

Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain Elk & Vegetation Management Plan Comments

Most recent comments are shown first. There are 41 comments.

Carl Mackey *Boulder*

Mar 20, 2020 *Comment #41*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: My opinion is that hunting is an important tool in the tool box of activities for managing this elk herd.

Ruby Bowman *Longmont*

Mar 20, 2020 *Comment #40*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: Boulder County should stop killing wildlife on our open space land. The county kills thousand of prairie dogs on county open space. Now the county wants to kill more elk. Lethal control of our precious wildlife is not the solution. No, I do not support the county's wildlife lethal control plans.

Wes Lowrie *Longmont*

Mar 09, 2020 *Comment #39*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I believe Boulder County's management plan for Rabbit Mountain and Red Hill are based upon sound science and professional expertise and support their continued application of public hunting opportunities accordingly. I specifically wish to acknowledge Jenny Dalton's effort in over seeing this program in the field and recognize that without her this program would not have been as near as successful.

Jeff Hiebert *Lyons*

Feb 28, 2020 *Comment #38*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: I spent my collage years studying wildlife management. There is a problem with our discussion on managing elk at Rabbit Mtn and Red Hill. It is an old, biblical idea that we have dominion over the beasts. We were taught in school that wildlife management is not done on what is best for the individual but for what is best for the population. Language in this plan is used in a way that objectifies the individual, we call killing elk harvesting, like they are pumpkins in our garden. As an ecologist, I understand the need to balance the natural equation especially when humans have put the system out of balance, but it should be done in a way that is ethical and provides for the just treatment of the individual. This plan treats elk like they are objects for our manipulation. Elk have herd structure, they have leaders, they form bonds, they pass along knowledge from generation to generation. They feel fear and work to avoid being killed. Who is to say if they feel grief but they will work to protect their young. I do not mind hunting them and eating them. I do mind that we put away our hearts and forget about the justice deserved to the individual and at the very least pay respect to these individuals instead of rooting for their death. We are intentionally traumatizing a family group of animals because they have sought refuge on open space. Of course, this is one of the main reasons for creating open space is a refuge from development and reduced human impact. Humanity has a history of turning living beings into objects to "manage" them and it is wrong and we cannot rationalize it by calling it wildlife management and that we know what is best. This is especially wrong when it is done because of money. The driving reason for this plan is the \$60k that the State is paying out in game damage claims. If you look at the 5-acres that are being impacted by the elk we see minimal impacts, especially considering the impacts of building parking lots, trail systems and the subdivisions and agriculture activities within eye-sight distance. The Mountain Mahogany ecosystem is not the delicate Willow Carr ecosystem that is so heavily impacted in areas such as RMNP and Yellowstone, the elk are not keeping vegetation from regenerating and impacting the whole ecosystem. In fact, disturbance in the mahogany ecosystem may be beneficial because of its resistance to fire and as is plainly visible it become a monolith of vegetation without disturbance. I also believe we are acting short-sighted in saying these animals are not acting "naturally" because they are not migrating, it feels like an excuse. Elk were on the plains in this ecosystem not too long ago. Our knowledge of their behavior is limited to after their reintroduction and it is not too far of reach to think that elk that inhabited the plains not so long ago did not have much different migratory behavior than the pronghorn, bison and deer. So I ask is it worth it to cause this much trauma to another group of living beings? Is it okay that 6-8 elk were shot and ran off and were not retrieved since this started, were they injured, how much did they suffer? What happens when individuals of the herd are killed, how does this effect the herd? How much trauma and injury and panic caused to these animals is worth a field of corn? For \$60k a lot of electric fencing could be put up to protect the cornfield. We need to do something different, wildlife managers do not get a pass when acting with cruelty in our society. Thank you for your consideration.

anita moss *Boulder*

Feb 26, 2020 *Comment #37*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: Initial plan is inadequate and cries out for peer review by qualified experts in science- based resource management. Leaving the solution to organizations like CPW who have only one approach (everything is a nail to a hammer) - is recipe for failure. The County commissioners have the opportunity to tap the knowledge of wildlife ecologists with broad knowledge and experience who live here in our community. Hope the commissioners show leadership on this systemic problem by engaging these unbiased experts.

Joe Castro *Boulder*

Feb 25, 2020 *Comment #36*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I've participated in this hunt 2 of the past 3 years and have harvested 3 elk from the Rabbit Mountain area. I've definitely seen the program's success with the hunts getting harder each successive year, but the benefits of wild game meat being harvested so close to home are tremendous in lowering expenses for hunting, greatly reducing miles driven, and benefitting local businesses with food purchases, supplies and game processing. I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity and have shared my success and knowledge with others so they can see the benefits of hunting for conservation.

Jared Smith *Loveland*

Feb 24, 2020 *Comment #35*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Please extend this management plan! This is a great precedent to which other land managers should take note, like Rocky Mtn NP! This is a win win, herd management through public opportunity! This likely saves tax payer money by avoiding hiring professional hunters. The harvested meat would be going to a good home as well. I don't see any cons to this proposition. Please allow this type of opportunity across Boulder County lands as well as work with other counties to promote this type of management! Win win!

Joanna Rodriguez *LONGMONT*

Feb 23, 2020 *Comment #34*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments:

Wendy Hawley *Longmont*

Feb 23, 2020 *Comment #33*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: I don't support the length of this extension. Full public open space access, or close to it, needs to be restored as soon as possible. By dismissing other options at this stage, or very soon in the future, you are changing the fundamental nature of the open space.

Janet George *Longmont*

Feb 22, 2020 *Comment #32*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: The public harvest program has been successful in every respect. It will take continuation of management action, especially the public harvest program, to maintain elk numbers and distribution at the objectives. Once at objective, the length of hunting and number of hunters can be reduced, but not eliminated or elk will again become overabundant and sedentary.

Jeanette Martin *Longmont*

Feb 21, 2020 *Comment #31*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: Why can't we do what other states have done and turn this area into an ELK preserve instead of preserving the grass. You know you have the seeds to replant the grass. This used to be their land...why can't we cherish THESE magnificent creatures and build the preserve as an educational facility. I say save the elk and get volunteers to replant the grass.

Jeremy Gregory Longmont

Feb 21, 2020 *Comment #30*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: I am greatly concerned about the lack of innovative and attainable solutions being used to deal with this issue that don't involve killing. I'm disappointed that tax payer dollars are going to decision-makers and their budget who can't seem to think outside the box to find non-lethal alternatives. This whole, intellectually and morally lazy mindset to shoot and kill is repugnant and unprincipled. As a third generation Boulder County native, I am beyond disgusted in the audacity you would even think about wanting to extend this antiquated approach in dealing with nature.

Patricia Sommers Longmont

Feb 21, 2020 *Comment #29*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: This is supposed to be a preserve for wildlife not a private hunting party property. I am adamantly opposed to continuation of this slaughter.

Jon Gustafson Boulder

Feb 21, 2020 *Comment #28*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: Why is the go to option always to kill. This is a preserve for the wildlife not a special park for hunters to kill animals. How is it actually even legal to close a publicly paid for park for the special use of hunters? The reason hunters claim this is a good "management" tool is not because they are concerned about wildlife or vegetation it is because it gives them close, near town, access to kill animals for their own gain. The reason the elk are "overpopulated" is because humans (hunters) have killed all of the predators-this is a fact. Instead of looking for long term viable and humane solutions they just argue for more and more killing.

Susan Sommers LONGMONT

Feb 21, 2020 *Comment #27*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: I find this notion that a native wild animal is overpopulated in a "preserve" and so therefore the solution is to kill them antiquated and wrong. Do you people realize that we have lost over 60% of the wild animals on the planet? Do you realize that this is because we have horribly damaged the natural system of predator and prey animals? Why is your go to ALWAYS kill them, animals are not in areas where we say they are "allowed", animals have "overpopulated" (as if-there are 8 BILLION people on the planet!) then just start a program of kill, kill, kill. I frequently hike at Rabbit Mountain and now I NEVER see any elk-this is supposed to be a wildlife PRESERVE! And not to mention my tax dollars pay for this and I'm not allowed blocks of time to be in the so called preserve by myself but boy o boy the hunter/killers sure are! I am ASHAMED of this approach! STOP KILLING ELK IN OUR PARKS AND PRESERVES!!!!!!!!!!

Jason Crooks Johnstown

Feb 20, 2020 *Comment #26*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: As a hunter who has participated in this hunt I've seen first hand how well it works at safely reducing the herd. The hunting program is very professionally run with safety and respect for the surrounding land owners as the top priority.

David Gillman Boulder

Feb 14, 2020 *Comment #25*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Given the fact that hunting has already proven to be an effective strategy, and the lack of viable alternatives, it stands to

reason that extending this management plan is best for wildlife and farmers in the area. That there is a problem seems clear- the increasing population is lowering biodiversity, costing the taxpayers who are indirectly compensating farmers, and creating a danger on roads. The other solutions (particularly sterilization and transplanting) are costly and of unknown efficacy. Hunting is a low risk option- elk are not exactly endangered so if unforeseen issues arise, the management plan can simply be discontinued and their population would likely thrive once again.

Jeanne Hoiem *Longmont*

Feb 13, 2020 *Comment #24*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: As a land owner near Rabbit Mountain, and visited by the elk herd, I highly support the efforts to reduce and maintain a smaller herd of elk in the area. The efforts in the last 3 years has been good, but I still see over 100 animals coming to my area beginning the first part of November. Currently the herd has been staying in a field very close to me since the week of Thanksgiving, only have returned to Rabbit Mountain for about 2 weeks around Christmas. 3 elk have been killed (that I know of) on Woodland Road this year, which is more than in the last 3 years. They cross from the fields to the south to the fields to the north. Also, if the herd continues to stay in the area, it would be good to let the hunters have access to the county owned land between Woodland and Vermillion, which is where they take refuge.

Randy Brown *Wheat Ridge*

Feb 13, 2020 *Comment #23*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I have friends living in the area and the elk herds crossing the roads is dangerous. Continuing the management hunts is a logical and effective way to reduce vehicle accidents. Hunting is also an effective way to reduce local crop and vegetation loss due to overgrazing by large local elk herds.

Doug Sigg *Berthoud*

Feb 12, 2020 *Comment #22*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I own 77 acres abutting Rabbit Mountain Open Space on the south end. While I do really enjoy seeing the elk on my property and on the open space, I understand the need for management. I think the hunt has been managed well for the most part and I haven't had any issues with the hunters. Jenny Dalton has done an excellent job. I do have a few comments on the future management plan: 1. Start the hunt after the main elk rut. This is a very stressful time for the elk and adding the hunting pressure during this time is inconsiderate to the animals quality of life. CPW allows almost no elk rifle hunting during September in the entire state for this very reason. I would like to see the hunt begin in Mid-October. 2. Restake the no hunting boundary on the South and East end of Rabbit Mountain adjoining my property. The current staking is not on the actual no hunting boundary. 3. End the hunting once objectives have been met. The herd has been significantly reduced and it may not take a full three more years to meet objectives.

Nat Paterson *Boulder*

Feb 11, 2020 *Comment #21*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Hunting has been proven to be a success in the Rabbit Mountain area and I think the program should be continued. Myself and other local hunters would enjoy the opportunity to hunt elk in this area.

Cory Wagner *Broomfield*

Feb 11, 2020 *Comment #20*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Hunting has been proven year after year to be an effective management tool for counties across the United States. I support continuing to allow hunting on rabbit mountain to help achieve the county's goal of limiting vegetation damage.

Colin Stewart *Niwot*

Feb 11, 2020 *Comment #19*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments:

Andrew LoDolce *Denver*

Feb 11, 2020 *Comment #18*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: The plan appears to be effective, and from what I have read, successful. It appears to be a win all around for the county, animals and conservationists alike.

Travis Provin *Boulder*

Feb 11, 2020 *Comment #17*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I support extending the management plan mainly because of the success of the hunting element. Hunting is an effective wildlife management tool and it seems that most residents around Boulder County do not know this and seem to think it is not an option at all. As a Boulder resident and an active hunter I have seen it work.

Riley Gelatt *LONGMONT*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #16*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments:

Patrick Megee *Longmont*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #15*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: After seeing the success of the rabbit mountain herd management program I suggest it be continued. Not only did this program reduce herd impacts it generated dollars for conservation and the local community.

Edward Foley *Longmont*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #14*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I support opening a public hunting season, and various methods of hunting.

Michael Calkins *Boulder*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #13*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Please continue using hunting to help control the size of the elk herd.

Carl Cotten *LONGMONT*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #12*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: From everything CPW and Boulder County has said, it appears that the management plan is working. It does sound like the herd isn't being reduced as fast or as effectively as desired. Maybe consider offering more permits, particularly archery only permits that will allow more opportunity, put more pressure on the elk, kill more elk early in the year, and have minimal to no impact on hikers, as archery equipment has a very short effective range and is quiet.

Benji Hunter *Longmont*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #11*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I live about 7 miles SE of Rabbit Mountain Open Space. I am a very avid and passionate Hunter. Please consider making these tags List B or List C tags. I do believe the number of tags would be the need to managed. It is my opinion that the majority of the avid and proficient Hunters will not burn their preference points for a nearly urban hunt. I do believe that they, myself included, would love to help out by managing the herd. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Max Fink *Longmont*

Feb 10, 2020 *Comment #10*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Yes, please finish the job. The change to Rabbit Mountain has been incredible.

geri cicero *Berthoud*

Feb 08, 2020 *Comment #9*

Support Extending Approval: No

Comments: Stop killing the elk

Don Holmstrom *Boulder*

Feb 07, 2020 *Comment #8*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Some points in support of the plan: -the property has highest biodiversity of fauna found in Boulder County -some species of plants only exist in Boulder and Larimer counties in the foothills of this area (in the world). -Hunting has shown to be the most effective management tool in the toolbox -86 wildlife associated car accidents with Red Hill herd since 2005 on US 36 - Support the method of take: archery, muzzleloader, rifle, shotgun

matthew langenfeld *littleton*

Feb 07, 2020 *Comment #7*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I strongly support the Rabbit Mountain Elk and Vegetation Management Plan. I participated in this program as a hunter in 2018/19 and hunted on private land in 2019/20. I harvested a cow in both years. This is a safe, well managed and low cost method of conservation for reducing the elk population to a range appropriate size of 30. At present there are about 130 elk in the Rabbit Mountain herd after the third season. With calf recruitment, in my conservative estimation, there will be around 170 elk going into next fall. About 50 or so are harvested each year. This program is successful and must continue. I have seen the damage to vegetation on Rabbit Mountain from the concentration of elk bedding in a small area. This management plan should be implemented for at least another 7 years to reduce the herd to 30. Once the herd reaches about 30 there should still be a managed harvest with a smaller number of hunters. Reducing damage to unique vegetation on Rabbit Mountain, private lanscape, private property, fences, crops, and lowering road collisions with elk is essential. I would like to recommend one change to the plan. I have observed these herds and talked to many others who also watch them. I note that the age class of the cows has been decreasing. Their are many calves and yearlings. There are also a large number of young bulls, especially spikes and raghorns. At times, it can be hard to get a good open opportunity on a cow due to all of the bulls. As only the cows are harvested there will continue to be more bulls and an unnatural age structure with fewer older cows. Lead cows are an essential part of a properly mixed herd age structure. The lead cows are the ones that will take a herd away from danger and help to disperse them. Allowing the harvesting of bulls will improve the age structure of the herd. Please allow hunters to harvest bulls during this next 3 year cycle in the management plan. If there is a concern that trophy bulls will be taken, then limit the harvest to non-trophy bulls. This could be 5 points or less or even bulls with less than 5 inch browtines. Lastly, I would like to commend the Boulder Open Space employees, biologists, hunt coordinator, and rangers that professionally manage this plan.

Steven Kurdziel *Longmont*

Feb 07, 2020 *Comment #6*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I attended the meeting on Feb. 5 and was very happy with what I heard from Boulder County. As someone who harvested an elk as part of the Rabbit Mountain management plan in 2019 I can say it is a great program. From what I saw as a

participating hunter it manages this problem safely and effectively while giving private citizens the opportunity to play an active role in a government program, as well as providing those citizens with a chance for a healthy and organic resource in the form of elk meat. I support continued hunting at Rabbit Mountain. I also support hunting as way to manage the Red Hill elk herd. I do think that one or both of these programs should allow archery hunting as a way to mitigate the herd in any areas where rifle hunting causes concern, whether that be do to property size/location or concerned adjacent private land owners. I also think that the county and/or CPW should facilitate a program to connect land owners with hunters who have either the sub unit tag or a general unit 20 tag. Lastly I would just like to say thank you to Boulder County Parks and Open space for the opportunity to participate both in the hunt and this continuing process of elk management.

Michael Holmes *Aurora*

Feb 07, 2020 *Comment #5*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Please extend any hunting opportunities. We are the stewards of wildlife conservation, and provide an ethical harvest of an animal that feeds our families, and mitigates overfeeding on the habitats.

Craig Thomes *Longmont*

Feb 06, 2020 *Comment #4*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Having attended the open forum, reviewed the management plan and seen the actual elk numbers reduced on Rabbit Mountain it seems clear that hunting is the most effective way to reduce the size of this heard, thereby reducing the stress on the habitat at Rabbit Mountain and neighboring private land/property. This plan is a win win for both the county and the citizens who partake in the opportunity. It is one of the least expensive options for the citizens of Boulder County and it benefits those who are lucky enough to harvest these animals with high quality, organic meat to feed their families. I also must say that Boulder County staff has done a terrific job of organizing and ensuring that the hunt is done safely, effectively with the least amount of disruption for the general population. I am in favor of extending the management plan for Rabbit Mountain and expanding it to other open spaces where similar issues may be resolved by hunting.

george robinson *Longmont*

Feb 06, 2020 *Comment #3*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Right thing to do to protect the properties' B1 biodiversity status. Over the last 3 years Hunting has shown to be the most effective management tool in the toolbox. Community upset has been limited. Would be interested in seeing more legal methods of take allowed, such as archery or muzzleloader. -Thank you for considering and utilizing hunting for Elk management, as it has been the most effective tool in the toolbox for trajectory toward management objectives.

Timothy Brass *Longmont*

Feb 06, 2020 *Comment #2*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: I think that the county has done an excellent job of managing and running the limited elk hunt on rabbit mountain, and I strongly support extending the program long-term. I also hope that this model could be looked at for other county properties. I would especially be interested in a limited program to facilitate Goose Hunting access on agricultural fields within the county, and would be happy to help develop a system to make this happen. I also think the county should consider allowing for archery hunting on rabbit Mountain, this would not require that the property be closed, but could facilitate additional hunting opportunity in a somewhat less obtrusive way. As long as there is some gun hunting, to keep the noise and pressure up, and disperse the animals, the other hunt days could be open for archery and occur alongside other uses

Barb Haaland-Muchaels *Lingmont*

Feb 05, 2020 *Comment #1*

Support Extending Approval: Yes

Comments: Our property SE of Rabbit Mountain continues to have tree & shrub damage & death from bull elk rubbing antlers during the rut beginning August 1st into November after the neighboring corn field has been harvested. Bull damage was worse this year than last as the limited hunting allowed only cow tags. We have noticed the cow heard has shrunk from hundreds in the past so it seems the management plan is beginning to work. This plan must continue not only one more year but every year to

keep a sustainable level of these lovely creatures without the resulting damage of a population out of control. Consider the carbon sequestration By allowing more trees to survive.