



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, November 20, 2025

TO: Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM: Aaron Clark, Land Officer
AGENDA ITEM: Forsythe Rock Conservation Easement Acquisition
ACTION REQUESTED: Recommendation to the BOCC

Real Estate Land Commitment: For much longer than Parks & Open Space's history of stewarding open space, the land in this community has been important to American Indian, urban native, Indigenous, and other cultural communities that continue to live here. We are making meaningful changes to how we do our work that include them, 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 a conservation easement over 36 acres for \$400,000. The property has an address of 1904 County Road 68 and is located near the intersection of Magnolia Drive and County Road 68. Staff supports this acquisition.

Background Information

The current owner acquired the property quite recently and is committed to ensuring its conservation as open space. The Forsythe Rock property is adjacent to another property (Shortridge) on the west that is also under a conservation easement held by Boulder County. The property is vacant and is moderately forested on fairly steep slopes. The primary feature of the land is Forsythe Rock, a large outcropping that rises to 8324' in elevation and is visible from many vantage points in the county.

Deal Description

This acquisition will remove all development rights on the property; no construction will be permitted under the terms of the easement. The mineral rights are intact and will be restricted through the conservation easement. No water rights are associated with the property.

This transaction will be paid for with funds from the 2021 Gross Reservoir settlement between Denver Water and Boulder County. As part of that agreement, Denver Water set aside funds for Boulder County to use "for acquisitions of fee properties, conservation easements, and trail corridors."

Acquisition Summary

\$400,000	Land Price (includes mineral rights)
\$400,000	Total Price (Fund Source: Gross Reservoir Settlement Funds)
\$400,000	Total Value

Boulder County will acquire these interests:

- 36 Acres (CE) [\$11,111/acre, or said differently, \$400,000/right for 1 Building Right]
- All Mineral Rights [valued with land price]

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: Archaeologically Sensitive Area, Environmental Conservation Areas (Winiger Ridge, Magnolia, Hawkin Gulch/Walker Ranch/Upper Eldorado Canyon), Natural Landmarks & Natural Areas (Winiger Ridge), Riparian Areas, Significant Natural Communities, View Protection Corridor (CR 68), and Wetlands.

Potential Uses

The property will not be open to the public because it is privately owned. Although the county is acquiring a conservation easement interest over this property, it will remain in private ownership and will be managed by the landowner. The landowner's property uses will be restricted by the terms of the conservation easement, which are designed to protect the property's conservation values.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval. Acquisition of a conservation easement over Forsythe Rock will protect important natural areas west of Gross Reservoir, a high-priority location. The CE will preserve significant natural resources as well as a high-value scenic resource in Forsythe Rock itself.

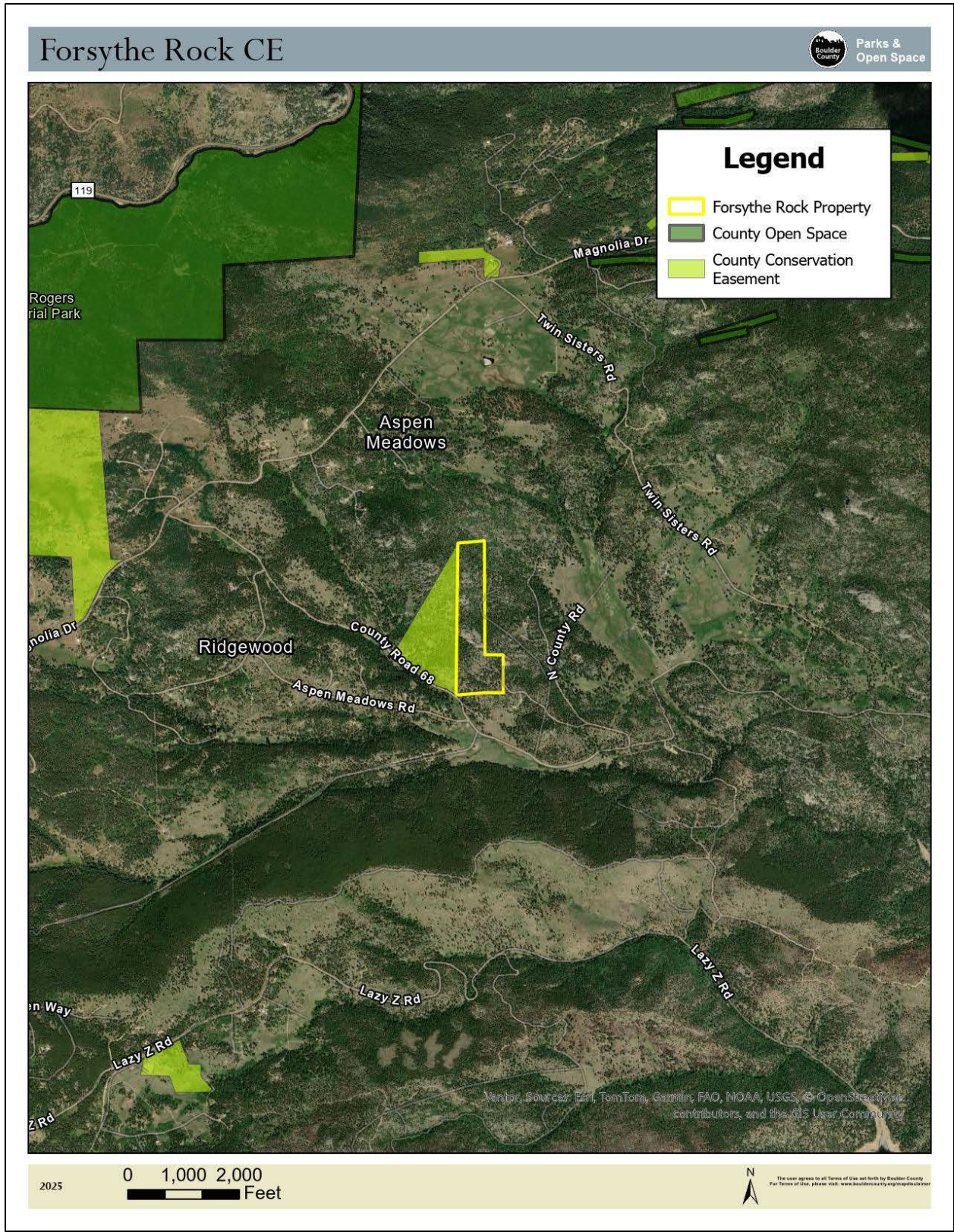
POSAC Action Requested

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

