




City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

Proposal:
Autrey Property

February 14, 2022

Submitted by:

Richard Biella and Linda Anderson-Biella



AUTREY PROPERTY

- 1. Please describe the operation you propose for this property. Include details regarding your proposed grazing management practices, vegetation/forage management and irrigation management practices. Please include practices that you currently employ, and management results from them, to conserve soil, water, and forage resources.**

The Autrey property is a beautiful parcel along the Arapahoe Road corridor that has produced an abundance of hay crops for many years. While it has also produced corn, oats, and barley in the past, we are primarily interested in continuing grass hay and alfalfa production, as well as winter grazing for our cattle. We need the hay to feed our cows; and we sell high-quality horse hay to our local customers. The demand for hay continues to increase, and we want to be able to continue to supply what we can to our customers. If our customers can't find the hay they need locally, that means they have to look elsewhere and pay more. While we understand the City's interest in having their lands and tenants offer a diversity of agricultural operations, our efforts focus on raising cattle and hay crops. That is our way of life; we are both Boulder County natives and 4th generation with family farming and ranching roots. In addition, we feel we have been successful by providing feed for local livestock; keeping historical lands in agricultural production; raising and selling cattle locally for reproduction; and providing excellent beef for local consumption. Switching gears at this stage to grow vegetables or have a small dairy operation would take a major investment, not to mention a high risk of being unsuccessful. In addition, there are no facilities on the Autrey property, nor the water to sustain viable vegetable production.

Continuing these properties as hay production assures the Class B Bobolink Habitat will be preserved. Due to winter pasturing on the Bobolink nesting fields 246, 248, and 533, these fields would not be cut prior to July 15 at least once out of every three years. Fields north of the McGinn ditch would be monitored by OSMP for nesting habitats and we would work with them as needed if a different timeframe is needed to cut hay.

Understanding that the northwest field is not included in this lease, we would be able to bush-hog this field for weed control as necessary per the direction of the City. This would also mitigate fire risk.

Grazing Management – We own approximately 80 head of Angus cattle, mainly a cow-calf operation. We lease the Weiser Property from City OSMP which is where we pasture most of our cattle between late April and October. We also lease the Anderson property where we winter graze our cows, which is next door to the east of the Autrey property. Winter grazing is planned at the Autrey property, as our cows can travel from Anderson onto the Autrey fields. Winter water supply for the cattle would be at the Anderson place. We also feed out a few grass-fed beef for local consumers each year. Having the upper pasture at Autrey's would provide additional grazing for this purpose.

The Autrey property will be included in our grazing management plan along with the Weiser and Anderson properties to effectively identify our pasture management system. All pastures within this system will be monitored with consideration of the four basic keys to grazing management: stocking rate, livestock rotation, utilization rate, and plant rest and recovery to help ensure pastures are not over-grazed. As we fully incorporate the Autrey property into our grazing/pasture management system, the strengths of our current system will become apparent. Good pasture condition is critical to a successful grazing system and sustainable livestock production. We understand pasture quality may vary greatly from one pasture area to another, from one year to the next, but the trend over time will show the direction in which pasture condition is moving. Our pasture and grazing management is an active process of continually evaluating and adjusting the four basic keys of grazing management.

Vegetation/Forage Management – The existing alfalfa/hay crops, and the pasture are well-established and have been managed extremely well. Pasture utilization by livestock will be monitored so as not to over-graze; the fields are not grazed year-round giving vegetation the chance to rest. Natural moisture always helps, and irrigation occurs when water is available. No pesticides will be used on any of the hayfields. Proper management of the hayfields results in productivity, therefore minimizing invasive species.

Irrigation Management – We are very familiar with the land and ditches, and understand that water is not always abundant and is not available beyond June 30. This is one reason why vegetable crops would not do well on the Autrey property. Available irrigation water will be fully utilized.

Conservation – Soil, Water, Forage Resources – We understand that forage production, as part of a comprehensive soil and water management plan can reduce erosion, invasive plants and sustain soil health. Our forage conservation management (hay production) and grazing management (livestock production) plans and practices are fundamental to the conservation of soil, and water resources. We understand our farming practices have a direct effect on soil and water conservation. Keeping soils always covered with a healthy stand of hay and or pasture is a sustainable and desirable practice for soil, water, and forage conservation. By keeping soils covered and

without overgrazing, moisture stays in the soil longer, fostering healthy, sustainable, and diverse ecosystems. Healthy soils make better utilization of irrigation and/or natural precipitation. Livestock grazing shuts down proportionally the same root area in the soil, which along with livestock manure and urine, feed beneficial soil microorganisms. Grazing livestock place great amounts of manure and urine directly on the pasture. Our proactive grazing management will help ensure that pastures benefit from livestock grazing. Hay production is defined as forage conserved under aerobic dry or limited moisture conditions. In our case, forage is conserved to feed livestock during periods of limited pasture growth, and/or for sale. We understand that a productive stand of hay/forage increase water infiltration into the soil by increasing the amount of roots in the soil and providing canopy interception for rainfall. Soil aggregation increases under permanent forage systems when compared to vegetable cropping systems.

Conservation is always at the forefront. Soil, water and forage conservation are all extremely important; otherwise the crops will suffer. It is in everyone's best interest to do the best we can to address these needs, pay attention to the land, and respect what it is doing for us. Soil sampling/testing would be done in spring to determine what is needed to improve soil conditions.

Current Practices and Results – Our goal is simple: to sustain our way of life, that we know well and love. The goal of sustainable agriculture, and the City of Boulder OSMP, is to meet society's needs in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Farmers/ranchers of sustainable agriculture seek to integrate three main objectives into their operations: a healthy environment, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. There are many practices used by people working in sustainable agricultural systems, including soil, water, and forage conservation. These are practices that have been used by many agricultural producers for a long time, including the Autrey property. As long as we can remember, this beautiful property was well-cared for and farmed by George Autrey, and then Steve and Arlene Penner. Linda's father Stuart was not only a neighbor, but a friend of George's for many years. Richard also helped George and Steve over the years and knows the property well. It is extremely important to us to preserve these open lands with sustainable agriculture practices and support the main goals and intent of the OS Master Plan.

2. Please describe your agricultural background and any existing agricultural enterprise(s). Include general location information and the years of experience you have implementing the agricultural practices you have proposed.

We are a small, local operation and both of us are Boulder County natives. Richard is 4th generation; Linda is 4th generation. Richard farms and ranches in Boulder County and has done so since he was a kid. We raise Angus cattle and currently have around 80 cows that we calf out: some in the spring and some in the fall. We also feed out a few steers each year for freezer beef customers. Beginning in 1915, Linda's great-grandfather, grandfather, and father owned and farmed the Anderson property and it stayed in the family until 1993 when a majority of the property was sold to the City. Stuart Anderson (Linda's father) continued to lease it back from the City and farmed it until his health declined, at which time we took over the lease (2010). Stuart passed in 2010, and Linda's mother Audrey passed in 2021. The 10+/- acre homeplace remains in the family. We currently live in Linda's grandparent's house, which has been in the family since 1919. We have about 9 acres there and keep about 3-5 head of cattle there in the spring/summer, as well as a small flock of chickens and 2 happy border collies. Both Richard and Linda participated in 4-H and the Boulder County Fair for many years. Richard was also a member of the Fair Board for approximately 5 years from 2007-2012, 3 of those as President.

In addition, since 2009 Linda has been the Secretary-Treasurer for the Marshallville Ditch. Her family's involvement with the Marshallville dates back to the early 1900s. She has worked with members of City OSMP over the years, as they have been current and past members of the board, and the City is a majority shareholder.

Richard grew up in Louisville on a family farm that was located at approximately Dillon Road and Highway 36 (before Hwy 36 was built; the highway split their property). He has raised cattle since he was a kid, and started helping his Dad farm at a very young age. They farmed about 80 acres of their own, and he also helped friends and neighbors farm on local ground that has since been developed. His livestock, equipment and agricultural knowledge is a part of everyday life, and he can also draw on the strengths and experience of our friends and neighbors should any problems arise. Both of us have deep historical roots in this area and remain committed to our agricultural way of life.

The Autrey property is perfectly located between the Anderson property and our personal residence. The Paclamar property that we also lease is right next door to the east of the Anderson property. Being able to connect these parcels together would significantly reduce our carbon footprint, reduce travel, and enhance the sustainability of the farm. And it just seems logical. Our residence almost borders the Autrey property as well, allowing us near immediate response time to address matters. The Weiser property is only about 3 miles north of us on 75th Street.



We currently lease three City OSMP Properties:

- 1) **Anderson Property** at 8556 Arapahoe Road. This property includes 80 acres of irrigated hay crops. All of our cattle are kept there during the winter months. They graze all of the fields and do a good job of cleaning up along ditches and also help with fertilizing the fields – helping to maintain soil health! Leased since 2010.
- 2) **Weiser Property** on 75th Street. The 150 acres is split into three pastures and we rotate our cattle on those pastures between April and November. We currently graze approximately 40-45 head of cattle (25 with calves) and start in late-April each year. In an effort to not disturb the eagle habitat/nesting area located in the north pasture along Boulder Creek, we rotate between the south and middle pastures until August 1. At that time the north pasture is integrated into our grazing management plan. Leased since 2012.
- 3) **Paclamar Farms** just east of the Anderson property. Approximately 96 acres of hay ground. The City applied a compost in 2020 which greatly improved forage production. The City seeded the upper south field in spring 2021 with pasture grass. Leased since 2018.

We feel we have built a strong, long-standing relationship with the City and do our best to help preserve these valuable pieces of open space property. We proactively practice sustainable agriculture and have proven to be good tenants to City OSMP.

Richard also puts up hay for about 15 other parcels within a 3-mile radius, totaling approximately 100 acres. Some of the hay is for us; some of it is for the property owners, who then compensate Richard for cutting, raking, and baling the hay.

In 2017, we were able to obtain an agreement with the City of Lafayette for Richard to cut/rake/bale an 8 acre parcel for the City of Lafayette off of Baseline Road. This parcel hadn't been cut in a few years, so there was dead/dry vegetation to clean up as well as harvesting the fresh vegetation. Richard's forage management practices have helped improve soil and water conservation on this property. 2018 through 2021 produced good crops. With enough natural moisture, 2022 should be a good year as well.

Richard has also farmed a 30+ acre parcel for the City of Louisville Open Space for 30+ years (west of Home Depot on Dillon Road, where it turns into Dyer Road, known as the Damyanovich Property). The yield on this piece relies entirely on natural moisture. This open space burned in the Marshall Fire, so it is undetermined at this point if the City of Louisville will allow Richard to harvest it this year or not.

3. **Describe your proposed vegetation and soil sampling protocol and how you will use this information to adapt and modify management practices.**

For 70 +/- years, George Autrey and Steve Penner took care of this land and it responded by yielding good crops. The soils are rich, undisturbed, and the vegetation is established. Over the years they grew corn, barley and wheat. Since 2016 the land has been strictly hay-producing ground.

Understanding how important healthy soils are, we would do some soils testing to determine the continued viability of the soil to grow the desired crop(s). We will also work with City OSMP to determine what fertilizers we can apply, and/or if applying compost (similar to what was applied at Paclamar in 2020) would be beneficial.

4. Describe how the City of Boulder agricultural land you are proposing to lease improves the viability of your existing agricultural operation or improves agricultural stewardship of your existing property(ies).

If awarded the Autrey Property, Richard would adjust some of his current parcels to be able to focus his efforts on developing a more sustainable agriculture business plan for our existing agriculture operation that would include the Autrey, Anderson, Paclamar and Weiser properties. The principal advantage is TIME. Richard will spend less time on the roads traveling/moving equipment to the other parcels which would significantly reduce fuel cost, and machinery repairs, not to mention the safety factor. The volume and speed of traffic on Arapahoe continues to increase, while the patience and courtesy of drivers continues to decrease. An ultimate goal would be to have more time to improve stewardship practices of existing properties and the Autrey property. Since the Autrey Property fits right in between our residence and the Anderson and Paclamar properties, the proximity and accessibility is definitely a management benefit.

In the past few years, Richard has lost about 50 acres that he has put up for quite a few years. This means lost income as well as the hay itself. In 2017, hay totals were about 40-50% of 2016 numbers. Although 2018-2019 numbers increased, another 15 acres were lost near Highway 7 and North 119th Street. The property owners annexed into Erie and have sold to developers for a new Erie development.

Hay Yields:

	2021	2020
Anderson	125 ton standard bales; 91 ton big bales	123 ton standard bales; 57 ton big bales
Paclamar	180 ton standard bales; 130 ton big bales	130 ton standard bales; 99 ton big bales

To us, being awarded the Autrey Property would mean being able to continue to produce hay on good ground, to provide for our cattle as well as selling some for income. We know the Autrey property has been taken care of by George (he grew up on the property) and Steve Penner (for 30+ years, with George's personal oversight and guidance) and produces good quality hay. It would help supplement the ground that we've lost, it's in close proximity and accessible to us, and gives us a chance to continue working with the City of Boulder OSMP. The leases we already have, and have had for several years, show a history of a simple concept: take care of the land, and it will take care of you. Keep the balance, do what you're good at, and work hard for what you believe in.

5. Describe your ability to finance the implementation of your proposed operation. Include information regarding any necessary capital or operating loans that will be required. Please describe how and where you will market the products grown on the property.

We currently carry the required insurance, own equipment, and don't anticipate any loans to farm this property. Currently we do not have any loans or leases for equipment; we are financially stable. We currently have the cash reserves to finance the implementation of our proposed operation. If loans are needed, we have an ongoing relationship with Great Western Bank. We are not "hobby farmers"; the agricultural enterprise is a significant part of our livelihood. Linda has a steady job in Boulder that provides good income to help supplement the farming operations. We own most of the equipment needed to sustain the farming operations at the Autrey property, as explained further in #7.

Having lived in this area all our lives, we have an existing customer base. We don't really have a formal marketing program; we never have a problem selling hay, cattle by private treaty, or freezer beef. We have in the past and will continue to put up high-quality horse hay for local horse owners, assuming we can get the hay crop up without any rain. If it gets rained on, our cows will benefit. Either way, it will not go to waste! We also feed out a few steers each year and the demand continues to increase. We have repeat buyers that count on premium local beef each year.

6. Please describe any kind(s) of infrastructure improvement(s) that you envision for the property.

At this time we do not envision any major infrastructure needs.

7. Please list the machinery and equipment needed to implement your proposed grazing and vegetation management operations on the property and how you will meet those needs, e.g.: own, lease, borrow, hire

custom, etc. Please only list or describe the machinery or equipment you will be using on the property, e.g.: seed drill, portable corrals, temporary fencing, etc.

Equipment Owned (no current leases or loans on any vehicles or equipment):

- Ford F150, F250 and F350 trucks
- 16' Flatbed trailer
- 30' gooseneck flatbed trailer
- Circle D 24' stock trailer
- John Deere 4255 Tractor
- John Deere 2955 Tractor with loader
- John Deere 2950 Tractor
- Custom Hire:
 - Ost diek Stacking – We hire Fernie Ost diek to stack most of our small bales with his New Holland Stackwagon. Fernie's family history also dates back decades in Boulder County.
 - Liam Dunn Custom Hay & Swathing – We hire Liam to bale the 3'x3'x8' bales (produces approx. 800 lb. bales) – if hay gets rained on and becomes cow hay, we may have it put up in big bales as opposed to the small standard bales.
 - We hire Fernie and Liam because we do not own a stackwagon or large baler. This works extremely well, as it allows Richard to move forward with harvesting and focus on his strengths; and it supports their custom hire businesses and draws on their strengths and skills that add to the overall success of the operation.
- (2) Hesston 1345 Hydroswing Swather
- (2) Hesston 4590 In-Line Baler
- John Deere 348 Baler
- New Holland 499 Swather
- Claas Rake
- Portable panels

If we need other equipment or if ours breaks down, we have friends/neighbors we can call on as a resource. In addition, Richard is mechanically experienced and can fix/repair most of the equipment, assuming parts are available. For major repairs on our tractors, we take them to Four Rivers Equipment in Longmont.

8. Are you involved in your agricultural enterprises on a full-time basis? If not, what percentage of your time is dedicated to agricultural pursuits?

Richard is involved 100% full-time, his 50+ years of experience and strong work ethic speaks for itself; this is what he knows and loves. Linda is available on weekends and as-needed, and keeps all the records for the operation. We have no employees or hired labor. We can call upon friends and family as needed.

9. Please provide any information pertaining to potential or certified eligibility as a U.S. Department of Agriculture historically underserved producer.

Our operation does not qualify as we are not a Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher; Beginning Farmer or Rancher; Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher; or Veteran Farmer or Rancher.

10. What is your proposed per acre bid for this property?

One-two cutting grass hay: \$65/acre
Irrigated Pasture: \$20/acre
Aftermath grazing on hay land: \$5/acre

11. Please describe your pay and employment practices and how you have provided farm goods to disadvantaged communities or mentored first generation farmers.

We do not have any employees. When we do call on friends for help, we usually decide on a work/trade agreement. For example, trade a load of hay or a half-beef for labor.

Our customers have historically been repeat customers year after year. We haven't had to explore additional venues to sell hay, cattle or freezer beef because there is enough current demand for these products.

Meeting The City's Goals

In summary, here is how we will address the City's Goals for the Autrey Property:

1. *Maintain and support a diversity of agricultural operations and uses on OSMP lands, except for GMOs.* We will manage forage production, grass and alfalfa hay (no GMOs) for livestock; cattle grazing in a sustainable manner to insure the conservation of soil and water. Current conditions (water availability) and no barns do not lend this property viable for vegetable crops or dairies.

2. *Maintain agriculturally related structures (fences) in an acceptable condition.* Fences will be maintained and especially monitored while cattle are grazing. Richard has an excellent history of building/repairing fences and we maintain an adequate supply of equipment and materials for this purpose.
3. *Maintain existing irrigation infrastructure in good condition.* Existing irrigation infrastructure is adequate but will be modified as necessary to deliver water efficiently to fields to enhance forage production and the conservation of soil and water.
4. *Increase or maintain soil organic matter and soil biological diversity on tilled/converted lands in agricultural production with non-native vegetation.* Our forage conservation management (hay production) and grazing management (livestock production) plans demonstrate our fundamental efforts of the conservation of soil and forage resources. By keeping soils covered and without overgrazing, moisture stays in the soil longer, fostering healthy, sustainable, and diverse ecosystems. Healthy soils make better utilization of irrigation and or natural precipitation. Periodic soil testing will help determine the continued viability of the soil to grow the desired crop(s). We will also work with City OSMP to determine what fertilizers we can apply, and/or if applying compost (similar to what was applied at Paclamar in 2020) would be beneficial. We look forward to working with the City OSMP to monitor and enhance soil health.
5. *Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides, wherever possible. When reduction or elimination of pesticides is not possible, use the least toxic and least persistent pesticide.* No pesticides will be used. If an invasive species becomes prevalent, we will work with City OSMP for a viable solution.
6. *Integrate agricultural management practices that support nesting habitat for Bobolinks and other ground nesting birds.* We will adhere to the schedule for cutting fields with Bobolink habitat.
7. *Manage agricultural activities to minimize soil erosion and protect soil fertility.* Strict adherence to our forage and grazing management will establish vegetation to eliminate soil erosion and protect soil fertility; no plans to disturb existing ground by plowing fields to plant different crops.
8. *Integrate/establish agricultural management practices that support native pollinators.* Actively explore opportunities to introduce beneficial insects. For example, if a beekeeper wanted to place hives somewhere on the property, we would work with City OSMP to determine the best location.
9. *Maintain integrity of agriculturally related viewsheds and ameliorate views which impact landscape character.* This section of the Arapahoe Road corridor is a viewshed. While stacking hay in the same location as in the past will be utilized, equipment would not be stored there long term since we also lease the Anderson property next door. "The character of a working landscape" means that haystacks show the land is producing, and the presence of cattle emulates an agricultural tradition and helps with weed control in the fields, as well as providing natural fertilizer.

References

Provide personal references that are familiar with your agricultural experience including the following, as possible. Please provide only names and contact information. Do not include reference letters as part of your submission.

Name	Email address and phone #	Relationship
<i>Two neighboring landowners to proposer's current operation:</i>		
Ryan Middleton OSMP Agricultural Program Mgr.	[REDACTED]	OSMP contact for our current leases
Lauren Kolb OSMP Agricultural Sr. Program Mgr.	[REDACTED]	OSMP contact for soil management; grass-fed beef customer
Ricky Rood & Cecelia DeLuca	[REDACTED]	Neighbor and hay customer just east of Anderson property
Jim and Ellen DeBacker	[REDACTED]	Neighbor, cousin and cattle customer west of residence
<i>A landowner who leases or who has agreed to allow proposer to use their land:</i>		
Ember Brignull City of Louisville, Open Space Mgr.	[REDACTED]	City contact for Damyanovich property
Rob Burdine City of Lafayette, Open Space Supt.	[REDACTED]	City contact for The Farm property

Jim Healy	██████████ ██████████	Friend and owner of 6 acre alfalfa field Richard has been farming for 23 years; beef customer
Dean DeLille	██████████ ██████████	Friend and owner of 25 acre grass/alfalfa fields Richard has been farming for 3 years; fellow board member for Marshallville Ditch
<i>A ditch rider, lateral captain or water commissioner who has worked with proposer on their current operation:</i>		
Amy Willhite OSMP Water Resources Sr. Proj Mgr.	████████████████████ ██████████	OSMP contact for water/irrigation
Dustin Allard OSMP Water Resources Program Manager	████████████████████ ██████████	OSMP contact for water/irrigation; Fellow board member for Marshallville Ditch; grass-fed beef customer
Johnathon Oppermann Alpine Environmental Excavating	████████████████████ ██████████	Ditch Rider for Marshallville Ditch; beef customer
<i>A customer or buyer of proposer's current agricultural product:</i>		
Chris Anderson	████████████████████ ██████████	Lives across from us; hay customer
Chris Gwiazda Boulder Equestrian Center	████████████████████ ██████████	Hay customer; owns facility just east of Anderson place and north of Paclamar
Steve and Dee Patterson	██████████	Friend and hay customer; residence borders Autrey property
Mike Thero	████████████████████ ██████████	Friend and long-time hay customer
Carol Heddings	████████████████████ ██████████	Friend and long-time hay customer
Tina Broida	████████████████████ ██████████	Friend and long-time hay customer; owner of 35 acres that Richard has been farming for 10+ years
<i>Any additional similar references that proposer believes would be helpful in evaluating the proposed operation:</i>		
Steve and Arlene Penner	██████████ ████████████████ ████████████████	Long-time personal friends and fellow farmer/rancher; Richard helped with their cattle and agricultural operations; former tenants of Autrey property. Richard and Steve went to high school together.
Jim Roberts	████████████████████ ████████████████	Personal friend, fellow farmer/rancher and lessee on Boulder County land
Bob Clyncke	████████████████ ██████████	Personal friend, longtime farmer in Boulder County
Jason Condon, Isabelle Farms	████████████████████ ██████████	Personal friend, fellow farmer, and also Linda's cousin; lessee on Boulder County land
Fernie Ostdiek Ostdiek Stacking LLC	██████████████ ██████████	Personal friend; stacks most small bales for us each year
Liam Dunn Custom Hay & Swathing	██████████	Personal friend; bales all 3x3x8 bales for us each year

*Please note that bidders may be asked to provide financial reference(s) and information upon request.

PROPOSAL FORM – REQUIRED – Autrey Property

Failure to complete, sign and return this signature page with your proposal may be cause for rejection.

Contact Information	Response
Company Name including DBA	N/A
List Type of Organization (Corporation, Partnership, etc.)	N/A
Name and Title of Person Authorized to Contract with City of Boulder	Richard Biella and Linda Anderson-Biella
Name and Title of Person Submitting Bid	Richard Biella and Linda Anderson-Biella
Email Address for Person Submitting Bid	
Company Address	
Company Phone Number	
Company Website	N/A
Company Fax Number	N/A

By signing below I certify that:

I am authorized to bid on my company's behalf.
I am not currently an employee of City of Boulder.
None of my employees or agents is currently an employee of City of Boulder.
I am not related to any City of Boulder employee or Elected Official.
I am not a Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) retiree.

Richard A Biella
Linda Anderson-Biella

February 14, 2022

Signature of Person Authorized to Bid on Company's Behalf Date

Note: If you cannot certify the above statements, please explain in a statement of explanation.