



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 23, 2023

TO: Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM: Sandy Duff, Senior Land Officer
AGENDA ITEM: Canyon Creek Acquisition
ACTION REQUESTED: 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 diverse Indigenous communities that continue to live here. 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. Parks & Open Space operates within modern legal constructs of land ownership to steward Boulder County open space and accomplish these efforts on behalf of our community.

Summary

Boulder County proposes to acquire fee title to approximately 201 acres of forested land, with a stone cabin, owned by the Patsy A. Walz Trust, with all mineral rights, for \$2,125,000. The property has an address of 21956 S. St. Vrain Drive and is located approximately 2.5 miles east of the intersection of the Peak to Peak Highway and South St. Vrain Drive, on the south side of South St. Vrain Drive. Staff is proposing to also create a small lot around an existing cabin which would be protected by a conservation easement if the county decides to sell the lot in the future. Staff supports this acquisition.

Background Information

The property has been in the family since the 1940s. There is a 2,167 square foot, 3- bedroom 2 bath, above ground cabin constructed of stone. A fully functional and intact bridge provides access across the St. Vrain to the property. The property is immediately adjacent to the Adams-Cowger Open Space to the south and east and bordered by U.S.F.S. property to the west.

Deal Terms

This acquisition will remove four development rights, leaving one right with the existing cabin. This transaction will be paid for with open space sales and use taxes, which Boulder County can only use for open space purposes.

Acquisition Summary

Acres	Water Rights	# Building Rights County Will Acquire	Price per Bldg. Right	Water Right Value	Total Purchase Price
201	None	5	\$425,000	None	\$2,125,000

Mineral Rights

Boulder County will acquire the mineral rights with this property.

A Phase I environmental assessment will be completed, and if the results show any mining hazards on the property, staff will notify the State of Colorado's Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety for formal closure of those hazards. Parks & Open Space will use the Phase I report to determine whether any portions of the property need to be closed to public use for public safety reasons.

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: South St. Vrain B2 High Biodiversity Significance Area, South St. Vrain Environmental Conservation Area, View Protection Corridor (scenic open space; highest score of 5 on scale of 0-5), Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Zone 3 (Suitable Contiguous Habitat), Riparian Areas Riparian Habitat Connectors, Significant Natural Communities and Wetlands.

Potential Uses

Like all properties acquired for open space, the property will be managed for an open space use. At this time, the property is used for the single-family residence and passive recreation of the property owners. Staff is proposing to create a small lot that will surround the existing cabin, and the approximate location of the lot is outlined in red on the attached map. If the transaction is approved by the Boulder County commissioners, the lot's rural character will be protected with a conservation easement if the county decides to sell the lot in the future.

The property will be open to public unless Parks & Open Space later determines other closures or other open space uses are appropriate. The process to determine specific future open space uses (including public access via trails or other passive recreation versus closures that protect a property's open space resources) is an involved planning process that can only be done after acquisition. Parks & Open Space staff need ample time after acquisition to evaluate the property, and no evaluations about other potential future uses have been made at this time.

Public Process

It is the county's practice to notify adjacent property owners when a future sale of the property is being contemplated. Staff sent letters notifying neighbors and nearby property owners in accordance with Parks & Open Space policies and procedures. In this instance, staff notified neighbors and nearby property owners immediately adjacent to the property. The notices included an invitation to attend and comment at this meeting. No public comments have been received to date, and any additional comments we receive after the date of this memo will be shared with POSAC at the meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval. The property is a high priority for its wildlife and forestry habitats. The variety of the environmental resource elements, especially along St. Vrain Creek and the fact the property lies within the South St. Vrain B2 High Biodiversity Significance Area, make this property an important area to protect. Being mostly surrounded

by Boulder County open space and U.S.F.S. lands, protection of this property will create an area of over 2,000 acres of continuous open space on the south side of the South St. Vrain Creek.

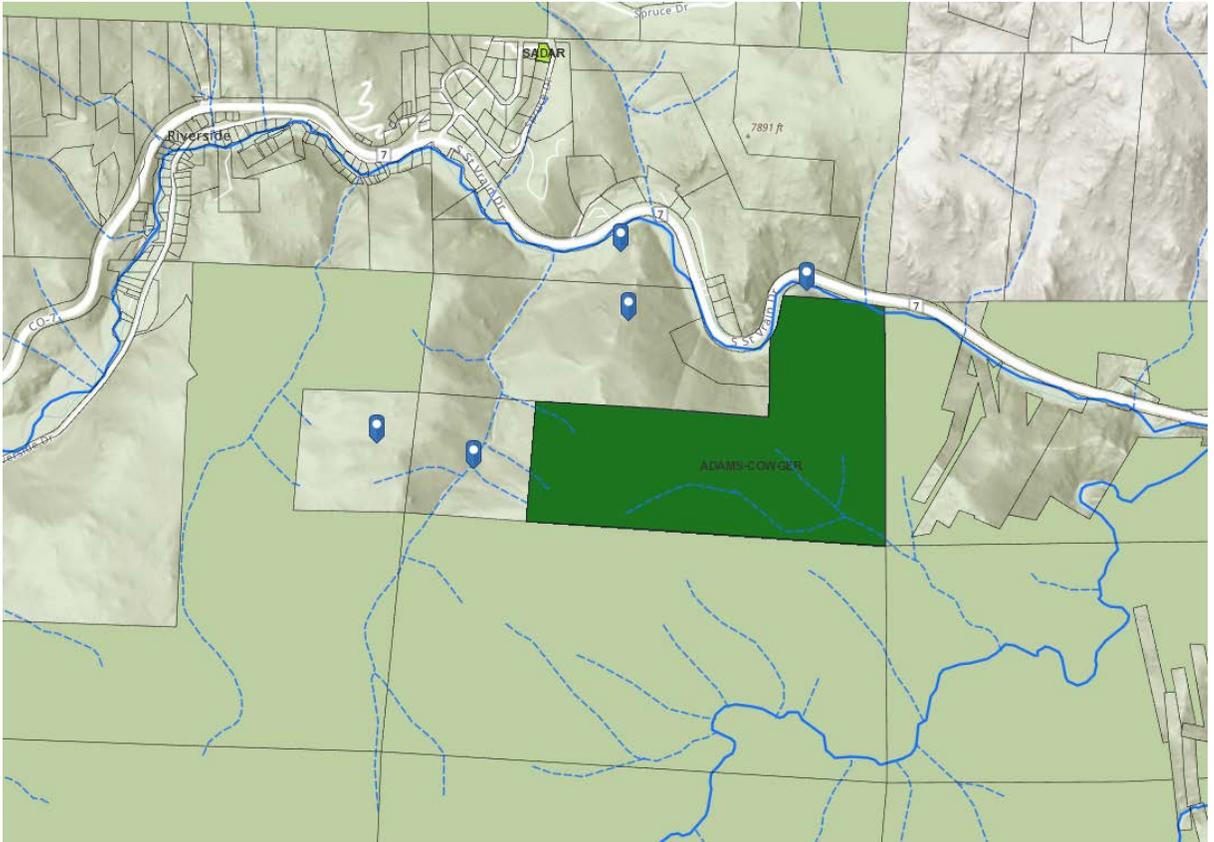
POSAC Action Requested

Recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners for approval of the acquisition and creation of a small lot around the cabin that may be a future disposition of the small lot, as further described by staff.

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

(see next pages for maps)

Vicinity Map



Close-Up Map

