



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 27, 2010 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland Library, 300 N Adams, Loveland CO

*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:

John Ericson	Peter Kast
Don Griffith	Hugh McKean
Nancy Wallace	Ted Swanson
Steve Vessey	Jeff Hindman

Staff:

Gary Buffington	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	Zac Wiebe
Meegan Flenniken	Lori Smith
Mark Caughlan	Jerry White

Absent:

Bill Newman	David Roy
Patricia Brennan	Trudy Haines
Commissioner Tom Donnelly	

Ted called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

**REGULAR MEETING**

- Approval of the meeting minutes for April 22, 2010.

**Peter moved to approve the April minutes, Steve seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

- Review Agenda and enclosures

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda.**

**INFORMATION:**

- No June OLAB meeting – happy summer break!
- Reminder: Starting in July OLAB meetings will be at Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- Chimney Hollow Open Space IGA extension with Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District - Jerry updated the Board on the IGA status. The NCWCD’s plans for reservoir construction have been delayed and the IGA has expired. The extension should be finished soon.
- Hermit Park OS conservation easement amendment approved by GOCO and recorded. It’s waiting on a signature from the Estes Valley Land Trust.
- Justin Scharton, the fellow with the Natural Resources Department from June 2008-May 2010, has finished his fellowship and has recently been hired full-time by Pitkin County to run their conservation easement monitoring program – congratulations Justin!!
- Morrison Trail Update - The trail construction has been completed. Meegan met with some reps from an ADA group to consider an ADA designation. There are not ADA specifications for trails so it can’t be



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

called “ADA accessible” but can be referred to as “wheelchair accessible” The trail is open and a grand opening will happen hopefully in July, once the Crowder family gives input on their preferences. Additions will include a kiosk and educational signs. Travis mentioned that there will be a soft opening before the grand opening event.

- State Certification and conservation easement tax credit update - Jerry reminded the board about the need for state certification to hold conservation easements that utilize state tax credits. The first part, the organizational profile has been submitted. Jerry has been working on the rest of the application and is hoping to have it completed by September 1st with approval at the July meeting. Jerry asked the Board if they would like to receive parts as they are completed or wait until it's finished. The board agreed to wait until it's completed before reviewing it. Jerry commented that the state finally passed a cap on conservation easement credits at \$26 million a year but he doesn't think it will affect the department very much.
- Board contact information and updates - Bill, Don and Ted's terms are completed. Don and Ted are reapplying and Bill is not. It will be known by about mid June about board appointments. John asked if applications are still open and if one was submitted from the Estes Valley Land Trust. There was an EVLT submission.
- Hidden Valley sign update - Travis updated the board after many meetings and discussions. Hugh made some connections and it was determined that the original intent of the agreement was to have a sign only for Hidden Valley drive. The HOA was understanding and were told that they wouldn't get a sign for the Hidden Valley Estates on that part. They may pursue putting a sign on residual open space but it doesn't seem likely due to the lack of good locations. Travis will move forward with placing a new identity sign. Peter asked what kind of sign he was thinking. Travis responded that it will be a way finding sign rather than a monument, probably 24" by 36" that matches signs on other areas. Peter wondered why it's not highlighted with a more prominent sign. Travis responded that thousands of cars drive by and parking issues have been cleared up, a more prominent sign might be appropriate.
- Report from the OLAB liaison to the Parks Advisory Board – Trudy. No report.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis
  - The vehicle trailhead at Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) has reopened. It was closed to the public for a rattlesnake hibernaculum. There has been only one recent sighting of a snake so far. Kerri asked if it would close again if more snakes are seen. Travis seemed to think that it has been warm enough and any snakes left have already dispersed. Meegan commented that monitoring will take place again in the fall. It's possible that volunteer monitors could have missed them this spring.
  - Travis attended the Laramie Foothills Advisory Committee meeting about the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) study at RMOS. The research is continuing to determine how the disease is passed from animal to animal. Of 140 deer collared, only 5% had CWD compared to 20% ten years ago. The plan is to keep infected deer in the population rather than remove them. The majority of the deer have moved out of RMOS into their summer range in Wyoming. They track deer weekly and so far there have been seven Mountain Lion kills, one death by car, and one infected with CWD.
  - Rangers will install more signs and increase patrols near RMOS in an effort to lessen trespass issues on the neighboring property.
  - A Mountain bicyclist had an accident at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space resulting in a broken femur. Rangers carried the cyclist out.



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- The Crazy Legs 5k race happened on a Sunday morning at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Eighty runners, the event cap, participated.
- The Poudre River trail: There have been meetings with the cities of Windsor and Ft. Collins and there will be shared service partnerships, patrols in exchange for maintenance. There will hopefully be no noticeable difference to visitors.
- Kerri asked about the board picnic. The Board will be happy with staff decisions.
- Natural Resource Events for June. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

### FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2009 - 2011.

Gary pointed out two requests totaling \$135,400. The first is for renovating Campground 1 at Hermit Park Open Space (HPOS) for \$35,400. Match from the Gates Family Foundation (~\$60,000) will help with a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant application to hopefully cover the remaining cost. Revenue at Hermit Park has increased \$86k from 2008 and continues to do better. The renovation at Campground 1 would include road work and the addition of about 25 campsites. The roads need a lot of attention due to the wet conditions. HPOS would potentially make another \$20k a year from these improvements. Kerri clarified that this project and budget request would be contingent on a grant award from GOCO.

The second request is \$100k for new office space at the Horsetooth headquarters. There continues to be major issues with the current office space. It's a modular unit, has mouse issues and has had to be fumigated. GOCO will now fund buildings that include nature centers, so the department is considering having a nature center/office building. It's likely a million dollar project that would include GOCO and Bureau of Reclamation money. Open Lands personnel would use the building also. This request takes the budget down to \$214,000.

John asked Lori to expand on the sales tax situation. Lori responded that sales tax is up 4.06% because vendors used to be able to keep 3.3% for administrative costs but legislation makes them report it for this year. The 4% increase includes that 3.3%. Gary mentioned a slow trend of tax revenue increase. Peter clarified that the Poudre River grant was for the conservation easement acquisition only and no construction. Ted asked if the building is a long term project. Gary responded that it would be late 2011 before an application is submitted. John asked if this is a proposal or is the Board voting. Gary responded that the Board is voting on the budget but it can be changed in the future. John mentioned his concerns about spending money wisely and he would prefer to focus on the mission instead of office space. Gary acknowledged that office space isn't as "sexy". Don commented that he thinks the department needs the infrastructure to support the staff. Ted asked for a motion to approve the budget change for Campground 1.

**Don recommended, Jeff seconded, the motion passed unanimously. Ted asked for a motion to approve the budget change for office space. Don recommended amending for the office space, Jeff seconded and the motion passed 7-1, the dissenting vote from John Ericson.**

Jeff commented that there might be public concern about building office space but if the department could build a million dollar building with 100k it would show the public our responsible spending. John asked exactly what the \$100k is being used for. John asked if leasing has been considered. Gary answered that it would be difficult to lease on federal property. John asked if another location has been considered. Kerri commented that it is important to be on site. Hugh commented that the nature center component should be on site.



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

### PRESENTATIONS:

- Department of Natural Resources Finances presentation – Lori Smith, Senior Accountant. An overview of the financial outlook for the Open Lands and Parks programs

Gary introduced the presentation. Hugh commented about the legislative bills concerning intergovernmental loans and asked how the department would handle a situation where it had to pay a lump sum. Lori commented that things would have to be shuffled around. Gary pointed out the good interest rate.

Ted talked about the next steps of forming a Finance Subcommittee and wondered who might be interested in being on a subcommittee. Kerri mentioned the past subcommittee that Peter and Ted were on. The difference this time will be the make up of the subcommittee. There would be two to three Parks and Open Lands Advisory Board members plus representatives from the cities. Ted commented that it is important to have buy-in from all groups involved. Steve wondered if it would be prudent to have a plan in case the tax doesn't pass. Ted responded that this is a good reason to start earlier than later in case it needs to go back to the voters. Kerri mentioned that discussions at the staff level have concerned updating a master plan and this could incorporate planning for both. John, Ted, Peter and Don volunteered to be on the finance subcommittee. Ted commented that by the time everyone is included it will be a large committee. Hugh wondered what level the discussions would be at before it comes to the cities. Kerri responded that there will be a lot of information gathering before starting the process. She envisions having a meeting early to come up with a process with all the stakeholders. Otherwise, support could be lost at the end of the process. It will be a long process, another reason to start soon, and the subcommittee should go slow and make good decisions. Jeff agrees that it is important, even from just a public information standpoint that the group put out information. Peter thinks that that should be a group from OLAB instead of everyone. If funding stops it's OLAB that needs to have a plan, not everyone involved.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Blue Sky Trailhead design & construction – Mark Caughlan, Park Manager

Mark gave a history of the Field of Dreams project and how it came to be included in the master plan as a trailhead for the Blue Sky trail. See presentation.

### ACTION:

- Blue Sky Trailhead entrance fee

Steve clarified that a parks pass would allow access if there is a fee. Gary reviewed the options. Nancy clarified that visitors approaching from the south wouldn't have to pay the fee and it is a per vehicle fee. Steve asked if it is big enough to warrant a gate house. Travis commented that the best comparison is the Soderberg area, which has a fee but no gate house. Nancy asked about the process of getting a gate house. Mark commented that there is room and it would cost about \$7000. Nancy asked what the advantage would be with installing a gate house now vs. later. Mark answered that it could be added later. Steve agrees that it should wait. Gary mentioned a precedent concerning access to Open Lands adjacent to fee areas and passed around minutes from 2004 OLAB and BOCC meetings. Jeff asked about the 2004 recommendations and assumed that the Board doesn't want to have free areas next to a pay area. Travis mentioned that from a management standpoint it is difficult to enforce on these areas. Steve asked what amount of traffic would come in and not pay. Mark thinks less than 10%. Gary mentioned that the department now has windshield tickets and it has helped with compliance. Mark mentioned that the Horsetooth Mountain trailhead gate house is well worth staffing. Gary mentioned that he's had complaints about a fee at Soderberg. **Nancy moved to adopt option 1 (an entrance fee with a self pay vault), Steve seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

### BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda**

Gary commented on Kerri's promotion and the Board to Open Lands Manager and the Board congratulated her.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. There was no executive session for this meeting.

**Steve motioned to adjourn, John seconded and the motion passed unanimously**

Ted adjourned the meeting at 8:12

*Next regular meeting: Thursday, July 22, 2010; Loveland Municipal Building Council Chambers, 500 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St*