



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 26, 2009 – 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	Ben Manvel
Brian Hayes	Bill Newman
Ted Swanson	John Ericson
Sue Sparling	Don Griffith
Bob Streeter	Trudy Haines

Staff:

Charlie Johnson	Olivia Hutton
Kerri Rollins	Meegan Flenniken
Gary Buffington	Chris Fleming
K-Lynn Cameron	Jerry White
Lori Smith	Deb Wykoff
CJ Cullins	Sue Burke

Absent:

Jean Carpenter	Jeff Hindman
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Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:18 pm. All staff and members of the board introduced themselves to the visiting public.

Changes to minutes: Sue Sparling was not on the 2008 Visual Artist Committee.

Nancy Wallace motioned to approve the January meeting minutes with the above change, Trudy Haines seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bernard Conservation Easement removed from the agenda.

Public Comments - none

INTRODUCTIONS

- Welcome to CJ Cullins, our new Volunteer Coordinator.

INFORMATION

- Photo of Open Lands Board was taken for 2008 Annual Report.



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- Small Grants Subcommittee – Volunteers are needed to work with Sue Burke on “growing” the Small Grants Program. The program is to be expanded, and the process moved to a different time of year. Trudy Haines, Nancy Wallace and Sue Sparling volunteered.
- CSU and Wind Holdings – Maxwell Ranch Wind Farm Proposal of less than 100 towers east of Red Mountain Road submitting application to Larimer County for 1041 Review Process. Focus is impact on Mountains to Plains landscape. Staff attending "stakeholders meeting" March 5. There have been public meetings held in Wellington and Livermore – K-Lynn will attend the stakeholders meeting for county staff. The Board of County Commissioners has the authority to approve or deny this 1041. The OLAB, Environmental Advisory Board and Agriculture Advisory Board will review the 1041 application. Todd Billings with the Greater Red Mountain Association inquired - is this stakeholders meeting open or closed to public? K-Lynn – the planning dept. is running this meeting – it is open to the public but not open for public comment. Our Open Lands Department is a referral agency – we get the application and review it. This is a ‘pre’-meeting to figure out the process. The county is deciding how it will review this application. Call Rob Helmick with the Larimer County Planning Department with specific questions.
- Volunteer Ranger Assistant Training – This was a partnership with Fort Collins on Feb 10, 12, 14. With 50 applicants we had more people apply for this program than the 25 they could fit, so there is a waiting list!
- Open Lands Visual Artist of the Year – A committee has been assembled to review submissions and will choose the 2009 artist March 16. Applications are accepted until February 27, 2009. For more information, contact Justin Scharton at jscharton@larimer.org. Thank you Nancy Wallace for your help on this subcommittee. We have 8 artist submittals – several painters, one glass artist, one sculptor – a good mix so far.
- CCLT Conference - The 2009 Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts Conservation Policy Conference is being held March 18th-20th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Denver. The conference is focused on excellence in conservation policy, stewardship and education. If interested in attending any or all sessions, contact Justin Scharton at jscharton@larimer.org.
- Red Mountain Open Space Update - Timeline and Budget. Meegan – today was the pre-construction conference with the contractor that won the bid – Gerrard Construction in Loveland. This is for the site work, toilet and road work. Their bid came in under projected cost. Construction begins Monday and we will have weekly construction meetings on Tuesday’s from here on out.
- Natural Resource events for March. See handout.
- S passes and subscribing OLAB to Natural Resource events flyer online.
- County has switched to Office 2007.
- Successful in getting grant for trail on Crowder property – received \$15,000; Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) received a \$500 grant from Larimer County Horseman’s Association towards potable water.
- Whole Measures – how we want to set up our program to partner with the community in sustainability – to ensure the passage of our sales tax. Loveland residents have requested information on Whole Measures. We will present to them March 2 at the High Plains Environmental Center.



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- Kerri showed 'progression through time' education wind break artist panels for the RMOS trailhead.

BOARD COMMENT-Items not on the agenda

- Bob Streeter- I don't know if there were feasibility requirements regarding the wind holdings regulations – staff needs to look at whether they have the market, transmission capability with new power lines – not just for Maxwell Ranch. There may be other landowners who decide to do this – could become a much bigger picture. Nancy – when this comes up, we'll be looking at the potential for future development. Bob – at the CSU meeting, George Wallace brought up several issues, such as having distributive windmills, different wind capture instruments, the research component to see what's best. The outcome was very positive – university admitted they needed further research and input from their sustainability group. Nancy – 1041 regulations are on the website for your review.

PRESENTATIONS

ACTION

- Bernard Conservation Easement II Donation Final Report. Request recommendation. See attachment. Action item was taken off the agenda.

DISCUSSION

- 2009 Goals. See attachment. This is a summary of the 2009 Open Lands Program Workplan and is useful for sharing the larger concepts of where we are headed. The order is in the same order as that of the work plan.
- Volunteer Program: 2008 in Review and the Volunteer Strategic Plan. CJ Cullins introduced herself. Total hours - almost 30,000 donated at a cost of \$19.51/hr – almost \$400,000 donated. Kerri – 2% of hours to admin, 49% in Blue Mt. district, 34% Horsetooth, OL – 15%. CJ – right now we are doing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Constraints) analysis of volunteer positions. Next steps – facilitated session in April, with entire process completed in June. Kerri – Trudy represents OLAB at facilitated sessions – very participatory process so we can hit every angle.
- Level of Service and Facility Development on Open Space Properties determined as a part of the Management Planning Process. See handout. K-Lynn – this item discussed last November at OLAB. Meegan and I met with those who had questions – Bill and Bob – to incorporate these issues into this draft. Meegan-Purpose was to define level of service with 2 major interests – respond to public expectations and project our management costs. She presented criteria that will be used in the final review process as part of a property's acquisition – see handout. When we met with Bill and Bob, we took these criteria and used 3 diverse open spaces (Soderberg Open Space, Eagles Nest Open Space, Devil's Backbone Open Space) as examples of how we analyze properties. We've also developed Examples of three possible levels for property development. Would like feedback on this. Trudy – so idea is when land is purchased there will be discussion about what level we develop at. Meegan –yes and also a good example is Devil's Backbone Open Space right now – when update management plan, we will revisit this criteria. Trudy – I like the idea of discussing it ahead of time. K-Lynn – Yes, the goal is to set expectations so everyone is involved in the decision. Bob – you have done a good job of meeting the board's interests- thanks for remembering our concerns. K-Lynn – we will now take this back to our staff, and bring it to the



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next OLAB as a recommendation. Nancy – we need to emphasize that this is a developing document, not something set in stone. As projects change, this document needs to state that it may change as well.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gary

- Department Reorganization: Gary handed out the previous organizational chart and the new one, so that the Board could see the changes that were made. Bob asked if the Citizen Boards would be merged since the new organizational chart indicated a single Board? Gary – the department currently has 3 Citizen Boards and I think the Boards need to have a discussion regarding the efficiency of staff time, support and Board volunteer time to conduct Advisory Board business. Maybe there would be some efficiencies in combing some or all of the Boards. Sue requested that the discussion take place before July so that she and others could participate. Lori- reviewed financial changes due to reorganization – see handout. Gary – some of these numbers could change a little bit as we work through the compensation elements with Human Resources. Bill – why don't we have a deputy sheriff do law enforcement at Hermit Park Open Space? Gary – the deputy sheriff (there is only one per shift) in the Estes area would be too busy to be able to respond in a timely manner to handle the law enforcement at Hermit Park. We think that our Ranger's are trained more specifically to handle the needs of our visitors regarding park information, natural resource education and also the enforcement of rules and regulations. Bill-How many incidents have you had at Hermit Park Open Space that would warrant an armed ranger? Gary –probably very few-Hermit Park was really only opened for a half season this year. Bob – what do you see over the next 10 years – an increase in the number of certified officers in our Open Spaces? Gary – Unfortunately, there are a growing number of serious incidents in our open spaces that require the need for fully trained rangers. If these incidents continue to increase you could see an increase of fully trained rangers. Right now we have a combination of rangers that have seasonal commissions and those that have full commissions. We feel that this is a good balance. Ben-don't you also have a number of Ranger assistants that will help on the trails reminding visitors of the rules and regulations? Gary-yes we do and this will certainly help our Ranger Program in a positive manner. Gary- after hearing these questions, I think that it might be a good idea to have a presentation to this Board sometime regarding the specifics of our Ranger Program. Natural resource agencies (State Parks, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service) throughout Colorado and the nation depend on fully trained Rangers to meet the needs of their visitors. Bill - This is also driven by budget – affording certified rangers. Gary- There is a difference in salary between seasonal commissioned rangers and fully trained rangers, but the service provided by fully commissioned Rangers to our visitors is well worth the small increased annual costs. Bill- I think distances should also enter in to the equation. Gary –Our fully trained rangers are stationed at Hermit Park, a Deputy could have to travel from throughout his/her district to respond if they were available. Ben – what is the process from here on the organizational chart regarding the commissioners? Gary – my supervisor approved the reorganization and the County Manager is also aware of the structure changes. The Commissioners are not required to approve the staffing changes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Hermit Park Open Space – 2008 in Review and looking forward to 2009Chris Fleming-slideshow presentation. See handouts. Bob and Trudy made a suggestion that we investigate special event rates to make sure they justify the staff time and involvement, and wear and tear on the property. Chris – further work to do on campground #2 to make it available to the public. Bill – The Rocky Mountain National Park



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campgrounds will be limited this year, so we are referring people to Hermit Park Open Space as well as other local Estes campgrounds. Larimer County is not part of the CO Visitors Bureau (CVB), and should we be? It's not much to join. Trudy – if we're already busy, why should we be? Chris – our goal is to be self-sufficient financially, and people are still discovering Hermit Park. We have received numerous referrals from CVB, and we will consider getting on their website. Trudy – I don't want to be nationally advertised – only within the state/county. Chris – reservation-wise we did not fill every weekend, but due to walk-ins and referrals, we did fill up every weekend. Nancy – look at your occupancy rates to see if you need to advertise more or not. Trudy – I would hate to see county residents turned away because outside visitors have filled up Hermit Park.

- Chris – Estes only has one deputy on duty for a huge district. They do help us, and we help them. Bill – How many incidents have you had at Hermit Park OS this past year that required a post-certified ranger? Chris – none so far. We worked several car accidents on Hwy 36 – we are all first responder trained. Nancy – how many volunteers do you use? Chris – we did not use them last year because the property was not fully up and running; we will be relying on volunteers this year. Kerri – we have dedicated volunteers who live in Estes and cross-volunteer with Larimer County and the National Park.
- Gary Buffington, Lori Smith-budget: Gary-we are looking for ways to do things better and at less cost. Nancy – how do you determine how much of permits go to Larimer County? Lori – if it's sold at Hermit Park, it goes to Hermit Park; if it's sold at the visitor center – it's allocated. Lori explained the handout – how staff salary percentages are split between properties. Gary – it's about increasing our revenue, economies of scale, not nickel and diming our FTE's. Our goal is not to subsidize Hermit Park. Bill – I think we should look at using the Sheriff for law enforcement issues at Hermit Park. Gary – We already do if we need their help. Nancy – We shouldn't have rangers cleaning cabins when you could hire someone for fewer dollars per hour. Gary- as a general rule Rangers do not clean cabins, however if we do get short handed then certainly we would have "all hands" help if needed. We are very customer service oriented.
- Quarterly Cash Flow for the Open Space sales tax. See handout. This form will replace the 11x17 Quarterly Cash Flow that Lori has done in the past – it is simpler and easier to read. We are showing the 3 revenue sources – Lottery, Parks Fund Reserve, and Open Space Sales Tax. Gary – we are constantly looking at improvements that draw visitors and generate revenue, such as a swim beach, campgrounds, etc. Board had discussion about prioritizing our remaining funds and the issue of place holdings in the budget. Nancy – how much of this is money for acquisition of land vs trails? K-Lynn explained this question via the budget sheet. If we are putting items in as placeholders then we should also include unforeseen opportunities since in this economy there are sure to be some. Nancy - suggest we move ahead with Red Mountain and River Bluffs development projects; other projects such as Hermit Park campground get bids on or work with landowners but then bring this information back to the Board to decide. Bob – can we get this sheet updated monthly? Gary – Yes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session – Pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest, Bob Streeter motioned to enter into executive session.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Wallace at 8:30 pm.