

# BCNA Ecosystem Plan

## Table Mountain ECA and Boulder Valley Ranch/Beech Open Space ECA

(This is the seventh in a series of articles that explores the evolution of the Ecosystem Plan and the current status of the core preserves and habitat connectors.)

These two Environmental Conservation Areas (ECAs) are located in the central portion of the county. Together, they help protect important prairie, wetlands, and habitat connectors linking the foothills to the plains.

The Table Mountain ECA is centered on a 1,700-acre tract of Federal land used as a radar and communications facility. The overall lack of use has helped retain a large block of native midgrass prairie. Boulder County Open Space and the City of Boulder have been acquiring adjacent and nearby lands and easements in order to expand this ECA and build a habitat connector to the foothills.

The Boulder Valley Ranch/Beech Open Space ECA is centered on the two open space properties within its name. It also includes portions of Boulder Reservoir and numerous other open space properties on the north flank of the City of Boulder. This is a winter raptor concentration area, periodically containing a large prairie dog colony. There are significant wetlands and several locations for the rare Bell's twinpod. Northern harriers have historically nested within this ECA, as have burrowing owls (though not recently). The wetlands and deciduous forests along the west and north sides of Boulder Reservoir are home to a number of rare and interesting nesting birds, including osprey. This ECA spans from the foothills to the plains and can be used as an animal movement corridor. It also contains Six-Mile Fold Natural Area.

-Dave Hallock