

Context

- The EA is still in the pre-scoping phase

Junction Creek, Colorado Trail Overview

- SJNF is investigating the possibility of providing ADA access along the Colorado Trail between the lower and upper parking lots. This may include hardening the trail surface, widening the trail, and creating an accessible fishing pier.
 - Not only would this provide access for people with limited mobility, but the hardening of the trail surface would also address sedimentation from the trail.
 - There is a healthy fish population in Junction Creek, but Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) could stock the creek if the population becomes depleted.
 - There are very few ADA accessible recreation opportunities in San Juan National Forest.
- Another consideration for the Junction Creek/Colorado Trail area is the stabilization of the stream bank and the reduction of social trails and sedimentation in the creek.
 - The strategic placement of boulders can help funnel visitors to the creek and keep them on durable surfaces to reduce sedimentation.
- San Juan National Forest will maintain acknowledgement that recreation in this area will likely continue to increase.
 - SJNF is exploring options to expand the parking lot at the trailhead of the Colorado Trail and make improvements to the Junction Creek Road.

Hidden Valley

- There are up to 80 known archaeological sites within Hidden Valley, reminding us of the long history of land use in this area.
 - About ¾ of these sites are prehistoric (before written records) and the remainder are historic (cultures with written records).
 - Remnants of the Steineger Homestead, established in the late 1800s, are still visible. Fred Steineger played a major role in the development of transportation in the area. SJNF would like to place interpretive signage at this site.
 - Prehistoric sites are not as visible in Hidden Valley, but there is evidence of habitations along the ridgeline that were likely used for hunting. Additionally, prehistoric cultures cultivated crops in the valley, which had a reliable source of water and a longer growing season than the Animas River Valley below, where cold air settles in the cooler shoulder seasons.
 - Because of the cultural resources and terrain in Hidden Valley, fuels management will involve selective fuels reduction, hand thinning and prescribed fire. No heavy machinery will be used here.
- There is a high density of user-created trails in Hidden Valley, which will be addressed in the Junction Creek EA.
 - SJNF will work with tribal partners to designate trails that are sensitive to cultural sites.

Falls Creek Ranch

- Falls Creek Ranch is a 940-acre ranch with 100 1-acre round plots.

- Homeowners at the Ranch began fire mitigation after the Missionary Ridge Fire in 2002.
 - The HOA used crews and contractors to do mitigation at first, but eventually took on the projects themselves and purchased their own equipment. They used grant money to get mitigation rolling at a faster pace and found that designated workdays and social events increased participation.
- When the 416 Fire ignited in 2018, Falls Creek Ranch was directly in its path. Luckily, the HOA had practiced evacuations and were well-prepared for a fire because of years of mitigation. This mitigation allowed fire crews to safely enter the Ranch and effectively stop the fire at its boundary.
 - Falls Creek Ranch is an excellent example of how private landowners play an important role in land management in our forests. The mitigation work they had done created the opportunity to save their homes from wildfire, a risk that is not decreasing for folks that live in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- Four years later, Falls Creek Ranch is still undergoing post-fire recovery and mitigation to protect themselves from future fires.