

**MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE, September 28, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Christine Quinlan in the Hearing Room of the Board of Commissioners, Third Floor, Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder, Colorado.

POSAC Members in Attendance

Present: David Batts, Lisa Dilling, Sean McCoy, Mary McQuiston, Christian Meyer, Janice Moore, Melanie Muckle, Eric Vogelsberg, Christine Quinlan and Dave Robertson

Excused: Barbara Hawke

Staff in Attendance

Ron Stewart, Jan Burns, Therese Glowacki, Jim Daus, Claire DeLeo, Dave Hoerath, Larissa Read & Melissa Arnold

Minutes of August 10, 2006 & August 24 Meeting

Chris Meyer moved to accept the August 10, 2006 minutes. *Melanie Muckle* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Dave Robertson moved to accept the August 24, 2006 minutes. *Sean McCoy* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda – None

Property Transactions:

* Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC

Staff Presenter: Jim Daus

A. Albrighton

See staff memo for detail. Approx. 14-acre mining claim near Fourth of July Trailhead.

Discussion/Questions by POSAC Members

Dave Robertson pointed out that the trails on the handouts were in the wrong locations. Answering questions, *Jim Daus* said the City of Boulder was probably not interested in owning more land in the area, and the adjacent parcels were on his shortlist for acquisition.

Public Comment – None

Motion

Sean McCoy moved to accept staff recommendation. *Melanie Muckle* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion by POSAC Members

Sean McCoy commented that this is a great price and likes that its purchase will prevent the construction of another house.

B. Morse, Skinner & Bernart

See staff memo for detail. Approximately 6.65 acres of mining claims on Spencer Mountain near Eldora Ski Area. Staff recommended acquisition of these properties together or individually.

Discussion/Questions by POSAC Members

Answering questions, *Jim Daus* confirmed that the parcels range from one to two acres and the purchase price will be \$20,000 for each parcel regardless of its size. He confirmed that the private claims in the surrounding area are on his shortlist.

Public Comment

- *Diane Brown, 2478 Eldora Road, Nederland CO*, is the primary fundraiser and director for the Eldora Land Preservation Fund, which would like to donate \$20,000 towards this acquisition. *See handout.* The Fund would like to require that the parcel could not be sold without their approval.

Motion

Dave Robertson moved to accept staff recommendation to purchase the parcels together or individually. *David Batts* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion by POSAC Members

Melanie Muckle appreciated Eldora's efforts to help acquire these properties. *Chris Meyer* commented that this area is a good example of long-term vision as the pieces of open space slowly fill in.

C. Howard

See staff memo for detail. Approximately 16-acre mining claim near Nugget Hill.

Discussion/Questions by POSAC Members

Answering questions, *Jim Daus* clarified the road access to Gold Lake and said the mineral rights come with the property.

Public Comment – None

Motion

Chris Meyer moved to accept staff recommendation. *Melanie Muckle* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion by POSAC Members

Melanie Muckle congratulated the staff on their work to fill in the open space in this area over time.

Grasslands Restoration Update

Staff Presenter: Claire DeLeo

* Information Only

Staff memo not provided for this item. A field trip was held prior to the meeting at the Dowe Flats/CEMEX property to look at the first season's seeding results on the northern 60 acres. An update of the Department's restoration efforts followed.

Discussion/Questions by POSAC Members

Lisa Dilling asked how staff compensates for the loss of native species that evolved along with grasslands. *Claire DeLeo* said that grasslands evolved with disturbance, so staff turns to prescriptive grazing and prescribed burning. She added that it is very difficult to mimic the natural patterns of historical ungulates because cows grazed differently than bison. Answering *Chris Meyer's* question about prairie dogs and restoration, *Claire DeLeo* said some projects are classified as multiple objective areas that allow prairie dogs, and some are intended to become prairie dog habitat but they must be restored to grassland first. Although she does not know the acreage of project sites unable to undergo restoration due to the presence of prairie dogs, some sites have becoming available for restoration following the plague. When *Chris Meyer* asked how many acres are restored each year, *Claire DeLeo* said approximately 150-300 acres. Currently, the department is handling a little over 700 acres and will probably stay somewhere in this vicinity. *Ron Stewart* mentioned a story about a dry wheat farmer in the southeast area was hired to do grasslands restoration work, which is a nice way to continue his way of life. When asked when research results on restoration at the Dowe Flats/CEMEX property would be reported, *Claire DeLeo* said next spring should produce some of the first results, although staff may wait a couple of years before making any conclusions. *Christine Quinlan* asked if staff would use the banded charcoal technique in future restoration efforts or wait until the results are in. *Claire DeLeo* said they would wait since its application is complex. *Christine Quinlan* commended the staff for bringing this research to Boulder County.

Elk Study Update

Staff Presenter: Dave Hoerath

* Information Only

See staff memo for detail. Staff presented an update on the radiotelemetry study of the North Boulder Elk Herd.

Discussion/Questions by POSAC Members

Answering questions, *Dave Hoerath* said the spring migrations takes anywhere from 2-3 days, and discussed other herds such as the Clear Creek and Caribou Herds. A discussion ensued about the study's mortality estimation, about which the staff feels confident: US 36 automobile collisions and game damage hunts east of 36 are the main causes of mortality, aside from legal harvest. Hunters have taken radio-collared elk in the past, which is a real indicator of mortality, but removing a study animal when given a choice with non-collared animals might be considered unethical. Responding to a carrying capacity question, *Dave Hoerath* said the elk he studies are at a healthy population level, but if the population grows to an unsustainable level, the Division of Wildlife could request hunting. The Heil Valley Ranch and Rabbit Mountain (NFOS) Management Plans both allow for hunting if the need arises. At this point, there are no requirements to control elk herd sizes. *Eric Vogelsberg* asked about the practicality of a Hwy 36 overpass, for which former POSAC member Jim McKee advocates. *Dave Hoerath* said it could be practical if POS owned the land or held easements on the other side of the highway. He commented that it does not make sense to build an expensive overpass only to send animals onto

private property where the owners are already giving damage claims. An underpass may be more feasible. In general, overpasses and underpasses can be very effective. He mentioned technology being tested in Montana that alerts drivers to approaching wildlife where they are crossing the highway without an underpass or overpass. *David Batts* mentioned that the Forest Service likes to have regional coordinated planning, and asked if the seasonal habitats from this study have been delineated on their maps. *Dave Hoerath* said that staff has provided them with all their data and there is coordination. When asked if there is a correlation between mountain lions and the location of elk, *Dave Hoerath* said mountain lions are not a big mortality source for adult elk because of their size. POSAC expressed appreciation for staff's efforts in this study.

Director's Update

Ron Stewart reported that there were about 1,500 people at Walker Ranch this weekend, the Wall Street Assay office will open on October 23rd at 3:30 pm, and POS will be getting a patent on 850 acres of BLM land in the Eldorado Canyon area tomorrow.

This year's budget will request a part time staff person to pay bills, a full time staff person to work with conservation easements, a resource tech to work in the cultural history interpretation area, a grounds staff person and a ¾ time landscape staff person at the Fairgrounds.

He mentioned that POS has been given two awards by the International City and County Manager's Association: One award is for being highly regarded by constituents and the other is for being the most improved department since the last survey.

The bridge at Caribou has been delayed because they have not received confirmation from a private party that they will help pay. Secondly, the Forest Service made a significant change in their sentiment about building the trail from Caribou to the Sourdough trailhead, as they have to undergo a federal process to consider the Green Backed Cutthroat Trout. It may take years before the connection can be made. Staff is looking into options, which will be presented in a public process.

Chris Meyer, Mary McQuiston and other POSAC members expressed gratitude for the invitation to this year's COSA conference.

Eric Vogelsberg mentioned the success of the September 16th trail project day at Heil Valley where 93 volunteers helped build the second loop. Another day is planned for October 21st.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.