

Mr. Richard Freeman
General Facilities Manager
Institute for Telecommunication Sciences | U.S. Depart. of Commerce | The National Telecommunications and Information Administration
325 Broadway MC ITS D
Boulder, CO 80305

February 14, 2022

Dear Mr. Freeman;

As the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Board, our mission is to help guide our County Commissioners on Parks and Open Space policy. We recently discussed the ongoing elk management problem in and around the U.S. Department of Commerce Table Mountain facility, which as you know has been a growing concern. The Boulder County Open Space Elk Management Team has conveyed that you are working toward more involved management of elk on this property. We fully support this and would like to take this opportunity to put our voice behind those efforts.

Over the past five years, the number of elk spending the summer in the Red Hill/Table Mountain area began to grow rapidly. This growth was attributed to more animals opting to not migrate back to their traditional summer grounds in the Indian Peaks, and for these now sedentary elk, increased calf production and survival has contributed to the rapid increase. With more elk staying in the Red Hill area during summer months, there has been a predictable increased damage to crops and private property, highway collisions, and resource degradation. To help address these growing problems, Colorado Parks & Wildlife expanded their elk management subunit in 2019, south to Neva/Niwot Roads in an effort to apply more hunting pressure on the growing herd. In 2020, Boulder County piloted a two-year limited hunting program on County owned open space properties within the subunit to further assist these efforts. While we have had some measurable success with the program, it is increasingly evident that the Red Hill elk herd is using Table Mountain as a refuge from hunting during large portions of the year.

The County Open Space Elk Management team believes that addressing how elk utilize Table Mountain is central to long term improvement in the Red Hill elk situation. We have learned that there are other public hunting programs being piloted on federal facilities around the county. We want to encourage you to investigate opportunities to put pressure on the elk herd to move by instituting safe hunting and harvesting on the Table Mountain facility. The County Elk Management Team believes that the Red Hill Elk Management Program may be a blueprint for piloting a program at Table Mountain. Over the past five years, the County program has demonstrated that hunting can be used as a safe and effective management tool through a system of careful access, oversight, and reporting. Increasing elk harvest pressure from multiple sites throughout the newly expanded range of the Red Hill elk herd can help overall management objectives.

Please share this letter with others in your department to express our support for utilizing this effective program for our mutual management goals.

Thank you for your efforts,

Paula Fitzgerald, Chairperson, Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee