

**MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
July 23, 2009**

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

POSAC Members in Attendance

Present: David Batts, Sue Cass, Lisa Dilling, Eric Hozempa (arrived 6:50), Paul Jurasin, Mary McQuiston, Christian Meyer, and Janice Moore.

Excused: Jason Vogel

Staff in Attendance

Rob Alexander, David Bell, Renata Frye, Chad Julian, Rich Koopmann, Conrad Lattes, Phill Leffler, Tina Nielsen, and Ron Stewart.

June 25, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Sue Cass moved to accept the June 25 minutes. Paul Jurasin seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

None

Ridge Road Community Forestry Sort Yard

Staff Presenter: Chad Julian

** Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC*

See Staff Memo for Detail on Presentation.

Questions

Janice Moore: You said this program was not funded with Open Space tax dollars. That is an important distinction for me. I don't think we want to go down that road of providing facilities with open space money. Ron Stewart: There is no Boulder County money involved in this parcel. This parcel was purchased by Nederland as a place for a Boulder Valley School District school bus barn. There was too much land for the bus barn, so Nederland gave us the remaining parcel to use as open space land, as agreed to by the town and POS in a management plan. Christian Meyer: When do you expect talks with Nederland to amend the Mud Lake IGA to be complete? Chad Julian: As soon as possible; the BOCC hearing is scheduled for August 4. Christian Meyer: I assume that what might come from those talks will be additional restrictions, rather than expansion over what Land Use has considered? Chad Julian: Based on what I've heard at previous meetings, I imagine it might restrict hours and days of use, and the length of the season. Christian Meyer: For this site, do you anticipate a volume change, based on what you've seen at Meeker Park? Chad Julian: It's been more successful than what we thought. We

are still within the original projections for volume at this site. I imagine we will start to see increased use at this facility as the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic progresses in that area.

Public Comment

None

Motion

Sue Cass moved to accept staff recommendation as presented, and Lisa Dilling seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Roundup Ready Sugarbeets

** Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC*

*Request to grow Roundup Ready Sugarbeets
on Boulder County Open Space land*

Staff Presenter: Tina Nielsen

See Staff Memo for detail on presentation.

Questions

David Batts: You mentioned that staff has looked more at the economic and environmental aspects. Is there a committee that will deal more with the social side of this? Tina Nielsen: You are welcome to look at the social side during your deliberations. Staff determined that the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability are the directly relevant ones here. We admit that we are looking at this very narrowly. We were asked to look at Roundup Ready Beets, not the issue of all GMO's. Paul Jurasin: Does the 50-ft buffer refer to irrigation ditches and reservoirs? Tina Nielsen: It would include reservoirs, but not ditches. Sue Cass: You mentioned that approximately one percent of Boulder County agricultural open space lands are currently growing GMO's? Tina Nielsen: Yes, out of approximately 17,000 acres of crop land, 1,500 are growing GMO's. Sue Cass: As I calculate that, it is 10 percent. Tina Nielsen: Yes, 10 percent, my mistake. Christian Meyer: You said that almost all GMO lands are in Roundup Ready corn. You also said that Bt corns were the only things considered by the GMO task force before, and that anything else would have had to come forward. What I took away is that there is something else that is genetically modified that is being grown on open space land. Tina Nielsen: There are three kinds of genetically modified corn that fall under the previous protocols. One is Bt Corn, which is a corn that is protected against a pest, not a weed. There are two kinds of herbicide resistant corn, Roundup Ready and Liberty Link. Liberty Link doesn't seem to be a product that is widely used, but Roundup Ready is. Christian Meyer: So is corn the only other GMO crop allowed? Tina Nielsen: Yes. Eric Hozempa: On conservation easement land, there is already the ability to grow GMO sugarbeets? Tina Nielsen: Correct. Under a conservation easement, the land is under private ownership; the County only owns the development rights.

Public Comment

- Mary Lee Chin, 2225 Dahlia St., Denver. She is a registered dietician and she advocates using organic, conventional, and bio-tech foods. She is not aware of any nutritional difference with bio-tech foods. She argues that agricultural lands are decreasing, so we need technology to allow growers to produce more.
- Kathryn Alexander, 5505 Valmont, #278, Boulder. She states that we as a population are sicker than we were 50 years ago and she blames chemicals and the alteration in nature. We need to have a long-term view. Monsanto has a history of being vicious to small farmers by taking them to court for matters that are out of the farmers' hands.
- Mickael Jones, 1520 8th St., Boulder. He argues that the staff presentation was biased. He thinks GMO foods should be labeled.
- Lauri Wirichs, 600 Linden Ave., Boulder. She is a bee keeper and she makes and sells products made from honey. She is very worried about the effect of GMO's on bees and butterflies.
- Niki Hayden, 5161 Laurel Ave., Boulder. She states that bees are in peril. We need pollinators for fruits and vegetables. She argues that we are at a crisis point.
- Famuer Rasmussen, Jr., 1342 Trail Ridge Rd., Longmont. He is one of the applicants. He is a 3rd generation beet grower. He is committed for 200 acres to the Co-op. He relies on open space land for 83% of those 200 acres. Sugarbeets are 14% of his crops, but 32% of his income. He has been told conventional sugarbeet seed will soon be out of production.
- Jason Adler, 2007 Pioneer Dr., Milliken. He works for Famuer Rasmussen, Jr. His goal is to be an independent farmer in Boulder. He wants everyone to see through their anger and look fairly at the science. He believes Roundup Ready sugarbeets are good for sustainability.
- Wyatt Barnes, 5000 Butte St., #96, Boulder. He has been an organic farmer in Boulder County for 6 years. He says that organic farming is hard, but it can be done. He feels queasy about the amount of Roundup that will end up being used. Monsanto is limiting the amounts of conventional seeds made available.
- Amy Tisdale, 5000 Butte St., #96, Boulder. She is the co-owner of Red Wagon Farm in Boulder. She states that many farmers' voices are not being heard because of the timing of these meetings. She states that good crop rotation decreases weed populations.
- Mike Otto, 1221 8th Ave., Unit E, Greeley. He works with sugarbeet distributors in the area. He states that Roundup Ready technology is one way to help keep local farmers productive. With 17,000 acres of agricultural open space land in Boulder County, we need experienced farmers to work the land.

- Christine Quinlan, 4765 Carter Tr., Boulder. She was on POSAC when GMO corn was approved, but she would like to see POSAC disallow Roundup Ready sugarbeets. One of her concerns is the lack of conventional seeds in the future. She sees this as an argument against allowing this technology. It's important to maintain seed stock. She points out that the white paper avoids the issue of food safety and long-term impacts to health, and our country's inadequate food labeling systems. She is aware of the many adults and children with food allergies. Food allergies are the body's reaction to unrecognized proteins. GMO technology changes the protein of the food.
- Steve Demos, 11666 Crane Hollow Dr., Longmont. He is the founder of organic businesses. DDT was argued to be safe when it was approved. There are hundreds of entrepreneurs in the organic food business in Boulder County, employing thousands of residents. He asked if we want to dilute our reputation in Boulder by experimenting with food quality and safety.
- Mary Mulry, 12855 N. 66th, Longmont. She has a Ph.D. in food science and nutrition. She claims that crop yields can vary from year to year. Organic crops have better yields over time. As a taxpayer, she prefers to support organic farming.
- Ellen Stark, 2010 Upland Ave., Boulder. She states that Monsanto has won court cases against farmers. We need an agreement to protect growers. She has observed community gardens showing up all around Boulder County.
- Andrew Staehelin, 2855 Dover Dr., Boulder. He argues that we need to make valid decisions based on science and not on feelings. He trusts the scientific reports more than the information on the internet. He cites a Swiss study that shows a 20% yield reduction over a 21-year period for organic farming. He also argues that the transfer of genes between unrelated organisms does happen in nature.
- Will Paradise, 1915 Orchard Ave., Boulder. He works for Whole Foods Market and he has worked in the natural foods industry for 26 years. Most people are not aware they are buying GMO foods because they aren't labeled; that should be a concern. He claims that the science isn't very old. He chooses organic and non-GMO foods for his family.
- Wendy Goldner, 4785 McKinley Dr., Boulder. It concerns her that we have decided to play Mother Nature in making changes in our food system. She states that we may be a small community, but we can have a big impact by not allowing GMO's.
- Mark Retzloff, 5517 St. Vrain Rd., Longmont. He is Co-Founder of Alfalfa's Market and Horizon Organic Dairy. He is Chairman of Aurora Organic Dairy. He was a member of the Boulder County GMO Task Force. He argues that organic crop yields are consistently equivalent to conventional yields, and often, organic growers are paid more for their crops. He thinks organic is a better alternative. He spoke about Aurora Dairy's willingness to work with tenants, give technical assistance, and buy from them if they convert to organic hay and feed.

- Dave Georgis, 3155 Endicott Dr., Boulder. He argues that the information presented is not factually correct. It is a false choice being presented, helping some local farmers stay in business versus the health and well-being and societal wishes of the community. We should be looking for another alternative for our farmers while staying sustainable.
- Stephen Keenan, 2530 8th St. He submitted a copy of Acres magazine. He argues that people are hungry because of a lack of money, not a lack of food. He advocates the websites www.thefutureoffood.com and www.911revisited.com . He thinks we should be very concerned about the licensing of seed by companies like Monsanto.
- Jules Van Thyne, 10323 Monarch Rd., Longmont. He is one of the six farmers making this request. He has looked into growing organic alfalfa, but he doesn't think it would be economically feasible for him. Organic crops require more plowing. The more you plow, the more moisture that is lost. Roundup Ready crops allow for less tillage.
- John Roberts, 815 13th St., Boulder. He has problems with the staff presentation. Just because so many crops grown in the U.S. are GMO, doesn't mean Boulder County has to allow it. Boulder County is special and it should remain so. He doesn't like that the irrigation ditches are excluded from the 50-ft buffer. He argues that, as a result, that water will run back into the water shed, obliterating the purpose of the buffer. He argues that the scientific reports, showing GMO's as safe, are suspect and have been paid for. He also states that the licensing of seeds is a concern and Boulder County should not promote the practice.
- Cindy O'Keefe, 4520 Nassau Place, Boulder. She lived in London in the late 1990's. The government officials and scientists insisted that the beef was safe for consumption, within a year the whole herd was culled. She is concerned that we don't know enough about GMO's at this time.
- Sandy Cruz, Ward. She is a member of FAPC. It has been argued that there are no incidents of Roundup resistant weeds in Colorado. However, during a recent field trip, she saw bindweed growing in GMO corn fields. Is that not a case of a Roundup resistant weed? She announced the FAPC meeting on July 30 at 5:30 p.m. In addition, she and the FAPC are hosting a gathering on Tuesday August 4, 6-8 p.m., at the Left Hand Brewery, Longmont. This meeting is to generate more ideas on the subject.
- Michael Brownlee, 4500 19th St., #422, Boulder. He is a member of FAPC. He never thought he would see this kind of spectacle in Boulder County. He is very uncomfortable with the science and economic arguments presented in favor of GMO's. He asks why a philosophical argument is wrong-headed. He would like to see the citizens of Boulder County demand a ban of GMO's on private and public lands.
- Barry Erdman, 3199 Westwood Ct., Boulder. He chooses to grow organic in his back yard. We should treat open space like it is our back yard.

- Henry Hempe, 400 Rock Lake Rd, Boulder County. Because this is a narrowly focused recommendation, he thinks that any decision on Sugarbeets should wait until the larger work on GMO's is done. He also thinks gene flow cannot be stopped by a 50-ft buffer.
- Steven Hoffman, 5576 Pennsylvania Ave., Boulder. He is with The Organic Center. He believes he has very clear science related to GMO's. The American Academy of Environmental Medicine has called for a moratorium on GMO foods. He argues that there are peer-reviewed studies showing the health and environmental risks of GMO's.
- Artie Almquist, 8724 I-25 Frontage Rd., Weld County. He was involved with the Sugarbeet Strip Till Committee that looked at new technologies and techniques for growing sugarbeets in Boulder County. They determined there are many benefits to adopting strip till technology. This means one-pass farming vs. 5 to 8 passes to prepare a field for farming. Introducing Roundup Ready opens the door for using this strip till technology to be rapidly adopted in this county. He argues that Roundup technology is healthier than using so many pesticides.
- Lynn Segal, 538 Dewey, Boulder. She is concerned with the health effects of too much sugar in our diet.

Discussion Related To Public Comments

Rob Alexander [responding to a question about bindweed in the Roundup Field]: Bindweed has a natural resistance to Roundup, rather than a resistance that has developed.

Tina Nielsen [responding to a question about tillage and weed resistance]: Out of any four-year period, only two years of that period would allow something that is glyphosate-tolerant to be grown. The other two years would not allow a glyphosate-tolerant plant or a glyphosate herbicide to be sprayed. This can either be a one-year-on, one-year-off regime, or a two-and-two regime. Christian Meyer: The material states that growers are "required to rotate a non-Roundup Ready crop in the system the year following a Roundup Ready crop. If this is not possible, you can do it in two consecutive years." What conditions would make it not possible? Tina Nielsen: The word "possible" may not have been the best one to use. There may be times when a grower might want to plant Roundup Ready sugarbeets the year following Roundup Ready corn, or do two consecutive years of Roundup Ready corn. It's a choice they make in their overall crop management.

Tina Nielsen [responding to a question about aquatic habitats]: Staff made a decision to not include irrigation ditches in the 50-ft buffer. Staff believes a 50-ft buffer on the natural waterways isn't really necessary because Roundup is not water soluble and Roundup is not allowed for overspray of waterways. Runoff isn't a concern because glyphosate becomes inert after hitting the soil. We decided to exclude ditches because they are not a natural feature, but rather a man-made infrastructure. In many cases, ditches don't provide a natural function. If POSAC feels this should be stricter, you can discuss that. Rob Alexander: This does not mean that farmers would spray Roundup over ditches. It just means that there would not be a 50-ft

buffer. It is illegal to spray Roundup over water. We can clarify the protocol to address this. Tina Nielsen: Regarding potential drift into the waterways, if the wind is blowing, you are not allowed to spray. Eric Hozempa: What are the rules currently for conventional herbicides? Rob Alexander: There are not many conventional herbicides that are allowed to be sprayed over water. Many ditches don't even contain water at the time the spraying occurs.

Christian Meyer: The issue of timing has come up. When do the growers need to make a commitment in terms of what specific crop they need to put in place? Famuer Rasmussen, Jr. [Applicant]: We like to make the decision in the fall, because the seed companies and chemical companies take their orders in December. I hope this is resolved by September 1, so we know in what direction we can go with our operation.

Ron Stewart: I want to stress the Department's interest in enhancing organic production on open space land. It is one of our goals to have at least 10% of our land be converted to organic production by 2012. We met with Mark Retzloff and the Aurora Dairy staff several years ago, along with the producers who lease the land. But at the time there was a sense that the price differential was inadequate to move them over to that kind of production. We are always happy to meet with organic companies to see if a deal can be struck. For POS, this is not an anti-organic action.

Motion

Janice Moore moved to accept staff recommendation to allow Roundup Ready Sugarbeets to be grown on open space land as presented, and Eric Hozempa seconded the motion. ***Motion passed 6 to 1, with 1 abstention*** [For: Eric Hozempa, Paul Jurasin, Christian Meyer, David Batts, Janice Moore, and Lisa Dilling. Against: Sue Cass. Abstention: Mary McQuiston].

Discussion on Motion

Janice Moore: My refrigerator is full of organic products. I do have concerns about GM foods. I think the notion of gene flow is a reasonable concern. But the matter before us is, can we grow GM sugarbeets on Boulder County open space land? It is not about whether our national policy about GM food is wrong. I have done a lot of homework on this matter. I consulted with Allison Snow at Ohio State whose specialty is transgenic plants. She is past president of the Botanical Society and a very good ecologist. She told me that unless Boulder County has a policy of requiring organic farming practices on open space land, there isn't much logic in turning away the RR sugarbeet growers. I haven't focused much on sugarbeet issues because the ecological and environmental harm that they might cause, relative to conventional Sugarbeets, seems minimal. Gene flow from non-existent flowers probably doesn't happen. The problem that I see is that if we are going to have all this open space, someone has got to farm it and maintain it. We cannot manage it without our farmers, and they have to be economically viable. This reduces the amount of chemicals we put on this earth. Eric Hozempa: I am not a scientist. I buy organic foods. To me it boils down to risk analysis. I look at driving in a car a riskier proposition than this sugarbeet. I also can't discount Longmont's long history with the sugarbeet industry.

A statement from Jason Vogel [read into the record by Christian Meyer]:

I consider myself to be an environmentalist, but also a pragmatist. Sometimes we are faced with choosing between the lesser of two evils. At this point in time, there is insufficient evidence that genetically modified organisms cause harm to human health, and given the reproductive biology of sugarbeets, especially in our climate, there is insufficient evidence that GMO sugarbeets cause harm to the environment. However, there is extensive evidence that pesticides in our environment have an adverse effect on human health and the environment. This goes well beyond typical acute or chronic human health impacts to more recent and more troubling discoveries, such as endocrine disruption, which, though extremely complicated and poorly understood, has been shown to affect brain development, gender behavior, fertility, and cancer incidence, among other effects.

We in Boulder County take pride in leading the nation in being environmentally and socially conscious - even trendsetters. But we are in the end, just one county. Prohibiting Roundup Ready sugarbeets in Boulder County will not put Monsanto out of business; it will not stop some of their business practices, which I do find abhorrent; and it will ensure the continued use of proven harmful chemicals on our open space lands.

I encourage everyone to take a sober view of the decision before us. Nobody yet knows how to scale up organic farming to the size of the farming operations under question. Growing sugarbeets organically appears to be such a herculean effort that it cannot be done, especially without the availability of cheap migrant labor. Even if the sugarbeets were grown organically, they would be processed with GMO beets and conventionally grown beets (meaning pesticide-grown beets) through the sugarbeet growers cooperative - thus eliminating any distinctiveness or human health benefits that organically produced sugarbeets might have. The final product of these beets is sugar, which does not contain any of the genetic material that makes these beets Roundup Ready. Speaking as a former chemist, to the best of my knowledge, organically-produced sugar would be chemically indistinguishable from the sugar from Roundup Ready sugarbeets.

While I am extremely disappointed that, so far, genetic modification has largely been used by companies like Monsanto to enable the use of specific pesticides for profit, I foresee a day when genetic modification will reduce pesticide use (as it will in this case), allow crops to be grown in areas that suffer from extreme heat and drought, increase the productivity of marginal agricultural lands, and for other laudable purposes. More debate and education on these issues is needed at the national as well as the local level, but I believe the effect of a GMO sugarbeet ban on Boulder County open space will do very little to promote a national debate, to force industry to revise its practices, or to protect human health or the environment compared to the known hazards of pesticides.

Basically, I see the choice as this: do we take a moral stand against GMO sugarbeets, or do we reduce the amount of pesticide entering our local environment. In my opinion, the evidenced harm caused by pesticides both to the environment and to human health makes the decision an easy one. I urge my colleagues and the public to take the pragmatic course and reduce the environmental and human health impacts of pesticides in the Boulder County environment by allowing the use of GMO sugarbeets.

Mary McQuiston: I wonder if this isn't an opportunity rather than a point to vote 'yes' or 'no' on Roundup Ready Sugarbeets. I was recently in Australia. There is a little town there that decided to ban bottled water. One spokesperson said that they knew this wouldn't change the business of bottled water on the planet, but they did it because they knew it was right. I won't vote 'yes' or 'no' tonight. I would like to see us spend more time looking at alternatives. There is not enough research to convince me, as a non-scientist, to not be afraid of this technology.

Sue Cass: This has been the most agonizing, gut-wrenching process. I am left with the feeling that this whole thing is one big scary experiment. I will have no qualms about voting 'no'. I agree that we are a tiny island in a sea of GMO's, but I cannot make myself say 'yes'.

Eric Hozempa: I agree that this has been an agonizing process. I would like to see people vote with their pocketbooks, which would probably cause more growers to lean toward organic crops.

Paul Jurasin: I don't disagree with any of the comments coming from the Board so far tonight. There is science on both sides. It is up to us to decide to make a recommendation on where to go with this. I would encourage POS to continue encouraging organic agriculture on open space land, although I don't think it is economically viable to grow only organic crops on open space land at this time. I think the bigger issue is the amount of pesticides used and the amount of energy expended to grow conventional sugarbeets.

Janice Moore: I am concerned with GM foods. Scientists on both sides are squabbling, but they don't seem to be squabbling as much over GM Sugarbeets. It's the other GM foods that are causing more concern.

David Batts: There is a lot of passion, and I'm always impressed by how many smart people speak in front of us. I see a communication breakdown between the two sides. I don't like the concept of GM foods. If I could, I would say only organic foods can be grown in Boulder County and all food be local. But most of my food comes from Safeway. The applicants have been doing this for a long time, and their families have been here a long time. I can't believe we can take care of that many acres without these farmers. GMO crops are already grown on private land in the county. Is it right? I don't know. I support what Mary [McQuiston] said about seeing this as an opportunity.

Lisa Dilling: I have been struggling with this since it came up. One mission we have is to maintain agriculture in this county. I keep looking for the magical alternative. We need to give the farmers these tools. But I also agree with Sue; there is something in me that doesn't want to see this technology advanced. Can Boulder County take a stand? How much does image matter? Regarding climate issues, I do see an advantage to GMO's. I am concerned with the farmers' viability. I don't know yet how I will vote.

Christian Meyer: Sustainability can mean different things. I heard that the economic viability of the tenants is what staff looking at. We are trying to make a long-term decision in the absence of any kind of long-term policy in the county. The citizens may decide to get something on the

ballot in the future. We don't have guidance such as a management plan, so what we need to look at right now is the short-term viability for the stewards of the land.

Statement Following the Vote from Christian Meyer: Staff has heard a lot from POSAC in terms of where this technology fits in. We have answered a very specific question to a very big issue. The level of dissatisfaction, even from members who support the measure, resides in the fact that we don't have a long-term vision of where we want to go.

Director's Update

Renata Frye will continue to try to schedule the annual retreat with members, as well as a field trip in August.

Eric Hozempa: At the last meeting, we discussed whether the Boulder-to-Lyons Regional Trail is actually within POSAC's jurisdiction. What is POSAC's role?

Ron Stewart: POSAC has always been involved with the regional trails. That issue will come before you in September or October.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.