



OPEN SPACE & TRAILS DEPARTMENT

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STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Katherine King, Senior Resource Specialist
FOR: January 28, 2020 Consent Agenda
REQUEST: Approval to acquire a 50% interest in the Iron, Crown Point, Smuggler and Silent Friend Lodes
(“Smuggler” Claims, Upper Blue)

Both the OSAC and BOSAC unanimously recommended the County and Town acquire the Smuggler mining claims at their recent meetings. The Breckenridge Town Council also approved the purchase, and the Town closed on the claims on January 15th. They are now requesting that the County purchase a 50% interest in the claims for \$245,000.

Schedule No. 6514206: Smuggler and Silent Friend Claims, MS# 6335 and Schedule No. 6514207: Iron and Crown Point Claims MS#19905. 20.47 acres total. Owner: Matt Casey (Fox Run - Lot 5 LLC)

BACKGROUND: Open Space staff from both the Town and County have been working to acquire these mining claims for many years. The property has been a high priority for both Open Space Programs due to its location along one of the primary access routes into the Golden Horseshoe trail network. Both the sets of mining claims are zoned backcountry, and could each have a home built on them with accessory structures and improved road access. Past negotiations have not been fruitful due to vast differences in opinion of value. Recently the owner again reached out to the County, as he was in the process of trying to negotiate a land trade deal on the Front Range for these parcels, and said that if we were still interested, “now was the time” to make him a reasonable offer.

Due to the acquisition being a higher priority for Breckenridge, and the owner not having as much history with Town staff, the Town took the lead on the negotiations. At the request of the seller, they closed on the property January 15th for \$490,000 plus closing costs. At their January 8th meeting, OSAC recommended the County contribute half of that purchase price to become joint owners in the property, which will be contiguous with existing Town/County Open Space lands.

OPEN SPACE VALUES: On Prospect Hill across from the Wellington neighborhood, these claims cross Prospect Trail and are forested with steep slopes and a small pocket wetland.

- Recreational/Access - Prospect Trail off of Gold Run Gulch Road is a highly used access into the French Gulch trail system, particularly by residents of the French Creek and Wellington neighborhoods. Alteration or loss of this access would have significant recreational impacts.
- Extensions: The property is surrounded by National Forest Lands and County/Town Open Space lands.
- View corridors - The Iron and Crown Point claims are directly above the Wellington neighborhood, and development on them would be seen throughout French Gulch and other points in Town.
- Unique lands: The Smuggler and Silent Friend claims have a seep and small wetland complex.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/REQUEST: Staff concurs with OSAC’s recommendation to pursue acquisition of the Smuggler mining claims at a cost to the acquisition fund of approximately \$245,000. Staff requests BOCC approval to purchase a 50% interest in the claims for the Town of Breckenridge in February, 2020.

Cc: Scott Vargo, Bentley Henderson, Jeff Huntley, Jim Curnutte