



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, August 21, 2008 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland, Library, Loveland

The mission of the Larimer County Open Lands Program is to preserve and protect significant open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations. These open lands provide opportunities for leisure, human renewal and protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Present:

Nancy Wallace	Bill Newman
Bob Streeter	Jean Carpenter
Brian Hayes	Bill Newman
Sue Sparling	Jeff Hindman

Staff:

K-Lynn Cameron	Justin Scharton
Jeffery Boring	Meegan Flenniken
Kerri Rollins	Jerry White

Absent:

Don Griffith	Trudy Haines
John Ericson	Ben Manvel
Ted Swanson	

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

Bill Newman motioned to approve minutes & Bob Streeter seconded, Jeff Hindman abstained

K-Lynn added a section to the agenda for appoint a subcommittee to oversee the Volunteer Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTIONS

Jeff Hindman, Town Trustee of Berthoud, introduced himself as a new member of OLAB. He discussed his introduction to land preservation in Clark, CO with where he worked with the Nature Conservancy and was able to help conserve a section of the Elk River. Jeff has served on the Berthoud Board of Trustees and brings varied experience from which to draw from, including being a general contractor and growing up in an agricultural family.

INFORMATION

Red Mountain – Meegan gave an update on Red Mountain Open Space. We should have designs for trailhead at next month’s meeting for the board to look at. Rob Novak will be doing the education plan at Red Mountain, and will integrate design elements from the facilities into education plan. The trail crew has finished the geology loop trail and is starting work on the wash trail. Kerri mentioned that the GOCO trails cycle is currently going, and we will soon know about any grants we may be awarded.

Hermit Park – Meegan gave an update on Hermit Park. The Kruger Rock trail is done, and is by all accounts outstanding. The turn lane is on-going should be done by August 30th, 2008. K-Lynn and Meegan will be hosting COSA field trip at Hermit Park, and discussed what the field trip would entail. Bob Streeter asked if



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everything was on budget, and Meegan said to the best of her knowledge everything was within budget, but Gary would have more updated info. K-Lynn added that turn lane was less than budgeted, and the Kruger Rock trail was over by roughly the same amount, so it balanced each other out.

Meegan said she would get revenue and expenses for Hermit Park for the September meeting.

Justin gave update on the Hermit Park dedication. Invitations have been sent out to over 150 people, and speakers from numerous partner organizations are slated to attend, including City of Fort Collins, GOCO, the Colorado Lottery, Agilent Technologies and more. In addition, there will be guided hikes to Kruger Rock, interpretive stations at Dutch Louie's cabin and an American Kestrel will be released by the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program.

COSA – Kerri gave update on COSA, which had 236 attendees registered at the time of the meeting, but the number is expected to peak at around 250. Kerri and K-Lynn extended invites to those OLAB that haven't signed up yet, and explained that the County would pay for one day's conference registration for any OLAB member wanting to attend.

Rocky Mountain Birding Fair – Kerri gave update on Rocky Mountain Birding Fair. Rob and Windy are currently working on this event. Kerri talked about the activities slated for the event, including three yet to be determined speakers, raptor releases, educational opportunities and more. The event will start at 7:00 AM on September 27th, 2008.

New West Fest & Corn Roast Festival – K-Lynn gave an update on New West Fest and the Loveland Corn Festival. New West Fest was rainy and miserable, but people came to us to stay dry and the people there seemed undeterred by the weather. But luckily, the rain did end on Saturday afternoon, which was followed by an abundance of booth visitors. K-Lynn was impressed about how many people would brave the weather to interact with us. She also gave information about the new display booth design and setup. Kerri talked about the number of contacts we made at the booth, which Sue Burke said was 230 people contacted at New West Fest and 207 at the Corn Roast festival. But Kerri did mention that this was a rough estimate, and commented on how hard it is to accurately count a flow of people talking to different members of staff.

Windy Kelley – K-Lynn talked about Windy leaving and her project for graduate studies. She spoke about how Windy's position, of which Windy was the first to be in, was created to give support to the Open Lands program, and gain professional experience for the person in the position. Windy's experience was just that, and her next move to a graduate program at CSU was no doubt helped by her Larimer County employment.

Landscape – Meegan spoke about Landscape project, a partnership between National Geographic and Natureserv, who teamed up to create a web-based clearinghouse for natural resource organizations to collaborate about successes that have been accomplished in land conservation in the United States on a landscape scale. The Laramie Foothills to Plains project was one of ten nationally that made it on a map that was created to showcase the successes, and Meegan described the project on the map.

Education Strategic Plan – Kerri talked about the upcoming Volunteer Strategic Planning process, and tried to recruit OLAB members to oversee and participate in the process. The first meeting will be on October 22nd, 2008, then in the spring sometime. Bob Streeter said he couldn't do 10/22, but might be interested. Sue Sparling suggested that we should check with OLAB member that weren't there. Nancy suggested the OLAB members contact them.



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BOARD COMMENT

Nancy asked for any additions to agenda, or any public comments, there were none.

PRESENTATIONS

Nancy introduced Jane Clark and Jeff Jones from Legacy Land Trust, who gave a presentation on their program.

- In Common – We live in one of the most beautiful places on Earth.
 - o Beauty of open landscapes were more important to people than the food & fiber production
- Building a knowledge base in the local community with this presentation
- LLT - 15 years, 6,000 acres – In 3 counties
- Conservation – This is what its all about... maybe we haven't talked about it enough. So what are the different definitions?
- What will this place look like 10, 50, 100 years from now?
- Why conserve? - Scenic beauty, protect local ag, protect ecological sustainability, protect quality of life and human environments
- So why conserve? Because its sensible
- What will the mix of conservation and development look like in the future? What are we doing conservation for?
- Opportunity to take action: LLT is non-profit, has protected 32,000, 3 counties, 99 projects, 60 landowners
- Where does conservation happen? Showed map of 24 priority areas, and talked about the plan in place to attack these priority areas to conserve as much as possible. (Keep it Colorado Initiative)
- LLT is a generalist land trust, not focused on a particular type of land
- Talked about the local priority areas in Weld, Larimer & Jackson Counties
- Local, member supported
- Its LLT's desire to leave a legacy for the future

Q & A

Bob Streeter asked about the case where a conservation easement was vacated by a local county government. Jeff Jones of LLT spoke to the issue that this case was so unique so as to not be a real threat to our situation. This sparked a discussion about how Larimer County “double-holds” many easements, though this isn't iron-clad. K-lynn spoke about how this could happen in our system, as there is a process for vacating a conservation easement. In addition, the county attorney doesn't allow us to work with non-municipal organizations for conservation easements. Jeff Jones discussed how a Land Trust would go through that process as well to amend an easement as long as the net conservation is not changed, and then how they would vacate a conservation easement

Bob Streeter suggested that in the future, for county acquisition of new open lands, we report if we have a conservation easement is on it (if fee simple), who will be holding the CE, how many, and if not more than one, why not? Nancy Wallace agreed that this was a good item to look at to further protect the holdings.

Jean Carpenter brought up the question of energy development and how it potentially threatens conservation easements. Jeff Jones described the relatively new negotiations that they are currently doing on the properties that they are holding.



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Linda Hoffmann presented on the Rural Land Use Center

- Getting Started – Met with as many of the orgs/depts. that the RLUC touches
- Did you learn anything?
 - o Ag land preservation is universally supported
 - o Economic viability of preservation is linked to working lands concept
 - o Collaboration is key to success
- Targeting Outcomes
 - o Incorporate
 - o Drafted some ideas
 - o Vetted with RLU Advisory Board
 - o Hoping for direction today
- Long Term Goals
 - o Make RLUC development projects a model for cooperative utilization to maximize benefits of preserving rural land
 - o Expand RLUC role to become county's LUC to foster cooperation and provide leadership so as to employ a multi-layer strategy for rural land preservation through support, technical assistance and negotiation
- Short term goals
 - o Develop collaborative relationships to build a spirit of cooperation and leverage expertise
 - o Support the RLUAB in the efforts to promote the rural land use process to ensure fulfilling the vision and mission of the RLUAB and ensure the current direction addresses current public interest
 - o Seek funding from other sources to reduce dependence on general fund
 - o Establish a more formal monitoring program to improve quality of residual lands management and satisfy requirements for conservation easements
 - o Prepare and submit to County Manager for an Annual Report Card to facilitate an evaluation of RLUC
- Mid Term Goals
 - o Conduct successful outreach campaign to improve communication to rural land owners
 - o Cultivate wide acceptance of appropriate use for rural lands to provide additional options for rural landowners
 - o Provide technical assistance to rural landowners especially those seeking non-traditional land uses
- Next Steps – Refine goals/outcomes, develop work plan and seek guidance as needed

Q&A:

Bob Streeter suggested Linda should go meet with local landowners that live on the land, as he thought that they wouldn't be too apt to go to a government entity, tell them they are having financial problems, which would send them elsewhere. Linda spoke of the frustration to get any governmental help actually to the land owners, lots of red tape. Nancy spoke about how the economic development piece of this just goes nowhere, and it needs to happen on the ground, and there was some frustration that it keeps coming up, but it never gets going. Jane Clark from LLT said her frustration is that there are a large number of un-built lots, but being able to protect those with conservation easements, there has to be conservation value in and of itself, which is hard with a small size and high price.



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DISCUSSION

NISP – K-Lynn gave NISP update. She went to a public meeting with the BOCC after they reviewed the comments that county departments had submitted. The BOCC found a couple items that they did find incompatible with the County’s master plan, and will give those comments to ACOE.

Education Strategic Plan – Kerri updated everyone on the on-going Education Strategic Plan Process. Handed out drafts of current plan, and asked for comments and revision from the board, and reminded that the Education program is partially funded by Open Lands. The plan in its current form is directed for internal use for manager’s review. Kerri reviewed core task force, had two group facilitation sessions, and spoke to the main points of the plan. Then she spoke about the parking lot session, where everyone in the department was allowed to give comments/concerns to the education plan. They used SCORP and POL study to ID audience and needs of the audience. She spoke about Table 1.1, which was the result of the second session, which produced a large amount of ideas and ended up gravitating into several niches including agricultural, natural resources, cultural/historic and entertainment & by audience (adult, general/youth). She then went through the different programs that would be considered that met different niches and audiences. She discussed Rob’s time, and how his time is paid, how restructuring of his time needed to be spent somewhere. Implementation has been broken down by managers to spend Rob’s time. Bill Newman commented that the costs for the junior ranger supplies seem high, as the RMNP Jr. Ranger programs have much lower costs. Kerri also discussed how Rob will be reporting back to the managers to give reports of status. Bob Streeter commented that he didn’t see programs that appeal to or are targeted to “non-dominant cultures”, such as Hispanic and others. For the education plan, contact Kerri Rollins.

FINANCIAL REPORT

None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

Meeting ended at 7:50 PM