

**MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE, January 24, 2008**

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, Mary McQuiston, Christian Meyer, Janice Moore (arrived 6:35 pm), Melanie Muckle, Christine Quinlan, and Jason Vogel.

Excused: Sean McCoy

Staff in Attendance

Jim Daus, Simone Baring-Gould, Renata Frye, Therese Glowacki, Dave Hoerath, Vivienne Jannatpour, Larissa Read

December 13, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Mary McQuiston moved to accept the December 13, 2007 minutes. Lisa Dilling seconded the motion. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

None

Property Transaction: Ramey (John)

12.12 acres, two parcels near CalWood

Staff Presenter: Jim Daus

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation.

** Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC*

Questions

Christian Meyer asked if sending TDRs from this site could change the possibility of trade with the USFS? Jim Daus answered that the value would be decreased, but he doesn't know if it would change the possibility of trade. He will find out and let the members know. Melanie Muckle inquired if there is a reason to have concerns about title or environmental problems regarding these properties? Jim Daus responded that it's too soon in the process. Staff just wants to make sure they cover these bases should problems occur.

Public Comment

None

Discussion

None

Motion

Christian Meyer moved to accept staff recommendation for the purchase of either or both properties as presented, and Melanie Muckle seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion

Christian Meyer commented that the CalWood educational use is special and the County should do anything it can to minimize houses in that area. Melanie Muckle seconded that comment.

Front Range Cougar-Human Interactions Pilot Study Update

** Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC*

Presenter: Matt Alldredge, DOW Wildlife Researcher

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation

Questions:

Janice Moore asked why DOW is applying the bulk of aversive conditioning in the areas where the cats are supposed to be, rather than in areas where we don't want them? Matt Alldredge: To increase their aversion to human interaction. We are trying to get them back into the appropriate habitat within that area. We are also testing various types of aversive conditioning like beanbags, pepper spray, and hounds to see which are the most effective.

Christian Meyer: Do the cats return to the same collaring sites? If so, that would seem to indicate that hounds aren't aversive. Matt Alldredge: The first adult cat collared on White Ranch hasn't returned. That might be because that was not on his home range. We are not sure. The other male adult has returned to Heil Valley, but not within a quarter mile of that site. This question is worth studying closer.

Christian Meyer: What is the benefit of expanding the study now verses looking at the cats you have now over a longer period of time? Matt Alldredge: Expanding would allow us to increase our observations. Long term, we hope to better understand the population of cats along the Front Range. We need to sample most of the population to understand the population.

Christian Meyer: To what degree are bears driving the conditions? Matt Alldredge: There is evidence that sometimes a bear will kick a cat off a kill and there is evidence that sometimes a bear and cat will share a kill. It would be interesting to see if their habitat use and movement patterns change because of bears.

David Batts: You are asking to increase the study size to 20 adults, are you saying you think there are approximately 20 adults within your study area? Matt Alldredge: I wouldn't venture a guess as to the number in our study area. Just for this year I would like to increase the study size to 20. In the future we would come back to discuss the long-term sample size.

Lisa Dilling: How will you know when you capture the cats if it's the beanbags or the moving of the cat that is the aversive conditioning? Do you have studies where they are moved without the use of beanbags? Matt Alldredge: Right now it's a more observational approach. We have not yet set up control groups but we might long-term.

Lisa Dilling: What has the average public response been? Matt Alldredge: Lots of interest and many people seem to like that we are studying the cats.

Lisa Dilling: You told us at the last meeting where the study was discussed that the protocols were still being worked out. Will we get the chance to see those? Matt Alldredge: I didn't bring that with me. Our internal protocols were approved by the director.

Jason Vogel stated that he understands the value of this study and he thinks it's moving in a good direction, but he recalled that, at a past meeting, members of the public expressed concern about aversive conditioning. He added that POSAC gave permission to begin the collaring project of the study. His recollection was that the Board deferred the aversive conditioning part of the study and POSAC agreed there would be a later discussion regarding that. Matt Alldredge responded that the use of aversive conditioning treatment is a management decision. Wildlife management will take part in aversive conditioning if it's called for. This research project can allow him to control the aversive treatment to some extent.

Christine Quinlan recalled that collaring would be done but that aversive conditioning would be discussed later. Matt Alldredge responded that aversive conditioning was part of the original study plan and he did discuss it at the last meeting. He added that releasing the cats on the property and applying the treatment there was not specifically discussed. That part came about as the researchers began to get a feel for the layout of the properties.

Jason Vogel: Has the W20 directive been altered? Matt Alldredge: It was updated in April, so the Board may have seen the older version of the W20 directive. I think the techniques outlined in there is the same and have been in there for years.

Dave Hoerath added that urban cats that get into trouble are going to get hazed whether they have a radio collar on or not. Hazing the cats is not part of the study. What is part of the study is following what the cats do.

Janice Moore stated that it seemed to her that the cougar study has stayed within the spirit of what has been approved. She added that the one cat that was subjected to the beanbag treatment had killed livestock and could have been shot by a rancher. To truly understand the cats' behavior as best we can, the study needs to have flexible guidelines so they can adjust the study as they see fit rather than coming back to POSAC for every little thing. If we don't allow some aversive conditioning, it could lead to having dead cougars.

Public Comment:

- Wendy Keefover-Ring, Director of the Carnivore Protection Program for Sinapu. She believes this program has been well thought out. She thinks the Board should ask DOW for some written protocols, but thinks the program is gathering important information. Public education is important to teach people to keep their pets and livestock under control.

- Bob Pisani, 1203 Weaver Dr., Sugarloaf. A lion lives near his home. He feels this lion has a right to be there and he feels protected by it. He hopes POSAC imposes careful oversight to this study.
- Chuck Southwick, retired CU biology professor, 6507 Baseline Rd., Boulder. He wanted to compliment Matt Alldredge and DOW on this study. Cougars are difficult animals to work with and he believes the research is very valuable. He is also interested in the cougars' impact on mule deer.
- Marcia Barber, Mountain Meadows, Sugarloaf. She urged POSAC to get more details about the study. She had concerns and questions that she would like to see addressed before allowing expansion of the study. These include: Why aren't lions that come into town the ones targeted for the study, rather than lions living in open space? Why aren't wildlife veterinarians always the persons administering the tranquilizers and reversal drugs? Couldn't this be dangerous for the cat? What is the amount of stress to the cats by being chased by dogs or being captured in a cage? Are the cage traps monitored 24/7? Could the collars be hazardous to lions or put them at any particular risk?

Discussion

Therese Glowacki accessed the POSAC minutes from a prior meeting when the cougar study was voted on. Per the minutes, aversive conditioning was approved in the original pilot study after much discussion.

Motion

Christian Meyer moved to accept staff recommendation to expand the study to 20 cougars. Janice Moore seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Discussion on Motion

Christian Meyer stated that he supports this expansion because the Front Range is an optimum area to study cougars because the open space programs are so strong. He added that he has a strong belief that the DOW, with the oversight of the County and Cities, will do the right thing in regards to the animals. Melanie Muckle added that she supports the study but would like to see more transparency in hopes of gaining more public support. Lisa Dilling stated that she would like to see the protocols.

Second Motion

Lisa Dilling moved to make a second motion to request the DOW to post its protocols, in full, in a publicly available place. Christian Meyer seconded the motion with an amendment that the information be made part of the package the BOCC would consider when they make approval. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Caribou Ranch Elk Study

Staff Presenter: Dave Hoerath

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation.

**Information Only*

Questions

Jason Vogel asked if the elk are collared? Dave Hoerath: No. Jason Vogel: Do you know their range? Dave Hoerath: Their range is from Sugarloaf in the winter, to Hwy 36, to up by Hessian and the Divide in the summer.

Resource Management 2007 Overview

**Information Only*

Staff Presenter: Therese Glowacki

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation.

Comments

Melanie Muckle said she would like to learn more about the air curtain burner for trees infected by pine beetles. Therese Glowacki responded that the county expects to purchase it in April and the members are welcome to plan a field trip to see it in operation. Resource Management will also plan a presentation to POSAC. Janice Moore said she would like to learn about cows eating diffuse knapweed. Therese Glowacki responded that she will see about getting the researcher on a POSAC agenda. Christian Meyer would like the County to make available an electronic version of the Walker Ranch post-fire study. He added that POSAC should plan trips to the Fairgrounds and the Ag Center. He would also like to plan a trip to observe the cougar study, but he doesn't know how that could be done. Melanie Muckle commented that it is wonderful to see grassland restoration come so far and for POS to get recognized for their work on this.

Director's Update

No Director's Update

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.