

Final Review  
January 22, 2015

Green CE/2014-243  
Laramie Foothills CE/2014-243

**Project Number:** 2014-243 **Staff** Meyer

**Public Name:** Laramie Foothills CE/2014-243

**Values (in bold and italics):**

<i>Scenic</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Agricultural</i>
<i>Buffer</i>	<i>Plants/Natural Communities</i>	Geological/Paleontological
<i>Wildlife</i>	Outdoor Recreation	Education
<i>Wetlands</i>	<i>Historic/Archaeological</i>	Other (explain in narrative)

**Note: This is a partnership request from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The conservation easement would be held by TNC. Larimer County would not have any ownership interest in the property.**

**Property Description:** Situated north of Red Mountain Open Space and within the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project Area, the Green property is also adjacent on two sides of the Belvoir Ranch Big Hole property (owned by City of Cheyenne with the CE held by TNC). The Green CE would protect an additional 677 acres of this rolling grasslands, foothills shrublands and perennial riparian stream landscape, further adding to the contiguous lands protected by Larimer County and partners in this area. The property provides a buffer to Red Mountain Open Space, both for wildlife movement as well as aesthetics. There are high ecological values on-site, including intact shortgrass prairie and mountain mahogany shrubland communities and undisturbed habitat for pronghorn, numerous shortgrass prairie bird species, and other large mammals. The headwaters of Sand Creek (top part of the Poudre River watershed) which runs through Red Mountain Open Space and boasts significant aquatic insect biodiversity, originates, in part, on the Green property.

It is hoped that the conservation easement will be the first step to protect this property, with a future goal of the City of Cheyenne to purchase the fee value and manage it as part of the greater Belvoir Ranch complex. The Belvoir Ranch Master Plan (<http://www.belvoirranch.org/>) outlines developments primarily on the northern boundary along I-80, ranging from trails, camping and equestrian opportunities to a links golf course. A wind farm lease has been signed and executed that would allow the opportunity for a wind farm to be built on the Belvoir Ranch no closer than one mile north of the Big Hole. There is also a WAPA wind power application titled Mariah LLC-Windy Hollow Wind Energy Project just to the north and west of the Green and Belvoir tracts that, to our knowledge, has had no action. The management of the Green property is anticipated to be similar to that outlined for the Big Hole portion of the Belvoir Ranch with future trails, trailhead and potentially using the Green residence as a visitor center. The Green property also presents the opportunity to resolve concerns about liability that Union Pacific has at the existing railroad crossing on the Big Hole parcel, which has been an obstacle to opening the area for public access. The Green property includes an existing road and tunnel under the railroad that could provide ideal public access to the Big Hole if a trailhead were established at the Green residence.

**Quadrangle:** Laramie

**Short Legal:** parts of Sections 11 & 14; T12N R 70W, Laramie Co, WY

**Acreeage:** 677 acres

**Current Zoning:**

**Adjacent Zoning:**

**Larimer County Natural Resources**

Final Review  
January 22, 2015

Green CE/2014-243  
Laramie Foothills CE/2014-243

**Water Rights:**

Low Line Ditch: Permit #14031D, Appropriation Date of March 20, 1916. Total diversion rate of 0.19 cfs, Adjudicated water right for domestic and stock uses and irrigation on 13 acres in Section 14, T12N, R70W. Sand Creek is the source.

Sand Creek Ranch Stock Reservoir: Permit #8980SR, Appropriation Date of September 18, 1981. Total amount of 12.80 acre feet. Adjudicated water right for stock water purposes in Section 14, T12N, R70W. Sand Creek or North Box Elder Creek is the source.

WELLS: Permit #64647W, well for domestic use in Section 11, T12N, R70W, 7-6-1983, 150 feet deep, 10gpm.

**Mineral Rights:** Under analysis

<b>Value Estimate:</b>	CE appraised value	\$790,000
	Land transaction costs:	\$7,570
	Stewardship Endowment:	\$20,000
	Staff Direct Costs:	<u>\$45,408</u>
		\$862,978

**Ownership**

Owner/Seller Robert E. Green

**Partners:**

	<u>Description</u>
The Nature Conservancy	Will hold CE
Larimer County, City of Cheyenne, Wyoming Wildlife Trust Fund, WGFD	Financial partners
Landowner	Partial donation

**Potential Funding Partners**

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Unnamed Foundation	\$300,000
The Nature Conservancy – Conservation Easement Fund	\$25,000
Landowner	\$197,500
Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust	\$190,000
Wyoming Game and Fish Department	\$25,000
City of Cheyenne	\$5,000

Total:	<u>\$742,500</u>
--------	------------------

Remaining Funding Needed: \$120,478

The request from TNC for financial support is a partnership request, and Larimer County would have no ownership interests in the conservation easement. Legal counsel for Larimer County has advised that if approval is given to spend open space dollars in this way, that an agreement with the conservation easement holder be obtained, stating that 1) the money will actually be spent to acquire the conservation easement, 2) that if the easement is terminated or changed such that the conservation values are no longer protected, that the funds must be returned to Larimer County, and 3) that benefits to Red Mountain Open Space be clearly identified as resulting from the acquisition of the conservation easement.

**Larimer County Natural Resources**

Final Review  
January 22, 2015

Green CE/2014-243  
Laramie Foothills CE/2014-243

---

**Evaluation Criteria**

Values	<b>Staff Rating</b>
Environmental/Ecological	HIGH
Scenic/Aesthetic/Sense of Place	HIGH
Outdoor Recreation	N/A
Historical/Archaeological	MEDIUM
Agricultural	LOW
Geological/Paleontological	N/A
Information/Educational	N/A
Context	HIGH
Political Factors	MEDIUM
Price	HIGH=Good