



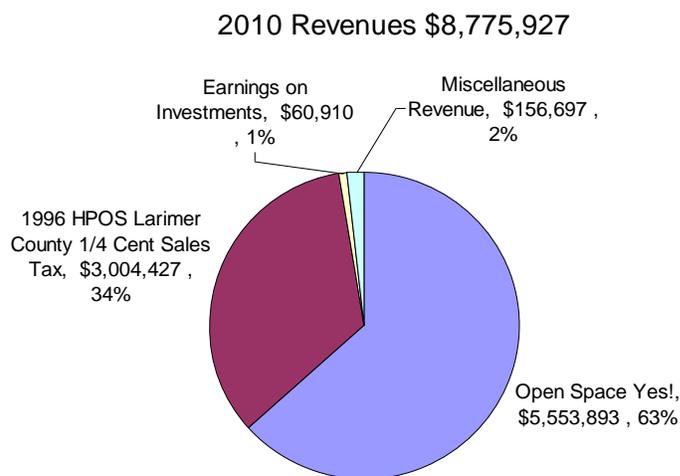
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To: Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board
Thru: John Stokes, Director, Natural Resources Director
From: Mark Sears, Natural Areas Program Manager
Date: May 11, 2011
RE: Natural Areas Program’s use of Help Preserve Open Space – Sales Tax Revenues

The City of Fort Collins appreciates the opportunity to present this report on how the Natural Areas Program spent the revenues received from the County Sales Tax in 2010 and express how much we appreciate and depend upon this funding.

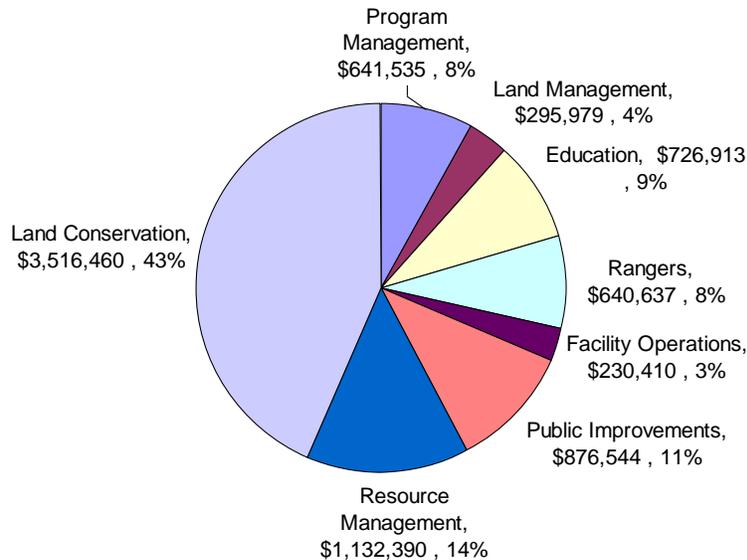
The Natural Areas Program (NAP) received \$3,004,427 in 2010 from the Help Preserve Open Space (HPOS) – Sales Tax Revenues. The NAP partners with Larimer County, GOCO, and other agencies to leverage these funds to provide even greater benefits to the citizens of Larimer County. The NAP manages 35 local and 4 regional natural areas that serve a very wide range of Larimer County citizens. To date the NAP has conserved 40,864 acres and manages 34,532 acres.

As shown below the HPOS revenues were 34% of the 2010 revenues for the NAP.



As shown below, 43% of the budget was spent on Land Conservation and 57% spent on Stewardship.

2010 Expenditures \$8,060,868



After many years of major land acquisitions and major public improvement projects, 2010 was a year for the Natural Areas Program to catch its breath and refocus on core services. Some of the 2010 Highlights were:

- Volunteers are a crucial to the success of the NAP; over 500 volunteers were involved in projects ranging from collecting scientific data to leading educational activities. Volunteers donated 11,452 hours of their valuable time, a savings of \$231,903 for citizens. NAP appreciates our volunteers and the difference they make!
- NAP took over the management of Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space from Larimer County per the IGA. County Rangers still use the on-site building and provide site patrol and minor building maintenance.
- In just nine months our Rangers logged 6,187 customer service contacts, with a renewed focus on making visitors feel welcome and safe.
- The Poudre River Natural Areas Management Plan update was a major project in 2010. Balancing the priorities of natural feature conservation, education and recreation at 19 popular, urban natural areas has been a rewarding challenge. More than 250 citizens commented through on-site and online surveys. The final plan is scheduled for completion in spring 2011.
- Extensive efforts to remove non-native Russian olive and Siberian elm trees at Poudre River natural areas.
- At Bobcat Ridge improvements were made to technical mountain bike trail features, a mounting ramp was constructed to assist horseback riders, and a bridge was installed to protect a wet meadow.

- At Maxwell extensive trail restoration work made the trail more sustainable under wet conditions.
- Gustav Swanson got a “facelift”, which included replacing 22-year-old wood fencing, refurbishing the parking lot, and installing a new site sign.
- Monitoring flora and fauna is a critical component of world-class stewardship. Staff and volunteers searched for undiscovered populations of rare plants; they identified four new rare plants. Prescribed fire is also proving to be a valuable stewardship tool.
- Awarded \$36,000 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support two fire technician positions. Under their leadership, a 50-acre restoration burn at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area and a 250-acre burn at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area were conducted to promote the habitat for the federally threatened mountain plover.
- One of the most exciting accomplishments was the Three Bells Conservation Partnership with Larimer County, Windsor, Timnath, and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO Grant), which conserved 338 acres along the Poudre River north of Windsor and will allow the Poudre River Trail to be extended by 1.2 miles.
- After years of negotiation an 8-acre parcel was acquired along Fossil Creek that will allow the Fossil Creek Trail to be extended in the future from Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area to the Redtail Grove Natural Area. The Fossil Creek Trail will also connect with Fossil Creek Park and the Mason Trail.
- A 23-acre peninsula was acquired on the east side of Fossil Creek Reservoir. The shoreline of the peninsula is lined with large cottonwood trees that serve as night roosts for bald eagles during the winter months and provide nesting sites for raptors and Herons during the spring.

The Natural Areas Program is currently working with Larimer County on several exciting conservation efforts and the NAP has many exciting projects that we are working on in 2011.