



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES
Thursday, April 22
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E. Third St., Loveland

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:

Peter Kast	At-large	Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Suzan Fritchel	At-large	Mary Banken	At-large
Steve Vessey	At-large	John Ericson	Town of Estes Park

Staff Present:

Gary Buffington	Director	Charlie Johnson	Land Agent
Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Manager	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager
Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager	Rob Novak	Education Coordinator
Jeffrey Boring	Resource Specialist	Commissioner Steve Johnson	
Commissioner Tom Donnelly			

Absent:

Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Trudy Haines	At-large
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins	Patricia Brennan	At-large

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for March 22, 2012 **Mary motioned to approve the minutes, Steve seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**
- Review Agenda and enclosures

PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda. No public comment

INFORMATION:

- The towns of Wellington and Timnath have provided their annual report via written formats. See enclosures. This concludes annual reporting from cities and towns.
- The BOCC signed a letter opposing a Senate bill, introduced by Kevin Lundberg, which would divert Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) funding to state education. The Town of Berthoud also formally opposed the bill. If the resolution passes, it would have to pass a citizen vote. Gary, Kerri and Commissioner Tom Donnelly will testify next week against the bill.



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

- Board changes, John Ericson is leaving and will be replaced by John Phipps. John E. will be a Town of Estes Park committee chairman. The Town of Berthoud representative, Jeff Hindman, was not reelected and will be replaced by Paul Alaback.
- Join the City of Loveland at an open house on **4/26 from 4-6pm** at the Maple/Spruce Multi-purpose Room of the Chilson Recreation/Senior Center, 700 E. 4th Street to review the proposed concepts for the Agilent Open Space property. Citizens will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed plan and possible recreational uses for the site. Suggestions for a new name for the open space will also be solicited at the open house. For more information and design concepts go to www.CityofLoveland.org/Agilent Charlie commented that it looks like a good plan, there is parking and access to all the ponds. A lot of the public comment has been regarding access to fishing and dog swimming. The historic farm homes will remain for now. There is no set opening date.
- An open house will be held at Hermit Park Open Space on **May 4 from 5pm-8pm** to review the draft implementation plan for limited hunting at this site. All neighbors within a 1-mile radius have been invited. All other interested parties are also welcome to attend. The draft plan can be found at http://larimer.org/naturalresources/hermit_hunting_mgmt_plan.pdf John read the press release at an Estes Park town board meeting.
- Staff and partners completed the site visit and presentation components of GOCO's River Corridor Initiatives RFP. Total project cost is \$10.7 million, requesting \$6.5 from GOCO. If funded at 100%, Larimer County will receive about \$877,000 from GOCO, matching with about \$560,500. Kerri thanked Jeffrey, Charlie and Jake for all their hard work. If awarded, there will only be about a mile left to complete. Statewide there were \$90 million in requests from 17 applicants.
- Conservation Easement (CE) Monitoring Program annual report – Jeffrey Boring
Jeffrey commented that state regulations require that CEs are monitored annually, there are 52. Steve asked what monitoring entailed. Jeffrey answered that the property is visited and photos are taken to ensure that the tenets of the easement are complied with. He also explained that DNR is fortunate to have few easements and explained one minor violation. John clarified that our monitoring responsibilities are only for the easements that DNR holds.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis Rollins
Travis showed a photo of parking lot at Devil's Backbone Open Space (DBOS) and explained its progression of growth. When it was built it had space for 15 cars, and then was enlarged twice to hold 30 cars and now 64. It's extremely full every weekend in the summer and usually fills up by 10:00 am. Nancy wondered what to do, increase the lot size again, allow parking on the road? Travis commented that staff's main goal is customer service, people shouldn't be turned away but the amount of parking should allow for a quality visitor experience. Staff works with the city of Ft. Collins to communicate fullness at their nearby natural areas in order to suggest alternative locations to visitors. Nancy asked if there is a location for a secondary trail or trailhead. Meegan commented that there is an access point on the west side of the property allowed for in the management plan but there are some access issues. Mary wondered about a shuttle service. Jeffrey suggested promoting the areas that don't have as much use. It's challenging because it has a lot to do with proximity to urban areas. Jeffrey commented that the social networking tools are a good tool. Gary asked about the time frame of highest capacity. Travis answered that it's full from about 10 am to 3 or 4 pm. It's a challenge for the rangers who have to spend time in the trailhead instead of on the trails. Nancy



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

commented that opening Chimney Hollow Open Space will help. Gary commented that it's a good problem to have and may help extend the sales tax.

General-

- Attended regular Agricultural Advisory Board, Open Lands Advisory Board and Habitat Partnership Program meetings
- With the warm spring weather, many of the open space trail heads have been at or over capacity
- Coordinated several special events to be hosted on the open spaces including the Horsetooth Mountain trail race, Quad Rock 25/50 mile endurance trail race and Forty in Fort mountain bike race. DNR staff has developed a good relationship with Lory State Park, which appreciates the visitor numbers that these events bring. Events are generally required to be on Sunday mornings to avoid conflict with other users.

Rangers-

- Volunteer Ranger Assistants will be stationed at trail heads from 10 am 2 pm on weekends to help with capacity issues. There are over 100 of them and they help immensely.
- Rangers have been set up with Twitter accounts to communicate real time information to our visitors
- Rangers have been doing extra patrol at Keyhole seasonal wildlife closure due to non-compliant visitors
- Automated pay station at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space has been working great and has sold over 2,200 passes since February 1st. It's a pilot program and they'll hopefully be used other places. They're selling 3 times as many passes with the machine.

Maintenance/Construction-

- Major clean up of River Bluff's area for GOCO board field trip
 - Significant work done on Sand Creek house at Red Mountain OS, Eldon Ackerman is planning on having a ranch hand move in this spring
 - Worked with neighbors near old trail head area at Devil's Backbone to clean up various debris
 - Worked with neighbors at Long View Open Space (east side of 287) to clean up various debris. This project was mentioned in the Reporter Herald.
- 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>

PRESENTATIONS:

- Small Grants for Community Partnering Awards Ceremony – Sue Burke
Sue welcomed the recipients and Commissioners Steve Johnson and Tom Donnelly presented the awards. Each recipient gave a brief explanation of their project.
- Plug in to Nature (PIN) pilot study assessing youth and family connections to nature, results – Rob Novak
Rob gave an overview of the results of the PIN study – see presentation. John asked what outreach efforts are underway. Rob answered that he's trying to present to many groups and elected officials. So far that has included the Ft. Collins Natural Areas board and staff, Estes Valley Land Trust, and the Town of Berthoud. He's also trying hard to make it available at a variety of conferences. Peter asked about feedback from Great Outdoors Colorado. Rob answered that they are happy with how the project turned out, especially in Larimer County. Their board also got this presentation and one of the conclusions that they came to is that helping schools is important. Peter wondered if it would be duplicated elsewhere in the state. Rob answered that they'd like to see it done on a smaller scale, using some of the components and at a lower cost. The final deliverable will be the replication guide. Kerri commented that discussion entailed wondering if a



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

study on one county could be replicated elsewhere. Peter asked if the cites were pleased. Rob answered yes and they'll be happier once there is data to share. The Town of Berthoud board is very excited. There's been a sense that children's connecting to nature has been an issue but now the information is available. Peter asked if Rob is interested in speaking to other groups. Rob: Yes, if anyone has any suggestions, let him know. A member of the public asked if staff is working with the Environmental Learning Center. Yes, the Director, Brett Bruyere, was a part of the project team.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2011 – 2013
The bottom line is now near \$2.5 million. This shows a change to the Poudre River Trail grant application match amount.
- Re-review of Long-term Management (LTM) spreadsheet projections
Gary clarified the LTM, lower right corner. \$115k is being cut for the years 2015 through 2018. There are 6 years of reductions starting now, to build up to 2015 the 1/3 of \$115k will be cut the first year, two thirds the next year, then \$115k, each year after. The County budget manager didn't want staff to be surprised so advised to "ratchet" down by 2015. Gary commented that some of the changes are using the Open Space sales tax to cover general fund shortages, for example, the Big Thompson parks & volunteer naturalist program. The good news is that there is \$2.4 million for acquisition and development and our long-term management projections are good through 2018. John clarified that the loan from Solid Waste is included and covered. Nancy commented that County Finance may change budget cuts if overall revenue increases. Gary asked the board if they agree with the budget philosophy and reminded them that it can be changed at any time. Steve thinks the County has been conservative. Peter supports the philosophy. Nancy supports the idea that DNR do as much acquisition as possible and to save development for later. Suzan feels that there are opportunities now due to the economy and would support aggressive acquisition.

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 move to executive session, Steve seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Prioritization exercise part I – review of potential property acquisition opportunities

Peter adjourned the meeting at 8:14 pm

Next regular meeting: Thursday, May 24, 2012; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland