

**City of Boulder  
Open Space and Mountain Parks**

**Open Space Board of Trustees  
May 23, 2012 Meeting**

**Bison Donation Evaluation  
Public Comment Supplement #2  
Received after 5 pm May 21, 2012**

**Bill Cameron**

5/21/2012

Dear Mark

I am writing in support of the staff recommendation to no longer consider the two parcels that straddle US36. The report is excellent, thoughtful and balanced. Personally, I oppose the use of these two parcels because so much land would be removed from public access and it would cost so much to build an unnatural ugly fence. Open space funds should be spent to keep space open and natural for public use. To do otherwise would seriously diminish my support for future open space initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bill Cameron  
375 S 68th St  
303-499-4166

**Dave Carter**

5/22/2012

Dear Mark and All,

I appreciate your response to my April 15 message, and apologize the delay in getting back to you. Unfortunately, I will not be able to participate in tomorrow evening's session. Our son-in-law is graduating from Harvard this week, so we will be headed to Boston tomorrow morning to celebrate. However, I did want to follow up on your message of April 30th with some additional information on the issues you mentioned. These are abbreviated responses, but I would be happy to provide additional details if requested.

Fencing

As per your request on April 30th, I have been working to develop a more realistic costing quote on the fencing. Over the past couple of weeks I have been communicating with Aztek Fencing in Fort Collins Based on the specifications of the fencing as developed by the Open Space Staff, and a rough layout of the property, they estimate the cost pre linier foot to be around \$6, including labor. While any specific quote will require that they be provided with more details regarding the terrain, number of corner braces, etc., it is reasonable to expect that the fencing specified by the staff could be constructed for much less than the price quoted in the feasibility study. Further, I would reiterate that the type of fencing recommended in the proposal far exceeds the requirements in terms of what would be adequate to keep buffalo in--and the public out of--the pasture.

Internal fencing adequate to create paddocks for rotational grazing can be accomplished with as little as 2-3 strands of electrified wire. Many ranchers use high-tensile steel wire (sometimes not even electrified). This type of fencing is inexpensive, and does not create any unsightly visual lines to across the pasture. In addition, EQIP funds available through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service are available to offset the cost of cross-fencing in many instances.

Handling Facilities

Depending on the corral design, the \$53,000 - \$74,000 will be more than adequate. Corrals are not an area in which any producer wants to cut corners. Good corral design is imperative for the safety of the handlers and animals alike. I have suggested to the Open Space staff that some materials (e.g. beetle-kill timber) may be available that would mitigate the cost of the corral design without compromising safety.

I would continue to recommend against the expense for covered storage for hay or handling facilities.

## Stocking Rates

I reiterate that the stocking rate used for cattle on the property should be utilized for bison as well. I understand the importance of protecting sensitive plant species on the property. However, grassland ecosystems can suffer from under-grazing, just as they can from overgrazing. I believe that there are relatively simple approaches that will protect the sensitive plant species while maintaining a reasonable stocking rate on the pasture.

## Bison As Dangerous Animals

I sent along the previous photos of Sue and I with our bison primarily to counter the false impression conveyed by the image in your public presentation. I would not recommend that anyone unfamiliar with the characteristics of the animals go and pose in the middle of a herd. However, there is also little reason for anyone to be overly frightened by being in the general proximity of the animals. During the past year, a well-driller, and a welder have both been in our pasture working on facilities at the same time that the animals were travelling through to drink from the stock tanks. Both of them exercised a reasonable amount of caution, but were able to conduct their work without being harassed by the herd. Ditch riders, public employees and other people requiring periodic access to the pastures would not need to worry unduly about being stampeded by belligerent bison.

## Invasive Species

I won't split hairs with you over the threat of introducing invasive species into the pastures. However, I would reiterate that the very pastures targeted for this project evolved over tens of thousands of years of grazing by bison. With proper stocking rates and management of the grazing patterns, bison will have a very beneficial impact of the health of land.

I hope this information is helpful. Again, I apologize for not being able to participate tomorrow evening. Good luck in your deliberations.

Best Regards,  
Dave Carter

**Linda Jourgensen**

5/21/2012 Boulder CO

May 21, 2012

Friends of Boulder Open Space (FOBOS) strongly supports the recommendation of OSMP's staff that the OSMP parcels north and south of US 36 be removed from consideration as the location of a bison ranching operation. (Due to the size of these locations, only a few animals could be maintained there, so the young would have to be culled every year and sold for finishing.)

While we commend Ted Turner's efforts to preserve the genetic integrity of bison, Boulder's Open Space Charter requires that these lands and their natural resources be preserved for future generations, and the areas adjoining U.S. 36 at the entrance to the city are appropriately managed under the Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan, adopted by City Council in 2010, after extensive study and community input..

Please see  
formatted letter  
appended.

The introduction of bison onto Open Space parcels north and south of US 36 would lay waste to approximately one-half of the tall grass communities that were recognized by the Colorado Natural Area Program in 1984 as the largest and highest quality in our state. At that time, these lands were designated as part of the Colorado Tallgrass Prairie Natural Area to conserve these tallgrass communities and the habitat they provide for species of grassland birds whose numbers are declining, for native grassland restoration, for scientific research, for their preservation of genetic material and their high aesthetic value. The north parcel incorporates a substantial portion of the Boulder Creek State Natural Area which the

Colorado Natural Area program designated in 2000 for conserving natural features in good condition within a working agricultural landscape, with specific reference to the rare and threatened Ute ladies tresses orchid, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the bobolink, as well as the mesic grasslands, wetlands and wet meadows, willow shrublands, riparian forest, and tallgrass prairie.

In contrast to the current use of these lands for seasonal cattle grazing, a bison ranching operation would require year-round consumption of natural grasses and the introduction of supplemental commercial feed, with its significant potential to bring in invasive plant seeds. At the same time, OS staff would be severely limited by its inability to move the bison to another area (due to the strength and naturally recalcitrant nature of the animals), to monitor the lands and resources and reclaim them, where reclamation is necessary, and to guarantee necessary access to others, such as ditch riders.

These areas are currently under lease for seasonal grazing by a family that has ranched in the Boulder area for generations and that has cooperated in managing these properties using practices that preserve the native ecosystems. One of the Charter purposes of open space is "preservation of agricultural uses." Relocating bison in either of the areas adjoining U.S. 36 would displace the operations of the current lessees, who have been good stewards and tenants. This would break faith with them and would undoubtedly reflect badly on the city's trustworthiness and reliability with the farmers and ranchers in the Boulder Valley.

Finally, the start up and operational costs of the bison proposal and the demands upon OS staff would reduce the time and money they require to satisfy their current commitments under the Open Space Charter, the Grassland Management Plan, and the Visitor Master Plan.

For these reasons, FOBOS urges the Open Space Board of Trustees to recommend against the proposal to introduce bison to these Open Space lands—and to support the OSMP staff recommendation.

Yours truly,

Linda Jourgensen, Chair, Friends of Boulder Open Space

**Richard & Flo Merlini**

5/21/2012

Hello----Please accept our support for the OSMP Staff recommendation to not graze buffalo on the OS parcels along US Hwy 36.

One primary objection to the buffalo in these locations is the "prison like" fences that will be required to contain these animals. Such fences would not provide an attractive entrance to the City. It would be analagous to the approach to Buena Vista where it is necessary to pass the detention facility along US Hwy 24.

You also must be aware of the loss of wildlife habitat that would occur with such fences. This open space currently supports a variety of wildlife, which now includes bears--new this year. Mountain lions last year.

At least one of the irrigation ditches that traverses this land carries water that eventually supplies part of our drinking water. We are not the experts, but there could be issues with contamination of this water with buffalo feces and the associated brucellosis bacteria. This

cannot have a good outcome.

And, yes, one of these locations is a few hundred feet from our back yard, so we would have other potential personal impacts such as increased traffic and trash, loss of OS use and some obstruction of views.

We encourage the Council to accept the OSMP recommendation and not burden the City with the cost and aggravation associated with caring for these wild animals.

Richard & Flo Merlini  
545 S. 68th St.  
Boulder, CO 80303

**Dan & Lisa      Rice**

5/21/2012

Just wanted to make sure our opinions were heard. We understand that it was recommended to remove the areas originally requested for the Bison donation. We agree with that recommendation.

Thank you,  
Dan and Lisa Rice

**David              Shomper**

5/21/2012

While I appreciate Mr. Turner's generous offer, we just don't like the idea of a large fence marring the scenery coming into town on 36.

Please vote "no" on this issue.

Thanks.



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