



**Carolyn Holmberg Preserve
at Rock Creek Farm**
Management Plan Update
Draft for public comment

Public Meeting • Oct. 27, 2020

Marni Ratzel • Resource Planner





Management Plan Update

Chapter 1 - Introduction

- ▶ Process
- ▶ Planning issues
- ▶ Previous planning efforts

Chapter 2 – Property update

- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Uses

Chapter 3 – Management Direction

- ▶ Recommendations for 13 planning issues
- ▶ Implementation plan

Chapter 4 – Public Engagement

Chapter 5 – Glossary

Appendices



Planning Area

1,124 acres

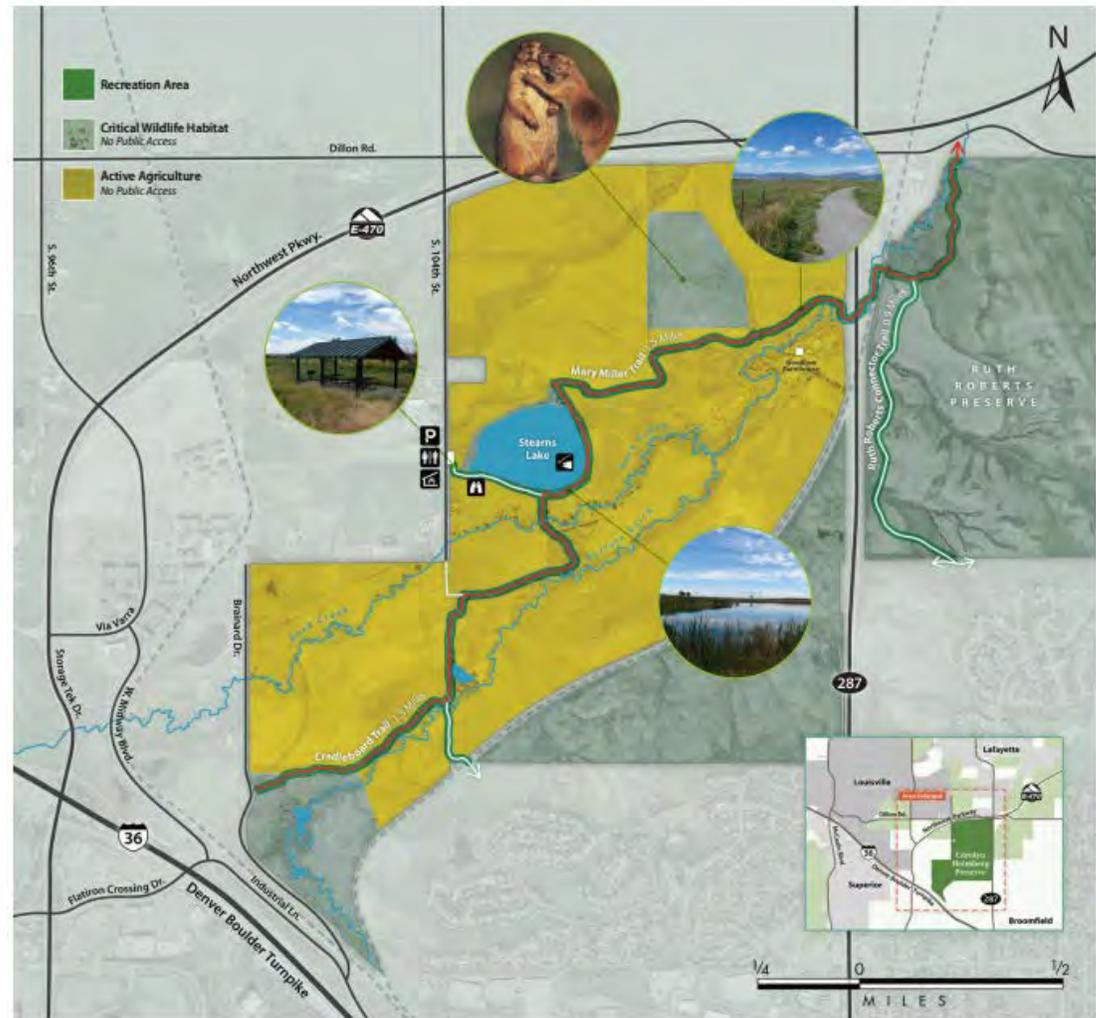
Key features

- ▶ Purchased to preserve the open space buffer zone and agricultural lands
- ▶ Birds of Prey Foundation rehabilitation center
- ▶ 3.3 miles of public trail system
- ▶ Designated cultural landscape
- ▶ Critical wildlife habitat areas
- ▶ Riparian creek corridors, wetlands, and significant natural communities
- ▶ Oil and gas wells

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm

LEGEND		LOCATION	
	Restrooms		Fishing
	Trailhead Parking		Wildlife Viewing
	Picnic Shelter		Multi-use Trail (pedestrian, equestrian, bikers)
			Paved Road
			Rock Creek Regional Trail
			Railroad

Located north of Broomfield at the junction of South 104th St and Dillon Road





Parks & Open Space



Mission

- ▶ conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and
- ▶ provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values



Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm

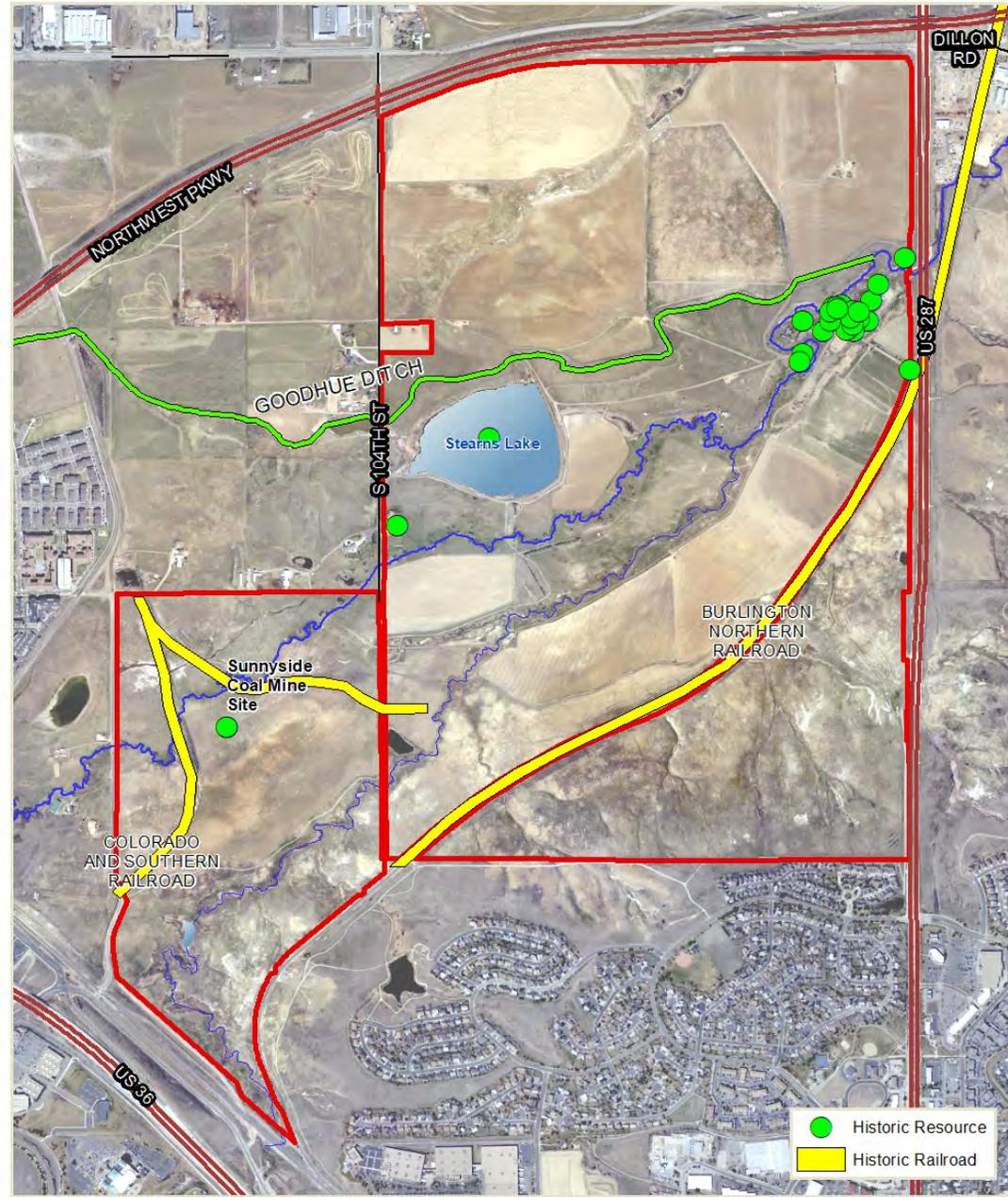
Proposed vision

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm is a working landscape of farming, ranching, irrigation features, and reservoirs, intertwined with critical wildlife, wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats, that preserves its distinct history and provides regional trail connectivity and recreational amenities for current and future generations.



Historic Resources

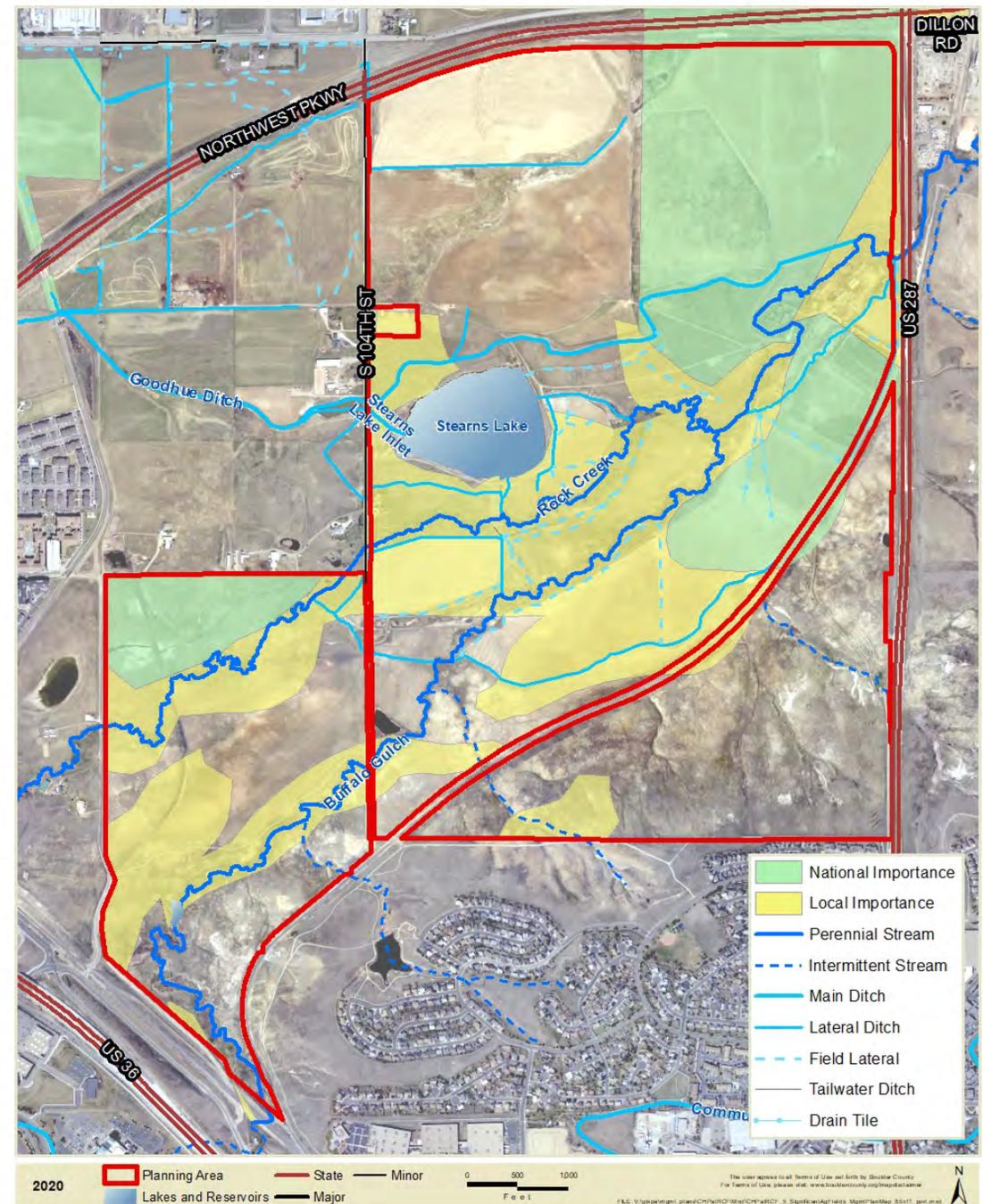
- ▶ Only 39% of the property has been surveyed
- ▶ Seven prehistoric sites
- ▶ 18 historic resources
 - ▶ Rock Creek Farm/Stearns Dairy
 - ▶ Goodhue ditch segments
 - ▶ Burlington Northern Railroad segments
 - ▶ Sunnyside coal mine
 - ▶ Several isolated finds





Significant Agricultural Land

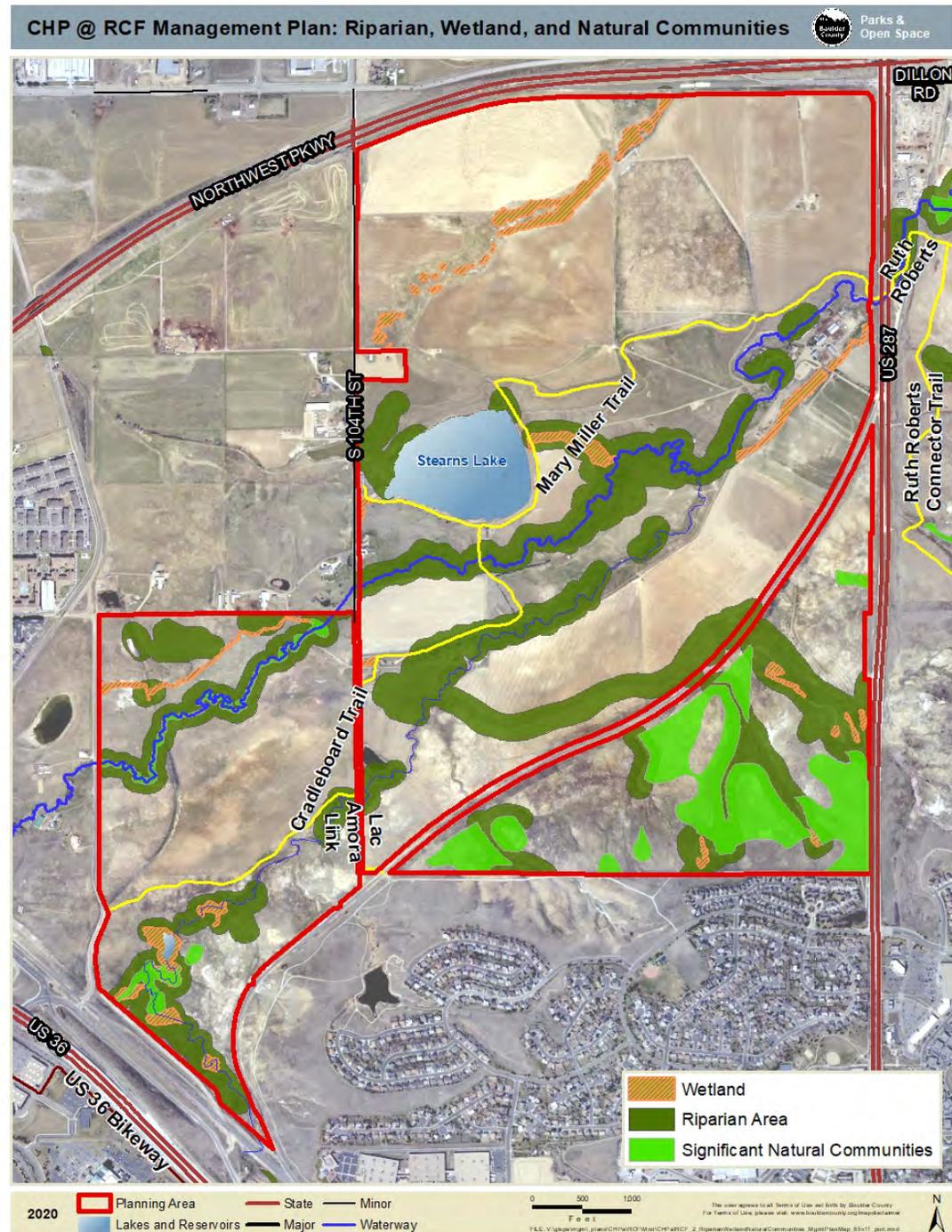
- ▶ Nationally and locally important agricultural lands
- ▶ Suitable soils
- ▶ Adequate irrigation water





Riparian, Wetland, and Natural Communities

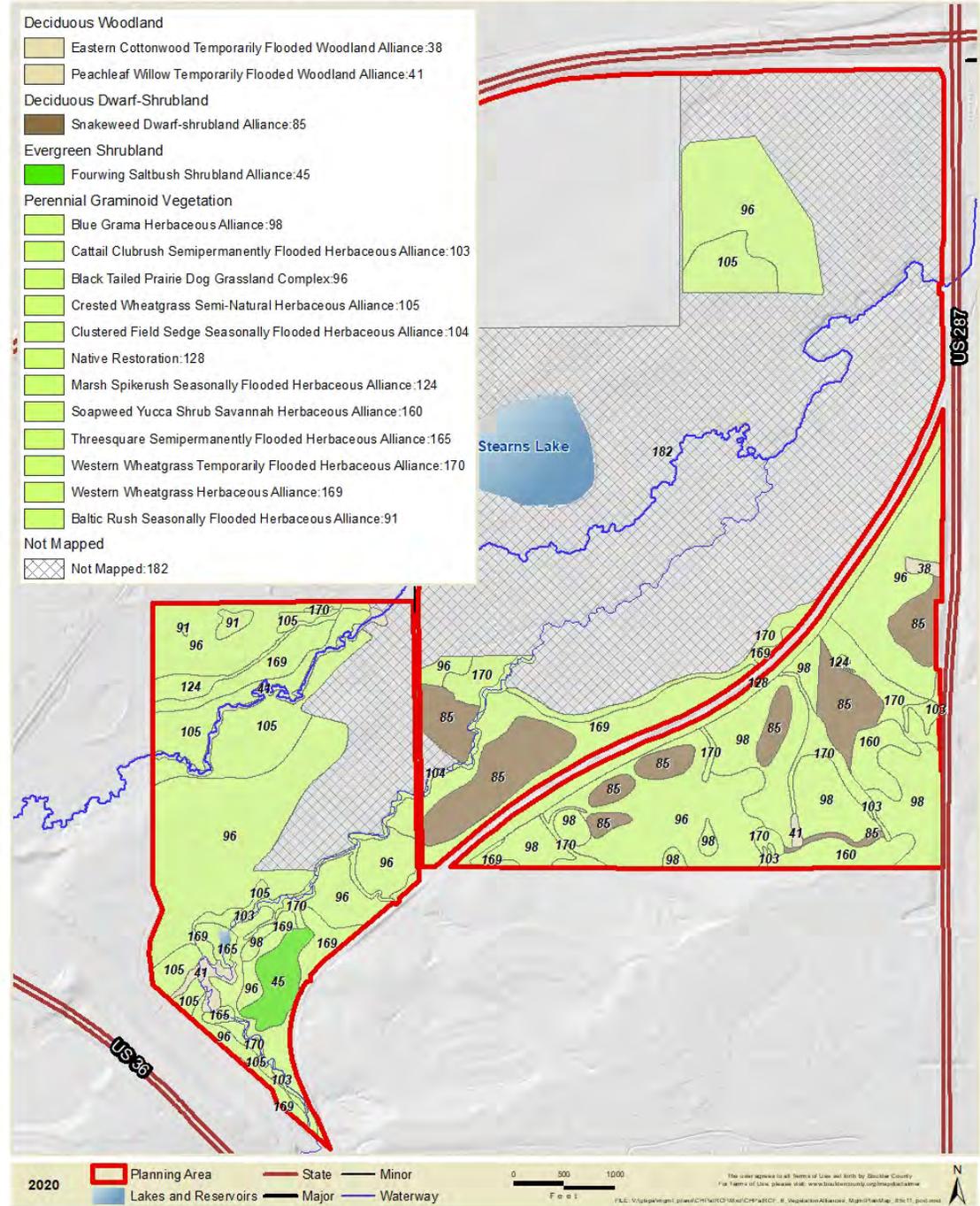
- ▶ About 5.7 miles of riparian corridors
 - ▶ Rock Creek
 - ▶ Buffalo Gulch
- ▶ Wetlands
 - ▶ along Stearns Lake and the riparian corridors
 - ▶ Alkali wetlands in NE area of property
- ▶ Native grasslands
 - ▶ In Habitat Conservation Area (HCA)
 - ▶ MOA lands in southern areas of property





Vegetation Alliances

- ▶ Deciduous woodland
- ▶ Deciduous dwarf-shrubland
- ▶ Evergreen shrubland
- ▶ 12 species of perennial graminoid vegetation



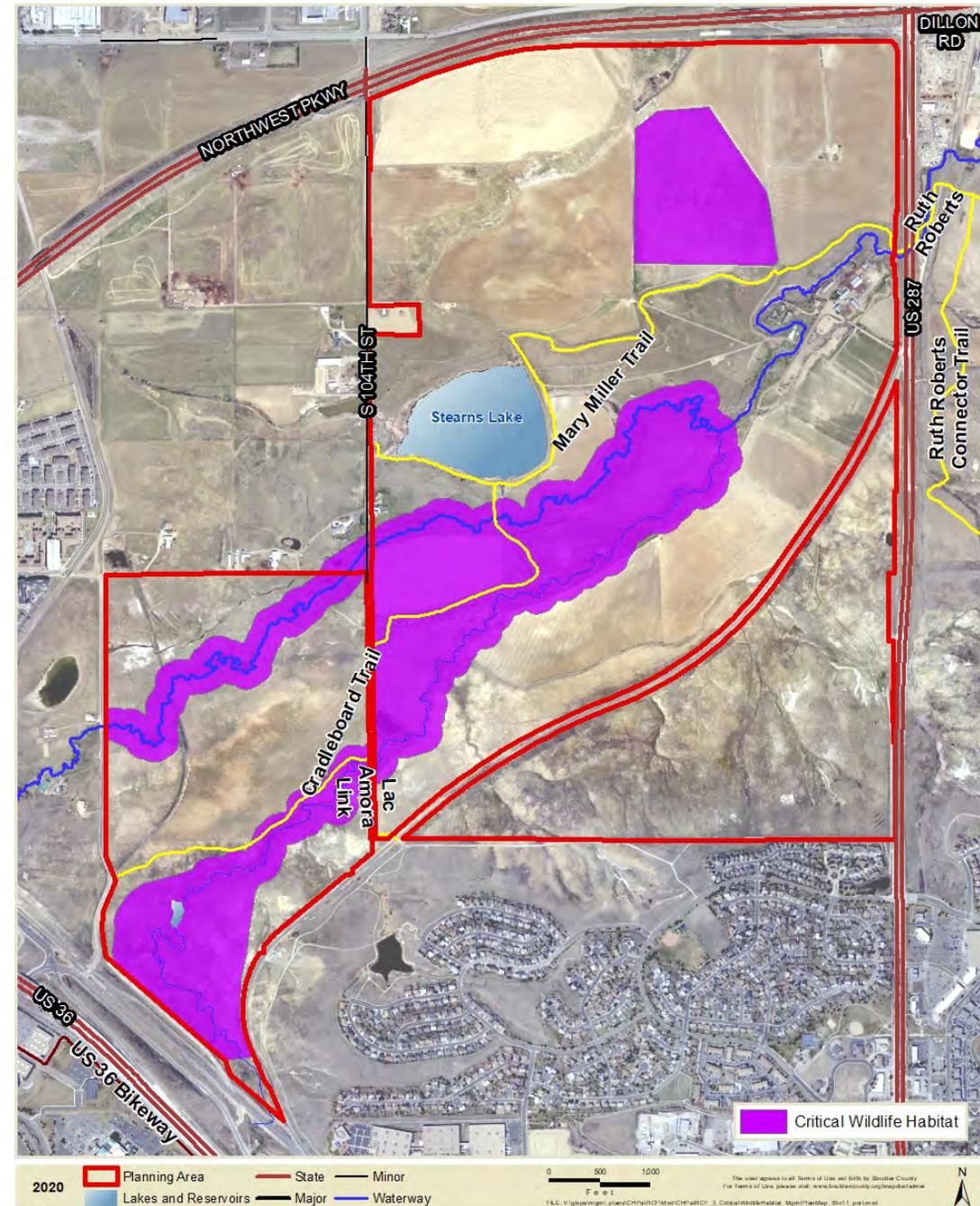


Critical Wildlife Habitat

- ▶ Critical wildlife habitats
 - ▶ #36 is the 40-acre burrowing owl preserve
 - ▶ #78 along Buffalo Gulch and Rock Creek

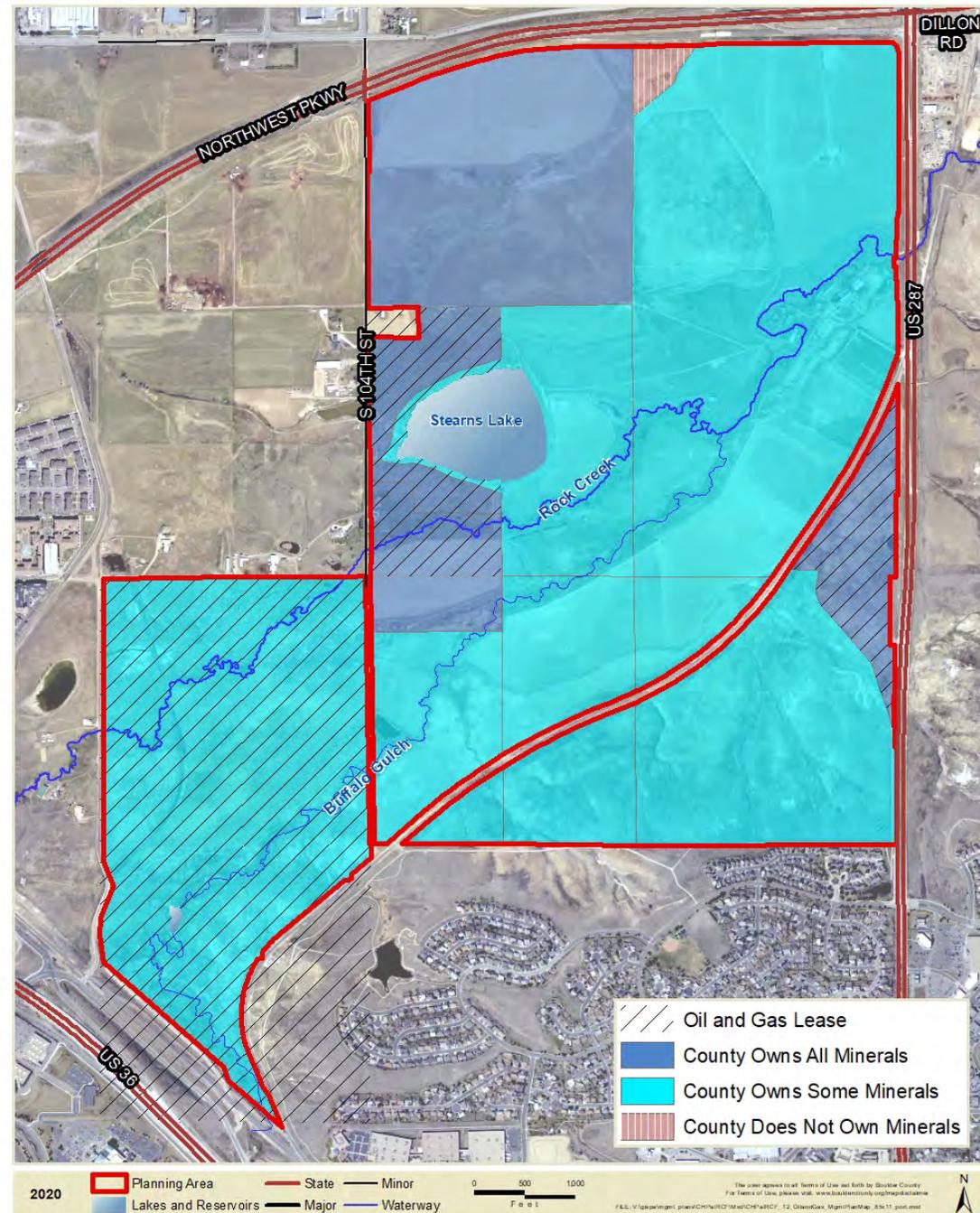
Wildlife habitat supports

- ▶ Diverse array of raptors, including a pair of bald eagles
- ▶ Burrowing owls
- ▶ Black tailed prairie dogs
- ▶ Northern leopard frogs
- ▶ Migratory birds
- ▶ Waterfowl



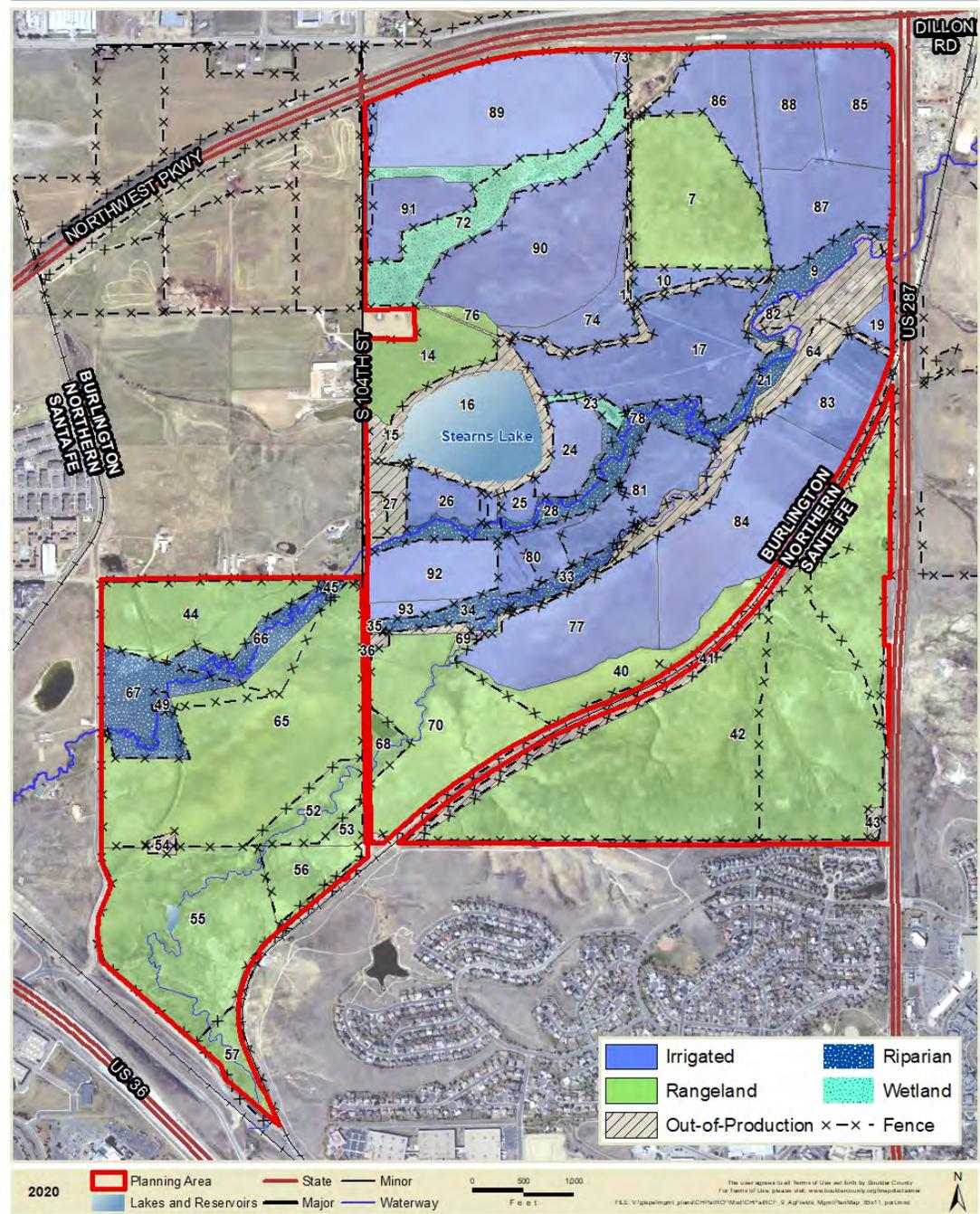
Oil & Gas Interests

- ▶ 10 existing oil & gas well sites
 - ▶ 3 producing wells
 - ▶ 5 abandoned
 - ▶ 2 plugged and abandoned
- ▶ Mineral rights ownership
 - ▶ County owns some
 - ▶ Leased out before county acquired rights
 - ▶ County has no decision-making role in management or extraction
- ▶ No known plans for new or refined production on CHP/RCF



Agricultural Field Types

- ▶ Cropland sited in northern part of the property
- ▶ Rangeland grasslands situated in the southern portions of the property.



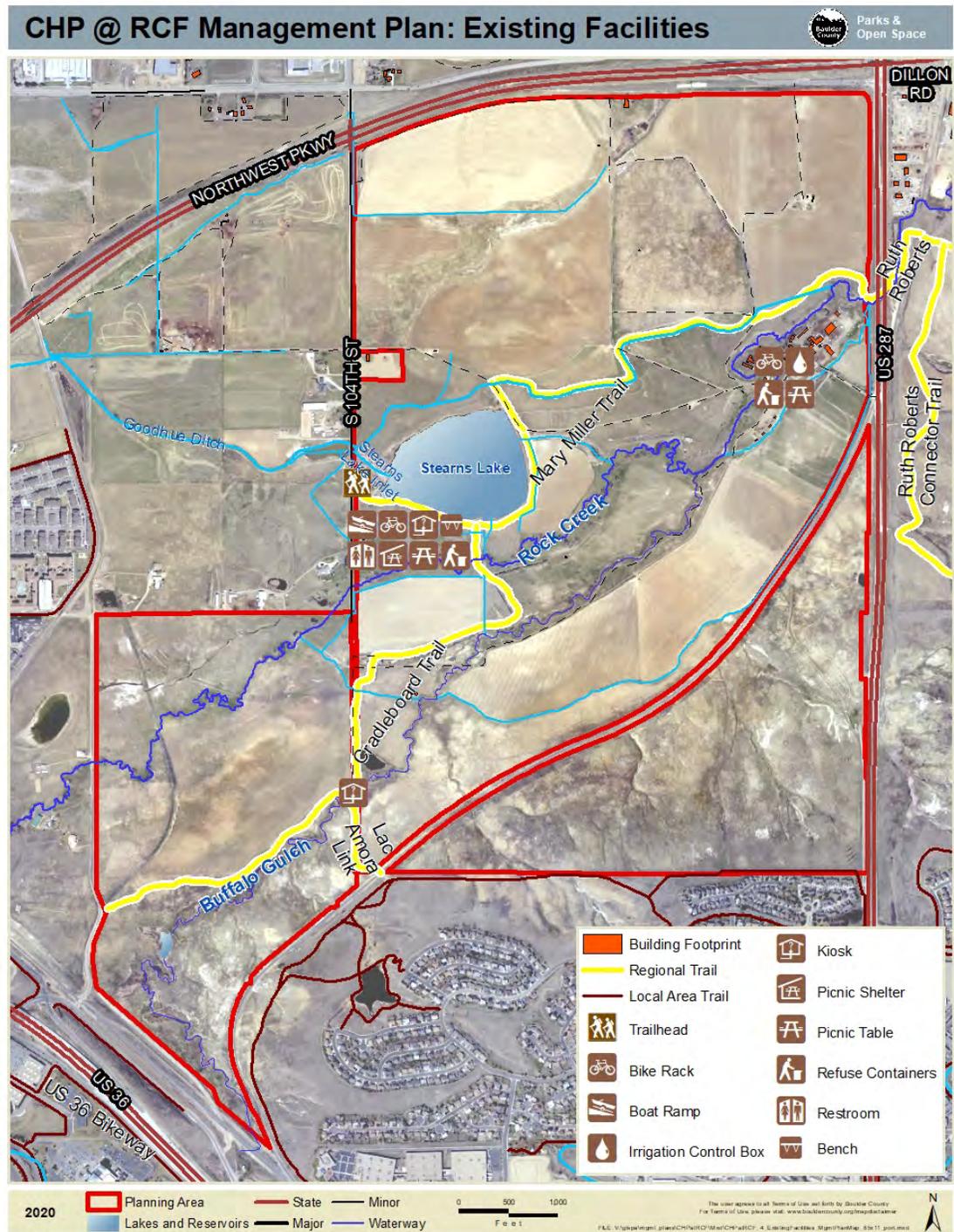
Existing Facilities

East side

- ▶ Agricultural operations
- ▶ Goodhue Farmhouse
- ▶ Birds of Prey Flight Cages

West side

- ▶ Stearns Lake Trailhead
- ▶ Birds of Prey Intensive Care Unit
- ▶ Mary Miller and Cradleboard trail
 - ▶ Brainard Rd. access gate





Estimated Visitors

2015 Visitor Study¹ (N=80)

- ▶ Broomfield (28%)
- ▶ Lafayette (21%)
- ▶ Louisville (15%)

Trail Use	in 2019
Stearns Lake Trailhead	35,691
Mary Miller Trail	15,877
Loc Amora Link	15,425
Cradleboard Trail ²	8,960
Total	75,953

Top three activities

Data Point	Primary	Second	Third	N=
2019	Hiking (43%)	Biking (24%)	Fishing (11%)	1,535
2018	Biking (38%)	Running (29%)	Hiking (15%)	721
2017	Biking (37%)	Hiking (29%)	Fishing (15%)	719

¹2015 Visitor Study includes system-wide demographics and satisfaction survey.

²The Cradleboard Trail was closed from mid-April to late July to protect sensitive wildlife in the area.

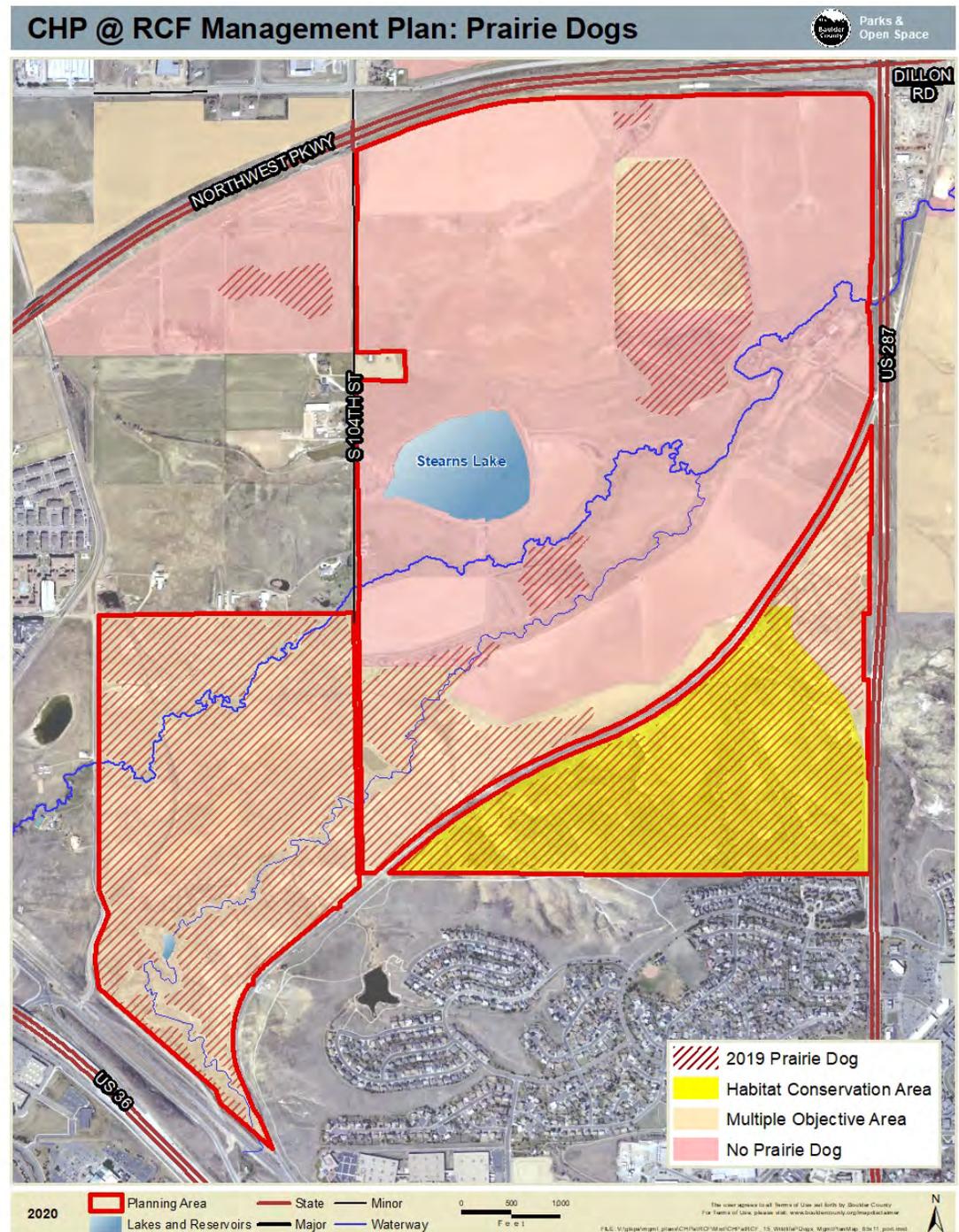




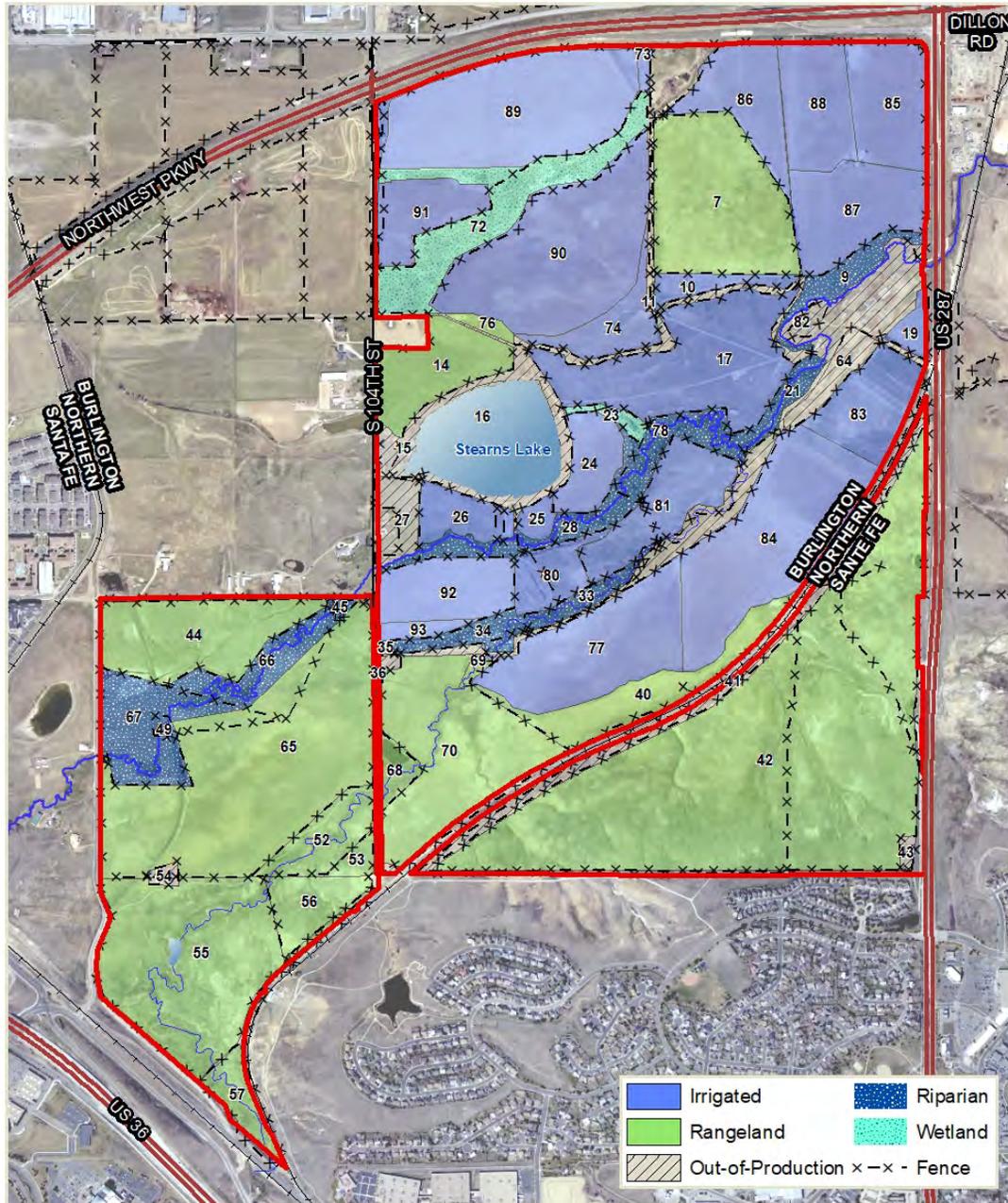
Planning Issues proposed for refinement

1. Designation and use of 40-acre burrowing owl preserve and field 65
2. Grassland health and restoration
3. Prairie dog management
4. Riparian habitat health
5. Seasonal wildlife closures of regional trail
6. Recreation and visitor access
7. Cultural and paleontological resources
8. Agricultural use of historic buildings and structures
9. Irrigation/water resources improvements
10. Buffalo Gulch
11. Invasive Weed management
12. Birds of Prey Foundation facilities
13. Standard operating procedures

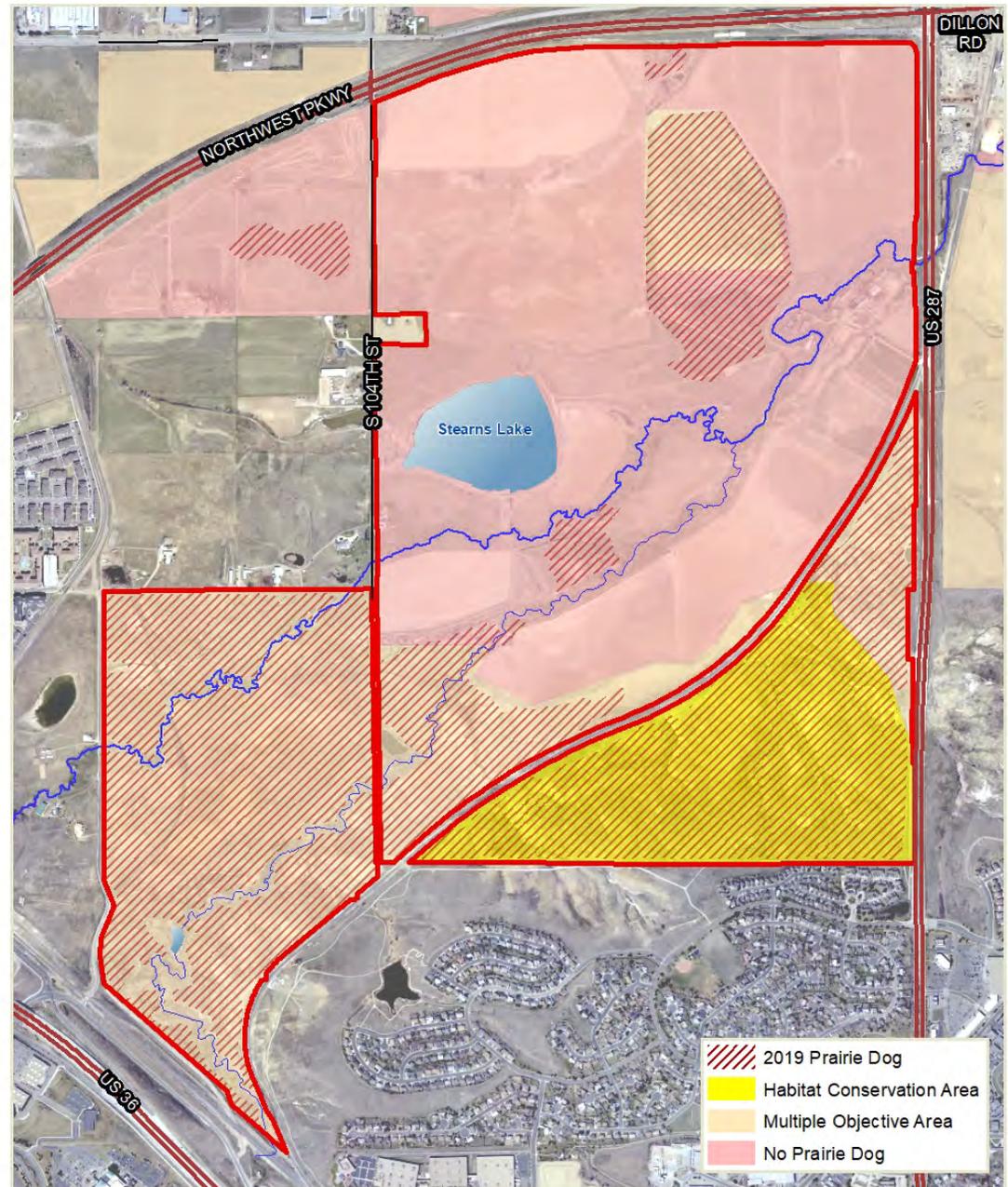
Prairie dogs



CHP @ RCF Management Plan: Agricultural Field Types



CHP @ RCF Management Plan: Prairie Dogs



1. Designation and use of 40-acre preserve

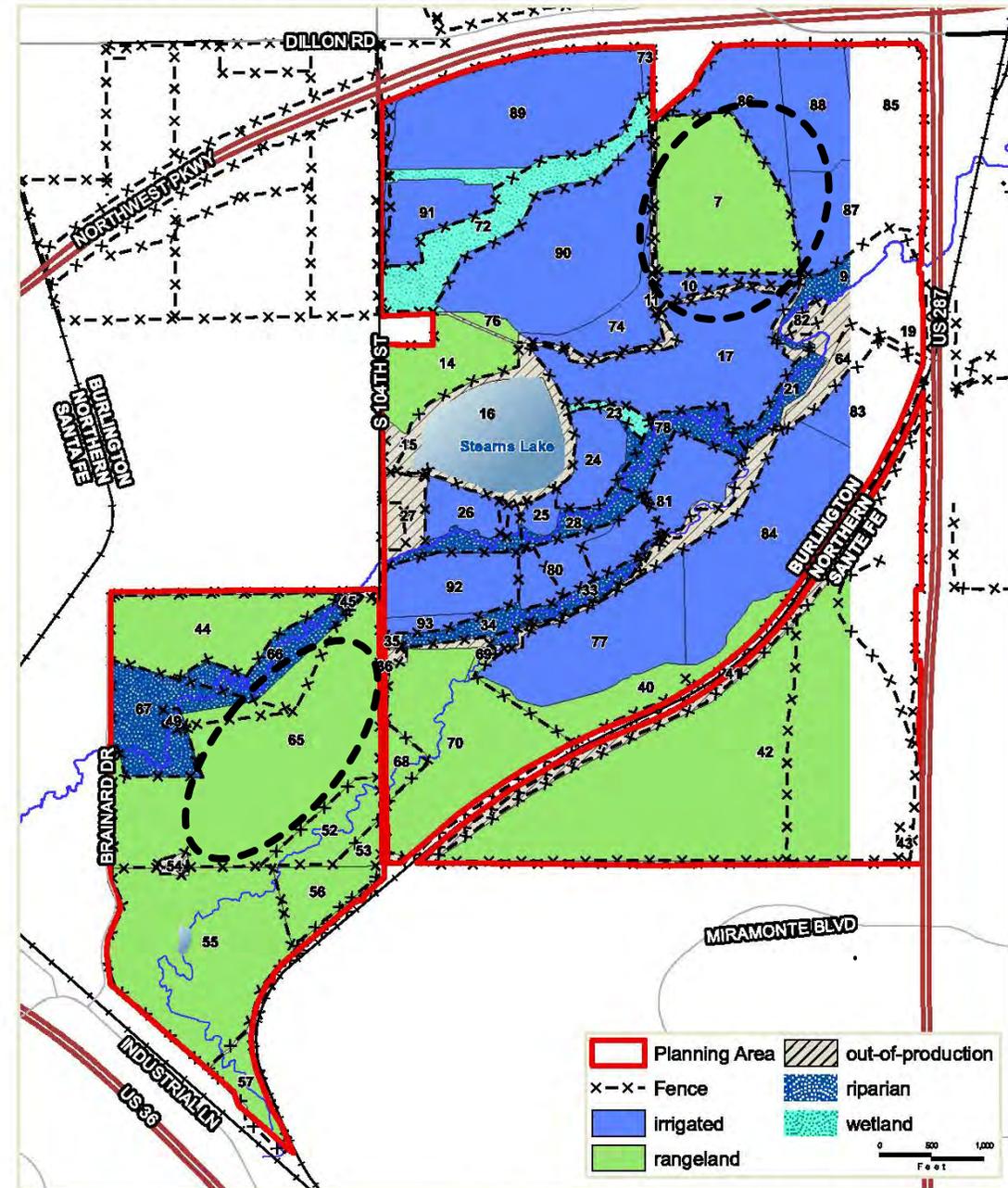
Recommendation

Field 7

- Change designation and use to NPD cropland
- Relocate prairie dogs to suitable areas within BCPOS lands

Field 65

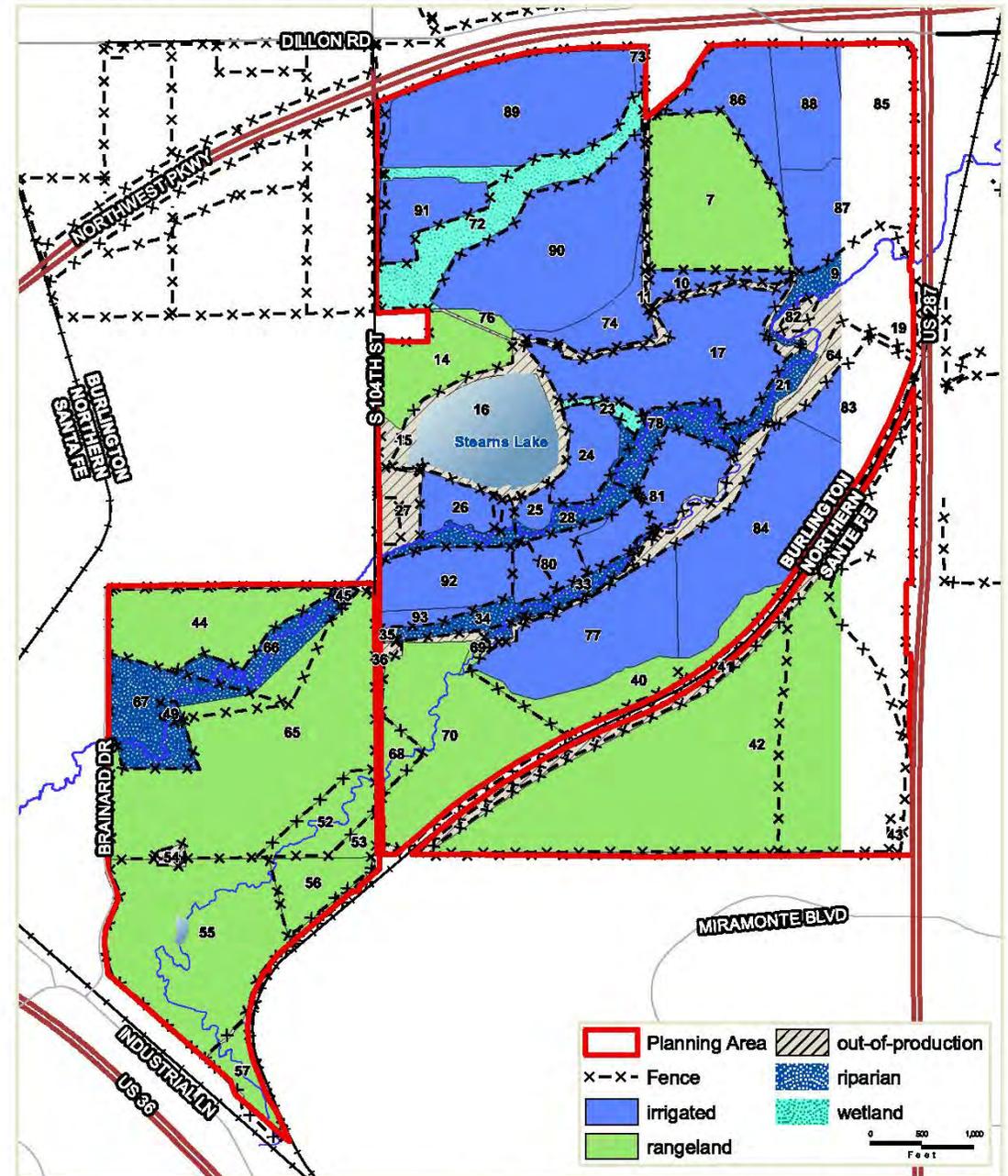
- Discontinue crop production as part of the agricultural operation
- Temporarily defer livestock grazing until the plant community recovers
- Prescriptive grazing plan after two to five year respite



2. Grassland health and restoration

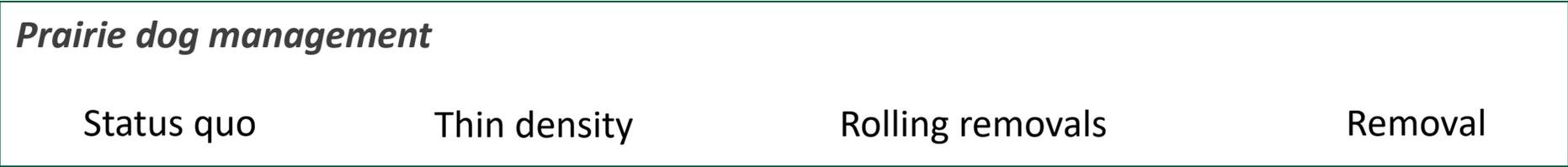
Recommendations vary by field based on characteristics, including

- ▶ Existing vegetation type
- ▶ Adjacent uses
- ▶ Natural barriers to help with containment/encroachment





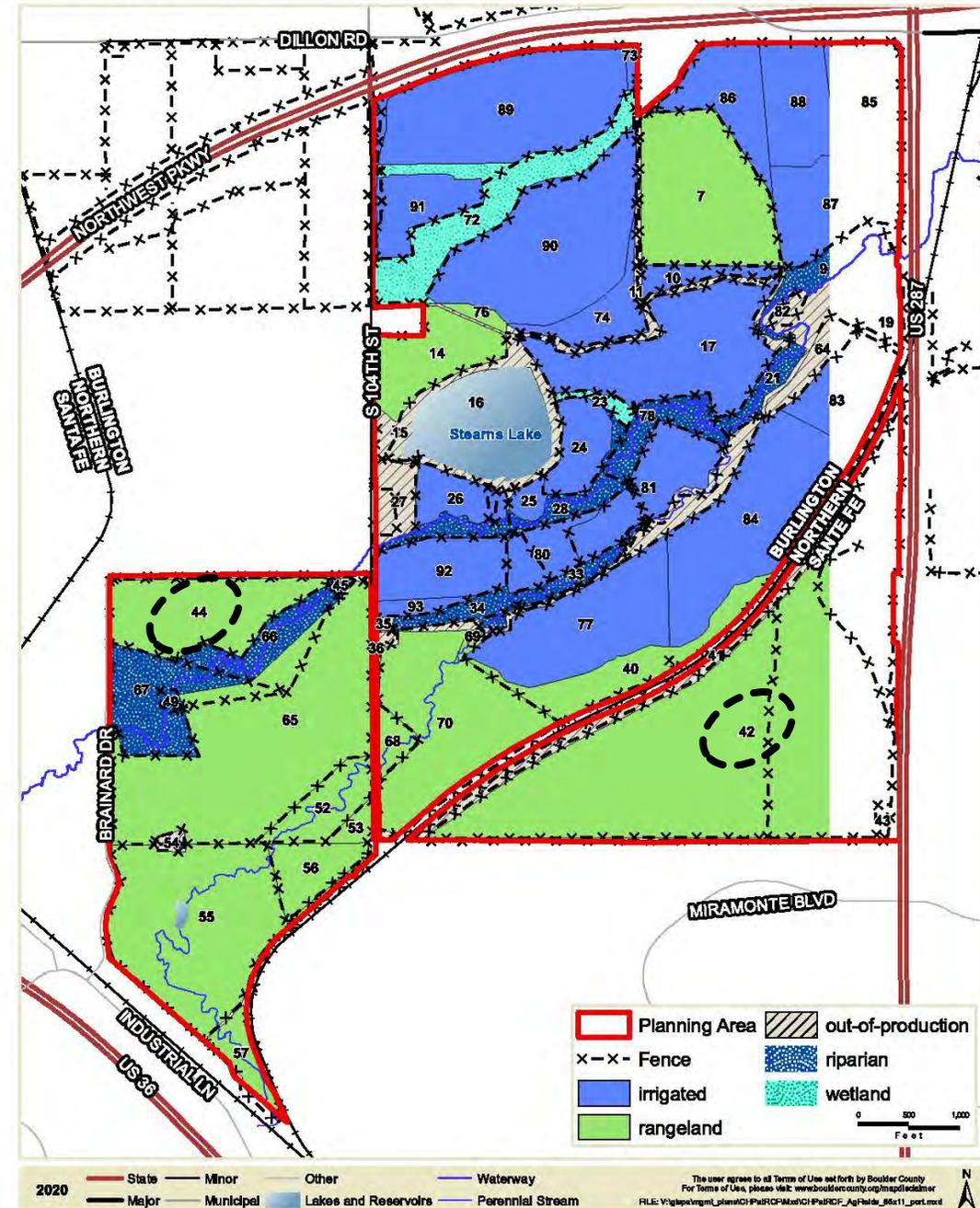
Range of options



3. Prairie dog management

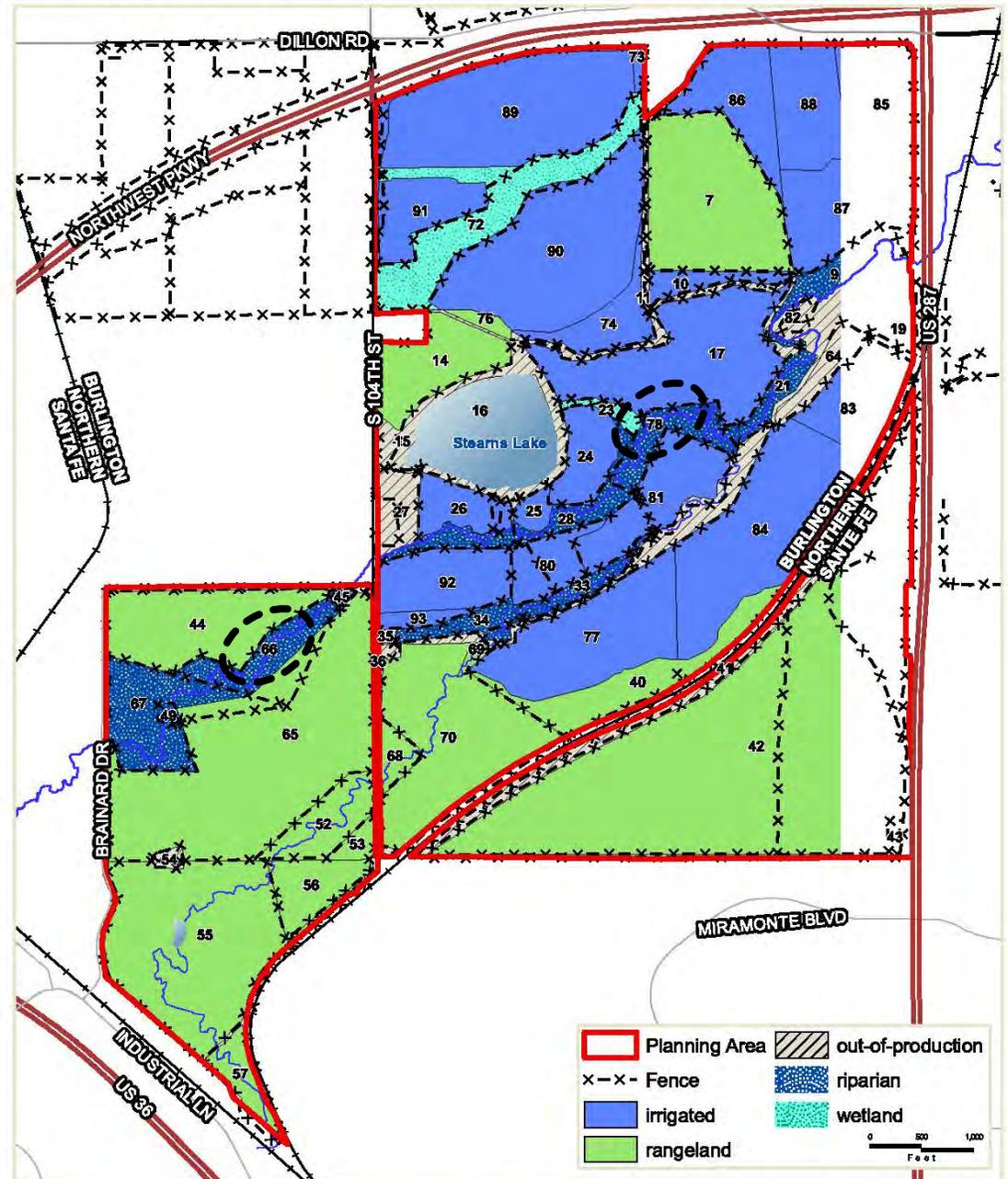
Recommendations

- ▶ Maintain the current NPD, MOA and HCA designations
 - ▶ Exception is Field 7 as described in #1
- ▶ Install barriers to prairie dog dispersal along the field 44
- ▶ Complete deferred maintenance along field 42



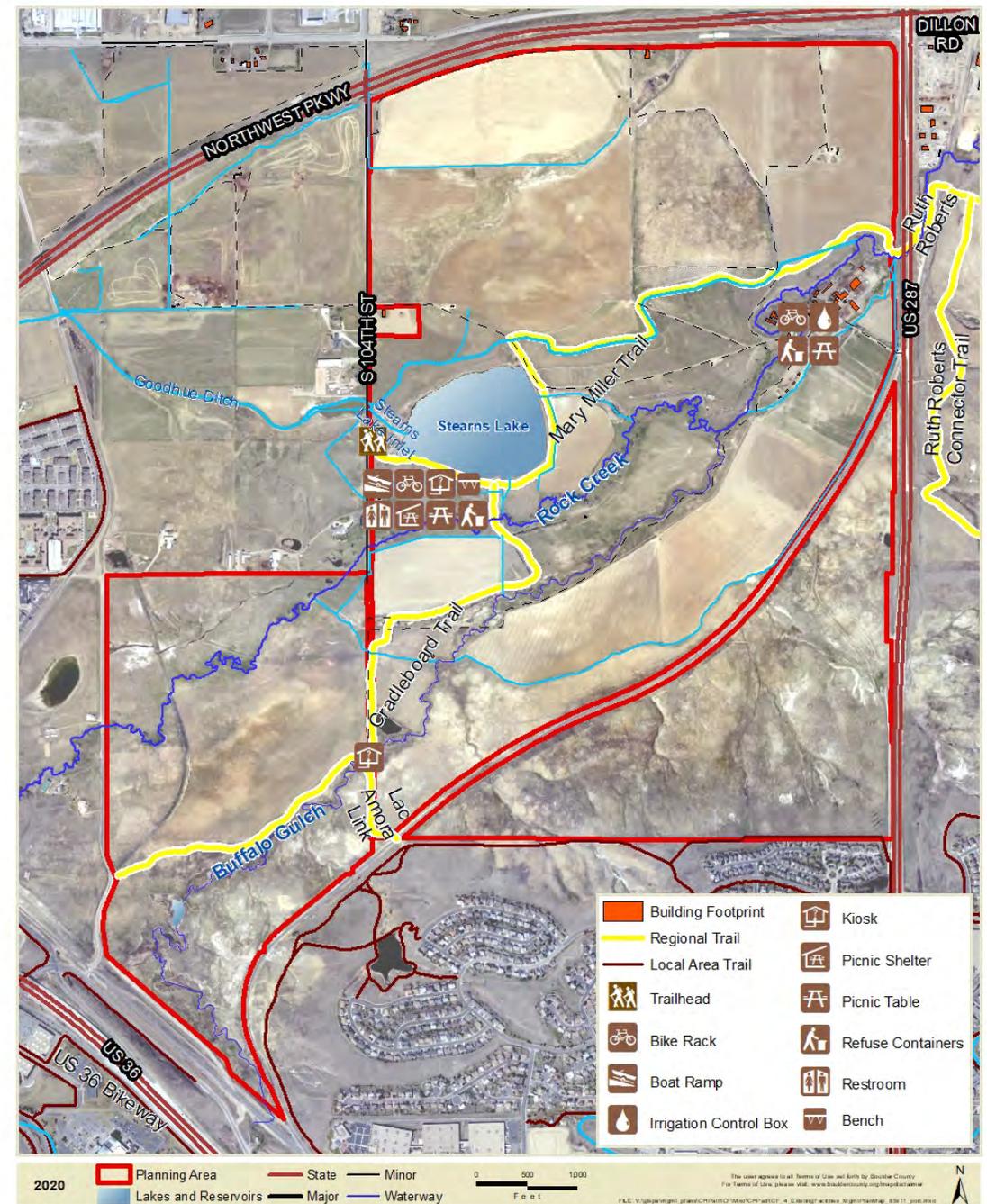
4. Riparian Health

- ▶ Remove grazing from areas of past restoration projects in fields 78 and 66 until willows are above browse height
- ▶ Establish a prescriptive grazing plan that prioritizes riparian habitat and native plant communities

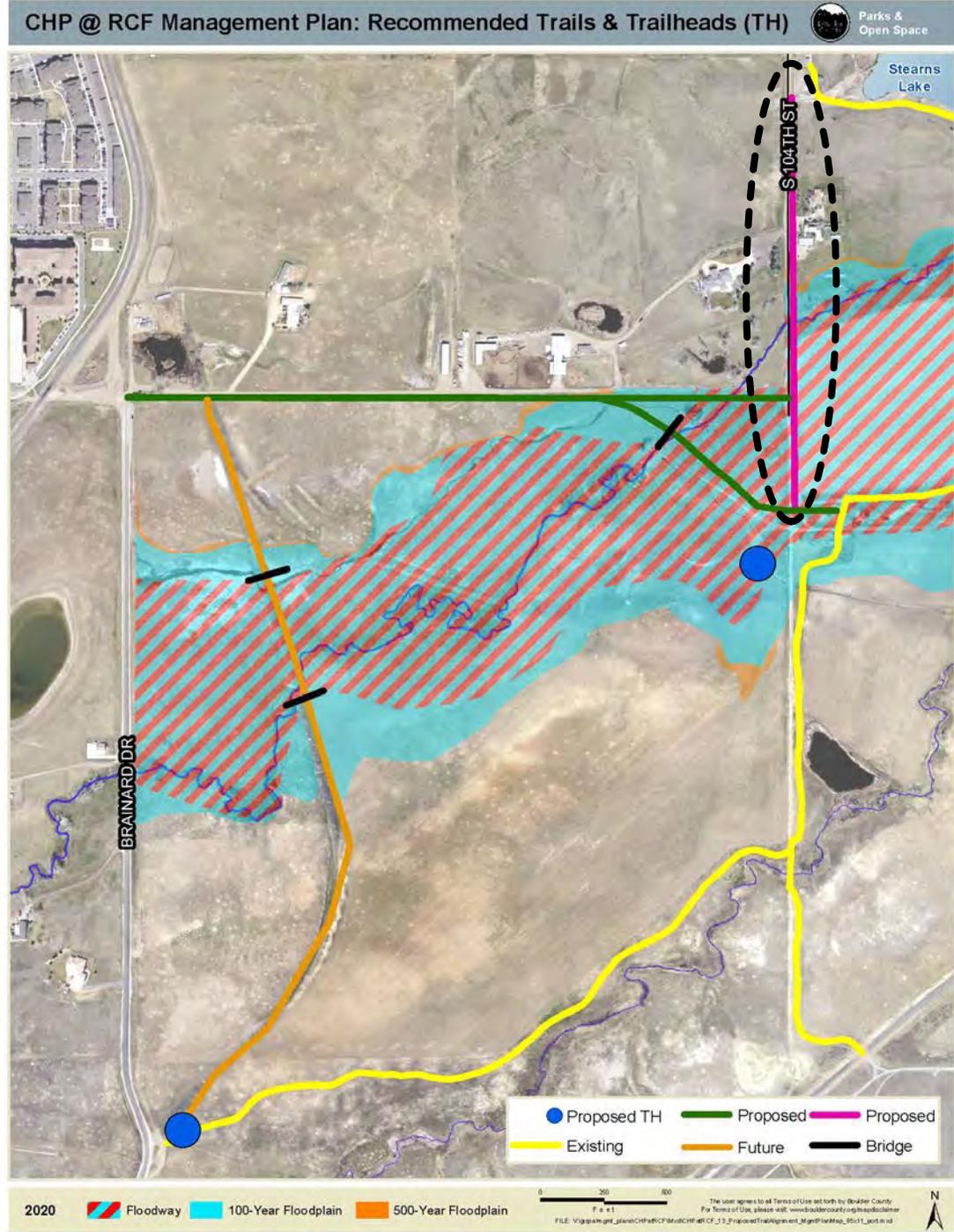


Trails & Trailheads recommendations

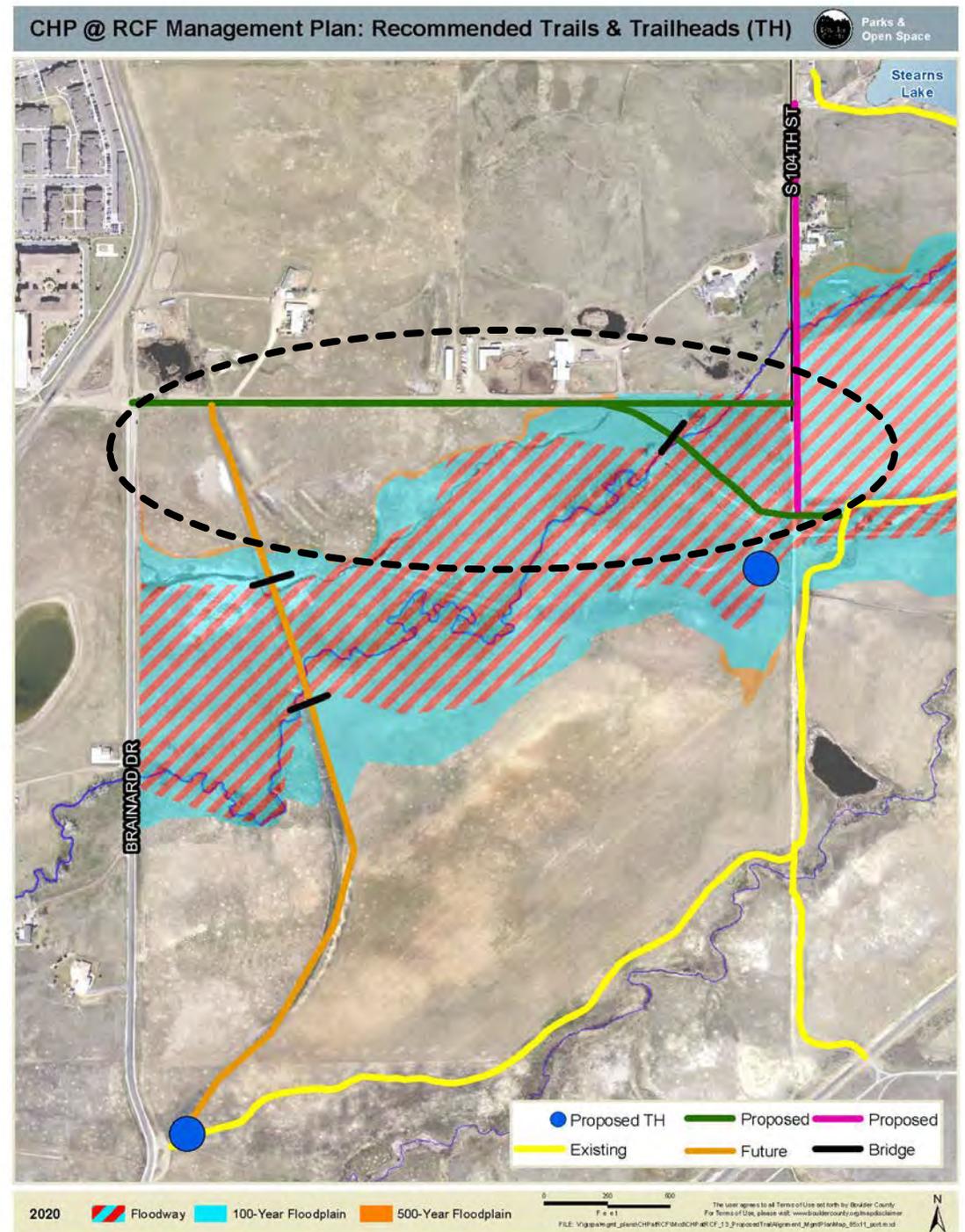
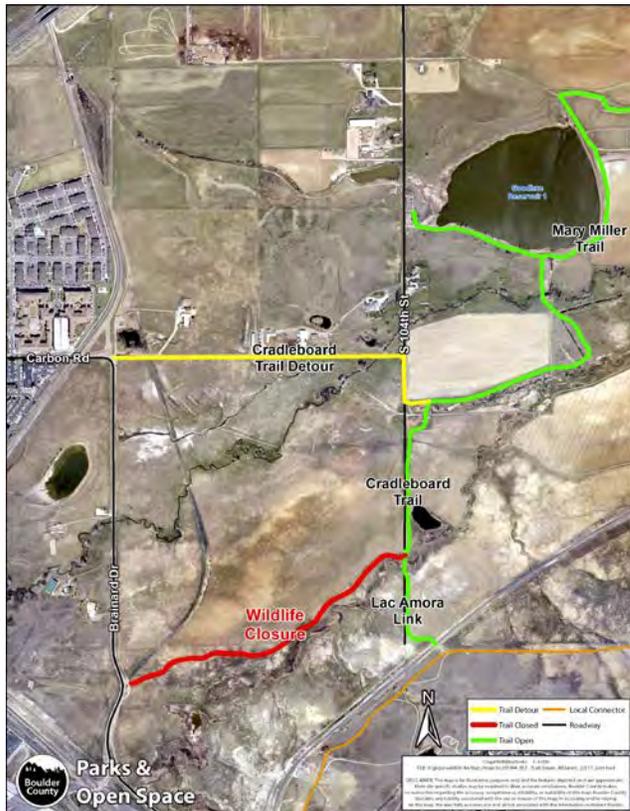
- 5. Wildlife closures of the regional trail
- 6. Recreation, visitor access and accessibility



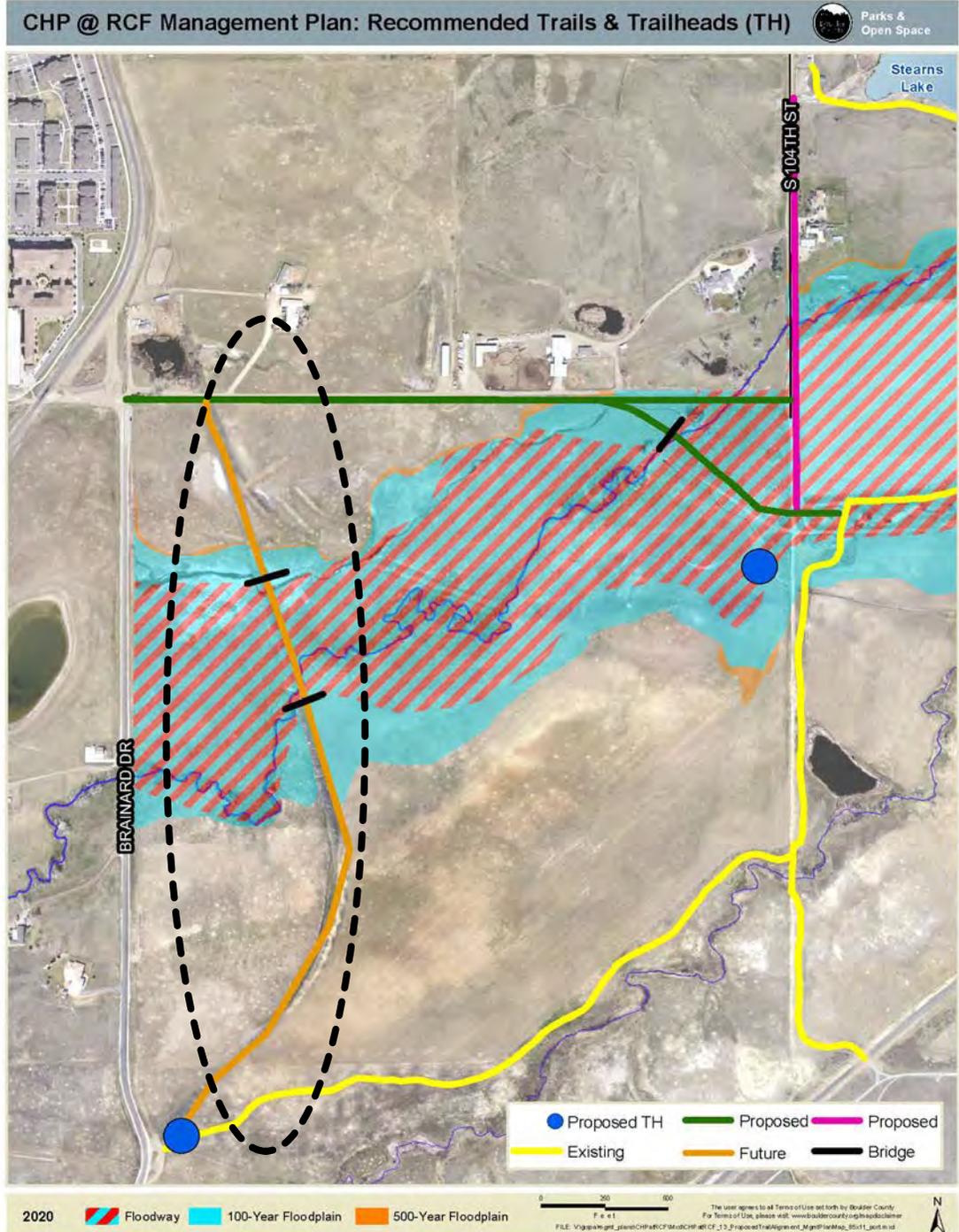
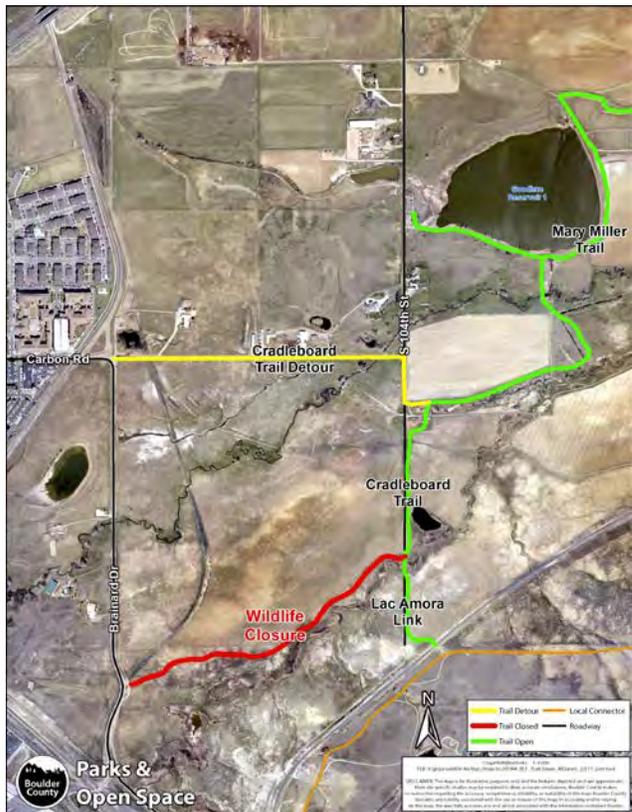
5. Wildlife closures of the regional trail east of 104th Street to Stearns Lake



5. Wildlife closures of the regional trail west of 104th Street to Brainard Rd.



5. Wildlife closures of the regional trail west of 104th Street to Brainard Rd.



6. Recreation, Visitor Access and Accessibility

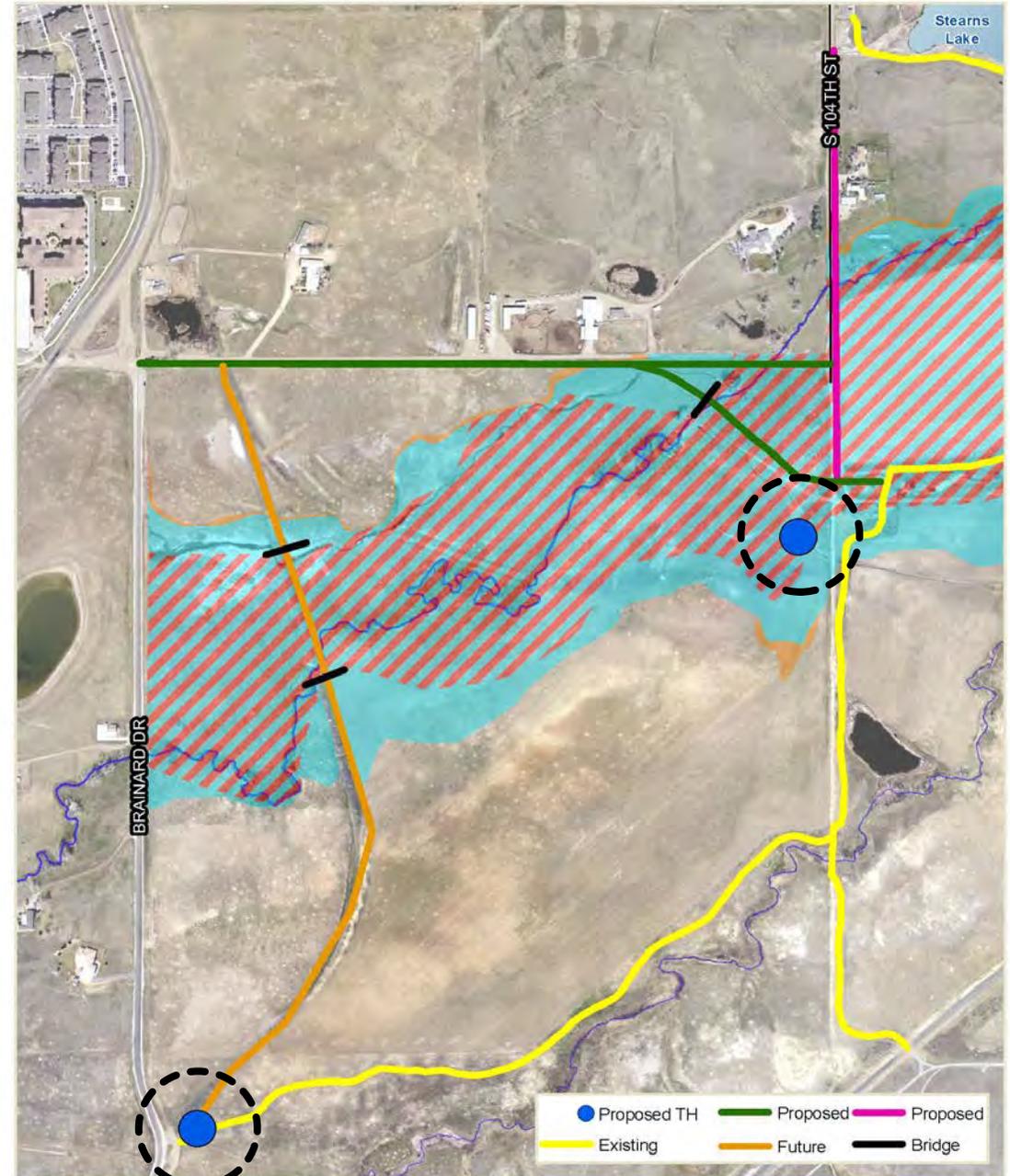
Trailheads

At the end of South 104th Street

- ▶ Develop a new trailhead with vehicle and horse trailer parking
- ▶ Redesign to easily identify the trail
- ▶ Provide trailhead kiosk and area for rest and enjoyment of the scenic vistas.

At Brainard Road near Cradleboard Trail

- ▶ Develop a new trailhead with vehicle parking spaces and a trailhead kiosk





Share your input

View the plan
and provide comments at
boco.org/CHPplan



Next steps

Historic Preservation
Advisory Board

Thursday, November 5, 6 p.m.

- ▶ Input to POSAC on cultural & historic resources

Parks & Open Space
Advisory Committee

Thursday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.

- ▶ Recommendation to BOCC

Comments received
by **Nov. 9**
incorporated into
POSAC presentation

Board of County
Commissioners

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m.

- ▶ Consider Plan Adoption

Comments received
by **Dec. 7**
incorporated into
BOCC presentation

Register, view the plan and provide
comments at **boco.org/CHPplan**



Thank you

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Questions?

