



The I-70 Scout

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Searching for news in Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Deer Trail and Agate

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

New Bennett School SRO cost? \$250K

by **Shylo Bockenfeld**
Editorial Assistant

BENNETT — As the Bennett School District continues to work on its transition of a school resource officer from Adams to Arapahoe County, schools in the community remain well prepared if they should need to lock down.

That was the message from Bennett Superintendent Robin Purdy during the Feb. 26 school board meeting.

SAFETY IS THE TOP PRIORITY

The district partnered with local law enforcement, including the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and the Colorado State Patrol, to complete a suc-

cessful lock-down drill with staff and students in February.

"Feedback from law enforcement was pretty positive, they praised how quickly our staff reacted and how smoothly the buildings were secured and locked down," Purdy said. "They were very impressed."

The drill was the first with the Arap-

ahoe County Sheriff's Office participating as the school safety contractor. The Adams County Sheriff's Office was the previous SRO contractor but that changed when the town of Bennett shifted its law enforcement services contract last year.

SEE BENNETT BOE PAGE 4

Public participates in Bijou Basin Open Space plans



by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — Arapahoe County is creating a master plan for the Bijou Basin Open Space, and officials are gathering community feedback on three draft plans.

Bijou Basin Open Space consists of 3,012 acres located about five miles south of Byers at the junction of Quincy Avenue (CR30) and Bradbury Road (CR173). It is part of a larger mass of more than 15,500 acres of protected land in the West Bijou Creek area. This area includes the county's 939-acre Mule Gulch Open Space; a 1,470-acre conservation easement held by the Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust; and several privately owned properties protected by conservation easements.

The Bijou Basin property is currently closed to the public and is being used for cattle grazing and dry land farming. Upon the conclusion of the master planning process, a portion of it will be open for passive recreation use such as hiking and wildlife viewing and, as the Bijou Basin website states, people "will be able to explore acres of rolling hills tucked into the heart of the basin, featuring short grass prairie and wildflowers

as well as cottonwoods and other native growth along the winding creek bed of West Bijou Creek."

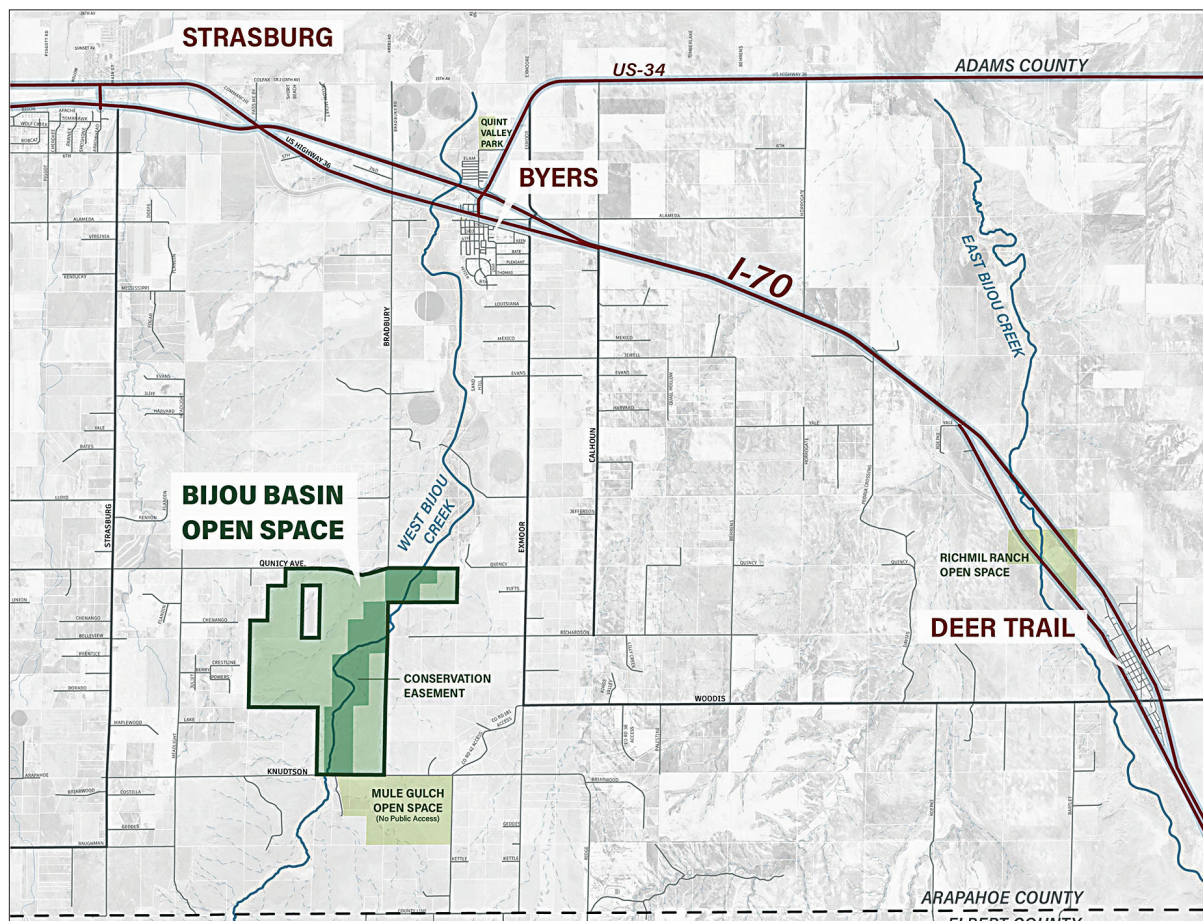
Community engagement for the Bijou Basin Open Space Master Plan began in early summer 2024 and included the rollout of the project website, key stakeholder outreach including direct letters and phone calls with immediate neighbors, interactive engagement events in eastern Arapahoe County, and an online survey. That feedback resulted in the development of three preliminary design alternatives for the public to weigh in on during the second round of public input now underway.

A well-attended public open house was held at Kelder Library in Byers March 6. A virtual public meeting will run from 5:30-6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 12, and the online survey is open through Sunday, March 16.

Following the final round of input, the design will be refined. The final master plan will be presented at the Arapahoe County Fair this summer and will go before the Open Space & Trails Advisory Board and the Board of County Commissioners for adoption.

SEE BIJOU BASIN PAGE 24

Bijou Basin Vicinity Map



This map of the Bijou Basin presents its location in relation to I-70 Corridor communities — south of Byers and west of Deer Trail.

Arapahoe County Natural Resource & Agriculture Specialist Sam Bahl explains a chart showing what visitors to Bijou Basin might experience.

KATHY SMILEY/The I-70 Scout