



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, October 23, 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:

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| Jeff Hindman | Don Griffith |
| Ted Swanson | Brian Hayes |
| Sue Sparling | Nancy Wallace |
| Ben Manvel | |

Staff:

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| K-Lynn Cameron | Justin Scharton |
| Sandy Marks | Meegan Flenniken |
| Jeffrey Boring | Charlie Johnson |
| Kerri Rollins | Jerry White |

Absent:

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| Jean Carpenter | John Ericson |
| Trudy Haines | Bob Streeter |
| Bill Newman | |

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm.

Sue Sparling motioned to approve the September meeting minutes, Don Griffith seconded.

INTRODUCTIONS

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None

INFORMATION

- 2009 Small Grants Program application forms are available at www.larimer.org/openlands/smallgrants.htm
- Update on Red Mountain Open Space
- The 4th Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on Saturday, September 27 was a great success once again! Kids especially had a great time! Thanks to Rob, Travis, Windy and all the others that worked so hard to make it a success!
- The *Picture Public Works* display will be set up around our meeting room on October 23 so you can check out all the photos. Remember Justin and Kerri were photo prize winners of 1100 submitted pictures!
- Great news for us! Jerry White has reconsidered retiring at the end of the year. He will continue with Larimer County on a half time basis.
- Interviews for the Natural Resource Technician I position took place on October 15. We interviewed 6 qualified applicants, and the job was offered to Olivia Hutton. She has accepted and will be starting in November.



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- The date of the annual OLAB Holiday party was changed due to a conflict with the Planning Commission's party. We have moved the party to Thursday, December 11th, 2008. More details to follow.
- Fifteen volunteers assisted in planting an additional 105 shrubs along the Pleasant Valley Trail on October 4th, 2008. Hundreds of shrubs have been planted at this site over the last four years and the site was watered twice weekly throughout the summer. The shrubs look great and should help meet the Fish and Wildlife's Preble's mitigation requirements.
- The Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts is holding their annual fundraiser "Brews, Buck and Boots" on Thursday, November 6 at the Wynkoop Brewery in Denver. CCLT is the organization that led the charge to get HB 1353 passed which strengthens the State Tax Credit Program.
- The Board of County Commissioners is holding a reception in honor of the volunteer members of the Larimer County Boards and Commissions. The reception will be held on October 27th, 2008 at the Lincoln Center in the Canyon West Room from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Please RSVP by 10/23 to the Commissioners' Office at 498-7015 or dtokarz@larimer.org.
- November Upcoming Events – Because of the small number of events going on this fall/winter, there will only be a Winter Events sheet published in November.

BOARD COMMENT

Ben Manvel asked if there had ever been any consideration of a policy to allow bicyclists into Horsetooth Mountain Open Space for free, as members of the biking community had asked him about this recently. Since they are using alternative transportation and don't take up the space that vehicles do, Ben wondered if this didn't warrant consideration. K-Lynn responded that the issue has been examined in the past, and there is an allowance for 4 bicyclists to ride in together under one pass. K-Lynn said that she would get the exact policy for the Ben.

PRESENTATION

2008 State of the State Report - Brian Ross, Executive Director, Colorado Conservation Trust – Brian Ross - Executive Director of Colorado Conservation Trust, came to discuss CCT's program & mission, which includes: 1) Assist organizations with their planning efforts (business plans, management plans, strategic plans, etc.), 2) A fellowship program that places Fellows into conservation organizations to gain professional experience, and 3) Acquire funds from national-level environmentally-minded donors which are then distributed strategically through different conservation organizations in the State of Colorado.

See handout for presentation notes

Q&A:

Nancy asked how the current economic conditions are affecting CCT's work, and the effect on interested parties wanting to do conservation easements, specifically. Brian thought that it was too early to tell. Ben added that growth might slow down for a few years which could be beneficial, allowing entities like CCT to catch their breath. However, Brian said that might not be the case, because as the economic crisis hits other regions of the country more severely, people might actually move to Colorado at accelerated rates. This is because Colorado is more stable in many sectors in the long term than many other States, (i.e. in Michigan where the auto industry could have catastrophic economic conditions because they are based largely on one industry).



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Kerri asked about the \$25 million a year needed to “do some great things,” and Brian clarified that CCT and other partners have identified priority areas around the State, and they have estimated that roughly \$800 million would protect approximately 700,000 acres in Phase I of this project. \$25 million a year is what it would take to start that effort in earnest.

ACTION

Draft: Policy for Granting Easements on County-Owned or County-Managed Open Space – Jerry discussed the need for a policy that deals with this issue, as the County has numerous requests for different types of easements across or inside of County Open Spaces every year, so this policy attempts to create a consistent, comprehensive policy for staff to refer to when considering these requests. Jerry presented the existing text of the policy. (See enclosure) In the various sections, it was reiterated that this is a policy, not a regulation, so exceptions can be made for extenuating circumstances.

Ted Swanson asked what ~~managment~~management threshold the County would have to have for this policy be applicable. Jerry responded that this policy is intended for situations where the County is the majority owner, or has a significant interest in the property. Brian Hayes asked about a temporary easement, with the example of a temporary road easement to the water tank at Devil’s Backbone to demolish the structure. Jerry said that this policy is intended for permanent easements, not temporary easements. Temporary easements will still be handled in the department on a case by case basis. Bob Streeter (via email) asked whether the County would be bound by this policy, and his feelings were that we do not want to tie our hands in any way. Jerry said that we could put that language in the applicability section if we wanted to. Then Ben Manvel asked to clarify that this is not directed at temporary easements, and Jerry confirmed that. It was then agreed upon that language should be added that clarified that permanent easements are the target of this document (See #1 below). Ted Swanson was concerned about the impacts of public and private roads, and suggested that the term “reasonably feasible” should be used to strengthen the language in the policy specifically about prohibiting a public or private road easement, as long as an alternative is “reasonably feasible.” Additionally, he felt that there should be language emphasizing that there should be a compelling purpose to grant a public road easement through an Open Space. Jerry said that there was more restrictive language in the original draft, but the County Attorney suggested that he take it out to avoid potential future conflicts with other departments in the County. Nancy reiterated that the language dealing with both private and public roads should have the “reasonably feasible” phrase added.

Three changes/additions were added to the policy before the Board acted on approving it, specifically:

- 1) Under Applicability - Change first line to read "The policy applies to requests for new permanent easements for a wide variety....." (page 1)
- 2) Under Public Streets - Change to read: "In situations where a transportation project involves construction of new streets, or expansion of existing streets on open space properties, the applicant must provide evidence that there is no other reasonably feasible alternative to the proposed alignment and design. The applicant must also prove that the proposed project will avoid or minimize the effect on the open space." (page 1)
- 3) Under Private Streets or Other Private Access, third line - "...unless crossing the open space is the only reasonably feasible means...." (page 1)

Recognizing the three additions, Brian Hayes moved that the policy shall be approved and sent to the County Commissioners for approval. Ted Swanson seconded. A unanimous yes vote carried the motion.



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Recommendation for Approval of Trail Names at Red Mountain Open Space – Meegan spoke about the trail names at Red Mountain Open Space and the process of naming them via the OLAB subcommittee. (See handout) Sue Sparling moved that we adopt the trail names as listed, Ben Manvel seconded. A unanimous yes vote carried the motion.

DISCUSSION

Draft: Revision of the Management Planning Process to Determine the Level of Service and Facility Development on Open Space Properties – K-Lynn presented the draft of the policy by first going through the existing planning process that the Open Lands program uses for management planning. (See handout) In the previous process, there was not a step that evaluated the correct level of development or infrastructure for a particular property. This new addition to the planning process would address this issue. Specifically, in Step 1, it would expand an existing evaluation sheet to include information on infrastructure such as proximity to water, sewer, power and other utilities. Additionally, it would estimate projected development costs. In Step 2, it would add test questions in each section of this step to ensure that implementation of development or infrastructure is being carried out for a specific property. K-Lynn added that we don't want to add specific items that are included (i.e. flush toilets, air pumps, etc.), but a more broad description such as basic-level, mid-level, and high-level of development.

Don Griffith asked how public comments are compiled from the planning process. K-Lynn explained how the process is done, including public meetings, the compiling of public comments and responding to each issue raised in a document published for the public.

This policy document will be brought back to the Board in the November 2008 OLAB meeting for approval.

Summary of 2008 Farm Bill – K-Lynn and Sandy presented the summary of the 2008 Farm Bill. (See handout) Nancy said that we should be looking for components of the 2008 Farm Bill that we can implement on the County-level. It was added that this may be under another Board's purview, as most of the items don't relate to open spaces as much as they would with the Rural Land Use Center, for example, or other entities. K-Lynn responded that combining agriculture with the open space program is one focus of the work Open Lands is doing with the Whole Measures program. Several ideas were offered as to how to best make community members aware of the benefits to them in this massive piece of legislation, including a document like Sandy created, some type of website or something else. K-Lynn reminded everyone that while this really isn't our mission, we will definitely make this information as user friendly as possible.

Red Mountain Education Plan Subcommittee – K-Lynn and Kerri spoke to the Board about the Education Plan that Rob is currently creating for Red Mountain Open Space. Because this plan needs to be fast-tracked for the June 2009 opening of Red Mountain OS, there is a need to create an education plan subcommittee to review the plan with Rob and be able to get it back for approval for the November 2008 meeting. It was mentioned that Jean Carpenter is really good with these plans and Rob will follow up with her to see if she is willing to be on the subcommittee; Sue Sparling volunteered.

FINANCIAL REPORT

None



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session – Ted Swanson moved that pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest, to enter into executive session and Ben Manvel seconded the motion..

Meeting ended at 8:00 PM