



WILDLANDS
DEFENSE

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

City of Boulder
Jane S. Brautigam
City Manager
303.441.3090
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RE: Naropa Prairie Dog Kill Application and Available Relocation Sites

WildLands Defense, Inc. is a nonprofit charitable organization with members residing in Boulder City and Boulder County, throughout Colorado, and across the West, who are concerned about the prospective destruction of the prairie dog community currently located on the site of Naropa Campus at issue in the instant application.

Our members do not want to see this large, functioning, and important prairie dog colony needlessly destroyed. Prairie dogs are not pests. They are a keystone species that play a vital role in our ecosystem, our living community. As Coloradans, WildLands Defense members value the wildlife and wild places that help make the Boulder community unique and contribute to an enriched local standard of living. Prairie dogs are intelligent sentient beings whose colonies provide habitat for a whole host of other species including burrowing owls and black-footed ferrets. Additionally, prairie dogs act as a critical food source for many other animals including coyotes, eagles, hawks, and badgers. Of course, Prairie dogs are important for their own sake as well and one of the particularly unique values of prairie dogs is in their capacity as ambassadors of compassion between humans and wildlife species given their immediate proximity to us within our shared communities. I would encourage all decision-makers to take a moment to observe the behavior of the prairie dogs on the Naropa site prior to making a decision to approve any application to destroy them. Observe the way these prairie dogs run, play, hug and kiss each other another. These behaviors occur right alongside us, and when we take the moment to observe and appreciate them amidst our day to day hustle and bustle we can recognize this unique ability that prairie dogs have to conspicuously remind us that members of the non-human world experience joy, kindness, compassion, and bliss just like we do. They have families that they love, just as we do. And, just as we do – prairie dogs are capable of suffering. The moral and ethical imperative fostered by this experience compels WildLands Defense, and our members, as activists and members of our respective living communities.

wildlandsdefense.org

WildLands Defense is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation dedicated to protecting and improving the ecological and aesthetic qualities of wildlands and wildlife communities in the Western United States

WildLands Defense, and our Boulder members, seeks to prevent the needless suffering of the prairie dogs on the Naropa property. We have reviewed the municipal, county, and state regulatory framework and are substantially impressed with the Boulder community's capacity to codify environmental and animal welfare protections for prairie dogs. The Boulder community has demonstrated a robust aspiration to exercise compassion in its mandates to protect prairie dogs.

That said, WildLands Defense's initial correspondences and investigations into the implementation of these important policies have given us reason for concern. It is not enough to have good intentions. For some reason the administration of the municipal and county policies aimed at affording dignified protections for these important members of Boulder's living community are not being realized on the ground, creating a tragically ironic circumstance whereby a Buddhism-inspired institution of education would be compelled to apply for a prairie dog kill-permit from the City of Boulder. I hope that you will agree with us that this is unacceptable.

WildLands Defense is committed to the prevention of the needless suffering and destruction of the prairie dog families on the Naropa site. We hope to do so in collaboration with the city of Boulder. If, as some within the city of Boulder have suggested, it may not be possible to save these prairie dogs – then WildLands Defense is committed to fostering awareness as to the lives lost, the suffering experienced, the irony of the actors involved, and the shortcomings of duty with respect to the municipality's fiduciary obligations to the citizens of Boulder to meaningfully implement policies that exist.

Potential Sites

WildLands Defense has undertaken investigation into the potential availability of relocation sites pursuant to both Naropa and the city's request with this solicitation of comment. Given our ongoing oversight of county efforts involved in we understand that there are a number of available sites that exist, and potentially additional land within open space complexes that the city and county jointly manage.

On July 14, 2015 the Boulder County Commission considered an exemption to its Prairie Dog Policy in which Therese Glowacki of Boulder City's Parks and Open Spaces presented a proposal for an exemption request to its prairie dog management policy in which the county identified Grassland Policy Open Space lands including the lands on the "Southeast Buffer" complex and the Rabbit Mountain Complex. These are lands identified by the county where the county "wants prairie dogs there." Ms. Glowacki characterized the Southeast Buffer as being a complex of land in which the city and county both own parcels and is one of the best areas as far as potential relocation areas. Ms. Glowacki similarly identified the Rabbit Mountain Complex as including vegetation communities and grassland objectives for which there is promising opportunity for

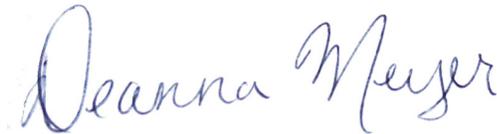
relocation efforts. However, given the particularized vegetation objectives identified those lands are currently tied up by grass component standards/criteria that the county staff now claims to be immaterial to its goal of increasing the native component. Ms. Glowacki presented the commissioners with the department's intention of modifying their policy to amend their criteria to more appropriately encompass native plant objectives on-the-ground that would be more permissible to relocation efforts throughout the county in Fall 2015 in such a way that would substantially open up areas to suitability determinations that allowed for relocation of prairie dogs.

Request: Table Application Until City/County Availability/Amendment of City/County Open Space Sites Can Be Considered By Boulder County

Given the prospective availability of the Southeast Buffer and Rabbit Mountain Complex sites this coming fall WildLands Defense requests that the City of Boulder table consideration of the permit to destroy the Naropa dogs until such time as these sites, and all others submitted pursuant to this comment process, can be investigated and explored.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Deanna Meyer
CO Board Member

_____/s/_____
Brian Ertz
Board President