoming a State and there were numerous celebration activities planned throughout the state.

Through the damage assessment process, 89 parcels throughout the study area were determined to be significantly damaged. Of these properties, three-quarters (68 parcels) were residential houses, often cabin or cottage houses.

Recreation and Tourism

The quality of the recreation experience for all users of the river is affected by a number of factors, apart from short-term flood recovery and restoration activities. Even with regulations in place, trespassing and other problems related to recreation management continue to increase. Recreational use along the Big Thompson River is an important component of the local economy. Fishing, sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, boating, road biking, and hunting attract a large number of visitors to the corridor. An important component in any management decision relating to the river is economic impact. As Front Range population and Rocky Mountain National Park visitation continues to grow, there will be more users through this corridor and more demand for this finite resource.

Visitation along the river corridor is made up of three distinct user groups, which of course overlap.

- Destination visitors (recreationists whose sole purpose is river recreation such as fishing, boating, picnicking at public recreation areas)
- Through visitors (sightseeing, wildlife viewing, interpretation, lodging, hiking, road biking)
- Dispersed visitors (hunters, campers, hikers, rock climbing primarily on USFS lands) that do not require major facilities and rely on access points to USFS lands.

Visitation

Recreation visitation specifically in the canyon is difficult to track because the recreation sites are free and open to the public. However, an estimated 1.8 million people travel through the canyon annually.

Fly fishing accounts for the major contribution to “destination” visitation and thus economic impact of recreation. On average each angler spends \$103.16 for each day of fishing.⁴ Past estimates of angler visitation have equated to 2,559 angler days per month on the Big Thompson, totaling an annual economic impact of fishing in the canyon estimated at \$2.37 million.⁵

A previously existing private campground at Drake also attracted overnight visitors.

⁴ Southwick Associates, The Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation in Colorado: A regional and county-level analysis, February, 2014

⁵ Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Big Thompson River Standard Regulations Section, Creek Census Summary (Multi-Years)

Recreation Facilities in the Big Thompson Study Area



[by the numbers]
 estimated costs of damage to recreational facilities by manager

Larimer County: \$818,000 +
 City of Loveland: \$2,535,000 +
 Forest Service: \$3,078,181 =

\$6,431,181

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT OF POST-FLOOD RECREATION FACILITIES

The spectrum of recreation uses throughout the canyon is wide and diverse. The multiple levels of recreation development include dispersed uses such as hunting and hiking into the National Forest, developed uses such as picnicking and maintained trails, and general enjoyment through wildlife viewing and scenic vistas.

River access, via public property, is a highly utilized resource of the Big Thompson Canyon. River access was available at a number of spots throughout the canyon. In addition, river access, along with hunting access, often occurred where US 34 intersects with National Forest Lands.

Recreation sites were well dispersed along the Big Thompson River Corridor. However, a cluster of Forest Service picnic sites were located on the North Fork just downstream of Glen Haven.

The following table illustrates the previously existing recreational facilities and amenities. As already discussed, the majority of facilities and amenities provided at these recreation sites were destroyed during the 2013 flood. The following table details which opportunities still exist by site. Black boxes represent an open amenity that was not impacted by the flood, and grey boxes represent a destroyed facility.

Pre-Flood/Post-Flood Recreation Uses + Facilities

	Map #	Name	Current Manager	Uses and Facilities													Restrooms	Notes	
				Kayak/Canoeing	Trailhead (hiking and/or biking)	Hiking along river	Equestrian Trail	Mountain Bike Trails	Fishing access	Accessible recreation (fishing pier)	Hunting access to USFS Lands	Picnic tables/shelter	Camping	Watchable Wildlife Site	Interpretation	Parking spaces			
Lower Reach	1	Morey Wildlife Reserve	Loveland		TH														Master Plan to be developed to include trails, parking, river access.
	2	Glade Park	Larimer														30		Grills, Porta potty
	3	Narrows Park	Larimer / CPW														6		County maintains the property.
Drake	4	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	Loveland		TH												-70		Master Plan underway, which will feature an educational center, trails, bridge, restrooms, parking, and other day use facilities.
	5	Round Mountain National Recreational Trail	USFS/Loveland		TH												10		Loveland currently maintains the restroom and parking lot.
	6	Idylwilde Rest Stop	USFS														?		Loveland has decommissioned Idylwilde Dam which will revert back to USFS management. Site will be restored with no planned recreation sites.
	7	Forks Park	Larimer / CPW														10		Managed by CPW as State Wildlife Area. CPW installed/maintained the restrooms, parking.
Upper Canyon	8	Big Thompson River (at Waltonia Bridge)	Private														?		Parking area for fishing access.
	9	Fishing Pier (1.5 miles west of Waltonia)	USFS														?		270 feet long parking area, Bighorn Sheep viewing area, fishing pier will be rebuilt in 2015.
	10	Sleepy Hollow Park	Larimer														5		
North Fork	11	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Drake Rt 43)	USFS		TH												8		Possibly expanding in future.
	12	Crosier Rainbow (Borrow pit) Trail/Trailhead	USFS		TH												15		Will be available for parking. No other facilities are planned as of 12/2014.
	13	North Fork- Lower Picnic Site	USFS														?		Working with Central Federal Lands on Rt 43 to leave parking area for fishing access. No other facilities are planned as of 12/2014.
	14	North Fork- Upper Picnic Site	USFS														?		Decommissioned.
	15	Glen Haven Picnic Site	USFS														?		Decommissioned, cultural site will remain.
	16	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Glen Haven)	USFS														?		
	17	Dunraven Trailhead/Signal Mountain Bulwark Ridge	USFS		TH												23		23 parking spaces, trail reconstruction scheduled for 2015.

Use/Facility Open in 2014

Past Use/Facility Destroyed in the 2013 Flood

CHAPTER 3. A BIGGER VISION

Through this assessment and many supporting plans and outreach, County residents and stakeholders have clearly communicated that recreational uses and the natural values of the Big Thompson River are essential to their safety, quality of life, economic recovery, and health and wellness. The loss of nearly all recreational facilities and inability to access long-time favorite destinations have kept thousands of visitors away and diminished revenues from lodging, services and other economic activities. Flood effects and subsequent reconstruction efforts have significantly impacted a self-sustaining trout fishery and natural resources river-wide on public as well as private lands.

The plan described in the remainder of this chapter can be summed up in just a few words - it seeks to provide a high quality recreation experience similar to or better than what existed prior to the 2013 flood and restore river function and resiliency of the corridor through conservation and reservation. Yet it isn't an effort to return to the past and recreate what was previously there. It is a bigger vision to preserve the Big Thompson River's natural assets and rebuild visitor infrastructure in ways that will not only protect but enhance the river floodplain. In some cases, use areas can be expanded, better access will be provided, and connections between public lands will be enhanced. In other cases, previous use areas may not be reopened in the same manner as they previously existed. Some new public recreation areas may also be developed. In all cases, facilities will be developed in a manner consistent with their location in a flood hazard area by selecting locations that minimize risks, incorporates resilient design, and uses materials natural to the setting.

The overall result will be a network of recreational access and use areas that range from simple pull outs along the highway that offer river access to other sites that include developed facilities. The plan recommends the development, redevelopment, or restoration of 20 sites along the river corridor. Through a combination of US Forest Service lands and park sites provided by Larimer County and the City of Loveland, public access to the river will be available at regular intervals and only rarely will the distance between access points exceed one mile.

Fundamental to the reconstruction effort is a commitment to respecting private property. Federal, state and local agencies will work in cooperation with private property owners to direct recreationists toward public access points to minimize trespass issues. Regulatory information, including no trespassing signs, is built into each priority project design.

Each of these projects is described in the remainder of this chapter. Case studies from similar river corridors highlight what can be accomplished through a tenacious commitment to a sustainable vision and the funding needed to accomplish it. The chapter concludes with best practices that, if implemented, would strengthen ecosystem, land use, and partnership resiliency river-wide.

TIMING AND CONDITIONS OF PRIORITY PROJECTS

The partners' ability to provide the recreation facilities is dependent on funding availability. Public investments should be distributed in a manner that ensures a range of high quality recreational experiences and conservation of the natural environment. These investments must be balanced, not only on the Big Thompson River, but on a county-wide basis. As a consequence, the timing of implementing this plan is dependent on funding availability from grant sources, open land priorities elsewhere in Larimer County and the City of Loveland, and landowner interest.

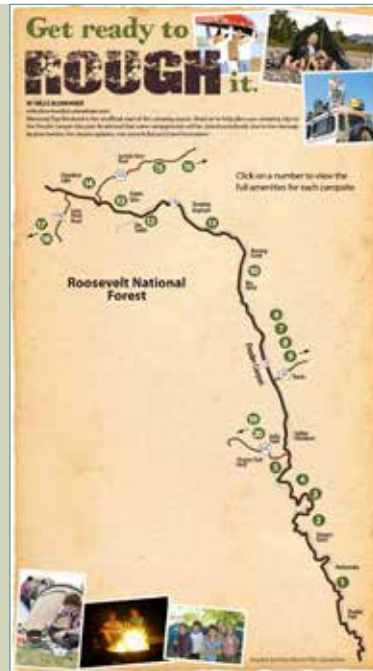
Conservation of private lands is always predicated on fair agreements with property owners; therefore they would occur only on a willing -seller basis. Available resources must achieve a balance between urgent, immediate demands and farsighted, long-range goals. Therefore, the vision emphasizes working with willing landowners to develop conservation strategies that meet both the landowner's financial needs and the partners' goals to conserve and provide recreation access to significant open lands and floodplains.

Specific properties for potential conservation easements or acquisitions by Larimer County, City of Loveland, or Estes Valley Land Trust will be reviewed by their respective citizen advisory boards and approved by elected officials or designated agency management.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

This vision plan provides a framework for potential future uses and facilities. Site-specific plans for priority projects will include review and analysis of existing conditions, opportunities and constraints. Site-specific planning and design will also incorporate additional, more focused public input at the neighborhood level.





Case Study: Choreographed Experiences in the Cache la Poudre River Canyon

The vision of the Cache la Poudre Wild and Scenic River is to protect the outstanding scenic features of the canyon and the existing free-flowing character of the river, while providing high quality recreation opportunities. The canyon is a popular location for fishing, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, rafting, camping, site seeing, and biking along Highway 14. Scenic quality is protected through cooperation with private landowners, county zoning, scenic easements, or land acquisition from willing sellers, to ensure that new developments maintain the natural beauty of the area. Impacts from heavy recreational use are minimized through coordinating public and private facilities to provide a balanced variety of services to meet the needs of the public, designing highway access to off-street parking, designating specific river access points to protect the riparian vegetation, and standardized signs to improve safety. Existing Forest Service campgrounds are maintained with high landscaping standards and potential new campgrounds will be developed in areas already being impacted by camping use. Camping will only be allowed in designated campsites. As a result, more people will be served in campgrounds, with less congestion along Highway 14 and less impact on the river.

For more information, see the Cache la Poudre Wild and Scenic River Final Management Plan <http://www.rivers.gov/documents/plans/cache-la-poudre-plan.pdf>.

Map source: The Coloradoan viewable at <http://archive.coloradoan.com/interactive/article/99999999/XPLORE03/399990141/Interactive-map-Poudre-Canyon-camping-guide>

PRIORITY PROJECTS

As described in previous chapters, the most important public investments needed to restore and enhance the river's setting and recreation opportunities include:

- Fishing access points
- Hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails
- Restoration of riparian and fishery resources per the 2014 BTRRC Restoration Master Plan in tandem with priority projects
- Public restrooms (located above the 100-year floodplain whenever possible)
- Safer bicycle infrastructure on US 34
- Limiting future property and facility losses through appropriate design and removing at-risk development from the floodplain
- Though some areas of the floodplain may be appropriate for active-use parks, visitor infrastructure should be minimized within the 100-year floodplain in favor of prioritizing passive uses with smaller footprints, including trails and fishing access

An assessment of potential projects is shown in the Evaluation Worksheet and series of four maps. Each site identified by the partners or public were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Site Feasibility:** How well can the site feasibly accommodate recreation facilities?
- **Risk Benefits:** How would the property reduce risks to people and/or property? What is the property's demonstrated history of substantial flood damage? How safe is access from major roads?
- **Recreation Benefits:** How would the property and program enhance river access and/or important recreational opportunities? What is its adjacency or potential connectivity to the river or other public lands that would otherwise be inaccessible?
- **River Benefits:** How would the project improve river function and/or protect important aquatic habitat?
- **Upland Benefits:** How would the project improve biological connectivity and/or conserve important riparian/upland habitat?
- **Pre-Planning:** What is the availability of disaster recovery or existing funding? Is it shovel-ready?

Based on the evaluation, public input, and site visits, the values of and recreational uses proposed for the most promising projects are presented in the Vision Map, Priority Projects table, and the remainder of this chapter. Note that final recreation programs for the Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park and some US Forest Service use areas along the North Fork will be determined through separate, concurrent master planning.

It is assumed that all priority projects described below (pages 26-30), along with future potential acquisitions, will undergo a full-scale restoration effort to reconnect the river with its floodplain and restore native riparian vegetation.

Evaluation Worksheet

		Evaluation Criteria						Project Readiness	Project Benefit Score (Total)
		Would the project achieve or enhance the following?							
		Site Feasibility	Reduces risks to people and/or property by removing at risk uses/parcels	Provides enhanced river access and/or important recreational opportunities	Improves river function and/or protects important aquatic habitat	Improves biological connectivity and/or protects important riparian/upland habitat	Pre-Planning; Availability of disaster recovery or existing funding		
Lower Reach	Loveland West	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Glade Park	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Narrows Park	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Drake	Cedar Cove and Trailhead/Trail	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Round Mountain National Recreational Trail	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Indian Village Area	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Idylwilde	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Forks Park Area	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Upper Drake	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Upper Canyon	Mile marker 75 / Downstream of Waltonia	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Waltonia Bridge	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Fishing Pier (1.5 miles west of Waltonia)	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Sleepy Hollow Park	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Glen Comfort Area	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Loveland Heights	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Common Point Shooting Range	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Estes Park Gateway	●	●	●	●	●	●		
North Fork	Hatchery Area	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Glen Haven Downtown / Crosier Mountain Trailhead	●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Drake Rt 43)	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			
	Crosier Rainbow (Borrow pit) Trail/Trailhead	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			
	North Fork- Lower Picnic Site	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			
	North Fork- Upper Picnic Site	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			
	Glen Haven Picnic Site	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			
	Dunraven Trailhead/Signal Mountain Bulwark Ridge	●				USFS to Determine Future Use			

Legend: ● None ● Low ● Moderate ● High



Public Parks and Recreation

- Larimer County
- Loveland
- USFS

Trails & Bike Routes

- USFS Trails
- Larimer County: Existing
- Larimer County: Master Plan
- City of Loveland: Existing
- City of Loveland: Proposed

- Areas of Potential Interest
- Other Public Land (No Public Access)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)

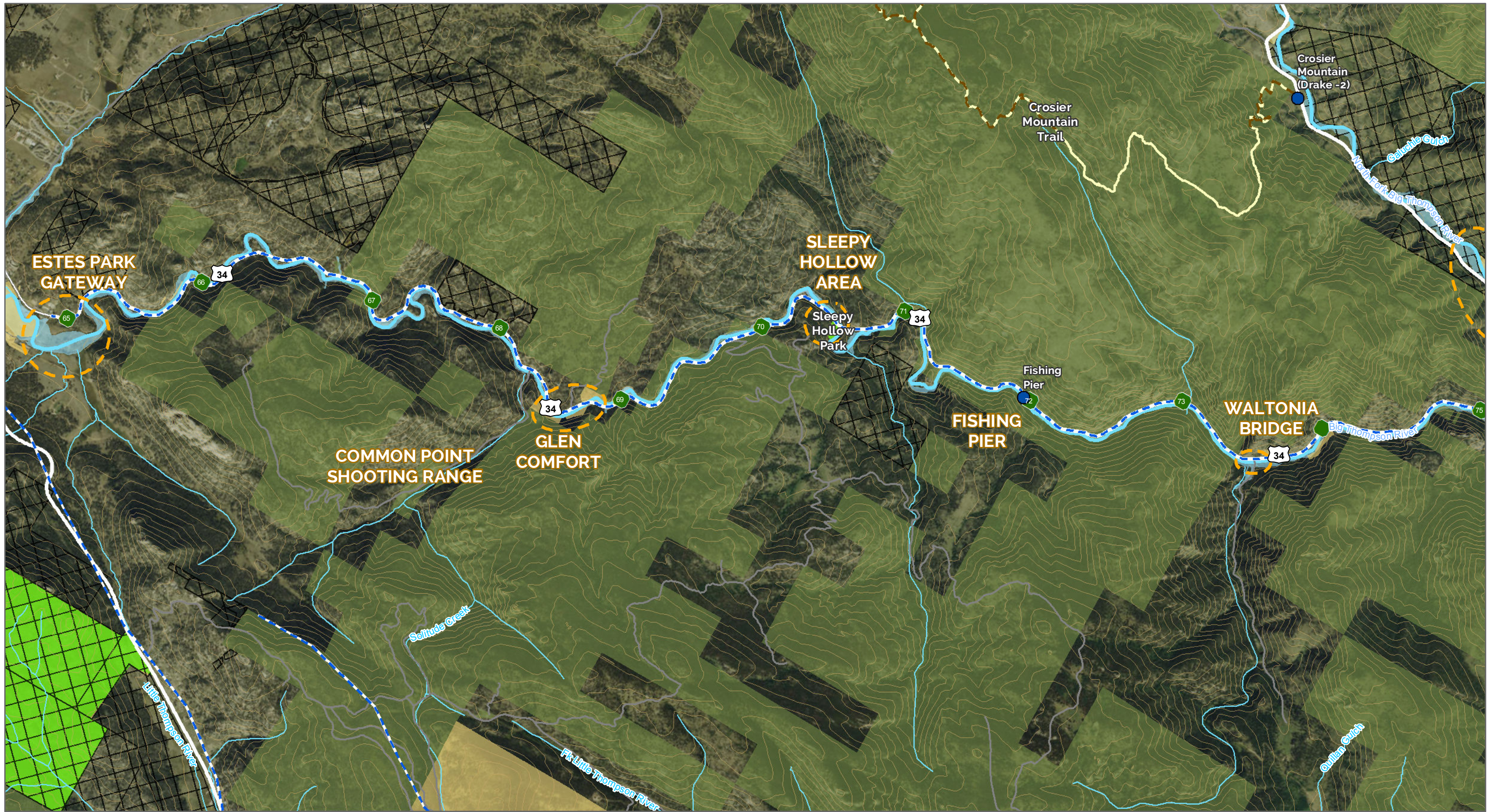
- Contours (100 Foot)
- Flood Plain
- USFS Recreation Sites
- USFS Roads



Areas of Potential Interest
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

North Fork
 Page 1 of 4
 6/23/2015

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles



Public Parks and Recreation

- Larimer County
- Loveland
- USFS

Trails & Bike Routes

- USFS Trails
- Larimer County: Existing
- Larimer County: Master Plan
- City of Loveland: Existing
- City of Loveland: Proposed

- Areas of Potential Interest
- Other Public Land (No Public Access)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)

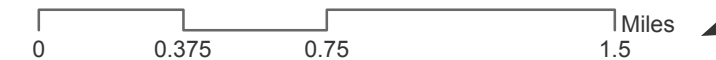
- Contours (100 Foot)
- Flood Plain
- USFS Recreation Sites
- USFS Roads

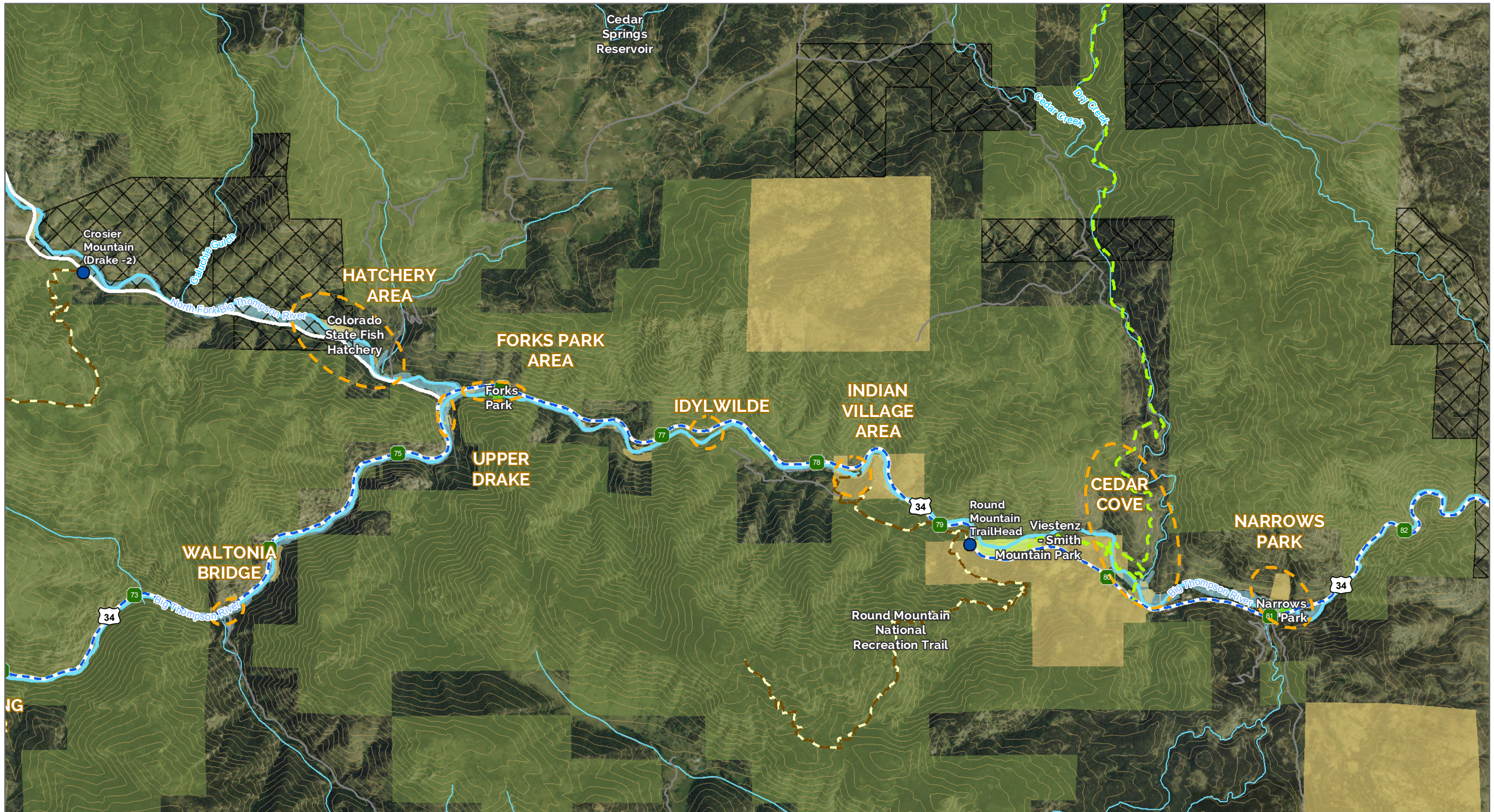


Areas of Potential Interest
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Upper Canyon
 Page 2 of 4

6/23/2015





Public Parks and Recreation

- Larimer County
- Loveland
- USFS

Trails & Bike Routes

- USFS Trails
- Larimer County: Existing
- Larimer County: Master Plan
- City of Loveland: Existing
- City of Loveland: Proposed

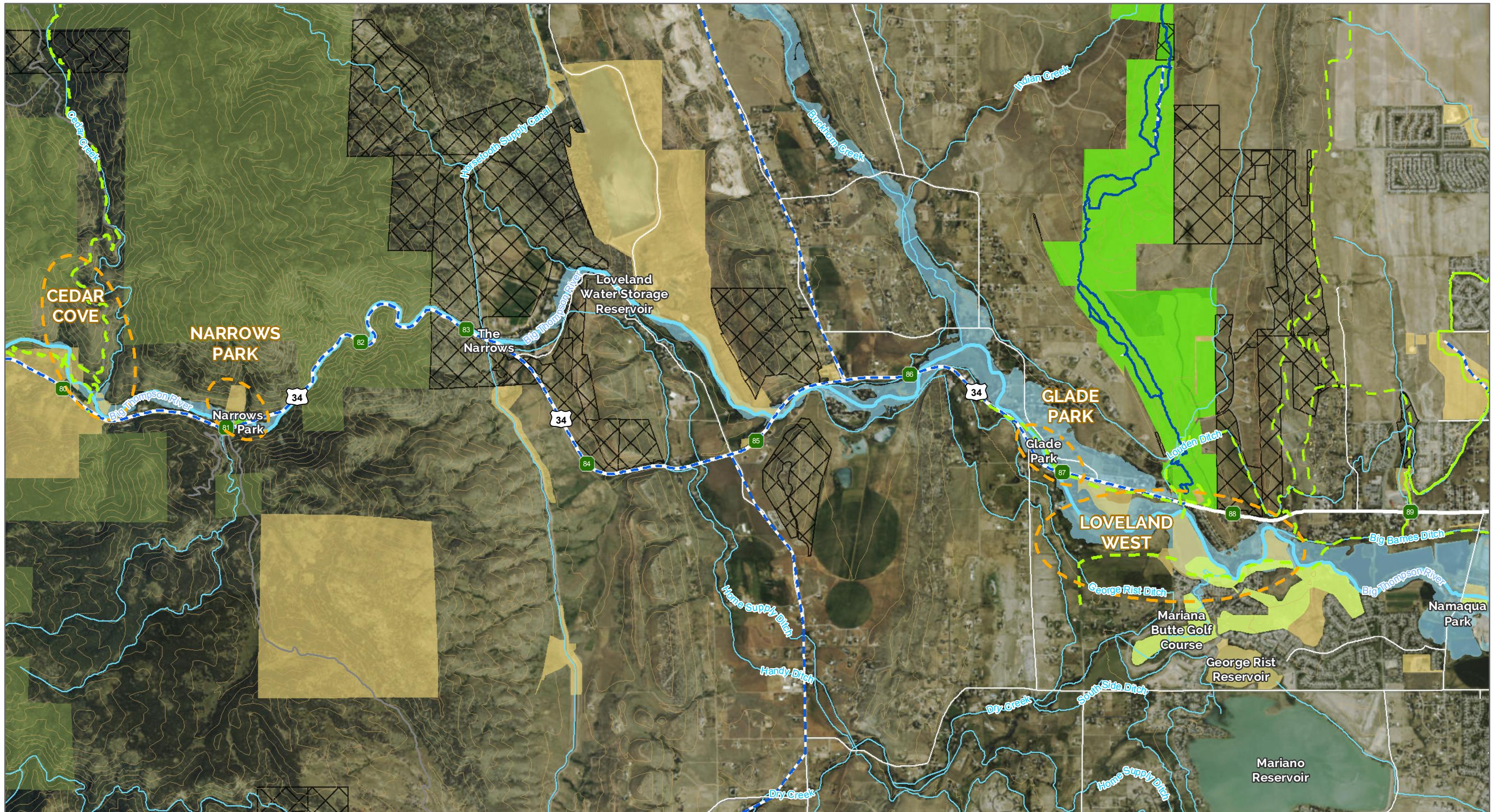
- Areas of Potential Interest
- Other Public Land (No Public Access)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)

- Contours (100 Foot)
- Flood Plain
- USFS Recreation Sites
- USFS Roads



Areas of Potential Interest
A Bigger Vision for the Big T





Public Parks and Recreation

- Larimer County
- Loveland
- USFS

Trails & Bike Routes

- USFS Trails
- Larimer County: Existing
- Larimer County: Master Plan
- City of Loveland: Existing
- City of Loveland: Proposed

- Areas of Potential Interest
- Other Public Land (No Public Access)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)

- Contours (100 Foot)
- Flood Plain
- USFS Recreation Sites
- USFS Roads



Areas of Potential Interest
A Bigger Vision for the Big T





Pre-flood



2013 Post-flood



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT



2013 Flood

Loveland West+ Big Thompson Multi-Use Trail

The Big Thompson River corridor has been a high priority for the City of Loveland and this area adds a new dimension to the recreation opportunities in the center of a triangle extending between Morey Wildlife Reserve, Glade Park, and Devil's Backbone Open Space. Both the 2014 Loveland Parks and Recreation Master Plan and 2015 Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan have looked forward to connecting the east-west Big Thompson Multi-Use Trail to the north-south Blue Sky Trail across US 34. There are multiple potential options to cross US 34 that will require detailed site planning (including Glade Park, Rossum Drive, and existing culverts). Another key recommendation is extending the Big Thompson Multi-Use Trail upstream from the Morey Wildlife Reserve (with a new trailhead) to Glade Park.

Opportunities/Constraints

- Adjacent to existing public land
- Wildlife corridor along river and ditches
- Connects existing recreational infrastructure such as trails, trailheads, access points, etc.
- Feasible public access to Big Thompson River
- High sedimentation loads during flood events
- Wide regulatory floodplain
- High riparian, wildlife, and aquatic habitat values – identified in City of Loveland Natural Areas Sites (2008), Our Lands-Our Future (2012), Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan (2014), and City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2014)

Potential Recreation Program

- Big Thompson multi-use trail (1 mile) connections to Glade Park and Devil's Backbone Open Space
- Interpretation
- Trailhead/Parking on city-owned property
- Wildlife watching
- Fishing / river access
- Restroom

Glade Park

Pre-flood, Glade Park was a popular family gathering spot with 30 parking spaces. To reduce flood risk, an additional parking area could be located on an adjacent property outside of the floodway or on city-owned property near Morey Wildlife Reserve.

Opportunities/Constraints

- Previous County Park
- Adjacent to existing public land
- Wildlife corridor along river
- Feasible public access to Big Thompson River
- Regulatory floodplain
- History of substantial flood damage upstream of the US 34 bridge
- County ownership is almost wholly within the floodway and new facilities would likely be damaged in future floods
- High riparian, wildlife, and aquatic habitat values – identified in Our Lands-Our Future (2012), and Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan (2014)

Potential Recreation Program

- West terminus of Big Thompson multi-use trail (0.5 miles) with connection to Loveland West and Devil's Backbone Open Space
- Parking (if additional lands acquired)
- ADA Restroom (if additional lands acquired)
- Picnicking and cooking grills (if additional lands acquired)
- Interpretation
- Wildlife watching
- Accessible fishing / river access



2013 Flood

Narrows Park

Narrows Park became a County park after the 1976 flood destroyed the homes on nine contiguous properties on both sides of the river. High flood waters in 2013 destroyed the parking area, grills, and pathways. Due to its susceptibility to flood damage, the site would continue to serve as a fishing access point with minimal facilities. Off-street parking, if offered again, would need to be located on an adjacent parcel outside of the floodway.

Opportunities/Constraints

- Adjacency to existing public land
- Access to the Big Thompson River
- History of substantial flood damage upstream of the US 34 bridge, including substantially damaged properties adjacent to existing county land
- Geological hazards (landslides, sedimentation areas, erosion risk)
- Ties in with existing recreational infrastructure such as trails, access points, etc.
- Previous County Park with established recreational uses
- Access from public roads
- Flood risk (within regulatory floodplain)

Potential Recreation Program

- Parking (if additional lands acquired)
- Wildlife watching
- Fishing / river access
- Restroom (if additional lands acquired)



2015 photo showing height of debris left in trees



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT

Cedar Cove + Trailhead/Trail

Once a residential subdivision, only a few homes have withstood two major floods and half of the properties are now owned by Larimer County. With restoration and landowner agreements, the area holds significant promise as a trailhead with connections to Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park and Bobcat Ridge Natural Area (managed by Fort Collins) as anticipated in Loveland's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Opportunities/Constraints

- High riparian habitat quality and aquatic improvement potential
- Adjacency to existing public land
- Access to the Big Thompson River
- Flood risk (within regulatory floodplain)
- History of substantial flood damage with heavy sedimentation and channel migration
- Potential regional trail access and connection to recreational infrastructure.
- Connects public land (County, City, USFS)
- Geological hazards (landslides, sedimentation areas, erosion risk)

Potential Recreation Program

- Potential trail connection to Bobcat Ridge Natural Area (7.4 miles) and Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park (1.5 miles) if additional land acquisitions/trail easements acquired
- Parking
- Interpretation
- Wildlife watching
- Picnicking
- Restroom
- Trails
- Fishing / river access



2015 photo post clean up



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT



2015 Post-flood



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT



2013 Post-flood

Indian Village Area

In addition to the 20-acre Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, the City of Loveland owns nearly 400 adjacent acres. This undeveloped land serves utility and watershed protection functions, as well as accommodating the popular Round Mountain National Recreation Trail and trailhead. The 1-mile Foothills Nature Trail climbs to a 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps era scenic overlook. This trail system could be expanded on public property downstream to Cedar Cove or upstream near Indian Village to the US Forest Service's decommissioned Idylwilde area, which had served as a popular recreation site and bighorn sheep viewing area until the 2013 flood.

Opportunities/Constraints

- River access via public property
- History of substantial flood damage
- Feasible public access to Big Thompson River
- Offers recreational access to other public lands that would otherwise be inaccessible.
- Ties in with historic/existing recreational infrastructure such as trails, access points, etc.
- Access from public roads
- Adjacency to existing public land

Potential Recreation Program

- Parking
- Fishing / river access
- Wildlife watching and scenic pull offs
- Hunting access to USFS lands via pedestrian bridge
- Improvements to the Round Mountain trailhead or a second trailhead below the CCC scenic overlook.
- Multiple routing options for a multi-use or natural surface trail system from Idylwilde to Cedar Cove through Round Mountain and/or Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park (4 miles). (if additional trail easement acquired)

Forks Park and Upper Drake Area

Like Narrows Park, Forks Park came into being after extensive flooding and sedimentation at the confluence of the Big Thompson and North Fork destroyed the majority of residential subdivisions in 1976. The 2013 flood again re-routed the river and caused substantial damage, obliterating all of Forks Parks' facilities. Forks Park remains highly visible and accessible near the intersection of US 34 and CR 43; with appropriate design and river restoration, the Forks could be rebuilt and possibly expanded to serve as a recreation hub in the center of the canyon and support local businesses.

Opportunities/Constraints

- River access via public property
- Access from public roads
- Previous county park with established recreational uses
- Adjacency to existing public land
- Flood risk (within regulatory floodplain)
- History of substantial flood damage with heavy sedimentation and channel migration
- High riparian habitat quality or ecological improvement potential
- High fishery quality and/or aquatic habitat improvement potential
- Kayaking/Canoeing access
- Wildlife viewing area - bighorn sheep movement corridor
- Substantially damaged parcels adjacent to existing county land

Potential Recreation Program

- Multi-use or natural surface trail
- Parking
- Restroom
- Interpretation
- Wildlife watching and scenic pull offs
- Fishing / river access
- Hunting access to USFS lands
- Picnicking
- Boating access put in for floating downstream to Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park



Pre-flood

Fishing Pier

Surrounded by US Forest Service lands, the parking area and interpretive panels were untouched by the 2013 flood though the popular fishing pier was washed downstream. Bighorn sheep can be seen on the nearby hillsides often for over 100 days a year. Grants are already in place to reconstruct the accessible fishing pier.

Opportunities/Constraints

- Funding available to rebuild handicap-accessible fishing pier
- Previously existing recreational uses.
- Wildlife viewing opportunity – bighorn sheep
- Fishing access
- High quality fishery and/or aquatic habitat improvement potential

Potential Recreation Program

- Parking
- Accessible river access
- Fishing / river access
- Interpretation
- Wildlife watching and scenic pull offs



Post-flood



Pre-flood

Sleepy Hollow Area

This beloved picnic area is located on both sides of US 34 at mile 12. It offers unique fishing access in a deep, partially secluded canyon. The restroom survived the 2013 flood, but picnic and parking amenities were destroyed.

Opportunities/Constraints

- Offers recreational access to USFS lands that would otherwise be inaccessible.
- Large substantially damaged parcels near existing county land
- Previously established recreational uses on public land
- Scenic river segments that are separated from the road
- Steep slopes
- Geological hazards (landslides, sedimentation areas, erosion risk)
- High quality fishery and/or aquatic habitat improvement potential
- River access via public property

Potential Recreation Program

- Multi-use trail
- Restroom
- Parking
- Picnicking
- Interpretation
- Wildlife watching
- Fishing / river access



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT



2013 Flood. Source: CDOT



2015 Post-flood

Estes Park Gateway

Below Olympus Dam, the Big Thompson River begins its descent into the rocky canyon across a lush meadow and riparian gallery that forms a prominent viewshed from Mall Road, US 34, and US 36. Whether through acquisition or conservation easement, the permanent stewardship of the ranchland, riparian area, and fishery at the gateway to Estes Park has been a priority for decades.

Opportunities/Constraints

- High quality riparian habitat
- High quality fishery and/or aquatic habitat improvement potential
- Scenic quality/ critical view sheds
- Ties in with existing recreational infrastructure such as trails, access points, fishing access
- Feasible public access to Big Thompson River and its tributaries

Potential Recreation Program

- Land acquisition or trail easement would be necessary for public access including:
 - Interpretation
 - Wildlife watching
 - Fishing / river access
 - Trails



Pre-flood



2015 Post-flood

Glen Haven Downtown / Crosier Mountain Trailhead

On summer days more than 30 cars line CR 43 in downtown Glen Haven as hikers climb to the Crosier Mountain Trailhead. A partnership with local businesses could relocate the trailhead for direct access off of “main street” rather than through a residential neighborhood. Parking and amenities would be provided by local businesses who would benefit from the hiking destination.

Opportunities/Constraints

- History of substantial flood damage
- Geological hazards (landslides, sedimentation areas, erosion risk)
- Flood risk (within regulatory floodplain)
- Flood hazard mitigation
- Ties in with existing recreational infrastructure such as trails and access points

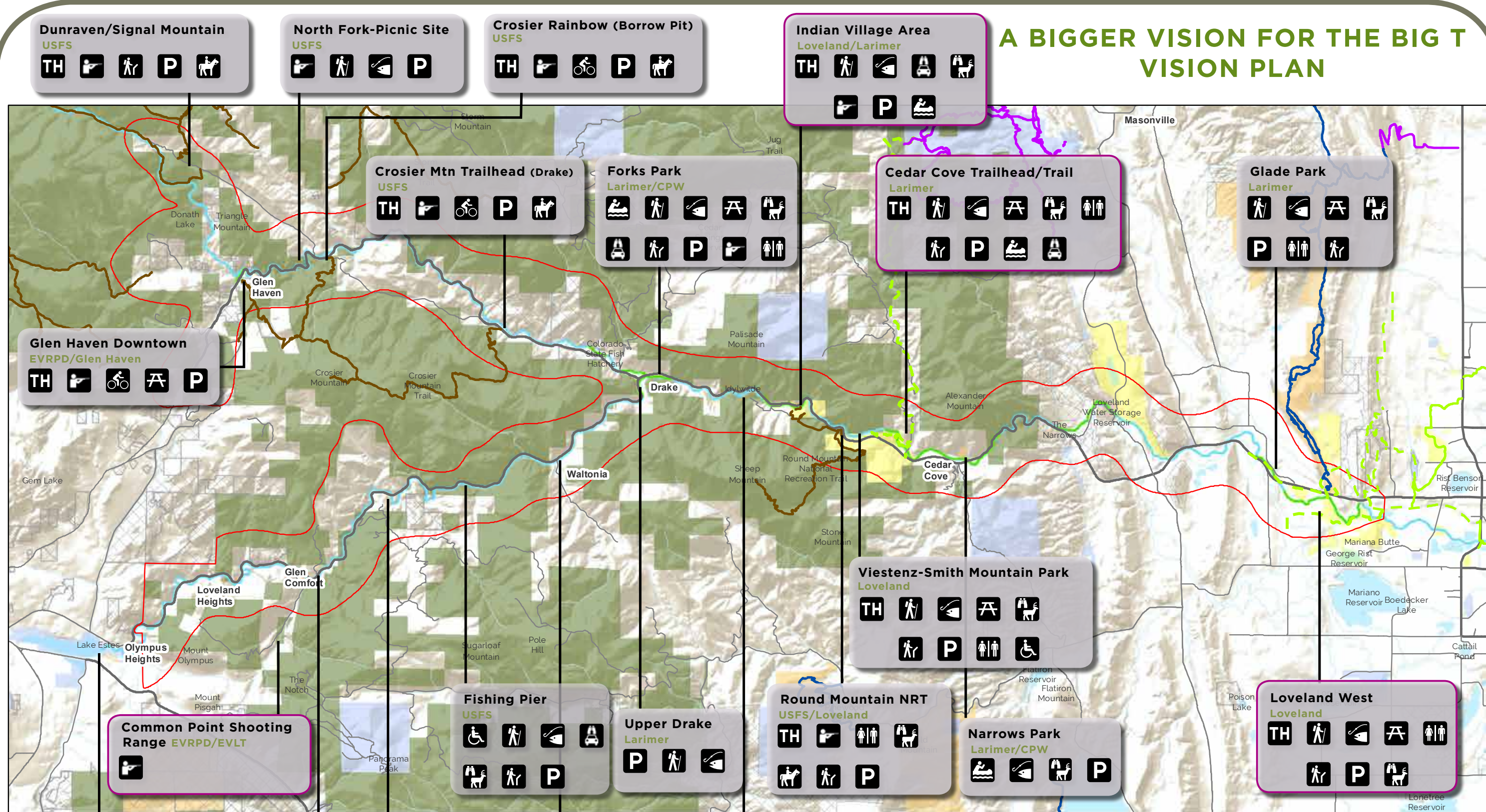
Potential Recreation Program

- Potential new trailhead in downtown Glen Haven to the Crosier Mountain Trail system, with stairs up the side of mountain (if additional lands or trail easements are acquired)
- Parking
- Trails including Mountain biking access
- Hunting access to USFS lands
- Picnicking

Priority Projects

	Name	Existed Pre-Flood?	Lead Agency/Future Manager	Potential Uses and Facilities															
				Kayaking/Canoeing	Trailhead (hiking and/or biking)	Hiking along river	Equestrian Trails	Mountain Biking Trails	Fishing access	Accessible recreation (fishing pier)	Hunting access to USFS Lands	Picnic Area	Scenic pull-offs	Wildlife Viewing	Interpretation	Parking spaces	Restrooms	Regulatory Signage	
Lower Canyon	Loveland West	Y	Loveland		TH	H				F			PA		WV	I	P	R	RS
	Glade Park	Y	Larimer			H				F			PA		WV	I	P	R	RS
	Narrows Park	Y	Larimer / CPW	K						F					WV		P		RS
Drake	Cedar Cove and Trailhead/Trail	N	Larimer	K	TH	H				F			PA	SO	WV	I	P	R	RS
	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	Y	Loveland		TH	H				F	W		PA		WV	I	P	R	RS
	Round Mountain National Recreational Trail	Y	USFS/Loveland		TH		E					H			WV	I	P	R	RS
	Indian Village Area	N	Loveland/Larimer	K	TH	H				F		H		SO	WV		P		RS
	Idylwilde	Y	USFS	K		H				F		H		SO	WV	I	P		RS
	Forks Park	Y	Larimer/ CPW	K		H				F		H	PA	SO	WV	I	P	R	RS
	Upper Drake	Y	Larimer			H				F							P		RS
Upper Canyon	Waltonia Bridge	Y	CDOT/Larimer	K						F		H			WV		P		RS
	Fishing Pier (1.5 miles west of Waltonia)	Y	USFS			H				F	W			SO	WV	I	P		RS
	Sleepy Hollow Park	Y	Larimer			H				F			PA		WV	I	P	R	RS
	Glen Comfort Area	N	Larimer/USFS							F		H			WV				RS
	Common Point Shooting Range	Y	EVRPD									H							RS
	Estes Park Gateway	N	EVRPD/EVLT			H				F					WV	I			RS
North Fork	Glen Haven Downtown Crosier Mountain Trailhead	Y	EVRPD/Glen Haven		TH		E	B				H	PA				P		RS
	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Drake Rt 43)	Y	USFS		TH		E	B				H					P		RS
	Crosier Rainbow (Borrow pit) Trail/Trailhead	Y	USFS		TH		E	B				H					P		RS
	North Fork- Lower Picnic Site	Y	USFS			H				F		H					P		RS
	Dunraven Trailhead/Signal Mountain Bulwark Ridge	Y	USFS		TH		E					H				I	P		RS

A BIGGER VISION FOR THE BIG T VISION PLAN



Dunraven/Signal Mountain
USFS
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse]

North Fork-Picnic Site
USFS
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Crosier Rainbow (Borrow Pit)
USFS
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse]

Indian Village Area
Loveland/Larimer
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse]

Crosier Mtn Trailhead (Drake)
USFS
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse]

Forks Park
Larimer/CPW
[Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse] [Picnic] [Restroom]

Cedar Cove Trailhead/Trail
Larimer
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Glade Park
Larimer
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Glen Haven Downtown
EVRPD/Glen Haven
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [Bike] [P] [Horse]

Fishing Pier
USFS
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Upper Drake
Larimer
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Round Mountain NRT
USFS/Loveland
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Narrows Park
Larimer/CPW
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park
Loveland
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Common Point Shooting Range
EVRPD/EVLT
[Hiking]

Loveland West
Loveland
TH [Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Estes Park Gateway
EVRPD/EVLT
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Glen Comfort Area
Larimer/USFS
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Sleepy Hollow Park
Larimer
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

Waltonia Bridge
Private
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse]

Idylwilde
USFS
[Hiking] [Camping] [P] [Horse] [Restroom]

- USFS Trails
 - Larimer County Trails
 - Fort Collins Trails
 - City of Loveland
 - ⊠ Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - New Recreation Areas Post-Flood
- * Dashed lines indicate proposed segments of trail
- Ownership**
- City of Loveland
 - Larimer County
 - Other Public Land
 - USFS

Conservation of additional private lands is always predicated on fair agreements with willing property owners. These areas will be considered for protection when willing landowners desire to sell or donate their land or conservation easements. The ability to implement this vision is dependent on local or state partnerships, open land priorities elsewhere, landowner interest and long-term funding.

Use of Other Larimer County and Loveland Properties

Approximately 152 parcels were acquired by Larimer County using FEMA funding following the 1976 flood. These properties serve a variety of functions, from the Big Thompson Parks (Glade, Narrows, Forks, Sleepy Hollow), fishing access, and hazard avoidance. More than 90% have river frontage and are not buildable (located in the floodway), and a limited number could be built upon despite some constraints. Apart from the formally-designated Big Thompson Parks, these properties are not maintained or signed and, taken collectively, their management burdens (trespassing, littering, illegal camping, nuisance complaints, road maintenance costs) often outweigh the benefits they provide to the public. Dozens of parcels have been sold by the County to private landowners, some of which were damaged again in the 2013 flood.

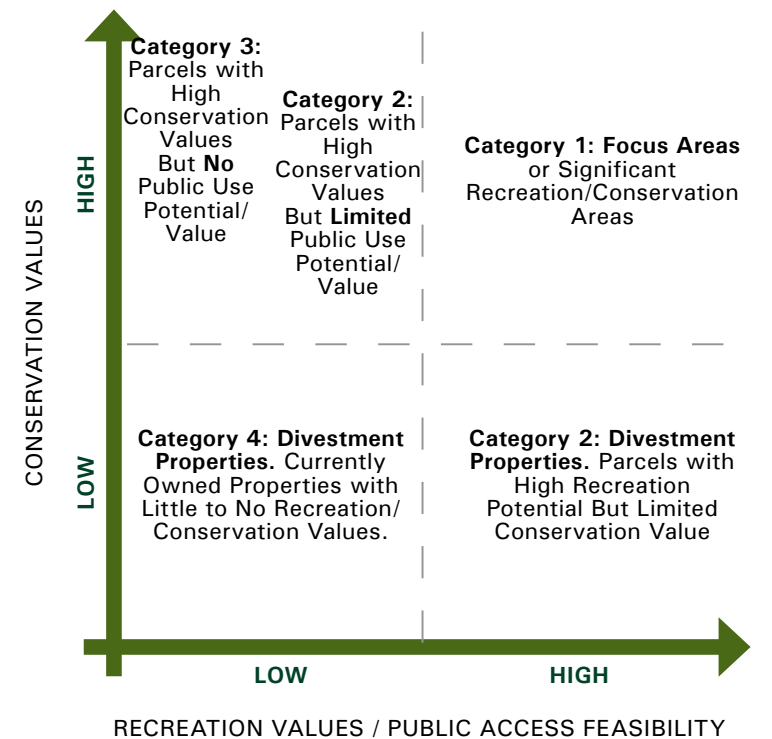
Similarly, Loveland owns nearly 550 acres along the Big Thompson, approximately 150 acres offers public access. As described under “Other Uses of Loveland Property” above, there are opportunities for improving trail connectivity without adding major facilities.

This study recommends that management of Larimer County and City of Loveland properties should consider the conservation and recreation values present on these properties. As shown in the figure at right, County and City properties can be categorized on a spectrum that accounts for property purpose, conservation mechanism, degree of naturalness, and potential for recreational use facilities. These categories can also be used by project partners to evaluate substantially damaged parcels that are eligible for FEMA funding.

- **Category 1. Recreation Parcels.** These are property areas where the County, Loveland and/or partners would actively seek to develop new or re-build recreation amenities, implement the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan, and/or purchase parcels for conservation. Signage would include interpretive, regulatory, and no trespassing displays.
- **Category 2. Conservation Parcels with Limited Public Use.** These are fee-simple parcels that would be retained for conservation or scenic values, may be open to the public (primarily for river access) but no infrastructure would be provided, including no formal parking areas. Regulatory signage would be installed. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments but could include fish habitat projects.
- **Category 3. Conservation Parcels with No Public Use.** Public use would not be practical due to the lack of established access, difficult access, size, maintenance difficulty, or conservation easement (private property). These parcels would be retained for the purposes of river function, most being located wholly or partially in the floodplain. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments. No trespassing signage would be installed.
- **Category 4. Divestment Parcels.** Properties with little conservation or recreation value should be disposed or traded. If retained for purposes other than conservation or recreation, the Larimer County Natural Resource Department and City of Loveland would have no management responsibility.

These four categories are further described and applied to Larimer County and City of Loveland properties in Appendix B.

Conservation and recreation criteria for future use of Larimer County and City of Loveland Properties



Proposed Off-Street Trail System Improvements

The following table summarizes the off-street trail components of the proposed priority projects presented earlier and which would be constructed on public land. Trail easements or land acquisition would be needed for the Cedar Cove Trail and Glen Haven Downtown Trailhead. Agency coordination with US Forest Service, Colorado Water Conservation Board, US Fish and Wildlife and Colorado Parks and Wildlife would occur for any trail segments adjacent to the river.

Priority Off-Street Trail Projects

Name	Distance	Start	End	Potential Partners	Trail Type	Purpose / Notes
Big Thompson Multi-Use Trail (north and south of the river near US 34)	1.5 miles	Morey Wildlife Reserve	Glade Park and Devils Backbone Open Space	Loveland, Larimer County	Shared Use Path or Natural Surface Trail	Multiple recreation users.
Cedar Creek Trail	7.4 miles	Cedar Cove	Bobcat Ridge Natural Area	Loveland, Larimer County, USFS, Fort Collins	Natural Surface Trail	Mountain biking, hiking, jogging, horseback riding, snowshoeing, nature observation
River Trail to Cedar Cove (downstream of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park)	1.5 miles	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	Cedar Cove	Loveland, USFS	Shared Use Path and/or Natural Surface Trail	Multiple recreation users. North of US 34
Foothills Nature Trail Extension (upstream of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park)	0.5 miles	Foothills Nature Trail at CCC scenic overlook	Near Indian Village	Loveland, USFS	Shared Use Path and/or Natural Surface Trail	Multiple recreation users. Could be phased to end at Loveland's Rosedale property near Indian Village, building off of the Foothills Nature Trail.
River Trail to Idylwilde (upstream of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park)	1.5 miles	Near Indian Village	Idylwilde	Loveland, USFS, Larimer County	Shared Use Path and/or Natural Surface Trail	To extend a continuous river trail from Cedar Cove to Idylwilde, this segment would start at Loveland's Rosedale property near Indian Village and continue on US Forest Service land to the decommissioned Idylwilde reservoir site.
Glen Haven Downtown / Crosier Mountain Trailhead	0.1 miles	Downtown	Current Crosier Mountain Trail	Glen Haven Association, EVRPD, Larimer County, USFS	Natural Surface Trail. Stairs in steep areas.	New trailhead on CR 43 near commercial amenities. Trail-based recreation and hunting access



US 34 Bicycle Safety Improvements

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the greatest needs identified by the public is for a safer, contiguous bicycle facility on US 34. CDOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief program to rebuild US 34 and make the corridor more resilient to future natural threats. CDOT is currently in the preliminary design process for 15 miles of the permanent roadway and bridge improvements from Estes Park to Loveland. CDOT remains committed to coordinating with and looking for as many win-win opportunities as possible throughout the US 34 corridor. Following the Governor's directive to "build back better than before," the US 34 Team has identified the following goals for the project:

- Build a safe system that meets the needs of the traveling public and stakeholders
- Build a more resilient roadway in harmony with the river and ecological systems
- Coordinate and collaborate with other agencies to maximize mutual benefits, goals, and outcomes and to ensure corridor improvements are compatible with one another and don't preclude future investments
- Complete the roadway project by the end of 2017
- Maximize system improvements within the allotted project budget
- Minimize life cycle maintenance costs and provide a quality product
- Implement an effective public outreach and communication plan
- Minimize inconvenience to the public and residents along the corridor and maximize safety for workers, residents, and the public

There are two key challenges associated with an improved bicycle facility on US 34: funding and physical constraints.

First, the Federal Highway Emergency Relief (FHWA ER) funds that CDOT is using to construct along US 34 cannot be expended to build elements that did not exist prior to the September 2013 flood, such as an off-street multi-use trail. In addition, the funds can only be used to reconstruct the roadway in areas that were classified as severely damaged by the 2013 flood (see the Permanent Repairs map).

Second, there is not enough space for a continuous off-street trail because of steep terrain and lack of public land and right-of-way.

In an effort to bring the US 34 corridor up to current roadway standards, CDOT has committed to building 6-foot paved shoulders wherever possible, within the segments classified as severely damaged. CDOT will be looking for additional funding sources in order to pay for widening the shoulders in areas that were not classified as severely damaged. Even though the wider shoulders will not be designated as bicycle lanes only, they will improve safety for all travelers (including bicyclists).

Contiguous 6-foot shoulders are key since constructing 6-foot shoulders in some segments but not others would not result in a safer, continuous corridor through the canyon. Bicyclists and other users would still have to negotiate segments with inadequate shoulders. While the 6-foot shoulder would accommodate bicycle use better than the current roadway, which has a shoulder varying from 1 to 6 feet in width, a wider shoulder alone would not serve as a bike path for a range of users, e.g. families with children, and presents some additional safety concerns. For example, though of inadequate width for vehicle parking, the shoulder may become an attractive nuisance to drivers who stop to take a photo or even briefly park, which may pose a safety hazard in and of itself and may also force bicyclists to merge with traffic to avoid stopped cars. In order to encourage motorists to park in designated areas, rather than within the 6 foot shoulder, this assessment recommends that signs be installed to indicate the distance to the next vehicle pull-off to motorists know there are designated stopping points - these could coincide with the developed parks proposed for the canyon.

There has also been strong public interest in an enhanced bicycle facility on CR 43, which has proven to be infeasible at this time on the eleven miles of CR 43 currently under reconstruction from US 34 (Drake) to West Creek Rd (Glen Haven) by Larimer County and Central Federal Lands. CR 43 is being reconstructed with 2-foot shoulders from Drake to Rainbow Ranch Curve; 1-foot shoulders from Rainbow Ranch to Glen Haven. It is highly unlikely that enhanced bicycle facilities could be added at a later date in narrow canyon segments due to terrain and funding constraints.

In summary, the 6-foot paved shoulders in permanent repair segments and additional signage will be an improvement to the pre-flood conditions for both bicyclists and motorists. A continuous 6-foot paved shoulder and further safety improvements from Loveland to Estes Park is dependent on additional funding, for which partners and citizens are encouraged to apply and advocate.



Map Generated : 2/10/2014



US 34
 ■ Damage Sites
 ▲ Project Milepoints

Roads
 — US Highway
 — State and County



Approximate Extent of US 34 Permanent Repairs. Source: CDOT



CHAPTER 4. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

BUILDING BACK BETTER THAN BEFORE

Through recovery efforts, including restoration of recreation areas, careful planning and design can make the Big Thompson River better and stronger than it was before. Under the Governor's "build back better and stronger" initiative, reconstruction efforts are not "simply going back to the way things were but about coming back stronger; not just bouncing back but bouncing forward. In that context, even a devastating storm can contain a silver lining in presenting the opportunity - or necessity - to think differently about one's future and to bypass the slow evolutionary processes that sometimes prevent building stronger places. In the end, [our community] should emerge not as if nothing ever happened, but actually stronger and better able to withstand greater shocks in the future" (ULI 2014). In hazardous areas, "building back better" often means not rebuilding or building in a different location.

Resilience - in its environmental, land use, partnership, and recreation dimensions - entails designing for reduced failure probabilities (better facility design), reduced negative consequences when failure does occur (through reduced costs), and reduced time required to recover. Resiliency means adopting more stringent development requirements to protect public health, safety, and welfare as well as protecting environmental resources. For example, where a property has a demonstrated history of significant flood damage (e.g., Drake, Cedar Cove, Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park), a resilient facility includes minimal infrastructure located at grade or below and no above-ground facilities within the floodway. Resiliency requires community awareness (adapting to the temporary and permanent changes that they present) and preparedness for natural hazards - drought and wildfire in addition to floods - as well as preparation for exposure to other potential environmental and community threats and risks like changes in climate. Lastly, resiliency relies on the health of the natural systems (i.e., aquatic habitat, water quality, soil conservation) that support and sustain life.

Best practices that would strengthen the Big Thompson River resiliency follow; many of which are already codified in existing plans and studies. Site specific recommendations will be developed for each property during design processes.

RECREATION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Recreational uses should be managed at sustainable levels that preserve a high quality recreational experience and protect the natural environment. In the interest of maintaining the health of the river and providing an enjoyable recreational experience for all, users of the river should follow - and land managers enforce - best management practices on the river, including:

- Respect private property
- Respect other river users (e.g., fisherman, wildlife watchers, etc.)
- Day use only, except on designated US Forest Service recreation sites
- Pets must be leashed and under physical control at all times
- Stay on established trails to protect natural resources and wildlife
- Use or discharge of firearms is prohibited except at designated hunting areas
- Fireworks are strictly prohibited
- Open fires are prohibited, outside of designated fire pits or grills
- Glass containers are prohibited
- Alcohol over 3.2% is prohibited unless permitted in designated areas
- Life jackets, flotation devices and proper footwear for swimming and wading activities
- No littering or styrofoam coolers
- No bathing or diapers in river
- All state fishing regulations and catch and release BMPs should be followed
- For Larimer County regulations, see <http://larimer.org/naturalresources>
- For City of Loveland regulations, see <http://cityofloveland.org/parks>
- For USFS regulations, see http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/arp/passes-permits/?cid=fsm91_058268

Education

Educational programs offered by CPW, Larimer County, City of Loveland, and USFS should provide information to river users and landowners, with a goal of improved safety and environmental and social conditions through increased knowledge of various aspects of river use, requirements and rights. Access points should provide signage and other educational exhibits to educate users on the best management practices on the river as well as on topics of natural and cultural significance about the Big Thompson River, the canyon, and its resources.

Access

Access points from US 34 are the primary recreation management tool for the river. Access points should be used as a tool to control the types and levels of use on the river. Larimer County Natural Resources Department and CDOT should review proposed developments and access improvements in the study area. Access point signage and gates should be installed and/or maintained to reflect current management restrictions. New facilities constructed at these access points should be in conformance with the desired recreation intensity level.

Signage

A limited, unified system of signage and kiosks will be added to the river corridor to support management activities and goals. Signage should be unobtrusive yet effectively provide a corridor orientation map including public access points, toilet locations, seasonal restrictions, recreation BMPs, and safety precautions. Similarly, a brochure could be developed that highlights the recreation amenities and made available online and at key locations.

"The awareness, energy, and resources that communities bring to recovery from a painful and heart-wrenching disaster can catalyze actions that contribute to broader objectives of livability and sustainability. Those communities that recognize that linkage become stronger, more vibrant, and better able to withstand future events, because they have laid the groundwork for maintaining themselves as healthy, functional, and self-sufficient—they bounce forward... The true test will be to see if these communities can summon and apply the same strengths in the calm before the next storm to implement long-term physical, financial, and organizational measures of prevention and protection."

- From the 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel Report for Northern Colorado, Connected Systems, Connected Futures: Building for Resilience and Prosperity

PARTNERSHIP RESILIENCY

Enduring partnerships and communication processes are essential to ensuring a strategic and shared approach to conservation, stewardship and funding over the long term. As shown in Table 3-6, the Big Thompson Watershed would benefit from deeper regional cooperation and a greater understanding of the larger natural systems that have shaped its history. This project and other recent collaborations such as *Our Lands-Our Future* and annual Big Thompson Watershed and Poudre River forums are important steps in the right direction. Institutionalizing lessons learned from past disasters may mean new, self-sustaining institutions to support agencies, such as formalizing the role of the Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition into a non-profit status. Collaboration is critical and regular dialogue on how to best use conservation as a tool to avoid or diminish these regular – though unpredictable – disasters is a priority. Partnership resiliency is not only about preparedness for these types of risks, but also the ability to respond effectively in unison.

Partnership Resiliency Best Practices

Best Practice	Authority/Source
Formalize the Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition. Create a regional non-profit organization with a mission to address the following issues for the entire watershed: disaster recovery, hazard mitigation (flood & fire), forest health, fishery and water quality, open space and recreation. The BTRRC is currently in the process of creating a formalized structure and permanent watershed-wide non-profit entity.	ULI Resiliency Report 2014
Resiliency working group. The group should continue to shape regional collaboration on key river and infrastructure resiliency issues. Could be part of the BTRRC mission, or led by another interagency group.	ULI Resiliency Report 2014
Expand the annual Big Thompson Watershed Forum. The critical issues facing the future of the Big T have evolved since the Watershed Forum's founding to include river resiliency, recreation, land conservation, land use in addition to traditional water quality/quantity topics. Highlight this plan's vision and recommendations, and the recommendations of the BTRRC Restoration Mater Plan and ULI Resiliency Report. The forum can be a venue to prioritize actions and community resources available in three pressing areas: 1. Resiliency by Unbuilding; 2. Financing Resiliency; and 3. Leading Resiliency	ULI Resiliency Report 2014

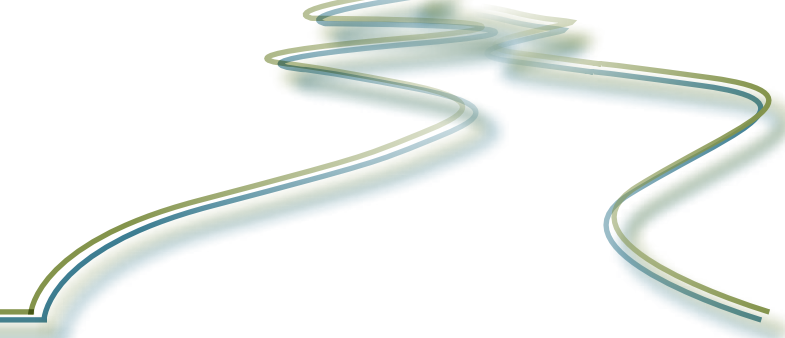
Case Study: Multiple Agency Management: the Arkansas Headwater Recreation Area



The Arkansas is one of the nation's most popular rafting rivers. From scenic and family-friendly Browns Canyon National Monument to boat-rocking Bighorn Sheep Canyon and Royal Gorge stretches, all Federal and state land along the Arkansas River is managed through a unique, cooperative partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service.

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) is a model of interagency management that provides recreation and resource protection taxpayer efficiencies. The AHRA "park" is actually a linear recreation area that follows the Arkansas River for 150 miles from the high mountains near Leadville, Colorado, to Lake Pueblo, on the edge of Colorado's plains. These agencies along with local governments, private organizations and individuals are responsible for managing the land and resources of the upper Arkansas Valley. The goal is to balance increasing recreation use and other demands with resource protection. Colorado Parks and Wildlife and BLM provide the primary management for intensive river uses as well as the region's many resources. The partners have acquired important river access for the public and developed recreational facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, boat ramps, wildlife viewing areas, fishing access sites and OHV trails.

For more information, see the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Brochure at <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/ArkansasHeadwatersRecreationArea/Documents/ArkansasBrochure.pdf>



RIVER AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCY

Allow rivers to act as rivers by providing sufficient space for flooding and the ability of rivers to move laterally within their floodplains. The September 2013 floods demonstrated in dramatic fashion the power of rivers and the limitations of FEMA-generated flood hazard maps — many of the residential properties destroyed or damaged by flooding were not located within a defined floodplain, including areas along both the Big and Little Thompson Rivers. These maps are a good starting point to identify inundation related flood hazards, but do not provide guidance to communities and home owners related to erosion hazards. Conserving additional lands along rivers provides additional space for the river to naturally move within its floodplain providing an added level of resilience to what can be achieved by floodplain regulations alone. In addition, floodplains provide critical habitat, wildlife movement corridors, and a scenic setting through which people travel to Rocky Mountain National Park and other regional attractions.

Table 3-4. River and Ecosystem Resiliency Best Practices

Best Practice	Authority/Source
<p>Undertake strategic land acquisition for river enhancements. Strategic fee-simple acquisition of flood-prone property or conservation easements in partnership with willing sellers is necessary to expand the natural water corridors to better mimic their predevelopment footprint. Acquisition or relocation of structures located in the most vulnerable areas should be prioritized. By acquiring floodplain land and restoring the ecological functionality of the river, a valuable community amenity can be created. Floodplain properties have preservation potential as working farms, riparian habitat, and water-based recreation sites.</p>	<p>City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2014, ULI Resiliency Report 2014, Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan 2015</p>
<p>Allow rivers to act as rivers. Work to restore the natural geomorphic processes of the river. This will require increasing the area for some channel migration where the river moves back and forth, and reconnecting the river to its historic floodplain.</p>	<p>ULI Resiliency Report 2014, City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Appendix E) 2014, BTRRC Restoration Master Plan 2015</p>
<p>Implement the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan. Restoration does not necessarily mean returning the river to a naturalized condition; it may also mean engineering the full functionality of the processes of the river within a designed landscape infrastructural system. Every effort should be made to follow the restoration and stabilization projects in the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan.</p>	<p>BTRRC Restoration Master Plan 2015, ULI Resiliency Report 2014</p>
<p>Native Fishery Recovery and Monitoring. Recovery of aquatic habitats and a native trout fishery is a high priority. Fish habitat management will be coordinated with CPW efforts to improve the fisheries, including fish stocking or removal, fishing regulations, habitat improvements and whirling disease control programs. Aquatic habitat improvements to the river should continue, including riparian enhancements and new structures. These improvements should be targeted to improve the aquatic environment for trout or dynamic river functions. Improvements to the river should be natural in appearance and in character with the surrounding environment.</p>	<p>Colorado Parks & Wildlife, BTRRC Restoration Master Plan 2015.</p>
<p>Riparian Restoration and Monitoring. Manage riparian vegetation to protect and enhance the natural habitat of the river, placing special emphasis on protecting cottonwood, willow and wetland vegetation. Some of the most productive, diverse and resilient habitats are the cottonwood and willow-dominated riparian areas. These riparian areas provide habitat for a large number and diversity of wildlife species, and many wildlife species depend either entirely or significantly on the availability and quality of these habitats for their necessary life cycles. Many of these habitats include a mix of woodland, shrub and grassland riparian communities. They also absorb and filter runoff, attenuate overbank flows and maintain river channel stability. Vegetation recruitment among cottonwood and willow stands should be carefully monitored, in many cases natural recruitment will be adequate. This mosaic should be preserved and enhanced through additional river restoration projects.</p>	<p>Colorado Parks & Wildlife, BTRRC Restoration Master Plan 2015.</p>
<p>Stormwater Regulations. Actively enforce stormwater management regulations, including erosion BMPs in Federal, state, and local construction projects. Properly locate snow storage areas.</p>	<p>Federal, state, and local stormwater management regulations</p>

“Design with nature, not against it: With a consistent historical record of flooding, development patterns should be shaped to allow rivers to act as rivers, providing reasonable space for flood lands and even the ability for rivers to move within their floodplains.”

- From the 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel Report for Northern Colorado, Connected Systems, Connected Futures: Building for Resilience and Prosperity

“Many physical interventions—from floating buildings and levees to wet floodproofing—can be employed to create resilience, depending on the particular set of risks faced by a community. However, *the most successful strategies will work in concert with the natural ecosystem* where they are used. In northern Colorado, that means development patterns must be able to respond with agility to the cycles of fire, flood, and drought that strike the region. Regular forest burns and the cleansing and depositional activities of floods are necessary to support important ecosystems that in turn support us and create the beauty that makes this region stand out.”

- From the 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel Report for Northern Colorado, Connected Systems, Connected Futures: Building for Resilience and Prosperity

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCY

Big Thompson communities can plan for and strengthen land use and infrastructure resiliency by continuing to identify, assess, and monitor development in risky areas such as floodplains, erosion hazard zones, steep slopes, and potential wildfire locations to be appropriately sited and designed. Integrating land conservation planning with infrastructure planning can assist in protecting critical infrastructure (bridges, emergency access, power and fuel supply, water supply, sewage treatment and outflow) by dissipating the velocity and volume of flood water.

As stated in the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan, the communities and jurisdictions along the Big Thompson River have been active and responsible in floodplain management since the 1980s, which is a contributing factor to the relatively low loss of life in the 2013 flood compared to the 1976 flood. Additionally, some buildings in the Big Thompson Canyon that had been the site of loss of life during the 1976 flood were never rebuilt, in part due to floodplain management ordinances. Yet many structures remain in highly hazardous floodplain locations. Even with restoration and mitigation measures, the flood risk to these structures cannot be eliminated. Such structures can only be protected from flood risk by relocation or floodproofing/retrofitting.

The affected jurisdictions should continue the practices of responsible floodplain management into the future, as described below.

Land Use and Infrastructure Resiliency Best Practices

	Authority/Source
<p>Retain Strong Floodplain Regulations. Just as the river constantly erodes its banks, there is constant pressure on local governments to relax the time-tested safeguards that protect public health, safety, and welfare. It is recommended that the Town of Estes Park, City of Loveland, and Larimer County retain their current strong regulations that go beyond FEMA guidelines to require a no-rise certification within the floodway and discourage residential development in the 100-year floodplain. However, these communities should establish a policy to gradually remove buildings and infrastructure in the floodway with the exception of bridges, infrastructure used to convey stormwater, or other facilities that can sustainably operate in a floodway. Communities are entitled to adopt measures that are more stringent than set forth in the FEMA and State rules and regulations for floodways, and these communities have had the foresight to prepare such regulations and should continue their enforcement.</p>	ULI Resiliency Report 2014
<p>500-year floodplain. In general, buildings should be limited in the 500-year floodplain. All essential facilities should be located outside of the 500-year Big Thompson River floodplain.</p>	ULI Resiliency Report 2014
<p>Discourage the placement of earth fill or dumping of any construction material within the floodplain. Enforce violations when they occur.</p>	Larimer County Floodplain Regulations, City of Loveland Floodplain Regulations, and Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Appendix E) 2014
<p>Update floodplain maps. The area inundated in 2013 was largely similar to the 100-year floodplain, but there were important variations. Current mapping also does not consider erosion risk, outside of the mapped floodplain, which resulted in the loss of life during the 2013 flood. Further, channel migration occurred in many locations. There is little doubt that future flooding will likely occur beyond the currently mapped 100-year floodplain. County and municipalities should work with the State of Colorado and FEMA to update their Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in order to account for the changes that have occurred. Uncertainty with the maps should not stop the development and implementation of recovery plans.</p> <p>It is also important to consider new ways to map and convey risk as currently being implemented through FEMA’s Risk MAP program. For more information on developing maps that better account for this dynamism, see:</p> <p>The State of Vermont’s Fluvial Erosion Mapping program at: http://www.vtwaterquality.org/rivers/docs/rv_municipalguide.pdf</p> <p>For more information on the types of flood risk products available through Risk MAP, see FEMA’s site at: http://www.fema.gov/risk-map-flood-risk-products</p>	ULI Resiliency Report 2014
<p>Design infrastructure to work with nature, not against it. Where possible, trails should be built upland and kept out of sensitive riparian areas and forest. Elongate the span and flood conveyance of recreational bridges in parks. Where possible, limit bridges to pedestrian bridges only that can be constructed at a lower cost and maneuver changes in grades easier than vehicular bridges.</p>	City of Loveland Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Appendix E) 2014

River Restoration Recommendations

Infrastructure located within or near the floodplain will require some type of bank stabilization for protection during flooding. High gradient streams in canyon reaches will typically require bank stabilization similar to what is naturally stable in these systems during floods, i.e., something similar to bedrock or very large rock (see the following example).

In high energy reaches cobbles, small boulders, woody debris, and even established vegetation will likely become mobile during large flood events as was observed during the 2013 flooding. This is why in high energy reaches the 'natural' bank stabilization observed is often large rock and bedrock, sometimes with little to no riparian vegetation.

Natural vegetated banks failed in equal measure during the 2013 floods in similar high energy reaches. This is why the Big Thompson River Restoration Plan recommended a variety of bank stabilization treatments so the correct treatment can be applied where needed (to be determined by future hydraulic models and other parameters). The plan also encouraged road setbacks where feasible to allow more room for restoration.

Poorly designed riprap may transfer erosive energy towards opposing bends or downstream areas, but can also be designed to not impact opposing banks and/or downstream areas. The master plan recommends hard armor and be vegetated with a set back away from the channel when possible. This will provide more room for natural processes to occur within the remaining cross section. Riprap does not prevent all channel movement, only the bank it is intended to protect.

The assessments completed for the BTRRMP were also used to guide the development of the proposed conceptual plans and treatments. The conceptual plans include ten different treatments that will help create a more resilient and healthy river corridor. The recommended treatments will need to be reassessed as to their need and applicability based on possibly different future conditions. The proposed plans are an attempt to meet the goals of the master plan while addressing the risks and needs of the corridor. By their nature, master plans are created at a conceptual level and are not intended to be used for final design purposes.

Most of the aquatic and riparian habitat in the canyon corridor was damaged to varying degrees. Aquatic and riparian habitat improvement potential was assessed for the river corridors and scores weighted for each project reach to inform the BTRRMP and to score project reaches for future project prioritization.

Aquatic Habitat Improvement Potential (AHIP). Miller Ecological Consultants, Inc. (MEC) evaluated the study area to identify reaches that would benefit from restoration. AHIP ratings range from five (5) for areas that have little or no instream variability and for which establishment of appropriate in-channel aquatic habitat structure is recommended, to zero (0) for areas where no restoration is needed or possible.

Riparian Ecological Improvement Potential (REIP). Alpine Ecological Resources evaluated the study area for the potential to assist natural riparian recovery processes, enhancing or creating riparian complexes of forbs, shrubs, and trees on floodplain benches. The REIP ratings range from five (5) for areas with high potential to one (1) for areas with low potential or need. Areas rated highly are disturbed areas that have substantial potential to restore large riparian floodplain complexes, such as gravel pond locations in Loveland. Areas rated two (2) to three (3) are important to restore as well to improve aquatic habitat, and to provide filtering of storm runoff before it reaches the main river channel. Areas rated one (1) are characterized by little or no available floodplain, steep canyon walls with exposed bedrock, little soil present, or relatively intact riparian habitat.



Source: allestspark.com

River Restoration Recommendations Table

	Recreation and Conservation Project	Management Category	AHIP	REIP	Treatments ¹	Applicable Conceptual Plan ²
Lower Canyon	Loveland West	1	3.0	4.6	Floodplain Bench, Aquatic Restoration, Stabilization, High Flow Channel	29- Morey Open Space
	Glade Park	1	3.7	4.2	Aquatic Restoration, Floodplain Bench	27- Glade Road
	Narrows Park	2	3.6	4.8	Floodplain Bench, Stabilization, Riparian Restoration, Aquatic Restoration (South of Road), High Flow Channel	22- Jasper Lake
Drake	Cedar Cove and Trailhead/Trail	1	3.9	4.0	Aquatic Restoration, Floodplain Bench, Stabilization, High Flow Channel	21- Cedar Cover
	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	1	1.8	3.5	Floodplain Bench	20-V-Smith Mountain Park
	Round Mountain National Recreational Trail	1-Trailhead only	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Indian Village Area	1	0.6	3.9	Floodplain Bench, Stabilization	18- Idylwilde
	Idylwilde	2	3.6	4.7	Floodplain Bench, Aquatic Restoration, Stabilization, Riparian Restoration	17- Old Idylwilde Dam
	Forks Park	1	2.5	3.9	Stabilization, Floodplain Bench, Increase Capacity	15-East Drake
	Upper Drake	3	0.0	4.0	Stabilization, Wall or Elevated Roadway (North side of River), Floodplain Bench, Increase Capacity	14-Drake
Upper Canyon	Waltonia Bridge	2	0.3	2.4	Riparian Restoration, Stabilization, Wall or Elevated Roadway (North side of River)	11-Waltonia
	Fishing Pier (1.5 miles west of Waltonia)	1	0.3	1.4	Riparian Restoration - Partial	10- USFS-2
	Sleepy Hollow Park	1	0.0	2.6	Riparian Restoration- Partial	8- Seven Pines
	Glen Comfort Area	2	0.0	2.0	Flood Plain Bench, Stabilization, Riparian Restoration - Partial, Aquatic Restoration	4-Bella Vista
	Common Point Shooting Range	2	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Estes Park Gateway	2	.3	2.7	Riparian Restoration-Partial, Aquatic Restoration	1-Evergreen Point
North Fork	Glen Haven Downtown Crosier Mountain Trailhead	2	5	4	Aquatic Restoration, Floodplain Bench, Stabilization, Riparian Restoration	42- Glen Haven
	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Drake Rt 43)	1	NA	NA	NA	57- Crosier Mt Trail
	Crosier Rainbow (Borrow pit) Trail/Trailhead	1	NA	NA	NA	54- Dunraven
	North Fork- Lower Picnic Site	1	NA	NA	NA	53- NR- Canyon 1
	Dunraven Trailhead/Signal Mountain Bulwark Ridge	1	NA	NA	NA	53- NR- Canyon 1

1. See Appendix C for Conceptual Treatment Graphic
 2. See the BRTTC Restoration Master Plan for map sheets.



FUNDING THE FUTURE

Clearly, planned recreation improvements and implementation of resilience strategies in the floodplain will require a major investment. Funding those investments will be a challenge for each of the agencies and organizations involved. The damage estimates reported in Chapter 2 are staggering. However, there are a variety of constantly changing funding sources that could be used for private and public projects.

The partners should work with the state legislature for a special appropriation to fund improvements in the canyon similar to what was done for US 36, which received \$8 million in 2014.

The most promising funding sources include the communities' share of Larimer County's Help Preserve Open Space sales tax, Great Outdoors Colorado grants, and even general fund allocations. For a complete listing of open space funding resources, see *Our Lands - Our Future*, Chapter 5 and Appendix D.

Great Outdoors Colorado has been funding open space, parks and recreation projects in Colorado for over 20 years, including many in Larimer County and its municipalities. In 2014, GOCO awarded over \$300,000 to the City of Loveland and Larimer County for flood recovery efforts to damaged parks, trails, and open spaces, including funding that supported this planning study on the Big Thompson River. In addition to special funding for flood recovery efforts, GOCO routinely funds projects for development. For perspective, GOCO's total awards announced in 2014 totaled more than \$32 million, with the largest project being a grant of \$8 million for construction of a trail corridor between Lyons and Estes Park along U.S. Highway 36. Nearly \$7 million was awarded last year for open space protection projects.

GOCO's 2015 draft strategic plan places substantial emphasis on protecting, enhancing and/or providing access to Colorado's waterways. The projects defined in this plan fit well within this identified priority.

Federal disaster recovery funds include Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR), Recover Colorado Infrastructure Grant Programs and CDBG-DR Resilience Planning Grant Programs. CDBG-DR Recover Colorado Infrastructure Grant Programs¹ can be used with local cost share for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs or Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Programs. Funds may also be used to enhance public infrastructure projects beyond FEMA eligible costs.

The CDBG-DR Resilience Planning Grant Program² will support capacity building through local staffing, basic planning and studies, and long range planning for disaster recovery in Larimer County.

The Watershed Resilience Pilot Program³ is a holistic program designed to align watershed restoration and risk mitigation with community and economic development goals using a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional, coalition-of-partners approach. These watershed program funds will support capacity building through watershed coalition staffing; multi-objective planning, modeling, and conceptual design activities; and project implementation to address long-term catalytic watershed system improvements that build resilience in watersheds that sustained damage from recent federally-declared flood and fire disasters.

The above funding sources are one-time or highly competitive. An ideal funding policy would be long-term, fair, consistent, and strategically limited. It would also provide incentives to create a desired market behavior—in this case, removing development from threatened areas. One such approach recommended in the ULI Resiliency Report is a floodplain occupancy fee that could be levied in addition to property taxes and applied to only those properties lying within a designated floodplain district (e.g., the 100-year floodplain). The funds received from the fee could be used to (a) finance the acquisition and removal of properties within the flood zone, (b) fund incentives such as reimbursement of relocation costs and other tools designed to encourage residents and businesses to move outside the flood zone, and (c) restore the acquired land to a more natural condition. By design, the program would end when the policy objective had been met, and it would affect only those people who are in high-risk zones.

As with all master plans, a bigger vision will require further planning, engineering, design, permitting, and stakeholder input before projects are constructed. The amount of work proposed is likely not feasible for an individual agency to accomplish alone. It will be most efficient if multiple recreation, restoration and conservation projects can be completed simultaneously and collaboratively. For example, as CDOT begins the permanent repairs along US 34, access to each priority project could be accommodated and at the same time the adjacent reach of river and opposing bank could be restored. Many initiatives and many partners are walking in step towards conserving and restoring the Big Thompson River watershed as well as further repairing tourism infrastructure.

¹ For more information on CDBG-DR Recover Colorado Infrastructure Grant Programs, see <http://dola.colorado.gov/cdbg-dr/content/local-governments-recover-colorado-infrastructure-grant-program>

² For more information on CDBG-DR Resilience Planning Grant Programs, see <http://dola.colorado.gov/cdbg-dr/content/resilience-planning-and-capacity-building>

³ For more information on the Watershed Resilience Pilot Program, see <http://dola.colorado.gov/cdbg-dr/content/watershed-resilience-pilot-program>. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) administers these competitive funds in partnership with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Colorado Watershed Conservation Board (CWCB).

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ACTION PLAN

The vision requires perpetual partnerships. The partners should continue to convene no less than quarterly to advance key river and infrastructure resiliency issues, recreation and conservation priorities, funding opportunities, management efficiencies and accountability.¹ Agency responsibilities, below, serves to guide implementation of the study’s recommendations. In addition to the roles of lead and supporting agencies, non-governmental organizations, user groups and volunteers are also vital resources for implementation, monitoring, and maintenance.

Partner responsibilities are intended to increase management efficiencies and funding potential. For example, to the extent possible there could be one maintenance agreement for servicing all restrooms along the corridor. It is conceivable that a single “recreation manager” could emerge that could provide most functions (ranger, maintenance, etc.) for canyon properties. It is assumed that all Larimer County and City of Loveland properties categorized as management levels 1 or 2, along with future potential acquisitions, will undergo a full-scale restoration effort to reconnect the river with its floodplain and restore native riparian vegetation.

Project	Management Category	Lead Agency: Role	Supporting Agency: Role
Lower Canyon	Loveland West	1	City of Loveland: Acquisition, Design/Development, Trail Connection to Devils Backbone OS and Glade (1/2), Management Larimer County: Acquisition Funding, Trail Connection to Devils Backbone OS and Glade (1/2) CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration FEMA: Acquisition and Restoration Funding CDOT: ROW for Trail Connection to Devils Backbone OS and Glade
	Glade Park	1	Larimer County: Design/Development, Management City of Loveland: Design/Development partner, trail connection to Loveland West (1/2), Management (cost-share if Larimer County lead) CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration CDOT: ROW for Trail Connection to Loveland Hogbacks FEMA: Acquisition Funding
	Narrows Park	2	Larimer County: Acquisition, Design/Development, Management CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration FEMA: Acquisition Funding

¹ These four categories are further described in Chapter 3

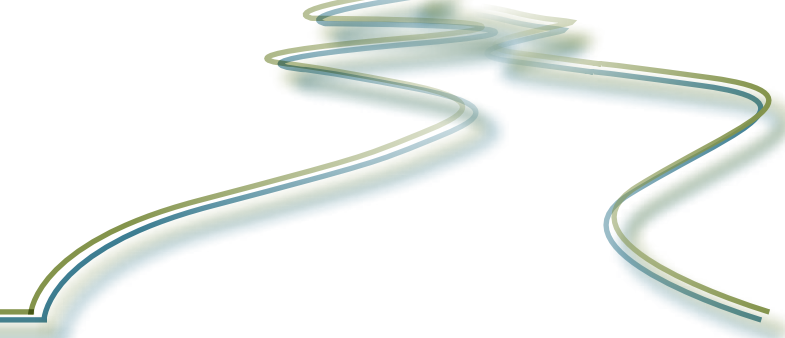
Category 1. Recreation Parcels. Actively seek to develop new or re-build recreation amenities, implement the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan, and/or purchase parcels for conservation. Signage would include interpretive, regulatory, and no trespassing displays.

Category 2. Conservation Parcels with Limited Public Use. Fee-simple parcels that would be retained for conservation or scenic values, may be open to the public (primarily for river access) but no infrastructure would be provided, including no formal parking areas. Regulatory signage would be installed. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments but could include fish habitat projects.

Category 3. Conservation Parcels with No Public Use. Public use would not be practical due to the lack of established access, difficult access, size, maintenance difficulty, or conservation easement (private property). These parcels would be retained for the purposes of river function, most being located wholly or partially in the floodplain. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments. No trespassing signage would be installed.

Category 4. Divestment Parcels. Properties with little conservation or recreation value should be disposed or traded. If retained for purposes other than conservation or recreation, the Larimer County Natural Resource Department and City of Loveland would have no management responsibility.

Project	Management Category	Lead Agency: Role	Supporting Agency: Role	
Drake	Cedar Cove and Trailhead/Trail	1	<p>Larimer County: Acquisition, Design/Development, Management</p> <p>City of Loveland: Acquisition partner, Design/Development, Management, Trail Connection to VSMP, Trail Connection to Bobcat Ridge NA (capital)</p> <p>Larimer County: Acquisition partner</p> <p>USFS: Trail Connection to VSMP, Trail Connection to Bobcat Ridge NA (permitting, management)</p> <p>Fort Collins: Trail Connection to Bobcat Ridge NA (capital)</p> <p>CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration</p> <p>FEMA: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>CDOT: Access Improvements</p>	
	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park	1	<p>City of Loveland</p> <p>Additional details presented in master plan currently in progress.</p>	
	Round Mountain National Recreational Trail	1-Trailhead only	<p>City of Loveland: Design/Development for Facility Upgrades, Trailhead Management</p>	<p>USFS: Interpretation, Facility Upgrade Funding, Trail System Management</p>
	Indian Village Area	1	<p>City of Loveland: Acquisition, Design/Development, Management, Trail Connection to VSMP (capital)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Larimer County: Acquisition, Design/Development</p>	<p>USFS: Trail Connection to VSMP (permitting, management)</p> <p>FEMA: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration</p> <p>CDOT: Access Improvement</p>
	Idylwilde	2	<p>USFS: Management, Trail Connection to Indian Village (permitting). Recreation Improvements are dependent on other partners.</p>	<p>Larimer County: Capital Cost to Construct Natural Surface Trail Connection to Indian Village</p> <p>CDOT: Access Improvements per USFS needs</p> <p>CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration, Watchable Wildlife Improvements</p>
	Forks Park	1	<p>Larimer County: Acquisition, Design/Development, Management</p>	<p>CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration, Acquisition Funding, Watchable Wildlife Improvements</p> <p>FEMA: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>CWCB: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>EVLTL: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>CDOT: Access Improvements</p>
	Upper Drake	3	<p>Larimer County: Acquisition, Design/Development, Management</p>	<p>CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration, Acquisition Funding, Watchable Wildlife Improvements</p> <p>FEMA: Acquisition Funding</p> <p>EVLTL: Acquisition Funding</p>



Project	Management Category	Lead Agency: Role	Supporting Agency: Role
Upper Canyon	Waltonia Bridge	2	CDOT: Access Improvements (pullout), Maintenance Partner?: Maintenance (cost-share) CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration, Acquisition Funding, Watchable Wildlife Improvements
	Fishing Pier (1.5 miles west of Waltonia)	1	USFS: Design/Development, Management CDOT: Access Improvements (pullout) CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration, Watchable Wildlife Improvements
	Sleepy Hollow Park	1	Larimer County: Design/Development, Management, Potential Acquisition CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration EVRPD: Management (cost-share) FEMA: Potential Acquisition of damaged parcels
	Glen Comfort	2	Larimer County: Management along River parcels USFS: Management of USFS Lands CPW: Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Restoration
	Common Point Shooting Range	2	EVRPD: Management
	Estes Park Gateway	2	EVRPD: Acquisition if in fee, Design/Development, Management Or EVLTL: Acquisition if in CE; monitoring Larimer County: Acquisition Fee or CE Funding EVLTL: Acquisition Fee or CE Funding CPW: Aquatic Habitat Improvements, Watchable Wildlife Improvements
North Fork	Glen Haven Downtown Crosier Mountain Trailhead	2	EVRPD: Design/Development of Trailhead/Stairs Glen Haven Association: Maintenance Larimer County: Acquisition Assistance/Expertise FEMA: Acquisition Funding USFS: Management on USFS lands
	Crosier Mountain Trail/Trailhead (near Drake Rt 43)	1	USFS: Design/Development, Management FEMA: Capital Funding EVRPD: Volunteer Maintenance
	Crosier Rainbow (Borrow pit) Trail/Trailhead	1	USFS: Design/Development, Management FEMA: Capital Funding EVRPD: Volunteer Maintenance
	North Fork- Lower Picnic Site	1	USFS: Design/Development, Management FEMA: Capital Funding EVRPD: Volunteer Maintenance
Dunraven Trailhead/Signal Mountain Bulwark Ridge	1	USFS: Design/Development, Management FEMA: Capital Funding EVRPD: Volunteer Maintenance	

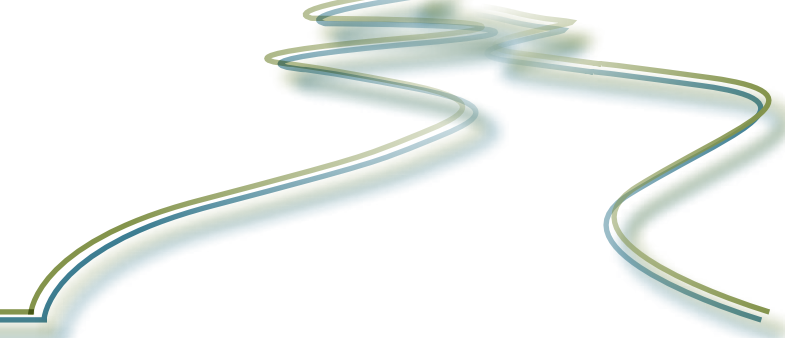
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APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

This study's assessment and recommendations were built on relevant direction from existing, adopted plans.

Agency	Plan Name (Date)	Recreation	Conservation
US Forest Service (USFS)	Land and Resource Management Plan (1997)	<p>The area is located in Management Areas 3.5 and 4.2, which primarily emphasize wildlife habitat and scenery with management strategies to provide habitat for elk and bighorn sheep.</p> <p>Management Areas 3.5 and 4.2 prohibit camping where uses impact soil, water and aesthetic resources.</p> <p>Goal 140: Manage trail development at a broad scale to coordinate with trail systems developed by municipalities, counties, states, other federal agencies and partners.</p> <p>Manage recreation, including camping and rock climbing, and grazing uses to reduce erosion or deterioration of riparian areas, watershed conditions and aesthetic resources.</p> <p>Acquire private lands from willing sellers in the Big Thompson River corridor to protect and enhance recreational opportunities and visual aesthetics.</p>	<p>The North Fork upstream of Drake is designated as Management Area 3.5 Forested Flora or Fauna Habitats – Limited Management, with a management emphasis on providing adequate amounts of quality forage, cover, escape terrain, solitude, breeding habitat, and protection for a wide variety of wildlife species and associated plant communities.</p> <p>Drake to Estes Park is designated as Management Area 4.2 Scenery and managed to protect or preserve scenic values and recreational uses of designated scenic byways and other heavily used scenic travel corridors.</p>
Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2014)	N/A	N/A
North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO)	Regional Bicycle Master Plan (2013)	Proposes a regional bicycle corridor/trail along the Big Thompson River from Johnstown upstream into the Canyon to complete remaining segments of this long-identified corridor.	N/A
Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition (BTRRC)	Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan (2014)	General channel stabilization and design concepts provided for reaches of the Big Thompson and North Fork rivers, including public lands that were used for recreation. No specific recreation recommendations are addressed.	<p>The plan includes river restoration recommendations and identifies areas with high potential for aquatic and riparian habitat enhancements that would significantly improve the ecology of the area. The plan has data that can be used to assess threats associated with flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.</p> <p>No specific recommendations were developed regarding the land conservation for natural resource, recreation or scenic values though these activities would complement the master plan's intent.</p>
Town of Estes Park	Comprehensive Plan and Action Plan	All development/ redevelopment adjacent to Fall River or the Big Thompson River shall provide access and orientation to the rivers.	Future development will need to be sensitive to the Big Thompson River.
	Estes Valley Habitat Assessment (2008)	N/A	Priorities for an ecological network the Big Thompson below Lake Estes (critical and important habitats, important Elk/Deer movement corridors) and Dry Gulch (Devils Gulch) .

Agency	Plan Name (Date)	Recreation	Conservation
Larimer County	Comprehensive / Master Plan	The abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities in Larimer County is a key element of the area's quality of life. Open spaces help define the character of the County and provide a welcome contrast to the compact urban form of our communities. Regional parks and open space facilities include the Big Thompson Parks, which cover 12 acres. Improvements for Big Thompson Parks include picnic facilities, toilets and fishing access.	ER-4: Larimer County shall endeavor to protect all areas identified as highest priority on the Important Wildlife Habitat Map, which is adopted by reference as part of the Master Plan.
	Our Lands - Our Future: Recreation and Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado (2013)	<p>This study of needs and preferences identified high demands for more land / facilities / activities that were or could potentially be offered in the Big Thompson River corridor: walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces and pavement, road/mountain biking, camping, fishing, shooting/archery, recreating with dogs, watching wildlife/birding, hunting, picnicking, non-motorized boating, horseback riding, and education.</p> <p>There was also interest in backcountry campsites (without structures), wild zones (areas where children can play in a natural environment with fewer restrictions), and hiking with dogs off-leash.</p>	<p>Study participants strongly supported using public funds for land conservation, with specific priorities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands or rights that provide regional trail corridors and greenways to connect to communities and parks • Land or acquire rights to protect lakes, rivers, streams, and preserve water quality • Ecologically sensitive lands (significant wildlife habitat, wetlands, rare plants) • Land or acquire rights for more outdoor recreation opportunities (hiking, walking, biking, horse riding, ...) • Invest in management and maintenance of current natural areas and facilities <p>The study also quantified economic benefits of land conservation (such as economic development, enhanced property value, direct use, and recreation and tourism), though it did not analyze the significant benefit of land conservation for flood prevention / mitigation.</p> <p>Map models available at http://tplgis.org/OurLands-OurFuture/ found that lands with the highest values and potential for conservation include: working farms and ranches between the mouth of Big Thompson River and Loveland; and the river (and US 34) as a regional wildlife, open space and trail corridor.</p>
	Open Lands Master Plan (2015)	The 2014 plan carries forward a regional trail along the Big Thompson River as a priority from the 2001 plan (Chapter 4).	<p>The 2014 plan carries forward the Big Thompson River as a conservation priority area from the 2001 plan (Chapter 3, River Corridors Priority Areas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue conservation and recreation efforts in the Cache La Poudre, Big Thompson and Little Thompson river corridors outside the growth management areas of cities and towns. • Pursue partnership opportunities with municipal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and user groups to conserve lands along these rivers to enhance their long-term ecological functions, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty. • Support regional coalitions that serve as a knowledge-sharing network and strategically coordinate watershed planning and preventative measures for flooding and drought through conservation mechanisms; create a vision plan for conservation and recreation, particularly along the Big Thompson River; develop an action plan to coordinate and leverage funding for improvements, operations and maintenance.
	Help Preserve Open Space Ballot language (approved 1995, extended 2014)	Revenues can be used for trails and passive recreational facilities.	"Lands considered highly desirable for preservation using revenue from Larimer County's attributable share and in cooperative partnerships with other entities include... riparian lands and access to riparian lands along the Big Thompson River."



Agency	Plan Name (Date)	Recreation	Conservation
City of Loveland	Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2005, currently being updated for 2015 with greater emphasis on resiliency and floodplain management)		Goal 5.4: Establish mitigation measures (such as buffer standards) that may need to be taken in such areas as the Big Thompson River Corridor, designated wetlands, and identified natural areas to offset or accommodate the impacts of development. Objective 5.3.2: Restore creeks, streams, and rivers, especially the Big Thompson River Corridor, to their more natural state using best practices. Objective 5.4.1: Protect waterways, including the Big Thompson River... ditches, and individual wetlands and their associated wildlife habitat from the impact of development while providing public access to waterways, lakes and ditches where appropriate. Goal 5.5 – Foster awareness and appreciation of open lands through citizen involvement and community education in order to promote stewardship.
	Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2014)	A multi-use recreational trail is proposed along the Big Thompson from Loveland to Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. Loveland has completed segments downstream of our study area. E.6 The City will emphasize trail access for citizens inside the City's Growth Management Area. Future connections to regional or statewide trail systems will be done in cooperation with public, multi-agency and private entities.	Identified potential open lands include the Big Thompson floodplain; lands surrounding Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park; Cedar Creek; and Green Ridge Glade. This includes the highly ranked Natural Area Sites 69 and 137 which rate high for overall habitat quality. Appendix E includes Guidelines for Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, with the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to restore the natural hydrologic processes of the river (which may include some channel migration where the river moves back and forth over time). • Where possible, trails should be built upland and kept out of sensitive riparian areas and forest. • Include the Big Thompson in the area-wide trail connection plan. • Protect viewsheds and other resources in the corridor. • Discourage the placement of earth fill within the floodplain.
	Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2012)	A multi-use recreational trail is proposed along the Big Thompson. Loveland has completed segments downstream of our study area.	
	Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Master Park (In Progress, 2015)	Restoration of the park is planned to include the re-establishment of picnic areas, multi-use and soft-surface trails, fishing and river access, primarily on the north bank of the river, out of the floodway.	The plan proposes to make the park more resilient to future flood events by incorporating bank protection and stabilization, improving the ecosystem's riparian, upland and aquatic habitats, and locating the river back to its post-flood location.

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APPENDIX B. MANAGEMENT OF LARIMER COUNTY AND CITY OF LOVELAND EXISTING PROPERTIES

As described in *A Bigger Vision for the Big T* (see the discussion in Chapter 3), Larimer County owns approximately 152 parcels acquired using FEMA funding following the 1976 Flood. These properties serve a variety of functions, including the Big Thompson Parks (Glade, Narrows, Forks, and Sleepy Hollow), riparian land protection, fishing access, and hazard avoidance. More than 90% have river frontage and are not buildable (lying in the floodplain), only a select few offer buildable sites for residences. Apart from the formally-designated Big Thompson Parks, these properties have not historically been maintained or signed. Collectively, the resulting management burden (trespassing, littering, illegal camping, nuisance complaints, road maintenance costs) has at times outweighed the benefits they provide to the public. Similarly, Loveland owns 550 acres along the Big Thompson, 20 acres of which is the Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. The majority of Loveland ownership is managed for water purposes including watershed protection.

A Bigger Vision for the Big T categorizes all Larimer County and City of Loveland ownership in the study area based on the conservation and recreation opportunities present and provides guidelines on their use and management. These categories, described in the following tables, can also be used by project partners to evaluate substantially damaged parcels in the 2013 Flood that are eligible for acquisition using FEMA funding.

These four property categories² were applied to all currently owned Larimer County and Loveland parcels in the study area. The following table summarizes all of the parcels by management category. The following map series illustrates the management categories by parcel. It is assumed that all Larimer County and City of Loveland properties categorized as management levels 1 or 2, along with future potential acquisitions, will undergo a full-scale restoration effort to reconnect the river with its floodplain and restore native riparian vegetation.

Management Categories Applied to Existing Larimer County and Loveland Parcels

Category	Management	Count	Acres
Larimer County			
1	Recreation	56	56.3
2	Conservation with Limited Public Use	26	23.5
3	Conservation with No Public Use	38	25.0
4	Divestment	8	1.3
Larimer County Total		128	106.1
City of Loveland			
1	Recreation	7	87.9
2	Conservation with Limited Public Use	9	439.2
3	Conservation with No Public Use	4	14.7
4	Divestment	0	0
Loveland Total		21	553.7
Total		149	659.8

² These four categories are further described in Chapter 3

Category 1. Recreation Parcels. Actively seek to develop new or re-build recreation amenities, implement the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan, and/or purchase parcels for conservation. Signage would include interpretive, regulatory, and no trespassing displays.

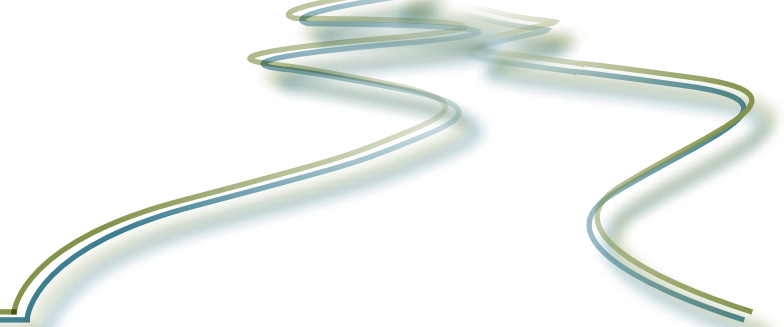
Category 2. Conservation Parcels with Limited Public Use. Fee-simple parcels that would be retained for conservation or scenic values, may be open to the public (primarily for river access) but no infrastructure would be provided, including no formal parking areas. Regulatory signage would be installed. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments but could include fish habitat projects.

Category 3. Conservation Parcels with No Public Use. Public use would not be practical due to the lack of established access, difficult access, size, maintenance difficulty, or conservation easement (private property). These parcels would be retained for the purposes of river function, most being located wholly or partially in the floodplain. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments. No trespassing signage would be installed.

Category 4. Divestment Parcels. Properties with little conservation or recreation value should be disposed or traded. If retained for purposes other than conservation or recreation, the Larimer County Natural Resource Department and City of Loveland would have no management responsibility.

Category 1: Recreation Parcels

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant recreation/conservation area or node. • Property areas where the County, Loveland and/or partners would actively seek to develop new or re-build recreation amenities and implement the BTRRC Restoration Master Plan • Properties acquired as fee-simple primarily for outdoor, passive recreation use
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to the public • Safe parking and visual access off of Highway 34 or other county/city roads. • Trail access within and to other properties where practical
Co-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacency to other public recreation/conservation properties is optimum.
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No size requirement; larger parcels provide more valuable recreation and habitat opportunities. • Should be large enough for intended recreation facilities and education opportunities.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and level of infrastructure will seek to minimize impact downstream in future flood events. • Designed for moderate to high level of public use and nature-focused recreational activities • May accommodate group activities • Designed to support self-directed uses, including outdoor recreation, nature programs and environmental education • Amenities provided limited the number of visitors and uses the area can accommodate while retaining the resource value and natural character of the site • Recreation uses designed to avoid impacts to high value natural resources, minimize ecological impacts, and maximize river resiliency. • Restoration per BTRRC Restoration Master Plan
Potential Amenities to Provide as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park identification signage • Regulatory signage • Interpretive signage • Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) for intended scale and use of the site • Picnic tables • Fishing access • Trailhead or entry parking area • Off-street parking (gravel) • Gate/fencing • Soft-surfaced non-motorized recreation trails • Vault or flush toilets if permitted
Additional Amenities to Consider as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use, hard-surfaced trails • Picnic shelter • Shade structure or gazebo • Viewpoint, viewing blind • Fishing pier • Bridge • Nature playground • Small outdoor amphitheater • Off-street parking (paved)
Amenities to Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenities that will be at high risk of future flood damage • Lighting • On-street parking on U.S. 34 • Turf, ornamental, or non-native plantings • Active use facilities (sports fields, sport courts, etc.)



Category 2: Conservation Parcels with Limited Public Use

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property areas that protect unique landscapes, scenic values, and open space from at-risk development, contribute to river aesthetics, and support river resiliency functions (stormwater detention, floodplain benches, ecological services, etc.). May secondarily provide recreation opportunities Signage would be limited to regulatory signage. Restoration would be limited to the most cost-effective treatments. No trespassing on adjacent private property
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be open to the public (primarily for fishing access) but no infrastructure would be provided, including no formal parking areas. May include floodplain, steep slope or other hazard area that precludes development May be connected to other properties via off-street trails
Co-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferably located in a complex with other public recreation/conservation properties May be isolated.
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No size requirement; larger parcels provide more valuable recreation and habitat opportunities.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May support self-directed outdoor recreation uses but typically less developed than Category 1 sites Potential restoration per BTRRC Restoration Master Plan
Potential Amenities to Provide as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory signage Fishing access Hunting access Parallel parking on U.S. 34 or property frontage Parking pull-off (nose-in)
Additional Amenities to Consider as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park identification signage Site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) Picnic tables Gate/fencing Soft-surfaced recreation trails (hiking, jogging, mountain biking)
Amenities to Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group activities Turf, ornamental, or non-native plantings Off-street parking (gravel) Vault or flush toilets

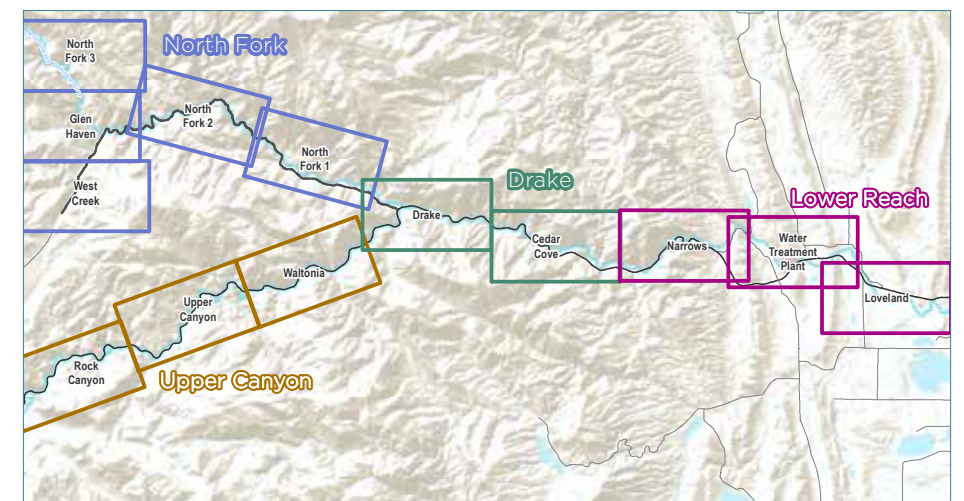
Category 3: Conservation Parcels with No Public Use

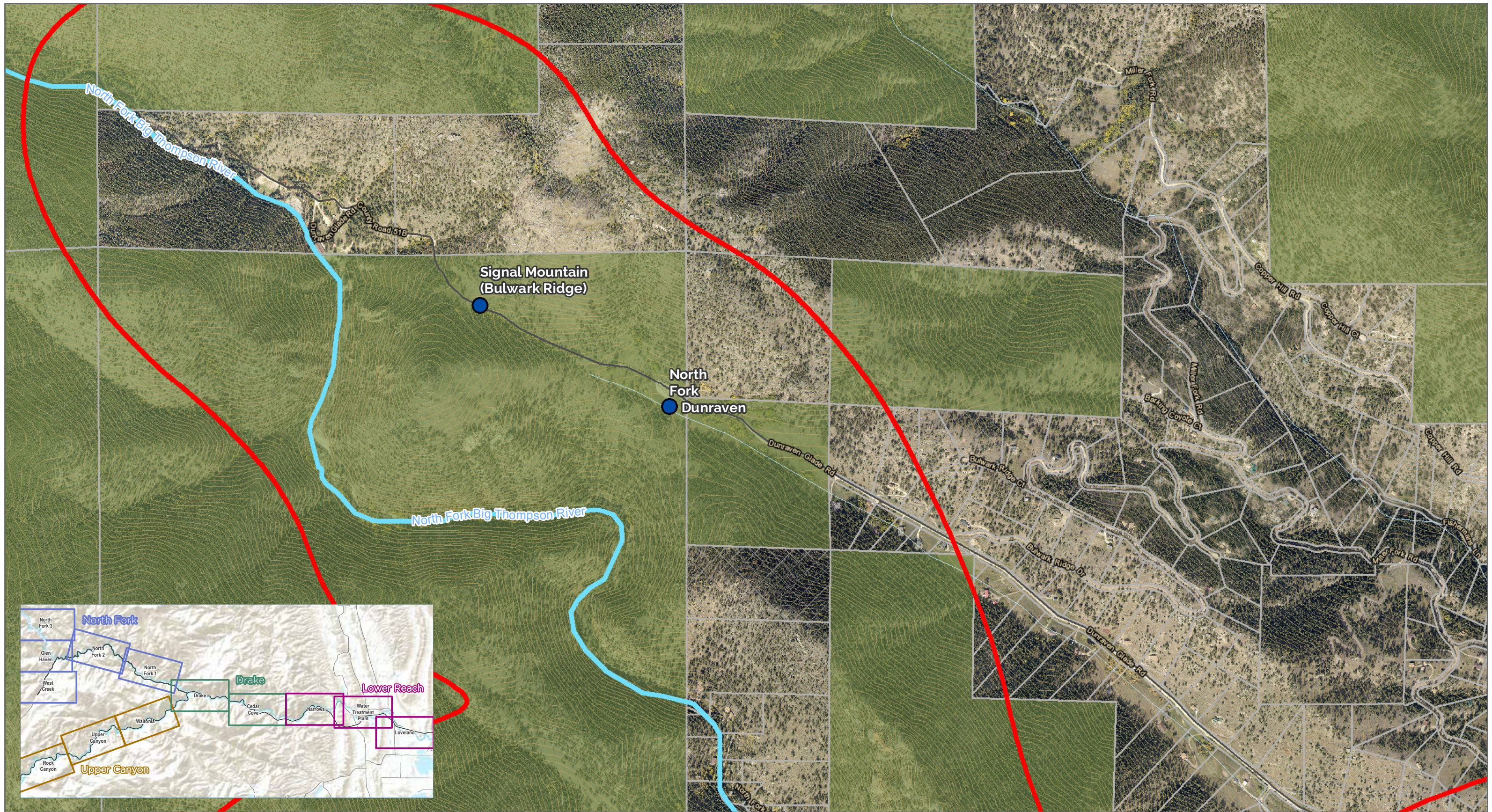
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properties acquired or retained primarily for the protection of natural resources or wildlife habitat, or prevention/removal of at-risk development. These parcels would be retained for the purposes of river function, most being located wholly or partially in the floodplain. Could be sold with Conservation Easement in place to protect conservation values.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public access. Public use not practical due to the lack of established access, difficult access, maintenance difficulty, or conservation easement (private property).
Co-location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wholly or partially in the floodplain May be isolated from other public lands.
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No size requirement; larger parcels provide more valuable habitat opportunities.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition and removal of structures No development Potential restoration per BTRRC Restoration Master Plan
Potential Amenities to Provide as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Additional Amenities to Consider as Appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory signage Un-signed/Un-regulated Fishing access Un-signed/Un-regulated Hunting access
Amenities to Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive recreation facilities

Category 4. Divestment Parcels

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properties with little conservation or recreation value should be disposed or traded. If retained for public works or utility purposes, the Larimer County Natural Resource Department or Loveland Open Lands Program would have no management responsibility.
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Land Management Categories Index Map





- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

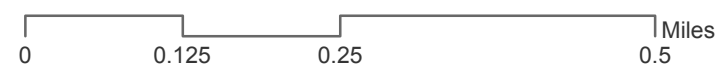
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories






A Bigger Vision for the Big T

North Fork 3 Reach
6/23/2015













Key


-  Flood Plain
-  Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
-  USFS Roads

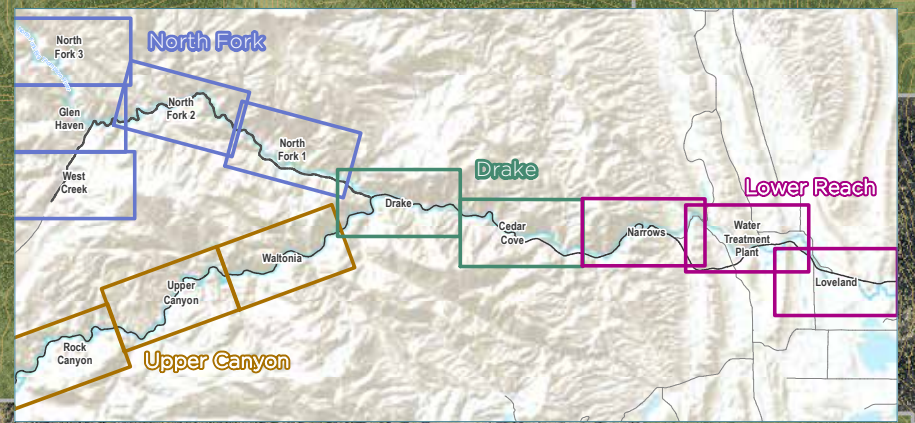
Federal and State Lands

-  USFS
-  BOR
-  State of Colorado
-  USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

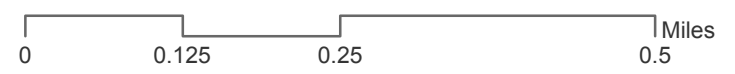
-  1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
-  2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
-  3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
-  4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch ) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

West Creek Reach
6/23/2015





- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

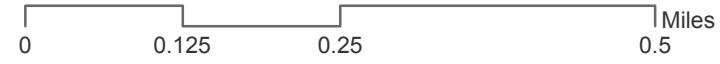
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories






A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Glen Haven Reach
6/23/2015













Key


-  Flood Plain
-  Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
-  USFS Roads

Federal and State Lands

-  USFS
-  BOR
-  State of Colorado
-  USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories



-  1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
-  2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
-  3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
-  4. Divestment Parcel

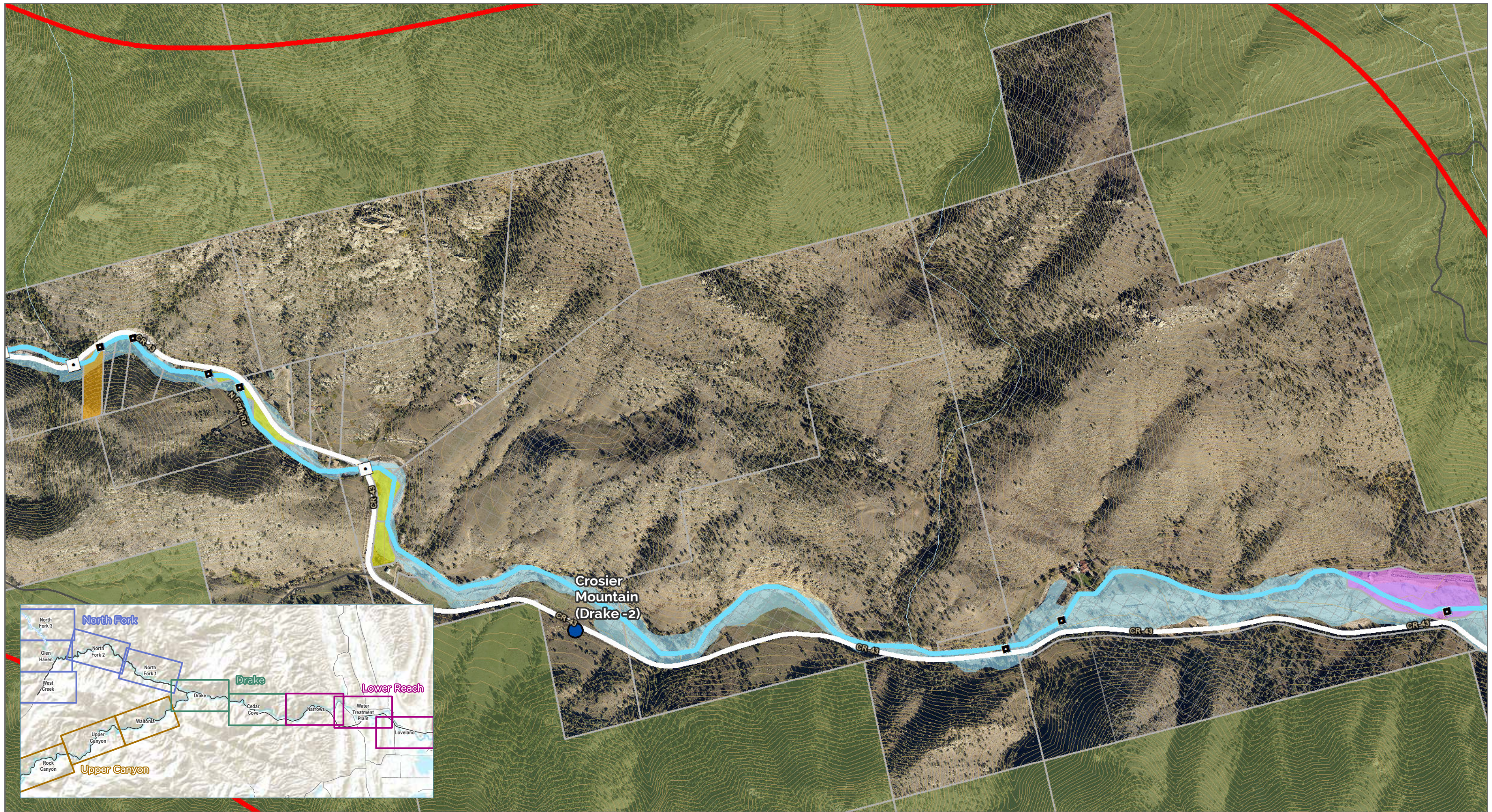
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch ) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

North Fork 2 Reach
6/23/2015



- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).








Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T
 North Fork 1 Reach
 6/23/2015





0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles







Key


-  Flood Plain
-  Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
-  Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
-  USFS Roads

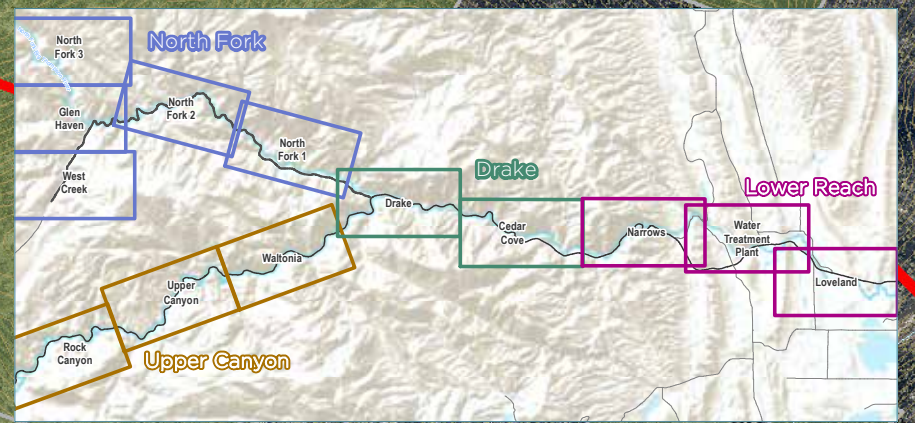
Federal and State Lands

-  USFS
-  BOR
-  State of Colorado
-  USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

-  1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
-  2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
-  3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
-  4. Divestment Parcel

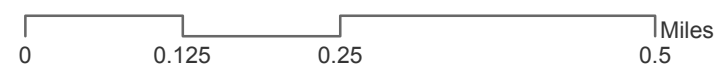
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch ) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories

A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Rock Canyon Reach
6/23/2015





- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Upper Canyon Reach
 6/23/2015



Key

	Flood Plain
	Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
	Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
	Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
	USFS Roads

Federal and State Lands

	USFS
	BOR
	State of Colorado
	USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

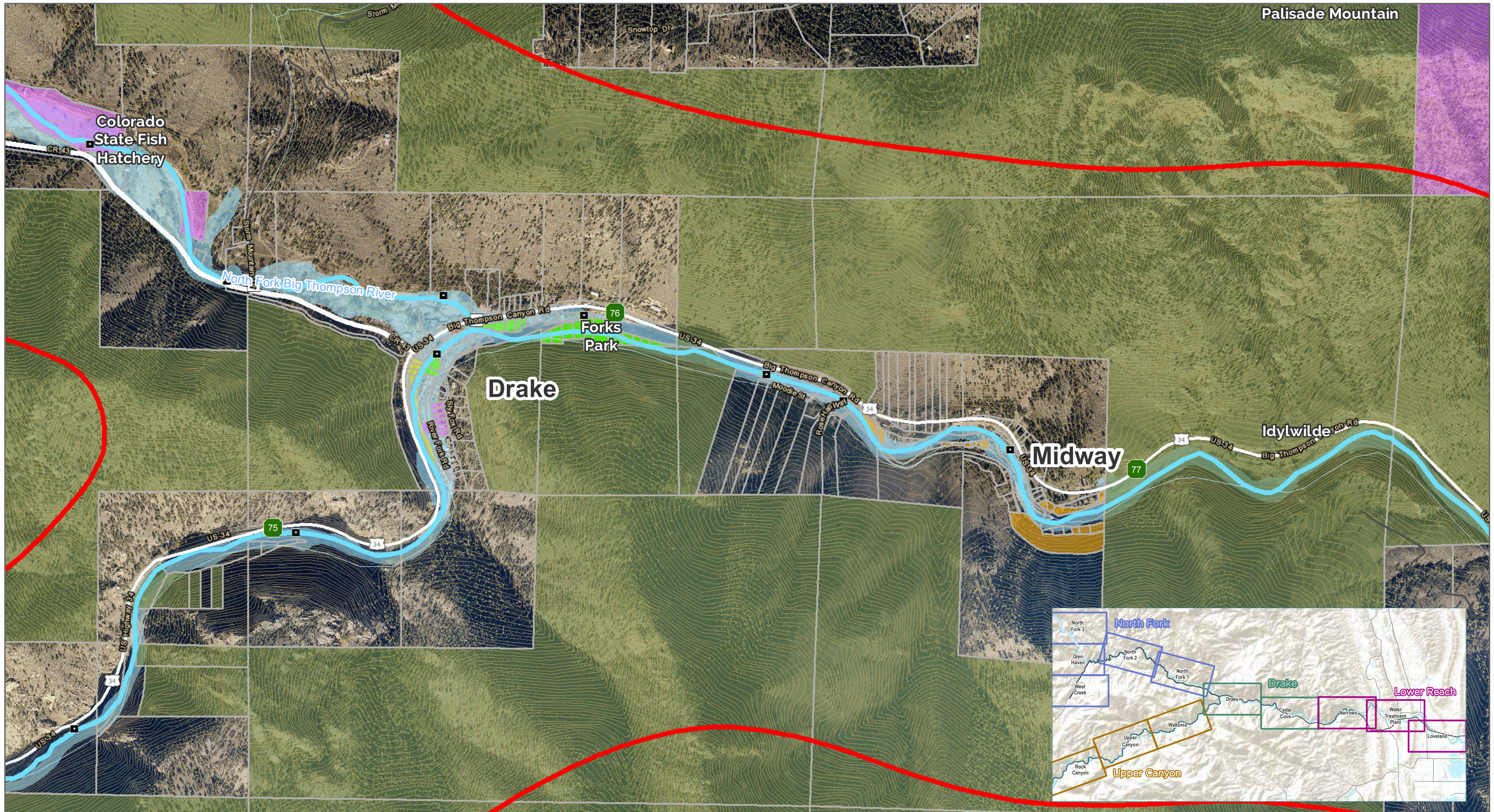
	1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
	2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
	3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
	4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Waltonia Reach
 6/23/2015



- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

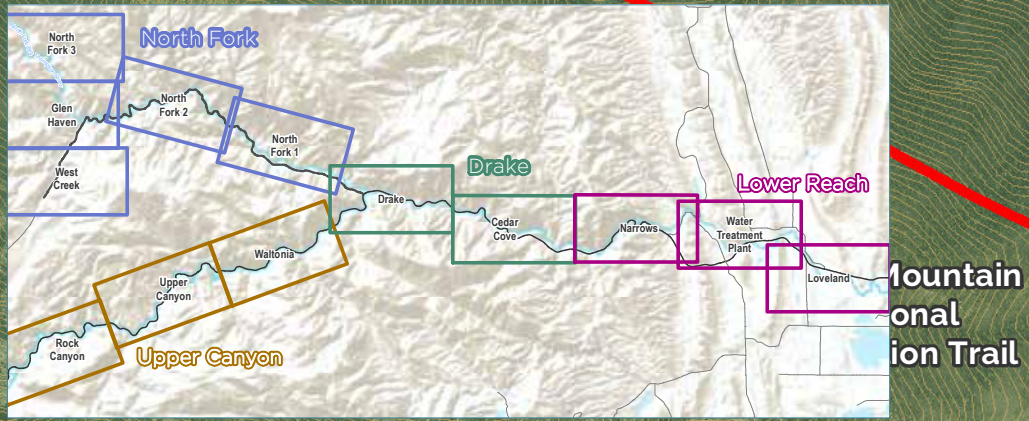
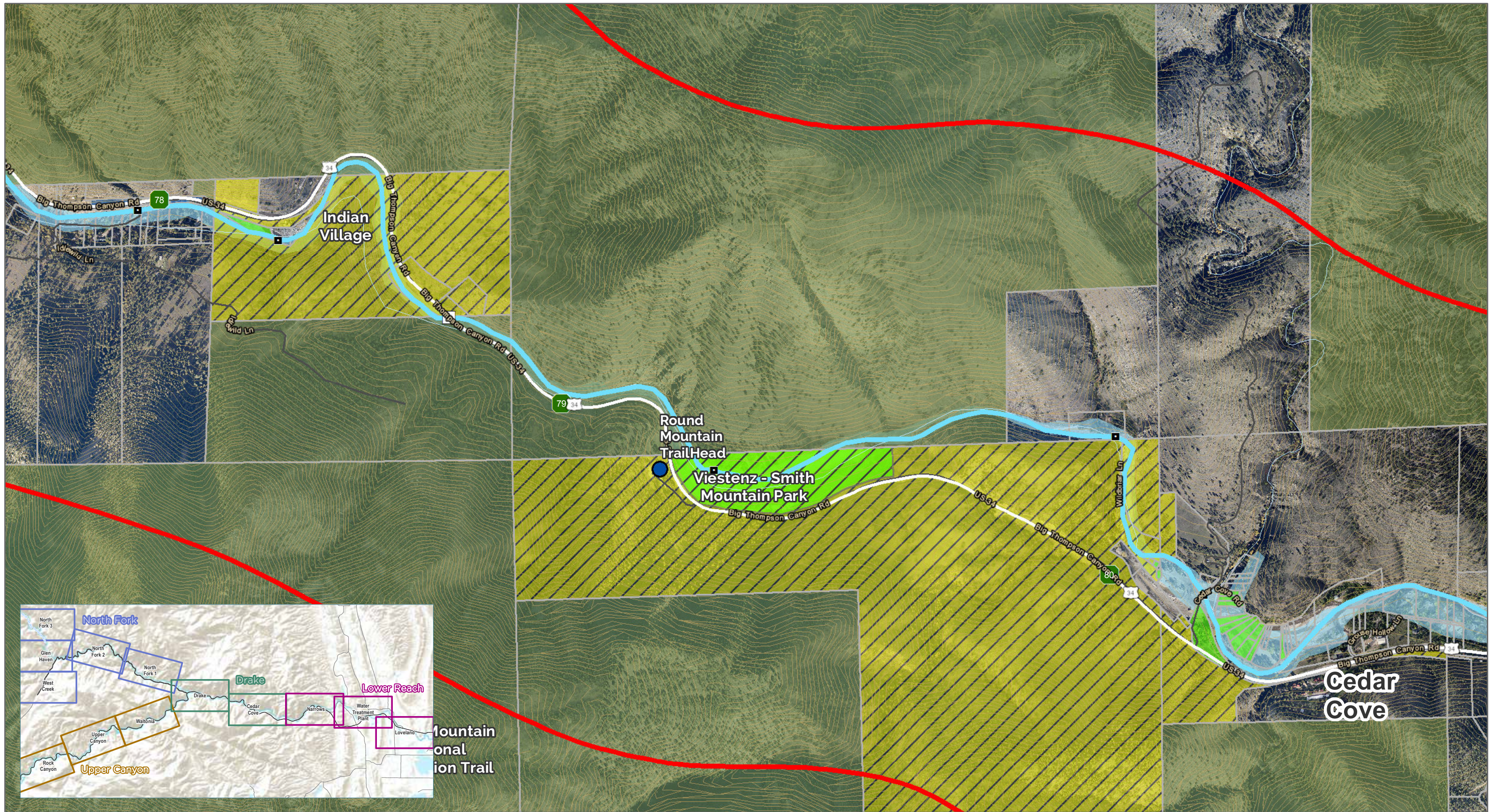
- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T
 Drake Reach
 6/23/2015

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



Key

- Flood Plain
- Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
- USFS Roads

Federal and State Lands

- USFS
- BOR
- State of Colorado
- USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
- 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
- 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
- 4. Divestment Parcel

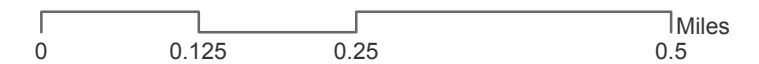
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).

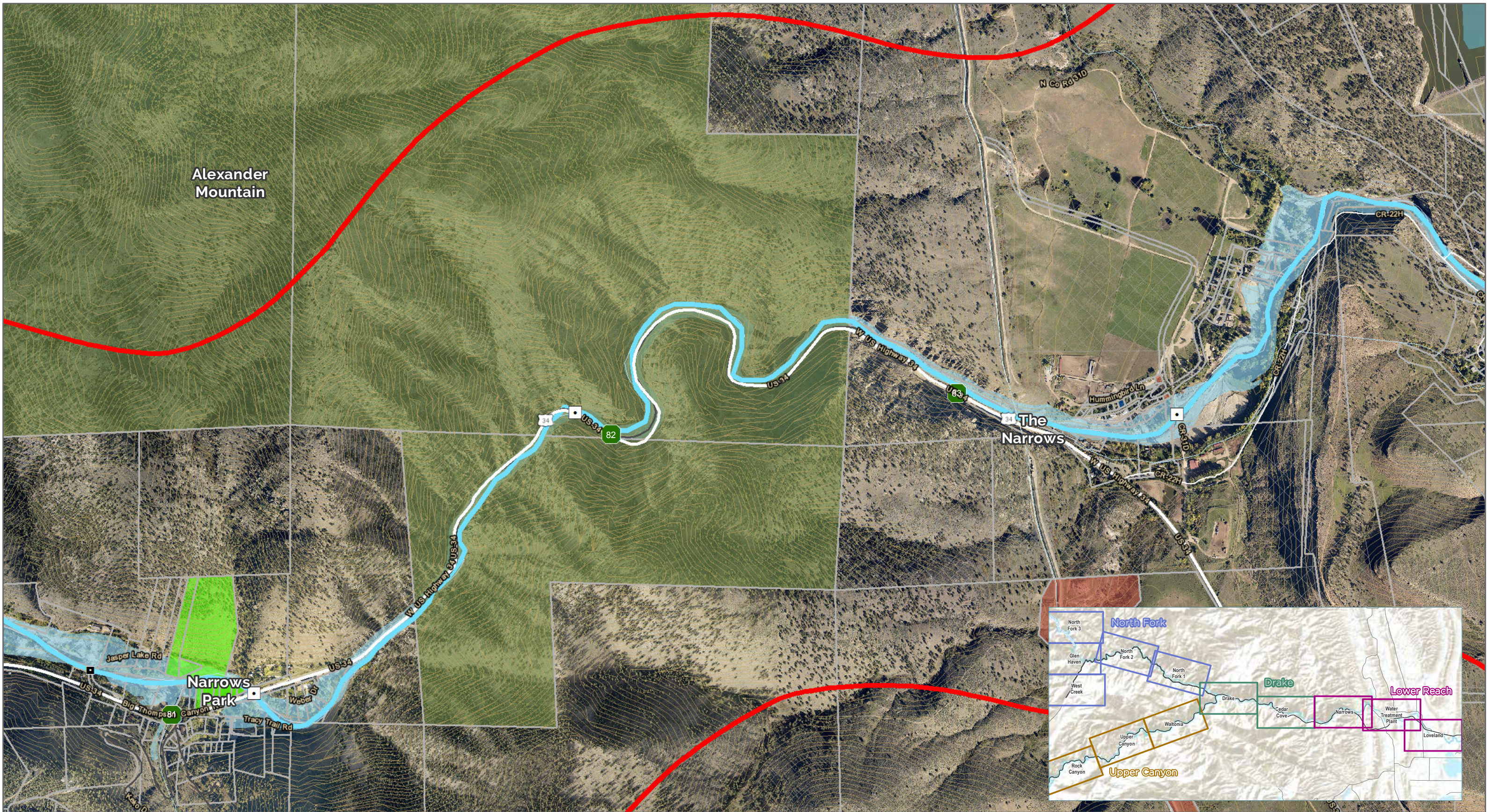


Land Management Categories

A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Cedar Cove Reach
6/23/2015





Key

- Flood Plain
- Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
- USFS Roads

Federal and State Lands

- USFS
- BOR
- State of Colorado
- USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
- 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
- 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
- 4. Divestment Parcel

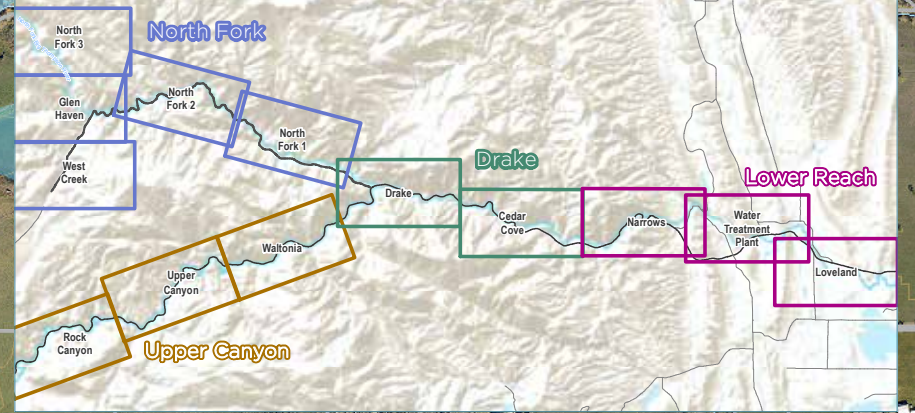
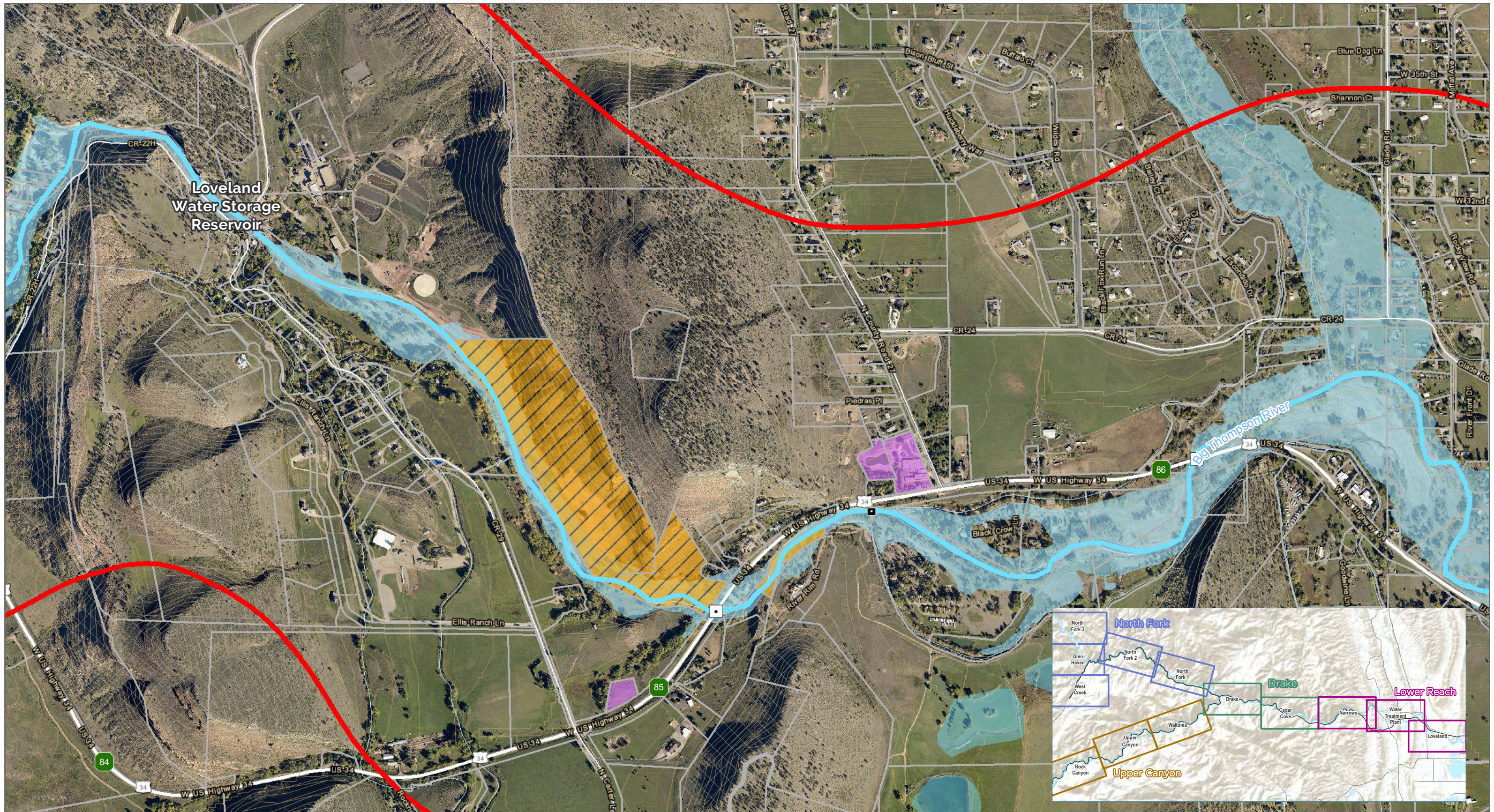
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).



Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Narrows Reach
6/23/2015

Miles
0.5



Key

- Flood Plain
- Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
- Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
- USFS Roads

Federal and State Lands

- USFS
- BOR
- State of Colorado
- USFS Recreation Sites

Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories

- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
- 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
- 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
- 4. Divestment Parcel

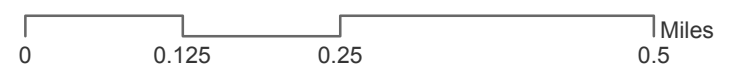
Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).

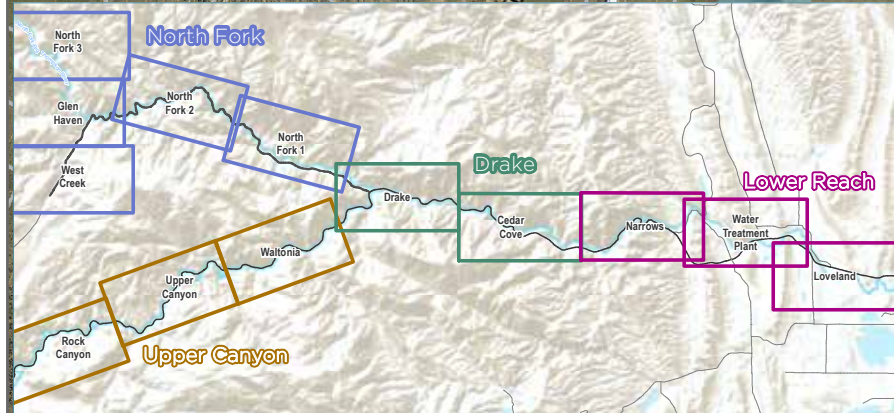
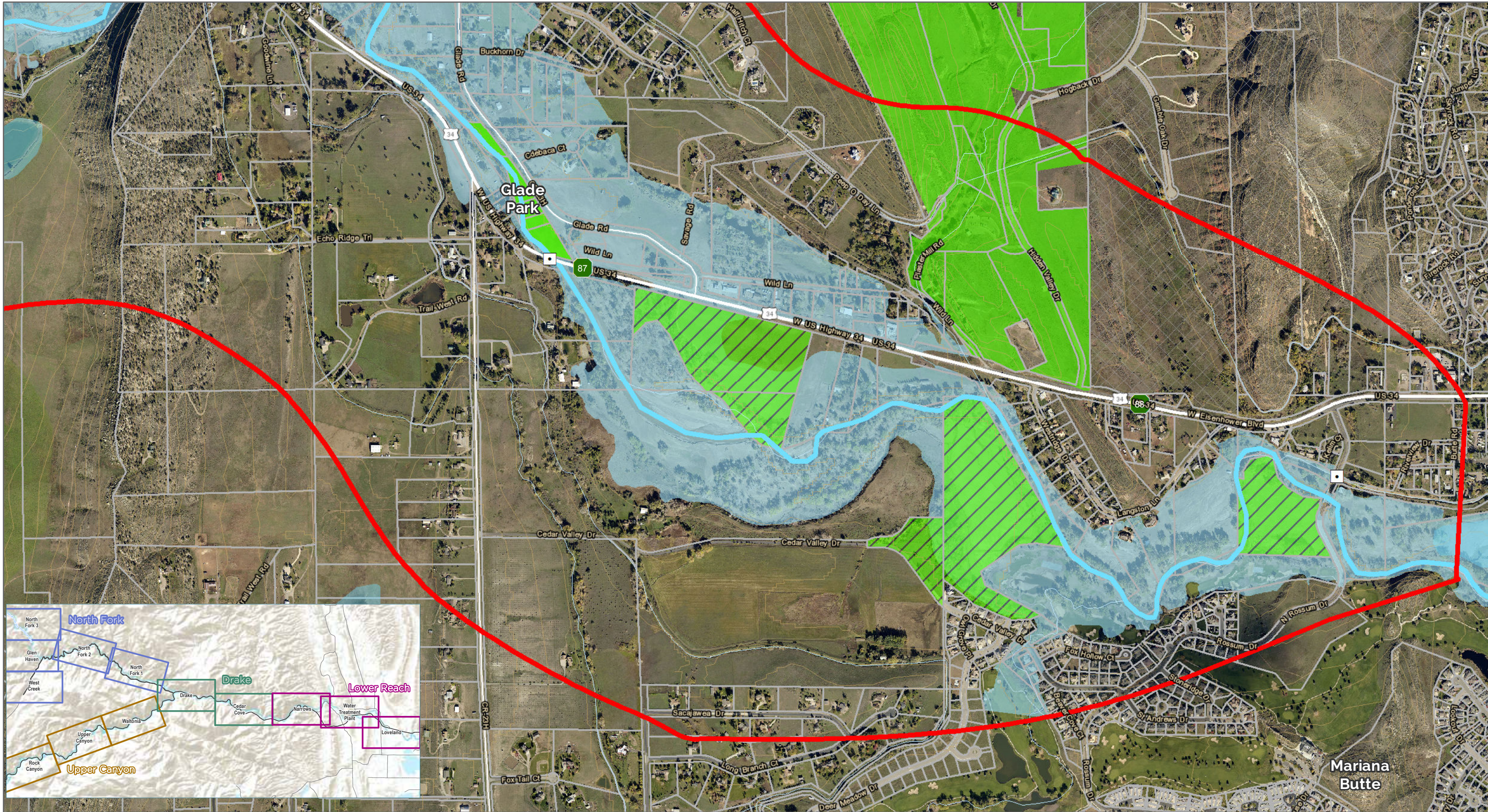


Land Management Categories

A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Water Treatment Plant Reach
6/23/2015





- Key**
- Flood Plain
 - Primary Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Access Bridge (Pre-Flood)
 - Conservation Easements (No Public Access)
 - USFS Roads

- Federal and State Lands**
- USFS
 - BOR
 - State of Colorado
 - USFS Recreation Sites

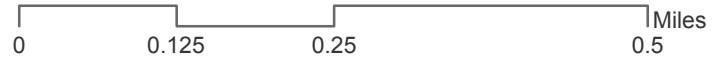
- Larimer County and City of Loveland Management Categories**
- 1. Recreation or Future Recreation Parcel
 - 2. Conservation Parcel, Limited Public Use
 - 3. Conservation Parcel, No Public Use
 - 4. Divestment Parcel

Management categories were applied to all parcels currently owned by City of Loveland (shown with a hatch) and Larimer County (shown without a hatch).

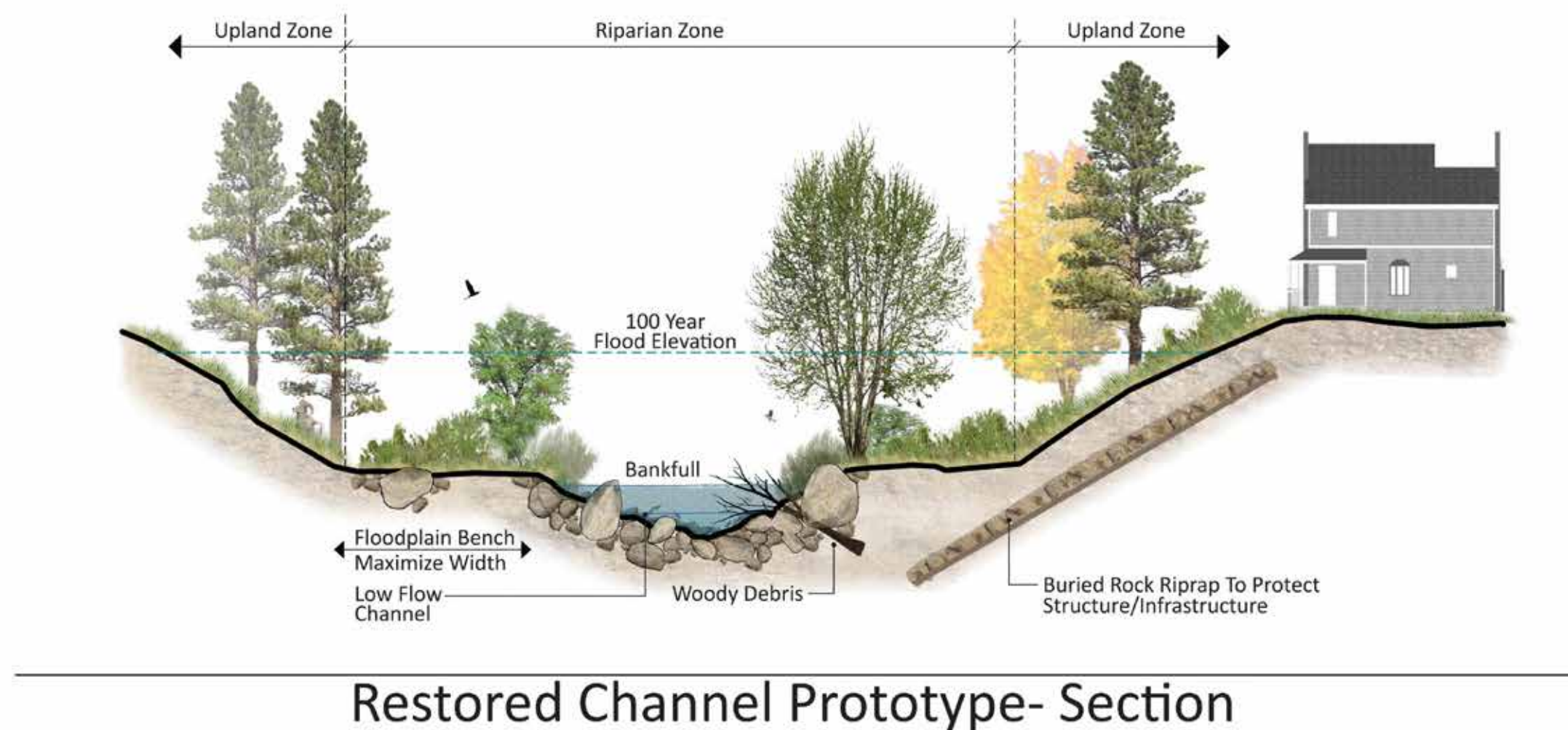


Land Management Categories
A Bigger Vision for the Big T

Loveland Reach
 6/23/2015



APPENDIX C. RESTORATION CONCEPTS FROM THE BIG THOMPSON RIVER RESTORATION MASTER PLAN



Source: All graphics presented in Appendix C were completed by Ayres Associates and Logan Simpson and can be found in the 2014 Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan.

Treatments

— Aquatic Restoration

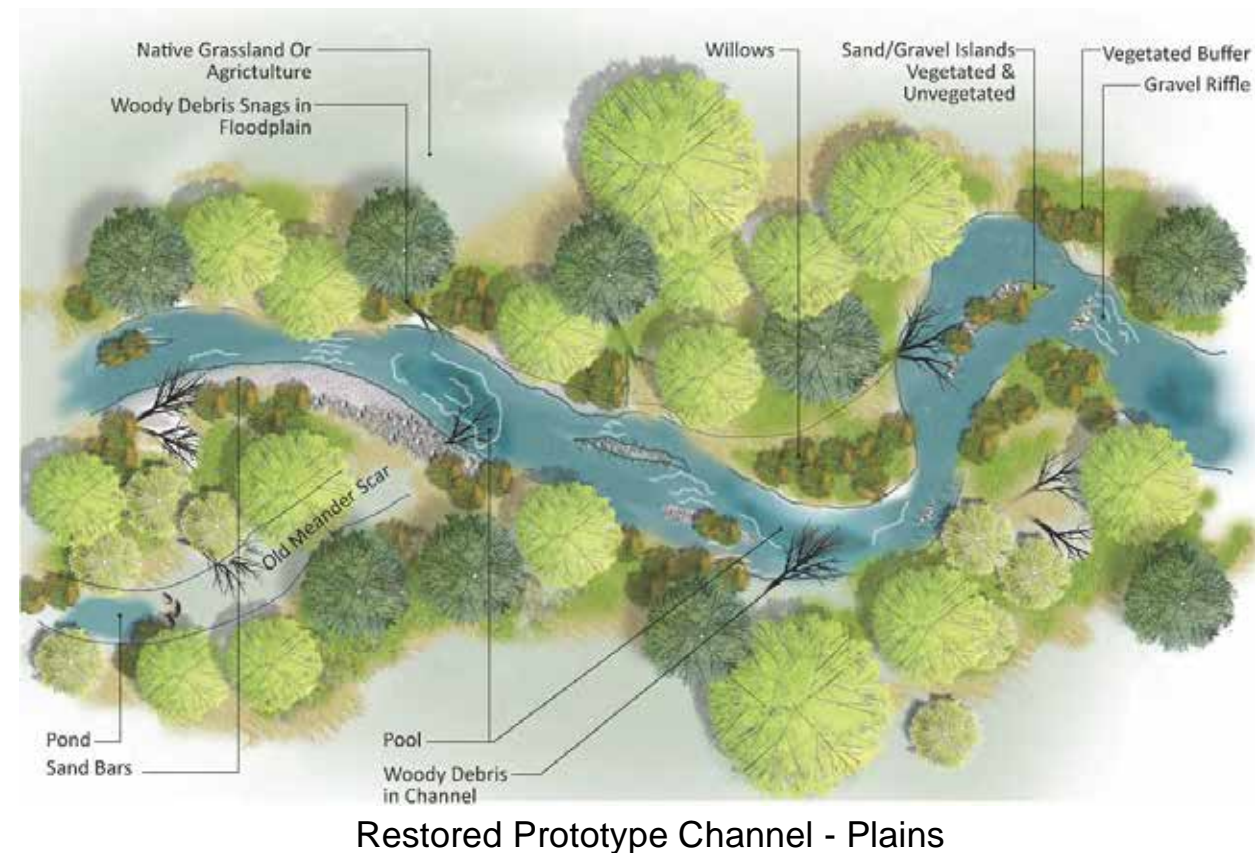
⋯ Aquatic Restoration - Partial

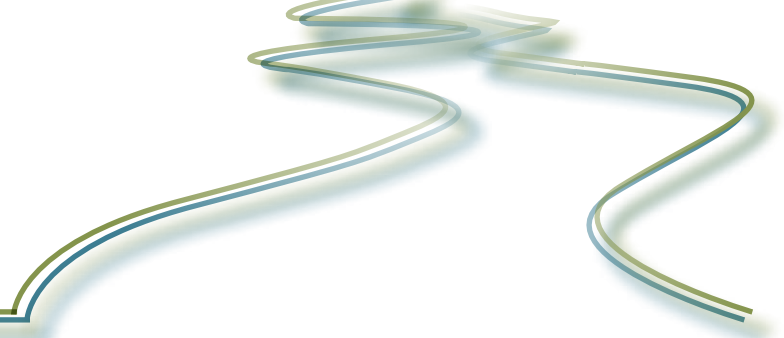
— Riparian Vegetation Restoration

⋯ Riparian Vegetation Restoration - Partial

Creation of appropriate aquatic habitat including pools, riffles, glides, as well as incorporation of boulders and woody debris. Partial designation means not all of the reach requires restoration.

Restoration and of riparian vegetation including wetlands and floodplain. Partial designation means not all of the reach requires restoration.





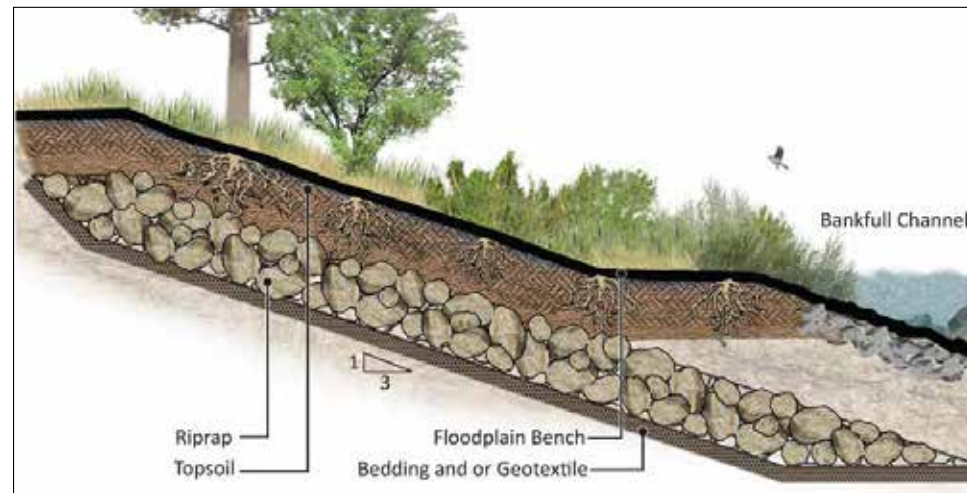
Treatments

— Stabilization

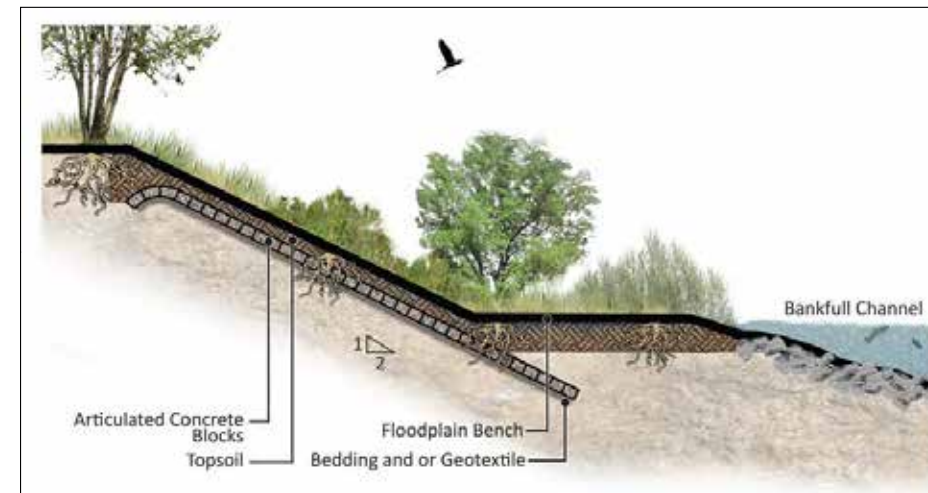
Bank stabilization measures used to protect infrastructure. Includes a variety of potential options depending on hydraulic forces, available area, cost, and access to materials.

— Stabilize and Riparian Vegetation - Partial

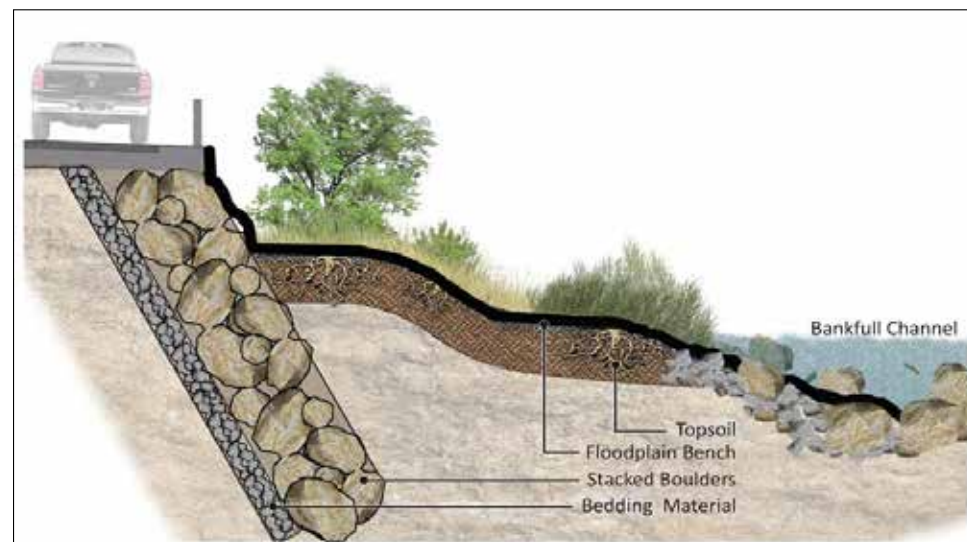
Stabilization and riparian vegetation needed for some of the designated reach.



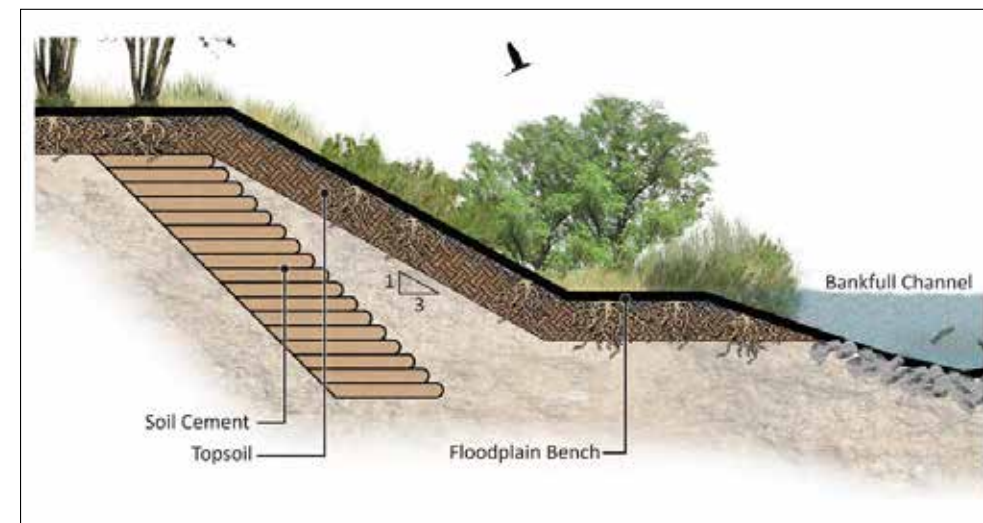
Stabilization Treatment - Riprap



Stabilization Treatment - Articulated Concrete Blocks (ACB)



Stabilization Treatment - Stacked Boulders



Stabilization Treatment - Soil Cement

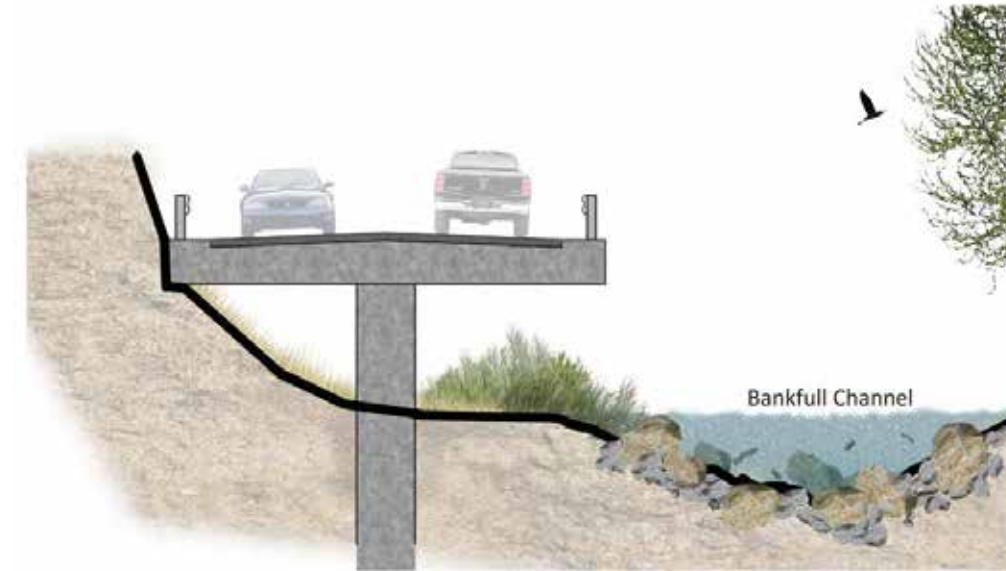
Treatments

— Wall or Elevated Roadway

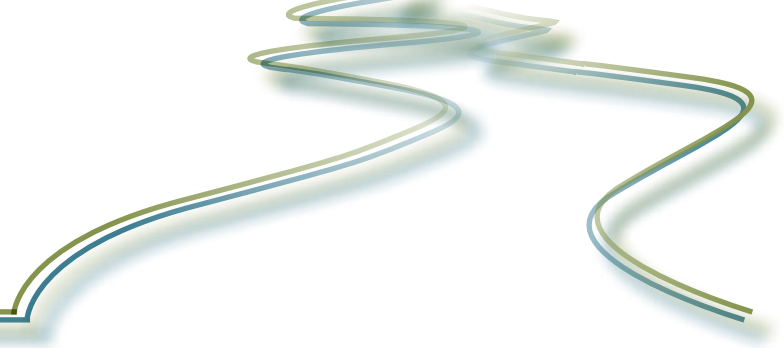
Bank stabilization measures used to protect infrastructure. Includes a variety of potential options depending on hydraulic forces, available area, cost, and access to materials.



Roadway - Vertical Wall



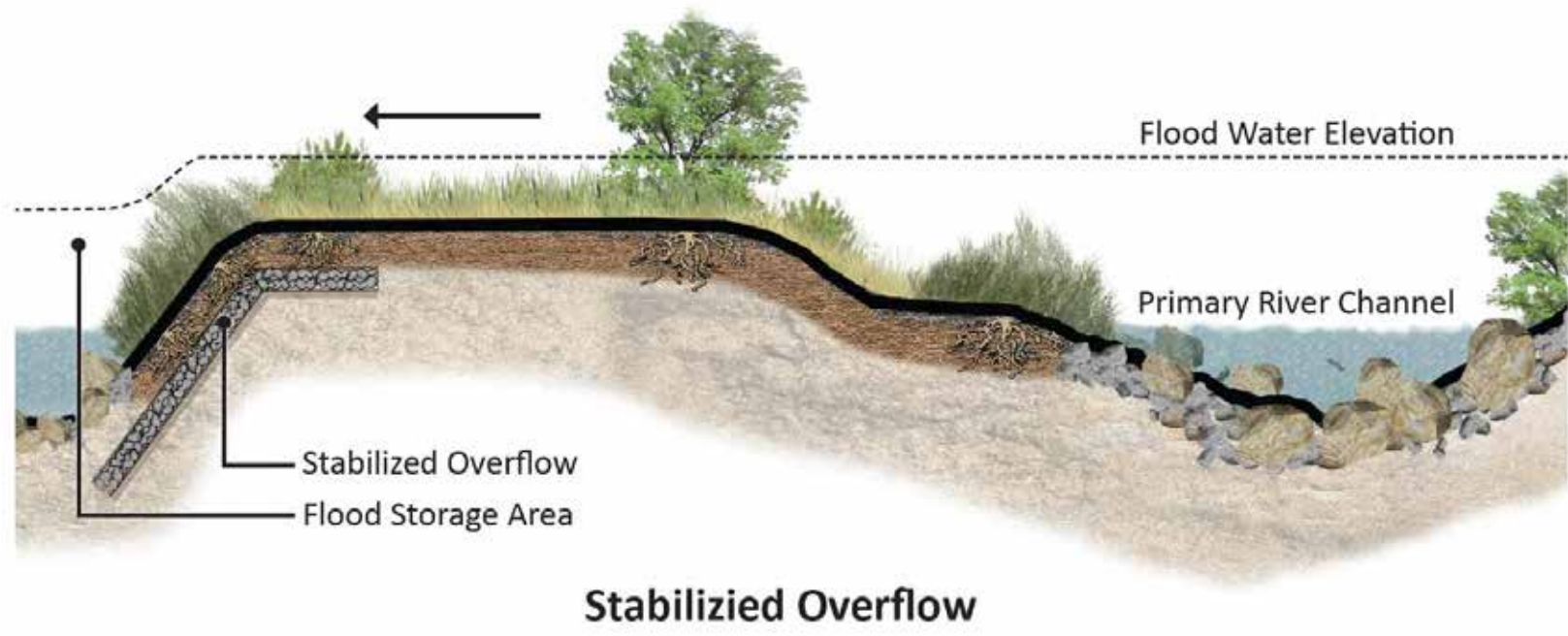
Roadway - Elevated Roadway




Treatments

Armored overflow

The stabilized overflow areas consist of a lowered embankment with stabilization on the downstream face to prevent future floods from head cutting and eventually avulsing through these areas. Stabilization may consist of regrading and vegetated plantings, the use of turf reinforcement mats, or buried and planted hard stabilization treatments.



Treatments

 Increase Capacity

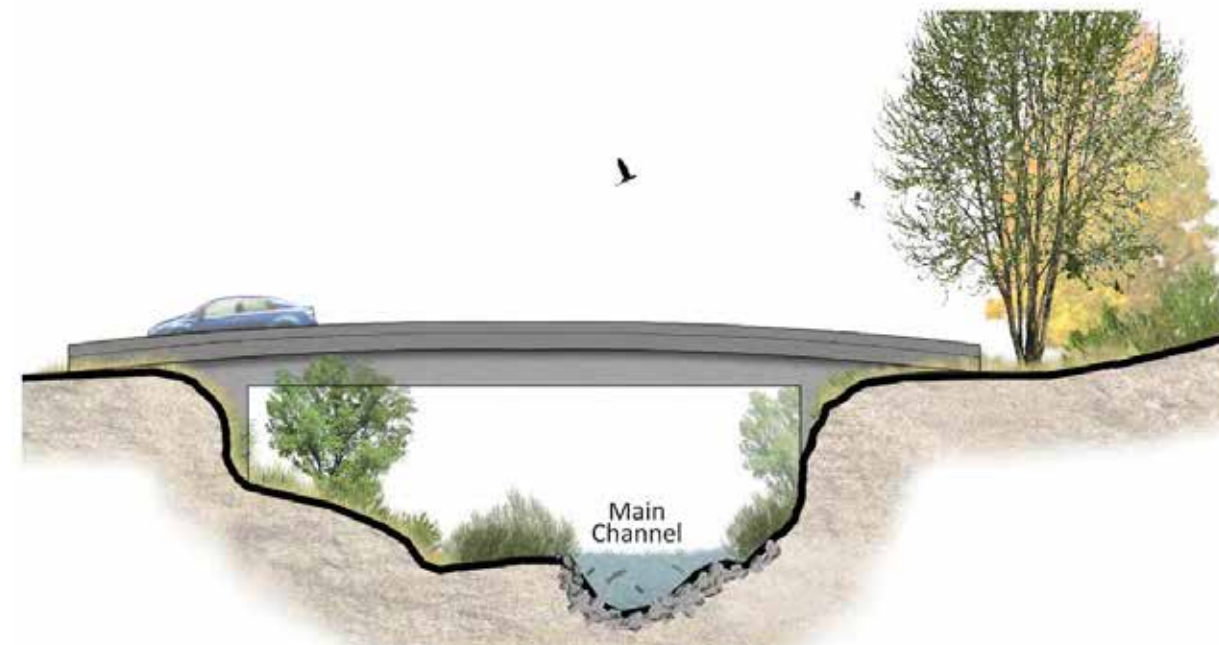
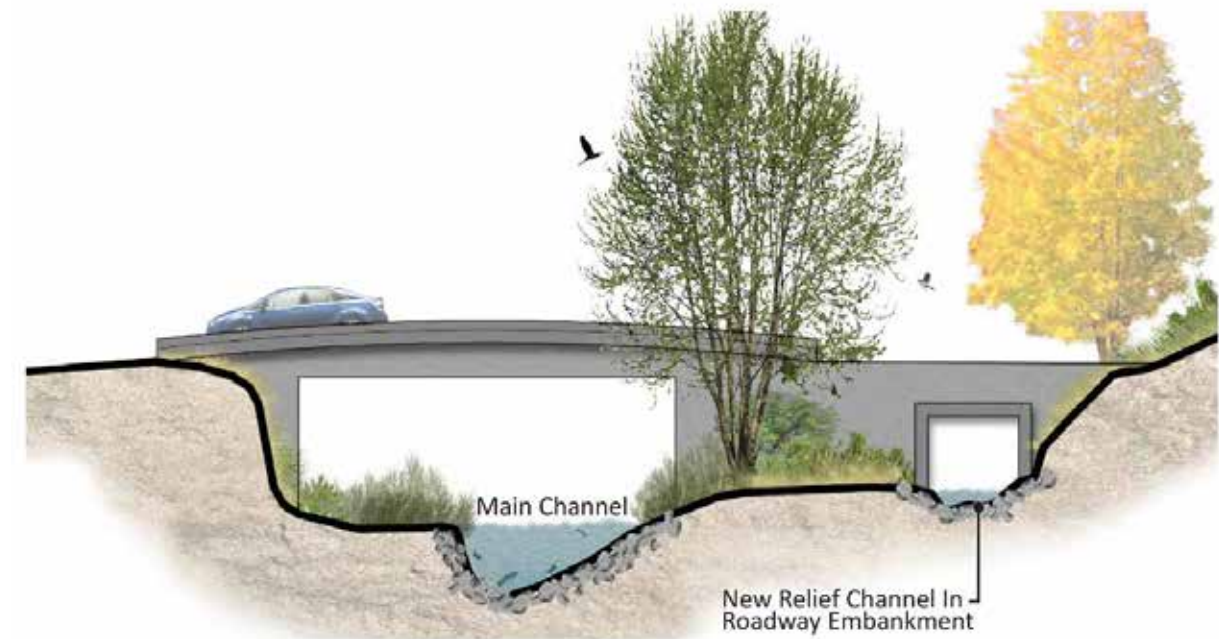
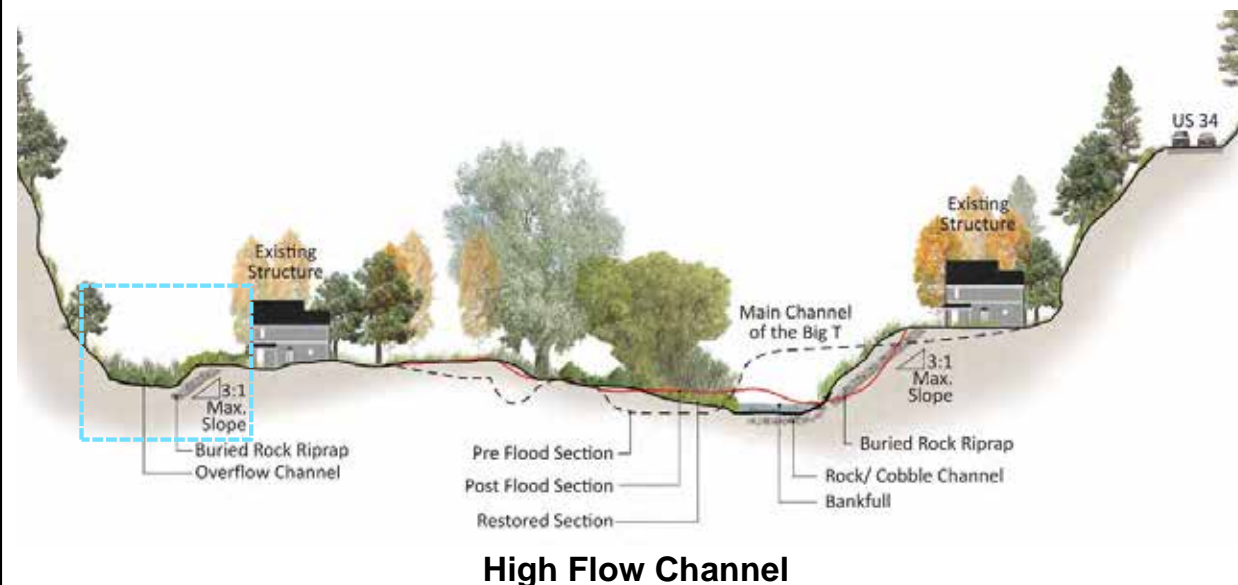
Increase capacity of bridge/roadway crossings including relief structures and/or larger primary bridge opening.

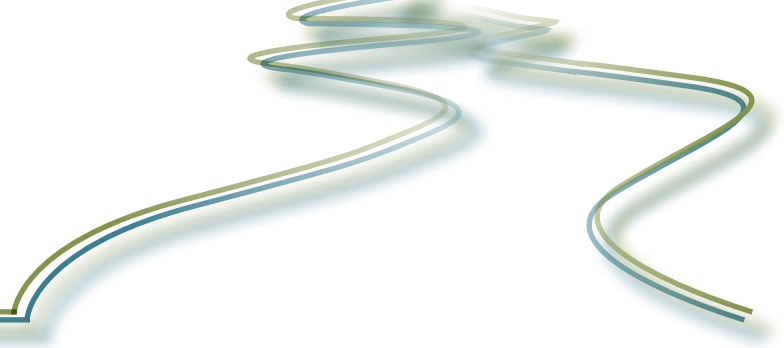
 Proposed Channel

Potential channel location including restoration of aquatic habitat. (see graphics related to aquatic habitat)

 High Flow Channel

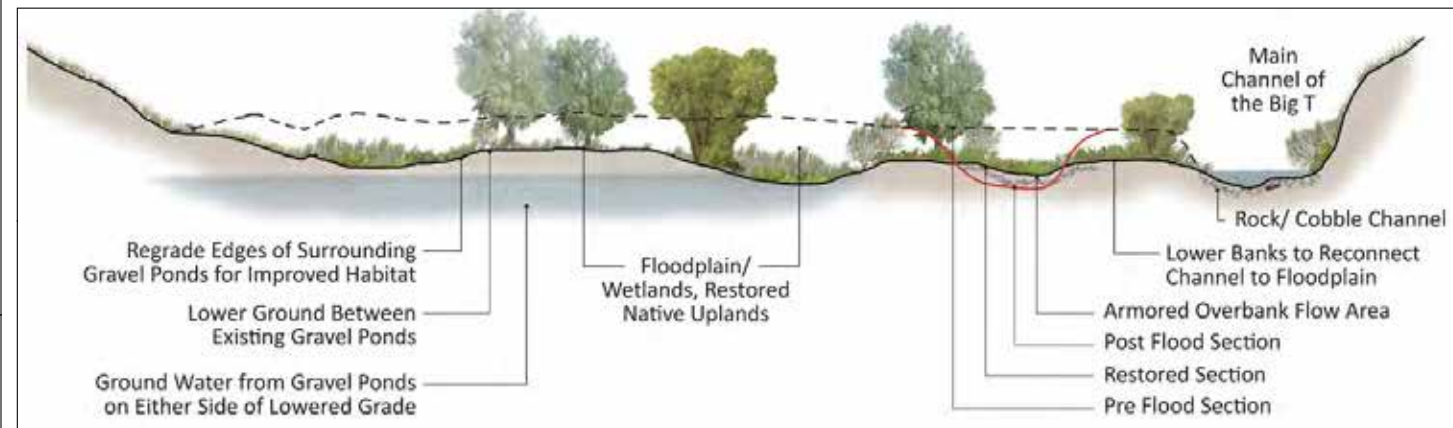
Increase capacity of bridge/roadway crossings including relief structures and/or larger primary bridge opening.



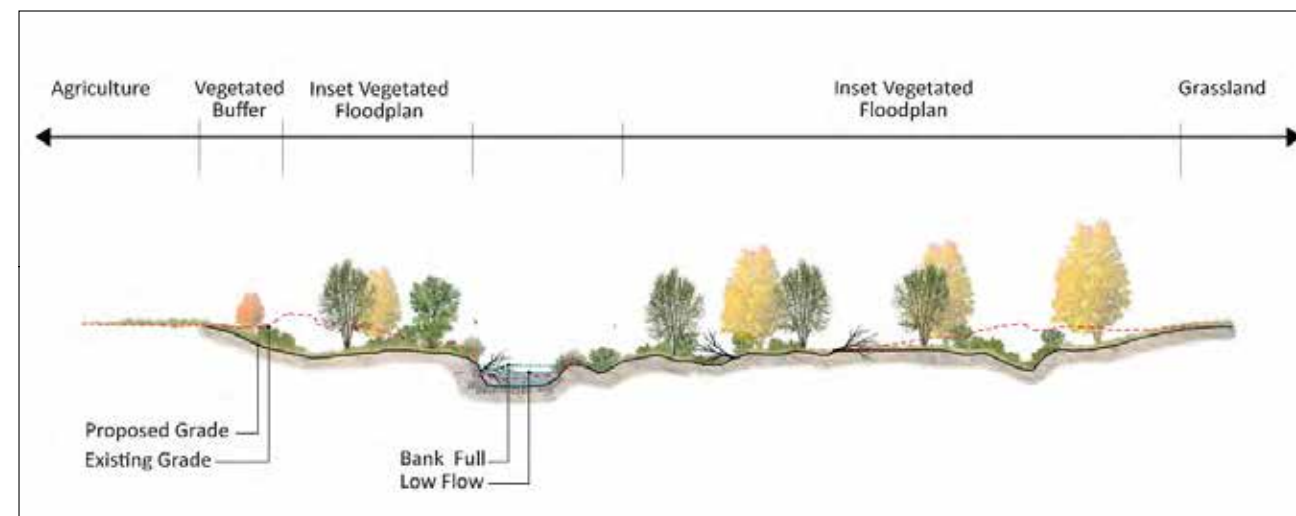


Treatments

- Lower/Regrade** Excavating areas of high ground within floodplain and regarding or hauling away material to reconnect and restore floodplain areas.
- Floodplain Bench** Creating and/or restoring floodplain benches for improved conveyance and restored habitat. May include some excavation, regrading, and vegetation plantings.
- Improve Conveyance** Improve flood flow conveyance through reach to minimize flood of homes and infrastructure by using a combination of lower/regrade, floodplain bench, highflow channel, and relocation of infrastructure.



Representative Cross Section - Loveland



Representative Cross Section -Eastern Plains

