



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025

Location: Boulder County Courthouse
1325 Pearl Street, Third Floor, Boulder

TO:	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM/PRESENTER:	Susan Spaulding, Environmental Resources Element Sr. Specialist, Resource Management Division
AGENDA ITEM:	White-Nose Syndrome in Bats in Boulder County: BCPOS Response and Internal Management
ACTION REQUESTED:	Information Only

White-Nose Syndrome (WNS) is caused by an invasive fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd). It arrived in North America in 2006, near Albany, New York. The fungus was unknown to science until it was discovered in North America. Since then, researchers have confirmed its presence in Europe and Asia, on bats. However, those bats do not succumb to the effects of the fungus. Unfortunately, our North American bats have been severely impacted by the fungus, to which they have no immunity, with some species experiencing up to 90% declines in population numbers.

The fungus infects the bats and grows on them during the colder, hibernation months. It infiltrates their cellular structure, which eventually cuts off circulation to their extremities, and their skin. This causes the bats to move around, or even to wake up fully, which leads to a depletion of their critical fat stores, that they'd built up to last through the hibernation period. In many cases, the bats will then leave the safety and consistent temperatures of their hibernacula in search of food. In most cases, they therefore freeze or starve.

WNS arrived in Colorado in Spring, 2023 in the southeast corner of the state. In Winter 2024, a little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) tested positive for WNS in Boulder County. In early Spring, 2024, several additional bats (*Myotis lucifugus*, fringed myotis: *Myotis thysanodes*, and big brown bat: *Eptesicus fuscus*) were found dead in Longmont, and near Lyons and tested positive for WNS. This is consistent with patterns seen elsewhere when WNS arrives in an area.

BCPOS has formed an internal WNS Team comprised of several work groups across multiple divisions. Our objectives are to understand WNS as a department and formulate best management practices during this initial wave of WNS, as well as into the future. In the past, we've coordinated on measures to limit disturbance to bat colonies on Open Space, but we've now initiated a formal process to develop department-wide standardized practices. Our goal is to discuss and address management activities that may overlap with

bat habitat to ensure we are considering and protecting bats during this severe challenge to their survival.

Resources available to learn more:

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/static-page/what-is-white-nose-syndrome>

<https://www.fws.gov/story/preventing-and-treating-white-nose-syndrome>

<https://www.fws.gov/story/bats-are-one-most-important-misunderstood-animals>