



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES
Thursday, September 27
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	Trudy Haines	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	Peter Kast	At-large
Steve Vessey	At-large		

Staff Present:

Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager
Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager	Meghan Oren	Department Specialist
Zac Wiebe	Fund Development & Special Projects	Charlie Johnson	Land Agent

Absent:

Mary Banken	At-large	Commissioner Tom Donnelly	BOCC
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Peter called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for August 23, 2012
- Nancy motioned to approve the minutes, Paul seconded and the motion was approved unanimously by the board.**
- Review Agenda and enclosures.
 - Update on the restoration of the banks of the Poudre River at Lion's Open Space.

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

INFORMATION:

- The Regional Open Spaces Boards meeting will be Wednesday, November 14th starting at 4:30 or 5pm (TBD) at the County Courthouse Offices building, 1st floor, Carter Lake Room, 200 W Oak Street, Fort Collins. It will be a fun meeting and an opportunity to meet individuals on other boards. The meeting will help us plan for future building, and in past years, has contributed to our master planning. At the meeting, preliminary results from the public survey will be presented. It'll be led by a representative from our consultant, Logan Simpson Design. When the schedule and agenda are finalized, they'll be sent out. We may have to meet after the meeting as well to discuss information for Executive Session.



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- The Devil's Backbone Open Space restoration project at Indian Creek received a COSA Blue Grama Award that was presented at the conference – hooray! It will be presented to the BOCC later this fall and displayed in the courthouse case. Meegan described how the partnerships were really important and our publications helped for receiving the award/recognition. Peter asked how many Blue Gramas has the department won? Meegan and Kerri listed awards having been received for Horsetooth Forest Health, Ramsay Shockey and the newest for Devil's Backbone Open Space.
- The Plug in to Nature Project received a Starburst Award for Planning from the Colorado Lottery. It will be officially presented to our BOCC at a future date.
- The COSA conference was fantastic and very educational. Over 225 people attended. Various staff gave presentations and attendees described which tours they went on at the conference.
- Kerri announced that the Plug in to Nature (PIN) project was supposed to be presented at the Land Trust Alliance's annual National Land Conservation Conference in Salt Lake City, UT, Sept. 29 – Oct. 2, but unfortunately Rob Novak was ill and unable to attend the conference. Heather Young presented the project in Keystone for the Colorado Parks and Recreation Association. The PIN project also received an award from the American Planning Association at their conference in Snowmass.
- The public meeting for Energy by Design was held on September 10th at the county office building with over 35 attendees – a formal presentation was given and input was received via questionnaire cards seeking input on balancing recreational/visual impacts with resource protection in regards to actual well location. (Meegan) There was a lot of confusion as to educating the public about what the county is doing and why. A lot of attendees were well informed on biology, geology. The report is still being finalized, the State Land Board technically owns the rights to it and they're not ready to release that information yet.
- The kick off event for the Our Lands, Our Future Regional Study took place at New Belgium Brewery on September 12th. There was a very good turn out of about 150 people in attendance and over 75% of attendees completed the survey. Many of our partners in the Regional Study had booths to answer questions and receive comments. The surveys are available online at: http://www.larimer.org/ourlands_ourfuture
- The 8th Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair is Saturday, September 29th at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space. This event is planned in partnership with several local organizations, and includes a tour of Three-Bell conservation easement on Friday, September 28th. The event is fantastic for the whole family and is a great display of local partnerships and sponsors. Carl talked about the guided hikes starting at 7 and 7:15am, the silent auction and prizes. Travis mentioned that the event is very kid-friendly and keeps getting better every year. He and the rangers helped set up the event including 10-12 booths for sponsors and activities.
- The Small Grants for Community Partnering received 17 applications for funding. Seven for agriculture-related projects, five proposed enhancing open spaces or providing linkages, two for education and/or interpretation, and three for research in open spaces. The subcommittee members are reviewing and will start site visits the 1st week of October with Sue Burke. Zac noted that this is the first time we've received this many research requests. Trudy, Nancy and Gerry are on the subcommittee.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis Rollins. See handout. Travis noted that this year has been our busiest year so far. There was a slight drop-off in visitation to the open spaces when it was



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really hot this summer, but our visitors are still coming out to many of the trailheads even in the cooler weather. It may feel like we're saturated with open spaces, but the number of people using the areas is always increasing.

General:

- Travis attended the Agricultural Advisory Board, Habitat Protection Program and Open Lands Advisory Board meetings.
- The McGraw house rental lease at Red Mountain was renewed and we are gaining revenue from that rental.
- Installation of the bases for the ten new automated pay stations has begun. We are moving away from the old system, which is very exciting. The new machines will arrive next week and installation will occur in October. We will be transferring into the new system which is really exciting since we have been using the same system since 1954. Our visitors have been giving a lot of positive feedback about the new automated pay stations.
- Travis and staff helped coordinate the Ranger session for the COSA conference in September.
- The pre-hunt meeting for hunters at Red Mountain was September 22nd. Nine hunters attended the meeting on Saturday to discuss all of the rules/regulations for the area and where they can/can't go. The program is going really well. We've received quite a few positive emails on the program and specifically from one visitor that describes what a blessing it is to be able to go hunting on this local space with his 14-year-old son. Trudy if there has been any negative comments? Travis responded that we have never gotten any negative comments. Trudy also asked if someone would be willing to come to the City Land Conservation Board for Soapstone to talk about this program and to help reduce some of the concerns/oppositions. Travis mentioned that he met with Daylan Figgs from the City of Fort Collins and offered to do that at any time if they'd like us to. Travis noted that the department feels we're reaching out to other groups and the sportsmen groups are really appreciative. He also commented that so far this program is working on this particular open space really well.

Rangers:

- We hosted the second annual '40 in the Fort' mountain bike race at Horsetooth Mountain on September 15th. The event was organized by Overland Mountain Bike Club and in partnership with Lory State Park. Travis mentioned that in the past we have had races that did not go as well and now the events seem to be going really well. The race is considered an endurance race and the course is two loops over very difficult terrain. Peter asked how many people participated. Travis said that entry is capped at 200 participants. As far as revenue goes, we make about \$1500 - \$2000 on the special permitting process.
- On September 9th, the Horsetooth Mountain trail race was hosted at Horsetooth Mountain with about 100 participants.
- A mountain biker was bitten by a rattlesnake at Devil's Backbone OS. It was reported in a few of the local newspapers.
- A female was transported by rangers and SAR from Horsetooth Rock trail with a possible broken ankle.
- Archery and muzzle loading season has started at Eagle's Nest Open Space. Hunting is allowed on the weekdays, but not on weekends. We receive funding from the Division of Parks & Wildlife to help support this program.
- Reports have been made of an individual who is collecting artifacts at Red Mountain/Soapstone. Suzan asked what kinds of artifacts. Travis noted that the artifacts are objects like arrowheads and that people have reported this person to the City of Fort Collins Rangers as well. They have spotted the individual with a rock hammer, but no artifacts. The individual was ticketed for being off-trail, but rangers continue to keep an eye out for that person.



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- Hunting patrols on open space properties have been increased for the season.

Maintenance/Construction:

- A competitive bid process for agricultural lease at Long View farm has been completed. Harry Sauer has been recommended by Larimer County, Fort Collins and Loveland for a five year lease on three different parcels between Taft/Shields and Hwy 287.
 - The concrete troughs and pads at old Indian Creek/Devil's Backbone concrete troughs and pads have been removed. The old spring water line was dug up, and a new trough was installed new trough. Travis mentioned that they'd like to go back in and work on them for wildlife habitat as a water source.
 - The large culvert in the Indian Creek valley/Devil's Backbone Open Space area was reset.
 - The upper area of Tower's Road at Horsetooth Mountain has been reworked to improve drainage and prevent erosion.
 - Erosion damage at the Devil's Backbone Open Space trailhead was repaired.
 - Work restoring the Logger's cabin at Horsetooth Mountain was completed.
- 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 October. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

PRESENTATIONS:

- Tim Katers, Planner for the Town of Berthoud, gave a presentation on the Heron Lakes Open Space Management Plan. Tim gave a brief background on the 43-acre property, then discussed the components of the proposed design including an osprey platform, heron rookery, native plantings, trailhead and educational elements. He also gave a timeline for the grant and proposed completion of construction. Trudy asked if there would be a trail through the adjacent housing development. Steve thought it was included in the plan and Tim indicated that at one point they considered the golf course the open space, but there was not a formal trail corridor in the 2008 approved plan. He noted that it is expected that the current design will need to be refined. Steve asked if the golf course has been removed from the design and Tim said no. Trudy noted that having a trail leading to the reservoirs and recreation by the properties would increase the value of the lots. Tim also displayed the management plan for the Heron Lakes Open Space. He noted that because of the high potential for bird habitat on the property, public access to the trails will be limited until after August 15th. Zac asked if boating would be allowed on McNeil Reservoir during the closing period. Tim said that the buffer would need to be adjusted, but that it would also depend on surface rights. Trudy asked how that would be enforced. Tim said that buoys would be placed on the water, but that currently local residents are aware of where those boundaries are even without buoys/notices. Nancy asked where the access to the trail on the north side would be and Tim said that a road would need to be planned with a publicly-deeded park. Tim also noted that none of the partners are bound to this project, but the Town of Berthoud plans to keep moving forward. Trudy asked if more fees could be added to the adjacent housing properties. Tim said that currently there is a fee on every house permit in town, but not any more than usual for those properties. Paul noted that they are looking at Fossil Creek Reservoir for management plans, guidance and ideas for Heron Lakes Open Space.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Zac gave a presentation on the Our Lands, Our Future – Land Conservation, Stewardship and Recreation Study. He described the collaboration and importance of the partnerships with every municipality in the county for the Regional Study as well as the process and timeline for the project. Public presentations and online and mailed surveys have been designed as a part of the process for gathering information from the



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public. 7,500 statistically valid surveys were mailed out to households around the county and the online survey is available at: <http://survey.rrcresearch.com/s3/Larimer2>. A local consulting firm, Logan Simpson Design, has been hired as well as an advisory committee, composed of experts and stakeholders from within the community, has been formed to help drive the process and to get the word out to the community. Zac handed out surveys for each board member to fill out and extra copies for them to hand out to the public. An informational postcard and fact sheet with more information about the timeline and process were handed out. See attached handouts. Ladonna asked what the expected return rate is for the surveys that were mailed out. Zac said about 30% are expected to be returned and that 10-15% of the surveys have been returned so far. Gerry asked why the board members were not consulted on the questions in the survey before it was sent out and Kerri said each municipality has representatives on the advisory committee and the process for deciding the questions in the survey was meticulously agreed upon. Zac also told the Board about the Kick off Event held at New Belgium Brewery on September 12th. Nancy attended the event and commented that it was really great. A website has been launched to help extend information to the public:

http://www.larimer.org/ourlands_ourfuture. Meegan, Kerri and Zac have begun presenting to multiple groups within the community and public workshops are being planned. The meeting on November 14th will also be critical for shaping how the data will be displayed using GIS and Greenprinting. Gerry asked why the average is considered a good way to determine criteria and Zac said it will be a subject to clarify with the consultant. Travis asked what social media is being used to market the study. Kerri said notices were sent out via Facebook and Twitter for the surveys and the Kick off Event. For more information or to schedule a presentation, contact Zac Wiebe at zwiebe@larimer.org or (970) 679-4534.

- Meegan explained the riverbank restoration project at Lion's Open Space along the Poudre River. The project began in mid-September and will be ongoing thru mid-October. Currently, the area along the bank has been fenced off due to safety issues and erosion for the past two years. Work to restore the riverbank includes reshaping the severely eroded and cut bank, planting over 5,000 trees and shrubs and providing river access points. Meegan, Charlie and Kerri commented that there are some concerns about the riverbank restoration project and the Town of Greeley's pipeline project from local residents near the open space. The Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife gave an easement to the Town of Greeley for the pipeline to go under Lion's Open Space and Larimer County negotiated the restoration and mitigation because the pipeline project will be impacting wetlands. The Town of Greeley will be taking care of the ongoing maintenance associated with the project until it meets the established criteria. Charlie and Nancy asked if any steps had been taken to inform local residents and the public about the project, specifically those that are concerned and local groups, such as LAPAC. Meegan commented that it is not a planning process because it is a riverbank restoration project and the department has done similar projects in the past. Nancy suggested that it would be a sign of community goodwill to make efforts to communicate and provide information about the project.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2011 – 2013: No updates.
- The annual cash flow spreadsheet will be presented before the end of the year.

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 go into Executive Session, Steve seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Peter adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, October 25, 2012; Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd St., Loveland