

MAROLT OPEN SPACE

Management Plan

DRAFT

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Marolt Open Space Management Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.01 Foreword	1
1.02 History	4
1.03 Process and Public Involvement	19
1.04 Management Plan Goals	20
2. EXISTING CONDITIONS	21
2.01 Planning Area	21
2.02 Natural Resources	22
2.03 Visual Resources	27
2.04 Historical Resources	28
2.05 Existing Plans and Policies	31
2.06 Current Uses	36
2.07 Adjacent Land Uses	38
2.08 Access, Trails, and Parking	39
2.09 Recreation	42
2.10 Water Rights and Infrastructure	42
2.11 Signage	44
3. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS	47
3.01 Public Comments	47
3.02 Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council	50
3.03 Aspen Historical Society	50
3.04 Aspen Community Garden	50
3.05 Marolt Ranch Employee Housing	51
3.06 Commercial Operators	51
3.07 Other Stakeholders	51
4. OPPORTUNITIES AND PLANNING ISSUES	53
4.01 Overview	53
4.02 Land Use Restrictions	53
4.03 Maintenance	53
4.04 Natural Resources	54
4.05 Historical Resources	54
4.06 Recreation and Trails	54
4.07 Interpretation/Education	55
4.08 Agriculture	56
4.09 Aspen Community Garden	56
4.10 Special Events	56

DRAFT

5. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS	57
5.01 Overview	57
5.02 Maintenance	58
5.03 Natural Resources	60
5.04 Historical Resources	62
5.05 Recreation and Trails	64
5.06 Interpretation/Education Actions	66
5.07 Agriculture	68
5.08 Aspen Community Garden	68
5.09 Special Events	70

APPENDICES

A	Planning Area Map
B	Vegetation & Wildlife Baseline Report
C	Archaeological Master Plan for Development of the Holden Lixiviation Works
D	Historic Preservation Plan, Holden Lixiviation Works
E	National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form
F	Wood Assessment of the Derrick and Stamp Mill, Holden Mill
G	Architectural Drawings for the Historic Derrick, Holden Lixiviation Works
H	Water Infrastructure Map
I	PUD and Subdivision Agreement
J	Plat
K	Public and Stakeholder Comments
L	Existing Recreational Access Maps
M	Proposed Recreational Access Maps
N	Management Actions Maps
O	Diagram of Existing Utility Easements
P	Original PD Document

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.01 FOREWORD

The Marolt Open Space is a significant property within the City of Aspen's portfolio of open space lands. Its prominence at the entrance to Aspen and its role in the community's silver mining and ranching heritage confer unique importance on this 74.5-acre parcel. Purchased with incredible foresight several decades ago, the Marolt Open Space has become a beloved landscape in the heart of the greater Aspen community where eyes may rest on undeveloped green expanses, people enjoy recreational activities and outstanding scenic views, local mining and ranching history is preserved and celebrated, recreationalists and commuters use trails connecting community amenities, and wildlife move among adjacent natural areas.

Today, this property hosts a mining & ranching museum, community garden, wildlife habitat, buffer zones between developed and natural areas, Nordic ski trails, a paraglider landing zone, and bike paths that are vital community connectors. The Marolt Open Space provides visual and physical representation of community values as stated by Tom Baker (Assistant Planning Director/Director of Long-Range Planning, Aspen/Pitkin County Planning Office, 1984 to 1990) in his August 1987 memorandum to City Council:

"...perhaps most important was this parcel's ability to serve as a key piece of open space at the City's west entrance; a parcel free of development making a statement about Aspen's image to all who travel through it."

Baker's memorandum echoes ideas expressed in an implementation action pertaining to the Marolt/Thomas Open Space in the Aspen Area Community Plan in 1985:

The parcel could convey an important image to all those entering the community due to its location at the entrance to town and directly across Highway 82 from the golf course.

Marolt Thomas should be developed as a passive open space parcel divided into several large open space areas... The Marolt-Thomas parcel will serve as part of a larger open space corridor; and function as one of the foci of the trail system...

Bordered by Castle Creek Road, Moore Open Space, the Roundabout, Highway 82, Power Plant Road, and Castle Creek, the Marolt Open Space consists of open grassy meadows, stands of aspen, cottonwood, and spruce trees, mountain shrublands, willow and cottonwood riparian ecosystems, and fragments of sagebrush ecosystem as well as ponds,

wetlands, irrigation ditches, and a reach of Castle Creek. Much of the property is flat, glacial terrace land with steep slopes along the gorge of Castle Creek. Elevations range from 7,860 to 8,000 feet above sea level. While much of the property is covered by non-native vegetation and areas that receive heavy human use, this landscape is a valuable buffer zone between ecologically important habitat areas within and surrounding the property. Wildlife use the Marolt Open Space for fawning, nesting, migratory stopovers, seasonal movements, resting cover, and foraging.

While relatively undeveloped and open, the landscape of the Marolt Open Space and its general surroundings have been used, heavily at times, by people across history. The Northern Utes and their ancestors were present seasonally in the upper Roaring Fork Valley for about eight hundred years. Exploration and mapping expeditions to western Colorado and the gradual removal of native Northern Utes was followed by the first permanent encampment at the future City of Aspen in 1879, starting the silver mining era. Ranching activities began in earnest in 1884 as a second basis of the local economy. In 1888, the Midland Railroad's tracks crossed what would become the Marolt Open Space, and in 1891 the massive Holden Lixiviation Works was built on the west bank of Castle Creek. The mill was the only lixiviation works in the state and the largest in the nation until the Silver Panic of 1893 brought about its untimely closure after only 14 months of operation. Later, the surrounding land and eventually the disused lixiviation site would become ranch and farm facilities producing hay, potatoes, livestock and other products into the early 1980s.

In the early 1908s the City of Aspen acquired parcels of land, creating the Marolt Open Space with the intent of making it a passive park that would serve as a hub for the local trail system. The Thomas parcel was acquired in 1982 and the Marolt parcel was acquired in 1983. Both parcels together are referred to in this document as "The Marolt Open Space." Of the property's 74.5 acres, 39.2 acres are zoned for conservation and 35.2 acres are zoned R15 PUD SPA. Fifty-seven and one-half acres were purchased with open space funds, 6.76 acres were purchased with transportation funds, and 10.1 acres were donated to the City.

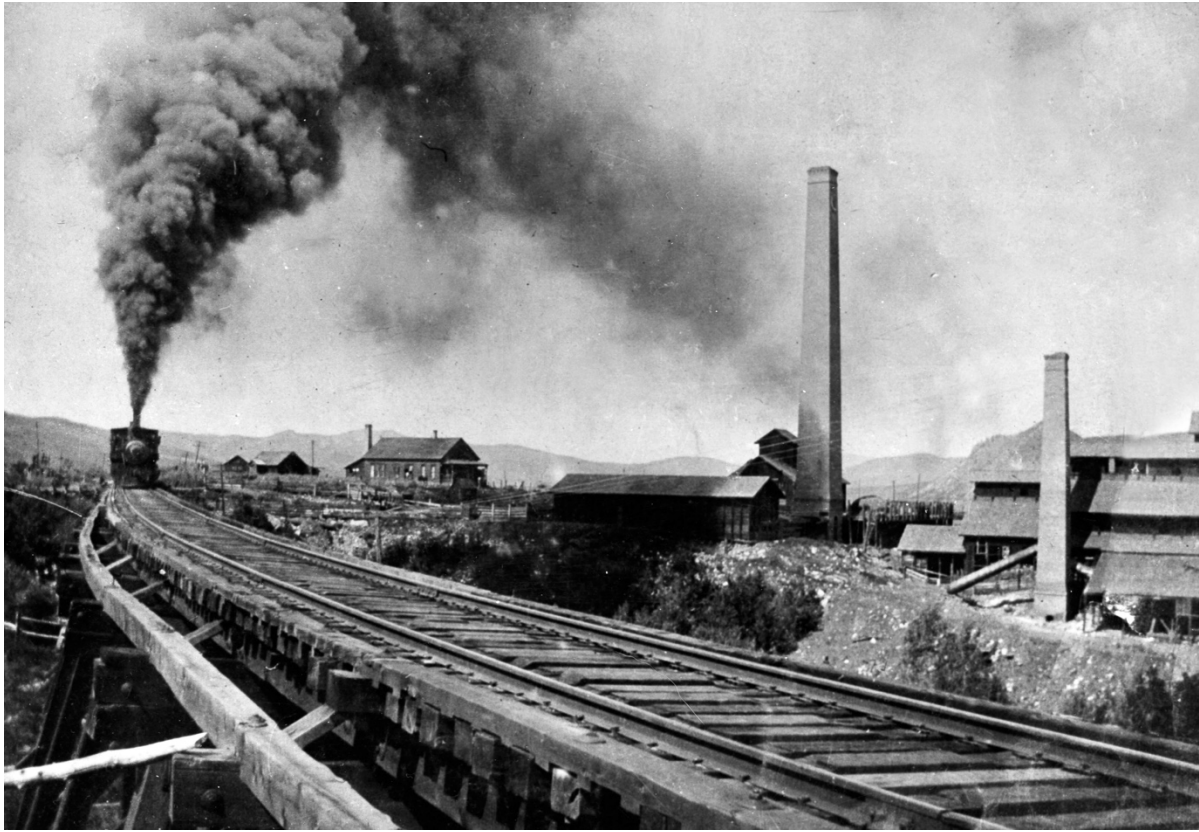
The Marolt Open Space is a favorite social and recreational site enjoyed by paragliders, cross-country skiers, dog walkers, cyclists, and runners. Children bike to and from school on the paved and single-track trails. Other commuters and recreationalists cross the property on its trail network that connects the downtown core and surrounding residential areas with neighborhoods and community amenities to the north and west, including the hospital, public school campus, Aspen Valley Ski and Snowboard Club, Aspen Recreation Center, Castle and Maroon Valleys, Aspen Highlands and Buttermilk Ski Areas, the Moore Open Space, Aspen Golf Course, residential neighborhoods, and other parts of the greater Aspen area. It is also the site of the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and Aspen Community Garden. The City of Aspen Parks Department also utilizes a site on the property for maintenance operations activities. The Bergman Trail winds through a portion of the historic lixiviation site where a derrick replica and series of interpretive signs invite visitors to imagine the industrial activities that took place here during the mining era. The

Marolt Open Space is a keystone property in the City of Aspen's open space portfolio, providing a vibrant landscape at the heart of the community.

The ongoing goals of this management plan are to protect, restore, and preserve the qualities of the Marolt Open Space in the spirit of the acquisition of the property, and in reflection of the values and needs of the natural and human communities that depend upon this space. This management plan document will be reviewed and updated every ten years.



1 Landscape view of Holden Lixiviation site and future Marolt Open Space, 1934. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society



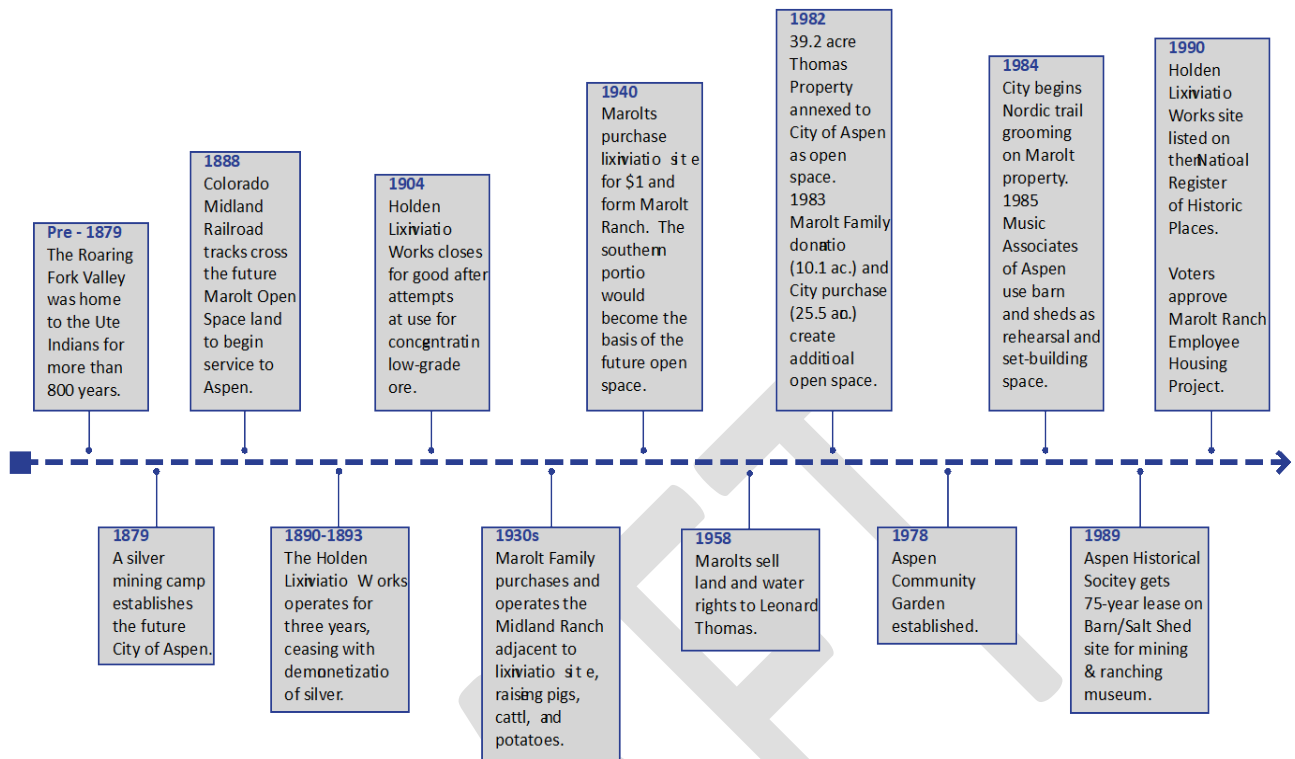
2 The Colorado Midland Railroad trestle and Holden Lixiviation Works, circa 1895. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

1.02 HISTORY

The history of the landscape of the Marolt Open Space is characterized by its importance in past and present human cultures, due in part to its topography and location within the community and Roaring Fork Valley. As a prominent site in two major historical industries, mining and agriculture, and as a keystone site for contemporary recreation, transportation, and greenspace themes, the Marolt Open Space has been and continues to be a very important landscape for the community of Aspen.

THE UTES

Prior to the arrival of prospectors in the late 1800s and for the preceding 800+ years, the Roaring Fork Valley was the summer seasonal home of the Northern Utes and their ancestors. These indigenous peoples hunted and gathered in the area's rich high country, procuring elk, deer, and other game animals for meat and hides, as well as the abundant berries and other foods and resources. The Northern Utes wintered in lower elevation landscapes to the north and west.



3 History timeline for the Marolt Open Space and its local surrounding region

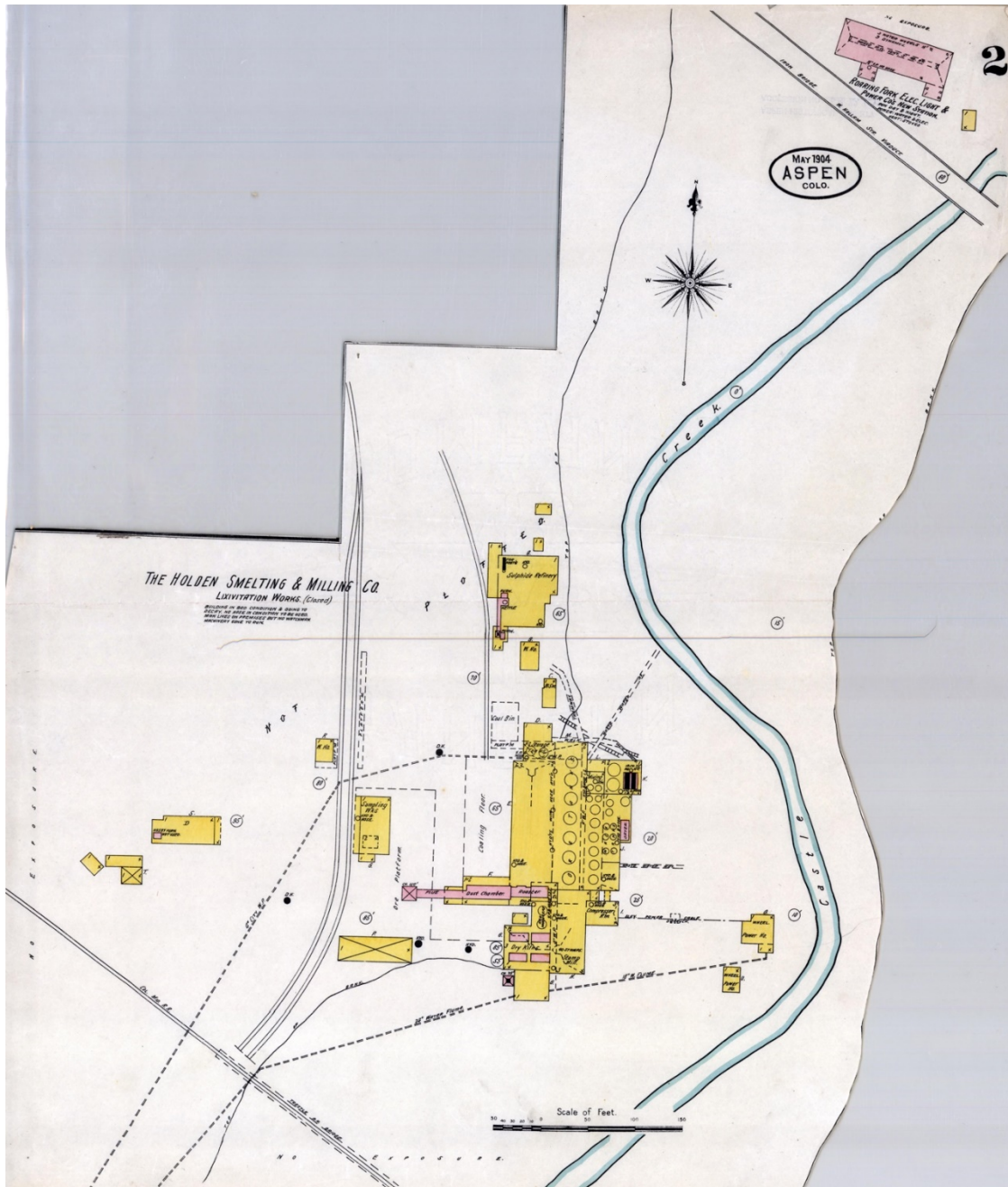
Colorado became a state in 1876, the year of the Meeker Massacre in which Northern Ute Indians revolted against government attempts to convert their nomadic lifestyle to an agrarian one. The U. S. Government gradually removed the Northern Utes from their ancestral lands, including the Roaring Fork Valley, relocating them on reservations in Utah.

THE SILVER MINING ERA AND THE HOLDEN LIXIVIATION WORKS

Ferdinand Hayden's 1873-1874 U. S. Geological Survey expedition passed through Colorado where the party mapped the mountainous landscape and noted mineral deposits and other resources of potential economic importance. Mining took hold in Denver making its way along the Front Range and into the mountains of Colorado where coal deposits lay and where valuable minerals such as silver and gold were contained in the rock formations of Colorado's Mineral Belt.

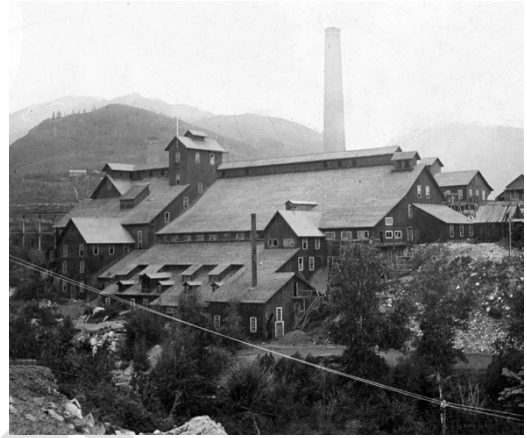
Prior to the 1881 removal of the Northern Utes, the first permanent mining encampments were established in 1879 near Ute Springs, the future site of the City of Aspen. As Aspen gained worldwide renown as producer of one-sixth of the nation's silver output and one-sixteenth of global silver production, it attracted investors and industry leaders with an eye for innovation and potential profits. Edward R. Holden was well-known in the mining industry by the time he set his sights on business opportunities in Aspen. He was a metallurgist by training with experience in assaying, sampling, smelting, milling, and the

business of mining, and was respected by his peers. Holden gained expertise with the technical, financial, and administrative aspects of the mining industry as a speculator and promoter, and in 1889 he began in-depth research toward building a lixiviation works in Aspen to process the area's low-grade ore. Currently, Aspen was the state's largest silver producing district with a population of 12,000, making it Colorado's third largest city after Denver and Leadville. Holden was also a principal owner of the Justice Mines in Tourtelotte Park.



4 Sanborn Map of The Holden Smelting & Milling Co., 1904. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

In December 1891, the Colorado Midland Railroad deeded a 20-acre parcel on the west bank of Castle Creek, part of the Stitzer Ranch, to the Holden Smelting and Milling Company. This property would become known as the Holden Tract. The massive plant of the Holden Lixiviation Works was built in 1890-1891 and processed 72-125 tons of low-grade ore per day for the next fourteen months. It was one of the most advanced ore-processing facilities of its time; the only lixiviation facility in the state and the largest in the nation. Using the patented Russell process, silver ores were roasted with salt and dissolved with sodium hyposulfite, and silver was then separated with the addition of an alkaline sulfide.



5 The Holden Lixiviation Works, circa 1900. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

The physical plant consisted of a 27,200 square-foot, five-story mill building equipped with four 30-foot tall drying furnaces, a 40-stamp mill for crushing ore, many large processing tanks, and two tall, brick smokestacks. Other facilities included a sampling house, ore bed buildings, a refinery, coal bins, two power houses, penstock piping, ditches, a salt



6 The Holden Lixiviation Works, circa 1900-1910. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

warehouse, an assay office, and two railroad spurs. Mechanical and electrical power were generated by a hydro-power system using water diverted from Castle Creek via a wooden flume. The flume water flowed into a steel penstock pipe running downslope to deliver tremendous water pressure to two powerhouses on the bank of Castle Creek where a three-foot Pelton wheel generated electricity for the mill's lighting and an eight-foot Pelton wheel generated mechanical power to run its machinery. Power was transmitted to the mill through cables and wires supported by a derrick.

When the Sherman Silver Act was repealed in 1893, the silver market collapsed overnight, and Holden's fortune slipped away. After a series of lawsuits and foreclosure, the sheriff took possession of the Holden Lixiviation Works on August 29, 1893. So close to achieving a steady profit, the works sat idle until a group of creditors operated the mill in an attempt to retrieve their losses. These creditors formed the Aspen Union Smelting Company in 1895 and received the deed to the Holden Tract that year to operate as a sampling business. Portions of the building were later leased and remodeled by various other companies for milling and concentrating purposes, all of which eventually ran into economic difficulties.



7 Aspen's baseball field in 1895, located on the present-day Aspen Golf Course with the smokestack of the Holden Lixiviation Works in the background on land that would become the Marolt Open Space. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society, Cooper Family Collection

For the next 31 years, the Holden Tract changed hands among several owners. During that time the buildings deteriorated, and locals scavenged them for salvage lumber and hardware. Rancher Fred Cullett's family lived in the Assay Office during that time, and portions of the tract may have been rented to other ranchers. In May 1932, owner W. C. Tagert released the title to Frank Rudolph, Jr. and Stephen Marolt for one dollar. They combined it with their purchase of the Midland Ranch to form the Marolt Ranch, bringing the property into a new era.

THE RANCHING ERA

Mining in the late 1800s involved many work animals including horses, mules, and jacks. These work animals pulled ore cars, carried ore over the mountains for processing elsewhere, and provided transportation by pulling wagons and buggies and by carrying riders. The few ranches in the Roaring Fork Valley could not meet the demand for hay and bedding for these animals. Meanwhile, miners lived on a meager diet of bread, salted pork, and canned goods. Supplemental food and hay were hauled over from Leadville at astronomical prices. With the final removal of the Northern Ute Indians in 1881, the area's agricultural industry took hold and settlers claimed land throughout the valley to begin cultivating food and hay for the booming town of Aspen.

Popular views at the time spurred white settlers to make the valley's bottomland productive; its clay loam soils were rich, although the growing season was only 76 days and average annual precipitation was just 19.5 inches. Local newspapers encouraged agricultural settlement and development on the basis of excellent soils and climate, easy irrigation, and a guaranteed market for farming and ranching products. According to an Aspen Times article on January 1, 1884, "Ranching is a valuable auxiliary to mining, and is sure to become a great factor in Pitkin County success."

Alfalfa hay forage became such a valuable and prolific crop that the Rocky Mountain Sun wrote in 1886, "Surely there are mines on top of the ground as well as beneath the surface." In addition to hay, other local crops included oats, wheat, peas, parsnips, potatoes, turnips, rutabagas, cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, rhubarb, grapes, currants, strawberries, tree fruits, and other cold weather crops. Farms and ranches produced dairy products, honey, eggs, beef, pork, chicken, lamb, and stock animals.



8 Cutting hay on the Marolt Ranch in 1945. Courtesy of Aspen Historical Society

As mining faded in the early 1900s, ranching and farming became the basis of the local economy. Seeds, tools and supplies were either ordered or purchased locally at dealers such as Cowenhoven & Co. Slowly, large implements arrived in the Roaring Fork Valley where farmers shared threshers, binders, mowing machines and other large, expensive equipment. Produce was delivered to sale in Aspen via wagons and sleighs. Irrigation was the lifeblood of local agricultural operations, and land values rose dramatically as water was claimed and ditches were built. Colorado's water law developed out of prior appropriation doctrine and as demand on water increased, water districts were formed to control and manage this important resource. Stockmen and farmers formed organizations, and grazing on public land brought about controls and conflicts as public land became degraded.

THE MAROLT RANCH

Much of the land comprising the Marolt Ranch was owned by speculators until 1927. This land was first owned as four separate properties that were acquired from the U. S. government by four individuals in the early 1880s. By 1886, Jerome B. Wheeler had purchased the four properties which later became known as the Stitzer Ranch, then the Midland



9 A man and two children with cattle on the Marolt Ranch, circa 1900, with the Holden Lixiviation Works in the background. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

Ranch, and later the Marolt Ranch. In 1886, James J. Hagerman, a trustee of the Colorado Midland Railroad, purchased the property, and in 1888 he transferred ownership to another trustee, Henry C. Lowe. After some failed initial arrangements, 20 acres known as the Stitzer Ranch were deeded to the Holden Smelting and Milling Company in December 1891. This parcel then became known as the Holden Tract where the Holden Works was constructed in 1890-1891.

For many years, the surrounding property, known as the Midland Ranch, was leased to local ranchers including T. O. Clark, Billy Tagert, and Lou Teuscher. When the Colorado Midland Railroad ran into financial problems in the late 1910s, Albert E. Carlton, new owner of the railroad, purchased the property in 1917. Ownership bounced back to the railroad and then

again to Carlton by 1923, meanwhile the land was farmed by local lessees. In March 1927, Carlton sold the Midland Ranch to Frank Rudolph, Jr., William Marolt, and Stephen Marolt. The Marolt brothers were sons of Austrian-Hungarian immigrants, Frank and Frances Marolt, who had twelve children. They owned a saloon in Aspen and later owned a ranch on what is now the Meadowood Subdivision. William sold out to his brothers in 1929, and the three remaining brothers purchased the 20-acre Holden Tract in May 1932 for one dollar.

At that time, there were five buildings still standing on the Holden Tract: the office/assay building, the sampling works, the salt warehouse, and two other small buildings. The main mill building had deteriorated over the years and locals had scavenged useable lumber and hardware, leaving the site in ruins. The three Marolt brothers continued to ranch the land, and when Rudolph died in 1936, his heirs transferred deed of his share to Stephen and Frank Jr. On June 7, 1940, Stephen and Frank divided the property: Stephen owned the western part (present site of Aspen Golf Course) and Frank owned the eastern part (including the Holden Tract). Two weeks later, Frank died, leaving his wife, Elsie Helen Marolt, as his sole heir.



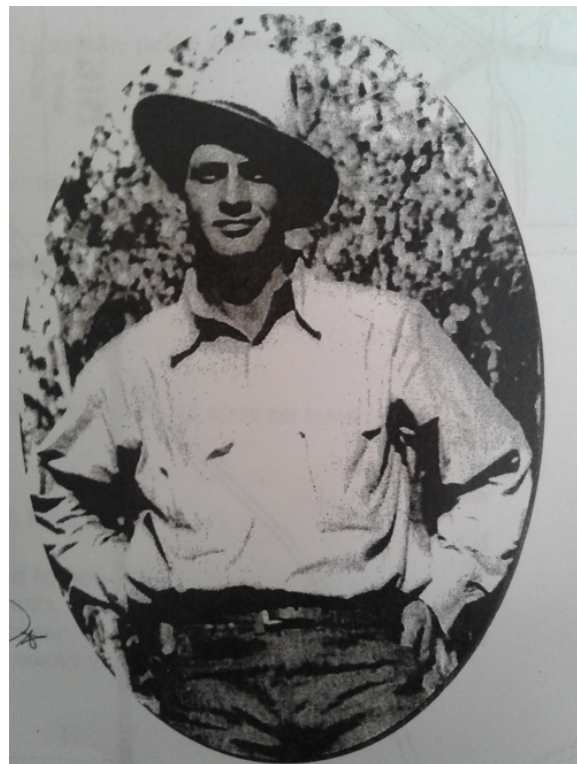
10 A tilled field on the Marolt Ranch with one of the smokestacks of the lixiviation works still standing in the background, circa 1945. Courtesy Aspen Historical Society

In September 1940, Elsie Marolt sold her ranch property to another Marolt brother, Mike. At this time, Ted ranched the land that belonged to his parents, while Steve and Mike ranched their respective western and eastern properties. The three brothers were close and saw each other nearly every day. At one point, the U. S. Army considered Mike's ranch as a potential site for Camp Hale, and he was relieved when a location near Red Cliff Valley was selected instead.

Mike's wife, Opal was born in Aspen in 1914. They had four children: Keith, Judy, Peggy, and Vicki. Mike and Opal's house, the former office/assay building, became the social center point of the extended family, where they hosted picnics and family gatherings.

Beef cattle, some of which were registered Herefords, were the main focus of the ranch business, along with a few milk cows. The cattle were grazed on National Forest in summer and fed in pasture during winter. The Marolts and several other local ranchers drove their cattle up Maroon Creek and moved them several times a season on horseback. Mike's cattle brand was X111, which can be seen on the granary doors along with Steve's U1 brand. Opal separated milk from the dairy cows to make butter and cream. Dairy products were used mainly by the household and any extra cream was shipped by train to creameries in Glenwood Springs or New Castle. Mike also raised pigs and Opal raised chickens for meat and eggs.

The Marolt family cultivated alfalfa, timothy, and brome grass for hay, harvesting two cuttings each summer. Hay was stacked through the early 1950s and was later baled. Hay crops were rotated with potatoes, barley, and oats. Grain was used as cattle feed and hog mash made with molasses and skim milk. Opal cooked for the crew of neighboring farmers when the threshing machine came to process grain for the ranch each year. Burbank potatoes were grown and stored in a potato cellar (a historic structure standing among overgrown vegetation on the Marolt Open Space is thought to be this potato cellar. Opal raised onions, lettuce, carrots, beets, string beans, corn, spinach, cauliflower, and cabbage in her garden, as well as flowers which she entered in the annual flower show held at the Armory.



11 Mike Marolt circa 1935. Courtesy of Aspen Historical Society.

The ranch's water supply came from two ditches, one which ran along the base of the

hill below Castle Creek and another which ran through the farm compound (today this is the golf course ditch). Horse-drawn equipment was used through the 1940s, after which tractors were used.

Over the years ranching activities changed and buildings were altered accordingly, often with wood re-used from the property as well as from the old Castle Creek bridge and from Camp Hale. The house had been remodeled and still contained the mill's safe. The sampling building became the granary, serving as grain storage, a workshop, and a hen house. Mike added partitions to the interior, creating grain bins for oats, barley, and wheat. A threshing machine outside delivered grain via an auger through windows and doors. Grain was ground with a hammer mill on the west porch, originally the loading platform for the Colorado Midland Railroad's sidetrack. In the shop, Mike had a work bench and forge where he did blacksmithing and woodworking. To make the work of re-roofing easier, Mike removed the original cupola which had probably covered an ore elevator during the Holden Works' operating years. Mike and Keith built a lean-to on the south end of the granary for machinery and animals.

The Marolt family used the old salt warehouse for various purposes, referring to it at different times as the barn, horse barn, and milking shed. Because the site of this 80-foot-long building was shaded by Shadow Mountain and received too little sun in winter, the east part of the building was removed and used to build a new barn and corral in a sunnier location to the north of the granary. A concrete floor and hay loft were added as uses changed from shelter for riding horses to milking, and later to storing tack.

The Marolt children raised animals as part of the 4-H program and held their own pretend rodeos. Cherie Gerbaz Oates, a childhood friend of the Marolt children, remembers that some of the best times at the ranch were spent lying on a bridge across Castle Creek watching leaves floating downstream. The children played in the granary and cousin Bill Marolt Jr. made a ski lift inside using an old rope from the music tent. Although he broke his arm in a fall and had to miss the upcoming football season, he went on to become a well-known ski racer. Following Mike's death in 1967, Opal rented the granary to Don Westerlind who built a second floor inside to facilitate storage.

Two other small buildings that likely originated as part of the Holden Works were located in the vicinity of the Marolt family house. One was used for machinery and equipment storage and the other, located on the ditch bank, served as a saddle shed where tack was stored.

Although the mill building was in ruins when the Marolts acquired the ranch, the smokestacks were still standing. The taller smokestack, which was 165 feet in height, was an Aspen landmark for more than 60 years. It had provided draft for the Holden Lixiviation Works' Stedefeldt furnace and later served as a meat locker for the Marolt family, where Mike hung butchered beef and smoked sausages. Bill Tagert dynamited the smaller smokestack in the early 1940s in an attempt to dismantle and sell the bricks, but the blast

destroyed them. About a decade later, Jake Lewis attempted to dismantle the larger smokestack. He used a pile of sawdust onto which he safely dropped the bricks one at a time as he worked his way downward from the top. Keith Marolt finished the disassembly in the mid-1950s, selling the bricks to help pay for school. These bricks are incorporated into several local buildings that still stand today.

The red cattle barn north of the granary housed weaned calves and milk cows. Cattle were dehorned and branded in this barn. After Mike's death, Opal rented the barn to furniture-builder Terry Morse. The barn burned sometime in 1968-1970. There were also several hay sheds on the ranch that no longer exist today.

In the late 1950s, the Marolt family began tapering off ranching activities and sold parcels of their land as they coped with reduced U. S. Forest Service grazing permits, their children's college expenses, and Mike's declining health. As one of the land sales, a northern parcel was purchased by Leonard Thomas in 1957. Mike passed away in 1967 and Opal lived on the ranch until 1986.

OPEN SPACE HISTORY

In the early 1980s, the City of Aspen acquired parcels that would become the Marolt open space. Leonard Thomas sold his parcel of the Marolt Ranch to the City of Aspen for the purpose of open space in 1982. Shortly thereafter in 1983, the Marolt Family donated 10.1 acres and the City of Aspen purchased 25.5 acres for additional open space for \$2.1 million. The intent was to create a passive park that would serve as a hub for the local trail system. Of the property's 74.5 acres, 39.2 acres are zoned for conservation and 35.2 acres are zoned R15 PUD SPA. Fifty-seven and one-half acres were purchased with open space funds, 6.76 acres were purchased with transportation funds, and 10.1 acres were donated.

Activities that precede the establishment of the Marolt and Thomas open space parcels and still continue today include the use of the south meadow as a hanglider landing area since the 1970s (now used primarily by paragliders) and gardening in the Aspen Community Garden which was established in 1978. Larry Dunn along with Ed Compton and others built the garden on a portion of the Thomas property to the north of the former Colorado Midland Railroad trackway. The garden has been expanded several times, most recently in 2015, and now has 57 large plots and 26 small plots. The Marolt Trail was paved sometime between 1968 and 1974 prior to the land becoming open space.

Nordic ski trails were first established and groomed on the Marolt open space as part of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System in 1984. In 1985 the Music Associates of Aspen used the barn and sheds for rehearsal and set-building space.



12 A paraglider approaches the landing area on the Marolt Open Space. Volunteer Ed Compton in the Aspen Community Garden in 1978, courtesy Aspen Historical Society.

In 1989, Aspen Historical Society (AHS) signed a 75-year lease on the Barn/Salt Shed site for the Holden Mining and Ranching Museum. The museum explores and celebrates the industrial silver mining and agricultural history of the Aspen area. The site was recognized as a historic district and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. It is also listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Please see Section 2.05 Existing Plans and Policies and Appendix E for more information on these listings. Additional historical buildings were relocated in 2018 to the site leased by AHS.



13 The Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum operated by the Aspen Historical Society, left; and a historic building moved to the AHS leased site in 2018, right.

In 1990, voters approved a \$6 million bond for the City of Aspen to construct the Marolt Ranch Employee Housing Project which houses students from the Aspen Music Festival and School in summer and Aspen Skiing Company employees in winter. This property is zoned (PUB) Public and while the housing itself is not within the Marolt Open Space, its associated parking lot is located within the Marolt Open Space.

In 1992 the Parks Department initiated a project to survey and interpret the historical foundations, artifacts, and landscape features of the lixiviation site, focusing on the foundations of the main mill building and other features in the immediate area of the east-facing slope above Castle Creek. The resulting Archaeological Master Plan was produced by Alpine Archaeological Consultants; see Appendix C. In 2004 Tatanka Historical Associates was contracted to inventory historic resources, produce a report of the site, and develop a series of interpretive signs that would tell the story of the Holden Lixiviation Works and its ruins; see Historic Preservation Plan, Appendix D. Parks then cleared overgrown vegetation and designed and constructed the Bergman Trail, a soft-surface loop trail descending an old road cut to the bottomland along Castle Creek below the mill's stair-stepped sandstone and timber foundations and passing by the powerhouse foundations, remains of the original derrick, a replica of the derrick, and other artifacts. A sandstone overlook was constructed on the edge of the terrace above the mill's ruins. Interpretive signs were installed at the overlook and at points along the Bergman Trail. In 2005 a Wood Assessment of the Derrick and Stamp Mill was conducted by Anthony & Associates in order to document the condition of historic wood features; see Appendix F.



14 The Bergman Trail features a series of trailside panels that explain the Holden Lixiviation Works and its historic remains.

An historically accurate reconstruction of the derrick was installed in 2016 in order to bring this unique structure to life and provide a sense of overall scale to the former mill site. Local architect Graeme Means and Ray Ingram of Renaissance Works collaborated to recreate the original structure, replicating the original architectural design, wood species, local sourcing and milling of timbers, and use of traditional hand tools. The replica was raised and installed on the original footprint using a gin pole system. See Appendix G for architectural drawings.



15 Ray Ingram and crew raised the derrick replica in June 2016.

THE ENTRANCE TO ASPEN

The Marolt Open Space includes parts of the gorge of Castle Creek along its eastern boundary, with the majority of the property lying on the flat terrace to the west, part of extensive flat glacial terraces that make up the valley floor in this part of the Roaring Fork Valley. In 1891 when the original Castle Creek Bridge was built across the gorge to provide an at-grade route into town from the west, the Holden Lixiviation Works was in the way of a straight alignment with Aspen's Main Street. The bridge was built a short distance to the north in order to bypass the mill, creating the 'S-curves' that exist today. The entrance to Aspen with its S-curves has been a source of contention and debate ever since that time.



16 This historic illustrated map, "Bird's Eye View of Aspen, Pitkin County, Colo. 1893," shows the locations of Main Street, Castle Creek Bridge, and the Holden Lixiviation Works during the period when the entrance to town was established. Courtesy of Aspen Historical Society

Highway 82 became a state highway in 1911 and it was paved in sections between 1937 and 1939. The original Castle Creek Bridge was replaced in 1961. As part of a major project completed in 2018, the bridge deck was redesigned to improve the bike/ped lane.

Over the last 40 years, issues related to the entrance to Aspen have been on local ballots 26 times. Relevant ballot outcomes are as follows. In 1975 City of Aspen citizens voted to secure federal funding for a partnership with Pitkin County to build a light rail system. The second vote in 1982 on whether to widen Highway 82 and make a straight shot into Aspen at 7th Street and Main Street did not pass. Aspen voters decided against a straight shot concept in 1986 and approved a train terminal in 1986. In February 1990 voters chose a 4-lane highway alignment as a straight shot to 7th Street and Main over the same expansion along the existing alignment. In 1994, Pitkin County voters decided against converting open space land to build the highway. The question of support for a valley-wide rail system between Glenwood Springs and Aspen failed on City and County ballots in 1998. In 1999 the City of Aspen asked for a \$20 million bond to construct the light rail system, and this also failed. Another 1999 ballot outcome directed City Council to work with other valley governments to develop a transit plan comparing bus-only with bus-to-rail concepts for a bonding vote by November 2000. Also, in 1999, voters supported a valley-wide transit system with park-n-rides and no increase of in-town parking. In 2000 Pitkin County voters passed a \$10.2 million bond to realign Highway 82 to 7th and Main Streets with bridges and a tunnel. In 2001, City of Aspen voters chose not to convert open space land for a 2-lane highway with exclusive bus lanes until rail funding could be approved. In 2002, both the City and County asked voters whether they supported S-curves or a modified direct route, and the S-curves won.

Additionally, in 1999 a lawsuit opposing the realignment went to the Federal Court of Appeals. The Federal Highway Administration ruled that the Entrance to Aspen Final Environmental Impact Statement of 1997 must be re-evaluated before moving forward with any realignment alternative. The re-evaluation was completed in 2006, but without a local voters' approval for funding, the federal court cannot proceed with the appeal case. In 2016, Aspen City Council, Pitkin Board of County Commissioners, and Snowmass Village Town Council voted in support of spending almost \$500,000 to study costs of building light rail across the Marolt Open Space compared to building dedicated bus lanes across the property.

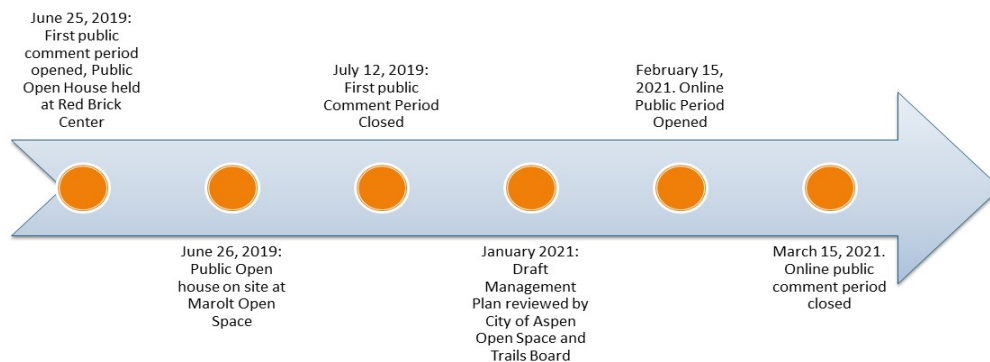
A pond and wetland area were created in 1999 on the south portion of the Marolt Open Space as part of the mitigation for wetlands impacted by construction work on Highway 82.



17 Pond and wetland built on the Marolt Open Space as mitigation for Highway 82 construction in 1999

1.03 PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public comments, existing conditions, input from staff and the City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board, and stakeholders' comments have been incorporated in the development of this Draft Management Plan. Appendix K contains public and stakeholder comments received to date. Two public open house events were held in June 2019: at the Red Brick Center and on site. The City of Aspen's website hosted a webpage to provide a public portal to the Marolt Open Space Management Plan effort, a venue to a calendar, and a survey designed to gather additional public comments. The first public comment period closed on July 12, 2019. Following a review of the Draft Management Plan by the City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board, a second online public comment period will be held from February 15th to March 15th. Staff will then review all comments received, revise the Draft Management Plan, and present a Final Management Plan to the Board for adoption.



18 Timeline of the public process for development of the Marolt Management Plan



19 Public Open House event at Red Brick Center, June 25, 2019

1.04 MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS

This management plan will guide decision-making for the Marolt Open Space into the future. Goals of this plan include:

- managing for land stewardship and ecological integrity
- preserving view planes and open space
- managing for preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat
- preservation and interpretation of the historical mining and ranching resources
- balanced and integrated approaches to public access, recreational uses, and trail management
- supporting the community garden
- providing a framework for handling commercial and special events requests

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.01 PLANNING AREA

The planning area, referred to in this management plan document as the Marolt Open Space, consists of the Marolt and the Thomas Open Space parcels located at the entrance to the City of Aspen. The Thomas parcel, acquired in 1982, is 39.2 acres and the Marolt parcel, acquired in 1983, is 35.6 acres.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



2.02 NATURAL RESOURCES

Surveys were conducted and a report was prepared during summer 2019 by Colorado Wildlife Science, LLC and Peak Ecological Services, LLC in order to document existing conditions for natural resources on the property, including soils and geology, vegetation, and wildlife. Recommendations for management approaches with regard to natural resources were also provided. The following subsections summarize the results of these surveys. Please see Appendix B for the Vegetation and Wildlife Report, 2019 Growing Season, Marolt-Thomas Open Space.

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

The well-drained, rocky, moderately permeable soils across the property are generally deep, ranging from 40-60 inches to bedrock. Formed in glacial deposits, the soils occur on gently sloping alluvial fans and terraces. Textures range from clay loam to sand, and the dark surface layer contains a high degree of organic matter. Five soil units are represented on the property: Urraca and moist-Mergel complexes occur over the grass meadow areas and an additional small area at the southeast corner of the property. The hydric soils of Fluvaquents occur along Castle Creek. Torriothents-Camorthids-Rock outcrop complex occurs on the steep slopes of the gorge of Castle Creek. Yejack-Callings complex occurs at the southwest corner of the property along a small ridge. The soils along Castle Creek are derived in alluvium of sand, silt, and gravel.

The geology of the Marolt Open Space consists of glaciofluvial deposits of poorly sorted outwash gravels, and the western edge consists of poorly sorted moraine deposits ranging from silt to boulders. Alluvium of sand, silt, and gravel occur along Castle Creek.

VEGETATION

The vegetation cover within the Marolt Open Space comprises a variety of plant communities representing native and non-native plants in various stages of recovery from past industrial mining and agricultural activities, and reflective of current recreational and maintenance activities. The first large-scale change to vegetation here occurred when the Holden Lixiviation Mill was constructed on 22 acres in 1891-1892. Historical photos from that time reveal that most riparian vegetation along Castle Creek was removed for mill operations. When activities shifted from mining to ranching in the early 1900s, the riparian corridor was left to continue recovering from past mining disturbances, and the terrace land was actively farmed and ranched. During the past several decades as a City of Aspen Open Space property, vegetation has further recovered, while invasive weeds have become established in certain areas.

Vegetation cover was evaluated by Peak Ecological Services in June and July 2019, identifying ten plant alliances and twelve plant associations, in total comprising 133 vascular

plant species, 30% of which are non-native. No rare or sensitive species were documented on the property; however, it should be noted that dense undergrowth makes surveying areas of the riparian corridor extremely difficult. Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) mapped the area along Castle Creek as part of the Maroon Creek – Castle Creek Potential Conservation Area due to the presence of natural riparian plant communities. Thirteen species of noxious weeds were documented during field work in 2019. These weeds are being controlled by City of Aspen Parks Department and none were noted to be problematic at the time.



Figure 20 Plant communities: cottonwood-red-osier dogwood, Castle Creek riparian, smooth brome hay meadow

Forests and woodlands cover 16.2 acres of the property. The highest quality vegetation community, Narrowleaf Cottonwood – Red-Osier Dogwood Riparian Woodland, occurs along Castle Creek. This is a vegetation association that is ranked as State “Vulnerable” by CNHP. This forest has a closed to open canopy and supports a diversity of native plants including alder, bush honeysuckle, mountain lover, starry false Solomon’s seal, roundleaf wintergreen, scouring rush, bog orchid, and field horsetail. Other forests occur along the property’s irrigation ditches and ponds where stands of narrowleaf cottonwood are established with an understory of non-native grasses and wet shrubland communities of mixed willow and river birch. In addition, a small stand of aspen adjacent to the Aspen Community Garden and adjoining stand of cottonwood share a similar understory dominated by non-native pasture grasses. Amid these cottonwoods is a small stand of blue spruce.

Tall mixed mountain shrubland communities on the property are primarily Gambel Oak – Serviceberry Shrublands, which are ranked as State Imperiled by CNHP. A well-represented stand of this shrubland type exists in the southwest corner of the property across from Aspen Valley Hospital, where tall Gambel oak shrubs on this ridge intermix with mountain big sagebrush, snowberry, and sticky rabbitbrush. Here, the understory is composed of non-native grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome and native plants such as Nelson’s needlegrass, elk sedge, aspen fleabane, sulphur-flower buckwheat, and silvery lupine. Noxious weeds present include plumeless thistle and houndstongue. This Gambel Oak – Serviceberry Shrubland also occurs on the slopes above Castle Creek, in several areas north of the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum, along portions of the former Colorado Midland Railroad bed, and along the edges of the Aspen Community Garden

where it is interspersed with Mountain Snowberry Shrubland. A Gambel Oak – Shrubland south of the museum has an understory of primarily snowberry.

Other shrublands on the property are classified as sagebrush, snowberry, and rabbitbrush associations. Two sagebrush communities documented include a Mountain Big Sagebrush Ruderal Shrub Grassland in the northeast corner and a Basin Big Sagebrush Ruderal Shrubland adjacent to the north pond. The term ruderal refers to a vegetation community growing where human disturbance has significantly interrupted native vegetation cover. Both of these sagebrush communities contain non-native grasses such as smooth brome, quackgrass, and crested wheatgrass, and have either lost their native grass and forb understory plants or simply represent shrubs that have colonized historically farmed or grazed pastureland. Occasional native plants in these areas include narrowleaf Indian paintbrush, comandra, silvery lupine, and Rocky Mountain penstemon.

Two types of wet shrublands occur along irrigation ditches and ponds: River Birch Wet Shrubland is found at the Marolt Wetland mitigation site where this community also contains bog birch, redosier dogwood, sandbar willow, and narrowleaf cottonwood. Herbaceous plants here include hardstem bulrush, woolly sedge, tufted hairgrass, and wild iris. Tall Willow Wet Shrubland has developed around the pond in the northwest corner of the property where whiplash willow, sandbar willow, hawthorn, and Drummond's willow dominate. Reed canarygrass, an invasive wetland grass, is also found around this pond.

Non-native Grassland or former hay meadow/pasture occurs on the terrace land above Castle Creek covering about one-third of the property and bisected by numerous, presently inactive irrigation ditches. These grasslands are dominated by smooth brome, an aggressive, non-native species which outcompetes and suppresses native plants, resulting in low species diversity and low ecological value. Where they occur, native plants in this area include western wheatgrass, Rocky Mountain penstemon, hairy golden aster, flax, arrowleaf balsamroot, and hairy golden aster. A few escaped, ornamental, red poppies have naturalized in an area northeast of the Aspen Community Garden. While low in ecological value, these grassland areas offer aesthetic and historical value. Native serviceberry, sagebrush and rabbitbrush shrubs are beginning to colonize portions of the grasslands.



21 Native vegetation: sagebrush, arrowleaf balsamroot, narrowleaf cottonwood

Pollinator habitat is found among the mixed mountain and sagebrush shrublands where an array of native flowers provides important habitat for native bees, butterflies, moths, flies, bats, beetles, and other organisms. This habitat is critical to ecosystem health as pollinators help plants reproduce and produce enough seeds for dispersal and propagation, and to maintain genetic diversity. Pollinator populations have suffered declines in recent decades due to many factors including loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat, pesticides, and other impacts. Managing for pollinators is an important component of land management.

Small disturbed areas occur throughout the property, some of which are currently used for construction or storage of slash and soil. A steep slope area adjacent to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum is dominated by weedy species and could be considered for a future native plant restoration project.

Noxious weeds documented on the property include Canada thistle, field bindweed, oxeye daisy, dalmation toadflax, common tansy, lesser burdock, plumeless thistle, houndstongue, redstem stork's bill, scentless chamomile, mullein, cheatgrass, and bulbous bluegrass.

WILDLIFE

Although the Marolt Open Space is a relatively small property, it provides habitat that is valuable to wildlife, notably songbirds, small mammals, meso-carnivores (animals whose diet consists of meat and other foods such as fungi, fruits, etc.), mule deer, and Rocky Mountain elk. Because of the high level of human activity and extensive areas of non-native vegetation with low structural complexity (mainly the large grass/hay meadows), wildlife species richness and abundance is relatively low and comprised mainly of species that are tolerant of human activity. The highest quality habitat is found in the riparian corridor along Castle Creek.

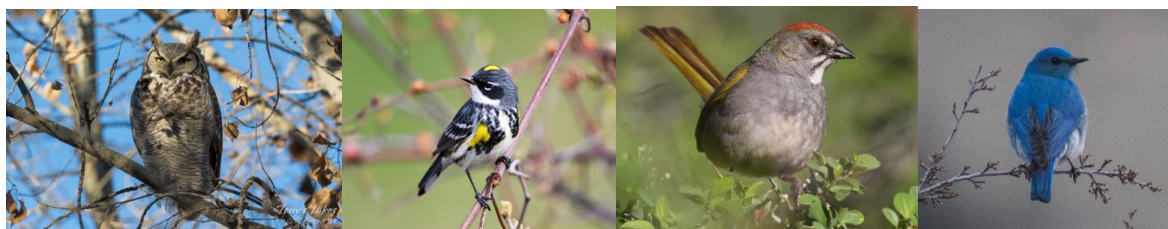
The interspersed patches of the property's various habitat types support both resident and seasonal wildlife, including a variety of songbird species, and mule deer and elk during transitional seasonal movements. Mule deer with fawns have been documented on the property.



22 Mule deer fawn and garter snake photographed on site June 2019, photos by Jonathan Lowsky

Colorado Wildlife Science (CWS) studied wildlife on the Marolt Open Space in June and July 2019 by conducting pedestrian surveys along two parallel transects. Direct observations of wildlife as well as wildlife sign (beds, nests, fur, feathers, burrows, dens, pellets, scat, prey remains, food caches, markings on the ground or on tree bark, and sounds) were recorded. Nocturnal bird surveys were also conducted.

One hundred twenty-seven individual birds were detected, representing 24 species. Most of these are species known to be tolerant of human activity and known to use a wide variety of habitats. Examples include American robins, black-billed magpies, and black-capped chickadees. A few bird species that are more sensitive and have narrower habitat requirements were also detected. Birds of conservation concern that are known or have the potential to occur on the property include bald eagle, northern pygmy owl, band-tailed pigeon, Lewis's woodpecker, and Virginia's warbler.



23 Great horned owl, yellow-rumped warbler, green-tailed towhee, mountain bluebird

Seven to nine mammal species comprising 55 individual detections were documented, including elk, golden-mantled ground squirrel, least chipmunk, mule deer, northern pocket gopher, red squirrel, and voles (voles were noted by sign only which could indicate any or all of three possible species). Mule deer use the Marolt Open Space during the non-winter months, as evidenced by a doe and a days-old fawn that were observed by CWS during their June survey. Elk use the property during transitional periods between summer and winter. Additional mammal species known or with the potential to occur on the property include coyote, red fox, nine species of bat, bobcat, mountain lion, bushy-tailed woodrat, common muskrat, deer mouse, North American porcupine, western jumping mouse, yellow-bellied marmot, mountain cottontail, three species of shrew, northern pocket gopher, American black bear, and raccoon.



24 Red fox, long-tailed weasel, least chipmunk

Although no specific herpetofauna surveys have been conducted on the property, one reptile, a western terrestrial garter snake was observed. Appropriate habitat exists for boreal chorus frogs and tiger salamanders, but their presence has not been confirmed.

No federal- or state-listed endangered or threatened species are known or suspected to occur on the property and no critical habitat for such species exists on or adjacent to the property. Field surveys found that while the Marolt Open Space is heavily used by people, it does provide important wildlife habitat. Higher wildlife species richness and abundance correlated directly with areas of lower human activity and greater habitat complexity, and lower wildlife species richness was detected in areas of heavy human use and low habitat complexity (primarily smooth brome pasture). CWS noted that little mule deer sign was detected on the south side of the garden and aspen/cottonwood grove where people were observed exercising their dogs, while substantially more mule deer sign, including the fawn, was observed on the north side where no dog activity was noted. While no direct or indirect observations of American black bears, coyotes, red foxes, or Wyoming ground squirrels were noted during surveys, these species are very likely to use the property at least seasonally.

2.03 VISUAL RESOURCES

The view planes associated with the Marolt Open Space offer outstanding scenic values and are among the property's most important resources. Whether seen by visitors and residents entering or leaving Aspen on Highway 82, or by people recreating and commuting on the property, the expanses of open meadow edged by rustic buck-rail fence and stands of trees are a visual respite in this area of the valley floor located at the west entrance to Aspen.



25 Scenic views at Marolt Open Space in summer and in winter

View planes also extend to the greater surroundings, including the valleys of Maroon, Castle, and Hunter Creeks and the Roaring Fork River. In this way, the Marolt Open Space is both a visual hub in the space where major valleys converge, as well as a functional hub

where trails link major parts of the Aspen community. Community decisions to preserve this landscape as open space reflect local values and vision for future posterity.

In addition to the open, undeveloped expanses of land, historic buildings and other historic features are important and valuable visual resources. The Marolt Barn which houses the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum has been a beloved Aspen landmark for well over a century. Best seen by visitors to the open space property, the barn is surrounded by other historic buildings, implements and machinery, and foundations of the former Holden Lixiviation Works, all of which create a setting in which two of Aspen's historic industries, mining and ranching, are displayed. This site was recognized as a historic district and listed on National and State Registers of Historic Places in 1990.

2.04 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Historical resources on the property relate primarily to the lixiviation mill complex, Midland Railroad, and ranching and farming activities. Reports from various historical surveys document many of these resources; see Appendices C, D, E, and F. The historic Holden Lixiviation Works site is on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places.

COLORADO MIDLAND RAILROAD

Remnant sections of the berm on which the Colorado Midland Railroad tracks once lay run along the south side of the Aspen Community Garden and the stand of trees to the west of the garden. Rusty railroad spikes may be found along the trackway.



26 The Colorado Midland Railroad's tracks once lay on this berm, now overgrown with native shrubs

HOLDEN LIXIVIATION WORKS



27 Historic Assay Office/Opal Marolt House and garage, currently City of Aspen Employee Housing

There are three main existing buildings from the lixiviation complex, all of which have been altered substantially over the years for various uses. The Office/Assay Office is located within a stand of trees to the west of the main historic complex. This house is commonly known as the Opal Marolt House and is currently in use as City of Aspen employee housing. An additional building that is thought to have originated as part of the lixiviation mill complex is located near the Assay Office/House and is currently used as a garage. The

Sampling Works is the largest of the existing buildings and is commonly known as the Marolt Barn. It is currently in use as the main facility of the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum operated by Aspen Historical Society. The Salt Shed to the south of the Sampling Works is currently used as a workshop associated with the museum.



28 Sandstone foundations and walls, and wooden stamp piers that are part of the ruins of the historic Holden Lixiviation Works

In the vicinity of the Sampling Works and Salt Shed, there are many pieces of historic equipment and machinery, and several small historic buildings related to silver mining and ranching. The small buildings were moved to the site from other locations in the Aspen area. Of the equipment and machinery, some items are original to the site and others have been relocated to the site as outdoor museum displays. Piles of original bricks, other materials, and land features also exist in this area.



29 Brick pile at the historic lixiviation site



30 Cable derrick replica built in 2016

Remnant sandstone foundations, wooden piers, and other features of the main mill building exist on the steep slope above the west bank of Castle Creek. An old road, now part of the Bergman Trail, exists to the north of the mill foundations. On the flat bottom land to the east of the mill foundations lie the stone foundations of two powerhouses. The ruins of the original cable derrick lie near the derrick replica which stands on the original footprint of this structure between the powerhouse foundations and the mill foundations. In this general vicinity, historic pieces of metal equipment and land features exist.

RANCHING

Irrigation ditches on the property originate in part from the flume and ditch system that was built to bring water from Castle Creek to the lixiviation mill site. Additional ditches were built later to create a system for irrigating the land for ranching and farming purposes. The existing Sampling Works/Marolt Barn, Salt Shed/Milking Barn, and Assay Office/Opal Marolt House were originally built as part of the lixiviation mill complex, and when the site was transitioned from ore-processing to ranching and farming purposes in the 1940s, these buildings were altered many times. Today they show evidence of both mining and ranching uses. The small building near the Assay Office/Opal Marolt House is thought to have originated as part of the lixiviation mill complex. It was used by the Marolt family to store farm implements and now serves as a garage/storage building.



31 Small lateral irrigation ditch built during the ranching era



32 Historic structure thought to be a potato cellar from the property's ranching era

To the north of the historic mill complex in a thickly vegetated strip between two gravel access roads, there is a partially subterranean, peaked-roof structure that is thought to be a historic potato cellar. This structure is still standing, yet it is very weathered with large holes in the roof and appears to be in a state of gradual collapse. It contains historic furniture and equipment presumably related to potato storage and/or other functions that the building may have served. The two large meadows on the property vegetated primarily by smooth brome grass were historically converted to hay grasses for

hay production and grazing during the property's ranching era. Existing ditches in these meadows were built by past ranchers in order to flood or sheet irrigate the hay crop. Remnants of ranching-era fences, gates, and equipment also exist on the property.



33 Historic ranching era fences and wagon ruins

2.05 EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

City of Aspen Zoning Definitions Applicable to the Marolt Open Space

The City of Aspen's Open Space Zone district [26.710.260**Open Space (OS)**] is defined as:

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Open Space (OS) Zone district is to preserve, protect and enhance lesser developed or undeveloped areas within the City containing unique naturally occurring or manmade landscape features which provide visual relief and enjoyment while reflecting or presenting community artistic or architectural statements. Development in the Open Space (OS) Zone District should emphasize and be consistent with the natural dynamic state of the land and minimize disruption of existing natural conditions.

B. Permitted uses. The following uses are permitted as of right in the Open Space (OS) Zone District: 1. Paved and unpaved walkways. 2. Benches. 3. Sculpture. 4. Water features such as ponds, streams or fountains. 5. Architectural lighting and downcast low-illumination lighting for walkways and trails .6. Sculptured or manicured landscape features. 7. Fencing.

C. Conditional uses. None

The City of Aspen's Land Use Code Part 700, P zone Page 1 26.710.240 **Park (P)** is defined as:

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Park (P) Zone District is to ensure that land intended for recreation use is developed so as to serve its intended use, while not exerting a disruptive influence on surrounding land uses.1.When a Park (P) Zone District is designated with a Transportation Overlay (T) Zone District designation, its purpose is to provide for the use of for both parks and public transportation facilities in the most compatible manner practicable, but with the park character remaining dominant.2.When a Park (P) Zone District is designated with a Drainage Overlay (D) Zone District designation, its purpose is to provide for the use of both park and drainage system facilities in the most compatible manner practicable, with the park character remaining dominant.3.When the Park (P) Zone District is designated both with the Transportation Overlay (T) Zone District and the Drainage

Overlay (D) Zone District, its purpose is to provide for the use of parks, public transportation facilities and drainage system facilities in the most compatible manner practicable, with the park character remaining dominant.4.When the Park (P) Zone District is designated Golf Course Support (GCS) Overlay Zone District, its purpose is to provide for the use of public golf courses and adjacent support facilities in the most compatible manner practicable, with the park character remaining dominant.

B. Permitted uses. The following uses are permitted as of right in the Park (P) Zone District:1.Open-use recreational facility, park, playfield, playground, swimming pool, golf course, riding stable, nursery, botanical garden; and2.Accessory buildings and uses.

C. Conditional uses. The following uses are permitted as conditional uses in the Park (P) Zone District, subject to the standards and procedures established in Chapter 26.425:1.Recreation building.2.Sport shop.3.Restaurant facility.4.Park maintenance building.5.Farmers' market, as defined in Section 26.04.100, provided: a. It operates no more than two (2) days per week, unless modified by the Commission under the conditional use review; b. It opens to the public no earlier than 7 a.m. and closes no later than 2 p.m., unless modified by the Commission under the conditional use review; and City of Aspen Land Use Code Part 700, P zone Page 2c.It shall be limited to those weeks that fall between the first Saturday in June and the weekend following the Thanksgiving holiday, inclusive, unless modified by the Commission under the conditional use review.

D. Dimensional requirements. The dimensional requirements which shall apply to all permitted and conditional uses in the Park (P) Zone District shall be set by the adoption of a Final Planned Development approval granted pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 26.445, Planned Development.

The City of Aspen's Public Zone district [26.710.250Public (PUB)] is defined as:

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Public (PUB) Zone District is to provide for the development of governmental, quasi-governmental and nonprofit facilities for cultural, education, civic and other nonprofit purposes.

B. Permitted uses. The following uses are permitted as of right in the Public (PUB) Zone District: 1. Library; 2. Museum; 3. Post office; 4. Hospital; 5. Essential governmental and public utility uses, facilities, services and buildings (excluding maintenance shops); 6. Public transportation stop; 7. Terminal building and transportation-related facilities; 8. Public surface and underground parking areas; 9. Fire station; 10. Public and private school; 11. Public park; 12. Arts, cultural and recreational activities, buildings and uses; 13. Accessory buildings and uses; 14. Public and private nonprofit uses providing a community service; and 15. Child care center.

The City of Aspen's Low-Density Residential Zone district [26.710.080Low-Density Residential (R-30)] is defined as:

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Low-Density Residential (R-30) Zone District is to provide areas for long-term residential purposes, short term vacation rentals, and customary accessory uses. Recreational and institutional uses customarily found in proximity to residential uses are included as conditional uses. Lands in the Low-Density Residential (R-30) Zone District are typically located along river frontages in outlying areas of the City.

B. Permitted uses. The following uses are permitted as of right in the Low-Density Residential (R-30) Zone District: 1. Detached residential dwelling. 2. Duplex. 3. Home occupations. 4. Accessory buildings and uses. 5. Accessory dwelling units and carriage houses meeting the provisions of Chapter 26.520.6. Vacation Rentals. Pursuant to Section 26.575.220C. Conditional uses. The following uses are permitted as conditional uses in the Low-Density Residential (R-30) Zone District, subject to the standards and procedures established in Chapter 26.425:1. Arts, cultural and civic uses. 2. Academic uses. 3. Agricultural uses. 4. Recreational uses. 5. Group home. 6. Childcare center. D. Dimensional requirements.

C. Conditional uses. The following uses are permitted as conditional uses in the Public (PUB) Zone District, subject to the standards and procedures established in Chapter 26.425.1. Maintenance shop. 2. Affordable housing.

D. Dimensional requirements. The dimensional requirements which shall apply to all permitted and conditional uses in the Public (PUB) Zone District shall be set by the adoption of a Final Planned Development approval granted pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 26.455, Planned Development.

The City of Aspen's Conservation Zone district [**26.710.220Conservation (C)**] is defined as:

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Conservation (C) Zone District is to provide areas of low-density development to enhance public recreation, conserve natural resources, encourage the production of crops and animals and to contain urban development.

B. Permitted uses. The following uses are permitted as of right in the Conservation (C) Zone District: 1. Detached residential dwelling. 2. Park, playfield, playground and golf course. 3. Riding stable. 4. Cemetery. 5. Crop production orchards, nurseries, flower production and forest land. 6. Pasture and grazing land. 7. Dairy. 8. Fishery. 9. Animal production. 10. Husbandry services (not including commercial feedlots) and other farm and agricultural uses. 11. Railroad right-of-way, but not a railroad yard. 12. Home occupations. 13. Accessory buildings and uses. 14. Accessory dwelling units meeting the provisions of Section 26.520.040.15. Temporary special events associated with ski areas including, but not limited to, such events as ski races, bicycle races and concerts; with Special Event Committee approval.

C. Conditional uses. The following uses are permitted as conditional uses in the Conservation (C) District, subject to the standards and procedures established in Chapter 26.425.1. Guest ranches. 2. Recreational uses including a riding academy, stable, club, country club and golf course. 3. Ski lift and other ski facilities. 4. Sewage disposal area. City of Aspen Land Use Code Part 700, C zone Page 25. Water treatment plant and storage reservoir. 6. Electric substations and gas regulator stations (not including business or administration offices).

D. Dimensional requirements. The following dimensional requirements shall apply to all permitted and conditional uses in the Conservation (C) Zone District. 1. Minimum Gross Lot Area (acres): 10. 2. Minimum Net Lot Area per dwelling unit (acres): 103. Minimum lot width (feet): 400. 4. Minimum front yard setback (feet): 100. 5. Minimum side yard setback (feet): 30. 6. Minimum rear yard setback (feet): 30. 7. Maximum height: twenty-five (25) feet. 8. Minimum distance between principal and accessory buildings (feet): No requirement. 9. Percent of open space required for building site: No requirement. 10. External floor area ratio: (applies to conforming and nonconforming lots of record): same as R-15 Zone District.

Original PD Document for the Marolt Open Space.

There is an original PD document associated with the Marolt parcel of the Marolt Open Space. This PD document was approved by Aspen City Council in 1982 and refers to the conditional uses of the property. Please see Appendix P.

2012 Aspen Area Community Plan

The Aspen Area Community Plan is a guiding document written by the City of Aspen Planning and Zoning Commission in conjunction with Pitkin County Planning and Zoning Commission and City and County Community Development staff. This document guides the City and County on decisions related to development, growth, transportation, the environment, health and welfare, historic preservation, parks, recreation, and other community aspects.

2015 Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan

The Pitkin County Nordic Trails Plan guides the vision and implementation of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System. The City of Aspen Parks Department is the operational arm of the program which is funded by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails. The system is overseen in an advisory capacity by the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council (ASNC). Short- and long-term goals of the ASNC are formalized within this plan, including maintenance, design guidelines, trail diversity, future trail expansions, and sign standards for navigation and wayfinding within the cross-country ski trail system. Within the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System, the Marolt Open Space offers a gentle, easy cross-country ski experience on 2.5 km of trails that connect to the High School ski trails on Meadowood HOA open space and to ski trails on the Moore Open Space (Pitkin County). Dogs are permitted on the

Marolt Open Space ski trails, one of the few portions of the Nordic ski trail system where dogs are allowed.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places and State Office of Historic Preservation

The Holden Lixiviation Works was listed on June 22, 1990 as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of the site's historical significance. A National Historic Register District is a defined geographical area consisting of contributing and noncontributing properties. The listing number is 90000867 and is described as 2.5 acres and two buildings with its period of significance being 1975-1899. Historic function is described as industry/processing/extraction and current function as recreation and culture, vacant/not in use. The National Historic Register's purpose is to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archaeological resources in the United States.

Such listing is defined on the National Historic Register's webpage (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/faqs.htm>): "Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting." As a National Historic Register listing, the site is automatically on the State Register of Historic Places, Colorado State Office of Historic Preservation: Holden Mining & Smelting Co., site number 5PT.539. Although there are no restrictions conferred by these listings, in the event that any federal or state monies (such as a realignment of Highway 82) would be involved with development that would impact the site, a process would be initiated per Section 106 of the National Preservation Act. A Section 106 process would involve any pertinent agencies including local preservation entities and local ordinances in order to address potential impacts and alternatives. Although a Section 106 process does not mandate a preservation outcome, this consultation process would require consideration of alternatives and/or mitigation to any impacts to listed historic resources.

Easements

There are existing utilities easements associated with the property. Please see Appendix O for an illustration of these easements.

2.06 CURRENT USES

For its relatively small size, The Marolt Open Space hosts a wide variety of important uses ranging from preserving and interpreting one of the community's most significant, historic mining and ranching sites to serving as a vital connector space at the center of our recreational and commuter trail systems. Perhaps most importantly, the property's location gives it unique prominence as an open, undeveloped landscape at the entrance to Aspen. The Marolt Open Space serves this important viewshed purpose while at the same time hosting the multitude of uses described below.



34 The character of the Marolt Open Space stems in large part from its views and green spaces



35 The Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum

The Marolt Open Space played an important role in Aspen's silver mining and early 20th-century ranching eras. Historical preservation and interpretation together constitute a significant use of the property today. The Aspen Historical Society (AHS) operates the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum on a 1.9-acre parcel that was once at the heart of Aspen's historic mining and ranching activities. Housed in the Marolt barn and adjacent salt warehouse, the museum opened in 2003, operating on a 75-year lease from the City of Aspen that was signed in 1989. Indoor exhibits feature a 15,000-pound stamp mill relocated from a site in the Difficult Creek drainage, a steam engine, a display of local minerals, coal-fired boilers, and ranching-era implements, photographs, clothing, tools, and more. Outdoor exhibits include mining and ranching machinery, carts, a steam-powered saw for milling raw lumber, and other equipment. AHS conducts tours, school programs, and special community events at the museum site.

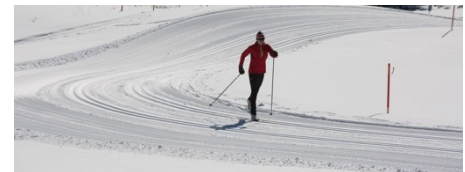


36 The museum site is leased and operated by Aspen Historical Society

Below the AHS leased parcel on an area of flat bottomland adjacent to Castle Creek, the Bergman Trail descends an old road cut and loops past the massive sandstone foundations of the lixiviation plant, foundations of two powerhouses, and a replica of a derrick structure. Interpretive signs along this trail and at a sandstone overlook on the Marolt Trail above tell the story of this site and the heavy industrial work that once took place here.

Other historic features on the Marolt Open Space include the old trackway of the Colorado Midland Railroad which is a raised berm overgrown with sagebrush and other vegetation. The standing remains of an old semi-earthen building exist to the east of the gravel driveway in the vicinity of the Parks work staging area. This structure has a peaked roof and contains a utility table, buckets, and other old tools, and is thought to be a potato cellar. Small artifacts from mining and ranching activities can be found all over the property.

Recreation is another significant use of the Marolt Open Space. Paragliders and hanggliders have been using the south grass field as a landing zone since the 1970s, and presently maintain a mowed landing strip. This area is also used by people flying kites and remote-controlled airplanes. Other recreational uses are based on the summer and winter trails that cross the property, including mountain and road biking, running, walking, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, dog-exercising, and bird watching. For some activities, such as biking and running, the Marolt Open Space trails are not the destination, but rather part of a route or a connector between other trails and areas. Groomed cross-country ski trails are used in winter by skiers, snowshoers, and dog-walkers. The Marolt Open Space is one of several sites within the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System where dogs are permitted.



37 A cross-country skier enjoying the groomed trails

The Aspen Community Garden constitutes the property's agricultural use, taking place within a fenced area in the center of the property. The garden has 77 plots that are watered by an automatic irrigation system with water supplied from the Marolt Ditch. Member gardeners use organic methods to grow vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers. The garden facility has a pump house and tool shed as well as a loading area and 5 parking spaces, including ADA parking.



38 The Aspen Community Garden provides space for seventy-seven gardeners to grow vegetables, berries, and flowers

The City of Aspen Streets Department occasionally stores snow removed from City streets in an area in the southern portion of the property. This is allowed periodically by Parks and Open Space during times of high snowfall when capacity at normal snow storage areas is inadequate. The City of Aspen Parks Department utilizes an area off the property's gravel driveway as a staging and work area with a compost pile. Additionally, a portion of Power Plant Road and a small portion of the Streets Department facilities adjacent to Power Plant Road are within the Marolt Open Space boundary in the northeast corner of the property.

2.07 ADJACENT LAND USE

The Marolt Open Space is surrounded by a variety of public and private lands. Some of the adjacent properties have specific easements, rights of way, recreational uses, and access that relate to management considerations for the Marolt Open Space.

To the south and east there are private residential properties, portions of the banks of Castle Creek, and the Castle Creek Pedestrian Bridge which connects the Marolt Open Space to residential neighborhoods and to the downtown core via the Hopkins Street Bike-Pedway. To the northeast is Power Plant Road, the City of Aspen Streets Department Shop, a Black Hills Energy pump station, Buggy Barnard Park, and the Holy Cross Open Space. A spur of the Marolt Trail connects to an underpass beneath Castle Creek Bridge along the northeast boundary of the property.

The northwestern portion of the property is bounded by Highway 82, across from which is located the City of Aspen Parks Department Headquarters, Thomas Estate Park, City of Aspen Golf Course, the Roundabout, a RFTA bus interchange area, and bus stops. To the west, the Marolt Open Space is bounded by a portion of Maroon Creek Road. Here, a ped/ski bridge over Castle Creek Road connects the Marolt Trail with the High School Trail, Hospital Trail, and another ped/ski bridge over Maroon Creek Road accessing the Moore Open Space which is a Pitkin County Open Space and Trails property.

To the south, the Marolt Open Space is bounded by Castle Creek Road, across from which are located the Aspen Chapel, the Aspen Chapel Lot which is a Pitkin County Open Space

property, Meadowood residential neighborhood, Whitcomb Terrace Senior Center and Housing, Aspen Hospital, Pitkin County Health and Human Services, and Castle Ridge Apartments.

There are easements related to waterlines, public utilities, emergency access, and irrigation ditches on the Marolt Open Space property. Plats describing these easements are located in Appendices H and O.

2.08 ACCESS, PARKING, AND TRAILS

Access to the Marolt Open Space in the non-winter months is provided primarily by the many multi-use trails that enter and intersect the property as well as by two roads providing vehicular access and public parking in several locations. Winter access is provided by Nordic ski trails and limited residential vehicular access. The Marolt Open Space, situated between downtown Aspen, major community amenities, residential areas, the valleys of Castle and Maroon creeks, and the Roaring Fork River, is a vital central link in local multi-use and cross-country ski trail systems. Bike and pedestrian traffic across the property is high in volume year-round, and represents recreational, commuter, and school users.

VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING

Marolt Place is a paved road that enters the property from Castle Creek Road, providing access to parking, facilities, and housing at the Marolt Ranch Employee Housing complex. There is a small, gravel, public parking area at the beginning of Marolt Place where it leaves Castle Creek Road. Vehicular access is also provided by a gravel road that enters the property off of Highway 82 near Castle Creek Bridge. Three public parking spaces exist at the beginning of this road. Where the road splits, the eastern portion goes through a Parks Department work area and continues to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum complex. The western portion of the gravel road accesses a City of Aspen employee housing unit, with a spur to the west that goes to the Aspen Community Garden. In the vicinity of the garden there are 5 parking spaces, one ADA access parking space, and a loading area.

The gravel road entering the property from Highway 82 and Marolt Place is plowed for winter vehicular access. There is additional parking in the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails parking lot adjacent to the Aspen Chapel. There is no winter public parking within the property.

TRAILS

The primary trail within the Marolt Open Space is the Marolt Trail, an 8-foot-wide, paved, multi-use trail that runs in an arc inside the perimeter of the property. The western end of the Marolt Trail begins at the ped/ski bridge over Castle Creek Road, and the southern end of the Marolt Trail begins at a crosswalk on Castle Creek Road in the vicinity of a RFTA bus stop that serves the Pitkin County Health and Human Services / Aspen Hospital campus and residential neighborhoods on both sides of Castle Creek Road. The portion of the Marolt Trail that descends the hill from the crosswalk at Castle Creek Road to Marolt Ranch Employee Housing is lit at night by three overhead lights.



39 Biking to school on the Marolt Trail

Trail access into the property and connecting to the Marolt Trail is provided as follows. The Castle Creek Pedestrian Bridge accesses the property from Eighth Street in Aspen's western residential zone and connects to the Marolt Trail adjacent to the site of the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum. The Castle Creek Underpass Trail goes beneath the Castle Creek Bridge/Highway 82, providing access to the Marolt Trail from Buggy Barnard Park and the bike/ped trail on Castle Creek Bridge/Highway 82. This underpass trail is lit at night by lighting on a metal railing. The ped/ski bridge over Castle Creek Road provides access to the property from the High School and Hospital Trails. This bridge was replaced in fall 2019 due to damage caused by a truck that hit the bridge. A paved spur trail starts at Castle Creek Road and climbs the hill to join the Marolt Trail at the Castle Creek ped/ski bridge.

A number of soft-surface, single-track trails enter the property and intersect within the large, open, grassy field to the south of the Aspen Community Garden (the paraglider landing field), and another footpath loops around the garden to the north. Many of these soft-surface, single-track trails and footpaths are unofficial social trails that have developed as a result of people bee-lining from point to point or simply by using a favorite route repeatedly until a trail develops. Several of these trails have recently become double and triple track trails where people walk side-by-side. New social trails have recently developed in several areas that were undergoing revegetation following impacts from irrigation and ditch work.

In winter, the Marolt Open Space hosts a portion of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail system, providing access to cross-country skiers and snowshoers. Throughout most of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Trail System, the groomed trails are open to use by cross-country skiers and snowshoers only; however, the winter trails on the Marolt Open Space provide one of several groomed trail areas within the system where winter recreationalists are permitted to bring dogs. Groomed Nordic ski trails enter the property at the Castle Creek

Pedestrian Bridge, the ped/ski bridge over Castle Creek Road, and at a trail that connects across Castle Creek Road from the High School Nordic trails. The cross-country ski trails form several loops within the property. The majority of the Marolt Trail is plowed in winter with the exception of a portion near the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum site where the Nordic ski trail is groomed across the full width of the trail.



40 This 2018 aerial image documents the network of social trails on the Marolt Open Space

2.09 RECREATION

Many forms of recreation are enjoyed by the public on the Marolt Open Space. Recreation is described for snow-free months and winter below.

SNOW-FREE MONTHS

Paved and soft-surface trails crossing the property are used by cyclists (both recreational and commuter), runners, walkers, birdwatchers, and people exercising their dogs. The open grass meadow in the southern portion of the property is used as a landing space for paragliders. This area is also used for flying kites and remote-control aircraft. The pond is used for dog exercise, and skills practice for stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking.



41 Paragliders land on the Marolt Open Space

WINTER

The City of Aspen Parks Department grooms Nordic ski trails on the Marolt Open Space as part of the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Ski Trails System. On this open space property, walking, snowshoeing, and dogs are also allowed on the Nordic ski trails.



42 Cross-country skiing, Courtesy Anna Stonehouse, Aspen Times

2.10 WATER RIGHTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The ditch system on the Marolt Open Space was created when the land was converted from native vegetation to ranching and farming uses well over a century ago. The City of Aspen gained ownership of water rights associated with the Thomas and Marolt parcels at the time each of these properties were acquired by the City's Open Space Program, 1982 and 1983 respectively. See Water Infrastructure Map, Appendix H.

There are two water rights that have historically irrigated the Marolt Open Space and surrounding lands. The Holden Ditch that diverts from the west bank of Castle Creek is Priority 613 and has an Appropriation Date of 8/27/1950 for a City of Aspen ownership of 25.4 cfs. The Marolt Ditch is Priority 279 and has an Appropriation Date of 3/1/1902 for a City of Aspen ownership of 13.6 cfs. Minority shareholders on the Marolt and Holden Ditches include Castle Creek Homeowners Association and Red Butte Cemetery. In

addition, homeowners on Cemetery Lane are encouraged to enter a Raw Water agreement with the Water Department to irrigate their properties with ditch water.

The Holden Ditch enters the Marolt Open Space property and flows through a splitter box that directs water to the Marolt Wetlands pond. The main Holden Ditch continues to the west and enters a second splitter box that delivers water northeast to Red Butte Cemetery, the Aspen Community Garden, and the City of Aspen Golf Course irrigation pond. The water continues northwest past the second splitter box and fills an irrigation pond on the west side of the property. The water then continues past the pond and under the Roundabout to the City of Aspen Golf Course open ditch system.

The Marolt Ditch enters the Marolt Open Space property and flows to the west through a Parshall flume and combines with the Holden Ditch just to the East of the Aspen Community Garden above the garden's irrigation pump station. The combined Holden and Marolt Ditch water continues under Highway 82 to the Aspen Golf Course main irrigation pond and north through the Cemetery Lane neighborhood. This combined ditch water also supplies the Castle Creek Homeowners Association water right on the east side of Cemetery Lane. A number of small ditch laterals that are not enumerated exist on the property and are important to the use of the water rights.

Per the State of Colorado, Division of Water Resources, owners of water rights are required to put water to beneficial use without waste. The City of Aspen uses water conveyed by the Holden and Marolt Ditches to irrigate the Aspen Golf Course, the Aspen Community Garden, and Cemetery Lane neighborhoods. There is potential for the City to use this water also to irrigate the former hay meadows on the Marolt Open Space.

Prescriptive easements exist along the Holden and Marolt Ditches, providing 15 feet of space on either side from the centerline of the ditches. These easements protect access for ditch maintenance work; no development may occur within the easements.

Wetlands and a pond were created on the Marolt Open Space upstream of the combined Holden Marolt Ditch in 1999 as part of mitigation for the loss of wetlands due to construction of the Roundabout and surrounding highway and road areas.

Summary of Water Ditches on the Marolt Open Space

Name	Adjud. Date	Approp. Date	Priority #	Absolute cfs	City Ownership cfs	Decreed Use
Marolt Ditch	7/25/1934	3/1/1902	279	18.6	13.6	Irrigation, Other Beneficial uses
Holden Ditch	10/24/1952	8/27/1950	613	30	25.4	Irrigation, domestic

2.11 SIGNAGE

A variety of signage exists at the Marolt Open Space, including the white typeface/green background style used by the Parks Department for place names and other purposes on open space properties and trails. Parks also uses winter seasonal signs on the property related to the cross-country ski trails. Additional signage, both seasonal and permanent, identifies pet waste bags dispensers and trash receptacles.

Other entities such as the paragliding community and community garden volunteers have installed various signs in different styles to serve different purposes in the areas in which their activities take place. The Aspen Historical Society has installed various signs within their leased area pertaining to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and its outdoor exhibits and interpretive elements.

This integrated approach to signage on the Marolt Open Space provides visitors and user groups with necessary wayfinding, orientation, directional, safety, interpretive/educational, and other information. Examples are provided in the following photo collage.





3. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

The Marolt Open Space Management Plan has been developed in coordination with input from the public and stakeholders. A process timeline is provided in Section 1.03 Process and Public Involvement. Appendix K contains public comments received. Comments were gathered from the following groups and entities: Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council, Aspen Historical Society, Aspen Community Garden, Marolt Ranch Employee Housing, and commercial operators. These comments, along with staff input, advice from the City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board, and existing conditions, help guide the development of Action Items for the future management of the Marolt Open Space.

3.01. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The first public comment period was open from June 25 through July 12, 2019. A public open house event was held on June 25, 2019 at the Red Brick Center for the Arts in Aspen, and an on-site outreach event was held at the Marolt Open Space the following morning. Forty-six comments were received from the two outreach efforts. Additionally, the Parks Department received 119 comments/answers to their online public survey at www.marolt.aspenparks.com.

General comments received online are provided in Appendix K. Written comments were also received during the public open house and on-site outreach events held in June 2019. The written comments addressed a wide variety of input including improving roads and access routes, environmental health and sustainability, preservation of the open space without change, and developing amenities such as a bike park. Many comments were related to the benefits of the historical resources on the property. Other suggestions included selecting one of the many social trails to designate as an official single-track, soft-surface trail across the Marolt Open Space and providing a shelter for the portable toilets at the Community Garden. The most common theme from the general comments was the desire to leave the Marolt Open Space primarily unchanged. It is not lost on the public, based on the number of comments, that the Marolt Open Space speaks volumes to the community's values as reflected by its role in the entrance to Aspen. The citizens of Aspen place a high degree of importance on preserving and maintaining natural open spaces such as this property in and around town.

The online survey generated themes and provided valuable feedback through scores participants provided in response to the survey's 10 statements. Answers to the survey were scored on a scale from **"Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5)**. Average scores from the 119 participants' answers were calculated to provide a measure of the public's opinion on each topic. These scores and resulting themes are summarized here:

1. The current trail system on Marolt Open Space meets the needs of the users. This scored a 3.65, indicating that survey respondents generally agree.
2. The public is indifferent to the closure of the unauthorized social trails, scoring 2.5.
3. The public is also indifferent to slightly agreeable to the idea of haying, which scored 2.8.
4. Preservation of historical sites is very important to survey respondents, scoring 4.57.
5. Survey respondents were indifferent to slightly agreeable to the idea of a bike park which scored 2.8.
6. Preservation of landscape and ecological integrity is very important, scoring 4.34.
7. Most people surveyed felt that the Marolt Open Space is an appropriate place to walk dogs, scoring 3.86.
8. Most people believe that the Community Garden functions well and that no change is necessary, scoring 3.77.
9. Most people think that the fencing and irrigation around the Community Garden are appropriate, scoring 3.74 out of 5.
10. The current multi-use nature of the Nordic Trail system is appropriate, scoring 4.1 out of 5.

Most people use the space either daily or weekly. Use on a less frequent basis is not nearly as common. This speaks to the high number of respondents that live in the area and use Marolt Open Space as a commuting route or a daily recreation area.

How often do you use Marolt/Thomas Open Spaces?

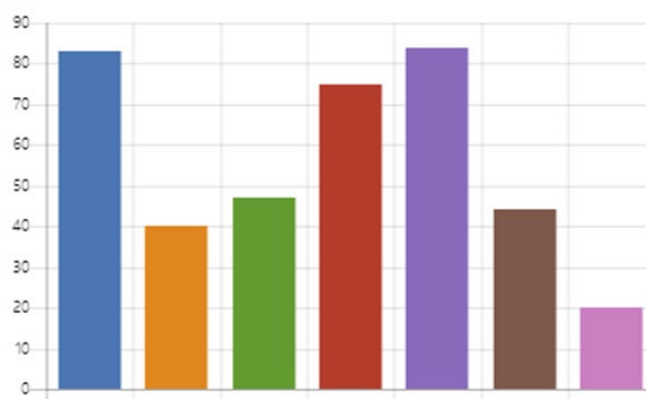
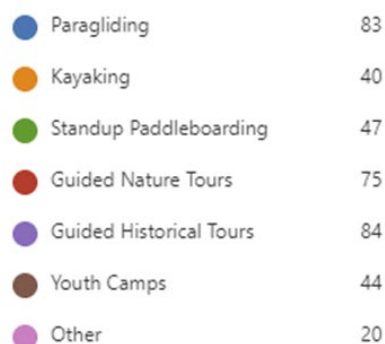
[More Details](#)



Commercial use at the Marolt Open Space is not uncommon. Aspen Paragliding, for example, has been using the space in the south grass meadow as a landing zone for about 30 years. Most of the people surveyed feel that a certain amount of commercial operation on the property is an appropriate use of the open space. The table below illustrates the public's perception of commercial uses which should be allowed on Marolt Open Space. Paragliding and historical tours received the strongest support.

What, if any, commercial use should be allowed on the Marolt/Thomas Open Space? (Select all that apply)

[More Details](#)



3.02 Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council

Comments from Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council (ASNC) pertaining to the Marolt Open Space state that the groomed cross-country ski trails are used daily during the Nordic skiing season and that this trail system meets ASNC's needs. ASNC appreciates the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum as an amenity on the property. They acknowledge winter fat biking as an allowed activity on the Marolt Open Space Nordic trails, but prefer not to allow a bike park that would operate during the period from Thanksgiving through March. Preservation of the landscape and ecological integrity are important. ASNC acknowledges that the Marolt Open Space provides one of the prime dog-walking areas within the Aspen/Snowmass Nordic Trail System, and that this multi-use designation should continue with the condition that pet owners must properly dispose of pet waste and maintain control of pets. Aspen Valley Ski and Snowboard Club's Nordic Program uses the groomed trails for training, and other user groups include paragliders and Aspen Historical Society. ASNC feels that the current multi-use purpose of the winter trails is appropriate, but that the management plan should delineate approved activities. The unique location of the Marolt Open Space provides multi-use access to trail users and therefore reduces pressure for multi-use needs on other sections of the system such as the Moore Open Space Nordic Trails and High School Nordic Trails.

3.03 Aspen Historical Society

Comments from Aspen Historical Society (AHS) include the following suggestions: 1) Direct vehicular access onto the gravel road that leads straight to the museum site and not on the driveway/road that goes to the employee housing and garden. 2) Improve/add permanent signage including state signage for the historical museum on Highway 82 and wayfinding signage on the Marolt Open Space to direct visitors to the museum, one location being at the start of the two gravel roads off Highway 82. 3) Relocate the compost pile. 4) Retain the existing cement slab for guest parking, expand parking, and provide space for a bus/shuttle turn-around and trucks/other large vehicles. 5) Add stop signs for traffic and rumble strips on the trail where the Marolt Trail and access road intersect near the museum. 6) Remove dead cottonwood trees along the road to the employee housing and garden. 7) Restore and preserve the historic potato cellar. The cellar is outside of the AHS leased area; however, it is a historical asset that AHS would like to interpret.

3.04 Aspen Community Garden

The Aspen Community Garden (ACG) expressed the following comments: Continue and adjust as needed the partnership with City of Aspen Parks Department for garden maintenance related to irrigation, compost, port-a-potties, etc. Retain the access road to the garden and associated parking spaces, as well as ADA access and parking and access to

trash and compost dumpsters. ACG expressed no changes to management, continuing with an annual or semi-annual meeting with Parks, and better communication regarding projects that may impact access to the garden.

3.05 Marolt Ranch Employee Housing

Marolt Ranch Employee Housing expressed the need for clarification on the proper authority for enforcing parking regulations along Marolt Place.

3.06 Commercial Operators

ASPEN PARAGLIDING

Alex Palmaz provided the following comments on behalf of Aspen Paragliding:

Aspen Paragliding prefers little change from the current uses and management for Marolt Open Space and opposes any development of the property such as playing fields, employee housing, and highway realignment. Aspen Paragliding suggests describing and designating in the Marolt Open Space Management Plan a 'Flight Park' and Memorial for Scott Bloom. This area includes the space currently used for landing and folding and breaking down gliders with adjacent benches and trash and pet waste receptacles. Other suggestions pertaining to maintenance of the open space property include irrigating and haying the grass fields, as tall grass contributes to difficult landing conditions; trimming or thinning trees along the south side of the landing area, as these trees generate air currents that are of concern to pilots; and manage commercial permittees toward proper land uses, insurance coverage, and operational safety plans.

3.07 Other Stakeholders

ASPEN PARAGLIDING COMMUNITY

Terry Paulson provided the following comments on behalf of the local paragliding community: Restore the buck rail fence on the property along Highway 82; top or replace trees with vegetation less than twelve feet tall; reduce the number of social trails; enforce a leash law and cleaning up pet waste; educate the public to walk single file on single track trails to avoid developing multiple parallel trails; consider irrigating grass meadows; discontinue storing snow on the property to reduce safety hazards (gravel, glass, etc.) and vegetation impacts; discontinue use of the west side of the Thomas parcel as a staging area for construction gravel and soil piles; slow down the bike traffic on the Marolt Pedestrian Bridge; develop signage to designate the paraglider landing area and eliminate bike traffic that short-cuts through this area, including Tuesday night organized bike events; eliminate potential for a 'straight-shot' realignment of Highway 82 through the property.

ROARING FORK MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION

Mike Pritchard provided the following comments on behalf of Roaring Fork Mountain Biking Association (RFMBA): The single track trails on the Marolt Open Space extend the single track experience for mountain bikers between downtown Aspen and trails such as Government Trail, Oregon Trail, Sky Mountain Park trails, etc. The single-track trails on the Marolt Open Space are included as components of the IMBA-rated Epic Ride 'Aspen Snowmass Mega Loop.' Marolt Open Space single track trails offer an introductory experience to young and beginning riders. Improve signage to designate the preferred single-track route on the west end of the property. RFMBA supports the concept of a fully featured bike park on the Marolt Open Space. In the near term, RFMBA supports small scale pump tracks or featured internal loop trails. The Marolt Open Space also allows winter fat bike riding, a recreational activity for which there are limited opportunities in the Aspen area.

4. OPPORTUNITIES AND PLANNING ISSUES

4.01 Overview

The Marolt Open Space provides unique and beloved view planes at the entrance to Aspen that are treasured by locals and visitors alike. The property also serves as a high-use area for recreation including cross-country skiing, paragliding, biking, running, hiking, exercising dogs, and more. Wildlife use the various habitats on the property for resting and hiding cover, foraging, and as a valuable corridor for movements among adjacent habitat spaces including the gorge of Castle Creek, Shadow Mountain, and the Moore Open Space. The property's diverse vegetation communities are used by breeding birds for nesting and by migratory birds for feeding and resting during stopovers. The rich historical resources on the property present many opportunities for ongoing preservation and interpretation.

4.02 Land Use Restrictions

The Thomas parcel is zoned (C) Conservation and the Marolt parcel is zoned R-30 Low Density Residential. It is possible that developments such as housing and a realignment of Highway 82 could occur on the property.

Approvals currently exist for a 'straight shot' realignment of Highway 82, which would cross the Marolt Open Space. Housing could also be approved on portions of the Marolt parcel. Aspen City Council, Planning and Zoning, and Parks administrative review along with community input would be required should any such future development be proposed. The Thomas parcel is under conservation zoning. The Aspen Historical Society holds a 75-year lease (as of 1989) on the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum site. The Marolt Ranch Employee Housing is occupied and requires the existing Marolt Place road. Changing access to the Holden Marolt Mining & Ranching Museum will be a challenge.

Please see Section 2.05 Existing Plans and Policies for detailed information on zoning and other land use restrictions.

4.03 Maintenance

An opportunity exists to explore the idea of burying the overhead utility lines that run along the gravel driveway that access the City of Aspen Employee Housing home and the Aspen Community Garden.

4.04 Natural Resources

A variety of habitat types exist on the Marolt Open Space, serving as home to many different wildlife and plant species. An opportunity exists to preserve existing habitat, for example, the cottonwood-red osier dogwood community adjacent to Castle Creek, which has high ecological preservation value.

A large portion of the Marolt Open Space property consists of non-native grass meadows to the north and south of the Aspen Community Garden. If no management actions take place, the native shrub community will gradually take over these meadows, changing the character of the property. If a return to all native grasses and forbs is desired, inputs will be required to achieve the desired outcome within a reasonable timeframe. Additionally, both of these management approaches present a challenge because they would be incompatible with any future opportunities for managing these areas as irrigated pasture.

4.05 Historical Resources

There is a long and rich history associated with the Marolt Open Space which is captured and celebrated at the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum located on the property (operated by Aspen Historical Society, AHS). This museum is centrally located within the property where access is challenging, and no obvious access or parking solutions exist. AHS experiences difficulties with drawing in guests and visitors due to the difficulty they experience in trying to navigate their way to the site.

While effective access is necessary for attracting visitors and for the museum's overall success, it is not in the interest of preserving open space to build parking lots or roads. This is a challenge; however, there may be opportunities to create better commuting options, better signed parking spaces around the perimeter, paths that lead directly to the museum, and better signage on existing paths. Such opportunities can enhance the visitor experience while preserving the character of the existing open space. The Marolt Open Space is home not only to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum, but it is also the site of several other historic structures and landforms. Opportunities may exist to interpret other such features on the property, including the historic trackway of the Colorado Midland Railroad and the historic potato cellar. There may also be opportunities to enhance the existing interpretive elements such as those at the historic lixiviation mill site.

4.06 Recreation and Trails

Over time, various users of the Marolt Open Space have created a network of social trails on the property. These social trails receive little management attention because they are not

part of the official trail system. Opportunities exist to identify one or more appropriate, soft-surface, single-track trail route(s) through the property that would be adopted into the trail system and for which the Parks Department would develop signage and provide maintenance. The other social trails could then be closed and revegetated. Maintaining the functionality of the existing ditch system designed for sheet or flood irrigation across the grass meadows must be considered with all proposed trail changes so that any potential future use of this system is not impaired, and that the irrigation system remains intact.

The paragliding community has been maintaining a portion of the south meadow as a landing area for many years. Paragliders are iconic in Aspen's local scene. There is an opportunity to partner with the paragliding community in order to maintain a safe landing zone.

The community has expressed interest in developing a bike park, and the Marolt Open Space has been suggested as a potential location. Due to restrictions in land use code associated with the Marolt Open Space parcel, this portion of the property does not lend itself to serving as a site for a bike park. The Thomas Open Space parcel may have potential for development of a small bike park amenity.

Many users enjoy exercising their dogs on the Marolt Open Space property. Opportunities exist for providing space for dog exercise and play, such as the pond at the west end of the property and the grass meadows. Important planning issues concerning dogs include impacts to wildlife by off-leash dogs, dog owners who may neglect pet waste, and dogs that may be a nuisance to others using the property. Such impacts within the property are currently high, in part due to the heavy use of the property and the increasing number of social trails that continue to develop. While open space provides opportunities for the public to walk and exercise dogs, these issues require management attention.

The pond at the west end of the Marolt Open Space is often used for practicing sand-up paddle boarding and kayak-rolling techniques, providing the public with a valuable recreational benefit. A related planning issue is managing private instructors and commercial outfitters that must obtain a permit from the Parks and Open Space Program in order to use the pond for classes.

4.07 Interpretation/Education

Opportunities exist to provide improved signage for the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum, the Bergman Trail and its series of interpretive signs, the historic potato shed, and the former Colorado Midland Railroad trackway. Further opportunities exist for improving signage for the trail network on the property, the paraglider landing area, and the Aspen Community Garden in order to facilitate appropriate pedestrian and bike traffic

use of the property's trails. The ongoing development of social trails is an important planning and management issue.

4.08 Agriculture

The historic Holden and Marolt irrigation ditches and their associated laterals were originally used for the lixiviation mill operation and for agriculture on the open space property and on adjacent properties. City-owned water rights associated with the Marolt Open Space must be used in order to be maintained. Together, these conditions present an opportunity to use the existing ditch system to flood or sheet irrigate the historic hay meadows toward harvesting hay that could be supplied to Cozy Point Ranch LLC, the equestrian operation that leases part of City-owned Cozy Point Ranch Open Space.

Existing soft-surface social trails may impede the flood or sheet irrigation system, requiring appropriate planning and management strategies to remedy associated impediments to the flow of water. If haying were to be pursued on the property at any point in time, social trails would need to be re-routed.

4.09 Aspen Community Garden

The Aspen Community Garden serves the community by providing space for citizens to grow their own food. The garden was most recently expanded in 2014. There are limitations on available space for further expansions; therefore, if the community has a need for additional gardening space, it is advised to seek other appropriate locations.

4.10 Special Events

Special events are not typically permitted on the Marolt Open Space due to the high potential for negative impacts on the integrity of the land and its designation as open space. Adequate parking for special events does not exist on the property. Special events should be limited to those requested by the Aspen Historical Society in association with their leased space. Parking and access for such events is located at the access point from Highway 82, along the gravel road to the Aspen Community Garden, or from Marolt Ranch Employee Housing.

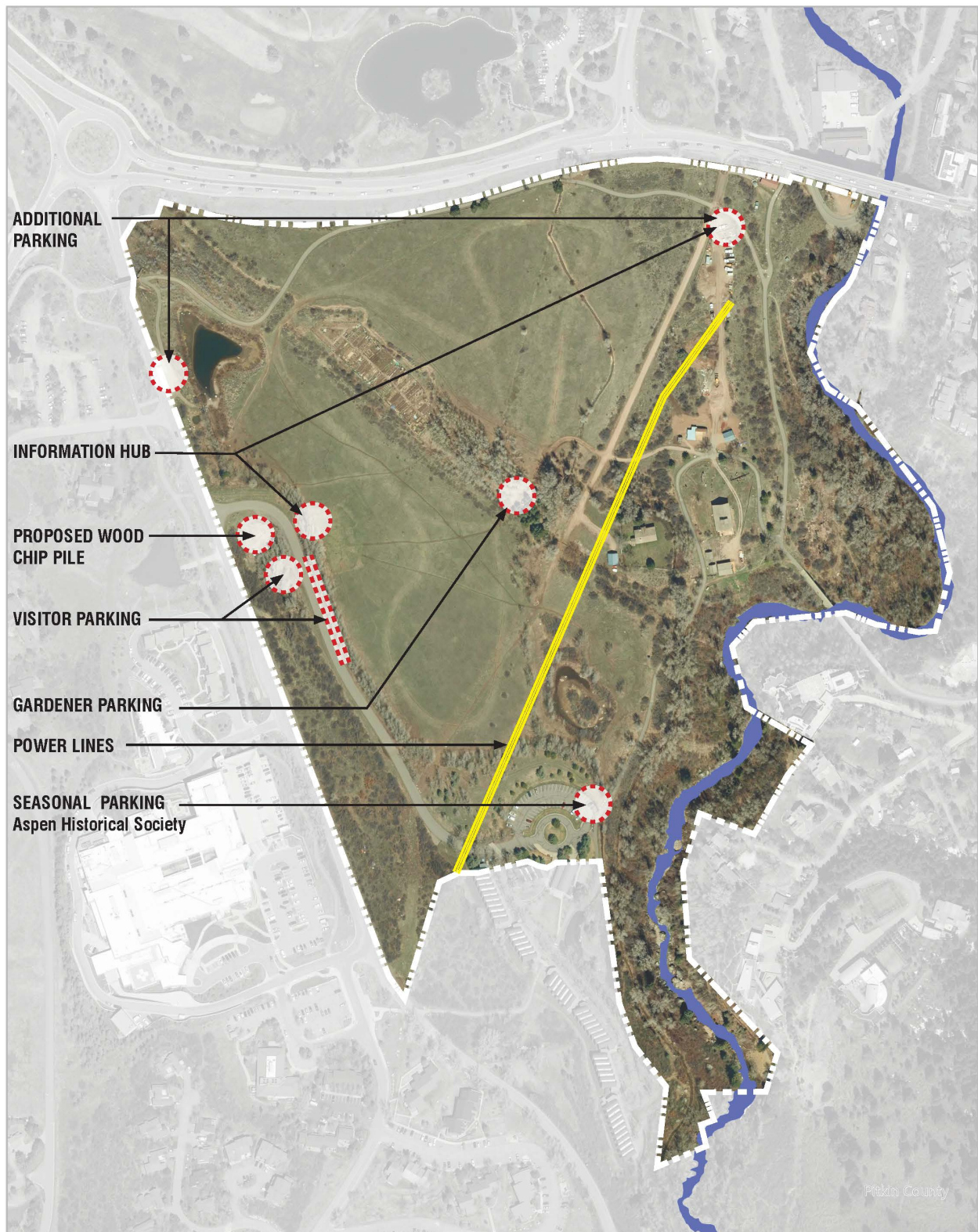
5. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

5.01 Overview

The management actions in this document have been developed based on considerations including the conditions of the planning area, input from professional evaluations, comments from the community and stakeholders, and administrative direction. The overall desired outcome is that the open space should remain relatively unchanged. The following management actions will allow the community to continue to enjoy the many benefits provided by the Marolt Open Space, such as its scenic views, and its historical, natural, and recreational values. This document is meant to serve the Parks Department for a period of ten years, at which time this plan will be reviewed and updated. Updates may occur prior to the ten-year time period if conditions or the wishes of the community warrant an earlier review. In general, there should be no change to the overall look and function of the Marolt Open Space except for minor modifications that do not change the basic character and uses of the property.

5.02 Maintenance

- Develop and implement an overall wayfinding and signage plan for the property.
- Develop the parking lot on Marolt Place. This can be used as an information hub for Marolt Open Space visitors. A kiosk with information and maps will help visitors navigate the property. This parking lot will be managed by Open Space Rangers. Add 'no overnight parking' signage to the west parking area.
- Dedicate and provide signage for four parking spaces in the Marolt Ranch Employee Housing parking lot as designated seasonal parking for Aspen Historical Society during the period of June 18th through October 5th.
- Replace the buck rail fence along Highway 82 with a fence of similar historic character.
- Restore and enhance the northern entrance to the property including the potential removal of the wood processing area and other maintenance related activities.
- Understand the cost implications and outline the steps to burying the electrical lines that cross the Marolt and Thomas parcels.

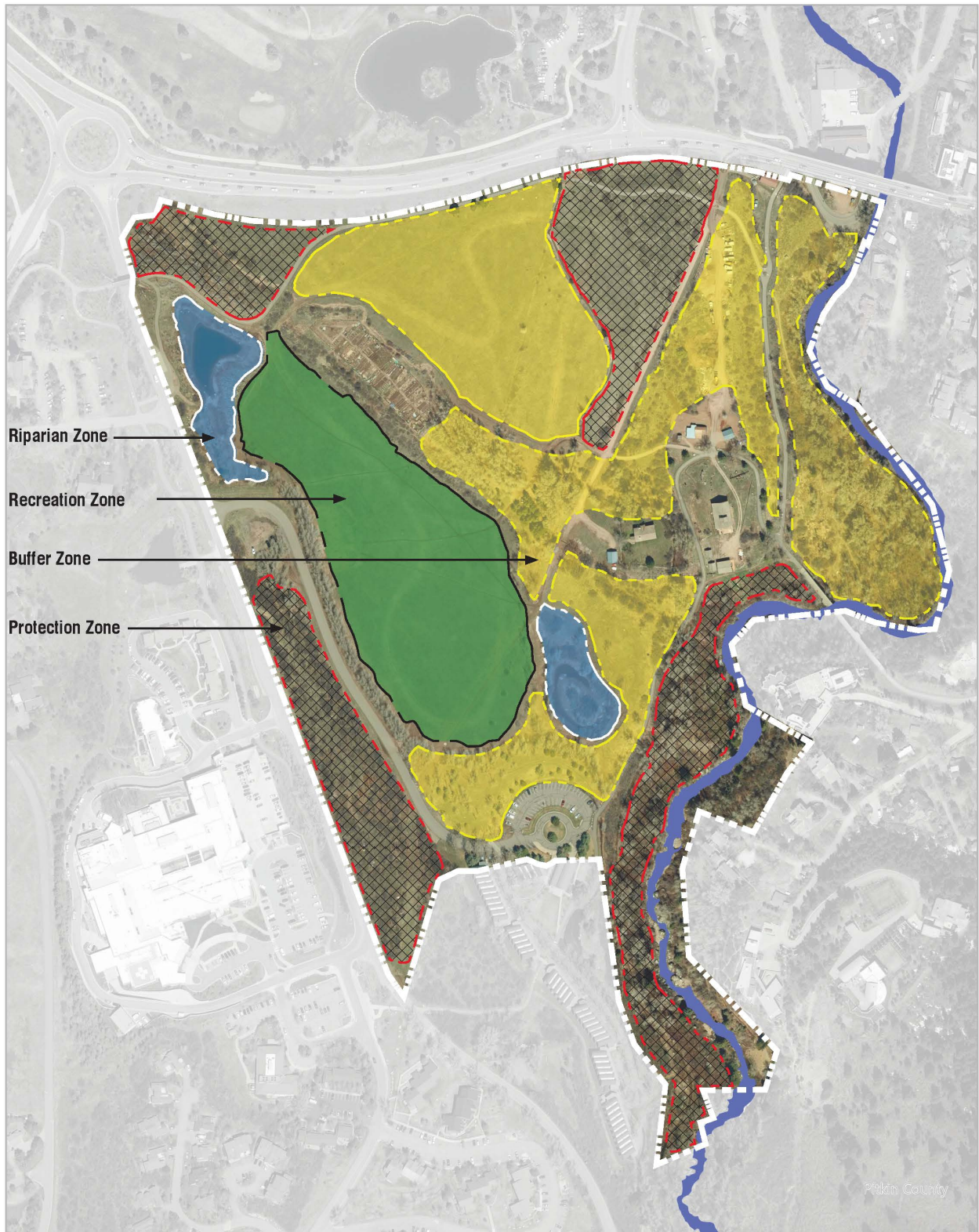


5.02 Maintenance



5.03 Natural Resources

- Allow the native shrub community to continue to expand in the meadow east of the Marolt ditch to improve ecologically valuable habitat.
- Revegetate with native riparian shrubs in the small area to the northeast of the derrick structure in vicinity of the Bergman Trail, and seed native grasses and forbs on the steep banks below and to the southeast of the Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum.
- Create pollinator habitat by planting and seeding with appropriate native wildflower seed mixes.
- Preserve areas with natural tangles of brush and decomposing wood, such as the cottonwoods in the strip of land between the two gravel roads in the northeast portion of the property and the shrubs surrounding the Aspen Community Garden, to support pollinator reproduction and overwintering habitat.
- Establish a zonal management strategy for the northeastern, central and southern pastures within the property. The strategy would use a maintenance hierarchy to establish three distinct zones within the property: protected, recreational and buffer. The boundaries for these three areas would generally follow existing site features. The formalization of trails within the property as well as seasonal closures of the northern pasture to dogs will further support native habitat development and wildlife use.
- Consider enhancing the existing wetland and riparian areas with expanded plantings along the Holden and Holden Marolt Interconnect Ditches.
- Continue noxious weed management while avoiding spraying herbicides between May 15 and July 31 to protect nesting songbirds.



5.03 Natural Resources



5.04 Historical Resources

- Access to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum will be allowed for employees of Aspen Historical Society (AHS) and the vendors and contractors that work AHS special events or maintain the historical buildings. Such vendors and contractors may park only on the AHS leased area. Parking on open space outside of the AHS leased area shall require written permission by the Parks Department's Open Space and Natural Resource Manager or his/her supervisor.
- Install a path with appropriate signage from the public parking space on Marolt place to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum.
- Restore the potato shed to stabilize and preserve this historical structure.
- Install a 4-foot-wide crusher fines path from the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and AHS leased area to the historical potato shed.
- Designate four parking spaces at Marolt Ranch Housing for summer season use by the Aspen Historical Society during the museum's operational dates which are June 18 – October 5.

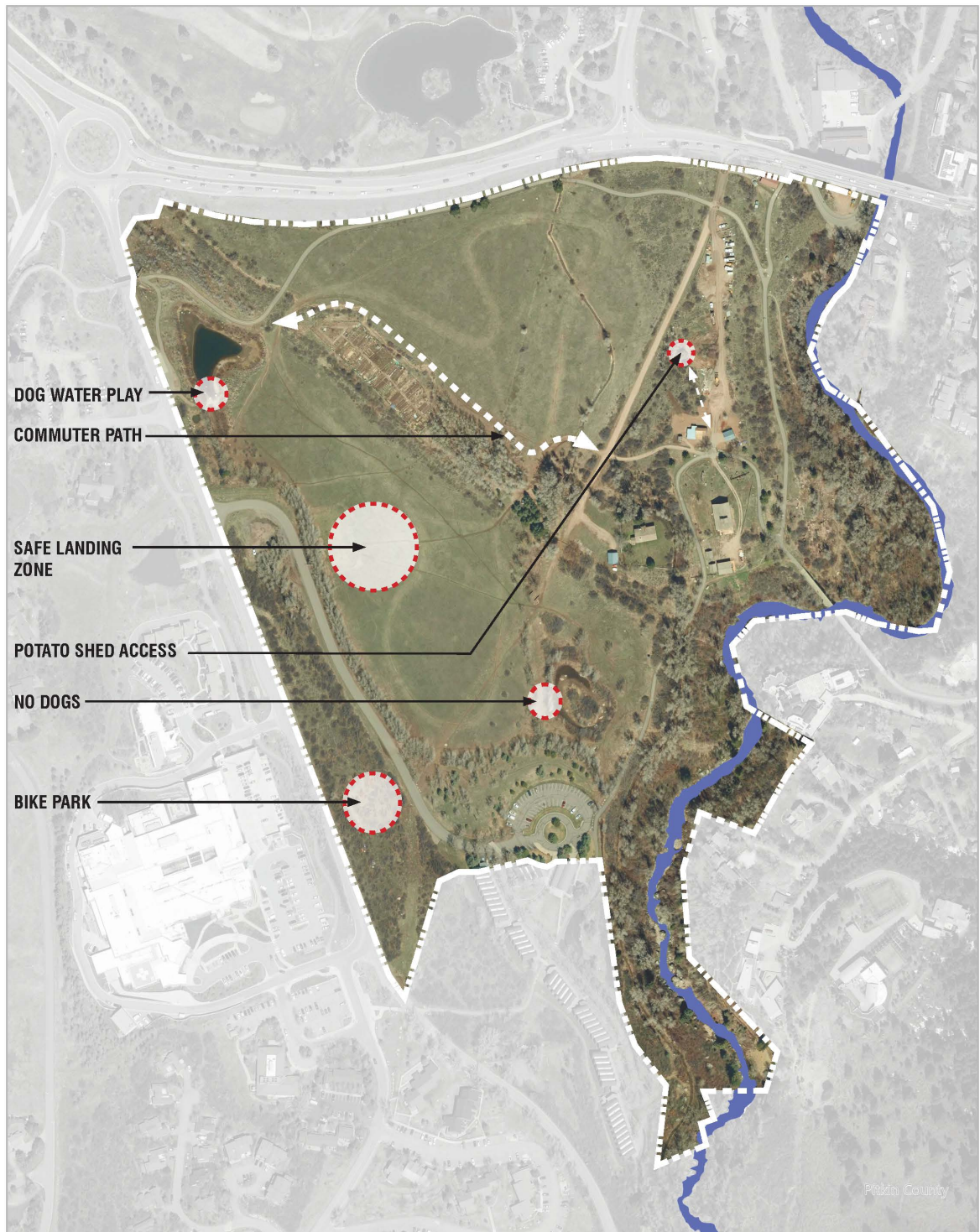


5.04 Historical Resources



5.05 Recreation and Trails

- Partner with the paragliding community to maintain a safe landing zone.
- Designate a soft-surface, single track path that goes through the property from the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum area, along the dirt road that goes north to the Community Garden, and across the open meadow to the paved Marolt Trail as it curves to climb the hill to the ped-ski bridge over Castle Creek Road. This path will serve as a commuter path across the property as well as an important link in area mountain bike trail routes. The dedication of this trail and the closure of the extraneous social trails will provide greater safety for the various recreation user groups on the property.
- Please see action items related to trails in section 5.04 Historical Resources. These action items suggest the development of two soft-surface paths, one for access to the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and the second for access to the historic potato cellar structure.
- Allow dog play in the Marolt Pond at the west end of the property, and not in the Marolt Wetlands.
- A permit shall be required by the City of Aspen Parks Department for all commercial activities.
- Explore the feasibility of a developing a small pump bike park on the Thomas Open Space parcel. If a site is determined to be appropriate, then consider installation and construction.
- Explore possibility of expanded Nordic trail system within the Marolt property.
- Explore the feasibility of snowmaking systems within the Marolt Open Space for Nordic Skiing. Research water access and storage availability, power access and snowmaking system options.
- Investigate alignments for a walking trail that is separate from the groomed Nordic ski trail system.

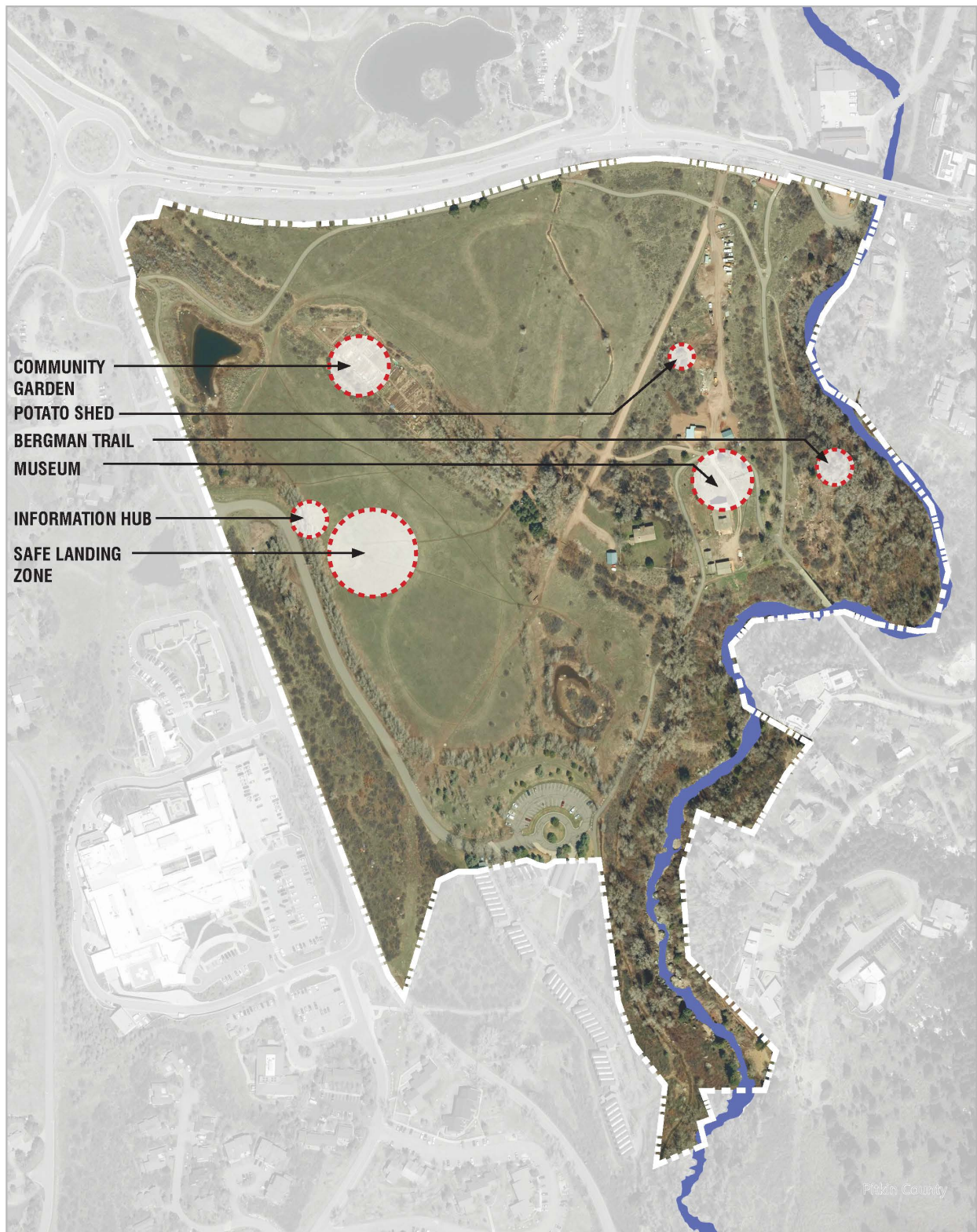


5.05 Recreation and Trails



5.06 Interpretation/Education

- An overall signage plan will be developed and implemented for the property. This plan will include, but not be limited to, open space, trails, historical resources, the Aspen Community Garden, and the paraglider landing zone.
- Create signage for the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum, the historical potato shed, and the former trackway of the Colorado Midland Railroad.
- Restore or replace the Bergman Trail interpretive panels.
- Establish information hubs for Marolt Open Space visitors. A kiosk installed on the western side of the property, adjacent to the parking area, will provide information and maps that will help visitors navigate the property.
- Install signage specific to the paraglider landing area and the Aspen Community Garden in order to facilitate appropriate pedestrian and bike traffic use of the property's trails.



5.06 Interpretation/Education

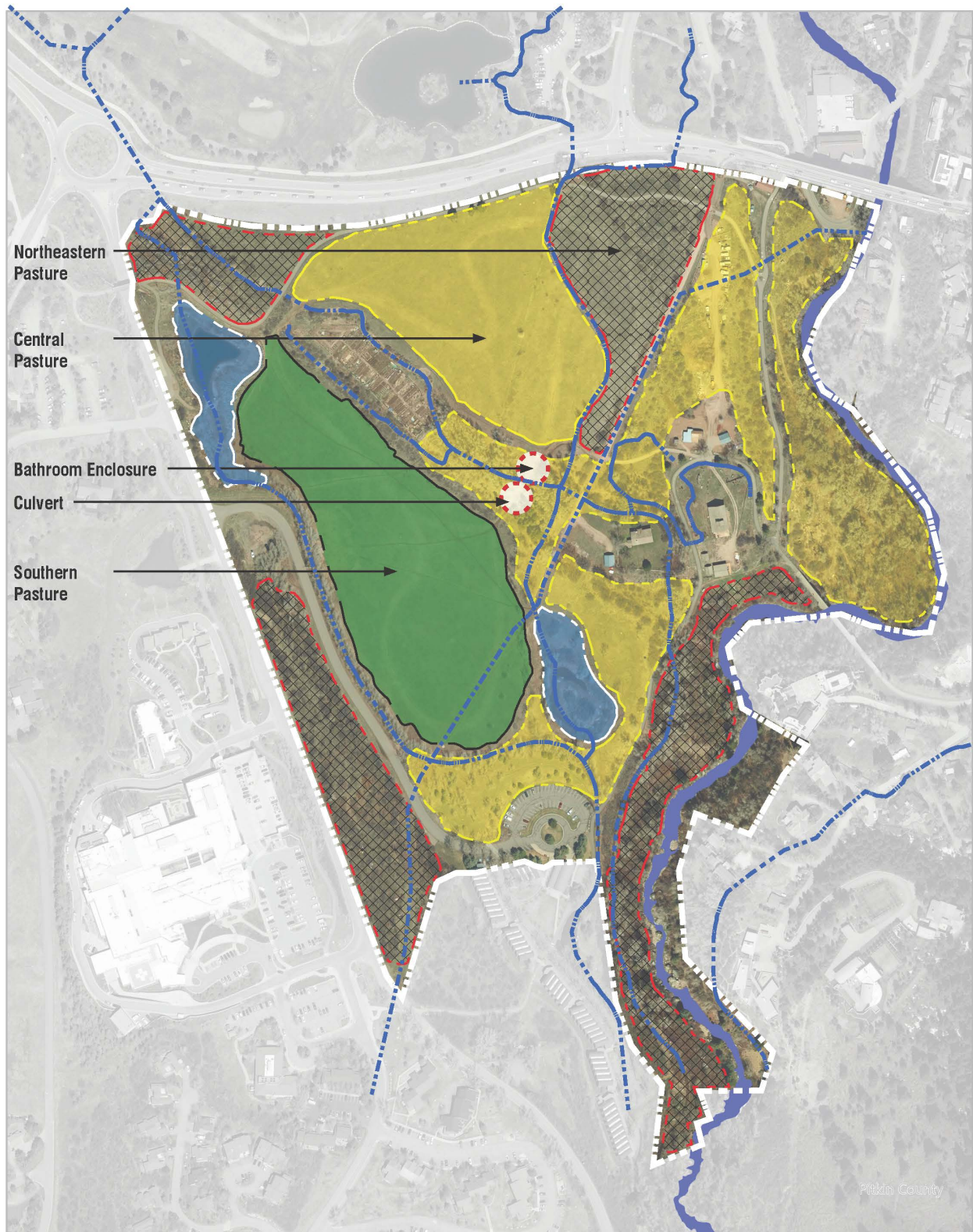


5.07 Agriculture

- Establish a zonal management strategy for the northeastern, central and southern pastures within the property. The strategy would use a maintenance hierarchy to establish three distinct zones within the property: protected, recreational and buffer. The boundaries for these three areas would generally follow existing site features. The formalization of trails within the property as well as seasonal closures of the northern pasture to dogs will further support native habitat development and wildlife use.
- Maintain the non-native grass pasture in the southern/central portion of the property for recreational use.
- Develop a water management plan for the Holden and Marolt ditches. To maintain the City of Aspen's water rights associated with the property, the grass meadows to the north and south of the Aspen Community Garden may be flood irrigated by ditch water from the Holden and Marolt Ditches. The flood irrigation will be coordinated with other uses to ensure limited overlap and resultant damage to the existing natural resources.
- Haying operations may proceed with up to two cuttings per year, depending on moisture and growth during the summer. Hay produced from the site will supplement operations at Cozy Point Ranch, a City of Aspen open space property.

5.08 Aspen Community Garden

- Replace the crushed culvert under the dirt road going to the Aspen Community Garden.
- Provide an appropriate enclosure for the port-a-potty that is in place annually during the gardening season.
- Provide gardener education about invasive weeds and their management.
- Provide ongoing assistance with community garden as deemed necessary by the Open Space and Natural Resource Manager.
- Research the feasibility and necessity of expanding the current community garden.
- Study alternative locations for additional community garden space.



5.07-5.08 Agriculture & Aspen Community Garden



5.09 Special Events

- Special events on the Marolt Open Space shall be prohibited. The Aspen Historical Society (AHS) may conduct special events on their leased area as permitted by the City of Aspen. AHS special events require a permit (per event) from the Parks Department.