

# BARBED WIRE POST

Fall 2010



Linking Boulder County Parks & Open Space and Our Agricultural Tenants

**THANKS TO ALL OUR TENANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO HAVE HOSTED AN AGRICULTURAL TOUR OVER THE LAST FOUR MONTHS**



The Agricultural Tours on Boulder County Parks & Open Space were more of a success than we ever thought possible. As part of the Cropland Policy process we hosted monthly tours running June through September. The goal of the tours was to show the citizens the spectrum of agricultural production systems, issues, challenges and opportunities on Boulder County open space lands. Our first tour started a buzz within the Boulder County community with 50 enthusiastic participants on one bus. As word spread our tours grew, the next tour had three buses, then to four buses on our third tour and back to three very full buses on our fourth tour. A huge *Thank You* to all of our tenants who hosted our tours. The tours were very educational for our participants who felt they gained a greater understanding and appreciation for agriculture in the county.

## **A Few Participant Comments:**

*"It's wonderful to meet the farmers on their territory rather than at a meeting and see their world!"*

*"These tours are informative and help bridge the gap between farms and other county residents."*

*"Very educational for me and gave me a much better understanding of what BCPOS does and the land I see around me in BC."*

*"Each of the farmers spoke well, answered questions intelligently and I found myself hoping that they would continue to succeed in their farming business."*

# REMINDERS

- ❖ All products/purchases for county properties must be approved by Ag Staff before it has been started or purchased. We cannot accept unexpected invoices.  
(Does not include crop share expenses)
- ❖ **ALL** invoices, including crop share, must be received by the county within 60 days of purchase or service.
- ❖ ALL payments and crop share accounting must be in by December 15.
- ❖ FINAL REMINDER FOR 2008/ 2009 RECORD BOOKS, THEY MUST BE RETURNED ASAP. We will be contacting all individuals who have not returned their books.
- ❖ Winterization of all irrigation systems and livestock watering systems are the responsibility of the tenants. If any damages occur the tenant is responsible for repairs and/or replacement.
- ❖ All grazing dates need to be reported for both cash and grazing leases by November 15.



## FALL AG COFFEE SHOP

Mid-November, look for your invitation in the mail

- ❖ Cropland Policy Update
- ❖ Alternative Markets~ Getting local food into the schools

### CONTACT INFO: Agricultural Resources Division

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# SAVE THE DATE ~ Boulder County Agriculture Forum

The CSU Extension office in Longmont is coordinating with and taking input from NRCS, FSA, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, and the Boulder County Farmers' Markets to offer the **"Boulder County Agriculture Forum" (BCAF), Tuesday, February 1, 2011, starting at 5:00 p.m. at the Radisson in Longmont.**

The BCAF will bring together ag producers, ag professionals, input suppliers, equipment dealers and other stakeholders in production and commercial agriculture in Boulder County. It will feature a display/trade show area, cash bar, free dinner and presentations from producers and ag professionals. There will be plenty of time to socialize with old and new friends, visit businesses, network, and learn about the wide variety of commercial agriculture in Boulder County.

Look for RSVP announcements in November. The program is free to producers in Boulder County and each may bring one guest.

## WEED WATCH

Questions concerning weeds?

Please contact Steve Sauer, Weeds Coordinator at (303) 678-6110.

### Puncturevine

- also known as Goathead
- List C Species
- flowers are lemon yellow with 5 petals
- seeds are hard and bear 2 to 3 sharp spines
- mat forming



### Cheatgrass

- List C
- 4-20" tall
- spikelets droop from thin branches
- awns (beard) 1/2 " long
- soft, white, fine hair usually covers leaves

Please help us look after the weeds on your leased property. When possible please address the problem weeds to help control the spread throughout the county.



# Promoting Agriculture in 2010

Agriculture has created a “buzz” in Boulder County. For many reasons the general public has taken an interest and wants to learn what agriculture in Boulder County looks like. This years ag. tours were a great start and a very positive experience for many who enjoyed hearing the stories of our farmers and ranchers. These stories may seem unexciting and just part of every day life to you, but to people who are



removed from agriculture the stories may be a once in a life time opportunity to experience what agriculture means to those who live it each day. The tours and staffing an ag. booth at the farmers’ market are just two ways that we are working to educate the public about what is grown on county open space. At these events the main attraction is always the sugar beet. This is not because of last year’s media coverage, but because some have never seen one up close or they have wondered what the “short, leafy green stuff” is growing in the field, for others sugar beets are nostalgic and reminiscent of our agricultural heritage.

A new idea that has come from the “buzz” is the virtual tour of harvest on county land. Using Google Map we have created a virtual map that people can view while sitting at home. All the public has to do is click on the icons and they can see what crops are grown in each field, learn facts, see pictures and even watch videos of the harvest. Just to give you an idea of the interest level, within 10 days we have had over 800 people check it out.

To keep people in the “harvest loop” we are posting updates on what crops are being harvested, pictures and videos on our cropland policy website, Facebook and Twitter. A recent headline in the High Plains Journal stated, “Farmers defend way of life



with Facebook and Twitter.” You may be thinking this is crazy but this is a new way of promoting agriculture and from what we are learning it seems to work. With millions of users, these social media outlets allow for people to share their stories, some pro ag., some not. As quoted in the article “ [farmers are] going online to tell their own stories, connect to a public they feel doesn’t understand them, exchange information and break the isolation they feel on the farm.” These are the stories that are going to help people understand the cultural and economic importance of agriculture in Boulder County. If you are interested in sharing your story, pictures or general information please contact Meaghan, 303-678-6181 or mhuffman@bouldercounty.org.

## VIRTUAL HARVEST TOUR 2010

[www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/harvesttour.html](http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/harvesttour.html)

# CROPLAND POLICY UPDATE

By David Bell

Boulder County Parks and Open Space's vision is to be a national leader in sustainable agriculture. We manage open space agricultural lands to maintain a healthy agricultural economy in the county, while protecting environmental and community values. The Boulder County Cropland Policy, due for completion Fall 2011, will outline the guiding principles that our staff will use to make management decisions on agricultural open space properties. By defining these principles, we hope to streamline planning on individual agricultural properties and make it easier for our tenants and the residents of Boulder County to understand the goals of our cropland program.

## **So what does this mean to you?**

Over the past eight months the Parks and Open Space staff has been working to create a public process that will allow us to engage the public, educate residents about agriculture on Open Space and gather input from the community. Some of the greatest resources we have in this process are the tenants who lease manage and take care of Boulder County's public lands. These partners have been involved with just about all aspects of this process. They provided their expertise at the Agricultural Open House, they were the centerpieces of the Agricultural Tours and we will be asking them to participate even more throughout the process.

Whether you've already been involved or are just hearing about the Cropland Policy, I would like to take a moment to provide an overview of where we are in the process and what are planning down the road.

## **Kick Off**

### **Open House**

Boulder County Parks and Open Space hosted a public open house on May 18, 2010, at the Boulder County Fairgrounds. The public provided input on topics to be addressed in the cropland policy. Staff provided information about the current state of agriculture on County open space lands, the scope and process for the cropland policy, and how the public can get involved. In addition tenants were available to speak directly to the public.

### **Agriculture Tours**

Boulder County Parks and Open Space conducted monthly tours to farms in Boulder County from June through September. The goal of the tours was to show Boulder County citizens the spectrum of agricultural production systems, issues, challenges and opportunities on Boulder County open space lands. The tours highlighted different farms each month, representing field and forage crops, vegetable crops and livestock. On these tours Open Space tenants addressed crowds of up to 200 individuals, discussing their agricultural operations, ranching and farming history in Boulder County and the challenges of farming in this urban interface.

## **Public Participation**

### **Cropland Policy Advisory Group**

Applications for the Cropland Policy Advisory Group (CPAG) are no longer being accepted. The application deadline was Friday, October 15. Members of the CPAG will be a sounding board for Parks and Open Space staff as they develop the Cropland Policy, and will have the opportunity to make policy recommendations, consider proposed policies as they are developed and comment on them in a public setting. Ultimately, the Cropland Policy will be adopted and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **Moving Forward**

### **Harvest Tours**

The success of our Ag Tours has lead to two new ideas. You can now use an interactive map (<http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/harvesttour.html>) and take a virtual tour of local crops right from you living room, or print a map and spend the afternoon on a self-guided driving tour. Each of these options allows you to learn more about the crops grown on County Open Space. Whether you are interested in kale or corn, sugar beet or sunflower this is a great way to learn more about what is happening on Open Space.

### **Sustainable Agriculture Forum**

On Saturday, November 6, 3-6 pm at Silver Creek High School in Longmont, the county will host a public forum to discuss

- What does sustainable agriculture mean in Boulder County?
- What policies will promote a sustainable system?
- How flexible can policies be in order to adapt to the changing world of sustainable agricultural practices?

*See back page of newsletter for more details.*



### **Farm and Ranch Forum**

While developing the Sustainable Agricultural Forum, we heard the public request for more opportunities to hear from the local agricultural community. To respond to this demand we have scheduled a second forum to hear from local ranchers, farmers and agricultural professionals. This event is scheduled for Jan. 19, from 7-9 p.m.



### **Public Comment and Approval**

In 2011, the staff team will begin a series of public meetings to gather public input on proposed policies developed during 2010 and into 2011. The process will consist of at least one public meeting followed by a presentation to POSAC, FAPC, and the Board of County Commissioners. A schedule for this portion of the process will be posted.

## Stay in the Loop

### Contact Us

In order for Boulder County Parks and Open Space to maximize its partnership with the community, we need to hear from you! Your questions, concerns, issues and feedback will help us adjust to better meet your needs. Let us know how we are doing and what we can do to make the Cropland Policy project a success. If you would like to receive project announcements via email, please email your name and address to [croplandpolicy@bouldercounty.org](mailto:croplandpolicy@bouldercounty.org).

## The Future

I recognize, that as the tenants of Boulder County Parks and Open Space agricultural lands, you are our partners in stewardship. It is all of you who perform the day-to-day operations that ultimately produce the local food, fiber and forage on our public lands. I believe that the Cropland Policy needs to be a tool that will help all of us better achieve our short-term objectives, while assuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture in Boulder County for future generations. I look forward to working with you in this process.

# Boulder County Presents

# **SUSTAINABLE**

# **AGRICULTURE**

# **FORUM**



**Saturday, November 6, 2010**

**3 p.m. - 6 p.m.**

**Silver Creek High School,**

**4901 Nelson Rd., Longmont, CO**

Keynote Speech by

**Pamela C. Ronald and Raoul W. Adamchak**

Authors of **“Tomorrow’s Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, and the Future of Food”**

Followed by

Panel discussion with regional experts

Question & answer with the public

Featuring a concession of local foods with all proceeds going to local 4-H

Please register for this event at  
[http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/management\\_plans/cropland\\_policy/](http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace/management_plans/cropland_policy/)

Questions? Contact Jesse Rounds, 303-678-6271, [jrounds@bouldercounty.org](mailto:jrounds@bouldercounty.org)