



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 25, 2024

TO: Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM: Aaron Clark, Land Officer
AGENDA ITEM: Elk Tracks 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 36 acres owned by Heff and Mo’s Fort, LLC, with any associated water rights, for \$535,000. The property has an address of 6359 Coal Creek Canyon Drive and is located near the intersection of the Peak to Peak Highway and Coal Creek Canyon Drive. Staff supports this acquisition.

Background Information

The current owner acquired the property in 2021. Elk Tracks is adjacent to USFS lands on the north side. Boulder County open space is also situated on the property’s north side, part of a contiguous stretch from the Baylin property through Reynolds Ranch. Elk Tracks is primarily forested and has several good-sized aspen groves. The property is bounded by Highway 72 on the south side. There are no structures on the property except for an old barbed-wire fence. A two-track road crosses the property east-to-west.

Deal Terms

This acquisition will remove one development right. 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 Acre	Water Right Value	Total Purchase Price
36	None	1	\$14,948/acre	N/A	\$535,000

Mineral Rights

Boulder County will acquire the mineral rights with this property if seller owns them. The status of the mineral rights is unknown, and title is currently being researched to determine whether seller owns the mineral rights. A Phase 1 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 1 report to determine whether any portions of the property need to be closed to public use for 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: View Protection Corridor (Highway 72), Environmental Conservation Area (Magnolia), Winiger Ridge Elk Herd Migration Corridor, Significant Natural Communities. In addition, the property may provide the potential opportunity for trail connections to Reynolds Ranch if those are desired in the future; however, there are obvious challenges relating to topography and vehicular visibility that will need to be analyzed. No evaluation has been done, and Parks & Open Space has no plans to explore that possibility at this time.

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 private recreation. Parks & Open Space will temporarily close the property for wildlife purposes so that staff can conduct a detailed assessment. 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.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval. The site's location between Highway 72 and the Reynolds Ranch open space area provides a good connection, and an opportunity for better access in the future. Acquisition of this property will preserve significant natural areas in Coal Creek Canyon and will provide beneficial effects for local wildlife migration corridors as well as the scenic corridor along Highway 72.

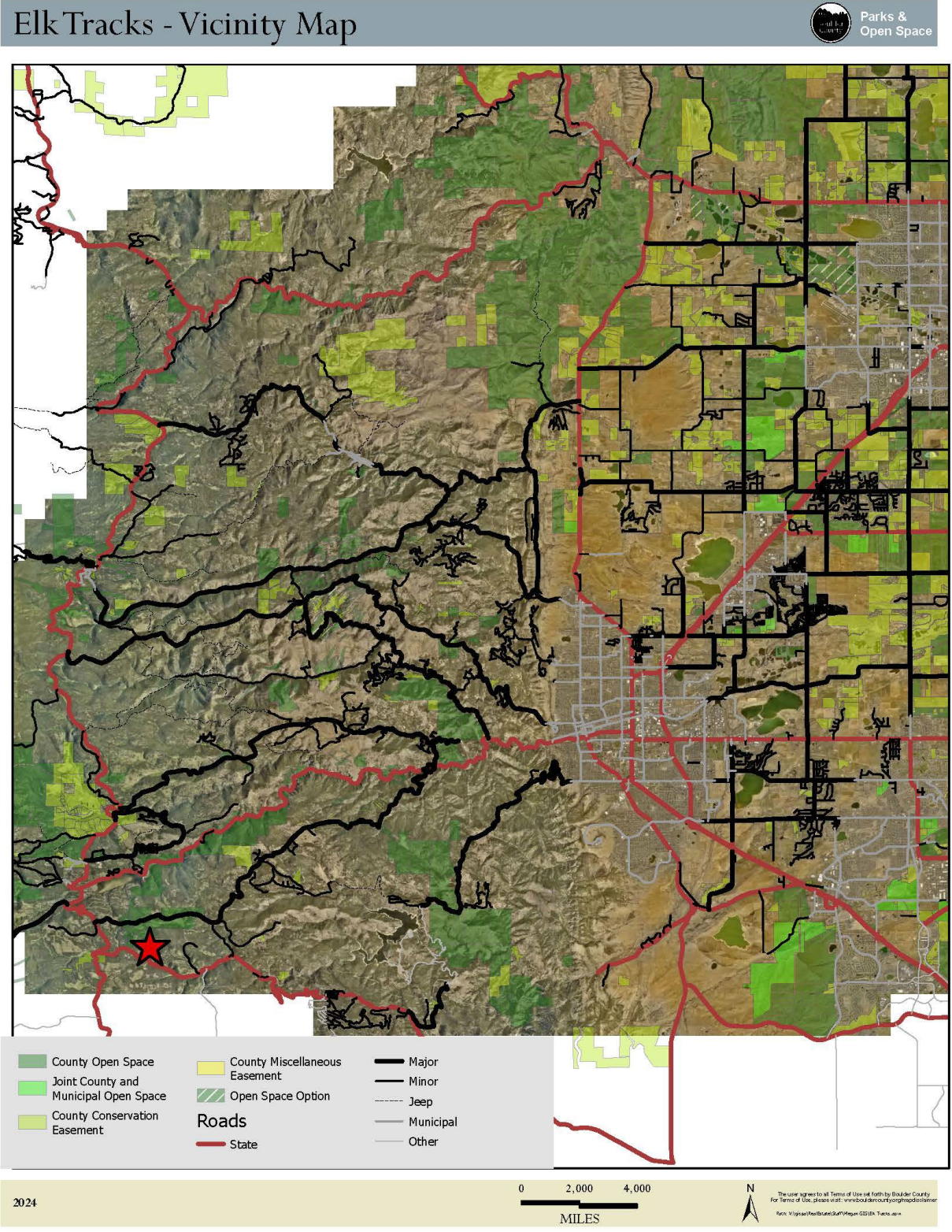
POSAC Action Requested

Recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners for approval of the project as described above and as further described by staff at the POSAC meeting.

Suggested motion language: I move approval of the project as described above and as further described by staff in their presentation.

(see next pages for maps)

Vicinity Map



Close-Up Map

