



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 23, 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:

Steve Vessey	At-large	Peter Kast	At-large
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Mary Banken	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission	Don Griffith	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large		

Staff Present:

Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager
Tom Donnelly	County Commissioner	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager
Zac Wiebe	Natural Resource Technician	Ben Meier	Ranger
Sean McCarthy	Natural Resource Intern	Charlie Gindler	Natural Resource Specialist

Absent:

John Ericson	Town of Estes Park	Patricia Brennan	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-Large	Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
Jeff Hindman	Town of Berthoud		

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:14 pm and reported that the city of Loveland completed the purchase of the Agilent property.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for May 26, 2011. **Nancy motioned to approve the minutes, Suzan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**
- Review Agenda and enclosures

INTRODUCTIONS: Sean McCarthy, a CSU intern volunteering 400 hours for school credit. Sean introduced himself and described his background and some of the work he’s done so far.

INFORMATION:

- Larimer County Environmental Stewardship Awards are due 8/31. You can nominate on line at www.larimer.org/boards/eab/Awards/awards.htm The awards acknowledge individuals and organizations in Larimer County who have undertaken activities that demonstrate exceptional stewardship of the environment.
- Open Lands Small Grants for Community Partnering applications are due 3pm on 9/9/11 and are available at <http://larimer.org/openlands/smallgrants.htm>
- Windy Hollow Wind Project proposal north of Red Mountain OS in Wyoming includes 67 1.5 MW wind turbines. Meegan explained that they are scoping for the EIS. The City of Cheyenne & The Nature Conservancy will make comments. This project could negate some of the preliminary work to avoid the visibility from open spaces. Nancy clarified that the transmission lines will go through the Open Space.



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- Yoga on the Beach has been a very popular event at the South Bay Swim Beach at Horsetooth Reservoir. It takes place every Saturday 8-9am through Labor Day. Entry fee is \$7.
- Belt Collins, a landscape design and planning firm out of Boulder, has donated 8-12 hours of pro-bono work to assist in designing the new wild zone at River Bluffs Open Space. Rob will work with them on the design.
- Sylvan Dale Cedar Ridge CE 560-acre donation valued at \$450,000 closed successfully on June 2
- COSA Conference reminder – Glenwood springs Sept 19-21, registration coming out soon. There will be an emphasis on sessions for Board and Commission members and 2-3 OLAB members are encouraged to attend.
- Open Lands Small Grants for Community Partnering applications are on the website and due 3pm on 9/9/11
- Department Volunteer Boards summer picnic – 8/24 at Horsetooth Reservoir South Bay Swim Beach
- Staff manned a booth at the Buckeye Community Day, led a scout fishing trip to Colorado Youth Outdoors, and attended an archaeology dig at Red Mt. Open Space.
- Kerri asked the Board if they would like to have another joint board meeting with other programs in the region. The regional food assessment project might be a good topic. Nancy commented that it shouldn't be overdone because there will need to be similar meetings in the future. Peter likes the idea but doesn't want to do it too frequently.
- As a reminder, there is no July OLAB meeting.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager

Travis introduced Ben Meier, an Open Lands ranger who splits his time between patrol and maintenance.

- Travis attended regular Agricultural Advisory Board and Habitat Partnership Program meetings
 - River Bluff's Open Space trailhead and bridge have been closed due to flooding conditions on the Poudre River. The trailhead was resurfaced and striped during closure.
 - Hosted Horsetooth Mountain trail running race on June 12. There were 75 participants.
 - DNR will host "40 in the Fort" Mountain Bike endurance race at Horsetooth Mountain/Lory State Park July 9th, 150 participants, organized by the Overland Mountain Bike Club. DNR will make some revenue and it is good PR.
 - The vacant ranger position will be posted in July.
 - Rangers conducted medical scenario training for the trail crew.
 - Rangers had 936 visitor contacts in which 38 were law enforcement (written warning or penalty assessment) related and hiked 105 miles.
 - Grazing lease request for informal quotes is being reviewed by purchasing and the BOCC. DNR will be forming an evaluation committee to review applicants.
 - Currently there are 110 cow/calf pairs at Red Mountain, 24 pairs at Eagle's Nest and 35 head at the North property, a property owned by Solid Waste in which DNR manages grazing leases.
 - Stenciled horse trailer slots to help with capacity issues and repainted parking lines at Soderberg trailhead.
- 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 July. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Agricultural leasing criteria review and process update – Charlie Gindler



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Kerri mentioned that two OLAB members are invited to be on the review committee. Charlie G. has redrafted all the leases, completed a summary of the properties, outlined the process, and sent it to purchasing. Purchasing was concerned about the limitation to people who own property in Larimer County but the BOCC approved that limitation. Ft. Collins had a bad experience with an agricultural leasee from outside the county. One thing that will be different is that a press release will be sent out instead of having a bidder list. Nancy asked if the amount will change in 5 years. Charlie answered that it is subject to a cost of living index. Nancy commented that she has a lease in Kansas that is subject to local comparisons rather than cost of living. If this is a competitive bid process, things could change. Charlie commented that changing conditions would likely affect the number of animals. Tom asked the Board's opinion. They are supportive of a competitive bid but are worried that someone will undercut the bid, perhaps someone who isn't a real rancher. Nancy pointed out that the criteria may take care of that and commented that, if it's an issue, the review committee can factor it in. Tom mentioned that it's not a written criterion. Steve clarified that criteria can be changed after five years. Travis commented that DNR is currently doing year to year contracts and this process will help. Kerri asked if DNR would have to require financial returns. Don commented that it's pretty common requirement. Nancy isn't too worried about it. Charlie thinks there will be a lot of viable candidates and there will be several rounds of cuts. **Nancy and Steve volunteered to be on the committee.**

- City 2010 spending reports received to date, Windsor, Johnstown and Berthoud, Wellington. Kerri went over each report. The gist is that most are saving their money. See handouts.
- Regional Land Conservation, Stewardship and Recreation Study and Open Lands Master Plan update – Draft Scope of Work, draft budget

Kerri updated the board on the status of the project. As a reminder, the study will be a partnership with Larimer County and all the entities that receive a portion of the open space sales tax. They will be asked for contributions based on the amount of tax that they receive. Amounts range from as little as ~\$50 to our share of \$60k. The Ft. Collins and Loveland boards have seen it and so far the feedback has been positive and supportive. She went over the document, see handout. She clarified on #2 that it refers to natural areas rather than developed parks, skate parks, etc. The master plan portion of the project boils it down to the county level. The cities will take the information and possibly use it to inform their own master plan processes. Public involvement is a critical component and DNR wants to make sure that it is reaching everyone using a variety of techniques. Regarding the budget and timeline, it's been decided to not state an amount for fear of not saving any money since everyone will submit proposals for the same amount. It might be challenging to weigh the proposals. The whole study will take about 18 months. The RFP will be used to apply for a GOCO grant in partnership with the cities. Peter asked when the RFP would be sent out. Likely January, as soon as GOCO grants are awarded. Mary asked if DNR has to declare an amount in the grant application. Yes, super interested parties could find out the amount but it would take some research. Nancy wondered if GOCO knows what it should cost. Kerri answered that they'll factor in our estimates and compared it to the pilot study. It will cost significantly more than the education project.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2010 – 2012
- Kerri pointed out the internal reserve for bond debt which was created in case of a major fluctuation in the sales tax. Over time, it has been released. The finance director recommended that it gets released entirely. The BOCC agreed that it's no longer necessary. It was released and allocated to other projects. She also pointed out the \$19,500 to replace a vehicle that broke down.



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Items not on the agenda:

Charlie updated the board on the Big Thompson flood parcels. DNR has a batch of parcels that it is trying to get into private ownership with public access. He brought two recommendations this month to the Indian village and the Narrows properties. At the Narrows, there will be a bidding process since there are multiple interested parties. They are currently being surveyed and there will be 10 ft. buffers to allow access. He just got a contract signed this week for a parcel up canyon from Glen Haven. There will be four or five more this year. There is a 60 day comment period for each one. Tom asked if there is a consideration for family members who died in the bid process. Charlie answered that the people who lost family tend to not want anything to do with the parcels. DNR has sold 25 parcels so far. Tom asked how big area 20 is. Charlie answered about 3 acres. The Loveland fishing club has made it a priority. The comment period just began for this parcel. Peter asked how Larimer County got the parcels in the first place. After the flood, FEMA condemned each property that had 50% or greater damage, and then gave them to us. Nancy asked if any are buildable. Charlie answered that there are some and he recommended selling them as buildable.

Kerri passed around logo choices for Plug in to Nature and solicited feedback.

Steve motioned to go into executive session, Suzan 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. **Hugh motioned to adjourn, Suzan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.** Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:46.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, August 25, 2011; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland
NO JULY MEETING