



Meeting Minutes  
Bald Eagle Management and Protection Preliminary Discussions  
May 17, 1993

In attendance:

Jerry Craig, CDOW  
Ray Spencer, CDOW  
John Hood, CDOW  
Leslie Cassar, Westminster  
Bryan Pritchett, Jeffco Open Space  
Jean Woodis, Land Owner  
Bini Abbott, Land Owner  
Jeb Love, CDH  
Mike Carter, CBO  
Jim Bradley, CBO  
John Wegrzyn, USFWS  
Bruce Thatcher, DOE  
Bob Birk, DOE  
Richard Flory, EG&G  
Marcia Murdock, EG&G

John Wegrzyn, USFWS, called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM after waiting for the Colorado Bird Observatory (CBO) representatives to arrive. In their absence, John started to summarize the history of the bald eagle pair's presence and activities, and CBO's observation. The eagles were observed starting nest building in December by local residents. The USFWS was notified in mid-January that nesting activity was on-going. The eagles remained in the area until March 22, 1993, and infrequent sightings have been reported since then.

CBO representatives Mike Carter and Jim Bradley arrived, and John turned the discussion over to them. Mike stated that in their observation period, from early March through when the bald eagles departed March 22, the main prey items they observed were prairie dogs, but had the eagles stayed, there might have been a good deal more fishing from Standley Lake. The CBO representatives passed out copies of their final report, and discussed the figures in the report. One of their comments was that due to the short observation period, the 25% use contours should not be used as a final assessment. Both Mike and Jim said that a long term study was needed to accurately establish the home range, necessary feeding areas, and other important data.

Bryan Pritchett, Jeffco Open Space Management, said that the long term plan for the area where the bald eagle's nest is located is for development of a state park wildlife refuge area. He added that according to their observations, foot traffic near the nest was the most disturbing to the bald eagles. He also mentioned an incident of model airplane enthusiasts flying planes very close to the nest tree. Jeffco Open Space has maintained the area of the nest site as closed to the public throughout the time the eagles were in residence, and continues to do so. Some discussion ensued about the merits of reopening the area during the summer as opposed to keeping the closure in effect.

Bini Abbott, Land Owner, discussed the problems that she has had over the years with trespassers at that end of the lake, in spite of signs and personal confrontations. Pros and cons on both sides of that issue were discussed, but the consensus was that it is difficult to train the public without changing the rules every six months.

Leslie Cassar, Westminster Parks and Recreation, discussed management of Standley Lake. She said that ice fishing was not allowed on the lake, but that people would fish on the north end of the lake because parks officials could not see that area from their normal work sites. The west end of the lake is now closed to boating and fishing; the closure is delineated with a buoy line. Violations of the closures will result in revoked lake use permits.

John Wegrzyn discussed the results of recent meetings to review Option B alternatives. The canal portion of the plan has been abandoned. Three new alternatives are being considered. These include:

- 1) A storm water retention reservoir and a pipeline to Great Western Reservoir.
- 2) Construction of a reservoir in the Buffer Zone west of Indiana.
- 3) Construction of a diversion on Woman Creek to divert storm water to Great Western Reservoir in the event of a major storm.

A combination of alternatives 2 and 3 is currently the most favored option.

Jean Woodis asked what impacts the construction would have on the eagles. Marcia Murdock, EG&G responded that Alternative 1 could be expected to have no impact, but that construction on the east side of Indiana would most likely have an impact. She stated that any construction would be scheduled as much as possible to occur when the eagles were not in the process of nesting or raising young. John Wegrzyn added that the DOE would be held to a biological assessment of any of the alternatives before any construction would be allowed by the USFWS.

John Wegrzyn asked Jean and Bini what the public sentiment was in regard to having the bald eagles as neighbors. Jean responded that they were generally pleased and excited to have the eagles there, but road closures would definitely create animosity toward the eagles and the USFWS. All parties agree that the traffic picked up once the presence of the bald eagles was announced. The worst problem with disturbance was with bird watchers stopping and getting out of cars. Jean and Bini agreed that the no parking signs and patrols did help reduce this problem. Jean also mentioned the signs that were erected by Browning Ferris Industries (BFI), the refuse removal company, at the corner of Simms and 100th proclaiming that the area was a bald eagle nesting area. There was some discussion, without resolution, as to whether obvious signage was a good idea.

Jim Bradley noted that people would pull over and get out of their vehicles to look at the eagles, and that would impede traffic as well as disturb the eagles. He also said there were limited areas for observation, which inhibited CBO's ability to keep unbroken contact with the eagles. Bruce Thatcher asked about the installation of an observation tower for public use. This idea was discussed, with the possibility of an observation point on 96th or on the Jeffco Open Space Property at Simms and 100th being raised. No

action was agreed upon in this discussion, but Bryan Pritchett indicated that he may be able to hire temporary personnel who could man an observation point for control and interpretive purposes.

John Wegrzyn introduced Dr. Jerry Craig, and asked for his comments. Jerry opened his discussion saying that nest failure for the first two years was common, and that the male usually leaves first. The female may be a local bird, possibly offspring from the Barr Lake nest. There was no indication that this pair actually put down eggs, and there was no incubation behavior. A serious nesting attempt often also includes a period of false incubation, which was not observed here. Also, if there is no male, i.e. if the male leaves, there is no incubation. The female will usually remain in the area if she is local and has a strong affinity for the nest site. Jerry indicated that he is optimistic that Standley Lake is an attractive area. Further discussion from other members of the group indicate that a single bald eagle has been observed in the general area since the pair left in March. No one has been able to confirm if this bird may be the Standley Lake female. In their southern ranges bald eagles are usually year round residents, and also perform courtship on a year round basis. They will continue nest building activities, with nests sometimes becoming huge structures.

Jerry acknowledged that for the protection of bald eagle's nests secrecy is usually the best policy, but noted that in this case it is impossible. He stated that the normal traffic flow should not be considered as a problem since the eagles moved into the area in spite of the traffic, and continued to tolerate it while they were here. Marcia Murdock noted that the air traffic from the Jeffco Airport frequently flew over the nest site, and asked if that should be considered a problem. Jerry asked what the eagles' reactions were, and she responded that they just watched the airplanes go over, but showed no sign of alarm or flight. Jerry said that it should not be considered a problem since they appeared to accept it as a normal everyday activity.

Bruce Thatcher asked Jerry about installation of the ultra high volume air samplers and the conduct of the wind tunnel tests. Jerry's response was that there should be no problem if the tests were conducted as soon as possible. All work involved in the wind tunnel tests and the installation of the samplers should be completed by the end of September to ensure that samplers were up and running when the eagles returned. The eagles can be expected to accept the ultra high volume samplers as long as the operation is continuous. Any intrusion to tend to the samplers should be an hour or less in duration. Typically, as long as the intrusion is of limited duration and restricted to a single day, it does not cause abandonment. Bruce indicated that there would be a test run of the ultra high volume samplers in the near future, and that Jerry would be requested to attend so he can assess how the noise level may affect the eagles.

Once the eagles have laid eggs and are incubating, they are much more tenacious in remaining on the nest. The amount of disturbance they will tolerate depends on the individual members of the pair. The best time to tend sampling equipment is mid-day for an hour's duration.

John Wegrzyn has information on suggested buffer areas. He also brought up the concerns of the USFWS as to what the prey base is, and will be during the breeding season. They would like to know how much is prairie dogs, and how much may be aquatic. The USFWS acknowledges that residential development will deplete the prairie dog populations, and that will affect the eagles.

Bruce pointed out that the DOE legal counsel has determined that the provision of a new water supply to Broomfield is not tied to the water rights of Great Western, and thus the replacement of Great Western is

not a federal action. This interpretation of the water replacement transaction indicates that a biological assessment is not required for this action.

The Standley Lake portion of the meeting was adjourned with the agreement of all parties to revisit the management issue at a future meeting in August 1993. Each entity will, in the meantime, develop plans for the protection of the bald eagles in areas under their jurisdiction or influence.