

Red Butte Open Space Management Plan



Original; 2007, Amended 2008

Property Discription

Red Butte Open Space (also known as Ute Butte) is a 35-acre parcel within the city limits owned by Aspen Valley Land Trust and managed by the City of Aspen Open Space and Parks Department under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Background

Red Butte was donated to Dartmouth College by Henry Stein in 1974. In 1989, it was anonymously purchased from Dartmouth for \$300,000 (although appraised at \$600,000) to prevent Dartmouth College from developing it or selling it for development, and donated to Aspen Valley Land Trust.

Improvements

Red Butte is adjacent to Stein Park and the Rio Grand Trail. An Aspen Sanitation District easement and ditch easement run along the north side of the property, parallel with the trail and Roaring Fork River. An elevated section of the Rio Grande Trail is on a portion of the east side of the property. There is an old water flume and unpaved hiking trail on the property.

Restrictions/Prohibitions

The property is deed restricted by Dartmouth College, stating that the property will be preserved in a “natural and undeveloped state.” If that condition is breached, the property ownership will revert to Dartmouth.

Management Objectives

The City of Aspen maintains the Red Butte property according to the following restrictions:

- Open to public access
- Non-paved hiking trails, except for the Rio Grande Trail on the east side of Red Butte
- No camping or campfires
- Dogs are allowed only on leash
- Weeds and non-native invasive plants will be managed according to the terms of the City of Aspen weed management plan.
- No structures or permanent facilities are allowed
- Trails will be maintained for erosion control
- Trails will be patrolled by City of Aspen parks staff for dogs on-leash enforcement and litter enforcement
- Other restrictions as may be required by the City of Aspen

Biological Resources

Red Butte is a steep ridge, covered mostly by pinon and Utah juniper trees. Chokecherries, serviceberries, mountain mahogany, and sage are dominant plant species and Douglas fir and scrub oak are prominent on the northeast slope. Because of its location along the Roaring Fork River, and within the city limits of Aspen, Red Butte is a pivotal habitat for deer because of its connection to the Zoline Ranch, Deer Hill and Stein Ranch. The shrubs provide excellent habitat for meadow voles, deer mice, rabbits, weasels, fox and coyotes.

Photo Credit: Todd Patrick Photography