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### Developer takes low-density approach

### Reynolds Reserve plans for open space

by Pamela Lawson Staff Writer

The entrance would fool you. Gnarled cottonwood trees tower over a creek near a sunsplashed dirt road that winds its way around a bend out of site. The view, of gentle gold/brown hills dotted with knee-high underbrush does little to prepare you for the sweeping panoramas of ponderosa pine and spruce against patches of deep snow a little further up the lane. Or the outcrops that demand you leave your vehicle and stand staring at a distant Pikes Peak, the South Platte River or hills and lowlands in between. Even the energy of the place is different than that of mountaintops a few short miles away. Man has left less of a mark there, except for the carefully engineered two-mile road, with four block wall structures to ensure safe passage.

A professional sign at the entry on Foxton Road reads "Reynolds Reserve" and under that the words "Private Mountain Homesites." In even smaller print an observer would notice the developer, Open Lands Inc., and under that the words "Intelligent Rural Development."

Twelve families will be the lucky ones when the 473-acre property hits the market this spring. The land has been divided into 12 lots of 35 to 44 acres each with a host of covenants and restrictions to preserve, if it's pos-

sible, some facsimile of wilderness and wide open spaces.

"It has a lot of romance and a lot of personality," said Gary Holub of Williams & Williams Investments Inc. "We are not a cookie-cutter developer. We call ourselves open space developers."

Some would prefer that no development occur at all on such a splendid piece of high ground, but free enterprise is a dynamic that makes that, at times, unavoidable.

Williams & Williams, a real estate investment firm, works with Open Lands Inc. on select projects. Open Lands Inc. is a privately funded organization that buys and sells rural real estate. Their guiding principles include a belief in the value of rural lifestyles, privacy and the free market, and that countryside can be intelligently developed for the benefit of everyone.

The two organizations work on projects nationwide.

Many include what Holub calls gentleman's farms that have hit the market and are in jeopardy of being chopped into smaller pieces without thought.

"We like to follow natural boundaries - things that kind of make sense," Holub said. "I think it's got a lot to do with trying to preserve the rural look of property."

Reynolds Reserve is the first "mountain" property the agency has tackled.

The 713 acres they purchased - about seven miles from U.S. 285 down Foxton Road where pavement hits dirt - was once part of a larger spread known as Reynolds Ranch. They bought it in June 2000.

Soon after, they quietly went about their business assessing the land, building a road and dividing it into home sites. The land was already zoned for 10-acre lots so the choice on the part of the developer to make the properties larger avoided the typical county slowdowns,

"The positive thing is that most are 40-plus acre lots," said Peter Hofstra, another representative of Williams & Williams. Nearby is Reynolds Ranch Park. Last October Jefferson County Open Space bought about 240 acres of the property from Williams & Williams that adjoins the park.

After the real estate agency purchased the property they now call Reynolds Reserve, an adjoining landowner submitted a proposal to OSAC asking that they consider buying the entire property from Williams & Williams.

"They already had a web site and had divided it into phases," said Open Spade Acquisitions Manager Joy Lucisano. "We looked at it in its entirety but we couldn't afford the whole thing."

They settled on 240 acres. An easement on one lot will allow residents there to access the open space. Denver Water Board land borders a section of Open Space

land, as well as the development surrounding it in a virtual blanket of wilderness unlikely to be sold or developed. Beyond that is the Pike National Forest.

"Our main purpose was to establish a trail corridor from Reynolds Park through the Denver Water Board property to the Colorado Trail," Lucisano said. The only slowdown of note involved the costly road that was installed on the property. Williams & Williams worked through Jefferson County Road and Bridge and deliberated over codes and standards until an acceptable outcome was met. They had hoped to build on the south-facing side of the property, but were required to work it up the north side instead.

"It took quite a bit of engineering and vision to decide where to put a road and how to get it up there," Hofstra said.

The mountain looms at 8,800 feet.

"You won't be able to see all 12 houses. Homes may be a quarter to a half-mile away," he said.

It took four block walls to build the road on the side of the mountain and various spots along the way are lined with guardrails. The two-mile drive will be privately maintained by the landowners.

"The development was out of the ordinary," Lucisano said. "By not having to go through platting it allowed the developer to put together a configuration of lots as they applied to his road."

Williams & Williams had been under contract for six months when the Hi Meadow Fire hit the area destroying 10,800 acres and 50 homes but that did not deter them from closing that same month.

Multiple fires that have occurred over time in the Pike and San Isabel National Forests can be seen from observation points at Reynolds Reserve.

"The fire department is very happy," Hofstra said. "We put a road up there and they can get to a 20,000 gallon cistern that we put in underground."

In business since the 1960s, Williams & Williams fancies themselves different from the norm.

"I am not against that word 'developer,' but that doesn't exactly fit what we do," said Holub, who has been with the agency for seven years. "All across the country we generally take big parcels that could be slated for development and we break them into fairly large parcels."

Neither Holub or Hofstra has an official title with the company, which, they say, represents the nature of their team.

"We are just people," Hofstra said. "I can do what I want to without a title."

By this spring the parcels will be on the market, and by

summer the agency plans to pave the dirt road ascending through the development.

But deed restrictions and covenants soon to be completed will be fairly restrictive, they say.

"We wanted to get along with the community," Hofstra said. "While it is a development we tried to do the minimum development."

A community that hardly knows they exist.

Sandra Ketchledge, President of the mountain watchdog group Preserve Our Mountain Community, was not aware of the development, but was intrigued by their concepts.

She hopes to speak with them, she said, since she is always "trying to learn new and creative ways to work with the mountain environment."

Square footage for each dwelling on the property has a minimum of 2,850 square feet and must pass an architectural control committee. Priced from \$259,000 the parcels, ranging from 35.8 to 44.4 acres, can work their way up to \$450,000 or more although firm prices have yet to be listed. Drilling wells is the responsibility of the landowner.

In the end, they admit any good operation likes to make a profit but they maintain that there are a variety of ways to do so.

"Money is somewhat the name of the game but having fun is more important," Hofstra said. "And doing a development nice-doing it right."

Lucisano is impressed.

"It seems to conform to the area nicely," Lucisano said of the development. "And imagine, with U.S. 285 so close and pavement almost to their entrance - that is almost unheard of."