

Willow Springs Open Space Owner's Association

Rules & Guidelines

Our communities' 810 acre open space is owned by the Willow Springs Open Space Owner's Association (WSOSOA), a non-profit corporation, with representation from each of the 10 Homeowners Associations (HOA) in the Willow Springs/Willowbrook area. Homeowners/residents should contact their HOA representative for more information and WSOSOA access tags.

OPEN SPACE RULES:

- MEMBERS AND GUESTS (ACCOMPANIED BY MEMBERS) ONLY
- PARKING ONLY WITH VALID WSOSOA PERMIT
- NO PARKING AFTER DARK
- NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES
- NO CAMPING, NO FIRES, NO SMOKING, NO FIREWORKS
- NO FIREARMS OR HUNTING GUNS, PAINTBALL GUNS, OR ARCHERY
- NO HUNTING
- DOGS MUST BE UNDER OWNER'S CONTROL AT ALL TIMES
- CARRY OUT ALL TRASH
- MOUNTAIN BIKES MUST HAVE A "VALID" WSOSOA – TAG

COMMON TRAIL COURTESY:

- Hikers: Listen and beware of other trail users and yield to horses. Stay on designated trails.
- Riders on Horseback: Do not ride when trails are muddy. Repair damage your horse may do to trails.
- Mountain Bikers: Yield to all other trail users. Downhill riders yield to uphill riders. Keep speed under control. "Skid'n is Forbid'n". Be very careful around blind corners. Pass other trail users after advising them of your intentions. Minimize your impact on the trails: Do not ride when the trails are muddy.
- Dog Owners: Pick up after your dog. If they do their business on a trail (kick it off the trail). At the trailheads at Whale Rock and Falcon Ridge, plastic trash bags are provided to pick up your dogs mess at these areas. There are trash containers available at these locations to dispose of your plastic trash bag. Keep your dog under control. If your dog has poor social skills, please keep it on a leash.

GUIDELINES FOR OPEN SPACE USE:

1. WSOSOA Use Permit Tag Must Be Properly Displayed. When parking at an entrance you must have a "valid permit tag" displayed on your rear view mirror or dash board. Please lock your doors at the trailheads.
 - Have your WSOSOA issued Permit Tags displayed around the neck or handlebars of your bike at all times. Willow Springs Open Space Owner's Association (WSOSOA) has a group of volunteer resident rangers (VR) that patrol the trails. It is quite probable that you will be stopped by them while you are on WSOSOA property. If a rider does not have a tag, they will be asked to turn around and exit the area. It is imperative that WSOSOA VRs receive the utmost courtesy and cooperation when you are asked to stop.

- We have a reciprocal agreement with Ken Caryl and there are a limited number of tags for Ken Caryl residents. They are allowed one tag per household. Do not transfer your use permit to anyone outside of immediate family members which live in your household. Violation of this rule will result in loss of all privileges to use WSOS trails.
2. Ride on Designated Trails Only, Leave No Trace.
 - This also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don't cut switchbacks.
 - Do not ride WSOS trails when they are muddy. You may be asked to repair any damage done to trails caused by riding in muddy conditions.
 - Clean up after your dog. Take any trash out.
 3. Do not ride with more than three (3) guests per resident and no groups larger than 10 riders total.
 - While your guests are on WSOSOA property, they are your responsibility, and you must be present with them at all times. If guests are found to invite themselves or ride unaccompanied, they will be asked to leave and their description recorded. Repeated use of the open space by guests not accompanied by authorized Ken Caryl residents may result in referral to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office for prosecution.
 4. Wildlife and Animals.
 - An unannounced approach, a sudden movement, or a loud noise startles all animals. This can be dangerous for you, others, and the animals.
 - The Open Space is home to animals that can pose a danger to humans including rattlesnakes, bears and mountain lions. Keep a close watch on your children and notify both Open Space management (HOA representative) and the State Department of Wildlife if you encounter a bear or mountain lion that exhibits aggressive behavior.
 - Rattlesnakes are plentiful around rocks and deep grasses. Stay on the trails.
 - When passing horses use special care. Dismount from your mountain bike and verbally ask for directions from the horseback rider. This will ensure their safety, as well as yours.
 - Dogs must be under the owner's control at all times and behave themselves around other users and wildlife.
 - In case of fire call 911.
 5. Perform 4 hours of Volunteer WSOS trail work per year.
 - Under the direction of Willow Springs Open Space Owner's Association managers, we encourage each resident to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours of work on WSOS trails annually.
 - Residents who volunteer 4 hours of work in our open space will be shown preference in receiving one of the limited number of reciprocal Ken Caryl Open Space tags.
 - You will be contacted via email of the trail work schedule.

The WSOSA appreciates your response and support in keeping our trails maintained and private. We feel that it is necessary for all of us to band together as a community and protect our treasure of recreational trails. Please enjoy the trails and treat the area and its natural inhabitants with care.

History of the Willow Springs Open Space

The Willow Springs Open Space Homeowner's Association, Inc. is a Colorado non-profit corporation formed in 1996 to take ownership and management responsibility for an 819 acre parcel of land to be used as Open Space as part of the Willow Springs Official Development Plan. Many thanks to Scott Bowman, the original "Trail Guy" and founding President for 10 years. Scott spearheaded the effort to provide the Open Space for our residents and then designed and managed the construction of most of the trail system we have today. Our community has a unique amenity that few housing developments in the country can offer - our own mountain park. Homeowners can use this open space for hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, enjoying nature. All this is just out your front door.

History of Willow Springs & Willowbrook Areas

The area surrounding our mountain park has an interesting and colorful history. Prior to the white settlers inhabiting the area, several Indian tribes had territories that overlapped this portion of the Rocky Mountain foothills. The Plains Indians, the Cheyenne and the Arapaho, shared the area with the Mountain Utes. The land was used for hunting elk and deer. A Ute Indian chief, Colorow, and his band inhabited the area along the hogback in the 1860s and 1870s. A large, natural cave-like structure, which Colorow used, bears his name and is located in the Willowbrook Development along Colorow Drive.

With the westward migration of gold miners and settlers, Willow Springs was bordered on the north and south by two roads that were major routes for miners heading for the gold fields of Colorado. Thousands of gold seekers poured into the mountains beginning in 1860 on the Bradford toll road which ran through Ken Caryl, our neighbor to the south, and later in the 1870s up Turkey Creek canyon on a road established by Colonel Parmalee. The two story stone house built by MJ Bradford still exists within the Ken Caryl development as do traces of the old wagon road.

With the growth of the settlement of Denver and the statehood of Colorado, the Indians were pushed out and the lands homesteaded and put to use as pasture for cattle and sheep.

The Willow Springs property has been used primarily for ranching over the years, although in the 1930s it also served as the original "Willow Spring Country Club" and boasted as many as 1500 members, residents of Denver who would come out for a day of picnicking in the country.

In 1948, the Harwoods bought the property, utilizing it as a ranch until the early 1970s when they began developing the most recent Willow Springs Country Club, now called Red Rocks Country Club.

The greatest impact to the Mountain park came in September, 1978 when the Murphy Gulch fire swept through portions of the Open Space. The fire lasted six days and was fought by 15 fire departments and hundreds of volunteers. The fire was caused by children playing with matches miles to the south along Deer Creek Canyon.

Many of the trails that exist within the Mountain Park were roads built to facilitate the herding of cattle. More recently, roads and fire breaks were cut to fight the Murphy Gulch fire. These dirt roads were the beginning of a network of trails that have been constructed since 1996 to give us the approximately 15 miles of trails used and enjoyed by our residents today.