







Boulder County Parks and Open Space

Boulder County Parks and Open Space 40 Years Making the Vision a Reality





Why Open Space?

Significant citizen interest in managing the growth that was coming and in protecting Boulder County's rural landscapes.....

From the beginning, citizens powered the effort to preserve open space



Early efforts

- 1967: Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee appointed
- Boulder voters approved a sales tax in the City of Boulder for open space
- 1973: POSAC hosts community meetings
- 1974: Community survey to obtain citizen input



1975

Parks & Open Space Department Established

- Commissioners Adopted:
 - 8 policies for Open Space
 - First priority trail corridor locations
 - Areas of interest for land acquisition and approval to initiate negotiations in those areas

Boulder County Open Space Evolution Longmont Jamestown Boulder Lafayette Louisville Nederland **County Open Space** Municipal Open Space



A Vision is Adopted

1978 Boulder County Comprehensive Plan

- Urban-type growth would only occur in cities and towns and not in the rural countryside
- Various tools could implement the Vision:
 - Zoning Minimum parcel size 35 acres in unincorporated county to maintain rural character
 - Intergovernmental cooperative efforts
 - Acquisition of Open Space



The Open Space Tool

The Comprehensive Plan Defines Open Space:

- As "lands.... intentionally left free from development, and in which it has been determined that it is, or may in the future be, within the public interest to acquire an interest in order to assure their protection."
- As rural land, not urban park land



Multiple Functions of Open Space

The Comprehensive Plan – multiple functions of open space:

- Agricultural Land
- Wildlife Habitat
- Urban-shaping Buffers
- Preservation of Historic Structures
- Scenic Vistas
- Passive Non-Motorized Recreation



An Unfunded Vision

County didn't have revenue to fund the acquisition of open space

New taxes would be required

1978 Defeat of Sales Tax Increase



Why Did the Tax Lose?

- Concern that government shouldn't own more land
- Landowners concerned they wouldn't be paid adequately
- Discontent among some that the Comprehensive Plan was too oriented to limiting growth
- An anti-tax sentiment is always there for some
- Cities and Towns in Eastern Boulder County wanted to grow to allow them more amenities
- There was a sense that "we already have open land around our communities"



Early Efforts to Buy Open Space

- Limited funding from County General Fund
- Large mountain ranches purchased 70s and 80s
 Betasso, Walker Ranch
- A few acquisitions on the plains starting in the 80s Rock Creek Farm, Lohr Farm
- A second unsuccessful attempt to pass an open space sales tax in 1988
- By 1993 about 10,000 acres preserved as open space



Third Time's The Charm



1993 Voter Approval
.25 Cent Sales Tax



Land Preserved

- Successful 1993 sales tax election. ¼ of a cent sales tax for open space. Issuance of bonds also approved.
- Since 1993, three additional taxes have been approved totaling an additional 35/100ths of a cent.
 Total now 6/10th of a cent.
- Significant bonding authority also approved.
- Years since 1993 have seen a significant increase in the land preserved



The Open Space Sales Taxes

Today: ~104,000 acres preserved

- 64,000+ acres fee simple
- 40,000+ acres of conservation easements
- 50% of the land is in the mountains, 50% on the plains



Water Preserved

- Our policy is to purchase the water that goes with the land to keep the land productive.
- \$50 \$70 million in water rights.
 Significant other water rights attached to the land in Conservation Easements.



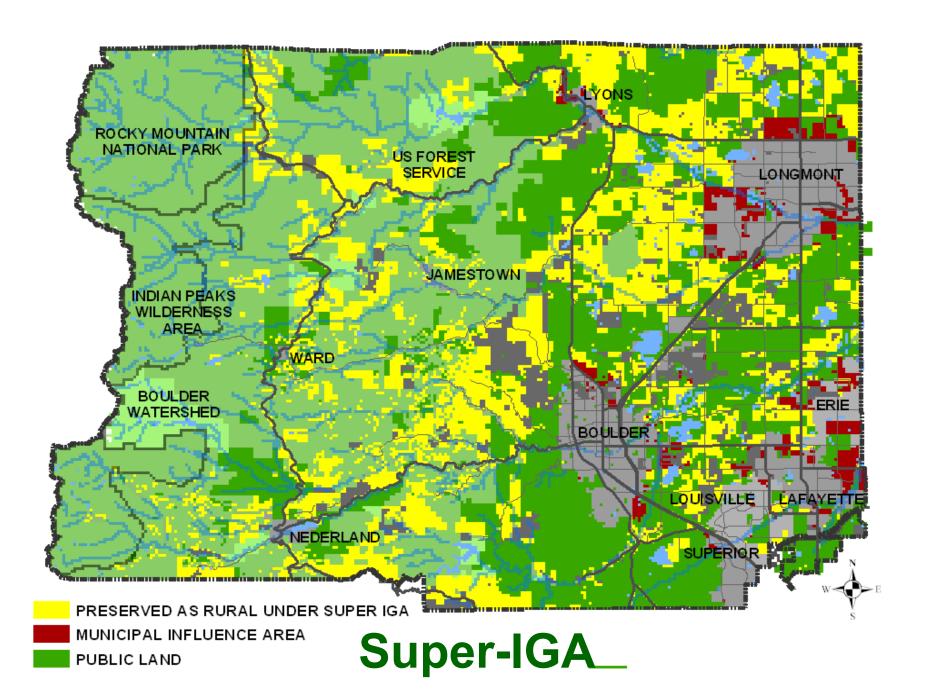
What's Left to Preserve

- 90% or more of land we'd like to preserve is preserved.
- Inholdings, large parcels, unique environmental or other open space values

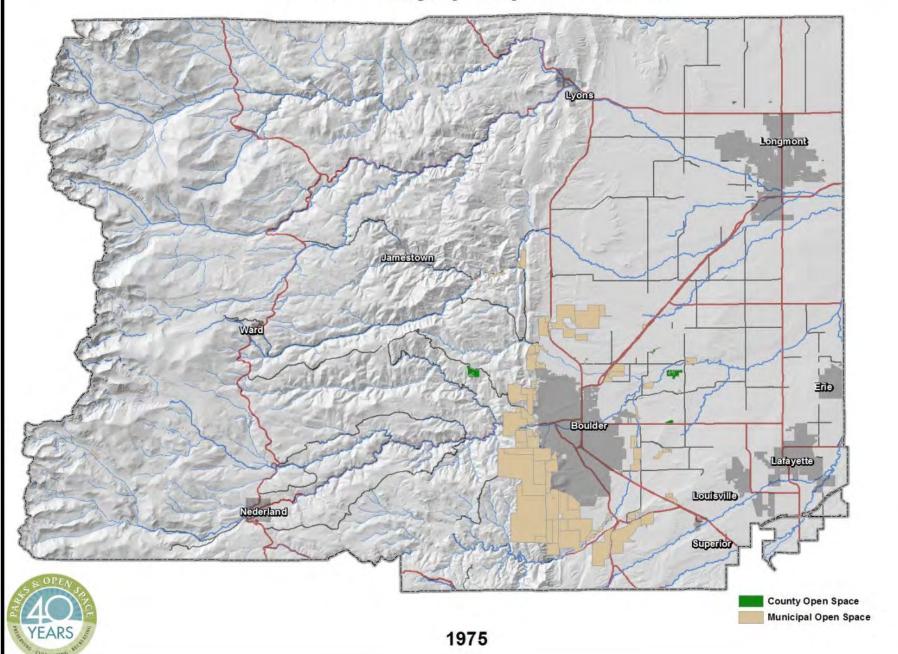


Another Preservation Tool: IGAs

- Intergovernmental Agreements define where cities and towns will grow and what land will remain as rural preservation.
- Super IGA County-wide binding agreement.
 Nine cities and towns and the county agree to 20-year vision of where growth will occur.
 - National awards for innovation in planning



Boulder County Open Space Evolution

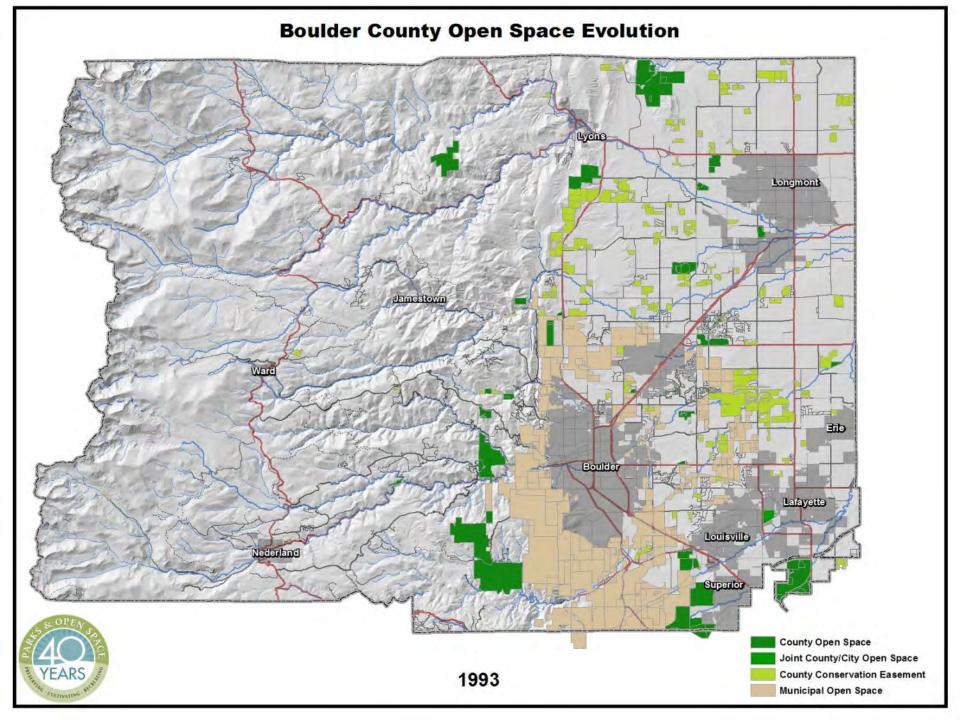


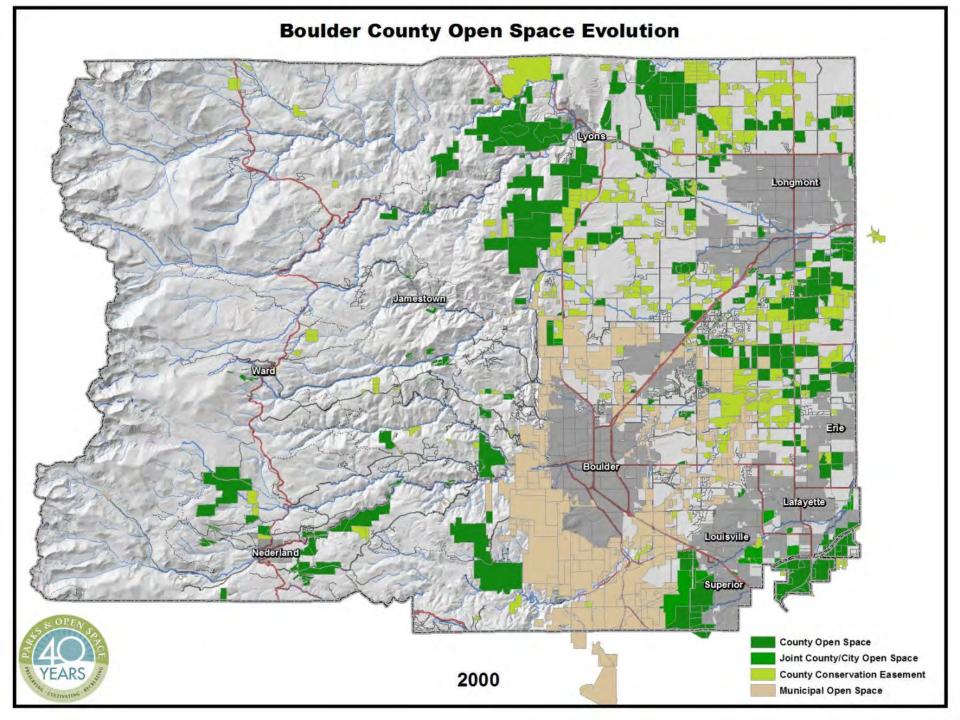
Boulder County Open Space Evolution Longmont Jamestown Boulder Lafayette Louisville Nederland Superior **County Open Space County Conservation Easement** 1978 Municipal Open Space

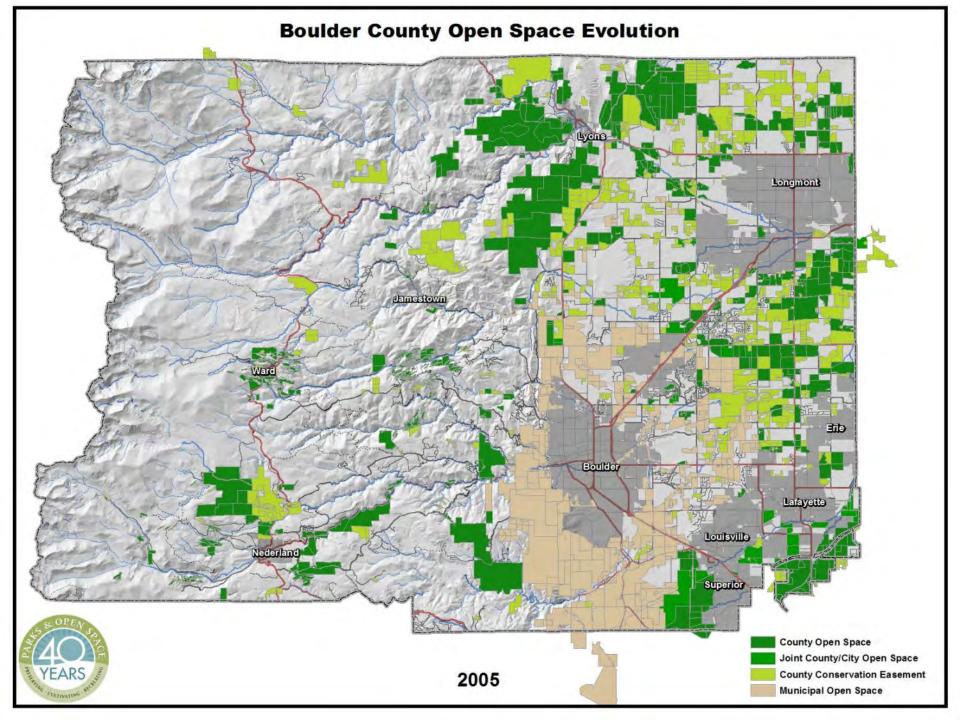
Boulder County Open Space Evolution Longmont Jamestown **CLE** Boulder T-3 Lafayette Louisville Nederland Superior County Open Space **County Conservation Easement**

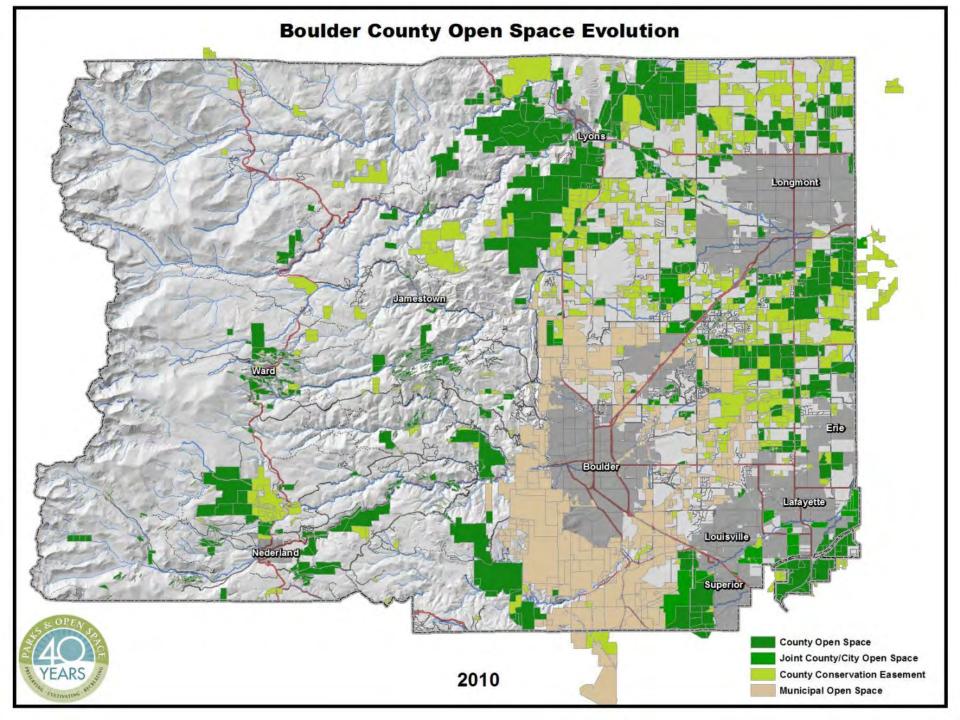
1988

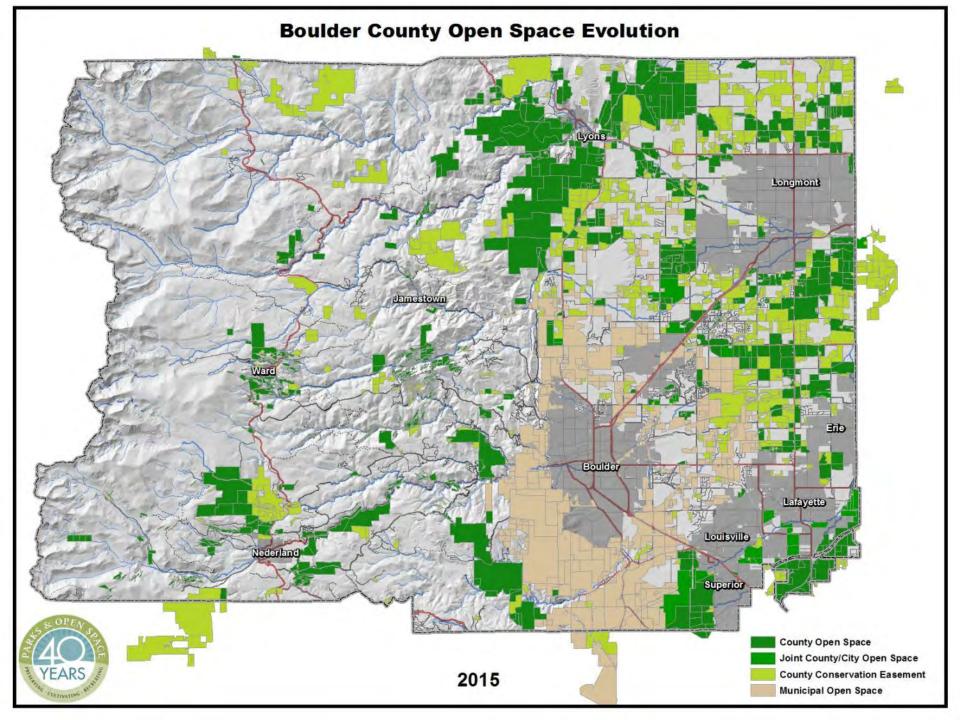
Municipal Open Space







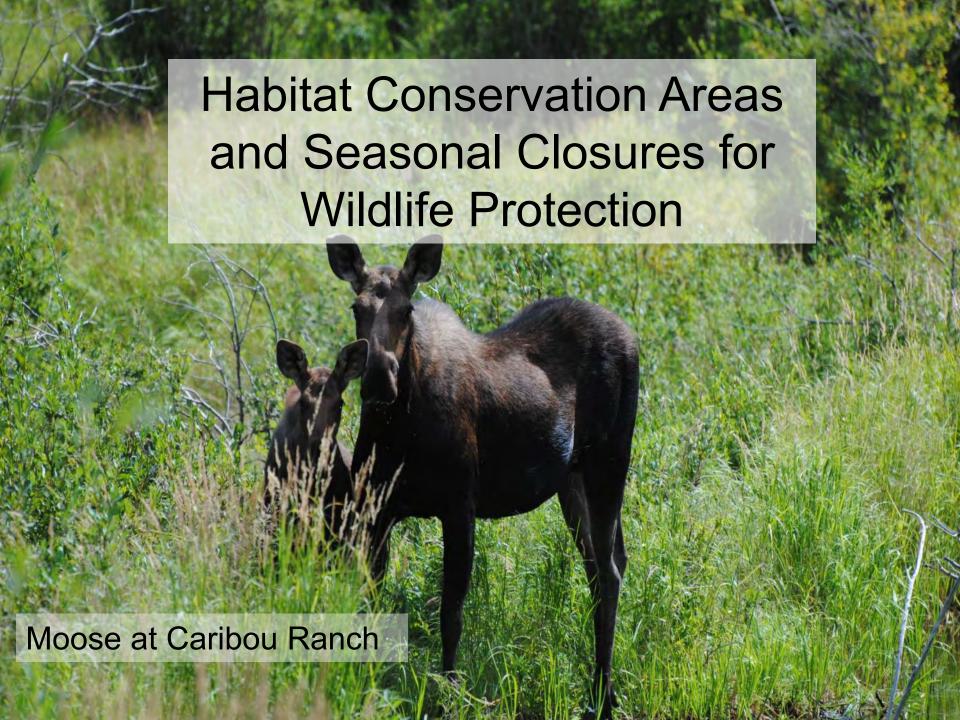














- Baseline surveys using structured protocol since 2000
- Surveys transitioned from trailside species lists in the 1980's to spatially balanced surveys using distance sampling
- Indicators of habitat quality and landscape change
- Assess the success or failure of conservation efforts



COMMON BIRDS IN STEEP DECLINE

Northern Pintail American Wigeon Cinnamon Teal Greater Scaup Long-tailed Duck Scaled Quail Northern Bobwhite Purple Gallinule Franklin's Gull Herring Gull Black Tern Yellow-billed Cuckoo Snowy Owl Short-eared Owl Common Nighthawk Chimney Swift Loggerhead Shrike

Horned Lark
Bank Swallow
Verdin
Varied Thrush
Snow Bunting
Cape May Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Field Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Grasshopper Sparrow
Eastern Meadowlark
Rusty Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Pine Siskin





Bald Eagles in Boulder County



■ 2005: 1 nest

2006: 2 nests

2015: 10 nests



Prebles meadow jumping mouse

- 1995: first year of surveying for Preble's. None were found on BCPOS.
- In 2014 we found them in 5 locations.





Prairie Dog Management



- 1994: Plague destroyed 90% of prairie dogs on BCPOS
- 2014: 1,500 ac of prairie dog colonies
- 1,200 of them on HCA and MOA

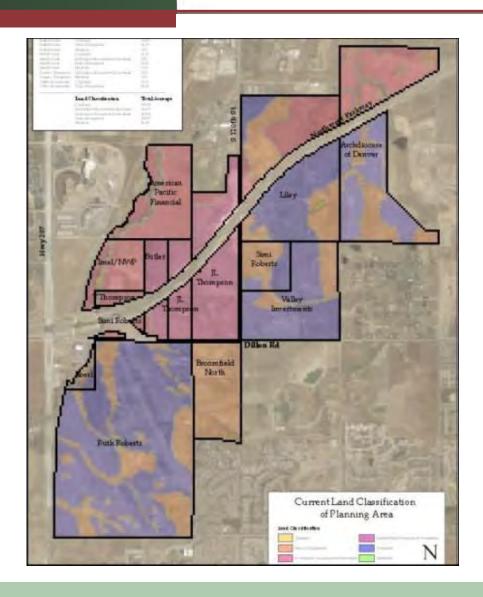


Native Plant Propagation





Grassland Restoration



- 1996: RCF began
- 2004: CEMEX began
- 2014: Mountain View Egg Farm





After the 2010 Fourmile Canyon Fire



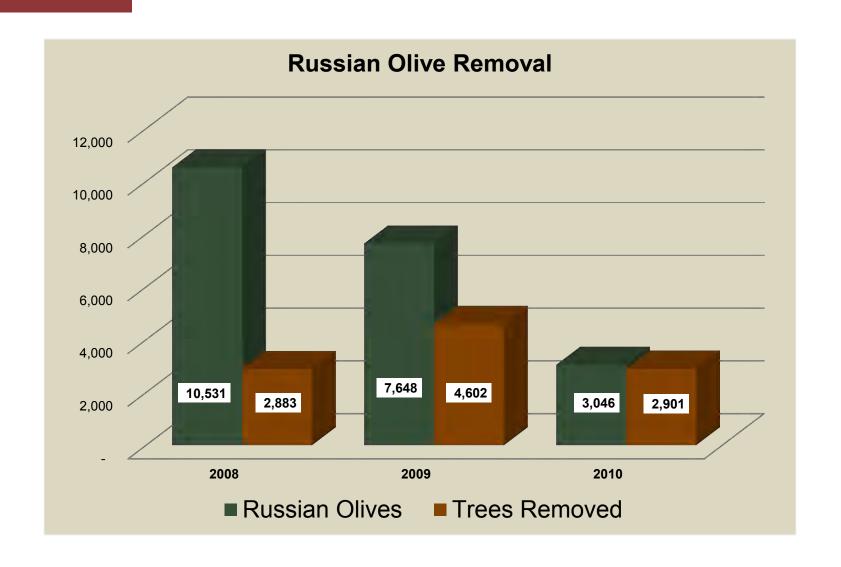
Russian Olives in **Boulder County**

Russian Olives

Russian Olive acreage in 2008 based on aerial photos



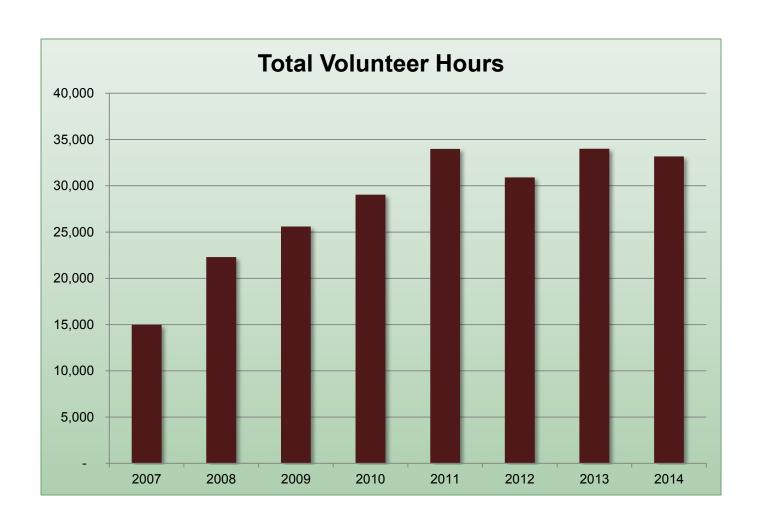
Russian Olive Tree Removal







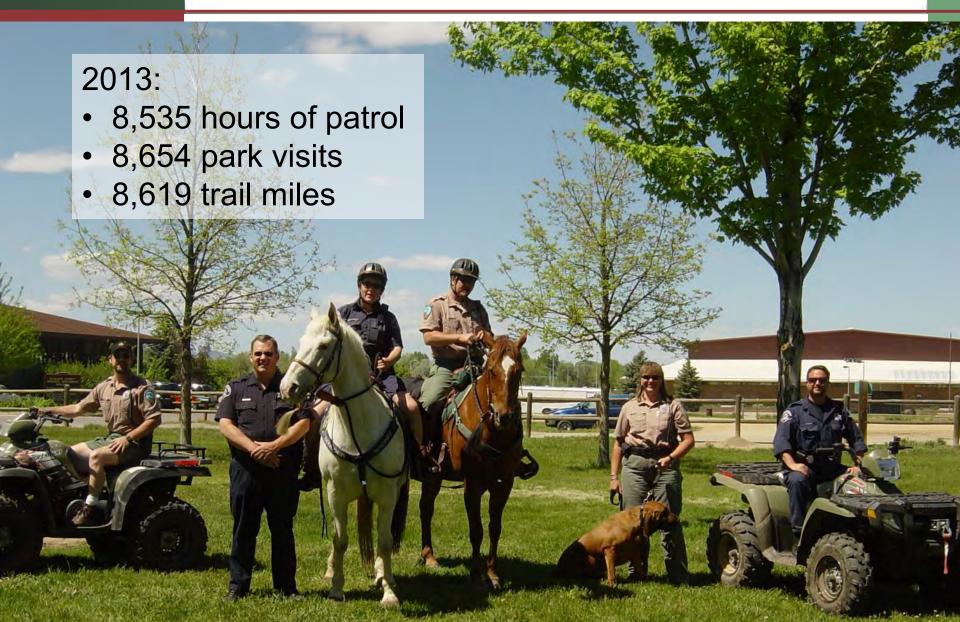
Expanding Volunteer Program







Resource Protection





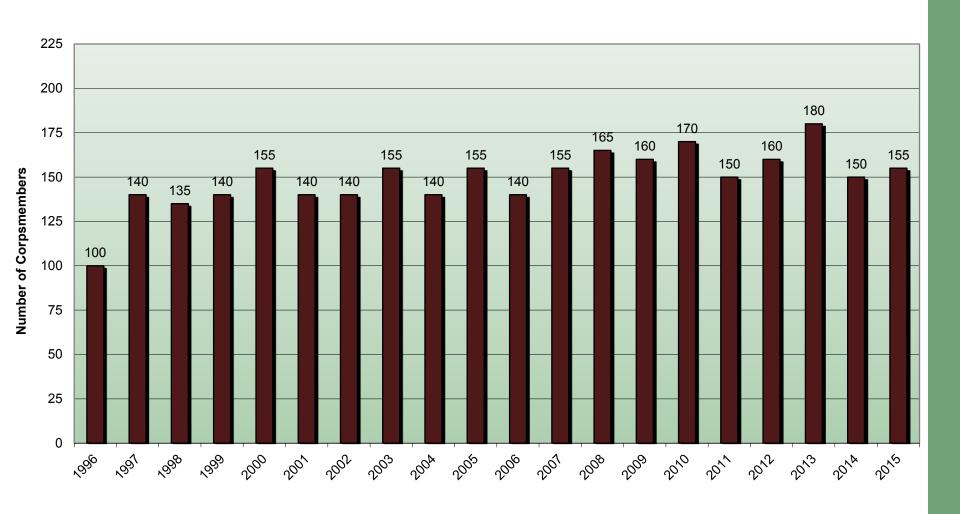
Caribou Artist in Residence





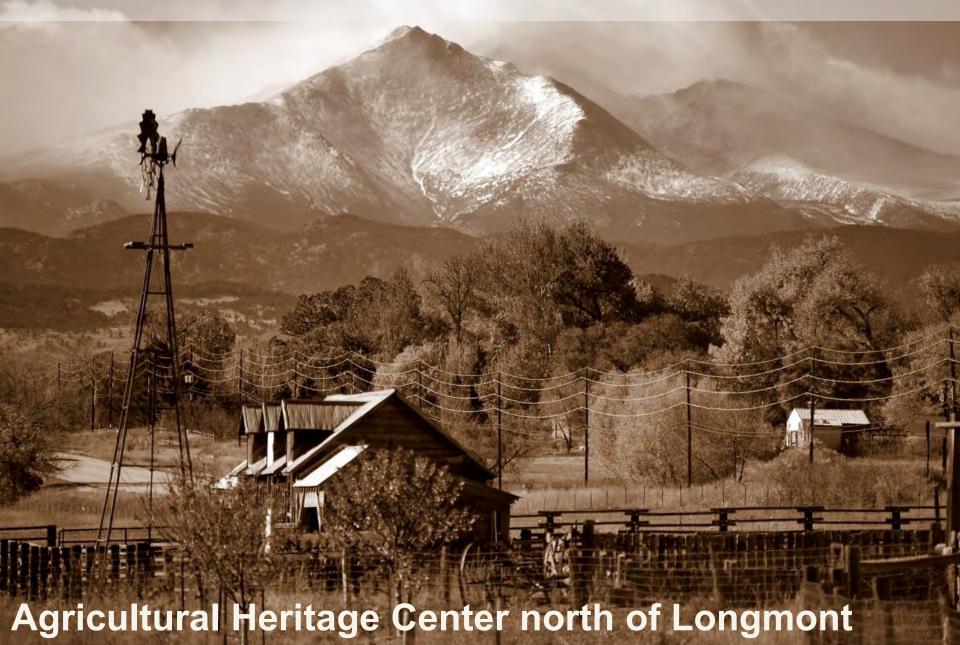


Nearly 3,000 Youth Corps Members, 1996-2015





Cultural Resources







James F. Bailey Assay Office





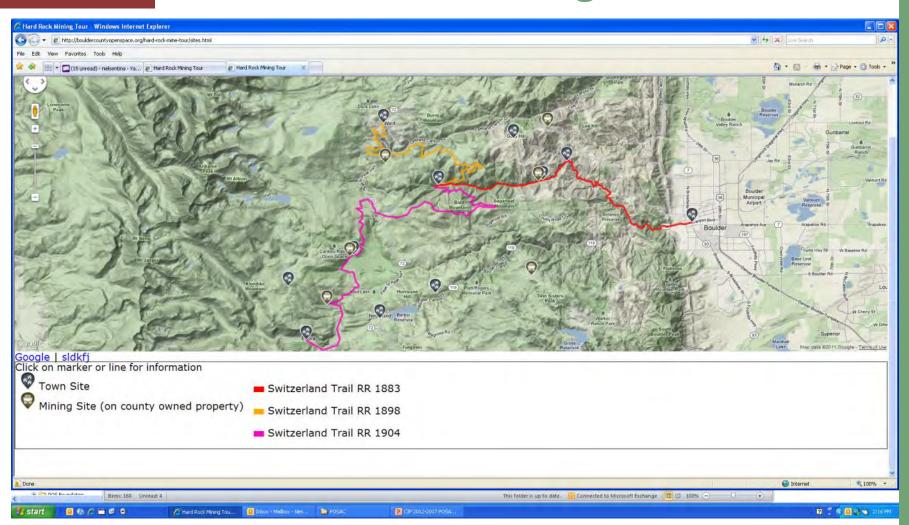


Nederland Mining Museum





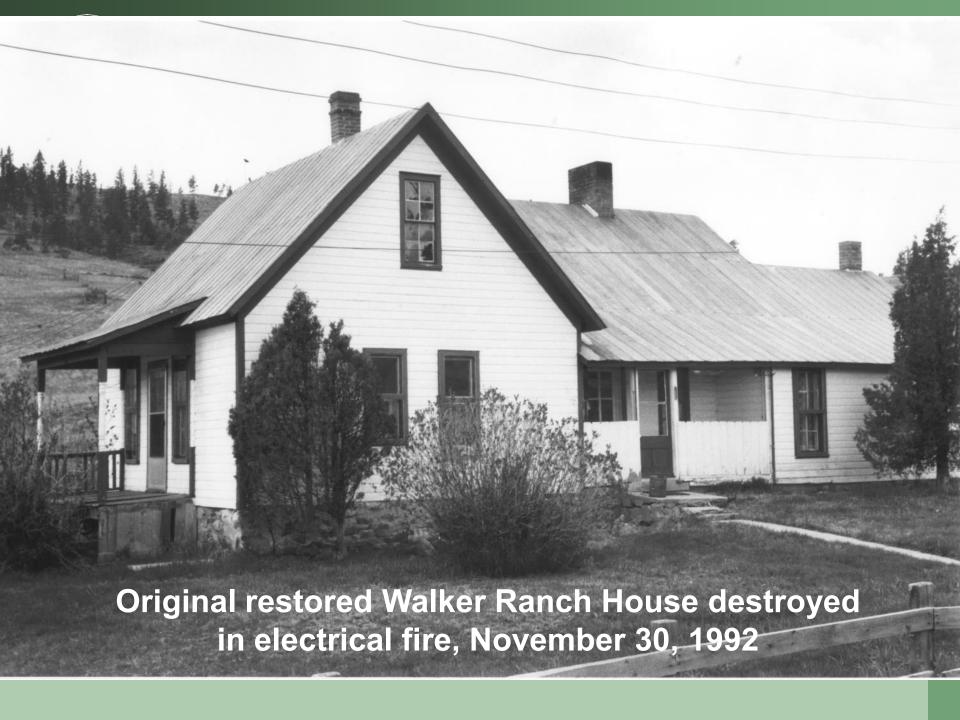
Hard Rock Mining Tour



Launched in 2012

1986: First POS Historic Preservation Project





Reconstruction, 2008

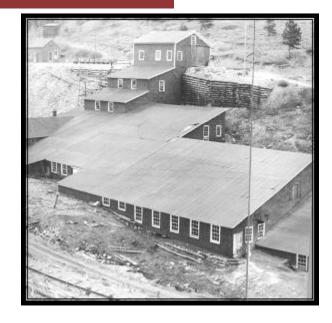






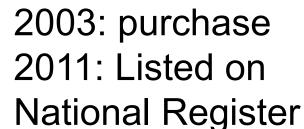


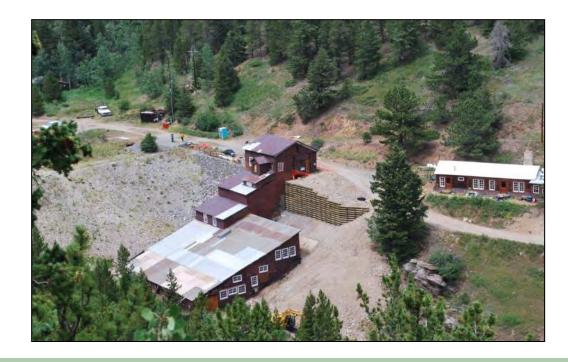
Cardinal Mill Restoration



Longest: Seven years

Most expensive: nearly \$1M











Cultural Resources on POS





- ~1,500 cultural resources on POS lands
- 264 structures > 50 yrs old
- ~85 have been rehabilitated
- 17 POS sites Boulder County Landmarks
- 1 POS site State Register Historic Places
- 5 POS sites National Register



Archeology





2010: Prehistoric hearth discovered during Rock Creek restoration at Zaharias





Resource Planning-last 5 yrs

Management Plans

- Betasso Preserve
- Walden Ponds
- Rock Creek Grasslands
- Two Creeks
- Lagerman/Imel/AHI

Management Policies

- Cropland Policy
- Water Policy
- Forestry Policy
- Prairie Dog Element

Special Projects

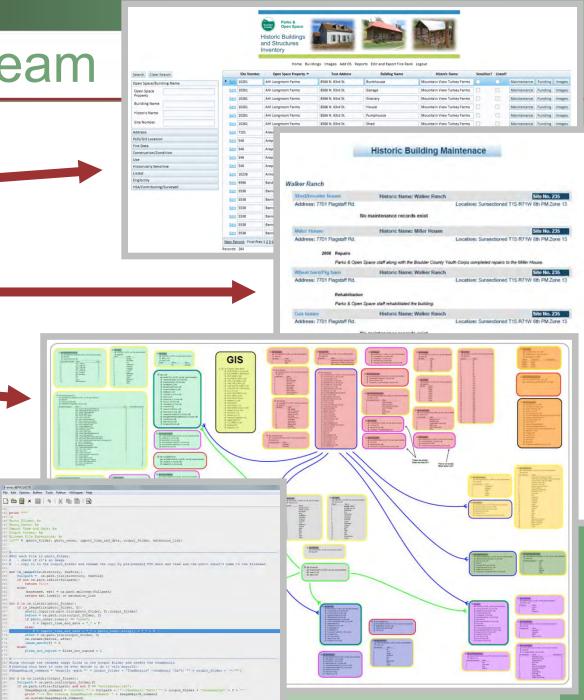
- ERE (BCCP)
- Regional Mountain Trails
- Lower Boulder Creek
- Hodgson Harris Reservoir
- Hall II Reclamation
- Harney Lastoka/SH42
- Twin Lakes Evaluation
- Picture Rock TH
- Hessie TH
- Quicksilver Trail
- Coalton Trail
- Mayhoffer 15/104th St. Trails
- Mud Lake Shelter
- Castle Rock



Data Team

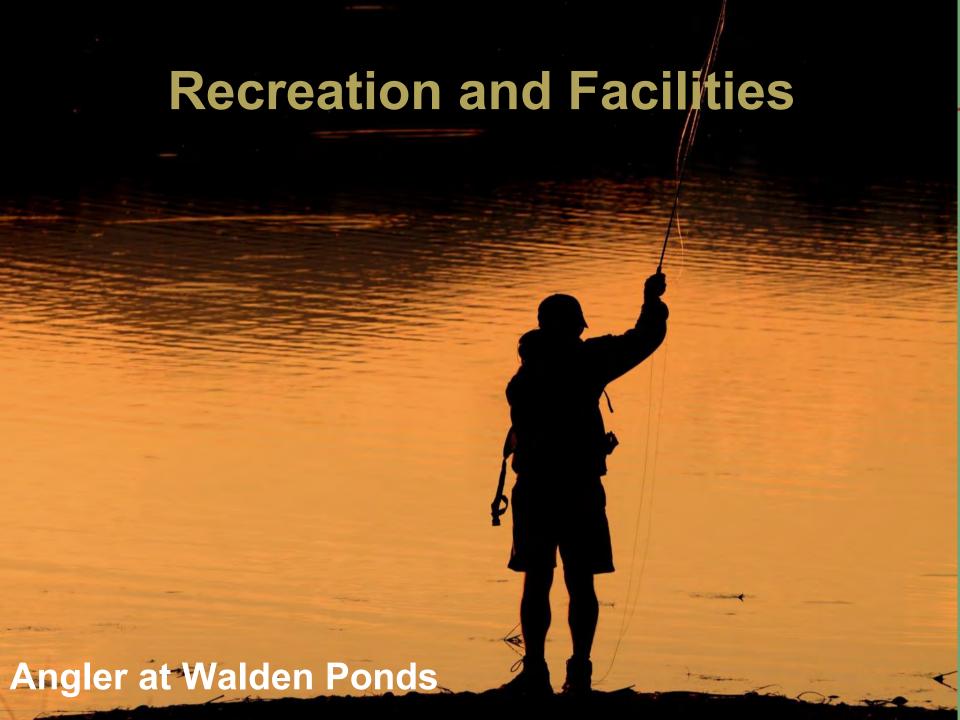
- 11 Web Database Applications
- Creating more than36 Reports
- Maintaining SQLDatabases
- Programming in Python, Xbasic, JavaScript
- Advising Staff





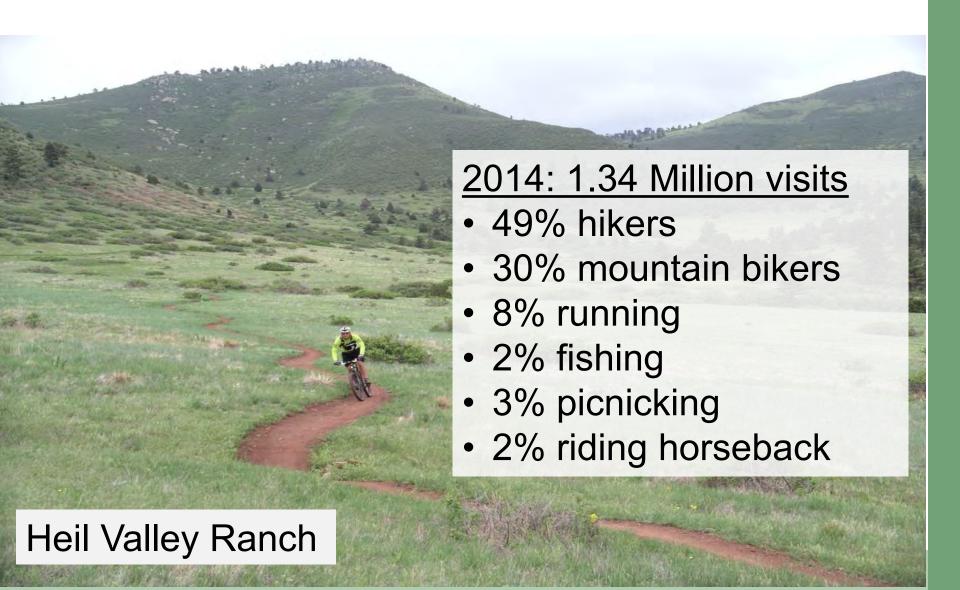






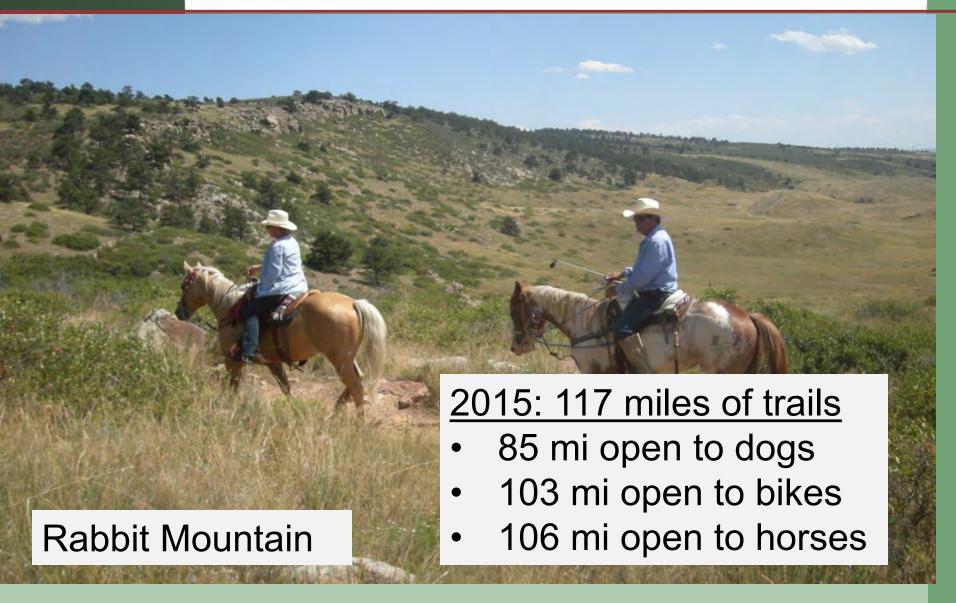


Trails and Facilities





Trails and Facilities





Trails and Facilities





Agriculture Rock Creek Farm



Agricultural Land

- 25,000 acres of farms and ranches owned fee simple
- Goal: 20% organic by 2020
- •90 lessees over 100 leases
- Crop Share and Cash Leases
- Market Farms









Extension – 100 years in 2014



The Boulder County Dairy Club



Boulder County Web Page

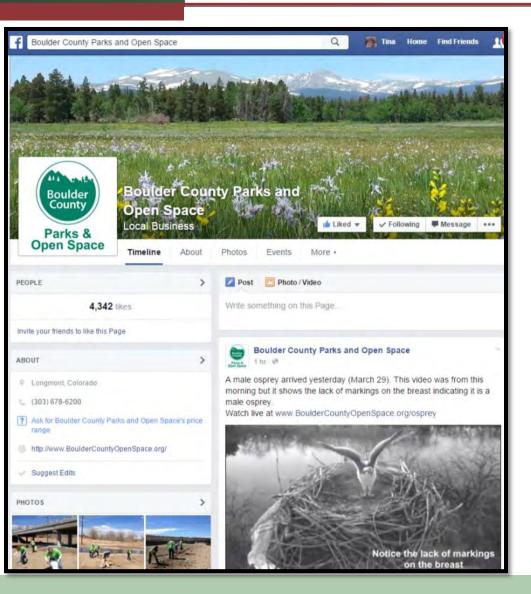
Fun Facts

5,105,118 Page views last year~10 Views every minute

Top 7 BC Pages	Top 7 POS Pages		
1. Jobs Listing	242,580	 Osprey Camera 	104,443
2. Homepage	237,588	2. Parks & Trails	83,226
3. Assessor	237,299	3. Department Page	44,454
4. Jail Listing	169,840	4. Fairgrounds Events	30,499
5. Jobs & Volunteer	140,115	Interactive Map	27,306
6. Osprey Camera	104,443	6. Betasso Preserve	25,438
7. Parks & Trails	83,226	7. Trail Conditions	23,421



Social Media introduced 2010



- 2,811 POS Twitter followers
- Rangers have their own Twitter followers
- 4,342 FB "likes"
- Wildlife video got 50,378 views on FB; 3,082 on YouTube



Nearly \$30M in Grants!!!





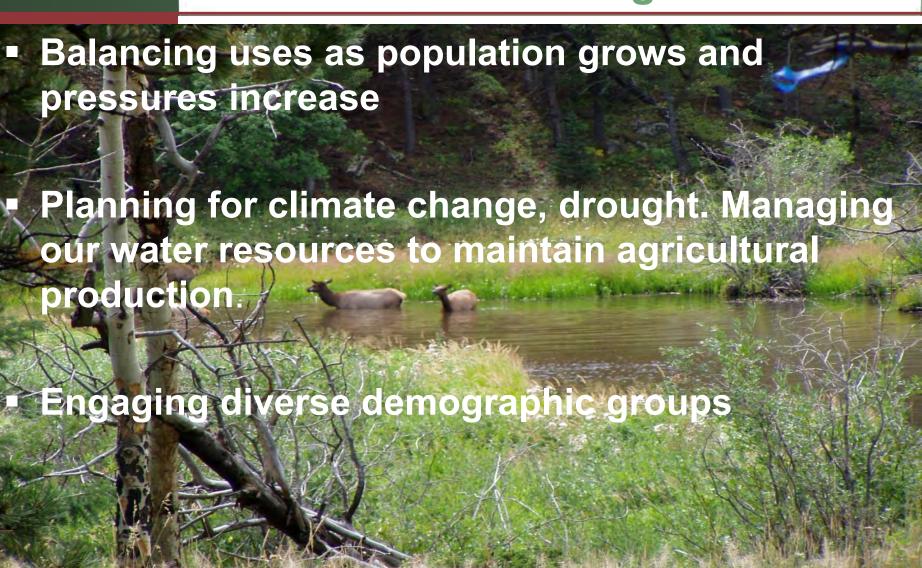
Administration Fun Facts 2014



- 5,543 invoices!
- Checked 183 time sheets/week
- Processed \$832,000 in oil and gas revenue, for 160 wells
- 78 contracts
- 67 bids reviewed
- 123 PO's
- 23 house leases
- 52 Ag leases renewed
- 290 water assessments
- Process \$1.4M from 125 ag leases/73 tenants
- Etc., etc., etc., etc.
- We could NOT do it without you!



Some Future Challenges





Carolyn Holmberg



"Mighty Oaks From Tiny Acorns Grow"





The true measure of life is to plant trees under whose shade one does not intend to sit

CAROLYN BRYANT HOLMBERG (1944 - 1998) dedicated much of her life to nurturing a vision of locally owned, public open space which is now a nationally respected program. Carolyn served as the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Director from 1983 to 1998 and played a pivotal role in preserving 40,000 acres of farm, ranch, wetland and forests from development.

Rock Creek Farm was the first acquisition Carolyn promoted while she served as a volunteer member of the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee in 1979. These open lands around you represented to her many of the values of open space preservation.....wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, community buffers, historic landmarks, prime agricultural land and recreation.

Until her death, Carolyn continued in her tireless efforts to acquire special places like Rock Creek Farm for future generations. She, along with the writer Edward Abbey, believed deeply that,...we must save a little room and time for the free play of the human spirit, the wild play of the animal kingdom and the space for tiny accorns to grow.

Park Rededication Ceremony October 6, 2000



Betasso Preserve



Ernie Betasso, 1977

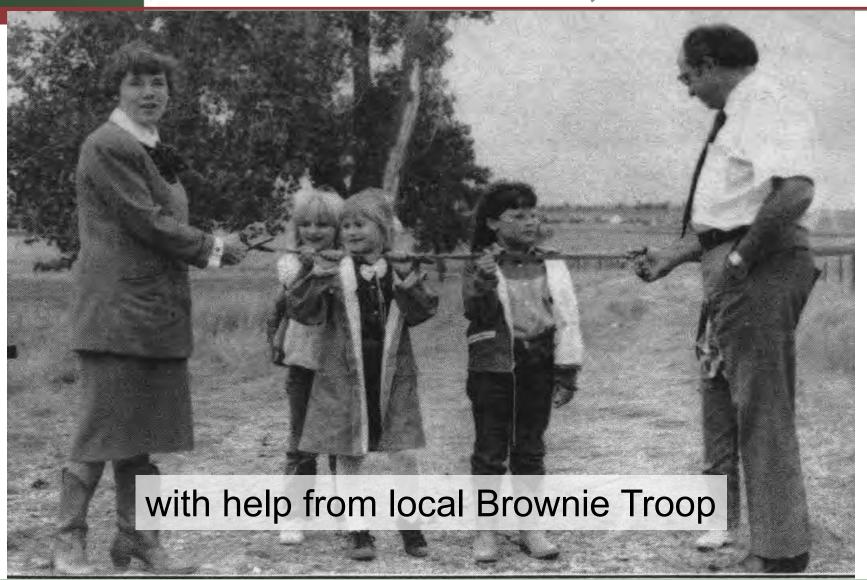


DOULDER COUNTY
PARKS & OPEN SPACE





Rock Creek Farm, 1987



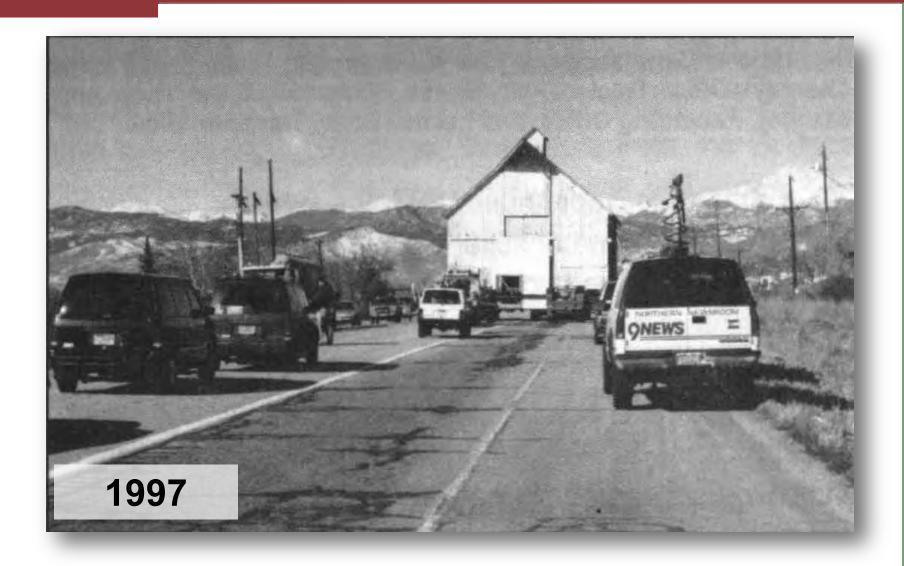


Anne U. White Trail dedication





Dickens Barn Move





Ricky Weiser Wetland at Walden Ponds, 2002





































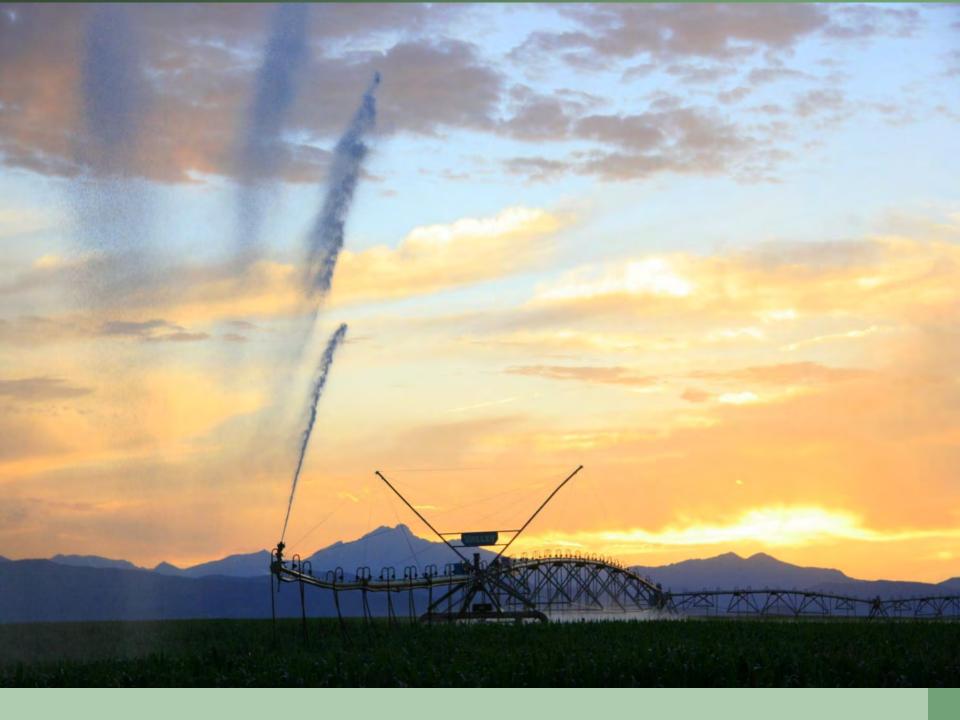




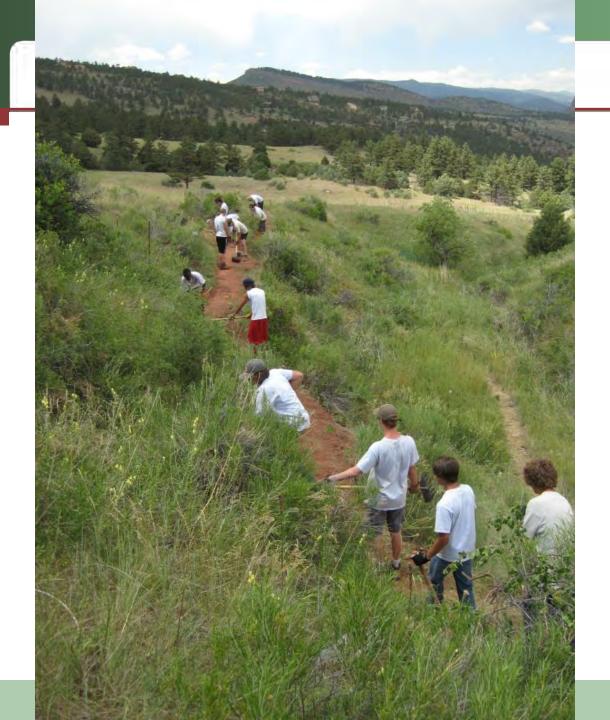














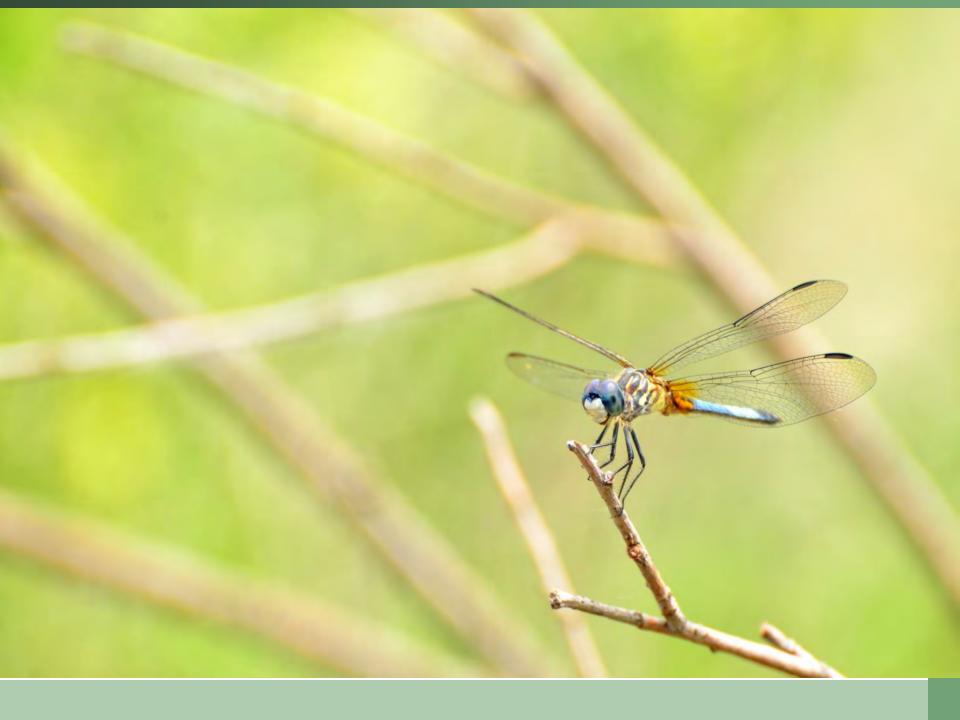


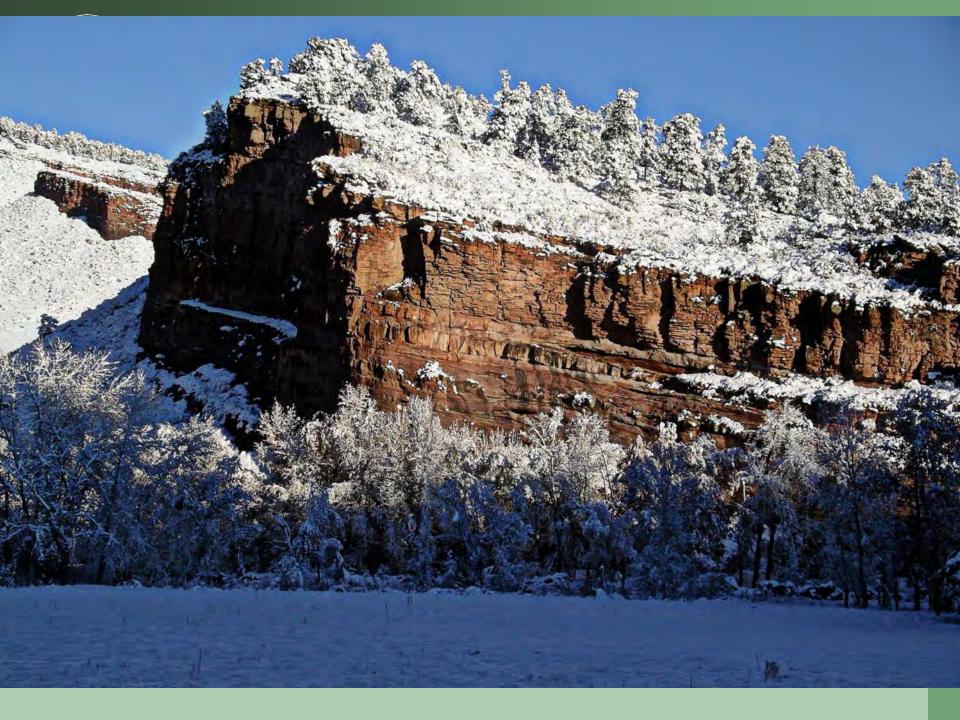
















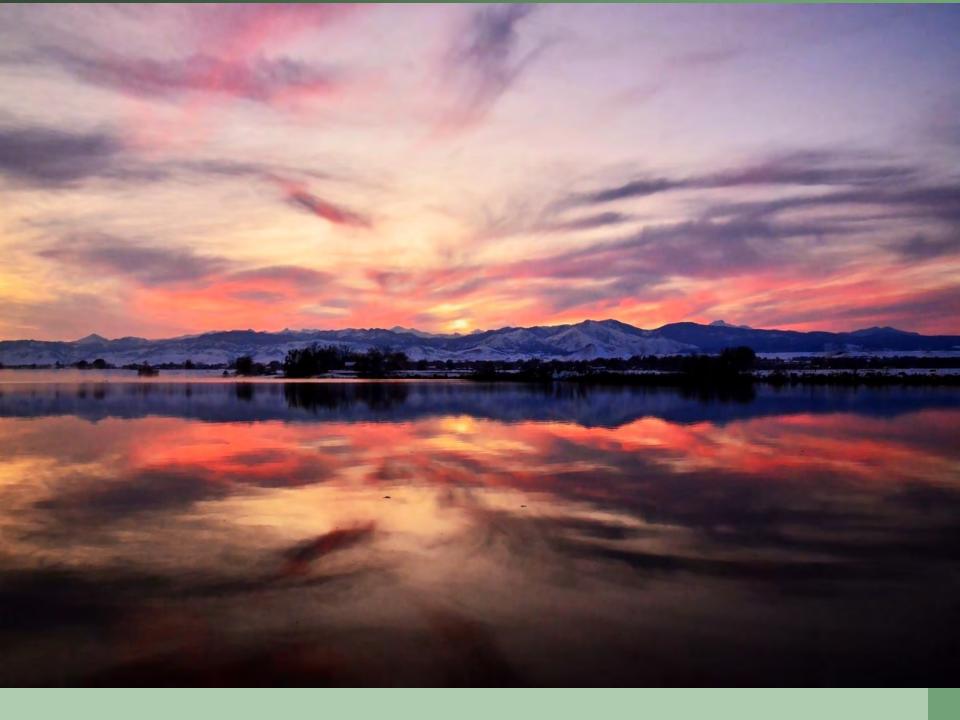










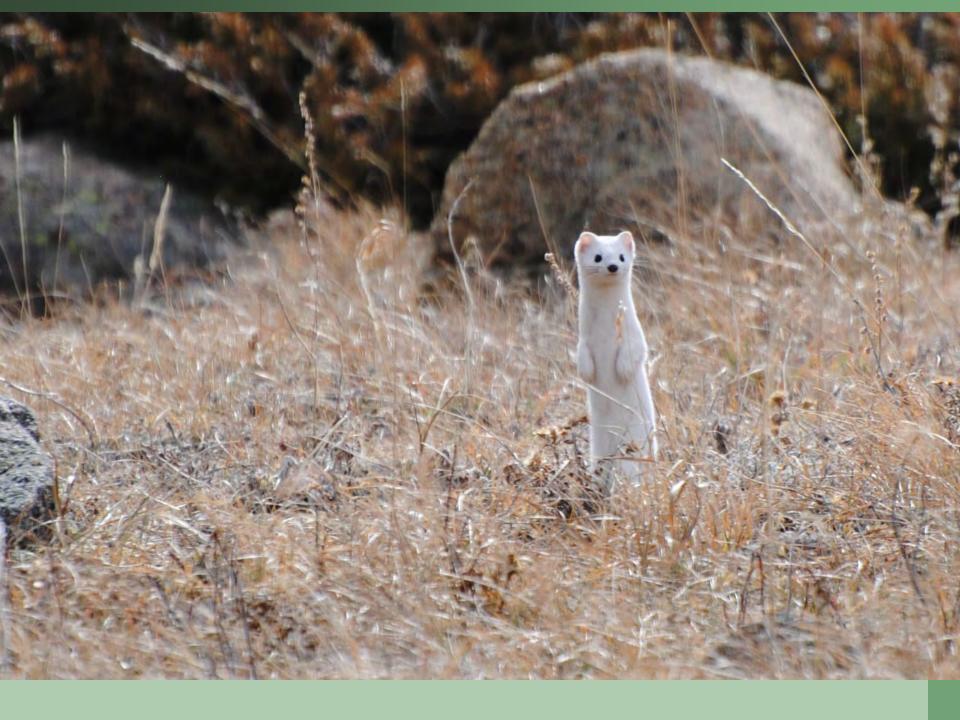


















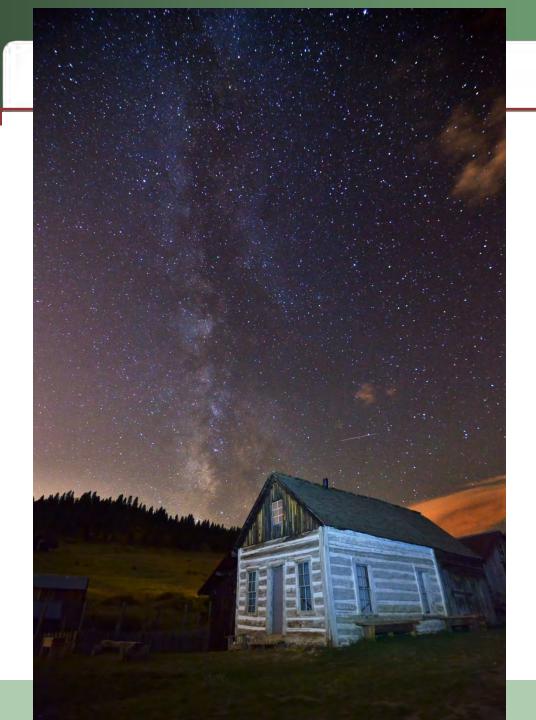






















Boulder County Parks and Open Space



Making the Vision a Reality

Our mission...to conserve natural, cultural and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values.

