

MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Board of Trustees

FROM: Dan Burke, Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Kacey French, Planning and Design Senior Manager
Katie Knapp, Principal Planner

DATE: September 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Written Information: Fort Chambers / Poor Farm Site Management Plan Update

The purpose of this written update is to provide an update on the Site Management Plan for the Fort Chambers / Poor Farm property ([Fort Chambers / Poor Farm Management Plan | City of Boulder \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/fort-chambers-poor-farm-management-plan)).

Context

The Fort Chambers / Poor Farm property is located west of North 63rd Street and south of Jay Road (see **Attachments A and B**). The property is important and has significant community meaning due to the many Open Space Charter purposes the property addresses and its association with the Sand Creek Massacre. City staff are working on a government-to-government basis with the three Sovereign Tribal Nations affected by the Sand Creek Massacre (the Cheyenne and Arapaho of Oklahoma, the Northern Arapaho and the Northern Cheyenne) to receive and incorporate their meaningful input into the development of a management plan for the property. The Site Management Plan will be used to guide ongoing land management and uses associated with the property.

Background

The Fort Chambers / Poor Farm property was acquired by the city in 2018. The acquisition memo and previous updates to the Board and City Council are available at the following links:

[03.14.18 OSBT Packet \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/03-14-18-osbt-packet)

[03.10.21 OSBT Packet \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/03-10-21-osbt-packet)

[02.22.22 Council Memo \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/02-22-22-council-memo)

From Aug. 28 to Sept. 16, 1864, more than 100 Boulder County men trained and mobilized at Fort Chambers into Company D of the Third Colorado Cavalry and later participated in the barbaric massacre of peaceful Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) and Hinono'eino' (Arapaho) at Sand Creek on Nov. 29, 1864. (This is an excerpt from the [Staff Land Acknowledgment | City of Boulder \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/staff-land-acknowledgment).) While the specific location of the fort is not known for certain, Fort Chambers is believed to have been located on or in the immediate vicinity to the Fort Chambers / Poor Farm Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) property.

The property also supports many Open Space Charter purposes and is considered agricultural land of statewide significance. The property is also listed on the National Register of Historic Place as the property's main home (Wells House), of iconic Queen Anne Victorian architecture, served as the Boulder County Poor Farm from 1902 through 1918.

Site Management Plan Update

Government to Government Tribal Partnership

The city has initiated government-to-government discussions with the federally recognized American Indian Tribes affected by the Sand Creek Massacre: the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the Northern

Arapahoe Tribe, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. On July 27, 2022, Tribal Leaders and Representatives and city staff met in person and:

- **Spoke about city Open Space and the Open Space purposes.** Staff and tribal representatives discussed the OSMP system in general, the City Charter and how it has specific [Open Space purposes](#) that guides how OSMP manages city Open Space. Tribal representatives expressed support for the Open Space purposes represented on the property.
- **Toured the Fort Chambers - Poor Farm property.** City OSMP staff provided information on the [property's connection to the Sand Creek Massacre](#) – in which more than 100 Boulder-area men participated. During the site visit, city staff also provided background on the property's other features, including the property's historic home and outbuildings as well as and the property's significant scenic, ecological and agricultural resources.
- **Discussed education and interpretation needs on the property.** City staff and Tribal Representatives viewed and spoke about the marker on the property and steps needed to either reinterpret it or remove it from the property. Tribal representatives encouraged staff to not solely focus on telling the story of how the fort was utilized but to also communicate events before and after the massacre. Representatives said it is critical that Indigenous perspectives be reflected in how the events and story are told.
- **Outlined future city/Tribal Nation collaboration.** City staff and Tribal Representatives discussed creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will further outline the process, roles and responsibilities for this Site Management Plan collaboration. Discussed a schedule for future city/Tribal Nation meetings and how the management plan may take time since Tribal Representatives and Tribal Nations consult with many federal, state, and local agencies across the county. Tribal Representatives expressed their preference to comment and provide feedback on staff-developed management plan concepts.

A summary from the meeting is included as **Attachment C**.

Inventory and Assessment

Staff have begun the inventory work needed to inform the site planning process. While the work is still underway, here is a summary of some initial findings:

Cultural Resources: Historical research indicates that Fort Chambers was a walled compound constructed of sod. It was used for a short time and allowed to disintegrate over time. Site surveys have found no features or artifacts on the OSMP property associated with Indigenous People, Fort Chambers, or Company D of the Third Colorado Cavalry. The exact location of the fort is not currently known. A magnetometry investigation (which detects anomalies in the earth's magnetic field) was performed on a portion of the property to help determine the location the fort. Some anomalies were found but the results were inconclusive. Additional investigation is needed and planned for later this year.

Wells House: An historic structure assessment and preservation plan was completed in June of 2019 to document the history, architectural significance and existing condition of the structure; evaluate the existing building systems; and provide recommendations for preservation. In the 2019 report, over \$800,000 of repair and remediation work was recommended. To help stabilize the structure, approximately \$75,000 of work was performed, including a new electrical service panel and the installation of a new roof. Asbestos and lead testing was also completed in August of 2022, verifying the presence of asbestos and lead in the building. Due to inflation, national supply and labor shortages, and the impacts of the Marshall fire, local construction costs have increased significantly in recent years. It is currently estimated that \$1.25 million of repair work is still

needed; this estimate does include additional costs associated with improvements to support uses that may be recommended as part of the site management plan.

Wildlife: Through annual monitoring, many birds and wildlife have been documented on the property:

- 32 native wildlife species were captured by a remote camera including white-tailed deer, bobcats, coyote, black bear, raccoons, and cotton-tailed rabbits.
- Waterfowl surveys documented 62 bird species (goose, dabbling ducks, diving ducks)
- Riparian songbird monitoring documented 31 breeding bird species (neotropical migrants including blue-gray gnatcatcher, Bullock's oriole, common yellowthroat, eastern kingbird, western kingbird, western wood-pewee, and yellow warbler)
- Hayfield bird monitoring detected 26 bird species. Comparatively, this is low quality. Bobolinks, which are decreasing globally, were only found in 2018.

While not part of the inventory phase, it should be noted that a portion of the Fort Chambers / Poor Farm property is currently under an agricultural lease with a local tenant.

Community Engagement

Continued staff conversations with Tribal Nations will help inform future public engagement opportunities with the Boulder community members that will be part of this Site Management Plan, including Indigenous communities and organizations not associated with the three Tribal Nations, agricultural and local food operators, local historic preservationists, and individuals and groups interested in natural and recreational resources. This broader community engagement will commence after completing core discussions with the tribes.

Next Steps

In the upcoming months, OSMP staff will:

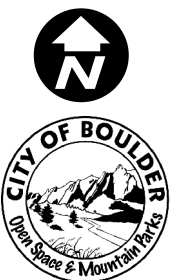
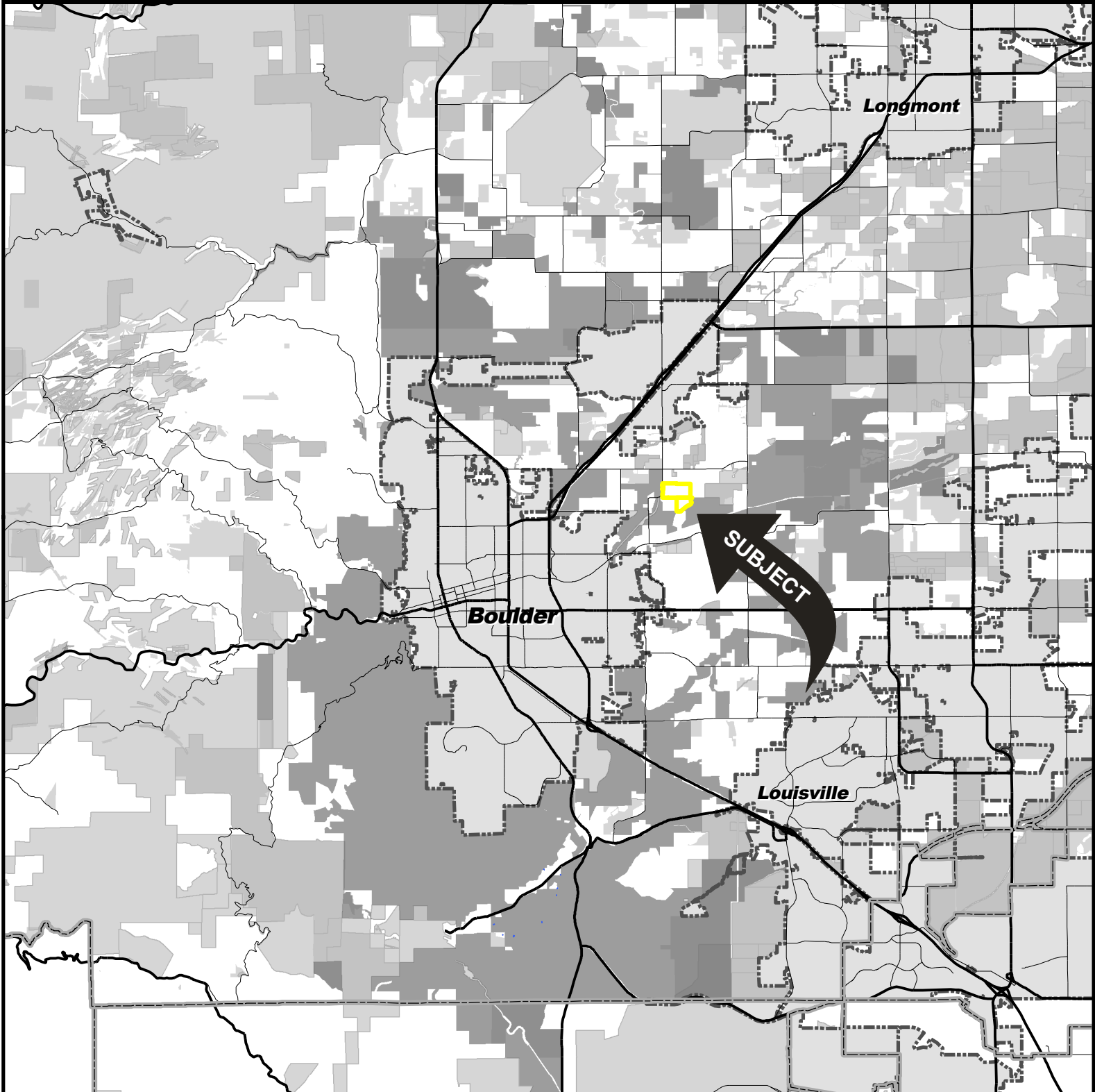
- work with the Tribal Representatives to create a MOU that will further outline the process, roles and responsibilities, and provide the foundation for ongoing collaboration. Continued staff conversations with these three Tribal Nations will help set the foundation for the property management plan.
- continue with the relevant inventories and update the [project webpage](#) with inventory information.
- begin developing site management plan alternatives for tribal input.

Staff will continue to provide periodic updates to the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) on the tribal collaboration and key milestones of the planning process. It is anticipated that staff will seek OSBT feedback on the Site Management Plan later in 2023.

Attachments

- **Attachment A:** Vicinity Map
- **Attachment B:** Location Map
- **Attachment C:** Meeting Summary (7/27/22)

ATTACHMENT A: Vicinity Map - Fort Chambers / Poor Farm








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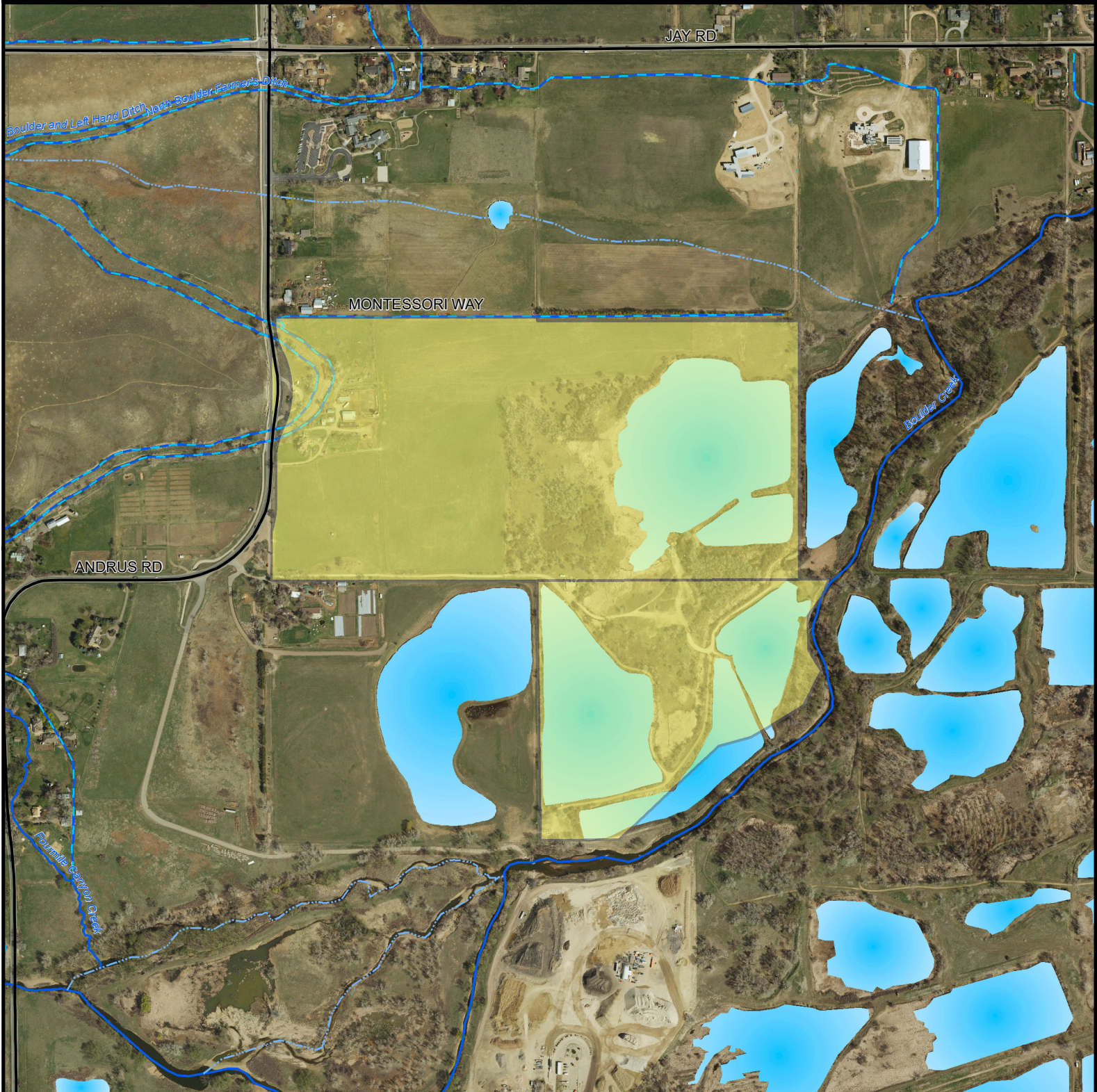
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Legend

-  Subject Property
-  OSMP Lands
-  County Lands
-  Federal Lands
-  City Limits
-  County Boundaries
-  Highway
-  Roads

Approximate property boundaries from Boulder County Assessor's data.

ATTACHMENT B: Location Map - Fort Chambers / Poor Farm Property









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0 375 750 1,125 1,500 Feet

Legend

Approximate property boundaries from Boulder County Assessor's data.

-  Subject Property
-  Roads
-  Water Bodies
-  Main Ditch
-  Perennial Stream
-  Intermittent Stream

Fort Chambers/Poor Farm

July 27, 2022: Meeting Summary

The meeting started with an opening prayer by Eugene Ridgely, Jr. (Northern Arapaho)

Participants introduced themselves. A copy of the sign-in sheet is included (Attachment A).



Information about Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) was provided by Dan Burke (OSMP Director), including how the OSMP Mission and Charter Purposes guide the work of the Department. An overview of the Fort Chambers/Poor Farm property was provided by Katie Knapp (OSMP Principal Planner). A copy of the presentation slides is provided (Attachment B).

Participants took a tour of the Fort Chambers/Poor Farm property.

- We started the visit with a prayer and ceremony led by Eugene Ridgely Jr.
- We then stopped at the Ft. Chambers marker where Christian Driver, (OSMP Cultural Stewardship Sr Program Manager) shared info about the history of the fort and the magnetometry investigations.
- The next stop was by one of the ponds on the property, where Christian Nunes (OSMP Wildlife Ecologist) talked about the different wildlife in the area.
- By the hay fields and vegetable gardens, Andy Pelster (OSMP Agriculture and Water Stewardship Sr. Manager) and Lauren Kolb (OSMP Agricultural Sr. Program Manager) discussed the current agricultural operations and OSMP's agricultural program.
- A tour of the historic house was given by Frances Boulding (OSMP Recreation and Cultural Stewardship Sr. Manager)



After the site visit, participants shared thoughts about the property and their history. We also discussed the site planning process and future collaboration.

What we heard:

Site Visit Reflections:

- Interpretation: The story of what happened at Fort Chambers and what happened at Sand Creek Massacre isn't enough. There is a need for the full truth...what happened before and after the Sand Creek Massacre is very important to understanding the Sand Creek Massacre event and ensuring the story is told from Native perspectives. Important questions: *who* were the people who played roles in this (ie: who was Chambers, what was he like?), *what* were they trained in at Fort Chambers, etc. The full story is needed for healing and understanding the history.
- Marker: The existing cultural marker is not accurate; there was no uprising, although it illustrates how events were told in local history. The site needs to tell the truth. Whether the marker stays and is reinterpreted, or removed altogether, is a sensitive decision that needs to be discussed by Tribal Council(s).
- Fort Location: The exact location is not currently known and may not be possible to determine. Finding the location was not important to all Tribal Representatives but there was interest in additional site investigations and learning what type of trainings or events took place at the fort.
- Historic House: The history of the Poor Farm was of interest and is part of the story of the site. The house was constructed after the Tribes had left the area and is not part of their story. Tribal Representatives had questions about whether or not Native Americans were inmates at the Poor Farm. There was also interest in how the house could be used for educational purposes.

Planning Process and Future Collaboration:

- There was general support for OSMP Charter Purposes and moving forward with the site planning process. Current uses that support OSMP Charter Purposes are desired on the property (agriculture, natural areas, etc.).
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be developed to provide information about scope, process, budget and deliverables.
- Tribal Representatives prefer to have OSMP develop site management plan ideas and alternatives for their review and comment. They are also available to answer questions.
- OSMP staff will seek input from Tribal Representatives on different ideas and alternatives prior to gathering input from the broader community.
- There was a preference to meet on a quarterly basis. A timeline with future meetings and milestones will be developed.
- The naming of the site should be discussed further.

Next Steps:

- A MOU will be developed that will provide more details about our collaboration on this project. Ben Ridgely will provide an example from another project and OSMP will develop a draft MOU for Tribal review and comment.
- OSMP will start developing site management plan alternatives and ideas to share with the Tribes for review and comment.
- Teanna Limpy will share interpretive materials with the group.
- Tribal Representatives will update their Tribal Councils on the process.
- OSMP will develop a schedule with upcoming virtual and in-person meetings for your review and comment.

Attachments:

A: Sign-in sheet

B: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Fort Chambers/Poor Farm

July 27, 2022: Introduction, Site Tour and Project Planning Start-up

Meeting Attendance

Name	Phone	Email	AM Mtg	Site Tour	PM Mtg
Katie Knapp	303-441-4107	knappk@bouldercolorado.gov	X	X	X
Dan Burke	303-817-3143	burked@bouldercolorado.gov	X	X	X
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde	303-441-3090	riveravandermyden@bouldercolorado.gov	X		
Mary Fletcher			X	X	X
Fred Mosqueda	405-687-1023	fmosqueda@cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov	X	X	X
Dave Kuntz		dave.kuntz.osbt@gmail.com	X	X	
Aimee Kane	720-308-3308	kanea@bouldercolorado.gov	X	X	
Kacey French	303-517-7156	frenchK@bouldercolorado.gov	X	X	X
Teanna Limpy	406-740-0420	teanna.limpy@cheyennenation.com	X	X	X
Jordan Dresser	307-349-3718	jordan.dresser@northernarapaho.com	X		X
Eugene Ridgely Jr.	307-840-4494	ridgelyjr@yahoo.com	X	X	X
Ben Ridgely	307-851-1254	benridgely007@gmail.com	X	X	X
Whitney May	303-551-4869	mayw@bouldercolorado.gov	X	X	X

Site Visit Guides

Christian Driver	303-919-5132	DriverC@bouldercolorado.gov		X	
Christian Nunes	303-910-5601	nunesc@bouldercolorado.gov		X	
Andy Pelster	303-817-1165	PelsterA@bouldercolorado.gov		X	
Lauren Kolb	303-652-7699	KolbL@bouldercolorado.gov		X	
Frances Boulding	303-818-2287	bouldingf@bouldercolorado.gov		X	

Morning Agenda

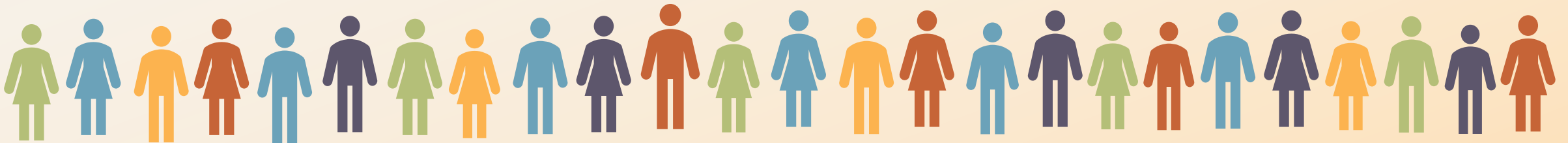
- Opening and Introductions
 - Opening Prayer
 - Introductions
 - Acknowledgements and Welcoming Remarks
- Open Space and Mountain Parks - Introduction
- City and OSMP Consultation with Tribal Nations
- Fort Chambers/Poor Farm - Property Overview
- Site Visit / Property Tour



Introductions

*“If only you could sense how **important you are** to the lives of those you meet... There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.”*

- Fred Rogers



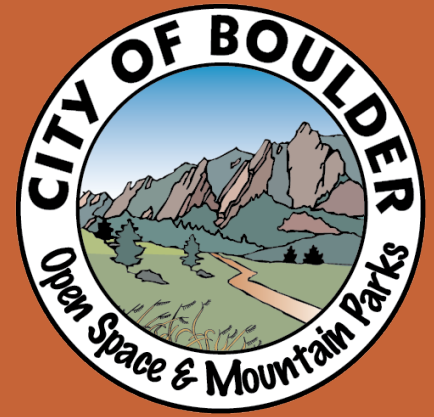
Acknowledgements



The City of Boulder acknowledges the city is on the ancestral homelands and unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples who have traversed, lived in and stewarded lands in the Boulder Valley since time immemorial.

The city recognizes that the history of Fort Chambers and the marker on or near the property are local legacies of American-European colonization that violently exiled Indigenous Peoples from their homelands and are a direct, local connection to the Sand Creek Massacre.

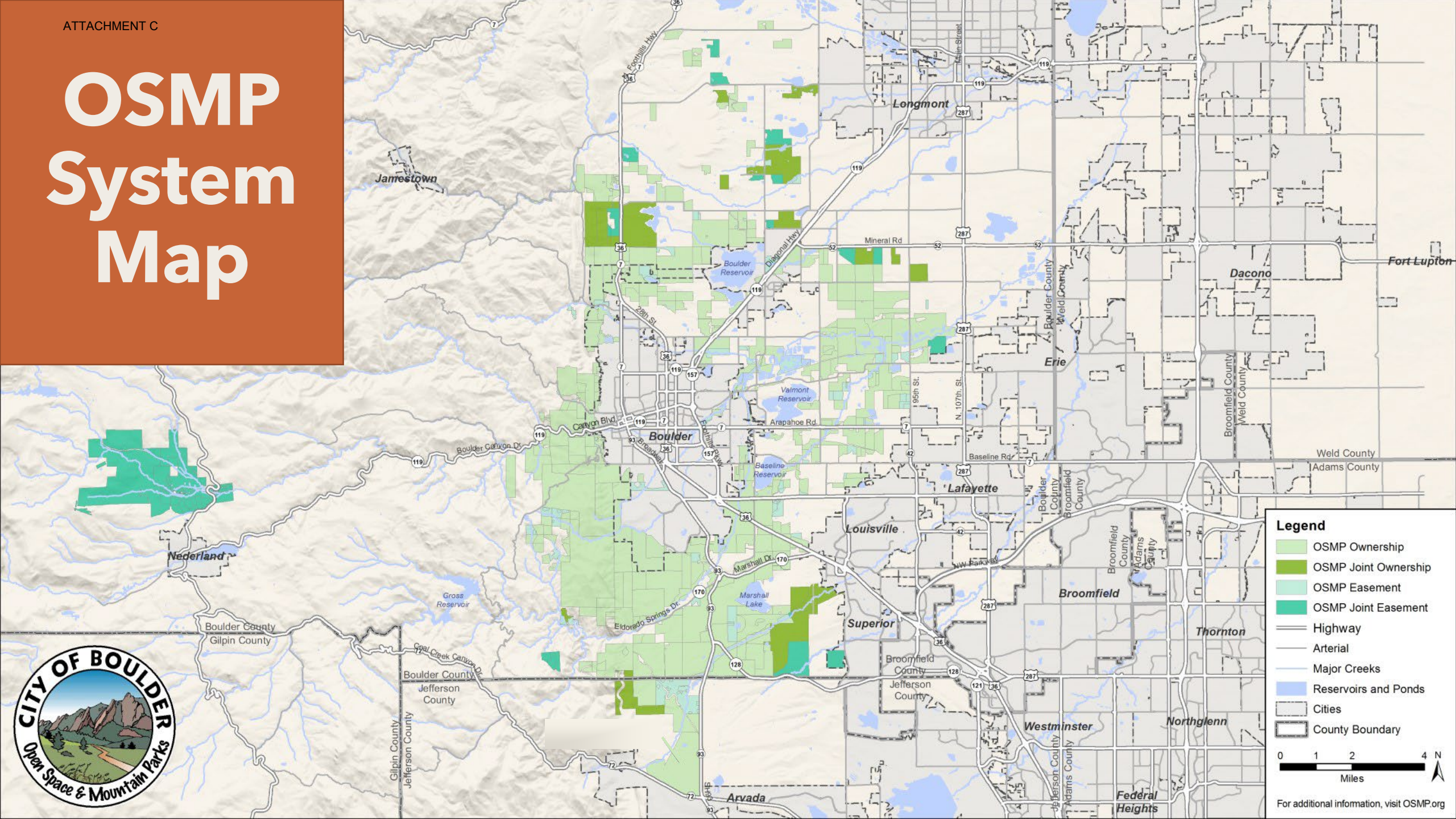
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks



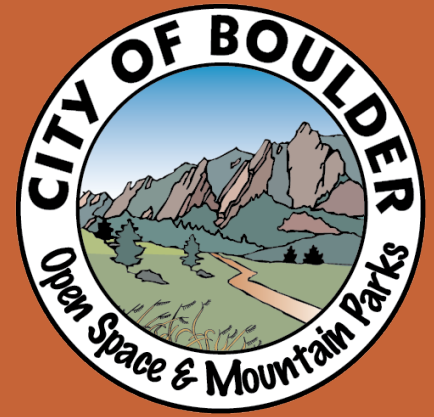
Mission:

The Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department preserves and protects the natural environment and land resources that characterize Boulder. We foster appreciation and use that sustain the natural values of the land for current and future generations.

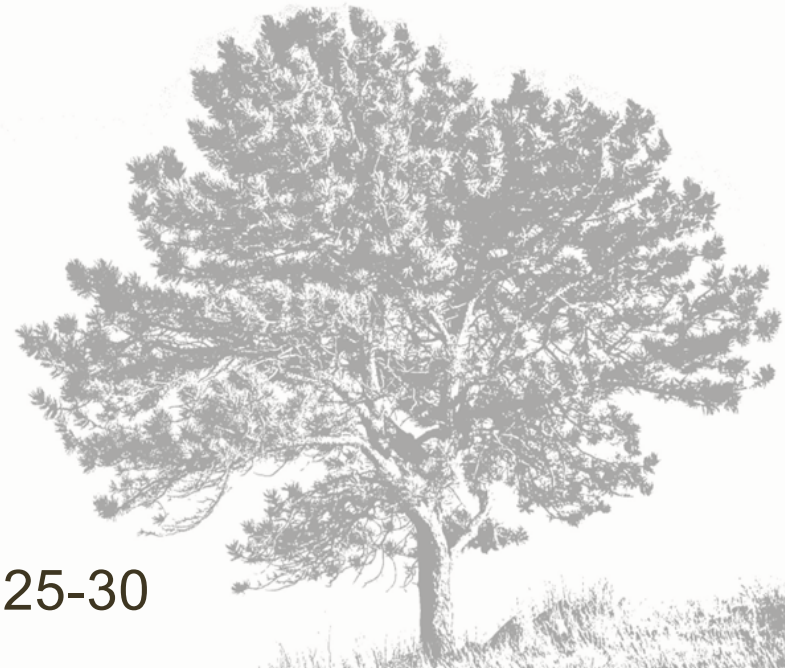
OSMP System Map



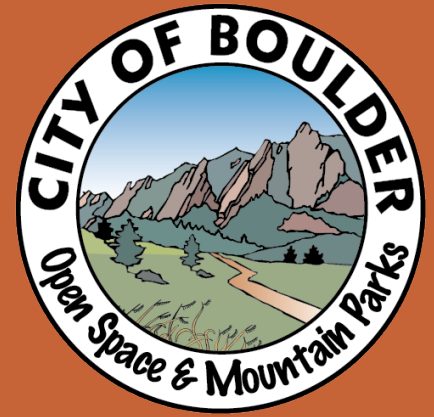
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks



46,100	Acres conserved
154	Miles of trails
~5.7 million	Annual Visits on OSMP
64	Mammal species
741	Plant species
15,000	Agricultural acres leased to 25-30 local farmers and ranchers
125	Full-time employees



City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks



OSMP Charter Purposes:

- a) Natural areas with features or species of special value
- b) Water, landscapes and ecosystems
- c) Passive recreation
- d) Agriculture
- e) Limiting sprawl
- f) Urban shaping
- g) Floodplain protection
- h) Aesthetics and quality of life

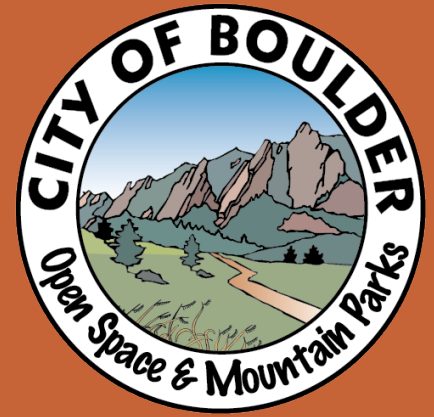
Consultation with Tribal Nations



Consultations with Tribal Nations Regarding OSMP-Conserved Lands

- Consultations date back to the 1990s
- Led to four agreements we share with Tribal Nations
- Recently, city has conducted consultations with Tribal Nations in 2019, 2021 and 2022.
- We recognize the need and critical importance of sustaining ongoing, meaningful consultations
- We are focused learning from you to ensure long-term collaboration and informed decision-making that will help us reach consensus on key issues.

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks



2002 MOU between Tribal Nations/City

- a) Recognized that the city charter limited use of open space lands to specific purposes.

Proposed Updated MOU between Tribal Nations / City

- a) ALSO recognizes the city charter limits use of open space lands to specific purposes.
- b) City to host consultations in September 2022 to further discuss updated an MOU. 9

City-Tribal Nation Projects



Fort Chambers/Poor Farm Management Plan (Ongoing)

- Seek guidance to help guide the area's long-term management

Updates to current Memorandum of Understanding (Ongoing)

- Condense, update past agreements into one document. Next meeting with Tribal Nations regarding MOU is scheduled for Sept. 12.

Peoples Crossing Working Group (Ongoing)

- Develop an ethnographic/education report in collaboration with Tribal Nations. Next meeting to occur on Aug. 30, 2022.

Notification of Inadvertent Finds (Ongoing)

- Follow current MOU to notify Tribal Nations of finds

Land Acknowledgement

- Sought Tribal guidance during development of acknowledgment

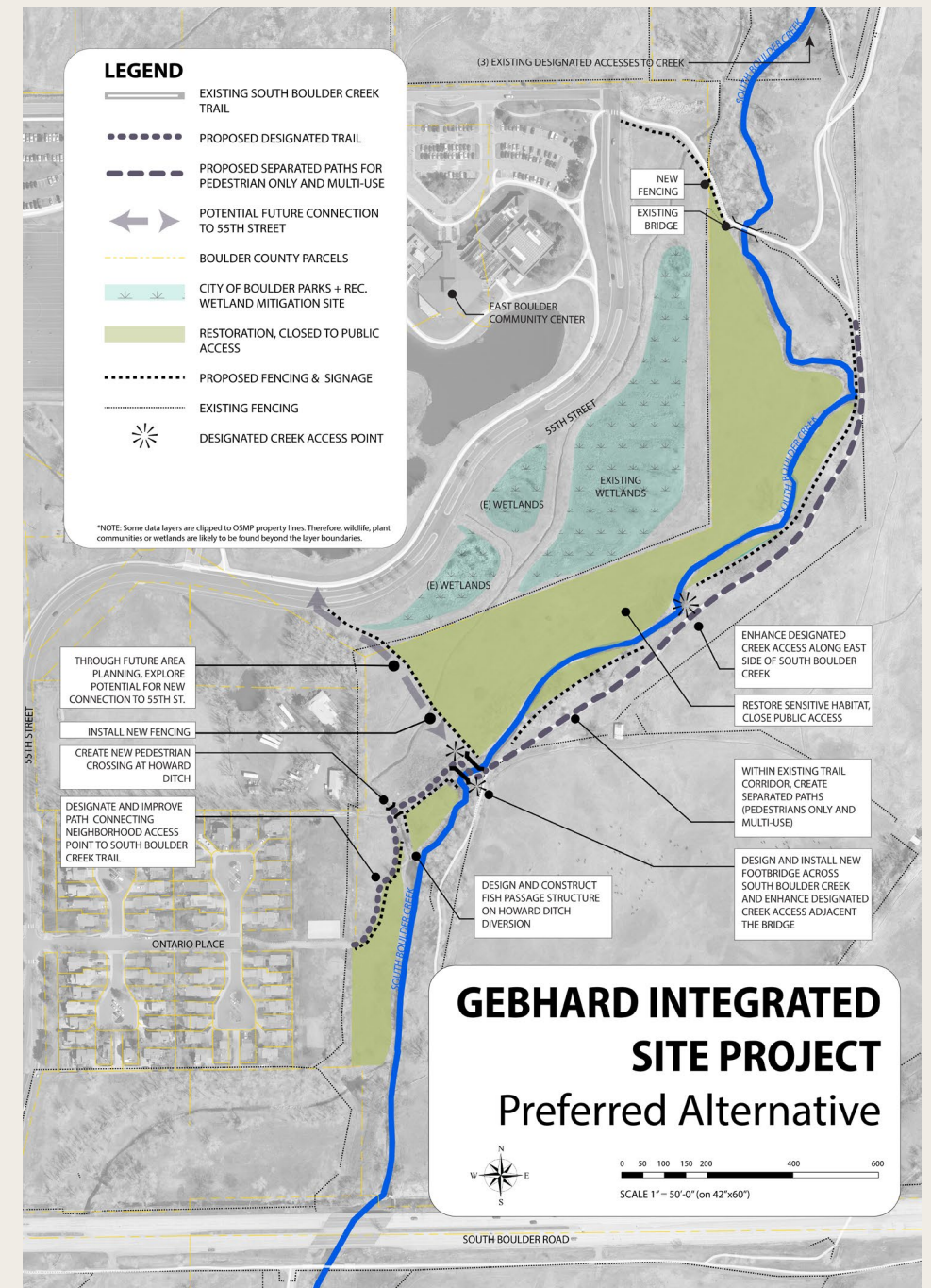
Renaming "Settler's Park" to "The Peoples Crossing"

- Renamed the area in west Boulder

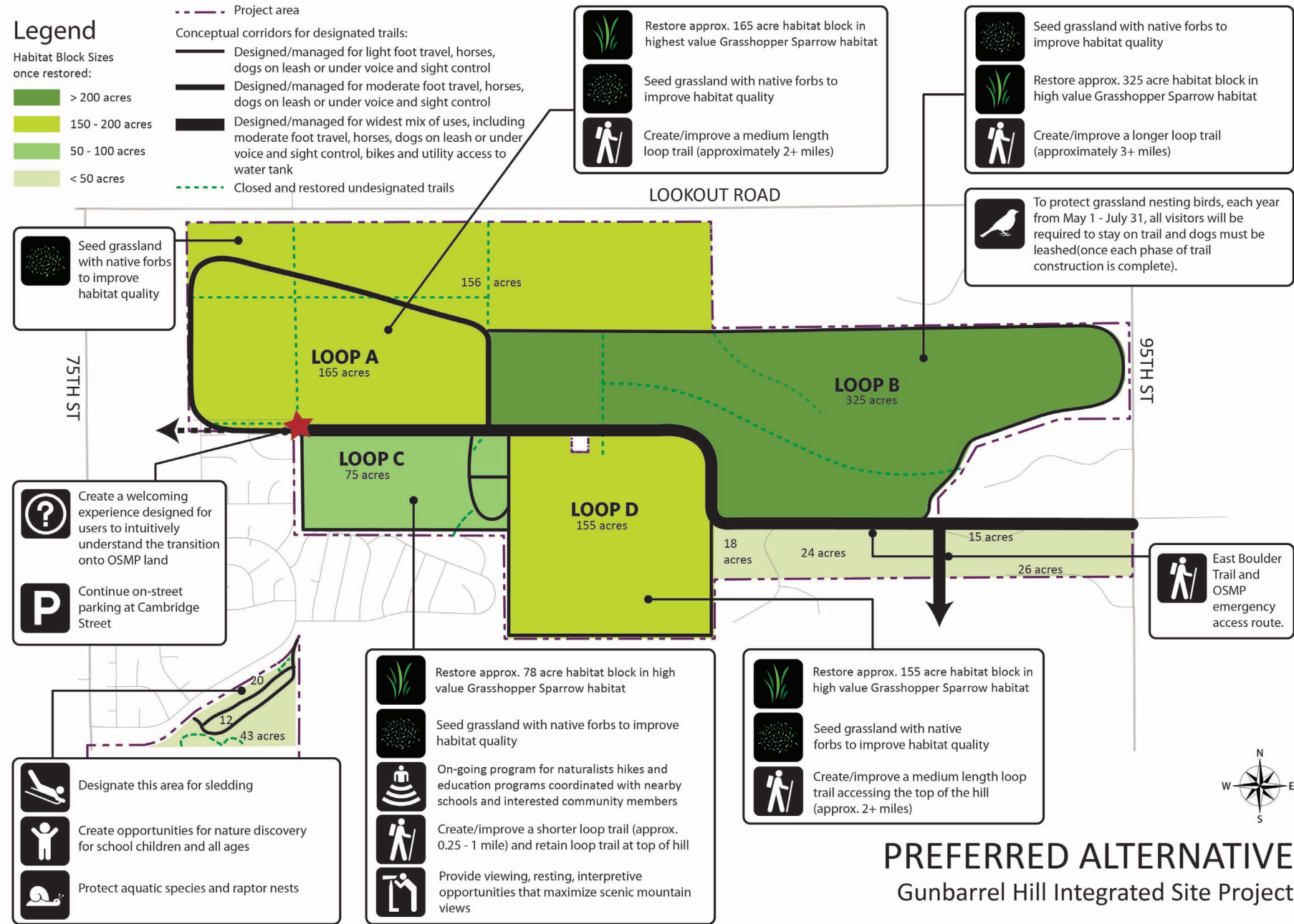
Property Management Plan

Long-term guidance:

- Consider OSMP purposes and services
- Support resource management
- Identify restoration and recreation opportunities, infrastructure projects



Property Management Plan



Partnership Goals



- Provide meaningful input into the development of a property management plan
- Identify the desired long-term relationship Tribal Nations wish to have with the property
- Consider how best to interpret the property and existing marker in relation to the Sand Creek Massacre
- Identify educational opportunities

Fort Chambers/ Poor Farm

**City of Boulder
Open Space and
Mountain Parks**

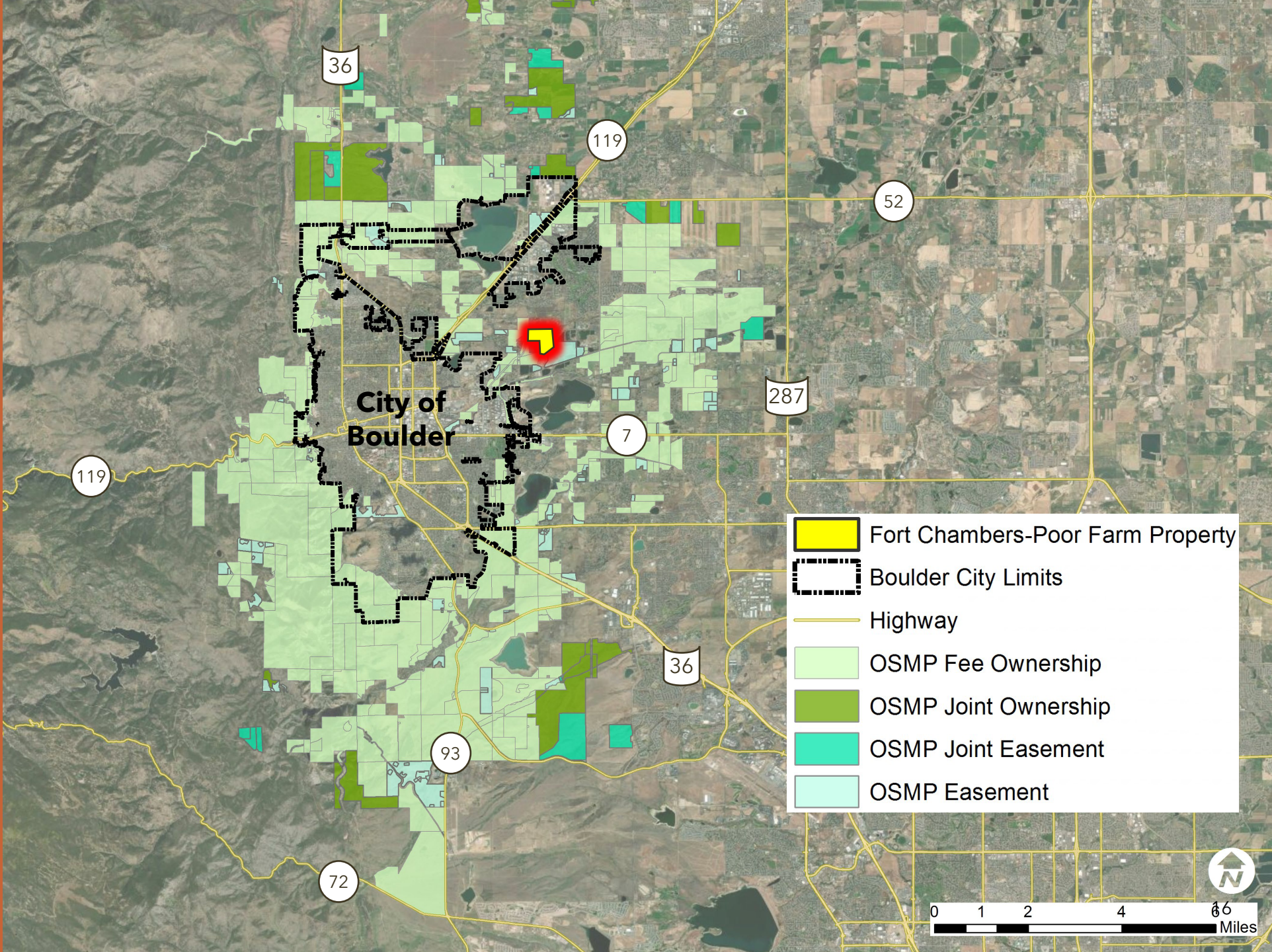


Background

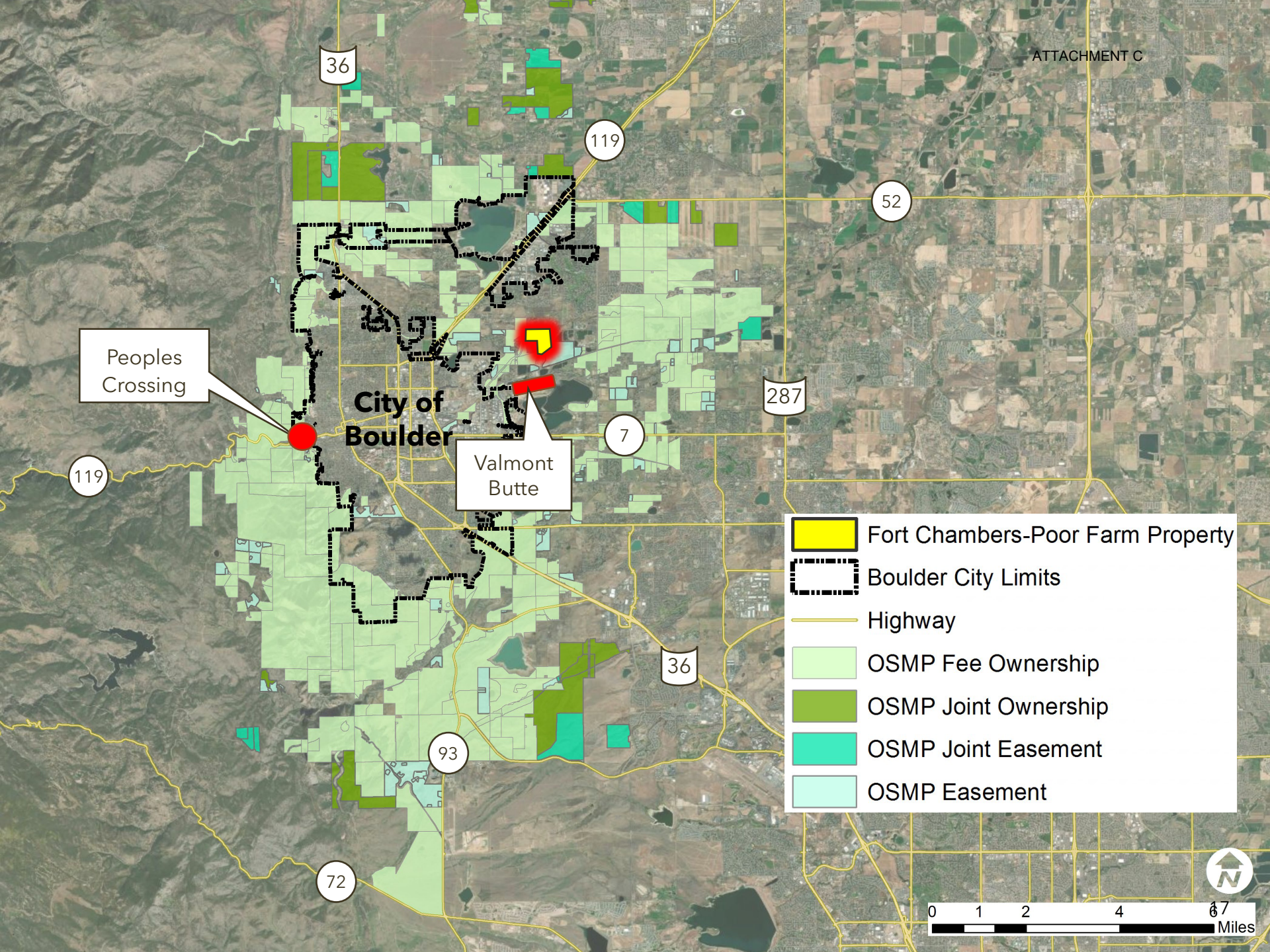


- Purchased in 2018
- Council/OSBT approved
- Fulfills Charter Purposes:
 - Natural areas
 - Water resources
 - Passive recreation
 - Agriculture
 - Limiting sprawl
 - Floodplain protection
 - Aesthetics and quality of life
- Land Management Plans for acquisitions

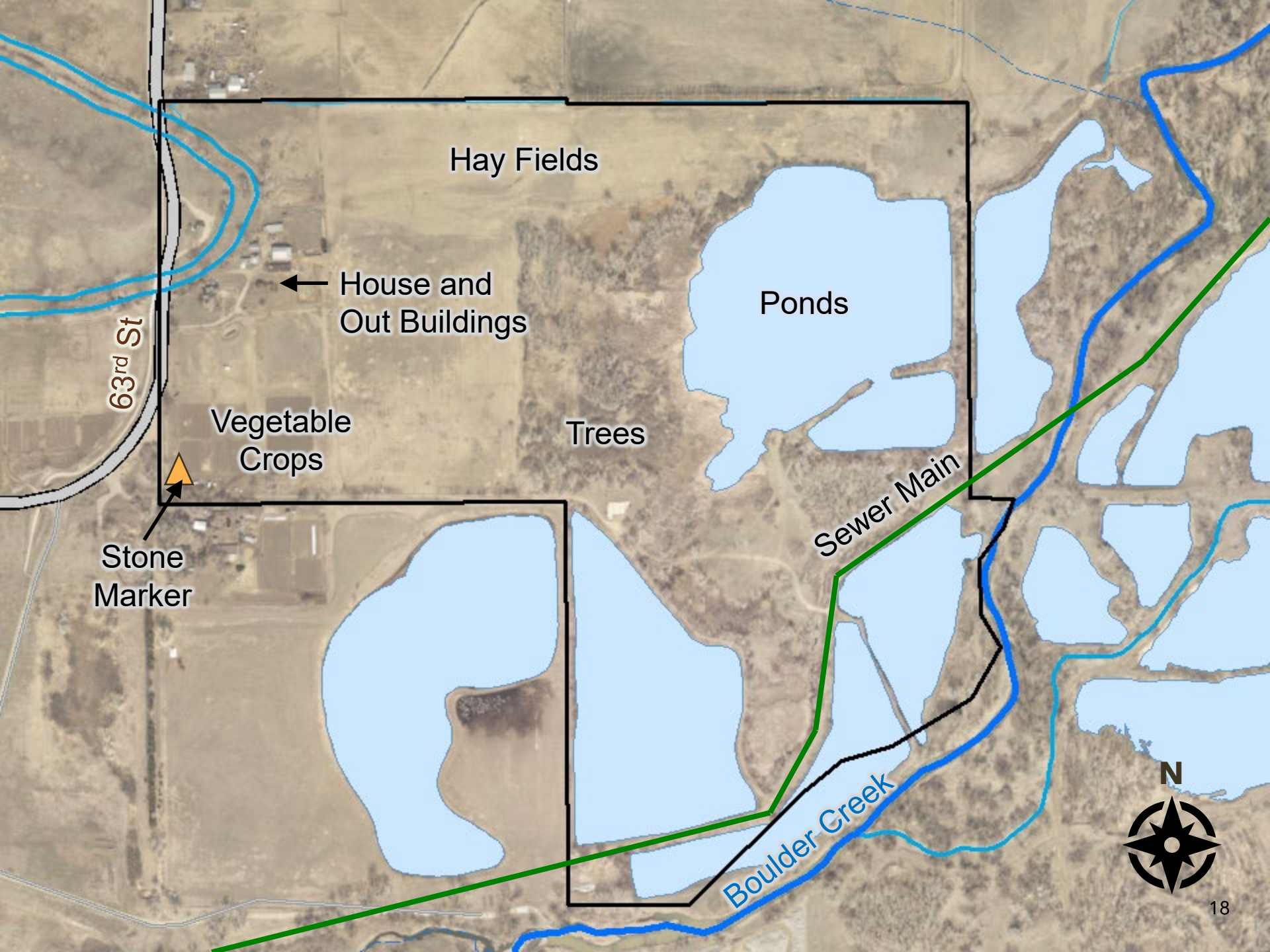
Property Location



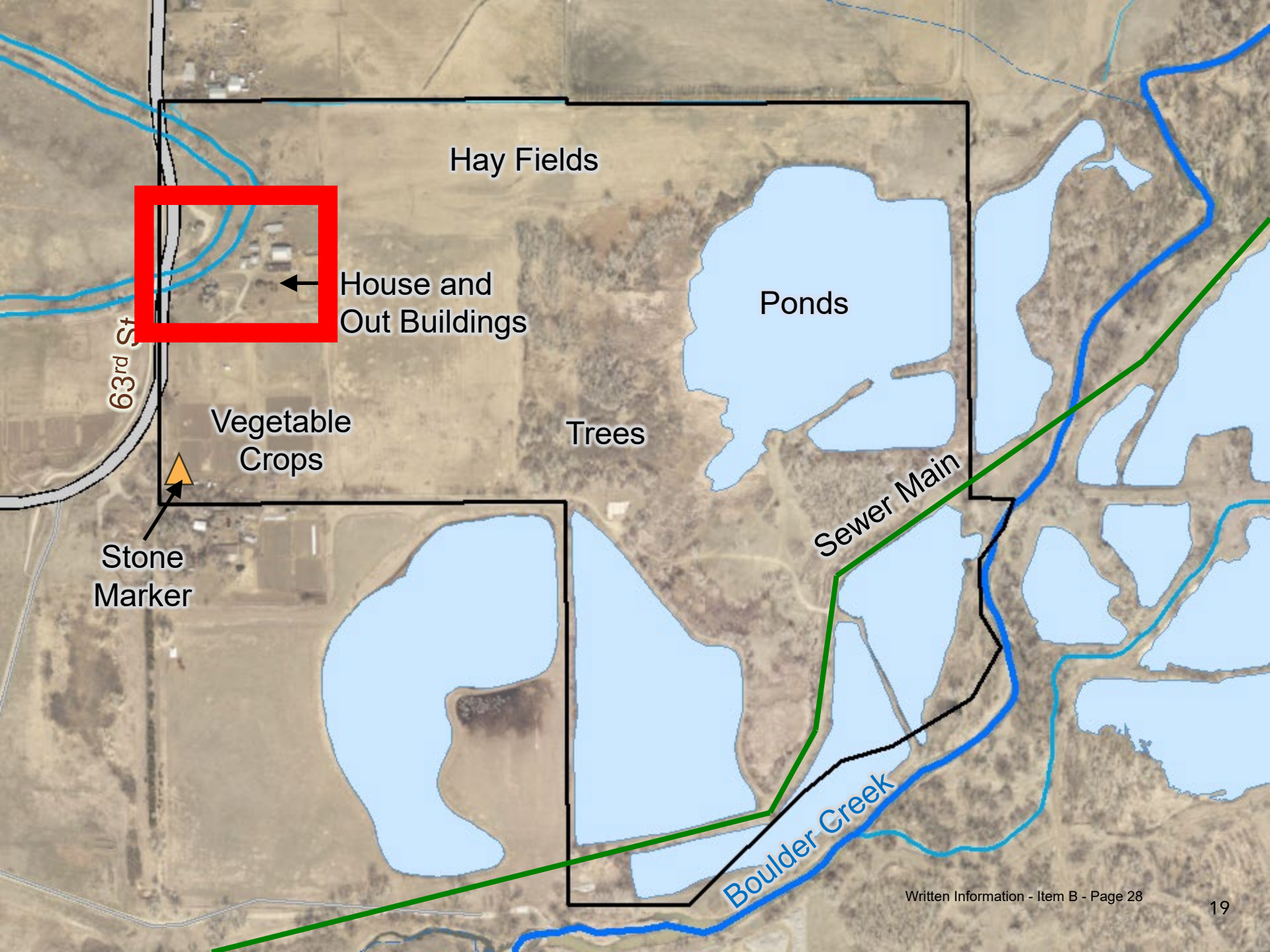
Property Location



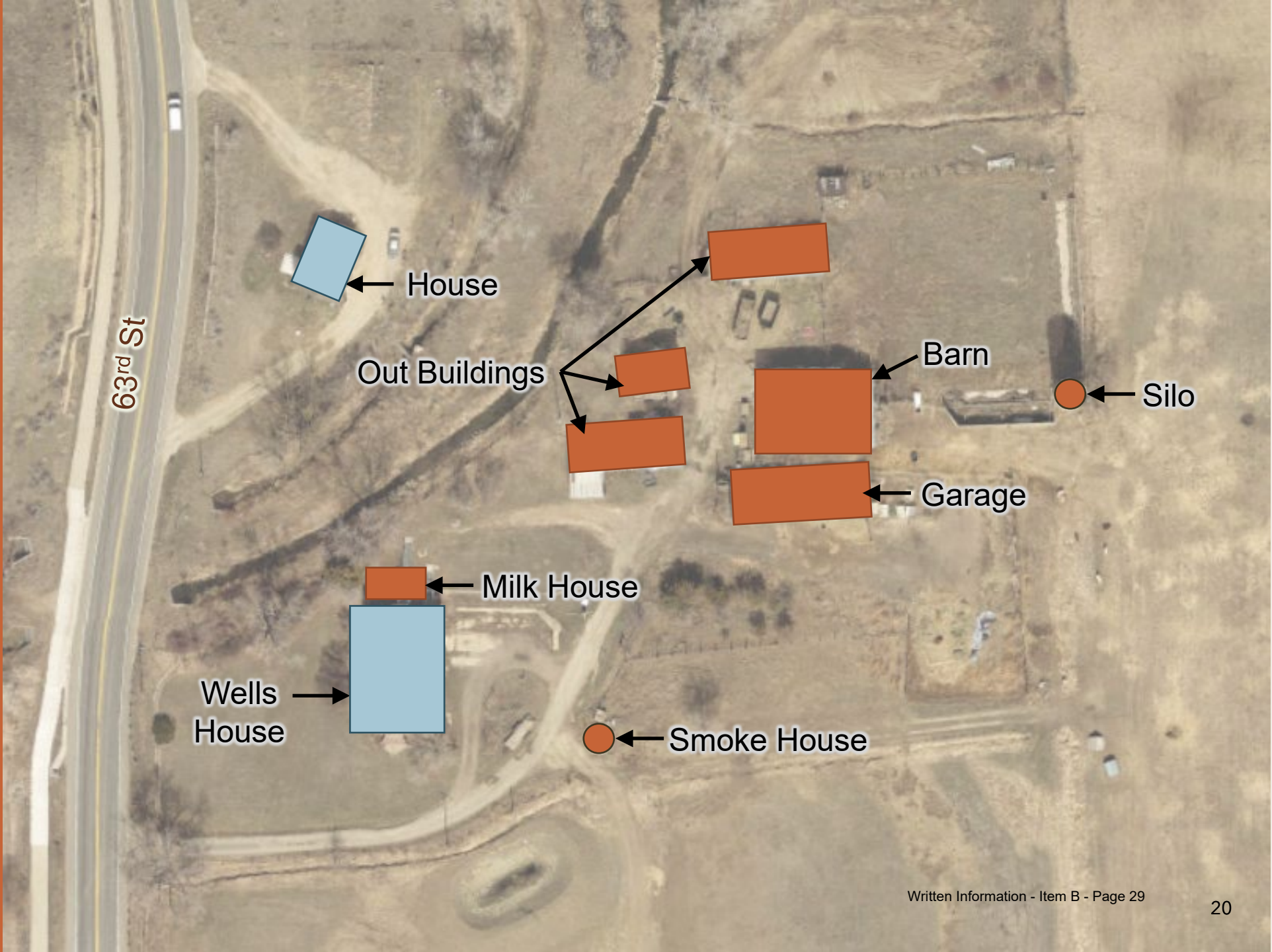
Property
Features



Property
Features



Property Features



Wells House

ATTACHMENT C



- Queen Anne Victorian architecture
- Poor Farm (1902 - 1918)
- National Register of Historic Places

Wells House



Built in phases:

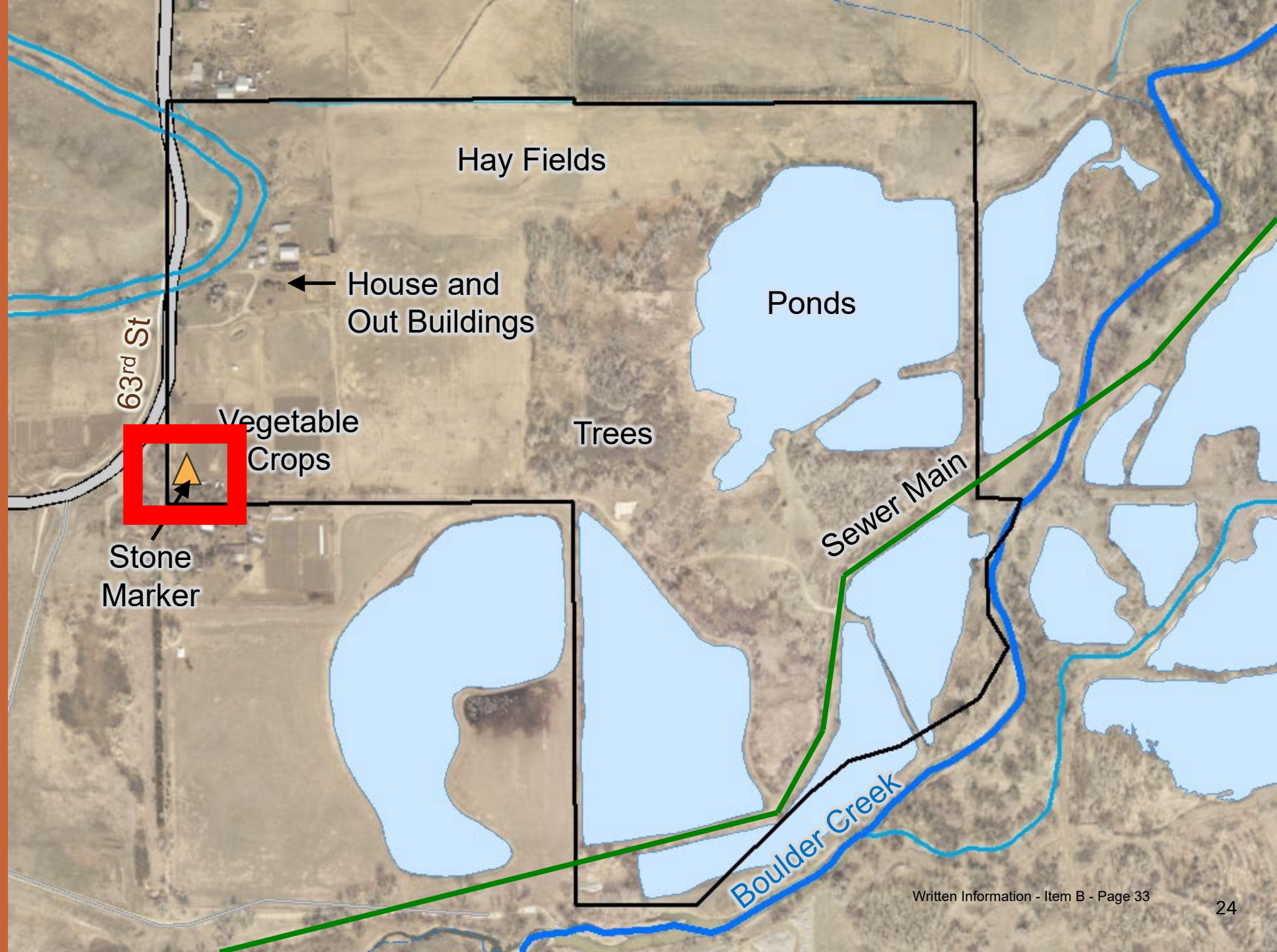
- 1862: Original house structure
- 1897: Queen Anne Victorian style addition
- 1904: Poor Farm Dormitory Wing addition (removed)

Second House



- 1-story house
- Occupied

Property Features

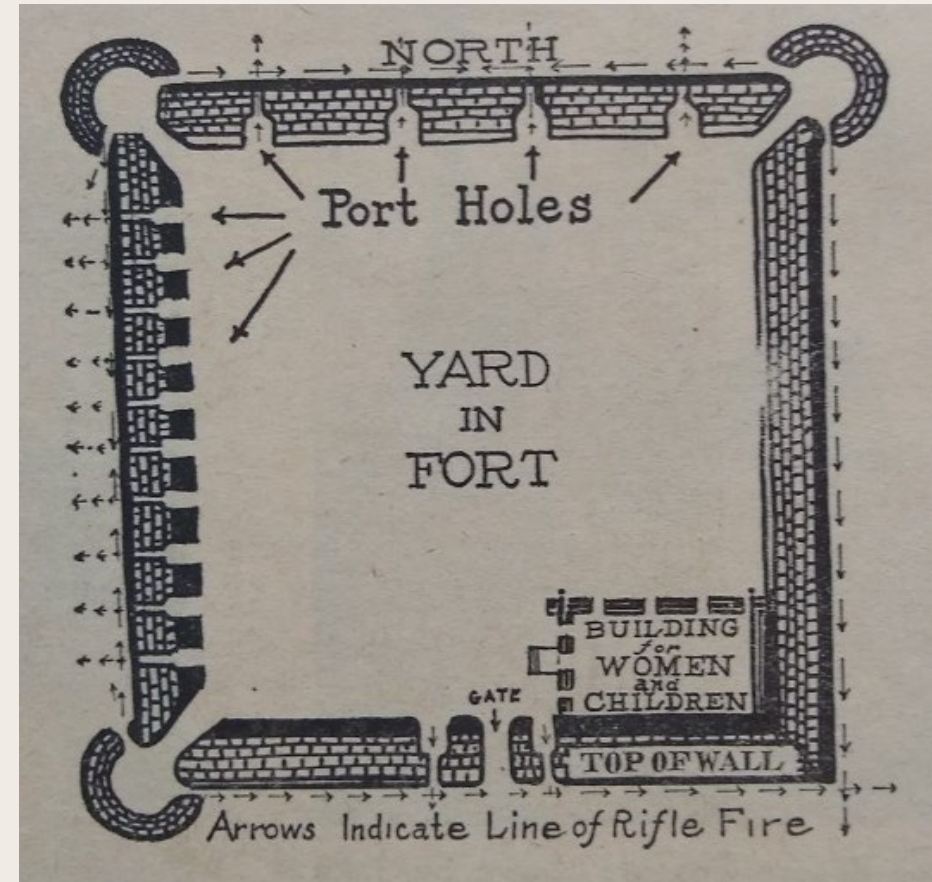


Fort Chambers

Existing Marker



Fort Chambers



Magnetometry Investigation:

- Detects anomalies
- Additional investigation needed

Agriculture and Water

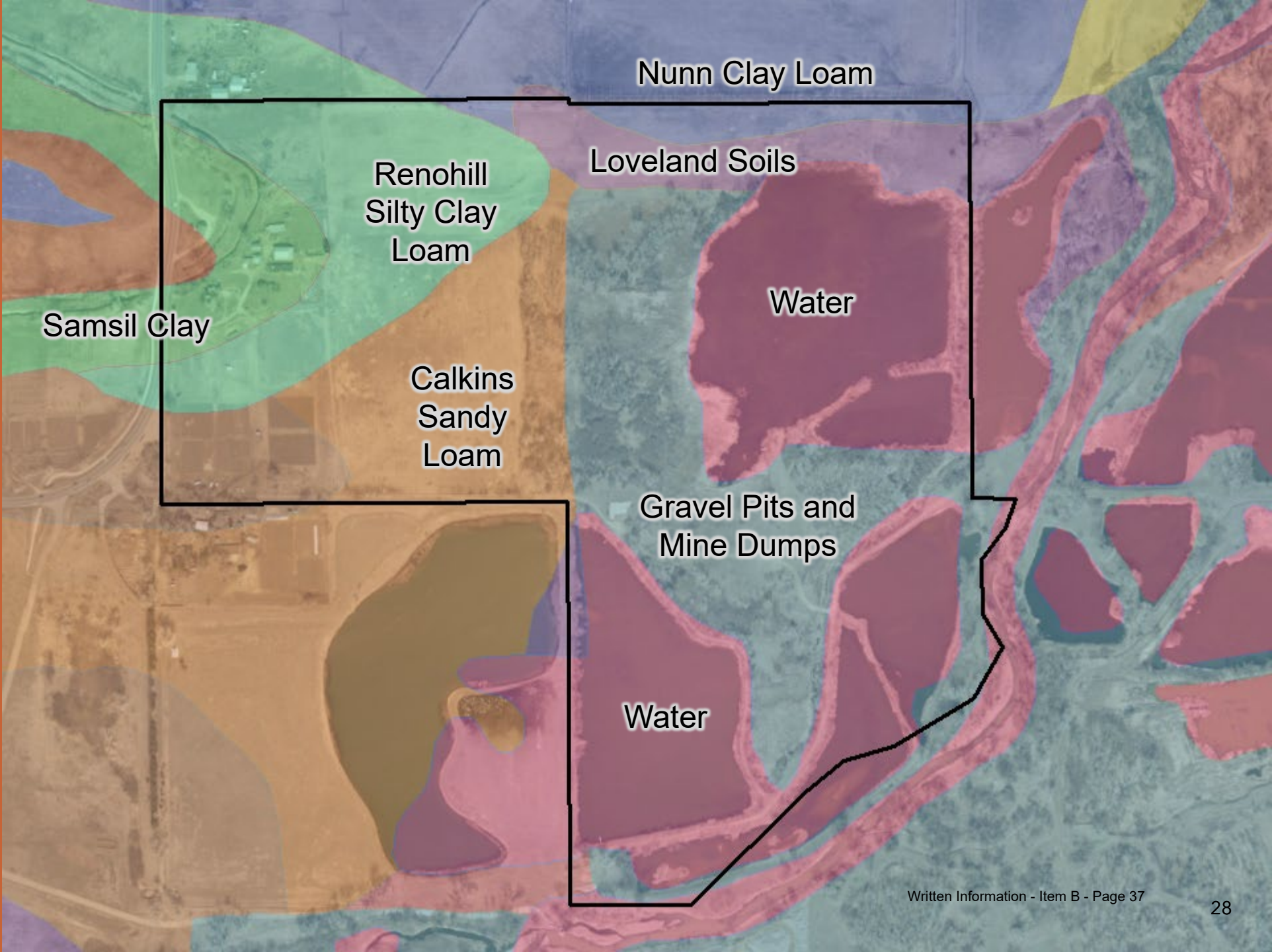
ATTACHMENT C



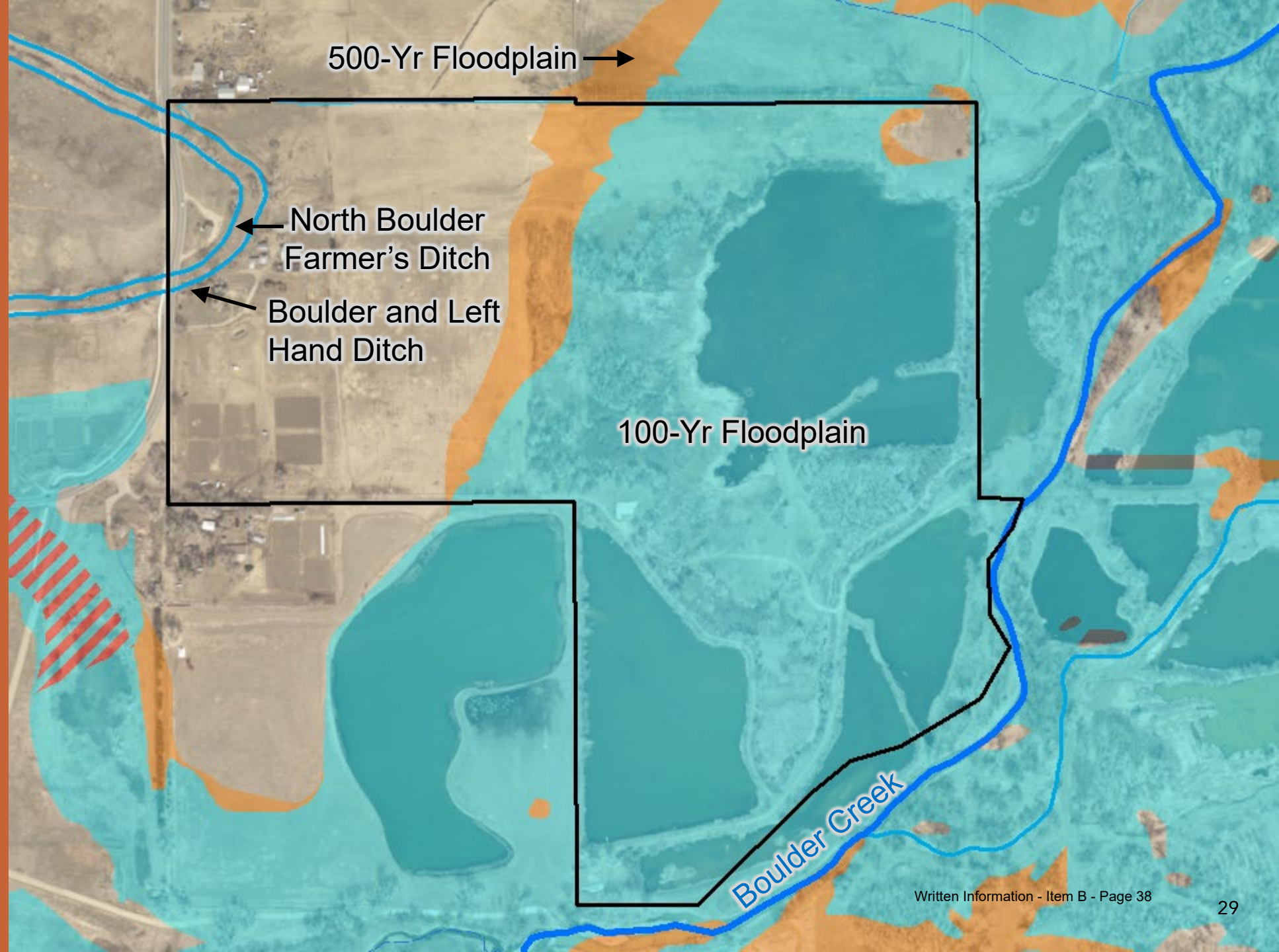
Our legacy and future are based on working landscapes that are in harmony with nature.

- Prime soils
- Senior water rights
- Existing agricultural facilities

Soils Map



Creeks, Ditches and Floodplains



Ecosystem Health

Using the best available science, we protect healthy ecosystems and mend those we have impaired.



- Non-native vegetation communities
- Low ecological value with significant restoration needs



- Open water ponds
- Boulder Creek riparian corridor

Wetlands

Wildlife



ATTACHMENT C

- 32 Native wildlife species
- 62 Waterfowl species
- 31 Riparian songbird species
- 26 Hayfield bird species

2016



2020



- Russian Olive tree removal in 2019
- Significant restoration needs remain

Restoration

Fort Chambers/ Poor Farm

**Property remains
closed to the public**



Fort Chambers/ Poor Farm

Site Visit

