

Jun. 22, 2009 -- Property Transaction Proposal
Division of Wildlife

Torres Ranch State Habitat Area Conservation Easement #4

Las Animas

637 acres

Stonewall, 30 miles west of Trinidad

Section 33-1-105 (3)(a), C.R.S. states:

In the event that the [Wildlife] Commission plans to acquire the fee title to any real property or to acquire an easement for a period to exceed 25 years or at a cost to exceed \$100,000 or to enter into any lease agreement for the use of real property for a period to exceed 25 years or at a cost to exceed \$100,000, or to sell or otherwise dispose of the fee title to any real property which has a market value in excess of \$100,000, the Commission shall first submit a report to the Capital Development Committee [CDC] which outlines the anticipated use of the real property, the maintenance costs related to the property, the current value of the property, any conditions or limitations which may restrict the use of the property, and, in the event real property is acquired, the potential liability to the state which will result from such acquisition. The CDC shall review the reports submitted by the Commission and make recommendations to the Commission concerning the proposed land transaction within 30 days from the day on which the report is received. The Commission shall not complete such transaction without considering the recommendations of the CDC, if such recommendations are timely made.

The required report is attached. CDC staff's questions about the report are listed below.

Action Required

Recommend support for the Torres Ranch State Habitat Area Conservation Easement #4 (\$466,000 CF, including \$233,000 Habitat Stamp funds and \$233,000 GOCO funds, for 637 acres).

CDC Staff Questions

None.



Capital Development Committee June 2009—Property Transaction Proposal

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife

Action Required		Pursuant to C.R.S. 33-1-105(3)(a), recommend to the Colorado Wildlife Commission support for the Division of Wildlife's proposal to <u>acquire</u> a perpetual Conservation Easement.	
General Information			
Name	Torres Ranch SHA, Conservation Easement #4		
Number of acres	Approximately 637 acres		
Location	Stonewall, approximately 30 miles west of Trinidad.		
County	Las Animas		
Costs / Source of Funding			
Purchase Price	\$466,000.00	Funding Source*	Funding Habitat Stamp and GOCO – will be a 50:50 split between the two sources.
Wildlife Cash – Habitat Stamp	Spending authority has already been approved for this project in the Long Bill		
	Fiscal Year	08-09	
	Line Item	Property Acquisition	
	Appropriation	\$4,500,000	
	Remaining Unexpended Balance	\$3,712,378	
GOCO	GOCO funds are not appropriated in the Long Bill		
	Fiscal Year	GOCO Resolution Dec. 2007	
	Grant	GOCO08729	
	Grant Amount	\$12,000,000	
	Remaining Unexpended Balance	\$9,056,692.50	
Annual Operation Costs	\$500.00	The annual operations costs will come from the Wildlife Management Line Item under the Division Operations Group in the Long Bill.	

Summary of Proposal

Increased subdivision and methane gas exploration is diminishing elk habitat in western Las Animas County, home to Colorado's second largest elk herd and, anecdotally, the best in overall quality. Other private lands in the area that have historically provided similar habitat are now subject subdivision, residential development and overgrazing by domestic livestock.

The proposed conservation easement would protect approximately 637 acres of critical wildlife habitat in the Upper Purgatoire River Drainage near Stonewall. The Property provides habitat for deer, elk, bear and turkey. The Property includes calving/fawning areas, winter range, denning sites and summer/fall concentration areas for bear and roosting and strutting sites for turkey. This area serves as transition zone between alpine communities, aspen and Ponderosa Pine habitat and would ensure preservation of a migration corridor.

The property is currently undeveloped and the conservation easement will prohibit all future subdivision and residential structures. The mineral estate is severed, however, the State shall have the same legal rights as the Grantor to influence and control impacts to the surface of the Property from mineral development by third parties.

According to the maps referenced below, the Property generally lies outside the scope of potential Wind and Solar energy potential, but is within an area of limited Geothermal activity.

Solar: July, 2007 National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), US Dept. of Energy;

Geothermal: November, 2003 US Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Geothermal Technologies Program;

Wind: March, 2004, Colorado Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation, from US Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Wind, geothermal and solar energy development will be prohibited by the Conservation Easement.

Attachments:

- Map
- Concurrence letters