



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 dependent 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**
Countywide or regional (extending beyond the County) habitat areas. These areas and connections are prioritized at the highest level of importance. Countywide habitat includes large blocks of land connected by wide, multi-directional 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 2,000-foot wide DuPont corridor which crosses US Highway 85.

- **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. The wildlife habitat and corridor plan within Castle Pines Village is an example. Integral wildlife movement corridors are generally 300 feet 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 uses 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 is required of applications in, or adjacent to, important wildlife resources, including moderate or high-value wildlife habitat areas, wildlife habitat conservation areas, movement corridors and overland connections as designated on the Wildlife Resources Map. Efforts to educate and assist residents about proper land management and living alongside wildlife are beneficial to sustaining healthy populations of wildlife.

FUNDING OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT

Douglas County has 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. Douglas County Open Space acquisition dollars used in habitat protection have been leveraged almost 3 to 1 through partnerships and grants.

In 1998, Douglas County bonded its open space sales tax money primarily to facilitate acquisitions. Between 1995 and 2018, over 63,000 acres of open lands were permanently protected. Of this total, Douglas County owns approximately 17,000 acres in fee title. Over 44,000 acres are protected through conservation easements. The County contributed to the acquisition and preservation of almost 2,000 acres owned by other agencies. As acquisition money dwindles, the pace of protection also slows. Douglas County relies more on partnerships with other agencies, citizen groups, landowners, and developers to conserve additional open lands and wildlife habitat.

The County also works to conserve additional wildlife habitat through alternative means, including mitigation of land use impacts and the restoration and improvement of existing habitat. For more information on the protected lands within Douglas County, please visit www.douglas.co.us/openspace.



WILDLIFE RESOURCES

GOAL 9-1

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

OBJECTIVE 9-1A

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

POLICY 9-1A.1

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

POLICY 9-1A.2

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

POLICY 9-1A.3

Protect important wildlife habitat, habitat conservation areas (HCAs), movement corridors and overland connections.

OBJECTIVE 9-1B

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

POLICY 9-1B.1

Identify important wildlife habitat, habitat conservation areas (HCAs), movement corridors, and overland connections, as designated on the Wildlife Resources Map in applicable land use applications. Evaluate the potential impact of the proposed change in land use on wildlife and habitat. The identified design solutions should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of the proposed land use.

POLICY 9-1B.2

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

POLICY 9-1B.3

Link wildlife habitat and movement corridors, wherever possible.

POLICY 9-1B.4

Locate development outside of important wildlife habitat and movement corridors.

POLICY 9-1B.5

Balance the location and design of transportation infrastructure with accommodation of wildlife habitat and movement values.

POLICY 9-1B.6

Minimize fencing that is exclusionary or dangerous to wildlife, except when necessary for human safety, commercial and industrial uses, protection of at-risk crops, and domestic animal containment. All other fencing should be wildlife friendly.

POLICY 9-1B.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 9-1B.8

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

POLICY 9-1B.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 9-1C

SUPPORT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

POLICY 9-1C.1

Support incentives and programs to foster conservation.

POLICY 9-1C.2

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

OBJECTIVE 9-1D

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

POLICY 9-1D.1

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

POLICY 9-1D.2

In designated high value wildlife habitat areas, require wildlife management and habitat conservation plans for new development, in consultation with professional agencies, as appropriate.

