



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	Steve Vessey
David Roy	Suzan Fritchel
Nancy Wallace	Mary Banken
Patricia Brennan	Trudy Haines

Staff:

Gary Buffington	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	Zac Wiebe
Meegan Flenniken	Charlie Johnson
Steve Gibson	Jerry White
Jeffrey Boring	

Absent:

Don Griffith	Hugh McKean
Peter Kast	Jeff Hindman

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for May 27, 2010.
Steve motioned to approve the minutes, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously
- Review Agenda and enclosures

INTRODUCTIONS:

- Introduction of new Board members Mary Banken and Suzan Fritchel. Board orientation schedule is below, all are welcome to attend:
7/22, 2-5pm - Classroom session, Loveland Park & Rec conference Room (2nd floor), 500 E 3rd Street
8/19, 130-5pm, south county tour – meet at Natural Resource Offices 1800 S CR 31
8/23, 11am – 4pm, north county tour – meeting place TBD

Kerri introduced the two new Board members. Suzan introduced herself and gave a brief overview of her background as an attorney and her experience with conservation easements. She expressed gratitude to the Board for welcoming her. Mary is from Estes Park and works with the Estes Valley Land Trust. She also gave a brief overview of her past employment and experience. Kerri discussed the Board member orientation and schedule. All board members are welcome to attend. At this point commissioners Donnelly and Gaiter will attend on the 19th. The rest of the Board and staff introduced themselves. Nancy commented on the makeup of the Board.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- The Morrison Trail dedication at the Russ Crowder Area of the Devil’s Backbone Open Space will take place 7/17 at 8:30am. Your attendance is much appreciated!



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The event made it into several local papers. It was a success that included many members of the Crowder and Dewey families. There was a geology hike afterwards and wheelchair accessibility was showcased.

- The Departmental Board and staff picnic will be held August 4th, 4:30-7:30. Families are welcome to attend, and we will honor our outgoing board members Ted, Brian and Bill. Please take the time to join us! RSVP to Zac at zwiebe@larimer.org. The picnic will take place at the Sail and Saddle club.
 - The Conservation Fund received a GOCO grant of \$1.5 million for protection of the Ben Delatour Scout Camp. Larimer County assisted by GPSing existing building envelopes within the conservation easement.
 - Department of Natural Resources will have interactive and informational booths at the New West Fest (8/21-22) and the Corn Roast Fest 8/27-28). Stop by and say hi!
 - COSA registration is open and Board members are encouraged to attend. The conference will be in Westminster this year, 9/13-15. Please go to www.coloradoopenspace.org for a full agenda and online registration. Hard copies will be available at OLAB. The Board is welcome to attend and registration will be covered by the Department.
 - Language of Conservation Study performed in 2009 has been distributed and could be a helpful resource as the Department moves forward in planning for the future.
 - Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis
 - Travis commented on his field staff attending OLAB meetings. Steve Gibson introduced himself and gave a brief description of his work history.
 - Travis updated the Board on the trail closure policy. The website has been updated, tweets are sent and there are new signs at the trailheads. There are also gates to limit access.
 - The Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) half marathon took place recently. There were about 80 participants and everyone was happy with the event.
 - A new hitching post, a trail map with watering areas and signage were installed at RMOS using the grant from the Roundup Riders of the Rockies.
 - The RMOS boundary was signed in preparation for the hunting season.
 - There was also a race at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS) last month. It was part of a series of races on Open Spaces.
 - The Blue Sky trailhead opened and has had traffic similar to Soderburg Open Space.
 - Seasonal closures for raptor nests have been lifted. The Nomad Trail closure for butterflies lifts on 7-31.
 - A juvenile set a fire at Longview Farms Open Space.
 - A jogger collapsed at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space and required medical care.
 - A hiker became stranded near the top of Horsetooth falls at HTMOS and required a technical rescue.
- Nancy commented that she has had comments from two horse riders about confusion on a loop at RMOS not allowing horses. Travis mentioned that there is only one foot-only trail. He will investigate their issues.
- Natural Resource Events for August. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

FINANCIAL REPORT:



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- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2009 - 2011. Gary pointed out the requested change for the Poudre trail and commented that sales tax is rising. Kerri commented that the project would be contingent on a GOCO grant, awarded in December. Jeffrey commented that it would extend the Poudre river trail 1.2 miles to the north. The requested change will leave a \$74,365 remaining balance. **Trudy motioned to approve the change, Steve seconded and the motion passed unanimously.** Steve clarified that this can be changed in the future depending on the sales tax. Gary reminded the Board that the number one Board priority is regional trails. Greeley and Poudre River Inc. have brought the trail 22 miles to the county line. Travis commented that while on a field trip with the town of Windsor and Poudre River Inc. along the trail, the visitors encountered were very receptive to the trail continuation.

PRESENTATIONS:

- Small Grants for Community Partnering 2009-10 projects close out
Sue gave a brief overview of the program for the new board members. Closing date this year is September 24th. Sue gave a brief report on the status of the projects, all but two are completed.
- Kayak feature at Lions Park proposal – Mandy Kotzman
Nancy talked about the process for the Board and that the management plan would need to be revised. Trudy asked about the schedule for plan updates. Meegan responded that plans are updated every 5-10 years. Kerri introduced Mandy and gave a brief overview of the status of the project. Mandy Kotzman, from Laporte, introduced herself and gave a presentation on the proposed kayak park. See presentation.

Suzan asked about the lease from the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW), who owns the property, and why OLAB is involved. Kerri answered that DOW owns the land but the Department has a perpetual lease. Trudy asked about the potential cost. Mandy responded that, depending on the design, it would be between \$20-100k and should be less expensive due to the current access. Donation of rock might also save money. Kerri mentioned the “Fishing is Fun” grant as potential funding source. Steve wondered if there would be increased maintenance. Kerri answered that more maintenance issues would come from increased use. David asked if staff has knowledge of habitat issues in that area. Meegan answered that there is endangered butterfly habitat nearby. Public answered that it is actually the Smoky-eyed moth. Trudy asked how this project is related to the park that has been approved by Ft. Collins. Mandy answered that Ft. Collins has a lot of money and a design but the project has been on hold for about eight years. She thinks that the more kayak parks, the better. Trudy asked if there is a formal organization behind this project. Mandy responded that the Colorado Whitewater Association is supportive and there is a plan to organize a local group once there is more approval. Trudy asked who would oversee the construction of this. The County would implement the project once the funds are raised and the design is complete. Trudy wondered if fundraising would include staff time and what effect the proposed Glade reservoir might have on the project. Mandy answered that there are two main issues, the Greeley pipeline and Glade reservoir, but, at worst, the kayaking season would be shorter. Trudy asked about projected usage numbers of the project. Mandy answered that she would be guessing and couldn’t estimate. Kerri commented that use issues would be addressed during a management plan process. Mandy commented that kayakers are a user group that seems to police itself.

Public comment:

Chris Denne from Ft. Collins has been a fisherman and kayaker all his life and is very excited about the project due to the improved fishing and local access to kayaking. He’s traveled to Lyons’ kayak park and mentioned that it boosts the local economy. Trail users will appreciate the kayak park also.



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John Gross from Laporte emphasized that the river bank is a mess. Something needs to be done anyway and he emphasizes the benefits to kayakers of an older generation. Trail users will also have good entertainment.

Dan Wooley commented that a kayak park will be a benefit to the County because the kayaking season is longer on the Poudre and it will bring people here and boost the local economy.

Michael Brown from Ft. Collins addressed the number of users and that both fisherman and kayakers use a leave no trace ethic.

Karen Delehoy, adjacent landowners east of Lions' Park on the south and north side. They have not been contacted by the kayak group. She distributed a letter she wrote and went over it with the Board. Karen is concerned about the increased use of the area. She talked about some claims on the website about parking. Today there were only three empty spaces and she is concerned about safety and overflow parking. The existing restroom facilities seem barely adequate at the current use. Also, without knowing the design, it's difficult to know habitat effects. She and her husband are also concerned about the integrity of their property. (see letter) All the land to the east is private property and she is concerned about trespass issues.

Gary Delehoy has lived there since 1982. He is concerned about changing the river characteristics because it changes everything. In 1983, a flood wiped out most of Lions' park at over 6000 cu ft/s. Another ten feet and the river would have claimed the original channel. A project like this is very important and he hopes that the Army Corps of Engineers will be involved. He has contacted the District Wildlife Manager for the DOW and he hasn't been contacted about the proposal. There are many people that need to be involved and he's concerned that this isn't the case. People don't respect his "no trespassing" signs. He recently had 40 people trespass in a four hour period. He would like a physical barrier to prevent trespassing if the project goes through. Trudy asked if the user group trespassing was tubers. He responded that it is everyone. Jeffrey asked about the proportion of trespassers. Karen answered that historically there haven't been too many kayak trespassers.

Meegan discussed the current management plan and its process. The process, adopted by OLAB in 2008, would be to collect information by hosting public meetings that include specific stakeholders and experts. The Board is updated each meeting during the process. Then, a draft plan would be developed and taken back to the public for more comment. Another revised plan would then be created and then adopted. The entire process would take approximately 1 year.

Nancy asked the Board if the management plan should be reviewed with this in consideration. David is in favor of moving forward but feels that the discussion brought up many more question, especially concerning infrastructure and in-stream flows. Meegan answered that there are facility standards that would be factored into the process. John wondered what our role would be. Nancy answered that staff would work on the management plan and roles would be decided during that process. Suzan also wondered about the steps of the process. Meegan answered that if a kayak park structure was approved through the management plan, the process would answer big picture questions. Suzan clarified that the question is if the plan should be done now or in 2012, when it is ten years old. Usually a revision takes a trigger, a major use suggestion, etc. Suzan would be concerned to spend a lot of staff time for a project that might not happen. Trudy asked if there are any other triggers at the moment and how it would impact staff. Meegan answered that there are no other triggers and the revision wouldn't compete with updating other plans. Kerri commented that some of our management goals like erosion control along the banks could be addressed. The kayak park could possibly fund some of these. Travis added that no matter what happens, the Army Corps of Engineers will ultimately oversee the project and it would be an extremely thorough process and application. Steve commented that the process would address



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some of the trespass issues. Meegan answered that part of the process would involve meeting with the adjacent landowners and addressing their concerns. John likes the project but is concerned about spending too much staff time and doesn't have enough information to support going forward. Gary commented that the number of citizens present would motivate him to dedicate staff time to it. John asked how much time it would take. Meegan thinks about three months total, spread over one year. Mary commented that there are other problems in the area that seems to warrant an update to the plan. Patricia is concerned that the city of Ft. Collins has money but hasn't moved forward. David answered that there is disagreement about in-stream flow and values of what the river represents. A rift of values seems to hold up the process but, without question, there is very strong support in the city. Steve commented that OLAB is always visiting ways to get more people on parks and open spaces and this is a great opportunity. Trudy approves studying the proposal but is concerned about the proposed location and would like to use a location that isn't surrounded by private land. As a generalization, kayaker and fisherman tend to respect private property values but that isn't the entire use. She likes to support fish habitat and recreation but is concerned about private landowners. Kerri commented that Glade Park fish habitat improvement cost about \$55k. Nancy agrees that it should be studied.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- State certification application draft policies and procedures – PLEASE REVIEW PRIOR TO MEETING
Jerry reminded the board of the need for certification and the steps that have been completed so far. He outlined all the policies that were necessary and gave an overview of each one (see packet). For the most part, the Department already does everything required but it hasn't been formally adopted yet. He highlighted the conflict of interest policy as being particularly important internal process. Although the department has done a very thorough job on this issue, there is no formal policy. Nancy clarified what a vote would mean. Jerry answered that these are only guidelines and procedures; the only policy is the conflict of interest policy. It would be an internal action only. David clarified that there have been no violations. Trudy asked about the selection process and the donative component. Jerry answered that there is no other considerations between a fee simple purchase or donation. The application will be submitted September 1st. Nancy asked about properties that were jointly purchased. Jerry responded that there is no difference. **Steve motioned that OLAB adopt the procedures, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

- Process review for Financial Subcommittee

Kerri reminded the board that a subcommittee is to be formed to consider the extension of the sales tax. Several OLAB members volunteered last meeting and so did members of the PAB. Staff considered all the volunteers and decided that the group would be too large to be efficient and suggested involving the chair and co-chair of each Board and a core group of staff. There would be a standing item to each Board's agenda to report on updates. The group would meet from 3:30 to 5:00 before each OLAB meeting. The benefit of a standing item is that it is still a public forum. The Board agreed to this approach.

ACTION ITEMS:

- River Bluffs Open Space Management Plan amendment, and construction update

Jeffrey introduced himself as a resource specialist, project manager for the River Bluffs project and regional trail coordinator. He reminded the Board that the River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS) management plan has been approved but amendments have been made. He outlined the progress of the regional trail and where it has gaps. He then gave an overview of the RBOS trail segment and reminded the Board why the trailhead was relocated, resulting in the first amendment. The second amendment concerns providing river access where the trail crosses the river and near the trailhead. The access points will be open year-round for all activities but public access in the river corridor will be limited seasonally based on DOW recommendations. Trudy clarified the access timeframe and that it would follow DOW recommendations. Trudy asked about the cultural resources. Jeffrey



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responded that the area was considered to be a seasonal camp. Nancy asked about the river crossing on the trail. It will be a detached bridge about 180 ft. long and about 10 ft. wide. Travis commented that the water level is low at this point and Jeffrey pointed out the channelization. Nancy asked if the trail is open to equestrian use. It is not because Windsor doesn't allow it and the RBOS portion is only half a mile long. Timnath and Ft. Collins are both in support of equestrian use. Gary clarified that it will be a concrete trail with a two foot crusher-fines buffer. Trudy commented on the Land Stewardship Advisory Board in Ft. Collins that is trying to create an identity and wondered if the groups could work together on a common theme at each location. Jeffrey mentioned working with Windsor and Poudre River Inc. who recently added mile markers and it's a debate between providing consistency or creating new identity. Trudy recommended talking to Ft. Collins. Kerri commented that the Cherry Creek trail in Denver might be a good example of a trail that goes through multiple municipalities. **David moved to adopt the amendments, John seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**

- Election of OLAB Officers

Steve recommended Peter for Chair, David seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Steve nominated Nancy for vice-chair, David seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

John mentioned amendments 60 and 61 and proposition 101 which would have significant impacts on the Department. He wondered if the Board is involved or if the higher government is dealing with it. Gary answered that it is at the Commissioner level. John commented that the Town of Estes Park has adopted a resolution formally against the amendments. Kerri contacted Neil Gluckman, Assistant County Manager, to see if the County has a contingency budget. CCI has come out against the amendments. Gary commented that reports will be made to the Board with any updates. Boulder has also adopted a resolution against the amendments.

David commented that Meadow Springs ranch has two imminent drilling rights on it. Kerri commented that the Department sent a letter to Ft. Collins for their State Land Board packet. David thinks it's odd that public entities protect the land and then another public entity drills on it. Nancy clarified that the State Land Board is appointed by the Governor. Charlie mentioned that there are two parcels at Red Mountain Open Space with severed mineral rights. Kerri commented that the city can't stop them from leasing the rights but they can ask for special consideration for infrastructure, roads, reclamation, etc. David commented that the State Land Board did deny a proposed ski resort on 7 Utes Mountain near Cameron pass. Charlie clarified that there are two drilling permits at Soapstone. Kerri recommended contacting Lise Aangeenbrug with Great Outdoors Colorado.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda

Blue Sky trail has opened and has a \$6 fee. Gary asked Travis if there have been any issues. There have been no issues or complaints about the fee. The Horsetooth reservoir swim beach is coming along and will be done in mid September. Trudy has heard many positive public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. **Steve moved to enter executive session, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Steve motioned to adjourn, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, August 26, 2010; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland