

MOOSE TIMELINE in EAGLE COUNTY, COLORADO

Date: 15 Oct 2023
 Report for: Town of Vail (TOV) Cultural Heritage Committee
 Report by: Lynn Albers, Vail Public Library (VPL) Local History Specialist

BA: Bill Andree, CO DOW officer in BGU 45 (Gore Creek to Homestake Creek area)
 BGU: CO Big Game Unit
 BH: Bill Heicher, CO DOW officer in BGU 44 (Brush Creek area)
 CHNC: online digital *Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection*
 DOW: CO Division of Wildlife
 EVE: *Eagle Valley Enterprise*, published in Eagle, Eagle County CO
 VD: *Vail Daily*, published in Eagle-Vail (Avon, Eagle County CO)
 VT: *Vail Trail*, published in Vail, Eagle County CO
 VVV: *Vail Valley Voices* oral history project at Vail Public Library

March 1978: 12 moose from Uintah Mountains UT were transplanted to Rand CO area

- Released at Illinois River wetlands in southern North Park near Rand, in Jackson County CO
- BH and BA personal communication and emails; 14 Jan 1994 VT in CHNC

Sep 1978: CO Department of Natural Resources press release

- UT Division of Wildlife Resources airlifted and trucked 12 moose from Uintah Mountains to north-central CO near Rand CO in southern North Park
- Moose were “tested for disease, fitted with radio-telemetry collars and ear-tagged ...”
- “Moose Airlift” episode on *Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom*; aired 22 Sep 1978 on KOA television in Denver
- 14 Sep 1978, EVE found in CHNC

Oct 1978: Hunter caution press release

- Noted identifying characteristics for bull, cow and calf
- Noted penalties for poaching: \$1000 fine, 6 months in jail
- Veterinarian drug M-99 used (human consumption prohibited)
- 12 Oct 1978, EVE found in CHNC

Jan 1979: 12 more moose from Wyoming were introduced into the Rand CO area

- BA email communication 19 Oct 2023

Early 1980s: transient, individual moose moved into Gore Creek and upper Eagle River valleys

- These solitary moose tended to be young males (1 ½ to 3 ½ years)
- BA and BH personal communication and emails

1982 or 1983: First positive moose sighting in Eagle County CO

- TOV Vail Village parking structure (removed from the “moose” level of the structure)
- BA and BH oral history (VVV at VPL); BA and BH personal communication and emails

Late 1980s: Moose were regularly sighted near Piney Lake

- Piney Lake wetland area nicknamed Bullwinkle Alley
- Moose herd increased and dispersed in every direction
- BA and BH personal communication and emails

Mid to late 1980s: Bull moose observed on west side of Vail Pass

- Timeline author observed large bull moose at night just off I-70
- Date was not noted, nor was observation reported

16-24 Nov 1985: CO opened its first moose hunting season

- Established at CO Wildlife Commission (CO Governor appointed) meeting on 14 Mar 1985
- \$200 resident moose hunting license; no nonresident moose license available
- Moose licenses issued by computer lottery
- 21 Mar 1985 and 28 Mar 1985, EVE found in CHNC

Sep 1986: Bull moose spotted by 4 individuals in the Sweetwater area

- This moose sighting was reported to game warden
- 18 Sep 1986, EVE found in CHNC

Feb 1987: 12 more moose from Laramie River Valley WY were released into the Rand CO area

- 14 Jan 1994, VT in CHNC

Sep 1987: Moose spotted in the Spraddle Creek area north of I-70

- 4 Sep 1987, VT found in CHNC

June 1988: Moose seen in Gore Creek Valley chasing bighorn rams

- "A moose was seen chasing 6 (bighorn) rams on the hills north of I-70 across from the Vail Golf Course"
- 10 June 1988, VT found in CHNC

Nov 1988: Eagle County game poachers press release

- Eagle County Crime Stoppers tipline number posted
- 11 Nov 1988, VT found in CHNC

Sep 1989: Bull moose sighting above "telephone booth at the East Vail exit"

- 8 Sep 1989, VT found in CHNC

Dec 1991: 26 moose from UT and North Park CO were relocated to Creede CO area

- Moose were released to the headwaters of the Rio Grande River
- 14 Jan 1994, VT in CHNC

1994: CO moose population approx. 400

- CO moose initially spread into Rocky Mountain National Park, the Gore Range and Middle Park
- 14 Jan 1994, VT in CHNC

Mid 1990s: Eagle County game wardens reported its first resident and reproducing moose population

- established near Piney River and Piney Lake
- BA and BH emails and personal communication

Late 1990s to 2000: Eagle County moose hunting season inaugurated

- Moose hunting allowed in BGU 36 (north of I-70 in Piney Lake area)
- Harvest quota: 1 bull moose
- BA email 19 Oct 2023

2005 – 2008: Brush Creek moose population established and reproducing (GMU 44)

- BH personal communication and emails

Winter 2007 – 2008: Moose removed thru a Vail home

- During a heavy snow year, a moose got trapped inside a fence with no gate.
- The moose was “darted,” bundled into a tarp and removed thru the house via a staircase.
- BA email 24 Oct 2023

July 2009: Bull moose documented in Dotsero

- BA email 19 Oct 2023

2010 to 2018: several moose road-kills occurred in Eagle County

- Mishaps occurred on Vail Pass, in Eagle-Vail, at Wolcott, and Red Cliff to Tennessee Pass
- BA email 19 Oct 2023

Oct and Nov 2013: Moose observed in Eagle County

- Moose observed on East Lake Creek, Gore Creek, Homestake Creek, Mitchell Creek, Yoder Creek, Mill Creek and No Name Creek (a tributary to East Brush Creek)
- BA email 19 Oct 2023

Jan 2014: Moose observed in Cross Creek area

- BA email 19 Oct 2023

July 2021: Moose in Lionshead Parking Structure tranquilized and relocated

- VD 27 July 2021

Other Eagle County moose sightings have occurred at:

- In and near the community of Vail: Vail Public Library and off Beaver Dam Road, Lionshead Village, north of I-70 near Red Sandstone Road, Potato Patch and Vail Golf Course
- Vail Mountain
- Meadow Mountain and near the old Battle Mountain High School in Eagle-Vail
- Castle Peak and Eby Creek area
- Sylvan Lake State Park and adjacent Conservation Areas
- East and West Brush Creeks
- White River National Forest sites in Eagle County, including Yeoman Park

2023: Moose occur in all Game Management Units of Eagle County

- GMU 15 (State Bridge to Sheephorn area), GMU 25 (Dotsero and Upper Colorado River Valley area), GMU 34 (White River Plateau to Derby Mesa area), GMU 35 (Castle Peak area), GMU 36 (Piney Lake and Piney River area), GMU 44 (Brush Creek area), GMU 45 (Red Cliff to Tennessee Pass area) and GMU 444 (Basalt and points north of Roaring Fork River Valley).
- BA and BH personal communication and emails Oct 2023

Resources:

2023 Statewide Game Management Unit (GMU) Map. CO Parks & Wildlife.

<https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Maps/BigGameGMUmap.pdf>

Andree, Bill. Retired CO DOW officer, GMU 45. Email communications 19 – 25 Oct 2023.

Andree, Bill and Bill Heicher. Retired CO DOW officers. *Vail Valley Voices* oral history project at Vail Public Library.

<https://vail.marmot.org/Archive/vail%3A719/Audio?searchId=202334978&recordIndex=2&page=1>

Around and About. *The Vail Trail*. 4 Sep 1987. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Heicher, Bill. Retired CO DOW officer, GMU 44. Personal and email communications 12 – 25 Oct 2023.

Hunters to Show Caution in Moose Herd Area. *Eagle Valley Enterprise*. 12 Oct 1978. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Hunting Seasons Set for Deer, Elk, Moose. *Eagle Valley Enterprise*. 28 Mar 1985. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Know a Poacher? Rewards Offered ... News Briefs. *The Vail Trail*. 11 Nov 1988. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

McGuire, Chuck. The Moose is Loose in CO. Something Wild. *The Vail Trail*. 14 Jan 1994. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Mighty Moose Weathers All. Nature Center News. *The Vail Trail*. 10 Feb 1984. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Moose Believed ... Sighted in Gore Valley. 10 June 1988. *The Vail Trail*. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Moose in Vail Parking Structure Gets Relocated. *Vail Daily*. 27 July 2021.

Of Gophers, Bears, and Moose ... Last Exit to Vail. *The Vail Trail*. 8 Sep 1989. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Outdoor News. CO Department of Natural Resources. 14 Sep 1978. *Eagle Valley Enterprise*. CO Historic Newspapers Collection. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

... Restrictions Set. *Eagle Valley Enterprise*. 21 Mar 1985. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Smith, Kent. Moose Sightings in Eagle-Vail ... *The Vail Trail*. 22 July 1994. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Talbott, Mary. Sighting of bull moose Brightens Week. Sweetwater News. *Eagle Valley Enterprise*. 18 Sep 1986. CO Historic Newspapers Collection.

Wildlife Alerts. *Town of Vail Year in Review for 2015*. 21 Dec 2015.

<https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/2015/12/town-of-vail-year-in-review-for-2015/>