



Land Use

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM

September 11, 2014 — 2:00 P.M.

Hearing Room, Third Floor
Boulder County Courthouse

Docket BCCP-08-003: BOULDER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE Environmental Resources Element Text and Maps / Docket DC-14-0003: Authorization to Proceed with Land Use Code Text Amendments

Request to the Board of County Commissioners to accept the text and map revisions to the BCCP Environmental Resources Element as approved by the Planning Commission on June 19, 2013, December 18, 2013, and June 18, 2014 and to authorize staff to proceed with Land Use Code amendments to reflect those text and map revisions.

Staff Planner: Peter Fogg, Senior Planner

Action Requested: Acceptance and Authorization – public testimony will be taken

SUMMARY After 20 months of hearings, study sessions and open houses, the Planning Commission has approved **Docket BCCP-08-0003**, a major rewrite of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element (ERE). The resulting document includes:

- an introductory narrative Overview that describes the intent of the Element, the kinds of geographic coverages or scales considered when developing the policies, and the types/significance of environmental resources, both designated and undesignated, to which the policies apply;
- eight new or revised goals;
- nineteen new or revised policies, eight of which apply across the unincorporated county (“General Policies for Environmental Resources”); and
- seven new maps.

Pursuant to the state County Planning Act CRS 30-28-106 it is the duty of a county planning commission to make and adopt a master plan and/or amend an existing plan (30-28-108.) Planning commissions have the authority to adopt/amend master plans in whole, in chapters or in other logical divisions. It has been our policy to refer Planning Commission approvals of BCCP revisions to the Commissioners’ for their review and acceptance before the Planning Commission proceeds to adopt the changes. The Commissioners’ may request that Planning Commission revisit the revisions in order to consider some changes before adoption, but ultimately the Planning Commission has sole authority in deciding whether or not to do so.

The precedent of amending existing individual Elements and developing new ones apart from doing a cover-to-cover BCCP revision has been a long established practice in Boulder

County. Originally adopted in 1978, the Environmental Resources Element continues to be the most frequently and widely used section of the BCCP for land use planning purposes as well as the most requested and visited Element by the public and other parties. Given its prominence, staff and Planning Commission strongly believe that updates should be adopted, made publicly available, and promptly put into use when new information and knowledge about intrinsic environmental resource values, management, significance, distribution and stewardship are developed.

This leads to the second request of this memo; that the County Commissioners authorize staff to proceed with amending the Land Use Code as **Docket DC-14-0003** to incorporate the ERE text and map changes. Staff has begun drafting a working document. The changes are primarily in deleting old ERE references (map names, designated resources, ERE goals and policies citations) and replacing them with the new names, designations and citations. Public hearing notices, referrals, website information, and other procedural steps will be followed as the drafting proceeds after Planning Commission's adoption of **BCCP-08-0003**.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Environmental Resources Element Text - Approved by Planning Commission June 18, 2014
- B. Environmental Resources Element Maps - Approved by Planning Commission December 18, 2013
- C. Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update Website – Table of Contents and website links to ERE text drafts, maps, supporting materials, public comments, and all Planning Commission/County Commissioner/Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee public hearings (in chronological order and with staff memos)

BACKGROUND The last significant update to the Environmental Resources Element had been in the mid-1990s. That Element ultimately contained 67 policies and two maps. This update began in early 2013. The baseline criteria for the update assessment were selected to identify whether goals, policies and maps were:

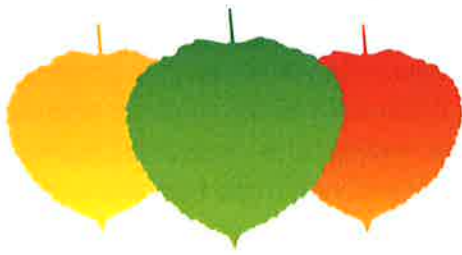
- Out of date
- No longer applicable
- Redundant or conflicting with other policies
- Unclear as to their meaning
- Programmatic rather than policy

Using these criteria, staff from the Land Use, Parks and Open Space, Transportation and Public Health Departments reviewed the 67 existing policies and two maps, subsequently preparing a new draft Element. Since then two open houses were held along with two Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee hearings, one County Commissioner hearing and nine Planning Commission hearings/study sessions. The document and maps accompanying this memo are for the most part the same as those presented to the Commissioners on February 14th of this year with one notable exception.

An additional policy was added and approved by the Planning Commission on June 18, 2014 and is incorporated as **General Policies for Environmental Resources ER 1.03** on page 5 of **Attachment A**. This policy was developed in response to the extensive and passionately debated issue over whether a proactive statement on “rights of nature” should or should not be asserted in the BCCP, which was carried on for several months before the Planning Commission as well as in correspondence to the staff, the Commissioners, the media, and others. At the general direction of the Planning Commission, a small working group of four persons was selected by staff, two supporting inclusion of a “rights of nature” position into the ERE and two opposed, to discuss through a facilitated process whether or not some mutually acceptable language could be developed requiring that species protection and preservation be given equal if not greater weight among the other factors considered in reviewing and making decisions on land use proposals and activities...in other words something between a categorical “yes” or “no” stance on the subject. Although the small working group could not reach an agreement, their efforts and the various revised proposals that had been floated in other conversations led to the drafting and adoption of the following language:

“Acknowledging our responsibility to ensure that naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations continue to exist and flourish in Boulder County, Boulder County will develop conservation and recovery plans for priority Species of Special Concern.”

RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **ACCEPT** the text and map revisions to the BCCP Environmental Resources Element as approved by the Planning Commission on June 19, 2013, December 18, 2013, and June 18, 2014. Staff further recommends that the Board of County Commissioners **AUTHORIZE** staff to proceed with Land Use Code amendments to reflect those text and map revisions.



Boulder County Comprehensive Plan

ATTACHMENT A

Environmental Resources Element

Approved by Planning Commission June 18, 2014

Overview

Boulder County values and strives to preserve, conserve and restore the unique and distinctive natural features, ecosystems and landscapes of the county using sound resource management principles and practices at both a site-specific level and on a broader, landscape scale. Boulder County's important environmental resources include naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations. Species of Special Concern are an integral component of this management approach. The list of Species of Special Concern includes locally threatened or endangered flora and fauna that the county seeks to protect. Habitat for these Species of Special Concern is particularly vital, since it often presents our best chance to protect native species.

In addition to identifying Species of Special Concern, this Element designates areas of important habitat at two scales: the "site-specific scale" and the broader, "landscape-scale."

At the site-specific scale, important environmental resources typically consist of an easily definable area such as an individual parcel of land or a distinct geographical location where specific resources exist. Designations at the site-specific scale include Critical Wildlife Habitats, Rare Plant Areas, Wetlands, Riparian Areas, and Significant Natural Communities (formerly referred to as Critical Plant Associations). Environmental resources designated at the landscape-scale are much larger and holistic in approach. At this scale, the designations of High Biodiversity Areas and Environmental Conservation Areas seek to preserve broader ecological processes and functions. These areas often encompass multiple resources also designated at the site-specific scale. Natural Areas and Natural Landmarks designations are intended to encompass and protect unique and distinctive natural features and landscapes in the county. The fundamental and essential sustaining resources of air, soil, and water are also considered and addressed.

While this Element calls specific attention to the aforementioned designated environmental resources (Environmental Resources), it also recognizes that these are not the only environmental resources of significance and importance that should be considered in land use decisions and cared for through management practices. With this in mind, Boulder County's overarching intention is to maintain the overall health and integrity of our rich and diverse environment to the greatest extent possible as our knowledge and understanding of environmental functions and interconnections evolves. The term "environmental resources" as used in this Element consists of both the designated "Environmental Resources" and undesigned environmental resources.

To provide some context for the goals and policies, a brief explanation of the environmental resource designations and their importance to the ecosystems of Boulder County follows. For the most part, these designations are those that already are utilized by reference in the Boulder County Land Use Code. Designations added or amended in updates to this Element will also be protected through administration of the Code and in conformance with applicable Federal and State law. The criteria used to determine these designations are periodically reviewed and updated resulting in updated lists of Species of Special Concern and updated maps of the Environmental Resources Element. Descriptions of these designations follow.

Environmental Conservation Areas

Environmental Conservation Areas (ECAs) encompass the largest remaining relatively natural or restorable forests, shrublands, grasslands, and agricultural landscapes in Boulder County. Even with the current amount of relatively undeveloped public land in the county, and the conservation and preservation efforts of public land managers on these lands, broad shifts in animal and plant communities are occurring as a result of development, habitat degradation, climate change, and the exclusion or disruption of natural processes. ECAs are a planning tool developed by the County and its agency partners for analyzing land use and land management decisions in the context of the cumulative effects of development, roads, trails and increased human presence at a landscape-scale on these large and complex ecosystems. This land use decision-making tool is used as a strategy for maintaining the wide-ranging animal species, native plant communities, and natural ecological processes that operate at this landscape scale.

ECAs are a framework for ecosystem management that identifies and designates valuable ecological areas and delineates corridors of connectivity between them regardless of ownership. With this designation, land use and land management decisions within and adjacent to ECAs and their connectors can be made within a framework that seeks to: protect species that may be wide-ranging, ecologically specialized or disturbed by human presence; encourage the return of species lost from the county; prevent additional habitat fragmentation; and limit increases in invasive non-native species in these ecologically-significant areas. Such planning and decision-making processes may include resource management plans, the location and extent of new development, future land and easement purchases for open space purposes, and the location of trails and other public facilities.

High Biodiversity Areas

High Biodiversity Areas (HBAs) are locales that have a concentration of rare environmental resources. If managed well, they represent the greatest opportunities for preserving specific aspects of Boulder County's natural heritage. The boundaries of HBAs encompass those lands that provide the habitat and ecological processes upon which the resources depend for their continued existence. These areas have been identified and ranked -- by the CSU Colorado Natural Heritage Program -- as having *outstanding significance* (B1), *very high significance* (B2), or *high significance* (B3).

Natural Landmarks

Natural Landmarks are prominent landscape features that distinguish a specific locality in Boulder County. They are important for the views they afford, their value as scenic vistas and backdrops, and the intrinsic value they hold as wildlife or plant habitats, natural areas, park and open space preserves, and open land areas. However, the single criterion for designation shall be its visual and scenic prominence as a landscape feature. They provide a record of Boulder County's natural heritage.

State and County Natural Areas

State and County Natural Areas are physical or biological areas that are unique and important to the natural heritage of the state and/or the county. Each area either retains or has reestablished its natural character, although it need not be completely undisturbed. It typifies native vegetation and associated biological and geological features and provides habitat for rare or endangered animal or plant species or includes geologic or other natural features of scientific or educational value. State Natural Areas are designated as such by the Colorado Natural Areas Program.

Significant Natural Communities

Significant Natural Communities are areas that are recognized by the presence of a critical plant association that is limited in its distribution and occurrence. These areas have multiple important environmental resources that co-occur and interact. These areas have species and processes that are relatively undisturbed by human actions and currently exist in their natural state. These areas are also referred to as Critical Plant Associations in the Boulder County Land Use Regulations.

Critical Wildlife Habitats

Critical Wildlife Habitats are the unique habitats which have a crucial role in sustaining populations of native wildlife and in perpetuating and encouraging a diversity of native species in the county.

Wetlands and Riparian Areas

Wetlands and Riparian Areas have unique and critical functions in the ecosystem. Wetlands are generally described as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the land is covered by shallow water or soils are saturated during the growing season. Wetlands have high biodiversity, are relatively rare, provide unique wildlife habitat, filter water, and buffer floods. Riparian Areas are a unique combination of terrestrial plant communities and aquatic systems associated with flowing water that provide unique habitat and important movement corridors for wildlife.

Rare Plant Areas

Rare Plant Areas are sites that are known to have a high likelihood of having occurrences of Plant Species of Special Concern.

Species of Special Concern

Species of Special Concern include the flora and fauna in the county whose populations may be threatened or endangered, locally rare, experiencing long-term non-cyclical population declines, isolated or restricted to distinct local habitat types, or native species which have ceased to exist within Boulder County.

To summarize, restoring, protecting and preserving our natural environment and all of its interdependent components upon which all things depend have been core values and objectives of Boulder County since the adoption of the first county-wide comprehensive plan in 1978. Numerous initiatives, plans and programs have been diligently pursued and implemented in this quest, and have benefited from the involvement of many stakeholders and interested parties in both the public and private sectors. The Environmental Resources Element is both a compass and a tool for use in sustaining and advancing these efforts.

Goals of the Environmental Resources Element

B.1 Boulder County shall conserve and preserve environmental resources including its unique or distinctive natural features, biodiversity, and ecosystems through protection and restoration in recognition of the irreplaceable character of such resources and their importance to the quality of life in Boulder County.

B.2 Boulder County sustains and protects native species, natural ecosystems and the biodiversity of the region by designating High Biodiversity Areas, Natural Areas, Natural Landmarks, Significant Natural Communities, Critical Wildlife Habitats, Species of Special Concern, Wetlands, Riparian Areas, and Rare Plant Areas. Other resources and designations

may be identified in the future. These designated areas and species lists also provide a point of reference for continued monitoring of long-term ecological change.

B.3 Boulder County shall promote the viability and integrity of all naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations by applying a variety of environmental resources management strategies in a manner that is consistent with current ecological principles and sustainable conservation practices.

B.4 Boulder County recognizes that climate change is having significant impacts on our environmental resources. As the body of climate science knowledge grows and potential effects are better understood, Boulder County shall incorporate the best scientific information into planning and decision-making to adapt to and offset those impacts.

B.5 Boulder County shall continue to protect air, water and soil resources and quality, as well as restore resources in a degraded condition to enhance overall environmental health. Pollution of air, water, and soil, and pollution caused by noise or light, shall be eliminated or minimized to the greatest extent possible in order to prevent potential harm to life, health and property, and to reduce incremental degradation of the environment.

B.6 Boulder County shall continue to protect prominent natural landmarks and other unique scenic, visual and aesthetic resources in the county.

B.7 Boulder County shall conserve and preserve Environmental Conservation Areas (ECAs) in order to perpetuate native species, biological communities, and ecological processes that function over large geographic areas and require a high degree of connectivity to thrive.

B.8 Boulder County shall protect environmental resources both at the site-specific scale and landscape scale through a variety of means such as partnerships with private landowners, non-governmental organizations, and other governmental agencies; education and outreach; advocacy at the state and federal level; and other programs consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Environmental Resource Policies

Introduction

The general policies below (ER 1.01 to ER 1.08) pertain to all environmental resources. Additional policies follow the general policies that expand on and are unique and specific to Air, Water, Soil and Noise (ER 2.01 to ER 2.03), Environmental Conservation Areas (3.01 to 3.05), and Natural Areas and Natural Landmarks (ER 4.01 to ER 4.03).

General Policies for Environmental Resources

The following policies apply to all environmental resources in Boulder County

ER 1.01

Boulder County plans and attendant regulations shall be formulated to insure that land uses avoid where possible and otherwise minimize the destruction or adverse modification of environmental resources. Land use proposals shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for their potential impacts to environmental resources identified in the BCCP as well as those resources that may be identified on the site and in the vicinity of the proposal during a county development review process. The applicant may be required to complete other studies, inventories, or reports that address the proposal's potential impacts on environmental resources and include recommendations for mitigation of those impacts.

ER 1.02 Boulder County shall continue to identify and designate environmental resources that have significance to Boulder County. Such designations, and attendant maps, will be based on criteria that use science, collaboration with experts, and on-the-ground verification to the extent practicable. Boulder County may periodically reevaluate such criteria and designations.

ER 1.03 Acknowledging our responsibility to ensure that naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations continue to exist and flourish in Boulder County, Boulder County will develop conservation and recovery plans for priority Species of Special Concern.

ER 1.04 Scenic vistas shall be preserved as much as possible in their natural state.

ER 1.05 Boulder County shall work with federal, state, municipal and other public or quasi-public entities that have a jurisdictional or property interest in unincorporated lands within or surrounding any designated environmental resources to achieve their protection.

ER 1.06 Boulder County shall work in partnership with private land owners and non-governmental organizations to protect, conserve, and restore designated environmental resources using a variety of tools.

ER 1.07 Boulder County shall use its open space program as one means of achieving its goals for protecting environmental resources.

ER 1.08 Boulder County shall encourage all private landowners to seek assistance from appropriate governmental and non-governmental entities to protect Boulder County's environmental resources.

ER 1.09 Boulder County shall modify plans, policies and regulations as necessary to adapt to climate change in order to reduce species and ecosystem vulnerability and other potential adverse impacts on environmental resources. These measures will guide environmental resource management implementation aimed at protecting biodiversity and ecological resiliency.

Air, Soil, Water, Noise and Light Policies

In addition to the general policies above, the following policies also apply specifically to air, soil, water, noise and light.

ER 2.01 Boulder County shall seek to protect overall public and environmental health by enforcing regulations concerning air, soil, water, noise and light pollution at the local level in accordance with applicable law.

ER 2.02 Boulder County shall evaluate land use proposals and other planned activities considering their cumulative impacts on public and environmental health. Sufficient mitigation and minimization of any impacts shall be required for the proposal or activity to be approved. These proposals and activities shall at a minimum comply with air, soil, and water quality standards, as well as noise level and lighting standards, established by county and state agencies or the Boulder County Land Use Code.

ER 2.03 Boulder County shall take a watershed approach to addressing water quality and water quantity including supporting and participating in local and regional watershed partnerships.

Environmental Conservation Areas Policies

In addition to the general policies above, the following policies apply specifically to Environmental Conservation Areas.

ER 3.01 Boulder County shall designate and map Environmental Conservation Areas as well as Overland and Stream Habitat (Riparian) Corridors at a landscape scale.

ER 3.02 Boulder County shall encourage the removal of development rights from ECAs through transfer, donation, acquisition, trade, or other incentives.

ER 3.03 Development within ECAs shall be located and designed to minimize the cumulative impacts on the environmental resource values of ECAs.

ER 3.04 Development outside of ECAs shall be located and designed to minimize impacts on and connectivity between ECAs.

ER 3.05 Boulder County shall encourage and participate with the appropriate public entities and private land owners in the development of coordinated management plans to conserve, preserve and restore the environmental resource values of ECAs.

Natural Landmarks and Natural Areas Policies

In addition to the general policies above, the following policies apply specifically to Natural Landmarks and Natural Areas.

ER 4.01 Natural Landmarks and Natural Areas identified in the Environmental Resources Element and as may be identified from time to time by the state under the Colorado Natural Areas Act, shall be protected from destruction or harmful alteration.

ER 4.02 Boulder County shall submit any County Natural Area that may be of state-wide importance to the Colorado Natural Areas Program for designation as a State Natural Area.

ER 4.03 Boulder County shall coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies and municipalities, as well as with willing private landowners, to protect natural resource values within Natural Landmarks and Natural Areas. This may include: identification of specific resources of concern including scenic values; recommendations for long-term management; mitigation of existing or foreseen impacts; or protection through acquisition of land interest.

ATTACHMENT B

Environmental Resources Element Maps

**Approved by Planning Commission December 13,
2013**

Critical Wildlife Habitat and Migration Corridors

Boulder County
Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update

Critical Wildlife Habitats

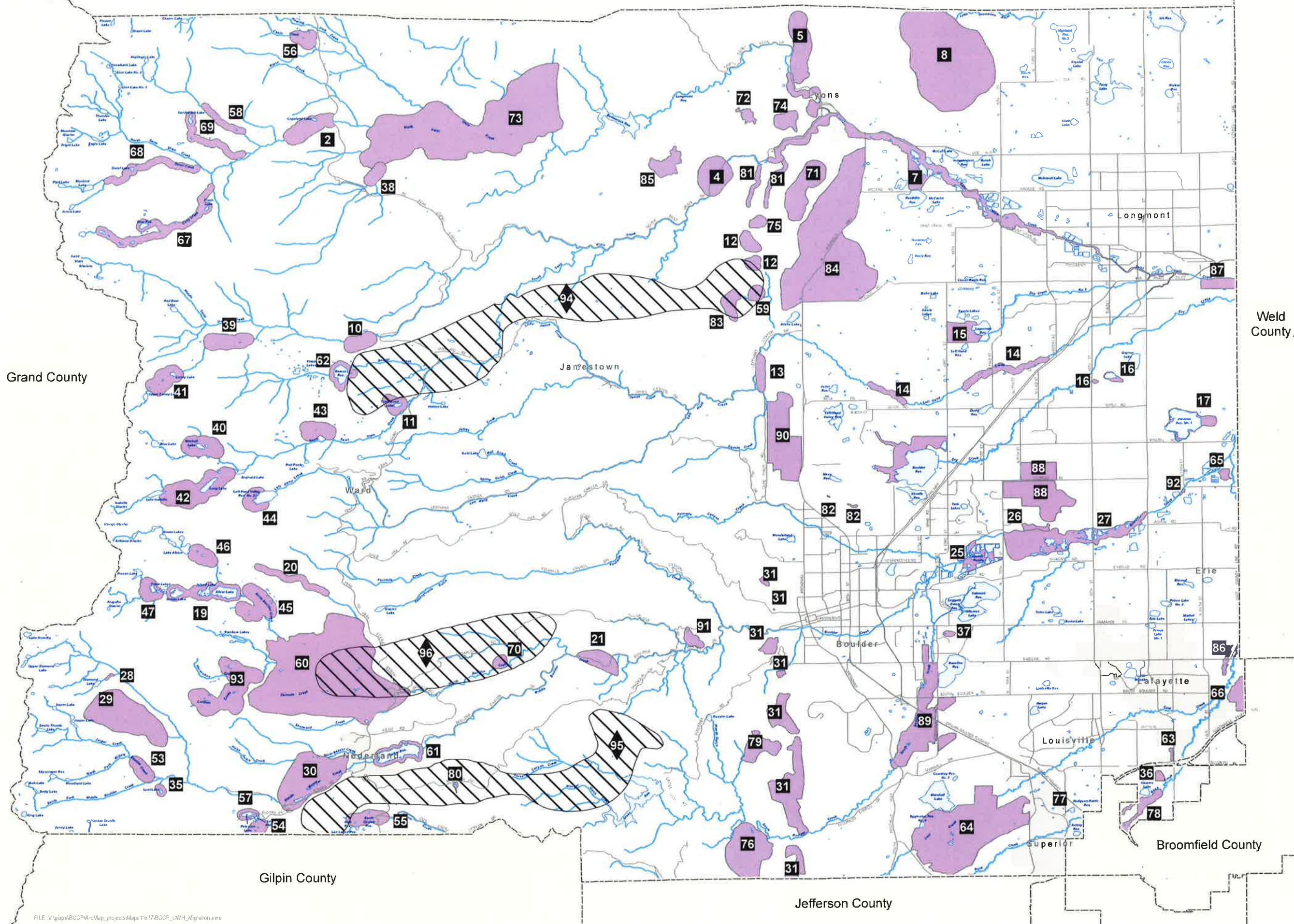


1
An area of unique habitat which has a crucial role in sustaining populations of native wildlife and in perpetuating and encouraging a diversity of native species in the county. The area may be significantly productive habitat or particularly vital to the life requirements of species that are critically imperiled or vulnerable to extirpation.

Wildlife Migration Corridors



A specific, delineated area of known elk migration movement for a major elk herd in Boulder County.



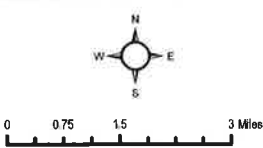
Weld County

Grand County

Gilpin County

Jefferson County

Broomfield County



Critical Wildlife Habitats

2	Copeland Willow Carr	58	Hunters Creek
4	Deadman Gulch and South St. Vrain	59	Geer Canyon
5	Steamboat Mountain	60	Caribou Ranch Montane Parkland
7	St. Vrain Corridor	61	Barker Reservoir
8	Rabbit Mountain	62	Beaver Reservoir
10	Middle St. Vrain Willow Carr	63	Goose Pond
11	Tumblesom Lake	64	Southern Grasslands
12	Marietta Canyon	65	Kenosha Wetlands
13	Lefthand Palisades	66	Two Creeks
14	Lefthand Creek Cottonwood Groves	67	Cony Creek
15	Lagerman Reservoir	68	Ouzel Creek
16	Gaynor Lakes	69	Sandbeach Creek
17	Panama Reservoir	70	Peewink Mountain
19	City of Boulder Watershed	71	Red Hill Gulch
20	Como Creek	72	Antelope Park
21	Boulder Falls Area	73	North Saint Vrain Canyon
23	Boulder Reservoir	74	Hat Rock
25	Walden and Sawhill Ponds	75	Ingersol Quarry
26	White Rocks	76	South Draw
27	Lower Boulder Creek Riparian Area	77	Hodgson-Harris Reservoir
28	Diamond Lake Outlet	78	Buffalo Gulch and Rock Creek
29	Chittenden Meadows	79	Bear and Aspen Canyons
30	Arapaho Ranch - Tucker Homestead	80	Giggey Lake
31	Boulder Mountain Parks Eldorado Mountain	81	Hall 2
35	Lost Lake	82	B.L.I.P. Ponds and Lapin Pond
36	Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm	83	Geer Meadows
37	Sombrero Marsh	84	Red Hill
38	Lazy H. Ranch Willow Carr	85	Coffin Top Mountain
39	Coney Flats Willow Carr	86	Powers March
40	Mitchell Lake Willow Carr	87	Quicksilver
41	Coney Lake Willow Carr	88	Gunbarrel Hill
42	Long Lake Willow Carr	89	South Boulder Creek Floodplain and Terrace
43	South St. Vrain Willow Carr	90	North Boulder Grasslands
44	Lefthand Reservoir Willow Carr	91	Bummer's Gulch
45	Boulder Watershed Willow Carr	92	Kenosha Heronry
46	Lake Albion Willow Carr	93	Upper Caribou Park Willow Carr Complex
47	Triple Lakes Willow Carr	94	North Foothills Elk Herd
53	Woodland Flats Willow Carr	95	Winiger Ridge Elk Herd
54	Buckeye Basin Willow Carr	96	Peewink Mountain Elk Herd
55	Los Lagos Willow Carr		
56	Roaring Fork Willow Carr		
57	Peterson Lake		

*CWH numbering is not sequential. Some previously established CWH's have been deleted or subsumed by another CWH. Those numbers were "retired".


Habitat Conservation Areas for Prebles Meadow Jumping Mouse

Boulder County
Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update


Habitat Conservation Areas Descriptions

Habitat Conservation Areas are adapted from the "Possible Conservation Zones" of the PMJM Conservation Handbook. The designations guide conservation of PMJM habitat with the overarching goal of aiding in the recovery of this Threatened species.


Zone 1 Mouse Management Area (MMA)

 Areas in which PMJM is known to occur, including adjacent habitat patches that are likely to be occupied. Management should emphasize maintaining higher quality riparian habitat and higher numbers of mice. Areas of poor quality are priorities for restoration with high expectations for success.


Zone 2 Possible Linkages

 Linkages are designated for populations that once occurred as a single unit, but are now fragmented. Linkages provide adequate structure for a few mice to "make it to the other side", facilitating dispersal, population maintenance, and genetic exchange.


Zone 3 Suitable Contiguous Habitat

 Areas of suitable habitat that are contiguous to a known population and are not known to be occupied by PMJM (i.e. PMJM either have not been captured or no trapping has occurred).


Zone 4 Potential Restoration, Contiguous

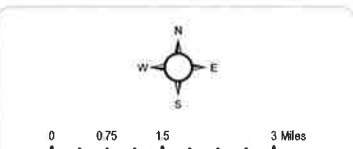
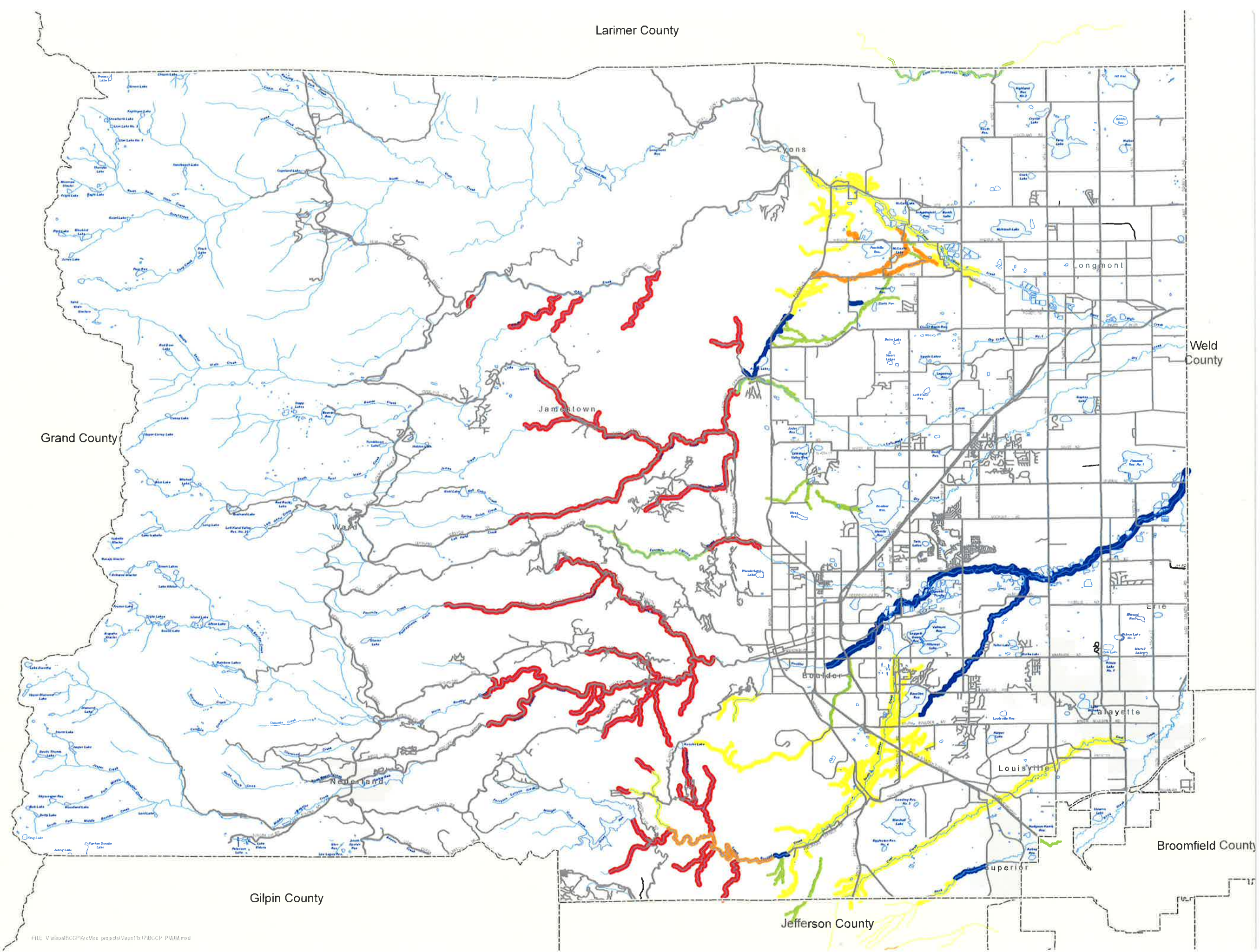
 Areas not known to be occupied but contiguous with known populations where restoration of unsuitable or degraded habitat could result in a significant increase in a PMJM population.

Zone 5 Suitable, Noncontiguous Habitat

 Areas of suitable habitat that are NOT contiguous to a known population and are not known to be occupied by PMJM.

Foothills Perennial Stream Habitat


 Areas of suitable PMJM habitat along foothills perennial streams up to 7,600 ft. in elevation not covered under one of the other designations. PMJM are known to occupy riparian habitat up to this elevation (USFWS 2004).




Rare Plant Areas and Significant Natural Communities

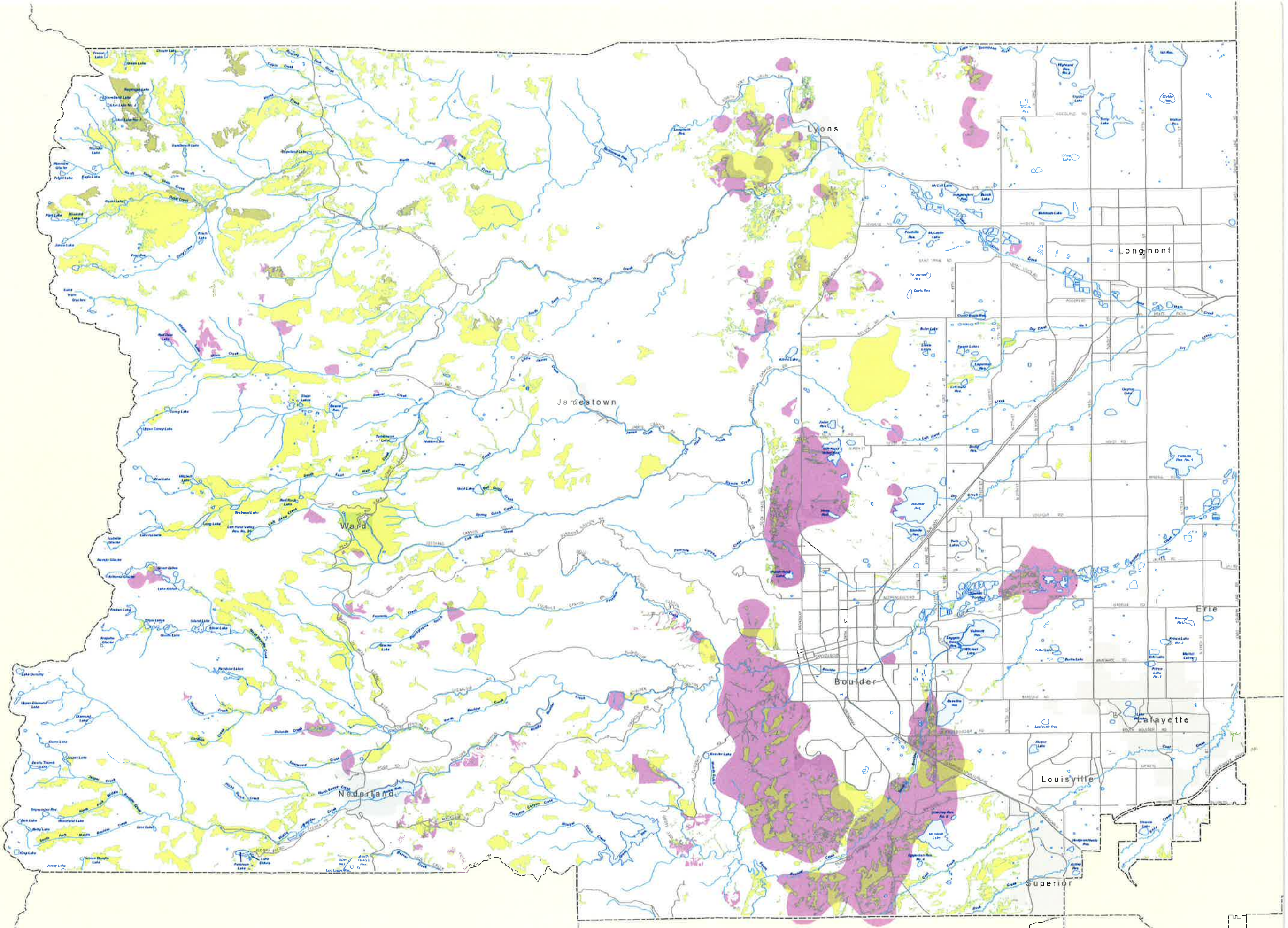
 **Boulder County**
Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update

Rare Plant Areas

 An area known to have or have a high likelihood of having occurrences of Plant Species of Special Concern.

Significant Natural Communities

 An area where a combination of plant species (a plant association) that is critically imperiled or vulnerable to extirpation is present.



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Wetlands and Riparian Areas



Boulder County
Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update

Riparian Areas



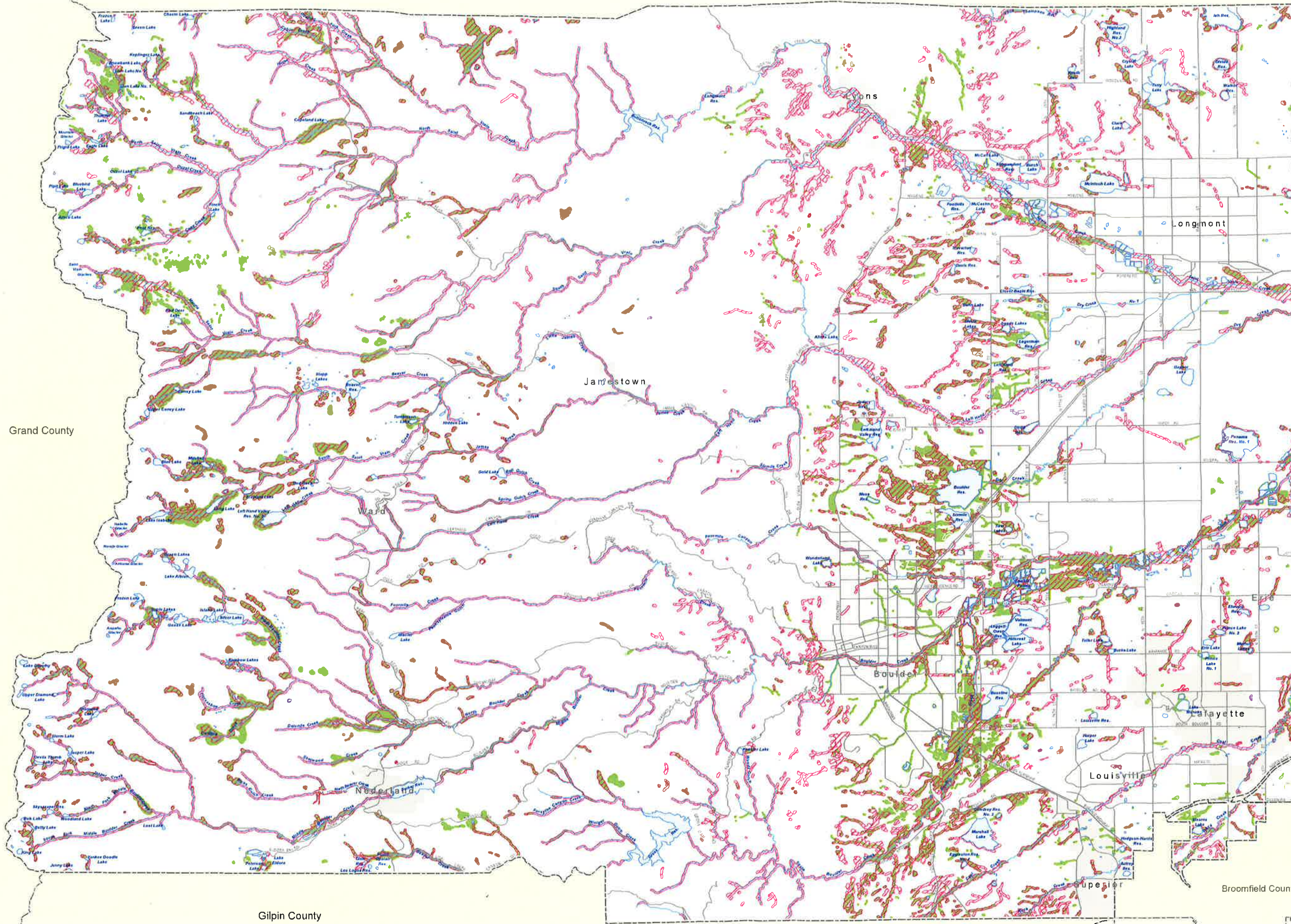
An area recognized by the presence of linear bands of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation along a waterway where plant communities and soil moisture differ from surrounding upland vegetation and soils

Wetlands



Lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water with one or more of the following attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes (wetland plants); (2) the substrate is predominantly un-drained hydric soil; and/or (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year (USFWS 1993).

Grand County



Weld County

Gilpin County

Jefferson County

Broomfield County



0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Natural Landmarks and Natural Areas

Boulder County Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update

Natural Landmarks

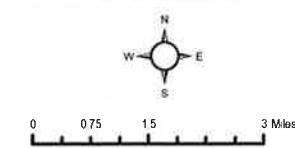
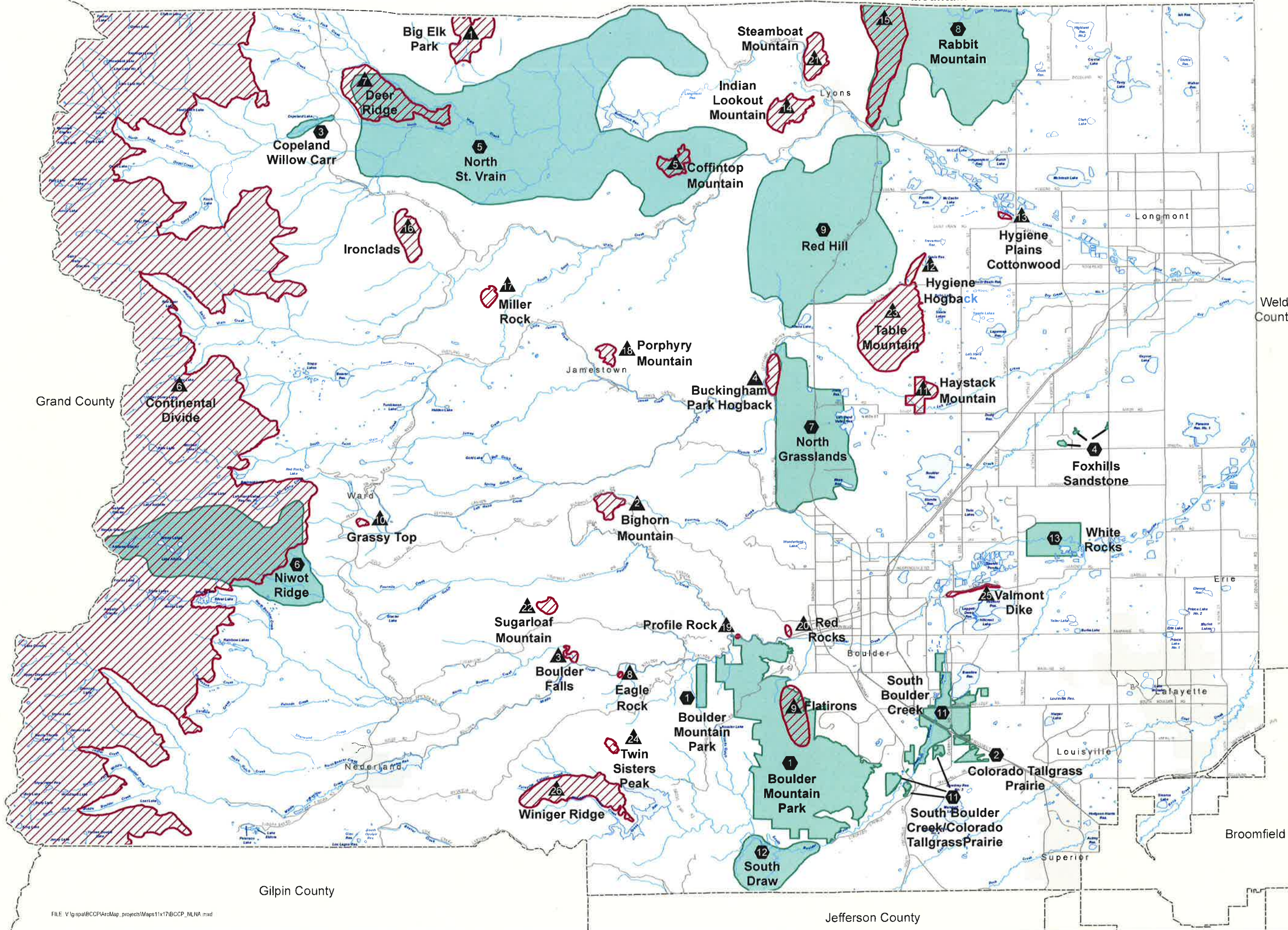


A landscape feature designated solely for its visual and scenic prominence that distinguishes a specific locality in Boulder County.

Natural Areas



An area especially unique and important to the natural heritage of the county that typifies native vegetation and associated biological and geological features and provides habitat for rare or endangered animal or plant species; or includes geologic or other natural features of scientific or educational value.



High Biodiversity Areas




Boulder County
Comprehensive Plan
2013 Update


High Biodiversity Areas

An area with a concentration of rare environmental resources that represents one of the greatest opportunities for preserving specific aspects of Boulder County's natural heritage. These areas have been identified and ranked by the CSU Natural Heritage Program.


B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance (Irreplaceable)

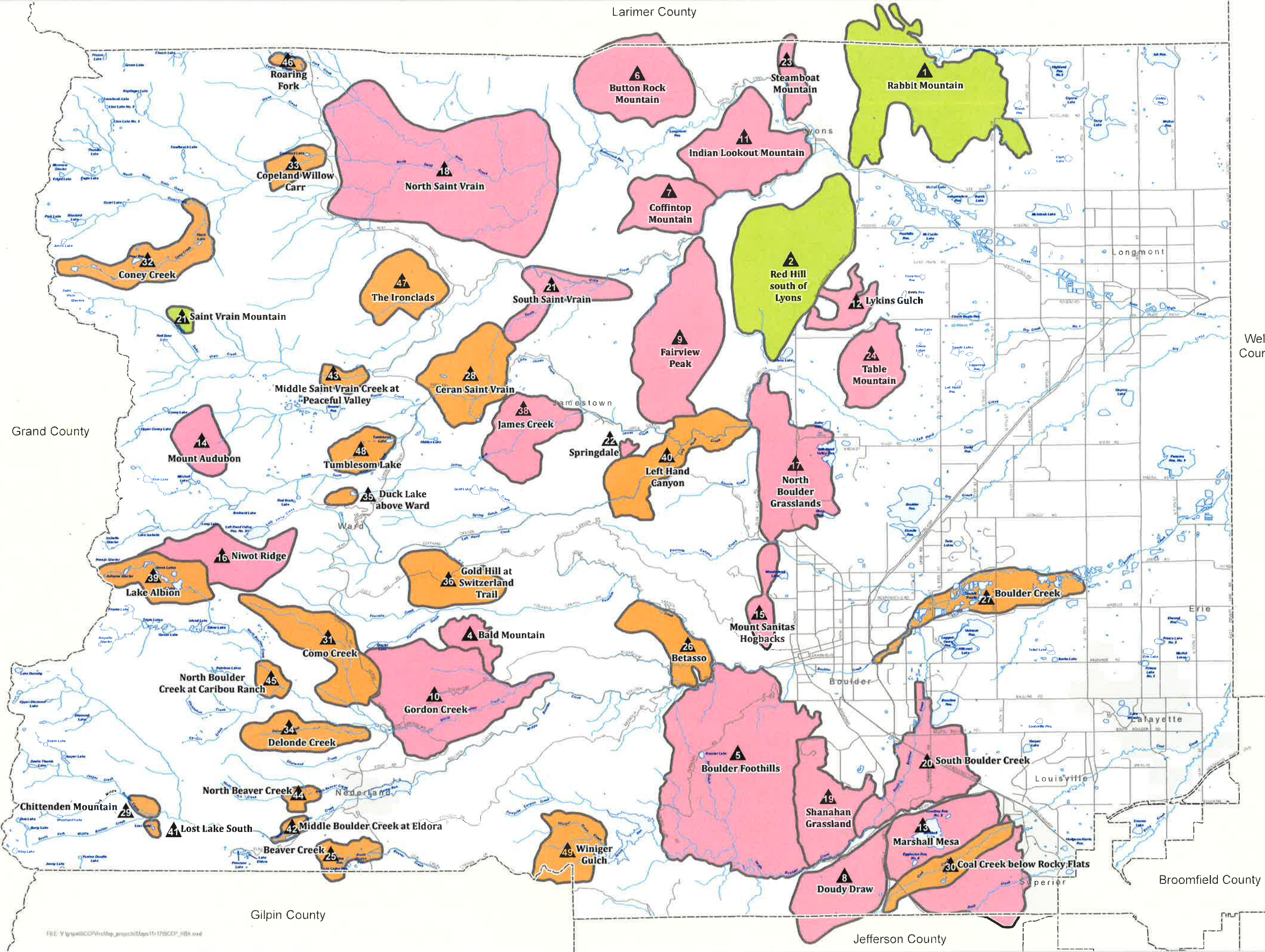
 An area that on a global scale is irreplaceable. The area has a concentration of four or more globally critically imperiled to globally imperiled (G1-G2) element occurrences that are in excellent or good (A- or B-ranked) condition.

B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance (Nearly Irreplaceable)

 An area that on a global scale is nearly irreplaceable and significance on a national scale. An area has a concentration of several biodiversity elements that are globally rare (G3) and/or species that are common globally (G4 or G5) but rare within Colorado.

B3: High Biodiversity Significance

 An area that has state-wide importance. The area has a concentration of several biodiversity elements that are more common globally but are excellent or good for this ecoregion.



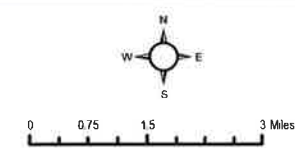
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Environmental Conservation Areas

Boulder County
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Environmental Conservation Areas

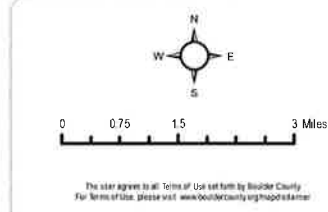
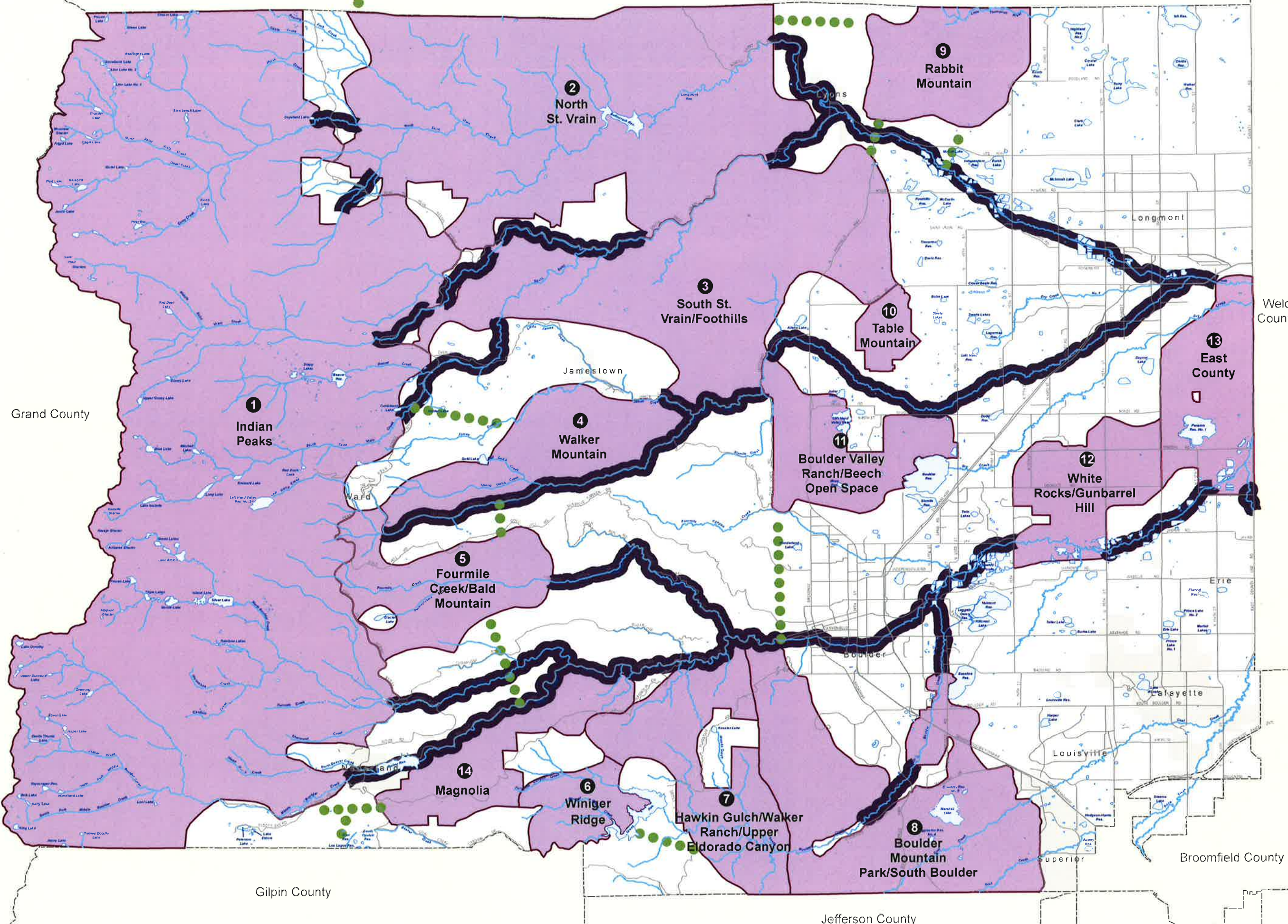
1
Areas of the County that possess a relatively low amount of fragmentation, contain high quality natural resources or habitats, are designated at a sufficient size to provide ecological benefit, and/or have significant potential for restoration

Overland Habitat Connectors

2
Areas of wildlife movement across relatively unfragmented landscapes which provides connectivity among Environmental Conservation Areas

Riparian Habitat Connectors

3
Areas of wildlife movement adjacent to relative unfragmented waterways which provides connectivity among Environmental Conservation Areas




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ATTACHMENT C

**Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update
Website – Index to Environmental Resources
Element Links**

Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update

Outreach efforts in 2011 introduced the existing [Boulder County Comprehensive Plan](#) (BCCP) to residents, explored how the Comprehensive Plan has shaped the county, and provided reasons for initiating a review and modernization of the plan. At these meetings staff introduced draft language on the Guiding Principles that provided direction for the Comprehensive Plan with the orientation toward sustainability. The [Guiding Principles](#) (250 KB)  were approved by the Planning Commission on January 18, 2012. The next steps for the Comprehensive Plan update will be to review the elements within the Plan. Gaining public input into the BCCP update effort is critical to planning for the future of Boulder County.

The [Planning Commission](#) authorized the Land Use Department to proceed with an update to the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan at its September 16, 2009 meeting. Please send your comments via the [Ask a Planner](#) webform.

Subscribe to get [email updates](#) and keep up-to-date on update meetings and other pertinent information.

Environmental Resources Element Update



Goals & Policies Approved by Planning Commission (6/19/2013)

- [Overview, Goals & Policies](#) (192 KB) 

Maps Approved by Planning Commission (12/18/2013)

- [Critical Wildlife Habitats & Wildlife Migration Corridors](#) (1 MB) 
- [Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Conservation Areas](#) (2 MB) 
- [Rare Plant Areas & Significant Natural Communities](#) (2 MB) 
- [Wetlands & Riparian Areas](#) (2 MB) 
- [Natural Areas & Natural Landmarks](#) (1 MB) 
- [High Biodiversity Areas](#) (1 MB) 
- [Environmental Conservation Areas](#) (1 MB) 

Primary Supporting Materials


- [List of Wildlife Species of Special Concern](#) (504 KB) 
- [List of Plant Species & Plant Communities of Special Concern](#) (182 KB) 
- [Critical Wildlife Habitat Criteria & Summary List](#) (360 KB) 
- [Wetland & Riparian Criteria](#) (13 KB) 
- [Environmental Conservation Areas Criteria & List](#) (220 KB) 

Supplemental Materials to the Environmental Resources Element

- [Summary of Updates](#) (431 KB) 

- [Supplemental Materials](#) (4 MB) 
- [Critical Wildlife Habitat & Wildlife Migration Corridors Descriptions](#) (814 KB) 
- [Environmental Conservation Area Descriptions](#) (3 MB) 
- [List of Subject Matter Experts](#) (28 KB) 

Public Comment

- [Comments Received During the Update Process](#) (1 MB) 

Upcoming Public Meetings

No meetings currently scheduled.

Past Public Meetings

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Update

Planning Commission voted (8-0) to approve the following language as a new policy for inclusion to the Environmental Resources Element of the BCCP: *"Acknowledging our responsibility to ensure that naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations continue to exist and flourish in Boulder County, Boulder County will develop conservation and recovery plans for priority Species of Special Concern."*

Staff Planners: Peter Fogg and William Davidson

When: June 18, 2014

Documents: [Staff Report to Planning Commission for June 18, 2014](#) (3 MB) 


Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Update

Planning Commission voted (5-0) to approve draft language, asking staff to edit/clean up if appropriate and bring it back to the June 18th Planning Commission meeting for final action: *"Acknowledging our responsibility to ensure that naturally occurring ecosystems and their native species populations continue to exist and flourish in Boulder County, Boulder County will develop conservation and recovery plans for priority species of special concern."* Public testimony was taken.

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg and Bill Davidson

When: May 21, 2014

Documents:

- [Staff Report to Planning Commission for May 21, 2014](#) (2 MB) 
- [Public Comment received through May 21, 2014](#) (556 KB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Maps Update

The Boulder County Land Use and Parks and Open Space departments presented the updated Environmental Resources Element to the Board of County Commissioners for discussion and suggestions, and for public comment. The updated Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element, as approved by the Planning Commission on December 18, 2013, is newly updated with revised narrative, goals, policies, and maps.

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg and Bill Davidson – Land Use; Justin Atherton-Wood – Parks and Open Space

When: February 11, 2014

Documents:

- [Board of County Commissioners Agenda for February 11, 2014](#) 
- [Staff Report to Board of County Commissioners for February 11, 2014](#) (7 MB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Maps Update

Planning Commission review and action on the updated maps for the Environmental Resources Element. Public Testimony was taken.

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg and Bill Davidson – Land Use; Justin Atherton-Wood – Parks and Open Space

When: December 18, 2013

Documents: [Staff Report to Planning Commission for December 18, 2013](#) (10 MB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Maps Update

Planning Commission review of the updated maps for the Environmental Resources Element. Public Testimony was taken.

When: November 20, 2013

Documents: [Planning Commission Agenda for November 20, 2013](#) (268 KB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003 Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC)

POSAC review of proposed updates to the Environmental Resources Element of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. Public Testimony was taken.

When: November 21, 2013

Documents: [POSAC Agenda for November 21, 2013](#) (17 MB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003 Open House: An open house regarding proposed updates to the environmental resource maps in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (the BCCP) will be held in Boulder on Tuesday, October 29. The map update process has been occurring in conjunction with the updates to the Goals and Policies of the Environmental Resources Element that were approved by Planning Commission in July 2013. Like all the elements and maps in the BCCP, these maps are used to inform decision-making about land uses and resource management in the county. The last time these maps were updated was in 1995.

What: [Open house for proposed map updates presentation](#)

When: October 29, 2013

Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update

Study Session: Planning Staff report on Rights of Nature Movement as requested by Planning Commission at their June 19, 2013 meeting. Public Testimony was taken.

Action Requested: Information item, no action requested.

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg

Date: October 16, 2013

Documents: [Staff Report on Rights of Nature Movement for October 16, 2013](#) (2 MB) 

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Revision Update

Planning Commission review of the draft Environmental Resources Element update, including revisions prepared by staff pursuant to the May 15, 2013 Planning Commission hearing. Public testimony was taken.

Action Requested: Approval

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg and Bill Davidson

Date: June 19, 2013

Documents: [BCCP-08-003: Staff Report to Planning Commission for June 19, 2013](#) (2 MB)

**Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Revision Update**

Planning Commission review of the draft Environmental Resources Element update, including revisions prepared by staff pursuant to the April 4, 2013 Planning Commission hearing. Public Testimony was taken.

Action Requested: Approval

Staff Planners: Pete Fogg and Bill Davidson – Land Use; Justin Atherton-Wood – Parks and Open Space

Date: May 15, 2013

Documents:

- [Staff Report to Planning Commission for May 15, 2013](#) (1 MB)
- [Public Comments received through May 8, 2013](#) (592 KB)

Docket BCCP-08-003: Environmental Resources Element Revision Update

Planning Commission discussion of the draft Environmental Resources Element update, including review of public comments and [POSAC](#) discussion. Staff requested Planning Commission direction for preparing revisions to the draft. Study Session - No Action Requested. Public Testimony was not taken.

Staff Planners: Peter Fogg and William Davidson.

Date: April 4, 2013

Documents:

- [BCCP-08-003: Staff Report for Planning Commission for April 4, 2013](#) (5 MB)
- [Public Comments received through April 4, 2013](#) (592 KB)

Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee Public Hearing: The [Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee](#) (POSAC) reviewed and discussed the proposed update to the Environmental Resources Element at their meeting on February 28. Staff presented an overview of the proposed update and a summary of input provided at the Open House held on February 6. POSAC made a recommendation to the [Planning Commission](#) (PC) for approval of the updated goals and policies of the element with minor text changes.

Staff Presenters: Resource Planners Justin Atherton-Wood and Ron West.

Date: February 28, 2013

Documents: [POSAC agenda, staff memo, and supplemental materials for February 28, 2013](#) (5 MB)

Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element Open

House: The Land Use and Parks & Open Space Departments are held an open house to present and discuss a proposed draft update of the current Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element goals and policies. The draft is part of an on-going project to revise and update the Comprehensive Plan, which is now 35 years old.

Date: February 6, 2013

Documents: [Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element Draft, January 25, 2013](#) (198 KB) 

DOCKET BCCP-08-003: Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update -

Environmental Resources Element Revision Update: Briefing on schedule for Environmental Resources Element update including POSAC in January and Planning Commission in the next two months. Informational Item – No Action Requested. Public testimony was not taken.

Date: January 16, 2013

Documents: [Staff Report for Planning Commission for January 16, 2013](#) (122 KB) 

Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Update Documents

- [BCCP-08-003: Staff Report for Planning Commission for May 15, 2013](#) (1 MB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Public Comments received through April 4, 2013](#) (592 KB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Staff Report for Planning Commission for April 4, 2013](#) (5 MB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Review Guide for Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element Goals, February 6, 2013](#) (187 KB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element Open House presentation, February 6, 2013](#) (2 MB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element Draft, January 25, 2013](#) (198 KB) 
- [BCCP-08-003: Staff Report for Planning Commission, January 16, 2013](#) (122 KB) 