

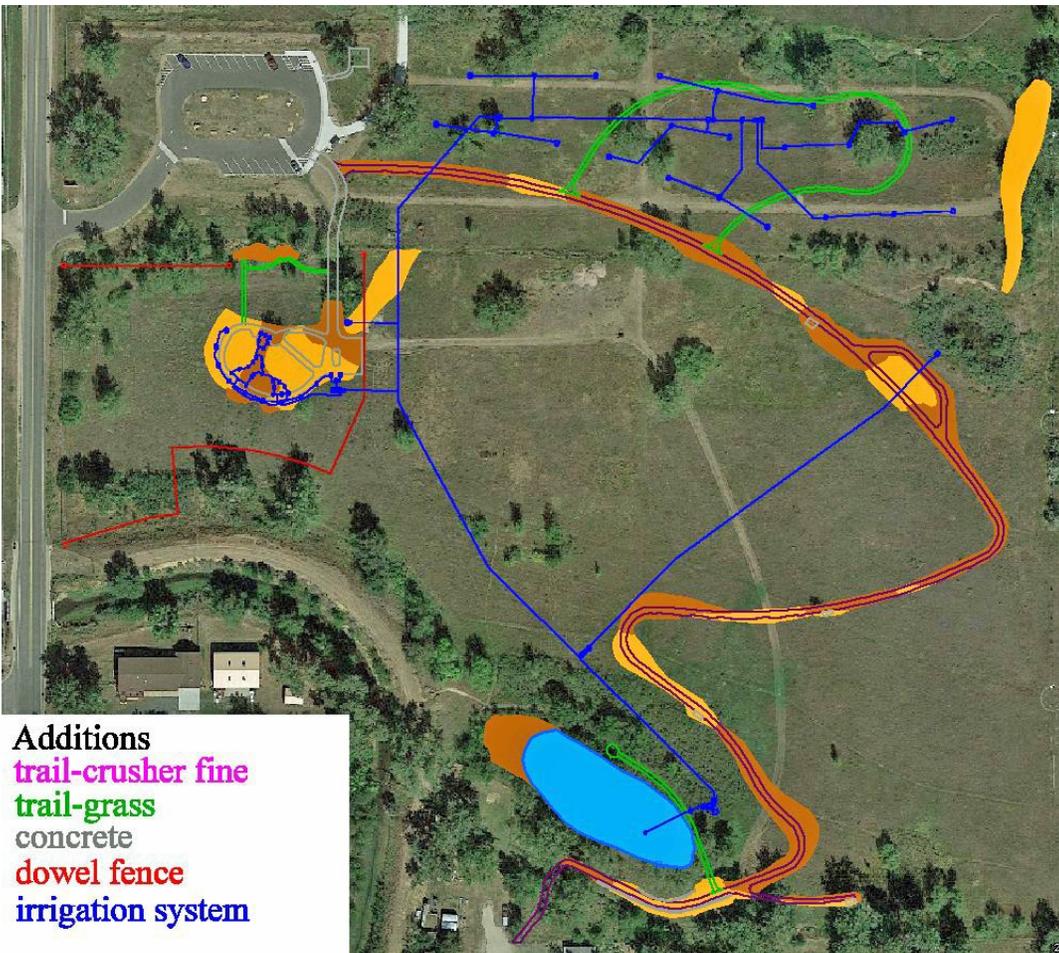
Disturbances
 total loop removal
 pond excavation, lining
 cuts
 fills
 ponds, creek

Serene Conservancy status

The gravel loops in the lowlands, presently used by walkers and pets, are to be totally removed, destroying their function as a levee confining Van Bibber Creek. The replacement is a single curved path to the south made durable with fine gravel. There is also a small lowland loop of mowed grass, not durable for walking traffic.

The upper (south) pond is to be excavated, lined, with dirt replacement, to hold water temporarily for irrigation of the lowlands.

A picnic shelter and playground are to be built south of the parking lot.



Additions
 trail-crusher fine
 trail-grass
 concrete
 dowel fence
 irrigation system

Total cost estimate: \$774K as of June, likely to rise 30%, from property taxes.

Main issue: Conservation Easement allows natural and agricultural uses and irrigation. The District is not choosing agriculture and its water needs. By definition, all natural areas must receive precipitation only. Therefore the plans for the irrigation system and lining of the south pond (which are costly) violate the natural status and waste water on prairie grasses that do not need it.

from Dr. Ed Holroyd, former caretaker.
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More detail and comments are posted at www.EdHolroyd.info/Serene, including a cost analysis at www.EdHolroyd.info/Serene/SereneCostReview.pdf.

You may send your comments to:

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Chairman of Board of Directors and of Prospect Foundation which oversees the Serene Conservancy for Prospect

Depending on your interest in the Serene Conservancy future open space property you might have an opinion on:

Trails - If you use the 3 lowland gravel loops for walking and pet exercise, how do you feel about the plan to totally remove those loops down to the old soil level?

Is the curving proposed trail to the east and then uphill to the top (south) a good replacement or does it have good usefulness for your needs?

If you already use the grassy path between the south entrance and the lowlands, the proposal is to abandon it, replacing it with the curving path that is more durable and with a slope that is wheelchair accessible. Is that a better route between the top and bottom? Not mentioned is retaining that simple existing path and strengthening it for more durability with traffic.

Irrigation - The interior 13 acres are supposed to be restored to natural habitat according to the conservation easement. That has essentially been done. But “natural” means that the only water it receives should be from precipitation, not irrigation from ditch water rights. From your visual observations of the property and the entire Van Bibber Open Space, does it appear that the natural vegetation needs irrigation water? If not, then the proposed irrigation wastes precious water for no good purpose and wastes the taxpayer money to establish the irrigation system. The supplemental water will enhance the productivity of invasive noxious weeds that do not belong on this property.

If irrigation is not needed, then there is no need to excavate the southern (upper) pond, line it with a water barrier, and refill its bottom with dirt and vegetation debris. That activity would also be an expensive use of taxpayer money.

The present leakage from the ditch of irrigation water is enlarging the cattail swamp in the southern highlands and dampens adjacent properties. That leakage could be lessened by installing a liner in the ditch, opened at the top for easy cleaning.