

WILDLIFE

INTRODUCTION

Wildlife is one of the most valuable community assets. Preservation of wildlife habitat enriches the human experience by providing beautiful vistas and vital links to natural systems such as watersheds for Douglas County residents. The existence of wildlife is entirely dependant upon the existence of sufficient wildlife habitat.



Douglas County accommodates the long-term needs of wildlife by creating a habitat plan based on an ecosystem model. The County model relies on a system of large, core-habitat areas connected by movement corridors to various habitat types dispersed throughout the County. The CMP also acknowledges the importance of smaller habitat areas and corridors, including the open areas within residential lots. This model uses a three-tiered approach to prioritize habitat needs for wildlife:

- **TIER 1: COUNTY/REGIONAL**
County-wide or regional (extending beyond the County) habitat areas. These areas and connections are prioritized at the highest level of importance. County-wide habitat includes large blocks of land connected by wide, multi-faceted connections. Examples include the Pike National Forest; Daniels Park; Highlands Ranch Backcountry Wilderness; and the series of corridors that connect these areas such as Plum Creek and the 2000' wide DuPont corridor which crosses US Highway 85.

SECTION 10

- **TIER 2: LOCAL**
Local or community-level areas are moderately sized wildlife habitat areas contained within, or shaped by, development. These habitat areas and connections are prioritized at a moderate level-of-importance. Examples include the wildlife habitat and corridor plan within Castle Pines North and Castle Pines Village. Integral wildlife movement corridors are generally 300' wide.
- **TIER 3: PARCEL**
Parcel-level habitat or connections are found within individual residential lots, small commercial sites, or small neighborhoods. These habitat areas are given the lowest priority. Land fragmentation, impacts to natural systems, changes in vegetation, and disturbance reduce the value of such habitat. However, wildlife use these areas, so the cumulative value of parcel level habitat must not be discounted totally.

The land-use review process in Douglas County seeks to identify, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wildlife and the various tiers of wildlife habitat. Stricter review and mitigation of development and other land uses will be applied to applications in, or adjacent to, wildlife habitat conservation areas and mapped wildlife movement corridors and overland connections. Efforts to educate and assist residents about proper land management, as well as living alongside wildlife, are beneficial to sustaining healthy populations of wildlife.

FUNDING OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT

Douglas County has many thousands of acres of protected land. Much of that land was purchased or protected through open space funding that was secured through the passage of a sales tax in 1994. The Douglas County Open Space acquisition dollars used in habitat protection are leveraged two- to threefold through partnerships.

In 1998, Douglas County bonded its open space sales tax money primarily to facilitate acquisitions. Between 1995 and 2007 over 45,000 acres of open lands were permanently protected. As acquisition money has dwindled and the pace of protection has slowed, Douglas County must now rely more heavily on partnerships with other agencies, citizens groups, landowners, and developers to conserve additional open lands and wildlife habitat.

The County is also shifting toward conservation of additional wildlife habitat through alternative means, including mitigation of land-use impacts and the restoration and improvement of existing habitat. For more information, see the following website for the protected lands within Douglas County: www.douglas.co.us/openspace.

WILDLIFE RESOURCES

GOAL 10-1

PROTECT AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE HABITAT AND MOVEMENT CORRIDORS AND FOSTER WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

OBJECTIVE 10-1A

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM WITHIN THE COUNTY BY ESTABLISHING, MAINTAINING, BUFFERING, AND IMPROVING A SET OF CORE HABITAT AREAS CONNECTED BY MOVEMENT CORRIDORS AND OVERLAND CONNECTIONS AS SHOWN IN THE WILDLIFE RESOURCES MAP.

POLICY 10-1A.1

Identify important habitat and movement corridors on the Wildlife Resources Map; revise the map to reflect changes.

POLICY 10-1A.2

Develop partnerships to conserve additional habitat and manage and improve existing habitat.

POLICY 10-1A.3

Protect important wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

POLICY 10-1A.4

Minimize and mitigate land-use impacts to wildlife and important habitat and movement corridors, to the maximum extent practicable.

OBJECTIVE 10-1B

MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO WILDLIFE BY ENSURING THAT DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE ARE COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND MOVEMENT CORRIDORS.

POLICY 10-1B.1

Identify important wildlife habitat and movement corridors in applicable land-use applications. Evaluate the potential impact of the proposed change in land use on wildlife and habitat.

POLICY 10-1B.2

Consider wildlife opportunities on neighboring lands, as well as a County-wide scale, when evaluating land-use applications.

POLICY 10-1B.3

Link wildlife habitat and movement corridors, wherever possible.



POLICY 10-1B.4

Locate development outside of important wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

POLICY 10-1B.5

Balance the need for safe, sustainable transportation with wildlife values.

POLICY 10-1B.6

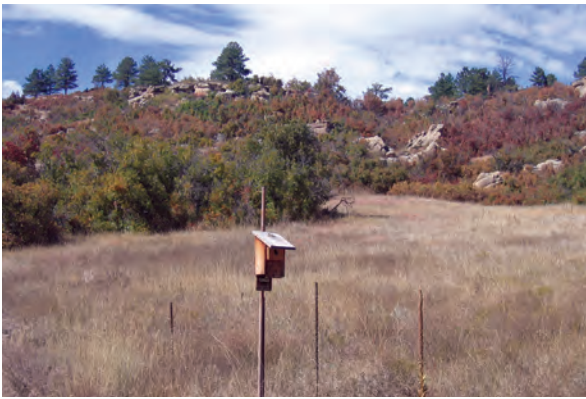
Minimize the use of fencing that is exclusionary or dangerous to wildlife, except within building envelopes when required, for human safety, for protection of at-risk crops, and for domestic animal containment. All other fencing should be wildlife-friendly.

POLICY 10-1B.7

Require development to appropriately revegetate degraded and disturbed lands with native or beneficial vegetation and wildlife-friendly species in important wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

POLICY 10-1B.8

Require noxious weed management plans and encourage Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for new development.

**POLICY 10-1B.9**

Require habitat restoration, improvement, and management practices such as restoration of native or beneficial flora; stream stabilization; erosion control; maintenance of residual cover during the winter; and proper pasture management on new development and special uses, as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE 10-1C

SUPPORT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

POLICY 10-1C.1

Establish and/or support incentives and programs to foster conservation.

POLICY 10-1C.2

Support measures to educate landowners and homeowners about the negative impacts of both domestic animals on wildlife and the feeding of wildlife, as well as wildlife habitat and species success.

OBJECTIVE 10-1D

SUPPORT THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE POPULATIONS TO MAINTAIN VIABLE POPULATIONS, SPECIES HEALTH, AND TO MINIMIZE HUMAN/WILDLIFE CONFLICTS.

POLICY 10-1D.1

Support efforts by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to manage wildlife populations.

POLICY 10-1D.2

Require wildlife management, habitat conservation, and land maintenance plans for new development, in consultation with professional agencies, as appropriate.