



Wild Bear Nature Center/Mud Lake Land Swap

An opportunity for community stewardship of Mud Lake Open Space and ongoing education and service to the community and its visitors

Summary

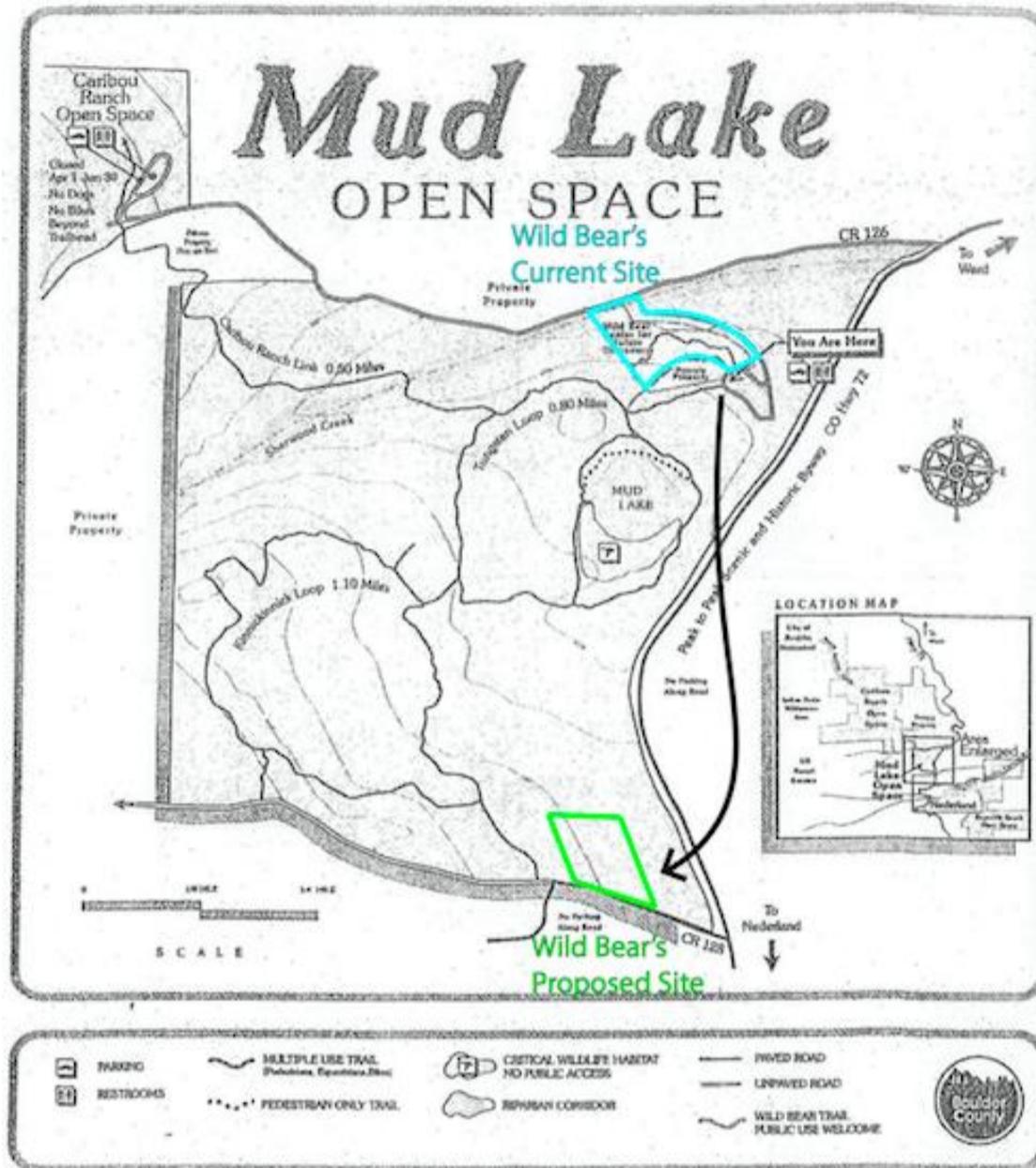
Wild Bear Nature Center is working with Boulder County to swap its currently owned 5 acres from the NE corner of Mud Lake property to a buildable 5 acres on the SE corner to build a permanent nature center facility. In 1999, Town of Nederland voters approved the annexation of a portion of Mud Lake property and the preservation of Mud Lake Open Space including an environmental center to be developed by Wild Bear Nature Center. In 2007, Wild Bear was awarded a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and received approvals of the conceptual design of the nature center on the 5 acres north of Mud Lake. Unfortunately, a 30-foot deep sink hole opened up on Wild Bear's proposed building site, and the Department of Mining Reclamation informally determined the site to be unbuildable. As a result, we are working with Boulder County to swap our 5-acre site for 5 acres on County Road 128 (Indian Peaks Drive) right off of the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway (HWY 72). Given the expiration of Wild Bear's current interim nature center lease (March of 2019), Wild Bear intends to pursue the land swap expeditiously along with a community driven building proposal. The following information provides further detail regarding Wild Bear's history, mission and vision for Mud Lake and surrounding community. To get involved, please contact us at info@wildbear.org

Background



Now, more than ever, we must provide opportunities for all ages to connect with the natural world. Since 1995 Wild Bear has provided thousands of people with positive learning experiences in nature. Our vision is to inspire a community who understands, appreciates and protects the natural world. We accomplish this through hands-on nature programs for children, teens, families and adults as well as through the nature center, which is FREE and open almost every day throughout the year.

Now, Wild Bear is planning to build the permanent nature center on a newly proposed 5-acre site on the southeast corner of Mud Lake Open Space. We are proud to have accomplished so much in the Nederland community, including the preservation of Mud Lake in 1999 and establishing Boulder County's only non-profit all-ages nature center located in downtown Nederland.



Wild Bear was a key partner in the preservation of Mud Lake Open Space and is an excellent ongoing steward. In 2000, Wild Bear recruited and organized the 134 volunteers who removed over 30 tons of trash (8 roll off dumpsters full of trash, plus hundreds of tires, appliances and cars) from the 260 acres of Mud Lake Open Space. Mud Lake is now one of the healthiest wetland habitats in Boulder County.



Current Site

We believed we were on our way to building a permanent nature center. In 2007, we were awarded a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and received approvals of the conceptual design of the nature center on 5 acres north of Mud Lake. However, a sink hole opened on Wild Bear's 5 acres, and the Department of Mining Reclamation informally determined the site to be unbuildable.



We learned that most of the mining activity occurred around Wild Bear's current site north of the Mud Lake Parking Lot (as indicated on this map by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety). We learned that it would take an expensive Geophysical Survey to determine if our site was buildable.

After this incident, we began to question whether this was the ideal site for the permanent Nature Center.

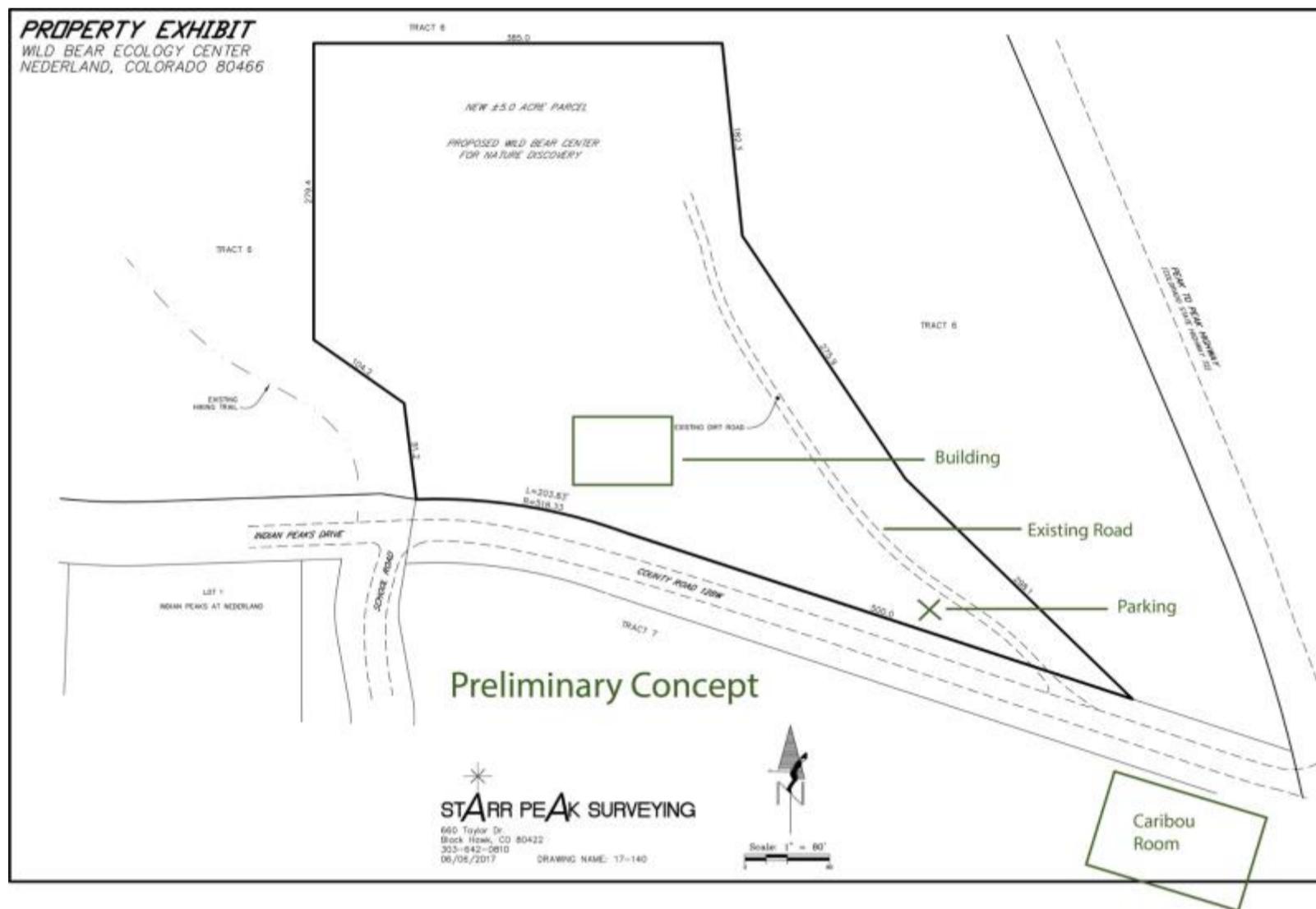
- Should we spend our funds on a Geophysical Survey only to find it was unbuildable?
- Is there sufficient parking to accommodate Wild Bear's visitors as well as those visiting Boulder County Parks and Open Space?
- Should the Nature Center be located closer to our partners and to the Town of Nederland? Since opening the Interim Nature Center in downtown Nederland in 2010, we realized the significance of being located near the town of Nederland.

New Site

Now we are working with Boulder County again to swap our 5 acre site for 5 acres on County Road 128 (Indian Peaks Drive) right off of the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway (HWY 72). These are the reasons Wild Bear believes this is the perfect site for the Nature Center.

- As indicated on the Mining Map, there are no Tungsten mine pits near the new site.
- There is already an "existing road" on the property which allows for an excellent location for our parking lot, directly across from the Caribou Room, which could potentially allow us to have overflow parking.
- The site is located near Nederland Elementary School (our longtime partner), the Nederland Ice Rink (whom we partner with to do winter programs) and the Community Center.
- This site is located within Town of Nederland limits which helps us to partner with the Town to achieve the Envision 2020 and Comprehensive plan.
- The vision is to be "grid tied" and this location allows us to then feed energy back into the Town of Nederland by tying into the town infrastructure.

- Wild Bear would reclaim the “existing road” to revegetate and become stewards of this highly impacted part of Mud Lake.
- Parking at the current Mud Lake parking lot would be designated specifically for Open Space visitors and Wild Bear parking lot would also accommodate Open Space visitors who would also have the opportunity to engage in learning about the natural features of the land and how to be good stewards.



Wild Bear has grown tremendously since opening the interim Center in 2010. All ages program participation has grown by over 150%. And now, we enjoy an average of 70 visitors per day-encouraging appreciation and protection of our local natural resources.

Wild Bear needs to move out of its temporary center. We are ready to create a center that is within nature and not in a commercial space fronting an asphalt parking lot. Wild Bear pays \$42,000/year in rent and its current lease will expire in March of 2019.

Vision

We are ready to pursue the vision of creating the permanent nature center on the proposed new 5 acres. Wild Bear’s nature center vision is also part of the Town of Nederland’s Envision 2020 and Comprehensive Plan. We look forward to helping our town to achieve its environmental and educational goals. Our plan is to:

- Be sure the building is not visible from the neighborhood or from the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway
- Locate the parking lot on the SE corner of our lot to maintain the integrity of the rest of the Mud Lake Open Space property.

- Improve the land on the SE corner of Mud Lake, to reclaim the “existing road”, mitigate the dead wood and thick forest and continue to be good stewards of the land.

We look forward to working together with the community to refine the nature center vision on its new site. This will be a wonderful source of pride for the Town of Nederland and Boulder County community.

We encourage you to **make your voice heard** to provide input to create this amazing community resource.



Please contact us if you would like to be involved in creating this important resource to our community and its visitors. [Get Involved 303-258-0495](tel:303-258-0495) info@wildbear.org