OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

AGENDA

DATE: April 23, 205
TIME: 5:00- 8:00 PM
LOCATION: Loveland City Council Chambers • Civic Center Municipal Bldg •500 E 3rd St., Loveland CO

Please call 970-619-4592 if you are unable to attend a meeting. Votes require a quorum. Thanks!

1) CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
2) PUBLIC COMMENT
3) AGENDA REVIEW
4) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES ***– pgs. 3-6***
5) INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
    a. The NoCo Nature Festival is collaborating to plan a joint event with the Harvest Festival. The event will be called Nature's Harvest Fest and will be on Saturday, September 12 at the Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins. This is a great way to reach a new audience and maximize efforts of committee members
    b. Loveland Open Lands 2014 Annual Report ***– pgs. 7-10***
    c. DNR Grant Successes ***– pg. 11***: Larimer County received a $350,000 State Trails grant for the Colorado Front Range Trail, Loveland to Fort Collins Segment. This 2.2-mile concrete trail will connect existing paved trails in Fort Collins and Loveland. The conceptual estimate for this trail is $1,021,701 and Larimer County has received $800,000 in grants for construction. Construction is planned in 2016.

        A GOCO Paths to Parks application was submitted by Larimer County, Loveland and Fort Collins for the Long View Corridor Trail. The $999,550 request will match the $1 million CDOT grant received earlier this year, to build this 4.4-mile concrete trail and new trailhead at Sunset Vista Natural Area. Grant awards will be made in June. Construction is planned in 2016 and 2017 if the grant is awarded.

        Larimer County received a $73,000 CDBG grant to develop a preliminary conceptual design for the Poudre through River Bluffs Open Space. This reach of the Poudre is in poor condition due to man-made levees and disconnection to the floodplain. The conceptual design will highlight physical improvements to the channel that will improve river function and will be compatible with surrounding land uses.
    d. Construction of the Poudre River Trail, Timnath's Gateway Park to Stonefly Drive segment is underway. Concrete has been poured on the majority of this 0.75-mile segment and the project should be wrapped up later this summer.
    e. The Natural Resources Department is working with Greeley to transfer a $150,000 CWCB award to Larimer County for bank repairs at Lions OS. The CWCB award, in conjunction with FEMA funds, will be used to repair the banks caused by the September 2013 flood and 2014 spring runoff.
    f. The interview process for our Community Relations and Communications Specialist, update
    g. Open Lands Master Plan adoption update
    h. Report from the Open Space Operations Managers ***– pgs. 12-14***
    i. Sales Tax Report from prior month ***– pgs. 15-16;*** Performance analysis handout
    j. Board photo (re-take) – wear those nice, bright colors again!

6) PRESENTATIONS
   a. Small Grants for Community partnering Commissioner presentation – Board of County Commissioners ***– attached separately***
   b. Division of Real Estate certification changes and conservation tax credit updates

7) DISCUSSION & UPDATES
   a. Big Thompson Canyon Recreation and Conservation Vision Plan update ***– attached separately***
   b.

8) EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a) for discussion of the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest,

9) ADJOURN

Included in PDF:	***Attached Separately:***
• Agenda • Minutes of last meeting • Loveland Open Lands 2014 Annual Report • DNR Grant Successes • Open Space Operations Reports • Sales tax report for prior month (analysis will be a handout)	1. Small Grants for Community Partnering Awards 2. Big Thompson Assessment schedule 3. Big Thompson Assessment Plan ***draft*** Chapters 1-3 4. News articles

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 26, 2015
5:00- 8:00 PM
Civic Center Municipal Bldg • Council Chambers • 500 E 3rd 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
Ladonna Lee	At-large
Mary Banken	At-large
Peter Kast	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-large
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
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
Chris Fleming, Open Space Operations Manager
Zac Wiebe, Fund Dev & Spec Proj Specialist
Lori Smith, Senior Accountant

Members Absent	
Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins

1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS - Meeting was called to order by Peter Kast.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT - No public comment
3. AGENDA REVIEW - No changes
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

   Motion by Carl Sorrentino and second by Trudy Haines to approve the February 26, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted in this month's packet. Motion carried unanimously.
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
   a. The Green conservation easement closed in late February, protecting an additional 677 acres in the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains corridor – Larimer County contributed $75,000 to the conservation easement. Tim Meyer is working on a tour for the Board in June.
   b. The Meininger Trail Easement, approved last month, closed March 18. That portion of the Poudre River Trail construction is still scheduled for completion in June.
   c. The Grant Access Easement at Lions Park Open Space closed March 3. The restoration project planned for the banks of the Poudre River has started and will carry on after spring runoff. This was the first closing for Alex since coming to work for the County. Congrats Alex!
   d. Several staff and Board members attended portions of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts conference March 16-18. Charlie thought it was excellent, and especially interesting to hear the perspective of the appraisers who are having so much scrutiny from the State. This will no doubt affect cost. Mary Banken agreed, stating that Colorado is experiencing growing pains in several areas around land acquisition and tax credits. Fees have gone up several hundred percent. Mary has requested a presentation to the Board on tax credits. Kerri added that senate bill 206 proposes to increase the cap of the transactions for land donations to help reduce large acreage landowners having to conserve their property in multiple phases.

e. The COSA Conference will be in Snow Mass September 14-16, 2015. OLAB members are invited and encouraged to attend.

f. Since last month, we have learned that there is a state statute that requires the Planning Commission to adopt the Open Lands Master Plan. We will attend a work session with the Commissioners in April for them to make a recommendation to the Planning Commission, who we hope will adopt it in May.

g. Report from the Open Space Operations Manager. No questions. Gary mentioned that we have a new director (Todd Juergens) at Road and Bridge and as a result, we are working closer with them for gravel and road grading at Hermit Park and other locations.

h. Sales Tax Report from prior month - Kerri will give a report on the sales tax performance for the year next month, since Lori is here tonight to discuss cash flow numbers.

7. DISCUSSION & UPDATES (1st item)

a. Zac reminded the Board that representatives from Colorado Dept of Transportation (CDOT), Colorado Parks & Wildlife, the Forest Service, Larimer County Natural Resources, City of Loveland and members from the Big Thompson Restoration Coalition, are conducting the Big Thompson Canyon Recreation and Conservation study. The scope of the study is the western edge of Loveland to the Olympus dam in Estes Park. Zac presented the major themes of feedback from the public meeting and the number of occurrences any one item was requested. His report did not capture notes, which he said were full of requests for trails, restrooms and bicycling is an activity that continues to rise to the forefront for the canyon. CDOT, with federal funding, will be building the road to today's safety standards (includes a 6' paved shoulder) where it is feasible, which is almost everywhere except the Narrows. They do not have funding to bring unaffected sections up to the 6' standard. Yet to be determined is the management of the shoulder. Will it be swept to prevent road bike accidents? Will cars be allowed or prohibited to park on the shoulder? The presentation and summary sheet will be included with permanent meeting record.

What's next for the group? – honing in on the properties and determining agency roles within the canyon. The group is beginning to draft a plan and categorizing the properties. Trudy asked if FEMA would buy property to prevent it from being rebuilt (just to be flooded again.) Zac responded that they are doing that right now. It is called Hazard Mitigation and we have applied to acquire some of those parcels to return them to natural condition and manage them in perpetuity, without any future help from FEMA after the inevitable next flood event in the canyon. Landowners do not have to sell to FEMA, and may not since FEMA is offering post flood values. Gary said there are about 90 properties in this category. Kerri told the Board we would work on a field trip for the Board and the Loveland Commission for some of these properties in May. In response to Nancy, Zac said that at first review they tried not to look at practicality, such as access routes. They stuck with resource, restoration and recreational values. Kerri added it is a visionary plan, so what is true today may not be true in 10 years.

PRESENTATIONS

Kerri reported that ever since the joint tour with the Agriculture Advisory Board of the Boulder County Agriculture Program, there has been many discussions about the concept of buy and dry of irrigated agricultural properties in Larimer County. While agriculture land has and continues to be a priority in our master plans, 95% of the agricultural land we have purchased has been ranch land, not irrigated farmland. The demand for conserving irrigated farmland is swelling. Kerri has scheduled this presentation tonight for educational purposes to prepare us for future property opportunities. She introduced George Wallace, Nancy's husband, retired professor from CSU, member of the Agriculture Advisory Board and the Poudre Sharing Group.

a. George presented **Alternatives to the "buying and drying" of irrigated agriculture land in Larimer County: Future partnerships.** Some highlights:
   - ☐ Irrigated agriculture in Larimer County – a rich history
   - ☐ Benefits Provided by irrigated ag
   - ☐ The unprecedented threats to ag land and water: ag to urban transfers ("buy and dry"). Examples were provided.
     - ☐ Colorado Legislature has passed several laws to facilitate water sharing and the Governor and Basin Roundtables want a State Water Plan that includes ATMs and water sharing

- ☐ "Buy and Dry" is seen as unsustainable: (by the CWCB, Inter-basin Compact Committee, Basin Roundtables, Western Governors Assn., county advisory boards & many other groups.
- ☐ Looking for alternative transfer mechanisms: Poudre Basin Water Sharing Working Group Formed in 2013
- ☐ Types of Water Sharing/Trading Being Discussed by the Working Group*
  - ☐ Water Swaps – trading multiple-use water (CBT) owned by irrigators for agricultural water owned by a utility
  - ☐ Leases Agreements – ag water shares used for urban water supply in response to a crisis
  - ☐ Interruptible Supply Agreements – longer term contracts to help utilities meet drought firming and recovery, emergencies
  - ☐ Buy and Supply – the most certainty for participants and the ATM with widespread support
    - ☐ Open space programs, water utilities, others, buy, protect, return (lease or re-sale) farms and water to ag producers with conditions for water sharing – a concept well received by the working group – with some local examples
- ☐ The need for new partnerships

Hugh asked George to clarify CBT water law. George explained that CBT is the most attractive to municipalities because there is no downstream return flow obligation and it is already decreed for multiple uses, so municipalities can take it and use it without any water court or other proceedings.

The Board supported the Buy and Supply Concept, discussing water resource options in depth and the value of keeping the Front Range in balance by not eliminating any one sector we enjoy and support today.

The presentation will be included with permanent meeting record.

b. Horsetooth District Headquarters and Maintenance Facility

Mark Caughlan, District Manager for Horsetooth Reservoir presented the conceptual plans for new Horsetooth headquarters and maintenance facilities. These are the final two projects of the 10-year master plan, having implemented all of the improvements for visitors first. Horsetooth is the third busiest reservoir in Colorado. Combined with Horsetooth Mountain and the Blue Sky Trail it is one the busiest recreation complexes in the State, without a "front door" or adequate facilities for staff. The new facilities will house Horsetooth Reservoir rangers, maintenance crews for Horsetooth Mountain and open lands north and the Trails Crew who work on all properties. The timeline is to start construction November this year, and complete the projects in phases over 2 years. The office building will be completed first, hopefully in 2016. The building was scaled back a bit from original plans to keep the footprint smaller due to the expense of moving rock. The crew at Fossil Creek is more likely to be incorporated into a centralized office location for Open Lands and Accounting. The presentation/plans will be included with permanent meeting record.

7. DISCUSSION & UPDATES (2nd item)

a. Acquisition & Development Financial Summary Sheet

Kerri reminded the board that last month Jeffrey sent them a budget information sheet for the Poudre River Trail Construction, Gateway Trailhead to Stone Fly Drive section. Actual costs came in higher than the budgeted amount and the Board needs to take action if they will approve.

8. ACTION ITEMS

a. Poudre River Trail Development budget item

Motion by Carl Sorrentino that we approve the additional $38,000 to complete the Gateway Trailhead to Stone Fly Drive section of the Poudre River Trail. Second by Suzan Fritchel. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Final Review Hermit Park Conservation Easement Amendment

Alex Castino highlighted the three main purposes of the 'amended and restated conservation easement' with Estes Valley Land Trust (EVLT). She also explained that Larimer County will have some review

power if EVLT ever chooses to transfer the easement. Gary added that the Board and staff will continue to have oversight of the development zone.

Nancy suggested that having a representative from EVLT on OLAB all the time seems wise. Mary Banken suggested Legacy Land Trust also. Kerri reminded all that we can suggest members, but the final composition of the Open Lands Advisory Board is up to the Board of County Commissioners.

As the Director of EVLT, Mary Banken recused herself. Motion by Nancy Wallace to recommend approval of the amended and restated conservation easement for Hermit Park Open Space. Second by Ward Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(a) for discussion regarding the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest, *motion by Nancy Wallace and second by Ward Nelson to move into Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously. (No minutes)*

a. Horsetooth District Headquarters and Maintenance Facility budget item

Gary Buffington presented a review of sales tax revenues and expenditures as of March 23, 2015, and estimates through the end of 2016. Next, he presented the 2014-2018 Natural Resources Capital Improvement Plan. He wants the sales tax to be a part of the funding source for the Horsetooth shop and offices.

Nancy Wallace does not think we should spend open space dollars on the Horsetooth building, which is not dedicated to open spaces. Gary showed that looking at the split of staff, there are five regular staff and 6-8 seasonals dedicated to Horsetooth Reservoir. Open Space folks are four regular staff (two maintenance and two trails construction) and 4-5 seasonal trail crew. He reminded the Board that the department is so intermingled now. It is not as it was 10 years ago.

Nancy thought there has been a priority placeholder for years to have a building that houses open space staff, but all of sudden a building comes up for a Horsetooth Headquarters for 3 million without any notice until today. Gary responded that he is not sure the placeholder was ever just for open space. The building for Horsetooth has been on their master plan since 2007. Further, there is not really an open space dedicated building in the future for this department. The accounting folks will be there as well and they are split many different ways between parks and open space funds. He restated that there is not any parks and open lands anymore. It is the Department of Natural Resources.

Trudy said that even with people intermingled; she thinks it is fair to split by staffing percentages. Gary responded we do that on the operational piece. But it becomes more difficult with capital improvements. At the Horsetooth facility, the split of staff between parks and open space funding is about 60/40 while actual open space funding of the project is to be 30%. Gary maintains that the building will have information about the entire department. It will be a Natural Resources building in the Horsetooth District.

Nancy requested that it not be called Horsetooth Headquarters (HQ), but to name it something that encompasses more than the reservoir. She suggests that we need to be careful to avoid sole focus on the reservoir if we are using open space dollars to build it. Several agreed that using something other than just Horsetooth in the name should be implemented. Some ideas were “The Natural Resource Center at Horsetooth,” “Information Center at Horsetooth” or using Horsetooth Rock as a neutral focal point. Gary confirmed that it will be a location to purchase access to any Larimer County park/open space.

Motion by Ward Nelson that we allocate 1.3 million to the Horsetooth facilities. Second by Suzan Fritchel. Motion carried unanimously.

9. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Open Lands Annual Report 2014

City of Loveland

Sunset Vista Natural Area at 57th Street & Taft Avenue

Sunset Vista Natural Area Acquired

In August 2014, a key property in north Loveland was acquired at the northeast corner of 57th Street & Taft Avenue. The purchase preserves scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, and agricultural land in the 3,500-acre community separator between Loveland & Fort Collins. Connections for two long-awaited off-street trails also became possible with this acquisition: the Long View Corridor Trail linking Loveland & Fort Collins and a gap in the Loveland Recreation Trail.

The 87-acre parcel was purchased for $1.5 million, including water rights consisting of 10 units of C-BT and 3 shares of Louden Ditch. A partnership from Larimer County Open Lands provided $200,000 towards the acquisition. The property contains several tributary wetlands and a section of the Louden Ditch, providing valuable wildlife habitat & movement corridors. Views of the foothills & mountains are outstanding.

A public naming contest generated over 300 name suggestions from more than 150 individuals. The winning name, *Sunset Vista,* is fitting since the site offers "the best sunsets in Loveland," as the submitters noted.

Anticipated uses of the property include construction of trails for recreation and wildlife viewing, development of a trailhead parking lot, and continued use as a working farm. Coordinating with our partners in Fort Collins and Larimer County, Loveland is pursuing $2 million in grants from GOCO and CDOT for the construction of the Long View Corridor Trail, which will connect the two cities.

River's Edge Natural Area Opened

Although River's Edge Natural Area sustained over $1 million in flood damage just two weeks prior to its scheduled opening in 2013, temporary repairs were completed and the site was opened for public access in July 2014. With five ponds and 152 acres, including the Jayhawker Ponds, River's Edge has proven to be popular with hikers, joggers, bicyclists, and particularly fishermen.

Sunrise at River's Edge Natural Area

Once permanent repairs are complete, visitors can look forward to picnic shelters, vehicle parking access and expanded environmental education opportunities. Loveland was fortunate to secure both FEMA funding in the amount of $920,000 as well as a GOCO Flood Recovery Grant for $180,000 to complete permanent repairs in 2015. Determined Park Planners, Open Lands staff and consultants have re-designed the site to better withstand possible future flood events by incorporating a realigned parking lot, flood cut-off walls and turf-reinforced matting. Visitors will also see the reconstruction of the boardwalk, amphitheater, wetland areas and other revegetation as part of the project.

Morey Wildlife Reserve Flood Recovery

The 2013 Big Thompson Flood completely filled in the 8-acre Morey Pond, depositing sediment where once was a magnificent waterfowl habitat and riparian area along the river. The floodwaters also caused significant damage to the adjacent Mariana Butte Golf Course. Temporary repairs in early 2014 prevented further flooding and damage during spring runoff.

Park planners worked with FEMA to obtain funding for sediment removal, but full reconstruction will depend on flood modeling and analysis to be completed. A hydrologic study of this stretch of the Big Thompson River is in progress and in 2015, redesign of the open space may include: river bank repairs and stabilization, an overbank channel through the former pond area, and intermittent pools allowing willow re-establishment and a self-perpetuating cottonwood gallery. These goals also provide additional flood hazard mitigation to the golf course and adjacent homeowners in the range of a 5-10 year flood event.

Environmental Education Update

Due to the flood damage at its long-time locale Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, the Environmental Education Program introduced a new curriculum at a new location in 2014 – the **Urban Wilderness Program at Namaqua Park**. Based on the successful structure of the Wildlife Program at Viestenz-Smith, the program includes rotations through five new interactive stations throughout the park and along the Big Thompson River. The full-day field trip supports 4th & 5th grade Colorado science standards and includes topics and activities such as *Animal Adaptations*, *Cottonwood Trees*, and a hands-on *River Lab* with macro-invertebrate investigations. Program materials were developed to be portable for use at other natural areas, parks and by roving interpreters.

Several other environmental education offerings were also launched in 2014: in-school programs for elementary schools, *River Ecology* programs offered to the public, *School's Out Science* at the Loveland Public Library, and the Northern Colorado *Get Outdoors Day* event in Fort Collins. In total, environmental education programming was presented to over 1,100 children and adults in 2014.

The Urban Wilderness Program at Namaqua Park

Comcast Cares Volunteer Project at River's Edge

Volunteer Projects

Open Lands education and outreach programs would not be possible without a dedicated corps of more than 30 volunteers who generously give their time and energy to inform, educate, and guide the public. Significant assistance was also provided by a local Eagle Scout, who helped coordinate and construct new facilities for environmental education at Namaqua Park. Other volunteer projects throughout the year included ongoing flood recovery, cleanup and seasonal stewardship projects. A volunteer group of Comcast employees helped to construct a 2,200-foot section of soft-surface trail at River's Edge Natural Area, providing access from the Thompson School District parking lot on S. Taft Avenue. In total, nearly 600 hours of volunteer time were contributed to the Open Lands Program in 2014. To sign up or for more information, please contact: Michele.VanHare@CityofLoveland.org or visit us online: www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands.

As part of an ongoing project, Biology Professor Jim Choun and his students from Front Range Community College assisted the Open Lands Division with the removal of Russian olive trees around the Jayhawker Ponds at River's Edge Natural Area. Russian olives were brought to this country in the late 1800's in an effort to control erosion and provide decorative landscaping; however, it was soon discovered that the water-loving, fast-growing trees cause much more damage than any benefits they provide. Student volunteer efforts include removal of the trees at different times of the year as well as various treatments to the stumps and root systems to eliminate regrowth. Students then analyze the data in an attempt to determine the best management practices for eradication of this invasive species.

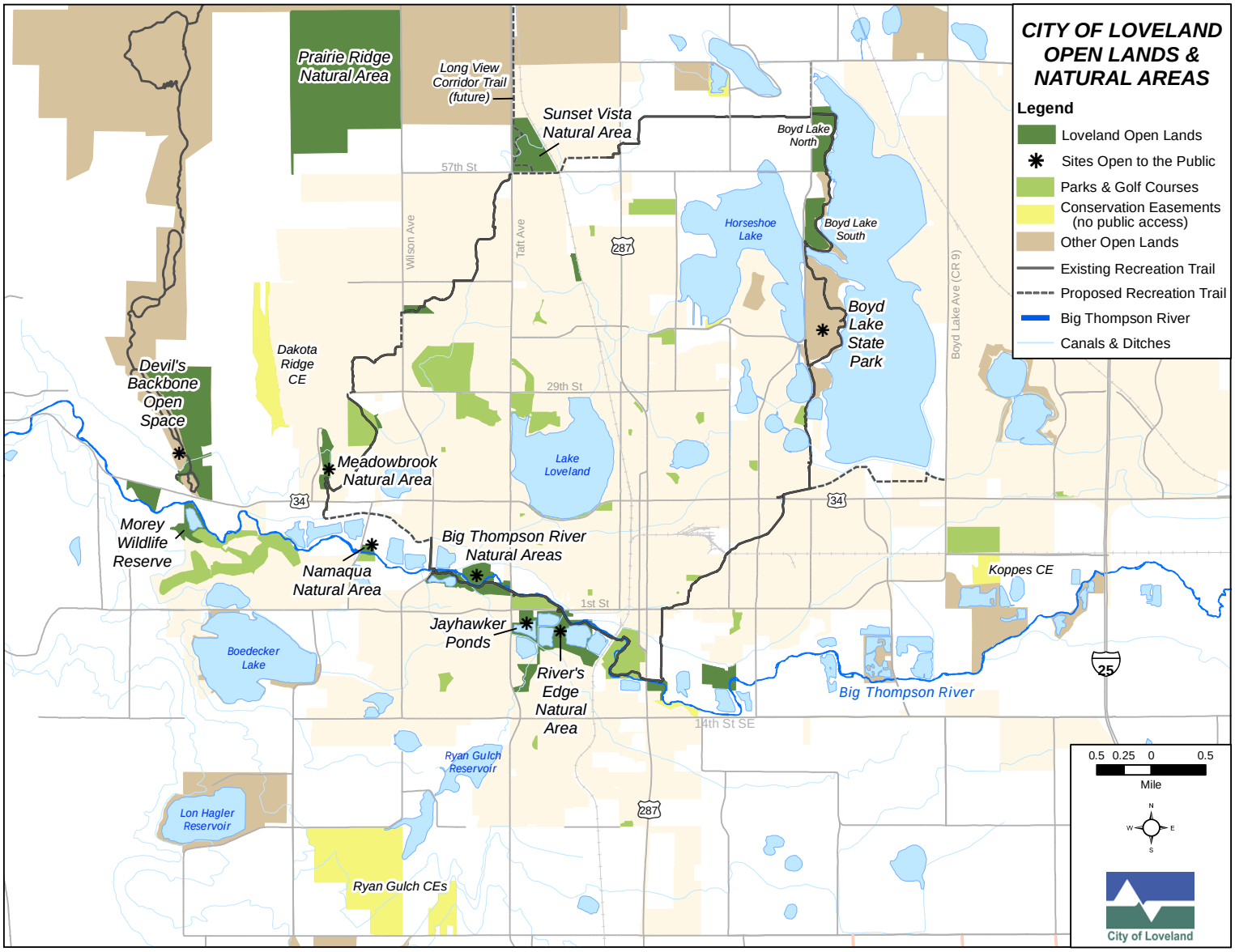
Technology Update

Open Lands purchased an iPad tablet to assist with numerous Parks & Recreation tasks and projects using GIS/GPS. The iPad will become an integral tool for Conservation Easement monitoring, including mapping resource data, collecting geo-referenced photo points, and creating site maps with GPS-collected data. The new device will also be helpful to inventory Open Lands resources, such as signs, trails and amenities. Park Planning staff will use the iPad for development review projects as well, to geospatially locate features in the field and create maps to provide feedback to applicants. Advantages of the new system include secure data that is automatically streamed to the City's network as it is collected. Data cannot be compromised due to equipment or battery failure. In addition, map products and reports can be created more efficiently, without the time associated with downloading photos and GPS data independently.

OPEN SPACE SALES TAX

Thank You for Supporting the Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax!

The primary funding source for Loveland's Open Lands Program is the county-wide ¼-cent Open Space Sales Tax, which was set to expire in 2018. In 2014, voters overwhelmingly supported the extension of the county tax until 2043, passing the referendum with 82% approval. Loveland's share of this revenue is used for acquisition, development, public access, stewardship, and management of open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and trails in and around Loveland.

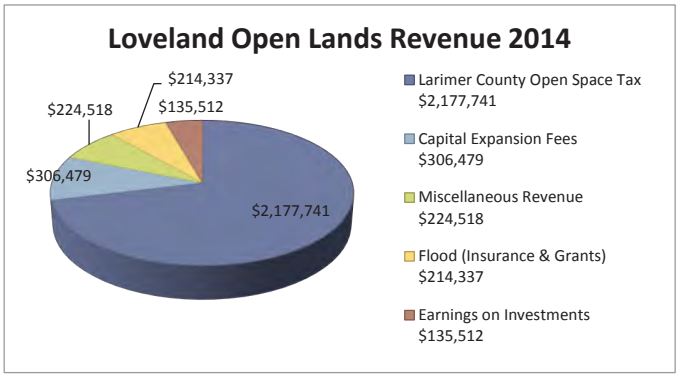


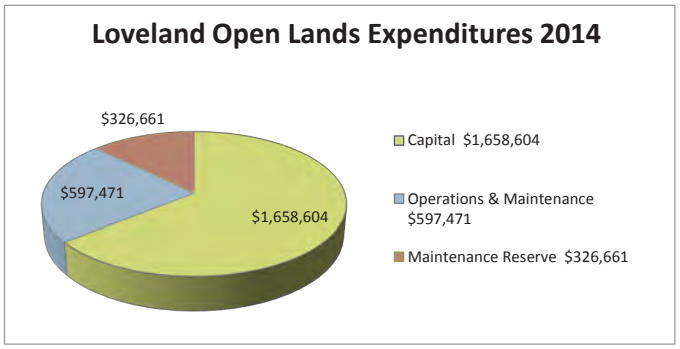
Open Lands Revenue – $3,058,587

The Open Lands Program is funded primarily by Loveland's share of the Larimer County ¼-cent Open Space Sales Tax, which provided $2,177,741 in revenue in 2014. The City's Open Lands Capital Expansion Fees are collected on new residential housing units and generated $306,479 for acquisitions & capital improvements. The majority of funding received as Miscellaneous Revenue came from a $200,000 partnership from Larimer County Open Lands towards the purchase of Sunset Vista Natural Area, in addition to agricultural lease income. Flood recovery funding in the form of insurance payments and grant reimbursements totaled $214,337. Investment earnings increased in 2014, amounting to $135,512.

Open Lands Expenditures – $2,582,736

Capital Expenditures in 2014 totaled $1,658,604, with the majority spent on the acquisition of Sunset Vista Natural Area ($1.5M). Operations and Maintenance, encompassing professional services, personnel, and supplies, required $597,471. Professional services included the Open Lands Division share of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the Big Thompson Recreation & Conservation Assessment, as well as flood recovery and repair projects. Division policy reserves 15% of annual open space sales tax revenues for future management and maintenance of open lands properties, resulting in the transfer of $326,661 into the Maintenance Reserve account in 2014.





From the Open Lands Advisory Commission Chair

As a long-standing member and 2015 Chair of the Loveland Open Lands Advisory Commission, I am proud to present the 2014 year in review, showcasing our program accomplishments as well as looking forward to what we plan to achieve in 2015.

Opening River's Edge Natural Area for public access in July after the September 2013 flood was a significant achievement, considering that the site sustained over $1 million in damage. Permanent repairs are underway and a full re-opening is planned for summer 2015.

Loveland's newest open space, Sunset Vista Natural Area, added valuable land to the community separator between Loveland and Fort Collins and provides connections for long-awaited trails linking the two cities and helping to complete Loveland's recreation trail loop. The 2003 Open Lands Plan was updated as a component of the 2014 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and with substantial public review & input, priority areas for preservation & trails have been updated to reflect current needs and funding realities.

Based on this plan, a number of acquisitions are anticipated for 2015, including several in the high-priority Big Thompson River corridor and others augmenting existing protected lands. Additional priorities for 2015 include restoration of flood-damaged properties and opening several sites for public access. These accomplishments and future goals would not be possible without the funding provided by the Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax. Loveland's share of this tax helps fund the acquisition, preservation, restoration, enhancement and development of natural areas, open space, and trails in and around Loveland. In November 2014, voters overwhelmingly supported the extension of the tax until 2043.

With guidance from City Council, the talented open lands staff and dedicated OLAC members will continue to work hard to be the best possible stewards of Loveland's natural resources by acquiring, conserving and maintaining additional natural areas and open lands for the ongoing use and enjoyment of the citizens of Loveland. As always, we welcome public attendance and comment at monthly OLAC meetings and encourage increased citizen collaboration regarding the City's Open Lands program.

William Zawacki, Loveland Open Lands Advisory Commission, 2015 Chair

Big Thompson River Recreation and Conservation Assessment

Big Thompson River

As a result of changes in the Big Thompson Canyon from the 2013 flood, Loveland and Larimer County are leading an effort to assess recreation and conservation opportunities along the river from Loveland to Estes Park. A robust public involvement process will include landowners, citizens and user groups, the Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, US Forest Service, and CDOT.

Goals of the project include working with the public in a cooperative fashion to enhance access to public lands, restore some of the historical recreation opportunities along the river, improve water quality, improve river function and resiliency by maximizing the land available for the river and its floodplain benches, enhance the scenic qualities of the river corridor, strengthen partnerships and management efficiencies, and increase appreciation, respect, and understanding of the river corridor's function and values. This visionary plan was initiated in 2014 with assistance from a GOCO Flood Recovery Grant and will be completed in mid-2015.

Northern Oriole at River's Edge Natural Area

2015 Open Lands Advisory Commission

The Open Lands Advisory Commission is comprised of volunteers who live in or near the City and represent the City's diverse land use interests. Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. The Commission advises City Council regarding open lands issues.

Members:
Gale Bernhardt
Rick Brent
Andy Hawbaker
Ross Livingston, Vice Chair
Darren Pape
Jim Roode
Nathan Thompson
Jean Whittaker
William Zawacki, Chair
Hugh McKean, City Council Liaison
Kerri Rollins, Larimer County Liaison

Mission Statement

The mission of the City of Loveland Open Lands Program is to identify, preserve, protect and enhance open space, natural areas and other significant lands. This ongoing process is accomplished through cooperation with and respect for private and public landowners, surrounding municipalities and counties, natural resource agencies, and other organizations with similar interests.

DNR Grants Received: 1/1/2014-4/6/2015

Number	Awarding Agency	Amount	Project	LC DNR Match	Partner	Confirmed Partner Match	Confirmed Match amount	Pending Match
1	**DOLA**	$73,000	Lower Poudre River Restoration and Resiliency Plan	$10,000	CSU	$10,000	$10,000	
2	**State Parks**	$350,000	Front Range Trail - Loveland to Fort Collins	$215,000	Loveland, Fort Collins	Loveland ($75,000), Fort Collins ($2,500)	$775,000	
3	**North Front Range MPO**	$450,000	Front Range Trail - Loveland to Fort Collins	0	State Parks	$350,000	$350,000	
4	**CDOT**	$1,000,000	Long View Corridor Trail	$550,000	GOCO, Fort Collins, Loveland	Fort Collins ($983,000), Loveland ($571,000)	$1,554,000	GOCO ($999,550)
5	**CWCB**	$150,000	Lions OS Restoration Project	0	Greeley			
6	**CSFS**	$25,000	Hermit Park OS Forestry Implementation	0	LCES; ASD	LCES $2,000; ASD $23,000 in kind labor	$25,000	
7	**CSFS**	$31,000	Chimney Hollow OS Forestry Implementation	0	LCES; Northern Water	Northern Water ($31,000)	$31,000	
8	**Poudre Heritage Allianc**	$5,328	Gage the Poudre Signs	$0	Pharos Foundation, Flywater, Inc., Fort Collins, Windsor	Pharos ($3,400), Flywater, Inc. ($2,425), Windsor ($350), Fort Collins ($350)	$6,525	
9	**GOCO**	$94,439	Flood Recovery - Hermit Park repairs and Big T Assessment	$15,000	City of Loveland, Big Thompson River Restoration Coalition, State of CO, FEMA	Loveland ($15,000) BTRRC ($10,000) CO ($51,300) FEMA ($307,802)	$384,102	
11	**GOCO**	$33,908	Pinewood Reservoir Environmental Education	$10,000	BOR, Friends group	BOR ($10,000) Friends ($500)	$10,500	
12	**CDPHE**	$96,000	Robert's Ranch waste tire removal	$4,850	CDPHE	None	$0	
13	**CPW**	$2,500	Partners in the Outdoors	$0	CPW	None	$0	
Total		**$2,311,175**		**$804,850**			**$3,146,127**	**$999,550**

Larimer County Investment	Return on Investment
$804,850	**$5,457,302**
$1	**$6.78**

Red Mountain District - Open Space Operations

General-

- Attended Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) , Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) and Open Lands Advisory Board (OLAB) meetings
- Interviewed and hired seasonal park ranger, park aide and maintenance positions
- Preparing budgets for 2016
- Met with Planning Dept and Manor Ridge Estates' HOA to discuss entry sign replacement which are located on open space property
- Ranger Excellence School is May 11th – 15th
- Working with City of Fort Collins on pasture fencing for bison project at Red Mountain
- Hosted Quad Rock 25/50 mile training run at Horsetooth Mountain on 4/11
- Fort Collins 10K/Half Marathon to be hosted at Eagle's Nest on 4/25
- Continue to work with Parks and Wildlife at Long View Farm on crop damage issues from geese

Rangers-

- Horsetooth Mountain gate house and park aide turned away approximately 1,000 vehicles from Horsetooth Mountain upper lot on Easter Sunday
- We have been averaging approximately 6oo vehicles turned away from upper lot on Saturdays and Sundays
- Cook spent two weeks in El Salvador with the Army Reserve
- Rangers assisted on carry out of a hiker at Horsetooth Falls with a broken ankle
- Rangers assisted with 50 y/o female that was bucked off horse near Soderberg TH
- Spring turkey season started on 4/11, extra patrols at Horsetooth Mountain and Eagle's Nest

Maintenance/Projects/Leases-

- Gindler participated on CSU Natural Resources' discussion panel
- Met with Kate Wilkins/CSU to determine bison and cattle grazing plots at Red Mountain
- Arranged with weed crew to hydro mulch seeding at Red Mountain trailhead
- Began working on free firewood program for Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- Checked range conditions at Red Mountain, Eagle's Nest and North property
- Turned on drinking fountains at Horsetooth Mountain, Blue Sky and Soderberg
- De-winterized bathroom at River Bluffs
- Repaired broken sewer line at McGraw rental house – Red Mountain

Big Thompson District Open Space Operations

Still working on hiring up seasonal crews. Hiring has been more difficult than usual this year, especially for maintenance crews. Working on addressing some funding issues with pay scales department wide.

Budget time of the year. Chris was relieved to only have to work on 6 budgets this year instead of the 9-10 of the past years! :)

Rangers attended a week long training on Crisis Intervention Tactics, where valuable communication tools were taught and practiced with professional actors in realistic scenarios. This training will aid rangers when interacting with the mentally ill or suicidal parties, a relatively common occurrence on our properties at times.

Dave has been working diligently on getting all of our campgrounds back open with reservations going live in May. Visitation has been steady.

Spring time in the Rockies means RAM JAMS!

Meegan and Chris are also working with FEMA on finalizing the HPOS trailhead and trail building project from our master plan which was selected as an alternate project from the flood damage to the canyon park properties. A major snafu with the state caused us to halt progress on the engineering design with our consultant and go out to bid. CDR Maguire (Ben and Joe) are amazing and have been working feverishly on getting the RFP done for us. We will use this RFP to hire on a consultant under DNR for any and all future projects for 2015 instead of having to use LC Engineering as our pass through. Maybe the hold up was a blessing in disguise! The "Joels" have been making amazing progress on the trail layouts- several of our staff have walked the initial layout with rave reviews! :) Construction is still expected to being this fall and be phased in over the next couple of years.

The DBBOS has been extremely busy as usual. We have been fighting capacity issues and muddy conditions which is typical this time of year. Our ravens are back and appear to be nesting in the same location as last year, which means no closures at the Keyhole so far! Cindy spotted our first rattlesnake of the season. Staff installed "No Parking" signs along the east side of the entrance road into the property to try to further address capacity and parking issues. Our two seasonal rangers, Candice (2nd season) and Aubrie (1st year) have been getting acquainted with the trail system and are doing a great job!

The heavy construction is winding down on Pinewood. Final walk through and punch list occurred April 17th. Reseeding occured March 23rd. Vault restrooms were installed March 25th and Rick and his crew have been hard at work on the walk in campsites. Over 100 volunteers are slated to come help on April 25th- plans include finishing the tent pads on the walk in sites, putting the new picnic tables together and finishing the trail connectors. Still on track for a grand opening Memorial Day weekend!

Work continues on the Big Thompson Task Force Team. Chris, Meegan, Kerri, Gary, Charlie and Zac all attended the 4th meeting on 4/16. Efforts to identify management efficiencies and further partnernships were discussed. Follow up tour with Loveland occurred 3/26. Chris attended the City of Loveland's open house meeting on the V. Smith concepts. Staff provided feedback on the concepts.

OPEN SPACE SALES TAX ACTIVITY
PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2015

REVENUES:					
	SALES TAX	$	840,164.15		
	MV USE TAX	$	145,625.05		
	BUILDING USE TAX	$	171,297.86		
	INTEREST	$	933.89		
	TOTAL REVENUE	$	1,158,020.95		
EXPENDITURES:					
	PERSONNEL & OPERATING	$	8,327.01	$	8,327.01
				$	8,327.01
	PRIOR MONTH RESERVE TO DISTRIBUTE	$	-		
	NET REVENUE:	$	1,149,693.94		
	DISTRIBUTED: 95%	$	1,092,209.24		
	RESERVE: 5%		57,484.70		

% SALES TAX DISTRIBUTED TO INCORP. AREAS (USED AS A BASIS) 55%

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON POPULATION 2014 State of Colorado Statistics

	2013 POPULATION	% OF INCORP AREA		REVENUE
FORT COLLINS	152,205	62.83	$	377,435.40
LOVELAND	71,224	29.40	$	176,620.08
ESTES PARK	6,075	2.51	$	15,064.68
BERTHOUD	5,248	2.17	$	13,013.90
WELLINGTON	6,700	2.77	$	16,614.55
TIMNATH	793	0.33	$	1,966.47
TOTAL INCORP.	242,245	100.00	$	600,715.08
TOTAL UNINCORP.	67,310		$	491,494.16
TOTAL	309,555		$	1,092,209.24

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON SALES TAX GENERATION 2014 Colorado Department of Revenue Statistics

		2013 GENERATION	% OF INCORP AREA SALES TAX		REVENUE
FORT COLLINS	$	67,503,539	59.92	$	359,935.24
LOVELAND	$	36,853,499	32.70	$	196,446.26
ESTES PARK	$	5,112,782	4.54	$	27,261.84
BERTHOUD	$	990,996	0.88	$	5,284.08
WELLINGTON	$	725,350	0.64	$	3,867.63
TIMNATH	$	1,474,083	1.31	$	7,859.95
TOTAL INCORP	$	112,660,249	99.99	$	600,655.01
TOTAL UNINCORP	$	12,986,726		$	491,554.23
TOTAL	$	125,646,975		$	1,092,209.24

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON HIGHEST YIELD TO INCORPORATED AREAS:

FORT COLLINS	$	377,435.40
LOVELAND	$	196,446.26
ESTES PARK	$	27,261.84
BERTHOUD	$	13,013.90
WELLINGTON	$	16,614.55
TIMNATH	$	7,859.95
TOTAL INCORP	$	638,631.90
TOTAL UNINCORP	$	453,577.34
TOTAL	$	1,092,209.24

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON NEW MUNICIPAL AGRREMENT:

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON POPULATION 2014 State of Colorado Statistics

	2013 POPULATION	% OF INCORP AREA	REVENUE
FORT COLLINS	152,205	61.27	$ 391,287.95
LOVELAND	71,224	28.67	$ 183,102.35
ESTES PARK	6,075	2.45	$ 15,617.58
BERTHOUD	5,248	2.11	$ 13,491.54
WELLINGTON	6,700	2.70	$ 17,224.33
WINDSOR	5,526	2.22	$ 14,206.22
JOHNSTOWN	647	0.26	$ 1,663.30
TIMNATH	793	0.32	$ 2,038.64
TOTAL INCORP.	248,418	100.00	$ 638,631.90

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON SALES TAX GENERATION 2014 Colorado Department of Revenue Statistics

	2013 GENERATION	% OF INCORP AREA SALES TAX	REVENUE
FORT COLLINS	$ 67,503,539	58.64	$ 374,489.02
LOVELAND	$ 36,853,499	32.00	$ 204,388.09
ESTES PARK	$ 5,112,782	4.44	$ 28,364.15
BERTHOUD	$ 990,996	0.86	$ 5,497.74
WELLINGTON	$ 725,350	0.63	$ 4,024.02
WINDSOR	$ 862,861	0.75	$ 4,786.89
JOHNSTOWN	$ 1,593,520	1.38	$ 8,840.36
TIMNATH	$ 1,474,083	1.28	$ 8,177.76
TOTAL INCORP	$ 115,116,630	99.99	$ 638,568.04

DISTRIBUTION BASED ON HIGHEST YIELD TO INCORPORATED AREAS:

FORT COLLINS	$ 391,287.95	57.04
LOVELAND	$ 204,388.09	29.80
ESTES PARK	$ 28,364.15	4.13
BERTHOUD	$ 13,491.54	1.97
WELLINGTON	$ 17,224.33	2.51
WINDSOR	$ 14,206.22	2.07
JOHNSTOWN	$ 8,840.36	1.29
TIMNATH	$ 8,177.76	1.19
TOTAL INCORP	$ 685,980.40	100.00

NEW DISTRIBUTION FOR MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT:		**YEAR TO DATE**	**PAID TO DATE**
FORT COLLINS	$ 364,280.04	$ 364,280.04	$ 60,881,826.71
LOVELAND	$ 190,280.59	$ 190,280.59	$ 27,100,824.56
ESTES PARK	$ 26,406.37	$ 26,406.37	$ 4,572,261.04
BERTHOUD	$ 12,560.31	$ 12,560.31	$ 2,233,859.96
WELLINGTON	$ 16,035.45	$ 16,035.45	$ 1,777,036.21
WINDSOR	$ 13,225.66	$ 13,225.66	$ 734,139.30
JOHNSTOWN	$ 8,230.17	$ 8,230.17	$ 507,841.65
TIMNATH	$ 7,613.31	$ 7,613.31	$ 419,823.06
TOTAL INCORP	$ 638,631.90	$ 638,631.90	$ 98,227,612.49
TOTAL UNINCORP	$ 453,577.34	$ 453,577.34	$ 70,899,159.70
TOTAL	$ 1,092,209.24	$ 1,092,209.24	$ 169,126,772.19