



# CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONATIONS

## A BENEFIT TO OUR COMMUNITY

For many years, the City of Boulder has used conservation easements as part of its acquisition strategy in preserving and protecting open space & mountain parks lands in and around Boulder. From small building lots to larger agricultural tracts, these properties are an important part of the 43,000+ acres of open space enjoyed by Boulder residents and visitors.

**What is a Conservation Easement?** An Open Space & Mountain Parks Conservation Easement is a legal agreement between the landowner and the City of Boulder that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values. Each easement agreement is unique to the individual parcel of land, the values to be protected, and the landowner's needs and expectations. Public access is generally not permitted.

**How does it work?** When landowners convey a conservation easement to the City of Boulder, they consent to certain mutually agreed upon limitations regarding use of the land. This typically involves restrictions on development of the property — either prohibiting any houses from being built or limiting the nature or size of any further development.



*Wetlands/streams:* Many of our conservation easements have a creek or wetland on them. We partner with the landowner to preserve these valuable natural resources and wildlife habitat.



*Small Acreage Rural Properties:* Many of our conservation easements are small-acreage rural properties with a single home and a barn. They are primarily located next to open space property and act as buffers from encroaching development. They also help to retain the agricultural traditions of the area and add scenic value.

**What are the benefits of a Conservation Easement?** Conservation easements ensure permanent protection of the land's resource preservation values, including historical agricultural uses, wildlife protection, and preservation of riparian areas. The landowner continues to own and use the property, with certain restrictions, and the community benefits by having the land preserved and protected. Substantial tax credits may also be available to donors.

A conservation easement donation allows the city to preserve land without spending public money. Landowners make significant contributions to the community by donating a conservation easement. Land conservation values are also preserved for future generations.

**What types of land are suitable for a Conservation Easement?** The City of Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks Department includes a broad diversity of lands that have been preserved and protected for the community's benefit. Conservation easements can be used as a way to further the Department's mission to protect farms, forests, wetlands, wildlife habitats, historic places, and scenic views.

Each conservation easement is written specifically to address the needs and desires of the landowner while protecting these important areas and values.



*Ranches/farms:* One of our charter purposes is to preserve agricultural uses and land suitable for agricultural production. Many of our conservation easements are on working farms or ranches.



*Forested properties:* Some of our conservation easements are located in forests. We are very interested in protecting our forests and keeping development to a minimum in these areas. In addition, we strive to protect this valuable wildlife habitat.

### Conservation Easement Tax Credits

Landowners donating land through a conservation easement may benefit in several ways. Colorado legislation allows landowners donating a conservation easement on their land to receive up to \$260,000 in state income tax credits. These may be used over as many as 20 years, or sold for use by others. There also may be federal tax advantages to certain donations. The donor makes a significant contribution to the community as well. The City of Boulder recommends that anyone interested in the tax benefits of donating a conservation easement consult an accountant and/or tax attorney to determine how they apply to their particular situation.

**How Do I Get Involved?** If you, or someone you know, would like to protect the conservation values of their land with a conservation easement, please contact Linda VanDervort, Conservation Easement Specialist with the City of Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks, at 303-441-3440, or [VanDervortL@ci.boulder.co.us](mailto:VanDervortL@ci.boulder.co.us).

CITY OF BOULDER OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN PARKS

PO BOX 791, BOULDER, CO 80306 303-441-3440 [www.osmp.org](http://www.osmp.org)