



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 24, 2011, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Loveland Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd 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:

Trudy Haines	At-large	Peter Kast	At-large
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Patricia Brennan	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission	Jeff Hindman	Town of Berthoud

Staff Present:

Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager
Charlie Johnson	Land Agent	Zac Wiebe	Natural Resource Technician
Rob Novak	Education Coordinator	Aaron Edwards	Natural Resources Intern
Heather Lindsey	Education Program Assistant		

Absent:

City of Ft. Collins representative		Mary Banken	At-large
John Ericson	Town of Estes Park	Don Griffith	At-large
Steve Vessey	At-large	Suzan Fritchel	At-large

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:22 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for March 24, 2011.

Nancy motioned to approve the previous minutes, Hugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- Review Agenda and enclosures

INTRODUCTIONS:

- Heather Lindsey (seasonal Education Assistant), and Aaron Edwards, (intern)
Heather introduced herself and gave some information about her work and background. She has many years of environmental education experience. She then gave an update on her work since starting at the County. So far this year, the education program has made 400 more contacts than last year at this time with a similar number of programs, mostly due to special request programs. The volunteer naturalist training was just completed and there are eight new naturalists. She is also working on new program curriculums that align with state standards. Aaron introduced himself and gave an overview of his background and area of study. The board introduced themselves to Heather and Aaron.

INFORMATION:

- *OLAB members are reminded that your attendance is needed at each meeting and to notify Zac if you are unable to attend. We've had difficulty maintaining a quorum in the past few meetings which hinders the ability for staff to move forward as needed.*

Kerri proposed that the Board discuss acquisitions more in executive session to foster greater interest from the Board. She and Charlie get a lot of phone calls about potential acquisitions and she could update the board, regardless of how serious the inquiry is. Trudy likes that idea. Charlie noted that lack of Board participation



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hasn't been a problem in the past. Patricia commented that the interview process was very clear about time commitments and expectations. Trudy recommended asking the Board why they aren't coming. Trudy suggested taking a strategic look at strategic acquisition areas, maybe reviewing the master plan once a year. Charlie wondered when the last time it was done. Kerri answered that 2008 was the last prioritization.

- Amendment to the Roman CE is in process and approved by GOCO
Charlie updated the board on the current situation with the Roman conservation easement (CE). The CE allows them to build infrastructure with a certain number of envelopes. They've approached GOCO and Larimer County to formalize the envelopes where they built. They have GOCO approval. There are 3 building envelopes: the north parking area, the south parking area and entrance station area. Nancy clarified that they are the areas that we are all familiar with.
- Small Grants for Community Partnering – needs 1-2 committee members for this year's cycle.
Trudy expressed an interest in being on the committee, as did Patricia.
- A response to the nomination by the Waverly Area Committee to add 2 parcels (sections 16 and 36) of State Land Board (SLB) land in Waverly was submitted. The response will be distributed at the meeting for those interested. DNR supports the designation. Engineering has some reservations about a roundabout. This nomination is a level of protection within the SLB. Nancy commented that this is just a nomination; if it gets actual designation it will be much more protected. Peter clarified that they are SLB parcels. Kerri commented that the lessees are in support of this designation.
- Regional Study & Open Lands Program Master Plan update – staff are working on a scope of work in conjunction with Fort Collins and Loveland. The study will be funded in part by the entities in the county, based on their sales tax. Timnath has shown strong support, Estes Park and Berthoud are in support and Johnstown and Wellington have yet to respond. Once the scope is drafted it will come to OLAB for review.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager - See handout
Nancy asked what is done when bison get out on to Red Mountain (RMOS). Charlie G calls the landowner or rounds them up. Peter asked about the latest news on the alabaster mine. Charlie answered that the miner hasn't been active lately. Also, the oil and gas inquiry turned out to not be at RMOS, it was the landfill's property.
- Meegan met with the EVLT about the easement at Hermit Park Open Space. An oversight meant that they haven't gotten rid of the concession building. They talked about possible options. There wasn't a resolution but they will think about it.
- River Bluffs grand opening. About 150 members of the public came, there were booths, naturalists, a bike shop, and the friends group. The dedication ceremony went very well with 50-60 people watching. Then came the trail breaking, kids rode through the ribbon to open the trail. Kerri commented that the staff did a great job of organizing the event. The moonlight hike that evening had about 10 participants, mostly kids. Trudy attended and commented that it was a beautiful night.
- To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm> put in your email and click 'subscribe', then check "Parks Advisory Board" box
- Natural Resource Events for May. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>



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ACTION ITEMS:

- Dept of Natural Resources Project Planning and Stakeholder Process – Meegan
Meegan reminded the board about the planning process. There have been issues with a plan that was adopted ten years ago and projects that are happening now. She, Dan R and Kerri were tasked with coming up with a process for involving stakeholders. She walked the board through the process and explained some of the triggers that might initiate a public process. See handout and flowchart. She's taken it to the Parks Advisory Board and the Commissioners. It's brought a lot of awareness to the staff. Trudy asked about notifying the public if there is an affected neighborhood. A letter is usually sent. Depending on the area, letters will be sent to a buffer of a certain distance. Meegan also mentioned that there will be training for staff on how to implement the new process. Peter asked where the line is drawn for initiating the process. Each situation will be unique. She gave an example of prescribed fires and aerial spraying. They sent letters and waited to see if there was feedback. If there was a lot of feedback, a public meeting would be held. **Nancy moved that the board recommend to Gary that the process be approved, Hugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS) Education Plan – Rob Novak
Rob reminded the board about when they've seen the plan before. These plans form the scope for education at a property and there needs to be a unifying theme. At RBOS, the theme is about connections. The river connects the communities, connects us to the land, wildlife, and the past. This theme is supported by a statement of significance. Another component of this plan has been to define the audience. Information from Greely and field experience has indicated that bikers will be the most dominant users of the site. This will affect the placement of the signage. One sign will be placed to highlight the archaeology of the area near the toe of the bluff, the second wayside sign will be near the bend in the trail on the south end of the property and will highlight the agricultural use. For the kiosk, there will be four interpretive, changeable signs on the left panel. Two signs will be comparing the different landscapes near one another. A riparian wildlife sign will help support raptor closures. The 4th sign will be about collaboration in conservation. For personal programming, there is a unique opportunity with such good riparian habitat. Programs will be focused on riparian corridors and archaeology. Rob is getting comments from Poudre Heritage Alliance, City of Windsor, City of Greeley and OLAB. A new, exciting part of the plan is to incorporate a "wild zone" to support unstructured play for children. It's proposed in a place where there is lower resource value. DNR is considering the area on the north end of the property under the elms. An area would be created for kids to play, dig, climb trees, etc. If the board is OK, he will meet with Jeffrey and Travis to decide on an area. It will have to be fenced for the protection of the children and confidence of the parents. Rob would like to expand it to other areas should this be a success. The wild zone would also have access to the river. In May, Rob will come back with board comments and other comments taken in to consideration. Patricia clarified that parents wouldn't be allowed in the "wild zone" and Rob answered that the decision will depend on the research but he hasn't gotten to that level of detail yet. There will be a sign with some regulations. Nancy mentioned that, if there is access to water, parents must be allowed. Trudy asked how big the area will be. That also hasn't been decided but it'll probably be around ¼ to ½ of an acre. It should be a fairly low cost project. Peter thinks it is great and would like to see it expanded to other areas. He clarified that there is fishing access along the river. Rob estimates the total cost to implement the plan will be around \$18k. Kerri commented that \$6k of money approved last month is for interpretive signs.
- Youth, Families and the Outdoors GOCO Pilot Project – Rob Novak
DNR was selected by GOCO to study gaps in the connection of youth and the outdoors as a pilot study to shape their work for the future. The county requisition process has been completed. Design workshop, a fairly large consulting group, was selected. Their team includes some local experts, including Brett Bruyere with CSU and Lisa Evans, formerly with the CDOW. This was the main reason for selecting Design Workshop. The first



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meeting was held yesterday with Rob, Kerri, Mark DeGregorio, Zoe Whyman, Jackie Miller and Kathleen Staks (GOCO), which is the Core Team. Roles were defined and inventories, public survey, schedule, dilemma and thesis were discussed. There will be bi-monthly conference calls and a diverse advisory group will be formed. The group will consist of 18-20 people and the first of four meetings will be on May 25. Trudy clarified that they will get a teacher to participate. Yes, along with a parent who has started her own nature group. Next steps include a project website, a subscription service, an RSS feed, more advisory group meetings, and gathering GIS data. Rob will update the Board throughout the process. It should wrap up in March and there will be some preliminary results in the fall. A COSA conference session on the project will be presented this fall and Board will get a report. Trudy recommended using groups that have had some success. Rob is planning on it. Kerri commented on an email from Senator Mark Udall who is also looking at this issue nationwide. The opportunity for statewide impact is incredible. She hopes the Board will be involved at some level. Peter suggested getting updates more often. Rob will update the Board at all significant milestones of the project.

- **Heron Lakes Project update**

Staff continues to assist Berthoud in moving forward. So far, GOCO representatives came for a site visit with staff and board members and walked the length of the peninsula. Staff will attend the GOCO projects committee meeting on May 24 and will have a good sense of the projects chances afterward. There were 18 applications requesting approximately \$9 million and they have around \$4 million to give. Kerri's personal opinion is that this project has a greater sense of urgency. If the GOCO project doesn't go through, the land will be sold and developed. It's also urban open space, which is a GOCO priority. Zac wrote the CDOW grant and a team of staff and local representatives presented it. She's not sure how many applicants there were but learned that there may be surplus money. Charlie wondered when they would decide. There isn't a specific date but it will be in a few weeks. Nancy clarified that this is contingent on the GOCO grant. Peter clarified that this grant will buy the surface rights to McNeil Reservoir. The CDOW isn't as interested in resource values for this particular application, they want motor boating access. Funding may depend on the ratio of shoreline access to motorboat access. Peter clarified that we are buying the rights from the existing landowner. He wondered about the water. Kathy Hartman, a member of the Loveland Open Lands Advisory Council, asked who would manage the property. Kerri responded that the management would be Berthoud's responsibility but they are considering contracting that to Larimer County. They are also considering having the County or Loveland hold the conservation easement. All rules and regulations would be determined through a public management plan process.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- **Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2010 - 2012.** Kerri went over some of the latest changes, some from last meeting. She pointed out the changes that were approved last month including the Hermit Park vault toilets and office space lines. The sales tax over-projections line was adjusted down. The bond debt service amount was lumped together through 2018. Nancy commented that the term "placeholder" should be used instead of "earmark".

Nancy motioned that the Board go into executive session, Trudy 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, Trudy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, May26, 2011; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland