



Last September, I wrote an article for the Village Crier about Quincy Farm, the City's 17 1/2 acre parcel of open space on the south side of Quincy at the High Line Canal crossing. As we move into the warmer months of 2024, I wanted to provide an update to that article.

WEST SIDE NATURE TRAIL

Since that last article, and as previously announced, work has begun to improve the nature trail on the west side of the property. The existing trail, installed several years ago, was a mowed path through the pasture, along with another loop through the wooded area on the northwest corner of the property. The current improvements include making the trail a uniform width and laying down a crusher fine surface to create a low-impact walking trail. These trail improvements were developed in direct consultation with the same environmental expert who performed the 2007 environmental baseline report for Cat Anderson (who graciously donated Quincy Farm to the City) underlying the conservation easement she placed on the property, as well as with Colorado State Extension.

When finished, the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking trail will allow community members to enjoy the natural landscape as well as the beautiful vistas uniquely located on the west side of Quincy Farm. The defined trail will also serve as an additional limitation to public access on the west side, in accordance with the conservation easement, as visitors will be required to always remain on the trail while visiting the pastures and wooded areas. This will help to ensure protection of the wildlife and natural habitat, again in concert with the conservation easement. The use of crusher fines will also limit the spread of weeds and

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minimize impact on the pastures from regular City tree and pasture maintenance.

The main part of the trail is expected to be completed by this spring, weather permitting, at which time the City will open the west side to the community from dawn to dusk, similar to the east side of Quincy Farm. The northwest loop through the wooded area will not be constructed and opened until the summer to avoid disturbing the great-horned owls that are known to nest in that area. Going forward, access to that part of the trail will always be closed during the nesting season for the same reason.

POND

In addition to the work on the nature trail, the City plans to dredge the pond on the southern end of the property. The pond was originally an irrigation pond fed from the High Line Canal, but with Denver Water no longer supplying the Canal with water the ability of the pond to sustain a healthy eco system has diminished substantially. Dredging the pond to make it a bit smaller and a little deeper will improve the pond's water quality and create an improved habitat for wildlife. The City is currently working with engineering and environmental consultants on the design and specifications for this environmental improvement which should be completed this summer, with dredging operations to begin this fall when the water level is lowest.

EAST SIDE/BIG BARN

As hopefully most readers know by now, the east side of the property was opened to the community last year. During 2023, the Cherry Hills Land Preserve (CHLP), the City's partner on Quincy Farm, put on over 15 different nature classes and programs, ranging from bee keeping to vegetable gardening, from learning about raptors to learning about the stars, and many more. For 2024, CHLP plans to offer similar classes and programs to allow our community to learn more about the local flora and fauna and help to instill an appreciation for nature and promote conservation and sustainability. You can find out more about CHLP and their plans for 2024 here: <https://www.quincymfarm.org>

In addition to the various programs that CHLP will conduct on the east side, the Big

Barn will be renovated this year to stabilize the structure and its historic elements and to create a gathering place for future programs. The City and CHLP intend for the Big Barn to become the educational hub for high-quality nature experiences and small community events. Engineering and construction drawings for this project are nearing completion, which should allow construction to begin later this summer. This approximately \$760,000 investment in Quincy Farm is being funded in part by CHLP and their donors as well as by the City.

While we are excited about our continuing efforts to preserve this amazing and historic property and make it available to the community, there continues to be a lot of misinformation about the City's intentions in this regard. From the start, the City has been dedicated to being good stewards of this extraordinary gift to the people of Cherry Hills Village and to adhering to the conservation easement on the property. Cat Anderson donated this property to the people of Cherry Hills Village under that conservation easement such that the land, wildlife, and environment could be protected, preserved, enhanced, and managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of our community. As with any municipal project, there will always be differences in opinion as to how something should be done, and Quincy Farm is no exception. However, I believe the City's work on Quincy Farm in conjunction with CHLP has not only been consistent with the conservation values enumerated in the conservation easement but has, in fact, enhanced those values.

The City regularly provides updates on Quincy Farm at <https://www.cherryhillsvillage.com/555/Quincy-Farm-News>

If you haven't had a chance to visit Quincy Farm, the crown jewel of the City's public lands, I urge you to do so, or sign up to attend one of CHLP's upcoming programs. The east side barnyard is currently open to visitors daily, dawn to dusk, and as noted above, the west side will be open later this spring.

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