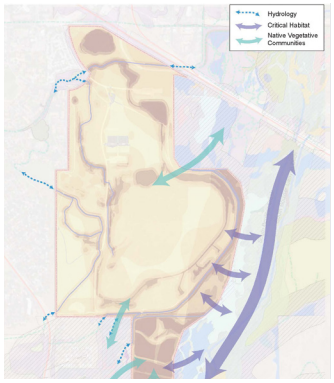
CITY OF BOULDER PLANNING, HOUSING, AND SUSTAINABILITY

University of Colorado Site Suitability

Boulder, Colorado



A site conservation suitability analysis delineates high-value ecological areas to help guide future planning decisions for a key University of Colorado site.

The University of Colorado owns a 316-acre open parcel adjacent to the City of Boulder where future annexation, flood control, and "South Campus" development activities are under consideration. Because of the site's key location along the South Boulder Creek corridor, the area also offers desirable habitat and open space benefits to the community. Biohabitats was contracted to conduct a conservation suitability analysis of the property to assist City planners and the community with evaluating options.

Biohabitats' approached the project as an opportunity to allow the underlying ecology to help dictate appropriate human use. Parts of the site have high quality wetlands and support ecological functions that could continue to serve future needs. Other areas have fewer ecological values and are more developable. Using a layered, data-driven analysis, Biohabitats was able to model the areas best suited for protection and low impact development. The transparent, easily communicated prioritization process serves as a framework for future communication with stakeholders and decision makers alike.

The planning team began by reviewing the information provided by the city and then conducted a desktop analysis and field assessment. Working closely with city staff, the project incorporated flood control planning, geology, hydrology, plant communities and sensitive species, the planning team selected the primary criteria for conservation suitability, then overlay secondary criteria such as views to offsite areas. A key aspect of the analysis was to highlight adjacent wildlife connectivity and buffer issues for inclusion in the analysis. The final deliverables were presented using both GIS and conceptual diagrams.

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SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIOREGION

800.220.0919
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