

## **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this management plan is to establish a vision and general direction for management of the Catamount Ranch Open Space (CROS) for the next five-year period from 1998-2002. At this point in time, there are significant uncertainties that preclude specifying all actions that the County will undertake in order to implement the plan over the next five years. Therefore, this plan assumes that additional information will be collected before certain management alternatives will be selected. This plan will evolve over time as new information about Catamount Ranch accumulates and as the County gains more experience in managing the property.

This plan was prepared as a joint effort of the Teller County Division of Parks, the Catamount Ranch Open Space Planning Team and a consulting team, headed by Land Stewardship Consulting of Boulder, Colorado. The Teller County Division of Parks has responsibility for managing the property. The Division of Parks prepared a Request for Proposals and subsequently hired the consulting team to prepare the management plan. The "Planning Team" is a group of local residents of Teller County and representatives of various state and federal agencies whose respective missions are relevant to Catamount Ranch Open Space. The Planning Team served in an advisory role to the County to define the broad direction for management of the property. Accordingly, the Planning Team developed the vision, a set of goals and a list of operating principles for Catamount Ranch. Ultimately, the Teller County Board of County Commissioners has the responsibility and authority to approve and implement this management plan.

## **II. History of the Catamount Ranch Open Space Project**

Catamount Ranch has been the focus of conservation efforts in Teller County for several decades. The private ranch land (680 acres) and the State Land Board lease over Section 16 (640 acres) were acquired by Roger C. Holden, an early advocate of public access to the neighboring Colorado Springs watershed lands. Apparently, Mr. Holden consolidated several smaller homestead parcels in the 1930's and 1940's. The remains of several of these homesteads are still visible on the property. Holden was also a supporter of the YMCA, and in the 1950's he and his wife began donating the private portions of Catamount Ranch to the Colorado Springs YMCA, now the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region. The YMCA operated a summer camp facility on the private property and the State Land Board lease land until the early 1990's when it was determined the YMCA could use its resources better elsewhere; therefore, the YMCA decided to sell Catamount Ranch.

In the early and mid 1990's, several developers proposed subdividing the private lands of Catamount Ranch into thirty or more 35-40 acre lots for residential home sites. Some of these proposals acknowledged the natural values of the property and sought to preserve them as much as possible through the thoughtful placement of roads and home sites and through the use of conservation easements. By 1996, all of these proposals had failed for a variety of economic and technical reasons. The property remained for sale by the YMCA.

In February 1996, Teller County, with technical assistance from the Trust for Public Land and the Palmer Foundation, applied for funding to the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund to support the purchase the YMCA property and to exchange land with the State Land Board of Colorado in order to acquire fee title to Section 16. The application sought to create a large Teller County open space with an emphasis on wildlife habitat protection and non-motorized recreation.

This conservation project is noteworthy for the number of partner organizations involved. The Trust for Public Land acted as a facilitator in this process and purchased the private land from the YMCA and held it until it could be purchased by and transferred to Teller County. Funds were secured from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (\$400,000), Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (\$150,000), Teller County (\$200,000), Gates Family Foundation (\$100,000), El Pomar Foundation (\$50,000), Helen K and Arthur Johnson foundation (\$50,000), Arkansas River Habitat Preservation Partnership (\$10,000) and local donor (\$15,000) to purchase the property. In addition, \$70,000 was raised in the local community and through Teller County schools. The land swap between the State Land Board and Teller County involved the State acquiring commercial property in exchange for the County gaining fee title ownership of Section 16. This land exchange was completed May 1, 1998. Catamount Ranch Open Space consists of 1320 acres of land owned in fee by Teller County. All of this land is subject to a conservation easement held by the Palmer Foundation.

A 177-acre parcel was sold in April 1997 to the Francis family of Manitou Springs. This parcel contains all of the YMCA camp buildings and served as the headquarters of the YMCA operation at Catamount Ranch. The funds generated from this sale to a conservation buyer helped Teller County acquire Catamount Ranch. The Francis family will grant a conservation easement over the property to the Palmer Foundation. The property is being operated as an environmental education facility known as the Catamount Institute. The primary partners in the Catamount Institute are Julie Francis and her husband, Howard Drossman, a professor at Colorado College. The land use, ecology and natural resource management of this private parcel and the Catamount Ranch Open Space will continue to be closely related because they are adjacent and because both properties will be subject to similar conservation easements.

The Palmer Foundation, a non-profit land trust based in Colorado Springs, has been involved in this project since its inception by working with the YMCA to find a conservation solution for this property. The Foundation has also been involved in all stages of the planning process and has a representative on the Planning Team. The Foundation will be responsible for ensuring that the management of Catamount Ranch Open Space by the County is consistent with the terms of the conservation easement.

The conservation easement over Catamount Ranch Open Space generally restricts any development and precludes commercial or industrial activities on the property. The property may not be subdivided, commercially logged or mined. The restriction on commercial logging would not preclude selective cutting of marked trees as necessary to maintain forest health or to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wild fire or widespread insect attack. The trees could be sold to recoup the costs of forest management. In addition, the Palmer Foundation must work with the County to approve all improvements such as trails and fences. Christopher M. West prepared a baseline inventory report that documents the initial condition of the property and which will be helpful in resolving any disputes that may arise regarding compliance with the the easement (West 1998).

Following the acquisition of the initial 680 acres in 1996, Teller County quickly realized that a management plan would be necessary to ensure that the natural resource values of the property would be conserved over the long term. In addition, it is important to manage public use of the property to protect its natural values. Ideally, the plan should be in place before public access began. The conservation easement requires preparation of a management plan. The County wanted to create a model management plan for the Open Space to set a precedent for future County acquisition and management of open space properties.

On October 3, 1997, Teller County convened the first meeting of a group that became the Catamount Ranch Open Space Planning Team. This meeting brought together many of the stakeholders involved in the acquisition of the property and other people who would be affected by management of the Open Space. A list of the Planning Team participants is included in the Appendix. Teller County Parks Coordinator, Kevin Tanski, the point person for the County Division of Parks for the Catamount Ranch project, chaired the first meeting.

At the first planning team meeting, the group re-affirmed that Catamount Ranch Open Space should be managed primarily to protect the significant wildlife and other natural resource values. This decision reflected the desires of the major supporters of the project including Great Outdoors Colorado and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, as well as the wishes of the neighboring landowners. Five general resource goals were defined to protect the hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, recreation, and historic/cultural/education/scenic resources of the property (see section VI. of this plan).

In December 1997, Teller County was awarded a planning grant of \$12,000 from Great Outdoors Colorado to develop a management plan for Catamount Ranch Open Space. This grant coupled with funds from the Conservation Trust allowed the County to hire a consulting team of natural resource and conservation professionals to draft the plan and generally guide the planning process. Following an application process, Land Stewardship Consulting was hired to prepare the management plan. The consulting team proposed to work closely with the Planning Team in an effort to increase involvement in and ownership of the project by local citizens. Land Stewardship Consulting has guided the management planning process, providing technical assistance and synthesizing the work of the Planning Team.

The second Planning Team meeting was held on January 23, 1998 at the Catamount Institute. Goals and objectives related to public access and use, safety, fire, vegetative management, and wildlife management were first discussed at this meeting.

Following the identification of these objectives, the Planning Team began to research potential management alternatives for the planning group to consider in March. In late February, the consulting team presented the project at public meetings in Florissant and Divide. These public meetings were held to inform a more general audience of County citizens about the project and to receive public input on the process and to receive alternative viewpoints important to the residents of Teller County in regard to their new open space property.

On March 13, 1998, a third planning team meeting was held at the Catamount Institute to discuss further the vision and goals for the Open Space and to discuss public use policies. During this meeting, most of the management policies for the CROS were agreed upon by the Planning Team (see section VIII. of this plan). In addition, the Planning Team discussed possible public access options for Catamount Ranch Open Space (see section IX.).

On May 8, 1998, the final Planning Team meeting was held at the Catamount Institute. The Planning Team finalized the vision for the Open Space, finalized the list of management principles, agreed to language for several management policies, recommended one public access alternative and agreed that one additional access option would be acceptable, and drafted a letter that the Planning Team members would sign recommending the Management Plan to the County Commissioners.

### **III. Catamount Ranch Open Space – Existing Environment**

#### **A. Location and Adjacent Land Use**

Catamount Ranch Open Space is located in Teller County, about 5.5 air miles southwest of Woodland Park and about 18 air miles (25 road miles) northwest of downtown Colorado Springs (Figure 1). The property is bordered on the northeast, north and west sides by private property and abuts the Pike National Forest on the south side. The southeastern corner of the property abuts the City of Colorado Springs North Slope watershed lands (Figure 2). The Marcus property on the northeast is a working cattle ranch; the Hagedorn property on the north side of the Open Space is a working cattle ranch that is protected by a conservation easement. The Catamount Institute property on the eastern side of the Open Space was originally part of the YMCA property but was sold to the Francis family to become the Catamount Institute, an environmental education center. This property will also be protected by a conservation easement. The Elk Valley Estates is a subdivision consisting of 35-acre lots also protected by a conservation easement held by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Portions of this subdivision were previously part of the Pike National Forest but are now private land as the result of a land trade. The Holiday Hills subdivision lies about ½ mile northeast of the Open Space along Edlowe Road.

#### **B. Physiography and Climate**

The Open Space property ranges in elevation from 9,200 to 10,200 feet. The property lies along the hydrologic divide between the Arkansas and South Platte River systems, with the majority of the property generally draining north to the South Platte River. Slopes vary from moderate to very steep on the property. The property is characterized by a series of ridges and valleys coming off a main ridge running northeast from the top of Raspberry Mountain, which lies south of the Open Space on the Pike National Forest. Two valleys run south and east from the ridge, while five valleys run north from the main ridge. The Open Space averages about 18 inches of precipitation a year, including winter snows (Colorado Climate Center 1984). Most precipitation occurs as high intensity summer storms in July and August. Yearly temperatures average 30 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

#### **C. Geology and Soils**

The property is underlain by Pikes Peak Granite, the dominant geologic feature of Teller County (Tweto 1979). Pikes Peak Granite, estimated to be over 1 billion years old, is characterized by coarse grained and light pink color. As the granite weathers it forms large round masses or blocks and becomes more colorful as weathering releases iron. An inactive fault runs down the Crystola Creek valley on the eastern side of the property. The property does not contain any significant or sensitive geologic features.

There are two main soil types found on the property. The first and most common is the Catamount-Guffey complex of soils which is found in the upland areas of the

property. The soils are made largely of weathered granitic material and are generally between 2 and 3 feet deep, with the Catamount soils up to 20 inches deep and the Guffey soils up to 40 inches deep (Natural Resources Conservation Service 1983). The Catamount-Guffey soils typically have low fertility, low water holding capacity, high permeability, and are found on steep slopes (15-40%). Therefore, the Catamount-Guffey soils are not very productive and are subject to significant sheet and rill erosion where plant cover is disturbed.

The second and less common group of soils is Histic Cryaquolls, found in the drainages and low-lying areas, primarily along the tributaries of Trout Creek, Upper Crystola Creek and the Horseshoe Meadows areas. These soils are composed of alluvium and organic material and can be up to 60 inches deep. These soils are typically saturated or flooded and have very poor drainage. In contrast to the Catamount-Guffey soils, Histic Cryaquolls are prone to flooding, are often saturated with water, and have high potential for frost action.

Mineral rights were conveyed with the property when it was sold to Teller County by Trust for Public Land, the organization that purchased the property from the YMCA. The right to mine or otherwise extract mineral substances was deeded to the Palmer Foundation as part of the conservation easement over the Open Space property except for Section 16. Mineral rights appurtenant to the former State Land Board property (Section 16) remain with the State Land Board; the Board has conveyed a long-term lease of these rights to Teller County which effectively prohibits any future mineral development.

## **D. Hydrology**

The southeastern portion of the property drains into the Arkansas River system mostly through Crystola Creek which flows from the Open Space, northeast through the Catamount Institute property and empties into Fountain Creek at Crystola (Figure 3). Horseshoe Meadows drains a small area in the southeastern corner of the Open Space and flows into North Catamount Creek about 200 yards east of the Open Space. North Catamount Creek empties into North Catamount Reservoir about one mile east of the southeastern corner of the Open Space property. This reservoir supplies water to the City of Colorado Springs.

Most of the property drains north into the South Platte River system through the upper tributaries of Trout Creek (Figure 3). From east to west, these tributaries are named East Williams Creek (containing Lander's City), West Williams Creek, East Trout Creek, West Trout Creek, and Elk Meadows (containing the dilapidated cabins at Goddard's). Trout Creek flows north from the property through the Hagedorn Ranch and eventually to the South Platte River at Deckers.

The property contains two ponds that were created by damming West Trout Creek just below the cabins at Goddard's (Figure 3). There are no surface water resources currently developed on the Open Space property, except for the two small ponds.

Groundwater resources are not being used and have not been quantified for the Catamount property. It is likely that only small amounts of ground water are found in alluvium along the valley bottoms. Wetlands are found on the valley bottoms. These areas are described in the section on vegetation below.

## **E. Vegetation**

### **Montane forests**

The majority of the site is covered with coniferous forest, with areas of wetland, montane grassland and open water along the Crystola Creek drainage. The description of vegetative communities of the property follow the plant nomenclature of Galatowitsch (1988 in press) and Weber (1990). Additionally, general information on community ecology information is extracted from Benedict (1991).

The coniferous forests can be divided into two types, 1) mixed montane conifer forest dominated by limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), which is found on dry and windswept south-, east- and west-facing slopes, and 2) Engelmann spruce (*Picea englemannii*) and Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) forests that are found on relatively cool and moist north-facing slopes and at the bottoms of ravines (Figure 4).

In many places, the forest has been significantly altered by logging, particularly along the Aspen and Ridge trails. There were apparently at least two episodes of logging on the property. The earlier logging was associated with the demand for timber by the railroads and mines around the turn of the century. Hand-hewn logs can still be seen on the property. Subsequent logging occurred from 1950-1990. Effects of this logging are most evident along Aspen trail, and it primarily impacted the mixed conifer forests of the property. The ravines and steeper slopes appear to be in much better condition either due to less logging activity or a quicker recovery following logging due to more mesic conditions. In the past, tree thinning and firewood cutting occurred to manage the forests of the property. No old growth forests are known to exist on the Open Space. No forest management is now being conducted on the property.

Mixed montane conifer forest is dominated by limber pine on most parts of the Open Space property. Other canopy tree species include ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), and Englemann spruce (*Picea englemannii*). Generally, ponderosa pine dominates on south-facing slopes and Douglas-fir dominates on the east- and west-facing slopes. Englemann spruce and aspen are distributed throughout this forest type. Understory species include kinnikinnik (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), prostrate juniper (*Juniperis communis*), strawberry (*Fragraria* spp.) and a number of other perennial wildflowers and grasses. Absent from the north slope of Pikes Peak are lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), species that are typically common in similar climates and elevations elsewhere in Colorado.

Southern subalpine forest is found on north-facing slopes and forested ravine bottoms and is dominated by an Englemann spruce and Colorado blue spruce. Subalpine

fir is absent and most of the understory species are the same as in the mixed montane forest described above. In places, a low-elevation example of subalpine understory community occurs. A number of ericaceous (heath family) herbs including blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), and a number of species of the wintergreen family, e.g., shinleaf (*Pyrola* spp.) that are more common at higher elevations are found in this area.

Successional aspen forest dominates a number of small stands on the Open Space property. The diverse understory includes a number of montane grasses and annuals, shrubby cinquefoil (*Pentaphragma floribunda*) and Colorado blue spruce. There are number of such stands on the eastern edge of the property along the Trailer Road, as well near the meadows at Goddard's and at Horseshoe Meadow.

### **Montane Grasslands**

There are dry, open meadows in a number of locations on the Open Space property (Figure 4). These meadows are dominated by bunch grasses, annuals, and shrubby cinquefoil. They often grade into ponderosa pine/limber pine forests on south-facing slopes and into successional aspen forests and wet meadows. There are extensive montane grasslands on south-facing slopes above Horseshoe Meadow, on east-facing slopes above Goddard's, and in the large meadow in the valley of West Williams Creek

### **Montane Wetlands**

The wetlands of the Open Space are in excellent condition. The absence of grazing on the property as well as the lack of intensive human uses over the past decade has likely helped preserve the wetland areas. An initial analysis by Dr. Tass Kelso, Professor of Biology at The Colorado College, found the wetlands to be classic examples of upper montane wetlands (Kelso 1997). The overall quality of these wetlands makes them one of the more important biological resources of the property.

There are three general types of wetlands found on the Open Space: lower montane willow carrs, wet montane meadow and floating and submerged palustrine wetlands (Figure 4). The willow carrs occur on the upper reaches of Crystola Creek along Trailer Road and are dominated by the tall willow (*Salix brachycarpa*). This type of willow carr is also present at Horseshoe Meadow and along the small tributary of North Catamount Creek that flows from it. Wet montane meadows occur in Horseshoe Meadow and in the big meadow and below the two ponds at Goddard's. Dominant species include the introduced timothy (*Phleum pratense*), as well as a number of sedges, including *Carex disperma*. Floating and submergent palustrine wetlands occur in the two ponds near Goddard's. Plants which emerge from water of depths greater than 0.5 m or float on the water surface comprise this community type. Some of the important species include sloughgrass (*Beckmannia syzigachne*), buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.) and chickweed (*Alsine media*).

### **Noxious weeds**

No major noxious weed infestations were found on the property although a patch of Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is present on the property near the cabins and upper pond at Goddard's. However, other noxious weeds could occur on the property

including leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), diffuse knapweed (*Acosta diffusa*), and musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*). The State of Colorado maintains a state noxious weed list and the property should be monitored for those species (see list in Appendix). Teller County currently has a weed inspector and this person may be able to provide extension support for control of noxious weeds.

### **Threatened and Endangered Plants**

No federally listed plant species are known from the property. According to the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, a number of species of state significance are found in the area and may be found on the Open Space property. These species are Rocky Mountain columbine (*Aquilegia saximontana*), yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus ssp. parviflorum*), reflected moonwort (*Botrychium echo*) and pale moonwort (*Botrychium pallidum*). Grassfern (*Asplenium septentrionale*), a species that is potentially imperiled in Colorado, was found on a rock outcrop on the Catamount Institute property and may be present on the Open Space property as well.

## **F. Fire**

Fire is probably the most important ecosystem process on Catamount Ranch Open Space that is influenced by land management. A general fire history of the North Slope of Pikes Peak is described in the Colorado Springs Watershed plan (Anonymous 1987). In the 1840's and 1850's large fires burned on the northern slope of Pikes Peak and were documented by early travelers in the area. Since that time minor fires have burned and have been extinguished quickly by local residents.

No fire history data for the Open Space property are available. However, fire has definitely been a part of the natural system at Catamount Ranch Open Space. (INSERT INFO FROM CC REPORTS). This is evidenced by the charcoal, in soils and the undersides of large logs, still visible on the ridge tops on the Catamount property. The areas of the Colorado Springs Watershed adjacent to the Catamount property have been rated "high fire hazard" on the ridge tops and south facing slopes and "low hazard" in the ravines and open areas (Anonymous 1987).

However, fire history data are available for the Manitou Experimental Forest at 6900 feet elevation (12 miles north of the Open Space) and from the Cheesman Reservoir watershed at 7800 feet elevation (21 miles northwest of the Open Space). Both of these areas are dominated by ponderosa pine forest. Veblen et al. (1996) and Goldblum and Veblen (1992) found in Boulder County, Colorado, that frequency of low-intensity ground fires decreased as elevation increased but that frequency of high-intensity crown fires increased as elevation increased. In the Manitou Experimental Forest, ground fires occurred on average every 15 years before 1800 and averaged once every 20 years from 1800 to 1870 after which fires ceased (Brown, Kauffman and Shepperd, unpublished data). Prior to 1800, the period between ground fires ranged from 2-35 years. At Cheesman Reservoir watershed, ground fires occurred every 25-30 years on average, with a range from 4-155 years (Brown, Kaufmann and Shepperd, unpublished data).

Fires at Cheesman also ceased after 1870 due to active fire suppression. There is good evidence of a large crown fire at Cheesman in 1851. Based on the available evidence, one would infer that ground fires were relatively rare at Catamount Ranch Open Space, probably occurring every 30 years or less frequently on average. The mixed coniferous forests at Catamount Ranch Open Space are more susceptible to crown fires than ponderosa pine forests at lower elevations. Management of the forests can reduce the risk of catastrophic fires.

## **G. Tree Parasites**

Bark beetle species attack ponderosa pine stands, with the mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) being the most common and the most destructive. During recent outbreaks, nearly 100% of overstory ponderosa pine trees were killed (Schmid and Mata 1996). Recent outbreaks during the 1970s' and 1980's over much of the western US including the Front Range, were relatively wide-spread and severe. The heightened severity has been attributed, at least in part, to increases in tree density and landscape homogeneity over the last century (Wilson and Tkacz 1996, Schmid and Mata 1996)

The Douglas-fir bark beetle (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*) is a major pathogen on Douglas-fir trees along the Front Range, especially in conjunction with the western spruce budworm (*Choristoneura occidentalis*). Swetnam and Lynch (1989, 1993) believe that increases in tree density and increases in landscape homogeneity over the past century have led to more widespread and intense tree mortality during budworm outbreaks.

Mountain pine beetle and/or western spruce budworm have killed trees on the property, primarily in areas dominated by Douglas-fir. In particular, the Douglas-fir forests southwest of the cabins at Goddard's and on the east-facing slopes of the ridges between the tributaries of Trout Creek and West Williams Creek have been impacted by parasites. Mountain pine beetle and spruce beetle are cyclical pests found in the forests of the area. In comparable areas along the Front Range in Colorado, the mountain pine beetle has defoliated large expanses of coniferous forest on a cycle of every 15-20 years.

Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir are commonly attacked by highly specialized dwarf mistletoe species (*Arceuthobium vaginatum* and *A. douglasii*, respectively). These are native species that have presumably co-evolved with their host trees. Trees killed by mistletoe provide important nesting sites for cavity nesting birds such as woodpeckers, chickadees, and brown creeper. Dahms and Geils (1997) suggest that mistletoe abundance may have been less abundant prior to Euro-American settlement. Increased abundance of mistletoe in the past century may have been followed denser stands of trees that facilitated the spread of mistletoe.

A century of fire suppression on the Open Space property with the attendant increase in tree density and decrease in general forest health has probably increased the likelihood of severe insect attack. Management of the Open Space forests needs to address the possibility of large-scale outbreaks of tree parasites.

## **H. Wildlife**

The area is home to a large herd of elk (*Cervus elaphus*). The Elevenmile elk study found that the elk herd on the north slope of Pikes Peak utilizes large conserved properties such as Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Mueller State Park, and the Colorado Springs Watershed for both summer and winter range, as well as for calf production (Dewey 1989). The general area supports a herd of several thousand elk. The Catamount Ranch Open Space property sits in the middle of the range of these animals and provides both winter range and spring calving areas. Elk are commonly seen on the property especially in summer. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) may want to actively manage the elk herd in the future through a variety of means including hunting and habitat improvement.

Mule deer (*Oedocoileus hemionus*) are also present on the property during the summer months. They are typically seen in more open areas and less frequently than elk. CDOW personnel have suggested that mule deer populations are relatively low in the area and that CDOW may support efforts for habitat improvement in and around Catamount Ranch Open Space (T. Sharp, pers. comm.). Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) funds may be available for mule deer habitat improvement projects.

Other mammal species seen on the property during the compilation of baseline study for the conservation easements that cover the Open Space and Catamount Institute properties include coyote (*Canis latrans*), cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*), and red squirrel or chickaree (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*). Ben Bell, the caretaker of the Catamount Institute property, observed black bears (*Ursus americanus*) several times in the spring of 1997. In addition Mr. Bell has seen mountain lion (*Felis concolor*) sign on several occasions.

Due to the variety of habitats found on the property, the Catamount Ranch Open Space supports a diverse bird fauna. The willow carr wetlands provide excellent nesting habitat for migratory songbirds, including yellow-rumped (*Dendroica coronata*) and Wilson's warblers (*Wilsonia pusilla*). Additional important species include blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), a variety of woodpeckers and other small birds adapted to the coniferous forests.

Migratory waterfowl use the ponds as a stopping point on their annual migrations and occasionally for nesting as well. During the summer of 1997, a pair of mallard ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*) was resident on the ponds, although it is unknown whether or not they fledged any chicks.

An annotated wildlife list was developed with the assistance of the CDOW through a geographical and habitat database query. CDOW uses a computer database system based on habitat type and location that identifies potential wildlife species present in an area. Those species that have been observed on the property are highlighted on this list which is found in the Appendix.

The Colorado Springs Watershed study listed animal species present on their lands to the south of the Catamount property. In the Catamount Open Space area, emphasis species are elk, mule deer, black bear, blue grouse, mountain lion and bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) while indicator species are Abert's squirrel (*Sciurus aberti*), three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*), northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), mountain bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) and white-tailed ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus*) (Anonymous 1987).

### **Endangered and Threatened Animals**

The Catamount property is not known to contain any threatened or endangered animal species. The bald eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) is known from the Catamount Reservoirs southeast of the property and may use Catamount Ranch Open Space as a hunting ground. Peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) may visit the area. The wetlands on the property may provide habitat for the federally listed boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*) or other threatened amphibian species. A thorough amphibian study was not undertaken as part of this work. Numerous amphibians were observed on the neighboring Catamount Institute property during the preparation of the baseline inventory (West 1997).

## **I. Scenic Features**

The Catamount property provides excellent views of Pikes Peak from several locations on the property, namely along Aspen Trail and from the Horseshoe Meadow area. From ridge tops on the property, there are views of the Rampart and Tarryall Ranges, South Park and the Mosquito Range to the north and northwest. The valleys of the tributaries of Trout Creek, with lush riparian vegetation and open meadows, also offer pleasant scenery. The Catamount Ranch Open Space is highly visible from the Pikes Peak Toll Road.

## **J. Human Features**

There are no structures which are currently being occupied or used on the Catamount Open Space property. There are no telephone and electrical utilities or sewage or water facilities on the property.

There are a number of abandoned structures and sites of demolished buildings, notably the cabins at Goddard's and Lander City (Figure 5). Trash dumps are also present on the property. The structures and trash dumps were investigated for hazardous materials in 1996 in a study completed by Greystone Inc. of Denver in 1996 (anonymous 1996). No hazardous materials were found.

There are several barbed wire fences on the property. These fences are largely in disrepair and in most places are simply lying on the ground. They are found on the western property boundary as well as along several of the ridge tops in the northern half of the property (Figure 5).

There is an extensive system of internal four-wheel drive and foot trails in existence on the property (Figure 6). There are probably more trails than can be adequately maintained. Parts of the Aspen, Collins, Suicide and Horseshoe Meadow trails are steep and suffer from erosion. A detailed inventory of the trails of the Open Space by a trail expert is needed to determine which trails need to be re-routed or abandoned and restored and where new trails might best be located.

## **IV. Vision Statement**

At its January 1998 meeting, the Planning Team developed a draft vision statement for the Catamount Ranch Open Space in order to capture and convey to the public the essential purpose of the property. At its March 13, 1998 meeting, the Planning Team considered a revised vision statement. There was general agreement that this statement was an improvement over the draft statement above, but the Planning Team did not reach consensus on any vision statement. On May 8, 1998, the Planning Team unanimously agreed to the following vision statement for Catamount Ranch Open Space:

*The Catamount Ranch Open Space will be managed primarily for long-term natural resource conservation and will remain commercially undeveloped.*

## **V. Operating Principles**

The Planning Team decided that the vision statement should be complemented by a set of broad principles that would govern Catamount Ranch Open Space. The principles are more specific than the ideas expressed in the vision statement and apply generally to the entire Open Space. The list of operating principles is as follows:

- The Catamount Ranch Open Space will be essentially undeveloped and managed primarily for long-term, natural resource conservation.
- Secondly, management will provide opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about the land, the wildlife, and the history of the area while respecting the primary purpose of long-term resource conservation through limited access and low-key human impact
- Management of the Catamount Ranch Open Space will respect the neighbors and complement adjoining land uses.
- Management will use wise and prudent practices that minimize negative impacts on the land, flora and fauna that might arise from public use of the property.

## **VI. Goals**

The goals that appear in this section reflect goals that the Planning Team developed during the October 3, 1997, January 23, 1998, and March 13, 1998, meetings at the Catamount Institute. All of the goals, objectives and actions steps listed below apply only to the Catamount Ranch Open Space (and not to neighboring lands) unless otherwise indicated. The goals, objectives and action statements are in no particular order.

### **Vegetation Goals**

- Maintain a mosaic of different native vegetation types on the property (spruce forest, mixed conifer forest, aspen forest, montane grassland, riparian shrubland, and wetland)
- Maintain the current extent of wetlands and riparian areas
- Reduce the hazard of wildfire
- Manage insect and disease outbreaks for forest health

### **Wildlife Goal**

- Maintain viable populations of native wildlife species

### **Recreation Goals**

- Provide the public opportunities for passive, non-motorized recreation and education, as can be accommodated with minimal impact to the natural and cultural resources
- The Open Space will be a “good neighbor” to nearby land owners with respect to public use and access

### **Hydrology Goal**

- Conserve the natural water resource

### **Historic / Cultural / Education / Scenic Goals**

- Protect, maintain and stabilize any significant historic structures or archaeological features
- Increase visitors’ understanding of the natural, historic and cultural values of Catamount Ranch Open Space
- Maintain the outstanding views of Pikes Peak and surrounding areas

## **VII. Objectives**

Different people use the term “objective” differently. In this context, an objective is a statement that is specific, measurable, achievable, and bounded in time and space. Thus, one can collect appropriate information and determine with some level of confidence if any objective is being met. These objectives are meant to motivate the County (and other parties) to pursue the actions outlined in the next section. All of these objectives are meant to be consistent with the associated goals outlined in the previous section. Unless otherwise specified, all of the objectives in this plan apply to Catamount Ranch Open Space and run for the five-year period of 1998 – 2002.

### **Vegetation Objectives**

- Decrease the current number of noxious weed species (per State and County lists)
- Decrease the abundance of noxious weed species (per State and County lists)
- Maintain or increase the number of native perennial plant species
- Maintain populations of any rare plant species that are tracked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Maintain occurrence(s) of any rare plant communities that are tracked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program

### **Wildlife Objectives**

- Maintain elk calving at appropriate levels
- Maintain populations of or use of the property by any rare animal species that are tracked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Exclude populations of non-indigenous animals, including fox squirrels, starlings and feral dogs and cats

### **Recreation Objectives**

- Open Catamount Ranch Open space to public use in the fall of year 2000
- Create one new public access point to the property by the time the property is open to the public in year 2000
- Reduce soil erosion that occurs on trails / roads
- Avoid trespass conflicts with neighbors

### **Hydrology Objectives**

- Increase the proportion of precipitation that infiltrates into the soil, versus running off the land
- Trout, Horseshoe, Crystola and Catamount Creeks will meet all applicable state water quality standards
- Increase the proportion of the soil surface that is covered by live plants and reduce the proportion that is bare soil

- Increase the volume of stream flow in Trout, Horseshoe, Crystola and Catamount Creeks during base flow periods
- Increase the time during the summer when Trout, Horseshoe, Crystola and Catamount Creeks have surface flows

### **Historic / Cultural / Education / Scenic Objectives**

- Provide educational and interpretive information to enrich the visitors' experiences with and understanding of the property's natural, historic and cultural values
- Provide low-impact access to selected historic, cultural and scenic features

## VIII. Management Policies

Policies are useful to help the County achieve the vision and to reach the goals and objectives that are established for Catamount Ranch Open Space. It is inevitable that Catamount Ranch will not be an appropriate place to accomplish certain worthy activities that the citizens of Teller County might want to pursue. The policies listed below will establish sideboards that will allow certain activities and restrict others at Catamount Ranch Open Space, in order to achieve the vision and goals and objectives for the Open Space. These policies represent the consensus view of the Planning Team except as noted.

- **Motorized vehicles** will not be allowed, except for administrative or emergency purposes, because their presence on and use of the property would detract significantly from the natural values of the Open Space.
- **Hiking** will be allowed on established trails. Some off-trail hiking will undoubtedly occur but it is likely to be inconsequential to natural resource protection. Trails will be open for hiking from Memorial Day until the first large snowstorm in the autumn. During the rest of the year, trails are generally not suitable for hiking due to muddy and snowy conditions. Hikers tend to create parallel social trails along side muddy established trails; these social trails are susceptible to severe soil erosion. Closures of certain trails may be made in the future to protect resource values, such as specific elk calving areas. Such closures will be posted. As used in this plan, hiking also includes running and jogging. Trails will be designed primarily for hiking and incidentally for cross-county skiing. There is no specific access for handicapped persons to the Open Space because of the long distance from the public access point to the Open Space property and because of the difficulty of negotiating steep topography.
- **Camping** in the Open Space will not be allowed. The Planning Team members believed that the benefits of backpacking to the public were outweighed by the potential resource damage caused by campers. Specifically cited were the potential for careless campers to start wildfires, the impacts on wildlife, and the cost of regulating and enforcing camping regulations. Camping is not allowed on Colorado Springs watershed lands. However, camping is allowed on Pike National Forest lands southwest of the Open Space.
- **Winter recreation** will be allowed for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Seasonal closures of specific areas might be necessary to protect resource values; for example, to avoid conflicts with wintering elk. **Snowmobiling** will not be allowed because it is a motorized use.
- **Horses** will be allowed from Memorial Day until the first snowstorm in autumn but only on certain designated multi-purpose trails. These trails will also be open to hikers. The designated trails will be designed and built to withstand horse and mountain bike use without suffering severe soil erosion. Horse use of the designated

trails will be confined to summer and early fall because these are periods when trails are expected to be relatively dry and able to withstand the impact of horse use. Additional restrictions will be imposed to protect resource values. These include prohibitions against bringing in hay to feed horses, limiting the numbers of horses in a group, and prohibiting commercial horse use of the property. Pack horses may use designated trails to access US Forest Service land. Mules, burros and llamas will be treated as horses for the purpose of this policy.

- **Mountain bikes** will be allowed only on designated multi-purpose trails from about Memorial Day until the first snowstorm in the fall (these will be the same trails that are designated for horse travel). These trails will be designed to accommodate horse and mountain bike use. Seasonal closures may occur to protect resource values.
- **Picnic tables** may be provided at one of the trailheads, subject to the presence of a suitable site. Trash cans would likely not be provided because of the high cost of emptying and maintaining the cans. Furthermore, trash cans can attract black bears. Fires would be prohibited at the picnic area. Picnic facilities will not be provided within the Catamount Ranch Open Space. Hikers will be allowed to sit along side the trails and eat a sack lunch, and they will be asked to pack out their trash.
- **Hunting** will be allowed on a limited basis to control big game populations. Hunting is a valid tool for managing game populations on the Open Space. The Colorado Division of Wildlife must certify that hunting on Catamount Ranch Open Space is necessary to regulate game populations. Licenses would be granted to sportsmen and sportswomen to hunt only under tightly regulated circumstances. The County could charge a fee to hunt on the Open Space property, with the fees being used to manage Catamount Ranch. Open Space visitors such as hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers would be notified of times during which hunting would be allowed to reduce conflicts between hunters and non-hunters. Details of hunting would be worked out in cooperation with CDOW, Teller County and the Catamount Ranch Open Space advisory group. There is currently no hunting allowed on City of Colorado Springs watershed lands.
- **Firearms** will be prohibited except by licensed hunters during hunts sanctioned and managed by the Division of Wildlife to reduce big game populations. Team members believe that target shooting and the discharge of firearms would create a conflict with other uses of the property. Unloaded firearms may also be transported across Catamount Ranch Open Space to nearby National Forest lands.
- **Animal trapping** will be prohibited except if clearly necessary to protect public health and safety and only as permitted and conducted by proper authorities; for example, the Colorado Division of Wildlife trapping a black bear or mountain lion that threatens a hiker. Trapping will be conducted so as to capture only the offending animal(s).

- ***Pets*** will not be allowed on the Catamount Ranch Open Space. Free-ranging dogs are known to harass wildlife in Teller County. Planning Team members were sympathetic with the desires of people to walk their dogs on a leash. However, the group was persuaded that most dog owners would not use a leash (except in the presence of a law enforcement person) and that the County would not be able to enforce a leash regulation. The Planning Team was convinced that dogs could cause significant problems for wildlife.
- ***Direct access*** to open space from adjacent lands will be allowed but only on designated trails. Neighbors will be allowed to ride horses or to walk off-trail as needed to retrieve livestock from Open Space property. This policy recognizes that neighbors will be tempted to continue to walk into the Open Space using social trails that have developed over time. Under this policy, social trails will be obliterated and will be replaced with spur trails that connect neighboring private land with Open Space trails. Neighbors will be expected to contribute substantially to the construction and maintenance of spur trails that provide direct access to private lands. The County will craft access arrangements with adjacent land owners.
- ***Collection of plants, rocks, soil and other natural objects*** will be prohibited unless it is part of an approved management or research project.
- ***Active recreation*** activities such as sledding, hang-gliding, and paint ball combat will be prohibited. Other activities that threaten or impair the natural resource values of the Open Space may be prohibited at the direction of the County.

## **IX. Public Access Options**

Public access to the Open Space is currently very limited and is discussed below in option 1. Within the Open Space, access is through the existing trail system described above. The County currently has access rights through the Catamount Institute Property for three years for management and emergency purposes only.

One of the recreation goals is to provide two public access points to the Catamount Ranch Open Space, the one that currently exists and one other. The future access point will likely include a small parking area, a trailhead, appropriate signage, and a structure containing a trail map and brochures for the open space property. Responsibility for developing and maintaining public access facilities will be decided once the future public access point location is determined.

### **Public Access Options Given Active Consideration**

The options listed below reflect discussions by the Planning Team on March 13, 1998, on May 8, 1998, and visits to potential access sites by the consulting team and County staff. The Planning Team discussed the following options at length.

#### **1) From North Catamount Reservoir on City of Colorado Springs watershed property**

The dam that forms North Catamount Reservoir is located about 2.5 air miles east of Catamount Ranch Open Space (Figure 7). The public can currently drive to North Catamount Reservoir on the Pikes Peak Toll Road; the cost of a one-day permit is \$3.00 per person; children under 16 are free. While the road is open all year, the North Slope Recreation Area is closed from late October to early May. Some issues relevant to this access point are as follows:

- This is currently the only public access point to Catamount Ranch Open Space.
- Some people may object to having to pay \$3 to access the Open Space.
- Winter recreation at Catamount Ranch Open Space is not possible because the North Slope area is closed during the winter.
- The distance from the parking area to the Open Space property will be at least 4 miles, making the Open Space difficult to access for day use.
- Teller County will not incur any facilities development or maintenance costs for this access point because the facilities are already built and maintained by the City of Colorado Springs.
- Trailers are not allowed on the Pikes Peak Toll Road, therefore this access effectively precludes horses.
- No motor vehicles are allowed on City of Colorado Springs watershed lands.
- Overnight camping is not allowed on the North Slope.

## **2) From Edlowe Road through City of Colorado Springs watershed property**

An access road leads from Edlowe Road to the City of Colorado Springs watershed property (Figure 7). There is a locked gate across the access road about 200 feet east of Edlowe Road. This option would involve building a parking area about ¼ mile east of the locked gate and moving the gate to prohibit vehicle travel beyond this point. Visitors would walk south on an existing road (the Catamount Trail) for about ¼ mile then walking west on a foot trail (the Limber Pine Trail). The Limber Pine Trail joins the Catamount Ranch Open space at the southeast corner of Section 16. Some issues pertinent to this option would be:

- A parking area and trailhead would be built east of the existing gate on City of Colorado Springs property.
- The City of Colorado Springs would have to agree to construction of the parking area and permitting public access.
- This would effectively create a new access point to the City of Colorado Springs watershed lands.
- The City of Colorado Springs might charge a user fee at this access to support their operation.
- Anglers bound for North Catamount Reservoir might use this new access point in far greater numbers than hikers bound for the Open Space.
- The distance from the access point to the CROS property would be about 1.5 miles.
- There would be increased vehicle traffic along almost all of Edlowe Road, probably more from anglers than from hikers.

## **3) Across private lands from the County loop trail southeast of Divide (preferred option)**

Teller County has acquired a trail easement across private property southeast of Divide (Figure 8). This option would involve the County acquiring permission from private landowners to construct and maintain a trail from their land to CROS. A possible location for the trailhead would be in the middle of Section 7 of T13SR69W. Some issues pertinent to this option would be:

- Access would have to be obtained across private lands east of US Highway 24.
- A parking area and trailhead already exist and would not have to be built.
- About 1.5 miles of trail would have to be built from the existing loop trail to the northwestern corner of CROS.
- Acquiring access rights from private landowners might require substantial funds and staff time from the County.
- The trail to Catamount Ranch Open Space could be connected to trails in Mueller Ranch State Park.

#### **4) Through US Forest Service lands along Orchette Gulch**

This option would involve the County working with the US Forest Service to build trailhead at the mouth of Orchette Gulch. In addition, a new US Forest system trail would have to be built from this trailhead. A possible route for the system trail is shown on Figure 9. Some issues pertinent to this option would be:

- A trailhead would have to be built about ¼ mile east of State Highway 67 adjacent to Canterbury Road, an existing County road.
- The US Forest Service would have to agree to build a new system trail that would connect with the Catamount Ranch Open Space trail system and would provide access to other locations.
- Two existing homes are located within 200 yards of the potential trailhead and parking area.
- The Divide South subdivision obtains drinking water from Orchette Gulch.
- The USFS trail would probably allow travel by horses on National Forest lands.
- This access point would be about 2.5 miles from the southwestern corner of the CROS property, assuming the conceptual trail alignment shown in Figure 6.
- Catamount Ranch would be difficult to access for casual day use because of the minimum 5-mile (round trip) distance involved.
- The USFS system trail and a multi-use trail across the southern portion of the Catamount Ranch Open Space could provide a 7-mile loop trail that would be appealing to horse riders, mountain bikers, and energetic hikers.

#### **5) Through US Forest Service lands from the switch back on the Four Mile Creek Road**

This option would involve the County working with the US Forest Service to build a trailhead north of the first switchback on the Four Mile Creek Road (Figure 9). An existing road / trail runs to the east from north of the Mennonite Camp to the southeastern corner of CROS. Some issues pertinent to this option would be:

- A trailhead would have to be constructed north of Four Mile Creek Road 1.1 miles east of State Highway 67.
- In its present condition, the County road along Four Mile Creek is passable by ordinary passenger cars but the road is very narrow and steep in places; widening the road would be advisable if this access point were developed.
- The County would have to maintain and probably plow the road between State Highway 67 and the trailhead.
- A new USFS system trail would have to be built.
- This access point would be about 2.5 trail miles from the CROS property.
- Catamount Ranch would be difficult to access for casual day use because of the minimum 5-mile (round trip) distance involved.
- The combination of the new USFS system trail and the Catamount Ranch Open Space trail would create a 7-mile loop that would be appealing to horse riders, mountain bikers and energetic hikers.

- A ten-acre patented mining claim owned by the Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp is situated very close to the conceptual trail alignment; a land exchange that would bring this parcel into public ownership might be needed to avoid conflicts between the public and the Mennonite Camp.

**6) Through US Forest Service lands from the junction of State Highway 67 and the Four Mile Creek Road (acceptable option)**

This option would involve the County working with a private landowner and the US Forest Service to build a trailhead about 200 yards east of State Highway along the Four Mile Creek Road (Figure 9). An existing road / trail runs to the east from the Mennonite Camp to the southeastern corner of CROS. Some issues pertinent to this option would be:

- A trailhead would have to be constructed north of Four Mile Creek Road about 200 yards east of State Highway 67.
- A new USFS system trail would have to be built.
- This access point would be about 3.5 trail miles from the CROS property.
- Catamount Ranch would be difficult to access for casual day use because of the minimum 7-mile (round trip) distance involved.
- The combination of the new USFS system trail and the Catamount Ranch Open Space trail would create a 9-mile loop that would be appealing to horse riders and energetic hikers.
- A rock quarry and associated gravel operation are slated to occur immediately east of Highway and north of Four Mile Creek. The gravel mine would create noise and dust that might be objectionable to some trail users and might pose a safety hazard.

**Evaluation of Public Access Options Given Active Consideration**

The Planning Team compared the six access options currently under active consideration using a set of criteria. The criteria reflect important values of the citizens of Teller County, although, obviously, these criteria would not be valued equally by all citizens. The Planning Team used the following eight evaluation criteria: a) cost of road construction; b) cost of access point development; c) cost of trail construction; d) effects of vehicular traffic; e) visitor safety; f) ability to accommodate different recreation uses; g) environmental impacts of access point development; and h) ability to control access.

Required road improvements could greatly increase the cost associated with a particular access point. We assume that most if not all of any road improvement costs would be borne by the County. Access point improvements such as a parking area and signs will cost significant sums. Less expensive improvements would be preferable. Trail construction is costly, although less so than road construction. More trail construction means higher access costs. It is likely that trail construction costs would be borne by the U. S. Forest Service to the extent that new trails are located on National Forest land. Increased traffic would have negative effects on people living along the

access road. An access point that would allow access by horses would be preferable to one that did not allow horses. An access point that had less environmental impact would be preferable to one that had more environmental impact. The ability to control access would be desirable in the event that this becomes necessary.

The Planning Team assessed each public access option with respect to each of the evaluation criteria. For each option, each criterion was assigned a score of 1 (lowest fit with the vision and goals for the Open Space), 2, or 3 (highest fit), and the scores were added for each option. The results of the evaluation procedure are presented in Table 1.

Based on the results of the evaluation procedure, the Planning Team unanimously recommended option 3 (across private lands from the County loop trail southeast of Divide) as the preferred option. Thus, the Planning Team recommends that the County determine if this option is feasible, particularly with respect to the relevant private landowners. Planning Team also unanimously decided that option 6 (through US Forest Service lands from the junction of State Highway 67 and the Four Mile Creek Road) was an acceptable option. The Planning Team had serious concerns with option 2 (from Edlowe Road through City of Colorado Springs watershed property) bordering on this option being unacceptable.

## **X. Action Steps**

The actions steps listed below are necessary to achieve the goals and objectives listed previously in this plan. The County will not have the resources to accomplish all of these action steps immediately and perhaps not even during the five-year planning horizon. Therefore, the steps have been subdivided into three categories, high, medium and low, to reflect their respective priorities. High priority actions would be accomplished during the first three years of this plan, i.e., by the end of year 2000. Medium and low priority actions generally would be accomplished during the last two years of the plan cycle. However, medium or lower priority actions could be initiated relatively quickly if low-cost or donated expertise and labor were available to accomplish the tasks.

### **Actions to Achieve the Vegetation Goals and Objectives**

- Eradicate the existing patch of Canada thistle (High)
- Develop and implement a program to search for and control noxious weeds (Medium)
- Develop a wildfire management and mitigation plan (High)
- Develop a forest management plan (High)
- Develop and implement a monitoring program for wetlands and riparian areas to document changes in plant species composition and ground water surface elevations (Medium)
- Develop and implement a monitoring program to document changes in numbers of plant species (Medium)
- Initiate forest management activities recommended in the forest management plan (Medium)
- Prepare a vegetation map of the property that depicts the locations and extent of the vegetation types listed in the first vegetation goal statement above (Low)
- Map the locations of any rare plant species and rare plant communities (Low)
- Conduct a “natural heritage” inventory to search for rare plant species and plant communities (Low)

### **Actions to Achieve the Wildlife Goal and Objectives**

- Delineate areas for which seasonal closures are needed to protect key elk calving areas (High)
- Work with CDOW to design and implement a program to monitor elk calving annually (High)
- Implement seasonal closures with appropriate signage, written materials and communications to the public (Medium)
- Maintain records of wildlife sightings by visitors (Medium)
- Conduct a “natural heritage” inventory to search for rare animal species (Low)
- Develop and implement a program to monitor populations of rare any animals (Low)

## **Actions to Achieve the Hydrology Goal and Objectives**

- Determine if the two small dams in northwestern corner of property will be maintained or abandoned (Medium)
- Initiate a program to monitor water quality (parameters to be determined) in Horseshoe, Crystola and Catamount Creeks where they exit the property (Low)
- Initiate a program to measure stream flow in Horseshoe, Crystola and Catamount Creeks where they exit the property (Low)
- Initiate a monitoring program to determine soil surface characteristics (bare soil, live plants, plant litter) (Low)

## **Actions to Achieve the Recreation Goals and Objectives**

- Evaluate existing trail system and determine which trail segments will be abandoned and restored and where new trail needs to be built (High)
- Determine the location of additional public access point (High)
- Build parking area and trail head for new access point, including signs (High)
- Work with partners, as appropriate, to lay out and construct trail(s) to connect the public access point to the Open Space property (High)
- Sign the perimeter in selected locations to demarcate the boundaries of the Catamount Ranch Open Space property (High)
- Build new trails and reconstruct or relocate existing trails as needed (High)
- Restore abandoned trails as needed (High)
- Design and produce a trail map (Medium)
- Design and produce an open space brochure (Medium)
- Fabricate and install trail signs (Medium)
- Develop a monitoring program to measure soil erosion on trails (Low)

## **Actions to Achieve the Historic / Cultural /Education / Scenic Goals and Objectives**

- Conduct a preliminary archaeological / cultural resources survey of trash dumps and camp facilities (Medium)
- Remove dumps and trash that are not of historic or archaeological significance (Medium)
- Remove dilapidated barbed wire fences (High)
- Remove non-historical camp facilities at Trailer Road (Medium)
- Develop a cooperative public education program with The Catamount Institute (Medium)

## **XI. Next Steps**

The final Catamount Ranch Open Space Management Plan will be reviewed by the Teller County Parks Board in June 1998. This advisory board makes recommendations on parks-related matters to the County Commissioners. The Plan will then be reviewed by the Teller County Commissioners who have the responsibility to approve or disapprove the plan. Implementation of the Plan will begin once it has been approved by the County Commissioners. The Teller County Division of Parks will be responsible for the management of the Catamount Ranch Open Space.

The implementation of this plan depends to a significant extent on the level of funds allocated by the County. The fiscal year for Teller County runs from January 1 to December 31. The only expenditures budgeted for Catamount Ranch Open Space for fiscal year 1998 cover preparation of this plan. Therefore, funds to support management of the Open Space will be very limited for 1998.

The Planning Team was instrumental in the preparation of this plan. The current role of the Planning Team will cease with the adoption and implementation of the management plan. However, the consulting team and the Planning Team suggest that the people who participated in the Team continue to work together as a “Friends of Catamount Ranch” organization. These organizations exist as a support and fundraising extension of municipal and federal park agencies across Colorado. A notable and highly successful example is The Friends of Roxborough Park in Douglas County. This group provides volunteer labor and acts as an advocate on behalf of the park in local and regional political circles. The relationship between the group and the park management is clear and friendly and mutually beneficial. We hope that a similar organization could be built around the Catamount Ranch Open Space.

The Plan identifies many action steps that are necessary to achieve the Plan’s goals and objectives. We summarize here the most important actions that should be undertaken in 1998.

- Work with private landowners and public agencies to determine the feasibility of option 3 as the additional public access point. Once the public access point is known, move forward with further infrastructure planning.
- Evaluate the existing trails on the property, determine which trails need to be closed and restored, reconstructed, maintained as is and any new trails that will be constructed. The goal is to have trails that will serve public recreational needs while protecting the natural resources of the property. Assume that public access option 3 will be developed. Develop a budget for trail work in 1999.
- Submit proposal to Colorado State Parks for Great Outdoors Colorado dollars to support trail construction and restoration in summer of 1999.

- Conduct a preliminary cultural survey of the trash dumps and camp facilities. Remove trash and barbed wire from the property. Remove camp facilities at Trailer Park. This will improve the appearance of the property and eliminate a potential source of liability.
- Eradicate the existing patch of Canada thistle.
- Develop a wildfire management plan for the Open Space. This plan would complement a forest management plan, which we recommend for 1999.

## **XII. Potential Cooperative Projects with The Catamount Institute**

A group of Colorado College students (mostly environmental science majors) and faculty hopes to develop a field school at The Catamount Institute which will provide a residential setting for students to study the ecological features and processes of The Catamount Institute property as well as the Open Space. These studies will be designed to provide information that will help the Institute and the County manage the Catamount ecosystem in a sustainable manner. Student internships are a highly desirable part of a Colorado College education. Internships fulfill the students' needs in many ways: allowing for long term field-oriented thesis projects, establishing connections with planners and scientists for future jobs and internships and as a training tool for class projects. The managers of TCI hope to soon host ongoing four-month integrated summer class projects at the Institute. The recent block class, during which students prepared a management plan for TCI, was a good model for the quality and the quantity of work which students can achieve in a relatively short time.

The internships could also help fulfill the needs of Teller County. This plan identifies a number of management actions for the County to undertake. However, the County may not be able to fund certain important but non-urgent management activities such as soil, vegetation, wildlife and water monitoring. Furthermore, information that will inform the long-term management of the Open Space can be time consuming and costly to obtain. A cooperative program between The Catamount Institute and Teller County Parks appears to offer great benefits for both parties and should be explored. Specific action steps that could be accomplished by Colorado College students working at TCI are noted in Tables 2-6.

### **XIII. Budget**

Estimates have been made for the dollars and/or the amount of time that would be incurred annually by Teller County to complete each identified action item during the five-year life of this plan (Tables 2-6). Many action items could be accomplished in one year while others would require several years, often with higher levels of resources initially and lower levels thereafter. Estimates of time and effort are best guesses and should be reassessed prior to initiating specific action steps. Note that these costs do not reflect those likely to be borne by other entities besides Teller County, e.g., the cost of building a trail across National Forest lands to connect the new access point with other National Forest lands and with Catamount Ranch Open Space. In addition, these costs do not reflect costs for Division of Parks administration of the Open Space project.

## **XIV. Acknowledgments**

This plan would not have been possible without the dedication of many people. County Commissioner Lucile Fehn has been a tireless supporter of Catamount Ranch Open Space. We appreciate the wonderful collaboration and cooperation of Teller County Parks Coordinator, Kevin Tanski. We thank the members of the Planning Team who volunteered many hours of their time over the past six months whose commitment to the project was truly inspiring. We thank the Catamount Institute for hosting all of the Planning Team meetings.

In June 1998, Teller County lost one of the area's strongest advocates for trails, open space and recreation. Bob Beekman was the Chairman of the Teller County Parks Advisory Board and an active participant in the planning for the Catamount Ranch Open Space. His energy and insight will be missed, and it is our hope that his dreams for Teller County's Parks and Trails are realized.

## **XV. References**

Anonymous. 1984. Analysis of Colorado average annual precipitation for the 1951-1980 period. Climatic Report 84-4. Colorado Climate Center, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO.

Anonymous. 1987. Pikes Peak watershed forest management plan. City of Colorado Springs, Water Division.

Anonymous. 1996. Phase I. Environmental assessment, Catamount Ranch, Teller County, Colorado. Greystone, Inc., Denver, CO.

Benedict, A. D. 1991. A Sierra Club naturalist's guide: the Southern Rockies: The Rocky Mountain regions of southern Wyoming, Colorado and northern New Mexico. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, CA. 578 pp.

Dahms, C. W. and B. W. Geils. 1997. An assessment of forest health in the southwest. General Technical Report GTR-RM-295. USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Ft. Collins, CO.

Dewey, A. 1989. Elk movement and habitat use in Teller and Park County, Colorado. Updates for 1990 and 1991. Unpublished reports, National Park Service, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Colorado.

Goldblum, D. and T. T. Veblen. 1992. Fire history of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests in the Colorado Front Range. *Physical Geography* 13:133-148.

Kelso, S. 1997. Memorandum to Christopher M. West.

Natural Resources Conservation Service. 1983. Soils 5 data sheets and unpublished preliminary soil survey data that will appear in Teller-Park Soil Survey. On file at NRCS office in Woodland Park, CO.

Schmid, J. M. and A. S. Mata. 1997. Natural variability of specific forest insect populations and their associated effects in Colorado. General Technical Report GTR-RM-275. USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Ft. Collins, CO.

Swetnam, T. W. and A. M. Lynch. 1989. A tree-ring reconstruction of western spruce budworm history in the southern Rocky Mountains. *Forest Science* 35:962-986.

Swetnam, T. W. and A. M. Lynch. 1993. Multi-century, regional-scale patterns of western spruce budworm outbreaks. *Ecological Monographs* 63:399-424.

Tweto, O. 1979. Geologic map of Colorado. US Geological Survey, Reston, VA.

Veblen, T. T., T. Kitzberger and J. Donnegan. 1996. Fire ecology in the wildland / urban interface of Boulder County. Unpublished research report, City of Boulder Open Space, Boulder, CO.

Weber, W. A. 1990. Colorado flora – eastern slope. University of Colorado Press, Niwot, CO.

West, C. M. 1997. Baseline report for Catamount Ranch. Unpublished report prepared for the Palmer Foundation and Teller County.

Wilson, J. C. and B. M. Tkacz. 1996. Historical perspective on forest insect pathogens in the southwest: implications for restoration of ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests. In: W. W. Covington and P. K. Wagner (tech. coords.) Conference on adaptive ecosystem restoration and management of Cordilleran conifer landscapes of North America. General Technical Report GTR-RM-278. USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Ft. Collins, CO. Pages 25-30.

**Table 1.** Scoring of public access options. Numbers in the boxes range from 1 (lowest fit with vision and goals for Catamount Ranch Open Space) to 3 (highest fit). Higher numbers mean a higher score and a more desirable option.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Options 5	Option 6
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>North Catamount Reservoir</b>	<b>Colorado Springs Watershed</b>	<b>Loop Trail near Divide</b>	<b>Orchette Gulch</b>	<b>Four Mile Creek at Switchback</b>	<b>Four Mile Ck &amp; Hwy 67</b>
<b>Cost of road constr. And maint.</b>	3	1a	3	3	1f	3
<b>Cost of access point facilities constr. And maint.</b>	3	3	3d	3	2	3
<b>Cost of trail constr. and maint.</b>	3	3	1e	3	3	3
<b>Effects of vehicular traffic</b>	3	1b	3	2	2	3
<b>Visitor safety</b>	3	3	3	3	3	2g
<b>Ability for multiple recreation uses</b>	1	1c	3	2	2	2
<b>Environmental impacts of access point develop.</b>	3	3	3	2	2	3
<b>Ability to control access</b>	3	3	3	3	3	3
<b>Total score</b>	22	18	22	21	18	22

**Notes** – a: assumes Edlowe Road improvements; b: assumes significant increase in traffic on Edlowe Road due to anglers and hikers; c: assumes ban on horse travel on Colorado Springs watershed lands; d: assumes that existing Loop Trail facilities are sufficient; e: assumes that County will have to pay for all trail construction and for trail easement; f: assumes County road improvements and maintenance; g: assumes some risk to visitors of gravel operation

<b>Table 2.</b> Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 1998.				
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Materials (\$)</b>	<b>Labor (weeks)</b>	<b>Cash (\$)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Eradicate Canada thistle</b>	50 (herbicide)	0.2	130	Summer intern
<b>Develop weed plan / search</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern
<b>Develop Wildfire Plan</b>	0	NA	1000	CoSFS or consultant
<b>Evaluate trail system</b>	0	NA	5000	Hire consultant
<b>Determine public access point</b>	0	0	0	TC & PT
<b>Sign perimeter of Open Space</b>	100 (signs)	1.0	400	Summer intern
<b>Conduct preliminary cultural Survey</b>	0	0.4	0	Volunteer(s)
<b>Remove trash dumps</b>	1998	2.0	500	Summer intern
<b>Remove old fences</b>	1998	2.0	500	Summer intern
<b>Remove camp facilities</b>	1998	2.0	500	Summer intern
Assumption: summer intern salary is \$1600 per month.				

<b>Table 3.</b> Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 1999.				
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Materials (\$)</b>	<b>Labor (weeks)</b>	<b>Cash (\$)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Search for noxious weeds</b>	0	0.4	160	Summer intern
<b>Develop forest mgt. plan</b>	0	NA	10,000	CoSFS or consultant
<b>Delineate elk closure areas</b>	0	0	0	CDOW & TC
<b>Monitor elk calving</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern & CDOW
<b>Restore bad trails and build new trails</b>	500 (tools)	40	22,000	4 summer interns & trails expert
<b>Determine fate of small ponds</b>	0	0	0	TC & PT
Assumption: summer intern salary is \$1600 per month.				

<b>Table 4.</b> Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2000.				
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Materials (\$)</b>	<b>Labor (weeks)</b>	<b>Cash (\$)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Search for noxious weeds</b>	0	0.4	160	Summer intern
<b>Implement seasonal elk closures</b>	500 (signs)	1.0	400	Summer intern
<b>Monitor elk calving</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern & CDOW
<b>Build new trailhead facilities</b>	10,000 + (signs, parking area, toilet)	8.0	13,200	TC, summer intern
<b>Design and produce trail map</b>	1000 (photocopying)	0	1000	TC, TCI and CC students
<b>Design and produce brochure</b>	3000 (printing b/w)	0	0	TC, TCI and CC students
<b>Restore bad trails and build new trails</b>	500 (tools)	40	22,000	4 summer interns & trails expert
<b>Fabricate and install trail signs</b>	500 (signs)	1.0	400	Fabricated by vol's, summer intern
<b>Monitor soils erosion on trails</b>	100 (field equipment)	0	0	TCI and CC students
Assumption: summer intern salary is \$1600 per month.				

<b>Table 5.</b> Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2001.				
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Materials (\$)</b>	<b>Labor (weeks)</b>	<b>Cash (\$)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Search for noxious weeds</b>	0	0.4	160	Summer intern
<b>Implement seasonal elk closures</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern
<b>Develop and implement wetland monitoring</b>	500 (ground water monitor wells)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Develop and implement plant species monitoring</b>	100 (field equipment)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor water quality parameters</b>	1000 (sampling gear and lab fees)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Measure stream flows</b>	1000 (staff gauges)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor soil surface characteristics</b>	100 (field equipment)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor elk calving</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern & CDOW
Assumption: summer intern salary is \$1600 per month.				

<b>Table 6.</b> Materials and labor cost estimates for recommended action steps for 2002.				
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Materials (\$)</b>	<b>Labor (weeks)</b>	<b>Cash (\$)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Search for noxious weeds</b>	0	0.4	160	Summer intern
<b>Implement seasonal elk closures</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern
<b>Prepare vegetation map of Open Space</b>	200 (aerial photos)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Conduct heritage inventory of plants</b>	1000 (plant presses, mounting matl's)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Map rare plant species</b>	100 (field equipment)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Conduct heritage inventory of animals</b>	1000 (traps and curating equipment)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor water quality parameters</b>	500 (sampling gear and lab fees)	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Measure stream flows</b>	0	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor soil characteristics</b>	0	0	0	TCI and CC students
<b>Monitor elk calving</b>	0	1.0	400	Summer intern & CDOW
Assumption: summer intern salary is \$1600 per month.				

**MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**FOR THE**

**CATAMOUNT RANCH OPEN SPACE**

**TELLER COUNTY, COLORADO**

**1998-2002**

**Management Plan for the Catamount Ranch Open Space  
Teller County, Colorado**

*Prepared for:*

Kevin P. Tanski, Parks Coordinator  
Teller County Division of Parks  
P. O. Box 1886  
Woodland Park, CO 80866  
(719) 687-5242  
tcplan@rmi.net

*Prepared by:*

Alan T. Carpenter, Ph.D.  
Land Stewardship Consulting  
2941 – 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Boulder, CO 80304  
(303) 443-8094  
atcarpen@bouldernews.infi.net

Christopher M. West  
Conservation West  
925 S. Downing Street  
Denver, CO 80209  
(303) 871-0240  
westchrism@aol.com

Will Murray  
Conservation Impact  
515 Franklin Street  
Denver, CO 80218  
(303) 321-4405  
willm@ecentral.com

July 1998



## **Executive Summary**

This management plan establishes a vision and general direction for management of the Catamount Ranch Open Space for the next five years. This plan was prepared as a joint effort of the Teller County Division of Parks, the Catamount Ranch Open Space Planning Team and a consulting team, headed by Land Stewardship Consulting of Boulder, Colorado. The Planning Team served in an advisory role to the County and developed a vision, a list of operating principles, and a set of goals for Catamount Ranch.

For many years, the Catamount Ranch Open Space was owned in part and leased in part for by the YMCA of the Rockies. Several years ago, the YMCA decided to sell the property. After several attempts to develop the property for residential purposes failed, Teller County decided to acquire the fee and leased land as County open space. Catamount Ranch Open Space encompasses 1320 acres of land owned in fee by Teller County. All of the Open Space land is encumbered by a conservation easement that effectively ensures that the Open Space will remain forever in an undeveloped state by restricting any development and preclude commercial or industrial activities on the property. The property may not be subdivided, commercially logged or mined.

Catamount Ranch Open Space is located near the center of Teller County on the northwestern flank of Pikes Peak, about 18 air miles northwest of Colorado Springs. The property ranges in elevation from 9200 to 10,200 feet and is underlain by Pikes Peak granite, which weathers into relatively shallow, coarse-grained soils that are susceptible to erosion. The property is dominated by dry or moist coniferous forests, with small inclusions of aspen forest, montane grassland as well as significant wetland and riparian areas. The property provides important summer and winter habitat for elk, as well as for a variety of other animals typical of the area.

The vision developed by the Planning Team states that Catamount Ranch Open Space will be managed primarily for long-term natural resource conservation and will remain commercially undeveloped. The operating principles developed by the Planning Team contemplate that a) the Open Space will be essentially undeveloped and managed primarily for long-term, natural resource conservation; b) secondarily, management will provide opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about the land, the wildlife, and the history of the area while respecting the primary purpose of long-term resource conservation through limited access and low-key human impact; c) management of the Catamount Ranch Open Space will respect the neighbors and complement adjoining land uses; and d) management will use wise and prudent practices that minimize negative impacts on the land, flora and fauna that might arise from public use of the property.

The Planning Team developed a list of goals for the Open Space covering vegetation, wildlife, hydrology, recreation, and historic / cultural / education / and scenic features. The Planning Team also recommended a list of public access and recreation policies that are consistent with the vision and goals for the Open Space. The Planning Team recommended one additional future public access point at the existing Loop Trail south of Divide that would be developed over the next two years.

# Catamount Ranch Open Space Management Plan

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction .....	1
II.	History of the Catamount Ranch Open Space Project .....	2
III.	Catamount Ranch Open Space - Existing Environment .....	5
IV.	Vision Statement .....	14
V.	Operating Principles .....	15
VI.	Goals .....	16
VII.	Objectives .....	17
VIII.	Management Policies .....	19
IX.	Public Access Options .....	22
X.	Action Steps .....	27
XI.	Next Steps .....	29
XII.	Potential Cooperative Projects with The Catamount Institute .....	31
XIII.	Budget .....	32
XIV.	Acknowledgments .....	33
XV.	References .....	34

## List of Tables

Table 1.	Comparison of Public Access Options .....	36
Table 2.	Materials and Labor Costs Estimates for Recommended Actions Steps for 1998 .....	37
Table 3.	Materials and Labor Costs Estimates for Recommended Action Steps for 1999.....	38
Table 4.	Materials and Labor Costs Estimates for Recommended Action Steps for 2000 .....	39
Table 5.	Materials and Labor Costs Estimates for Recommended Action Steps for 2001 .....	40
Table 6.	Materials and Labor Costs Estimates for Recommended Action Steps for 2002 .....	41

## List of Figures

Figure 1.	Regional Locator Map .....	42
Figure 2.	Catamount Ranch Open Space and Nearby Properties .....	43
Figure 3.	Streams Draining Catamount Ranch Open Space .....	44
Figure 4.	Major Vegetation Types .....	45
Figure 5.	Trash Dumps and Derelict Barbed Wire Fences .....	46
Figure 6.	Existing Trails .....	47
Figure 7.	Potential Access Points 1 and 2 .....	48
Figure 8.	Potential Access Point 3 .....	49
Figure 9.	Potential Access Points 4, 5, and 6 .....	50

## **Appendix**

**List of Planning Team Members**

**List of Noxious Weeds**

**List of Plant Species**

**List of Wildlife Species**

***To the Teller County Board of County Commissioners on behalf of the community at large:***

As members of the Catamount Ranch Open Space Planning Team attending the final meeting of the Planning Team on May 8, 1998, we propose and support the implementation of the attached Management Plan for the Catamount Ranch Open Space.

Doug Allen  
Allan Bartel  
Bob Beekman  
Randa Bell  
Ed Beaumont  
Arlin Buller  
Hank Cole  
Terri Collins  
Sydney Del Bianco  
Stu Dodge  
Howard Drossman  
Vic Eklund  
Lucile Fehn  
John Geerdes  
Al Hagedorn, Jr.  
Paul and Janice Hamlet  
Leon Kot  
Elaina Leo  
Naomi Marcus  
Gene Pask  
Andy Schlosberg  
Tonya Sharp  
Julie Snow  
Kevin Tanski  
Jack Vayhinger  
Melissa Walker  
P. J. Wenham

## List of Planning Team Members

Affiliations are included for the convenience of the reader.

Doug Allen, Audubon Society

Allan Bartel, Director, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

Bob Beekman, Chairman, Teller County Parks Advisory Board

Ben and Randa Bell, Caretakers, Catamount Institute

Jerry Bergeman, Chairman, Teller County Board of County Commissioners

Ed Beaumont, Colorado Motorized Trail Riders Association

Tom Brown, Colorado Field Director, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Alan Carpenter, Principal, Land Stewardship Consulting

Tom Casemyer, Executive Director, Gates Family Foundation

Dan Cleveland, Executive Director, Trails and Open Space Coalition

Hank Cole, Equestrian Enthusiast

Terri and Randy Collins, Local Residents

Dave Conley, Palmer Foundation

Mike Davenport, Planning Director, Teller County

Bob Davies, Colorado Division of Wildlife

Sydney DelBianco, Woodland Park Saddle Club

Stuart Dodge, Executive Director, Palmer Foundation

Howard Drossman, Catamount Institute and Colorado College

Vic Eklund, Colorado Springs Water Resources Department

Cal Elder, Local Resident

Lucile Fehn, Commissioner, Teller County Board of County Commissioners

Julie Francis, Owner, Catamount Institute

Peter Gaede, Biologist, U. S. Forest Service

John Geerdes, Mueller State Park

Robert Gregory, Trust for Public Lands

Al Hagedorn, Jr., Local Resident

Paul and Janice Hamlet, Local Residents

Leon Kot, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Elaina Leo, Local Resident

Naomi Marcus, Local Resident

Bill Miller, Elk Valley Estates

David Palenchar, Vice President, Programs, El Pomar Foundation

Gene Pask, Pikes Peak Chapter, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Mitzi Pasternak, Catamount Institute

Sally Riley, Director of Community Activities, City of Woodland Park

Andy Schlosberg, Colorado State Forest Service

Tonya Sharp, District Wildlife Manager, Colorado Division of Wildlife

Julie Snow, Local Resident

Kevin Tanski, Parks Coordinator, Teller County Division of Parks

Stave Tapia, Manitou Experimental Forest, US Forest Service

Tom Ulrich, Park Ranger, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

Jack Vayhinger, Wildlife Biologist, Colorado Division of Wildlife

Melissa Walker, Palmer Foundation

P. J. Wenham, Vice President, Palmer Foundation

Chris West, Conservation and Natural Resource Solutions