



# Parks & Open Space

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## PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 24, 2022

Location: Virtual Meeting

<b>TO:</b>	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
<b>FROM:</b>	Sandy Duff, Senior Land Officer
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	Camp Tahosa Conservation Easement Acquisition
<b>ACTION REQUESTED:</b>	Recommendation to the BOCC

*For much longer than Parks & Open Space’s history of stewarding open space, the land in this community has been important to the diverse Indigenous communities that continue to thrive here today. We are partnering with Indigenous people to make meaningful changes to how we do our work that include Indigenous people, incorporate their perspectives, and honor their land stewardship legacy.*

### Summary

Boulder County proposes to acquire a conservation easement (CE) over the approximate 318-acre Camp Tahosa property for \$3,000,000. The property has an address of 173 County Road 96 and is located near the intersection of Peak to Peak Highway and County Road 96, north of Ward. The property is on both sides of the road, with the majority of the improvements, and Tumblesom Lake on the southern side of the road. The purpose of the easement is to preserve and protect in perpetuity the significant natural environment and open space and wildlife habitat attributes of the property and to limit the uses of the property and structures which may be permitted on the property. This CE acquisition will remove eight development rights on the property. Staff supports this acquisition.

### Background Information

The Camp Tahosa property is owned by the Boy Scouts of America (Scouts). The following history is from a past Special Use Permit application the owners made to the county regarding the property.

The first owners of the property were Frances M. Edmondson and Silas T. Tumblesom, and Tumblesom named the lake after himself and sold the land a few years later. In 1912 he repurchased his original 160 acres as well as an additional parcel for a total of 320 acres and opened a fishing resort. In 1917, Tom Hussie purchased the property from Martha Tumblesom and continued to run the fishing resort until August 1929 when they sold it to Mel Gelwicks. Mr. Gelwicks built the first stone buildings on the property. In May 1931, Boulder County granted a license to run a public dance hall and the popular fishing resort at Tumblesom Lake became a full-fledged mountain resort that included a dance hall, dining room and rental cabins, and was known as the Stoney Point Lodge. The great depression was a tough time to be running a recreational resort and Mr. Gelwicks sold the lodge back to Lulu Hussie in 1933. In May 1938, the Denver Area Council purchased the property and the lodge became “Denver’s Rocky Mountain Scout Camp”. During the first decade of operation as a scout camp, the camp population doubled from 800 to 1600 scouts. Rustic campsites, campfire rings and an amphitheater were built, and programs were started including nature, aquatics, pioneering, rifle range,

archery range, handicraft, horseback riding, hiking and backpacking. In 1942 the name of the camp was changed to Tahosa. Over the years, enrollment went from the height of 4,000 campers to lesser amounts, with many campers going to another camp in Elbert County. Today, the camp continues to operate and will continue to operate even after the CE is placed over the property.

**Deal Terms**

There are nine development rights associated with the 318-acre property. County Road 96 bisects the property into two large parcels. The purchase of the CE will remove eight of the nine total development rights on the property. The one remaining development right, which is in use at the ranger residence on the property, is on the southern parcel. The majority of the camping structures including a dining hall, stone cabins, group cabins and a chapel are also located on the southern property and mostly near Tumblesom Lake.

The northern 120 acres has a large maintenance barn and picnic shelter, and this area is called the Lower Meadow where the Scouts hold a variety of challenge events. This property will not have any development rights associated with it.

Specific details of the CE will include identifying conservation values, existing uses, and limitations on square footage of all accessory buildings. Current scouting and camping activities will continue to be allowed.

*Acquisition Summary*

Acres	Water Rights	# Building Rights County Will Acquire	Price per Bldg. Right [or Acre	Water Right Value	Total Purchase Price
318	50% interest in all water rights	8	\$375,000/ \$9,434	N/A	\$3,000,000

- The landowner will retain one building right.

*Mineral Rights*

The county will not acquire the Scouts’ mineral interests, but the conservation easement will contain language prohibiting development of the property’s mineral rights. A Phase I environmental assessment will also be completed.

*Oil & Gas Leases*

The property is not subject to an oil and gas lease.

**Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Designations**

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) provides information about the area’s agricultural, cultural, environmental, and other open space resources (including passive recreation, community buffers, and scenic viewsheds). Maps in the Comp Plan indicate the following designations of these resources near the property: Tumblesom Lake B3 High Biodiversity Area, Indian Peaks Environmental Conservation Area, Overland Habitat

Connectors, Riparian Habitat Connectors, Wildlife Migration Corridors, Critical Wildlife Habitats, Significant Natural Communities, Riparian Areas, and Wetlands.

**Staff Recommendation**

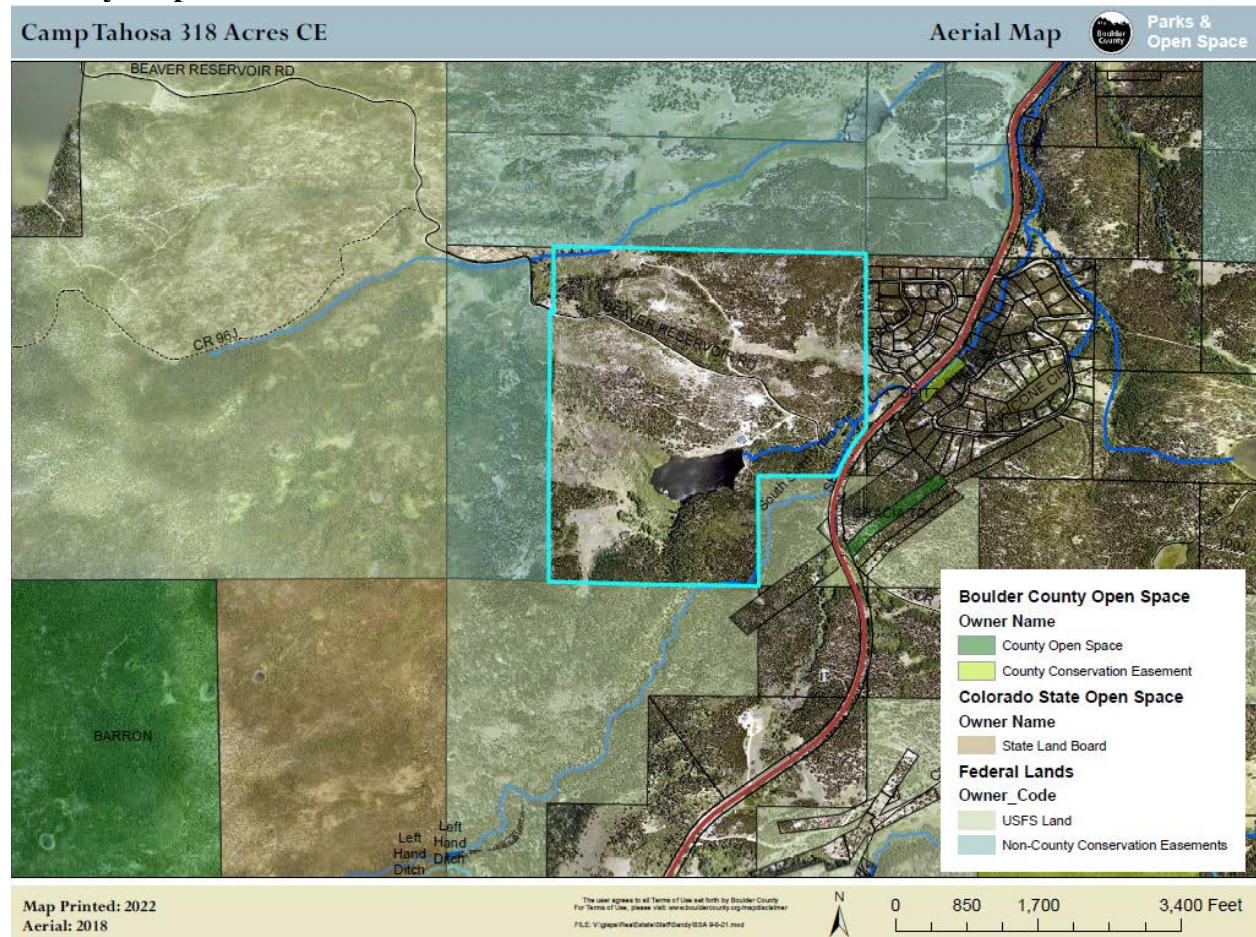
Staff recommends approval. Staff has been in contact with the Scouts for over 17 years. The Scouts will continue to own the land and continue the scouting activities as they have done over many years. Placing the land under a conservation easement enhances the conservation programs of both the Scouts and Boulder County Parks & Open Space.

**POSAC Action Requested**

Recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners to approve the request as described above and as presented by staff.

Suggested motion language: I move approval of this acquisition as staff has described.

**Vicinity Map**



# Close-Up Map

