



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 26, 2010 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland Municipal Building, 500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., 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     | Town of Estes Park  | Steve Vessey   | At-large |
| David Roy        | City of Ft. Collins | Suzan Fritchel | At-large |
| Nancy Wallace    | Planning Commission | Mary Banken    | At-large |
| Patricia Brennan | At-large            | Trudy Haines   | At-large |
| Don Griffith     | At-large            | Peter Kast     | At-large |
| Hugh McKean      | City of Loveland    |                |          |

Staff:

|                  |                              |                           |                               |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gary Buffington  | Director                     | Travis Rollins            | Open Lands Operations Manager |
| Kerri Rollins    | Open Lands Manager           | Zac Wiebe                 | Natural Resource Technician   |
| Meegan Flenniken | Resource Stewardship Manager | Commissioner Tom Donnelly |                               |

Absent:

|              |                  |  |  |
|--------------|------------------|--|--|
| Jeff Hindman | Town of Berthoud |  |  |
|--------------|------------------|--|--|

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

**REGULAR MEETING**

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

**John motioned to approve the July minutes, David seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**

- Review Agenda and enclosures

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

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

- Megan Keith, volunteer intern

Megan introduced herself and gave a brief description of her background.

**INFORMATION:**

- Staff led a media tour on 8/20 at River Bluffs Open Space to highlight that the trailhead and trail development project is underway and set to open late fall.
- 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! Final numbers haven't been calculated but there were over 500 visitors the first day of New West Fest alone.
- 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](http://www.coloradoopenspace.org) for a full agenda and online registration.



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair will take place at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on 9/25 from 7am – 3pm. A multitude of agencies are hosting, and it promises to be the biggest year ever with new birding clinics, speakers and activities for all ages. Detailed information is on the website.
- The Small Grants for Community Partnering grant applications have been posted and are due 9/24. Interested parties can view the criteria and download an application from the website.
- Staff toured nature centers/office buildings looking at the feasibility of such a structure at Horsetooth Reservoir. Kerri updated the board on the nature center tours. The Morrison, Dinosaur ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Barr Lake visitor centers were toured.
- Mark your calendars for a Board field trip to a new potential conservation easement on the morning of 9/2. More information will follow. Several staff will go on this field trip and OLAB members are welcome to attend.
- Report from the OLAB liaison to the Parks Advisory Board – Trudy. The Parks Advisory Board didn't meet in July
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis
- Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open space has been open for six years and upkeep continues to take place. Peter asked about a heart attack he heard about there. Travis responded that there are a lot of runners that use the area and she was a diabetic.
- AVI and the Larimer County engineering department are working on a design for the new pier on Fossil Creek reservoir. Demolition of the old one will start next week. The goal is to have it completed by the Northern Colorado Birding Fair. Peter asked if there was insurance or if the City of Ft. Collins was helping cover the cost. Travis responded that an ice event with wind was not covered by insurance. Keri commented that GOCO wasn't going to hold the department responsible for fixing it but would be pleased if it is done.
- The Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS) firewood program has run for the last 2 weeks. The dates were makeup dates from last year's bad weather cancellations. About 15-18 loads were taken out and staff is gearing up for fall program. Twelve trucks per weekend day are expected.
- A designated backcountry site in HTMOS is being considered. 75% of backcountry users aren't necessarily into the "backcountry" experience. Due to resource damage, staff will try to concentrate the use.
- Survey work at Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) is complete. The north boundary is now marked and it will be helpful for the hunting season and a variety of management issues. Most of the markers were only 5-10 ft off. Trudy suggested alerting the press, Don thought markers would be stolen if this was done.
- Hunting season starts this weekend and rangers are adapting patrols to prepare for potential poaching. Travis has been educating the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) to make them aware of poaching problems. Peter asked if Travis was happy with the process for distributing hunting tags. Travis answered that it was cumbersome with 338 applicants for 7 tags. This year it will be in the CDOW catalog and more applicants are expected. A Google application will be used to set up the drawing.
- Volunteer Ranger Assistant training is currently taking place. It consists of an 8 hour classroom training and an all day weekend scenario based training. There are 174 people in the program.
- Kerri solicited volunteers to review the River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS) education plan that will hopefully be adopted in October. Don and Suzan volunteered.



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Kerri told the board about a call from John Fielder who has been hired by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to photograph properties that have used GOCO dollars. He will tour several Open Lands properties including RMOS and the Blue Mountain conservation easement.
- GOCO requested a meeting with Kerri about GOCO's strategic plan goal concerning kids and families in the outdoors. Some of the feedback they got throughout the recent planning process involved kids in the outdoors and education and they are looking for input on how to implement that.
- Natural Resource Events for September. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

### PRESENTATIONS:

- Laramie Foothills Mule Deer Research study update – Dr. Tom Hobbs, Project Coordinator, CSU  
See presentation.

Tom expressed extreme gratitude to Gary and Travis for their help and cooperation on this project.

David asked about the protocol for deer taken at RMOS that might be positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Tom responded that there is no current protocol. Hugh commented that hunters should avoid nerve tissue. Tom answered that the concentration of CWD preons is higher in the nerve tissue. Nancy asked if deer can build immunity. Tom responded that they cannot because there is no immune response. Travis wondered why CWD was more prevalent in older males. Tom doesn't know but guesses that it's because they cover more ground. Tom thanked the Board and offered his group as a resource for education and interpretation.

### FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

Kerri reminded the board about the \$140,000 that was approved to match a grant for trail work north of River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS). The Department recently learned that a landowner north of RBOS might be willing to work together. She would like to postpone the grant application and hold the money for potential future acquisition.

Kerri reminded the board about the budget for improvements to campground 1 at Hermit Park Open Space. The final grant budget was higher than the original projections. In addition to requesting the maximum amount from GOCO, she requests to allocate another \$24,000 to this project.

**David moved to approve the budget requests, Mary seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Gary mentioned that he realizes this takes the bottom line down to \$50,000 but sales tax projections are looking better.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Finance Subcommittee report

Peter commented that he would like to revisit the discussion. Before the Board can address the financial side of the issue, it needs to revisit the master plan for the future and what should be done with the revenue. Voters will want to know what is intended. Peter would like to discuss revisiting the master plan and possibly starting the public process now. There are a lot of questions to be answered and this Board needs to discuss the bigger picture items before financial considerations. Nancy mentioned the amount of staff time it will take to redo the master plan. Is there staff time available? Kerri mentioned that staff has "penciled in" about a year for financial research. Research is necessary to move into the future. Nancy commented that the Board will have to consider the expectation of integrating the Open Lands and Parks Boards. It's a decision to make ahead of time. There needs to be some meetings, perhaps with commissioners, to get a sense of how to proceed in the future. Peter agrees. Nancy wants discussions and meetings before going to the public. Some questions have to be answered first. Trudy asked when the plan would be updated. Kerri answered every ten years or so. Gary commented that if the Board sees this as a priority then staff will make time. Nancy commented that the Department should



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

allow itself enough time for more than one try for the sales tax extension. Trudy wondered if it should depend on the economic climate. Nancy thinks the Board should “bite the bullet” and pick a year. Kerri mentioned doing public polls before proceeding. Hugh commented that the public poll, opinion survey, and the nexus of the process could take place right before election time. Maybe the Board should consider segmenting the master plan in order to promote advocacy. Peter commented that it would be interesting to divide it into a couple phases, what’s the direction, and then how to fund it. Hugh commented that philosophically there’s been a good discussion in Loveland concerning Open Spaces vs. Parks. Those points are ones that need to be decided quickly. David wondered if GOCO can set up programs to fund preparation for ballot initiatives. Kerri responded that they would fund master planning, but not polling. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) does offer that type of support and has contacted us already to offer help. John thinks it’s very important to reconsider the focus and vision and then work out the rest. The Department needs to present some type of vision, then get public input, then modify, then get to the specifics. He would support going back to update the master plan. Don agrees that economically there will be transitions in the master plan as well as public opinion of what the Department does. He agrees that there needs to be flexibility in the timing depending on the economic climate. Nancy commented that there are always tax increases on the ballot. Don would still like to retain some flexibility. Peter reminded the Board that it is a continuation, not a new tax. Kerri mentioned that Dee Frankforth from TPL may be here in November and might be able to talk to the Board about guiding the process. Peter commented that the Board needs to be sensitive to the fact that it was a citizen initiative to begin with and it’s incumbent on the Board to give some direction. John mentioned considering the voter population. 80% of the Estes Park population hasn’t been there for 10 years and need to be educated. Trudy likes the idea of redoing the master plan. It’s time anyway and using it for advocacy and education will be beneficial. Doing it now would allow time to use it as a tool for outreach. Kerri mentioned that, at the earliest, the process couldn’t start until a year and a half from now. Gary commented that this could be acceptable and time to form a momentum. Trudy commented that it would be good to get citizens involved early. Hugh agreed that it would be a great way to reach people. Suzan likes letting the public tell the Department what did or didn’t work for them. The public needs to feel invested. Mary concurs that initiating a master plan is an appropriate way to continue and getting citizens involved from the beginning makes sense. Nancy feels that OLAB also needs to figure out how it will proceed with the Parks Advisory Board (PAB). It’s an issue that needs to be addressed. Gary mentioned that combining Boards is not a big leap; a lot of the missions of the OLAB align with the PAB. Nancy would like to be clearer and have more open discussion about what the PAB does now vs. OLAB. She mentioned Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS) and doesn’t think that the public was aware of the implications of moving HTMOS to Open Lands. The public needs to be aware of how those decisions are made. Tom commented that, from the Commissioners’ perspective, the first priority will be the extension of the jail tax, probably in 2012. He mentioned that the amount of tax should also be considered. The current tax won’t be enough to take care of long term management. Peter commented that it sounds like there is a consensus. He suggested everyone read the existing master plan.

### **ACTION:**

- Letters of support for GOCO grants for two Hermit Park Open Space projects

Kerri reminded the board about the two projects, the campground 1 development and the education area improvements. The education area will not use sales tax and will include some interpretation, new benches and better parking. It will use \$45k from GOCO, \$6k from Gates Family Foundation, and \$1k from Cargill. Hugh commented on a meeting he attended with a 10.2 billion dollar company, Crop Production Services. They recently moved to Loveland and may be a potential donor for projects like these. Kerri commented that one way to approach them is for volunteer projects where they pay for materials. David commented that they should know about the small grants program. Peter asked that Hugh inquire about what they might be able to do. **Peter motioned to support the projects, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**



## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

### **BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda**

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

Gary commented on visitation at Parks and Open Lands. The high water has had good effects in some areas but not for camping. Some revenue records have been broken revenue this last month. Hermit Park Open Space continues to increase revenue. There have been 15 weddings this summer and the Department is hosting 1200 Boy Scouts in September. The Estes Park campgrounds have been difficult this first year with maintenance issues. The last concessionaire maintained his website that claimed Mary's Lake campground to be closed. The website is fixed now and a new building is going in at Mary's Lake campground. The campground is breaking even now but should turn a profit next year. It looks like revenue will be up this summer at the end. It was slow at first but picked up as the summer went on.

**Nancy moved that the board go into executive session, Don seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest.

**Nancy Motioned to adjourn the meeting, Suzan seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 6:59.**

*Next regular meeting: Thursday, October 28, 2010; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Loveland*