



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, 2022

Location: Virtual Meeting

TO:	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM/PRESENTER:	David Hirt – Senior Plant Ecologist
AGENDA ITEM:	Overview of BCPOS Two-Year Wetland Assessment
ACTION REQUESTED:	Information Only

Background: Wetlands are one of our most valuable ecosystems, recognized as an “important environmental resource” in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan – Environmental Resource Element. Wetlands provide critical habitat for a suite of plant species and are utilized by nearly 90% of wildlife species. Additionally, they perform a variety of important ecosystem functions such as groundwater recharge, flood attenuation, and improving water quality. Unfortunately, they are also one of the most imperiled habitats, facing a range of threats from development pressure, changes to hydrology, invasive species, and climate change.

BCPOS staff will present the findings of a two-year project, utilizing consultants, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, and BCPOS staff to update, map and assess the health of wet meadow and emergent wetlands across Boulder County.

In all, 310 wetlands were mapped, encompassing 774 acres, across 68 properties covering nearly 13,000 acres of Open Space from the sub-alpine to the plains. 92 wetlands were formally assessed utilizing the Ecological Integrity Assessment protocol produced by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) for use Statewide. This important effort will help identify high functioning wetlands for conservation, as well as those in need of restoration, and will serve as a baseline for future management and tracking of wetland health.

BCPOS staff will present a brief history of past wetland mapping and assessment and an overview of the recently used protocol, field methods, and the results of the assessment. This work was funded in large part by the POS Foundation, POSIP funds, and internal Plant Ecology operating funds.

Public process, if applicable: Not applicable.