



# OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 25, 2015

5:00- 8:00 PM

Civic Center Municipal Bldg • Council Chambers • 500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.*

### Members Present

Carl Sorrentino	At-large
Mary Banken	At-large
Peter Kast	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Suzan Fritchel	At-large
Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud
Ward Nelson	Town of Estes Park

### Staff Present

Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Director
Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Charlie Johnson, Senior Land Agent
Alex Castina, Land Agent
Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager
Sandy Werkmeister, Department Specialist
Travis Rollins, Open Space Operations Manager
Chris Fleming, Open Space Operations Manager
Zac Wiebe, Fund Dev & Spec Proj Specialist

### Members Absent

Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
Ladonna Lee	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-large
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland

### 1) CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Call to order by Peter Kast.

### 2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Thad Eggen addressed the Board on behalf of the Estes Park Cycling Coalition. The coalition's interest is to expand trails in the (Estes Park) area for mountain biking, increase advocacy for road cycling and generally get people out on two wheels having fun. Since learning of the multi-use trail planned for Hermit Park in the current master plan, they are advocating for moving the construction of the trail up to 2015 if possible. They offered volunteer support for the project. Thad left the Board with a letter stating the same.

### 3) AGENDA REVIEW

No content changes to the agenda. The order of presentation may change.

### 4) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Paul Alaback and second by Suzan Fritchel to approve the January 22, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted in this month's packet. Motion carried unanimously.

### 5) INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Board received a list of OLAB 2015 Meeting dates & locations.
- b. On Feb 12, we had our first public meeting for the Big Thompson Conservation and Recreation assessment.
- c. Heather and Kerri assisted with a tour of the playscape project at Big Thompson Elementary for GOCO staff and a member of the National Children and Nature Network. They liked the interaction between traditional playground features (track & field) with native species and natural processes education.
- d. The County Manager approved the 2014 Devil's Backbone Management Plan. The Plan was also recommended for approval by Fort Collins' Land Conservation and Stewardship Board for the signature of the Fort Collins City Manager.

- e. The Poudre River Forum was a success, with more than 200 people in attendance and a variety of perspectives on the future of water in Colorado expressed. Hopefully cooperative projects can be developed, that benefit agriculture and the environment.

Suzan reported she expected it to lean more toward the interest of the water users, so to have the voices heard about conservation at the table was interesting. She said the City of Greeley and Timnath discussed their plans for the Poudre where it runs through their town. Paul Alaback said Greeley has counted 900 people accessing the trail on a summer day. It has really transformed their downtown and they are doing developments oriented toward their river and trails. He agreed that having agricultural and municipality interests at the same table a highlight.

- f. Heather led a hike for CSU International Natural Resources students. She said we started doing last year as a part of an annual CSU symposium on conservation with people from around the world, especially Africa. The U.S. model (things like boundaries that people honor and funneling people through one entrance) is unheard of in many countries.
- g. Pam reported that volunteers are ready for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Fishing Expo--March 7 & 8 at the 1st National Bank Building at The Ranch. Come see us!
- h. The Poudre River Trail segment from the Gateway Trailhead in Timnath was awarded to NORAA Concrete Construction out of Brighton. This is our Swets trail easement. The preconstruction meeting was this morning and the we are on schedule to have this segment complete by the grant deadline.
- i. Campground host recruitment for 2015 is almost complete.
- j. Pam & Ranger Cook graduated 19 new Volunteer Ranger Assistants. Only one person dropped out, after he found out he couldn't patrol with his dog.
- k. Just had the kick-off meeting for planning Get Outdoors Day again - Saturday, June 13 this year. Over 30 representatives attended the kick off event. UCHealth agreed to be our title sponsor again this year. Over 1700 attended last year at Fort Collins City Park. This is a direct answer to feedback from Plug into Nature to provide more instructional recreation type opportunities for families.
- l. The partnership to further the genetics of Yellowstone bison (the last large reservoir of genetically pure bison) by grazing bison on portions of Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and then propagating calves with pure bison genes to be placed in conservation herds around the U.S. is moving forward. The County Manager has signed the IGA between Larimer County, Fort Collins, CSU and the USDA and the project is already receiving significant press regionally and statewide! Gary added that there is a movement in congress to have a national mammal, and if successful, it will be the great American Bison.
- Kerri added an informational item – about our partnership with the City of Greeley where we are responsible for co-holding the third-party conservation easements with the Town of Windsor on some acquisitions along the river, per GOCOs request. Greeley is offering a field trip of properties they are looking at for anyone who wants to go - March 10, 5:30 leaving Windsor Community Recreation Center at 250 N 11th Street. Contact Alex if you want to go.
- m. Report from the Open Space Operations Managers  
Travis – The reopening of Hermit Park and Red Mtn will likely be delayed due to snow and mud, a cost saving decision. They received 600 applicants for hunting at Red Mountain. Colorado Parks & Wildlife this year report that the herds are growing so the number of tags was bumped up to 4 bull tags, 3 cow tags and 6 buck deer tags.
- n. Sales Tax Report from prior month.

6) DISCUSSION & UPDATES

- a. End-of-Year presentation for Outreach, Education & Volunteer Programs – presentation included with minutes. Pam Mayhew presented on the accomplishments of the Volunteer Program in 2014. Heather Young presented on the accomplishments of the Education Program in 2014. Presentation is attached.
- b. [Big Thompson River Recreation & Conservation Assessment](#) is a partnership with Loveland and others. Zac – To date the group has formed a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of government stakeholders in the canyon (Forest Service, CPW, CDOT, ourselves and Loveland) to identify areas of potential interest for future recreation opportunities. They developed a series of maps displaying these areas of interest. All of these maps were displayed for feedback at a public meeting on February 12 where 70 attended. People were invited to add stickers and notes about their priorities. The technical advisory committee will take this input and come up with a first draft to take back to the public. They hope to have a final plan by summer. Zac showed the board an example of criteria used to determine interest in a piece of land.

Mary Banken - what scale will be used for valuation of canyon properties?

Charlie - the first round of FEMA buyouts is post flood value.

Kerri - if we want to use FEMA grant money for flooded properties buyouts, we have to use their process, which includes a post flood appraisal value. If we want to purchase a property outright, the amount we pay could be different.

Charlie we should know more from FEMA in 30-45 days.

Paul - is any funding available beyond FEMA?

Kerri - we just learned of some NRCS money that may be available for acquisition or restoration.

Zac - the Big Thompson Coalition is becoming a 501c3, so they will another entity that can apply for grants for the Big Thompson Canyon.

Kerri - we also must be careful about stepping on the toes of other departments that do not have the same level of funding we do for land acquisition.

Nancy - will be any conflicts about who gets what piece for what efforts.

Zac – up to now, the parcels can be distributed as needed to meet everyone's varying interests. Having everyone working together from the beginning is helping with this tremendously.

Gary - the beauty of this study is taking the time to talk to citizens and be deliberate about decisions. After the 1976 flood this did not happen. Eighty-seven properties were just handed off without any planning.

Paul - taking everything back to what it was isn't necessarily nature's choice. Ecologically, a pile of mountain size rocks can destroy a park, but also makes great fish habitat.

- Before moving into Action items, Kerri passed around the acquisition & development budget sheet with handwritten notes added about recent and proposed purchases. The Board will receive an updated A&D sheet next month from Lori Smith, the department accountant.

- c. [Red Feather Lakes Library](#) Community Play Area partnership

Zac reminded the Board that we are planning to sponsor the Red Feather Lakes Library for a GOCO grant. Darlene and Angie from the library gave a detailed presentation (included with these minutes) about the project. The library often needs to fill the role for after school programs and is also a meeting place for community members at large, offering 24-hour wi-fi access. The library owns itself. It is a special district, the smallest in the state, serving three fire districts (Glacier View, Red Feather & Crystal.) The library is putting up \$500 and Friends of the Library \$5,000. In kind dollars are planned, but the dollar values not yet calculated. As a part of their budget, they are also asking for a partnership request of \$4,500 from OLAB.

Kerri verified for Mary Banken that a legal agreement is drawn up between us and any entity we sponsor for accessing GOCO money.

7) ACTION ITEMS

- a. [Red Feather Lakes Library](#) Community Play Area partnership request for \$4,500  
Motion by Nancy that we approve \$4,500 toward the Red Feather Lakes , contingent that the GOCO funds come through and that we can earmark the money for a piece of the project that meets the Open Lands Program mission. The allocation will come out of the school initiative line item. Second by Ward Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. [Final Review](#) – Meininger Trail Easement acquisition (Poudre River trail) – attached with these minutes. Charlie Johnson presented the final review. The board discussed consequences of setting a bad precedent about inflated prices paid for land and whether this easement is specialized enough to alleviate that. Motion by Nancy Wallace to recommend to the Board of Commissioners the purchase of the trail easement on the northeast tip of the Meininger property for the Poudre River Trail. Second by Paul Alaback. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. [Final Review](#) – Grant Access Easement acquisition (Lions Park Open Space) – attached with these minutes. Alex Castino explained that we currently have an oral agreement with the Grants for this access, which we want to solidify in writing. Following up from discussion during the initial review, Alex reported that there is precedent to transfer this easement if a different party took over maintenance of this property. Weve consented to the price because it is based on what Greeley paid for pipeline access. This access will allow us to complete restoration work in Lions Park. Alex is working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (owner of the property) to pick up 50% of the cost, but that would occur after the purchase. Motion by Suzan Fritchel that we recommend to the Board of County Commissioner the purchase of this access easement for \$12,500 for the benefit of our management duties on the west side of Lions Park Open Space. Second by Nancy Wallace. Motion carried unanimously.
- d. Small Grants for Community Partnering projects review subcommittee recommendations  
Zac presented the Small Grants for Community Partnering recommendations – attached with these minutes. There were 12 applications. The committee is recommending that we fund 10 of them for a total of \$17,647. In reponse to Peter Kast’s question, Zac agreed that we are going to try some different marketing ideas next year to solicit more new applicants. The awards ceremony will be in March or April. The grant cycle officially starts when we award them the check. The board discussed the need for some grantees to start their project early spring, and whether knowing the money is secured is enough. Motion by Nancy Wallace to approve the recommendations of the Small Grants for Community Partnering subcommittee for \$17,647. Second by Mary Banken. Motion carried unanimously.
- e. [Open Lands Master Plan](#) approval  
Board that the changes to the acquisition process that Alex presented last month, with a reference added to the agriculture land valuation incorporated, were approved by the Board of Commissioners last week and added to the master plan. With no other changes made, Zac was asking for a recommendation for a full adoption of the master plan. Motion by Mary Banken to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners adoption of the 2015 Open Lands Master plan. Second by Carl Sorrentino. Motion carried unanimously.

Zac distributed an Executive Summary of the Open Lands Master Plan to each board member.

8) EXECUTIVE SESSION: No Executive session

9) ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.