
ROARING FORK RAILROAD CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

October 5, 2022



Cattle on Working Ranch near Ironbridge
(Trail to new elementary school middle left)

Prepared For:
Covenant Enforcement Commission
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

Prepared By:
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I. Introduction, Approach to the Assessment

The Rio Grande Corridor is a 34-mile long rail corridor running from Glenwood Springs to Woody Creek, Colorado. The corridor is "rail-banked," a law enacted through the 1983 National Trails System Act, which allows out-of-service rail corridors to be used as trails until they might be needed again for rail service. The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) owns the corridor and is charged with maintaining the property for public transportation and recreation purposes. A trail is currently located on the corridor that enjoys heavy use by enthusiasts. As a part of the purchase of the corridor, RFTA and the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO), a funding partner, agreed to place a Covenant on approximately half of the corridor to preserve the "conservation values" on the property. For the purposes of this report, an "encroachment" means an incursion, intrusion, or disturbance into, across or along the corridor by a person or corporation other than RFTA. This includes both structures and uses. The types of encroachments that are specifically listed in the Conservation Covenant are as follows: structures, fences, crossings, timber harvesting, mining activities, paving, roads, trash, weeds and "other improvements."

To monitor and enforce the covenant, RFTA created a Covenant Enforcement Commission (RFTA CEC) made up of representatives from each of the entities belonging to RFTA. It is the responsibility of the Commission to meet annually to assess the rail corridor and to recommend to the RFTA Board that it make any corrections necessary to ensure that the conservation values of the areas described within the Conservation Covenant are not compromised. An annual assessment of the entire corridor, including the nine Conservation Areas is conducted annually to determine if any potential violations exist. The report is then presented to and discussed by the RFTA CEC.

In 2018 the assessment was expanded to cover the entire length of the corridor from the main line tracks in Glenwood Springs to the terminus of RFTA ownership at Woody Creek Road. The format of this report has also been modified to account for this change. This report will first summarize all violations, showing which violations are new, which are in the process of being remedied, and which have been remedied. Encroachments are detailed on separate Encroachment Forms that describe the location, type of encroachment, background information on the encroachment, and a recommended remedy to resolve the issue.

Also included is Appendix A which describes the nine Conservation Areas.

III. Summary

Based on the visual inspection of the corridor, the following is a summary of the violations on the corridor:

New Violations Noted

<i>Milepost</i>	<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Form #</i>
4.19	No	Homeless Camp	1
7.00	No	Storage Structures in Corridor	2
24.55	Area #7	Ramp Over Tracks	10
28.13	No	Realtor Sign in Corridor	14

Violations Being Remedied

<i>Milepost</i>	<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Form #</i>
9.37	No	Landscaping at Sign in ROW	3
14.2	No	Fill for Parking Lot near Corridor	5
18.71	Area #6	Trash Shed in Corridor	6
19.80	Area #6	Structure and Berm in Corridor	7
25.32 – 25.49	No	Lawn Encroachments, Samuelson Subdivision	12
25.45	No	Private Trail/Ramp on Corridor	13

Violations Remedied:

<i>Milepost</i>	<i>Conservation Area</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Form #</i>
10.79	Area #4	Trash/storage in ROW	4
21.3	Area #6	Ditch Debris in Corridor	8
23.1	Area #7	T-post Fence in Corridor	9
24.92	Area #7	New Irrigation putting green	11
29.04	No	Private Access to River	15

General Corridor Comments:

There were four new potential violations this year, one of which is within a Conservation Area. Overall, the corridor is in good condition, the trail is well used and maintained; most notably, no weed infestations or trash accumulations were present.

Conservation Enforcement Commission Comments:

The Commission discussed the report and certain encroachments, including the barn and berm in Covenant Area #6. The Commission recommended that RFTA Board consider forwarding the report and staff responses to GOCO .