



November 15, 2020

The following is a summary of the trail counter program for the summer of 2020. This program is a partnership between The City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County Riders. The program was focused on the Emerald Mountain and the Buffalo Pass trail systems, and we maintained a counter on the Core Trail all year.

The focus of the counter program on the Emerald trail system was to cover the access points and collect overall usage data. We also had a goal to place all of the counters earlier in the year. We deployed thirteen counters on Emerald Mountain. We placed IR counters on Ridge trail, Rotary trail, Beall trail, both of the lower NPR sections, Robbie's Cut, Blackmere, Molly's, Lupine at the stables, and two at various locations on Bluffs trail at and above the stables. We also deployed two magnetic counters on Emerald on the bottom of Beall trail and under the bridge on the top section of NPR. The only counter issue on Emerald was a gap in data of approximately six weeks on the green lower NPR trail. We suspect this was due to the battery not being installed correctly. After fixing the issue, we collected valid data until the end of the season. We did not see any major issues with the Emerald data when we uploaded and checked it, so the data for Emerald should be valid. We deployed all of the counters on Emerald by May 6<sup>th</sup>.

The focus of the counter program on Buff Pass was to document trail usage data and to expand the number of trails for which we collected data. On Buff Pass, twelve counters were placed. We placed IR counters at the top and bottom of the Spring Creek downhill trail, on lower and middle Flash of Gold, on Grouse below the midway access point, on the Spring Creek uphill below the wall, on the Soda Mountain trailhead, and at the Spring Creek trailhead. We also deployed magnetic counters in the middle of Grouse, on lower Flash of Gold, at the bottom of BTR, and on the ditch trail. We had issues with the Grouse IR counter that we were unable to resolve. The counter started reporting invalid data (abnormally high counts) soon after it was deployed. In response, we repositioned the counter and still had the same issue. We then placed an additional magnetic counter in the middle of Grouse. Other than this counter, the uploaded Buff Pass data appeared to be valid. All of the working counters on Buff Pass were deployed in a timely fashion to capture early season usage.

The season wrapped up and all of the counters were taken down by November 2<sup>nd</sup>. All of the data from the counters has been uploaded to the TRAFx website for the city to review and analyze. Our current stock of counters includes nineteen IR counters, nine magnetic counters, and one counter that needs to be replaced. There are also two functioning counter readers.

This season, we met all of our goals from last year. We successfully placed all counters earlier in the season, and we added counters to Soda, middle Flash of Gold,

Spring Creek uphill, lower Spring Creek downhill, and magnetic counters on Grouse and lower Flash of Gold.

We plan to maintain a similar counter program for 2021, but we recommend the city fund an expansion of the program to field verify trail usage and compare it to collected counter data. We also recommend the city undertake another round of trailhead surveys to help better understand the collected data. This concludes our summary of the 2020 Trail Counter Program. Please contact Craig Frithsen, program administrator, at (970) 846-7980 with any questions or concerns regarding the Trail Counter Program.

Sincerely,

Connor Frithsen,  
Trail Counter Technician