

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF PITKIN COUNTY, COLORADO,
ADOPTING THE REVISED PITKIN COUNTY
NORDIC TRAILS MANAGEMENT PLAN
RESOLUTION NO. 085 -2015

RECITALS

1. The Aspen-Snowmass Nordic Council (ASNC) was established over twenty five years ago for the purpose of preserving and improving cross-country skiing in the Aspen-Snowmass area, and has a defined goal to provide seamless skiing experience with high quality Nordic trail platforms connected to and within the community centers in Pitkin County.
2. In 2006, the Pitkin County voters approved inclusion of funding for nordic program in the Open Space and Trails mission, and the ASNC serves as advisory council to the Open Space and Trails Board (OSTB), in its continued oversight of the nordic system.
3. The 2007 Pitkin County Nordic Trails Management Plan created a comprehensive vision to identify the Council's goals and vision for the nordic trail system, and provide design guidelines and serve as a reference document for staff, city and county governments, other interest agencies, and the general public.
4. The ASNC has produced a final update draft of the Pitkin County Nordic Trails Management Plan after conducting public scoping, review of master plan documents and consultation with City of Aspen, Town of Snowmass Village, Town of Basalt, and County staff.
5. On September 17, 2015, the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the proposed update to the Nordic Trail Management Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pitkin County, Colorado that The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan, dated 9-11-2015 is hereby adopted and effective immediately.

INTRODUCED, FIRST READ ON THE 14TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2015 AND SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 28TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2015.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TITLE AND SHORT SUMMARY OF THE RESOLUTION PUBLISHED IN THE ASPEN TIMES WEEKLY ON 10-15, 2015.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND THE FULL TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION POSTED ON THE OFFICIAL PITKIN COUNTY WEBSITE (www.pitkincounty.com) ON THE 15th DAY OF October 2015.

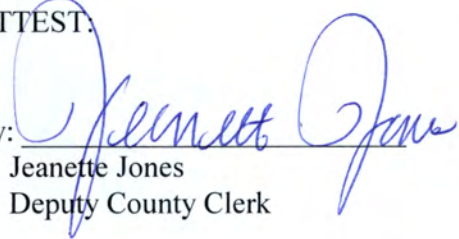
ADOPTED AFTER FINAL READING AND PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 9th DAY OF October 2015.

PUBLISHED BY TITLE AND SHORT SUMMARY, AFTER ADOPTION, IN THE ASPEN TIMES WEEKLY on November 5, 2015

POSTED BY TITLE AND SHORT SUMMARY ON THE OFFICIAL PITKIN COUNTY WEBSITE (www.pitkincounty.com) ON THE 30th DAY OF October 2015.

ATTEST:

By:


Jeanette Jones
Deputy County Clerk

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

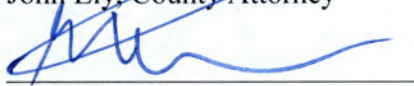
By:


Steven F. Child, Chair

Date: 10/29/2015

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


John Ely, County Attorney


Dale Will, Director
Open Space and Trails

MANAGER APPROVAL


Jon Peacock, County Manager

Pitkin County Nordic Ski Trails Plan

September 11, 2015



Adopted by the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners
January 9, 2008

CREDITS

STAFF

Dale Will | Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Director

Gary Tennenbaum | Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Assistant Director

Jeff Woods | City of Aspen Parks and Recreation Manager

Tom Rubel | City of Aspen Parks and Open Space Director

Austin Weiss | City of Aspen Open Space and Natural Resource Manager

Matt Kuhn | City of Aspen Trails Manager

PITKIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD

Hawk Greenway

Graeme Means

Howie Mallory

Tim McFlynn

Tai Wood Jacober

CITY OF ASPEN OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD

Howie Mallory

Charlie Eckart

Jessie Young

Giles Thornely

Phillip Jeffreys

Jim Stark

ASPEN SNOWMASS NORDIC COUNCIL

John Wilkinson, **President**

Eric Peterson, **Secretary**

David Polovin, **Treasurer**

Peter Looram

Bob Wade

Howie Mallory

Ben Dodge

Helen Carlsen

Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club Representative

Aspen Skiing Company Representative

City of Aspen, City Council Representative

Town of Snowmass Village, Town Council Representative

Town of Basalt, Town Council Representative

Pitkin County, Board of County Commissioners Representative

Acknowledgments-

The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council would like to thank all the supporters of the Nordic Trail System, especially those people who attended the Plan meetings. Special thanks to contributors of the 2008 Plan including Cherrie Galante, Scott Messina and Bob Wade, Mark Pearson, and Warren Ohlrich.

Special thanks to Susan Jackson who supplied many of the photos in the 2015 revision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aspen and Snowmass are among the foremost destination ski resorts in the world. Along with four world-class alpine ski areas, the upper Roaring Fork valley offers extensive cross-country skiing opportunities with over 90 kilometers of groomed trails. The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System is maintained by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails and the City of Aspen. The system is overseen, in an advisory capacity, by the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council. The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan (Plan) is the culmination of over 25 years of community participation and experience with the Nordic Trail System. The original 2008 document formalized the short and long term goals of the Nordic Council to improve and expand the cross-country skiing experience in the middle and upper Roaring Fork Valley.

With the 2014 update, the Plan builds on the ideas for future trail improvements and adjusts some of the goals to better reflect the current status of the Nordic trail system. The plan still includes the design guidelines required for maintaining the trail system.

Special attention was given in the 2014 revision to answer the questions of how to provide a diverse trail system, as well as continuing with the goal to make the trail system resilient to climate variations. The Nordic Council has reaffirmed its commitment to building a legacy of linking communities through an inclusive, high-quality, and enduring Nordic Trail System.

In 2008, there was great community support during the process of developing the Plan, where it became apparent that there was an increased need in the mid-valley communities for trails opportunities similar to those available in the Aspen and Snowmass Village areas. The Nordic council, as well as City and County staff, have worked to expand skiing opportunities in the mid-valley areas, although consistently maintained ski trails at the Roaring Fork club have so far been unachievable.

Finally, this Plan continues its purpose to be a referral document and planning tool to a variety of local public agencies. In 2014, the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council further modified the plan to assist agencies in the decision making process for expansion and/or acquisition of Nordic trails and easements, as well as providing guidance on the needed conditions to groom Nordic ski trails in the winter.

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan was adopted on January 9, 2008 and this document serves as the 2014 Plan Update.

Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council Mission

The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council continues its goal of providing a seamless skiing experience with high quality Nordic ski trail platforms connected to and within the community centers of Pitkin County. This may be achieved by resolving methods of road crossings and acquiring critical trail easements.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
1. THE ROLE OF THE NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM IN THE COMMUNITY.....	7
2. THE ASPEN SNOWMASS NORDIC COUNCIL.....	8
History	8
Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board	8
Organizational Structure	8
Existing Partner Groups.....	9
3. ASPEN SNOWMASS NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM EXISTING CONDITIONS	10
Overview.....	10
Hubs and Spokes of the Nordic Trail System.....	10
Other Existing Trail Systems in Pitkin County.....	10
Users.....	11
Access to Nordic Trails.....	11
Operations	12
4. THE PLANNING PROCESS	13
Nordic Trails Plan in 2008.....	13
Plan Adoption Process and Referral Opportunities.....	13
Use of the Plan	13
Plan Revision 2013-2015 Process	14
Using the plan to make operational decisions	14
1. VISION AND GOALS.....	16
GOAL 1: Secure linkages and enhance connections for a seamless Nordic Trail System in Pitkin County.	16
GOAL 2: Expand Nordic skiing areas and opportunities in Pitkin County and environs.....	16
2. NORDIC TRAILS DESIGN GUIDELINES.....	17
Variety of Terrain.....	17
Guidelines for Grooming Chart	17
Photographic Examples of Trail Grooming Categories.....	18
3. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE	20
Road Crossings: Over, Under, and At-Grade	20
Snowmaking	20

Signage	21
Facilities	21
Access and Parking	22
4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPANSION	23
5. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS.....	25
Improvements Background	25
Expansion Screen.....	25
Aspen Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities	26
.....	28
Snowmass Village Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities.....	28
Mid-Valley Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities	29
Non-Maintained Valley-Wide Nordic Skiing Opportunities	30
Long-term Trails Opportunities	31
6. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION	32
Partnering and Coordination.....	32
User Groups.....	32
Outreach.....	33
EXISTING NORDIC TRAILS DESCRIPTIONS.....	35
EXISTING TRAIL MAPS.....	38
Aspen.....	38
Snowmass.....	39
North Star Preserve	40
Rio Grande Trail.....	41
Basalt Area Trails	42
Owl Creek Trail	43
Adoptions and Resolutions.....	44

BACKGROUND

1. THE ROLE OF THE NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM IN THE COMMUNITY

As an integral part of the community fabric, Nordic trails are an extension of the summer trail system. They provide winter recreation, tourism, community health opportunities, and alternative transportation. These cross-country ski trails create connections between the City of Aspen, the Town of Snowmass Village, and the Town of Basalt. As such, the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System is one of the premier systems in the country.

Over the past twenty years as the quality of skiing continues to improve, the use of the trails by diverse audiences has increased dramatically. The cross-country ski trails are utilized by individuals, families, local schools, the senior center, the recreation department and the Aspen Valley Ski and Snowboard Club. These groups enjoy different aspects of the ski trails from day tours, to athlete training, to family excursions, to moonlight tours.



Cross country skiing is an excellent complement to alpine skiing. Increasingly, alpine skiers venture onto the Nordic trails between lift served ski days, thereby experiencing a different side of the Roaring Fork Valley.

The community benefits are summarized as follows:

- **Community:** The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System (Nordic Trail System) and related events provide opportunities for exercising and social interaction. Recreational centers become focal points for communities, especially if centers for different but compatible uses are grouped together. For example, the Aspen Recreation Center, the Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club, and the public schools are all close together and serve as a hub for a network of Nordic skiing trails. Encouraging people to recreate and exercise out of doors promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- **Economics:** The valley's strong economics are based on the resort town nature of the up-valley communities, especially Aspen and Snowmass Village. Nordic skiing is a winter recreational activity that supplements and provides an alternative to alpine skiing. The Aspen Cross Country Center and the Snowmass Cross Country Center are full service retail shops and provide rental equipment as well as lessons to cross country skiers. Nordic skiing attracts visitors for both Nordic recreation and racing with special events such as the *Owl Creek Chase*, a point to point cross country ski race from Snowmass Village to Aspen. With more recreational opportunities offered to visitors, people may extend their stay, furthering contributions to the economy.
- **Environment** - Nordic skiing's environmental impact is less than other heavy infrastructure sports and the activity is adaptable to climate variations due to the ability to locate trails at diverse elevations. The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council strives for high environmental standards and helps annually fund tree planting along Nordic ski trails.

2. THE ASPEN SNOWMASS NORDIC COUNCIL

History

The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council (Nordic Council) was formed in the early 1980s as a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and improving cross-country skiing in the Aspen and Snowmass Village area. The Nordic Council was first supported by extensive grassroots donations, and through the local governments of the City of Aspen, Pitkin County and the Town of Snowmass Village. In the late 1980s these entities joined together in an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) to help ensure the continued success of the system. Pitkin County secured funding for the maintenance of the trail system through an Open Space ballot measure that went before the residents of Pitkin County. This mill levy has provided long-term funding and stability for the Nordic ski trail system.

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board

In 1990, the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board was formed to oversee the acquisition and management of open space and trails in Pitkin County. The Board is responsible for the overall direction of all activities that occur on the open space parcels, future parcel acquisitions, and general land management and development of multi-use trails.

In November 2010, voters approved the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails mill levy re-authorization, which included funding the Nordic Trail System in Pitkin County until 2020. Thus the full funding responsibility for the Nordic Trail System and the activities of the Nordic Council were transferred to the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails program.

The Nordic Council acts in an advisory capacity to the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board. The Nordic Council provides general guidance and oversight to the Nordic trail system, and has the ability to make recommendations to the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board regarding opportunities for expansion, changes to the trail system, and general operational functionality.

Organizational Structure

The Nordic Council operates as an IRS 501 (c)(3) tax exempt not-for-profit organization. While the majority of funding for the Nordic Trail System comes from Pitkin County via the mill levy, the Nordic Council continues to receive private funding. The community contributes to the Nordic Council, through small individual contributions collected in boxes at the trails and during an annual membership fund raising campaign. Also, many individuals (landowners) contribute in-kind by donating trail easements or constructing critical trail links and road crossings. Nordic Council funds have not been used to acquire trail easements, but could be used for future acquisitions. Trail alignments are either donated by private landowners for winter use only, or they are acquired through the local jurisdictions based on the recommendations of the Nordic Council and the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board.

The funds provided by Pitkin County are used primarily for base operations, including trail maintenance, staffing and equipment. Funding for additional proposed improvements to the Nordic Trail System will be evaluated on a

case by case basis. The City of Aspen Parks Department staff maintains the system through its trails program under the direction of the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Land Steward.

The Nordic Council may assist in coordinating acquisition of trail easements. Trail ownership and easements are held by the agencies that purchased or otherwise obtained them.

Existing Partner Groups

Due to the diverse locations of the trails and their close relationship with community infrastructure, partnerships with counties, towns and cities are necessary. To date, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails coordinates with the following partners for diverse needs:

- City of Aspen, Town of Snowmass Village and the Town of Basalt
- Aspen Skiing Company - access to the Government trail, crossing of both the Snowmass and Buttermilk ski areas, and parking
- Snowmass Club – Snowmass Golf Course
- The Aspen Valley Ski and Snowboard Club
- Roaring Fork Transit Agency (RFTA) - provides transit connections, grooms sections of the Rio Grande Trail near Carbondale
- Maroon Creek Club - Maroon Creek Club trails
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) - access, snowplows for parking, old Highway 82 Bridge permit
- Aspen Cross-Country Center and Snowmass Cross-Country Center
- Private landowners, Homeowners Associations and Metropolitan Districts on whose land trails or easements are located
- Regulatory agencies such as the United States Forest Service on whose land trails or easements are located



3. ASPEN SNOWMASS NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

The Aspen Snowmass Nordic trail system distinguishes itself as the largest free groomed cross-country ski system in North America. With over 90 kilometers of groomed skiing, the majority of the system is maintained for both classic and skate skiing. Trail grooming is done with either small snowcats or snowmobiles with specialized grooming equipment.

Hubs and Spokes of the Nordic Trail System

The Nordic Trail System currently has three physical hubs: two privately operated cross-country centers located on golf courses central to the communities of Aspen and Snowmass Village (Aspen Cross Country Center and the Snowmass Cross Country Center) and the Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club (AVSC) Clubhouse on the Aspen High School Trails. The cross-country centers offer a variety of facilities including ski rental, food and beverage, restrooms, and showers. The AVSC Clubhouse is the central hub for most youth ski programs. The trails extending from these hubs are wide, providing for classic and skate skiing with a range of easy to intermediate terrain. These trails are the most heavily used, highly maintained, and have the widest tracks.

The Nordic Trail System's spokes offer several distinct ski experiences. For example, the North Star Nature Preserve east of Aspen along the Roaring Fork River provides a mellow, contemplative ski, while the Aspen High School Trails are challenging and heavily used for training and racing purposes. The Owl Creek Trail provides a rolling and scenic ski between Aspen and Snowmass Village connecting the varied terrain and trails of each town.

Designated dog-friendly trails exist throughout the Nordic Trail System allowing people to ski with their dogs, while select trails allow users to walk with their dogs. These trails include the Labrador Lane on the Snowmass Club Golf Course, Village Way Trail extending from the Snowmass Village Base Area to the Two Creeks lift, Bernese Boulevard on the Aspen Golf Course, the Marolt Property Loop, and Rio Grande Trail. The Maroon Creek and Independence Pass Roads are also dog-friendly walking and skiing routes (though these are not maintained by the ASNC or included as normal system trail).

See the Existing Trails Map and the Existing Trail Descriptions in the Appendix for further trail information and descriptions.

Other Existing Trail Systems in Pitkin County

- **The Rio Grande Trail** offers a Nordic ski connection between Aspen and Basalt when snow and weather conditions permit. It is heavily used in the Basalt/Emma area, as well as Woody Creek and through to the Aspen area. A number of driveway and road crossings create challenges for the point-to-point skiers, with skier numbers diminishing in the more bisected trail sections. The Rio Grande Trail from

Carbondale to the Catherine's Store Bridge is groomed when snow cover exists by the Roaring Fork Transit Authority's trail staff.

- **Spring Gulch**, outside of Carbondale, is managed by the Mt. Sopris Nordic Council and provides skiers with 21 kilometers of groomed trails.
- **Ashcroft Ski Touring**, privately operated on National Forest Land, is located in the scenic Castle Creek Valley south of Aspen. The ski area offers 35 kilometers of skiing and a restaurant.
- **The Roaring Fork Club** in Basalt is required to provide public Nordic ski trails on its golf course. Staff are working to better develop the roughly 5km loop with the Roaring Fork Club staff.
- **Maroon Creek Road (USFS)** is packed by a private snowmobile outfit located at the snow closure of Maroon Creek Road (T Lazy 7). The road provides a multi-use trail for skate and classic skiing, as well as walkers and fat bikes.

Users

The Nordic Trail System is a winter trail system and is used by a wide variety of people and groups. The trail system was originally intended to provide platforms for recreational and competitive cross country skiing. The Nordic Council has further expanded their mission to provide high quality Nordic ski trail platforms that connect to and within the community centers of Pitkin County. Designated dog-friendly trails are included in the Nordic Trail System allowing people to ski and walk with their dogs on leash. Walkers, runners, and bicyclists are permitted on designated trails only and certain trails are maintained for multi-use, with a combination of a snow-free maintained trail and a snow covered platform.



The primary users of the groomed cross country ski trails are as follows:

- Classic and skate skiers
- Snowshoers

Access to Nordic Trails

One goal of the Nordic Ski Trail System is to provide cross-country skiing close to residential community centers and tourist lodging and to provide linkages among the trails, minimizing the need for driving and parking. There are also many locations to access the system via free public transportation. Use of public transportation provides the opportunity for one-way ski trips. Existing cross-country centers have maintained parking areas.

Operations

Funding for Nordic Trail System staff is through the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Program. Positions related to operating the program include:

- Director, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Program - oversees all programs related to Trails and Open Space, works closely with the Open Space and Trails Board.
- Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Land Steward - oversees Nordic Trail System financial decisions, distribution of funds, approves budget, and provides general overview of Nordic Trail System.
- City of Aspen Manager of Parks and Recreation - oversees City of Aspen Parks staffing and operations related to Nordic Trails.
- City of Aspen Trails Manager - day to day staff person for Nordic Trail System, involved in all decisions relating to trails, manager of operations and supervisor for winter trails staff.
- City of Aspen Winter Trails Staff.

The City of Aspen and Pitkin County jointly and individually own a variety of specialized equipment for the operation and maintenance of the Nordic Ski Trail system. This equipment ranges from vehicles and trailers, to snowcats, snowmobiles and other mechanized grooming equipment.



4. THE PLANNING PROCESS

Nordic Trails Plan in 2008

Obtaining public input was a very important part of the process. Meetings were held in Aspen, Snowmass Village and Basalt, as well as direct contact through mailing and email to over 800 people.

At the public meetings there was enthusiastic support and praise for the existing Nordic Trail System and the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board. Each meeting group focused attention on the Nordic skiing close to its community. In 2008, the following points were highlighted by the community in the planning process:

- The system should grow to include more Nordic ski trails, accommodate more users, and extend to a wider geographic area, specifically mid-valley.
- Partnerships and increased communications among all the groups related to Nordic trails should be encouraged.
- Trails were identified on maps, both for improvement and new alignments. The conclusions from the meetings have been integrated in this Plan document.

Plan Adoption Process and Referral Opportunities

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan went through the following steps in order to be adopted by Pitkin County on January 9, 2008:

- Present to and receive comments from the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board. Refine the Plan as needed.
- Post the Plan on the City of Aspen Recreation Department website for public review.
- Submit the Plan to Community Development staff for their review and recommendations.
- Present the Plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

By virtue of adoption by the Commissioners, the Plan is recognized in the Pitkin County Land Use Code as a document that will be utilized in County land use reviews. Where trail needs are identified in the Plan text or on Plan maps, the Community Development Department Staff may make an applicant, as well as elected and appointed officials, aware of the Nordic trail interest, and refer the development application to the Nordic Council for comments and to recommend action.

Subsequently, the Plan was adopted by the City of Aspen, Town of Snowmass Village and Town of Basalt. With this adoption across multiple jurisdictions, the Nordic Council became a referral agency to the jurisdictions that adopted the Plan.

Use of the Plan

Adoption of the Plan solidified the Nordic Council's goal to become a referral agency for review of development applications that potentially contain areas for Nordic Trails. The Plan provides Pitkin County, the City of Aspen, the Town of Snowmass Village, and the Town of Basalt a document that indicates areas that may contain

alignments vital to existing conditions and possible expansion of the Nordic Trail System, including additional hubs of the system.

Plan Revision 2013-2015 Process

A Nordic council subcommittee began reviewing, editing, and updating the 2008 version in the spring of 2013. The subcommittee focused on changes in priorities, as well as multi-use demands on the Nordic trail system. Land use challenges and successes were also accounted for in the vision section of the document.

Drafts were presented to Nordic council in April, May and June of 2014, and the Nordic Council finalized the updated plan in July 2015.

Using the plan to make operational decisions

The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council, during the 2014 revision process, felt the Nordic Trails plan needed to provide a screen criteria that could be employed when potential expansion opportunities would be presented. This screen is referenced in Goal 2 in the following pages.

THE VISION

1. VISION AND GOALS

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan formalizes the goals of the Nordic Council to improve and expand the cross-country skiing experience in the upper Roaring Fork Valley. The Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council seeks to continue its goal of providing a seamless skiing experience with high quality Nordic trail platforms connected to and within the community centers in the valley. This may be achieved by resolving methods of road crossing and acquiring new critical trail easements.

GOAL 1: Secure linkages and enhance connections for a seamless Nordic Trail System in Pitkin County.

- Ensure and enhance seamless connections among the Nordic skiing trails serving the urban centers of the valley (primarily Aspen, Snowmass Village and Basalt). Continue to improve linkages to outlying semi-urban areas and trails, and connect to the outlying trail systems such as North Star Preserve.
- Maintain and improve the existing trail network that serves the populated centers of Aspen and Snowmass Village. Create road crossings that go over, under or across at-grade, so that skis do not need to be removed for road crossings.
- Identify and secure key trail alignments and connections in perpetuity.
- Collaborate with related organizations in the area to promote the best possible winter trails experience.

GOAL 2: Expand Nordic skiing areas and opportunities in Pitkin County and environs.

- Identify and develop future areas and routes for Nordic skiing, and prioritize opportunities.
- Provide a range of experiences and difficulty levels of the Nordic trails.

Based on the above goals, the subsequent sections highlight the necessary components for a successful Nordic Trail System and then identify the particular trails, connections, and areas of interest.

2. NORDIC TRAILS DESIGN GUIDELINES

The goal of the Nordic Council is to offer a range of Nordic skiing experiences from wide, well groomed trails located generally in areas of higher population and that accommodate both classic and skate skiing, to trails that are tracked by the skiers themselves and offer a more remote experience.

Variety of Terrain

The Nordic Trail System accommodates different widths and gradients of ski trails, thereby offering varied recreational experiences. During the 2014 revision process, the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council identified the following points as priorities for future trail development and planning:

1. Rustic, woody trail experiences that are easily accessed from the Nordic Trail System: integrate more rural and remote experiences.
2. Well-groomed trails in mid-valley areas: generally flatter trails are more popular and in high demand in Basalt area.
3. Challenging groomed trails: hillier, more difficult terrain, including for racing.
4. Resilient skiing: northern exposure, snowmaking, higher altitudes.

Guidelines for Grooming Chart

CATEGORIES	FULL WIDTH	MEDIUM WIDTH	NARROW WIDTH	NON-MAINTAINED
Width	24 feet	15 feet	5-8 feet	N/A
Track Type	Dual or Single Classic and 12-foot Skate Lane	Single Classic and 8-foot or wider Skate Lane	Skate Lane with or without Classic Track, or Classic Track only	Set by Skiers
Examples	Golf Courses, Owl Creek Trail	North Star Preserve, Moore Open Space, Paved Summer Recreation Trails	Bernese Boulevard, Benedict Trail	Government Trail
Grooming Equipment	Snowcat/snowmobile	Snowcat/snowmobile	Snowmobile	N/A

Photographic Examples of Trail Grooming Categories

Full Width



These trails serve as social trails, with high intensity and multi-use opportunities.

Medium Width



These trails provide a groomed platform, but more intimate natural skiing experience.

Narrow Width



These trails often have constrained circumstances, but still offer well patronized multi-use opportunities.

Non-Maintained



These trails provide a quiet, secluded experience away from more heavily used areas.

3. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

Road Crossings: Over, Under, and At-Grade

In order to provide a seamless cross-country skiing experience, it is a top priority of the Nordic Council to eliminate road and paved trail crossings that require skiers to remove their skis. The Nordic Council proposes that all new road construction and improvements that interface with the Nordic Trail System be designed to accommodate either a grade separated crossing for both skiing and summer trails, or a method for safe at-grade skiing across the road. Grade separation is a preferred choice as it not only improves the connectivity of the Nordic Trail System but also enhances the safety of all users.

Overpass: When possible, the preferred trail overpass accommodates a snow load, skiers, and grooming equipment (for example, the bridges adjacent to the roundabout over Castle Creek and Maroon Creek Roads). These bridges serve trail users year round and are wide enough for a Medium Width Nordic Trail.

Underpass: Another viable road crossing alternative is to construct an underpass. The underpass on Highway 82 west of the roundabout is a successful example; this feature connects the Aspen Golf Course and the Moore Loop trails while also accommodating bicycle and foot traffic in the winter. Underpasses need to be a minimum of 14' wide and 10' high to accommodate the snowcat. Underpasses are less desirable than bridges as they require considerable maintenance to keep snow in the tunnel and frequently ice over. Sudden unexpected snowless or icy areas pose a hazard to trail users.



At-Grade: The last alternative for road crossings is an at-grade crossing. There are several forms of at grade crossings. The first option is to leave snow on the road surface throughout the winter as on the Moore driveway and Meadowood Road. However, this is the least desirable option as it requires continual maintenance and monitoring with potential conflicts between cars and skiers. The ASNC and Staff will try to work with property managers and homeowners to provide snow covered crossings as much as possible. This requires annual correspondence and diligence, and opportunities may exist in potential new trail easements to require some level of ski trail continuity within the easement language. In the Plan revision process, the Owl Creek Trail was noted as an example of a ski trail experience that is challenged by numerous road crossings.

Snowmaking

Snowmaking in select locations would extend the Nordic skiing season. Snowmaking possibilities on the Aspen Golf Course were foreseen when the new water system was built in 2005. Similarly, the Nordic Council would like snowmaking possibilities to be considered in other highly used cross-country areas. It is a priority of the Nordic Council to continue to explore the options and opportunities regarding snowmaking on the cross country

ski trails. Partner groups, such as the Aspen Valley Ski Club could be potential partners in future snowmaking installations, as snowmaking can provide early and late season racing and training venues.

Signage

The 2008 Planning process established the need for an enhanced signage system to serve the following purposes:

- Identification of levels of difficulty of trails
- Availability of facilities
- Interpretive opportunities
- Road Signage
- Branding of the Nordic Trail System
- Improved trail maps
- Clarification of allowed trail users
- Use of available technology such as the recently published Pitkin Outside mobile mapping software.

Over the summer of 2015, staff, along with a graphic designer, developed a sign standard that will address many of these points. The improved sign system will be implemented in the 2015-2016 winter season.

Maps are important components of the signage system as they provide useful information. Maps are posted as signs showing users their location in the Nordic Trail System, as well as available at the hubs of the trail system. Pitkin County has also developed an online and mobile application for trail information and route finding. Maps should be updated as regularly as possible to maintain accuracy.

Facilities

Enhanced facilities that are related to trails and operated by partners are encouraged. New facilities may need to be approved by the relevant jurisdiction. Recreational and competitive events generally require a higher level of facilities.

Trailside: Facilities allow for an extended skiing experience or a family outing and include:

- Trailheads and informational kiosks
- Benches, picnic tables
- Yurts
- Warming cabin with wood burning stove and hot drink opportunities
- Drinks and snacks
- Dog waste stations
- Cross-country centers with services such as food and beverage, toilets, changing rooms and showers

Mid-Valley Hub: Consider creating a mid-valley hub or cross-country center, near transit and with services, similar to Aspen or Snowmass Cross-Country Centers. Potential options exist at the Roaring Fork Club or Basalt High School.



Lighted Trails: Night skiing, in designated locations could add yet another amenity and attraction to the Nordic experience. Small scale, solar lighting could provide a service to some skiers looking to ski at the Nordic centers in the early evenings, and these small scale mobile lighting systems should be further explored.

Trees: Trees improve snow-retention while also increasing the intimacy of the skiing experience. The Nordic Council has invested significant amounts of money toward tree planting throughout the Nordic trails system.

Trail Base Surface: Nordic trails in the Roaring Fork Valley are often maintained over multi-use trails for cycling and walking in the summer months. Whenever possible, the summer trail surface should consider the ability for that segment of trail to *hold* snow over the winter. Soft surfaces are preferred for Nordic skiing; grass, crusher fines, or natural earth tend to capture less heat and snow is maintained on those surfaces better than hard surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.



Operations: As the Nordic Trail System expands, there will be consideration of additional needs for staffing and equipment.

Safety: While efforts are made to set safe tracks, the Nordic Council provides no other services along its designated trails. Other agencies handle enforcement and emergencies.

It should also be noted that some areas outside of the groomed trail system maintained by Aspen Snowmass Nordic trails, including Independence Pass and Maroon Creek Road, are in known avalanche areas. While these areas are open to the public and provide enjoyable experiences for winter users, the risks of avalanche are unmitigated and inherent to travel in the winter backcountry. If future expansion of groomed trails in these corridors is considered, then special attention should be paid to address safety, communication, and risk.

Access and Parking

- Provide convenient parking at trailheads.
- Identify public transportation hubs and bus stops that serve and provide access to the Nordic trails system.
- Continue to partner with CDOT for snowplowing parking areas and for access across the old Highway 82 Maroon Creek Bridge

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPANSION

As the Nordic Trail System continues to gain more use, improve, and grow, the Nordic Council has developed guiding principles to focus its efforts towards improvements and expansion. Concurrently, it is important that growth does not exceed the need for and appropriate use of trails or the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails' ability to properly maintain these trails. The main challenge is to ensure high-quality grooming of existing trails along with the ability to groom trails in new areas.

The **first priority** is to maintain the quality and integrity of the existing Nordic Trail System and strive towards a seamless skiing experience:

- **Secure existing endangered trails** where formal long-term easements do not exist, or to reroute trails to better/more secure alignments.
- **Resolve critical crossings** so that skis do not need to be removed to cross roads allowing a seamless skiing experience.
- **Create high quality skiing platforms** for all groomed trails. Improve sections of trails that do not meet the guidelines of a high quality skiing experience. Examples include trails that have not been graded properly, are very steep or trails that have problems with snow coverage due to aspect (sun exposure) or their rocky nature.
- **Focus on the amount of use** as more use warrants more effort. Trails close to urban areas will have more facilities, wider trails, variety of use, terrain and signage.



The **second priority** is to expand the Nordic Trail System or anticipate future changes due to new development or climate variations:

- **Ensure the ability** to maintain and groom the trails.
 - It is strongly preferred that trails are not groomed on top of hard surface summer trails, such as asphalt and concrete.
 - Consider areas of higher altitude, greater shade, and ideal aspect.
 - Opportunities for snowmaking or the use of manmade snow.
- **Provide a variety** of terrain and skiing experiences.
 - Identify opportunities for groomed classic-only ski trails
- **Integrate adjacent trails** that may be less used trails, currently un-groomed trails, or potential high quality trails. This may be achieved by additional grooming, signage, or easements.
- **Identify linkages** where trails are needed to connect existing trails and to create connections to community centers e.g. downtown Aspen, the Airport Business Center, or Burlingame Housing.
- **Consider parking** needs.
- **Ensure useable public** transportation connections.



- **Trail banking:** New trails should adhere to the Nordic Council's desire to accommodate its Nordic Trail System to climate variations. New trails should have good snow holding ability, e.g. north or north east facing, at high elevation, or shaded by vegetation.
- **Resolve multi-use conflicts** through signage, designate trails appropriately, maintain partially snow covered and partially cleared trails, ranger enforcement, and identifying new trails.

The above vision principles rely greatly on the following:

- Landowner cooperation and public support
- Collaboration with jurisdictions
- Review and input on land use applications for affected properties

5. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements Background

The following tables depict both vital trail connections and easements, as well as potential large scale trail developments and opportunities. The tables also identify several areas where people currently enjoy skiing on non-maintained winter trails, and further improvements could be made such as improved wayfinding, route clearing, access improvements, or easements.

Expansion Screen

The following set of questions should be analyzed and answered during the planning process for future trail developments. While value is not placed on any specific question, the Nordic council should use this as a starting point for discussion of expansion (or contraction) or changes. Consideration should also be given to the preceding guiding principles.

- Does this expansion connect seamlessly with current trail system?
- Does this expansion meet the goals of Nordic Trails Design guidelines (variety of terrain)?
- Does this expansion address climate and resilient skiing considerations?
- What are the increased operational costs or savings?
 - Does this expansion trigger additional equipment needs or staff time?
 - Estimate cost and report to Nordic council.
 - Would we eliminate existing trail segments in exchange for this expansion opportunity?
 - Prepare cost benefit analysis comparing proposed changes
 - Outreach the idea for reduction of service with adjacent communities or impacted parties
 - If Nordic Council resolves to recommend expansion beyond the scope of current budget or projected budget, the following are steps to implement the changes:
 - Nordic council submits recommendation to City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board, Basalt Parks Open Space and Trails, or Town of Snowmass Village Trails committee, based on appropriate jurisdiction.
 - Or seeks other funding opportunities.
- What kind of public scoping and process will be needed?
- Is the land public, private, or based on an easement? What will be the planning, zoning, or other land-use implications?
- Are there impacts to wildlife, including critical winter habitat for Elk and Deer?
 - Review expansion with existing wildlife studies and/or Colorado Parks and Wildlife.
- If expansion opportunity exists apart from current trail system, special attention should be paid to increased operational costs, and to how the expansion addresses the goals of the 2014 revision, as stated in Goal 1.

Aspen Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities

The following trail descriptions are organized traveling from east to west from Independence Pass. First, there are the trails that are already in the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System and have been identified for enhancements. These trails may lack permanent easements, may require improved road crossings, or may be improved by re-routing the trail onto a different alignment. Trail alignments that may be at risk in the future are identified. Second, areas that are currently used informally for Nordic skiing, or are summer activity areas, are identified as potential alignments that would provide high-quality additions to the trail system.



TRAIL CONNECTOR	CHARACTERISTICS VALUE	RISK NEEDS	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT
A1: James H. Smith Open Space	Expansion of North Star skiing with beginner and tranquil terrain on the north side of the river.	Currently not groomed.	North Star Management Plan updated in 2015 providing authorization to expand skiing. Study and design connection to existing trails on North Star.
A2: East of Aspen Trail	Could provide a seamless East of Aspen Trail from North Star Trail to Difficult Campground.	More parking at North Star; road crossings. Improve Benedict Trail to North Star route. Private and public land access.	Provide larger parking area. Improve trail connections.
A3: Midland Trail (Shadow Mountain)	Direct connection to downtown from Marolt pedestrian bridge.	Sidewalk currently plowed in winter.	Obtain alignment at base of Shadow Mountain between 5 th and 7 th Streets.
A4: Aspen High School Trails Meadowood Subdivision (critical)	Varied terrain, great racing venue close to town.	Current Meadowood Subdivision easement is short term.	Obtain long-term easement with Meadowood Subdivision.
A5: Aspen High School Trails AVSC to ARC	Important seamless ski linkage between High School Trails and Marolt Open Space.	Need to remove skis to cross the plowed road entrance to the High School parking lot near the AVSC clubhouse.	Overpass needed to eliminate ski removal.
A6: Moore Open Space ARC Connector (critical)	Critical connectivity for Aspen trails. Rolling terrain, historically used.	Easement is short term.	Secure long term easement.
A7: Haleakala Connection	Connects High School Trails to Aspen Golf Course via roundabout. Offers more loops and seamless skiing.	No suitable easements exist.	Widen easement.
A8: Aspen Golf Course (important)	Highly utilized, maintained, facilities, multi-use.	Continue to enhance facilities and opportunities. Need for snow to hold longer.	Continue to enhance facilities. Add snowmaking. Continue tree planting program.

TRAIL CONNECTOR	CHARACTERISTICS VALUE	RISK NEEDS	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT
A9: Maroon Creek Golf Course Trails	Varied terrain, close to town.	Multiple road crossings. Potential to provide trails on north portions of Maroon Creek Club, currently “private”.	Install grade-separated crossings.
A10: Burlingame via Maroon Creek Golf Course and Double Bar X Ranch	Potential trail connection of Burlingame and Double Bar X Ranch.	Additional area could be groomed per PUD. Need connection through underpass and easement on Double Bar X to connect to Burlingame	Coordinate with Maroon Creek Club, Double Bar X.
A11: Owl Creek Trail West Buttermilk Connection (important)	Offers an alternative improved route.	Currently steep trail crosses driveway.	Obtain easement for new alignment that would be gentler with less crossings.
A12: Difficult Campground*	Summer road, good snow covered surface in winter. Scenic, secluded skiing. Early and late season grooming.	Currently not part of Nordic Trail System.	Would require special use permit or agreement with USFS to groom. Possible multi-use.
A14: Richmond Ridge*	High elevation, good snow coverage, great early and late season use, ski lift access, spectacular views, rolling terrain, near facilities.	Currently not used for Nordic trails. Need access. Possible multi-use. High altitude advantages and challenges.	Partner with Aspen Skiing Company and USFS for use, access and facilities.
A15: Castle Creek Valley Alignment (Aspen to Ashcroft)	Could provide a viable connection in Castle Creek valley.	Options need to be studied. Very large scale project; feasibility.	Coordinate with stakeholders.
A16: Five Trees and Water Plant Trails:	Connects to Aspen High School Trails. Advanced racing terrain. North facing and wooded.	No easements exist.	Coordinate with City of Aspen for long term use agreement.
A17: Maroon Creek Highway 82 Bridge*	Would connect Aspen and Maroon Creek Golf Course at grade.	Need an at grade connection.	Fully implemented in 2014/15 season.
A18: Maroon Creek Valley*	Scenic, good snow, gentle terrain.	Currently road is groomed by private special use permittee, grooming future is not guaranteed.	Secure guarantee of long term use at appropriate time. Nice terrain, avalanche hazard.
A19: Ashcroft*/** (important)	Scenic, good snow, rolling wooded terrain. Excellent skiing at cross-country area. Restaurant.	Currently area is groomed by private operator.	Secure guarantee of long-term use at appropriate time. Restaurant operation.

* Potential addition to Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System

** Separate from Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System

See Appendix - *Nordic Trail Opportunity Maps* for location of existing trails and proposed improvements.

Snowmass Village Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities

Interests of Snowmass Village residents focused on the immediate vicinity in and around the Town of Snowmass Village. There was a desire for more, easy dog-friendly ski trails. Owl Creek Trail is a popular ski trail, however users would like to see fewer road crossings where skis need to be removed. There were several recommendations for new trails including Brush Creek Trail.



TRAIL CONNECTOR	CHARACTERISTICS VALUE	RISK NEEDS	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT
S1: Owl Creek Road (critical)	Critical scenic link in Aspen to Snowmass trail system.	Optimize alignment. Current license agreement is short term. Many road crossings.	Reinstate “Twister” alignment and other historic alignments. Obtain permanent winter easements. Resolve crossings through realignment or other at-grade means.
S2: Glendale Drive	Potential alignment has good snow retention, is an easier route. Would provide better access to Owl Creek Trail. Parking across from maintenance center.	Need an alternative to steep “Berlin Wall” section.	A potential trail from Glendale Divide to Terminator Trail on a high contour should be explored. An easement exists for portions of alignment.
S3: The Pines	This new alignment would potentially provide improved skiing and fewer road crossings.	The Pines HOA will realign a trail section to an alpine easement to reduce road crossings and provide a wider trail.	Secure long-term easement for new trail that is to be created. Possibly a PUD agreement through Town of Snowmass Village (TOSV).
S4: Snowmass Golf Course (important)	Hub of skiing, provides great groomed trails and facilities.	Need connection to the recreation center across Brush Creek Road. Separate conflict area with pedestrians and dog walking users.	Existing underpass too low. Install at-grade or grade separated crossings. Study enhancing facilities.
S5: Town Connector – Village Way Trail	Section of Village Way is being relocated for development.	New alignment may be inconvenient with road crossings.	Possible grade separated crossing at Owl Creek and Brush Creek road intersection
S7: Brush Creek Trail*	Summer trail could be used in winter linking the Brush Creek intercept lot at Highway 82 to Snowmass Golf Course trails.	Current wildlife closure during winter on Pitkin County section. Possible multi-use needs. Requires snow cover.	With TOSV and Pitkin County, explore possibility of Nordic use in winter.
S11: Cozy Point Ranch North near Woody	Easy access and parking, good snow holding.	Currently an archery range. No ski trails.	City of Aspen owned property. Maintain.

*Potential addition to Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System

See Appendix - *Nordic Trail Opportunity Maps* for location of existing trails and proposed improvements.

Mid-Valley Vicinity Nordic Trails Opportunities

During the planning process, existing and future use trends were studied including what needs are not currently being met, and estimating the potential demands and uses in the future. With the addition of community support, it became apparent that there is the need for the Nordic Trail System to continue to grow, especially into the wider geographic area of Pitkin County.

During the community meetings, the mid-valley area was perceived as being suitable for the expansion of the Nordic Trail System. Currently, The Nordic Council has acted as the default mid-valley Nordic ski advocacy agency for the Basalt community, and more specifically, the Roaring Fork Club trails and the lower Rio Grande trail connections. The Nordic council membership includes residents and elected officials of the Town of Basalt.

TRAIL CONNECTOR	CHARACTERISTICS VALUE	RISK NEEDS	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT
M1: Rio Grande Trail	Major trail connector through valley. RFTA maintains Carbondale to Catherine Store section.	Multi-use coordination. Road crossing issues. Near Aspen underpasses need more snow.	Use signage. Possibly move ski trail to previous track alignment. Continue to coordinate with RFTA for grooming.
M2: Roaring Fork Club	Close to Basalt and Rio Grande Trail. North facing, good snow. PUD approval requires grooming of Nordic trails for public.	Trails seldom groomed. Public access difficult.	Improve trail connections to transit. Possible new trailhead near bus stop. Coordinate with Roaring Fork Club (RFC) to set trail alignment and groom trails.
M3: Basalt High School*	Central location, potential new hub, possible use of playing fields, connects to Rio Grande. Possible use of adjacent properties.	Not currently used for skiing, but there is great potential. Conflicts with sledding hill and school activities.	Study options and coordinate with landowners and town, including recreation department to set trail alignment and groom.
M5: Capitol Creek Valley*	Scenic, varied terrain, historic Nordic use, possible valley wide links, annual event occurred.	Maintenance. Form of arrangement with landowners. Traffic and parking.	Nordic Council to coordinate with landowners. Could be part of larger valley system.
M7: Spring Gulch** (important)	Existing cross-country trail system maintained by Mt. Sopris Nordic Council with 21k of groomed trails and is partially funded by Pitkin County OST (20% of operational costs).	Spring Gulch and Mt. Sopris Nordic Councils to remain independent of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council, but continue as a strong partner.	Continue to communicate with Mt. Sopris Nordic Council.
M9: Crown Mountain Park	Small trail system surrounded by mid-valley homes.	Independently groomed by Eagle County parks staff.	Nordic council available for collaboration.

*Potential addition to Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System

** Separate from Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System

See Appendix - *Nordic Trail Opportunity Maps* for location of existing trails and proposed improvements.

Non-Maintained Valley-Wide Nordic Skiing Opportunities

The following Nordic areas provide a unique experience that the Nordic council has identified as vital to the Nordic trail system in the upper Roaring Fork valley. Most of these areas are not suitable for machine grooming at their current state, and if the community or the Nordic Council identify these as future priorities, the expansion screen will be used with a recommendation for expansion needing to be presented to Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board.

TRAIL CONNECTOR	CHARACTERISTICS VALUE	RISK NEEDS	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT
M6: Hay Park Trail*	“Down Valley Government Trail” to remain unmaintained. Link to valley system. Parking available. Possible multi-use.	Steep access from public parking on Capitol side.	Add signage. Coordinate with and discuss alternative access with private landowners. Consider Dinkle Lake Rd access and possible winter gate for closure.
M4: Northeast facing hillside – Light Hill*	Good snow holding. Ditch alignment.	Identify public access locations.	Study options and coordinate with stakeholders, including recreation department and BLM.
S9: Tom Blake Trail and Stark Trail*	Potential connectors between Government Trail and Owl Creek Trail at Two Creeks.	Stark Trail is steep.	Study options.
S10: Highline Trail from Maintenance Center	To remain un-groomed.	Potential connector from Owl Creek Trail to Brush Creek potential trail. Most of Sky Mountain Park area closed in winter; winter elk range.	Study winter connection and wildlife recommendations.
S8: Divide Ditch Trail to East Snowmass Creek*	More remote feeling skiing. Gentle terrain. Multi-use.	Parking and access needs. Resolve multi-use conflicts and long-term use.	Resolve parking, access, and long-term use. To remain un-groomed. Repair or replace failed foot bridge.
S6: Government Trail* (important)	Currently a more remote ski experience, scenic, wooded terrain. Potential to loop with Owl Creek Trail.	Improve access to trail from Two Creeks side. Improve ski connectivity on both sides. To remain un-groomed.	Work with Aspen Skiing Company on access from Two Creeks via lift or gondola. Explore possibilities on West Buttermilk side. Better winter route marking.
A13: Hunter Creek Valley*	Scenic, gentle terrain, near town.	Access and parking limitations, steep entry.	Discuss access and parking with area stakeholders.
M8: Windstar Valley Ranch	Scenic terrain in the Old Snowmass area.	Parking and access.	Secure long term parking and consider designation of non-maintained ski routes.

Long-term Trails Opportunities

The following areas are identified as having Nordic skiing potential. Due to circumstances such as property ownership, distance from population centers and accessibility, the Nordic Council is not pursuing these options at this time, although there was mention of these areas during the 2008 public meetings. Therefore, these locations should be considered as possibilities only. The trail alignments and easements could initially be acquired as summer trails. Backcountry trails, including the 10th Mountain and other overnight Hut Systems will remain separate from the Nordic Trail System.

- In the **Aspen Snowmass** area the land near the Rio Grande in the vicinity of **W/J Ranch** may offer gentle terrain with access to the Rio Grande Trail.
- Cozy Point Ranch Nordic opportunities including biathlon and skijoring.
- Long term, a trail connection from Brush Creek Road to **Aspen Village** would provide a useful link. In addition, trail opportunities may exist in the Watson Divide area.
- In the **mid-valley** area potential Nordic skiing areas may include the Spring Park Reservoir vicinity on **Missouri Heights**.
- The Crown area near **Emma** provides summer hiking and biking trails that may be considered for un-groomed winter use providing there is sufficient snow coverage and BLM permission.
- The **Crystal River Valley** and **Redstone** have Nordic skiing opportunities in the coke ovens vicinity, as well as further up Coal Basin. The potential trails would reflect the updated plans interest in more remote and rustic trails, and could provide down valley residents with an alternative to Spring Gulch. The Crystal River Valley is also known to hold snow well, and partnerships with the community of Redstone or the US Forest Service could be explored if funding becomes available. If a regional trail were developed in the **Crystal River Valley**, it could have potential for Nordic use as well.



6. NORDIC TRAIL SYSTEM OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION

Partnering and Coordination

The Existing Conditions Section identified the Nordic Council's current partner organizations. This list may be expanded (including current user groups) as follows:

- Town of Basalt
- Snowshoe groups and Environmental Education Providers
- Summer trail systems and organizations
- Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers (RFOV)
- Pitkin County schools including the Aspen School District, some RE-I District schools, RE-2, Basalt and Carbondale Schools as well as private schools
- Mt. Sopris Nordic Council
- Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association
- POST Basalt
- Town of Snowmass Village Trails Committee

The following partnering actions may be pursued by the Nordic Council:

- Continue to build cooperative efforts between public and private groups to facilitate trail access.
- Formalize relationship with partners identifying roles, responsibilities and financing.

User Groups

As previously stated, the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council seeks to continue its goal of providing a seamless skiing experience with high quality Nordic ski trail platforms connected to and within the community centers of Pitkin County. The Nordic Council acknowledges the multi-use conflicts of snow covered platforms and strives to find solutions such as:

- Collaborate with other user groups to work towards solutions for various winter trail users.
- Use signage to differentiate Nordic ski trails and inform users of various uses.
- Identify sections of each golf course that are appropriate for multi-use and sign accordingly.
- Provide enhancements, or expansion, to the dog trail system including signage and information so people know where to go with their dogs, and dog bags and receptacles at dog-friendly trails.
- Determine if more Nordic dog trails can be added to the Nordic Trail System.

The Nordic Council recognizes that there are also potential conflicts with bicyclists needing paved and plowed winter routes and Nordic skiers, especially on the Rio Grande Trail, the Marolt Open Space areas, Castle Creek and Maroon Creek bridges. The Nordic Council will continue to work towards resolving the conflicts to make the trails functional for both parties.

Outreach

During the Plan process, the community identified the benefits of additional public outreach to gain a broad base of support. The Nordic Council and the members currently provide, and will enhance, the following outreach efforts:

- The Nordic Council website which provides grooming reports, trail conditions, and events calendars
- The Nordic Hotline at (970)429-2039
- Signage on trails
- Maps for trails
- Stay current with recent informational outreach and technological trends

The Nordic Council will continue to encourage user groups and partners to initiate or to continue the following outreach efforts:

- Inform locals and visitors about Nordic opportunities through newspapers, newsletters and other publicity.
- Support fun events, such as the AVSC Progressive Bonfire Dinner or AXCC Ski Extravaganza and locals' lessons.
- Encourage school programs and valley-wide programs.
- Reinforce or create a youth winter sports center and/or community Nordic center.
- Continue a volunteer winter ambassadors program to help educate the public on the Nordic Trail System.
- Improve use of the Nordic Council website including access to grooming reports and trail conditions.
- Provide education/information to winter trail users to minimize use conflicts.
- Support cross-jurisdictional enforcement efforts.



APPENDIX:

EXISTING NORDIC TRAILS DESCRIPTIONS

Aspen Golf Course & Cross Country Center

The Aspen Cross-Country Center is located at the Aspen Golf Course, 1 mile west of downtown Aspen off Highway 82. The Center offers ski lessons, tours, retail shop, rentals, a lounge, lockers, snacks, and videos.

Difficulty: Beginner. **Length:** 5 km. **Access:** RFTA bus service available. Moore, Marolt and High School trails are all easily accessible from the golf course trails.

Bernese Boulevard

Located on the Aspen Golf Course, the Bernese Boulevard provides dog owners and their pets a scenic route around the perimeter of the golf course. Please keep your pet under control at all times. **Difficulty:** Beginner.

Length: 3.2 km.

High School Trails

The High School tracks offer excellent skiing on varied terrain, and in warmer weather have better snow conditions because of the higher elevation and exposure. A shorter 3 km loop omits the steeper hills, and a longer 5km loop negotiates hillier terrain. **Difficulty:** Intermediate/Advanced. **Length:** 5 km.

James E. Moore Trail

The James E. Moore Trail has a short loop and a connecting trail to the High School, Iselin and Owl Creek trails. Both the flat connecting trail and loop wind through open sage areas that are home to deer; fox and other wildlife. **Difficulty:** Beginner and Intermediate. **Length:** 3.2 km. **Access:** The safest access is via the roundabout pedestrian underpass. Or, from the parking lot at the Aspen Golf Course, cross under Highway 82 on foot and go 200 feet to the left (east). RFTA bus service available.

Marolt Property Trails

These tracks are used primarily as an access route between the west end of Aspen and the Aspen Golf Course and the High School tracks. Dogs are allowed on designated routes only. **Difficulty:** Beginner. **Length:** 2.4 km.

Access: From Aspen via the Marolt Trail, by foot, take Hopkins west to 7th Street and go left, then turn right at the Marolt Pedestrian Bridge.

Maroon Creek Club Trails

These tracks are accessed from the Tiehack Nordic Bridge, the old Highway 82 Bridge from the Aspen Nordic center, or from the Buttermilk base area.. **Difficulty:** Intermediate. **Length:** 3.2 km on and around the golf

course. **Access:** Pick up the tracks beyond the Panda Peak lift at the Buttermilk Base area. RFTA bus service available.

North Star Nature Preserve Loop

The Preserve is 175 acres of land east of Aspen that has been preserved to allow its natural ecology to continue with a minimum of human impact. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are one of the few uses permitted on the flat, open meadows close to the Roaring Fork River. Please stay on marked trails and respect the wildlife. **Difficulty:** Beginner. **Length:** A little over 2.4 km. **Access:** Go 1.5 miles east of Aspen on Highway 82 and look for the small parking area on the right.

Benedict Trail

This section of trail serves as a connection from the East end of Aspen to the North Star Nature Preserve. It is narrow, winding and mostly in the trees. A small portion of the trail is subject to avalanche danger. **Difficulty:** Intermediate. Not suitable for skating. **Length:** 2.5 km from Ute Avenue to North Star Nature Preserve. **Access:** Follow Ute Avenue to the Ute Trail parking lot, then up a public access 100 yards to where the trail crosses. RFTA bus service available.

Snowmass Cross-Country Center

The Snowmass Cross-Country Center trail system is the western hub of the Aspen/Snowmass Nordic Trail System. The Cross-Country Center, located on the golf course, has a retail shop, snack bar, restaurant, lessons, rentals and tours. **Difficulty:** Beginner through Intermediate. **Length:** 8 km. **Access:** By car from Aspen or Snowmass, take Brush Creek Road and turn left onto Club House Drive. By bus, take the free skier shuttle to Snowmass Village, and get off at Town Park Station

Labrador Lane

Labrador Lane is a dog friendly trail at the Snowmass Cross-Country Center. **Length:** 3.2 km. **Access:** Follow instructions for Snowmass Cross-Country Center listed above.

Village Way

Village Way is a multi-use access route between Snowmass Village and the Snowmass Golf Course tracks. The trail is fairly steep and not generally groomed for cross country skiing, making the route challenging in either direction. Dogs are allowed. **Difficulty:** Intermediate **Access:** From Snowmass Village, this is best reached from the bottom of the Assay Hill Lift. From the golf course, follow the same direction as the Owl Creek Trail but turn right after Owl Creek Road.

Terminator

The Terminator trail, which loops around the Two Creeks development, is an exciting trail for advanced cross-country skiers. This loop can also be used to access the Owl Creek Trail. **Difficulty:** Advanced. **Length:** 5 km for

the loop. **Access:** Follow the same direction as the Owl Creek Trail but continue straight uphill after crossing Owl Creek Road.

Owl Creek Trail

This popular and scenic trail connects Aspen and Snowmass Village, hugging the south side of the Brush Creek and Owl Creek valleys. The easiest and most popular stretch of trail runs from the West Buttermilk Road to the Snowmass Cross-Country Center. Another popular option from West Buttermilk Road is to ski to Glendale Divide and back. The Terral Wade (Tiehack) Bridge allows skiers seamless access to the Owl Creek Trail from the Aspen Cross-Country Center. Follow the green disks to stay on course when crossing the Buttermilk Ski Area. Be aware and yield to downhill skiers. **Difficulty:** Intermediate; most of the trail is good for beginners, but the occasional hills add some difficulty. **Length:** 14.5 km from the Aspen Golf Course to the Snowmass Cross-Country Center. **Access:** *Snowmass Village:* Village Way Trail or Snowmass Cross-Country Center. Follow signs. *West Buttermilk Road:* Drive west on Owl Creek Road from Highway 82 to West Buttermilk Road, turn left. The Owl Creek Trail crosses 1.4 miles up the road, by a small parking area on the right. *Tiehack:* Experienced skiers can ski from the base of Tiehack up along the right side of the alpine trail to the Oregon Trail towards and across Main Buttermilk. Follow the green disks. *Aspen Golf Course:* **Access** Tiehack via the James E. Moore Trail and the Terral Wade Bridge.

Rio Grande Trail

A popular walking, skiing and snowshoeing trail, the Rio Grande follows the old Denver and Rio Grande Railroad bed along the Roaring Fork River. The trail gently meanders through the quiet woods and open sage areas. Note: the snow can deteriorate quickly on this trail. The Rio Grande is a dog friendly trail. Dog owners are required to keep their companion on a leash and to pick up after their pet **Difficulty:** Beginner **Length:** Up to 32 km one way, from Aspen to Basalt: **Access:** The eastern end starts behind the Aspen Post Office. Numerous additional access points exists between Aspen and Basalt. RFTA bus service available.

Maroon Creek Road

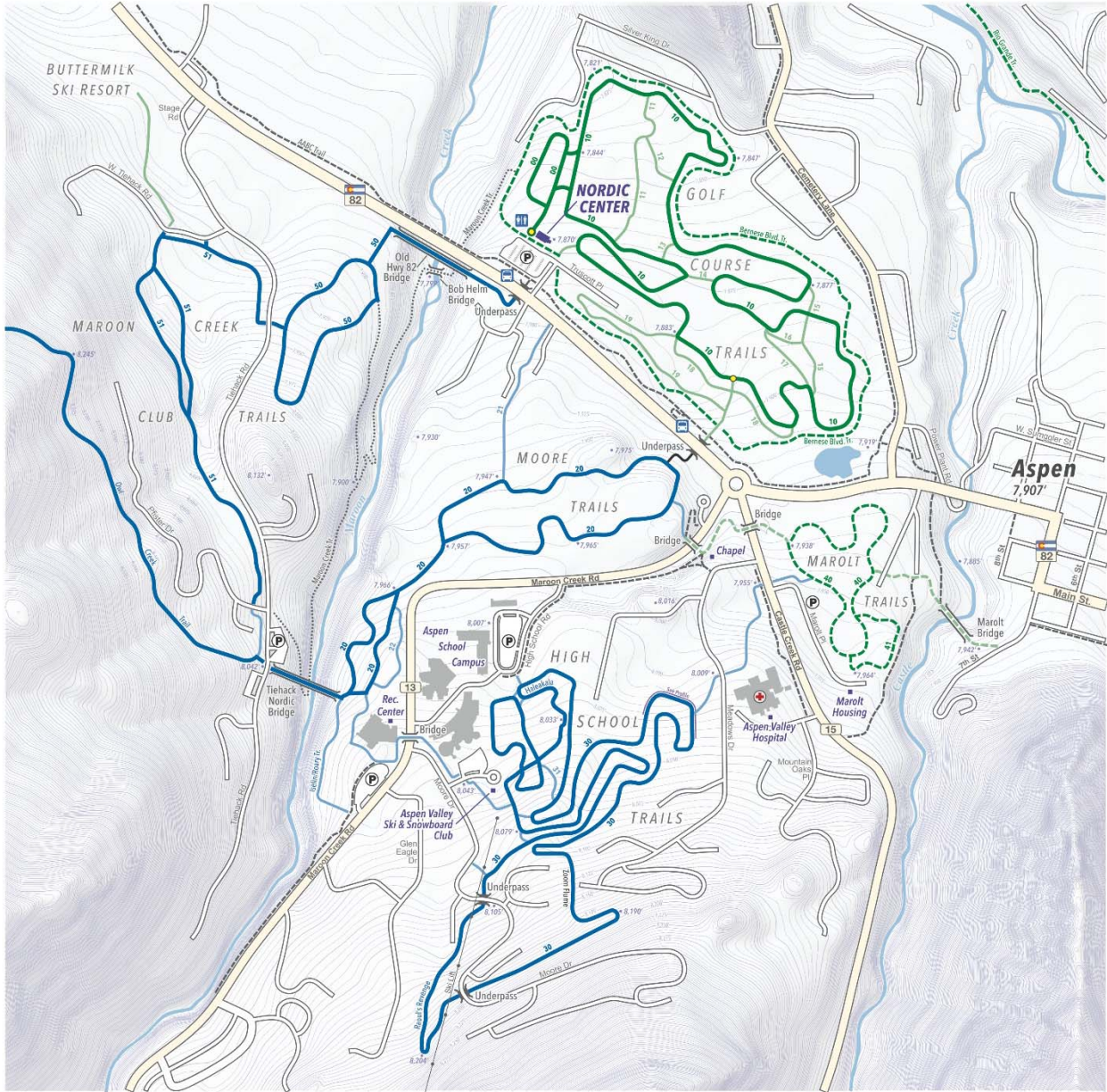
The county road to Maroon Lake is not plowed in the winter due to USFS winter closure. T-Lazy 7 operates snowmobile tours to the lake and grooms the road to the lake. There are no classic tracks, but it is a gentle climb with nice scenery. Check Colorado Avalanche Information Center (<http://avalanche.state.co.us>) for information on backcountry conditions. Respect closed signs. Share the trail with other users. **Difficulty:** Beginner/intermediate. **Length:** 10 k to Maroon Lake. **Access:** Drive 3.5 miles up Maroon Creek Road until the road is closed. Park in the lot across from the stables. Dogs are allowed.

Independence Pass Road

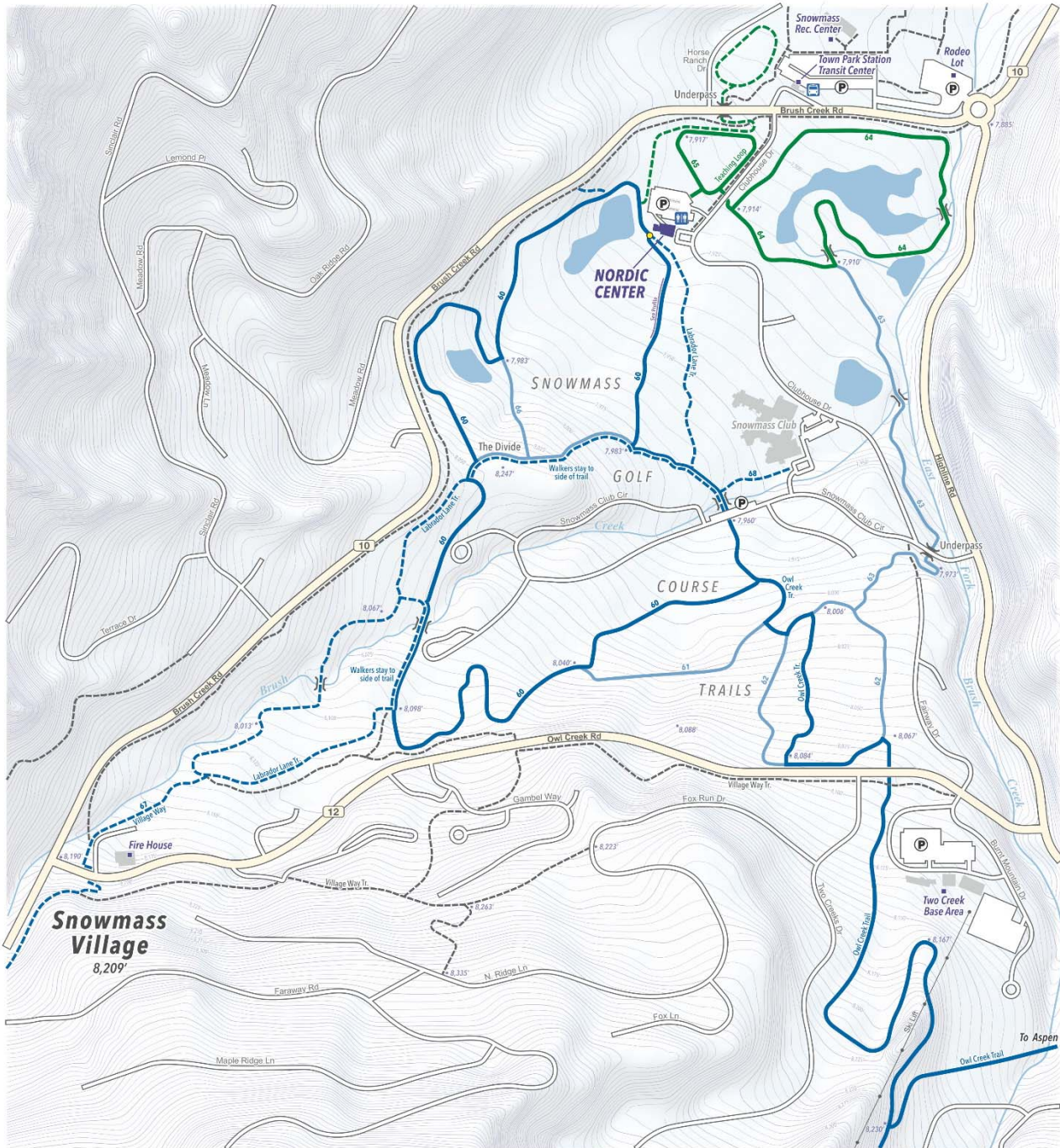
This road is not plowed in the winter. Check Colorado Avalanche Information Center (<http://avalanche.state.co.us>) for information on backcountry conditions. Share the trail with other users. **Difficulty:** Beginner through Intermediate. **Length:** Up to 25 km one way. **Access:** Drive 5 miles east of Aspen on Hwy 82 until the road is closed. Dogs are allowed.

EXISTING TRAIL MAPS

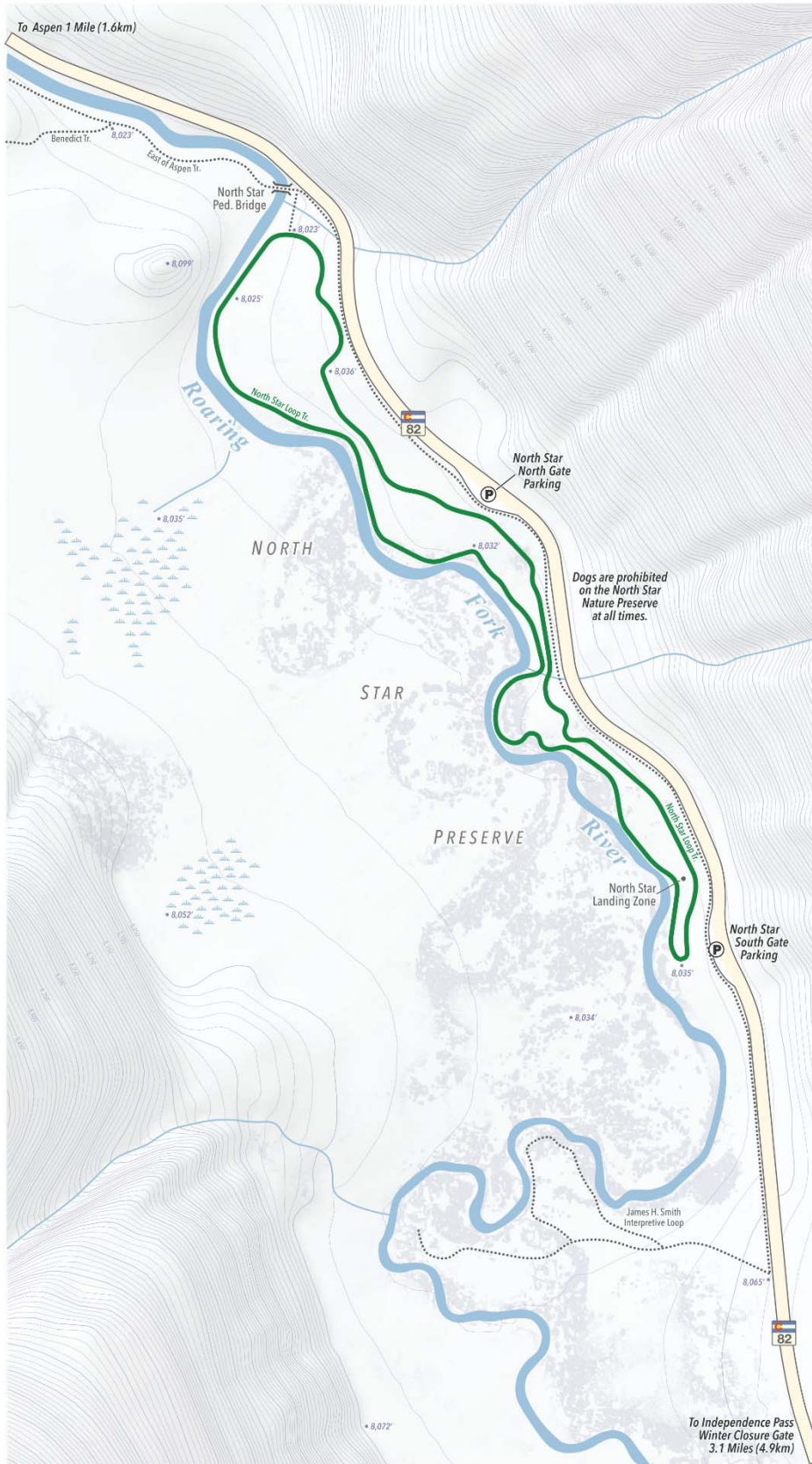
Aspen



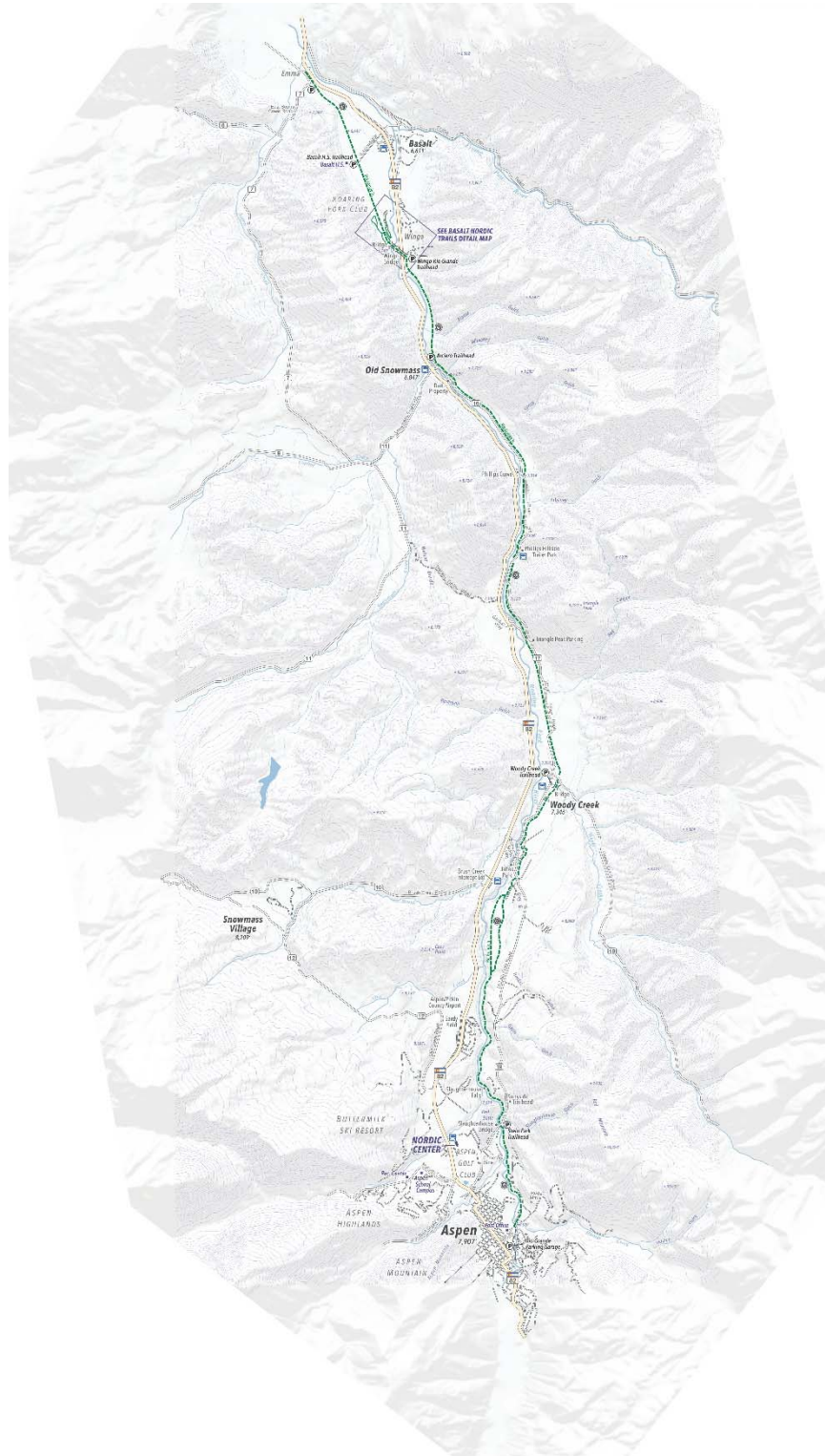
Snowmass



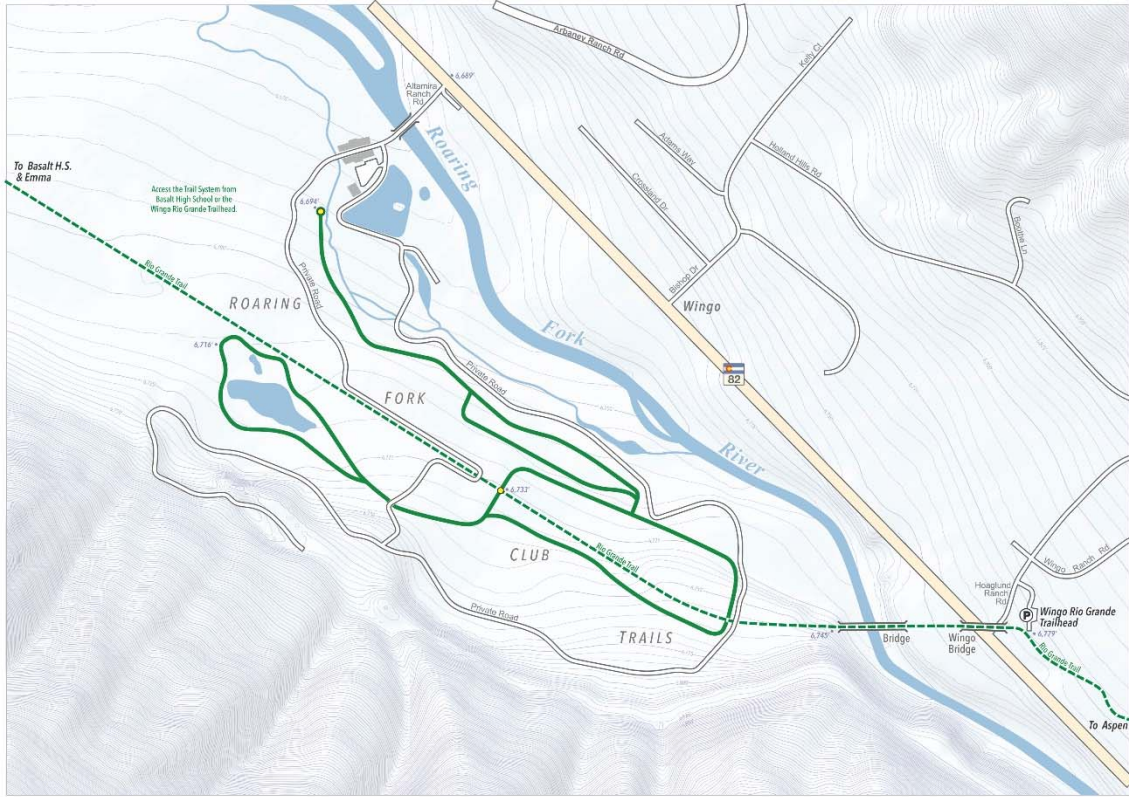
North Star Preserve



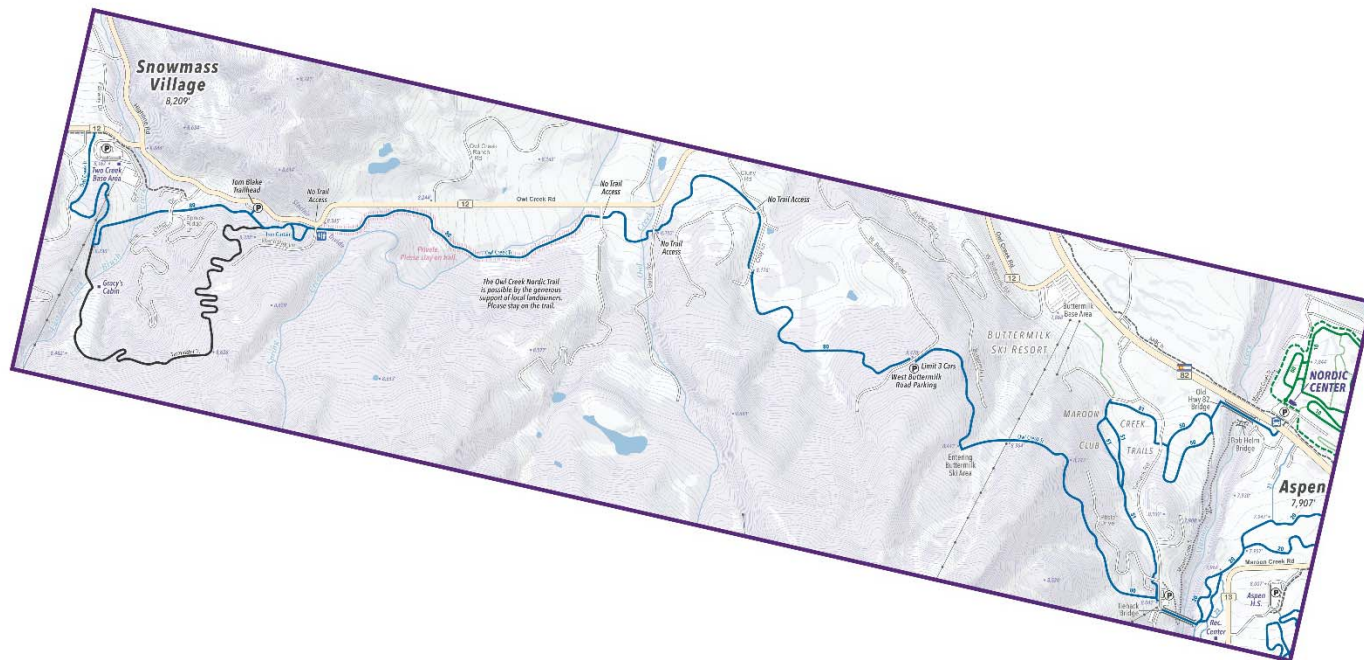
Rio Grande Trail



Basalt Area Trails



Owl Creek Trail



Adoptions and Resolutions



March 24, 2008

Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Courthouse Plaza
530 E. Main Street, 3rd Floor
Aspen, CO 81611

Re: Town of Basalt
Resolution No. 05, Series 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find a fully executed copy of Resolution No. 05, Series 2008 from the Town of Basalt, regarding the Pitkin County Nordic Trail System.

Best regards,

Sally Ferren
Deputy Town Clerk

Enclosure

101 Midland Ave. • Basalt, CO 81621 • 970-927-4701 • Fax 970-927-4703

101 MIDLAND AVE.
BASALT, COLORADO 81621
970-927-4701

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF BASALT, COLORADO,
ADOPTING THE PITKIN COUNTY NORDIC TRAILS PLAN**

**TOWN OF BASALT, COLORADO
RESOLUTION NO. 05
SERIES OF 2008**

RECITALS

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan is the culmination of over 20 years of community participation and experience with the Nordic Trail System.

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan formalizes the short and long term goals of the Nordic Council to improve and expand the cross-country skiing experience in the mid to upper Roaring Fork Valley.

Town of Basalt has been working with the Nordic Council and the Roaring Fork Club to improve the Nordic experience for Basalt residents.

The Basalt Recreation Department offers Nordic Skiing programs for children with hopes of expanding the program.

Over forty percent of the voters and property owners in the Town's 2005 Community Survey identified adult cross country skiing as a recreational program they would like to see included in the Town of Basalt's Recreation program.

A primary objective of the Pitkin County Trails Plan is to have the relevant governmental entities – Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board, Pitkin County Commissioners, City of Aspen Council, City of Aspen Open Space & Trails Board, The Town Council of Snowmass Village and the Town Council of Basalt, adopt the proposed Plan.

The Pitkin County Trails Plan was presented to the Town Council at their regular meeting of February 26, 2008; and

The Town Council members endorsed the Pitkin County Trails Plan at that meeting;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Council of the Town of Basalt, Colorado, that:

- 1) The Nordic Trails Plan, dated March 9, 2007, is hereby adopted as an implementation document to advance the recommendations of a portion of the Town's Master Plan.
- 2) The Town intends to use the Nordic Trails Plan as a guide in planning and making future improvements in the Nordic Trail System and in planning or reviewing proposed land uses for properties adjoining or near the Nordic opportunities.
- 3) The Town Planning Department intends to include the Nordic Council as a referral entity when properties/easements identified in the Plan's vision are in transition.

- 4) The Town intends to seek and/or support grants and pursue similar funding opportunities to supplement local funds to implement the plan.

RESOLVED this 26th day of February, by a vote of 5 to 0, with 1 abstention.

TOWN OF BASALT, COLORADO

By: *Leroy Duroux*
Leroy Duroux, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pamela K. Schilling
Pamela K. Schilling, Clerk

Res05 Nordic Trails Plan



RESOLUTION NO. 31
Series of 2008


A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASPEN, COLORADO, APPROVING THE ADOPTION OF THE PITKIN COUNTY NORDIC TRAILS PLAN, BETWEEN THE CITY OF ASPEN, PITKIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD, PITKIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, CITY OF ASPEN OPEN SPACE TRAILS, THE TOWN OF BASALT, AND THE TOWN OF SNOWMASS VILLAGE, AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OR CITY MANAGER TO ADOPT SAID PITKIN COUNTY NORDIC TRAILS PLAN ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF ASPEN, COLORADO.

WHEREAS, there has been submitted to the City Council a proposed Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan, between the City of Aspen, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board, Pitkin County Commissioners, City of Aspen Open Space Trails, the Town of Basalt, and the Town of Snowmass Village, a true and accurate copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASPEN, COLORADO:

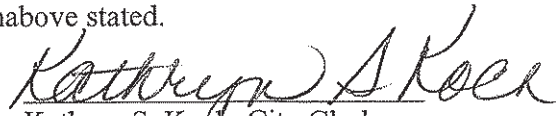
That the City Council of the City of Aspen hereby approves that Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan, a copy of which is annexed hereto and incorporated herein, and does hereby authorize the Mayor or City Manager to execute said agreement on behalf of the City of Aspen.

INTRODUCED, READ AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Aspen on the 14 day of April, 2008.



Michael C. Ireland, Mayor

I, Kathryn S. Koch, duly appointed and acting City Clerk do certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of that resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Aspen, Colorado, at a meeting held on the day hereinabove stated.



Kathryn S. Koch, City Clerk

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF PITKIN COUNTY, COLORADO,
ADOPTING THE PITKIN COUNTY NORDIC TRAILS PLAN
RESOLUTION NO. 004 -2008

RECITALS

WHEREAS, The Aspen-Snowmass Nordic Council (ASNC) was established over twenty years ago for the purpose of preserving and improving cross-country skiing in the Aspen-Snowmass area, and has a defined goal to provide seamless skiing experience with high quality Nordic trail platforms connected to and within the community centers in Pitkin County.

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Pitkin County voters approved inclusion of funding for nordic program in the Open Space and Trails mission, and the ASNC serves as advisory council to the Open Space and Trails Board (OSTB), in its continued oversight of the nordic system.

WHEREAS, the OSTB, ASNC and City of Aspen desired to create a comprehensive Pitkin County Nordic Trail Plan to identify the Council's goals and vision for the nordic trail system, and provide design guidelines and serve as a reference document for staff, city and county governments, other interest agencies, and the general public.

WHEREAS, the ASNC has produced a final draft of the Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan after conducting an extensive public scoping process, involving focus groups, public review of master plan documents and consultation with City and County staff.

WHEREAS, on December 6, 2007, the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board accepted Nordic Trails Plan and recommended it for adoption to the Board of County Commissions.

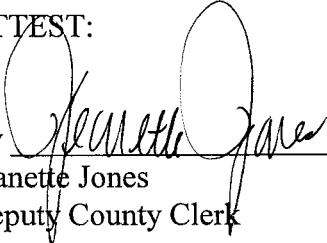
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pitkin County, Colorado that The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan, dated 12/2-07 is hereby adopted and effective immediately. INTRODUCED, FIRST READ, AND SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON DECEMBER 19, 2007.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PUBLISHED IN THE ASPEN TIMES WEEKLY ON December 30, 2007.

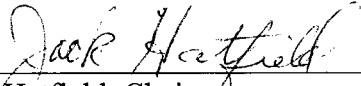
ADOPTED AFTER FINAL READING AND PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 9, 2008.

PUBLISHED BY TITLE AND SHORT SUMMARY, AFTER ADOPTION, IN THE ASPEN TIMES WEEKLY ON January 20, 2008.
date)

ATTEST:


By 
Jeanette Jones
Deputy County Clerk

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

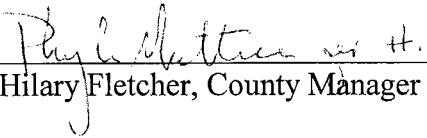
By: 
Jack Hatfield, Chairman

Date: 1/9/08

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

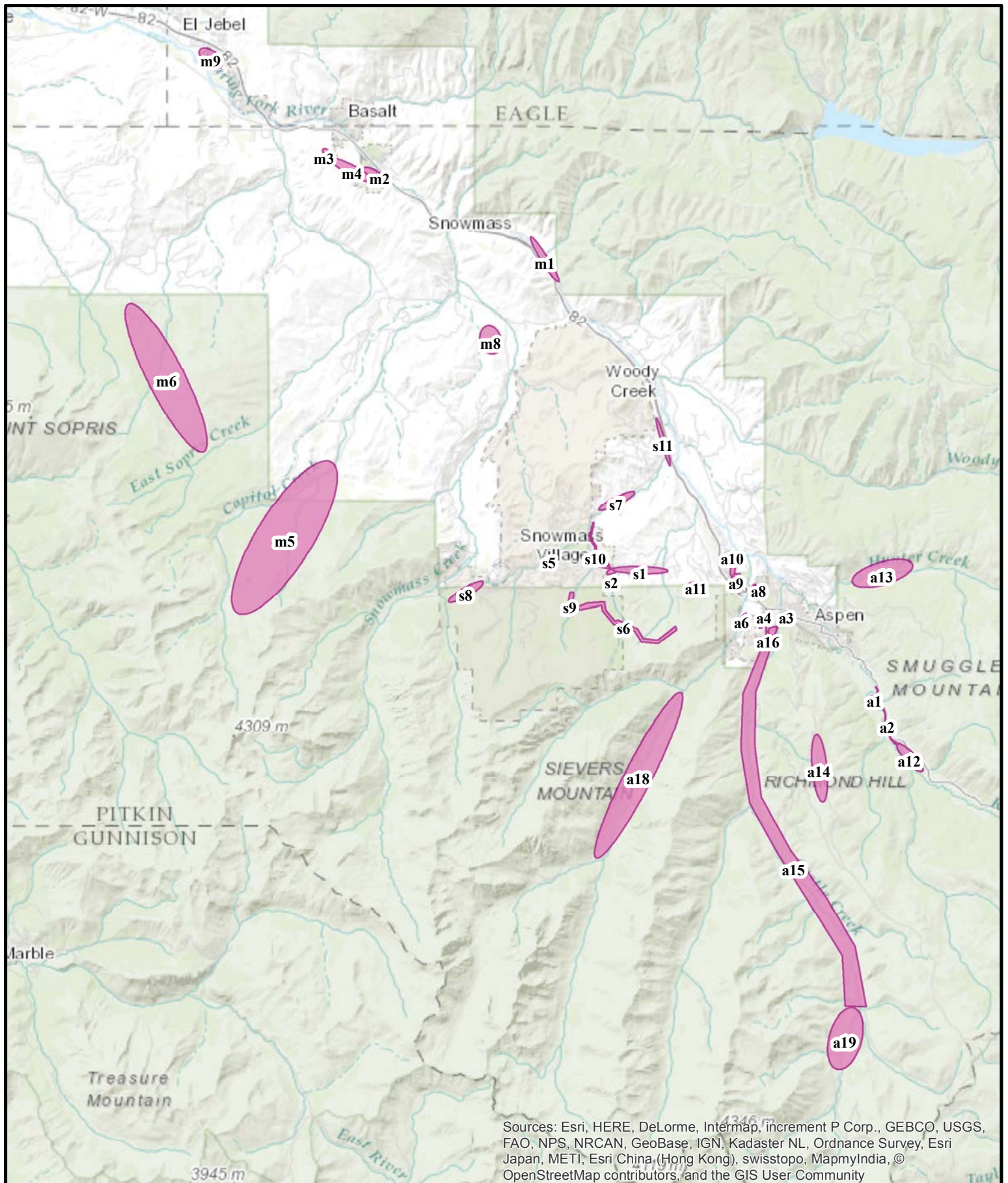

John Ely, County Attorney

MANAGER APPROVAL

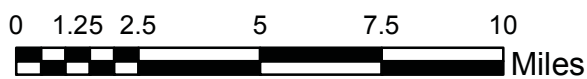

Hilary Fletcher, County Manager

Nordic Trail Opportunity Maps

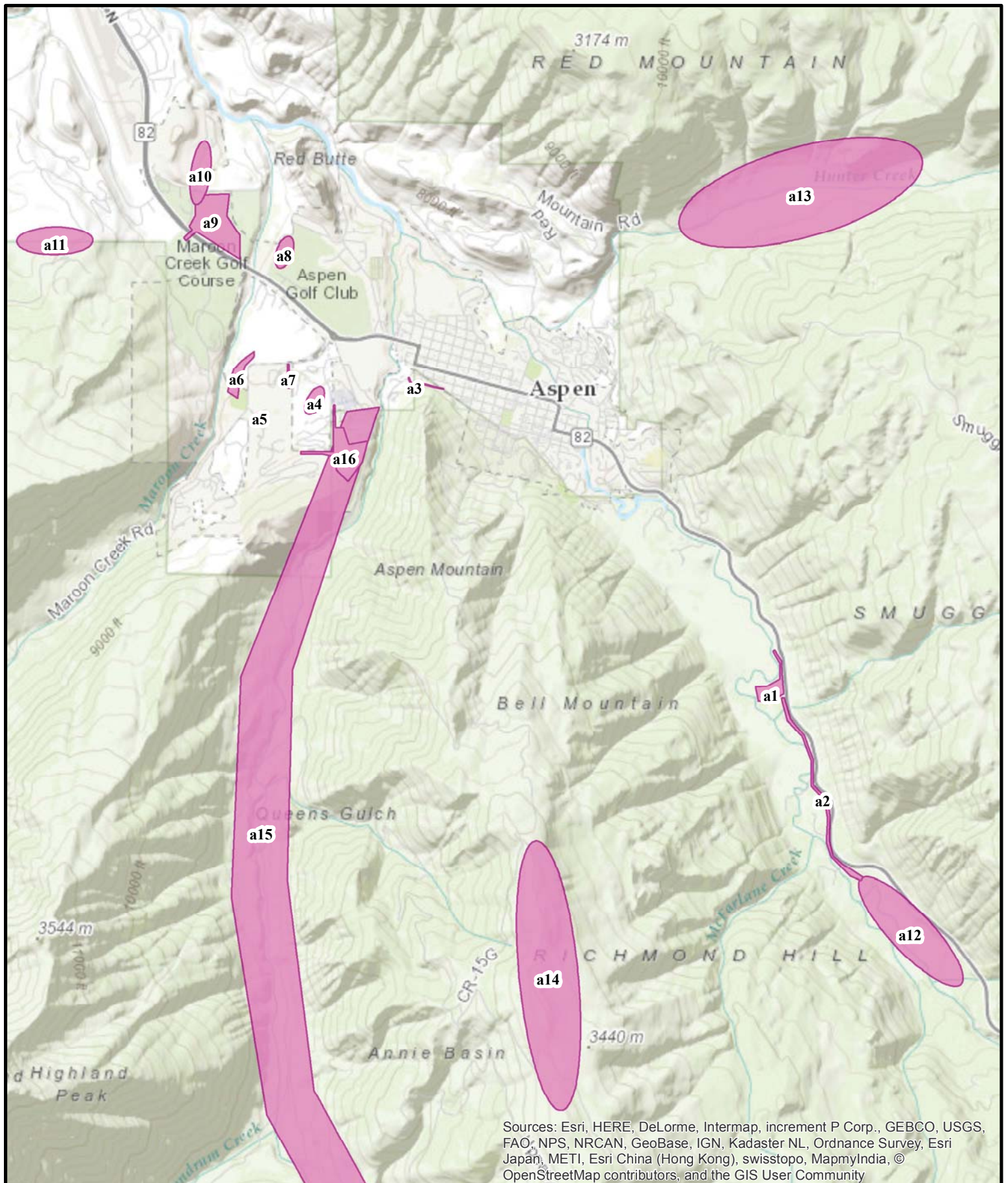
Overview of Pitkin County Nordic Trail Opportunities



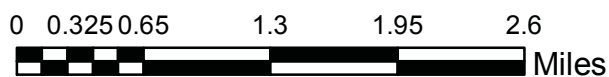
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



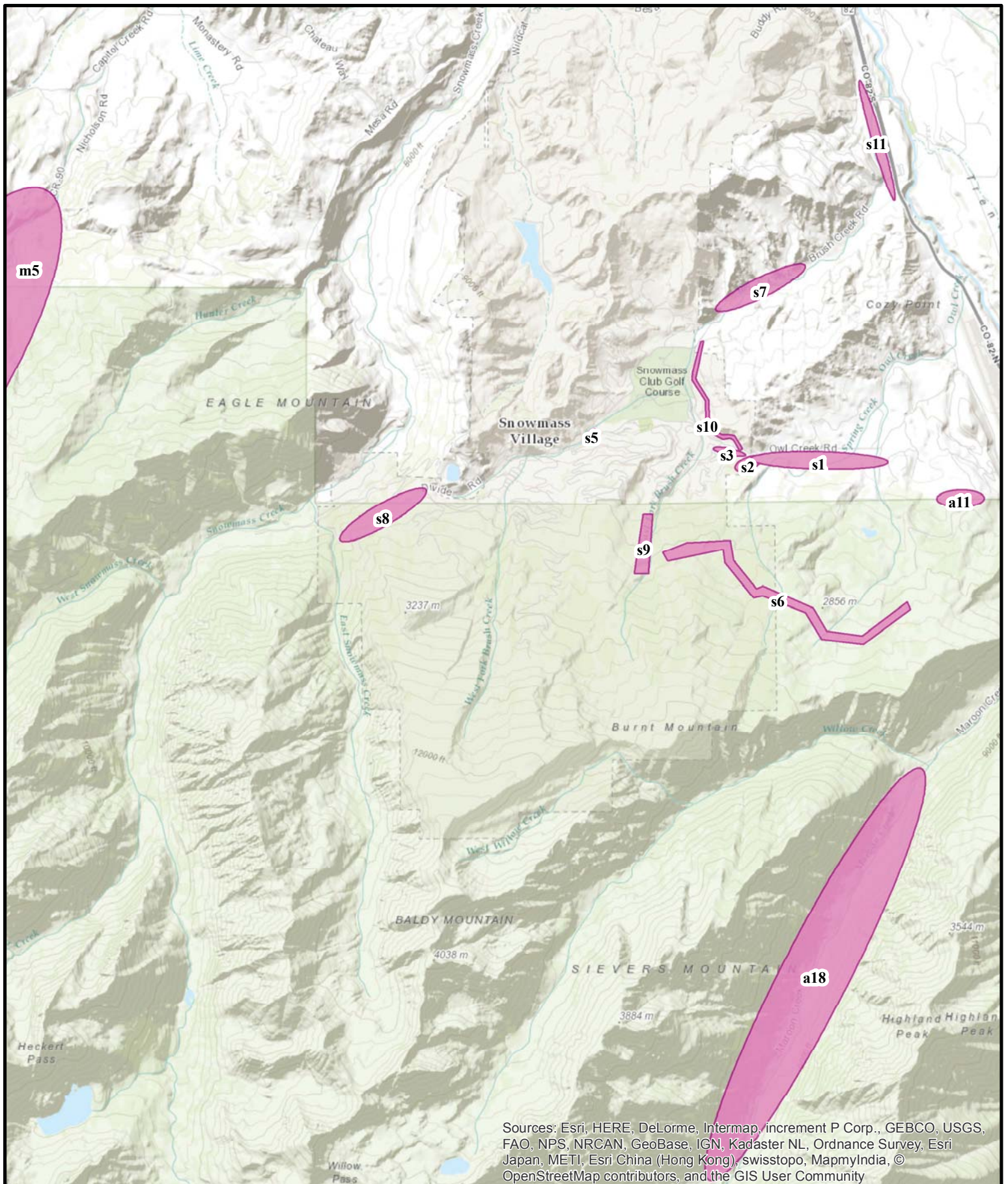
Aspen Area Nordic Trail Opportunities



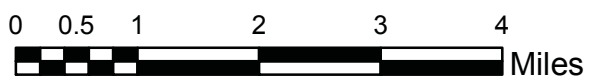
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



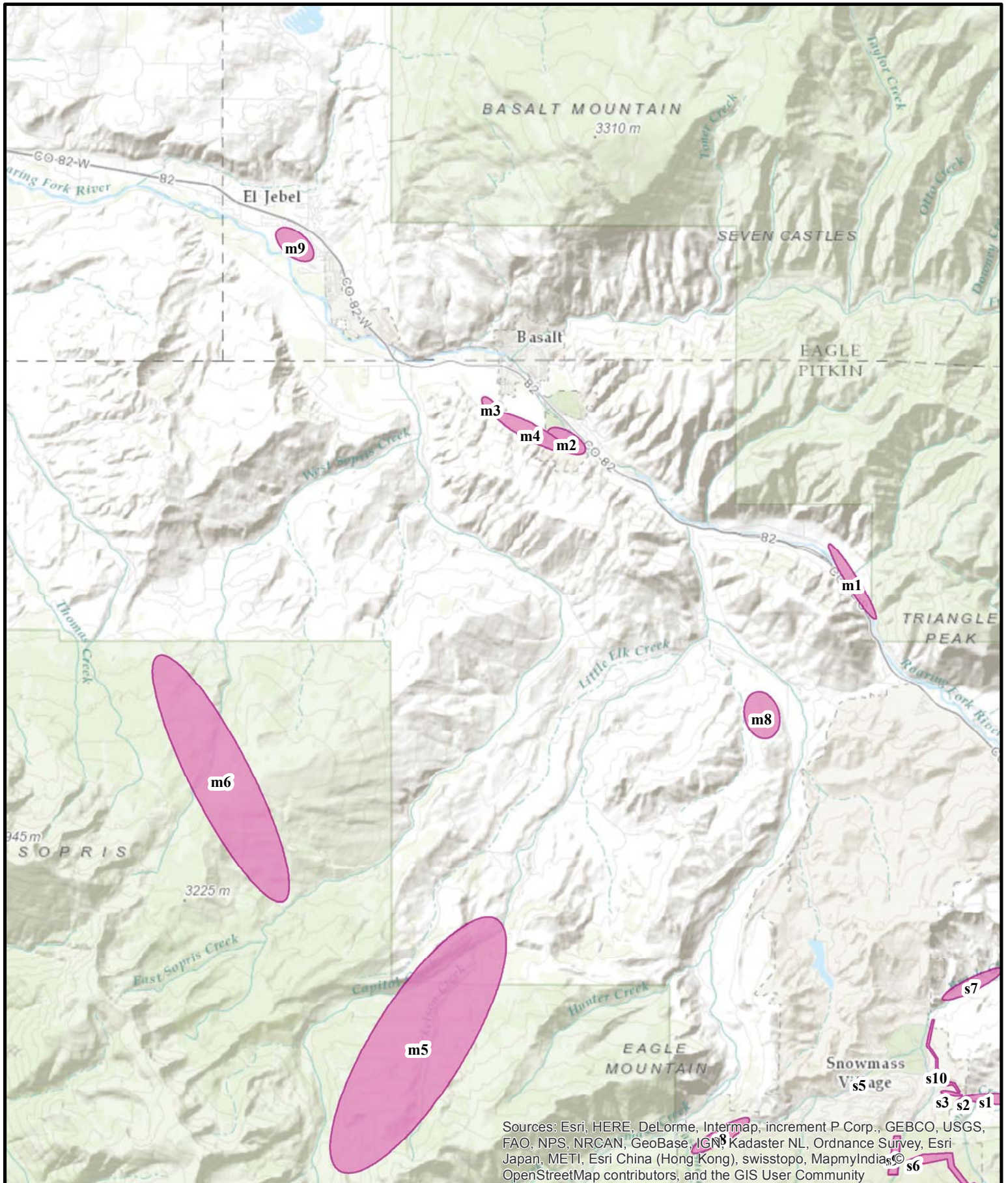
Snowmass Area Nordic Trail Opportunities



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Mid-Valley Area Nordic Trail Opportunities



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

