

LARIMER COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.,

Boyd Lake Room, Larimer County Courthouse Office Building, 200 W. Oak, Ft. Collins, CO

The mission of the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department is to establish, protect, and manage significant regional parks and open lands, providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.

PRESENT

Parks Advisory Board member:

Steve Ambrose
Nick Clark
Mark DeGregorio
Russell Fruits
Frank Gillespie
Rob Harris
Chris Klaas
Deborah Shulman
John Tipton
Stephanie Vann Dyken
1 Public

Staff:

Gary Buffington
Mark Caughlan
Meegan Flenniken
Nancy Lathrop
Deb Wykoff

ABSENT

John Gaffney
Steve Johnson, Commissioner
Ron Kainer
Dan Rieves

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

GENERAL INFORMATION: (10 min.)

- Natural Resource Events for this month: See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
- To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm> put in your email and click 'subscribe', then check "Parks Advisory Board" box.
- Bison Introduction: Larimer Foothills Conservation Herd will be introduced on November 1st, which is National Bison Day. 2 calves have been born, and along with the adult bison, will be secured behind a 5' fence on the existing pasture at Soapstone Prairie and Redstone Mountain. Dr. Jennifer Bartlett is the

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bison veterinarian. The bison will be put in close to the public viewing. The event will be advertised in the news, and through social media. Only five calves have been produced using this scientific method since 2012. So far, funding has come from three sources DNR \$15,000, City of Fort Collins \$40,000 and the rest of the money will come from CSU. To continue operating the project, fundraising will be highly promoted, and people will be given various options, including a way to donate on the Larimer Foothills Conservation Herd website. November 1st will be a very fun and family friendly event. (See attached hand-out on “Preserving An Icon”).

- Appreciation supper—everybody had a good time. Thank you.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Parks Master Plan Process Introduction - Gary

- Mark DeGregorio was on the 2007 OL master plan. Rob Harris was on the task force. This board was formed from the task force. Meegan is the professional master planner for DNR.
- This group will be working on this for the next year and one half.

Parks Master Plan Process - Meegan

- The next master plan takes off from the 2007 master plan, we have to do an environmental assessment. Not a full new document needed, per the bureau. There is some flexibility on EIS (environmental impact statement) and not expecting anything will trigger that for the 2017 Master Plan.
- The Ranch is part of the Public Works Division. The RFP process will touch both the Ranch’s plan and DNR’s plan. In general we’re expecting the process to be somewhat abbreviated. Only the Horsetooth part of the Master Plan is 95% complete. Carter Lake swim beach and south shore are still in development. (85-90% complete). Some things in the plan the board might want to take another look at.
- 2015/2016 Parks Master Plan PowerPoint presentation (see attached)

Board and staff comments:

Steve Ambrose: Not much controversy

Gary Buffington: We put \$14 million in the ground in 10 years. Most of that money was not county money. Not sure how ambitious will be with raising money through grants. Boat ramps, pavilions, first flush restroom (3 building) with showers. Chimney Hollow will have trailhead connection to Carter Lake just over the ridge. Pinewood renovation is finished. Flatirons needs some other improvements. Non-sexy stuff is needed like roads, etc., have to be done, and it costs money. Coulson will start on 38E on October 10th.

Mark Caughlan: South Bay entrance has a dangerous. sloped curve. Drivers come up at bad angle on 38E.

Gary: We have a capacity issue with the reservoir. 3 boat ramp areas. Satanka boat ramp has an open area to possibly put weekend parking. Paddleboarding is huge. When Chimney Hollow opens up, it will take some pressure off of Horsetooth. Paddleboarders love the coves (at Horsetooth).

Deborah: How is Northern Water related to this?

Mark: Northern Water is in charge of the units, and control outflow gates. They manage the water, and the Bureau owns the water. I’m speculating that Northern Water may not control the water in 25 years or so.

Gary: put on your thinking caps. There will be lots of tours, and then the public process. You’ll hear a lot about the Master Plan, and this board will be a huge part of the process.

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Frank Gillespie: What's the justification for having a consultant?

Meega: It's nice to have someone from the outside to help us think through the process.

Gary: It is a lot of work to do it right. We all have our day jobs. It puts distant between staff and citizens, which they appreciate.

Frank: Are you prepared to hear people say, "why don't you do this in house"?

Mark: Consultants are very good at what they do. We come up with the basic plan. We know where the problems are. We have a general look at what the public wants to see.

Gary: We provide the framework, and it brings about good discussion with the public.

Mark: The county hires consultants all the time, and they can handle the larger projects. Don't see why we should think twice about hiring a consultant.

Gary: You will recognize the value that a consultant will bring to these projects

Russ: Some projects can get pretty deep in the weeds, and the (DNR) staff simply wouldn't be able to handle it.

Gary: How we are going to do the fee structure for example: consultants will be able to provide that research.

Russ: Some ideas can be approved, and evaluated between the staff and consultants.

Rob: Who did the 2007 plan? (*Added: EDAW, Tom Keith, Principal Consultant*)

Gary: We will do a request for qualifications.

Meegan: It takes about 3 weeks; will begin interviews in October

Chris: Who's budget does this come out of. What is the budget amount? Who makes the decision?

Meegan: The budgeted amount is about \$150,000.

Gary: The money comes out of Parks Reserve fund. We can ask or have asked BOR for half, but they don't usually help out.

Frank: How come we need a survey; and why do we need a consultant? From the letters in the paper, this is something people like to complain about.

Chris: Who's decision is it?

Gary: We will have an outside decision, and the staff will be consulted.

Mark: We'll evaluate the decision independently.

Gary: We might get someone from the board to participate. It will go through our purchasing department. The County Commissioners will sign off on the contract.

Deb Wykoff: By then it will have met all of the county's approvals.

Steve: Who signs final document?

Mark: The County Commissioners.

Russ: Any questions?

Steve: Scoping what's happening in the Larimer County (and the) population in the next 10 years?

Mark: Capacity will be our biggest issue.

Steve: Lake Tahoe only has a 2 lane road. There was no planning for future population growth back then in the 20s and 30s. Can't get around Lake Tahoe.

Gary: Do we actively go out and look for a new park? That's a thought for the future. Board will be involved in how it's decided.

Rob: Chimney Hollow?

Gary: Chimney Hollow will be wakeless or 10HP or less, with a concurrent trailhead and boat ramp. It will have the largest surface acre in the state of Colorado. Maybe a little backcountry camping.

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Meegan: There will be an IGA with Northern Water. Some specific things the IGA will address, Gary has already talked about, like how fires can be dealt with, etc.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Chair Fruits called for the election of officers both a Chair and Vice Chair, to back up the Chair in the event of absence.
- Deborah Shulman made a motion to nominate Russ Fruits for Chair. It was seconded by Rob Harris.
- Chris Klass made a motion to nominate Rob Harris as Vice Chair. It was seconded by Russ Fruits.
- Motions passed by acclamation.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

Mark Caughlan, Horsetooth District Manager:

- The new Horsetooth building construction project is delayed a little bit. It will probably put us back a month because of fire mitigation issues. A contractor needs to be on board. We will phase in office building first, and that will still be done in October or November. Maintenance will be done out of the conex boxes.
- Horsetooth water level lost 25 feet since mid-July.
- Campgrounds are 100% full.

Gary Buffington, for Blue Mountain District

- El Niño winter affected season. It recovered in June and July. Dollars lost in May hopefully we made up in June and July.
- May was a bust. Campgrounds are full, but the gravy comes in with the day use. If the weather's bad, recreationists have readjusted their vacation schedules, and they're coming out during the middle of the week. Good for everybody. We make a lot of money. We have broken records every year for the last five years. With the Master Plan, will need to save some money to help with the planning. Park Reserve has \$2,000,000.. Natural Resources has 49-50 full time employees. We've added a new ranger to Mark's program this summer. We can afford consultants (every 10 years). Any questions about this years recreation season?

Comments:

Frank: How's Hermit Park?

Gary: Just got a proposal to put in a new trail (a little saddle area to connect to the Hermit's cabin to Krueger Rock about 2 miles). \$150,000 Open Space dollars were spent on the pavilion. It has a gas fire pit, stoves, and looks great.

Russ: Will Hermit Park remain Open Space?

Gary: When we bought that from Agilent, we had a developed area and an open space. The park area is the cabins area. The open space area is about 1300 acres. Open Space tax will help pay for (maintaining) that.

Deb: Is there any plan to develop/acquire more land around Estes?

Gary: Agilent came to us. It comes down to needing willing landowners. Open Space program is going crazy right now. Combination of the economy and the land prices, you think about your legacy. There are 4 or 5 parcels we could spend \$10 mil that are already connected to our open spaces.

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Russ: We are out of space to build campgrounds. We've seen the parks board continual shrink –opens questions to gain more campgrounds that are set aside to recreation as opposed to open space?

Gary: The Master Plan will determine what the future will be. If you don't manage it, it will manage you. If you can control your own destiny, you all have a voice in how it will go.

Chris: What's happened with the two campgrounds in Estes Park?

Gary: The boss quit mid-summer and went to Colorado Springs—it's a tough one up there.

Frank: Stan took us on a tour of East Portal.

Gary: We did it (managed those properties) for 5 years

Frank: Estes Park is a solid parking lot. It's overcrowded. Estes Park doesn't have room for anything.

Gary: The EP Management effort came out \$25K to the good. We didn't recognize the problem with their infrastructure.

Chris: Would you go there again?

Gary: Maybe with a huge contractual increase; they are trying to do it with half the staff we did. We tried to help them along. We'll see how it goes for them.

Russ: Estes Park (RMNP) is a mess. I tried to buy annual (RMNP) parks pass. They were out of them. Attendants were waving cars through.

Mark: 3.6 million visitors to EP

Russ: No parking spaces at shuttle (when I was there).

Deb: More people are traveling domestically rather than internationally.

Chris: I-70 is such a mess, that the parks are the alternatives to travelers.

Chris: When I worked at Carter Lake, 50% (of the visitors) are coming from outside Larimer County

Russ: Anything to finish?

Adjourned: 6:40

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy Lathrop

APPROVED:

Russ Fruits

***Next regular meeting: Tuesday, October 13, 2015,
Bison Room, Administrative Office Building, 1800
South County Road 31, Loveland 80537***

Public can view agenda and minutes at
www.larimer.org/parks