



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES
Thursday, May 24
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
Patricia Brennan	At-large	John Ericson	Town of Estes Park
Trudy Haines	At-large	John Phipps	Town of Estes Park
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud		

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	Meghan Oren	Department Specialist
Sue Burke	Coordinator for Small Grants	Zac Wiebe	Fund Development & Special Projects
Commissioner Tom Donnelly			

Absent:

Steve Vessey	At-large		
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Peter called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for April 26, 2012.

John E. motioned to approve the April minutes, Trudy seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

- Review Agenda and enclosures - No additions.

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

INTRODUCTIONS: Meghan Oren, new Department Specialist; New Board members John Phipps, Estes Park and Paul Alaback, Berthoud. Paul, John P., and Meghan introduced themselves and briefly discussed their backgrounds.

INFORMATION:

- Gary and Kerri testified in front of the Veterans Affairs committee on the Commissioners views of SCR12-003. The bill died in committee.

Gary and Kerri testified on the Commissioner's views against Senate Concurrent Resolution 12-003 in front of the Veterans Affairs committee. Staff issued a letter against the resolution, and the bill was killed 3-2.



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The resolution would have “required the state lottery net proceeds that would otherwise be distributed to the GOCO trust fund under existing law to instead be distributed to the state education fund.” The failing of the bill is considered good for GOCO and for the Open Lands Program. Kerri brought in two news articles from the Denver Post stating the editorial staff’s position for the bill and also mentioned a conservation group that wrote in favor of defeating the bill.

- **Regional Study consultants were interviewed, the study will kick off soon**

Interviews were conducted by staff members to determine which consultant would be best suited to follow through with the Regional Study P12-01. A final decision has not been made yet and should be announced at the next meeting. The study will start shortly after the consultant has been officially notified.

- **Staff attended the GOCO Projects Committee meeting to hear how recent grant applications are fairing.**

The GOCO Projects Committee meeting was held on May 21st to give updates on their recent grant application recipients. The Open Lands program, in partnership with the City of Fort Collins, Town of Timnath and City of Greeley, applied for a grant for the Poudre River Trail through the River Corridors Initiative. There were a total of 63 applicants requesting funding and GOCO invited 17 of them to continue with the grant process. GOCO finally chose 8 of the 17 to receive funding. Kerri reported that although none of the 8 are 100% funded, our application was chosen as 1 of the 8 to receive funding. She passed around a summary of the proposal and concepts, as well as who was not chosen to receive funding.

- **Eagle’s Nest Open Space closed on May 16th due to the Hewlett Gulch fire.**

Kerri gave an update as to the status of Eagle’s Nest Open Space. Travis closed the open space for a few days to allow emergency crews to use the road to fight the Hewlett Gulch fire. The road will be re-graded due to the heavy use by the crews.

- **Meegan attended the Energy by Design Technical Team meeting on May 23rd.**

Meegan reported that she, along with staff from City of Fort Collins, The Nature Conservancy and the State Land Board had a meeting to discuss energy development at Red Mountain Open Space. The team refined resources and felt the progress made was promising towards an agreement of terms. The leasing of the property requires the oil/gas companies to work with Larimer County. The bidding process will occur some time in September and Meegan will keep the board updated as progress is made.

- **Gary and Kerri interviewed new OLAB applicants on May 23rd**

There will be two new board members to fill Don Griffith’s and Patricia Brennan’s positions. There were eight applicants and all were interviewed. The two new board members will be announced soon and an orientation will be arranged for all new members, including the new appointees from Estes Park and Berthoud.

- **New County Recreation Maps are available – includes slight updates/changes and is more durable.**

Jeffrey and other staff members worked on updating the maps, including correcting mistakes and making the maps more durable.

- **School field trip programs have doubled since this time last year.**

Rob and Heather have been very busy conducting educational programs.

- **If you have a Facebook or Twitter account, be sure to “like” or “follow” our pages.**

Rob has been updating the accounts and has asked board members to “like” or “follow” the Open Lands Program on their Facebook and/or Twitter accounts.

- **30 members of the Northern Colorado Climbers Coalition worked with the trail crew on the Fawn Hollow trail at Carter Lake Reservoir**

Meegan reported that although the Fawn Hollow trail is not heavily used for hiking, it is frequently utilized for access to bouldering routes. There has been a renewed interest by the local rock climbing group to improve and build routes, and the hope is that the group will continue volunteering at Carter Lake.



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- **Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis Rollins, See handout**
 - The Ranger Excellence School was held out at the Ranch Events Complex recently. 83 people participated from 13 different agencies, which is more than last time the event was held. Many of the rangers attended and taught several sessions at the event.
 - Travis met with the City of Fort Collins' staff to discuss the possibilities of a joint pronghorn hunting program on the Soapstone & Red Mountain properties. The meeting was a preliminary discussion about the partnership and he will update the board in the future on the progress.
 - Travis and Charlie have been working with a survey crew to help settle a boundary dispute at Devil's Backbone Open Space. The private landowner had put up temporary fencing and built some trails on their property, but because of the landowner's trails' proximity to the county's property, it has confused local hikers and trespassing has occurred. The survey crew will be in next week to continue settling the dispute.
 - Open Lands Operations held a free mulch giveaway for the public at River Bluff's Open Space. Unfortunately, the Coloradoan newspaper ran the wrong date and so the public showed up a week early to load up mulch. As a result, the event was held two weekends in a row in order to meet the public's interest. Travis noted that the program has worked well, the public loves it and that there is an overabundance of mulch, so it works great for everyone.
 - The rangers hosted the first annual Quad Rock 25/50 Endurance Race and the 7th Crazy Leg's 10K. There were over 125 participants in the events.
 - Travis reported that there was an ATV accident at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. The accident resulted in one patient being transported to the hospital. A citation was given for operating a vehicle off road and for careless driving.
 - There has been significant roadwork done on Indian Creek Valley Road and Blue Sky Trail at Devil's Backbone Open Space. The work addressed drainage issues and flooding from last summer. Crews are still working on Eagle's Nest and Red Mountain Open Spaces.
 - Field trips were conducted for lease applicants for the agricultural lease at River Bluff's Open Space. Commissioner Donnelly asked when the bid process for the agricultural lease deadline would be. Travis responded June 14th and added that they are working with the purchasing department for the application submittals.
 - This month's safety training covered chainsaw operation and safety.
 - Travis ended his report by showing images of the new water troughs at Rawhide Pasture at Red Mountain Open Space. Hugh asked if the new troughs were lined with concrete and Charlie asked about the fencing design located in the center of the trough. The fencing is to protect the pipe from the cattle.

Mary announced that on Friday, June 15th, Estes Valley Land Trust will be hosting a family breakfast at Hermit Park Open Space. Kerri will be a guest speaker at the event and Rob has recreational activities planned. Everyone is invited and the event is open to the public. Entrance fees to the open space are waived until noon to encourage attendance. The featured events have been coordinated to display improvements recently made to Hermit Park and to promote the Open Lands Program. Reservations are requested. Cost is \$15 for adults and \$5 for kids age 5-18. Children age 4 and under are free.

- 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 September. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>



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PRESENTATIONS:

- Update on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) study at Red Mountain Open Space – Tom Hobbs, CSU
Tom began by giving a brief introduction to the Laramie Foothills Mule Deer Project and the study's five year funding from the National Science Foundation. The project is in its third year and is being conducted on both private and public lands. About 40 landowners have agreed to allow the study to take place on their properties and the project acknowledges their cooperation, as well as support from Larimer County, the City of Fort Collins and the Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife, as a major contribution to the advancement of the study. Tom explained the background of CWD and how transfer of the disease can occur by contamination of the soil which makes the disease environmental. See the handout for a summary of the current findings of the project as of May 2012. Trudy and Kerri had questions concerning the treatment of the study subjects as well as the potential of CWD transferring to other wildlife, such as mountain lions. Tom explained the process by which the deer are tracked and how research is gathered from them. He also noted that there is a strong species barrier between mountain lions and the infected mule deer therefore prohibiting transference. Tom also acknowledged the projects capability of providing educational opportunities to students from varying study departments at CSU as well as informational programs for local high school students. Gary wanted to know if the private landowners were responding positively to the project. Tom mentioned only one incident has occurred in the Starry Night subdivision, but that the project has been well-received in public meetings. Tom explained that the infected deer have been found to be more prevalent on private lands than on public. Travis asked about the concern of hunters consuming infected meat and Tom recommended that all meat should be tested. Commissioner Donnelly asked Tom about the project's funding and if money would be needed in the future, but Tom said the study has enough money for a sixth year of study. Tom left business cards for the board members as well as a handout summarizing the study with a URL available if more information was needed.

<http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/modelingCWD/>

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Easement Policy update (in regards to RBOS) – Charlie Johnson
An oil & gas company approached staff about putting a pipeline through River Bluffs Open Space. Charlie provided our easement policies and process for doing so, which would be very difficult, and suggested considering another route. There has been no further response.
- Small Grants for Community Partnering Criteria updates – Sue Burke
Sue, Trudy, Patricia and other DNR staff updated some of the criteria for the small grants program by “cleaning up the language” used in the application process, specifically in the qualifications for who can apply for a small grant. The updated information was attached in the electronic packet sent to all board members prior to the meeting. Sue reported that the next cycle of small grants would be announced soon. Kerri asked the Board if the changes should be officially adopted. The board felt that a “nod of approval” was sufficient without a vote for now.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2011 – 2013
There have been no changes since last month. Kerri asked the board if anyone had any questions.

Kerri handed out the DNR Annual report for 2011 and mentioned that this year's report was shortened, therefore saving on printing. The department is trying to utilize the website, but all required information was included in the report. Pictures and bullet points were added to make it more “user friendly.”



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BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

Nancy asked if staff had contacted the Forest Service regarding Eagle's Nest Open Space and possibly connecting to Gateway Natural Area. Meegan confirmed that she had spoken to them regarding opening a possible route, but it will depend on the Seaman Reservoir proposal. Backcountry camping sites and additional recreational activities were noted as being desired additions to the area. Gerry commented that an interim trail would make more sense considering the timeframe to expand Seaman Res. is about 15-20 years. Nancy added that if work is going to be done already; maybe the trail can be added at that time.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda

Gary updated the board about creating a boat/vehicle pass that would be transferable to multiple vehicles. The pass will be good for 12 months from the date of purchase and will cost \$75 for Larimer County residents and \$95 for non-residents. A public hearing will be held in June to determine if the pass will go into effect. Commissioner Donnelly asked what the annual revenue is for Horsetooth Reservoir and Travis replied \$155,000. Trudy suggested making the non-resident fee higher, it could be a missed opportunity to charge more. Gary added that residents could potentially receive other benefits that will be discussed during the process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Prioritization of purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. **Suzan motioned to move into executive session, John E. seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Peter adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, June 28, 2012; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland