

March 8, 2013

Denver City Council,

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This sand prairie remnant, encompassing 30 or more acres, is one of the largest I've seen in an urban area. In comparison, the celebrated Curtis Prairie at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, advertised as the world's oldest restored prairie, encompasses about 60 acres. Iowa's Sioux City Prairie, touted as the "largest known prairie preserve within an urban environment," encompasses 150 acres. The much-publicized and visited prairie remnants at the University of Iowa encompass only about 7 acres.

In addition to its size and diversity of native grasses, Hentzell Park lies along a major riparian corridor linking other prairie remnants to the south and east with natural areas throughout

Shortgrass prairie (mostly blue grama and sideoats grama growing beside hiking/biking path.



Native switchgrass (one of the four tallgrass prairie dominants) growing beside Cherry Creek.



Smith, Shelley - City Council

From: Velez, Kelly - City Council
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 8:43 AM
To: Brooks, Albus - City Council District 8; Brown, Charlie - City Council District #6; Faatz, Jeanne R. - City Council Dist #2; Herndon, Christopher J. - City Council District 11; Kniech, Robin L. - City Council; Lehmann, Peggy A. - City Council Dist #4; Lopez, Paul D. - City Council Dist #3; Montero, Judy H. - City Council District #9; Nevitt, Chris - City Council Dist #7; Ortega, Deborah L. - City Council; Robb, Jeanne - City Council Dist. #10; Shepherd, Susan K. - City Council District 1; Susman, Mary Beth - City Council
Cc: Bartleson, Debra - City Council; Smith, Shelley - City Council; Williams, Gretchen - City Council
Subject: FW: Parks: Hentzell Environmental Report
Attachments: Hentzell_Prairie_letter_-1.docx

Kelly Velez | Council Secretary

Legislative Services – Denver City Council | 720.337.2002
City & County Building
1437 Bannock Street, Room 451
Denver, CO 80202
kelly.velez@denvergov.org | [Dial 3-1-1 for City Services](#)

From: Dave Felice [mailto:gelato321@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 10, 2013 4:48 PM
Subject: Parks: Hentzell Environmental Report

Keep Parks for People, not Profit

www.denvernature.net

www.denverdirect.tv

www.georgeindenver.wordpress.com

Here is an environmental assessment of Hentzell Park Natural Area from Stephen R. Jones, Environmental Consultant. This assessment, including photographs, makes a compelling case for saving this valuable natural land.

Jones is author/co-author:

Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie, The Last Prairie, The Shortgrass Prairie, Colorado Nature Almanac, Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range

3543 Smuggler Way
Boulder, Colorado 80305
curlwsj@comcast.net;

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In addition to its size and diversity of native grasses, Hentzell Park lies along a major riparian corridor linking other prairie remnants to the south and east with natural areas throughout Denver. I was surprised and very pleased to see that the stretch of Cherry Creek running through the park remains in a relatively natural state, with wide meanders, sandbars, and sand banks supporting native cottonwoods, willows, and a variety of native tallgrasses. Beaver sign was apparent along the creek, and we saw Kingfishers, a variety of native songbirds, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. The ecological mosaic created by this relatively natural stream corridor and the adjacent sand prairie and prairie dog colony provides unique and invaluable wildlife habitat within the confines of a large city.

Citizens of Denver should be proud of this remarkable prairie preserve located so close to the urban center. With continued restoration--especially planting of native bunch grasses and forbs--this park could eventually become one of the finest urban prairie preserves in all of North America.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Jones, Environmental Consultant

Author/co-author: *Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie, The Last Prairie, The Shortgrass Prairie, Colorado Nature Almanac, Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*
3543 Smuggler Way, Boulder Colorado 80305
curlwsj@comcast.net; 303-494-2468

Denver City Council
Finance Committee
March 13, 2013

Re: Land Swap between the City and County of Denver's Hentzell Park Natural Area
and Denver Public Schools

My name is Pauline Reetz and I am the Conservation Chairman for the Audubon Society of Greater Denver, a grassroots conservation organization of about 3,000 members based in the Denver metro area.

On behalf of our Audubon members I urge you not to approve this land swap. Though it may seem financially advantageous it sets a very dangerous precedent for Denver's parks and designated Natural Areas. Taking this land (actually 11.5 acres) out of the City's park system is a violation of public trust – the trust that a place that has been called a Park and represented as such on City maps for years will be preserved.

Further, the cavalier de-designation of a City Natural Area shows little respect for the hard work and study that went into the designation of Hentzell Park Natural Area. We have only 167 acres of such areas in Denver and every single acre is precious, a place where citizens can see natural ecological processes in operation. Hentzell Park Natural Area was designated for specific reasons, and those reasons still apply.

You might think that this affects only the local neighborhood but in fact it affects a large part of Denver's population, since the heavily-used Cherry Creek Trail goes right past this area. The Audubon Society conducts a Christmas count every year on the trail; as in years past, observers noted dippers (*Cinclus mexicanus*) in the area, which is rare for a prairie stream, as well as kingfishers and various over-wintering migratory birds. Hawks are attracted to the prairie dog town – my husband and I observed a Swainson's hawk there one spring, and other observers have reported red-tailed and sharp-shinned hawks (which actually eat the birds living in the riparian cottonwoods and willows). I refer you to the report by Dr. Stephen Jones, cited by other speakers today.

Again, we urge you not to approve this land swap.
Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Submitted by Pauline P. Reetz
Conservation Chairman, Audubon Society of Greater Denver
Home: 470 Clayton St.
Denver, CO 80206
Tel, 303-333-2164

To: Government and Finance Committee
Denver City Council

March 11, 2013

Public Comment on Contract with Denver Public Schools to exchange Hentzell Park land for Parcels on Fox Street

Exchanging 9 acres of Hentzell Natural Area for an office building is a bad precedent. Growing urban population requires that we protect open space and natural settings. Once gone, park land cannot be replaced.

Why can't the City buy the Fox Building and DPS buy appropriate land or a building for a school (if needed) and leave this unique natural area intact?

Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommended that this land remain undisturbed. Denver Park System gains nothing from this transaction and loses a lot. DPR Manager Dannemiller's release of this land for the mayor's real estate trade flies in the face of the parks advisory board and her position as steward of our parklands.

Please put preservation of this parkland above politics and recognize the questionable behavior surrounding this process. Protect our park system and do not allow the transfer of 9 acres of Hentzell Park Natural Area to DPS.

Michele Fuerst
8804 Martin Luther King
Denver, CO 80238

PRO	CON
	Dave Felice
	Ray Ehrenstein
	Gerry Todd
	Brad Cameron
	Kathleen Wells
	Pauline Reetz
Happy Haynes	
	Celia Greenman
Bill McMillan	
	Dawna Reed
Robert Rosenthal	
	Jay Rust
	Kathleen Rust
Dora Lee Larson	
	Meg Schomp
Morgan Skurky-Thomas	
	Scott Heron
	Ronnie Crawford
	James Sample
	Annette Woodward
	Joe Halpern
Margaret Abrams	
Susan Ovelette	
Benita Duran	
Jen Walmer	
David Suppes	
	Grady Acelman
	Alan Prenberger
Ben Trujillo	
	John Riley
	Kristen Tourangean

11 Total

20 Total



Smith, Shelley - City Council

From: Marcia Pittleman [mlp48@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2013 7:10 PM
To: Smith, Shelley - City Council
Subject: Hertzell Park

Shelley:

I'm adamantly against the constructing a school and parking in this location. First, I purchased property near a wildlife park Area. Second, the traffic at Havana and Dartmouth is already a disaster at rush hour, especially during the winter months. With additional vehicle traffic, buses making a left turn, children walking, this intersection will incur daily backups, accidents, and mishaps. Please vote against the swap.

Marcia. Pittleman

From: Kathleen Wells
(for public record)

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Native switchgrass (one of the four tallgrass prairie dominants) growing beside Cherry Creek.



Natural meanders, sandbars, native grasses, and willows in Cherry Creek drainage.

From: Kathleen Wells
(for public record)

REASONS FOR HENTZELL PARK LAND GIVE-AWAY INVALID

1. “Denver has an adequate amount of parkland”

When evaluated against reasonable standards, Denver does not have an adequate amount of urban parkland. When the amount of urban parkland in Denver, 6,286 acres, is compared with the amount in a city with a comparable population and level of density such as Portland, Oregon, Denver lags far behind. Denver has 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 people compared to Portland’s 25 acres per 1,000 people. Aurora, CO has 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 people.

2. “The loss of parkland is a reasonable bargain in light of the designation of other land managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation.(DPR)”

Giving away parkland is absolutely unprecedented in our system, and it is not an action that likely would be approved by a majority of the voters of the City and County of Denver.

A review, under an open records request to the DPR, of records pertaining to the land that has been described by the Manager of DPR as new land to be turned into parkland (Heron Pond, Stapleton, and Montbello) in “trade” for the land that is to be lost at Hentzell Park, shows that only 4.4 acres at Heron Pond, land best described as an industrial waste land, will be newly added to the park system, as a result of the Hentzell Park land swap—and that area is already owned by the City. The other land to which she has publicly referred as mitigation for Hentzell Park is land that has long been in the works for conversion to parkland.

3. “The land is not worthy of designation; it is “blighted”.

According to the DPR’s own Management Plan for the area, a plan that is only 6 years old: “Hentzell Park contains remnants of native prairie vegetation that appear to be among the best to survive in Denver. Wildlife habitat is present for birds, fish, small mammals, and other small animals.” Indeed, an ecologist with expertise in prairies consulted by Advocates indicated if this land were in some Midwestern states, where prairie is especially rare, it would be protected by a state government, and it would be a source of local and state pride.

4. “The social need for a school and a domestic violence center trumps the need for parkland.”

A serious commitment to providing for the educational and social needs of the citizens of Denver would never be expressed in a convoluted land deal such as the one under discussion. A serious commitment to meeting these needs would have resulted in plans that allowed for the unimpeded construction of a school or location of a building to house domestic violence programs. It is worth noting that the school to be built in Hentzell Park is located on a flood plain.

5. “There are no alternatives” Due in part to the absence of early public involvement in this issue, no alternatives to the land swap have been debated publicly. At least one council person proposed an alternative location for a domestic violence center that did not involve the loss of scarce parkland some time ago that was rejected by the administration.