Interpretive Master Plan for the Community of Highlands Ranch, Colorado

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Introduction
This plan is the work product of Exhibit Design Associates, a Colorado corporation, working on behalf of the Highlands Ranch Metro District. It articulates statements of significance and interpretive themes to guide the development of interpretive media for the Community of Highlands Ranch, Colorado. The plan also offers recommendations for specific exhibits and programming (the “media prescription”), actions to support interpretive objectives (“the tactical prescription”) as well as a prioritized schedule and cost estimates for implementation.

The focus of the plan is community-wide, but particular emphasis is placed on development at three sites:
- Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion
- Fly’n B Park
- Cheese Ranch Historic and Natural Area

Purpose & Need
The purpose of this document is to provide a foundation and guide for the development of interpretive media and programming that will be implemented in the future. There is currently no interpretive plan in place for the Highlands Ranch Community.

Goals of the Plan
The goals of this plan are to:
- Develop statements of significance and interpretive themes for the community of Highlands Ranch to guide the development of interpretive media and programming.
- Envision interpretive media to be deployed in Highlands Ranch, and provide a prioritized schedule for implementation.
- Provide cost estimates for implementation.
- Develop a strategy to assemble research materials in a single location, whether virtual or bricks-and-mortar, to enable/facilitate research by interested parties, especially local schoolchildren.
- Suggest strategies that will complement and enhance the objectives described below.

Objectives
The objectives of the interpretive media and programming described in this plan are to:
- Increase appreciation and understanding of local history.
- Develop a sense of place that includes greater awareness of cultural heritage and ecological issues such as water management and preservation of open space and wildlife habitat.
- Stimulate curiosity and a desire to discover more about the community and its history.
- Increase appreciation of the lifestyle offered by the Community of Highlands Ranch.
- Provide recreational opportunities that stimulate learning through healthy, fun activities.
- Create a personal connection with visitors who seek something of value for themselves.

Methodology/Project Approach
The first tasks completed in the project included meetings/interviews with Highlands Ranch Metro District staff. The focus of these meetings was to get a sense of the existing situation and the resources available. The project team studied the available histories, planning documents, existing interpretive media, maps and other materials.

The project team toured the community’s parks and trails, and performed site analyses at the three focus sites. The team also toured the Chum Howe house in the Highlands Ranch Historic Park.
Planning Workshop
A half-day workshop was held on February 3, 2015, at the Highlands Ranch Mansion. The Highlands Ranch Metro District staff and external stakeholders in attendance included:

- Melanie Tafaro, Douglas County Historic Preservation Board
- David Johnston, Douglas County Historic Preservation Board
- Mark Stevenson, Highlands Ranch Historic Society
- Nancy Linsenbigler, Highlands Ranch Historic Society
- Laura Lacerte, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- David Parks, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- Carolyn Peters, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- Brian Muller, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- Carrie Ward, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- Carolyn Peters, Highlands Ranch Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
- Tammie Clausen, Douglas County Libraries, Highlands Ranch Branch
- Shaun Boyd, Douglas County Historic Research Center
- Susan Appleby, author of local history volume
- Jamie Noebel, Highlands Ranch Community Association
- Sherry Eppers, Highlands Ranch Metro District Community Relations Department
- Jeff Case, Highlands Ranch Metro District Public Works Department

The workshop notes can be found in Appendix C.

Kids Workshop
A kids-only workshop was held on February 26, 2015, at the Cresthill Middle School. Seven kids attended: six 7th graders and one 8th grader.

The workshop was conducted by EDA historian/writer, Larry Borowsky. It was an informal affair that involved several exercises intended to get a sense of the participants’ knowledge and perceptions about Highlands Ranch. These included trying to identify historic photos, multiple-choices quizzes, developing their own Highlands Ranch masterplan and describing what a pioneer family would have to do to survive on the High Plains.

A “write the caption” exercise in which the kids were challenged to create captions for an historic photo led to the (quite robust) idea to include a “write the hashtag” component in interpretive materials such as exhibits.

Important takeaways included:

- When asked about their favorite places to go at Highlands Ranch, all seven kids named a local natural area.
- The biggest “hit” of the workshop was a masterplanning exercise in which the kids designed their own versions of Highlands Ranch.
- The kids really liked the idea of taking photos from the same point of view from which an historic photo was taken and doing before-and-after comparisons as part of an exhibit (they viewed historical and contemporary photos of the residence at Fly’n B Park).
- Support was also expressed for exhibit activities that include quizzes at the beginning, with the answer(s) being revealed as the exhibit experience unfolds, as well as cliffhanger stories at the beginning of an exhibit experience (with the story’s conclusion revealed at the end).

The workshop notes can be found in Appendix D.
Project Background
Highlands Ranch is the largest unincorporated community in Colorado with a population of about 100,000 people. Its population is roughly equal to that of Centennial, the tenth-largest city in the state.

The local government is the seven-member Board of Directors of the Highlands Ranch Metro District (“the District”). Municipal services provided by the District include:

- Construction of major roads and storm drainage facilities
- Installation and maintenance of landscaping and fences along major roads
- Installation of traffic control devices on major roads
- Operation of recreation and sports programs
- Management of open space and natural areas
- Police and fire protection, contracted through the City of Littleton
- Water and wastewater services, contracted through the Centennial Water & Sanitation District (CW&SD)
- Community events and volunteer program management
- Senior outreach services
- Operation and maintenance of Highlands Ranch Mansion.

For the last decade, more than 90% of the District’s water supply has come from riparian sources, reflecting a commitment on the part of CW&SD to optimize the use of renewable water supplies. These sources are supplemented, as needed, with withdrawals from underground aquifers.

The Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA), a nongovernmental homeowners association, is one of the largest organizations of its kind in the nation. It enforces architectural covenants and zoning ordinances. HRCA also operates four recreation centers, provides recreational programs, maintains backcountry wilderness areas and organizes a variety of community events.

About Douglas County
Highlands Ranch is located entirely within Douglas County, Colorado. Douglas County is the eighth-most populous of Colorado’s 64 counties with a population of about 285,000 (2010 U.S. Census). It is the 46th largest county in the state with an area of 843 square miles.

Castle Rock is the county seat. Castle Rock, Parker and Lone Tree are the largest incorporated communities in the county. Highlands Ranch, with a population of about 100,000 people, is nearly twice the size of the next-largest community (Castle Rock has slightly over 50,000 residents).

Douglas County has been recognized by national publications and organizations for several positive attributes, including:

- High school test scores
- Job growth
- Quality of life.
Please see Appendix A for more information about recent national recognition of Douglas County and Highlands Ranch.

Located midway between Colorado’s two largest cities (Denver, Colorado Springs) on the I-25/Front Range corridor, Douglas County was the fastest-growing county in the nation in the 1990s. The median household income in the county is nearly twice the national average ($102,961 versus $52,250), placing it among the ten wealthiest counties in the nation. It is the only county on that list that is not on the Eastern Seaboard or in California.

With 55.8% of its residents holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, the county also has significantly higher levels of educational attainment than both Colorado (37% of state residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher) and the nation (29.1%). The community of Highlands Ranch has an even more highly-educated population than Douglas County overall, with 81% of its residents holding a bachelor’s or graduate degree.

The incidence of home ownership is also impressively high: 91% versus a national average of 64%.

Ethnically, Douglas County is overwhelmingly white (91.6%). Persons of Hispanic/Latino, Asian and African-American descent together constitute virtually all of the ethnic minority population. The proportion of the population they represent is considerably less than both state and national averages.

_Douglas County Landscape/Natural History_

Douglas County is situated roughly in the geographic center of Colorado, at the intersection of the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. About one-quarter of the total land area is in the Pike-San Isabel National Forest. The county spans three distinct topographical regions: mountains, foothills and plains. Dramatic changes in elevation result in an ecologically-diverse and scenic landscape.

The elevation above sea level in Douglas County ranges from 5,380’ in the area of Chatfield Reservoir to 9,748’ at Devil’s Head in the national forest. The southern boundary of the county lies along the divide between the watersheds of the Platte and Arkansas rivers at an elevation of about 7,500’. Known as Monument Hill, it is an area known for unpredictable weather extremes that frequently challenge travelers along the I-25 corridor.
Douglas County has an arid mid-continental climate with abundant sunshine (>300 days per year). Large daily and seasonal temperature fluctuations (from an average of 12.2° in January to 86.3° in July) are typical. Rainfall is less than 15”/year in most areas. The area is subject to both violent summer thunderstorms and winter storms accompanied by heavy snow and gale-force winds, but the weather is generally mild and sunny, one of the major reasons why so many people have chosen to relocate to the Front Range.

Vegetation communities include grasslands (shortgrass prairie) at lower elevations, shrubby hillsides and ponderosa forests in the foothills and spruce-fir forests in the higher elevations. Major riparian areas on the north side of the watershed divide (where Highlands Ranch is located) include the South Platte River and Plum Creek. These “ribbons of green” are vitally important wildlife habitat.

Although there are threatened and endangered species (i.e. Preble’s meadow jumping mouse) that use similar habitats along the Front Range, in the immediate area of Highlands Ranch in Douglas County there are no known areas of critical importance or occurrences of listed species.

**Historical Overview**

This section is intended to give a brief overview of Douglas County and Highlands Ranch history. It is not intended to serve as an exhaustive reference, rather to provide enough foundational information for readers to make an informed evaluation of the relative importance of the statements of significance and interpretive themes presented later in this document. Readers desiring more detailed information are referred to the volume *Fading Past: The Story of Douglas County, Colorado*, by Susan Consola Appleby (who has generously donated her time and expertise to consult on this project). More references can be found in Appendix A: Bibliography.

**Native American Occupation**

The occupation of Colorado’s Front Range is generally divided into five phases that reflect the technologies used by a succession of Native American people. Throughout these phases, there is strong archaeological evidence that the Douglas County region supported comparatively high population concentrations. It can be inferred that this was due to the availability of resources from both mountain and plains ecosystems, and relative ease of travel between them. The South Platte River offered a natural corridor connecting mountain and plain, with abundant resources along the way that included water, timber, fish, fruits and seeds from riparian vegetation.

The **PaleoIndian Period** (12,000-7000 B.C.) was the last period in which the megafauna of the Pleistocene (mammoths, giant sloths, etc.) inhabited the Great Plains, and it marked the first human occupation of Colorado. The widely-held theory is that nomadic hunters migrated southward through an ice-free corridor along the Front Range to inhabit areas from Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front to New Mexico.

The **Archaic Period** (7000 B.C.-500 A.D.) was distinguished by a shift to more dependence on small game and plant foods as the megafauna faded into extinction. Manos, metates and other stone tools used to process plant material provide evidence of the shift. The appearance of bows and arrows as well as snares suggest an increased reliance on hunting smaller game animals.

The **Plains Woodland Period** (500-1000 A.D.) saw the importation of technologies from the east and south, notably the cultivation of maize and fabrication of ceramics. The tepee appears during this period.
The **Upper Republican Period** (1000-1500 A.D.) was marked by diversification of cultivated foods to include beans, squash and sunflowers, as well as more sophisticated ceramics.

The major event of the **Historic Period** (1500-1900 A.D.) was the appearance of Europeans. Acquisition of the horse from the Spanish dramatically altered the lifestyle of the natives. Horses facilitated travel and created a culture of reliance on the great herds of bison that, early in the period, populated not only the Great Plains but also mountain areas like South Park.

At the time of the arrival of the Europeans, the region that is now Douglas County was dominated by the Arapaho and Cheyenne. Utes dominated the mountainous regions to the west, but their acquisition of the horse allowed them to travel to the plains to hunt bison. Conversely, the plains tribes often migrated to South Park for its abundant game and to acquire salt. Conflict between tribes was frequent, with the Cheyenne and Arapaho usually allied against the Utes.

In the immediate area of Highlands Ranch, there is archaeological evidence that Indians frequented the area in both the prehistoric and historic periods to obtain petrified wood, quartzite and rhyolite for tool-making and decorative purposes.

The first Europeans to arrive in Colorado (after early forays from the south by Spanish conquistadors) were fur traders in search of beaver pelts. Although these trailblazing mountain men essentially eliminated beaver from Colorado's streams in a few short decades, they were small in number, and by and large friendly with the Indian tribes. Mutually-beneficial trading relationships and even intermarriage were common.

The discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858 signaled the beginning of a precipitous decline in the vitality of the Native American cultures in the state. Violence between Indian tribes and the miners, farmers, ranchers and other EuroAmerican immigrants was commonplace throughout the latter half of the 1800s. Indian culture was eventually submerged by a tidal wave of immigration, and the Native Americans were forcibly relocated to ever-shrinking reservations. By 1900, virtually all of the Native Americans in Colorado had been displaced from the lands they occupied when gold was discovered.

**AngloAmerican Settlement**

Douglas County spawned one of the first significant mining camps in the 1858-59 gold rush that launched Colorado’s modern-day settlement. Russellville, located on the upper reaches of Cherry Creek in southeastern Douglas County, attracted so many placer miners in the late summer of 1858 that some historians regard it as “the birthplace of Colorado.” By 1859 the miners had moved on, but Russellville’s sawmill remained busy cutting timber for the booming mining camps of Denver and Auraria.

Russellville’s experience established a pattern that would recur throughout Douglas County’s first century. From the very beginning, the region’s communities have supplied Denver and other nearby population centers with food, water, construction materials and other resources. These commercial connections enabled several generations of Douglas County families to make a good living on the outskirts of Denver. This pattern, in turn, set the stage for the eventual growth of Highlands Ranch as one of the city’s largest suburban metro developments.

The primary resources that attracted settlement to Douglas County in the 19th and early 20th centuries were:

- Water
- Timber and Stone
- Livestock
Produce Water

Nearly all of early Denver’s water supply flowed through Douglas County. Both of the city’s main waterways, Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, run through Douglas County. Cherry Creek originates just south of the county line in northern El Paso County. An important South Platte tributary, Plum Creek, lies completely within Douglas County.

In addition to this relative abundance of water resources, Douglas County contains the headgate of the Highline Canal, which winds more than 60 miles through Douglas, Arapahoe and Denver counties. Completed in 1883, this human-made waterway brought tens of thousands of acres of land under irrigation. The Highline was a prime reason that Denver’s population tripled from 35,000 in the 1880 Census to 107,000 in 1890. It vastly increased the Front Range’s human carrying capacity.

Douglas County added a second major irrigation project in 1889 with the completion of Castlewood Dam, along Cherry Creek south of Parker. One of the first major dams upstream of Denver, it was designed to provide irrigation for about 30,000 acres in Douglas and Arapahoe counties. The leaky dam never fulfilled its potential, although it did feed canal networks that supported farms and fruit orchards for about 40 years. In 1933 the dam gave way and sent a wall of water cascading downstream toward Denver. Miraculously there were few deaths, but the disaster caused extensive property damage along Cherry Creek all the way down to Denver.

As terrible as the Castlewood Dam failure was, it caused less destruction than Douglas County’s natural flood events. All of Douglas County’s waterways witnessed major floods that destroyed farmland, property and lives. Devastation occurred about once a decade in the 19th century, beginning with a May 1864 flood that drowned an entire family of Douglas County settlers on East Plum Creek near Castle Rock. The same event washed out roads and bridges along the length of Cherry Creek from Castle Rock to Denver.

Similar catastrophes occurred in May 1878 and July 1885, with the latter interrupting service on the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway. The flood of June 1921 was the most severe ever recorded along the South Platte River. The river and Plum Creek both overflowed their banks in Douglas County. Downstream in Denver the waterline rose more than 7 feet.

The county’s worst recorded flood event occurred in June 1965. Both branches of Plum Creek flooded, inundating the town of Sedalia. Cherry and Kiowa Creeks in eastern Douglas County flooded as well, causing extensive damage to highway bridges and railroad tracks throughout the eastern half of the county. A Cherry Creek monitoring station in southeastern Douglas County registered a maximum flow of 40,000 cfs—three times as high as any previously recorded.

The 1965 floodwaters on Cherry Creek never reached Denver; they were halted by the recently constructed Cherry Creek Dam, just downstream of Parker. However, the South Platte and Plum Creek floodwaters wrought havoc in Littleton, Englewood and Denver, illustrating the need for better flood control along that drainage. Construction on Chatfield Dam in Douglas County began in 1967 and was completed in 1975.

By the late 20th century, water had become perhaps more important as a recreational resource than an agricultural one. Recreational trails along the Highline Canal and South Platte River drew thousands of Denverites to Douglas County. Chatfield State Park, Roxborough State Park and Castlewood Canyon State Park Creek were other popular destinations. All these venues introduced Coloradans to the scenic beauty and natural wonders of Douglas County, helping set the stage for suburban settlement.
Timber & Stone

Denver’s booming growth in the 1860s wouldn't have been possible without the timber of Douglas County. The county harbored the region’s two most accessible timber stands: The Pinery, located on upper Cherry Creek on the north-facing slopes of the Palmer Divide, and the foothill forests of West Plum Creek, south of present-day Sedalia. Both areas were thickly covered in Ponderosa pine. Plum Creek sustained additional communities of spruce, fir and oak.

These two sources supplied most of the lumber that built early Denver and other towns, including Parker, Littleton and Sedalia. They also fueled the growth of early Colorado’s railroad network, supplying logs for railroad ties, water towers and other rail infrastructure. It’s no coincidence that the Denver & Rio Grande Western was routed along East Plum Creek and the western edge of The Pinery.

The arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in 1871 was a game-changer for Douglas County: it opened up markets in both Denver and Colorado Springs. Mail and manufactured goods came in on the train. Coal, lumber, dairy products and stone went out. The Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad came through on its way to South Park in 1874, and in 1887 the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad arrived from Pueblo. So, while there wasn’t a major rail hub in Douglas County, rail transportation for both freight and people was easily available and affordable.

In addition to timber, Douglas County was blessed with rich deposits of volcanic rock, or rhyolite. The county’s first quarry, the Madge Quarry, opened in 1872. Located near present-day Castle Rock, the Madge was surrounded by other rhyolite quarries including the Douglas, Santa Fe, Plateau and O’Brien quarries.

The quarries offered a major source of steady employment through the end of the 19th century, supporting thousands of workers. These jobs were particularly attractive to immigrants, as they imposed few barriers due to language or skill level. As a result, Douglas County’s population was ethnically diverse from the very beginning. Quarry workers came from throughout Europe and from northern Mexico. Many of the families who came for quarry jobs later moved into farming, ranching or other industries.

Douglas County stone built prominent structures throughout Colorado, beginning with the Highlands Ranch Mansion. Other noteworthy buildings that use Douglas County stone include the original Union Station and Molly Brown House in downtown Denver, the Rosemont Mansion in Pueblo and the main hall of Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Local stone found its way to markets in Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming. With the rise of the concrete industry in the early 20th century, the Douglas County quarries went into rapid decline. By 1910 most of them had closed.

Livestock

Ranching was well established in Douglas County long before Samuel Long began building the structure that evolved into Highlands Ranch Mansion in the late 1880s. Ranch settlement in Douglas County dates back as far as the early 1860s. The Russellville gold rushers established a short-lived ranch along Cherry Creek in about 1861. Remnants of it are still standing. Sylvester Richardson established his Pretty Woman Ranch in 1862, and later served as one of Douglas County’s first commissioners. He left the county in 1868.

More permanent early ranchers in the area included cattleman Frederick Bartuff, dairy rancher Frederick Doepke, sheepherder Benjamin Hammar (also a major player in the rhyolite industry) and John and Joseph Schweiger. Another early Douglas County rancher, Edward Kreutzer, was the father of William Kreutzer, Colorado’s first U.S. Forest Ranger.
Douglas County’s geography didn’t lend itself to sprawling, industrial-scale operations that exported livestock to faraway markets. Most of the area’s ranches were small and locally oriented, serving Denver and Colorado Springs with meat and dairy products. However, this is not to dismiss the importance of ranching in Douglas County. On the contrary, it has been one of the region’s most reliable and sustainable industries, consistently supporting families and communities for nearly 150 years.

**Produce**

Douglas County’s early farms clustered in the floodplains of the South Platte and its tributaries. Irrigated agriculture, initially sparse in Douglas County, expanded rapidly in the 1880s after the opening of the Highline Canal and Castlewood Dam. But even then, the vast majority of the region’s farmers served local markets (Denver and Colorado Springs) rather than exporting their goods across the country.

One major exception was Big Dry Creek Cheese Ranch, whose specialty cheeses attracted a national clientele. In addition, a few of the orchards and farms along Plum Creek took advantage of their proximity to the adjacent Denver and Rio Grande Western line to develop out-of-state markets.

But the vast majority of Douglas County operations resembled the Silver State Farm. Founded by the Alderman family in 1876 on 160 acres in far southeastern Douglas County, the farm slowly grew to encompass about 600 acres. Although unirrigated, the land supported bountiful harvests of beets, potatoes, corn, wheat and oats. The Aldermans also raised cattle, pigs and chickens. They shipped their goods by wagon to Denver and Colorado Springs, and to rural population centers such as Castle Rock, Elizabeth and Parker. The farm supported three generations of the Alderman family, thriving well into the 20th century.

Dozens of other small-scale, family-owned Douglas County farms followed the same pattern. They were large enough to provide a marketable surplus, but small enough that they didn’t require large capital investments for equipment or hired help. They sold their harvests directly to consumers, wholesalers and food processing plants in Denver and its environs.

Even as early as 1871, historians estimate that 35,000 acres of land along the Platte River and Bear Creek were irrigated and under cultivation. The town of Littleton emerged as a hub of agricultural activity for the county, but its population in 1940 was only slightly more than 2000 people.

Douglas County remained predominantly rural with scattered small towns until well after World War II. The major trend in early 20th Century land use was consolidation of small homesteads into larger holdings, such as the 22,000+ acre John W. Springer Cross County Horse and Cattle Ranch that would eventually become Highlands Ranch. Small farms focused on irrigated crops gave way to larger ranches focused on breeding horses and cattle. Some manufacturing developed: Gates Rubber and Lockheed Martin built factories, but the county’s population remained small:

- 1960: 4816
- 1970: 8407

**Highlands Ranch**

Please see the section titled “Summary of Resources Meriting Interpretation” for a brief look at the history of the ranch prior to its purchase by Mission Viejo Company in 1978. That section also includes background material about Cheese Ranch and Fly’n B Park.
Regional and historical context

The development of Highlands Ranch—called the “ultimate suburb” by the Rocky Mountain News—dramatically and irrevocably changed the face the Douglas County.

The story begins in 1978, when Mission Viejo Company bought an option to purchase the entire 22,000 acre property. The company exercised its option after a year of public hearings, and upon agreeing to set aside several thousand acres of open space (known today as the Backcountry) on the south side of the property.

Highlands Ranch was conceived on the heels of America’s environmental awakening in the early 1970s, shortly after Colorado voters—citing environmental concerns—rejected an opportunity to host the 1976 Winter Olympics. In keeping with these sensibilities, Highlands Ranch was envisioned as an antidote to runaway sprawl development. It was intended to model a new type of suburban community that consciously and deliberately incorporated environmental principles into its design. Following the precepts of Ian McHarg’s innovative 1969 book Design With Nature, the planners carefully protected environmentally sensitive land, including drainage areas, high-erosion zones and habitat for wildlife and natural vegetation. They sited roads, parks, community services and commercial areas with an eye toward protecting air quality and preserving viewsheds.

Before construction could begin, Highlands Ranch had to confront the environmental issue that has plagued Western development since the days of John Wesley Powell: water. A court battle over well permits delayed the project’s groundbreaking. It was an early instance—repeated throughout the West during the ensuing decades—of the regional struggle to sustain a growing population with limited water resources. Fifteen wells were eventually drilled, and construction began in 1980. The first residents moved into their new homes in September 1981.

At that time, Broadway and County Line Road were the only paved roads at Highlands Ranch. There were no schools, hospitals or commercial establishments. That situation quickly changed. Mission Viejo financed the first new elementary school, and more schools soon followed. (The quality of Douglas County schools is now frequently cited by residents as one of the primary factors that motivated them to move to Highlands Ranch). Better access from Broadway was completed, and by 1986 the community boasted a sparkling new recreation center, several parks, a medical center and a golf course. Businesses sprang up to meet the needs of residents.

The growth rate was nothing short of spectacular. Highlands Ranch’s increasing population helped make Douglas County the fastest-growing county in the nation in the 1990s. The tidal wave of new residents served as proof of Highlands Ranch’s appeal. It boasted virtually all the ingredients that fueled growth up and down Colorado’s Front Range in the 1990s and early 2000s—affordable homes, good schools, accessible recreation and a high quality of life.

Ironically, Highlands Ranch was such an attractive destination that it came to be seen as a symbol of the very thing its planners sought to avoid: sprawl development. A 1996 issue of National Geographic fueled this perception. The magazine featured Highlands Ranch in an article about the environmental pressures being felt in Colorado (and the West in general) as a result of rapid population growth. Highlands Ranch appeared in an unflattering light, portrayed (in both text and aerial photographs) as a sea of cookie-cutter subdivisions and strip malls encroaching on pristine Western acreage.

This type of media coverage tapped into broad anxieties about the pace of growth in Colorado—not only in Denver but also in Colorado Springs, Boulder and ski resort areas such as Aspen and Summit County. Dismayed by soaring housing
costs, widespread traffic jams and other growing pains, Coloradans expressed unease at the perceived “Californication” of their state.

As the backlash against this regionwide transition intensified, Highlands Ranch—fairly or unfairly—was a lightning rod for criticism. It was the largest and most visible target for those who were skeptical of (or hostile to) the changes in Colorado’s landscape. Deserved or not, Highlands Ranch became synonymous with “unsustainable growth.”

In such an atmosphere, it was impossible to focus attention on the environmental sensitivity baked into Highlands Ranch’s design. Supporters pointed to their community’s thousands of acres of open space and greenbelts, carefully balanced land use, transit-friendly layout and accommodations for wildlife, vegetation and runoff. But such arguments went largely unheard until very recently.

By the 25th anniversary of Highlands Ranch’s first occupancy, most of its critics had reassessed their positions. The Los Angeles Times acknowledged that “Highlands Ranch may turn out to be a model for master-planned developments,” while the Denver Post conceded, “Highlands Ranch took a lot of blame for problems that weren’t necessarily its fault.” Some observers pointed out that more recent master-planned communities—most notably the high-profile infill development at Denver’s former Stapleton Airport site—were being celebrated for the very same features (such as parks, greenbelts, and water-sensitive design) that Highlands Ranch had pioneered decades earlier.

Nonetheless, those more recent master-plans often drew praise as better conceived, more sustainable versions of Highlands Ranch. One Denver Post columnist chided Highlands Ranch as “a 20th-century subdivision in a 21st-century world,” contrasting the community’s automobile-centric lifestyle with the expansion of light rail, bike-sharing programs and dedicated bus lanes elsewhere in metro Denver. A lively debate titled “Highlands Ranch at 25: Smart or Sprawl?” unfolded on the urban planning blog Cyburbia.

This debate is a long way being from settled. So, too, are the broader debates about the changing face of the West. It is not our purpose to settle these debates or take an advocacy position on them. What’s important from an interpretive perspective is to note that Highlands Ranch has played an important role in a broad, ongoing and historically significant transition that has been unfolding for a generation. Its sheer size foreshadowed the population surges in Colorado, Arizona, Nevada and the Pacific Northwest. And its design principles anticipated the need to develop with, rather than against, the West’s sensitive landscape.

Local issues
Just as Highlands Ranch was stigmatized as a boring cookie-cutter development, its residents were often stereotyped as bland, unthinking suburbanites. Those perceptions couldn’t have been further from the truth. From the very beginning, Highlands Ranch residents were actively engaged in determining the look, feel and design of their community. They expressed their likes and dislikes, and played an energetic and significant role in shaping their community’s future.

Historian Susan Appleby describes several episodes of Highlands Ranch citizen activism In *Fading Past: The Story of Douglas County, Colorado*. One instance occurred in 1986, when Mission Viejo encouraged the relocation of Denver’s venerable Elitch’s Amusement Park to a 150-acre site at the northwestern corner of Highlands Ranch. A group of residents vigorously opposed the proposal, and eventually convinced Elitch’s to look elsewhere.

In 1990, the Highlands Ranch Citizens Council urged community leaders to slow the pace of new construction while focusing more attention on parks and schools. The council suggested that Mission Viejo revise its plans to create a system of trails connecting the parks scattered throughout the community. That same year saw disagreements over the extension of South Ranch Road as well as the siting of a 46,000-square-foot postal facility.
In 1993, the Highlands Ranch Community Association formed a committee to study the feasibility of incorporating as a city, hoping to give residents more control over local issues. While the idea never gained enough momentum to become a reality, it did inspire support for a centrally located civic center. This concept eventually expanded into a walkable mixed-use downtown that integrated shops, restaurants, civic buildings and a lush town green. Construction on the Highlands Ranch branch of the Douglas County Library began in 1999, the first building in what is today a vibrant shopping and recreation district.

Over time, residents and town leaders worked together toward the development of what Susan Appleby calls a “mosaic city” that integrates commercial centers with residences and public parks and open space. Tastefully designed and landscaped business parks have attracted companies such as Lucent, providing many residents the opportunity to work close to home rather than commuting to downtown Denver.

Mission Viejo Company was sold in 1997 to Shea Homes, a California-based developer that ranks among the largest homebuilders in the country. Although Highlands Ranch was more than midway through its buildout at that time, there remained tens of thousands of undeveloped acres. Shea remained largely true to the original vision of a thoughtfully planned, environmentally-conscious community. Now at close to 100 % buildout, Colorado’s “ultimate suburb” can only be considered a success story. A 2015 survey of residents found that 95% rated the overall quality of life in Highlands Ranch to be good or excellent, and 90% rated the quality of services from the Metro District to be good or excellent. Residents highly value the community’s trail system and recreation centers, as well as its open space. They praise its schools, and find the community to be an exceptional place to raise children.

Outside observers also give Highlands Ranch very high marks. Forbes, BusinessWeek and other national publications have recently placed Highlands Ranch on “best of” lists celebrating the most desirable places to live in the U.S.

As it approaches full buildout, Highlands Ranch is set to enter a new chapter in its evolution. It has played an influential role in the modern evolution of Colorado and the West, and understanding that role is a critical component of effectively interpreting its history.
Summary of Resources Meriting Interpretation

This section provides an inventory of local resources that have stories worthy of the telling. Readers are asked to provide input if they are aware of any resources (or historical events and characters) not included in this section that should be listed here, or in the draft media prescription table that follows the chapters that articulate statements of significance and interpretive themes.

The primary focus of this plan is to suggest concepts for media that will interpret three sites: Fly’n B Park, Cheese Ranch and Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion.

Fly’n B Park
The Highlands Ranch Metro District acquired the Fly’n B Park and House in 2006. Metro District staff prepared a master plan for the future park site. The plan, which was approved by the Board in 2007, included rehabilitation of the Fly’n B House and various improvements to the surrounding property.

In 2009, during the early stages of work on the Fly’n B House, the District discovered structural deficiencies in the building. The rehabilitation project was put on hold so that costs could be reevaluated and balanced against community benefits. Over the next several years the District commissioned an extensive review of the building’s condition, as well as a Historical Structure Assessment. In addition, public workshops were held to determine how the community wanted the house to be used.

In 2010, while the Fly’n B rehabilitation was on hold, the HRMD acquired two additional historic properties: the Highlands Ranch Mansion and Chum How House. Neither acquisition was anticipated at the time the Fly’n B House project began. The acquisition of additional properties necessitated reevaluation of the future of Fly’n B House in the context of all the District’s resources.

In 2013, the Metro District’s Board of Directors decided to proceed with improvements. The house was stabilized, and the exterior siding and roof were replaced in 2014. Plans for the interior were not specific at the time this plan was published, but an overarching objective for interior improvements is to provide a gathering space for events of up to 75 people. Future functions of the Fly’n B House may include its use as a recreation center, outdoor education center and/or community reception area.

Historically, the property illustrates the importance of water to area settlement. The Highline Canal bisected its original 400 acres (and is accessible today from the parking lot at the park). In 1906 the land came into the possession of Matthew Plews, a horticulturist who ran a nursery, greenhouse and landscaping business on the property, using water from the canal for irrigation. Plews sold not only ornamental plants, but also root stock and fresh vegetables that he hauled to market in Littleton in a Model A Ford truck.
Plews sold the property in 1937 to a pair of shady characters who ran a gambling operation from the house. One of them, O.E. Stephens—better known as “Smiling Charlie”—was a close associate of the Denver’s most prominent Mafia family, the Smalldones. The property was sold in 1944 to a California couple, the Eberhardts, who occupied it as their summer home. Mr. Eberhardt owned and operated a manufacturing plant in Denver. The couple lived quietly in the home, and engendered none of the notoriety generated by its previous owners.

The property was sold to Gates Rubber Company in 1967. The company traded it to the Bowen family, longtime local ranchers, in exchange for other land owned by the family. The Bowens named the ranch the Fly’n B, being avid aviators who regularly commuted by small plane to and from another family-owned ranch near Strasburg. The Bowens focused on raising cattle. Family patriarch Johnny Bowen passed away in April 2015.

Construction of E-470 in the mid-1980s left the property fragmented, an island of agriculture in a sea of development. The Bowens sold the property to Erickson Retirement Communities in 2004. The Plews House and five acres of land were conveyed to the Metro District in 2006. Fly’n Park was planned and built. It opened to the public in 2010.

The park has exceptional opportunities for interpretation. Features include a root cellar (at left), the house itself, the Highline Canal with associated ditches, detention ponds and other water management structures, natural riparian vegetation, cultivated ornamentals and wildlife including freshwater flora and fauna. The history includes truck gardening, nursery operations, cattle ranching, irrigation, illegal gambling and apple growing.

Recreation opportunities include fishing, cycling, walking/hiking, wildlife-viewing, picnicking and nature study. A single interpretive panel focused on fishing is in place.

A shelter adjacent to the pond (below) can accommodate small groups.
Cheese Ranch Historic and Natural Area is a 50-acre site offering trails, picnic areas, a windmill and some of the only interpretive signs in the Highlands Ranch parks and trail system.

Established in 1879, the Big Dry Creek Cheese Ranch was one of the earliest permanent settlements in Douglas County. Its original buildings are among the oldest structures in the county. A fairly large operation for its day, Big Dry Creek Cheese Ranch had numerous buildings that included:

- Farmhouse
- Barn
- Sheds
- Corrals
- Chicken coops
- Hog house
- Silo
- Cistern
- Ice house
- Carpenter shop
- Blacksmith shop
- Bunkhouse
- Slaughterhouse

By the 1980s, most of these structures had fallen into disrepair, with collapsing walls, caved-in roofs and thick vegetation overgrowing them. Despite their exceptional historic significance, Mission Viejo Company decided to clear away the crumbling structures in 1986, leaving intact only the handful of structures that were still viable (including an historic windmill). Douglas County Commissioners and residents strongly opposed this decision. Perhaps in response to the outcry, the developers announced plans for the park in 1994 and it opened to the public the next year.

Before demolishing the buildings, Mission Viejo commissioned a technical study in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Historic American Building Survey. Archaeological excavations were undertaken within the ruins of a three-room structure that is believed to have been the original cheese factory. A detailed survey was completed to document the site's structures prior to their removal.

Readers desiring more information than is presented here are referred to that study, which was authored by Richard Carrillo: An Historical, Architectural and Archaeology Study of the Big Dry Creek Cheese Ranch.

The property that became Cheese Ranch was purchased in 1879 by Johanne Welte and his brother-in-law, Plaziduo Gassner. They started a dairy operation which achieved local fame for its excellent butter and Limburger and Brick cheeses. The ranch became a social center of sorts, as Denverites would make a day out of traveling to the ranch to sample and buy cheeses, drink home-brewed beer and enjoy the countryside.

Gassner died in 1883 and Welte assumed responsibility for the operation. His husbandry was nothing short of extraordinary. The ranch merited mention in the periodical The Scientific Farmer in 1906. Two articles lavished praise on the efficiency and ingenuity of the ranch operation:

“The Welte farm, so far as soil is concerned, is no better and no worse than today lies idle in untenanted millions of acres in Eastern Colorado. Its rainfall is no greater than that enjoyed in many others of the dry land sections of the state. The things which have brought this farm to its present high stage of culturation and Mr. Welte himself from penury to wealth has been simple perseverance, adaptability and patient toil.”
High praise, indeed. Welte was a pioneer of dryland farming techniques. He grew corn, alfalfa, wheat, barley and beets without supplemental irrigation. A ten-acre orchard of fruit trees was also nurtured with only natural precipitation. The ranch was entirely self-sufficient.

Welte was a genius at the integration of agricultural operations to achieve maximum efficiency. One example of the sort of practice he implemented was using dried cow chips mixed with wood chips and coal as fuel for boilers, saving tons of coal.

Welte sold the entire 1800-acre ranch for $30,000 to his son-in-law, Philip Renner, in 1910. Renner had experience working at the Tivoli Brewery in Denver, and the enterprising dairymen also brewed beer. It can probably be safely assumed that brewing operations would have been kept under wraps during Prohibition. The ranch stopped making cheese in 1938. It was sold through an intermediary to Lawrence Phipps, Jr., in 1943. He incorporated it as Highlands Ranch.

Existing interpretation includes a series of interpretive panels in an outdoor seating area enhanced by a replica windmill. The panels are in fair-to-good condition, showing some minor signs of wear and sun-fading. They are displayed under plexiglass, though, which cannot be considered a best practice. Re-design and replacement might be considered. The existing frames are in good condition without obvious need of repair or rehabilitation.

Interpretive opportunities at Cheese Ranch Historic and Natural Area are limited somewhat by the absence of first-hand artifacts. That said, the story of Welte’s ingenuity, in particular his implementation of dryland farming techniques, is perhaps one of the most compelling historical accounts that can be told because of its contemporary relevance. Themes and topics might include the function of the ranch as a social center, the importance of self-sufficiency in early agricultural settlements, dryland farming and the practice of limiting waste through recycling in an era before the word recycling had ever been spoken.

Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion

Highlands Ranch Mansion, often referred to as “the castle,” is considered one of the most unique structures in Colorado. The 22,000 square foot structure features a cacophony of architectural details, materials and styles that reflect the diverse tastes of a series of wealthy owners.

The first EuroAmerican owner of the property (at the time a 2,000-acre farmstead) was Samuel Long. He dubbed the property “Rotherwood,” and was known for culturing fruit trees with dryland farming techniques.

John Springer bought the property in 1891, renamed it “Springer’s Cross Country Ranch,” and acquired enough adjacent land to increase its size to over 22,000 acres. The main focus of the operation was to breed and sell reliable coach horses for carriages. Springer imported Oldenburg stallions and breeding mares from Germany to develop “the ideal American coach horse.” During his ownership, the ranch relied on water from Castlewood Dam to irrigate the pastures and row crops needed to feed its livestock. He served as first president of National Livestock Association.

Springer sold the ranch to the father of his first wife (William Hughes) after a failed second marriage to a woman whose multiple infidelities led to a notorious murder. Readers desiring more information about that scandal are referred to Murder at the Brown Palace: A True Story of Seduction and Betrayal, by Dick Kreck.
Wyoming oil magnate Frank Kistler bought the property from Waite Phillips in 1926. Phillips owned it for a mere six years after buying it from Hughes’ heirs in 1920. A wealthy oilman known for philanthropy, he named it “Phillips Highland Ranch.” Kistler renamed it the Diamond K Ranch. The mansion was remodeled and expanded during Kistler’s ownership, nearly doubling in size. A wing built in the English Tudor style was added, as well as a bowling alley.

The Diamond K Ranch focused on livestock breeding, while becoming a center of activity for Denver’s high society. Both dairy and Angus cattle were raised, as well as horses, sheep, hogs and poultry. Kistler ran into financial problems during the Great Depression, having overextended his financial empire to build a pipeline. He was forced to sell the entire property to Denver businessman Lawrence Phipps, Jr., in 1937, for a mere $250,000. Phipps had become enamored with the expansive ranch lands while a member of the Arapaho Hunt Club, which used the ranch for outings.

Phipps renamed the property Highlands Ranch. It was the home of the Arapaho Hunt Club until 1987. Dedicated to maintaining the British tradition of fox-hunting on the high plains of Colorado, the club chased coyotes across the countryside on horseback.

Phipps died in 1976, and the ranch was sold to Mission Viejo Company by his estate in 1978. As previously noted, the mansion was conveyed to Highlands Ranch Metro District in 2010. Funding for the renovation, which cost in excess of $6 million, came from surplus infrastructure development funds collected from the developer. Operating costs are covered by rental fees collected by the mansion. A $4 million endowment ensures that future needs for operations and maintenance will be met. The renovation was completed in 2012.

The existing outbuildings, which include a large horse barn (at left), caretaker residence and miscellaneous outbuildings, are scheduled to be transferred to Metro District ownership sometime around 2020. Included in that conveyance will be about 200 acres of pastureland and riparian forest south of the mansion proper.

This “Historic Park” will include an historic windmill and cistern structure (below) at the top of hill that offers sweeping views of the City of Denver and the Front Range.
**Chum Howe House**
The Chum Howe House, built in the 1930s by Lawrence Phipps, Jr., as a home for his daughter, lies across the parking lot west of the mansion. It is named after Charles “Chum” Howe, a later occupant of the home.

The 3,300 square foot brick home was donated by Shea Homes to Douglas County in 2001. None of several plans for its use came to fruition, and the county donated the structure to the Metro District in 2012. It is still somewhat in a state of disrepair after having been unoccupied for a long period (“disrepair” should not be taken to imply structural deficiencies or similar; the house needs a good cleaning and some TLC from a skilled carpenter). It is currently used for file storage, and the Highlands Ranch Parks and Recreation District stores some of its equipment in the garage.

Chum Howe House has excellent views west toward the Front Range.

Existing interpretation at Highlands Ranch Mansion consists primarily of programming. There are several poster-style displays in various rooms as well. Tours are conducted by volunteer docents. Discussions at the planning workshop held in early February 2015 suggested that the scripts being used were inconsistent with internet content. As of the writing of this draft, the script was being re-written to achieve more consistency, and to integrate some facts uncovered by recent research.

There is huge interpretive potential at the Historic Park and Mansion, Chum Howe House and ranch buildings. The range of themes and topics could include dryland versus irrigated farming, architecture, water management, historic versus contemporary agriculture, the lives of Denver’s rich and famous, high plains ecology and more. The mansion tours can always be improved and enhanced through a structured program of volunteer training, with upgrades to visual non-personal media as well. The Chum Howe House has the potential to serve as the home of a reading/study room focused on Highlands Ranch history and/or interpretive displays and exhibits. The ranch buildings and pastureland south of the mansion offer almost unlimited potential for interpretation of high plains farming and ranching, including living history. The 200-acre park will be home to a hiking trail, interpretive displays and programs.

**Common Themes and Characteristics**
The stories of Fly’n B Park, Cheese Ranch, and Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion intersect in several respects. Chief among these are:

- **Dryland agriculture.** All three sites faced one of the West’s most common and daunting challenges: cultivating crops in a low-rainfall environment.
- **Water conservation and management.** All of the sites maximized the availability of water by using one or more conservation / management strategies. These included irrigation ditches, groundwater wells, cisterns and the selective planting of crops.
- **Business and/or social connections to Denver.** All three sites sold commodities to Denver. In the case of Highlands Ranch Mansion, one of the main “commodities” was refuge from the city for recreation, hunting and socializing.
Other Sites for Consideration

Three sites (Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion, Cheese Ranch and Fly’n B Park) are the primary focus of this planning project, but certain other sites (both historic and contemporary) have been mentioned in various discussions. The following list is offered in the hope that our readers will provide input on whether or not these sites should play a role in the planning process. Are there any other sites, or historical events/trends/characters that are missing from this plan? Should particular attention be paid to any of the sites in the list below?

- Backcountry Wilderness Area
- Tall Bull Memorial
- Daniels Park
- Sites in Pike National Forest
- Wolhurst
- Turkey Ranch
- Homesteads?
Segmentation of the Target Audience

Audience segmentation is not an exact science, nor should it be for our purposes. Segmenting an audience using anecdotal information and common sense is a tool that helps interpretive planners get the most bang for the buck when media are deployed. It is nothing more complicated than figuring out that the best way to reach skateboarders is to put a sign at the skate park. Or not: the pre-eminence of digital media in the communication world has fundamentally changed the manner in which a target audience is reached.

In the pre-Internet, pre-smartphone world, fixed signs and hard-copy literature were the most cost-effective way to interpret. Radio and television offered an electronic option, but were affordable only to those with grand economies of scale. Communication in our digital world is cheap, immediate and almost ubiquitous. This process requires thinking about the division between people with smartphones and those without.

All that said, the purpose of segmenting our target audiences is a practical, intuitive process intended to achieve efficient communication. Eventually, we will ask questions like: Where should we try to reach this user group? What is the best media to employ to reach this user group? And so forth.

One of the standard techniques for segmentation is a four-way division among groups: local versus non-local and specialized versus non-specialized. A specialized user is one whose activity requires specialized equipment, training, knowledge or skills. A 4WD enthusiast or a disc-golfer, for instance, is a specialized user. They need a vehicle and some factory-modified Frisbees, respectively. A hiker or dog-walker is not a specialized user. They do not need any specialized equipment – good walking shoes and a leash would not be considered “specialized” in this model.

The table below offers a preliminary segmentation. Readers are encouraged to offer suggestions for additions/deletions, and to think about ways that these groups, among which there is overlap, can be most effectively reached. In the next draft of this plan, media suggestions will be matched with these groups.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local, Non-Specialized</th>
<th>Non-local, Non-specialized</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Seniors from Wind Crest Retirement Community</td>
<td>• Relatives/friends visiting HR families</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trail &amp; park users w/ smartphones</td>
<td>• Trail &amp; park users w/ smartphones</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trail &amp; park users w/out smartphones</td>
<td>• Trail &amp; park users w/out smartphones</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Resident homeowners</td>
<td>• School groups, on field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grade-school kids, informal</td>
<td>• Attendees at HR Mansion special events (i.e. weddings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Middle-school kids, informal</td>
<td>• Potential homebuyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High-school kids, informal</td>
<td>• School groups, on field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School groups, on field trips</td>
<td>• Attendees at HR Mansion private and community events (i.e. weddings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attendees at HR Mansion private and community events (i.e. weddings)</td>
<td>• Boy &amp; Girl Scout troops</td>
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<td>• Boy &amp; Girl Scout troops</td>
<td>• Cyclists w/ smartphones</td>
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Statements of Significance

Statements of significance are one-sentence statements of fact. They differ from interpretive themes in that interpretive themes are intended to suggest storylines and accompanying human emotions such as fear, love or anger.

Statements of significance articulate what is unique, special or important about a specific resource (i.e. the Fly’n B House), a locality or region (i.e. Douglas County) or a period in time and the characters who played important roles (i.e. the Great Depression).

Douglas County/Highlands Ranch Region

- Douglas County, Colorado, was the fastest-growing county in the nation during the 1990s.
- Douglas County is one of the ten wealthiest counties in the nation, and the only one of the top ten not on the Eastern Seaboard or in California.
- Douglas County has higher average levels of education than both the State of Colorado and the United States.
- Although Douglas County has significant water resources, as well as timber, stone and relatively good soils, a lack of mineral resources such as gold was a major factor in the county remaining predominantly rural until well after World War II.
- The first documented human presence along the South Platte River in the vicinity of Highlands Ranch and Littleton occurred about 6000-7000 B.C. (the Lamb Spring site).
- Numerous archaeological sites confirm human presence in the region of Douglas County in all five phases of pre-settlement human history, and the extrapolated population densities are thought by scientists to represent some of the highest in the High Plains.
- Although not a major transportation hub, Douglas County was traversed in all directions by travel corridors both during and preceding the Euroamerican settlement era.
- The arrival of the railroad opened markets in Denver and Colorado Springs for Douglas County agricultural products, as well as other natural resources such as stone, timber and coal.
- Views from Highlands Ranch include landscapes that have significant geological and paleontological resources, as well as other natural resources that have played major roles in the history of Douglas County, including water and timber.

Community of Highlands Ranch

- Highlands Ranch has been the primary driver behind Douglas County’s population growth since 1981, and it would be the tenth-largest city in Colorado if it were incorporated.
- Highlands Ranch has significantly higher per capita levels of income, education and home ownership than both the State of Colorado and the United States.
- Residents of Highlands Ranch overwhelmingly rate their quality of life as good or excellent, and highly value the trails and open space of the community.

Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion

- Highlands Ranch Mansion is one of the more architecturally unique structures in Colorado.
- Various owners of the property used both dryland and irrigated farming techniques.
- The Arapaho Hunt Club used the lands that comprise Highlands Ranch from 1927 until 1976 to hunt coyotes in the manner of traditional British fox-hunting.
- John Springer used the ranch to breed and sell “coach horses” descended from Oldenburg stallions imported from Europe, and was a founder of the National Livestock Association.
Although he experienced financial difficulties that forced him to sell the ranch, Frank Kistler converted it to a rations breeding ranch specializing in dairy and Angus cattle, purebred sheep, hogs and chickens.

During the ownership tenures of Lawrence Phipps, Jr., and Frank Kistler, the mansion became one of the focal points of Denver’s “high society.”

Cheese Ranch Historic and Natural Area

- Johann Welte used dryland farming techniques to grow the crops needed to feed the dairy cattle he raised at the ranch.
- Cheese Ranch was considered a model of efficiency by agricultural experts.
- Cheese Ranch was a social center that drew visitors from Denver and other parts of the fledging metropolitan area during its heyday from about 1890-1920.
- The first buildings at Cheese Ranch were some of the oldest existing structures in Douglas County at the time of their demolition in 1986.

Fly’n B Park

- Matthew Plews used irrigation to grow both ornamental plants, fruits and vegetables.
- The presence of the High Line Canal made the truck gardens at Fly’n B Park possible.
- Remnants of water management structures such as ditches, detention ponds and canals can still be seen on the property.
- Visitors to Fly’n B Park have the opportunity to view a variety of riparian flora and fauna, as well as a full range of freshwater biota.
Interpretive Themes
The job of the interpreter is to facilitate visitors’ intellectual and emotional connection to a place by telling stories. An interpretive theme is a one-sentence encapsulation of a story. Interpretive themes link a place’s tangible attributes (articulated as statements of significance) to the intangible ideas, meaning, beliefs and values that connect people with place.

It is not the job of the interpreter to tell an audience what to think about a resource, or how to feel about a place. It is the job of the interpreter to tell stories that facilitate personal exploration of place meaning, to help people form unique, individual connections with a resource on whatever level the individual chooses, be it emotional, intellectual, or spiritual.

Attaching meanings to a place is a fundamental human trait. So is storytelling. We assign special significance to the places, events, people, and things that touch our lives and shape our culture. We pay special attention to the stories that connect us to place, that make us laugh or cry, that make us feel.

Stories facilitate exploration of resource meaning and the significance of place. Human beings are natural-born storytellers, and societies depend on the power of story to share the ideas, meanings, beliefs, and values that collectively constitute culture. Storytelling is a fundamental, basic activity of human societies, and it is the heart and soul of interpretation.

The set of overarching stories that communicate the essential qualities of a resource are called primary interpretive themes. Each is written as a single-sentence abstract that tries to capture the essence of a place and its stories. Storylines are the detailed subthemes that provide detail and specific substance.

The interpretive themes and storylines presented below form the basis for the media recommendations that follow.

Primary Theme
The modern story of Highlands Ranch encapsulates many of the tensions and challenges of Colorado’s Front Range: once a somewhat undeserved symbol of suburban sprawl, its amenities like trails and open space are highly-valued by its residents, who have shifted the conversation to smart, sustainable growth and good urban planning.

Highlands Ranch encapsulates the challenges facing Colorado settlers from two eras: the 19th-century pioneers who wrote the formative history of this region, and the “New West” settlers who have arrived within the last generation and who will shape Colorado’s future.

Subtheme #1: Agricultural Heritage (AH)
The success stories of the area first diverse agricultural endeavors -- from dryland farming at Cheese Ranch to irrigated truck gardens at the Fly’n B Park to horse breeding at Springer’s Ranch -- remind us that hard work and ingenuity often overcome challenges, and that early agriculture took several different directions to success even as some tried and failed to make living from the arid land.

Subtheme #2: Masterplanning (MP)
Highlands Ranch residents, who live in one the largest master-planned communities in the nation, highly value the trail system, parks and open space that are among the benefits of master-planning.
Subtheme #3: Water (H2O)

Like many communities in Colorado, Highlands Ranch cannot take its water supply for granted and must conserve carefully, monitor consumption closely and make realistic projections about the long-term sustainability of its water-use patterns.

Subtheme #4: Human Heritage & Rate of Change (HH)

Human occupation of the region of Highlands Ranch has been continuous for over 10,000 years, which emphasizes the staggering magnitude of the changes in the land in the last several decades, and makes us wonder what the landscape will look like one hundred years from now.

Subtheme #5: Natural History (NH1)

Within the viewshed of Highlands Ranch Historic Park are exposures of geological strata that contain significant fossils telling a tale of creatures from a time far, far away.

Subtheme #6: Natural History (NH2)

Travelers in the Highlands Ranch region, even before the advent of the automobile, find themselves in a landscape of such biological richness and diversity that they can experience four distinct vegetation communities and climatic zones in a single day’s travel.

Highlands Ranch Historic Park and Mansion

HRM1 The renovation of Highlands Ranch Mansion was a labor of love that combined skilled craftsmanship and heavy lifting, patient detective work and lots of money, resulting in an extraordinarily valuable community asset, the history of which still has tantalizing gaps despite the wealth of stories we have the pleasure of knowing.

HRM2 The diverse architectural styles, from Bavarian to Tudor, and the variety of different materials used in the construction and remodeling of the mansion, reflect both the diversity of Front Range resources and the different tastes and personalities of its series of owners.

HRM3 Although Highlands Ranch Mansion has been a focus of Denver’s “high society” at various times in its history, the troubled marriages of most of its owners remind us that wealth does not guarantee happiness.

HRM4 Of the many impacts that Highlands Ranch Mansion has had on the evolution of Denver and Colorado, one of the most significant is the role John Springer played in the founding of the National Livestock Association and the continued existence of the National Western Stock Show, a Denver tradition.

Cheese Ranch Historic and Natural Area

CR1 Johann Welte was an innovator, and many contemporary Coloradans would likely have enjoyed the opportunity to sit with him and eat some cheese, drink some beer and pick his brain about how to efficiently run an integrated agricultural operation.

CR2 The dryland farmers who wrest a living from the marginal soils of the arid High Plains owe a debt of gratitude to early pioneers of dryland farming techniques like Johann Welte.
Fly’n B Park

FB1 From the first Euroamerican settlement in Colorado until the modern period, water and the manipulation of water has shaped the evolution of society and its patterns of migration and settlement.

FB2 None of the lush beauty of the park, its abundant wildlife or the economic success of Matthew Plews’ truck garden operation would have been possible without the waters of the Highline Canal.

FB3 A venture into the history of the Fly’n B House reveals a titillating account of illegal gambling and underworld connections that stand in dramatic contrast to the industriousness of previous owner Matthew Plews and the quiet lives led by its subsequent occupants.

FB4 As the park’s name suggests, aviation played a key role in the cattle-ranching operations of the Bowen family, whose use of private aircraft to commute from the Fly’n B to other ranching operations is an indicator of the way in which transportation technology has changed agriculture.

FB5 The orchards at Fly’n B Park, as well the root cellar and vestiges of irrigation structures, stand like the contents of a time capsule against the rush of traffic on C-470, giving park users a respite from the hustle and bustle of contemporary society and the march of progress.
Media Prescription
Suggested interpretive media are presented in this section. This narrative offers recommendations organized by category, suggests various criteria for design/location and addresses some of the cost/benefit issues that should be considered.

This draft of the interpretive plan treats all ideas equally, without assigning priority based on cost, feasibility or other factors. It would be premature to assign priority before gathering input from the community. The feedback gathered via community surveys and public events may lend insights that enable us to state with confidence that a particular idea, or set of ideas, promises the most bang for the buck. Until then, we offer these ideas in a brainstorming spirit.

Following the narrative description of ideas for interpretive media, we summarize the information in a table that is intended for use as an organizing tool. This table can eventually serve as the basis for priority setting and decision making about which ideas to implement immediately, which ones to save for eventual development, which ones might need modification to suit the community, and which ones should be discarded altogether.

Interpretive Signage
The existing universe of signs at Highlands Ranch is consistent in design, and does an excellent job of branding community amenities such as parks. The red Indian Paintbrush logo ties park signage together, and its use on additional signage, in conjunction with the “HR” logo, is recommended.

This plan recommends a conservative approach to signs. The parks and trails of Highlands Ranch are clean, well-designed and well-maintained. Caution should be exercised in the placement of any manmade structures that might interfere with the existing pleasant ambience of most sites. Toward that end, mounting signs on existing structures, such as the wall of a restroom building, should be considered where possible and practical.

Orientation Kiosks
There are no large kiosks in the Highlands Ranch Park system or on its trails. The typical three-sided kiosks (below right) or multi-panel kiosks (left) frequently seen at trailheads in large natural areas may not be appropriate in many areas of Highlands Ranch. Most of the trail users are residents who do not need orientation, and kiosks might be viewed as unnecessary intrusions on the viewshed. That said, several locations might be considered, such as the entries to Historic Park. It can be expected, for instance, that non-local visitors attending a wedding at the mansion will need orientation to the park and might enjoy viewing some interpretive content prior to taking a hike.
The planning team intends to cycle or walk the entire trail system following review of this draft, and will recommend potential sites for kiosks in the final draft (following public input and discussion with Highlands Ranch staff). Typical kiosk locations would be at trailheads, parking lots and highly visible locations in parks.

Wayside Interpretive Signage

Choosing locations for wayside interpretive signage should be approached judiciously and conservatively. There are two primary reasons for this: 1) even though trail users are used to seeing such signs, and may have even grown to expect them, wayside signs can be viewed as intrusive and 2) significantly more interpretive content can be delivered electronically than can be printed on a sign, without creating visual clutter on the landscape. Digital content is not only unobtrusive, but also changeable. Several types of traditional wayside signs and mounting techniques are pictured here.
Interpretive Trails
Traditional interpretive trails are nothing more than a series of wayside interpretive panels linked by a common interpretive theme. Such media can be approached either traditionally or electronically.

The advantages of a “digital trail” include changeability and unobtrusiveness. Users can be cued to look on their phones either by small markers with URLs or Q-codes, or even “pinged” by a program that uses GPS technology to send a notification to the user’s phone when they approach a certain set of coordinates.

The disadvantages of a digital trail include the fact that users would need to download an app, and that such trails exclude users without smartphones. It is probably safe to assume, as well, that a proportion of users equipped with smart phones do not want to take their phones with them on a hike or walk so they have more of a sense of escape.

Interpretive Art
Some interpretive art already exists in Highlands Ranch parks (left). Art can be considered an abstract, non-verbal expression of an interpretive story. Some sort of design competition focused on community involvement might be a way to bring local artists out of the woodwork and foster some good will.

Media could include sculpture, murals, environmental art (art objects made with all-natural materials from twigs to stones) and surface art (images etched, stenciled or stamped onto hard-surfaced paths, plazas, fishing docks, etc.).

Free Play Spaces
The popularity of these sorts of experiential spaces is on the rise. Designed to draw in kids and enhance their trail or park experience with some active involvement in a safe, themed environment, ideas might include:

- History-themed play area (e.g. ranching playground with steers to ride and rope)
- Nature play area (an area featuring play structures designed from natural materials with opportunities to do activities such as making art from twigs and leaves)
- Tree House (invite guests to climb up and get a new perspective on the landscape)
- Water feature (irrigation features like head gates that kids can manipulate; hand-operated pump jack)

Given the popularity of community gardens within Highlands Ranch, adding interpretive elements to the gardens is an idea worthy of consideration. For example, a garden could be assigned an historic theme and interpretive media and art could be incorporated into the garden’s built features (e.g. gate, fencing). Fruit trees that were historically grown in the locale might be nurtured with similar dryland techniques and interpreted.

Print Media
It is likely that a number of Highlands Ranch residents, and especially people visiting friends/family who live in the community, would enjoy some basic background literature that introduces the community and its history.

Literature might be mailed to residents (to keep on-hand for visitors) and/or distributed at locations like the library and recreation centers. As with all interpretive media, the Indian paintbrush graphic, as well as the simple, bold Highlands Ranch identifier (right) should be prominent to strengthen brand identity and create a unified, consistent appearance.
Brochure/Field Guide
The preliminary thinking is to consider two publications: 1) a tri-fold brochure with a map that highlights parks, trails and interpretive opportunities, and 2) a larger, booklet-style “field guide” more expansive than the brochure that offers detailed information about natural history (i.e. plant and animal identification), unique features (i.e. Highline Canal) and where cultural features are (or were) located on the landscape.

Baseball and Playing Cards
Small, collectible print graphics can serve an interpretive function, as well as stimulating fun conversations that have the side effect of familiarizing residents and visitors with the community. Three possibilities to consider are:
- **Highlands Ranch Deck of Cards**: this idea would be expressed with decks of real playing cards available for sale at local merchants. A deck with four “suits,” each having a common theme is envisioned. The suits would be divided into topic areas such as Pioneers/Owners, Modern Families, Flora/Fauna/Livestock and Details (architectural features, furniture, historic labels from cheeses, etc.). An image would appear on the player-viewed side of each card with a brief caption.
- **Baseball Cards**: this idea envisions trading cards that commemorate prominent persons in Highlands Ranch history with a card styled in the manner of a baseball card. Cards might be sold for a modest price intended to cover design/printing costs, and collecting them could be encouraged at community events and in local newsletters.
- **Trivial Pursuit Game**: this concept could be delivered both in print and online. The basic idea is to create a trivial pursuit game using Highlands Ranch facts and figures.

Digital Media
The already-considerable and steadily rising proportion of the population who use mobile phones and tablets creates an almost unlimited universe of possibilities for interpretation.

Mobile App
A mobile application is an innovative way to encourage exploration, enhance existing outdoor exercise routines and promote an active lifestyle while delivering insight into the natural and cultural history of the community.

Any mobile app can function on multiple levels, and the universe of possibilities is almost unlimited. The nature of the app functions envisioned for Highlands Ranch fall into three general categories:
- **Activity Generator**: suggestions on where to go, what to see and what to do
- **Gaming Approach**: introduces a competitive aspect to outdoor activities such as cycling or walking
- **Tour Guide**: relies on GPS technology to “ping” visitors when they get close to a site of historic interest or natural feature worthy of a closer look.

The features of a Highlands Ranch Mobile App(s) could include:
- GPS-enabled alerts (“pushes” or “pings”), or Q-codes on physical signs at certain locations, offer the user an opportunity to browse trivia facts, historic photos, natural history and so forth.
- Before-and-after photos (accomplished by shooting photos from the same point-of-view as an historic photographer); users view an historic photo taken from the spot where they are standing
- Short videos and/or podcasts
- Audio/oral histories (these could be clips from the historical society’s “Then & Now” series)
- Quizzes, questions and other brain-teasers
- Interactive map showing the evolution of Highlands Ranch and Douglas County over time
- Sharing functions (one-click connection so that users can post photos and information on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
- Social functions (find and connect with Facebook friends who are using the app)
- Itineraries and maps for self-guided tours around the community
- Photo contests
- Field guides (ID flora/fauna, etc.)
- Community information (i.e. hours of operation for recreation centers, calendar of events, etc.).

Not surprisingly, the kids at the kids-only workshop came up with some good ideas for the use of digital technology. The exercise that was the most popular at the workshop was master-planning, an activity in which the kids were given a terrain map of Highlands Ranch (sans any built features like roads), and assumed the role of community planner/developer. An app that would allow users to design their own version of Highlands Ranch was the suggestion that emerged from the popularity of that exercise (the kids loved it).

The kids also suggested that any fixed exhibits, or sites with interpretive improvements, should encourage users to take photos (i.e. a selfie with an exhibit in the background or similar) and then post the photo (or just a comment) on Twitter or Instagram with a unique hashtag. The creation of hashtags will likely generate back-and-forth sharing of comments about an exhibit (or a site, or whatever), and might even result in some kids gathering at a site.

Highlands Ranch Amazing Race
For those readers not familiar with the television program, The Amazing Race, it is basically a scavenger hunt on steroids. Teams of competitors are given clues that lead them to locations where they perform a task, take a picture, answer a question, find an object or something similar. Once the team has completed the task, they are given another clue that leads them to another location. And so on until the finish line is reached; the team to complete the course in the fastest time wins.

There is no reason why the race has to be completed in a team format, it could be an individual event as well. The sorts of challenges that would be faced will stimulate learning about Highlands Ranch history and ecology. With digital technology, clues can be planted almost anywhere. For instance, a location near the mansion might trigger the display of a picture of Springer’s horses on the racers’ phones when they arrive. The racers would be challenged to count the horses to get their next clue. While completing the challenge, they would learn that the horses were descended from Oldenburg stallions imported from Germany. In a similar vein, racers arriving at Fly’n B Park might be shown a virtual picture of Matthew Plews Model A Ford truck and be challenged to guess the year of its manufacture. In the process, they would learn that Plews ran a truck garden and nursery on the site. And so forth.

There might an entire series of Highlands Ranch Amazing Races, each based on a unique theme. And, if the races are digitally-based, there is no reason why competitors would all have to run the course at the same time. Competitors could check in at a time of their choosing to complete a course, and then compare their time to others online. Group events are fun, though, offering opportunities for socializing/eating/drinking at the finish line. Prizes can be awarded in categories like best costumes, best team name and so forth.

Video/Animation of Highlands Ranch Landscape
Somewhat expensive to produce (if original footage is shot) but very inexpensive to distribute might be a video with animated maps and motion graphics that would allow users to visualize how the Highlands Ranch landscape has changed over time. The short (3-4 minute) video would depict the evolution of local land use and reveal historic milestones. Viewing would not necessarily have to occur on a phone; the video could be available online or on screens in places like recreation centers or the library.
Events and Programming

Highlands Ranch Mansion is generally open to the public for tours two days a week, plus one evening a month. Volunteer docents are available to lead tours on a drop-in basis. Larger group tours can be scheduled in advance.

The delivery of personalized interpretive services can be expensive, but Highlands Ranch is blessed with a group of dedicated volunteers who are eager to be involved. The volunteer program provides opportunities for the community to make a positive contribution and generates significant good will. It could use an audit and some tweaking, but its volunteers are one of the most valuable assets the community has.

That said, volunteer labor in reality is far from free. It may even be that the supervision and training of volunteers is more expensive than just hiring a full-time professional interpreter. Volunteers have voiced concerns that tour content varies from one docent to the next. They have expressed a desire for more formalized volunteer training and a tighter script to ensure consistency of the tour experience.

In addition to regular tours, the Mansion hosts special public events throughout the year. These include (but are not limited to) concerts and dances, summer movies under the stars, murder mystery evenings, and special events for Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, and other holidays. In addition, each September the Mansion hosts one of the largest events on the community’s calendar, the three-day Highlands Ranch Days celebration.

Several concepts for personal interpretive services are suggested in this plan:

- **Living History:** the full potential for living history interpretation will not be realized until the horse barn, outbuildings and land for Historic Park are conveyed to the Metro District. At that point in time, the possibilities for costumed interpreters offering visitors the chance to get hands-on with traditional agricultural activities are off the charts. Prior to implementation, a nationwide tour of farms and ranches that offer living history (i.e. Living History Farms in Urbandale, IA) would be an excellent way to learn about the costs and benefits of such programs.

- **Outdoor Lecture Series:** there are several venues that would be appropriate for a lecture series about topics and themes relevant to the community. From large-scale events at the Civic Green Amphitheatre to intimate events at the Cheese Ranch windmill, there are good possibilities to draw a variety of speakers.

- **Stewardship Projects:** the involvement of residents in projects like streambank stabilization or weed control presents opportunities for informal learning while the work gets done.

- **Guided Tours:** park rangers might experiment with offering tours of areas like Cheese Ranch (where wetland habitats exist) to combine healthy walking with informal learning.

- **Community-sponsored trip to National Western Stock Show:** this Denver institution has roots at the mansion, and a bus from the community to the show for a day’s visit could include a lecture enroute about Springer’s ties to the show.

- **Costume boxes:** under the supervision of an interpreter, visitors to the mansion might try on different period costumes and assume the roles of mansion owners, guests or the hired help. This would no doubt lead to selfies, hashtags and increased buzz about the mansion.

- **Story Corps Station:** some sort of mini recording studio, located at the mansion, library, Chum Howe House or another location, would offer local families the opportunity to record their stories for posterity. This activity has demonstrated popularity, and is known to enhance family connections across generations. This concept would require active curation, but nuggets of audio could be shared via social media, the proposed mobile app or in an exhibit.
Summary Table of Proposed Interpretive Media

This table is a tool intended to list, organize, view, discuss and prioritize potential media development. Readers are urged to suggest additions/deletions/edits, and to add any comments they have to the existing recommendations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site, or Description if Community-Wide</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
<th>Target Audience Segment</th>
<th>Implementation Priority</th>
<th>Notes/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between HR Mansion and Historic Park</td>
<td>AH, NH1, NH2, HRM1-4</td>
<td>Kiosk welcoming visitors to Historic Park &amp; providing orientation to the open space, map(s) &amp; interpretation of both mansion history and the natural environment that includes a riparian area and grasslands</td>
<td>Detailed cost information will be provided in subsequent drafts.</td>
<td>To be completed after review and consultation w/ HR Metro District staff &amp; stakeholders</td>
<td>Implementation priorities will be assigned after consultation with HR Metro District staff and stakeholders.</td>
<td>Consider kiosk at the south end of the property (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On trail system at location(s) TBD</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>Kiosk(s); whether to use kiosks at all is a talking point. If desired, consider the costs of an off-shelf unit versus a custom design</td>
<td>A three-sided, off-shelf unit, installed sans signage will cost $4-5K; a custom design is likely to cost at least $10K and can easily run as high as $20K if logs and custom stonework are desired.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>*Planning team to conduct system-wide site analysis in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On trail system at location(s) TBD</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>Wayside interpretive sign(s)</td>
<td>For rough estimating purposes; a 6 square foot interpretive panel w/ standard NPS frame, including design, fabrication and installation, will cost about $4K.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>*Planning team to conduct system-wide site analysis in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive signs on railing at Fly’n B Park shelter</td>
<td>AH, H2O, FB1-5</td>
<td>3-4 rail-mounted interpretive signs (+/- 6 sq. ft. @ 48x18&quot;)</td>
<td>$12K</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Consider installation in light of frequent use of facility for weddings &amp; other events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly’n B Park</td>
<td>AH, H2O, FB1-5</td>
<td>Interpretive trail w/ 5-6 signs</td>
<td>$24K</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Collaborate with Highline Canal Working Group to place some of the signs on the canal trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Cry Creek Cheese Ranch</td>
<td>AH, H2O, NH2, CR1&amp;2</td>
<td>Interpretive trail w/ 5-6 signs</td>
<td>$24K</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Evaluate existing signage and consider replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive trail at Historic Park</td>
<td>AH, MP, H2O, HH, NH1&amp;2, HRM1-4</td>
<td>Interpretive trail w/ 7-8 signs</td>
<td>$32K</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>*Planning team to conduct system-wide site analysis in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various parks TBD</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>Interpretive art</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various parks TBD</td>
<td>TBD*</td>
<td>Free play space(s)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>*Planning team to conduct system-wide site analysis in May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Proposed is a tri-fold brochure w/ a map of trails and amenities &amp; an overview of Highlands Ranch history; intended for free distribution</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field guide</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Proposed is a glossy, 8- or 16-page booklet that offers all the content of the brochure above w/ additional detail about the natural &amp; cultural history of the community</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Printing will be expensive; consider sales at a price point adequate to recover costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site, or Description if Community-Wide</td>
<td>Theme(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Cost Estimate</td>
<td>Target Audience Segment</td>
<td>Implementation Priority</td>
<td>Notes/Comments</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deck of cards</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Actual playing cards w/ suits in different themes; each card will have an image &amp; caption on the side that players view to acquaint users w/ various aspects of community history</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball cards</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Intended to be a &quot;rogue’s gallery&quot; of major players in HR history presented in the style of a traditional trading card. To be sold at nominal cost.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile app</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Mobile app or apps with multiple functions including orientation; full description &amp; discussion on p.29</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master-planning app</td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>App similar to Sim City online game; users have a blank slate that is the terrain of Highlands Ranch and are responsible for planning the infrastructure of a modern community w/ rewards for decisions w/ positive outcomes &amp; punishment for bad decisions</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Ranch Great Race</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Both group &amp; individual events either scheduled or on-demand; requires smartphone; multiple “courses” that require knowledge of local history &amp; ecology to finish</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Ranch Land Use History Video/Animation</td>
<td>HH, MP</td>
<td>Animated video shows the evolution of local land use over time</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Planning was the most popular exercise at the kids’ workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands Ranch Mansion barn, outbuildings, caretaker home and Historic Park</td>
<td>AH</td>
<td>Living history with hands-on user involvement in traditional/historic agricultural activities (i.e. churning butter)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor lecture series</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Multiple existing locations depending on crowd size</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship projects</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Need consultation w/ HR Metro District staff, esp. as regards liability and history (if any) of similar endeavors</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Concept is similar to community gardens that have been successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided tours</td>
<td>AH, MP, H2O, HH, NH1&amp;2</td>
<td>Field nature study to be led by HR Parks &amp; Rec staff; system-wide</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trip to National Western Stock Show</td>
<td>AH, HRM4</td>
<td>Bus trip to stock show w/ volunteer docent on-board to provide background information about John Springer’s contribution to the association and the event</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Mansion</td>
<td>HRM1-3</td>
<td>Costume boxes, to be used by mansion visitors who want to pose for photos</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Likely to generate social media buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Mansion or Chum Howe House or alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a “themed interpretive” medium or program</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tactical Prescription

This chapter describes potential actions that do not involve, in a strict sense, the development of interpretive media. The intent is to stimulate discussion about strategies that might facilitate accomplishment of specific interpretive objectives and the overarching objective of this process: to enhance appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural history of Highlands Ranch.

Readers are asked to consider these tactics carefully, and to suggest additions/deletions/edits.

Promote alternative informal learning opportunities throughout the Metro Region.

The Highlands Ranch Mansion is in the enviable position of being supported by site-generated revenues (e.g. not dependent on a tax allocation). The mansion, though, is not a profit-motivated business, and is not competing for visitor dollars with nearby informal learning facilities. Particularly in interpretive media developed for the local target audience, this plan recommends that increasing awareness of the full spectrum of interpretive opportunities in the metro area, from museums to galleries and nature centers, should be an objective.

Develop and implement a formal training program for volunteer docents.

This idea would build upon and improve the training program that is already in place for volunteer docents at the Highlands Ranch Mansion. Numerous volunteers expressed the desire for a more formalized training process, and Highlands Ranch can achieve this very affordably via the resources of the National Association for Interpretation, which is headquartered in Fort Collins. The NAI offers excellent training and certification programs for informal learning venues across the country, including historic sites, nature centers, museums, and regional / state / national parks. This plan recommends that willing docents be provided the opportunity to become NAI Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG). Going forward, it should be possible to get at least one docent (or staff member) certified as a trainer (CIT) so that an in-house certification program based on NAI standards could be developed and implemented.

Offering the opportunity for volunteers to earn a respected and highly-valued certification will not only improve the visitor experience at the mansion, but also reward the volunteers who make the tour program possible.

Develop a reading room/library/archive where reference materials can be stored and accessed.

This concept envisions a single location where people wanting to do research could access the (now scattered) collection of reference materials about Highlands Ranch. This would encourage further research.

To contain costs and avoid duplication of effort, such a program could integrate with existing resources at the Douglas County Library’s Historic Research and Archive Center. However, we strongly recommend that Highlands Ranch establish its own on-site facility (at the Mansion, Chum Howe or elsewhere) to complement the Douglas County Library’s archive room. Driving down to Castle Rock is a hurdle that many people simply won’t jump over without encouragement. The benefit of a local library/archive at Highlands Ranch is that it would stimulate interest, whet appetites and inspire many people to visit the Douglas County Library so they can dig deeper.

Locating the reading room / archive within the Highlands Ranch branch of the library would be a logical way to cement this connection.
A Highlands Ranch library/archive does not have to be comprehensive in order to be very useful. Because of its proximity to the target audience, it will attract more visitors and have a greater impact than a resource based primarily (or entirely) at the Douglas County Library.

**Examine the potential for creating an exhibit experience in the Chum Howe House.**

Douglas County tried and failed to figure out what to do with this resource for more than a decade (an outbuilding is pictured at left). This plan suggests opening discussions about the potential of the house as a location not only for a reading room, but also for an exhibit (or living history) experience of some sort. This is a complex situation. The conversations about feasibility would need to consider neighborhood traffic issues, staffing, liability and much more. But it is a resource with excellent potential.

**Provide Highlands Ranch residents an ongoing opportunity to record their family histories.**

This idea follows on from the above ideas for a reading room/library/archive and possible uses for the Chum Howe House. People really like NPR’s Story Corps Project: it connects families across generations and strengthens the shared heritage of communities. This plan recommends opening conversations about locating a recording studio at the library or other location in Highlands Ranch. Integrating a recording opportunity with the proposed reading room is an obvious consideration. This strategy would obviously entail both startup costs and ongoing expenses for curation.

As with the library/reading room described above, an oral history program could supplement the existing recording program at the Douglas County Library. As above, proximity is an important consideration. The program will attract far more participants if families can record and listen to stories at the Mansion or other nearby location, rather than being obliged to drive down to the Douglas County Library in Castle Rock.

**Consider adding more community gardens, to be integrated with interpretive opportunities.**

The existing community gardens have been popular and successful. Adding more gardens, especially with an eye toward enhancing the gardening experience with heritage learning opportunities is suggested.

**Publish research questions for which answers have not come easily.**

There are lots of gaps in the historical accounts of the mansion, and no doubt many more questions about both early and modern Highlands Ranch history. Publishing those questions in local newsletters, or at locations such as library, might stimulate community involvement in heritage preservation and might get some answers to nagging questions.

**Work with Douglas County School District to develop pre- and post-visit curricula for school field trips.**

There is no stronger bond between an organization and the community it serves than one forged through its children. This plan recommends working with local/regional educators to develop supporting materials for teachers conducting field trips that are consistent with state curriculum requirements.
Implementation
This chapter will be completed and presented in the next draft of the plan, after review and consultation with District staff and stakeholders has created a better sense of both priorities and what concepts for media development are well-supported and which are not.

Priorities & Schedule
TBD

Cost Estimates
TBD
Appendix A: Bibliography

Print Resources


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Digital and Online Resources

http://www.wolhurst.org/ (accessed 2/16/15)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcjgYSmLh_c (accessed 2/16/15)

http://highlandsranch.org/community/history/ (accessed 2/16/15)

http://highlandsranchhistoricalsociety.org/ (accessed 2/16/15)


Appendix B: National Recognition of Douglas County & Highlands Ranch

Highlands Ranch tops the nation for the No. 1 community for people who have a HS diploma and making more than $50K
https://twitter.com/denbizjournal/status/56962902724721793

These Are the Ten Best Counties in America
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Nerd Wallet rates Highlands Ranch among nation’s fastest growing cities
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(2012)

Douglas County number 7 on Forbes’ richest counties list
(2011 – ranked 7th)

Business Week ranked Highlands Ranch first in Colorado as Best Place to Raise Your Kids
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http://images.businessweek.com/ss/09/11/1117_best_places_to_raise_kids/7.htm

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(2009 – ranked 20th)

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Buzzle -- 100 Best Places to Live in the United States
http://www.buzzle.com/articles/100best-places-to-live.html
Appendix C: Notes from Planning Workshop 2/3/15

These notes are presented exactly as taken at the workshop; nothing has been edited, spell-checked or re-formatted. Please notify the planning team if you attended the workshop and feel that any of your comments (or those offered by others) are not accurately represented.

Feb 3 2015

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE
Melanie Tafaro
David Johnston    local historical society, and county preservation board
Mark Stevenson    local historical society
Nancy Lisenbigler  local historical society
Laura Lacerte     metro district park ranger, environmental education progs
David Parks       metro district rec supervisor
Carolyn Peters    metro district rec
Brian Muller      metro district parks
Carrie Ward       metro district parks
Tammie Claussen   library grants manager
Shaun Boyd        library history dept
Susie Appleby     author
Jamie Noble       homeowner ass’n ?????
Sherry Eppers     metro district
Jeff Case         metro district

WHAT’S UNIQUE / SPECIAL / IMPORTANT ABOUT HR RESOURCES?

Melanie ---
I’d like to incorporate technology — e.g., at the mansion if you had an app you could download and then you use a QR code to show you an image of something that the museum can’t put on display. maybe all the sites all tie in to a single app.

e.g., maybe when you’re out on a trail you can use the app to get a photo of what the place looked like in the 1930s.

maybe the app gives you a drop dot on a map, so you know where you are. and maybe there are particular websites, video clips, etc that are associated w/ those GPS coordinates

DAVID
the mansion has a lot of history. the field behind has a lot of natural history about grasslands, etc. Cheese ranch talks about the farming and what that’s like. Signs weather well, so I’m in favor of that. at Cheese Ranch I’d like to see more of the orchards, engineering marvels, other infrastructure an their dryland farming techniques. in the field behind the mansion, some of the natural features. maybe touchscreens at the mansion to talk about the history of the mansion. maybe the fly n B is a combination of both.

MARK
i’m here on behalf of the historical society. i’m a docent at the mansion. it occurs to me there could be better signage for the paths surrounding the mansion. for people who just walk their dogs, there are benches to admire the views, but no interpretive materials --- no signage, no apps, nada.

one of my pet peeves is there is no consistency betw what’s on the website and some of the scripts the docents are using. i’d like to see more consistency so we’re all on the same page.

some pct of docent tours are self-guided, partic for families w/ small children. the signage for the hallway is very good, but within the rooms of the mansion there’s not much room-by-room interp for the self-guiders. great room, solarium, etc etc ---- they probably have a good time wandering around, but there’s not a lot of help for them to understand what they’re looking at.

recent additions to the website of room-by-room content is a good direction, but that content isn’t all consistent w/ the scripts the docents use.

NANCY
i’ve been w/ the historical society for a long time, very involved for three years. we did a survey, and one of the survey results was that people like local info and facts. that’s one of the reasons we’re doing our HR then and now series. the need for more info in general is really there.

in private life i’m a realtor, and i’d have clients asking me about various landmarks and buildings. many new people are coming in, they all have relatives come and visit, so even though we have 100K local residents, there are lots of people who don’t know anything about it --- either bc they’re new, or bc they’re visitors from out of town.

the more signs, the more ways to get people involved, the better.

the other thing i notice is we have three big demographic groups:

  kids
  parents
  significant senior population. they all come bc they want to be with their kids and grandkids.

we need to appeal to all three audiences. that should be taken into consideration.

finally, on the mansion grounds the chum hao house was built for a real family with real kids (5 kids). that would be a nice feature, maybe adding a playground to pay homage to the kids and family that lived there.

BIFF ---- what is local? how far east? how far south?

BRIAN --- how do the three sites relate to one another? do they relate to one another? we like connectivity. our trails are all very interconnected, so how do we make the parks connect? is there a relationship there? not only locally, but how does it relate to the adjacent stories on the boundary. that’s really important.

BIFF ---- right. the views encompass the entire Front Range. is that our defn of “local”? or is that too big? we need the group to think about that. if Dinosaur Ridge is within view, is that fair game for interp?

DAVID ---- i think we need to focus on the local history. we don’t want to go too far afield.

SUSIE --- we want to bring the sites into context and relate them to one another. so if we relate.
SHAUN --- i’d like to tie them in to wolhurst, and turkey ranch, and some other sites that might take us further afield.

SUSIE ---- yes turkey ranch is part of our scope

NANCY ---- there were tons of homesteaders throughout douglas county

DAVID ---- the “backcountry” had a dairy and some homesteads too

JEFF --- i’m guilty of scope creep for sure. but i think what’s important to people is that we don’t have “old” families here. maybe there are families on their second generation, but nothing deeper than that. knowing about the mansion and flyn b, it’s important to talk about this area in the context of the West ----- of Denver growing as an entity. very few of the residents lived here full-time, they were mostly seasonal people who lived in denver and had regional / national businesses. one of the reasons wolhurst was so popular was because of the railroads. that was a rail stop. people from denver would ride down the train, stop off to gamble, and then ride home.

cheese ranch was known regionally for the quality of the cheeses. it’s important for people to understand that in its own right. they played a part in the overall west, and certainly in douglas county and the front range.

stories that connect this place to Denver are overwhelmingly positive. that’s an incredibly important story, and would be very welcomed.

SHAUN ---- mission viejo’s story is an important story. this is the new gold rush. we’re the new pioneers. this is an american story --- migration, etc etc. we could tie this story in of modern-day migration with the pioneers of previous decades. it may be recent, but it ties in to historical stories.

DAVID --- it also ties in to the DTC and other industrial booms.

BIFF --- denver is growing again bc of various reasons ---- oil/gas, fracking, marijuana, green energy etc etc.

LAURA --- i’m mostly out and about on the trails. i’m partic excited about flyn b. but a lot of times when people show up there, there’s nothing to tell people what the house is. we’d like to attract the seniors from Windcress and get them involved. it’s just a short distance. a lot of them do walk there.

johnny’s pond is now open with a trail, and that’s just below windcress. (“johnny” as in john bowen.)

CARRIE --- the house interior hasn’t been done yet.

LAURA --- i would like to have a place that’s an indoor “center” for environmental programming. we don’t have a nature center or visitor center. being able to use it for that would make me happy.

any time i do a program out there, people always want to know about the house. it’s definitely a point of interest.

BIFF --- who comes to the programs?

LAURA --- mostly residents. we gear more toward families and younger kids. we’re definitely trying to do some teen programs, but those haven’t gone over very well. not enough interest.
we do outreach to schools. right now it’s just that if a school calls and ask us to put a program together, we’ll do it for them. but stone mtn elementary had coyotes in the area, and the school was concerned so we were brought in to teach kids about coyotes.

i have some canned programs that i work off, and then i do some ad hoc.

as far as cheese ranch, there are some interesting things --- windmill and pond --- but that’s all that’s left. i don’t know if the signs that are currently in place will ever change, although some of them are a little bit wordy.

BIFF ---- what are central ideas about park mgmt, safety, stewardship etc.?

LAURA --- dogs off leash, dogshit. people call about the dogs off the leash, that’s our biggest conflict betw different user groups. but we don’t have conflict betw, say, cyclists and pedestrians, or skateboards, etc etc.

cheese ranch, i was thinking about doing a program out there talking about history, and offering the types of cheeses they made. (and adding wine too!) that’s something i may attempt, and we’ll see what the interest is.

BIFF --- how about the community garden? how’s that working out?

CARRIE --- fabulous. we have three of them, and there’s a waiting list. we need more garden spots.

DAVID PARKS
my role w the metro district is rec supervisor. our theme is to create fun. we work closely w laura. our programs are geared toward kids, or kids/families. we try to make the ranger info and lore into fun experiences.

signage would have to be eye catching to get kids to learn about the community and gain an appreciation for what they’ve got.

a lot of our focus recently has been on nature and outdoor education. the senior population is growing, so that’s something we’re looking at. how to engage them, how to create fun opp’ties for them to learn about the community and enjoy it.

CAROLYN
there are so many families and groups that are going outdoors and looking for unique experiences. Ben Franklin Academy has “adopted” the FlyN B park. we have places that provide unique opp’ties.

they have an active PTO --- it’s a charter school. they’re right next to the park. they use it actively as a classroom resource. what’s really great about FlyN B is that it provides an opp’ty for groups that want some privacy, e.g. family reunions.

SHERRY ---- there’s a community service group at Ben Franklin. they met w/ park staff and talked about how the kids could help to care for the park, as well as use it for learning.

BRIAN
I’d like to see what we can do about wrapping in the original vision of Mission Viejo. they tied together large pines, red sandstone, the raptor, etc etc --- how do we tie those elements in from an aesthetic appeal.
also, how can we maintain those things? what materials can we use? how much will it cost to maintain them? how vulnerable are they to vandalism?

finally, the use of the land. jeff associate ranching with this place, but agriculture pre-dates it. there’s an apple orchard at FlyNB that is who knows how old. there’s a tree farm here that’s over 100 years old. they experimented w/ the black locust here. you can actually see the original tree grid if you look on google maps / google earth.

story of water needs to be told all over the place --- both the diversion of water (e.g. highline canal) but also dryland farming, such as wheat, corn, potatoes, hay. also fruit orchards.

SHAUN --- from 1880 to 1920 there were a lot of wet years strung together, which is when they were most successful growing corn and other crops like that.

JEFF --- littleton, englewood, columbine valley etc etc were all very ag oriented. littleton’s core was ag --- orchards. the ability of location along the platte gave them enough water.

part of the story also is the scarcity of water, and how communities were able to support ag even in the absence of abundant water. douglas county was a big center for timber.

and of course eventually the most viable business became cattle. so eventually ranching did become the dominant agricultural use. but initially it was cultivated crops.

the people who came here were from the east, and they did what they knew --- farming. they didn’t really know ranching.

NANCY --- no one so far has mentioned the arapaho hunt club. we need some signage or interpretive stuff that talks about that.

SUSIE --- that ties in w/ the rich folk in denver. that all ties in.

CARRIE ---- one thing i’ve been thinking about is this: we get to a certain point and thinking about where and how to deliver this info. the metro district did a community resident survey, and the results showed the trail users are our biggest users --- 98 percent of the people used the trails within the last month. so people are really out and about. the mansion was at the bottom of the list in terms of people’s visitation.

another thing that strikes me is that we have an appetite for people to know about the environment they live in --- wildlife, geology, botany, etc etc. they also want to know about the history of the place, but there’s a real appetite for the natural features and environmental features.

BIFF ---- where are the holes? what’s underserved? where are the gaps?

CARRIE ---- definitely cheese ranch and fly n b. for sure those two. backcountry is another one. there are a lot of little niches that not everybody knows about, that just cry out for interpretation. they’re all over the place.

TAMMIE ---- from a new person’s perspective, one of the challenges of moving here is that the sense of history needs to be ubiquitous in order for you to find it. it can’t just be on the trails. there needs to be brochures, especially for kids.
when i taught history to high school kids, there’s always a nature piece. so any colorado story is in part about the environment, and the challenges it poses. that “big backyard” story is important. and kids need to see themselves in their community.

BIFF ---- how do you see accomplishing that? what helped history click w/ your kids when you taught them?

TAMMIE ---- they need to be able to fit all the pieces together. if they’re learning about colorado history, the local piece needs to be brought into a bigger context --- american history, colorado history, local history. all those connections need to be made for them, they won’t necessarily make the connections themselves.

they like to know what things were happening at the same time as other things they might know about ---- e.g, what was happening here during the civil war? when the titanic went down? during ww1? etc etc

they like to connect it with their own personal experiences too.

BIFF --- will kids read a brochure?

MELANIE ---- you might have a brochure at the rec center, library, or something else, which then directs you to the website. could also be distributed at the pool, at schools, in the metro district’s magazines, at local coffee shops, at the mansion, through the HOA, via social media . . . .

TAMMIE ---- you need a starting point, and a brochure can be a starting point. a teaser. i came from chicago, and you’re surrounded by history there, it’s obvious. you have to look harder to find the historical connections out here.

BIFF ---- how can EDA use the metro district’s mailing list for our purposes? can we use it to conduct a survey ???
[no answer]

LAURA ---- is there a “new homeowner” packet? if so, could the brochure or other interpretive “teaser” be part of that, when people first move in?

SHAUN ---- the underlying thing is that douglas county had about 3,000 until about 1950, and now it’s got 300,000 people. that is where a lot of the history happened. we need to get people connected to that part of their sense of place and love of where they live. there are a lot of ways they can go.

BIFF: shaun, what are the most important storylines in your opinion?

1. connection to denver metro, it’s the gateway between denver and the ranching world. it’s denver “exurbia.” if you interviewed the local people in 1900, they probably wouldn’t have felt connected to denver. they’d have felt connected to littleton. but they were connected to denver.

2. the wealthy ranchers have some great stories. by having this building, you make everybody feel like they’re part of the family --- you can get a sense of the wealthy rancher lifestyle.

3. dryland ag.
4. the transition to suburbia. “what’s a master-planned community” ?? what does that mean, how did it come about, etc etc.? [LB ---- this is another way we might connect HR to Denver, insofar as some of the master-planned infill development like Stapleton etc., which used HR as a model to an extent]

5. just from the manion’s owners there are connections to the oil and gas industry, hoteliers, cattle and horse ranching, the arapaho hunt, etc etc. phipps was on the board of Mountain States AT&J.

SUSIE ----
my focus is mostly the mansion here. i have dabbled in the other areas. i’ve written about the FlyNB, and a little bit about cheese ranch. but mostly it’s been the mansion. i do a lot of docenting. i agree w/ a lot of what Mark said, we should put more focus on the docent program here at the mansion. we do a GREAT job with events, but i want more focus on the education piece.

part of the story is that this place is not tax-dollar-supported.

there's no cohesiveness or consistency to the stories we tell. each docent has their own tour and their own focus and their own set of stories. but there’s no consistency vis-a-vis primary themes, secondary stories, etc etc.

to me, the owners are the primary stories ---- they’re the central points. but how do we weave in the secondary stories and connect those owners to some of the other stories we were writing about?

SHAUN ---- some of the only black people people in Douglas County (maybe the very only ones) lived in this building, in the mansion.

SUSIE ---- right. i’d like to talk about the servants and ranch hands and their families. they were here year-round, while the owners weren’t. the women here have GREAT stories. i’d like to talk about the day-to-day life here and what that was like.

BIFF ---- is there any ag living history on HR, and what would anybody’s thought be about using the mansion outbuildings for living history?

SUSIE --- i’m hoping we’ll do that somebody, and find the funds to open up the barns. i think it would be great to do some 4H, boy scouts, girl scouts, do some demos and living history, etc etc.

BIFF ---- should we be looking at it?

[general consensus is yes, it would be great]

BIFF --- how would that be funded? could it be funded via the proceeds of mansion events fees etc?

CARRIE --- maybe eventually.

LAURA ---- i think living history could be done inside the mansion too ---- with actors dressed up as the owners, telling stories, etc etc.
SHAUN ---- CAF (colorado ag foundation) --- they do hands-on ag history and demonstrations in castle rock. they’re also planning to do something down at lone tree. so a hands-on history demo program here would tie in with those other things.

CARRIE ---- we need to tie everything together and agree on what we want to share, and coordinate everything. it’s very disjointed right now. we need to bring it together. and we need to have something we can share with schools, community groups, etc etc so that their programming has some connection and relationship to the metro district’s.

DAVID --- we don’t want to dumb this down. we want to preserve all the cool stories, but we need a common starting point and framework in which to deliver all those cool stories. we need more than just an entry-level version of the story.

NANCY --- highlands ranch “then and now” is a series of monthly programs we’re putting together, and that includes some oral histories.

CARRIE ---- the county commissioners are funding nancy’s programs

SUSIE --- tours include a personal touch, more so than the technology. there’s nothing more “interactive” than a live docent. there are pros and cons to new technology. the younger generation doesn’t know any different. but i love having a human being in front of me. one of my favorite things about being a docent is sharing the passion for the place. you can’t get that through an iPad.

MARK ---- oral histories are being captured digitally. we started this program about 9 months ago, and our first subject was one of Phipps’s daughters who lived in the Chum Hao house. i was there beside the former residents taking video, and i shot video as they walked through the old outbuildings and narrated their memories of them. so we went ahead and did a complete oral history with those people. we got incredible recollection from Susanna Reyes and other family members. some of the information we got from her was completely new, and contradicted what we thought we knew.

as a historical society, we went to Douglas County Library and said we’re going to do this in video. so all of our oral histories are on video. Mark does the filming, digitizes it, but is not the conservator. so douglas county library acts as the conservator, they make the audio and video available on their website.

we’re hoping that our oral histories will capture stories about

the formative years of mission viejo
ranch foremen
arapahoe hunt club
early residents
developers

BRIAN ---- coming up soon, there’s going to be a garden to commemorate marian morgan. she was a matriarch who made this a great place to live, and the garden is going to be installed this year --- 2015 --- on the mansion grounds, in the front yard. so the point is, there will always be new stuff to interpret as we go along. it’s not static, it’s always evolving.

JEFF ----
generally an estate of this scope / stature is associated with a single individual ---- it expresses one person’s vision. this is none of that. it started as a simple ranch building and evolved over time. there’s no continuing style --- it’s a tudor,
it’s bavarian, there were plans that were partially (but not fully) implemented. everyone who owned it put their mark on it.

also it wasn’t the home of a particular family until the phippses moved here in the 1950s. since people moved in/out, they didn’t save everything ---- there are a huge amount of gaps. you find snippets of information here and there. stan oliner dug up some interesting information. there also are long gaps in terms of our images ---- there are whole decades where we don’t have images of certain parts of the house. so the history is fragmented, and we fill in gaps as we go along.

we need volunteers who might be willing to spend tens / hundreds of hours tracking down specific items, or collections, or people. we don’t just need docents. we need researchers. we need genealogists. that’s a huge commitment and sacrifice.

SUSIE --- we need a program to train people to do that research.

JEFF --- right. e.g., let’s say we want to research livestock breeds, or cattle brands, etc etc. we need to find people who have the passion for those subjects, and channel them into specific research projects that fit their interests and passions.

marian morgan lived on the property for 45 years, longer than anybody else. she wasn’t a VIP like springer, kistler, phipps, etc etc., but she lived as much / more of the history of the property than almost anybody else.

BIFF ---- so one of the products we can give you is a decision tree for research??? a road map for research so it was somewhat organized?

SHAUN ----- yes that’d be awesome.

JEFF ---- i think so. creating a virtual repository. some methodology by which people can provide information, but create it in such a way that it’s accessible and flexible. it needs to be like a discussion community, where you can throw out a hunch that somebody else might eventually follow up on (or not).

JAMIE --- consistency of information is so very key. the HRCA has a different history from the metro district. we hear people saying the wrong things all the time. it’s very harmful and needs to be corrected.

i also think the apps are very fruitful. the littleton museum has fabulous living history, and i can so see that happening here. we do it on HR Days already, where we bring in a chuckwagon, blacksmith, etc etc. ---- that really engages the kids.

i’m all about a brochure --- something that sends people to other sources of information, be they online, at the parks, whatever. we need stuff we can send people away with, e.g. something a teacher can take away after visiting with a class of kids, a point of reference she can use to follow up w/ her students after they get back into the classroom.

SHERRY ----
as i look at target audiences, i break it out separately by age. the kids are obviously a big audience, and even they are broken out by age.
when kids are learning about colorado history it’s all abstract --- it’s not something they can associate and connect to the place they know best, ie home, ie Highlands Ranch. the emotional connection is huge ---- that’s what they’re going to remember. something that touches them, inspires them, etc etc.

high school seniors who are working on senior projects might also be fruitful volunteers, where maybe they can take up some of the research projects that are lying around.

there’s a growing appreciation of the history from 1981 forward, ie the buildout of the current communities. they’re fascinated by how much HR has changed in just their parents’ lifetimes, or their own lifetime.

drawing parallels when possible between historical cultures / relationships, and modern ones. e.g., agriculture then and now ---- that makes it relevant. it’s fun and instructive to draw those parallels.

water is a huge theme. geology is a big theme because of all the materials that have been used on the front of the mansion.

the story of the renovation / preservation of the mansion itself is a storyline. the filming of the Centennial mini-series back in the 1970s.

the industry leaders --- wealthy guys who owned this building were in oil, ranching, railroads, cattle, etc etc., along with politics.

it’s important to bring people back more than once ---- we want to keep it fresh so people come to the mansion a few times a year, or once every few years, instead of coming just once.

BIFF --- we don’t have many artifacts, do we?

SHAUN ---- there are some artifacts from the cheese ranch.

NANCY --- there’s an arapahoe hunt club outfit floating around somewhere.

BIFF ---- but basically we’re not talking about cases full of artifacts. that’s probably not something that’s going to be part of your buildout, because the artifacts just aren’t there.

JEFF ----- with respect to the mansion itself, we’re so happy and fortunate to have worked out a funding scenario that makes it self supporting. we don’t use tax dollars to run the facility. that’s because we have a business model that enables us to do that, and the model includes certain limits on operating hours, programming, etc etc. it’s important to recognize those limits and stay within them.

that said, there are tremendous opportunities to pick up on. i’d love to see something that relates to the National Western Stock Show, because Springer was one of the founders of the Festival of Mtn and Plain. that’s a connection that we can draw that would be wonderful. it connects the local to the regional history.

there will always be more potential than what we’re able to act on. but that’s part of how we keep it fresh and keep people coming back ----- add new exhibits over time, or do rotating exhibits, etc etc.
POST-LUNCH DISCUSSION

FlyNB and Cheese Ranch ---- what should we focus on there?

CAROLYN --- FlyNB is a good place for exploration. there’s the island off the pond. there’s the orchards. there’s the root cellar. there’s the highline canal. that’s the word that comes to me with FlyNB. exploration of water.

BRIAN --- the highline canal has a real deep history. there’s a canal working group that meets every other month. that could turn into something that’s bigger than just HR if you go too deeply into it.

CARRIE --- johnny and jan bowen are still alive.

SHAUN ---- i have pictures of the plew era, when it was a small farm, truck farm. i think of it in those terms.

BRIAN --- windcress was thinking of having a community garden nearby. that ties right in with matthew plew.

BIFF --- should we be thinking at all about the interior of the house at FlyNB? or is this an exclusively outdoor experience?

CARRIE ---- it will be 3 to 5 years before we have the funding to do anything there with the interiors. the plan is for an open floor plan from the main floor, very flexible space. could be lots of interp displays, but also ability for the community to use it for meetings, recreation, education, private rental. flexibility is the word i’d use.

CAROLYN ---- keep in mind that it’s pretty small.

NANCY --- but it’s a focal point at FlyNB. it’s where people go first --- they check out the house and take pictures.

CAROLYN --- you’d be surprised at the number of weddings you have there in the gazebo.

BIFF --- so for now, assume exterior only.

BRIAN ---- just on the other side of C470 there’s new multi-family development, within the city of littleton, and that could have some impact on the use of the park.

SHERRY --- it’s becoming a very popular site for family photography.

CARRIE --- it’s got this direct link with modern highlands ranch, a key part of the land deal. and because the bowens are still alive.

BIFF --- do we want to promo the trail system, local museums, etc etc at FlynB and Cheese Ranch ??

[group consensus in favor]
SHERRY --- we have a trail map that’s incredibly popular and heavily used. that’s our number 1 document.

BIFF ---- that type of map should be included at a kiosk or something at some of these places.

SHERRY --- Tall Bull Memorial and the Backcountry should also be included in there.

JAMIE ---- there are native americans who use the Tall Bull area a couple of times a year for drum circles, dances, and other such uses.

MIMI ---- what about cheese ranch ????

SHAUN --- lot of photos at douglas county library and littleton history museum. we have some cheese labels, and the cheese wagon is at littleton historical.

NANCY --- there’s interesting topography there.

SHERRY ---- there’s a community garden, so that ties right in with the ag theme. there’s a pond, so we can talk about water. the neighbors really love that place.

MARK ----- maybe some wayfinding would help, because there are no signs directing visitors to the site. it’s hard to find if you haven’t been there. it’s not a walk-in place, it’s a drive-in place ---- but there’s nothing to direct drivers there.

BRIAN ---- it’s in the middle of a residential area, so the roads and everything are very oriented in that direction, ie residential.

what’s nice about the sites is that we have them well distributed geographically ---- there’s one site in east highlands ranch, one in the middle and one on the west. sometimes the east side feels like the “stepchild” of highlands ranch, so it’s nice that we’re well balanced geographically.
Appendix D: Notes from Kids Workshop

K12 CHARETTE
Cresthill Middle School
February 26, 2015, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

ppt exercise #1: which photo is from Highlands Ranch?
Five kids vote for A, two for B --- nobody correctly guesses C, and they’re surprised and intrigued by this.

ppt exercise #2: which animal would you most want to do a report on?
Even split between red-tailed hawk and coyote, with one person (Aaron) choosing the black-tailed prairie dog.
  Q: Aaron, why the prairie dog?
  A: There’s a colony near my house, they’re very social and they’re always chirping.
  Q: How many of you have seen these animals? Who has seen a hawk?
  A: Two or three kids say they’ve seen them at the open space.
  Q: How many have seen a coyote?
  A: All seven hands go up.

Kids in attendance, and their favorite place to go at Highlands Ranch:
Ethan, 7th grade: “There’s a hiking trail near my house that I like, for dog walking etc. Also, there’s a river behind my friend’s house that’s hidden away. We call it the secret river. You have to walk through the trees to get to it. There’s mud at the bottom of it, and there are these little waterfalls there.” (probably describing the Highline Canal)

Mandy, 7th grade: Likes to go to Daniels Park. “I love taking photos there, it has a lot of options for photography.” Q: What type of photographs do you like to take? E.g., landscapes? Animals? Flowers? “Sometimes I take landscapes, but mostly of my photos are closeups of animals or plants.”

Aaron, 7th grade: “I like to go ‘herping’ at Big Dry Creek Park, catching salamanders.”

Pesett, 8th grade: “I like the dog park next to the post office. I go there a lot w/ my dog. It’s an off-leash park.”

Sam, 7th grade: “Cheese Ranch. I go there every weekend and hang out with my buddies. We like to feed the ducks, mess around with the deadwood, walk along the creek.”

Kate, 7th grade: “Big Dry Creek Park. I ride my bike and play with my brother.”

Savannah, 7th grade: “My favorite place is Big Dry Creek. We like to go down into the creek and explore things. We found this tunnel thing thing with a bunch of graffiti in it. It’s a great place to chill and take selfies.”

Re the historic sites
2 of the kids have been to Cheese Ranch.
3 have been to the Highlands Ranch Mansion, and all have heard of it.
  Kate and Mandy have performed there with their elementary school choirs. Savannah has been to the mansion on multiple occasions, including once when she went on a scavenger hunt that was led by volunteers. “While we were
on the scavenger hunt, they told us the stories behind some of the rooms in the mansion. So we learned all about the mansion, which was really cool.”

All say they have never been to the Fly N B Ranch (although this later proves untrue) and are not even aware it exists.

**What’s an interpretive plan?**

LAB: It’s a document that identifies the important stories to tell about a place, the stories that make it special. We want to tell stories that will interest people, teach them something new, and help them understand the place. So what are some stories we could tell about Highlands Ranch that would help you understand it better. Sam, when you’re at Cheese Ranch every weekend, are there questions you wish you knew the answers to?

Sam: “Yeah --- sometimes we wonder about those old trees. They’re dead and the bark is coming off, and you can tell they’re really old. You wonder why they died. You wonder what kind of tree they are.”

Q: Aaron, what about you when you’re ‘herping.’ Aaron: “Sometimes I’ll find a vernal pool w/ thousands of salamanders in it. I’ll wonder where they all came, what the source is.”

Pesett: “West of here there are some really old buildings w/ wood and rusted metal. I wonder what those buildings might be. They have no windows or doors. They’re empty but definitely old. I wonder what those buildings were used for and why they are there.”

Ethan: Q -- do you mean genealogy? LAB: That’s part of it, but not all of what our job is. Genealogy is essentially the story of a family. We do want to tell stories about families --- but we also want to tell stories about animals, the environment, historical events, etc etc.

Savannah: “I wonder about what creatures roamed in prehistoric times. I’d like to know what was going on during the ice age.”

Aaron: “One prehistoric animal is the Utah raptor. it was 12 feet tall.”

Ethan: There are tons of aspens all over Highlands Ranch. I wonder where they all came from. There’s more aspens here than anywhere else. And now they’re all dying, because they were all planted at the same time. I wonder why that is.”

Savannah:”How far back does human life go here?”

Ethan: “I think six or seven thousand years.”

Sam: “It depends what you mean. We could talk about native americans, when they came here. And then there are the pilgrims and all of them.”

Pesett: “I see signs all the time that say, ‘water well.’ I wonder why there are so many signs that point them out.”

Sam: “There’s a lot of fracking and stuff in Colorado. I’m curious about why there is so much oil and gas here.”

Ethan: “Why is our commercial market developed so much? A lot of places that have existed for 100 years don’t even have a McDonalds. But Highlands Ranch is really young, but we have all these big companies here.”

LAB: Excellent observation ---- why do you guys think that is? When did highlands ranch become so populous?
Sam: “I think it started in the 1980s.”

Pesett: “It’s modern-day immigration. My mom was born in Cambodia. She came here in 1998. She moved first to Denver and then to Highlands Ranch. We’ve lived in Highlands Ranch for five years.”

Savannah: “One reason it got so big is maybe overflow from Denver. But when it was a rural area people came for good farming land, good hunting. And I think it grew in the 1980s because crime rates in Denver are up. Highlands Ranch is safer. It’s a safe haven.”

Sam: “I don’t know if HR has the best farmland or dirt. My parents are always complaining about the soil.”

Savannah: “Well not farming. Ranching.”

Kate: “Highlands Ranch is a family place. You can start a family here because you know it’ll be safe, there’s a lot of things to do that are good to do.”

Aaron: “My grandpa says Highlands Ranch is a cookie-cutter place.”

Savannah: “There are some places where all the houses are identical, and they just paint them different colors but they have the same layout. But my cousins in Kansas and Louisiana live in these really old houses that have character, and they’re all different.”

Ethan: “Some of Denver is like that too. There are neighborhoods with really old houses.”

LAB ---- This is really important. Why do you think Highlands Ranch became a ‘cookie-cutter’ place while places like Denver have a lot of different types of houses with ‘character’?

Savannah: “I assume it costs a lot of money to hire an architect.”

Ethan: “They mass developed here. These houses were all built at the same time?”

LAB --- Has anybody ever heard the term “master-planned community”? The kids more or less do know the term, but don’t really know what it means.

LAB ---- A development master plan tells the builders where to put the houses, where to put the roads, where to put the parks etc. Everything is planned for. If you were drawing up a master plan, what kinds of things would you have to put into it?

Answers shouted out by various kids:
- Houses
- Recreation buildings
- Shopping
- Open space
- Plumbing, sewer pipes
- Power and electricity
- Police and fire departments
- Roads
- Schools
- Entertainment
Office buildings
Government buildings
Post offices
Garbage service

LAB --- Highlands Ranch is one of the biggest master-planned communities in the whole country. Does anybody know how many acres it is?
   The guesses range from 10,000 acres to 500,000 acres. One kid (Pesett) gets it right on the nose --- 22,000 acres.

LAB ---- anybody know how many people live here now?
   Pesett knows the census figure of 96,000 from 2010.

**Master planning exercise**

_Scenario:_ The year is 1980. You’re an urban planner. You’ve just been hired to develop the master plan for Highlands Ranch. There’s nothing here except for a few scattered homes, farms and dirt roads. Describe how you’d proceed.

_Some questions to consider:_
- Where will you put the houses? roads? parks?
- How will you decide what goes where?
- Will you leave any areas undeveloped? Which ones? Why?

**General takeaways:**
1) A number of the kids play Sim City and immediately saw the connection between this exercise and Sim City. One even pulled out his smartphone and launched the Sim City app on his phone. I did not ask about Minecraft, but would suspect some of the kids play this as well.

2) All but one of the kids drew maps. This was not part of the original setup, but it’s how they naturally responded to the exercise, ie they wanted a visual component.

3) It was a very popular exercise. The kids loved it --- huge hit. I stopped them after about 15 minutes but they all wanted to keep working on their master plans. I asked if they would enjoy doing an exhibit of this type or using an online interactive or app, and they enthusiastically said yes and immediately started designing the app. They’d want one scenario in which you could wind the clock back to 1980 and re-master plan Highlands Ranch from scratch --- working within real-life constraints on water, terrain, soil, wildlife, etc etc., but you’d be able to put the parks and roads and homes etc. where you wanted them. And then (as in Sim City) you’d see the consequences of your decisions --- some decisions would work out, and others wouldn’t.

But they’d also want non-Highlands Ranch options that allowed them to master-plan different pieces of virgin terrain with different factors (e.g. maybe wetlands or forests) that aren’t present at Highlands Ranch.

4) Some discussion about the kids’ individual plans:
Mandy: Q --- why’d you put your main road where you did? A: “I had to make sure the road wouldn’t make too much noise for residential houses, and I didn’t want it to disturb wildlife so I put it far away from the open space.”

Pesett: “I drew a circular concentric layout so it’s easy to get around. Everything is close to everything else, and everything leads to everything else.”
Ethan: “I put open space in the center, and residential nearby, with small commercial areas scattered around. The government and public safety HQ are clustered in southwest corner.”

Kate: “I put a lot of parks near the residential areas and schools near those, so it would give kids places to play near their schools and houses.”

Savannah: “I wanted to plant a lot of trees to create a natural forest in one area. The rest of the open space would be native prairie. I kept the historic area undeveloped. I put parks near subdivisions, and near those I’ve got the school zone and another park.”

**ppt exercise #3 (Fly N B Park):**
When the kids see the photo of the house, four of them recognize it immediately and realize they have been to the park, contra their statements earlier. They just didn’t know the place by name.

Only one of the kids (Savannah) gets the correct answer here. The others guesses are split between horse rustlers and buried treasure. The kids are amused / surprised to learn about the Mafia connection.

**ppt exercise #4: which building would you write a report about?**
Five of the seven choose the bunkhouse. They’re intrigued by it — nobody knows what it is, but it’s picturesque and stimulates their imaginations. Asked to guess what the building was used for, they offer:

- Slaughterhouse
- Hermit’s cabin
- Storage shed
- Home for a poor person

They’re amazed to learn that it actually housed multiple people. Ethan: “My bedroom is bigger than that whole building.”

**Homesteading exercise**

*Scenario: The year is 1880. You’re 13 years old. You’ve just arrived in Colorado from somewhere back east to start a farm on 40 acres of land at Highlands Ranch. Describe your new life.*

*Some questions to consider:*  
  - What does Highlands Ranch look like?  
  - Where do you live? What do you eat and drink?  
  - How do you spend your time on a typical day?  
  - What are the toughest challenges to building the farm?  
  - How are you meeting those challenges?  
  - What do you love about your life? What do you hate about it?

*General takeaways:*  
1) Also a popular exercise. We weren’t able to spend as much time on this one as on the master-planning exercise --- just a general discussion rather than each kid developing his/her own individual scenario.

2) Re challenges, the kids listed:  
   - What if the land’s no good for farming?
e.g., poor soil  
not enough water  
sloping ground  

What if you don’t have enough building materials?  
What about bandits?  
What about pests eating your crops?  
What if you need people to work for you and there’s nobody around to hire?

3) Re how they’d be spending their time in this scenario, the kids listed:  
Taking care of younger brothers and sisters  
Doing laundry, cooking, cleaning  
Hauling in building materials  
Hunting  
Doing whatever my parents told me to do --- same as my life now

3) I went around the table and asked each kid to list what they’d love about that life:

Kate: “I love being around animals all the time. The horses, the cows, and all the wildlife.”  

Aaron: “I love the fact that we’re earning our living, and nothing is handed to us.”

Mandy: “I love that it’s a simple life.”

Ethan: “I love the independence of it (until I’d have to work). Right now I have to ask to do everything. I have to be supervised a lot of the time. I’d have more responsibility and independence. I’d be able to go farther away, and they’d trust me more.”

Savannah: “You’re more respected. You’re not bossed around as much. You’re able to make your own decisions. Your family is isolated, so you have to be independent. And that would be cool.”

Pesett: “You’d get to explore a lot. There’d be a lot to see and do, especially in a place like Colorado.”

Sam: “I’d like the independence and the privacy. Being with horses and being able to ride.”

LAB --- Do you all ride?

All hands go up. All seven have ridden. Some have horses in the family (parents, grandparents). Others have ridden in girl scouts / boy scouts, camps, or private lessons.

LAB --- Would it be interesting to learn about the different breeds of horses that were raised at Highlands Ranch? The different brands and the stories attached to them?  
Ans. --- enthusiastic “yes”

**ppt exercise #5: 50 percent**
Nobody guesses this one correctly, and they’re amazed to learn that half of Highlands Ranch was preserved as open space. I ask why the master planners might have made this decision, and they have good responses — viz. to attract families, it’s pretty, it helps the wildlife etc etc.

**ppt exercise #6: 1000 percent**
Easy-peasy --- they all get this one correctly. LAB: So if there are 100K people living here now and the population growth is 1000 percent, how many people were living here in 1990? Ethan: 10,000. LAB: Right --- so 90,000 people have moved here since 1990. Mandy: Including us! LAB --- Yep, including all of you. And those master-planners planned for all 90,000 of you.

**ppt exercise #7: write the caption**
The kids put a great twist on this --- instead of “write the caption,” they do “write the hashtag.” They’d enjoy an interactive exhibit in which they’d see a historic photo, write a hashtag for it, enter it into the database, then pull up a list of other people’s hashtags and “like” the ones they found most amusing.

They were shouting out hashtags for all the pictures, some of them pretty clever. Unfortunately I didn’t capture any of these.

They were fascinated by the historic picture of the Plews house (ie the last slide), which is taken from exactly the same angle as the modern-day picture in the Fly N B ppt exercise. The drastic change in the house, and the landscape around it, really grabbed them --- as well as the sight of a familiar landmark in totally unfamiliar surroundings.

Q: So before / after pictures are cool? Ans. -- most definitely, the kids want more of those.

Re the ppt “quiz” exercises generally ---- they’d like an exhibit or app in which the quiz comes at the beginning; then you go through the exhibit / activity, and then you get to revise your answers afterward. They also would dig a “cliffhanger” story, in which you get the setup on the front end but don’t get the conclusion of the story until the end of the exhibit.
Appendix E: PowerPoint Presentation Used at Kids’ Workshop

The kids’ workshop was organized around a PowerPoint presentation. The slides used are presented here.
Which photo is from Highlands Ranch?
Which photo is from Highlands Ranch?

B
Which photo is from Highlands Ranch?

C
Which photo is from Highlands Ranch?
Which photo is from Highlands Ranch?
You have to write a report about one of the Highlands Ranch animals. Which one would you choose?
You have to write a report about one of these Highlands Ranch animals. Which one would you choose?

B
You have to write a report about one of these Highlands Ranch animals. Which one would you choose?
You have to write a report about one of these Highlands Ranch animals. Which one would you choose?

A

What animals are these?

Which one(s) have you seen before?

B

C
Which one of these things really happened at the ranch house at Fly N B Park?
Which one of these things really happened at the ranch house at Fly N B Park?

A. Two horse rustlers were trapped there by a posse, tried to shoot their way out, and died bloody deaths.
Which one of these things really happened at the ranch house at Fly N B Park?

B. An ex-convict with Mafia connections ran an illegal gambling parlor for rich Denver businessmen.
C. John Elway received the house as a gift after taking the Broncos to the Super Bowl in 1987.
D. A man found a buried chest full of money while he was digging a hole for an outhouse.
Which one of these things really happened at the ranch house at Fly N B Park?

A. Two horse rustlers were trapped there by a posse, tried to shoot their way out, and died bloody deaths.

B. An ex-convict with Mafia connections ran an illegal gambling parlor for rich Denver businessmen.

C. John Elway received the house as a gift after taking the Broncos to the Super Bowl in 1988.

D. A man found a buried chest full of money while he was digging a hole for an outhouse.
Which one of these things really happened at the ranch house at Fly N B Park?

A. Two horse rustlers were trapped there by a posse, tried to shoot their way out, and died bloody deaths.

B. An ex-convict with Mafia connections ran an illegal gambling parlor for rich Denver businessmen.

C. John Elway received the house as a gift after taking the Broncos to the Super Bowl in 1988.

D. A man found a buried chest full of money while he was digging a hole for an outhouse.
You have to write a report about one of these buildings. Which one would you choose?
You have to write a report about one of these buildings. Which one would you choose?
You have to write a report about one of these buildings. Which one would you choose?
You have to write a report about one of these buildings. Which one would you choose?

Have you seen any of these buildings before?
The year is 1880. You're 13 years old.

You've just arrived in Colorado with your family from somewhere back east to start a farm on 40 acres of land at Highlands Ranch.

Describe your new life.

Some questions to consider:

What does Highlands Ranch look like?
Where do you live? What do you eat and drink?
How do you spend your time on a typical day?
What are the toughest challenges to building the farm?
How are you meeting those challenges?
What do you love about your life?
What do you hate about it?
The year is 1980. You're an urban planner.

You’ve just been hired to develop the master plan for Highlands Ranch. There's nothing here except a few scattered homes, farms and dirt roads.

Describe how you'd proceed.

Some questions to consider:

Where will you put the houses? roads? parks?
How will you decide what goes where?
Will you leave any areas undeveloped? Which ones? Why?
Which of these are you most worried about:
- Water
- Views
- Soil / geology
- Wildlife
50 percent

A. Highlands Ranch families that moved here from out of state

B. Increase in average Highlands Ranch home value since 1990

C. Original Highlands Ranch acreage that's preserved as open space
50 percent

A. Highlands Ranch families that moved here from out of state

B. Increase in average Highlands Ranch home value since 1990

C. Original Highlands Ranch acreage that's preserved as open space
1000 percent

A. Population increase at Highlands Ranch since 1990

B. Increase in average Highlands Ranch home value since 1990

C. Increase in soil erosion at Highlands Ranch since 1990
A. Population increase at Highlands Ranch since 1990

B. Increase in average Highlands Ranch home value since 1990

C. Increase in soil erosion at Highlands Ranch since 1990
Write a caption that explains who / what / when.
Write a caption that explains who / what / when.
Write a caption that explains who / what / when.
Write a caption that explains who / what / when.
Write a caption that explains who / what / when.