



Gross Reservoir Community Land Preservation Survey Results Meeting

MAY 18 (Virtual) and 21 (Nederland), 2024

Meeting Agenda



1. Welcome and Agenda Review
2. Overview of the \$5.1 M Land Acquisition Fund & County Commissioners' Decision-Making Process
3. Gross Reservoir Land Acquisition Community Survey Results
4. Presentation on Process for Purchasing Open Space
5. Community Q&A and Comments

Rules of Engagement



- Allow staff to make presentations before taking questions.
- Keep questions and comments to the topic of the \$5.1M land preservation fund.
- Respect each other's time and allow everyone who wants to speak once before speaking twice.



Gross Reservoir Expansion Land Preservation Fund

Presenter: Barb Halpin, Boulder County Commissioners' Office

Section 5.1 Land Preservation



Denver Water v Boulder County Settlement Agreement (2021)

5. Land Preservation. Boulder County is concerned that the Expansion Project will inundate approximately 424 acres of forested land and cause the removal of approximately 234,000 trees.

The area is home to many terrestrial animals, habitats for rare and sensitive species of flora and fauna, and other biodiversity. As partial mitigation for the loss of 268 acres of United States Forest Service (USFS) land, Denver Water participated in the acquisition and conveyance to USFS of 539 acres of the Toll Property, located in Gilpin County.

5.1. Denver Water will allocate \$5,100,000 to a fund that the County will use for acquisitions of fee properties, conservation easements, and trail corridors.

5.2. Denver Water will transfer to Boulder County ownership of 70 acres of land it owns adjacent to Walker Ranch Open Space, the approximate location of which is shown in Exhibit A. Prior to the transfer, Boulder County may perform a due diligence review of the 70 acres and refuse the transfer based on the review. The land will be deed restricted for open space/conservation use.

Section 4.2 Open Space Management



Denver Water v Boulder County Settlement Agreement (2021)

4. Reduce Impacts to County Recreation Areas. Boulder County is concerned that, during construction, recreational uses of the reservoir will redirect to County open space. After construction, some areas of the reservoir previously used for recreation will no longer be available.

4.1. Denver Water will provide \$50,000/year during recreation closure of the reservoir to Boulder County Parks and Open Space to be used for additional rangers, communication, staff, signage, shuttles, and similar measures. Denver Water also agrees to work collaboratively with the County to make Denver Water ranger staff available to help manage overflow issues during peak times or critical recreation closures.

4.2. Boulder County Parks and Open Space may use a portion of the funds specified in section 5.1 below for trail construction/maintenance or other Parks and Open Space projects intended to offset increased recreation on County open space land and reduced recreation opportunities.

Boulder County's Use of the Fund



- Boulder County received \$5.1 million from Denver Water (early May 2024).
- Input sought from Gross Reservoir Community on potential uses of the money (April-May 2024).
- Survey results presented 5/18 & 5/21, with additional public feedback requested.
- Staff to present Boulder County Commissioners with survey results and final feedback (early June).
- Commissioners to make decision on use of the fund (by end of Summer).
- Land purchase may take anywhere from 6-9 months to two years depending on availability and negotiations.



Gross Reservoir Community Land Preservation Survey Results

Presenter: Samuel Wallace, Peak Facilitation Group

Survey Background & Purpose



Survey Purpose: To collect feedback from Boulder County residents impacted by the Denver Water Gross Reservoir Expansion (GRE) Project on how the county might spend the \$5.1 million allocated via the *Denver Water vs. Boulder County* Settlement Agreement.

Survey Process

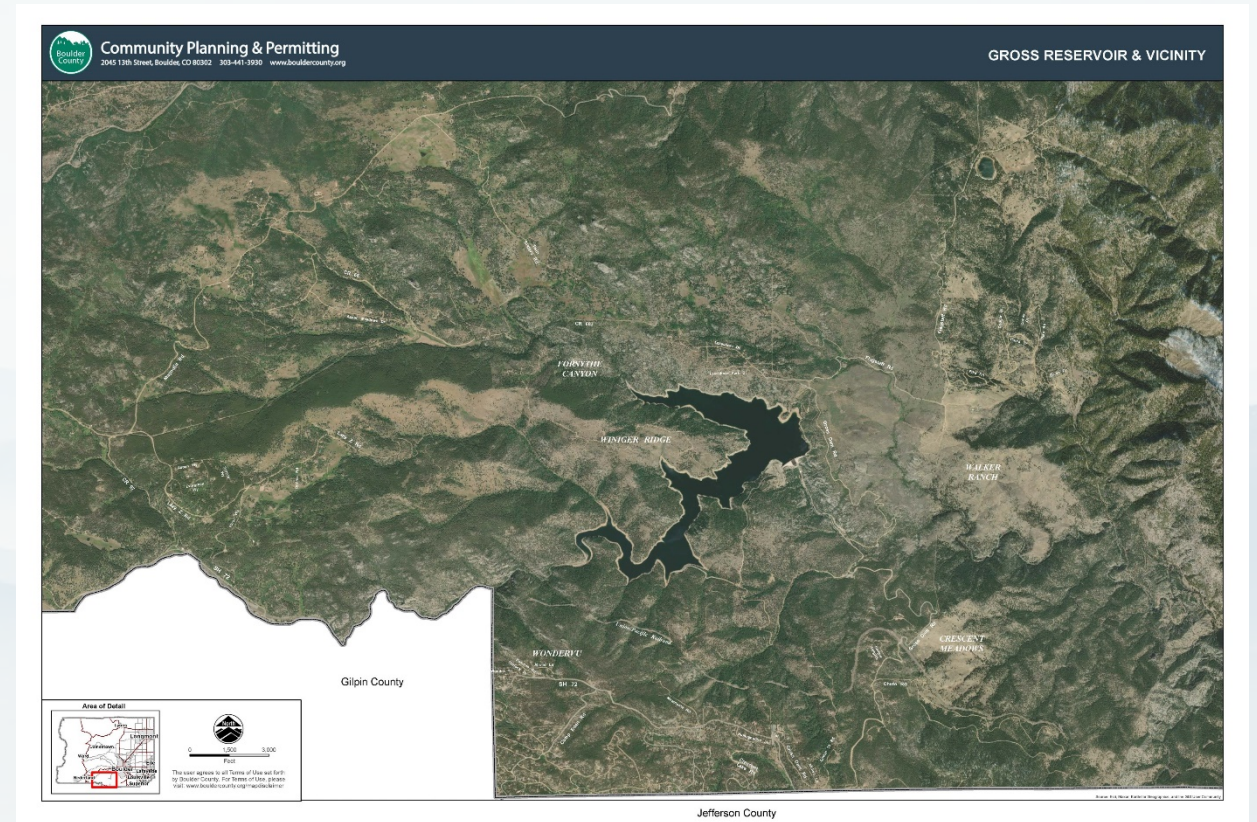


Survey Process: Peak Facilitation Group, a neutral third party, conducted the survey and analyzed the results on Boulder County's behalf. Survey results are shared with Boulder County and members of the public in aggregate form.

Survey Background & Purpose



- **Survey Audience:** Boulder County sought feedback from GRE-impacted residents because the money was specifically allocated to alleviate impacts from the Denver Water Project.
- **Survey Distribution**
 - Contact list Boulder County built to provide updates on the county's distribution of funds from the Settlement Agreement (over 2,500 contacts)
 - Targeted social media posts (NextDoor)
 - Open from Apr 25 to May 13



Survey Background & Purpose



Four Potential Uses Considered

- Habitat Protection
- Undeveloped (Non-Motorized) Passive Recreation
- Developed (Non-Motorized) Passive Recreation
- Parcel for a Public Shooting Range

Survey Background & Purpose



Habitat Protection

County open space land that is closed to public use. This type of purchase is generally used to protect wildlife and/or to expand a wildlife migratory corridor, protect a nesting area, or create a buffer between human development and wild spaces.



Undeveloped (Non-Motorized) Passive Recreation

County open space land that is open to the public for passive recreation, but that has no amenities (such as trails). This type of purchase usually helps connect other publicly owned lands such as state or national forests or county or city open space properties. It can also be used as a potential future trail connector or to connect with a larger parcel of public land (e.g., the purchase of a privately held mining claim or other "inholding" surrounded by national forest land).

Survey Background & Purpose



Developed (Non-Motorized) Passive Recreation

County open space land that is open to the public and has amenities associated with passive recreation. An example of this type of purchase is any trailhead or open space property managed by Boulder County Parks & Open Space that has amenities like a parking lot, toilets, designated trails, signage, etc. (Note: It is unlikely that the \$5.1 million would go far enough to purchase a stand-alone "park" for this type of use, but a parcel could be purchased adjacent to an existing county open space property to expand trail access or passive public recreation on that property.)

Survey Background & Purpose



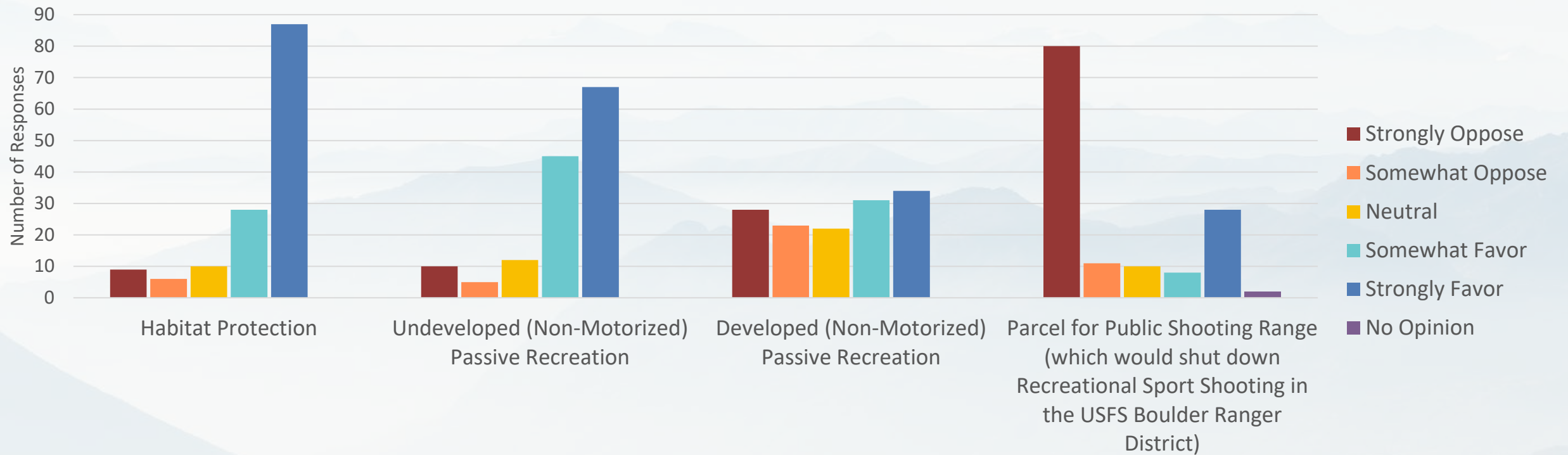
Parcel for a Public Shooting Range

Non-open space land that could be developed for use as a public shooting range. Establishing a public shooting range would enable the USFS to prohibit Recreational sports shooting on national forest lands within the Boulder Ranger District ([BRD map](#)), including the federal forest land and public trails around Gross Reservoir. (Note: Boulder County is looking throughout the Boulder Ranger District to acquire land for the shooting range. We are not proposing that a parcel be acquired for this purpose near Gross Reservoir.)

Survey Results



Please indicate your level of support or opposition for each of the proposed uses of the land that could be acquired using the \$5.1M outlined in the Agreement. Rate each use separately.



Survey Results



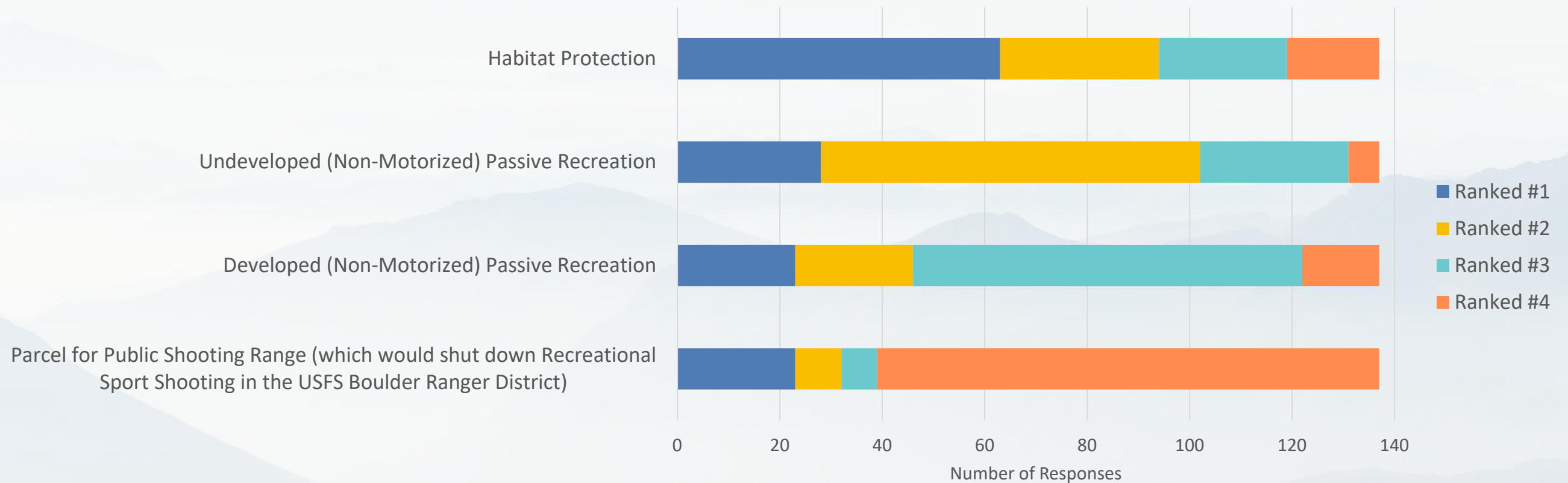
***Question 1:** Please indicate your level of support or opposition for each of the proposed uses of the land that could be acquired using the \$5.1M outlined in the Agreement. Rate each use separately.*

Land Use Type	Weighted Average
Habitat protection	4.27
Undeveloped (non-motorized) passive recreation	4.11
Developed (non-motorized) passive recreation	3.14
Parcel for public shooting range	2.19

Survey Results



Please rank the following potential uses in order of preference, with one being your most preferred use and four being your least preferred use.



Survey Results



***Question 2:** Please rank the following potential uses in order of preference, with one being your most preferred use and four being your least preferred use.*

Land Use Type	Ranked #1 (% Respondents)	Ranked #2 (% Respondents)	Ranked #3 (% Respondents)	Ranked #4 (% Respondents)
Habitat protection	46%	23%	18%	13%
Undeveloped (non-motorized) passive recreation	20%	54%	21%	4%
Developed (non-motorized) passive recreation	17%	17%	55%	11%
Parcel for public shooting range	17%	7%	5%	72%

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

COMMENTS ON PURCHASING PARCEL FOR A PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE

Comments in Favor

- Establishing a public shooting range would mitigate impacts from unregulated recreational shooting, including making passive recreation safer.
- There is high demand for shooting, so more opportunities should be available.
- Any support is for a shooting range not in the foothills, mountains, or within audible range.

Comments Against

- Noise disruptions
- Wildlife impacts
- Fire hazards
- Groundwater contamination
- Safety
- Lack of clarity on exact location made it difficult to respond
- Unacceptable if located near Gross Reservoir
- Not an appropriate use of funds

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

COMMENTS ON HABITAT PROTECTION

Comments in Favor

- Wildlife are also impacted from GRE.
- Residents moved to the area for wildlife, forests, and mountains.
- Habitat protection should occur in forested mountain areas near Gross Reservoir.
- Purchase of a parcel should be informed by wildlife data.

Comments Against

Habitat protection does not mitigate issues caused by the GRE; funding should be used to repair damages to the area.

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

COMMENTS ON UNDEVELOPED (NON-MOTORIZED) RECREATION

Comments in Favor

- Funds should be used for passive activities that do not add to GRE impacts.
- Outdoor recreation promotes environmental awareness and protection.

Comments Against

Additional undeveloped open space is not necessary and will increase traffic on overused roads.

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

COMMENTS ON DEVELOPED (NON-MOTORIZED) RECREATION

Comments in Favor

Newly developed recommendation should focus on those most affected by the GRE.

Comments Against

- More developed recreation will increase noise and traffic.
- New camping will invite illegal campfires and increase wildfire risk.
- Newly developed recreation should not interfere with existing recreation access.

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

COMMENTS ON DEVELOPED (NON-MOTORIZED) RECREATION

Comments with Suggestions

- Picnic areas (with appropriate bear-proof trash containers)
- Multi-use trails for mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian
- A multi-use single-track system that connects the Walker Ranch Meyers Homestead to the Twin Sisters Peak Area
- An expansion of trails at Walker Ranch to include the fire-burned hillside and areas behind Langridge Dike

Comments with Suggestions

- A trail that goes around the new perimeter of Gross Reservoir for jogging, walking, and biking
- Motorized recreation trails
- Hiking trails
- Equestrian trails
- Dispersed camping
- Developed campsites
- Toilet facilities at the Crescent Park Trailhead
- Expansion and improvement of the picnic table area of Walker Ranch Loop Trail

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

OTHER COMMENTS

Comments with Suggestions

- Purchase easements alongside Flagstaff Road for pedestrian sidewalks for walkers and bikers, as fast cars on Flagstaff Road are putting pedestrians in danger.
- Purchase easements alongside Flagstaff Road near Green Mountain West trailhead for a parking lot, which would help alleviate the dangerous parking situation.
- Fix dirt roads (e.g., Gross Dam Road, 68J, North County Road) for fire evacuation routes and safe passage.

Comments with Suggestions

- Fix and maintain infrastructure that already exists in the area.
- Build a train stop from Denver to Gross Dam, a historical train stop in the area.
- Improve signage that clarifies recreational versus private properties to prevent visitors from wandering through private backyards.
- Improve the grounds of local schools (instead of building more redundant parks).

Survey Results



***Question 3:** Please provide any additional comments related to Boulder County's potential use of the \$5.1M Acquisition Fund.*

OTHER COMMENTS

Comments with Geographic Suggestions

- Coal Creek Canyon
- Land adjacent to Walker Ranch and Gross Dam Road
- The foothills and mountain areas (rather than the plains of Boulder County) since the mountain residents and recreationists are losing public lands.

Other Comments

- More information is needed before responding.
- Concerns about effective management and enforcement if the proposal for a public shooting range and other developed recreation uses advances
- No more parking (unless for a public shooting range)

Survey Results



Question 4: *Please provide your address below to verify your residency in the impacted area. We will only use your address to verify residency.*

- Addresses were used to verify residency.
- A total of 141 responses were from valid households in the Gross Reservoir Community.

Question 5: *Are you aware of any properties that might be available for sale that match any of the four uses described above? If so, please provide details on the property and a contact name/number so that a Boulder County staff member can follow up with you.*

Responses were compiled and shared with Boulder County staff. Responses were not publicly shared to avoid pricing speculation or influence potential real estate negotiations.

Survey Results



Question 6: Please provide an email address if you're interested in receiving the results of the survey.

Emails were compiled into a contact list, who will receive the survey report once finalized.



Real Estate Procedures Overview

Real Estate Procedures Overview



Aaron Clark, Land Officer
Boulder County Parks & Open Space

What Are We Looking for in a Land Purchase?

From Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Goals...

- Proximity to other Open Space
- Wildlife Habitat/Migration Corridors
- Cultural Resources
- Possible Trail Connections
- High Biodiversity Areas
 - Wetlands/Riparian Areas
- Scenic Views
- Generally, 35 Acres or More
 - Smaller if High Resource Value



General Acquisition Process

- Identification of Potential Acquisition
- Outreach to Owner
- POSAC & BOCC Approvals
- Negotiation
 - Fee Sale? Conservation Easement?
 - Price/Terms—Fair Market Value
 - Willing Sellers Only! No Condemnation
- POSAC & BOCC Approval in Public Hearing
- Roughly 3-4 Months from Agreement on Terms to Closing



Community Q&A and Comments