

Berthoud Recorder
9-3-09
**Larimer
Program
Offers Free
Firewood**

Free firewood is available to the public in return for assisting with stacking slash and/or relocating firewood for one hour prior to loading and hauling it away.

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources encourages individuals inter-

County Briefs

ested in participating in the 2009 Firewood Collection Program to check our Web site at www.Larimer.org/firewood for start dates. No firewood is currently available and there is not a wait list.

All information regarding start dates and how to sign up will be made available via a press release and the Web site at www.Larimer.org/firewood. Individuals are encouraged to sign up to receive press releases by e-mail under the Subscription Section at www.Larimer.org. Go to www.Larimer.org/naturalresources.

**Natural Resource
Grants Available
in Larimer County**

Larimer County's Small Grants Program is an initiative of the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' Open Lands Program with the intent of dispersing a portion of the Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax dollars throughout the county for projects related to the "protection and enhancement of open space on public and private lands." Since 1998, a total of 88 community projects have received approximately \$113,000 in funding.

As a result of Peter Forbes' recent "Whole Communities" workshops, and in an effort to do a better job of connecting people and communities to the land, the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board approved expansion of the small grants program.

Three new grant categories were added: agriculture, increased access to open spaces, and research on open spaces. The original category designation -- protection or enhancement of open space, trails, natural areas, wildlife habitat, river areas, and wetlands on private or public land -- was maintained. The program was renamed to Small Grants for Community Partnering, and total funding increased to \$20,000 annually for individual awards up to \$2,000 per project.

The 2010 Small Grants for Community Partnering grant cycle has begun. Applications are due Wednesday, Oct. 14 at 3 p.m., with awards announced by February 2010. Applicants are encouraged to read through the selection criteria and to contact Sue Burke, Coordinator for Small Grants for Community Partnering, with questions.

Application forms, selection criteria, and other information may be obtained by these methods:

- Online at www.Larimer.org/Parks/OpenLands/SmallGrants.htm,
- Larimer County Department of Natural Resources: Application packets may be picked up at the Bison Visitor Center at 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, or
- By Mail: Contact Sue Burke at the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources at 970-679-4566 or SBurke@Larimer.org to request an application by mail.

Loveland Connection 9-2-09
**Volunteers wanted
for gardening duties**

Horticulture volunteers known as Dirt Devils are needed to support the gardens at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, between Loveland and Fort Collins, and at the Bison Visitor Center, near Carter Lake.

For more information, call 679-4552.

Loveland Connection staff

Loveland Connection
Saturday, September 5, 2009 • 19

**Fossil Creek
Reservoir Regional
Open Space**

> **Quiet time:** This place is tucked behind a rise that separates you from the noise of a busy Larimer County Road 32. There are two trails that head east and west from the parking

**Local gardening
volunteers needed**

Horticulture volunteers known as Dirt Devils are needed to support the gardens at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, between Loveland and Fort Collins, and at the Bison Visitor Center, near Carter Lake.

For more information, call 679-4552.

Loveland Connection staff

lot. Neither is overly exciting as far as scenery goes. The 1.2-mile Cattail Flats Trail to the east is the better choice. If you would rather sit and contemplate rather

than hike, the wildlife viewing pier is an excellent option.

> **Where:** Along Larimer County Road 32, just west of Interstate 25

> **Hours:** Dawn to dusk

> **Cost:** Free

> **Information:** Larimer County Natural Resources, (970) 679-4570 or www.co.larimer.co.us/naturalresources



Outdoors **Near Your Back Door**

Volunteer and Keep Learning

Story, photo by Deborah Huth Price
BERTHOUD RECORDER

Last week, I led a workshop for a group of master naturalists from the City of Fort Collins. As always, I came away rejuvenated by their energy. They teach me as much as I teach them. These volunteers spend hundreds of hours leading programs in natural areas for school groups, families and private groups, and they bring their own enthusiasm and curiosity to each outing.

Enjoying the outdoors is one thing — sharing what you know with others and continuing the learning process on the way brings an even greater reward. Larimer County Natural Resources and the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program both have excellent volunteer opportunities that provide avenues to

explore the outdoors, learn more about the environment and meet a wide variety of other volunteers with varied interests and backgrounds.

C.J. Cullins, Volunteer Program Coordinator for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, says that since she was hired in January the county has, "gone straight into a strategic planning process inclusive of creating policies and procedures, a new volunteer database ... all in an effort to provide a better, more organized volunteer experience."

Cullins reports that in 2008, volunteers donated nearly 30,000 hours to parks and open spaces, equating to over \$400,000 of donated time and energy. Opportunities range from providing public programs and guided hikes to assisting with other projects at various open spaces.

Volunteer opportunities with the county include a tree planting project in October at Horsetooth Reservoir and a prairie dog monitoring project at several sites in September and October.

The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program also provides extensive opportunities for volunteers to get involved. Master naturalists complete a 50-hour training, offered each spring, that prepares them for leading hands-on field trips and public programs. If speaking in public is not your thing, master naturalist assistants

Get Involved
■ Larimer County Natural Resources, C.J. Cullins, 970-679-4552, ccullins@larimer.org. Web site: www.co.larimer.co.us/naturalresources/volunteer
■ City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program, Sue Kenney, 970-224-6118, skenney@fcgov.com (for Master Naturalist program); Susan Schafer, 970-416-2480, sschafer@fcgov.com (for all other volunteer opportunities); Web site: www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/volunteers.php

provide support in a variety of ways.

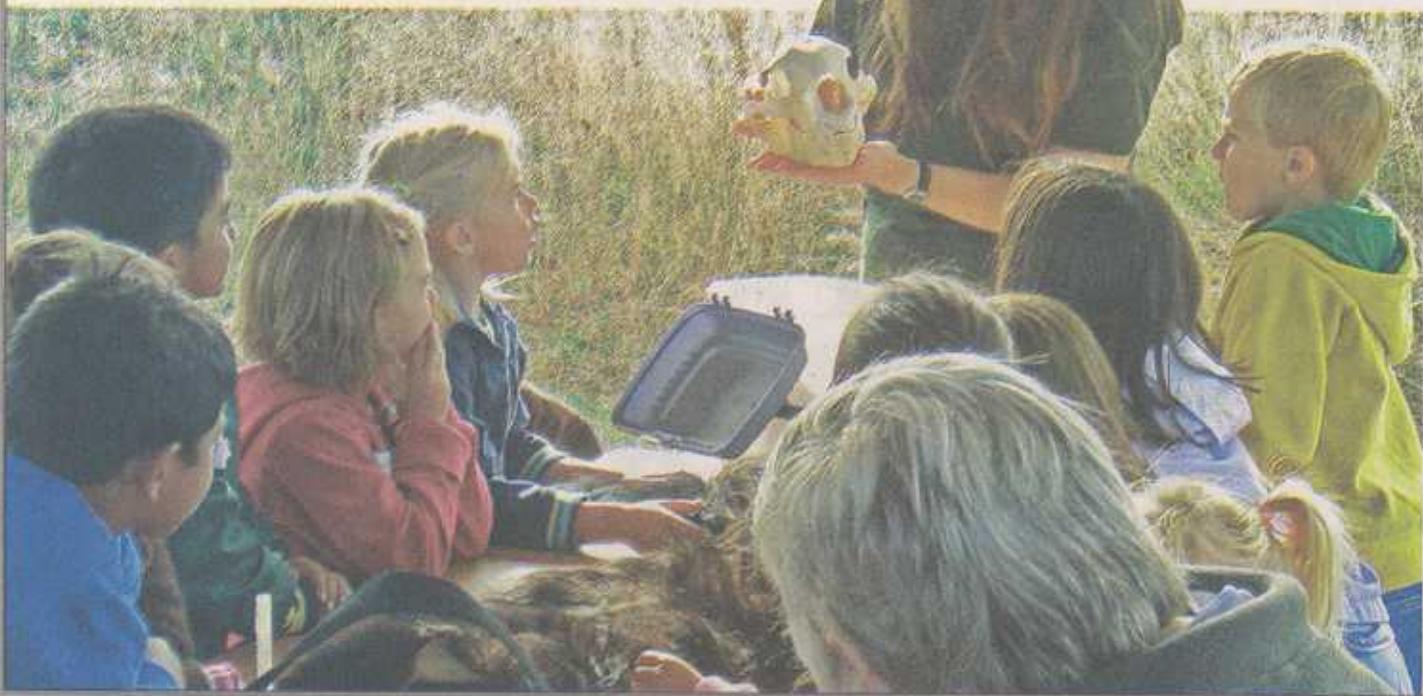
Other opportunities with Fort Collins include trailhead ambassadors (who welcome visitors and answer questions), volunteer ranger assistants, gardeners and group projects such as weed pulling or litter clean up.

Fort Collins properties range as far south as Bobcat Ridge Natural Area in Masonville to the newly-opened Soapstone Prairie near the Wyoming border.

Education is a life-long process. Even as an environmental educator, I am constantly learning more about nature and how we interact with the natural world every day. I am also aware of how much I still have to learn, and amazed that I

have the benefit of incredible volunteers who walk with me down that path.

Fort Collins Master Naturalist Kimberly Tamkun shows a bear skull to kindergarten students visiting Bobcat Ridge.



Straight Talk on County Budget

COMMUNITY

By Jamie Folsom
BERTHOUD RECORDER

How does Larimer County budget? That was the basic question at this month's county commissioner citizen meeting Wednesday morning. Larimer County Commissioner Tom Donnelly and Budget Director Bob Keister sat down with several citizens, as well as Berthoud's Interim Town Administrator Gary Suiter and State Rep. B.J. Nikkel, to look at Larimer's "budgeting for results" process.

Keister explained the new process gives commissioners a chance to prioritize budget items within each category, such as law enforcement and public facilities, and then make their funding decisions within that context. The previous method was to make uniform cuts or increases across all departments and services.

But, he noted, having a more finely tuned process and making cutbacks now is essential, because they expect budget shortfalls — "a huge reduction in 2012" — due to the economy, and falling property tax income. Keister said they are preparing for that drop off so they can "do a few things well instead of a lot of things poorly."

"We are using the criteria questions to help us rank our priority services and how to fund them," Keister noted.

The budget picture also has to include state and federal program funding, so Keister explained it is difficult to predict many items, and yet, "We believe the citizens want us to make the difficult decisions, not to spread the butter evenly," he said.

They also noted that some funding is regulated as well as mandated, and those items take top priority. Keister added that keeping the county's good financial rating, for instance, requires 10 percent be held in reserve. The funds that are set aside show credibility for the county's financial management practices and help absorb short-term fluctuations in the total financial picture.

Rep. Nikkel asked about county finances online, similar to the standards the state now uses as a result of the "Taxpayer Transparency Act" she co-sponsored this year. Keister responded they are expanding their Web site to provide that kind of transparency. All expenditures and employee compensation numbers are online, as well as home appraisals, sex offender maps, and timely and accurate information from all county departments.

Donnelly and Keister added that new features, such as a citizen comments forum, county update subscription service, informational videos, and public health reports on businesses is expected to be online by next week.

In addition to the budget, citizens discussed their concerns on pine beetle infestation, program alternatives for the justice system and roadwork on County Road 17 near Berthoud.

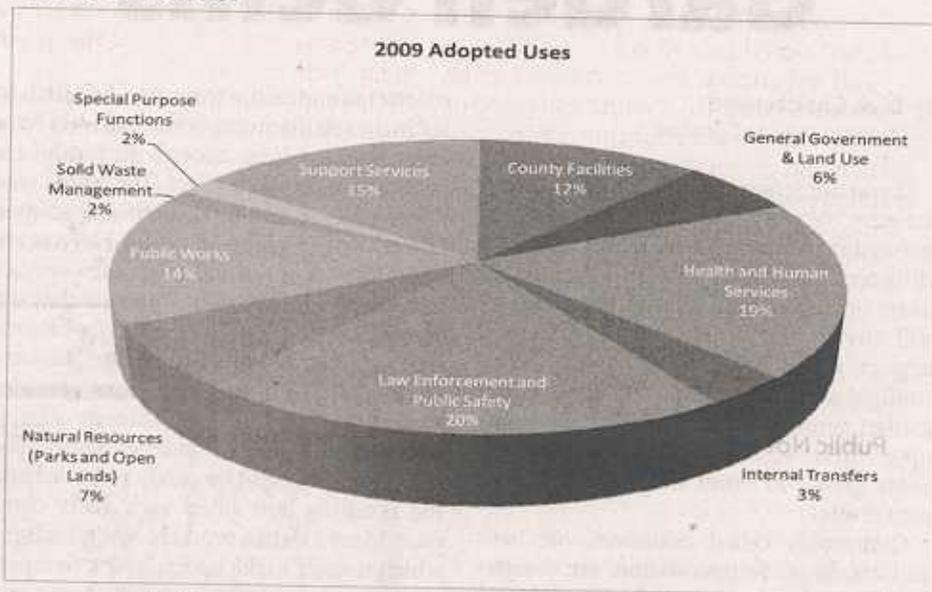
Donnelly, who meets with Berthoud constituents on a monthly basis, said he will be



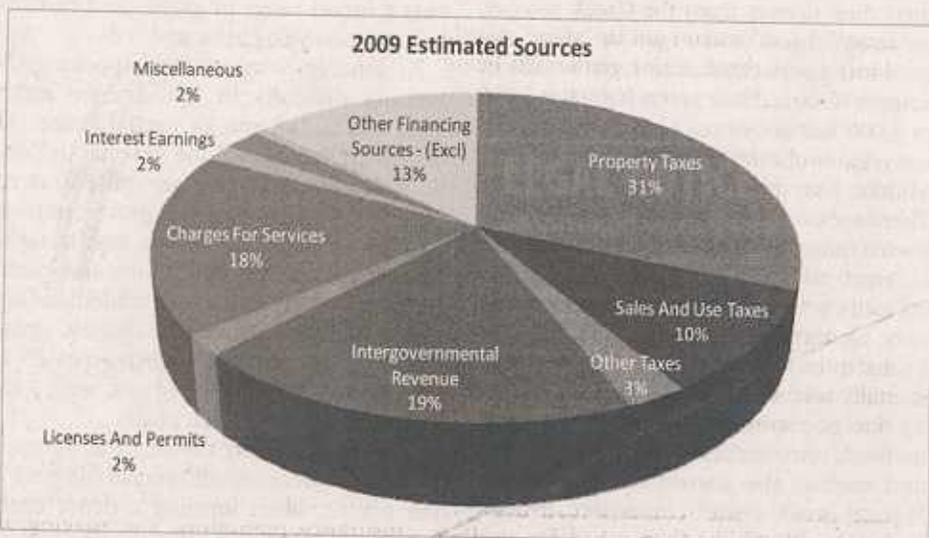
Larimer County Budget Director Bob Keister, left, was the special guest at County Commissioner Tom Donnelly's monthly breakfast meeting with Berthoud citizens.

Photo by Jamie Folsom

Uses of Funds:



Sources of Funds:



attending a 10-county budget conference in September, and has scheduled his next breakfast in Berthoud for Oct. 28. His special guest will be Linda Hoffmann who will

take questions on regulating horse boarding facilities.

For the full budget: www.Larimer.org/budget.

Reporter Herald 9-2-09

County won't remove signs near Backbone

Commissioners: They fall under state jurisdiction

BY PAMELA DICKMAN
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

FORT COLLINS — Residents have asked Larimer County to remove a developer's signs posted along U.S. 34 near the entrance to the Devil's Backbone advertising nearby homes for sale.

Because the location is actually on a state right of way, the Larimer County commissioners declined to do so.

Commissioner Steve Johnson, at a Tuesday meeting, argued that the Colorado Department of Transportation should enforce their own rules instead of looking to the county.

"They won't enforce their own policy?" he said.

"They did during political time. We all had our signs stolen — all right, borrowed."

Marc Engomoen, public works director, and Dale Miller, road and bridge director, had asked the county commissioners Tuesday if they wanted county park rangers to enforce the state sign rules at just that location, where the county has received complaints.

"Their advertisement is somebody else's eyesore," said Engomoen. "Their benefit is somebody else's nuisance. Their gain is somebody else's loss."

He and Miller said it makes sense because the rangers are already there, the state has given the county permission, residents are complaining and it is adjacent to a county open space.

However, developer Greg Wild, who is responsible for the signs in question, said to do so would be a move to "usurp CDOT control."

Two of the three commissioners, Johnson and Tom Donnelly, agreed that it is not the county's place to enforce rules on state property.

"I think it's very dangerous for us having our guys

Split the road, split the bill

Larimer and Weld counties are splitting the bill to pave a two-mile stretch of County Road 1 from Crossroads Boulevard to U.S. 34.

That road is also known as County Line Road because the east half is in Weld County and the west half is in Larimer.

The last half mile of the area to be paved was annexed by Johnstown and is not in either unincorporated county.

The town has informed county officials that it can't afford the \$350,000 to pave its portion.

So rather than pave all but a half mile and to benefit the residents who drive on the road, Larimer and Weld county commissioners agreed to each pitch in \$175,000 and cover Johnstown's portion.

Commissioner Steve Johnson agreed to the move, but noted that towns should not annex areas if they can't afford the costs of the roads.

The entire project will cost \$1.178 million, which is less than the \$1.4 million engineers estimated it would cost.

— Pamela Dickman

working in CDOT's rights of way," said Donnelly.

"I think our insurance carrier would feel the same."

And enforcing state rules in one location is opening the county to similar requests in other areas, according to Johnson.

The third commissioner, Kathay Rennels, agreed with staff that it makes sense to keep the rules consistent with county and state policy.

However majority rules, so the county will not enforce sign rules on that piece of state property.

However, county staff will continue to enforce the regulations on county property and remove all signs on a complaint-only basis.

People hosting open houses will get a pass on weekends.

The commissioners agreed those signs will be allowed Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year, and Mondays on official holiday weekends.

Reporter Herald 9-3-09

September programs offered at Larimer County Open Space

Larimer County Parks and Open Space will offer several programs to the public in September.

- "Geology: It's not just for breakfast anymore" will feature an easy two-hour walk through the Bent Rock Canyon to explore its geology. The free hike will start at 9 a.m. Saturday at Red Mountain Open Space. Registration is required at www.larimer.org/naturalresources/registration.

- "Bear Aware" at Hermit Park Open Space will feature the Colorado Division of Wildlife's bear-aware education team who will discuss recreating and camping in bear country. The team will be at the Hermit's Cabin at Hermit Park 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Sept. 12. The program is free; but a \$6/car entrance permit is required.

- In "The Elk Rut" at Red Mountain Open Space, a naturalist will lead participants on a short hike and discuss the importance of the area to migrating wildlife. The program begins at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, and is free. Registration required at www.larimer.org/naturalresources/registration.

- Attention will turn to bears at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, as a volunteer naturalist presents the "Bear Necessities" program on how local bears prepare for winter. The one-hour program will take place at Devil's Backbone Open Space. The program is free. No registration necessary.

For more information on naturalist-led talks and walks, call 679-4561.

— Reporter-Herald staff

COLORADOAN 8-29-09

LARIMER COUNTY

Help needed at Chimney Hollow Open Space

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is seeking volunteers to help stack branches into slash piles at Chimney Hollow Open Space.

Chimney Hollow is near Carter Lake southwest of Loveland.

Volunteers must be able to work a four-hour shift, hike short distances on uneven terrain and bend or stoop to pile branches. Staff will provide a short history and education program on the open space.

For more information or to volunteer, call (970) 679-4552.

Coloradan 9-2-09

Free firewood for a little hard work

Larimer County will offer free firewood to the public in return for helping with stacking slash or relocating firewood for one hour before hauling the wood away, according to a statement from the county.

Firewood collection dates and times have not been determined yet but will be announced soon.

For more information on the Larimer County Firewood Collection Program, visit www.larimer.org/firewood.



BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Thursday, Aug. 27

The Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board will meet at 5 p.m. on at the Loveland Library multi-purpose room, located at 300 N. Adams in Loveland. All meetings are open to the public.

Berthoud Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, 7 p.m. in the Town Hall boardroom.

LARIMER COUNTY OUTDOORS GUIDED HIKE AND PROGRAMS

Saturday, Aug. 29

"Red Mountain: The Whole Enchilada," 8:30 a.m. We bring it all together during this 2.5 mile-walk through the Red Mountain Open Space, located 25 miles north of Fort Collins, between I25 and Hwy 287. Led by an experienced Larimer County Naturalist, this program will cover the area's fascinating and unique plants, animals, ecology, geology, history, and pre-history. Three-hour program. Registration required. Please go to www.Larimer.org/NaturalResources/Registration to sign up.

Saturday, Sept. 5

"Geology: It's Not Just For Breakfast Anymore," 9 a.m. Join naturalist and rock hound Carl for a hike at Red Mountain Open Space. Carl will take you on a walk through the Bent Rock Canyon to explore the geologic wonders of this brand new open space. Hike rating: Easy. Three-hour program. Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing and bring water for the trail. Registration required. For more details contact Rob at 970-679-4561.

Aug. 27, 2009 www.BerthoudRecorder.com

Monday, Sept. 7

Larimer County offices will be closed for the Labor Day holiday.

County Briefs: Picture This!

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is recruiting photography enthusiasts to join our ranks and go out in the field to get pictures of visitors recreating in our parks and open spaces. If you have a passion for catching the moment please contact CJ Cullins, Volunteer Program Coordinator at 970-679-4552 or by e-mail at ccullins@larimer.org.

Go Where Nobody's Allowed to Go

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is also seeking volunteers to help stack branches into slash piles at Chimney Hollow Open Space. It is one of the most stunning open spaces in the system. Chimney Hollow is located near



Carter Lake southwest of Loveland. Staff will provide a short history and education program and the volunteers will be the first visitors to access this open space before it is formally open to the public. For details contact CJ Cullins, Volunteer Program Coordinator, at 970-679-4552 or at by e-mail at ccullins@larimer.org.

Reporter Herald 9-6-07
Weed district starts

appointment-only hours

FORT COLLINS — Effective Tuesday, the Larimer County Weed District office will be open only by appointment during the off-season of September through March.

Anyone who needs to meet with a weed district representative should call 498-5768 to set up an appointment.

Normal office hours of 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. will resume in April.

— Reporter-Herald staff

Nancy Moeller jogs along the Foothills Trail along Horsetooth Reservoir on Sunday. The trail offers a quick escape from the city.

Quick GETAWAYS

Nearby
escapes
allow
you to
stay
close,
yet totally
lose
yourself

BY MILES BLUMHARDT
milesblumhardt@coloradoan.com

This time of year, the transition from care-free summer days to hectic school year can be a little — OK, a lot — stressful for children and adults alike.

Sure, there's some excitement, what with the new school and college year. But between the new schedules, the start of new sports seasons and all the orientation meetings piled

on top of all the other things on your plate can create a need to just get away for a little while.

Yeah, I know, you don't have time to get away. What if I told you that getaway is no more than a 10-minute car drive or 20-minute bike ride away?

Yeah, thought so. Here are six quick escapes that offer solace amid the storm.

Foothills Trail

> **Quiet time:** This city earthen trail that runs along the spine of the hogback between Fort Collins and Horsetooth Reservoir and connecting Reservoir Ridge and Pineridge natural areas is among my favorite escapes. It's easily accessed from numerous points that allow you to get "lost" in a hurry, serves up excellent

scenery whether overlooking the city or the reservoir, offers up some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities and can be enjoyed on foot or mountain bike, both of which take little effort here.

> **Hours:** Dawn to dusk
> **Favorite sections:** Reservoir Ridge is quiet and the shoreline trail along Horsetooth is incredibly scenic.

> **Distance:** 6.4 miles one way

> **Trailhead:** You can start either at Michaud Lane or behind Hughes Stadium off of Larimer County Road 38E.

> **Cost:** Free

> **Pets:** On leash

> **Information:** www.fcgov/naturalareas or 416-2815

See ESCAPES/Page C2