



Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road • Longmont, CO 80503
303-678-6200 • POSinfo@bouldercounty.gov
www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

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

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

TO:	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM/PRESENTER:	David Lucas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
AGENDA ITEM:	Big Game Management- Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge
ACTION REQUESTED:	Information Only

The Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established in 2007 and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This 5,237-acre Refuge has striking vistas of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains and rolling prairie grasslands, woodlands and wetlands. It is home to 239 migratory and resident wildlife species, including the prairie falcons, deer, elk, coyotes, songbirds, and the federally threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

Numerous big game species take advantage of Refuge habitats. Species include black bear, mountain lion, moose, mule deer, and Rocky mountain elk. In recent years, the resident population of elk has grown substantially. In 2018, elk were estimated at a population of just over 200, and increased to 448 in February of 2024 prior to calving. There are now over 600 elk inhabiting the Refuge.

Guided by the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and environmental impact statement, a hunt management plan will be developed that provides specific details on the goals and objectives of the hunting program while ensuring public safety throughout.

- High-powered (center-fire) rifles will not be authorized.
- Hunting will only be allowed in certain areas providing an adequate safety buffer to any roads and residential development.
- Hunting will only occur during traditional seasons (early September through late November).
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) will utilize its current processes to issue licenses and tags for elk.
- All hunting must comply with CPW and Refuge-specific rules and regulations.
- Refuge staff will monitor habitat conditions, elk populations, and any impacts of hunting to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

In early 2026, the USFWS will compile all changes to hunting and fishing regulations nationwide. These changes will be published in the Federal Register for public comment. If approved, elk hunting at the Refuge could be authorized beginning in the Fall of 2026, with public hunts beginning in Fall of 2027.