



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Thursday, August 23

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:

Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Suzan Fritchel	At-large	Mary Banken	At-large
Ladonna Lee	At-large	Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud
Carl Sorrentino	At-large	Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
John Phipps	Town of Estes Park	Commissioner Tom Donnelly	BCC

Staff Present:

Gary Buffington	Director	Charlie Johnson	Land Agent
Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager
Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager	Meghan Oren	Department Specialist
Christine Fleming	NR Manager Visitor Services		

Absent:

Trudy Haines	At-large	Peter Kast	At-large
Steve Vessey	At-large		

Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for June 28, 2012

Nancy motioned to approve the June minutes. Suzan approved first, Mary seconded and the motion was approved unanimously by the board.

INTRODUCTIONS: Kerri introduced the new board members. She also updated the board on how the orientation tours on August 14th and 21st went. The tours visited the Poudre River Corridor project and the Horsetooth and Devil’s Backbone priority areas. She asked the new board members to give any feedback for the tours. New board members Ladonna Lee, Carl Sorrentino, John Phipps and Paul Alaback introduced themselves and commented how much they all enjoyed and appreciated the orientation tours.

- Review Agenda and enclosures - A few more items were added to the Information section of the agenda and will be denoted by (*).
- The OLAB members took their annual group photo before beginning the meeting.

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



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INFORMATION:

- Nancy announced the Boards and Commissions Reception on Monday, September 24, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. and invited the OLAB members to attend. The reception is to thank all the board and commission members for their invaluable service to Larimer County. Each board member will be receiving an individual invitation to the event.
- Kerri invited the board members to the COSA conference and passed around the conference agenda and session descriptions for everyone to read. Any board member who would like to attend the conference should contact Kerri or Zac for more information. Kerri noted that past board members who have attended have enjoyed the experience and have found the information helpful. The conference agenda and session descriptions are also available at www.coloradoopenspace.org.
- Kerri announced that events have started for the kick-off of Colorado's Inaugural Land Conservation Appreciation Week - "*Land is life. Land is livelihood. Land is recreation. Land is wildlife. Land is Colorado.*" The celebration will last August 23-26, 2012, and a list of events can be found at <http://landiscolorado.cclt.org/>.
- The Regional Land Conservation, Stewardship and Recreation Study kicked off on July 12. Kerri noted that the commencement of the study was intended to coincide with the "*Land is Colorado*" events. Logan Simpson Design, formerly known as AECOM, is the consultant for the study which will include a large outreach effort to the public, including electronic and mailed surveys, as well as opportunities to speak with groups that have worked with our department in the past on projects. Meegan noted that the online survey will be available around September 3rd.
- (*) Kerri announced to the board that the City of Loveland has hired Robert Burdine as the Natural Areas Director for the city's Open Lands Department.
- (*) The county commissioners agreed to collect a fee in lieu of taxes for Hermit Park to the Estes Park Marketing District. The fee was approved because the campground benefits from the marketing provided by the district as well as to be fair to the other campgrounds in the area.
- (*) Kerri announced that Larimer County has been awarded a position with the database pilot project with the Center of Excellence. The program will be helping to convert the department's many databases into one database system using Salesforce. Zac will be overseeing the pilot project for the department and the conversion of the data.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager - See handout
Travis attended the Agricultural Advisory Board, Habitat Protection Program and Open Lands Advisory Board meetings. He also met with Pat Grant to discuss a security contract for his house and ranch in the Red Mountain area as well as attended the quarterly Laramie Foothills Chronic Wasting Disease research group meeting. The research is being conducted near Red Mountain and Soapstone.
Travis announced a couple of special events scheduled for Horsetooth Mountain. The Horsetooth Mountain Trail Race is scheduled for September 9th and the mountain bike race '40 in the Fort', which is being sponsored by the Overland Mountain Bike Club, was originally postponed due to the High Park fire, but has since been



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rescheduled for September 15th. The event will be hosted by Larimer County and the Overland Mountain Bike club will be organizing it.

The Rangers assisted with a mountain bike accident at Horsetooth Mountain. The patient was transported by helicopter to the Medical Center of the Rockies with a broken back, neck and nose.

The self-service pay vault at Horsetooth Mountain, which has been in use since 1954, was removed on August 1st. Travis noted that the pay vault had become a large inconvenience for our customers and that the new system is running at 98% efficiency. Prior to the automated pay stations, the Rangers would have to collect the money from all of the vaults, bring the cash to our accountants to count and have an armored truck come to pick up the funds safely. The vault was replaced by an automated pay station, similar to the machines on CSU's campus, and is selling the day passes now. The pay stations are all solar-powered and eventually will be able to sell the annual passes as well. 10 more pay stations will be added in the area. Each machine costs about \$7,500 and will pay for itself within three months.

Travis also reported that there have been some neighborhood access issues in the area of Thompson Heights between Horsetooth Mountain and Soderberg trail heads. People have been illegally accessing the area by ATVs.

As a follow-up to June's meeting, Travis updated the board that a pre-hunt meeting has been scheduled with Red Mountain hunters for September 22nd.

The competitive bid process for the agricultural lease at River Bluffs has been completed. Although we were previously doing one year leases, Royal Vista Equine was recommended for a five year lease. The board wanted to know when the horses are brought in for grazing. Travis said that they try to get 3-4 cuttings of hay and then they bring in the mares to graze, but that it all depends on how much precipitation we've had.

We are currently working in partnership with Fort Collins and Loveland on an RFP for agricultural leases on Long View farm and adjacent city owned properties. These properties are referred to as the Corridor Area and each of the agencies owns a parcel on those properties. Travis will update the board next month as to the status of all the leases and noted to the board that we're making more money on the leases than we have in the past. Travis reported that improvements were made to the road at Chimney Hollow in preparation for guided tours in the area. The work was done in conjunction with Northern Water. The board wanted to know how grazing has been at Red Mountain. Travis stated that it was really poor to start, but has picked up because of precipitation recently received and that cattle are there now. Travis also mentioned that a new trough was installed at Carey Springs at Horsetooth Mountain.

- 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
- (*) Commissioner Donnelly announced the "Take It Outside with your Commissioner" hike scheduled for 8:30 A.M. on Friday, August 24th at Devil's Backbone with Larimer County Open Lands Program Manager Kerri Rollins.
- (*) Hugh announced the Old Fashioned Corn Roast Festival is August 24-25 at Fairgrounds Park in downtown Loveland. The festival is free to the public and includes a parade on Saturday morning.
- Natural Resource Events for September. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>



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PRESENTATIONS:

- Members from the Back Country Horsemen Association of Northern Colorado (BCHA) presented a check to Larimer County Park Manager Chris Fleming for improvements at Hermit Park. The local chapter of the BCHA was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the national association to help build an equestrian campground at Hermit Park. The group was very involved in the planning and design process for the campground and trails and also plan on volunteering when it comes time to build the improvements. The local chapter has about 70 members.
- Chris Fleming, Park Manager, gave a presentation to the board regarding plans for an Equestrian Campground being implemented at Hermit Park. She gave a brief background on the development of the area from the original master plan and explained why and how the new campground has become a priority for improvement. Of the eight existing camp sites, three will be removed in favor of expanding and renovating the remaining five sites. Each campsite will have corrals to house up to two horses. Chris described the design details that were considered for the campsites, such as high lines vs. permanent corrals for tying up horses. A new double vault toilet, bear boxes and picnic benches will also be installed at the new campground. All of the construction is occurring over existing development and will include a buffer from the open space and meadow area with the intention of future planning to connect the trail systems. The design is being considered a pilot project for the Estes Park area. Construction is slated to begin in mid-September and is expected to be open for use mid-spring 2013. The estimated budget for the renovations is \$240,000 minus the \$11,000 donated by the Back Country Horsemen Association of Northern Colorado, Roundup Riders of the Rockies, Larimer County Horseman's Association and Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Meegan gave a presentation on Energy by Design, a planning process in partnership between Larimer County, Fort Collins, the State Land Board and led by The Nature Conservancy. The presentation was an introduction to the program's goals and how it will help plan for potential oil and gas development on Red Mountain Open Space, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and Meadow Springs Ranch in order to allow mineral owners access to develop mineral while avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts to natural, cultural and scenic resources. The project focuses on the Larimie Foothills Mountains to Plains Area, where on the three publicly-owned properties the mineral rights are severed. Meegan updated the board on the phasing of the project, descriptions of biological, cultural and recreational values, technical team involvement, maps, surface occupancy descriptions and designations within the planning area and what events the committee has planned for public outreach. The first open house will be on September 10th from 5-7 P.M. at the Larimer County Courthouse and is open to anyone who would like to attend. Hugh asked about the frequency of visitation to the drilling site once drilling has started in regards to management of sites in need of timing limitations due to resources. Meegan said that the Best Management Practices which outline timing limitations as well as a myriad of other avoidance and minimization tactics are still being drafted and would be used in negotiations as part of a surface use agreement. Nancy was concerned about the restoration requirements for the drilling companies being sufficient. Meegan explained that the surface use agreement will address restoration - ideally there will be one operator, but noted that surface use agreements could technically be negotiated by individual parcel. Paul wanted to know more about efforts being made to map the ecological quality of the areas. Meegan noted that she presented just a sample of the biological maps that are part of the document but ecological integrity was one of many maps analyzed. She offered to send the Mountains to Plains Energy by Design document to the board. More information can be found at:



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<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/colorado/howwework/energy-by-design-in-colorado.xml>

- The board watched a short presentation on highlights from the Small Grants program in 2011. After the program, Kerri requested volunteers for subcommittee members for 2012. Nancy and Gerry volunteered. For more information, contact Sue Burke at (970) 679-4566.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2011 – 2013 – No changes.
- **BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda**
- **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda**
- **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest.
- **Nancy adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.**
- ***Next regular meeting: Thursday, September 27, 2012; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland***