CITY OF BOULDER
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA ITEM

MEETING DATE: May 23, 2012

AGENDA TITLE Consideration of a motion regarding the donation of bison to the City of Boulder and the use of certain Open Space and Mountain Parks lands for bison ranching operations.

PRESENTER/S Open Space and Mountain Parks
Michael D. Patton, Director
Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late October 2011, a private party involved in ecological conservation offered to donate bison to the City of Boulder. In December, the City Council directed staff to evaluate the bison donation offer. Staff evaluated the donation offer through consultation and visits with other bison ranching operations, literature review and internal meetings. Staff evaluation focused upon the potential effects of a bison donation upon agricultural operations and ecological systems. Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) also considered aesthetics associated with viewing bison on key entry points to the city. Public comment was collected at a March 29 open house and through a project comment form on the city's Website over an eight-week period (March 23-May 21). Staff evaluated the suitability of lands both north and south of US Highway 36. The Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) was updated about staff's evaluation at their meeting on April 11, 2012.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff proposes that the Open Space Board of Trustees recommend to the Boulder City Council that the Open Space and Mountain Parks identified parcels north and south of US Highway 36 be removed from further consideration as the location of a bison ranching operation as part of the offer of donation of bison to the City of Boulder; and that staff will continue to consider other OSMP locations and cost efficiencies.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS

- Economic - Overall economic impacts on the business community are unknown. It is possible that some visitors would be attracted to a bison ranch. However, because the areas proposed for consideration are closer to retail centers in Superior and Louisville than to Boulder, the overall impacts upon the business community in the City of Boulder are unknown. It is unclear if, or precisely how, the presence of bison along an approach to the city would affect revenues.
- Environmental – Staff's evaluation identified several important concerns about the establishment of a bison operation on the two proposed sites including effects upon rare plants and plant communities, wildlife habitat, prairie dog management, and existing agricultural operations. Established Colorado Natural Area designations and agreements are based upon a particular set of conditions that may not persist in the presence of year-round bison grazing. In the absence of these conditions, such agreements may be revoked. The presence of bison on the approach to Boulder is seen to enhance the experience of those travelling to Boulder, in general and perhaps to CU for football games and other athletic events.
- Social – While the specific effects of the proposed bison donation are difficult to predict, it is likely that the presence of bison would enhance the experience of many people travelling along the highway or who visit the animals at some potential viewing area. There are also other, negative effects upon OSMP visitors and neighbors. Visitors would be permanently excluded from relatively large areas of OSMP lands. Some community members feel the tall fence would be unattractive and destroy an important view shed. Neighbors to the project are concerned about increased traffic, vehicle congestion, speeding, and littering.

OTHER IMPACTS

- Fiscal – Start up costs are estimated to be between $456,000 and $640,000. Annual operating costs are estimated between $14,000 and $115,000.
- Staff time – Under the proposal for a staff-run bison operation, a new full time equivalent and seasonal staffing for several months would be required. Staff time (salary, benefits, overtime) accounts for the majority of the difference between the lower and higher range of annual operating costs.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND PROCESS

This item is being heard as part of a public meeting advertised in the *Daily Camera* on Sunday May 20, 2012.

Staff hosted a public open house on March 29, 2012 at the East Boulder Community Center. Approximately 35 community members attended a staff presentation on the project and a question and answer session. Many of those attending the open house also provided comments during the casual discussions with staff before and after the presentation. In addition, a project Website was created to provide community members with information about the project, including upcoming meetings, and an opportunity to comment. Approximately 140 comments have been received via the project Web comment form, and another 50 comments provided by direct email to the department or by other means. The comment period began on March 23 and ended May 21. A summary of public comments is included in the evaluation report (Attachment A).

ANALYSIS

Background

In late October 2011, a private party with a strong interest in the conservation of North American grasslands and grassland wildlife offered to donate 20 bison the City of Boulder. The interest in bringing bison back to Boulder Open Space was based on the general aesthetic value of seeing these "magnificent" creatures as you entered or left Boulder, the potential for a positive economic impact, as well as with the connection to the University of Colorado and perhaps added inspiration that a herd of bison or buffalo might provide to fans or players for CU's athletic teams (the Buffalos or "Buffs"). Just over a month after the idea of the bison donation was reported in the *Daily Camera*, City Council directed staff to evaluate the bison donation offer.

Staff evaluated the donation offer through consultation and visits with organizations, agencies and individuals involved in bison ranching operations, as well as through literature review and internal discussions. Staff evaluation focused upon the potential effects of a bison donation upon agricultural operations and ecological systems. OSMP also considered aesthetics associated with viewing bison on key entry points to the city. Additionally, staff gathered input from the community as described above.

Location

The information provided to staff indicated a strong interest locating the proposed bison operation near one of the entry ways into Boulder. The grasslands flanking US Highway 36 (US 36) were mentioned most often in the media and seemed an obvious option. Ultimately, staff focused on and identified two areas for analysis referred to henceforth as the North Area and the South Area as they are north and south of US 36 respectively (Figure 1).

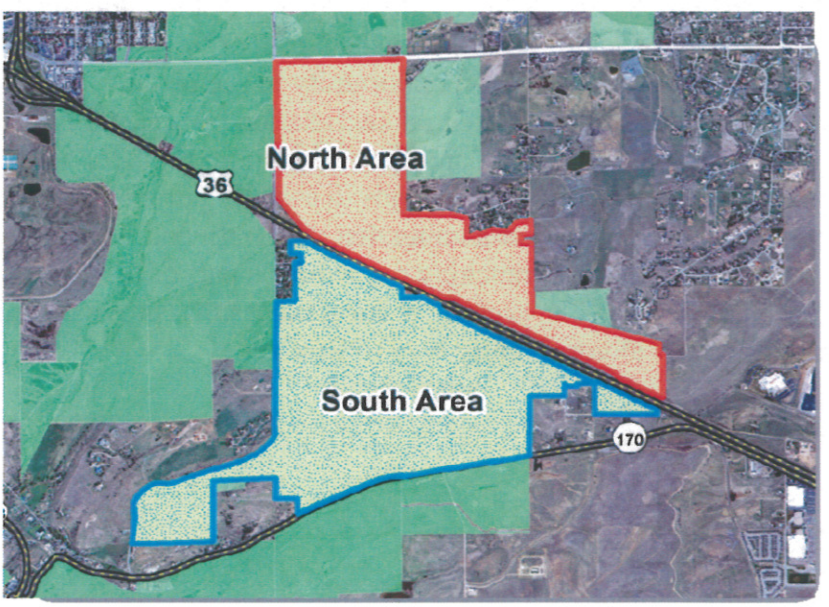


Figure 1: Location of Evaluation Areas

Staff also performed site evaluations of six OSMP grasslands along approaches to the City of Boulder (see Attachment A: Appendix A for a summary of these assessments).

Evaluation Factors

In order to determine the relevant evaluation factors, staff discussed the proposed donation internally with staff members experienced in bison management with other agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge [NWR], and The Nature Conservancy [TNC] at a number of sites). Staff also contacted Denver Mountain Parks, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, and TNC to gather feedback about what staff at those agencies considered being the most relevant

factors for OSMP to consider. Staff also spent a day with the managers of the Denver Mountain Parks Genesee bison ranch where bison have been on the land for over 100 years. The March 29 community meeting provided additional information about the concerns of neighbors and other community members. Table 1 lists the evaluation factors that were used in staff's analysis of the North and South areas.

Table 1: Bison Donation Evaluation Factors

Factors Affecting All Categories: Cost Management flexibility		
Agricultural Factors	**Community Factors**	**Ecological Factors**
• Safety	• Safety	• Habitat fragmentation
• Effects upon tenants	• Enjoyment of bison	• Xeric tallgrass prairie
• Lease revenue	• Visitor access	o Grassland birds
• Bison ranching operation	• Neighborhood effects	o Butterflies and skippers
o Pastures/forage	• Cultural landscape	• Ute ladies-tresses orchid
o Water availability		• Prairie dog management

Staff prepared an evaluation of the North and South areas according to these factors (Attachment A). Staff's report concludes that either the North or South area could provide aesthetic appeal and provide people driving US 36 with an opportunity to see bison. There would also be significant start-up costs ($460,000 to $640,000), potential degradation of xeric tallgrass prairie ecology, a reduced ability to manage the area adaptively, and the elimination of visitor access. Because of the high cost, the need to dedicate a large area of OSMP lands to a single purpose and because of substantial public/neighbor opposition, staff is recommending that the North and South areas be removed from further consideration as locations for a bison ranching operation as part of the proposed bison donation. Having identified the relevant issues, staff is working to locate areas that provide similar benefits, but face fewer challenges, still preferably along an entry way to Boulder.

Submitted by:

Michael D. Patton, Director

Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Bison Donation Evaluation Report

ATTACHMENT A

BISON DONATION EVALUATION REPORT

5/11/2012

Benefits, Feasibility and Costs

In late October 2011, a private party involved in ecological conservation offered to donate a herd of bison to the City of Boulder. Soon afterward, the City Council directed staff to evaluate the bison donation offer. Staff's evaluation included consultation and visits with other bison ranching operations, literature review and internal meetings. The evaluation focused upon the potential effects of bison upon agricultural operations and ecological systems. Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) also considered aesthetics associated with viewing bison on key entry points to the city. Public comment was collected at a late March open house, and a project Website over an eight-week period (March 23-May 21). Staff evaluated the suitability of OSMP lands both north and south of US Highway 36.

Photo credit: James N. Stuart (cover-used with permission)

Bison Donation Evaluation Report

BENEFITS, FEASIBILITY AND COST

INTRODUCTION

In late October 2011 a private party with a strong interest in the conservation of North American grasslands and grassland wildlife offered to donate a small (ca. 20 animals) herd of bison to the City of Boulder. While the specific reasons for the donation are not documented, staff's understanding is that the donor was interested in reintroducing an extirpated species to the grasslands around Boulder, and to provide an opportunity for those approaching Boulder along US Highway 36 (US 36) to view bison. The inspiration that a herd of bison or buffalo might provide to fans or players for CU's athletic teams (the Buffalos or "Buffs") may have also figured into the motivations for the project. Just over a month after the idea of the bison donation was reported in the Daily Camera, City Council directed staff to evaluate the bison donation offer.

Staff evaluated the donation offer through consultation and visits with organizations, agencies and individuals involved in bison ranching operations, as well as through literature review and internal discussions. Staff evaluation focused upon the potential effects of a bison donation upon agricultural operations and ecological systems. OSMP also considered aesthetics associated with viewing bison on key entry points to the city.

This evaluation is intended to provide the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) and City Council with information about the factors associated with establishing a bison ranching operation on city-owned Open Space and whether lands along US 36 are suitable for a bison ranching operation. Also addressed in this report are approaches that OSMP staff would recommend to mitigate any of the adverse effects of a bison ranching operation on other open space services and existing programs.

Specific objectives for this report include:

- Summarize staff's consultations with other agencies and individuals managing bison,
- Describing public comment on the effects of the proposed donation.
- Identifying the relevant, resource-based, community and operational factors.
- Applying these factors to specific areas flanking US 36 to determine the nature of effects
- Accounting projected costs of accepting the proposed donation

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The information provided to staff indicated a strong interest locating the proposed bison operation near one of the entry ways into Boulder. The grasslands flanking US 36 were mentioned most often in community conversations and in the media. Consequently, staff focused on this area and identified two areas for analysis referred to henceforth as the North Area and the South Area as they are north and south of US 36 respectively (Figure 1). A more detailed map of the evaluation area can be found in **Appendix A.** Both areas are located on city-owned Open Space. The North Area comprises 311 acres bounded by US 36 to the south/southwest, Cherryvale Road to the west, the initial evaluation area extended north to South Boulder Road, the edge of city ownership bounds the area to the east. The South Area (533 acres) is bounded on the north/northeast by US 36, on the west by Cherryvale Road and on the south by Marshall Drive, the edge of city ownership bounds the area to the east.

Both areas are primarily grasslands including uplands dominated by xeric tallgrass prairie and mosaic of mixed grass prairie. Hayfields of predominantly exotic pasture grasses and native wetlands occupy the majority of the irrigated lowlands of both areas (Figure 2).

The analysis areas are part of the Tallgrass Prairie East Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) identified in the Visitor Master Plan. Both areas have been recognized for their natural value by the Colorado Natural Areas Program. The North Area includes portions of both the Colorado Tallgrass Prairie State Natural Area and the South Boulder Creek State Natural Area. The North Area includes approximately 20 acres (7.5%) of the Tallgrass State Natural Area, and the South Area includes 100 acres (37%) (see inset map below). The North Area includes 130 acres or about 11% of the South Boulder Creek State Natural area. The South Area does not overlap the South Boulder Creek State Natural Area (see inset map below).

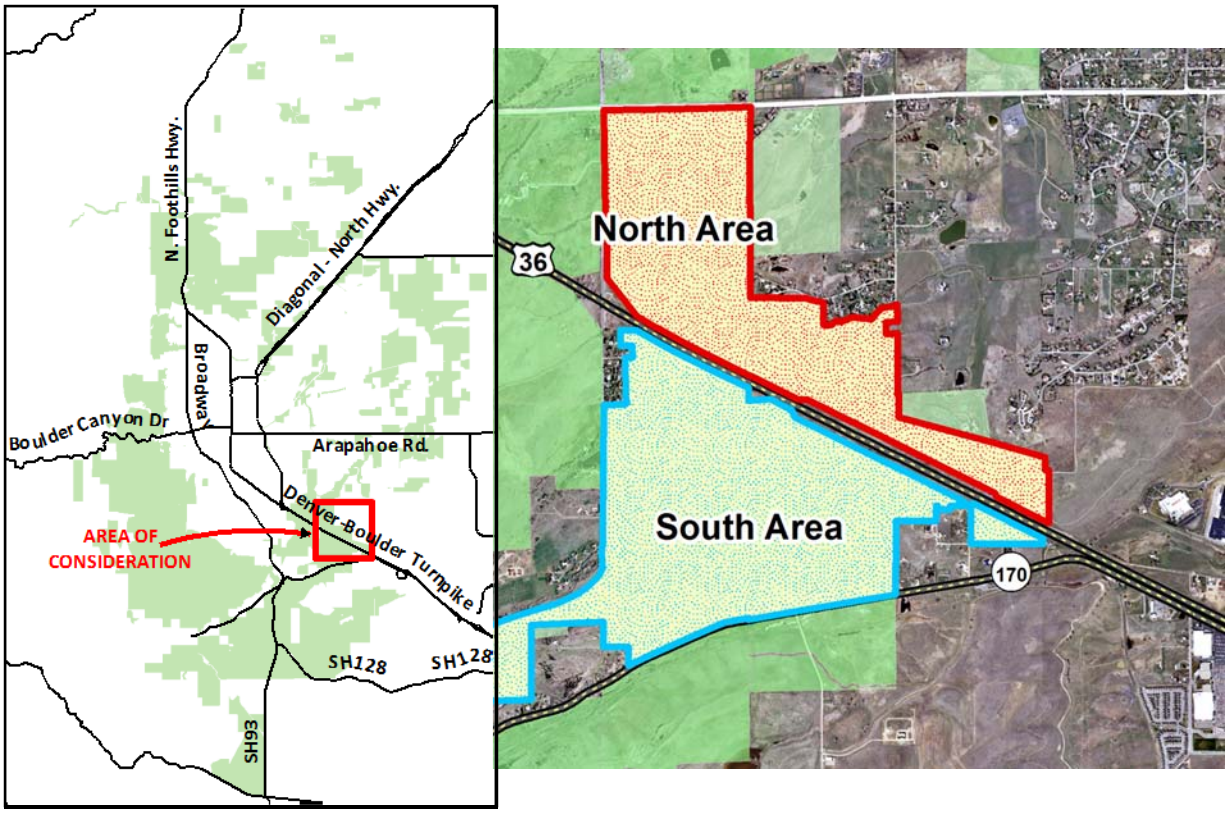


FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF EVALUATION AREA

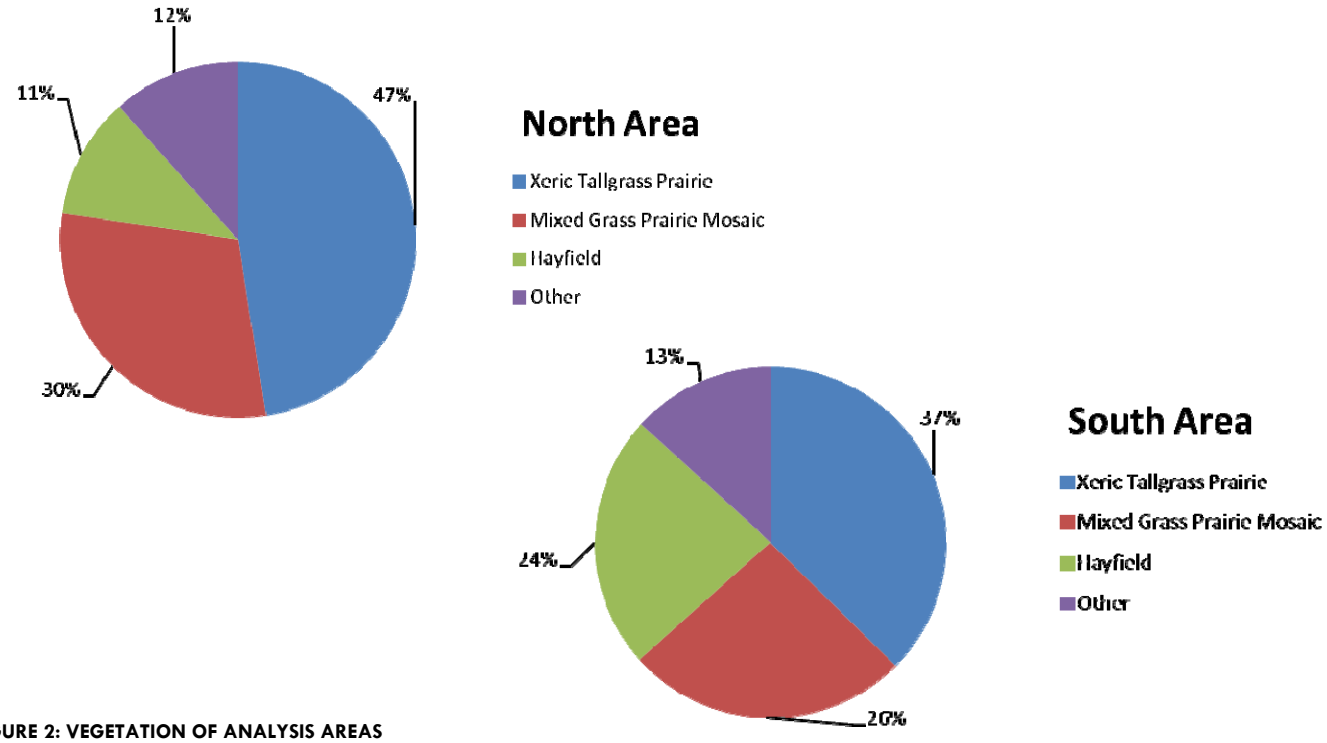
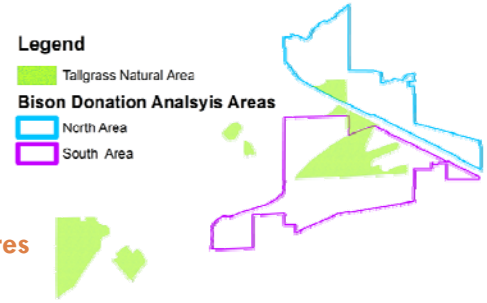


FIGURE 2: VEGETATION OF ANALYSIS AREAS

In 1984, the Colorado Natural Area Program recognized Boulder's tallgrass prairies as the largest and highest quality in the state; and designated the 270 acres *Colorado Tallgrass Prairie Natural Area* to conserve:

- **Mesic & xeric tallgrass communities**
- **Habitat for rare and declining grassland birds**
- **Baseline for native grassland restoration**
- **Opportunities for scientific research**
- **Reservoir of genetic material**
- **High aesthetic value and exemplary natural features**

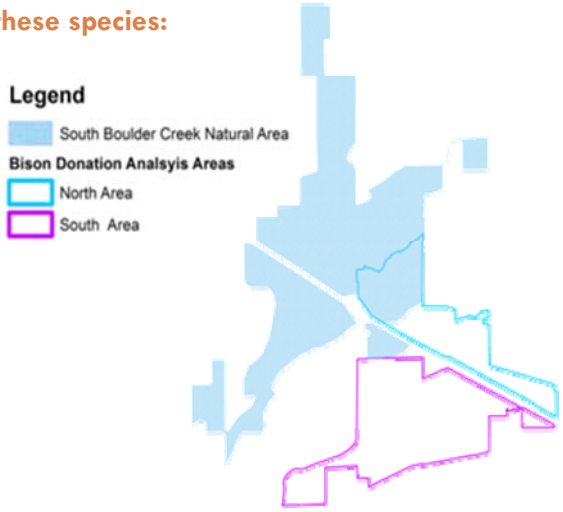


In 2000, the Colorado Natural Area Program again recognized the City of Boulder for the value of its Open Space by designating the 1200-acre South Boulder Creek State Natural Area for conserving many natural features in good condition within a working agricultural landscape. The natural area designation calls out these species:

- **Ute ladies-tresses orchid**
- **Preble's meadow jumping mouse**
- **Bobolink (a grassland bird)**

And these communities/wildlife habitats:

- **Mesic grasslands**
- **Wetlands**
- **Wet meadows**
- **Willow shrublands**
- **Riparian forest**
- **Tallgrass prairie**



Both the North and South areas are part of a larger agricultural lease including most of the OSMP grasslands south of Arapahoe Road and west of 75th Street. The lessees are fourth generation ranchers working this area and have been Open Space and Mountain Parks tenants since the city's acquisition of the properties. They run a cow-calf operation typically selling yearling calves in late winter or spring of each year.

Staff also performed less-detailed site evaluations of six Open Space and Mountain Parks grasslands along approaches to the City of Boulder (see **Appendix B**).

EXTIRPATED SPECIES IN GRASSLAND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Open Space and Mountain Parks Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan (Grassland Plan) was approved unanimously by the Open Space Board of Trustees (2009) and City Council (2010). The plan includes a section entitled "Extirpated Species" which states that staff will participate in restoration efforts whenever the city's grasslands can reasonably make a meaningful contribution to reintroduction for extirpated species.

Species reintroduction and restoration efforts are typically undertaken by state or federal agencies for species that are considered endangered or threatened. The bison is not listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife as a threatened or endangered species. In Colorado bison are not considered wildlife at all, but rather livestock and are managed under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. With the exception of a program involving only Department of Interior properties, there is not a centralized or coordinated effort in the United States or North America for the conservation of bison.

Although the bison donation is not part of a coordinated reintroduction or restoration plan, OSMP could still make a contribution to the conservation of bison. Since the animals proposed for donation are considered "pure" bison—that is they are free of cow genes, they would be a good starting point for a small

conservation herd. Working with other conservation herd managers, OSMP could practice herd-level genetic management to sustain bison populations with a healthy level of genetic variation.

INFORMATION GATHERING-SITE VISITS AND CONSULTATION

Bison Ranchers and Managers

Open Space and Mountain Parks staff contacted staff members at Denver Mountain Parks (DMP) responsible for the management of two bison herds, one in Genesee and the other in Daniels Park (Douglas County). Staff members made multiple visits to the Genesee site where they met with the bison operation staff, toured their facility and learned about their experience running a bison ranching operation and how they addressed public safety issues. Staff visited the Daniels Park bison herd to see the most recent fencing innovations designed by DMP in collaboration with Douglas County.

The executive director of the National Bison Association visited with OSMP staff, offered his assistance, and the assistance of his organization. He provided complimentary copies of the Bison Producers Handbook to OSMP.

OSMP staff also visited a property with a city-owned conservation easement, where the owner operates a bison ranch (the Strear Conservation Easement). The landowner provided staff with a tour of his facility, describing his infrastructure and the general operation of his ranch. It is believed that this is the only operating bison ranch in Boulder County at this time.

In order to determine the relevant evaluation factors, staff discussed bison ranching operations with other agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge [NWR], and The Nature Conservancy [TNC] which have bison at a number of sites—including the Zapata Ranch in the San Luis Valley).

Brucellosis and Bison Donation

City Council specifically requested a description about assurances that donated bison, if accepted, would be free of brucellosis. Brucellosis is a highly contagious bacterial disease affecting a wide range of mammals. One species of brucellosis affects cattle, bison and elk. Transmission among these species, especially in the Yellowstone area, has become a complex and contentious management issue.

The bison proposed for donation are currently in New Mexico. Open Space and Mountain Parks staff consulted the animal health regulatory programs in both New Mexico and Colorado. Currently both states are considered to be "Brucellosis Free" (i.e., thought to be free of the type of brucellosis affecting livestock). The Colorado Department of Agriculture requires that bison imported to the state from brucellosis-free states must have been vaccinated as calves, or must test negative for brucellosis within 30 days prior to entry into Colorado unless they are imported directly from a certified brucellosis-free herd. Based upon both Colorado and New Mexico's stringent requirements, staff has concluded that the probability of donated bison being infected by brucellosis is extremely low.

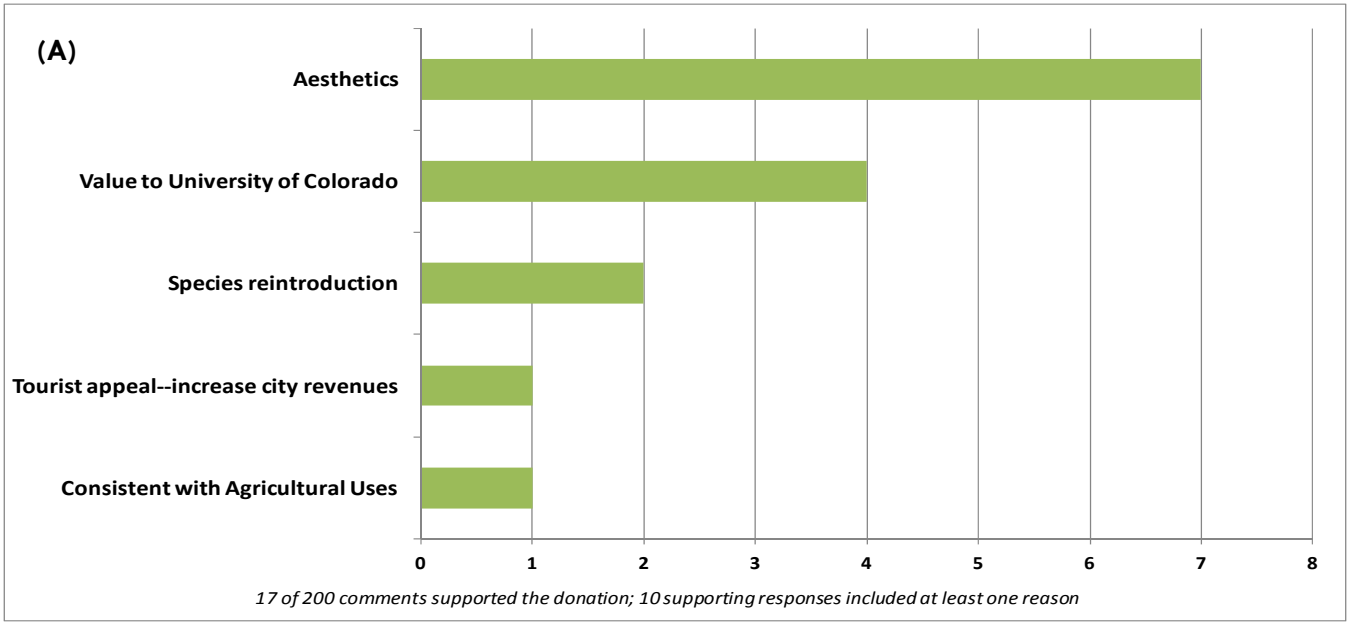
Public Input

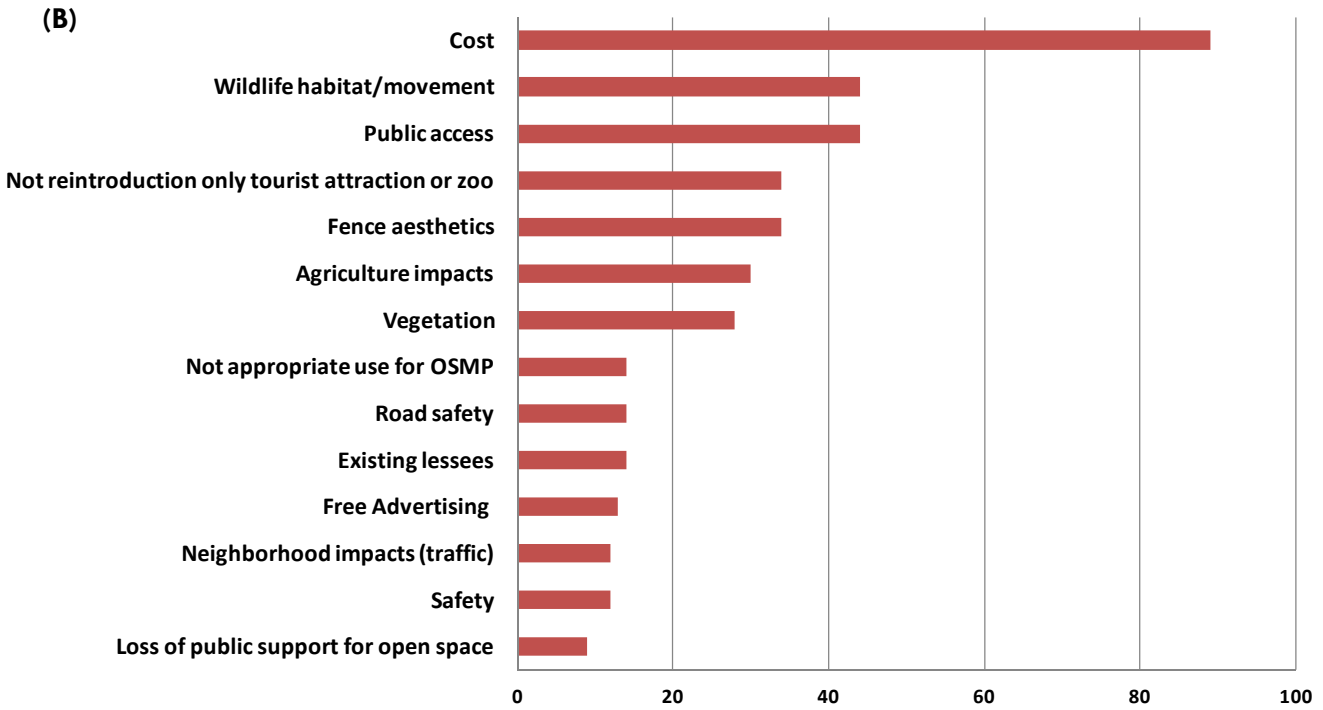
To gather input from the community, staff hosted a public open house on March 29, 2012 at the East Boulder Community Center. Approximately 35 community members attended the open house which included a staff presentation, question and answer session and casual discussions with staff before and after the presentation. In addition, a project Website (www.bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/bison) was created to provide community members with information about the project, including upcoming meetings, and an opportunity to comment. Approximately 150 comments were received via the project Web comment form, and another 50 comments provided by direct email to the department or by other means. The comment period began on March 23 and ended May 21. Comments received by May 16 are included in **Appendix C.**

Most people providing comments opposed accepting the donation of bison and establishing a bison ranching operation in the evaluation areas along US 36. Of the approximately 200 comments received, 183 opposed the donation. Many of those opposed (137/183) explained the reason for their position. The issues most commonly raised were costs, effect upon wildlife habitat and movement, loss of public access, the negative aesthetics of fencing and a concern that the donation would not so much result in the reintroduction of bison, but the creation of a zoo as a roadside attraction. The complete list of reasons is shown in Figure 3A. Many respondents included more than one reason for their opposition.

Few (17 or 8.5%) of those providing comments supported the bison donation and the proposed location. Of the 17 comments received in support, ten indicated the reason for their position. Five reasons were given as shown in Figure 3B. The aesthetics of having bison on OSMP lands along US 36 was the most frequent reason given for supporting the proposal followed by the value it would have to the University of Colorado. Three respondents indicated they felt it was important to reintroduce bison to Boulder's grasslands, and one each wrote that the tourist attraction would benefit the city and bison ranching was consistent with OSMP purposes.

FIGURE 3: REASONS GIVEN FOR (A) SUPPORTING AND (B) OPPOSING BISON DONATION ***NOTE: X AXIS SCALES DIFFER***





183 of 200 comments opposed the donation; of these 137 opposing responses included at least one reason

EVALUATION FACTORS

In order to determine the relevant evaluation factors, staff discussed the proposed donation internally with staff members experienced in bison management with other agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, and TNC at a number of sites). Staff also contacted DMP, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, and TNC to gather feedback about what staff at those agencies considered the most relevant factors for OSMP's consideration. The March 29 open house provided information about the concerns of neighbors and other community members. Table 1 lists the evaluation factors that were used in staff's analysis of the North and South areas.

TABLE 1: BISON DONATION EVALUATION FACTORS

Factors Affecting All Categories: Cost Management flexibility		
Agricultural Factors	**Community Factors**	**Ecological Factors**
• Safety • Effects upon tenants • Lease revenue • Bison ranching operation o Pastures/forage o Water availability	• Safety • Enjoyment of bison • Visitor access • Neighborhood effects • Cultural landscape	• Habitat fragmentation • Xeric tallgrass prairie o Grassland birds o Butterflies and skippers • Ute ladies-tresses orchid • Prairie dog management

Factors Related to all Categories

Cost

Staff's cost model (**Appendix D**) for the bison donation proposal developed incrementally as the level of understanding of what is or might be required of a bison ranching operation increased over the course of the evaluation period.

Start up costs included the estimated costs of fencing, corral and handling facilities, hay storage facility, water development (South Area only see p. 12), and a bison viewing pullout. Fencing was the most significant cost, accounting for between 63 and 75 percent of total startup costs. There were high and low estimates for some of the startup costs such as hay storage facilities and the bison corral. These two costs are the basis for the low and high levels of investment in the model.

Annual operating costs were developed for both lessee- and staff-run operations. Under the lessee run operation, the only annual costs are OSMP staff time for lease administration and funding for a contractor to make fence repairs.

Denver Mountain Parks staff strongly recommended that OSMP consider a staff-run operation because of the demands associated with addressing the needs of members of the public when managing bison simultaneously for public viewing *and* ranching. In the staff-run operation cost model, OSMP assumed that a single employee would be assigned to the bison ranching operation with seasonal employees assisting for an annual roundup. In addition to salary and benefits, the costs for a staff run operation also include a vehicle (replacement and operational costs), computer, veterinary costs, and fence repair funding for a contractor to address major fencing repairs. Based upon the recommendation of DMP that a staff member be located near the operation and on call to respond to emergencies, OSMP also included the value of rent at an OSMP-owned house nearest to the evaluation areas.

The cost model given is an estimate of the costs under two levels of investment and two staffing scenarios and is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: COST SCENARIOS FOR BISON DONATION EVALUATION (STARTUP AND ONE YEAR OPERATION)

		Operator	
		Lessee	City/OSMP Staff
Level of Investment	Low	North: $470,000	North: $580,000
		South: $590,000	South: $690,000
	High	North: $530,000	North: $640,000
		South: $650,000	South: $750,000

Staff has not developed a corresponding funding model for these costs. Under current conditions, startup and annual operating costs would need to be allocated from existing funding sources such as the Open Space or General funds. In either situation, expenditures on a bison ranching operation would either require additional appropriate or result in a reduction in the city's ability to deliver other community services. Some members of

the community who have commented on the bison proposal have identified volunteers, CU alumni, and other CU athletic enthusiasts as likely sources of support. OSMP staff has not evaluated those ideas.

MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY

Delivering community services with a multiple-use mission is challenging. Active management for sustainable agricultural operations and trails, a high-quality visitor experience, and the conservation of species, communities and ecological systems requires coordinating many moving parts. It is common for OSMP staff to need to make adjustments to some aspect of management in response to another or to new information (e.g., regulations coming into effect, drought, the discovery of a rare plant population, unexpected difficulties with access to a remote location). Consequently it is valuable to have the ability to make changes in response to new information and new conditions.

OSMP's existing agricultural leases require that lessees respond to requests from OSMP when new information or changing conditions require a shift in practices. Over time, OSMP staff members have learned about the types of agricultural operations that are likely to provide the necessary flexibility and those that do not, and have encouraged the former. The proposed bison operation appears to offer limited flexibility because without significant extra expense and effects upon a variety of resources, there would be only one area equipped to manage bison.

Climate, prairie dog activity, disease, weed infestations or a combination of these or other sources of stress can threaten to degrade the vegetation and habitat value of OSMP grasslands used to graze livestock. From time to time OSMP determines that a lower grazing intensity is needed or that an area needs to be rested and livestock moved elsewhere. This sort of adaptive response is essential to protect OSMP resources. In the case of a bison ranching operation, OSMP would face a number of challenges. While adult bison may be able to be coaxed from one pasture to another or into a corral once a year, it is not a simple matter to load them on a truck and move them elsewhere. Even if moving bison were practical, OSMP has no alternative place fenced for bison. Since the majority of costs associated with a bison operation are fencing related, creating a reserve pasture would be very expensive—and would have the unintended effects described below. Neither reducing the herd size nor providing supplemental feed is likely to be economically sustainable over the long term. Supplemental feeding would not preclude other grazing unless the bison were contained in a feeding area. Confining bison is unlikely to work, and even if the bison chose to stay in a small area, that area would be quickly and potentially severely degraded by their concentrated presence.

The presence of bison in a single defined area also affects OSMP's ability to manage that landscape. For example the use of prescribed fire would be limited by the presence of bison, which unlike livestock cannot be moved, and are present year round. Integrated Pest Management often requires people to be on foot pulling weeds, removing trees or applying pesticides to individual plants. Due to the potential danger of bison, staff will be unable to be in the area with bison without ready access to a vehicle, and controlling invasive species at critical times may be impossible. Relocation of prairie dogs could also be affected by the presence of bison. Similarly, OSMP relies upon monitoring to keep track of ecological conditions and patterns of visitor activity. The presence of bison would likely disrupt long-term bird, burrowing owl, and vegetation monitoring, thereby reducing the value of the city's investment in previously collected data. Existing research projects could also be affected by the presence of bison, complicating data collection and increasing costs.

Agricultural Factors

Safety

Many agricultural operations and municipal water suppliers throughout the Boulder Valley rely upon irrigation water. Several irrigation ditches cross the North and South Areas. Although these ditches run through city Open Space, others have the right and regular need to access them. Irrigation systems must be maintained and operated throughout the year. Regular access to these ditches must be provided to a variety of individuals including, but are not limited to, OSMP staff, representatives of the Colorado Division of Water Resources (the District Water Commissioner and his staff), ditch company representatives, as well as the water rights owners. These people access OSMP to operate control structures or maintain ditches serving their properties or uses. The presence of bison would make it more difficult to provide safe access to water delivery facilities on OSMP, and special coordination, likely requiring more staff time, would be required to reduce the likelihood of injury or property damage.

Five ditches cross the North Area (from north to south). These are the South Boulder Canon[1], Shearer, Marshallville, Goodhue and Davidson ditches. In addition there are control structures on OSMP lands that are operated by neighbors to deliver water to their properties. The South Area is crossed by the Goodhue and Davidson ditches. Open Space Mountain Parks has a varying level of interest in these ditches ranging from 100% interest in the Shearer Ditch to no interest in the Goodhue Ditch.

OSMP staff would need to work with water rights owners and administrators to describe bison management practices and respond as practicable to facilitate access. It is possible that OSMP staff would also need to work with the Office of the City Attorney to determine which actions and practices would be the responsibility of OSMP and which would be the responsibility of others.

Effects upon Tenants

All agricultural operations on OSMP properties are run by farmers and ranchers who lease property from the city. The tenants currently leasing the evaluation areas run a cattle operation and have been doing so since before those properties were acquired as open space. This operation involves raising cattle on irrigated and non-irrigated pastures and native grasslands as well as raising hay for supplemental feeding. Cattle are sold as yearlings in the late winter or early spring. The evaluation areas are used for pasture only between November and May. The North and South areas represent only a portion of the approximately 7,000 acres of OSMP lands in the lease stretch from city-owned open space in Jefferson County north to Baseline Road.

The Hogan family has been ranching the area for four generations. OSMP has found a strong and productive partnership with Albert "Babe" and Leo Hogan. In addition to their successful agricultural operation, the Hogan brothers' management has created habitat and maintained populations for the Ute ladies-tresses orchid before the species was officially named or described by botanists. Similarly, their grazing, pasturing and irrigation practices have created habitat that supports the Preble's meadow jumping mouse—again before, during, and since that species was identified as threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Much of the Colorado Tallgrass Prairie Natural Area and all of the South Boulder Creek Colorado Natural Area are coincident with the Hogan brothers' agricultural lease; and in both cases their management preceded the recognition of the importance of these areas.

The Hogan brothers have worked with OSMP to develop and undertake changes in agricultural management aimed at improving a wide range of open space service including, but by no means limited to agricultural

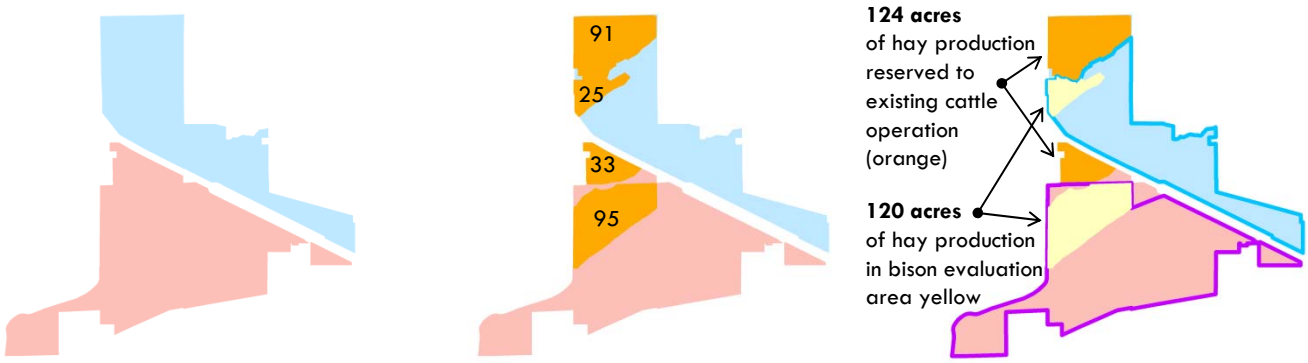
[1] Pronounced "canyon" or "canon" but spelled without the "y" or "ñ".

productivity. Beyond their knowledge and care for the landscape, their collaboration with OSMP and long tenure as managers, the Hogan brothers are something of an iconic presence. They are seen in all seasons using traditional practices, working on horseback and representing a way of life that is as rare as it is highly valued by many members of the community.

Out of recognition of the important relationship among the Hogan brothers, OSMP and the broader community, staff considered the effect of the proposed bison donation on their operation. Since all of the land under consideration in both the North and South area are part of the Hogan existing lease, any alternative would have some effect upon their operation. The chief areas of consideration for effects upon the current tenants were: 1) hay production, 2) pasture and 3) contiguity of operation.

Hay Production

Cow-calf operations in the Boulder Valley are dependent upon available hay for supplemental feeding and vulnerable when sufficient hay is not available. Under the original evaluation area, approximately 244 acres of hay production would be removed from the existing lease. Staff sought to reduce this loss by adjusting the boundary of the original evaluation area along existing hayfields to retain 124 acres of hay production as part of the existing operation (Figure 4). Other areas of hay production (120 acres) were left in the evaluation areas, recognizing the necessity of supplemental feeding for the proposed bison ranching operation. It is likely that an operator of the proposed bison ranch would need to purchase supplemental hay in addition to that which could be produced in the evaluation area. While additional hayfield availability would benefit either operation, staff felt that this modification best balanced the sustainability of the existing cattle and proposed bison operations.



(A) INITIAL EVALUATION AREAS
BLUE = NORTH AREA (405 ACRES)
PINK = SOUTH AREA (585 ACRES)

(B) HAYFIELDS (ORANGE) IN INITIAL EVALUATION AREAS. ACREAGE SHOWN IN BLACK TEXT

(C) REVISED EVALUATION AREAS
BLUE LINE = NORTH AREA (311 ACRES)
PINK LINE = SOUTH AREA (533 ACRES)

FIGURE 4: MODIFICATION OF ORIGINAL EVALUATION AREA TO ADDRESS EFFECTS ON CURRENT LESSEES' HAY PRODUCTION

Pasture

Both evaluation areas are used in their entirety as pasture by the current lessees. This means that the existing lessees would see a reduction of either 311 acres of pasture in the North Area, or 533 acres in the South Area (Figure 4C). However, recognizing that the evaluation area would become too small to support a bison herd of any size, staff did not propose further reduction of the evaluation to address loss of pasture. Other changes to the Hogan brothers' lease such as increasing stocking rates on other pastures, extending the time on other pastures, and reductions in numbers of animals would be used to mitigate the transfer of pasture to a proposed bison operation.

Contiguity of Operation

The Hogan brothers' lease area is generally contiguous from the Boulder/Jefferson county line north to Baseline Road (Figure 5). The operators practice has been to move their cattle through the lease area minimizing the need for truck transport. Staff could not develop a design for the proposed bison operation that would both address the other factors and provide contiguity. This is due in part to the lessees use of the Davidson Ditch culvert beneath US 36 to connect the open space in the North and South areas. In either the North of South bison operation scenario, one side of this culvert would be removed from the existing lease. Should a bison operation be established, it may be possible to establish a grazing plan that would allow livestock to travel to the Davidson Ditch culvert through fields being rested from bison grazing.

Bison Ranching Operation

OSMP staff considered the needs for a bison ranching operation and developed a pasture design and grazing plan. This information in turn informed the internal fencing and water development needs cost model.

In both the North and South Areas the pasture design includes three pastures. A pasture dominated by the hayfield, and two upland pastures. Most of the pastures have a reliable source of water for the season of proposed grazing. The exception is the eastern pasture in the South Area.

The cost of developing a reliable water source (well) in this pasture is approximately $40,000. Internal fencing (6' barbed wire) in the North Area is estimated to cost $66,000, and $72,000 in the South Area.

Figure 6 shows the grazing plan proposed for either the North or South Area and the current cattle grazing program. The current program has been in use for several decades. The most noticeable differences between the cattle and bison operations is grazing during the growing season in uplands and the lower number of animals grazing under the bison scenario.

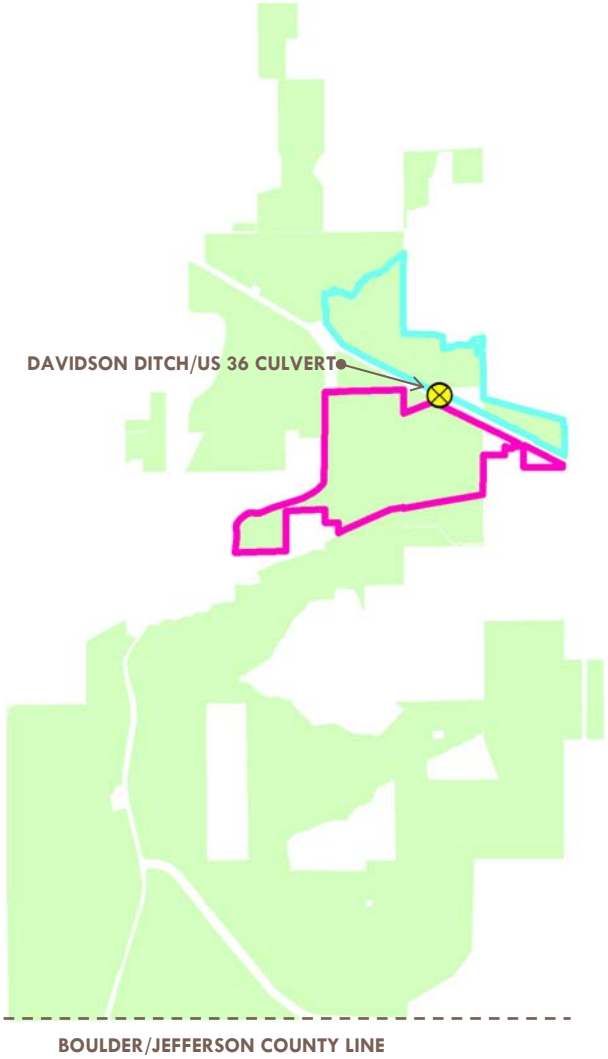


FIGURE 5: HOGAN BROTHERS' LEASE AREA IN BOULDER COUNTY

While the Hogan brothers' cattle pasture off OSMP lands for much of the growing season, there is no alternative to year-round grazing by bison. Moving them off OSMP for the summer is not practicable, and such a move would run counter to the interest in having bison visible to travelers on US 36.

Open Space and Mountain Parks staff calculated a stocking rate of 12-13 adult bison as the appropriate herd size if the donation were accepted. This calculation is based in part upon the history of productivity and grazing of the evaluated areas. Under the current livestock grazing regime, the area is grazed only in the

dormant season and early spring. There is no grazing from June through November. During the November through May grazing period, half or more of the forage consumed by cattle comes from supplemental hay, which was grown on the property the previous year.

Staff has proposed to reduce the amount of forage consumption in the North or South area by about 40% compared to cattle grazing. The lower number of animals and less intensive use is put forth as a conservative management approach to a new type of operation. As discussed previously, the lack of alternative locations for the bison reduces management flexibility and potentially increases the risk that lands will be degraded. A smaller herd size and less forage consumption represent a smaller contribution to the stresses that could affect grasslands during a time of constrained resource availability. Such an approach reduces the likelihood that significant management changes to the bison operation would be needed.

With the shift to grazing during the growing season, reduced grazing intensity makes sense and is necessary to protect wildlife habitat and rare plant communities (see p. 17).

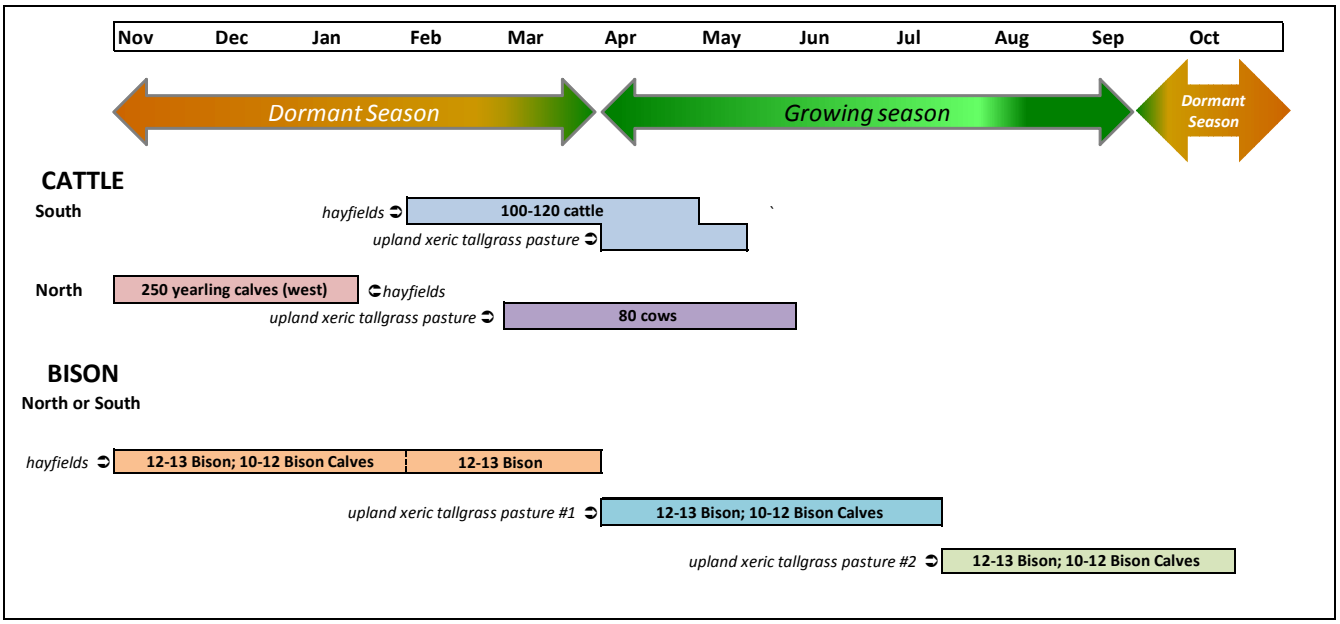


FIGURE 6: GRAZING PLAN SUMMARY FOR CATTLE (EXISTING) AND DEVELOPED FOR THE PROPOSED BISON RANCHING OPERATION IN EITHER THE NORTH OR SOUTH AREA

Community Factors

Safety

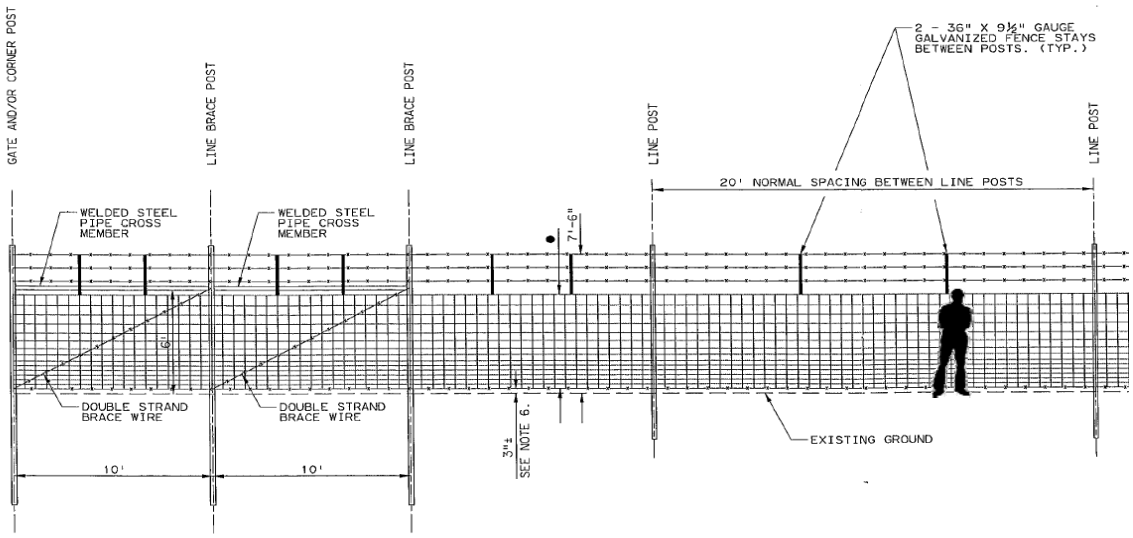
Public safety is a key component of the visitor experience OSMP has committed to provide in the Visitor Master Plan. Bison are large and powerful animals, and are capable of inflicting serious harm, though they are not typically belligerent. While their behavior may be more predictable to those who have worked with them extensively; most people don't know how to behave around bison or how to interpret the cues they give about their mood or next move.

Fortunately, most people unfamiliar with how to treat bison also recognize the potential risk of approaching immense, powerful, and sharp-horned animals. On the other hand there are those who neither know how to act, nor register the danger and will enter or try to enter a pasture with a bison. As a public land

management agency evaluating and explaining the issues associated with a bison ranching operation, OSMP consulted with the City Attorney's Office and the city's Risk Manager to determine if there was any special liability associated with bison. The conclusion regarding liability was that it appears that for Boulder, keeping bison entails no legally different liability risks than keeping other large animals. From a risk management perspective, OSMP was advised to consider that bison are much larger and stronger than cattle in containing and managing them.

Using this legal and risk management advice OSMP consulted with DMP, a nearby municipality that has been managing bison over 100 years to learn about how they addressed containment and related management issues. Staff at DMP indicated the importance of separating visitors and bison and provided OSMP with the fencing design they used to contain bison, and discourage people from entering bison enclosures at their second and more recently developed bison operation in Daniels Park (Douglas County, CO). The design is duplicated below (Figure 7) with a six-foot tall human silhouette for scale and a photograph of a similar fence. This design was provided to one of the city's fence contractors who in turn provided a bid that was used to inform the cost estimate for external fencing.

(A)



(B)

FIGURE 7:
(A) BISON ENSCLOSURE FENCE DESIGN PROVIDED BY DENVER MOUNTAIN PARKS (DRAWN BY DOUGLAS COUNTY)
(B) PHOTOGRAPH OF BISON AND FENCE OF SIMILAR DESIGN

Should the bison donation be accepted, it would be appropriate for the city to enact an ordinance or rule to prohibit unauthorized access within areas bounded by external bison fences. Such a closure would preclude visitor access, including the development of trails. In this case, providing for public safety would require that the city reduce access to some open space.

Visitor Access

As part of the VMP, OSMP is working with the community to develop access and resource protection plans for the entire land system. These Trail Study Area (TSA) plans have been completed for the western and portions of the southern part of the OSMP system. The TSA plan that would address the evaluation areas is last with two before it as of 2012, and is unlikely to be completed sooner than 2015. Making long-term decisions about public access to either the North or South areas outside the TSA process is likely to cause concern among community members. Concerns about the loss of public access were frequently mentioned by those objecting to the bison donation (Figure 3).

There are no designated trails in either of the evaluation areas. However, six pedestrian gates provide access to the South Area, and undesignated trails have developed parallel to Cherryvale Road and US 36 as well as to the top of Davidson Mesa. The area is used by residents of scattered homes and rural subdivisions along Cherryvale Road and Marshall Drive. Model sailplanes pilots have been using the South Area for decades. Representatives of sailplane pilots have provided comments attesting to the importance of this area for their activity, and describing steady attrition in the number of available areas to enjoy their activity.

There are four pedestrian gates providing access to the North Area. Social trails parallel the northeast fence line and cross the property from north to south. Residents of the rural subdivision on the south end of N. 68th Street appear to be the dominant visitors to this area. **Appendix E** is a map of the evaluation area showing the location of pedestrian gates, undesignated trails and areas of concentrated visitor activity.

Enjoyment of Bison

One of the reasons for the proposal was to provide community members and visitors to Boulder an opportunity to enjoy viewing bison. Bison are large, charismatic mammals that symbolize the American West to many, and are a symbol of the University of Colorado athletic teams. Many people drive US 36 from the Denver metro area to watch the CU Buffs play football. Based upon public comment, some members of the community strongly support the donation because of their interest in being able to see bison, or because of the connection with CU athletics. The location along the heavily travelled US 36 was selected to optimize the number of people who would have a chance of seeing bison. The scenic overlook on the highway could also provide opportunities to view bison, especially in the North Area. A bikeway adjacent to and north of US 36 is proposed for construction in 2013-2015 as part of improvements to US 36, and would provide additional viewing opportunities of the North and South areas.

Both the North and South areas include places that are not visible from US 36. Although bison are more likely than cattle to spend time on hillsides and hilltops, there is no guarantee that the bison would congregate near US 36, or even in areas visible from the highway. Cherryvale Road offers many viewing opportunities for the South Area, and some for the North Area. OSMP has included funding for the development of a viewing area under each of the scenarios.

Neighborhood Effects

There are scattered homes and rural subdivisions (South Area: Mesa Valley, South Vale and Wildflower Ranch, North Area: Benchmark and Bari-Don Knolls) adjacent to or nearby the evaluation area. OSMP

neighbors have expressed concerns about increased traffic and vehicle speeds, noise, danger to children and pets, increased need for subdivision funded maintenance of roads, littering, loss of privacy and trespassing.

Neighbors, especially those whose property borders OSMP or who have a direct view to the OSMP boundary from their homes, have objected to aesthetic intrusiveness of the exterior bison fence.

Cultural Landscape

A cultural landscape is one that has evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. The State of Colorado has preliminarily determined that the area along Cherryvale Road from South Boulder Road to 1226 Cherryvale (Fox/Hogan Farm) is a good example of such a property and may serve as both a National and Colorado Register Cultural Landscape featuring both architecture and ranching. Records provide information that shows cattle (both dairy and beef) and horse ranching have been the historic use of the land for approximately 120 years.

Although exact boundaries have not yet been determined, the land along the Cherryvale corridor qualifies as a historical cultural landscape because it is still being used for a cattle ranch operation, and thus looks much as it did after homesteading. The view that flanks US 36 is essentially the same that existed over 100 years ago. Ditches provide water for the pastures, the pastures sustain cow and calf operations and wildlife roams the land next to the cattle as it has historically. Both the Fox/Hogan Farm at the south end of the proposed landscape and the Viele/Van Vleet complex at the north end are used in almost the exact fashion as when they were first established as cattle ranches. Two properties on the Fox/Hogan complex are on the National Register of Historic Places, and the entire Viele/Van Vleet Ranch complex is a City of Boulder Historic Landmark. Other structures in the area qualify for historic designation status.

The structures and their relationship to the land and its current and historic use create an invaluable link to Boulder's heritage. By preserving the look of the land, the community gets a sense of place, and knowledge of the city's living heritage that can't be gleaned from a textbook. Visitors see firsthand one of the primary reasons people settled in Boulder in the first place over 100 years ago – opportunities for agriculture and stunning natural beauty.

While bison are certainly a part of Colorado's history, they were practically hunted to extinction before this land was homesteaded. Bringing bison back to the land is technically an attempt to recreate a *natural* landscape, not a *cultural* one. However, the two plots of land originally proposed for use by bison are within an area being considered for designation as a *cultural* landscape. As described above, bison require fencing much larger than that typical for cattle. Such fencing is not sympathetic to the historic fabric of the existing landscape. Also, over the passage of time, the grassland itself would change due to the use pattern of bison being radically different than cattle and the look of those parcels would change.

Because of the required new infrastructure and the change to the livestock pastures, the addition of bison onto this cultural landscape could diminish the cultural landscape of today. This potential adverse effect to the integrity would weaken the strong link to our past that exists today.

Ecological Factors

Greater detail about Open Space and Mountain Parks' conservation objectives and strategies for grasslands are contained in the Grassland Plan.

Habitat Fragmentation

Fragmentation is used here to describe a condition where once continuous habitat is separated into pieces that are completely or practically isolated from each other. Although OSMP lands include some relatively locally large blocks of habitat, even the largest are the fragments of extensive continental grasslands that once characterized the Boulder Valley, and the high plains. Nevertheless, the locally large habitat blocks have been demonstrated to be of ecological value; for example grasshopper sparrows, an indicator species in the Grassland Plan prefers large habitat blocks. The Grassland Plan sets objectives for increasing the number and size of habitat blocks. The creation of bison fences within larger habitat blocks will lead to a reduction in effective block size and may reduce the number of large habitat blocks.

The bison fence would act as a barrier to the movement of some animals, effectively fragmenting the landscape for deer, elk, lion, bear and possible coyotes. The incremental effect of the fence where it parallels US 36 is probably insignificant given the effectiveness of the highway as a barrier. However, the additional fencing would create a situation where wildlife could be trapped and unable to survive or reproduce within the bison enclosure. Modifications to the fence design may be possible to allow moderately sized mammals to move through the fence without providing passage for bison.

Xeric Tallgrass Prairie (including Butterflies, Skippers and Birds)

Xeric tallgrass dominates the evaluated areas outside the irrigated hayfields and is largely composed of warm season grasses. Warm season grasses flourish under dormant season/early spring grazing regimes, and decline in the presence of repeated grazing during the growing season. In addition to being biologically interesting, xeric tallgrass prairie is also globally imperiled. The ecological importance of the xeric tallgrass on OSMP lands has been recognized by both the State of Colorado and TNC. In 1984, the state and the City of Boulder partnered to designate the Colorado Tallgrass Prairie State Natural Area and developed a management plan for its long term sustainability. In 2001, TNC identified the tallgrass prairie stands along the Front Range (including those on OSMP) as areas integral to the conservation of biodiversity in the Southern Rocky Mountains Ecoregional Assessment and Conservation Blueprint.

OSMP's proposed three pasture rotational grazing system for the bison operation would reduce the regularity of grazing during the growing season in these areas, but not eliminate it. Over the long term there is likely to be a shift in the relative composition of warm and cool season grasses, which could lead to the loss of an ecological system of regional importance. Non-native pasture grasses and other aggressive non-native species would likely invade and spread in areas where native tallgrass cover declined over time. This transformation could be accelerated through supplemental hay use. Supplemental feeding, potentially for the entire winter, would have a high likelihood of introducing non-native weed seed. Weed free hay is difficult to find and often includes non-noxious, non-native weed seed. If supplemental feed is placed repeatedly in a few areas, those areas will have reduced native plant cover and potential soil loss and weed invasion will increase.

Degradation of tallgrass communities could result in a decision to remove these OSMP areas from state natural area status. These shifts would be inconsistent with the management direction established in the City Council-approved Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan.

Xeric tallgrass prairie is habitat for a variety of ground nesting birds and rare butterfly/skipper species. Most of the birds nesting in this area are species that rely on taller stature vegetation to provide cover and protection for their nests. As a result, growing season grazing could impact the availability of habitat and potentially success of nesting birds. Butterflies and skippers rely on specific host plants on which to lay their eggs and rear young. Some of the skipper species in this area are globally imperiled, a level of rarity similar to that for the xeric tallgrass prairie itself. As a result, they are species for which OMSP strives to manage in a way that protects their habitat. Vegetation species composition changes in this area could result in a decrease in these host plant species, and as a result a decrease in the habitat available for these rare skippers and butterflies.

Ute Ladies-tresses Orchid

The federally threatened Ute ladies-tresses orchid, occurs in the evaluated areas in large numbers (**Appendix A**). These plants are also slow-growing, and vulnerable to grazing throughout the growing season. The Grassland Plan calls for continuing the successful management of the orchid with winter grazing, irrigation, hay cultivation and rest during the growing season. The plan also calls for actions that will support orchid populations where they occur. The bison donation proposal would result in agricultural practices that are inconsistent with the direction for conservation of the Ute ladies-tresses orchid.

Prairie Dog Relocation

The Grassland Plan established a set of prairie dog management objectives and strategies. One of these was the designation of certain areas as Grassland Preserves that could be used, under appropriate conditions, as receiving sites for prairie dog relocation. The balance of location, extent and area of prairie dog management areas was difficult to find because of polarized pro- and anti-prairie dog sentiments in the community. However the Grassland Plan was able to describe a situation that was acceptable to the OSBT and City Council. The largest of the Grassland Preserves in the Grassland Plan includes much of the South Area. One of the functions of the Grassland Preserve is to serve as a receiving site for prairie dogs when ecological conditions are acceptable. Receiving sites were needed to balance the Removal and Transition areas where prairie dogs were found to be incompatible with OSMP's agricultural sustainability or ecological conservation objectives.

With an ability to adjust cattle grazing patterns, staff anticipated that vegetation conditions in the South Area would someday meet the criteria necessary to allow relocation of prairie dogs. However, year round grazing by bison may slow or redirect this trend. Bison grazing may also encourage the spread of existing prairie dog colonies by maintaining overall lower stature of vegetation. In addition, presence of bison could make having relocation activities on the property problematic or impossible. If the bison donation is approved and bison placed in the South Area, OSMP might need to remove the area from the Grassland Preserve and determine the appropriate prairie dog management designation for the area.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

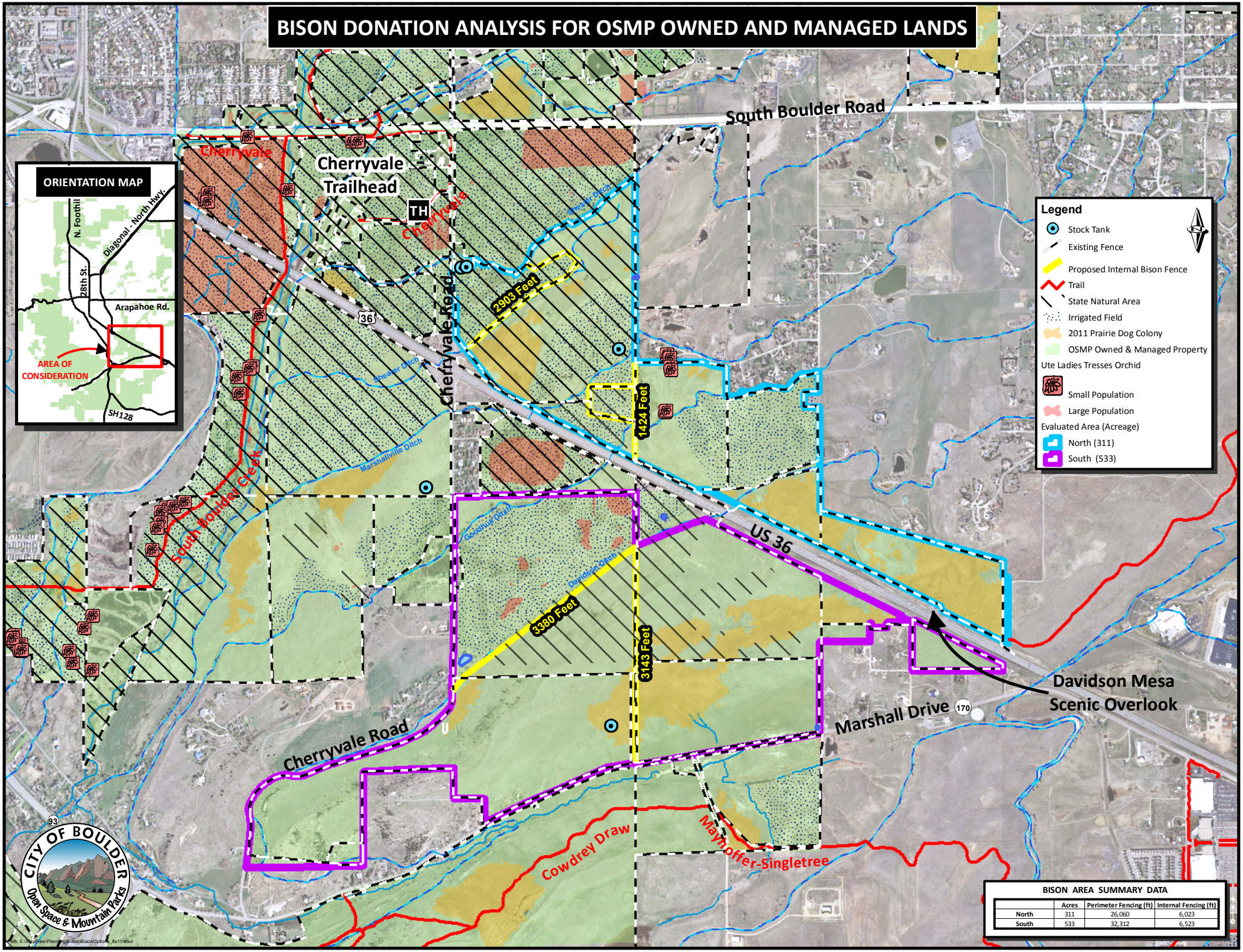
Staff's report concludes that either the North or South area could provide aesthetic appeal and provide people driving US 36 with an opportunity to see bison. There would also be significant start-up costs ($460,000 to $640,000), potential degradation of xeric tallgrass prairie ecology, a reduced ability to manage the area adaptively, and the elimination of visitor access. Because of the high cost, the need to dedicate a large area of OSMP lands to a single purpose and because of substantial public/neighbor opposition, staff is recommending that the North and South areas be removed from further consideration as locations for a bison ranching operation as part of the proposed bison donation. Having identified the

relevant issues, staff is working to locate areas that provide similar benefits, but face fewer challenges, still preferably along an entry way to Boulder.

APPENDIX A

DETAILED MAP OF EVALUATION AREA

BISON DONATION ANALYSIS FOR OSMP OWNED AND MANAGED LANDS



BISON AREA SUMMARY DATA

	Acres	Perimeter Fencing (ft)	Internal Fencing (ft)
North	311	26,060	6,023
South	533	32,312	6,523

APPENDIX B

BISON DONATION ASSESSMENTS SUMMARIES
OSMP GRASSLANDS ALONG APPROACHES TO BOULDER

Northern approach to Boulder along US 36

This area had heavy cattle and prairie dogs grazing prior to its acquisition as open space in the late 1980s and is still recovering. Periodic population expansions by prairie dogs have slowed the recovery of this grassland even though OSMP removed livestock grazing many years ago. Prairie dogs are currently in expansion mode in this area, and vegetation monitoring indicates that the grasslands generally fall outside the range of acceptable condition for bare ground, native plant cover, native plant species richness, etc. Restoring these grasslands are important for a number of plant, bird and butterfly species. Staff's initial conclusion was that this area would not be a good choice as a location for the introduction of bison, largely because staff would not consider introducing livestock to this area until grassland conditions improve, and with bison, there would be very low management flexibility (largely because moving them is difficult and staff would probably not build the necessary fencing somewhere else "just in case").

Southern approach to Boulder along Colorado Hwy 93

(a) Jeffco Grasslands

The extensive bluestem prairie on the Jefferson County properties is a landscape that has not been geologically disturbed for approximately 2 million years. The grassland that has developed in this area is dominated by the warm season grasses, big and little bluestem. Staff has concerns that grazing during the growing season for these species could cause a shift in species away from the warm season bluestems, and staff is not quite sure what would come to dominate this area, based upon current patterns of vegetation, Canada bluegrass and some weeds are predicted. These grasslands are also habitat and part of a movement corridor for elk. Building a bison enclosure would disrupt the movement of elk in this area. These grasslands are also not exactly at a "gateway to Boulder," and traffic turns off on Colorado Highways 128, and 170 (Marshall/Eldorado Springs Drives) before even approaching the city limits. Therefore it did not appear to be a good match for what staff understood to be the "placement profile" for a bison herd. Staff did not consider this area further largely because of concerns over changes to the vegetation and patterns of elk movement, and the site's distance from Boulder.

(b) OSMP Grasslands along Colorado Highway 93 in Boulder County.

Similar concerns to those raised regarding elk use and travel areas affect this area. In addition, public access restrictions would affect the outcomes of the Eldorado Springs/Doudy Draw and Marshall Mesa/Southern Grasslands Trail Study Areas. Permanent and full access restrictions in this area, even in the HCAs, are likely to be a significant concern among community members. Existing trails criss-cross this area and the costs of fencing would be significantly increased by the need to fence the trail corridors, such a treatment would also adversely affect both the visitor experience, and OSMP's ability to manage the trail corridors (in the absence

of grazing - weeds are likely to proliferate). Staff considered all these concerns in its conclusion not to advance this area for further consideration.

Eastern Approaches (a) Baseline, Arapahoe and Valmont Roads

OSMP land ownerships in these areas tend to be small, with most of the acreage not readily visible from the roadway. They are also closer to the cities of Louisville, Lafayette and Erie than they are to Boulder. Staff did not believe that these properties were well situated to address the interest of some to identify the herd with the City of Boulder.

(b) Lookout Road
There are large and contiguous Open Space and Mountain Parks grasslands along Lookout Road from 95th Street to 75th Street. These are referred to as the Northern Grassland Preserve in the Grassland Plan. This forms the eastern entry to the Gunbarrel Area—some of which is in the city limits. Most of these grasslands are in restoration from annual crop cultivation, and most have seen extensive prairie dog occupation in recent years. There is little livestock grazing because of the condition of these grasslands, and like the northern approach, staff did not feel that the grasslands were ready to support grazing pressures by bison especially given the lack of flexibility in moving them should conditions degrade further. Recent efforts to locate an area for prairie dog relocation in Northern Grassland Preserve area met with strenuous objection by neighbors who indicate a strong desire to use the trails and open space in this area. Staff did not consider this area further mostly because of the condition of the grasslands as they recover from a history of intensive agricultural use in the presence of prairie dogs.

Diagonal Approach

Staff is considering a parcel along Colorado Highway 119 (Longmont Diagonal) as a potential alternative. It is located close to Boulder, is readily available from roadways, has the capacity to support a herd of bison, is not currently leased, involves few natural resource issues (there are some wetlands on the site), and does not see a great deal of recreational use.

Western Approaches to Boulder (Boulder Canyon, Linden, Lehigh, Eldorado Springs Drive)

The western approaches to Boulder were not considered due to the lack of grasslands visible from the roadway.

APPENDIX C

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED BISON DONATION EVALUATION

Dear Mr. Gershmanm:

I cannot believe that, yet again, I hear the City is negotiating at the expense of open space. It appears that enough cannot be done to detract from the natural beauty of decades of open space preservation. Why do we now need large shaggy wild oxen to disturb the balance of wildlife and integrity of open space that has existed for so long? Why does Boulder need to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on building facilities, fences, corrals?

Repeatedly, those entrusted with the responsibility to protect open space are taking steps to endanger it. First, there was the 35,000 square foot riding arena proposal on South Cherryvale. Then, there was expansion of fraking on open space. Now, it's bison. Seriously, are we trying to destroy the open space set aside for All to enjoy?

I have to assume this is going to negatively impact other wildlife fenced out of the huge area, such as deer, coyote, prairie dogs, bear, etc. Not to mention the additional impact on the surrounding neighborhoods as curious visitors, and the aforementioned wildlife, converge on the areas along Highway 36.

Have conversations taken place between the City and ranchers? I doubt it.

Were those who actually LIVE in the area consulted before now?

I do hope the City is giving considerable rational thought to the negative impacts on so many levels and to so many residents.

Richard **Adams** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

The placement of a small bison herd on either side of highway 36 at the entrance to boulder is ill advised for several reasons. At the present the entrance along highway 36 is very pleasent. The erection of a 7 1/2 foot fence along that route would be unsightly. Imagine the traffic problem caused with people stopping along that route to look at eh bison. Even the establishment of ""pull outs"" would cause traffic problems. The cost of erecting such and fence and the associated facilities to care for the anamials is not worth it. Boulder's Open Space is for the people of Boulder to use and enjoy. And for the occacional wildlife to pass through or use. The use of a bison herd such as this as a tourst attraction is rediculous. There will not be many people travel to Boulder to view a small herd of bison. I do not believe an increase in tourst visits to Boulder would off set the cost of establishing and maintenance of this group of bison. The city should decline Mr. Turner's offer to supply the animals.

Richard Adams

Amy **Adjuster** 4/22/2012

NO BUFFALO!!!

David **Alessi** Longmont CO 4/26/2012

Nice gesture, but there are too many negatives for the city, including the fence w/ barbed wire.

Mary **Althauser** Longmont CO 4/11/2012

I am opposed to the proposal to maintain a herd of bison on open space. Among the many factors that affect my decision are the cost, the unsightly fencing and the loss of the land for other purposes. I was especially interested in the comments from staff that the loss of the space may hinder prairie dog relocation. Having recently successfully defeated the City of Boulder's efforts to relocate pdogs in the Gunbarrel area, I worry with the loss of this habitat for pdogs the city may once again try to dump them on this area.

Mr. Turner made his donation at a gathering where he was honored by the Prairie Dog Coalition. I would have preferred he agree to take our excess pdogs and give them a good home on his many ranches

Mary Althauser.

Wayne **Angevine** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

As a long-time open space supporter and user, I find the bison proposal inappropriate and impractical. The city cannot afford and will not benefit from what amounts to a publicity stunt.

I am also one of the folks who fly model sailplanes on the parcel south of US36 and east of Cherryvale Road. It's a very low impact use, but finding appropriate space has become increasingly difficult. It would be best if that parcel remained available for our use.

Fred **Atencio** Boulder CO 3/28/2012

Trascribed from voicemail left for Mark Gershman, by Leah Case.

Fred Atencio received card in mail for Bison meeting. Is not available to attend.

My opinion is I would object to the bison donation because of the expense. I have a lot of experience with bison (old cow hand). They are hard to control, and expensive to maintain. City of Boulders tax payers will be spending a lot of money to take care of them. Will need high fences to control them, and people assigned to take care of them. They also carry a disease that can be transmitted to cows. Boulder beef will be contaminated by bison. There are a lot of things to consider. Boulder's taxes are being distibuted to Ted Turner. All he wants to do is donate 20 buffalo which is a tax write off for him. He has a lot of money and he really does not care about the public. I am concerned about the Open Space.

Judith **Auer** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

I agree with Jo Easton in his opposition to accepting a gift of buffalo. The land will no longer be open space to natural wild habitat and that is what we paid taxes for. The beituiful open view will be marred by extensive 7 and 1/2 foot fences. It will not be the land where the buffalo roam but a zoo. Often they will be far enough away not to be seen. Then there is the cost to taxpayers-money that could surely be better spent. Mr. Turner may be well intentioned but if you have go through with this then at least insist on an endowment from Mr. Turner so that maitenance will not be paid by taxpayers. He is getting free land and care for his herd-an exellent business deal. Who will get the meat when the heard must be culled-our homeless soup kitchens in Boulder??

William **Autrey** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

To the Boulder Open Space Trustees:

Open Space! Not prohibited public access because ill-tempered livestock pose a threat to recreationists.

Open Space! Not a 7Â½ -foot electrified, barbed-wire-topped fence lining the highway and side roads, creating the look and feel of a correctional facility at Boulderâs SE approach and rural neighborhoods.

Open Space! Not free advertising for institutions that wonât contribute a penny to the $650,000 capital investment and $100,000+ annual upkeep and maintenance of this soon-to-be restricted acreage.

Open Space! Not the attractive nuisance of a gawkerâs block and the subsequent slowdown and/or accidents along US-36.

Open Space! Not the PR needs of a select few, but for a public that pays via ongoing taxation for the purchase and administration of public lands that are open for the conservation, recreation, and enjoyment of all.

Sorry, Bruce and Ted, the citizens of Boulder paid for open space, not a bison preserve. And, to the Open Space Board of Trustees: Shame on you for considering this debasement of the publicâs trust.

- William Autrey

William **Autrey** Boulder CO 4/29/2012

Why are Boulder taxpayers being asked to subsidize an activity whose primary benefit is the public relations needs of the University of Colorado (the pot of gold at the end of the newly renamed ""Buffalo Highway"") and Ted Turner's downtown restaurant? While at the same time prohibiting public access to ""open space"" lands (paid for by the public) via an electrified, 7.5' fence? This is insane and smacks of behind-the-scenes influence. I urge the advisory board and city council to reject this suspect project.

Susan **Baker** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

Boulder has been an example of supporting native species in open space. I believe addition of buffalo would be an excellent way to support this conservation. Although the fencing and cost are of concern, I fully support the city moving ahead with this project. The lands under consideration are not currently open to visitors so it will not impact the current trail system. I would much prefer that this land be used for buffalos that resident and visitor can both enjoy rather than for private ranchers to profit. Please vote to accept the gift of a herd of buffalo to preserve this icon of the American west!

Andrea **Barnett** Longmont CO 4/8/2012

Surely the city of Boulder can find a more responsible way to spend it's citizens' tax dollars. To think that the stunningly beautiful and picturesque eastern approach to Boulder can be enhanced by criss-crossing the land with mesh fencing and a few bison is ludicrous. Those who currently lease that land have been excellent stewards and the grazing cattle and open space are a very scenic and pleasant reflection of Boulder's history and character. That land has been designated as open space and is home to a variety of flora and fauna to be enjoyed by all who pass by. If it is fenced sufficiently to keep the bison in, then other animals will necessarily be fenced out and their habitat destroyed. As a sixty-year resident of Boulder and Boulder county I am appalled that the City Council would consider spending enormous sums of money to establish and maintain what amounts to nothing more than a zoo. Please don't trade a charming and natural environment for a promotional bison display. Thank you.

Dennis **Bashline** 4/2/2012

Thank you and boulder staff. I would like to help with this project in any way I can. Fence building , ditch digging , hauling hay. What ever I can do to help. Thanks again!

dennis **bashline** boulder CO 3/29/2012

i think this is wonderfull. and will help in any way i can .thank you for involving the public.

Gary **Baughman** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

Why wasn't information regarding the meeting placed at the entrances to these areas so the public could attend?

Once again another open space area that we have been paying for is being considered to be closed to the public.

Catherine **Bender** Boulder CO 4/23/2012

Just say NO to this terrible idea of putting buffalo on city open space land. This is a terrible idea for all of the squillions of reasons that have already been presented. There is no need to spend more tens of thousands of dollars researching why this is a terrible idea. If it were a good idea, some local Boulderite would have come up with it by now.

Just say no to this outsider's ridiculous idea of a "gift".

Alternatively, we could "regift" them to Weld County.

Respectfully,

Catherine Bender
Boulder

Phil **Block** 4/2/2012

Mark Bison should be protected and have there natural home, but not in the city. I think that you should consider some federal land. The pastures is not the place for them. Phil

Karen Lee **Boardman** boulder CO 4/10/2012

I am writing to speak out against getting bison in Boulder, especially along the US 36 corridor leading into town.

First, this is a beautiful drive into our city--it is an open, vast, and beautiful view. Putting up a 7-foot, dense, mesh fence along the highway will ruin this open view and make it feel like we are driving into a prison camp, with the tall fence funneling us into town. The view is very important to our city--it is most people's first introduction to town, and is a terrific, sweeping, timeless view. Because the people of Boulder value Open Space, we have preserved this land and view; the Open Space around town is a trademark of Boulder, and a ""bison fence"" would destroy this.

Second, we value Open Space in Boulder, and by fencing this off for bison, you are closing our access to it--it will not longer be open. We purchased the land with our taxes, not to be closed to our walking there or using it, but to be open to all to use--not private lots, not private mini ranches, but open land for all to enjoy.

Third, the fence will keep out wildlife, and Boulder normally prides itself on protecting wildlife and preserving their land. Mountain lions, bears, bobcats, elk, deer, coyotes, and foxes are just a few of the special species that cross this land. Fencing them out would be terrible. Boulder is famous for its wildlife--let's not take away their space.

Fourth, the space allocated is not enough for bison to live as they used to do, hundreds of years ago. This is just a pen to raise meat for a local restaurant.

Fifth, cattle ranching is an age-old practice in Colorado, and eliminating it in this area not only takes away from families who have used the land for years, it also takes away the history of the area. By this I mean bison were not ranched in the old days--they were free and roamed over thousands of acres, whereas cattle have been ranched here since days of old. Pretending to have bison on these proposed plots of land so ""Boulder looks like it did long ago"" is ridiculous--the fence will ruin look of long ago. Cattle look great! And they co-exist with hikers and others who use the land, plus they have been here in this manner for over 150 years.

Sixth, it takes away a perfect site for glider model airplanes. Their pilots do not have many options for their sport, and the land was purchased also for ""recreational"" value.

Leasing the land to a small-time bison rancher, or having our city staff try to raise bison, is a terrible waste. It destroys our iconic viewscape, our entrance to the city. It impedes wildlife, it serves the limited ""needs"" of only a very small population. Our tax dollars for Open Space were intended for the greater good, not for special-interest groups.

Please say no to the bison donation. Let's let the cattle be our ""local source"" of meat that some desire.

Thanks for your time,
karen

Eli **Boardman** Boulder CO

See attached--"Boardman Camera"

Please see appended *Boardman Camera*.

Celia **Bockhoff** Boulder CO 5/15/2012

Dear Board of Trustees I am writing to offer my insights and opinions regarding the plan proposed by the City of Boulder to place 13 buffalos on the Open Space property flanking Rt. 36.
My husband and I live at 1670 South Cherryvale Road and our property backs directly on Open Space bordering the area to the south being considered for the bison.
My husband has lived here for thirty years - I have lived here for three. Both of us have enjoyed tracking an abundance of wildlife on the Open Space you are considering. We have seen many species make there home here and travel through - White Tailed Deer Mule Deer bobcats coyotes prairie dogs rabbits lots of birds and little critters and an occasional black bear. We consider the Open Space here a wildlife sanctuary and pray that it will stay that way. I can't imagine how devastated all these populations will be if they are fenced out and prevented from inhabiting their natural homes. In addition the open space has been explored and cared for by many hikers and naturalists studying the natural geology and habitats on this land. By fencing IN the bison we would fence OUT those who dearly care for this land thus preventing countless nature lovers from enjoying this precious area.
With the proposed bison plan we would be re-introducing one species on the land but barring and traumatizing the lives of untold other species.
This is a cost that is untenable. It clearly dishonors the covenant we hold with this land.
I urge you to recommend that is plan be rejected. Let us embrace our role as guardians and caretakers for a precious commodity: free and undeveloped land that all can enjoy and all the beings whose lives depend on it.
Thank you very much.

Celia Bockhoff
city: Boulder

Gary **Boucher** BOULDER CO 4/8/2012

This bison project is a terrible idea. First, it is an ego trip centered on Ted Turner. Second the very large costs of establishing and maintaining this roadside zoo should be prominently listed on the website, and in any case are unsupportable when the OSMP trails are in such desperate need of maintenance. Who knew there was an extra million dollars (over 5 years) floating around. How can we spend money acquiring more open space while withdrawing approximately a square mile from any use by hikers, bicyclists or indigenous wildlife?
As a 70-year old long-time Boulder resident who uses OSMP trails every single day, and mourns their ravaged state, I am vehemently opposed to this idea.

Gary **Boucher** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

Dear City Council Members:

Subject: Bison on OSMP land.

I wish to register serious objections on the part of myself and everyone I have spoken to about the proposed establishment of a herd of bison on OSMP land. Please consider the following points:

1. Cost. The project is purported to cost $500,000 to start up and $100,000 per year in perpetuity for maintenance. The $100,000 per year figure seems reasonable to me as to amount, but not as to purpose.
2. Erecting a captive zoo beside highway 36 does not represent wildlife management in any way consistent with the long-established goals of Boulder.
3. Nearly a square mile of land will be cut off from citizen access, not to mention access by the indigenous wildlife for the possible benefit of people zipping by in their cars, (not counting the drivers who should be watching the road).
4. As a 70-year old runner and hiker who uses OSMP trails every single day, I bemoan the decrepit state of all the trails in the system, most so eroded that people like me can no longer run on them. If there is half a mill plus a hundred grand a year available for an unneeded and unwanted herd of bison, that money should be spent on park maintenance.
5. Speaking only for myself, my support for public money to run OSMP will not continue as it has over nearly 40 years.
6, I find it preposterous to erect what amounts to an ego-monument to Ted Turner.
7. Approval of this project would seriously impugn the citizens' credibility and trust in the City Council.

The bison could, of course be used to feed the hungry, entailing far less expense, and being more in tune with Boulders 'eat local food' philosophy.

Gary Boucher
4405 Osage Drive
Boulder, CO 80303

Susan **Boucher** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

Esteemed City Councilors -

Those of us in the horse biz know there's no such thing as a free horse, we all know there's no such thing as a free lunch, and - trust me - there's no such thing as a free bison! The loss in the good will of citizens alone should concern you, never mind the loss of habitat, land, native plant species, money, etc. If you'd like a very long list of things I'd rather you spent tax money on, do feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan F Boucher

Susan F. **Boucher** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

I honestly cannot imagine what possible benefit to the city of Boulder a herd of bison will provide. The introduction of a species (regardless of where it once roamed) which will result in the destruction of hard-won habitat, the displacement of current wildlife, soil erosion, challenges to irrigation - NOT to mention the expense of building and maintaining enclosures far more secure than those required by cattle, supplemental feeding, veterinary care, monitoring... the list goes on. And on. Those of us in the horse biz know there's no such thing as a free horse, we all know there's no such thing as a free lunch, and - trust me - there's no such thing as a free bison! The loss in the good will of citizens alone should concern you.

Kathy **Bowen** Boulder CO 4/20/2012

Dear Mark,
end this discussion now. We do not want Buffalo. Instead of working and making money for the following year, I am fighting this idea.

Kathy Bowen and Craig Smith

Charles **Bryerly** Boulder CO 5/7/2012

Mr. Gershman,
I would like to offer some thoughts on the proposed introduction of 13 bison to Open Space. On the surface this seems like a good idea but I believe the impact to the current cattle operation and the adjacent neighborhoods may outweigh any gain from bringing the bison in. I don't know how much alternate pasture land is available to the Hogan's operation but it appears that this could pose a significant hardship if they are no longer able to run their cattle on this land. I am familiar with some of the acreage and it appears very healthy looks as though it has been well managed and cared for.
I do feel for the people who live on Merry Lane. There will me a major impact on their quality of life if the bison are brought in as planned. The 7.5' fence is pretty bad but I think the biggest problem will be the people coming to look at the animals. This will be very disruptive. Obviously there will be increased traffic, noise and litter but also just a lot of people hanging around a once very quiet and isolated neighborhood -- which is what the residence there love about that spot. I hope you and the council will take this into consideration when deciding on how this will work out. There may be some good compromise positions, such as creating a buffer near the neighborhood, holding the bison back perhaps to the south side of the creek that runs through there (sorry, don't know the name).
Thanks for your time.
Charles Byerly

Sandra L. **Buckner** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

This letter is written to urge you to OPPOSE introducing bison on Boulder Open Space land.

Placing 12 bison on this public land is a bad idea because:

1) the initial cost of $450,000 to $650,000 and the annual cost of up to $100,000 will take away a HUGE amount of funds from the rest of the Open Space and Mountain Parks system. Many other properties and projects will be compromised by having funds taken away.

2) the citizens of Boulder city and county will no longer be able to USE this large area for hiking, exercising their dogs, horseback riding, flying model airplanes, etc.

3) the cattle which are presently on this area will be gone, which means that the sustainable agricultural system of winter grazing, spring calving, and summer hay production will be lost to us and our children on hundreds of acres, just to âlook atâ 12 bison.

4) There will be more traffic congestion and problems on US 36 as people slow down or stop to view the bison, which will be over the hill toward CO Hwy 170 in the summer months (for hay production, if the South Area is chosen) and rarely very visible to the people.

5) OUR CITIZENS are more important than our visitors.

We need to preserve the rural agriculture of this Open Space, rather than enclose it for merely viewing 12 bison.

There is no wisdom in this proposal, so I urge you to OPPOSE it, and thank Ted Turner very much for his offer.

Sincerely,

Sandy Buckner
1077 S. Cherryvale Rd.
Boulder, Colorado 80303

David **Buckner** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

Dear Board of Trustees,

Please consider this citizen and neighbor's opinion that accepting the gift of bison from Ted Turner is not a good idea. The costs outlined by OSMP staff at the Public Meeting for infrastructure (largely fencing) were enormous (up to $650K)and are especially tough considering that the funds would have to come from OSMP operating budgets, already strained. The charge to use the land as it is now (in agricultural production)is met only in name given that perhaps only a dozen bison would be included and at most 10 calves would be available per year to provide any income. Given the high initial costs and likely high operating costs (estimated at $100K at the public meeting), proceeds from 10 bison calves would be a pittance. The existing bovine operation much more closely approximates what the charge to preserve traditional agriculture envisioned. This comes down to being a very expensive little zoo exhibit. Please decide to tactfully tell Ted that his generous offer just doesn't work for us.

Thanks,

David Buckner
1077 So. Cherryvale Rd.

Patricia **Butler** Boulder CO 4/17/2012

Dear Mark:

At the April 12, 2012 meeting of the Boulder chapter of the Colorado Native Plant Society some OSMP staffers made a very informative presentation about plant surveys on city property and in the Q/A period someone in the audience asked about the proposal to acquire a bison heard to live on city open space. The staffers replied that the department is studying this issue and suggested that we look at the website and send comments to you. Although I saw that the public comment period had technically expired by the time of the meeting, I was encouraged to send comments to you as you're preparing for a meeting with the OSMP Board of Trustees later this month.
I appreciate the appeal of a local bison herd -- in part due to the species' iconic association with the western prairie and, of course, as the CU mascot. But aside from the romance of this idea (and disregarding costs and the potential traffic issues that could occur depending on where they could be seen), I am concerned about the impact of even a small bison herd on the vegetation in the areas under consideration (which, I suspect, due to their proximity to the foothills, may not have been historical bison habitat). I know that OSMP staff have undertaken serious efforts to restore and maintain native vegetation in these open space areas and would hate to see those hard-won improvements undermined or reversed.

Specifically, as an advocate for native plants, I am concerned about: 1) fragmentation of wildlife habitat due to the type and height of fencing needed to contain bison, 2) long-term effects on globally rare tallgrass prairie (and associated rare butterflies and birds) in response to changing the grazing period from the current winter/spring regimen to summer (specifically I'm concerned that summer grazing will increase grazing pressure on warm season plant species that dominate the tallgrass communities) 3) the changing grazing regimen that will limit the Department's flexibility to adaptively manage these areas in response to potential future adverse conditions among the plant or wildlife populations (in contrast to current flexibility for cattle grazing), 4) restrictions on weed management and summer vegetation and wildlife monitoring, 5) weed introduction from hay that may be needed for supplemental feeding (especially during winter and drought periods) or if the existing prairie dog colonies expand and 6) in general, the overall intensive disturbance of feeding areas.

I know OSMP is dedicated to preserving natural areas to the greatest extent possible and that you and your staff probably share these concerns, so I urge you to make the City Council aware of these risks as it considers the bison herd. As soon as I hear that Council has scheduled a study session on this issue, I will be writing Council members with my concerns.

Betsy **Byrne** Boulder CO 3/28/2012

Oh please accept the buffalo to Boulder. If I were a student coming to visit CU and saw a field of buffalo coming over the scenic overlook, that would be it!!!! I would definitely want to be a buff!!! What better PR could CU get?

Frederick E **Caccese** 4/9/2012

Dear City Council Members:

Buffaloes are not cows. They are powerful and go where they want to go. I think that a herd of bison on Open Space and Mountain Park land will be viewed as the "white elephants" of Boulder. They will produce nothing, yet absorb a lot of money.

Sincerely,
Fred Caccee

Margaret **Campbell** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

Please do not accept these bison for our open space. It sounds like a good idea at first, but there are too many negative impacts for this to be a good use of our money or open space. This is basically putting the bison into a (large) pen which is really good for no one.

Please see no to this opportunity.
Thank you.
Margaret Campbell

Mona **Carp** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

PLEASE do not approve Ted Turner's proposal to donate bison to Boulder.

Dave **Carter** Westminster CO 4/4/2012

As Executive Director of the National Bison Association, and as an individual bison producer, I want to offer my full support for the proposed establishment of a bison herd on Boulder's Open Space.

Please see appended fully formatted letter

This proposal is consistent and compatible with the core mission of the Boulder Open Space program: ""Preservation or restoration of natural areas characterized by or including terrain, geologic formations, flora, or fauna that is unusual, spectacular, historically important, scientifically valuable, or unique, or that represent outstanding or rare examples of native species.""

The ecosystem of our region evolved through thousands of years of grazing by bison. The vegetation and wildlife in our environment all evolved in concert with bison. Reintroducing bison into this part of their native habitat will provide a living demonstration of the complex relationship between bison and the grassland environment.

In addition, the herd can be managed as an agricultural enterprise, which would support the mission of ""preserving agricultural uses and land suitable for agricultural production.""

The Open Space staff has done a thorough job of examining the issues surrounding this proposed donation. The plans they have developed will assure the public safety, and will maintain the ecological health of the open space. In addition, I believe that the actual construction costs for fencing and facilities may turn out to be less than projected.

As a bison producer, I am willing to work with the City in any way needed to assist in the implementation of this proposal. And, the National Bison Association would love to collaborate with the City to maximize the opportunity to educate the public about this magnificent animal.

Dave **Carter** Westminster CO

April 15, 2012
Dear Members of the Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees:

As I mentioned Wednesday evening, I am a bison producer, and serve as the Executive Director of t he National Bison Association. Following that meeting, I feel compelled to contact you with information and clarification regarding the proposed bison herd on Boulder Open Space.

At the outset, I was excited that this proposed donation offered a rare opportunity to incorporate a bison herd in Boulder in a manner consistent with the Open Space mission, and in a manner that would educate the public about the important role that bison play as a part of a complex ecosystem. Sadly the program proposed by the Open Space staff simply reinforces misguided stereotypes the public has regarding bison.

This is particularly frustrating because I have worked with the staff to offer information and Best Practices guidance based upon accepted standards in the bison business. Let me address the specific areas in which bison industry standards are at variance with the proposal under consideration.

Fencing
The core staff proposal is based upon constructing a seven-foot wildlife fence, topped by three wire strands, and including an electrified strand on the inside. This fending design has been presented as the requirement for keeping bison contained in a pasture. That is simply not true.

Yes, bison can jump six feet, and are powerful enough to run through common fencing. However, bison that are in a pasture with adequate feed, water and the correct social mix of bulls and cows have no incentive to try and test the fencing. On my pasture near Byers, much of the fencing consists of five strands of barbed wire no higher than five feet, along with one strand of electrified wire. While the animals initially "walked the fence line" when introduced into the pasture, they have never broken through-or jumped over-that fence. Several sections of the fence line on the open space property are already adequate to contain a bison herd.

Addressing the need to keep the public out of the pastures is likely a more legitimate concern than fencing the animals in the pasture. If city officials believe that a solid wild-life fence is required for that purpose, I would not argue. However, I would question the need for three strands of wire atop the fence.

Cost
The cost projection presented to the board of trustees is extremely inflated, even based upon constructing the type of fence proposed by the staff. According to my latest conversation with staff, they estimate a cost of between $11-$13 per foot for constructing the fence as proposed.

The National Bison Association has developed an Excel-based Fencing Calculator workbook to assist producers in developing a budget for fencing. This calculator has different spreadsheets for various types of fencing. Because we did not even have a sheet covering the type of fencing proposed by staff, I developed a new sheet based upon the type of construction proposed.

Using the retail price of materials from a local farm supply store, the calculator indicates that the cost of materials for the type of fence proposed by staff would be $1.96/ft. Addition of a single strand of electrified wire would add $0.04/ft., plus the cost of chargers.

Construction Costs for Woven Wire Fence - 6.5 ft., plus three strand barbed wire 10' Angle Iron-post on 20' Center
<see full letter in pdf form>

These costs do not include labor. Based upon a labor rate of $25/hr, and a total time required of 46 hours per quarter-mile, the cost of building the fence (materials and labor) should be about $2.82/ft. This is comparable with the actual costs typically paid for fencing on bison ranches.

The proposed pasture in the larger segment is about 570 acres. Based on the calculation that a section of land (640 acres) is one-mile square, it is safe to assume that there would be roughly four miles of fencing required for the pasture. That would bring the total cost of fencing to $59,584.

Corrals and Handling Facilities
Staff noted in their assessment that the City of Denver has a large barn on the Genesee property for the purpose of storing hay, and for providing a cover over the working facilities (scales and squeeze chutes). This is an unnecessary expense for a small herd. Hay stored for winter feeding can be placed in an enclosed pen and covered with a tarp.

There is no need to have the working facilities in a barn. This practice is often used on large ranches, where the annual roundup can cover a period of several weeks. On a small operation, the winter roundup usually requires 1-2 days. The rule of thumb is that, if it is cold, put on the insulated overalls...if it's really cold and miserable, wait until next week."

Again, I provided staff with an estimate of the cost of constructing handling facilities for the bison, Using current pricing from a local ranch supply store, and from the Pearson Company (a manufacturer of handling equipment for the bison industry). The costs projected for that aspect are $35,400 using all-new materials.

Handling Facilities
<see full letter in PDF form>
Accordingly, a rancher looking to put bison on a similar pasture would estimate $94,984 in expenses for the fencing and facilities. This is not even close to the amount projected by the Open Space staff.

Stocking Rates
Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of this proposal is the concept that only 12 animals would be housed on the pasture. This is close to 50 acres per animal.

As I mentioned at the meeting last Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service advises that bison be stocked at the same rate as cattle. According to staff, the acreage now houses 100 units of cattle (mother cow and calf = one unit) for three months each year. That calculates to a stocking rate of 25 animal units per year. That number should be used for bison, as well as for cattle.

Management
Staff mentioned in the presentation that the city may have to hire someone to manage the herd at a potential cost of $100,000 per year. I have offered to work with the city to manage the herd as a private rancher (I live 13 miles from the proposed site). There are other bison ranchers who may be interested in negotiating with the city to provide management as well.

Bison as Dangerous Animals
Some of the images presented by staff reinforce the misconception of bison as belligerent and dangerous animals. Bison are undomesticated and should be handled in a manner that respects their natural instincts as a prey animal. But they are not belligerent or dangerous if treated properly. The photos below illustrate the type of interaction my wife and I have with our bison herd near Byers.

The primary period requiring significant caution is during the roundup or sorting times when the animals are moved through the handling facilities. During those periods, experienced handlers will use low stress handling techniques to assure the safety of workers and animals alike.

Marketing Excess Animals

The question was asked at Wednesday's meeting regarding how excess animals would be handled. I believe that this property would best be used as a cow-calf operation. Under that type of operation, the calves would be sold after weaning each year. This could be handled in a variety of ways. For example, the calves could be sold through a sealed-bid auction or through private treaty.

Today, bison calves are selling for about $2.80 per lb. That means that each 400 lb. calf would bring about $1,120 in revenue.

Invasive Plant Species
Staff mentioned that any hay brought into the pasture could introduce invasive species of plants or noxious weeks. This can easily be handled by purchasing certified weed-free hay.

However, I wonder what steps are taken to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds or invasive species as cattle are moved onto the pastures periodically through the year. Any forage eaten by an animal prior to transport could end up being deposited in the pasture. Other weeds likely arrive as passengers on the coats of the cattle brought into the pasture.

In other words, this issue should not be of any higher concern for bison than for cattle.

Conclusion
The proposed donation by Ted Turner offers the city of Boulder with a unique and valuable opportunity to restore a native species to this portion of its historic environment, and to provide the general public with enjoyment derived from watching these animals work upon the land. Personnel within Turner Enterprises-some of the best buffalo people in the business-are willing to work with the City to facilitate the development of a successful project. In addition, the National Bison Association and individual bison producers are willing to assist as well.

I certainly hope the City will revisit the feasibility process and look at costs, stocking rates, and other factors that more accurately reflect the realities of modern buffalo ranching.

Best Regards,
Dave Carter Bison Rancher, Executive Director, National Bison Association

Dan **Catlin** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

The idea of putting a giant 500 acre pen with 7.5' fences along the US36 corridor coming into Boulder will completely defeat the purported purpose of having a bison herd in the first place. Notice the fence! See the bison? Notice the ugly fence not the bison. This is an exceedingly poor use of OSMP funds to say the least. This idea needs a whole lot more work and discussion before you accept this gift from Mr. Turner.

Dianne **Cauble** Boulder CO 4/6/2012

Regarding the bison gift please be aware that the first outbreak of brucellosis occurred in Yellowstone Park during the early 1900s when bison were moved into an area that had formerly held grazing cattle. So even if they arrive disease-free. They may not remain that way. The original Parks & Wildlife report is available online under brucellosis.

Dianne **Cauble** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

A former cattle grazing area in Yellowstone Park, which was later stocked with bison, led to the first outbreak of Brucellosis disease in 1919, according to a report by the Parks and Wildlife Dept. The original report is available online under the topic brucellosis. So, even if the bison arrive disease-free, there is no guarantee they will remain that way. I know City Council has performed a thorough investigation and will make a wise decision.

John **Christensen** Broomfield CO 4/10/2012

The whole idea of Ted Turner donating bison, requiring complete fencing off of open space to all other use is repugnant to me. We already have the Buffalo Bill site within 20 miles or so with bison that can hardly be seen most of the time. This looks like an idea with many unintended consequences and costs to Boulder that are unwarranted. I think you have answered the question just by looking at the costs, ecological, operational, and agricultural factors noted in your factors under consideration topics. Bison are not 'friendly' animals. They are extremely powerful, requiring an unsightly fence to contain them, and pose potential hazard and a liability to Boulder when located directly adjacent to US 36.

I see too many issues for Boulder to take on this unnecessary 'gift'.

John Christensen

Elaine (and Family) **Colvin** Boulder CO 4/24/2012

Hi Mark,

As a longtime resident of Boulder, I wanted you to know that our family is not interested in having our tax dollars go toward supporting bison in our open space. The Hogan family does a good job of keeping the open space in working order with their cattle and have been here for many generations. The land should be open for use by the county's residents and not closed for use by bison. Lets face it, we stole the land from the indians and killed off many species heartlessly that inhabited this land, sadly enough. I don't find any retribution in sticking 13 bison back on the I36 corridor. I do, however, think it will be sad to now kick a 4th generation rancher off the land...see the pattern??

Elaine Colvin and Family

Frances **Costa** Boulder CO 4/6/2012

Jo Easton's letter to the editor published in the Daily Camera on 5 April 2012 indicates that the expense associated with this gift is likely to be very high. If the writer's estimates are indeed correct (""up to three-quarters of a million dollars the first year and up to $100,000 each year after that""), and if the funds are taken from open space tax monies, I would like to weigh in as opposed to the project. I share Ms. Easton's concerns about the impact of fencing on other wildlife and on citizens' diminished access to open space and question the wisdom of this project.

Diane **Curlette** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

While a lovely romantic concept, the reality of having buffalo on our open space would present more minuses than pluses. Difficult animals to control, unsightly fences, denial of access to the space for grazers, visitors and wildlife, gawking motorists, severe traffic accidents if they escape on the roadway -- let's turn this expensive and difficult offer down politely. Buffalo are currently being raised on the prairies where they belong. Let's support them there.

Debbie Lerch **Cushman** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

I do not want to see Bison located next to Hwy 36 in Boulder. I look at the list of considerations above and I am overwhelmed by the potential negative effects on our land and open space. I love the West and I love the idea of Bison. But this will not be a necessary herd. It is a show piece that will cost the tax payers too much money and will make the entrance into boulder unsightly. It is perfect the way it is now to see open space and grassland, cattle and coyotes welcome us to our fine city!

Patty **Dance** 4/19/2012

Why not acquire the Shanahan Farm and install the buffalo there? There is room to provide parking for tourists, the land is large enough to be grazed in cycles that would not deplete native grasses and flora. More room for them to roam and less of a traffic hazard than busy Route 36.

Patty Dance
Boulder County resident

Cliff **Daniels** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

After reviewing the material, and listening to the presentation/introduction, I am against the installation of buffalo on the Open Space. Few people, if any, benefit.

- Cost (is this the time in 2012 budget constraints to be even allocating these type of financial resources to such an endeavor?)

- ROI for +/- 13 buffalo per determined acreage, is this a means for the effort to enhance the City (and how is this an enhancement) vs the actually initial and future budget costs to the City?

- Is the fencing the desired visual plan the City wants to incorporate into the City Open Space, despite the reality of implementation costs?

There are very few reasons for a positive endorsement beyond a traveler on 36 with a ""Wow, look honey, buffalo"" factor compared to the substantive/realistic reasons to reject such an initiative.

respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Cliff Daniels

Cliff **Daniels** Boulder CO 5/15/2012

Dear Mark,

I would like to take a moment of your time to prepare for the May 23rd Council regarding the topic of the +/- recommendation of buffalo on City Open Space.

Would you at your earliest convenience provide additional input on the possible "Pro" consideration/s of placing buffalo on Davidson Mesa? I have made an attempt to outline the "Pros" and "Cons" of this proposal, many details coming from your Open Space presentation regarding buffalo to City Council Members.

Pros:
Ted Turner gives the City 13 buffalo to harbor on Open Space at "no charge".
"Home on the Range" – (but, deer and antelope no longer play due to fencing) provide citizens and visitors to
view 13 buffalo. This may be "neat", and the expense/budget worth the endeavor
Ted Turner buffalo themed restaurant benefits in advertising donation to City.

Cons:
Fencing: 7.5' to 12' - short space pole spans
Comments from a local buffalo rancher utilize 12' fence height, smaller tract, her cost: $2,000,000,
her buffalo clear an 8' high fence.
Two Open Space parcel choices are key sections of Open Space, causing a large fencing budget, plus the
additional internal fencing proposed
Aesthetics: "Stalig Boulder" image fencing coming/leaving Boulder
Costs will include:
Fencing (external plus the internal parcel fencing) - very large tracts
Full time wrangler/s - manage watering / feeding / rotation, managing fencing
Vet services
Yearly management/maintenance costs of herd (food - water - rotating)
In event of drought, project to be decommissioned, track of lands restored to previous status
Legality of changing the vision of the Open Space Charter, Visitor Plan, Article XII
Damage to native species
Exclusion of native wildlife and persons to access Open Space, becoming "Closed" Space
Keeping the parcels "open", unobstructed physically and visually to keep in natural state vision change.
Congestion: Parking / traffic accessing neighborhoods / US 36 (add to current pull off?)
Ditch Corps: violation to Ditch Corp access and safety to current Ditch water rights/maintenance
County: County permitting for extended fencing height and any roadway pull offs
Impact: On current four generation cattle operation. Fear of bison contagion to cattle operation
Insurance: additional liability coverage for any escaped buffalo/s
Univ of CO: lack interest in participating with input or financial support

Respectfully submitted for your review. With so many "Cons" regarding this proposal, your feedback and any insight from the Open Space Board concerning buffalo on Open Space would be appreciated.

regards,
Cliff Daniels
Boulder Colorado

Colinda **de Groen** Golden CO 3/28/2012

What a great opportunity for the younger generations to see this icon of the Old Wild West that decorates the back of our Nickel!

Dean **DeLille** Boulder CO 4/29/2012

Please vote NO on the Bison/Buffalo herd for Boulder, and the proposal and offer from Ted Turner. The expense is just too great, not to mention the ugliness of the high fence, and the fact that folks will no longer have any access to that portion of open space. In these recessionary times especially, the taxpayer's money can be put to much better use and items that are much more needed.
Thank You for your consideration.
Sincerely,
Dean DeLille

Susie **Donahue** Broomfield CO 4/11/2012

As a native of Boulder, born & raised on south Cherryvale Road I am writing to express my strong negetive feelings about the proposed Bison Project in the open space flanked by US 36 and Cherryvale Road. When I first read the article in the Daily Camera this past fall I thought it was laughable because it seemed like such ludicrous idea. I'm not laughing now that it has become something that the City of Boulder has taken the preposterous stance of discussing and spending time/money to ""study"". I think any logical person would find the following points more than reason enough to end this huge waste of time & money:

1. The current ""lessee"" is a family that has been ranching in this area for generations. They have the managment of this property down to a science resulting in the most pristine tall pasture in the County. The Hogan's are a huge part of Boulder County's agricultural history and this is their LIVELYHOOD!
2. The OSMP Department couldn't pay someone to manage this pasture and tall grass ecosystem as beautifully as the lessee. In fact, OSMP has continually shown their inability to manage their property (weeds, erosion, etc) while asking for more money to cover their shortfalls every election. The current use results in one of the best maintained open space parcels AND it produces revenue. This is such a HUGE WIN-WIN for OSMP and the taxpayers. Why in the world would you want to disrupt this well-run, longstanding operation? Well-managed land that generates revenue vs. replacing with a breed that turns pastures to dust and spending large amounts of money for upfront ($450-600k) and annual costs ($100k) Any sensible person would choose the former.

I know there are other arguments against the Bison Herd including safety, unsightly tall fencing interrupting an incredible view corridor, hot-wire and traffic. However, I feel the two points above should be reason enough to end this discussion and get back to life as usual on S. Cherryvale.

Why? I can't think of any reason that the City needs to take Ted Turner up on this un-generous offer. It is a waste of City, County and natural resources and for what benefit? As a realtor who has the priveledge of introducing people to the area one of the things I'm most proud of and get a wonderful reaction from is cresting US 36. This is where I point out all of the beautiful open space and explaining how great it is that our open space system strives to maintain historical use - cattle ranching, farming, etc. People are in awe of this living history.

I plan to move back to S Vale Road someday. I hope the sun-filled, waving pastures, baby calves and roaming coyotes, fox & deer are there to share with my family and fellow taxpayers. Maybe I can still wave to a Hogan on a horse or a tractor doing what their fathers and grandfathers taught them to do.

Sam **Dorsi** Boulder CO 4/4/2012

Please decline the gift of bison. I don't think the Boulder Open Space should be in the business of operating a ranch, zoo, or wildlife restoration project. I support Open Space bonds because I am interested in create more public land for recreation access. Fencing-in land for bison would run counter to that goal--less open space would be available for public access. I am also concerned that land that is currently leased to ranchers would become unavailable for actual ranching. Boulder would lose a source of income in the leases, and productive cattle grazing land would become 'showpiece' bison grazing land.

Thank you for including my comments.

Debbie **Duggan** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

As interesting as it would be for residents and visitors to see Bison as they enter the Boulder Valley, I absolutely do not believe it warrants the initial investment or the ongoing costs that would be necessary to maintain the herd. In addition, the Open Space views that make our community so pleasant and appealing would be ruined by having a 7 foot high, miles long fence surrounding the open space, which would keep the bison in but also keep out all the other wildlife that relies on that same section of open space currently. Why trade a ""domestic"" animal herd for our current Wild life animals? The affect that the herd would have on the tall grass prairie would also be devastating. The over population of prairie dogs on our open space land has already turned areas that were once beautiful tall grass prairie land into dusty, desert wastelands with minimal vegetation. Having a herd of bison in a fenced off area will most likely create the same ill effect. Finally, every time we turn around more and more of the open space that our residents have taxed themselves so much for, is being closed off or over regulated and thereby being taken away from us. I do Not support the proposed Bison Donation.

Jo **Easton** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

Why are the donor and City Council so interested in the bison being visible from the turnpike? This smacks of ulterior motives, such as free advertising (for Ted""s Montana Grill), CU boosting, and Boulder boosting. Nothing wrong with all that, really, except for the fact that it steals from the citizens of Boulder, who willingly taxed themselves for the benefits of Open Space. Please keep in mind the reason you have any Open Space to manage in the first place.

Joanna **Easton** Boulder CO 4/1/2012

I think putting Ted Turner's bison on these parcels of land is a terrible idea. It will cost taxpayers too much money for feed, fencing, and water. and there will undoubtedly be other associated costs, including lost leases with the Hogan family ranching operations.

Speaking of the Hogans, this plan will have catastrophic consequences for them. There is, after all, a long history of ranching in Boulder County. The Hogans have been good stewards of the land, the result being beautiful, accessible open space for the people of Boulder to enjoy.

Why is the City of Boulder Open Space thinking about allowing this land to become inaccessible to the people who paid for it through their taxes? To accommodate a herd of bison, there will have to be tall fences criss-crossing the entire area. That sounds like an expensive, obtrusive theft of our Open Space.

I would like to remind OSMP that when the bison existed here naturally, there were no fences. If bison are fenced in, other animals will be fenced out. This land is home to deer, elk, coyotes, bobcats, and foxes, as an example, and I think they are more important to lovers of Open Space than a fake herd of bison.

In truth, I am appalled that the City of Boulder is even considering such a shortsighted, high-handed idea.

Jo **Easton** Boulder CO 4/6/2012

Dear members of Boulder City Council,
I am writing to voice my opposition to the Open Space Mountain Parks plan to fence in a small herd of bison on what is now beautiful, accessible, productive ranch land. I see nothing to be gained by giving away up to 530 acres to 12 - 20 bison, and much to be lost. Other animals - deer, elk, coyotes,and bobcats, to name a few, will be fenced out, and where are the pluses to be found in that? Remember who pays for the Open Space, please, and why we have been willing to do it year after year. I see no grandeur in looking at a small herd of bison in a big pen, especially when that pen is to lock people out as well as to lock the bison in. This is a squandering of the taxpayer's money, and theft of the use of the land. Please turn down this far too expensive "gift".

Sincerely,
Jo Easton

Vicki **Edgington** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

I don't mind the gift....I'd rather the City spend money on this going forward instead of buying more open space (which we have enough of!).

Lorri **Flint** Boulder CO 4/20/2012

Hi Mark,

I'm adding my opinion of the proposal to have Bison on Boulder Open Space. I think it makes no sense at all for the City and only benefits Ted Turner by drawing attention to him and his restaurants. This is not a "gift" the City should accept.

The City has no business spending funds to maintain Bison on a limited parcel of land purchased as Open Space and surrounded by an ugly and costly fence.

There are many needs within the City that could be better served with the funds it would take to prepare for and maintain the herd.

I hope the City puts this proposal to rest soon and moves onto more important matters.

Sincerely,

Lorri Flint

Jeremy **Funk** 4/19/2012

The idea has too many moving parts. I live here and can not possibly support this initiative. A Stalig coming into boulder will look horrible.

Just my two cents.

Annie **Gaddy** lafayette CO 4/7/2012

Please, please keep this open space OPEN!
Let the animals who already inhabit the space stay -
please do not fence them out or the bison in.

Laine **Gerritsen** Boulder CO 4/27/2012

This proposal is a no-brainer to me. Yes, I guess you have to think of all the implications, but don't lose sight of the big picture, which is driving into Boulder and seeing a herd of Buffalo. How cool! How perfect!
There is a way to make this happen by private fundraising, I'm sure. The Athletic Dept backers are an obvious source of money.

Serge **Goldberg** Boulder CO 4/4/2012

I like and support the idea of having the bison herd on open space land.

John **Graves** Erie CO 4/5/2012

My name is John Graves, I live in Erie, and I manage a horse ranch in South Boulder, across the street from the proposed south bison area. I have worked for the National Bison Association, Rocky Mountain Natural Meats (the largest bison producing company), and train Ralphie for the University of Colorado. I have worked on several bison ranches and volunteer at the National Western Stock Show when the bison are brought into the Stock Yards.

I believe this is a great opportunity for the city and would be a huge mistake if bison are not brought into Boulder and managed by the city. Bison were here on this land long before any of us and they must be brought back. There are many herds throughout the United States that are run and managed by State and local funds. Locally Denver owns three different herds of bison, the Genesee herd, the herd located at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, and a herd located down south. These herds are very healthy and sustainable.

While the initial cost of setting up fencing and facilities for bison will be expensive, some of the cost could easily be offset by the sale of the calves and tourist activities. Fact of nature with bison is they are very fertile and a herd typically averages out 85-90% calf rate each season, far higher than cattle. Having bulls and cows in the Boulder herd will lead to calves plain a simple. The calves can be used to grow the herd, or sold off at various sales that happen around Colorado throughout the year. The Genesee herd holds a sale at its facility every year to sell off its calves and other animals. They also bring animals to the National Western Stock Show to be sold. Having a herd so close to a high population area will easily attract tourists to the area. Those tourists will come to see the bison and then travel into the city for shopping, dining, and other activities contributing to the cityâs sales tax revenue. Increase in sales tax revenue will not directly support the herd, but it will support the city that manages the herd.

Outsourcing the management and handling of the herd would be a mistake. By keeping it in house, it is very easy to control how the herd is managed and what decisions are made with respect to the animals and the pastures. Unlike cattle, bison are very hardy animals and do not require much attention and handling. Bison do not require any assistance with calving, are not as susceptible to disease as cattle are, will eat almost all grasses and weeds the grow in our area. All this leads to the need of a small staff that works with the animals year round and not a huge expense in employment.

The proposed north bison area would be the best choice. The current irrigation ditches could remain and be used to irrigate the pasture and carry water to ditch users downstream. The area in the north proposal, on the east side, would greatly benefit from bison grazing the pasture. Currently this section of land is rarely grazed by the cattle using the land due to the lack of high quality vegetation and presence of rocks all over. By allowing the bison to graze the area, they will eat whatever vegetation is there (they are not picky), will help spread seeds and nutrients through their manure, and will loosen the compact dirt with their hoofs while they graze. The pastures in the north proposal, on the west side, could still be used by the Hogans to hay each summer by the use of the proposed fencing that would be installed through the middle of the whole north area. The current Davidson Mess Scenic Overlook could be expanded to allow people to observe the herd more easily than if the herd was on the south side.

Many people are concerned about bison and safety to people. While this is a concern it should be a small one. Bison are known for testing fences, and gates, and can find a way through almost any fence, but happy animals will not test a fence. If the herd is too large and there is not enough forage to eat, bison will try to seek areas that mi

patricia **greenberg** Boulder CO 4/6/2012

I am completely against accepting this donation which will cost the city a very large amount initially and will have continuing expense. There are so many city programs that could be funded instead of a herd of bison grazing on open space!

This seems almost like a serious advertisement for the University mascot. Please don't waste taxpayer money!

Sallie **Greenwood** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

Bison are meant to roam rather than be penned up and their proclivity to roam maintains the habitat. I think the gift is well-intentioned but wrong-headed, and costly in terms of not only money and staffing and infrastructure, but essentially destroys the prairie dedicated to the animals. I would much rather we say no, and concentrate our resources on the business of keeping and expanding the lands we have.

Tom **Gressman** Boulder CO 4/11/2012

Introduction of Bison into the Cherryville property is not a good use of resources. I hike and fly model gliders on this property. Bison would eliminate those activities because of their aggressive behavior. The fences would make this area look less like a natural setting. I ask you not to approve this project for economic, aesthetic and limiting use reasons.

Bob & Jane Grotluschen Boulder CO 4/10/2012

April 9, 2012

City of Boulder
Open Space and Mountain Parks

Re: Bison Donation Evaluation

To All It May Concern:

I am writing to provide comments from attending the City of Boulder Bison Donation Evaluation Open House. I live in Unincorporated Boulder County directly across Cherryvale Road from the proposed Bison Donation site. Please make no mistake; I am strongly opposed to the City of Boulder using this Open Space land to receive a donated herd of 12 – 20 bison from Ted Turner of Ted's Montana Grill and to install a 7-1/2' fence around and within pastures to manage them. I believe to accept this donation would be a grave mistake.

Let me address some of the points presented. To reintroduce a conservation herd of bison in this area using 12 head, hand feeding them, and placing number limitations do not constitute a conservation herd. This is a fenced zoo much like the San Diego Wildlife except that there will be limited observation opportunities. To reintroduce a species to an area requires that the area be vast enough to handle the numbers released after which the animals are left to acclimate and reproduce with natural survival instincts. Take a look at the reintroduction of moose to Colorado, the wolf, the lynx. In this scenario you are fencing in the bison and prairie dogs and fencing out everything else that cannot fly. There are no natural predators for the bison and bison do not eat prairie dogs! You will be taking a diverse ecosystem that is flourishing and turning it into a faux ecosystem that contains only two species.

That brings up "wildlife effects." A fence of this magnitude and expense (not including the costs to install and run hotwire around the 7-1/2' proposed fence) will not serve the existing wildlife and Boulder County citizens well at all since all will be excluded! At present there is a plentiful variety of wildlife that happily coexists with the present ecosystem. To artificially disrupt this for a viewing herd of bison makes no sense. To remove the opportunity for the tax-paying public to recreate on this open space land is not in the keeping of open space land designated for agricultural use. The esthetics of a 7-1/2' fence is less than pleasing – it is ugly! It will make our countryside look like we are housing a prison.

Agricultural economics was mentioned several times. I am opposed to the City of Boulder spending open space tax revenue for this endeavor. It is under the guise of a wonderful opportunity to reintroduce the bison to Boulder County when in fact, it is an opportunity for Ted Turner to promote his conservation endeavors and his restaurant in the City of Boulder and for The University of Colorado to promote its mascot and logo of the Buffalo. All this comes free to them for a ridiculous amount of taxpayer money for the small investment of 12 animals on their part. At least a quarter million dollars to set up the area for bison and over one hundred thousand dollars a year to operate is preposterous. The lease revenue received for 12 bison has to be far less than the lease revenue Boulder and OSMP receives for the approximate 150 cow/calf ranching that will be displaced. The sale of 12 bison calves or yearlings per year cannot possibly put more meat into our local food production than 150 bovine calves or yearlings. This I know to be true as we have raised Longhorn cattle and are quite familiar with all aspects of ranching and raising large animals for profit or mostly, no profit. There is no profit from 12 head of bison compared to the costs of managing and running such an operation. You brought in a bison rancher but neglected to hear from other ranching experts. Seemed like a very one-sided view.

Please appended photographs

The landscape benefits are horrendous. You will be taking some of the finest grazing and hay producing acres in Boulder County and turning it into dust. The bison graze an area until it is eaten down and then move on. The prairie dogs follow and continue to denude the land. As you might be able to note from the attached pictures the positive landscape from present ranching practices and the bare and weed (flowering bindweed) infested land where

the prairie dogs have moved in. The long term changes to vegetation will not be so long term in destruction but will be long term in recovery, if ever!

Addressing the effect upon existing lessees is an item you should take very seriously. The City of Boulder would be displacing one of the oldest ranching families in the county. The Hogan's' have been a part of the agricultural success of Boulder County for generations. They have passed down ranching techniques and knowledge from generation to generation. Much of their knowledge and practice of day-to-day ranching has not and cannot be learned from books or theory. Modern ranching knowledge is not ignored but rather assimilated into successful ranching practices. To displace these hard-working Boulder County natives would be criminal. It would also be hard pressed to find a more "model" example of ranching and ranch life anywhere else in Boulder County. This is education already available and accessible.

The Open House addressed Bison Ranching Operational Factors. Animal numbers, stocking rate and management objectives are all based on maintaining a constant number in the herd and therefore the idea of reintroduction and conservation is not logical. This will be the Boulder Bison Zoo where city people can come, spend 5 minutes once or twice a year and then say "Oh been there, done that!" It is a "feel good" for Ted Turner and CU using my taxpayer money with no regard to the quality of life that is out here on and around this acreage.

Under several categories the topic of safety was brought up. Bison are reputed to be "mean and meaner." People who do not work with large animals are at an greater personal risk from doing some "dumb and dumber" interactions with the bison. Can these bison be safely managed squeezed into an urban setting given their disposition? What about the people who must go in with them? What about the traffic on US36 and Cherryvale Road? Cherryvale is heavily used for bicycle and jogging recreationists as well as commuter traffic during the rush hours. Additional cars cruising by looking for the 12 bison and then perhaps needing to pull over is a scary thought. The same goes for US36. The 6 to 7 hours of daily rush hour traffic produces many accidents. Are you willing to add another distraction to these commuters? Will US36 have a safe way for people to park and get out of their cars? The same problem exists for Cherryvale Road. The road shoulders are not really designed for this type of use.

I do not want this "generous offer" from Ted Turner to be accepted by OSMP or the Boulder City Council. I do not want to see The Boulder Bison Zoo or and operation that will be like Disneyland in my backyard, literally. As a voice from a county resident I realize that I have no strength in numbers nor do I have an opportunity to vote for people who serve their constituents to speak for me. I resent the City of Boulder messing with the open space that is designated for agricultural purposes when there is absolutely nothing wrong with how well this land is managed now. I resent the City of Boulder impacting our quality of life. I am not pleased that the City of Boulder will use city and county Open Space Tax monies to fund this donation that will be free advertisement and promotion for Ted Turner, Ted's Montana Grill and the CU Buffalos. I hope that you will consider the real disruption and damage this will cause and recommend that the City of Boulder tell Ted Turner "Thanks, but NO THANKS!"

Sincerely,

Jane Grotluschen
5887 South Vale Road

Bob **Grotluschen** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

To Whom it May Concern;

After attending the Open House on March 29th I would like to offer my comments on the proposed bison donation.

My first concern is the negative impact on the current cattle ranch operation on the indentified property. Either of the proposed sites for the bison would have a tremendous negative impact on the present ranching operation. By taking a significant portion of the hay meadow away from the cattle ranch, hay production for winter feeding and winter grazing will be greatly reduced.

The cow/calf operation on the former Van Vleet and Church Ranch properties has been in place for over 100 years. It is a significant part of the history of Boulder Valley. Open Space was intended to preserve history and to maintain the area in a manner consistent with its historic use. I don't believe it was intended for Open Space to become "Disneyland" for Ted Turner. The present use of the land is an excellent example of good land stewardship. No overgrazing or out of control weed infestations. Locally produced naturally raised grass feed beef cattle.

No one has mentioned how much of a herd reduction would be required by the current operation to adjust to the loss of hay production and winter pasture, but I would estimate that it would a least a reduction of 100 to 150 cows. That's approximately a third of the operation. The continuation an Agricultural Use has been mentioned as an important aspect of the land. How does a loss of 100 to 150 head of cattle to be replaced by 12 to 20 bison make any sense as an agricultural use?
It was also mentioned that the anticipated loss of lease revenue from the cattle ranch would be "a wash" with the lease income from the bison operation. How can that be possible? If a bison rancher's revenue is the sale of 10 calves and the cattle rancher's revenue is from the sale of 100 calves, how can the bison rancher afford the same rent as the cattle rancher?

Reintroduction of a species has been touted as a reason to replace the cattle with a few bison. There have been numerous specie reintroduction programs throughout the west. I am not aware of any that involved fencing in one species while fencing out other species. In my simple understanding of species reintroduction, a group of animals are placed in area where they are left to move about freely unmanaged by humans. They integrate into the natural surroundings and become part of the ecosystem. The great bison herds that roamed the plains migrated over huge expanses of the prairie. They didn't graze on irrigated hay ground. Penning a dozen bison in an area of 300 to 500 acres that is fully fenced and crossed fenced with forced pasture rotation, winter feeding, and significant human management isn't "species reintroduction". It's a bison ranch at best, but realistically more like a zoo.

Tourist attraction. Does Boulder really need another tourist attraction? The current ranch operation is in itself a great tourist attraction. The number of people who stop to look at and take pictures of the calves every spring should be evidence of the popularity of the current use. The proposed receiving sites are large. Just how visible will a small group of bison be from US 36? Will they be herded next to the highway for home football games?

Aesthetic concerns. How will a 71/2 foot fence be more appealing than the low level minimally visible fences that are in place today?

What about the ecosystem that exists today? The ranch land is home to more than cattle. Coyotes move freely over the ranch. What becomes of the rodent population when coyotes are removed? White tail deer are often seen on the Davidson Mesa. A few years ago, three elk wintered on the mesa. Bear, bocat and fox are also residents of the property. They will all be "fenced out". How can a diverse mix of large animals be replaced with two species

(bison and prairie dogs) and have it be called an “ecosystem”?

The costs for this program are significant. For a gift worth perhaps $20,000, the city is facing a cost of $500,000 to $1,000,000 the first year and $100,000/year thereafter. The employee time and resources spent just evaluating this “gift” has to exceed the value of the bison by many times.
Is this really the best use of the limited resources that are available for the goals of the open space program?

The biggest cost however isn’t the money. It’s the damage done to the historic ranch, the loss of the open vistas unencumbered by a zoo fence, the loss of access by the public and the detrimental impact on the existing wildlife in the area.

Bison populations have grown rapidly in recent years. Projections are for continued expansion of the bison industry. The novelty of having bison is gone.

There are many other needs for conservation and preservation that deserve a higher priority and could use the staff time and public funds that are being directed at this project.

Please tell Mr. Turner, “no thank you”!

Bob Grotluschen
5887 south Vale Road
Boulder, CO 80303

Timothy **Guenthner** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

I do not support the establishment of a herd of buffalo on Boulder County Open Space land. This is a terrible idea. We are all very grateful for the offer from Mr. Ted Turner, but please do not accept it. Boulder county open space is no place for a herd of buffalo. They belong on the huge open ranches and parks in Wyoming, SD, and other places where they now range. The time for a buffalo herd in Boulder County passed many, many years ago. The cost to build a fence to try to contain buffalo is way too high and a complete waste of money. The costs to maintain the herd on a yearly basis is way too high. The destruction to the open space land proposed to be occuppied by the buffalo is unacceptible, unnecessary and unrecoverable.

Please stop this plan. From every aspect, it is the wrong thing to do.

Bill **Hander** Louisville CO 4/4/2012

Dear Council Members,

I have recently become aware of the proposal to host a small herd of bison on Open Space land near US 36 as a symbolic gesture of some kind. As a 14-year resident, employee and taxpayer in Boulder County, I have consistently supported tax increases and proposals that make more Open Space land available to residents and indigenous wildlife. I am disturbed that the city is even considering a plan to build a large fence and put a few animals on display.

I am also a member of Boulder's RC soaring community, and the potential site on the south side of US 36 is used responsibly by Boulder's RC thermal glider pilots during select seasons of the year. The community spans young and old, and includes casual hobbyists as well as consistent national and world championship pilots. This is certainly a small slice of Boulder's population, and does not contribute significantly to Boulder's commercial success, but it is nonetheless something that brings Boulder worldwide acclaim and contributes to the rich cultural landscape.

Please consider my respectful objection to this proposal, and please move to maintain Boulder Open Space for its intended purposes. Please decline Ted Turner's proposed, and presumably self-serving, donation and allow people arriving into Boulder to enjoy Boulder's natural splendor rather than a conspicuous zoo exhibit.

Respectfully,
Bill Hander

819 Trail Ridge Dr
Louisville, CO

Vic **harris** Jamestown CO 4/10/2012

Having reviewed the materials on your site I am very concerned that the acceptance of the bison would generate substantial up front as well as ongoing costs. Additionally the environmental impacts appear to be both significant and adverse. Nothing in the materials indicates the benefits to either Boulder City residents or others of having such a captive domestic herd. Having bison able to range freely over a very large tract of land is quite different from bison in a relatively confined (less that one square mile) enclosure.
I hope that there will be a clearer reporting of the benefits to the community and the bison of such a plan and how the adverse environmental impacts would be mitigated before there is further serious discussion of this proposal.

sincerely,
Victor A Harris
POB 334 Jamestown, CO 80455

David **Hatcher** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I must express my opposition to Ted Turner's offer of 12 to 20 bison that would be fenced in along the Boulder Turnpike. The expense alone for the fence, which I've read would be $650,000, is insane, along with the approximate $100,000 per year to take care of the buffalo. Boulder doesn't need this kind of tourist attraction; the city is doing just fine without it. As a commuter on Highway 36, I'm painfully aware of the risks from distracted drivers. We definitely don't need anything else that might distract them. Please reject the bison idea.

Kyle **Herbertson** Castle Pines CO 4/11/2012

Buffalo - you are considering the care & feeding of them in Boulder county - if you elect not to do this please consider reaching out to The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg Colorado http://www.wildanimalsanctuary.org/. This is an amazing sanctuary is is they way wild animals should be cared for if you're going to care for them in the US. Zoos today are outdated old do not provide enough free space for animals and should not be in the middle of cities. These kinds of animals require tons of space to roam and wander and space to do it without being stuck in small spaces. Please be progressive and forward thinking on this matter and do what is BEST for the buffalo. Thank you! Ms. Kyle Herbertson

Lynn Marie **Herklotz** boulder CO 4/3/2012

Hello,
I was unable to attend the meeting on 3/29/12 due to out of town commitments, however, being a Colorado native and resident of the proposed area to be directly affected by this 'donation' since 1992, I strongly oppose the bison project/experiment.
I have reviewed the information provided on the OSMP site and tried to maintain an open mind to the project.
First of all, the magnificence of arriving in Boulder is the view one is impacted with upon ascending the Davidson Mesa, it is indeed awe inspiring. The addition of bison will add a 'wow' factor, but at the expense of half a million dollars up front and then $100,000 annually (which will increase with inflation) hardly seems like dollars well spent in this economy. How can the general public possibly be in support of Boulder spending this kind of money on a 'cosmetic' accessory to our beautiful rural lands, impacting the ecological and agricultural balance that has been long established, destroying the habitat for an endangered wild flower and displacing and disrupting the operations and lifestyle of the family that originally owned and sold this land to the city of Boulder?
Of course, I can't hold back from speaking to our needs as residents of this rural gem in Boulder. There might not be established trails in these areas, however, the proposed land on the south side of hwy 36 is used daily by the residents of this neighborhood for recreational and meditative purposes and has been the calving field for hundreds of cattle over the decades. This field contains a low lying wetland, which becomes saturated and boggy in the summer due to irrigation, this would only be worsened beyond reclamation with the introduction of bison.
If the two areas north and south of hwy 36 are the only considerations and the bison must be accepted (with the additional cost to accept the donation) it seems more sensible to construct a larger scenic overlook on top of Davidson Mesa to view the animals on the North side of the highway. This would eliminate the costs of an additional and unnecessary parking lot for viewing in the valley, eliminate the additional traffic generated to reach the parking lots for viewing, and not interfere with an already increasing amount of traffic on hwy 36. Furthermore, I would imagine the majority of onlookers would be coming into the city versus leaving the city, thus, a north side of hwy 36 habitat would be conducive to this visibility.
I thank you for allowing a forum for comments and I trust that my comment will be seriously considered.
Sincerly,
Lynn Herklotz

james **herklotz** boulder CO 4/6/2012

Where, oh, where will the buffalo roam? While the romantic vision of a small, but symbolic herd of American Bison roaming the plains of southern-most Boulder is a tantalizing one, it certainly would have a significant impact on the city and county of Boulder and those of us residents that border the proposed habitats.

Economically, the herd is a gift only in gesture and a responsibility thereafter. Does Boulder want or need to be a zoo (because we would certainly not be doing this as a profitable cattle ranching venture would we?) The initial infrastructure costs and yearly maintenance and care costs are going to be significant. To what degree will this be offset by increased tourism? How does Boulder market the herd?

How do you propose to rectify the loss of grazing and calving fields that the Hogan family currently utilizes for their ranching operation? Cows and bison don't mix well and I am sure these long standing ranchers - indeed the donors of many, many acres of Boulder's Open Space lands - will not be keen to fight the brucelosis battle with the city on top of having to either downsize or shift their ranching operations elsewhere.

As for the issue of where to corral these mighty beasts, the map provided here could literally put the herd in my neighborhood's front yard here on Merry Lane, south of 36. Obviously this would impact our quality of life and likely draw traffic, visitation and disruption to our otherwise pastoral setting. And while I wouldn't mind watching buffalo out my front window and getting a lot of great photographs, the very real possibility of a future parking facility here is most certainly a negative.

That said, I prefer consideration to be given to the north side of 36. I do realize that this will border some neighborhoods as well and I have not explored the boundaries over there to assess to what degree. Forgiving that bit of NIMBY hypocrisy, the whole point of the gift was that it would be among the first great sights as people crest Davidson Mesa on 36 heading INTO Boulder. Incoming traffic would scarcely be able to view the herd if it were placed on the south side of 36, and I dare say it would cause a dangerous traffic situation coming down the hill. There is already a scenic overlook and pull-off at the top of the mesa and this would be an appropriate, primary viewing area for the herd. An alternate pull- off could be provided along the shoulder of 36 lower down, conceivably, and the existing parking lot at the Cherryvale Open Space Facilities lot could be utilized. Perhaps a short trail from there through the field east of Cherryvale could be constructed to view the herd in the next field further east so as to allow the Hogans continued use of that 1st field adjacent to the barn.

So, if the decision is to accept and steward this herd, I would ask that you please prioritize the Hogan's operational needs and give due consideration to their concerns, first and foremost. Secondly, I would demand that logic dictate the location of the herd to the north of 36. And, finally, I would plead that we not accept a burden we can not sensibly afford to shoulder, if that be the case.

Sincerely,

James Herklotz
715 Merry Lane.

James **Herklotz** Boulder CO 4/12/2012

Mark,

Thank you very much for the very thorough and professional presentation you made regarding the bison proposal last night. I was unable to attend the earlier meeting, so this was my first exposure to the extent of analysis you and your staff have invested in this proposal. I know that you are in a hard place trying to find a way to make this work for everybody and that we residents of the adjacent areas are probably not easing the stress levels of your job any.

We residents of Merry Lane admit that we have a wonderful thing here in south Boulder. We are bordered on 4 sides by open space parcels. Merry Lane is a no-outlet street and we enjoy the fact that we get very little traffic. While we may not see the Flatirons as well as our neighbors behind us on Cherryvale, we do love the open field (complete with a low fence) in the front yard and the cows and calves that are born daily through the early spring.

Creating the needed bison enclosure to the south side of Cherryvale would, according to the map presented last night, put the bison in that field. I understand that an amended map was included at the previous meeting that removed this field from consideration due to the rare orchids that grow here, but that was not presented last night, so I don't know if that is still the case. Regardless, from what I understand from my neighbor Craig Smith, the enclosure would, at a minimum, abut the southern fence of our neighbors', Cliff and Julie Daniels, property.

I can see that the fence may or may not be as "Gulag" in appearance as that drawn, and recognize that there are many ways to build an adequate fence. Certainly, aesthetics should factor highly into anything that borders a neighborhood or residential property. The fact is that because our street is off of Cherryvale and presents safer parking for the curious, we will be very impacted by buffalo tourism.

One big concern is that, as county residents, we do not reap many of the benefits that city residents do regarding street maintenance. As I recall, the issue was defeated in the last election as to whether we could get repaving of our streets out here in county territory. This proposal will bring a lot more traffic onto Merry Lane and it will wear out much more rapidly as a result. Are we to pay for road improvement here out of our own pockets? As it is, the end turn around (where all the lookie loos will park close to the fence) is breaking down from the snow plow that CDOT graciously sends in after every snowstorm.

My other concern truly is the impact on the lifestyle here in rural SoBo. The Hogans are a HUGE part of that and it's biggest asset. The cattle ranching keeps the grasslands clear of weeds thanks to grazing cattle as well as irrigation and haying operations. We enjoy watching the going's on and even participate in a friendly way with it. I personally have rescued a days-old calf who was separated from it's mother and in danger of freezing to death, and we regularly keep an eye out for any problems with the herd as they reside in "our" field. We have Babe Hogan's number and have called him several times to let him know about things and it is always a delight to talk to Leo Hogan and learn about the history of these lands. They are wonderful stewards of these, their family's, homestead lands. They should be at the table figuring this out. They know a thing or two about managing cattle and fields.

It seems to me that any herd of bison the city takes on will have to be treated as cattle since there was no mention of raising a sterile herd. Bison will calve, calves will grow and the herd will need to be culled, as well you know. We are the only natural predator of significance to do the task as the coyotes may be challenged to duck the fence, there are no wolves or grizzly bears about and the Native American tribes were removed from this region long ago. That leaves the Open Space staff to handle it and that makes us Ranchers. The surplus will be sold, their fate likely on a plate.

If scientifically Boulder wishes to contribute to the genetic restoration of the American Bison as well as restore a tall grass prairie habitat to an original, bio-diverse state, there must be

better places to do this than these two parcels. These parcels are irrigated fields. The vegetation down here is vastly different than that on the slopes and top of Davidson Mesa. Happily, our little orchids grow here, but there are no yucca or cactus and the grasses are different. We have wild asparagus and dwarf iris that grow in these fields. I don't know the scientific definition for what we have here, but I dare say it is the way it is because this land has been irrigated for 100+ years and that has changed it more significantly than anything. Given a few decades with the bison and zero irrigation, perhaps these fields will return to their original state, but what an experiment that will be and one that will cost plenty. There are better parcels to do this on, most certainly.

We may not be able to change the course of this proposal, but it will impact the quality of life out here and, therefore, we must protest. We will have financial burdens from the increased visitation (wear and tear on our pavement), trespass on our properties (parking), loss of privacy (more eyes to look in windows) and many other byproducts of tourism. We will lose out on access to a couple of great, open space fields and the little secrets they hold (asparagus, iris, orchids). Wildlife will lose access because of the big fence needed for these athletic animals and we likely wont see the occasional bear or dear that finds its way over here via the ditch. There's also some archaeological history in these fields related to the old coal mines that will then be contained and excluded. And of course, we wont get to see the Hogans' calves born in the spring. In effect this proposal, as it stands, will change one wonderful environment - very in keeping with the open space mission - trade it for another and burden the local residents with it's costs.

As I said at the meeting, we are no longer and open prairie environment, we are a suburban one - one that should retain what it can of it's rural character but that ought not be too idealistic in hoping to ever get the lands of Boulder to be what they once were when the buffalo did roam.

Again, thanks for you efforts and for hearing me out.

Sincerely,

James Herklotz
715 Merry Lane

Lynn **Herklotz** Boulder CO 4/28/2012

Hi Mark,

I am aware that there is no meeting on April 30, 2012 which concerns me deeply. I respectfully ask that you bring this letter or it's contents to the board of trustees or please assist me in obtaining the email address to the board members.

I voice my concerns of the residents of our neighborhood, the decision of the City Council to accept this proposal and use OSMP budget to fund this proposal is in conflict with the Mission Statement of the OSMP. The mission statement clearly states the purpose is to, "protect and preserve the natural environment" and the restriction of use for the housing of an enclosed herd of animals is neither protection or preservation of the land. Clear and simply, this is not in concondance with the mission statement in my opinion.

If the member of City Council that is in support of this proposal would like to maintain a relationship with Mr. Turner, graciously decline his proposed donation and suggest that if he wants to, "do something good for the landscape and the people who enjoy it (a quote taken from the reply attached below) to make an inkind donation for the preservation of the Shanahan Ridge property that the City Council recently stated they have no interest in purchasing. Mr. Turner can maintain the land as it is in it's pristine state or add his bison, his bison staff and his enclosure on that land at his expense.

As a concerned rural Boulder resident who might be very directly impacted by the bison proposal if it is accepted, I am very disturbed and disappointed that the meeting scheduled for April 30th has been cancelled with apparently, no resheduled date posted. Those of us in attendance at the most recent meeting waited patiently as all the board members looked over their schedules for quite some time to find a date that would allow them to all be present. The Board also seemed to think that this issue needed more immediate attention and wanted to move the next meeting up to an earlier date. We were very impressed with the boards' attempt to find a date when all could be in attendance and listened patiently as the board members voiced concern over getting more information regarding, among other concerns, the impact on the Hogan family.

We are very concerned that the Board of Trustrees and the City Council will decide to meet with limited notice to the public to attend the meeting as was the original plan.

I had the recent pleasure, as I often do, of 'running' into both Hogan brothers at their property on Thursday morning. According to them, the city has not come forth to discuss any options, concerns of details with them.

A concern of the residents in our neighborhood on the south side of Hwy 36 since the last meeting has been increased traffic on our 'no outlet' dead end street. These curious visitors are so busy looking into the meadow that they are a risk to the residents, pets and those that do business from their homes.

Again, thank you for your time and patience, I am aware that you are receiving multiple letters of concern.

Sincerely and concerned,

lynn herklotz

Mary **Hey** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

This is not a gift:it's a long-term obligation for the city of Boulder, an idea that would be ridiculed had the City proposed it. In no way are these bison ""free."" Would the city accept 500 puppies from Ted Turner?

The view coming in over Davidson Mesa is breathtaking, and has warmed my heart for 45 years. The sight of bison will not improve the experience. It will, however, remind me every time I cross the hill that the City was snookered into accepting an expensive and sentimental ""gift"" from a celebrity stranger to these parts. That's what I'll think of when I cross into Boulder Valley, every single time.

Please do not accept Ted Turner's animals.

James R. **Hill** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I've lived in Boulder over 34 years, and have enjoyed our wonderful open spaces around the city. Although the idea of restoring bison to our area sounds romantic and cool, the necessary fences and maintenance costs are NOT how I want my taxes spent, and converting our open space to a big fenced in ranch with no other use or access to us citizens is contrary to the intent of our open space program. Please say "No to the buffalo" in this case.

Reginald J. **Hill** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

No to bison!! Bison are dangerous, and require ugly fence. Trespassers and the curious can be killed. Such bison are not full breed anyway; they are a meat product. Boulderites will surely object and sue to prevent slaughter for meat. Cattle are best. Taxpayers do not need the expense, nor the fence.

Richard **Himley** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

Missing from the citizens meeting on the bison proposal was a business plan. The reason cited for the bison is agriculture, which is indeed a business. As such it should, at the least be break even, although the start-up costs (stated at $100,000) were stated to not be slated for recovery.

This business plan is an absolute necessity for approval. Properly prepared, it will contain all the information on environmental impact, cost analysis, and alternate plans; no business can effectively operate without one. It was not obvious that the Open Space and Mountain Parks department has anybody with the background to develop a comprehensive plan. Perhaps they need some expert help.

One additional question, concerning the fence. Bison are kind of big creatures. Cannot we devise a fence that could keep them in and give the much smaller animals, ala coyotes, access?

Ed **Hochstein** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

We think the herd might be a good idea, but not at the projected costs nor the location. The city can't and shouldn't be responsible for that kind of money. Thanks Ted, but maybe not at this time.

Dave **Hoerath** LONGMONT CO 3/28/2012

A nice idea, but not practical, not worth it, and a public relations fiasco? The fencing costs would be astronomical for a postage stamp size pasture and herd. It would look like a zoo/curiosity shop. All the fences would have to be modified and/or come down. You would have to eliminate the livestock grazing. You would have to eliminate or deal very complexly w/ the trails that are present. Would you involve the county and/or joint open space. It's too small and too costly for something that already exists in several places in the state (and even the county). You would have to manage, rotate, birth, cull, sell, etc. a huge operation all by itself: all year, every year. Many Boulderites would have a difficult time with killing/culling any of them. Someone would protest the roundup or chain themselves to a fence or let them out or Nebraska fans would brand them all with little red 'N's as their historic whipping boy. Don't do it - even if somebody pays for the fencing.

Chris **Hoffman** Boulder CO 4/6/2012

I oppose the introduction of bison into open space land.
I think it's not the best use of our resources.
Thank you.

Karen **Hollweg** Boulder, CO 4/6/2012

I was out of town and unable to attend the public meeting, but have read all of the online documents.

I want to thank the OSMP staff for their substantive analysis of possibilities for harboring donated bison on city open space lands.

Given the costs associated with the infrastructure and ongoing management of bison as well as the ecological impacts, I am reluctant to see the city proceed with acceptance of the bison that have been offered. The high quality of the natural areas in both the north and southern areas are worth managing for their special populations of native plants and animals -- qualities which led us to acquire these open space lands.

Caroline **Hoyt** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

I LOVE the idea of having buffalo in Boulder. I wholeheartedly support the concept.

Elizabeth f. **Hunt** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I oppose boulder accepting Ted Turner's gift of bison. There are many more ways to spend our money, AND then animals would be like caged zoo animals.

Please decline the gift!!

Margaret **Iden** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

Board of Trustees for Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks:
I am a neighbor who lives on South Vale Road just off of South Cherryvale. I am very disturbed by Ted Turner's offer to donate bison to be located in pasture land at the base of the hill leading into Boulder from Denver. I do not think we need a herd of bison taking up grasslands that is currently occupied by wildlife as well as cattle that have occupied the land leased by ranchers, the Hogans. The Hogans have done an excellent job of maintaining the land for their cattle as well as the beauty of the surroundings.

I am not in favor of putting up a 7.5 foot high miles long fence to hold the bison. I certainly am not in favor of the expense involved including the $100,000 a year to care for the animals.

The money that would finance this project could be used in many other ways that would be of greater benefit for the City and County of Boulder and its citizens.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter.

Margaret A. I den
5912 South Vale Road
Boulder, Colorado 80303

Anne **Jennings** Louisville CO 4/5/2012

I was so surprised about the proposal to bring bison to the open space! How can we ensure the safety of the bison or the hikers, bikers, riders etc with bison roaming around? I cannot imagine that there is enough forage for those large animals on our open space, especially with the very dry conditions we are experiencing now and will likely have in the future. Won't they break through the fences and get onto the freeway if they want to cross to greener pastures? Won't they tear up the land horribly? Why on earth would we add bison as users of our already stretched open space?

I think bison are very interesting and a cool thing to see...but really I think they are very dangerous and destructive.

Lenny **Keer** Greeley CO 4/14/2012

This open space area has been used by many people for years, and SHOULD NOT be closed off to use as a buffalo containment area.

walter **keith** Longmont CO 4/10/2012

A B S O L U T E L Y O U T R A G E O U S.....!!!!

Christine **Kirk** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

I am not in favor of the bison donation. If the donation included a full-scale restoration of bison habitat and it included enough land that a fence wasn't necessary and the donor was creating an endowment to care for the bison then my position would be different. As it is, however, the donation is a bad idea.

Marcia A. **Klump** Superior CO 4/11/2012

Bison are very strong headed wild, wild animals that need to be in the open plains not fenced at the gateway to an amazing view of the Flatirons and Boulder. This plan is stupid and costly and will only benefit Ted Turner's Restaurant. The view coming into Boulder is spectacular and will be changed for ever with Prison fencing.... this is how you want visitors to see your city?? It will certainly change my opinion and desire to go to Boulder. Downtown Louisville is looking pretty good at this Point. Leave the open space to the people!!!

Mac **Kobza** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

I am also a wildlife biologist with a neighboring agency, and wish to comment on this proposal. This is my personal opinion and does not represent the views of Boulder County Parks and Open Space.

The introduction of Bison will bring substantial negative impacts upon the grassland ecosystem, drive out existing wildlife populations, and seriously hinder ongoing taxpayer supported efforts to conserve and restore Boulderâs wild lands for the benefit of the greater public. This project will drain funds away from under-funded efforts to increase the overall value of public lands in Boulder, and will apparently serve mainly a superficial gain in public interest to persons whom already intended to drive into the city. A significant value of Boulders unique image lies in the city's restored and preserved open space and parks. Placing bison on these lands will significantly reduce the aesthetic quality of the space, cause long-term damage to the soils, drive out rare and unique wildlife, impact local surface water and potentially send a message to visitors that the Boulder community values superficial image greater than environmental sustainability and quality of life, which I know is furthest from the truth. Thank you.

Maria **Krenz** Boulder CO 4/11/2012

I have lived in Boulder for 44 years and my heart has always lifted as I came down Davidson Mesa and beheld the beauty in front of me. Having a fence will detract from the wide open feeling. The current wildlife and grasslands are bound to suffer. We don't need a nostalgic ""cute factor"" added.

Most of all, to spend $650,000 to start with and at least $100,000 yearly seems absurd.

Thank you for your attention.

Lois **Lafond** Boulder CO 3/31/2012

THIS COMMENT WAS SUBMITTED AT THE MARCH 29 COMMUNITY MEETING/OPEN HOUSE

Regarding the $100,000 projection for staff, do consider that this is a community of volunteers. If it is possible to train (underlined) volunteers, you will have them.

""Hay Storage Facility""
Given the beautfy of the landscape & its enhancement with bison, hopefully the facility will be in an area not very visible from the viewing/highway spots.

David **Larson** 4/15/2012

Mark, I haven't been attending any of the public meetings, only reading the Camera. I see on the website that the comment period is over. So a late idea: instead of fencing, creating a visual impact, a trench with a steep side toward the public and a less steep side toward the bison.
DPL

andrew **lattanzi** boulder CO 4/5/2012

Boulder and Boulder County has more pressing issues than to be spending time, money and other resources on such a frivolous issue as attending to a herd of bison. Let's keep our open space open and use the money for other more critical issues such as housing and food for the homeless, education etc.

How many people can be fed with the expected start up cost and annual expenditure of such a project?

Pay attention to the real needs of the community.

Claudia **Lau** Boulder CO 4/21/2012

Sir,
Bison on open space would be a "cute" idea. But if you look at all the costs (fiscal and otherwise) involved, the risk definitely outweighs the benefits. Tax money will not be spent wisely.
Please vote no.
Claudia Lau
1435 Moss Rock Place, Boulder

Ed **Lau** Boulder CO 4/19/2012

BAD IDEA!!!
We should spend public money more wisely.
Way too many negative aspects of this compared to the "cute" idea of bison "roaming freely".

Ed Lau
1435 Moss Rock Place, Boulder

Barbara **Leaf** Boulder CO 5/5/2012

I would love to see Open Space purchase the Shanahan Ranch and have the ""Turner"" bison ranched on it. Even if the bison prove to be too expensive to ranch, I still support the purchase of the Shanahan Ranch. It is exquisite land that should not be developed for housing or other commercial purposes.

Thanks for considering this idea,

Barbara Leaf

Mychele **Lepinsky** Boulder CO 4/19/2012

Hi Cliff, thanks for forwarding this along...

Boulder should have a new tag line... "Boulder - getting 'stupider' every year"

seriously. Boulder is becoming more and more of a dog-UNfriendly environment because of all the restrictions in place and ongoing, it used to be the most dog-friendliest city in the country - now, I would rather live anywhere else, where they have less enforcement on the most "ridiculous" rules they come up with here in Boulder -
You take your dog ANYWHERE else that has, as we call it, open space, and there are no dog-police handing out tickets because your dog went off to sniff the grass more than 10 feet away from it's owner. c'mon. You want to talk about important issues - back-off on the dog rules & reg's and get your head out of your ass. How about spending money to send someone from Boulder to other cities to see how they enforce Dog rules & regs. get a clue. we should have less not more imposed on us. sorry for the rant, but I could go on...as you know.

I truly believe the city of Boulder employees are over staffed AND over paid. They have nothing better to do that come up with RIDICULOUS ideas like this STUPID bison idea. Do any of them watch TV? People are losing their homes, can't find jobs, and they want to spend near 1 million dollars for this STUPID project with no PROS that I can see - zoos should be extinct. we don't need to add to this "zoo-like thought process" of enclosing a FREE RANGE animal in a "zoo" environment - let's lock up the people making these decisions in a confined space indefinitely and see if that warrants a feeling of happiness. I THINK NOT.

how's that for my 2 cents. I should be running Boulder. period :o)

John **Lilley** Boulder CO 4/4/2012

Yes! Bison in Boulder County would be a wonderful thing. I've often marveled at them when I drive by Genesee.

Ken **Lindas** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

I am extremely opposed to this proposal.

Mr. Turnerâs âgiftâ should be respectfully declined. The landscape surrounding US 36 coming into Boulder is currently beautiful, and needs no additional attractions/distractions. The land is âOpen Space,â and should remain Open. The amount of time and energy expended considering this proposal already exceeds the amount it should have been given.

Would Mr. Turner consider donating a few Bison to be located on a remote section of Boulder Open Space, accessible only by foot? If the proposal is to locate Bison only along US 36 coming into Boulder, then I would conclude Mr. Turner has motivations other than increasing the overall lifestyle of Boulder; possibly advertising a chain of restaurants?

The funds required to initiate and maintain this proposal can by used for many more responsible projects/programs within Boulder.

Please be bold and decisive, and reject all aspects of this proposal, reassign the resources to more reasonable issues, and move on with other value added projects.

Sue **Lion** Boulder CO 4/11/2012

Seems like a massive amount of our hard-earned tax dollars are going into a ZOO on hard-fought-for OPEN SPACE! Open space includes a variety of animals and people. Seems like a 7 FOOT FENCE will keep everything out, except the bison and prairie dogs. And the massive amount of electricity needed to keep everything out just seems counter to what the intention of open space actually is. Now, what is this zoo for? The entertainment of people on highway 36 who should be paying attention to the road? Once a 7' fence is constructed and people from the city come around to gaze as the bison through a high density wall, will they make the trip back out? Plus, where will they park? In the bike lanes? Goodness, there was a huge amount of money spent to actually put bike lanes in so there wasn't so much danger of drivers and bicyclists/runners running into each other. Add a bunch of cars parked on the bike lanes - well, I can see problems - big problems. In the end, what does this massive amount of money buy for the open space program. It drives off a bucolic, well-run cattle operation that is as much of our history as bison. It prevents people from walking/snowshoeing/exploring the land. It keeps coyote, fox, bobcat, bear, deer, raccoon, etc. from living in their natural habitat. It creates more problems with traffic. Ted Turner might have a love affair with CU and its mascot, but CU won't be contributing to this squander of our taxes. Seeing bison from 36 does one thing - it highlights CU! My taxes and I vote NO!

Jim **Lorio** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

This seems like a poorly considered project intended to pander favor with a wealthy donor. This public land serves multiple use purposes at this time. The ranching, wildlife, and human activities this land supports are all valuable aspects of the goals of our open space program. This project would limit this use with no real advantage except its value as a ""publicity stunt"".
The cost of this project is outrageous given to needs of this community.

Rima **Manas** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

PLEASE - No Bison for Beautiful Boulder!!

Peter A. **Mandics** Boulder CO 4/14/2012

At first glance Ted Turner's Bison donation to Boulder appeared quite attractive to us. However, after thinking about it, we now feel it is not a good idea. In fact, we are totally opposed to it for the following reasons:
* The cost, currently estimated around $650 thousand, is way too excessive. As more details emerge, we are certain that the cost will increase substantially.
* If Boulder has this kind of extra cash (from our taxes, of course), please use it to extend our greenbelt.
* The 7 ft sturdy fence will be a real eyesore as people approach our city from the south.
* People gawking at the bison while driving on 36 will cause accidents. Also, there will be parking problems, traffic congestion, etc.
* It is true that our area used to be buffalo country. But with the already dense population that is steadily increasing every year, this area is no longer a place for large wild animals. Yellowstone and other national parks are the appropriate areas for them.
Please thank Ted Turner for his generosity, but definitely DECLINE his offer.

Thank you,
Peter A. Mandics and Agnes Takacs

Avigael **Mann** Boulder 3/25/2012

I think it a GREAT idea to have these bison!!!! I'm all for it and even live close to where we're thinking of having them roam.

Margaret **Mansfield** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

I am opposed to Boulder's becoming guardian to a small herd of bison on our open space land.

Nancy **Mehler** Boulder CO 4/13/2012

I am very much opposed to putting buffalo on our Open Space.
The Open Space is a treasure. Our job (and yours) is to preserve it intact, not to make a tourist
attraction out of it. The big fence will be an ugly detraction.
We all contributed to the purchase of this property thinking it would be maintained in its natural
state, without buffalo on it. You will be breaking your promise to us and abandoning your role as
stewards of the land if you put buffalo out there.

Eva **Mesmer** Boulder CO 4/26/2012

$100,000 per year for upkeep of a small buffalo herd? I can think of better things to do with that money. I would say this: If Mr. Turner has such good will towards Boulder and the University, please invite him to pay for any costs associated with this folly. We already have a herd west of Denver along the I-70 corridor... this concept is silly and way too expensive. Please reconsider!

Pat **Meyers** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

Even though it seems bad manners to refuse a gift, I believe the gift of 20 bison is a gift that should be refused. The $650,000 estimated cost for fencing and the approximate $100,000 for yearly maintenance could be put to better use, such as cleaning the outhouses on Open Space more than once a year (if it is done that frequently) or even updating them. Boulder is no longer a part of a romantic west where the deer and the buffalo roam. That is the past. Time to move on.

leon **midgett** boulder CO 4/5/2012

I an sure that staff and citizens of this fair county can come up with countless reasons to not accept this donation. That said, it seems to me that this would be a wonderful introduction to Boulder for visitors to this little piece of paradise. It feels like this is or should be a great fit with the "" Boulder Brand"", rugged, outdoorsy, fit, skinny, healthy people that we all (of course) are.
The tie-in with the University is obvious. Any chance that CU might lend a hand?
Even if they don't, this is simply a great opportunity to enhance our already great reputation.....or, if we go the Scrooge route, to enhance our already dubious reputation.
This seems like common sense to me - a quality that I sometimes question in some of our decisions here. Let's get over ourselves and move ahead with this.

Skip **Miller** boulder CO 4/3/2012

My name is Skip Miller. I am an active member of the Boulder Aeromodeling Society, a 70 year old model airplane club in Boulder. I am also a member of the Rocky Mountain Soaring Association, a very active RC Soaring club(no motors,sailplanes).

I am also the chairman of the BAPC(Boulder Aeromodelers Preservation Committee), a group to make sure the BAS field by the Boulder Res is available in perpituity. I actively defend that site for powered and un powered RC flight.

I have flown sailplanes competively on a World and National level for over 35 years, and worked with the city and the rangers for over 30 years to fly sailplanes and electric sailplanes in the South access point for the proposed Bison herd east of Cherrvale road. Obviously we currently share this site with cattle, the leased rancher, as well as the irrigated land. Still with all the encumbrances, it is a valuable site for the RC sailplane community of Boulder. I encourage you to NOT plan the Bison in this area.

RC flying is a unique sport, and in the world of other activity, flying sites are being ""pressured out"" all across the US. Most of the famous aviators in the US were model airplane enthusiast as young, and this skill often develops into commercial avaition and space professionals.

I urge you to go to the North side of 36. This will give you exposure to hwy 36, as well as South Boulder Road, leaving the south parcel for the current activity of sailplane use, and the occassional dog walker/trainer. There is no impact from the sport on the field and it has been a valuable soaring site in Boulder for many years. If you have any questions please contact me miller@uasusa.com

sincerely,

Skip Miller

Jan and Don **Mogk** 4/20/2012

Please no NO buffalo in Boulder !!!!! We visit there often and we love the undisturbed fields we are not there to see BUFFALO. Jan and Don MOGK

Jim **Monaco** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

Mark – thank you for your prompt and thoughtful reply.

I was only aware of one access point to the south area, I looked for others but did not find any that were obvious. I always use the access point that the hikers and the glider pilots use. I was looking for another access point last week when the cows were all gathered at the normal entry, I guess I did not go far enough south to find it. I am out there nearly every day and have never seen anyone access the property from anywhere other than that gate.

There are a number of us that have concerns, and we would love to schedule a meeting to discuss it with you. In order to ensure that you are not bombarded with such requests from individuals we will coordinate a reasoned group response and get back with you.

I appreciate your response and we surely want to participate in the process.
Thanks

Jim

Jim **Monaco** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

Where were the signs for public notice of the proposal and meeting? We have a group of R/C sailplane pilots that use the South area nearly every day and there were no notices at the main entry point to the opene space. No one saw any notices and thus we as a group were not able to particip[ate in the public meeting.

The South area is very widely used every day by the public for hikes and dog walking as well as being the primary location for remote control glider flying. We would like to be able to provide our input to the planning process - is there another mechanism/process where we can do that?
Thanks - Jim

Jim **Monaco** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I am writing to express my concern about the proposal for Buffalo on OSMP Open Space.

I believe that this proposal is not good for Boulder for various reasons.

1. The cost/benefit tradeoff is not appropriate. The financial costs for providing what is essentially a publicity statement is unwarranted and unnecessary.

2.The impacts on open space are not worth the effort. The loss of accessible open space in order to provide a ""zoo"" is not acceptable. The loss of native habitat and fauna and flora is not worth the benefit of a few buffalo to view.

3.Ranching operations have been co-existing with open space usage for many years. This co-existance has benefited the existing ecosystem, open space users and the farming operations. It would be bad to lose such a successful use of open space.

4.Buffalo are large dangerous animals and could pose a danger to the community if they are able to escape. This is liability Boulder does not need.

5.Traffic concerns could pose a danger with drivers stopping along the road to view the buffalo.

6.The large fence surronding the area will actually be an eyesore, looking more like a prison than pritine open space.

7.The deal would be unfair to the lease holders that have been great stewards of the open space while allowing public access.

For all of these reasons and more that you can think of, this proposal should be rejected.

Respectfully - Jim Monaco

Lynda **Monsey** Boulder CO 4/21/2012

To City of Boulder,

This is an odd but lovely gesture on the part of Ted Turner to offer to buy a baker's dozen of bison for our city, but the arguments presented at the last council meeting completely persuade me and my family that this is not a good use of our open space in the least bit. Given the economic shortfalls in EVERYBODY'S budgets from the school district, to law enforcement, to road maintenance, to county and city social and health services, etc. - this will be an extravagant, unsightly (the fence), and ecologically unsound decision.

My first question is, why doesn't Mr. Turner offer to pay for the fence and the maintenance if he thinks this is such a good fit????
Secondly, can you prove this operation will be a substantially better use of the land than what it is being used for now.?
Third, does this plan call for only females or will there be a bull who is sterilized? What is their rate of reproduction and what is the plan to cull the herd when
too many calves are born?

I have seen the bison herds in Custer State Park, SD. They have many square miles to truly roam and are integrated into the environment without undue impact upon the soils, fauna, flora, and human communities. The amount of space designated for this operation doesn't come close to what these enormous grazing animals will need. We have to be realistic about re-introducing native species (especially those which are 2000 lbs. each) into a place that no longer resembles in the least bit the land they occupied 300 years ago.

Lastly, I do not want to see a 7.5 ft. electrified fence especially with razor wire as I'm coming over the Davidson Mesa. When I reach the top of that mesa on 36 whether I've been in Denver or coming back from being out of state, I always have this tingly, warm, "I'm home", sensation looking down into Boulder Valley. This is a gorgeous, relatively unencumbered view of Boulder Valley, and the scene consisting of open space with the cattle and a few homes might be the best facimille to what it probably looked like 100 years ago. Currently, it works - I'm not sure why everyone wants to fix it - this way and especially with this price tag. And what will be the price of getting rid of the bison and the fence if it doesn't work? Will Ted pick up that tab? And what will the city do with the land? I am assuming the land would revert to simply open space.

Although legally, I am not in the city limits - I live about a 100 yards from the line on Jay Road - for all practical purposes I live in Boulder and have for 33 years. My husband and I try very hard to keep our buying activities within city limits so that revenue goes to Boulder. This is precious space ladies and gentlemen, and my family and I implore you to protect it. This is a hairbrained idea.

Thank you,
Lynda Monsey

Sandra **Mullis** Lafayette CO 4/2/2012

This is a very expensive and unnecessary project that will further limit the accessibility of publicly funded property from those that have funded it. It will also limit the access of the local populations deer, coyotes and other wildlife and place even more pressure on them.

It appears the taxpayers are being asked to turn over land that they have funded and also to pay to support this unfortunate idea all so that people can look at buffalo as they drive along US36?? I vote NO NO NO

Michael **Murphy** New Carrollton MD 4/26/2012

In an era of corporations benefiting greatly at the cost of middle income taxpayers, it would not be a wise decision to knowingly hand over not only set up costs but also annual maintenance costs for the proposed Buffalo Highway. If the deal goes through, it is the taxpayer yet once again being buffaloed by greedy corporate interests.

Lisa **Murray** 4/11/2012

Thank you, Mark. Truly hope we help find an appropriate spread of land for these beautiful creatures while also keeping access to coyotes and other wild animals we are living with and near. We have not really looked but my husband John thought the acreage surrounding the airport south of U.S. 36 would be a fine home while also making MANY parking spaces for viewing much more possible than the rare glimpses one would get from a fast-moving car travelling on US 36.

Again, we all need to know of the future costs. It is not only schools that have the most of the expenses AFTER being built!

Sincerely, Lisa

Lisa **Murray** boulder CO 4/10/2012

We are not wanting to pen buffalo in the proposed area, most especially the northern proposed area. We DO have ideas as to where would be proper and also would, if we agree on expenditures before penning and, very importantly, AFTER penning and, if agreed upon, would like to ensure free access to coyotes, rabbits and all animals so that they too did NOT become penned. We are wanting, furthermore, for all parties to become aware of the original plan of a semi-wild area around Boulder and that, as stated by some of the people who GAVE, not sold, land to us all, was that there be a ""highly connected, rough-hewn, semi-wild CONNECTION of lands so people could run, walk, ride, horseback AROUND Boulder. It was, to these people, almost immediately changed so that parcels became blocked off and some regretted they were not more clear about their mission and why they had given land to us. Again, there are probably places to better pen this 'gift' but that is another question for another day. We also very much support the existing ranchers and like their stewardship. Sincerely, Lisa Murray

Nancy **Neupert** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

To: Council
Subject: bison on OSMP

Re: the proposal to put bison on OSMP

What a bad idea! Please don't do it.

Superficially, it might seem a romantic way to connect with the "old west", but in fact, running a "herd" of a dozen bison inside an 8-foot high cage next to an urban area is a travesty. Bison belong on the open range, not here. None of the areas Mike Patton referred to in his comments about the job of caring for a bison herd were on the edge of a city, and there are good reasons why.

I agree with all the points Jo Easton made in her letter to the Camera of April 5. I also have two more points.

1. Running bison in such a small area would damage the existing plant community. Mitigation efforts might reduce the destruction, but the plant community will be changed. At this time, I doubt that OSMP can even guess what those changes will be, or the extent of the damage. The area under discussion is one of our most beautiful and varied grasslands, with tallgrass (yes, you can walk among head-high grasses there); Ute Ladies'-Tresses; and a rich mosaic of other grasses and flowering plants. It should be preserved.

2. The northern parcel is adjacent to a number of homes. Would you like to have your view blocked by an 8-foot bison-proof fence at the end of your backyard? Our neighbors would feel like the bison--caged like a zoo.

I love our Americn icon as much as anyone, but I just don't think this is the right place for a herd. "Urban" and "bison" don't go in the same sentence. We have better things to do with our money and our beautiful OSMP land.

Sincerely,
Nancy Neupert
333 So. 68th St. Boulder, CO

Nancy **Neupert** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

What a bad idea!

Superficially, it might seem a romantic way to connect with the ""old west"", but in fact, running a ""herd"" of a dozen bison in an 8-foot cage next to an urban area is a travesty. Bison belong on the open range, not here. None of the areas Mike referred to in his comments about the job of caring for a bison herd were on the edge of a city, and there are good reasons why not.

I agree with all the points Jo Easton made in her letter to the Camera April 5. In addition I have two points.

1. Running bison in such a small enclosure would damage the existing plant community. Mitigation efforts might reduce the worst destruction, but the plant community will change. At this time, I doubt that OSMP can even guess what those changes will be, or the extent of the damage. That area is one or our most beautiful and varied grasslands, with tallgrass (yes, you can walk among head-height grasses there); Ute Ladies'-Tresses orchids; and a rich mosaic of other grasses and flowering plants. It should be preserved.

2. The northern parcel is adjacent to a number of homes. Would you like to have your view blocked by an 8-foot high bison-proof fence? Our neighbors would feel like the bison--caged like a zoo.

I love our American icon as much as anyone, but I just don't think this is the right place for a herd. ""Urban"" and ""bison"" don't belong in the same sentence.

Werner M. **Neupert** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

I attended the Community meeting of March 29 and was impressed with the amount of detail that OSMP has been able to develop in response to the Boulder City Council request to evaluate the donation of bison to the city. I concur with the many concerns raised by citizens to this issue. Although staff has attempted to minimize the impact of these animals on the area by limiting their numbers, the very existence of dense fencing (no doubt a visual eyesore) will change the ecology of the area and we will have a zoo, not a natural open space, which should be the objective of open space acquisitions.

I wish to emphasize one concern that may be overlooked by OSMP on the assumption that the state roads commission (or whatever their proper name is) will evaluate this proposal. It is not included in the factors listed above: I believe that having bison in the immediate vicinity of the heavily traveled Turnpike will lead to accidents and near-collisions. People will naturally want to slow down to see the animals (or to attempt to spot them) and that will lead to erratic driving. Safety on this highway depends on all drivers (at an average speed of 65 mph and often more) driving with complete attention and at a consistent speed . The density of traffic is so high that any diversion will lead to accidents. Please include this concern in your report to City Council.

David **Noe** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

My concern is that the bison herd would come with a number of costs that would have to be maintained through time. It does not seem advisable for the City to take on these costs when its budget is already stretched. It is far more appropriate for those funds to go toward primary city services, including the hiring and compensation of staff needed to do those services.

On another note, I quite like the existing use of those lands. The small cattle herds already lend a pastoral air to the approach from Davidson Mesa. And they do not encourage gawking, traffic slowdowns, or accidents!!

Denise **Noe** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

While I appreciate Mr. Turner's generousity, this sounds like an on-going costly proposal for the city in terms of money, land, staff time, etc. In addition, I think there could be unexpected consequences and unexpected expenses. Consequences could be slowing down of traffic on 36 as people slow down to gaze at the bison. Unexpected expenses could be related to damage created if/when a bison escapes the enclosure. Also, what happens when we have another economic downturn or drop in revenues, but have this on-going fixed expense? Maintaining a herd of buffalo seems like an expensive luxury that as a taxpayer and city resident I am not willing to support and does not seem to be a strategic long-term decision.

Jim **Normandeau** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

The thought of a herd of buffalo alongside route 36, penned in as a tourist attraction is one of the most ridiculous projects I have heard of.
Have a heard in a completely unnatural state is cruel. Go to Yellowstone if you want to see them.
Please tell Ted, thanks but no thanks.

Andrew **Ogden** 4/17/2012

Hon. Council Members:

I am sending this comment to register my strong opposition to the proposal to use approximately 750 acres of City of Boulder open space to maintain a small herd of bison. The principal reason for my opposition is not the substantial monetary cost of the proposal, but rather that it is a use of open space that is in contravention of the purposes for which it was acquired and which is detrimental to the habitat which open space is suppose to preserve.

First, regarding the purposes for acquiring and preserving open space, the city charter is clear that only those purposes specified in Section 176 are permissable uses for open space. Notably, Section 176 is silent on the use of open space for the maintenance of a herd of domestic livestock, as bison is classified under Colorado law. However, Section 176(c) does specify that one of the purposes for the acquisition of open space is the preservation of land for "passive recreational use, such as hiking". As noted in the OSMP report on the bison proposal, such recreational uses will be incompatible with the maintenance of a bison herd on the open space lands. Further, as explained below, because Section 176(b) does specify that a purpose of open space is the preservation of wildlife habitats, the degregation of the proposed areas as wildlife habitat will further violate Section 176.

Second, regarding habitat, it is self-evident that enclosing a substantial acreage of open space with a tall electrified fence will create a significant barrier for wildlife to access these lands. Habitat fragmentation is one of the principal factors that create stress on native species of wildlife, which the preservation of contiguous parcels of open space has sought to mitigate. Erecting an almost impermiable barrier for wildlife is a gigantic step backwards in the goal of preserving a sustainable ecosystem which will support a wide variety of native wildlife.

In conclusion, the bison proposal violates the City Charter regarding the permissible uses of open space in that the use is both not authorized by Section 176 but also in direct conflict with the specified permissible uses. Further, the proposal will further habitat fragmentation to the detriment of native wildlife species. For these reasons, in addition to the substantial cost and other problems presented by this proposal, it should be rejected by the Council.

Please note that these comments are made in my capacity as a private citizen and not as a representative of my employer.

Andrew G. Ogden
Adjunct Professor, University of Colorado School of Law

Kim **Opler** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

Please do not waste our precious monetary funds on what amounts to a zoo for bison. These animals need far more territory than we can possibly provide. (Yellowstone and Teton National Parks cannot even contain their nartural wonderings.)
This is a case of someone saying ""wouldn't it be cool to see Bison when you come over the hill into Boulder Valley?""Having a zoo for Bison does not meet the goals of our open space programs and If this plan is enacted you will NEVER get me to vote for on penny of funding for your programs ever again.

Dean **Pajevic** 4/9/2012

Hi Mark,

What you say makes sense. While I agree with helping repopulate the bison, and maybe this will be a draw for tourists, I think my main concern is how it will look. If the fences, parking and buildings can be made to look "nice", aka Disney, then this could be an interesting project for the city. In the end, I would need to know more about all the potential impacts that you have outlined on the city website.

Again, thanks for getting back to me.

Best,

Dean

Dean **Pajevic** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

Hello,

This does not make sense for Boulder. Having miles of seven-and-half-foot-high fencing along one of the main roads into Boulder seems like a very bad idea. It will destroy the natural beauty that open space gives us.

Given all the money the city will spend taking care of the bison, plus building the fence and facilities, it's a lot of money to sink into what is basically a marketing project on saving bison. Why not put the bison out east of I-25 where there is more space?

SIncerely,

Dean Pajevic

Scott **Peppet** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

Dear Board of Trustees for OSMP:

We write to oppose the plan to keep bison on Open Space land.

As currently conceived, this project does not seem even minimally rational. Essentially, the City proposes to take land that currently sustains hundreds of cattle (on a seasonal rotation), wildlife (including deer and bear, which we have personally seen on this land), and human recreational use (including some of the most beautiful vistas available from any of the Open Space in the OSMP system), and substitute for those three types of use only one: the maintenance of roughly a dozen bison. Put differently, this proposal would convert truly âopenâ space that supports agriculture, wildlife, and recreational uses into a closed, fenced-in preserve that supports only a very limited agricultural use.

Fencing off Open Space from wildlife and human uses is an unprecedented and radical move. To do so would privilege one type of agricultural useâbisonâover the historical agricultural useâranchingâthat is one of the primary uses protected in the charter and in the City and Countyâs planning documents. Moreover, it would convert Open Space land from a less intensive type of agriculture to a more intensive type. This, too, is unprecedented. Going from low-intensity flexible cattle rotations to a full-time $600,000, 7-foot high fenced permanent enclosure that would support fewer uses is not stewarding this land with sustainability and low-impact conservation in mind.

How does this make sense?

Currently it seems that some on City Counsel, and perhaps some of the Open Space staff, are enamored by the romantic idea of bringing back bison. There is much to be said for bison conservation, and Ted Turnerâs huge herds of bison on his ranches are both beautiful and a meaningful step towards creating a market for bison. The proposal on the table is nothing like that, however. Instead, the City proposes to build a huge fence on Open Spaceâwhich will be ugly, pure and simpleâin the main view corridor towards the Flatirons as one drives into Boulder on Route 36, because of some vague hope that this token gesture will reflect well on our City.

It wonât. Instead, it will make the City of Boulderâand the Open Space program if it supports this effortâlook like token conservationists who are more interested in meaningless gestures than in real conservation or sustainable recreational use. In these economic times, it also appears very frivolous. Do the City and taxpayers really need to take on an optional financial responsibility? Is this really a priority for the Open Space budget? Please recommend to the City Counsel that they reject this proposal and use these resources towards better care for our existing Open Space trails, parking lots, and infrastructure.

Sincerely,
Scott Peppet & Kellie Zell
1355 S. Cherryvale Road
Boulder, CO 80303

Jeanette and Jim **Petersen** Boulder CO 4/23/2012

We have lived in the South Vale neighborhood for over 30 years. Our family has hiked on and enjoyed the open space along Cherryvale where you are reconsidering locating the bison. To fence us out would be a tremendous loss for us and many others. We are also concerned about the considerable initial, as well as the ongoing, cost for all of us. This parcel is one of the closest to the city and is loved and appreciated by a great number of citizens. Please don't devalue it by turning it into a zoo.

shane **phillips** boulder CO 4/11/2012

will this mean that this land will be closed to foot traffic?

Madsiopn J. **Post** Boulder CO 3/30/2012

While it would be cool to have a city herd of bison, I do not believe it is worth the diversion of city resources and additional loss of open space access to the public. Has the University been approached to help support the herd (after all, it is their mascot, not Boulder's)? Liability is a big concern. If a looky-loo slow downs on US 36 cause accidents, won't the victims look to sue? On Marshall Rd people will park illegally to take photos; bikes will have to swerve into the highway and may be clipped - more lawsuits. Vet bills, feed, staffing for monitoring, etc. And isn't the pasture fragile?? It always is if humans have access! In my opinion, it is best to pass on bison.

Jaclyn **Ramaley** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I do not beleive that creating a bison enclosure along Highway 36 or any where in Boulder County is justifiable, worthwhile, or ecologically sound.
Justifiable - Estimates of cost were provided at the meeting, but they were presented as very rough costs with maintence of animals, structures, etc at $100,000 as exceptionally low. Security at all levels was treated likely.
Worthwhile - The mini herd would be ""moved"" in order that they did not over graze, but I feel that a mini dustbowl would occur as the only animls that would be able to enter the ""pen"" would be rodents (praire dogs, mice, voles, rats) not coyote, various wild cats, and other wildlife that can now roam freely throughout the proposed space.
Ecologically sound- OSMP has done an exceptional job over the years in working to understand the ecosystems that are present in Boulder County, how their fragmented patchwork works across the landscape, and strive toward a sustainable future. Bison do not intergrate into this equattion.

Alice **Ranney** 4/10/2012

Re the possible placement of bison on open space land:
Being a CU grad I am intrigued with the idea of bison in the Boulder area, however I am very concerned with the use of public lands for this purpose for the reasons outlined in the Concerned Boulder Citizens for Open Space ads placed in recent Daily Camera papers. Please take these issues into consideration when considering the placement of Bison on open space areas, even if it is on open space areas that are not heavily used by the public.
Thank you.
Alice Ranney

Hal **Remington** LOUISVILLE CO 4/12/2012

As ""cool"" as it might be to have buffalo in Boulder I am totally apposed to closing the South Area for that purpose. I am not familiar with North area and its current usage but I do use the South Area, as do many others, for walking our dog and flying remote control gliders. By dedicating that area to buffalo it would turn a multi-use open space into a single use area that no one would benefit from and only incur higher costs.

Juan **Rodriguez** 5/1/2012

Mr. Gershman:

I read you statement on the April 10 issue of the Daily Camera:

"Gershman said it was highly unlikely the buffalo would try to break through the fence, but it would need to be sturdy just in case. "As long as there is available food and nothing of particular interest to them on the other side, it's unlikely they would go through the effort of trying to break down the fence," he said. "But we've been told that if a buffalo wants to go somewhere, you better have one heck of a fence.""
We live near the fence next to one of the open spaces mentioned as potential sites. If you care to come and look from the S 68th street boundary you will notice that the open space grass is mostly gone most likely caused by the dry March and April that we've had and the overgrazing by the cow herd that pastures over the Winter. And then look at the other side of the fence. If there was ever a case where the other side of the fence is greener it is there now! Just the case you mention where " if a buffalo wants to go somewhere, you better have one heck of a fence."
Today the buffalo will want to go there.
One more item: With Buffalo roaming I wonder how many more accidents there will be on US 36 as all those tourists, and the tens of thousands of daily commuters, crane their necks to see the the activities they would otherwise only get to see in the National Geographic channel. Which, by the way, towards the end of their "Secret Yellowstone" documentary on wolves mention the buffalo to be the "most dangerous animal in the Park", more than wolves, lions and grizzlies.
I hope the Council makes the right choice and gives Mr Turner back his buffaloes.

--
Juan A Rodriguez

Robyn **Rolander** Boulder CO 3/28/2012

My opinion.....I happen to think that buffaloes are beautiful, majestic animals that do not belong on Boulder County Open Space. They are certainly not people friendly. They are/can be quite dangerous, especially to someone naive and curious. They are grazing animals and will continue to graze until there is no more!

Vic **Rompa** Boulder CO 4/5/2012

I think the bison will really rip up the present vegetation and beauty of the area. I also wonder why we would use the money for a project like this versus ones that can benefit everyone (not just people in the local area).

I am against this proposal.

Thanks,
Vic

Kurt **Rosner** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

The part of the South Area adjacent To Cherryvale Road at the foot of Davidson Mesa, (same elevation as Cherryvale Road) that is presently available to the public by a pedestrian gate, is frequently used by the public, including myself, and barely visible from the highway. I fervently hope that strip of land is not being considered for closing to the public.

Kurt Rosner

Pat **Rudstrom** Nederland CO 4/10/2012

While it might seem like a ""good fit"" on its face, we DO NOT need fenced in bison along Route 36! The cost alone is prohibitive, the cost to wildlife is unacceptable, and for heaven's sake, why would we want to spoil the beauty of that drive into Boulder with a 7.5 foot fence?!!! And with distracted driving becoming such a huge cause of accidents, why add another distraction?

Boulder prides itself on its open space and preservation of wildlife - good grief, we've just restricted off-leash dog access to one area to preserve the nesting area of birds that ""might"" nest there -- what would we be preventing other wildlife from doing by fencing in such a large area? Plus, what about the the animals using that area for grazing now? What impact will that have to our ranchers?

PLEASE - DO NOT ACCEPT THIS ""GIFT""!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

David **Runyon** Golden CO 4/9/2012

Currently I use this ""Open Space"" to fly radio control Gliders. They are silent, safe, colorful, and graceful to observe. Additionally, I belong to a local club called the ""Rocky Mountain Soaring Association"". There are several members of the club that use this Open Space to improve their skills, practice for worldwide contests, and share recreational opportunities. Often times we get interested spectators.

Finding adequate flying fields for our gliders is a difficult challenge, but Cherryville (as we call it) is an excellent field for us to use, and I don't want to loose access to it.

By putting up tall, ugly fences, and eliminating this space for public usage is not acceptable to me. It also will cause a traffic nuissance along Hwy 36. Many people, hike, and ride horses on this land.

Additionally, I do not believe that it is in the public interest for a City/County government to be in the commercial livestock business. The cost and liability is not acceptable for this ""Buffalo"" herding idea.

Additionally, ""Big Money"" people have hidden agends, and Ted Turner is certainly Big Money. Buffalo are not an endangered species, and we don't need such a huge zoo, which will steal away such an asthetically pleasing piece of land.

I urge you to NOT change the status of this Open Space land, and certainly not for stinky Buffalos!

Dave Runyon

Dave **Runyon** Golden CO 4/2/2012

I am opposed to removing this land from park open space for public use. We don't want buffalo, or fencing, or more gov't services expense. There are plenty of buffalo around the country without Boulder trying to install a new ""zoo"" for 20 animals. When they grow to hunderds, then it will cost even more. Even if it's possible for private money to do the buffalo thing; Leave this land as it is now.

karen **sandburg** boulder CO 4/10/2012

i just wanted to weigh in on the hotly debated bison issue. every time i drive down 36, i breath in the beautiful view surrounding boulder -- the cows grazing, the simple, pastural image which slows me down and fills me with serenity. it's perfect as it is and i think the bison ""offer"" by ted turner should be denied. it's too expensive and the ugly fence required to contain these animals would be an eyesore.

Art **Schwadron** Boulder CO 5/1/2012

I live at 1300 Bluebell Ave and am in favor of adding a Buffalo Herd somewhere visible in Boulder. My wife and I are CU alums and my 2 boys are or will be students there so that may a factor in my position. I also wouldn't mind if you could find a way to have CU cover a portion of the costs.
As a side note I live near Chautauqua and am excited to watch the USAPCC bike race go up Flagstaff.
Thanks for your time

Steve **Setzer** Superior CO 4/4/2012

I think this is a terrible idea. There is no reason to close open space to the public so that we can make Ted Turner's buffalo visible to people on US 36. The fact that their visibility is so important shows that the City's and Ted's main interest is creating a tourist attraction and not restoring the buffalo population. Replacing valuable open space with something that approaches a zoo is not in alignment with Open Space philosophy. Please reconsider. The City will be replacing natural habitat with a buffalo pen. On top of that, the City will be paying for the maintenance of the herd. There is no benefit whatsoever to this plan. Natural habitat is being replaced, and it costs the City of Boulder money. I guess there is some tourist benefit and free advertising for Ted's Montana Grill. That is not a good enough reason. There is great benefit to maintaining Open Space that in it's natural condition (or as close to it as possible) that the public can enjoy. Again, please reconsider.

Thanks,
Steve

Marcy **Shykula** 4/10/2012

Thanks, but no thanks, Ted for the herd of buffalo. Sure they would look rather nice, but they would take away from the plain beauty of coming down the hill and seeing the open space. And, Ted doesn't offer any upkeep of them! The critters that live in the area should be able to continue living there in peace. A big zoo pen there just doesn't sound appealing -- our ranchers deserve better, too. Leave well
enough alone. Please!

Marcy **Shykula** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

Don't allow Ted's bison herd to come! Sure, it would look nice as we come down the hill, but the pen they have to be enclosed in and their upkeep and their effect on all the other creatures that inhabit the land just isn't worth it.
Nice idea, Ted, but you could offer to pay for their upkeep, too. The herd would just detract from the beauty of the open space as is.

Marcy **Shykula** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

Good Lord, forget the bison! Why spoil what we have? Way too many people (ranchers) and wildlife and
critters in the area will be affected, and it's simply not worth it -- just so Ted can give us a herd and then
leave all the upkeep to the citizens of Boulder. It's simply too lovely the way it is to upheave it all. Please
don't give it any further study -- JUST SAY NO!

Desiree **Slavick** boulder CO 4/10/2012

While I would love to see buffalo as a native species returned to our open spaces, I'm troubled that people will no longer be able to access these areas. I think balancing the bison with human access is what open space should strive for.

Margot **Smit** Boulder CO 3/29/2012

Concerned about the impact of fencing--all ecosystem management describes it's healthiest to have continuous corridors for wildlife movement
Concerned about the impact on the tallgrass prairie ecosystem of restricting it's use to one large species
Could Ted Turner be approached about ongoing funding for this? I am concerned about the unnecessary burden on OSMP budget.
Not clear that this supports the mandate of the department.

Craig **Smith** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

Before the public meeting about the Bison I thought this was a great idea. After the meeting not so much. I live on Merry Lane and the fence is planned to be at the end of the street. That is not very attractive. Also Iâm concerned about people driving down and parking on our street. We have a very quite street and this would make our street very busy. If there is only going to be about 13 bison with there offspring, the chances of people seeing the bison are slim coming down 36. Some tourist is going to jump the fence to get their picture next to a âdomesticated bisonâ. The orchid in the field is threatened and with the bison trampling it, it will be even rarer. There is no parking right now. So CDOT or who ever needs to create a pull off or parking. I love the cattle out my front door and I would hate not to see them anymore. Thank you Ted, but no thank you. Craig Smith

Archibald & Margaret **Smith** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

We are against the introduction of buffalo in the open space along Hwy 36. We prefer to see cattle grazing in this area and would not like the ranchers to lose its use. It is more appropriate to see buffalo in Wyoming, Montana and South Dakota, in their native habitat.

George J **Smith** Boulder CO 4/2/2012

Please do not put Bison on the area South of Colo 36. It is used by hikers, dog walkers and non-powered sailplane moldel flyers.

Archibald and Margaret **Smith** 4/10/2012

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David **Smith** Boulder CO 4/20/2012

This would ruin that whole area where you purpose to put the buffalo. Feel sorry for the people living in that area, say good by to there property value and the wildlife on that land. Please do not do it!!

Matt **Smith** 4/20/2012

Dear Mr. Greshman,

I'm sure you are aware of the value of free space in and around Boulder. It is a huge part of what makes the community great.

By accepting a herd and fencing off public land, you are closing off a significant area of free and open space. This restricts other wildlife traffic and public use to an unacceptable degree. The costs are not justified and the required fence would be scar on the community's beautiful open landscape.

The animals may be free, but they come at a tremendous and unacceptable price.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Matt Smith

bonnie **smith** Boulder CO 4/12/2012

This is a terrible idea. Reasons include:1. Safety 2. City liability 3. Cost 4. Closing open space from current users (dog walkers, hikers, horse riders and sailplane pilots) 5. Negative environmental impacts 6. Closing a wildlife habitat 7. Could not move Buffalo to another location if needed (fire, fence down etc.) 8. I did not vote for taxes for Open space to have it closed to the public and will never OK another OS tax increase if this happens 9. The city should not get into ranching. 10.> The horrible impact to the Hogan family

Art **Sohrt** Broomfield CO 3/29/2012

While I would be OK with the reintroduction of this donated bison herd, I do realize this is something that needs a lot of thought and preparation and not to be entered into lightly.

Susan **Spaulding** Golden CO 3/29/2012

As a wildlife professional with a neighboring agency, I wish to comment on this proposal. This is my personal opinion and does not represent the views of Boulder County Parks and Open Space.
I feel the long-term management of a herd of bison will be overly intensive to merit serious consideration. Ecologically as well as economically. While I understand that bison are symbolic of Boulder, as the CU mascot, and as an iconic figure of our disappearing grassland ecosystem, there is not enough space to allow this species to exist without serious management. A herd of herbivores that is not allowed to move around the landscape will mean serious impacts on the grassland systems that exists in these areas. Even with supplemental feeding, the year-round congregation of bison into a confined space will alter the area negatively. Thank you.

Mike **Stallman** Boulder/Lafayette CO 4/5/2012

Hi:

I am writing to oppose the introduction of bison to the area described. I currently use the open space area 4-6 times a week with my dog and friends.

There are very few areas that we have where we can exercise and walk our dogs off leash and off trail, with our voice and sight tags. This space is very special to us. Of the nearly 100,000 acres of Open Space Agricultural Land available in Boulder County, I sincerely hope you DO NOT open this area up to Bison and keep it as an open space area that we can continue to use.

Laura **Stinson** Boulder CO 4/4/2012

This is a terrific opportunity for Boulder to add to its already considerable tourist appeal. I love the sight of Boulder surrounded by open space as one drives over the mesa. Adding bison to the mix is a fantastic idea, and one that I'm happy to pay for with my tax dollars.

Ann **Tagawa** 4/10/2012

If there is a way to reasonably fund the project, I think it would be great to have bison on open space. What a sight that would be for all who come over the mesa on U.S. 36!
Ann Tagawa

Ann **Tagawa** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

If there is a way to reasonably fund the project, I think it would be great to have bison on open space off of U.S. 36. What a sight that would be for everyone coming over the mesa in Boulder.
Ann Tagawa

Jonathan **Tate** Superior CO 4/10/2012

To those considering the Proposed Bison Donation,

I'm a proud CU Buff graduate student and have been commuting to CU from Northglenn and Superior for over 6 years. Given our school maskot and the proposed locations near the freeway I presume this plan is specifically meant for us at CU. As such, I would like to give my opinion on the proposal.

With the proposed sites this close to the freeway, if one of the bison were to find itself on the freeway (barbed wire certainly won't be enough to keep a curious animal of this size) it could easily cause a pileup, especially given the location of the proposed areas on the north side of the hill. In the mornings, it's not at all uncommon for folks to out-drive their visibility going up that hill on US-36. Several times I've almost been witness to serious accidents when commuters find themselves having to slam on their breaks at the top of the hill. I can only imagine what could happen if instead of parked cars commuters found a bison on the other side of that hill.

Beyond the safety concerns posed by the animals' proximity to the freeway, I'm not completely certain that it would be fair to them to be on such a small tract of land. The proposed south area can't be much larger than one square mile, and the northern area is even smaller. For 20 animals, this strikes me as cruel, particularly given the intent for them to be viewed from the freeway and the surrounding Cherryvale and Marshall roads. Wild animals need their space to stay healthy, but if they're surrounded by roads I can't see how they could get it.

Finally, I believe the local people living around the areas must be considered. If an animal were to get loose, it could feasibly kill a child, or possibly even an adult. We aren't talking about cows here; these are very large, and very fast creatures. Though they are beautiful, they can be quite dangerous to the unwary. We aren't talking about Ralphie here (a female american bison), but a bull which can be 6' tall, weigh well over a ton and could be aggressive. In this light, have insurance costs been considered at all?

From this proposal I do not believe these factors I have brought up are being considered. As such I can not with good conscience support this proposal, in spite of the honor it would bring my university.

Thank you,

Jonathan Tate

Thomas **Tate** Superior CO 4/9/2012

It would be a shame to bring these beautiful animals into this urban setting just so someone can yell ""Look there's a buffalo"" as they whiz by on the freeway. This proposal if implemented would destroy natural habitat and established usage of the site and affect many of the neighbors. Many groups use these sites and the roads and area around it. I know it just looks like an empty field with cows, but many of us locals enjoy the benefits of this area contemplated. If buffalo are brought in, they will destroy the ecology as they are not as easy on the environment as cows are. The wildlife in the area would be blocked from the site due to the fencing proposed. The current irrigation would have to be stopped and would result in more ecological upheaval as the land is stripped of it's vegetation and erosion sets in. Additionally, we would lose the area for flying model sailplanes, the neighbors will have to put up with all the negative side effects of housing bison and the neighbors and the bikers using the roads around the area will be endangered as the traffic patterns will be altered. Finally, the proposed sites are not close to an interchange and even with signage telling them where to exit most people won't do it. My opinion is that there will also be increased chance of accidents due to people parking on the side of highway 36.
This proposal should be denied and another more suitable location found.
Thank you

June **Tate-Gans** Superior CO 4/10/2012

Incorporating Bison at the southernmost field is asking for trouble: the field has already been used heavily as a pasture for cows, the seven-foot-high electric fence would be an eyesore and a danger, and the danger to the soil and the indigenous plants would be quite high.

Placing a herd of Bison on this field field is a dangerous gamble to the animal's well being as it has already been used for years as a pasture for cows. The field has accumulated a great deal of cow manure over the years, which in and of itself is dangerous to humans and animals alike since it is often a carrier for sickness. Due to this intrinsic property, the danger to the bison is just as great -- doubly so since bison will graze anywhere they please.

Bison are also a danger to the field itself: when bison graze, they grab plants from the base and rip them out of the ground roots and all. As a result indigenous rare plants will be destroyed due to soil drifting and erosion -- the small field is not a plain for the animals to truly range, and plant lifetime cannot be sufficiently sustained to maintain the soil. Since the field tends to have a high amount of wind, the end result is that over time the soil will become less bound by plantlife and erode away, making the field (and surrounding air) unusable for both beast and people.

This field is surrounded by farmland that is actively used by families for various activities. Since a seven-foot-high electric fence will be installed, there is a great danger to harming children and others that live and work around that area. Bicyclists commonly ride down the adjacent Cherryvale road, and the families that work the pastures nearby bring children there as well for crawfishing -- as such, the county would become liable if a bicyclist crashed into the fence, or a hapless child came too close.

The northern fields, on the other hand, are far more visible to passers-by, have less usage by the surrounding land-owners/-users and are a better fit for the Bison themselves. For these reasons and more, the southern Cherryvale field is a poor fit for the animals, and is trouble in and of itself.

Chuck **Taylor** Boulder CO 4/20/2012

Mr. Gershman,

Regarding the discussion to have bison roam on city open space in Boulder, as a long time resident of the city I think this would be a very poor decision for the community. I think the overall impact would be very negative and only create unnecessary costs for the tax payers of Boulder. I have a difficult time seeing anything positive from this decision other than a large zoo like exhibit along a major throughway where the likelihood of being able to see the animals is very small.

I urge you and the council to consider not allowing this to happen to our beautiful city.

I appreciate your time.

Kind Regards,
Charles Taylor

Gregg **Thornton** Boulder CO 4/8/2012

Don't Fence Me In is a popular American song with music by Cole Porter and lyrics by Robert Fletcher and Cole Porter.
I want to ride to the ridge where the west commences Gaze at the moon 'til I lose my senses Can't look at hobbles and I can't stand fences Don't fence me in.

Brian **Underhill** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I think this plan is a bad use of open space resources that could be used much more wisely elsewhere, as well as being environmentally questionable.

Chris **van den Honert** Boulder CT 3/29/2012

Re: donation of bison

Unless the donation includes an endowment whose income will pay for all maintenance costs of the herd in perpetuity, this idea is preposterous. Given all of the other financial demands upon the city of Boulder, anyone who proposes using tax-payer money for this purpose is, to put it charitably, seriously misguided. Let's spend our money on people, not bison!

Deborah **van den Honert** Boulder CO 3/28/2012

I have a comment about bison on open space. IF, and ONLY IF, the bison would cost us nothing, ever (initially, ongoing care and feeding, wear and tear on land, impact on ecosystems, etc, etc, etc), then it might be a neat thing. But I'm VERY worried that the public would end up paying quite a bit for this venture and I think the money is better spent on more urgent social services.

Tamera W **VanSpriell** SUPERIOR CO 4/10/2012

When I first learned about the possibility of a herd of bison living in the fields bordering Highway #36, I was very supportive, even excited. However, if accepting this herd of bison means having to build a 7.5 foot high fence to keep them safe and transforming the primary highway between Denver and Boulder into a tourist stop, I am very much against accepting this gift. This would be much too costly to our treasure, public safety, ease of access into Boulder and the possible impact to our wetlands and natural resources.

Michael **Verzuh** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

The following is the OSMPs Mission Statement: ""The Open Space and Mountain Parks Department preserves and protects the natural environment and land resources that characterize Boulder. We foster appreciation and use that sustain the natural values of the land for current and future generations.""

This proposal to completely restructure one of the most used Open space areas (Cherry Vale south)by introducing a no longer native animal, but rather an animal that has seen domestication, runs completely counter to the commission's charter. Natural values that have been in place will be destroyed not fostered.

Over 30 years the areaâs diverse use has included, ranching, farming, hiking, dog training and exercise, silent radio controlled aviation (sailplanes), horseback riding, naturalist use. All of these forms of use have successfully co-existed and in fact are a model for other open space use.

This proposal is put forth by a small special interest (Turner and associates)whose interest for the promotion of their local restaurant. Meanwhile it removes valuable open space accessed by 1000s of users every year to benefit a corporation. These buffalo are no longer natural and have not been part of the Boulder eco-system for over 100 years.

There are extensive safety, legal and taxpayer costs which have not been planned for, not to mention the 7 ft high fence will be nothing less than an eyesore with a few animals behind it. Have all the taxpayers been provided a full and thorough cost benefit analysis of this proposal? Given all of the extensive unintended and direct consequences and long-term taxpayer commitments this proposal is only appropriately accepted if put to a full vote of the people. It is beyond the charter and purview of City Council and certainly the OSMP to accept such an ill-conceived proposal. It should be immediately rejected on this grounds.

Linda **Weber** 4/13/2012

I agree wholeheartedly with the letter to the editor by William Autrey in the Daily Camera this past week. PLEASE DO NOT fence in any of our public open space in the name of some kind of over-sentimentalized notion of bringing back the bison. The joy of the land is that it is OPEN and that the native wildlife that are left can roam freely. As responsible stewards of the habitat that is left, we have the responsibility as a community to see to it that the land is not used as a kind of "Disneyland." I expect my open space taxes to be used ONLY for OPEN space. That's what I have voted and paid for all these many years. Thank you.

dave **weil** boulder CO 4/5/2012

If Jo Easton's April 5 letter to the Camera is accurate, the bison thing does sound like a dumb idea.

Kathy **Wellman** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

I do not believe we should allow a bison zoo on open space. It's bad stewardship of the land, and it's not safe in any way for Highway 36.

Sincerely,
Kathy Wellman
3750 23rd Street
Boulder, CO. 80304

Dennis **Wellman** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

I am of the opinion that while a minority might view this as ""like Disneyland"", the majority of us would
rather not like to pass through an area either side of Route 36 that more resembles a penitentiary. We have a grand entry to our city...let's keep it that way.
This project is not one I consider relevant to the mission/goals of the OSMP and I regard it as squandering
my tax dollars and greatly diminishing my support.
For all the considerations, costs, factors, and implications listed on the OSMP web site, and those yet to be revealed, I cannot support the idea of possibly viewing a bison at 60 + mph when I have the highway and the Flatirons in front of me!

Warren **Wendling** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

I urge the Board of Trustees to approve the location of a small herd of Bison on Boulderâs Open Space along US 36. The costs are minor. The Bison fence is NOT a visibility issue. Slide 12 of the Staff Presentation shows how when constructed the fence becomes nearly invisible to the eye. Slide 11 as a construction drawing obviously is meant to show the details of construction, and use of such a drawing in an attempt to depict visual impact is disingenuous.
In my opinion Prairie Dogs are an obnoxious varmint that should NOT be reintroduced into Boulder Open Space grazing lands, and they should not be in the Bison range.

Suzanne **Westgaard** Boulder CO 4/7/2012

I am against having the bison herd in Boulder. First of all, bison don't 'belong' for want of a better word, in Boulder. They need large areas, not a restricted amount of land so that they can be used as a tourist attraction. The amount of money that will be needed to maintain them can be used for a lot more necessary causes. The large fence will be an eyesore. Just because Ted Turner wants to 'donate' them to Boulder doesn't mean Boulder has to go along with it. It's absurd, unnecessary, and last but certainly not least, unfair to the bison.

John **Wilkens** Boulder CO 4/30/2012

I hope the city values our open space enough to decline this blatant attempt to get Boulder taxpayers to cover the setup and annual costs of Ted & Ralphie's publicity petting zoo along US-36.

A 7' electrified, barbed wire fence that keeps the public from accessing these lands is antithetical to the open space mission. There are better things to do with the taxpayer's money.

Please decline this potential boondoggle.

Richard **Witmer** Bolder CO 3/29/2012

THIS EMAIL WAS ENTERED ON 29 MARCH 2012 BY MARK GERSHMAN IT WAS RECEIVED UNDER SEPARATE COVER AS AN EMAIL TO MIKE PATTON

Mr Patton, I appreciate the time you took to meet with me last week regarding Council over arching issues. I am very concerned about the long term sustainability of the Open Space system and think they were on the right track before pulling back on key points. With the huge growth of the front range I do not believe we are on a sustainable track and action is needed if our system is to be available in the future. I lack your faith that this half step is the correct start. It looks to me like we are backing down from the shrillest voices proven by the last election to be only very few Boulder residents. As I explained during our meeting I spend part of the year in Canada and will be leaving early next week but will be watching this conversation with interest until I return.

More importantly, on a subject that our time did not allow; a have read several times that the Council has asked you to explore the possibility of bringing Bison to Open Space. One Council member says it is a priority for 2012. I don't understand this at all. Bison are dangerous, expensive to manage, will require that hundreds of acres be permanently closed to public access. While better management of public access is necessary putting Bison on the land is not the way to do it.

I have talked with many other Boulder residents and we are all baffled by this proposal. None of us can see an Open Space purpose here and without that credential OS dollars cannot be used to fund such a project. Council may be well intended but you and your Board of Trustees are here to provide professional input and another view from the public. I want to be sure that there will be an extensive public process since this would divert hundreds of thousands of dollars from protecting the land. You indicated that around $800,000 dollars will be invested this year to implement the West TSA and other preservation strategies. Will this Bison project divert funds away from the West TSA either this year or in the immediate future. If you can at this early stage please identify preservation work that will not be undertaken in order to fund this project. Also, let me know the number of acres that will be required and where the animals will be located.

Please respond to my questions as specifically as you can at this point in time. Also, please pass this along to your Board and perhaps the Chair could also respond to my Bison questions. You are welcome to also send this to City Council.

As you suggested I will copy all correspondence to Cecil Fenio.

I have been a Boulder resident since 1970 and have great faith in you, your staff and City Council to spend our money wisely,
Richard Witmer

Richard **Witmer** Boulder CO 2/14/2012

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Richard Witmer

Janice **Zelazo** Boulder CO 4/9/2012

I believe Ted Turner's idea of gifting buffalos to Boulder is ""cute"" but terribly impractical. My cncerns are varied including: maintenance expense, environmental impact, humane consideration of the animals well-being, and the impact of ""sightseeing"". I encourage the Board to kindly reject the offer.

Gordon G. **Zellner** Boulder CO 4/10/2012

It is cetainly laudable for Mr. Turner to make this offer, however, I feel it is toatally out of place to put such a natural phenomenon in an urban or suburban setting. In essence despoinling the natural beauty of the area. The fence is repugnant, the dollar cost of serious concern, not to mention the cost to natural wild life and human recreational use of the area.
I firmly oppose the project.
Gordon Zellner

The Boardman Camera

Saturday, April 7, 2012, Vol. 6, No. 205

Happy Easter!

Tomorrow is Easter, the most important Christian holy day. It is when Christians celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead. Many people go to church as well celebrate by having a big meal with family and friends.

Eggs, flowers, chicks, and bunnies are symbols of Easter because they represent rebirth.

Candy has become a popular Easter treat, with milk chocolate leading the way. We thought we'd include a few fun facts about Easter candy, taken from various web sites.

- Ninety million chocolate Easter bunnies are made each year.
- Seventy-six percent of people say they eat the ears on their chocolate Easter bunny first.
- Americans buy over 700 million marshmallow Peeps throughout the Easter season, making it the second-favorite Easter candy.
- Sixteen billion jelly beans are made specifically for Easter—enough to fill a plastic egg the size of a nine-story building.

Home on the Range?

On Thursday, March 29, there was a public meeting reviewing the proposed bison donation made by Ted Turner. About one and a half years ago, Turner opened Ted's Montana Grill, a restaurant specializing in locally grown foods. On year later, he offered to donate 20 bison to Boulder. In December 2011, the City Council met about it and has asked the staff and Parks and Rec to find out if it would be conceivable.

The meeting on the 29th was to present the possibility to the public and answer their questions.

The city is considering putting the bison along US 36 starting near the scenic overlook, with one site on the north side of the highway and the other on the south side.

They have many factors they are considering, such as impacts on the community, agriculture, wildlife, and other ecological concerns. One community factor would be that public access through the entire area, about 850 acres, *Cont. p. 2*

Eli Boardman, Publisher

Home on the Range?, cont.

would be denied. Currently, it isn't a high-use area, but it does have several unofficial trails, and model airplane pilots fly at the site, according to Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor, who made the presentation.

Some agricultural concerns are that ranchers who lease the area for cows would lose that opportunity, and those who have ditches running through the area, which need to be maintained, might have safety concerns.

A wildlife factor is that the complex, seven-foot-tall fence used to keep bison in and people out is not accessible for wildlife. According to Gershman, the only type of animal that could get in or out would be mice or voles, and of course birds.

"Wildlife would have a difficult time," he said, "they would either be fenced in or fenced out."

Gershman made it clear that stocking bison in that area would be an agricultural undertaking rather than reintroducing bison to the environment.

He said the start-up costs are projected to be $450,000 to $650,000, with an annual maintenance cost of around $100,000. Start-up costs include fencing, handling facilities (such as hay storage and a corral), hay, and special equipment to manage the bison.

It is uncertain at this time as to whether the city staff will ranch it or whether it will be leased out to a bison rancher.

The public had many concerns. While some said they understood that it would be neat for people to see bison as they drive into Boulder, they worried that the main thing people would see is a huge fence.

One man said he was for the idea at first.

"When I first heard it, I thought it was a great idea," he said. "But now when I hear that it is a breeding herd off about 12, I have to say it sounds more like a hobby than an agricultural opportunity."

While 20 bison have been offered, the city staff believes that the area can hold about a dozen, considering they will be kept in order to breed and there will need to be room for the calves. They propose to sell off the calves every year to be processed for meat and other products elsewhere.

Several people in attendance were worried about the safety of people on US 36 pulling over to watch the bison, *Cont. p. 6*

Ten-Mile Hike: Mesa Trail

Over the past year, we have been featuring different 10-mile hikes which we have taken and recommend. First was the Whiskey Mountain Trail, in Wyoming; second was the Hot Springs Hike, at the Chalk Cliffs near Nathrop, Colorado; and third was the Doudy Draw-Marshall Mesa hike, in Boulder. We now continue our series with hike 4, on the Mesa Trail, also in Boulder. We will feature another 10-mile hike later in April, and then a 20-mile hike, hopefully in May.

We started out at the NCAR trailhead, heading West. It was crowded at first, as it was a sunny Sunday at the beginning of spring break. The trail was dry and rocky at first, but as we got into the forest, there were occasional snowy patches. When we turned south and joined the Mesa Trail, the crowds were left behind. Only occasional hikers and joggers marked man's appearance in the forest.

Spring Beauties

Along the trail, we saw plentiful spring beauties, which are tiny, diluted pink and white flowers. They are only about three inches tall, and the flower itself is only about a half-inch across. One misstep would crush a spring beauty, but new were crushed, as hikers were good at staying on the hard-packed trail.

As well as spring beauties, we saw several rare and delicate Pasque flowers, their light purple petals lifting to the sun, as it poured through the opening of the canopy of pines.

Pasque flowers

Occasionally, we heard chickadees and other songbirds sing as they flitted through the tops of the trees. Other than them and a few squirrels and an occasional beetle lumbering across the trail, wildlife was scarce.

As we had never hiked for extended distances on the Mesa Trail, we had never realized how many ups and downs there were and the elevation changes encountered along the trail. After plunging down off the ridge on which the Mesa Trail had continued for so long and into the valley shared by the Towhee and Homestead trails, we knew we didn't want to climb back up that slope and complete the hike we

Cont. p. 4

Ten-Mile Hike: Mesa Trail, cont.

Had planned, which was to return along the same path we had come.

At just over five miles into our hike, we stopped and ate a big snack. Now that we were out in the open, cloud cover had come in, and it wasn't quite as hot. This was good.

We looked at the trail map we had brought along and plotted a new return route, which took us to the Big Bluestem Trail, then to Shanahan Ridge.

View on the Big Bluestem.

It was amazing how many meadowlarks were singing and flying in the meadows we crossed through on our way to Shanahan Ridge. Occasionally, we would spot them and see their bright yellow chests and brown-speckled wings. It is fascinating, how far their song carries.

Also, as we hiked, we saw a big hawk flying in sweeping circles above us. We were just above South Boulder Creek, and we could hear red-wing blackbirds shrilling in the marshes.

Once we got to Shanahan Ridge, we left the trail and hiked the last mile and a half along city sidewalks. Even though we were tired from hiking so long, and ended up going a little more over 11 miles instead of our planned 10, the final mile and a half wasn't the hardest. For me, the hardest part was the beginning and middle of the hike, when there were so many elevation changes (I was still getting over a bad cold).

My favorite part was out on the Big Bluestem Trail, hiking through the meadows, hearing meadowlarks and watching hawks in the sky. Overall, it was a wonderful, but sometimes crowded, 10-mile hike.

Joke of the Weekend

What spends its whole life in bed?

A flower!

The Boardwalk: Winter's Last Breath

It was unusually warm the past two weeks here in Boulder, and over the weekend, temperatures climbed into the eighties. This triggered all the spring flowers and most of the fruit trees to begin blooming.

Tulips burst open their buds and lifted their showy heads to the sun. Pears, crab-apples, cher-ries, and plums all quickly dressed themselves in flowers of white, purple, pink, and red. Even sheltered lilacs started to bloom, and they usually don't bloom until May.

Bee on cherry blossoms.

Then, on Tuesday, winter roused itself from its nap and blew its cold, icy breath down on Boulder again.

Overnight, we got several inches of snow, and at times temperatures dropped below freezing. We were worried for our sweet cherry tree, which was in fuller bloom than we have ever seen. Our mouths watered looking at the flowers, thinking of the delicious cherries they would become. Now we feared we wouldn't get a single cherry.

Cherry Blossom.

Thankfully, the next day, things started to melt and the sun came out. Nothing seems damaged, and it impossible to find any snow. We hope it was winter's last breath!

* Cats * Dogs * Turtles * Lizards * Hamsters * Fish * Plants

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Pet-Sitting Services

Let your pet stay happy at home when you go on vacation. I'll take care of it and keep it company, plus water your plants and take care of other vacation chores.

Experienced and reliable. References available.

Eli Boardman 303-543-9692
Editor@BoardmanCamera.com.

Bunnies * Guinea Pigs * Birds* Ducks * Chickens *

Home on the Range?, cont.

saying the area is already accident prone. Others were worried about the bison getting out of the fence and endangering people.

Some didn't like the fact that this large area of Open Space would be closed. Others were worried about a rare flower species that is most abundant in that area might be trampled or lost; others expressed concern that with the natural predators of voles (coyotes and foxes) excluded from the area that the voles might take over and eat the rare flowers, as apparently happened in other areas.

Someone asked where the money would come from, and he seemed disturbed when he heard that it would be diverted from other OSMP projects, especially without a vote since taxpayers haven't approved this spending.

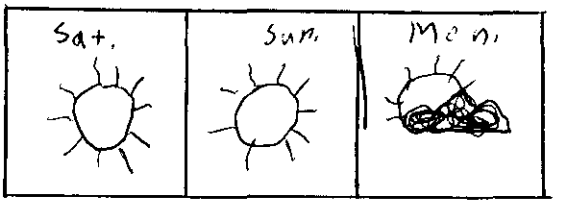
One woman who lives near the area said she thought it would be neat to have bison near her house and did not seem disturbed by safety issues.

Several people voiced their concerns about wildlife being fenced out. Gershman acknowledged that bears, mountain lions, bobcats, elk, and deer have been seen in the area and would no longer be able to go there.

These were the main areas that people were concerned about, and the majority seemed apprehensive about the idea of bison being kept as produce in this area. The city staff said nothing has been decided yet, and that they may look at other locations as well.

The city is taking comments on the bison issue through this Tuesday, April 10. To voice your concerns or wishes, go to http://tinyurl.com/boulderbison, or Google "Boulder bison donation."

Weather Forecast



Sunny with high of 60° on Sat.; lows in the 30°s. Sunny on Easter Sunday with highs near 70° and lows near 40°. Mostly sunny on Mon. with highs in the 70°s and lows in the low 40°s.

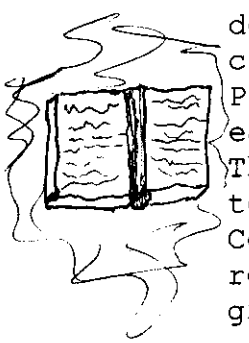
Public Service Announcements

Today! Meet Your Legislatures

Subscriber Ceal Ruffin sent us a notice that there will be a session today when you can meet the people who are busy making laws that affect us in Colorado. You can hear what they have to say and ask them questions at the BVSD Education Center Board Room, at 6500 Arapahoe, from 10:30 until noon today.

Free Books for 4-Year-Olds

If you have a four-year-old and live in Boulder, you can go to the library the week of April 23-28 and get your child a free book. The Boulder Public Library is participating in Colorado Lt. Governor Joe Garcia's One Book 4 Colorado Program, a part of his early literacy campaign. The Lt. Governor's goal is to ensure every child in Colorado is a successful reader by the end of third grade.



Studies show that low-income kids are exposed to 30 million fewer words than other kids by the time they are age 4. But children who are read to and who have access to books can overcome this deficiency and are more likely to be successful readers later.

All three public libraries in town—Main, Reynolds, and Meadows, will give out the free books during story-time hours; patrons who are unable to attend story-time can pick up their free book anytime during library hours that week. For more information, call 303-650-4460.

Volunteer to Watch Birds

If you like watching birds, you might like to volunteer to be a raptor monitor for the Parks and Rec Department. The department will monitor raptors and birds of special concern at the Boulder Reservoir from late April through early August.

Volunteers should be able to work independently and should own binoculars. Skilled birders are preferred, but identification training will be provided for beginners.

Responsibilities include monitoring, observing, and documenting nests, wildlife closures, and surrounding areas for birds of prey; reporting significant events; and assisting with educating the public.

Volunteer commitment is flexible, but the city would like everyone to commit one to four hours on a weekly basis from late April through early August. Training will be held on Saturday, April 14; please call Mary Malley at 303-413-7245 for more information.

April 15, 2012

Dear Members of the Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees:

As I mentioned Wednesday evening, I am a bison producer, and serve as the Executive Director of the National Bison Association. Following that meeting, I feel compelled to contact you with information and clarification regarding the proposed bison herd on Boulder Open Space.

At the outset, I was excited that this proposed donation offered a rare opportunity to incorporate a bison herd in Boulder in a manner consistent with the Open Space mission, and in a manner that would educate the public about the important role that bison play as a part of a complex ecosystem. Sadly the program proposed by the Open Space staff simply reinforces misguided stereotypes the public has regarding bison.

This is particularly frustrating because I have worked with the staff to offer information and *Best Practices* guidance based upon accepted standards in the bison business. Let me address the specific areas in which bison industry standards are at variance with the proposal under consideration.

Fencing

The core staff proposal is based upon constructing a seven-foot wildlife fence, topped by three wire strands, and including an electrified strand on the inside. This fending design has been presented as the requirement for keeping bison contained in a pasture. That is simply not true.

Yes, bison can jump six feet, and are powerful enough to run through common fencing. However, bison that are in a pasture with adequate feed, water and the correct social mix of bulls and cows have no incentive to try and test the fencing. On my pasture near Byers, much of the fencing consists of five strands of barbed wire no higher than five feet, along with one strand of electrified wire. While the animals initially “walked the fence line” when introduced into the pasture, they have never broken through—or jumped over—that fence. Several sections of the fence line on the open space property are already adequate to contain a bison herd.

Addressing the need to keep the public out of the pastures is likely a more legitimate concern than fencing the animals in the pasture. If city officials believe that a solid wild-life fence is required for that purpose, I would not argue. However, I would question the need for three strands of wire atop the fence.

Cost

The cost projection presented to the board of trustees is extremely inflated, even based upon constructing the type of fence proposed by the staff. According to my latest conversation with staff, they estimate a cost of between $11-$13 per foot for constructing the fence as proposed.

The National Bison Association has developed an Excel-based Fencing Calculator workbook to assist producers in developing a budget for fencing. This calculator has different spreadsheets for various types of fencing. Because we did not even have a sheet covering the type of fencing proposed by staff, I developed a new sheet based upon the type of construction proposed.

Using the retail price of materials from a local farm supply store, the calculator indicates that the cost of materials for the type of fence proposed by staff would be $1.96/ft. Addition of a single strand of electrified wire would add $0.04/ft., plus the cost of chargers.

Construction Costs for Woven Wire Fence - 6.5 ft., plus three strand barbed wire
10' Angle Iron-post on 20' Center
Pricing for 1,320 ft (1/4 mile)
Instructions: Fill in information in shaded cells and worksheet will calculate the results

	Unit	Amount	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost
10 ft. Corner Posts (10' x 6")	*Per Post*	6	$ 22.30	$ 133.80
8 Ft. Wood posts (5 in-diameter)	*Per Post*	3	$ 9.50	$ 28.50
Steel Angle-Iron-Posts - 10'	*Per Post*	66	$ 15.50	$ 1,023.00
Staples and clips	*Lbs.*	12	$ 1.50	$ 18.00
Woven Wire (78" high)	*Feet*	1320	$ 0.90	$ 1,188.00
Single Strand Barbed wire	*1/4 mile roll*	3	$ 64.90	$ 194.70
Misc. Supplies				$ -
Labor (estimated)	*Hours*	42	$ -	$ -
TOTAL				$ 2,586.00
TOTAL PER Foot				$ 1.96

Estimate Based on Angle Iron Posts buried 3' deep and spaced 20 ft. apart.
6" wood posts for corner bracing
One In-Line H every 440 Ft.

Adding Single Strand Electric Fence

	Unit	Amount	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost
14-Guage Galvanized Wire	*Roll*	1	$ 27.00	$ 27.00
Insulators	*Per Insulator*	68	$ 0.32	$ 21.76
Misc. Corner Insulators	*Per Insulator*	4	$ 0.43	$ 1.72
Staples and clips	*Lbs.*	3	$ 1.50	$ 4.50
Misc. Supplies				$ -
Labor (estimated)	*Hours*	4	$ -	$ -
TOTAL				$ 54.98
TOTAL PER Foot				$ 0.04

Plus Solar Charger
$275 for 12 volt.

These costs do not include labor. Based upon a labor rate of $25/hr, and a total time required of 46 hours per quarter-mile, the cost of building the fence (materials and labor) should be about $2.82/ft. This is comparable with the actual costs typically paid for fencing on bison ranches.

The proposed pasture in the larger segment is about 570 acres. Based on the calculation that a section of land (640 acres) is one-mile square, it is safe to assume that there would be roughly four miles of fencing required for the pasture. That would bring the total cost of fencing to $59,584.

Corrals and Handling Facilities

Staff noted in their assessment that the City of Denver has a large barn on the Genesee property for the purpose of storing hay, and for providing a cover over the working facilities (scales and squeeze chutes). This is an unnecessary expense for a small herd. Hay stored for winter feeding can be placed in an enclosed pen and covered with a tarp.

There is no need to have the working facilities in a barn. This practice is often used on large ranches, where the annual roundup can cover a period of several weeks. On a small operation, the winter roundup usually requires 1-2 days. The rule of thumb is that, *if it is cold, put on the insulated overalls…if it's really cold and miserable, wait until next week."*

Again, I provided staff with an estimate of the cost of constructing handling facilities for the bison, Using current pricing from a local ranch supply store, and from the Pearson Company (a manufacturer of handling equipment for the bison industry). The costs projected for that aspect are $35,400 using all-new materials.

Handling Facilities	
Corral materials	$10,000.00
Six 16' gates @$700	$ 4,200.00
Two 12 foot gates @ $600	$ 1,200.00
Block Panels	$ 5,000.00
Squeeze Chute w hydraulic and headgate	$12,500.00
Scales	$ 2,500.00
	$35,400.00

Accordingly, a rancher looking to put bison on a similar pasture would estimate $94,984 in expenses for the fencing and facilities. This is not even close to the amount projected by the Open Space staff.

Stocking Rates

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of this proposal is the concept that only 12 animals would be housed on the pasture. This is close to 50 acres per animal.

As I mentioned at the meeting last Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service advises that bison be stocked at the same rate as cattle. According to staff, the acreage now houses 100 units of cattle (mother cow and calf = one unit) for three months each year. That calculates to a stocking rate of 25 animal units per year. That number should be used for bison, as well as for cattle.

Management

Staff mentioned in the presentation that the city may have to hire someone to manage the herd at a potential cost of $100,000 per year. I have offered to work with the city to manage the herd as a private rancher (I live 13 miles from the proposed site). There are other bison ranchers who may be interested in negotiating with the city to provide management as well.

Bison as Dangerous Animals

Some of the images presented by staff reinforce the misconception of bison as belligerent and dangerous animals. Bison are undomesticated and should be handled in a manner that respects their natural instincts as a prey animal. But they are not belligerent or dangerous if treated properly. The photos below illustrate the type of interaction my wife and I have with our bison herd near Byers.

The primary period requiring significant caution is during the roundup or sorting times when the animals are moved through the handling facilities. During those periods, experienced handlers will use low stress handling techniques to assure the safety of workers and animals alike.

Marketing Excess Animals

The question was asked at Wednesday's meeting regarding how excess animals would be handled. I believe that this property would best be used as a cow-calf operation. Under that type of operation, the calves would be sold after weaning each year. This could be handled in a variety of ways. For example, the calves could be sold through a sealed-bid auction or through private treaty.

Today, bison calves are selling for about $2.80 per lb. That means that each 400 lb. calf would bring about $1,120 in revenue.

Invasive Plant Species

Staff mentioned that any hay brought into the pasture could introduce invasive species of plants or noxious weeks. This can easily be handled by purchasing certified weed-free hay.

However, I wonder what steps are taken to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds or invasive species as cattle are moved onto the pastures periodically through the year. Any forage eaten by an animal prior to transport could end up being deposited in the pasture. Other weeds likely arrive as passengers on the coats of the cattle brought into the pasture.

In other words, this issue should not be of any higher concern for bison than for cattle.

Conclusion

The proposed donation by Ted Turner offers the city of Boulder with a unique and valuable opportunity to restore a native species to this portion of its historic environment, and to provide the general public with enjoyment derived from watching these animals work upon the land. Personnel within Turner Enterprises—some of the best buffalo people in the business—are willing to work with the City to facilitate the development of a successful project. In addition, the National Bison Association and individual bison producers are willing to assist as well.

I certainly hope the City will revisit the feasibility process and look at costs, stocking rates, and other factors that more accurately reflect the realities of modern buffalo ranching.

Best Regards,

Dave Carter
Bison Rancher,
Executive Director, National Bison Association

BOUNDARY
OPEN SPACE PROPERTY BEHIND
THIS SIGN

APPENDIX D

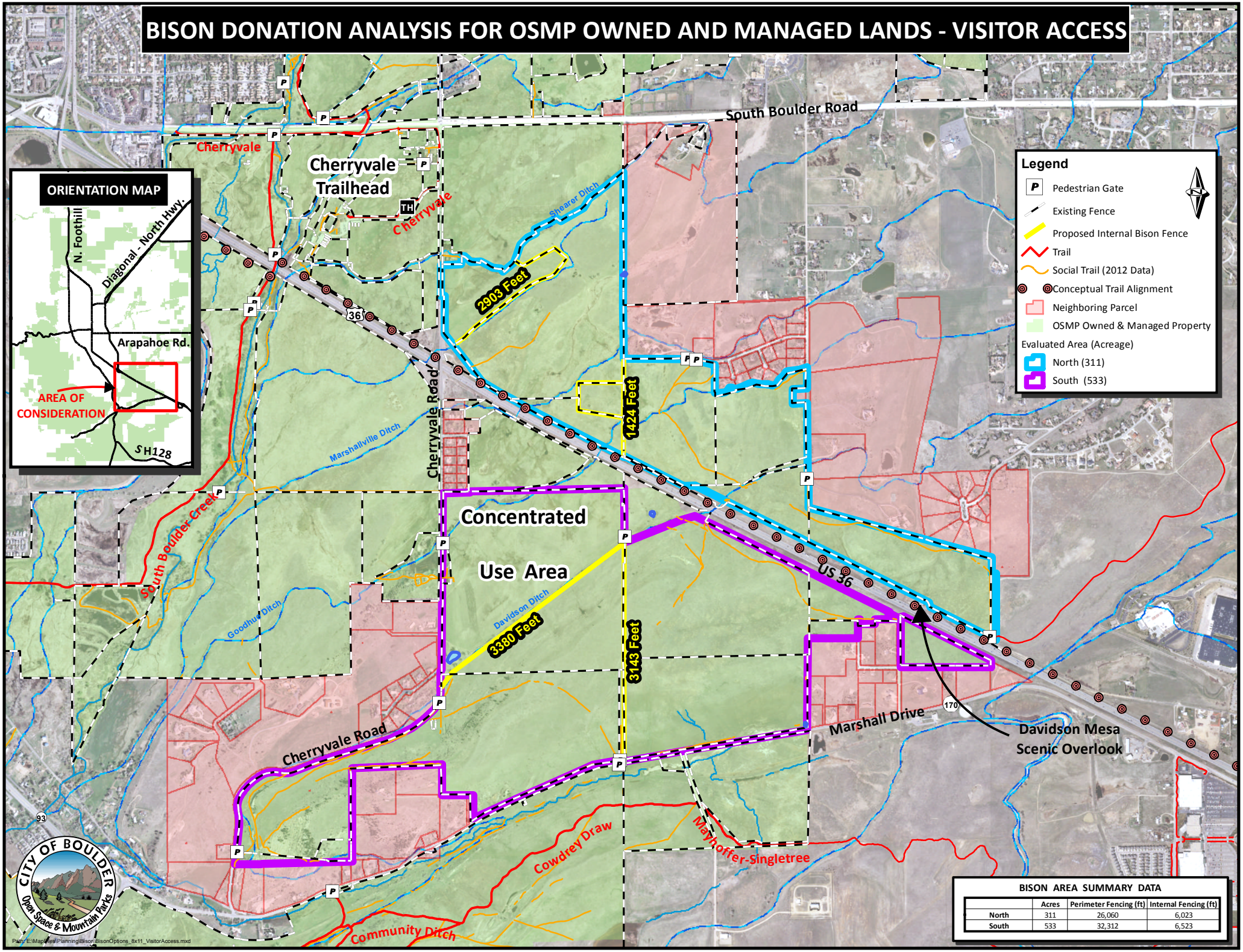
COST MODEL FOR BISON DONATION PROPOSAL NORTH AND SOUTH OF US 36

Item Descriptions	Sites	
	North of 36	South of 36
Acreage	**311**	**533**
START UP COSTS		
Fencing		
External Fencing length (ft) (Cost per foot below)	26,060	32,312
$11.00	$ 286,660.00	$ 355,432.00
Internal Fencing length (ft) (Cost per foot below)	6,023	6,523
$3.50	$ 66,253.00	$ 71,753.00
TOTAL FENCING	**$ 352,913.00**	**$ 427,185.00**
Other/Non-Fencing		
Corral (high)	74,200	74,200
Corral (low)	$ 53,200	$ 53,200
Squeeze Shoot/Scale	$ 12,500	$ 12,500
Building for Hay Storage (High: hay barn)	$ 77,500	$ 77,500
Building for Hay Storage (Low: pole barn)	$ 40,000	$ 40,000
Water Development		$ 40,000.00
Bison Viewing Pullout	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00
START UP COSTS LOW	**$ 464,613.00**	**$ 578,885.00**
START UP COSTS HIGH	**$ 523,113.00**	**$ 637,385.00**
LESSEE RUN OPERATION		
Additional Start Up Costs		
Staff Time	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00
Additional Annual Costs		
Lease Administration	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00
Fence/Facity Maintance & Replacement Costs	$ 5,000.00	$ 5,000.00
ADDITIONAL COSTS: LESSEE RUN	**$ 14,000.00**	**$ 14,000.00**
LESSEE RUN LOW	**$ 473,613.00**	**$ 587,885.00**
LESSEE RUN HIGH	**$ 531,113.00**	**$ 645,385.00**
OSMP STAFF RUN OPERATION		
Additional Start Up Costs		
Vehicle (full sized pick up-purchase)	$ 28,000.00	$ 28,000.00
Computer/Office	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00
Additional Annual Costs		
Staff Time	$ 78,000.00	$ 78,000.00
Vehicle (replacement cost at 7-year duty cycle)	$ 4,000.00	$ 4,000.00
Vehicle (annual operational cost @ $.33/mile)	$ 3,000.00	$ 3,000.00
Residence	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00
Feeding (12 head for four months)	$ 3,960.00	$ 3,960.00
Veterinary Costs (disease testing, vaccination,)	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00
Fence/Facility Maintance & Replacement Costs	$ 5,000.00	$ 5,000.00
TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS: STAFF RUN	**$ 114,960.00**	**$ 114,960.00**
OSMP STAFF RUN LOW	**$ 579,573.00**	**$ 693,845.00**
OSMP STAFF RUN HIGH	**$ 638,073.00**	**$ 752,345.00**

APPENDIX E

MAP OF VISITOR ACCESS POINTS, UNDESIGNATED TRAILS AND AREAS OF CONCENTRATED VISITATION

BISON DONATION ANALYSIS FOR OSMP OWNED AND MANAGED LANDS - VISITOR ACCESS



BISON AREA SUMMARY DATA

	Acres	Perimeter Fencing (ft)	Internal Fencing (ft)
North	311	26,060	6,023
South	533	32,312	6,523