



Administration Building
West Hearing Room
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Littleton, CO 80120
303-795-4630
Relay Colorado 711
303-795-4630 Audio Agenda Line

Nancy A. Doty, Chair, District 1
Nancy Sharpe, District 2
Rod Bockenfeld, District 3
Nancy Jackson, Chair Pro-Tem, District 4
Bill Holen, District 5

Study Session

October 11, 2016

The Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners typically holds weekly Study Sessions on Monday and Tuesday. Study Sessions (except for Executive Sessions) are open to the public and items for discussion are included on this agenda. Agendas (except for Executive Sessions agendas) are available through the Commissioners' Office or through the County's web site at www.arapahoegov.com. Please note that the Board may discuss any topic relevant to County business, whether or not the topic has been specifically noticed on this agenda. In particular, the Board typically schedules time each Monday under "Committee Updates" to discuss a wide range of topics. In addition, the Board may alter the times of the meetings throughout the day, or cancel or reschedule noticed meetings. Questions about this agenda? Contact the Commissioners' Office at 303-795-4630 or by e-mail at commissioners@arapahoegov.com

Study Session Topics

10:00 A.M. Calendar Updates (WHR)

Diana Maes

BoCC Administration Manager

10:30 A.M. BOCC Updates (WHR)

Board of County Commissioners

Break

1:30 P.M. *Open Space Agricultural Lease Program (WHR)

Discussion from the Open Spaces Operations staff seeking to provide information to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the current state of the Department's Agricultural Lease Program and requesting direction regarding the desired future state of the program

Request: Information/Direction

Bill Bauer, Operations Supervisor, Open Spaces

Glen Poole, Operations Manager, Open Spaces

Shannon Carter, Director, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations

Todd Weaver, Budget Manager, Finance

Tiffanie Bleau, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Documents:

[ACOS_LEASEPROGRAM_BSR.DOC](#)

2:30 P.M. Open Spaces Update (WHR)

Josh Tenneson, Grants and Acquisitions Manager, Open Spaces

Shannon Carter, Director, Open Spaces and Intergovernmental Relations

3:00 P.M. * Executive Session (WHR)

Executive Study Session and County Attorney Administrative Meeting [Section 24-6-402 (4)(b)C.R.S.](As required by law, specific agenda topics will be announced in open meeting prior to the commencement of the closed and confidential portion of this session) (WHR)

Ron Carl, County Attorney

*** To Be Recorded As Required By Law**

WHR - West Hearing Room

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Assisted listening devices are available. Ask any staff member and we will provide one for you.

If you need special accommodations, contact the Commissioners' Office at 303-795-4630 or Relay Colorado 711.

Please contact our office at least 3 days in advance to make arrangements.



Board Summary Report

Date: September 29, 2016

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Shannon Carter, Intergovernmental Relations and Open Spaces Director

From: Glen Poole, Open Space Operations Manager
Bill Bauer, Open Space Operations Supervisor

Subject: **Open Spaces Agricultural Lease Program (Multiple Properties)**

Direction/Information: The Open Space Operations staff is seeking to provide information to the Board of County Commissioners regarding the current state of the Department's Agricultural Lease Program. Direction will be requested regarding the desired future state of this Program.

Request and Recommendation

The Arapahoe County Open Space Program has numerous properties under agricultural lease agreements supporting both farming and ranching land use activities. These lease agreements have been in place for over seven years. Open Space staff is requesting Board direction on the development of a new formal Agricultural Lease Program that will govern all open space properties that support agricultural activities.

Open Space Operations staff recommends the adoption of Alternative #1 which supports the development of a future agricultural lease program governing Open Space properties to be implemented in calendar year 2017 or at the renewal of an existing lease. Formalizing the Department's lease program and associated policies ensures equitable treatment of lessees leasing our properties, ensures competitive rates are paid for the various agricultural uses and will require lessees to support Operations staff's annual natural resource management plans and protection priorities. The Department does not currently have a formal consistent lease program or policy that governs the Department's entire portfolio of properties.

Background

The Arapahoe County Open Spaces Program currently has 3,915 acres under agricultural lease. This includes Kiowa Creek North Open Space, Kiowa Creek South Open Space, Richmil Ranch Open Space and our largest lease at the Bijou Basin Open Space. Each of the properties currently under a lease agreement followed roughly the same process to establish the existing lease. The County initiated an acquisition process to acquire the property based on an evaluation matrix which demonstrated the property's high value for open space and natural resource protection. After the property was acquired a negotiation process was then completed to retain or extend the existing lease arrangements with the historic lessee or the former property owner. Open Space Operation staff then established a working relationship with the lessee. Staff the works together with the lessee to define operational and land management goals. The working relationship is maintained through frequent on site property evaluations and monitoring. The lessee maintains the operational assets (fences, wells, stock tanks, etc.) and the County Open Space

Program funds large site or capital improvements for each property. Open Spaces staff has completed range inventories of each property under grazing operations to ensure proper stocking rates. The lease program is in its seventh year of operation. Open Spaces Operations staff has close working relationships with our existing lessees and has also received inquiries regarding our lease program from potential future lessees.

Current Lease Program Summary

Property	Acreage	Lessee
Kiowa Creek North Open Space	265	Copeland Cattle Co.
Kiowa Creek South Open Space	492	Copeland Cattle Co.
Richmil Ranch Open Space	352	Copeland Cattle Co.
Bijou Basin Open Space	2,806	Bradbury Land Cattle
Total:	3915 acres	

Links to Align Arapahoe

Fiscal Responsibility

- Improve the Economic Sustainability of Open Space Properties
 - The Agricultural Lease Program will provide supplemental revenue to support the operation and management of each property under lease. Each lessee acts as an extension of Open Space Operations staff in supporting the day to day management and oversight of the sites. The partnership between staff and lessee reduces the fiscal impact of operation on the Open Space Maintenance fund.
 - The lease agreements also generate income for the local economy as the lessee spends money on supplies and the costs of their operations at many local businesses.

Service First

- Achieve Customer Service Excellence
 - Establishing a formal Agricultural Lease Program provides the necessary structure to equitably manage our business relationships with the Department’s current and future lessees.

Discussion

The current Agricultural Lease Program is directly tied to the land acquisition process of the Open Spaces Department. All of the Department’s existing lessee relationships were established through each property’s original land acquisition, pulling in the either the former lessee or the former land owner. The Open Spaces Program has matured over the last 7 years of operation. Management has determined that the current lease program and its associated process of identifying lessees constrains staff in their ability to effectively utilize the lease program as a tool to manage open space properties. These constraints include: limited ability to ensure lease rates are equitable to the County, no formal policy exists to select a lessee if we lose an existing relationship or if the Department acquires a property with no existing lessee, current leases are not directly tied to the property’s natural resource plans and the Program has varying lease terms and lengths for each individual property.

Goals for the New Agricultural Lease Program:

1. Support sound natural resource management and protection.
2. Provide revenue to offset operational costs associated with each property.
3. Preserve historic Arapahoe County land uses of farming and ranching.
4. Equitable business model supported by strong relationships with lessees.

Alternatives

Open Space Management recommends Alternative # 1 as the preferred staff alternative.

1. Open Space Operations staff develop a new formalized Agricultural Lease Program based on defined goals which will be applied as policies governing all open space properties. Present to the Board of County Commissioners for final approval prior to implementation.
2. Open Space Operations establish agricultural leases based on individual properties and on an as needed basis. Approval of leases through the Department Director.
3. No action. Maintain current approach for establishing leases during property acquisition process. Address the loss of lessees as needed.

Fiscal Impact

Formalizing the County Open Space lease program will:

1. Ensure competitive rates are paid by existing and future property lessees based on range inventories and stocking rates recommended by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.
2. Support offsetting of operational costs for Open Space properties with available land for leases.
3. Ensure length of lease terms match the current market and support lessee business revenue goals. This will make County's leasable properties more attractive to local farming and ranching businesses when the properties come available for lease.

Concurrence

1. Byers Office, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
2. Adjacent Land Owners: Kiowa Creek North Open Space , Richmil Ranch Open Space
3. Open Space Trail Advisory Board has expressed interest in a more formal approach to the Department's agricultural lease program.

Reviewed By:

Tiffanie Bleau, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Shannon Carter, Director of Open Spaces & Intergovernmental Relations

Glen Poole, Open Spaces Operations Manager

Bill Bauer, Open Space Operations Supervisor