



## Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road • Longmont, Colorado 80503  
303.678.6200 • Fax: 303.678.6177 • [www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org)

<b>TO:</b>	Board of County Commissioners
<b>DATE/TIME:</b>	Monday, March 30, 2020, 4:30 pm
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Virtual Meeting via Teams Live, Boulder, CO
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain Elk and Vegetation Management Plan Extension</b>
<b>PRESENTER:</b>	<b>Therese Glowacki, Manager, Resource Management Division</b>
<b>ACTION REQUESTED:</b>	<b>Approval of the Addendum to the Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain Elk and Vegetation Management Plan</b>

The third year of elk and vegetation management on Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain ended on January 31, 2020. The third managed hunting season went smoothly and is moving Parks & Open Space (POS) in the direction outlined in the management plan: reducing the numbers of elk using Ron Stewart Preserve year-round and getting elk to move beyond their high use area.

We will present the results of the three years of implementation including hunting success, public input, and elk counts and distribution.

POS and Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff continued monitoring the radio collared elk, including regular coordinated monthly counts. The actions taken to date have reduced the herd size from a high count of 360 in 2016, to 120 this winter.

Elk distribution has expanded nearly three-fold, from 16 square miles in 2016 to 44 square miles in early 2019. Elk continue to spend time on Rabbit Mountain and are still utilizing agricultural areas (crops and corn) over the summer but are also expanding into Larimer County as expected.

While the number of non-migratory elk using this area is declining, we have not reached our goal of 30 non-migratory or up to 70 migratory elk in this herd. For this reason, we are requesting an extension of the plan for up to five more years.

We took this to the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) in November, 2019, held an open house on February 5, 2020, which had 70 people attend, and presented a draft plan to POSAC on February 27, 2020. We also had an on-line form for the public to submit comments. Thirty-nine (39) comments were submitted with 77% (30) supporting continuing the elk and vegetation management. Public concerns included 1) not closing open space to public recreation, 2) requesting a peer review of the action, and 3) requesting non-lethal methods be used.

POSAC voted unanimously to support the continuation of the elk and vegetation management in the proposed five-year plan extension.

Attached is the plan Addendum for your consideration.

**Action Requested:** Approval of the Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain Elk and Vegetation Management Plan Addendum