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## **Newest Open Space Jewel: Bijou Creek Basin**

*Arapahoe County buys 2,800 acres of open space for public recreation*

**Arapahoe County, Colo.** --- The word "Bijou" is French for "jewel" or "gem", and that's exactly what Arapahoe County has protected with its most recent open space acquisition. On Dec.29, Arapahoe County purchased 2,800 acres known as the Bradbury Bijou Creek Ranch near Byers for \$2.69 million using Arapahoe County Open Space funds.

Once open, residents will be able to explore thousands of acres of rolling hills tucked into the heart of the Bijou Basin, featuring a carpet of short grass prairie and wildflowers, hidden canyons and three miles of the winding West Bijou Creek. Broad and extensive cottonwood galleries fill the bottomlands with four seasons of color, along with upland pastures which support a diversity of wildlife and native shrubs such as juniper, scrub oak and wild plum.

"This is the largest and most significant open space acquisition since the program began in 2004," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Chair Rod Bockenfeld. "It serves as a strategic location along the future *Arapahoe Greenway* trail corridor that is to be developed along Quincy Avenue from E-470 to Bradbury Road south of Byers."

The land, a family cattle grazing operation since 1958, is bordered by 12,000 acres of adjacent conserved lands including the West Bijou Conservation Easement to the east and the Plains Conservation Center to the south. Unlike most of these conserved lands which are under private ownership and not open to the public, with the exception of the Plains Conservation Center which is accessible only by appointment or invitation, the County's Bradbury Bijou Creek Ranch will allow for future public access.

Over the next four to six years, the County will allow for an agricultural lease, which will provide local land stewardship and cover maintenance costs. A management plan will determine appropriate open space/trails development on the property.

Future amenities may include a trailhead with parking, picnic area, restroom, a multi-use, non-motorized trail system that features views and vistas of more than 15,000 acres of conserved lands surrounding the ranch.

To learn more about the County's Open Space program, visit [www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us) and sign up to receive the Open Space newsletter.

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To download photos click on the following link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/Bradbury/>

*Bradbury\_BijouCreek*: Once open, residents will be able to explore 2,800 acres of rolling hills tucked into the heart of the Bijou Basin, featuring a carpet of short grass prairie and wildflowers, hidden canyons and three miles of the winding West Bijou Creek.

*Bradbury\_DustDevil*: Arapahoe County protects 2,800 acre open space gem, known as the Bradbury Bijou Creek Ranch near Byers.

*Bradbury\_MuleDeerBuck*: Can you find the buck Mule Deer that was found at Arapahoe County's newest open space?