



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 28, 2009 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland Library

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	Trudy Haines
Brian Hayes	Bob Streeter
Ted Swanson	John Ericson
Sue Sparling	Jean Carpenter
Ben Manvel/David Roy	

Staff:

Charlie Johnson	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	K-Lynn Cameron
Gary Buffington	Sue Burke

Absent:

Bill Newman	Jeff Hindman
Don Griffith	

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:14 pm.

Sue motioned to approve the April meeting minutes, Jean seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

INFORMATION

- The 2008 Natural Resources Annual Report is out and available for distribution. Let us know if you need extras to distribute.
- Sam Waldo, long time employee of the department has now retired at the young age of 82! She will still be catering Open Lands Board dinners with her grandniece and nephew.
- Steve Johnson and Tom Donnelly toured the Poudre River Trail and River Bluffs on May 12, 2009.
- The Open Lands Program staff had a mid year retreat on May 13, 2009 to check in on the 2009 Work Plan and discuss ideas, thoughts and concerns regarding the future as K-Lynn leaves her position as Open Lands Program Manager. Staff developed some recommendations/requests for Gary to consider.
- Jill Ozarski, Executive Director of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts is resigning and John Swartout, former GOCO Director will act as interim Executive Director. The position is opened & being advertised.
- On May 19 and 20, the City of Fort Collins sponsored a cultural sensitivity training for Soapstone and Red Mountain for volunteers and staff prior to the opening of these two open spaces. Approx. 150 people attended.



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- On May 28, a sneak preview of Red Mountain for staff and media was held. Colorado Getaways filmed a spot for that program (to air 6/13 at 6:30pm), and all the local press attended. Approx. 40 people hiked the new trails, and the weather was phenomenal.
- The Lieutenant Governor will be visiting Larimer County to promote the Children in the Outdoors concept on June 11 9:30 – 12:30 at the Mountain View High School in Loveland. Larimer County and the Children & Nature Connection host.
- Red Mountain Open Space – Construction Timeline and Budget Update. Everything is on schedule. There may be a few touch ups for grand opening day, but everything is looking great.

BOARD COMMENT-Items not on the agenda

No comments

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Red Mountain Open Space Grand Opening, 11:30am Sunday June 7** – Kerri discussed the various events planned at Red Mountain on grand opening weekend and encouraged the Board to check out the website at www.larimer.org/redmountain for a complete list. She thanked Jean, Sue, Carolyn Smith and Cathy Parkhurst for their hours in sewing the celebration flags for both Red Mountain and Soapstone – over 600 flags in all! The Friends group will have a table at our trailhead on opening day giving away magnets with an open space message, granola bars with the same message, and getting citizens to sign the flags for display. The flags will be put in a time capsule that will be opened in 10 years. Kerri passed around flags for the Board to sign and decorate.
- **Small Grants Program expansion proposal** – Sue reviewed the proposal that was included in the packet. Is there anyone who thinks we shouldn't be going in this direction? Community-supported agriculture and transportation to open spaces are examples of things that will now be included in this program. We agreed program funding would be expanded from \$10,000 to \$20,000. It will take twice as much work to develop the process and selection criteria so Sue wants to make sure everyone is on board with this direction. Once the development process and selection criteria are drafted, it will come back to the board. We'll have education to do with the new board members. Jean supports the vision we are bringing to this: times have changed and it is time to look at other areas that may need some support. Small grants are a very effective community development.
- **Proposed Action Plan for Commissioner review regarding using the Whole Measures concept in the Open Lands Program and the County's Strategic Plan. See handout.** – K-Lynn reviewed 10 groups of practices to create whole communities seen through the land lens and relevant to groups working with and on the land. Representatives from 25 organizations and interests met with Peter Forbes last fall to discuss other ways to connect with the community, and bringing in the whole community. Commissioner Rennels attended part of the workshop and understood and liked the concept. More recently, staff met with the two new commissioners to bring them up to date. The Board of Commissioners asked that the group look at this for the entire county and to come back with an action plan.

Staff is proposing that we start with Natural Resources Department (DNR). First step would be DNR staff, Parks Advisory Board (PAB) & OLAB evaluate their programs using the Whole Measures Value-based practices. K-Lynn went through the 10 practices to give examples of how to evaluate our programs through this lens. The idea is for us to think broader, and grow with the times. As the world changes, make sure we are keeping up with those things. And, keep doing what we are doing really well.



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The Commissioners asked that the group look at the existing strategic plan to see if it already addresses these issues. The Open Lands Program work plan for this year includes doing a public opinion survey to see how satisfied people are with how we are spending their open space sales tax dollars. Gary, K-Lynn, and Kerri had a conversation with a group that does public opinion surveys. Great Outdoors Colorado may want to tag on some questions to our survey. The goal is to have this done by end of September. Peter Forbes will come to Larimer County this fall to do a half-day workshop. He would help us figure out our next steps in achieving Whole Measures. We will identify other county departments that are connected to the land and how they could look at Whole Measures practices as well. In 2010 it will be time for the Open Lands Master Plan to be updated, especially in light of the economy. We need to have an up-to-date Master Plan before going back to the voters. K-Lynn, Kerri and Gary will present this action plan to the Commissioners on 6/16.

Bob: Three major cities – we cooperate through open space efforts. It would be a good idea to invite an observer from each of the cities. Bring all these groups together. Really important to include other entities/agencies.

David: Where did this idea come from? Is there a book?

K-Lynn: Peter Forbes was with Trust for Public Land. He left to set up the Center for Whole Communities. Land conservation organizations are really good at protecting land. They need to do as good a job with connecting people with the land. That piece must come in: healthy land – healthy people – healthy communities. When we started our open space programs in the early 90's, they were great and continue to be great, and the world is changing. Whole Measures will help us partner with those other parts of the community that we don't reach now.

Bob: add university communities, ag communities. How do we get the ag community involved?

K-Lynn: Lew Grant of Grant Family Farms, was at the meeting. Other ag community representatives were not able to be there. There were people who couldn't be at the table. We need to reach out to those communities.

Can we get Whole Foods or Sunflower Market to sponsor. What about American Farmland Trust? Doesn't really represent the ag community. Extension and ag advisory board would be a group that would go through this. Please send K-Lynn any other comments you may have.

- **July 2008 GOCO Survey of Colorado Residents Regarding Performance, Priorities and Policies (attachment)** – K-Lynn highlighted sections of this GOCO survey and said the economy has made a difference in the way people are thinking. Our local parks and open spaces are even more important than they were in the past. In 2008 the biggest issue people had: economy, immigration, energy. Open space and parks remain really important to the citizens. The survey needs to be really good to find out what kind of an impact the economy has on how people think about the open space sales tax, how we've been spending it, and how we want to go ahead. People are doing "staycations" and staying close. Our open spaces and parks are close and inexpensive. Survey is good information and can be shared with folks. Open space and parks didn't come out as high as they did in earlier surveys, but they are still rating as important.



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BOB: K-Lynn is leaving her position as Open Lands Program Manager. She has defined what the program has been for all these years. Bob is concerned about having visibility for the Open Lands Program (OLP), particularly as we go forward with the sales tax, etc. Wonders what the plan is for maintaining that visibility?

Gary: There is no decision as to filling the position at this point. As mentioned previously, it was discussed at the Open Lands staff retreat in May and some short and long term solutions were recommended to him. The OLP has had to front some of the payout for K-Lynn's position which somewhat effects the budget. He can fill the position in September at the earliest. Gary wants to hear from the Boards to find out what we need in a person to satisfy the program needs. Exposure is important. We need a leader to take the campaign to the next level. Outreach and experience are important, this person should be an "Ambassador" of the Open Lands Program. K-Lynn's staff has picked up the slack. K-Lynn has asked that Gary look at how staff is spread out throughout the division. Staff will not be watered down. We've talked about the structure changing. Gary asked the Board's opinion regarding filling the position.

Sue S. is concerned that staff will be burnt out getting more work on them. Is that going to be hard on them? K-Lynn agreed everyone is busy and maxed. As a team of people, OL staff really likes to achieve and accomplish a lot. We are operating at 100% and may not be able to take on more without letting go of something. She thinks the person who replaces her should work on updating OL Master Plan, work with the cities and towns regarding the share-back, as some may change depending on what the future brings. County sales tax dollars can be very important to them. Looking to the future and sustainability of the programs is really important. Jean thinks it is really important to maintain the distinction between Parks and Open Lands. We need to keep the name out there with an effective leader. Open Lands has a slightly different and distinctive program from Parks. A temporary measure to get through a few months is okay, but staff is already busy. We need to do the very best we can to keep the Open Lands Program in the forefront, getting the name out there. **David:** We have more budgetary issues. Agrees we need to have a fulltime person. Gary requests that board members email comments to him.

Bob requests a letter from the Chair go to Gary with copies to Marc E. and others stating the position of the Open Lands Advisory Board regarding filling the position.

Bob motioned for the Chair to write a letter to Gary stating that the Board feels the position of Open Lands Program Manager should be filled. Sue seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Hermit Park Open Space – Proposal for Campground names** – Kerri reviewed the staff-suggested names for each of the campgrounds at Hermit Park. The OLAB subcommittee (Nancy, Brian, Jean and Don) were sent these names and have made the following recommendation:

Campground 1: Hermit's Hollow, Campground 2: Bobcat, Campground 3: Kruger Camp, Campground 4: Aspen Glen

John motioned to approve names for campgrounds at Hermit Park as proposed by the subcommittee. Sue seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Proposal to honor K-Lynn Cameron** – Gary said the Board of County Commissioners has a proposal they would like this Board to consider to honor K-Lynn's commitment and dedication to protecting open space in



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Larimer County. Kerri reviewed the idea and the Board adjusted it slightly. The item will be presented to K-Lynn on her last week at the County.

PRESENTATIONS

- **Community Market Place** – Hill Grimmett, Northern Colorado Food Incubator (NCFI) and Be Local Northern Colorado.

Hill presented the Community Marketplace concept. Background on project : Founder of NCFI 5.5 years ago to help food related business get off the ground and find kitchen space. Currently use 3-4 kitchens around the county. 2006 started talking about year round market places. Had a one day winter time farmers market in 06 and 2 in 07, and last year 5 – all went well, and held at Opera Galleria. Had 40-45 vendors and had 1400 people in the 4 hours they were open. Estimated \$90,000 in sales over the 5 markets in 2008, and many said it was money they would not have had. It's what kept them afloat. The marketplace will help bridge the gap between November and March. Downtown Development Authority (DDA) wanted to hear about a year round market as some kind of marketplace had been on the wish list for a number of years. There has been about 20 organizations that are interested in making this happen including CSU, City of Fort Collins, UniverCity connections, County's Rural Land Use Program, ranchers and farmers, downtown business people, etc. Started a planning process last year for what the market place might look like, plus a financial feasibility study, site and site management.

Hill presented a slideshow of what the market place might look like. The mission of the place is a showcase of local food/products; a place where sustainable ag and businesses come together with fair entrepreneurial practices; the center for learning how these principles can be applied in our community and out business life. Upstairs might be devoted to the University or some other organization that was oriented around green building, ie the Extension office. Goals are living, connection, learning. Triple bottom line is profit, social justice and the environment and how the business fares in all of these is what some businesses are striving for. This place is aimed at the conscious consumer where 68 million Americans are, 40 percent is the rate of annual growth in fair trade sales over the past decade and is even higher in Larimer County. Atmosphere is intended to welcome everyone, even the cowboys feel comfortable!

Timeline of this project is still in early feasibility stages between now and early 2010. Design will go through mid 2011 with a potential opening in early 2012. The economic goals include the building being built by DDA and would be carried forward without debt, or at least manageable debt. It has to stand on its own 2 feet and be economically viable with no public subsidies.

Trudy asked if it is a 7 day a week thing, and Hill said that is how its envisioned. She mentioned that office space in Northern Colorado is easy to come by, but venture capitol money is something that is highly sought after.

- **Special recognition of Jean Carpenter, Sue Sparling and Bob Streeter for their dedication and energy in service to the Open Lands Program and the Open Lands Advisory Board for the last six years 2003-09.**

K-Lynn reviewed the history of the past 6 years. Every once in awhile 3 vacancies come open, and in 2003 we "got" these guys. Jean has been important in the aspect of education and her influence and interests helped us move in that direction with the Education Strategic Plan. Now she is giving leadership to Friends and volunteering even more time! Jean said she has grown from the opportunity to be a part of this group. Bob has been an essential member of the Board. We have new policies in place, and procedures that we didn't have before because he raised the issues and asked hard questions that caused change for the better.



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Bob said it's been a wonderful 6 years and he has learned a lot. One thing he learned is how fantastic the staff are that K-Lynn has put together. Bob said he never wanted to be on a rubber stamp board so he had to poke and prod at everything staff brought forward. Sue has some memorable moments too – particularly her quotes in the paper! Hard work on the many subcommittees is really commendable. The most important thing she did was introduce K-Lynn to her husband! Sue said it has been a privilege and she worked hard but had fun. She had such great experiences working with such a talented staff that is unbelievable, and working with the “mother” of the OLP that put it all together. Nancy expressed her appreciation for all of their contributions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Gary reviewed the changes to the sheet that was emailed. Gary is checking with the County Attorney if “resource projects” fall under the maintenance or development budget category. K-Lynn, Meegan and Jeffrey brought it to his attention that we were not getting enough resource projects done and it is important that we show the voters that we are spending some of their money doing resource management. K-Lynn said resource management is as important as working with the visitors. Gary said Jeffrey will bring a list of resource project ideas/needs to the Board next month. He will work with the County Attorney to see if we can use development funds to do them without violating the ballot language. K-Lynn said at some times it has made sense to use development funds, but when projects went on for years (even after they opened to the public), then it seemed to make sense to use maintenance dollars. It is a gray area. Gary said we still have a positive balance and we are still accomplishing a lot, which is great. He asked for the Boards thoughts. K-Lynn asked for clarification on the OL Acq/Dev cost was for in the spreadsheet. He said that is money that sits in the account every year slated for acquisition operations costs, but never get spent. He would like to see them go back in to the pot. Bob asked if the Small Grants Program expansion dollars are not shown. Gary said it shows \$10k ADDITIONAL for the next 3 years, not the existing \$10k already allocated. Nancy asked for an additional column that shows “existing” so there is a grand total column that shows how much that item is really getting. Jean asked if the vertical total could be given as well as “remaining balance” at the very bottom. Bob confirmed that the \$200k for office space has not been approved by this Board. Gary mentioned that we should explore alternative heat producing sources for the new office building at Horsetooth. The Governor’s Energy Office may have stimulus grant money to off set the cost of the building. Current office space is needed even with our staff staying at Fossil Creek. Bob said DOW’s Division Wildlife Manager’s keep a laptop in their vehicles and operate out of their vehicles instead of an office. Ted asked about the money for Hermit Park Open Space that we talked about last month, it seems to have disappeared. Gary pointed it out on the spreadsheet. The \$50k in 2010 is for moving the 2 cabins out of wetland and the \$30k is already in 2009 for the campgrounds. Nancy suggested the Board keep these and compare them month to month so they can understand it better.
- **Bond Revenue requirements and priorities**
Sales tax revenue is decreasing and K-Lynn wants to explain how that impacts our funds. She drew attention to words on the top left of the sheet. Because of economic conditions and declining sales tax it is impacting our bond payback and the priorities of how money gets paid and allocated as it comes in. #1 priority is to ballot language and 15% to Long Term Management, #2 if you combine debt service (DS) amount’s; and #3 is the operating budget for acquisition and development fund which is primarily Jerry/Charlie salary; #4 county policy that is another reserve to pay bonds off; #5 is the 2nd 15% discretionary funds; #6 is anything and everything left over the acquisition and development fund.

Looking at the numbers on the sheet: \$291,044 is what the county got in November for sales tax, and the numbers above it are how it got allocated. Since there wasn’t enough money to go through all the priorities



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you can see the OL Long Term Management (214) was shorted because there was not enough money. So now looking at February (arrow on spreadsheet) and what has never happened we were short for the first time. Because we have some in reserve, everybody still got paid but if that keeps up we need to be looking at how to alleviate it. Nancy said if over the next 6 months this keeps up we could be in trouble. Gary said we will be keeping a sharp eye on this regularly.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Gary said Travis is here per Nancy's request. Bob said he thinks it is good that Travis is here and hopes he chimes in. Travis said he is available anytime, not just at these meetings. Bob said Travis has already contributed significantly at this meeting. David Roy asked what are the most frustrating question they always get. Travis said it is diverse. At Devil's Backbone it is the dog issues and why we close trails for a raven's nest. Most common enforcement issue may be dog off leash, people off trail, or on closed trails. Each time a property opens it has its own challenges, like at Red Mountain OS it might be the cultural artifacts. Visitor safety and resource protection is always the emphasis. On each public contact they want the public to walk away knowing why they got a ticket. They use Authority of the Resource to do that. Nancy asked if he feels staff is struggling to keep up, or is they feel reasonably staffed. His goal is proactive and not reactive. It is challenging, we have properties from Boulder County up to Wyoming that and east to Windsor. When Red Mountain OS is open there will be a total of 70 miles of trails on open spaces. They try to prioritize their time based on visitation, but also maintain the quality of the resources on all the lands, even the more remote. He hopes the Board likes the job they are doing. Gary mentioned that we're expanding the Volunteer Ranger Assistant (VRA) program, and that helps out tremendously being eyes and ears on the ground. Their reports provide valuable information for knowing where to focus rangers' efforts. Bob asked about cooperation with the City in cross-rangering. Travis said they are working on MOU's with the City of Fort Collins and Wyoming on agreements regarding enforcement.
- Parks Advisory Board – Gary honored Trudy's request in asking the Parks Advisory Board (PAB) for money for Camp Area 2 at Hermit Park. Feedback was lots of questions, and no consensus. It is not in the Parks Program master plan. He would like to share budgets back and forth so they all know what each board is doing financially. Trudy asked about joint board meetings. Gary said there was an Executive Committee formed that hasn't been used much. Sue Sparling is the PAB liaison and attends their meetings occasionally. The Board asked for time in each meeting for a PAB liaison report. Nancy said we'll need to ask for a new PAB liaison at the next meeting since Sue will no longer be on the Board.
- Board Cost – Gary asked for ideas on how this board could be more austere. It costs \$68,000 per year on Board management. Most is staff time, though most staff are salaried. Field trips, holiday party, and summer picnic costs about \$14,000/year. Food for the Board is negligible and isn't being questioned. The PAB has decided to do 9-10 meetings instead of 12, and thinking about not having a holiday party. What is the happy medium of what they should or shouldn't do? Gary is open to feedback.

Bob is open to 1 maybe 2 less meetings per year, and management of the meetings could make them shorter. Holiday parties and summer picnic are fun to still have, but everyone could bring a dish. Nancy said the field trips are important as it gives them the chance to see the land. Taking people out is what we should be doing. Sue said they can't vote on a property they haven't seen. Jean said field trips for the Small Grants Program are essential, maybe scheduling could be improved. Trudy clarified that the real savings is hard money in the \$14,000 and she likes the idea of a potluck. K-Lynn said this group is ambassadors of the program and they have to understand it and it would be irresponsible if they didn't understand what they are working on. Getting them the information they need to do that allows them to be accountable for the



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program. For staff to understand where the board is coming from and hear it firsthand allows them to better respond to Board concerns and questions. This board needs to be engaged and feel responded to. Jean said their voluntary hours also contribute to grant match and community involvement. Nancy said the Planning Commission gets a holiday dinner at a fancy restaurant every year, goes out to dinner once per month and has a field trip every month. Trudy said she doesn't mind chipping in for food. Bob asked Gary about the audit done at State Parks and the disastrous results. Would Gary take a look at it and give us 5 minutes on what this Department can learn from it? Gary agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 8:35pm

Pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest, Bob motioned to enter into executive session. Ted seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Wallace at 8:55 pm.