

# MSI Separator Sheet



MSI2010

PCI

## Dale Craker

---

**From:** Dale Craker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 2:40 PM  
**To:** Kathleen Staks; Lynn Aguirre; Josh Tenneson  
**Subject:** FW: Medano Zapata  
**Attachments:** GOCO MZ Disposition Memo 1-13-11.pdf

I want to make all of you aware of this pending "post-closing issue" regarding The Nature Conservancy's Medano-Zapata Ranch purchase from 2003. We helped TNC buy fee title to about 30,000 acres in the San Luis Valley. At the time of the purchase, TNC anticipated that various pieces of the property could one day be sold to various federal agencies for inclusion in different federal holdings in the Valley (Sand Dunes park, wildlife refuges, etc.). TNC has started preliminary discussions to dispose of all 30,000 acres in four separate transactions. Because the feds won't take property subject to a conservation easement, the easement will be extinguished over the sale properties (and that is contemplated in the easement). TNC provided us with a rough outline of the proposed transactions and wanted to make sure that they were proceeding in compliance with the Easement; my response to TNC is below.

These sales will likely take a while - if they ever happen, as they're all subject to Congressional appropriation and with earmark bans and spending cuts, land purchases in the San Luis Valley are probably low on Congress's spending priority list.

I've attached the memo that Peter provided.

---

**From:** Dale Craker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 2:31 PM  
**To:** 'Peter D. Ericson'  
**Cc:** Lise Aangeenbrug  
**Subject:** RE: Medano Zapata

Peter: I've reviewed your memo concerning the potential sale of the Medano Zapata ranch to various federal entities. The approach TNC is taking sounds appropriate and in compliance with the Easement. When the time comes to finalize sales, we'll need to make sure:

- that TNC has clearly established the rationale for the sale, its authorization in the Easement, and how that particular parcel's conservation values and the "primary objectives of the Medano/Zapata Ranch project as approved by the Board" will not be adversely affected (that is done in the memo you submitted; it'll be necessary to reiterate at the time of sale for each particular parcel)
- that acceptable legal descriptions are created
- that each sale parcel is appraised as though unencumbered by the easement (since the easement will be extinguished over the parcel sold)
- that the GOCO proceeds from the sale are accurately calculated (GOCO is entitled to 54% of the sale's net proceeds, so GOCO will need an accounting of the sale's "closing costs and fees")
- that the Easement is properly amended to remove the sale parcel from the Easement's terms.

Because the Easement contemplates sales to federal agencies free from the Easement, none of the sales as proposed would need Board approval. We would need to seek Board approval only if a proposed sale failed to meet the requirements laid out in Section 7H of the Easement.

I can't imagine that I've managed to think of all the things GOCO will need at the time of each sale, but these should be the highlights. Please keep in touch with us as the talks with the various federal agencies proceed so that GOCO is kept aware of each pending transaction.

Dale D. Craker | Director of Programs | Great Outdoors Colorado

(303) 226-4521 | (303) 863-7517 (fax)  
[DaleCraker@goco.org](mailto:DaleCraker@goco.org)

---

**From:** Peter D. Ericson [<mailto:pericson@tnc.org>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 15, 2011 4:39 PM  
**To:** Dale Craker  
**Subject:** RE: Medano Zapata

Attachment(s) available for download until 2011-03-01

Attachment: [GOCO MZ Disposition Memo with Maps 2-15-11.pdf](#) [20.48 MBytes, ME-18b21f5e75c6338b6ce2cf1929540e58]

You have received attachment link(s) within this email sent via The Nature Conservancy's Secure File Transfer. To retrieve the attachment(s), please click on the link(s).

Dale,

That is actually an embarrassing oversight on my part...I forgot to attach the maps in the version I sent to Lise.

With the maps the file size gets a bit unwieldy, so I've upload to a file transfer site. You should get an email that points you to a link where you can download a new version of the memo with the maps included.

Thanks, and thanks for your time in reviewing this. Please let me know if there is anything else and we look forward to talking with you further.

Peter

---

**From:** Dale Craker [<mailto:dcraker@goco.org>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 15, 2011 3:54 PM  
**To:** Peter D. Ericson  
**Subject:** Medano Zapata

Peter: Lise forwarded your memo regarding the proposed M-Z disposition. The memo I got didn't have the maps attached. Please send those so I can better understand what we're talking about.

Thanks

dale

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Lise Aangeenbrug, Executive Director, Great Outdoors Colorado  
FROM: Peter Ericson  
DATE: 1/14/11  
RE: Property Disposition Request for the Medano Zapata Ranch

---

The series of transactions which included the purchase of the Medano-Zapata Ranch and permanent protection via a conservation easement, purchase of the Baca Ranch, designation of Great Sand Dunes National Park, and creation of the Baca National Wildlife Refuge remain signature accomplishments of The Nature Conservancy in Colorado. The Conservancy greatly appreciates the support of Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO) in pursuing this ambitious project. In the 11 years since the Conservancy and a host of partners initiated this work, the shared vision of a 500 square mile "American Serengeti" in the San Luis Valley remains strong. Indeed, the Conservancy continues to focus on the Great Sand Dunes conservation area and greater San Luis Valley as priority landscapes through the present day.

The challenge that has since emerged is how to reconcile this vision with challenges relating to management of an evolving, multi-jurisdictional public/private landscape. In light of this challenge, and with over a decade of experience owning the ranch under our belts, the Conservancy is contemplating disposition of land affected by the GOCO funded fee simple purchase to the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Conservancy has always viewed ownership of property in the landscape to be secondary to achieving conservation objectives across the Great Sand Dunes landscape. With this in mind, the Conservancy accepted inclusion of large portions of the Medano Zapata Ranch in federal expansion boundaries established in the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act of 2000. As such, federal management and ownership of a seamlessly integrated landscape as a viable conservation outcome has always been understood as a possibility, so long as effective conservation outcomes are secured in perpetuity and the partnerships built with adjoining federal agencies, community partners, our agricultural operator and our funders and supporters are maintained.

It is important to recognize that this sentiment was explicitly contemplated by the Conservancy and GOCO upon funding of the easement and, as a result, clear guidance on how to proceed in the event of disposition was written into the easement language. In keeping with this guidance, the Conservancy respectfully submits this memo to GOCO staff and the Board as written justification for proposed disposition of fee simple property, as explicitly called for in Section 7.H of the easement. This memo covers the following topics as a means to solicit the Board's approval:

1. Revisit the terms of the Medano Zapata Ranch Deed of Conservation Easement governing conditions under which the Conservancy may propose and pursue disposition of the ranch, and the Board's standard of review for such requests;
2. revisit the primary objectives of the project as established in the original grant application and subsequent approval;

3. discuss how the primary objectives of the Medano Zapata Ranch Project can be served via disposition of property;
4. outline the transactions which we have discussed with agency partners to date and the rationale behind these transactions.

In terms of the timing for this request, GOCO staff and the Board should understand that the contemplated disposition scenarios all involve working with federal agency partners, subjecting the Conservancy to the uncertainties associated with the federal budgeting and appropriations processes. Faced with the problem of securing approvals without benefit of fully fleshed out or funded transactions, the Conservancy feels that the best course of action is to request GOCO approval in principle to proceed with transactions that fit within the parameters provided by the easement language, fully expecting that this approval in principle be predicated on consistent communication to GOCO regarding details of specific transactions as funding and other important details coalesce, likely in the next 2-4 years.

Given the importance of this topic and the fact that these requests are time sensitive, we would like to better understand GOCO's process and timing for considering this request. The Conservancy would welcome the opportunity to discuss with GOCO staff and Board at any time.

#### **1. Terms of the Medano Zapata Ranch Deed of Conservation Easement**

Section 7, paragraph H of the conservation easement speaks to a variety of scenarios related to disposition of property. The most important factors we understand to be at issue are 1) the financial expectations that exist in the event of a sale and 2) whether the terms of the easement remain in place.

Regarding compensation due to the Board in the event of a sale, the following standard is clearly defined: "In the event of sale of any portion of the Property, the Conservancy shall pay to the Board 54% of the net proceeds of the sale (sales price less all closing costs and fees, multiplied by 54%) at the time of closing on such sale." The stated compensation percentage reflects the fact that the Board granted \$3.48 million against a total purchase price of \$6.4 million, or 54%, in 2003. The Conservancy recognizes that there are clear compensation standards in place and acknowledges the need to work with the Board to reach agreement in the event that disposition in any manner is deemed acceptable.

Regarding whether the terms of the easement remain in place in the event of disposition, the Conservancy believes that the following easement language provides ample clarity regarding options available to the Conservancy and the Board:

"Subject to the prior written approval of the Board, the Conservancy may sell any portion of the Property west of the Closed Basin Canal...to a public agency free from the terms of this easement and/or the Conservancy may sell any portion of the Property to the federal government for inclusion in the Great Sand Dunes National Park...free from the terms of this easement, provided that in any such sale the Board determines in its discretion that the primary objectives of the Medano/Zapata Ranch project is as approved by the Board will not be adversely affected."

The easement establishes geographic parameters for what land can be disposed of and a clear standard as to prospective recipients or buyers of any portions of the Medano Zapata Ranch. Implicit in all scenarios currently being contemplated is the fact that federal agencies cannot accept nor acquire property interests on which there are deed restrictions or easements.

As a result, the Conservancy is obliged to seek the Board's approval for these transactions to proceed free from the terms of the easement.

## **2. Primary Objectives of the Medano Zapata Ranch Project**

In seeking release from the terms of the conservation easement for certain portions of the property the Conservancy understands that the crux of the Board's decision is whether "the primary objectives of the Medano/Zapata Ranch project as approved by the Board will not be adversely affected." Taking into consideration the original application for funding and grant award documentation it is the Conservancy's strong belief that this standard will be met should any or all of the transactions move forward.

A memorandum dated June 14, 1999 from Great Outdoors Colorado Staff Debbie Pentz and Janis Whisman to the Great Outdoors Colorado Board regarding "Open Space Policy Issues and Grant Recommendations" contains the most concise written record the Conservancy possesses regarding what the Board and Staff of Great Outdoors Colorado deemed the "primary objectives" of the project when it was reviewed in 1999 and the subsequent decision to fund the Medano Zapata easement. The memo includes "Attachment D, Summary Descriptions, Funding Conditions and Comments (on projects recommended for funding)" where the Medano Zapata Ranch easement is addressed in detail.

The primary objectives cited by the Board in this document were:

- 1) complimenting adjacent protection efforts (e.g. the national monument, now national park, wilderness area, and state wildlife area/state park);
- 2) continuation of ranching operations;
- 3) use of facilities to advance conservation outreach and education goals; and
- 4) protecting the considerable biological significance of the ranch.

We feel strongly that the Conservancy's work at the Medano Zapata Ranch continues to addresses all four of these objectives. We offer the following as simple measures and explanations of our success relative to the primary objectives:

- *Complimenting adjacent protection efforts:* The Conservancy continues to work closely in partnership with NPS, USFWS, DOW, BLM, State Parks and others to identify and implement improvements on cross boundary management issues including fire response, invasive weeds, water, and wildlife management. Disposal of portions of the Medano Zapata Ranch is, in all cases, meant to further compliment or augment these public protected areas.
- *Continuation of ranching operations:* Working in partnership with a Colorado ranching family who handles the agricultural operations, we have grown our bison herd to 2,000 animals, seasonally rotate as many as 1,000 cattle on the ranch, and become a financially stable agricultural concern in the process.
  - Our bison herd gives us invaluable real world experience on issues including bison genetics, behavior, interaction with other wildlife species and nuts-and-bolts management issues like fencing and the Conservancy is actively engaged in challenging bison conservation discussions at the state and national levels as a result.
- *Use of facilities to advance conservation outreach and education goals:* Over the last 10 years the Conservancy has significantly expanded visitation opportunities, to the point where

approximately 2,000 people make use of the ranch facilities each year. The Conservancy uses the facilities for multi-day naturalist workshops and cultivation for current and prospective donors. The facilities are also available for use by partner organizations, historians, scientists for meetings and retreats and to school groups and other youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts, for volunteer projects. Through a partnership with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado we constructed two publically accessible trails. In 2007 we executed a contract with a guest services operator who offers educational ranch vacations and bison tours which attract visitors from across the globe.

- *Protecting the considerable biological significance of the ranch:* The Conservancy has legally consolidated protections for the water rights underlying the Medano Zapata and Baca Ranches and implemented management plans and activities that protect the most important biological elements of our property related to surface and sub-surface flows.

### **3. Furthering Primary Objectives via Property Disposition**

While the Conservancy feels that the primary objectives of the project are being met through current efforts, we also perceive significant opportunities to utilize disposition as a means to achieve greater impact. In light of recent changes in land ownership within and adjacent to the Medano Zapata Ranch, as well as a change in funding priorities affecting federal agency partners, we believe strongly that selectively augmenting adjacent protected areas is our best option for consolidating progress and/or furthering all objectives of the Medano Zapata Ranch project. This assessment undergirds the transactions we are contemplating and deserves brief discussion as a result.

In December 2009 +/- 15,419 acres of Colorado State Land Board holdings transferred to the National Park Service and 4,408 acres to Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in Great Sand Dunes National Park and Baca National Wildlife Refuge, respectively. These transfers had been anticipated since the signing of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act (the Act) in 2000, though the exact timing of this transfer was a moving target. The vast majority of transferred lands were leased from the State Land Board by the Conservancy for purposes of bison grazing. These transfers made the Medano Ranch a virtual in-holding of the Park and Refuge, complicating the Conservancy's ability to manage the Medano ranch under, effectively, two new landlords.

Since the transfer both the Park and the Refuge have been able to refocus on the Medano Ranch as integral component of their General Management Plan (GMP) and Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), respectively. The Park's GMP identified important resource values on the Medano – both those portions acquired from the State and those portions that remain under Conservancy ownership – which the Park has a duty to protect or enhance. These values include interpretation, archeological resources, additional public education opportunities, water management and invasive weeds, to name just a few. While the Conservancy is currently focused on all of these conservation values, both the Park and the Conservancy are of the opinion that there are efficiencies to be gained by bringing as much land as possible under the Park's GMP in the near term and that certain of these conservation values– namely historic and archeological resources – would benefit from the broader mandate and increased expertise that the Park Service could bring to bear. As of January 2011, the Refuge is in the early stages of a new CCP process. It is the shared opinion of the Refuge and the Conservancy that resolving ownership, or at least laying out a clear process for acquisition of the Medano Ranch by the Refuge, would improve their plan, again leading to a more consistent management regime on Refuge lands. Essentially, the Conservancy and the two agencies see disposition as a means to streamline management on these lands in a manner that will protect if not enhance all conservation values.

While the BLM was not directly involved in the 2009 transfers they too are in the midst of pertinent planning efforts, spurring agency staff to renew discussions with the Conservancy regarding the South San Luis Lakes parcel, discussions first broached in 2000 when the Conservancy purchased the Medano Zapata Ranch. BLM is in the midst of an amendment to their Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) boundary. This boundary revision is meant to address access issues and connectivity of their land and water interests in the Great Sand Dunes landscape. As part of this process, BLM has focused on potential acquisitions that are meant to provide a buffer for the existing ACEC against the impacts of climate change and other threats by having additional lands and wetlands with different hydrologic regimes available for restoration and protection. Having this wide diversity of wetland types, locations, and size provide one of the best opportunities for adaptation in the face of climate change and will benefit a variety of species and habitat types in a manner that is above and beyond what the Conservancy is able to do on its own.

Concurrent with the land transfers coming to fruition and management/planning issues being examined, all three federal agencies were empowered to discuss land acquisition due to a relatively favorable political and funding climate. The Obama administration has called for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the primary source of funds for federal land acquisition. As a result of this signal from political leadership, federal land management agencies have enthusiastically sought to resume discussions with the Conservancy regarding disposition of our property within expansion boundaries defined in the Act and the proposed ACEC boundary

Taken in combination, the effect of land transfers, increased or renewed agency focus regarding cross boundary management and renewed interest in federal acquisition presents opportunities to advance objectives of the Medano Zapata Ranch project. The Park and Refuge are focused on land adjacent to and within the Medano Zapata Ranch to a degree we have not seen before. Given this context, the Conservancy feels strongly that now is the time to utilize disposition as a strategy to capitalize on this renewed federal interest in achieving shared conservation goals.

#### **4. Proposed Projects and Justifications**

There are four potential transactions for which the Conservancy is seeking Board approval in principle. Please refer to the two attached maps for reference. While these maps were prepared specifically to illustrate the BLM South San Luis Lake transaction (#1 below) and the NPS Medano Ranch transaction (#3 below), the West Medano (#2, below) and USFWS Medano parcels (#4, below) are clearly visible on these maps.

1. At a date to be determined, but no sooner than calendar year 2012, fair market value sale of the 4,682 acre "South San Luis Lakes" parcel to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) free of the terms of the Board funded easement for inclusion in the Blanca Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC.)
2. At a date to be determined, but no sooner than calendar year 2013, fair market value sale of a 7,996 acre "West Medano" parcel which lies immediately west of San Luis Lake State Park to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) free of the terms of the Board funded easement for inclusion in the Blanca Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC.)
3. At a date to be determined, but no sooner than calendar year 2012, fair market value sale of all remaining Conservancy fee simple holdings (+/- 14,706 acres of the Medano Ranch) within the designated expansion boundary of the Great Sand Dunes National Park to the National Park Service free of the terms of the Board funded easement; the



size and cost may necessitate two or more transactions, though the Conservancy's strong preference would be as few transactions as possible.

4. At a date to be determined, but no sooner than calendar year 2013, fair market value sale of all remaining Conservancy fee simple holdings (+/- 6,623 acres of the Medano Ranch) within the designated expansion boundary of the Baca National Wildlife Refuge to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service free of the terms of the Board funded easement; the size and cost may necessitate two or more transactions, though the Conservancy's strong preference would be as few transactions as possible.

Given that under all scenarios a public agency is augmenting public protected lands and that under all three scenarios the Conservancy will retain the vast bulk of the +/- 20,000 acre Zapata Ranch and all guest service facilities located therein, in no way is the Conservancy abrogating our responsibility to protect the natural values as originally established, to work cooperatively with neighboring agencies, nor compromising our ability to continue outreach and education activities that are a crucial part of our programmatic agenda.

#### *1. South San Luis Lakes Parcel*

The Conservancy wishes to pursue the sale of 4,682 acres of land contiguous with the BLM's Blanca Wetlands complex. This land has is part of the Zapata Ranch and lies west of the Closed Basin canal and south of Lane 6. This land would be subtracted from the larger, +/- 20,000 acres of the Zapata Ranch. Referring back to the terms of the conservation easement, this transaction would meet the geographic test of being west of the Closed Basin Canal, and the buyer/recipient standard of having a public agency partner, in this case the BLM. Regarding financial implications, the Conservancy understands that GOCO would be entitled to the requisite 54% of the proceeds.

BLM desires to acquire and restore critical playa wetland systems that provide essential wildlife habitat to multiple threatened and endangered species and offer important public recreational opportunities. As surface water became over-appropriated and wells were drilled into aquifers lowering the Valley's water table, these wetlands started disappearing. State and federal agencies initiated wetland restoration efforts in the 1960's, as bird populations were plummeting. A critical component of these restoration efforts was the development of the BLM's Blanca Wetlands ACEC, a 10,000 acre Special Recreation Management Area, an Important Bird Area in Colorado, a key site for the Intermountain West Joint Venture shorebird science team, and a nationally significant wildlife resource area. The diverse and unique wetlands found at Blanca Wetlands provide important habitats for 13 threatened and endangered species. In addition, over 160 species of birds are known to use the site, including 26 species of shorebirds, 21 species of waterfowl, and 15 species of waterbirds. Sale to the BLM would allow the agency to fulfill goals identified in the 1995 Integrated Activity Plan for Blanca Wetlands. In BLM's assessment, the parcel is imperative for connectivity of wetlands across the landscape and. In the Conservancy's assessment, inclusion in the Blanca Wetlands ACEC and increased resources for wetlands restoration is a boon for the considerable biological resources of the ranch. The Conservancy has managed this land for over a decade, adaptively managing the significant water resources in efforts to benefit the wetlands. However, there is no substitute for restoration efforts integrated into the Blanca Wetlands ACEC. The Conservancy is excited by the prospect of moving forward with a transaction that has been 15 years in the making.

This project is the most clearly defined in scope and has progressed in federal funding discussions as a result. This sale would be at fair market value. In June of 2010 BLM submitted a FY 2012 LWCF funding request to acquire 4,682 acres of the South San Luis Lakes parcel for a total cost of \$1,875,000, which is an estimate of fair market value. Early indications are that

the request was ranked highly nationwide, giving it a very strong chance of proceeding and securing funding in the summer or fall of 2011.

## *2. West Medano Parcel*

The Conservancy may pursue the sale of 7,996 acres of the West Medano that is likely to be included within BLM's revised Blanca Wetlands ACEC boundary. This land is part of the Medano Ranch and lies west of the Closed Basin canal and north of Lane 6. Referring back to the terms of the conservation easement, this transaction would meet the geographic test of being west of the Closed Basin Canal, and the buyer/recipient standard of having a public agency partner, in this case the BLM. Regarding financial implications, the Conservancy understands that GOCO would be entitled to the requisite 54% of the proceeds.

The rationale for pursuing sale of the West Medano is essentially the same as information presented above for the South San Luis Lakes parcel. The West Medano is of particular interest to BLM for its ability to augment water flows, either surface or subsurface, which would be used to benefit restoration efforts at Blanca Wetlands.

This project is prospective in nature as BLM and the Conservancy considers whether and when to submit an LWCF request in light of already submitted requests made for FY 2012. Submissions for FY 2013 or FY 2014 are strong possibilities as the BLM ACEC revision is expected to be completed on a complimentary schedule.

## *3. Remainder of the Medano Ranch within NPS Expansion Boundary*

The Conservancy seeks the Board's approval for sale of the remainder of the fee simple holdings (+/- 14,706 acres) within the designated expansion boundaries of the Great Sand Dunes National Park to the National Park Service free of the terms of the Board funded easement. This could occur in one or more transactions in 2012 or later. Referring back to the terms of the conservation easement, this sale would meet the necessary geographic and recipient expectations established in the conservation easement as all acreage proposed for sale sits inside the designated Park Expansion boundary as defined in the Act and the National Park Service would be the buyer. Regarding financial implications, the Conservancy understands that GOCO would be entitled to the requisite 54% of the proceeds.

In May, 2010 the Park Service submitted a preliminary request for fiscal year 2012 LWCF funding for acquisition of the Medano Ranch within the Park expansion boundary. The request generated by NPS focused primarily on the strong desire to augment protection of and public access to historical and archeological values on the Medano Ranch. In specific, preservation and interpretation of the historic Medano Ranch headquarters, corrals, and various outbuildings that are within the donated parcel has been discussed in depth. Ultimately, a Park Service interpretive/education facility on the western portion of the Park is one possible outcome. The Park Service is assessing how best to secure monies in support of the capital intensive elements of this project, though exact funding requests have not been quantified. As envisioned by the Park Service, this facility would be capable of hosting public visitors, likely in a guided day-use only fashion, whereas there is currently no such facility, public nor private, capable of playing this role. A Medano Ranch headquarters facility would allow the Conservancy and the Park Service to highlight the cultural, archeological and ecological elements of the Medano Ranch and former Baca Ranch. The Park is currently focused almost completely on the dune system and associated geo-morphological process in the eastern portion of the Park while the Conservancy's base of operations is at the Zapata Ranch headquarters further to the south.

The Conservancy has spent in excess of \$600,000 of privately raised, discretionary funds stabilizing, renovating and preserving historically significant buildings on the entire

Medano Zapata in the last three years. Over the last decade we have supported a variety of researchers and organizations in their efforts to document historical features of the Ranch. This has included working cooperatively with researchers from the National Park Service, the Smithsonian, Colorado Historical Society, CU-Denver School of Architecture and Planning, and various written and oral histories undertaken by the Conservancy. However, the Conservancy feels that the Park Service is better staffed and capitalized to undertake additional renovation, interpretation and education projects which focus on historical, archeological and other conservation values which are slightly outside the Conservancy's biodiversity mission. In light of competing conservation priorities that are closer to the Conservancy's mission, our assessment is that realizing a sale to the Park Service offers a means for to greatly expand the use of the Medano Zapata facilities for conservation outreach and education under National Park ownership while retaining the same level of commitment to the biodiversity values which principally drew the Conservancy to purchasing and protecting the ranch to begin with.

The Park and Conservancy acknowledge that funding, planning and timing considerations may warrant a phased approach to transactions, as there are a host of issues to be resolved. The determining factor has been, and must always be, a determination by the Conservancy and its partners that the multi faceted conservation objectives we are pursuing at the ranch our being protected and/or advanced. Advancing bison conservation in this landscape in a manner that is ecologically defensible and economically viable is enormously important to the Conservancy. Maintaining or improving the ability for the Conservancy and public partners to educate and engage the general public, agency partners, elected officials or supporters is crucial.

#### *4. Remainder of the Medano Ranch within USFWS Expansion Boundary*

The Conservancy seeks the Board's approval for sale of the remainder of the fee simple holdings (+/- 14,706 acres) within the designated expansion boundaries of the Baca National Wildlife Refuge to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service free of the terms of the Board funded easement. This could occur in one or more transactions in calendar year 2013 or later. This sale would meet the necessary geographic and recipient expectations established in the conservation easement as all acreage proposed for sale sits inside the designated Refuge acquisition boundary as defined in the Act and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be the buyer. Regarding financial implications, the Conservancy understands that GOCO would be entitled to the requisite 54% of the proceeds.

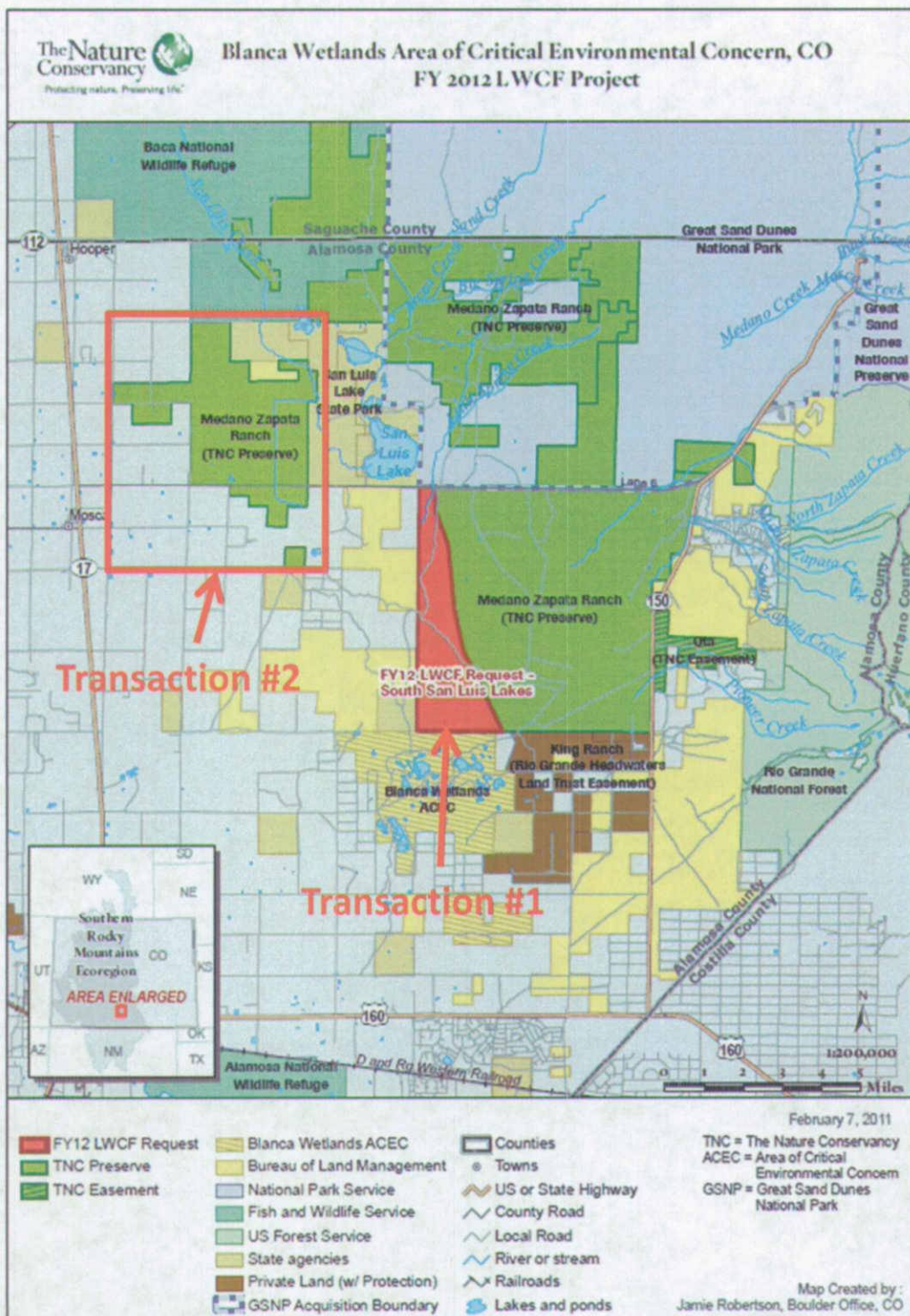
The justification for pursuing this sale is largely the same as the rationale identified for a sale to the National Park. The Conservancy is confident that should portions of the Medano Ranch come under Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction the same standards of stewardship and resource protection for the habitat and species of the ranch will be maintained. The notable difference between the Park and Refuge is that there are a much lower concentration of historic structures on those portions of the Medano that would go to the Refuge, obviating the desire to focus on historical preservation and interpretation. Furthermore, given its size and relative lack of facilities and much smaller staff compared to the Park, the Refuge does and will have less of an emphasis on public visitation.

Baca National Wildlife Refuge is undertaking a number of planning initiatives in 2011 and 2012, including their overarching Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP.) The Refuge has clearly indicated a desire to acquire portions of the Medano Ranch within the Refuge expansion boundary in the future and will likely address this potential acquisition in the CCP process. However, because this process is pending the Refuge did not submit a FY 2012 LWCF request for the remaining acreage within their acquisition. The Refuge foresees making budgetary and/or appropriations requests in time for either FY 2013 or 2014 budget cycles.

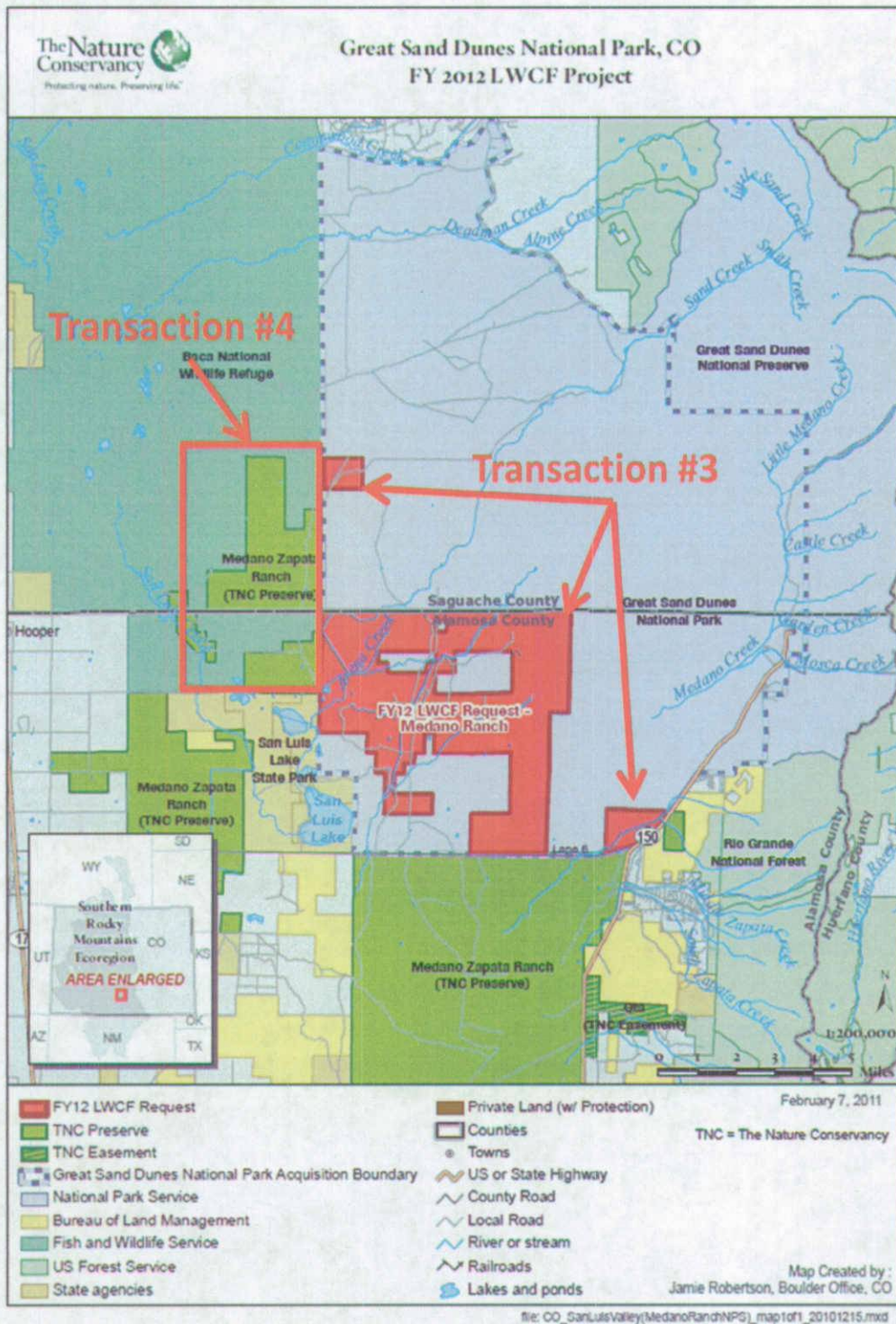
## Closing

In closing, we want to make it clear to the Board that the transactions we are contemplating are part and parcel of a larger and longer term effort aimed at achieving our stated conservation goals in the Great Sand Dunes landscape. The Conservancy would be remiss to not consider all strategies, including disposal of portions of the Medano Zapata ranch that offer the possibility of improved conservation outcomes. The Conservancy will only do so in a manner that strives to minimize inefficient transactions to the greatest extent possible. As the Conservancy and the Board are well aware, transaction costs are not insignificant, nor are the resources necessary to clear administrative and budgetary hurdles when dealing with multiple government entities and funding partners. The transactions for which we seek the Board's permission are defensible in their own right and as part of a larger ownership and management strategy. In our view these transactions meet the standard of not adversely affecting the primary objectives of the project as approved. The Conservancy respectfully requests that the Board provide formal permission to proceed in discussions regarding these proposed disposition scenarios. The Conservancy wishes to have the utmost confidence that our efforts and the efforts of our agency partners are understood and supported by GOCO at all times.

Map 1: Proposed Transaction #1 – BLM South San Luis Lakes and #2 – BLM West Medano



Map 2: Proposed Transaction #3 - NPS Medano Ranch and #4 – USFWS Medano Ranch





## MEMORANDUM

To: GOCO Board  
From: Michele Frishman, Open Space Program Manager  
Date: September 21, 2017  
Re: Transfer of GOCO-funded Medano Ranch Inholdings to the National Park Service

---

### Transfer of Medano Ranch Inholdings

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has requested GOCO's approval of its proposed transfer of 12,518 acres of the Medano Ranch in Alamosa County to the National Park Service (NPS). This acreage is made up of several inholdings within the boundaries of the Great Sand Dunes National Park. TNC hopes to complete the conveyance by the end of 2017.

GOCO funded TNC's acquisition of the larger Medano-Zapata Ranch, which includes the NPS inholdings and the West Medano portion described below, through several transactions in 1999 and 2003 for \$3.48 million. This memo concerns properties within the Medano Ranch portion of TNC's holdings.

At the time of the original projects, the parties understood that TNC anticipated eventually transferring some of the properties. Therefore, the conservation easement placed on the property provides specific instructions as to how such transfers are to be handled:

1. GOCO approval is required for any sale of the property to the federal government for inclusion in the Great Sand Dunes National Park that would involve removal of the conservation easement. In this case, the easement must be terminated with respect to the Medano Ranch inholdings because the federal government will not accept encumbered property.
2. TNC must provide a written request for GOCO approval along with written justification for the sale. The sale is subject to GOCO's determination in its discretion that the primary objectives of the project as approved by the board will not be adversely affected. In making its determination, GOCO may rely on the written justification for the sale submitted with the request, the original grant application for the project, and any other documentation it deems pertinent. TNC submitted the attached memorandum that provides its written justification for the transfer and addresses the primary objectives of the original project.
3. In the event of a sale of any portion of the property, TNC must refund to GOCO 54 percent of the net proceeds of the sale (sale price less all closing costs and fees) at

the time of closing. The exact amount due to GOCO for the transfer of the Medano Ranch inholdings has not been determined yet because the appraisal is not complete.

4. If GOCO approves the request, the parties must amend Exhibit A and the terms of the conservation easement prior to the conveyance to exclude the inholdings.

Staff has reviewed the attached memorandum and documentation of the original project, and concludes that the primary objectives of the project will not be adversely affected by the transfer of the inholdings to the NPS.

### **Transfer of West Medano**

TNC is also working on the transfer of 7,996 acres of the Medano Ranch known as the West Medano property. This property is protected by the same conservation easement as the Medano Ranch inholdings described above. TNC plans to sell the West Medano land to the Rio Grande Water Conservancy District, with the conservation easement remaining in place. Under the terms of the easement, GOCO approval is not required for TNC to subdivide and sell portions of the property west of the Closed Basin Canal if they remain subject to the easement. However, TNC must make the 54 percent refund to GOCO for the West Medano transfer. The sale price is \$4 million, but the closing costs and fees are not yet known in order for us to determine the exact amount due to GOCO. TNC hopes to complete this conveyance in October 2017.

### **Action Item**

The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee recommends that the board:

1. Approve the transfer of the Medano Ranch inholdings by The Nature Conservancy to the National Park Service pursuant to the requirements of the conservation easement.

### **Attachment**

- A. TNC memorandum





The Nature Conservancy in Colorado  
2424 Spruce Street  
Boulder, CO 80302

tel [303] 444-2950  
fax [303] 444-2986  
[nature.org/colorado](http://nature.org/colorado)

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Michelle Frishman, Open Space Program Manager, Great Outdoors Colorado  
FROM: Nancy Fishbein  
DATE: August 11, 2017  
RE: Property Disposition Request for a Portion of the Medano-Zapata Ranch

---

According to the terms and conditions of the conservation easement in place on The Nature Conservancy’s Medano-Zapata Ranch in Colorado’s San Luis Valley, the Conservancy must obtain permission from the Board of Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO) to transfer portions of the property free from the easement encumbrance. This memo provides justification for and requests authorization to pursue a land transfer to the National Park Service.

**Background**

The series of transactions which included the purchase of the Medano-Zapata Ranch and permanent protection via a conservation easement, purchase of the Baca Ranch, designation of Great Sand Dunes National Park, and creation of the Baca National Wildlife Refuge remain signature accomplishments of The Nature Conservancy in Colorado. The Conservancy greatly appreciates the support of GOCO in pursuing this ambitious project. In the 17 years since the Conservancy and a host of partners initiated this work, the shared vision of a 500-square mile “American Serengeti” in the San Luis Valley remains strong.

The challenge that has since emerged is how to reconcile this vision with challenges relating to management of an evolving, multi-jurisdictional public/private landscape. Considering this challenge, and with almost two decades of experience owning the ranch, the Conservancy is pursuing disposition of a portion of the GOCO-funded Medano-Zapata Ranch to the National Park Service.

The Medano-Zapata Ranch is comprised of two units: The approximately 27,278-acre Medano portion lies primarily north of Lane 6 and the Zapata portion (about 22,535 acres) lies south of Lane 6. There is a conservation easement covering the Medano Ranch and a second easement on a portion of the Zapata Ranch. The Zapata Ranch guest facilities and the immediate area surrounding them are not subject to a conservation easement. (See Map 1).

The Conservancy has always viewed ownership of property to be secondary to achieving conservation objectives across the Great Sand Dunes landscape. With this in mind, the Conservancy accepted inclusion of large portions of the Medano Ranch in federal acquisition boundaries established in the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act of 2000. When the Great Sand Dunes National Park was established in 2004, portions of The Nature Conservancy’s Medano Ranch became “inholdings” within the Park boundary. As such, federal management and ownership of a seamlessly integrated landscape as a viable conservation outcome has always been understood as a possibility, so long as effective conservation outcomes are secured in perpetuity and the partnerships built with adjoining federal agencies, community partners, our agricultural operator and our funders and supporters are maintained.

It is important to recognize that this sentiment was explicitly contemplated by the Conservancy and GOCO upon funding of the easement and, as a result, clear guidance on how to proceed in the event of disposition was written into the easement language. In keeping with this guidance, the Conservancy

respectfully submits this memo to GOCO staff and the Board as written justification for proposed disposition of fee simple property, as explicitly called for in the conservation easement.

### **Proposed Project**

The Conservancy seeks the Board's approval for sale of the remainder of the fee simple holdings (+/-12,518 acres) within the designated expansion boundary of the Great Sand Dunes National Park to the National Park Service (NPS) free of the terms of the conservation easement. Please refer to the attached map for reference. We anticipate the completion of the sale by the end of calendar year 2017. Per the terms of the conservation easement (explained below), this sale would meet the necessary geographic and recipient expectations as all acreage proposed for sale sits inside the designated Park Expansion boundary as defined in the Act and the NPS would be the buyer. Regarding financial implications, the Conservancy understands that GOCO is entitled to 54% of the proceeds.

### **Terms of the Medano Ranch Deed of Conservation Easement**

Section 7, paragraph H of the conservation easement addresses the criteria for disposition of property. The most important factors at issue are 1) the financial expectations that exist in the event of a sale and 2) whether the terms of the easement remain in place.

Regarding compensation due to the Board in the event of a sale, the following standard is clearly defined: "In the event of sale of any portion of the Property, the Conservancy shall pay to the Board 54% of the net proceeds of the sale (sales price less all closing costs and fees, multiplied by 54%) at the time of closing on such sale." The stated compensation percentage reflects the fact that the Board granted \$3.48 million against a total purchase price of \$6.4 million, or 54%, in 2003.

Regarding whether the terms of the easement remain in place in the event of disposition, the following easement language applies:

"Subject to the prior written approval of the Board, the Conservancy may sell any portion of the Property to the federal government for inclusion in the Great Sand Dunes National Park...free from the terms of this easement, provided that in any such sale the Board determines in its discretion that the primary objectives of the Medano/Zapata Ranch project as approved by the Board will not be adversely affected."

### **Primary Objectives of the Medano-Zapata Ranch Project & Project Justification**

In seeking release from the terms of the conservation easement for certain portions of the property, the Conservancy understands that the crux of the Board's decision is whether "the primary objectives of the Medano/Zapata Ranch project as approved by the Board will not be adversely affected." In a memorandum dated June 14, 1999, GOCO staff reported to the Board what they deemed to be the primary objectives of the project when it was originally reviewed and subsequently funded. These objectives are as follows, and we feel strongly that the Conservancy's work at the Medano Ranch will continue to address all four of these objectives after the transfer of portions of the property to the NPS:

1. *Complimenting adjacent protection efforts:* In December 2009, approximately 15,419 acres of Colorado State Land Board holdings, most which were leased by the Conservancy for bison grazing, transferred to the NPS for inclusion in Great Sand Dunes National Park. This transfer had been anticipated since the signing of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act (the Act) in 2000, but the transfer made portions of the Medano Ranch a virtual in-holding of the Park, complicating the Conservancy's ability to manage it.

The upside of the transfer has been that the Park has been able to focus on the portion of the Medano Ranch within the Park boundary as an integral component of its General Management Plan (GMP) completed in 2006 (see Map 2). The Park's GMP identified important resource values on the Medano – both those portions acquired from the State and those portions that remain under Conservancy

ownership – which the Park has a duty to protect or enhance. These values include interpretation, archeological resources, additional public education opportunities, water management and invasive weeds, to name just a few. Both the Park and the Conservancy believe that there are efficiencies to be gained by bringing as much land as possible under the Park’s GMP in the near term and that certain of these conservation values– namely historic and archeological resources – would benefit from the Park’s broader mandate and increased expertise.

2. *Continuation of ranching operations:* As part of its arrangement with the NPS, TNC will continue to manage the ranching operation on the Medano for 5-7 years after the property transfer. After that time, the NPS may manage a conservation bison herd per the terms of its overall ungulate management plan, which is still under development. The Conservancy has been involved in the development of the management plan and continues to work closely with the NPS to finalize it. TNC will continue to own and manage the 20,000+-acre Zapata Ranch.

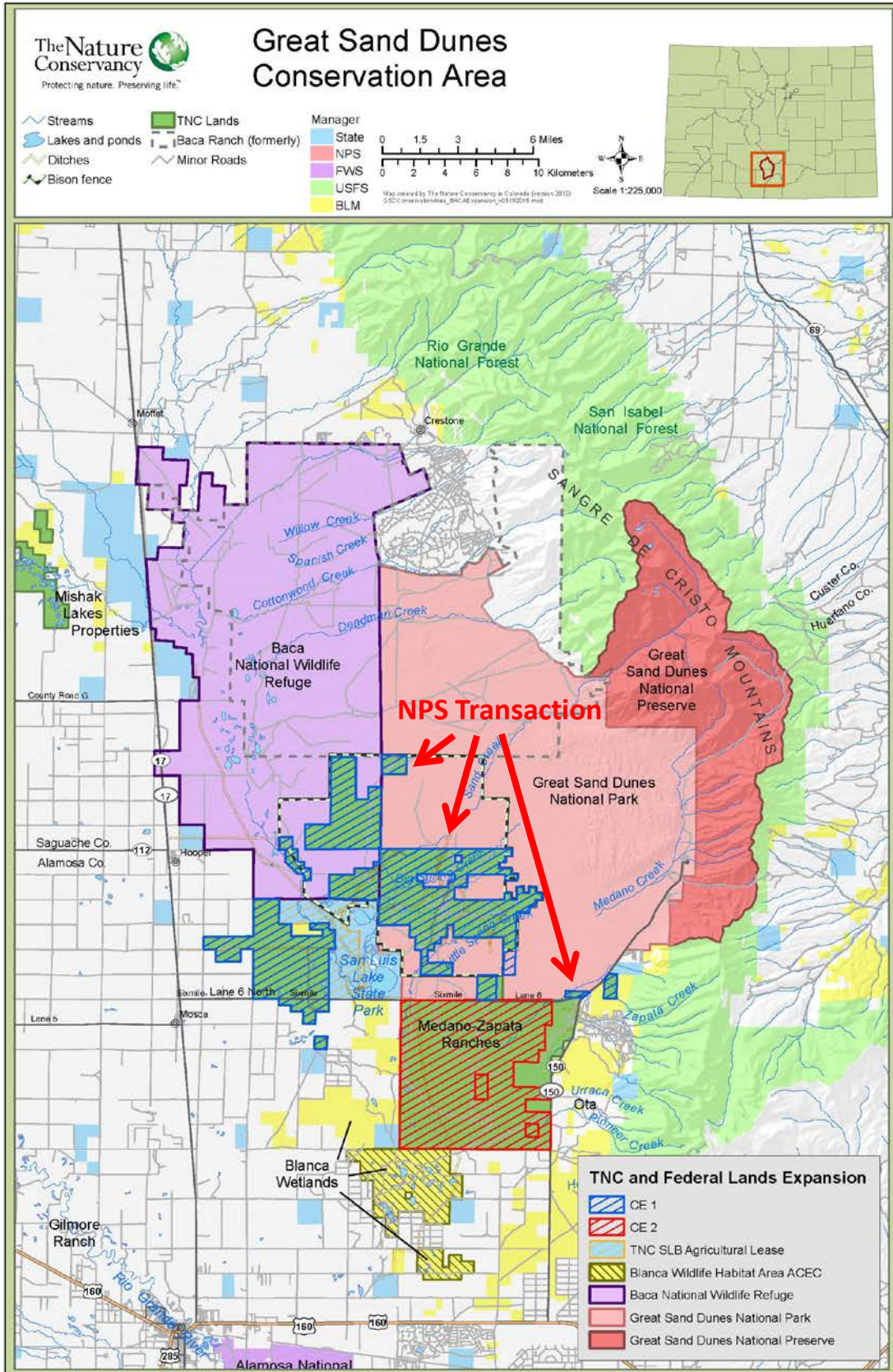
3. *Use of facilities to advance conservation outreach and education goals:* The Conservancy will continue to use the facilities at the Zapata for naturalist workshops, staff and donor events. The facilities will continue to be available for use by partner organizations, historians, scientists for meetings and retreats and to school groups and other youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts, for volunteer projects. In 2007 we executed a contract with a guest services operator who offers educational ranch vacations which attract visitors from across the globe. With the transfer to the NPS, we anticipate that use of the Medano facilities will increase (use of the Zapata facilities will likely remain the same) because of the Park’s focus on augmenting protection of and public access to historical and archeological values on the Medano Ranch, specifically the preservation and interpretation of the historic headquarters, corrals, and outbuildings. A Medano Ranch headquarters facility would allow the Conservancy and the Park Service to highlight the cultural, archeological and ecological elements of the Medano Ranch and former Baca Ranch.

4. *Protecting the considerable biological significance of the ranch:* Whether in the ownership of The Nature Conservancy or the NPS, the protection of the Medano-Zapata’s extensive biological resources is paramount. The NPS’s General Management Plan preferred alternative places the land acquired from TNC in either the Natural/Wild or Guided Learning designations, except for the building areas that comprise the Medano Headquarters (see Map 2). These designations are among the most restrictive. The focus of the Guided Learning designation is to protect sensitive resources while allowing education to occur. These are areas where visitor use is permitted only with a guide or escort to protect particularly sensitive resources. The Natural/Wild designation is reserved for the wildest places. It protects natural resources and provides opportunities for physical challenge, adventure, and solitude. Natural systems and processes prevail, and natural and cultural resources are generally unaltered and unaffected by human influences. Resource inventory and monitoring activities help to identify and protect resources. Rare or special plant communities receive management emphasis for preservation and protection. Archeological sites are protected in place. Natural soundscapes and the dark night sky predominate. The Conservancy is confident that the ecological resources of the Medano will be well taken care of under the stewardship of the National Park Service.

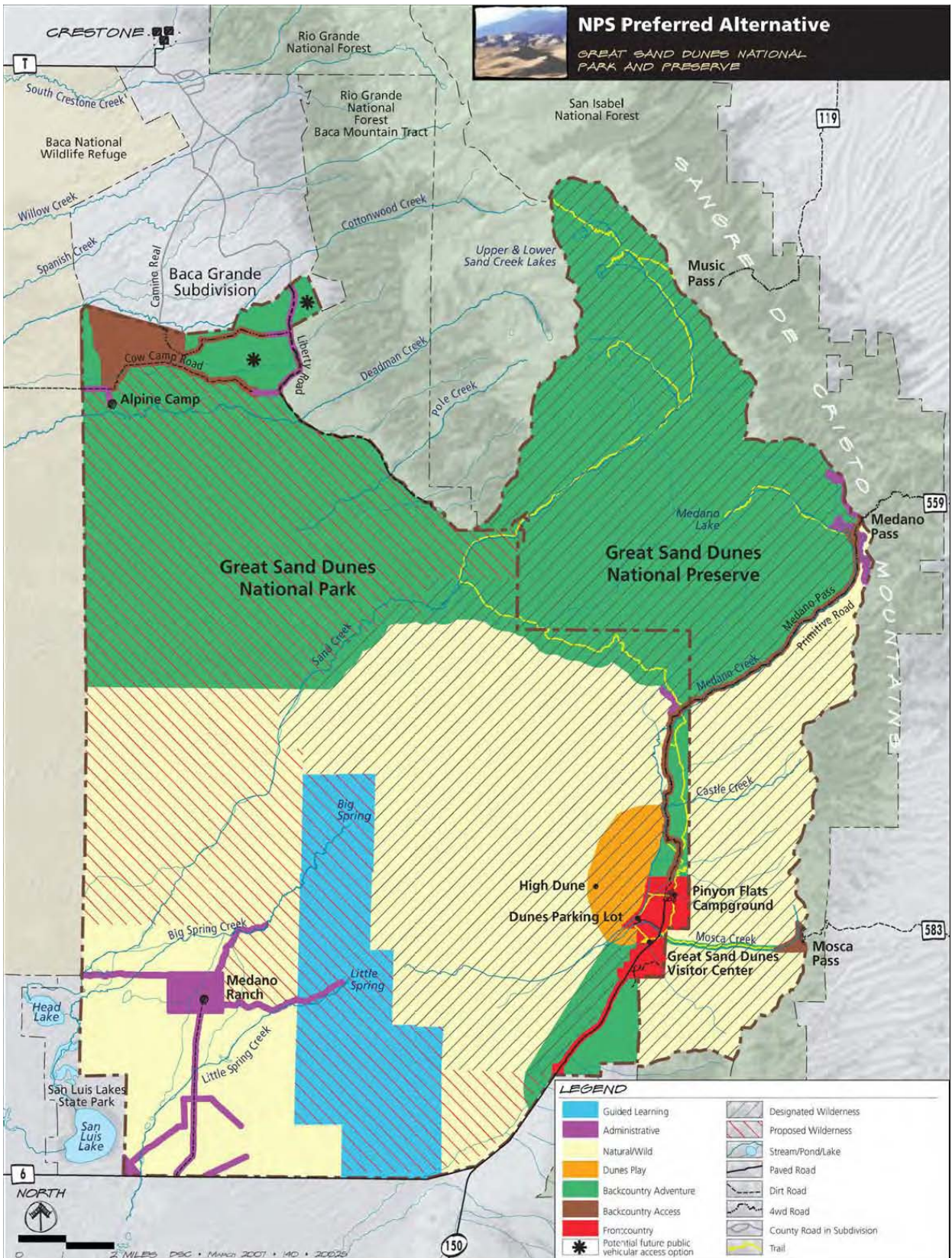
### **Concluding Thoughts**

The Conservancy respectfully requests that the Board provide formal permission to transfer portions of the Medano-Zapata Ranch to the NPS free from the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. The transaction is defensible in its own right, and it addresses larger ownership and management strategies. In our view this transaction meets the standard of not adversely affecting the primary objectives of the project as approved.

Map 1: NPS Parcels



Map 2: Great Sand Dunes National Park General Management Plan





THE STATE BOARD OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO TRUST FUND  
BOARD RETREAT – FRUITA, COLORADO  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017

<u>INDEX</u>	<u>RESOLUTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Year in Review		2
Mid-Strategic Plan Review – Finance & Policy Background		2
Audit Policies – Substantially Equal		2
Audit Policies – Discretion, Use, Eligibility		2
Substitution Procedure		2
CPW O&M Funding		2
CPW Director’s Innovation Fund Results		2
CPW Wildlife Capital Dollars		3



*A meeting of The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund convened at 9:02 AM on September 28, 2017 at the Fruita Community Center.*

**Board Present** Jason Brinkley (Chair), Tom Burke, Warren Dean, Jenn Dice, Karma Giulianelli, John Howard, Tony Lewis, Dave Palenchar (Treasurer), Bob Randall, Chana Reed, Jacy Rock (Vice Chair), Jody Rogers, Linda Strand, Michelle Zimmerman

**Board Absent** Katie Cattanach (Secretary), Hollie Velasquez Horvath

**Staff Present** Matt Brady, Madison Brannigan, Laura Cardon, Chris Castilian, Andrea Conrad, Rosemary Dempsey, Peter Ericson, Michele Frishman, Amanda Hill, Jake Houston, Dylan Lewan, Erika Meyer, Jackie Miller, Michelle Schrote, Emily Orbanek, Chris Yuan-Farrell

**Public Present** Michael Reagan (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

**Year in Review** Mr. Castilian presented the year in review.

**Mid-Strategic Plan Review – Finance & Policy Background** Mr. Ericson presented on GOCO’s finance and policy background. Specifically, he reviewed GOCO’s existing finance and programmatic policies, current systems for tracking, managing, and reporting on finances, and policy questions board/staff must consider and/or address.

**Audit Policies – Substantially Equal** Mr. Ericson presented on draft policy recommendations and next steps for defining, managing, and tracking substantially equal as outlined in the meeting materials.

**Audit Policies – Discretion, Use, Eligibility** Mr. Ericson presented on policy recommendations and next steps on grant categorization in relation to discretionary authority, use, and eligibility as outlined in the meeting materials.

**Substitution Procedure** Ms. Frishman presented options on revising or eliminating GOCO’s current property substitution procedure as outlined in the meeting materials. Following discussion, the board asked to revisit the topic the following day.

**CPW O&M Funding** Ms. Orbanek presented a history of GOCO’s state parks capital versus operations/maintenance investments and outlined a recommendation on an annual single recreation management grant as outlined in the meeting materials.

*The board unanimously (14-0) agreed to proceed with implementing a single recreation management grant in this year’s CPW Investment Proposal.*

**CPW Director’s Innovation Fund Results** Ms. Orbanek presented results from the first round of the Director’s Innovation Fund. She outlined next steps for collecting feedback and making improvements to the application process for subsequent rounds.



**CPW Wildlife Capital Dollars**

Ms. Orbanek presented Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff and commission recommendations on GOCO investment options for wildlife purpose funds earmarked for the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Protection Program as outlined in the meeting materials.

*Mr. Howard moved to approve planning of CPW's FY18-19 Investment Proposal taking into account the key priority allocations outlined in the meeting materials; Ms. Zimmerman seconded. Motion carried (13-1).*

*The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM on September 28, 2017.*





THE STATE BOARD OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO TRUST FUND  
BOARD MEETING – FRUITA, COLORADO  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

<u>INDEX</u>	<u>RESOLUTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Minutes Approval		2
Executive Committee & Officer Election		2
2018 Meeting Calendar		2
Legislative Update		2
Lottery Update		2
Finance Update/FY18 Spending Plan	2017-18	2
Marketing Campaign Update		3
Connect Initiative Grants	2017-17	3
Substitution Procedure		3
Conservation Excellence Grants	2017-16	3
Overdue Grants		3
TNC Medano Ranch Transfer to NPS		3
CPW Update		4



*A meeting of The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund convened at 9:06 AM on September 29, 2017 at the Fruita Community Center.*

**Board Present** Jason Brinkley (Chair), Tom Burke, Warren Dean, Jenn Dice, Karma Giulianelli, John Howard, Tony Lewis (Secretary), Dave Palenchar (Treasurer), Chana Reed, Jacy Rock (Vice Chair), Jody Rogers, Linda Strand, Michelle Zimmerman

**Board Absent** Katie Cattanach, Bob Randall, Hollie Velasquez Horvath

**Staff Present** Matt Brady, Madison Brannigan, Laura Cardon, Chris Castilian, Andrea Conrad, Rosemary Dempsey, Peter Ericson, Michele Frishman, Jake Houston, Dylan Lewan, Erika Meyer, Jackie Miller, Emily Orbanek, Jim Ott

**Public Present** Mike Bennett (City of Fruita), Lori Buck (City of Fruita), Jim Butterfield (Bookcliff Middle School), Tom Casal (City of Fruita), Adam Eichberg (Headwater Strategies), Mary Marchun (The Capstone Group), Ture Nycum (City of Fruita), Dean Riggs (Colorado Parks and Wildlife), JT Romatzke (Colorado Parks and Wildlife), Trina Romero (Colorado Parks and Wildlife), Mike Sukle (Sukle Advertising), Colin Waters (Colorado Lottery), Greg Weckenbrock (Bookcliff Middle School), Traci Weiland (City of Grand Junction)

**Minutes Approval** *Mr. Burke moved that the minutes from June be approved; Mr. Palenchar seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**Executive Committee & Officer Election** *Ms. Strand called for a motion to elect Mr. Lewis to secretary and maintain all other current serving members in their positions on GOCO's Executive Committee; Mr. Brinkley seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**2018 Meeting Calendar** Mr. Brinkley presented the 2018 meeting calendar as outlined in the meeting materials.  
*Ms. Reed moved the calendar be adopted as presented noting the addition of possible half day retreat during the spring board meeting; Ms. Giulianelli seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**Legislative Update** Mr. Eichberg and Ms. Marchun presented the legislative update.

**Lottery Update** Mr. Waters from Colorado Lottery presented the Lottery update.

**Finance Update/FY18** Ms. Conrad presented the finance update.

**Spending Plan**

Mr. Ericson presented the proposed amendments to the FY18 spending plan.

*Ms. Strand moved Resolution 2017-18; Ms. Reed seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*



**Marketing Campaign Update**

Ms. Dempsey invited Mr. Schultz, Ms. Spence, and Mr. Sukle from Sukle Advertising, as well as Ms. Denious from OMNI Institute, to present a campaign performance update on Generation Wild. Discussion focused on to-date results from the media campaign, partnership and public relations updates, topline learning from OMNI's baseline survey, and an outline of campaign next steps.

**Connect Initiative Grants**

Mr. Houston presented the 2017 Connect Initiative grant recommendations. GOCO received eight applications. Staff and the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee recommended the board fully fund the top four projects and grant a partial award the fifth-ranked project, for a total of \$8,900,000 from local government purpose funds.

*Ms. Strand moved Resolution 2017-17; Ms. Dice seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**Substitution Procedure**

Ms. Frishman revisited the prior day's conversation on GOCO's current property substitution procedure, providing a revised procedure for the board's review.

*The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee members agreed to review the draft substitution procedure for discussion at the November committee meeting.*

**Conservation Excellence Grants**

Ms. Frishman presented the 2017 Conservation Excellence grant recommendations. GOCO received three applications. Staff and the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee recommended the board fully fund the top two projects and grant a partial award to the third-ranked project, for a total of \$200,000 from open space purpose funds.

*Ms. Strand moved Resolution 2017-16; Ms. Giulianelli seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**Overdue Grants**

Ms. Frishman presented on overdue grants. Staff and the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee recommended the board approve extensions for five local government and three open space grants outlined in the meeting materials.

*Mr. Lewis moved to approve the recommended extension requests of the eight projects as outlined in the meeting materials; Mr. Burke seconded. Motion carried unanimously (13-0).*

**TNC Medano Ranch Transfer to NPS**

Ms. Frishman presented on The Nature Conservancy's request to approve the proposed transfer of 12,518 acres of the Medano Ranch to the National Park Service (NPS).



*Ms. Giulianelli moved to approve the transfer request as outlined in the meeting materials; Ms. Zimmerman seconded. Mr. Howard called for a roll call vote. Motion carried (6-5).*

*Roll Call Vote: Burke – no; Dean – abstained; Dice – no; Howard – no; Giulianelli – yes; Lewis – yes; Palenchar – yes; Reed – no; Rock – yes; Rogers – no; Strand – yes; Zimmerman – yes*

**CPW Update**

Ms. Orbanek invited Mr. Weckenbrock to speak about on the Outdoor Wilderness Lab or OWL program taking place in the Grand Valley.

*The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM on March 23, 2017.*