



OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 25, 2016

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	
Suzan Fritchel	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-large
Jeff Hindman	Town of Berthoud
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
Pete Kelly	At-large
David Marvin	At-large
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland
Ward Nelson	Town of Estes Park
Carl Sorrentino	At-large
Sherri Valentine	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Members Absent	
Jason Brothers	At-large

Staff Present
Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Director
Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager
Alex Castino, Land Agent
Sandy Werkmeister, Department Specialist
Chris Fleming, Big Thompson District Manager
Teddy Parker-Renga, Community Relations Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kenny Beardon from Fort Collins with the Overland Mountain Bike Club reminded the Board they gave a grant for the Hidden Valley Trail and provided about 40 volunteers for that project and are currently helping with the new trail at Hermit Park Open Space (HPOS.) He's here to observe and hear the HPOS trail progress report.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – switching the order of C and D under 6.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Carl Sorrentino and second by Ward Nelson to approve the July 28, 2016 *meeting minutes* as submitted in this month's packet. Motion carried unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Malchow property acquisition closed on August 8. The property will temporarily be called the Little Thompson Farm until a naming process is undertaken. A Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant was submitted on August 19 for an \$800,000 request. There is a tour for the GOCO Board on October 3. Let Kerri know if you would like to join that tour.
- b. The Board of Commissioners approved your \$250,000 partnership recommendation for the Ward property. Loveland will close on the property tomorrow.
- c. The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the latest update to the OLAB bylaws. All OLAB members are receiving a hard copy for their handbooks.
- d. Work continues on the three buildings at Horsetooth Reservoir. The maintenance building was turned over to us on June 24 and staff will move into the building the last week of August and should be open to the public around the middle of September.
- e. Met with City of Fort Collins Natural Areas to develop NOCO Trail Report marketing plan (website with trail conditions should launch late summer/early fall.)

- f. Conducted 2016 dark sky monitoring with Fort Collins, Boulder and National Park Service with volunteer assistance.
- g. The Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Project was given honorable mention for a Larimer County Innovation Award!
- h. Met with City of Cheyenne to learn status of its planning for the Belvoir Ranch and specifically Big Hole Open Space – still no funding to implement access or planning.
- i. City of Greeley’s water pipeline drilling will occur on Lions Open Space through the end of the year. Restoration of the disturbed area is being coordinated with Greeley.
- j. Lions Open Space Bank Stabilization Phase II construction is scheduled to begin in early September on both the east and west banks.
- k. We have not yet heard back about if we were awarded a Wetlands for Wildlife grant from CPW for the River Bluffs Restoration and Resiliency Project. We anticipate knowing more by the Sept. meeting.
- l. Received 30 applications for the Fund Development & Special Projects position. We hope to present the successful candidate to you at the September meeting!
- m. Small Grants for Community Partnering announcements have been distributed and are on the website. They are due September 16. Please encourage any projects or groups that might benefit from this program.
- n. 20th anniversary celebration invites have been mailed for the September 22 event at Horsetooth South Bay Pavilion. We are hoping for 100-150 people to attend.
- o. The September 22 OLAB meeting will be at the new Horsetooth Area Information Center.
- p. Open Space Operations District Reports – no questions
 - ***The Board made a reminder to write out acronyms the first time used.***
- q. Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report
- r. Natural Resources events/registration and NR News

6. DISCUSSION & UPDATES

- a. NOCO Trail map app demo - Teddy

Teddy provided the Board a quick demo of the soon to be launched NOCO Trail map site. He mentioned that while he is the one presenting it, this project has been in the works for years and he gave credit to the many people who have engaged in the process over the years. The intent is to provide trail conditions on multiple platforms in real time. It is a website, not an app, but can work like an app by saving it as a shortcut/icon on your phones screen. The logo was specifically developed to be non-agency specific, with the hope that other organizations will want to join. Final testing for phase 1 is in process now and will launch this fall. Marketing materials will include flyers, FCTV spots, and all of our regular marketing channels. Phase 2 may include letting partners in, adding points (trailheads) to the trails, and more. Teddy responded to the Board that we did review apps that have been built for other Counties and we found that building such an *area specific* app is prohibitively expensive at the front end and ongoing. This solution was pennies comparatively.
- b. Little Thompson Farm Draft Stewardship Plan presentation (attached) – by Meegan Flenniken

The board discussed the properties surrounding the farm and potentials for preservation. Also whether there were any mineral rights to consider as well as the gravel needs of the Front Range. The Board also discussed the water and crop plans and options into the future.
- c. Financial analysis of the Help Preserve Open Spaces Long-term Management Fund (attached)

Gary reminded the Board of the question asked a couple months back on why there has been such an increase in operating expenses the last two years. Lori Smith presented the response.

- d. Hermit Park Open Space Presentation for 2016-17 improvements (attached) – by Meegan Flenniken & Chris Fleming

Discussion included the expected use of the proposed day use area and the current composition of users. The campgrounds receive a lot of overflow from Rocky Mountain National Park, meaning out of County and out of state visitors. Chris confirmed we have the data to back that up. Day use is heavier in locals. Gary confirmed that we do not have plans to charge out of County visitors more because administratively it costs the same or more to manage.

7. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Hermit Park Open Space Budget Recommendation

Motion by Ward Nelson to recommend allocating \$234,950 from the Acquisition & Development Fund (A&D) toward the Hermit Park trail construction and day use area. Second by Sherri Valentine. Motion carried unanimously.

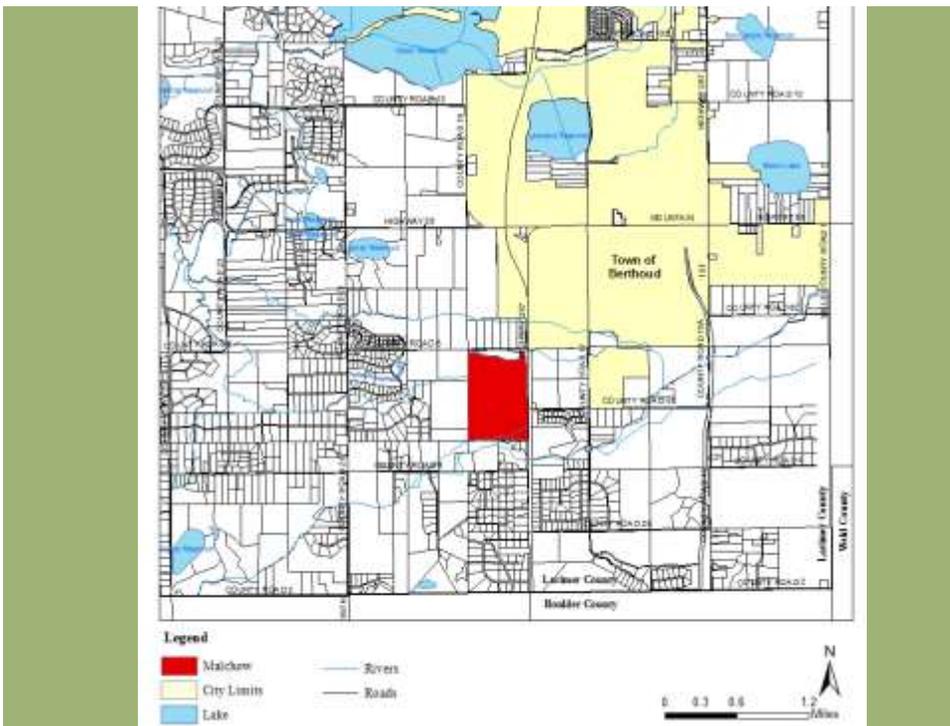
8. OTHER BUSINESS

Volunteers are needed for the Small Grants for Community Partnering – Carl Sorrentino and Dave Marvin wanted to serve again this year, and Sherri Valentine was volunteered to join the committee.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 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 Suzan Fritchel to move into Executive Session. Second by Jeff Hindman. Motion carried unanimously.

10. ADJOURN - The meeting adjourned a 7:45 p.m.

Little Thompson Farm Stewardship Plan



Stewardship Plan

- 3-5 Year Plan
- Addresses Interim Management of:

Agriculture/Water
Natural Resources
Cultural Resources
Public Use/Education
Site and Buildings



Agriculture & Water Management

- Manage the existing farm lease – 5 year period.
- Finalize water portfolio - alternative water sharing options, partial divestment, or other options for long-term agricultural production.
- Farm Operations Plan - specify crops grown, rotation, fallow year management, lease modifications (ie: cover crop, weed control), and water use and allocation once water determined.
- Evaluate Larimer County's niche and role in agriculture for potential future and long-term uses of the property.



Natural Resource Management

- Manage noxious weeds.
- Inventory tree species, assess tree health and implement any pruning or removal of large trees and shrubs.
- Maintain a species list
- Monitor active red-tailed hawk nest, and as necessary, implement seasonal buffers for any public activities.



Cultural Resource Management

- Conduct a Phase I Historic Structures Assessment (HSA) to determine significance of each structure and the landscape.
- Conduct a Phase II HSA on appropriate buildings only to determine stabilization/ improvement needs.
- Incorporate cultural history into educational information.
- Protect/secure items of historic value.
- Remove debris/structures that have no historical or other use value.
- Work with Berthoud Historic Society regarding the Beet Shack.



Public Use/Education

- Facilitate guided public tours (goal of 3-4/year), during the agricultural growing season (April – October).
- Develop educational materials for use during guided tours.
- Evaluate access improvement needs for guided public use.
- Collaborate with partners in northern Colorado working with agricultural education and interpretation.



Site Management

- Install gates, locks and secure all buildings.
- Conduct regular ranger patrols.
- Evaluate leasing the residence.
- Maintain (mowing, pruning, etc.) vegetation at homestead.
- Work with Risk Management Department to insure property.



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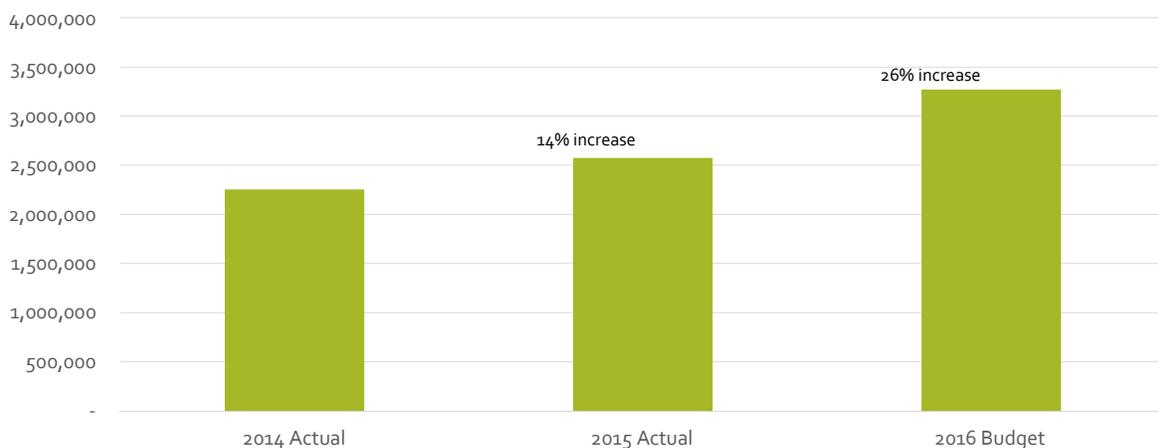
LARIMER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Comparison Between
Actual Expenses in 2014 and 2015
with Projected (Budgeted) Amounts for 2016



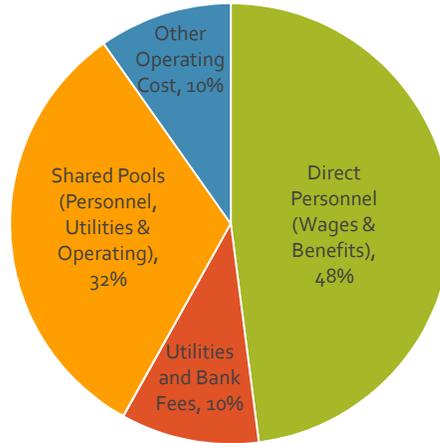
Lori A. Smith, Natural Resources Finance Manager

Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Comparison of Annual Expenses



Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund 2016 Projected Expenses (Budget)

- Ramsay Shockey
- Red-tail Ridge
- Hermit Park
- Devil's Backbone
- Big Thompson
- Chimney Hollow
- Lions Park
- Eagle's Nest
- Red Mountain
- Long View
- River Bluffs
- Horsetooth Mountain



\$ 3,274,000

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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Direct Personnel Cost



Direct Personnel cost includes those expenses charged directly to the Open Lands Districts including regular and seasonal wages with benefits and the Forestry Management (grant funded) Programs, it excludes shared cost pools (administration, weed allocation, trail allocation, volunteer/education and marketing)

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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Direct Personnel Cost – Regular and Temporary Wages

Increase in visitation resulted in a need for increased staffing

- Regular Wages increased by \$97,000 between 2014 and 2015
 - Estes Campgrounds transferred back to Estes Valley Recreation & Parks District (\$58,000)
 - Conversion of part-time seasonal to full-time regular Restoration Ecologist (\$17,000)
 - County Market and Merit increases (\$18,000) and miscellaneous items (\$4,000)
- Temp Wages increased by \$66,000 in 2015 and by \$75,000 in 2016
 - Visitor Services was re-organized going from three to four districts
 - \$33,000 between 2014 and 2015
 - \$20,000 between 2015 and 2016
 - Hermit Park was open for a full season after flood-related closures in 2014 (\$33,000)
 - Department's seasonal wage scale was adjusted in 2016 to remain competitive (\$55,000)

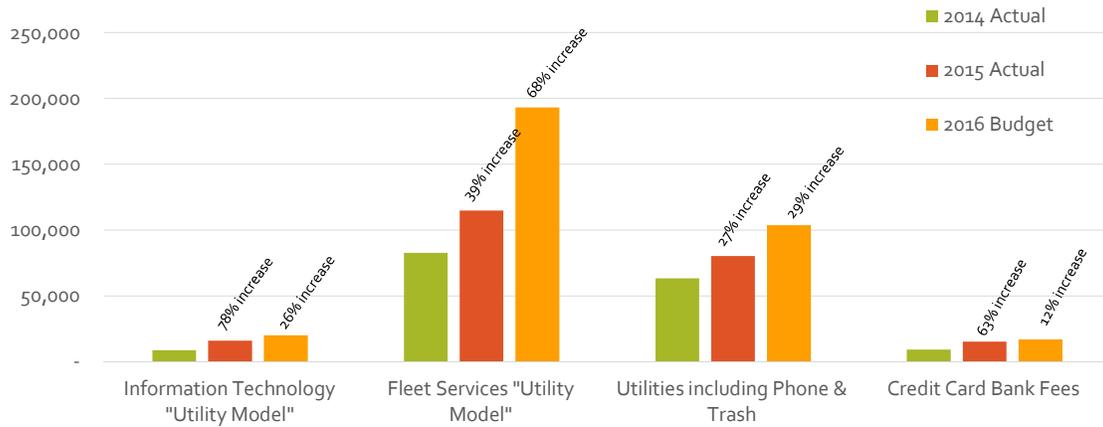
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Direct Personnel Employee Benefits, Forestry (Grants), Payroll Accrual

- Employee Benefits increased by \$32,000 in 2015 and by \$114,000 in 2016
 - The Affordable HealthCare Act was implemented (5 employees offered Health coverage)
 - Health Coverage as well as the cost of other benefits increased County-wide
- Forestry Management Projects vary substantially by year
 - This is a partnership between Emergency Services and Natural Resources
 - The program is fully funded by grants, costing us only the cost to administer
 - Varies by year with some years having fewer grants available
- The Payroll Accrual also varies by year
 - This is just a timing issue
 - The accrual is the difference between when wages are earned and when they are paid

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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Utilities and Bank Fees



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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund County Mandated "Utility Models"

- Information Technology cost increased by \$7,000 in 2015 and by \$4,000 in 2016
 - A County-wide utility model was implemented

- Fleet Service cost increased by \$32,000 in 2015 and by \$ 78,000 in 2016
 - A County-wide utility model was implemented in 2015
 - One additional vehicle added in 2015 & no additional vehicles added in 2016
 - Fuel charge remained steady

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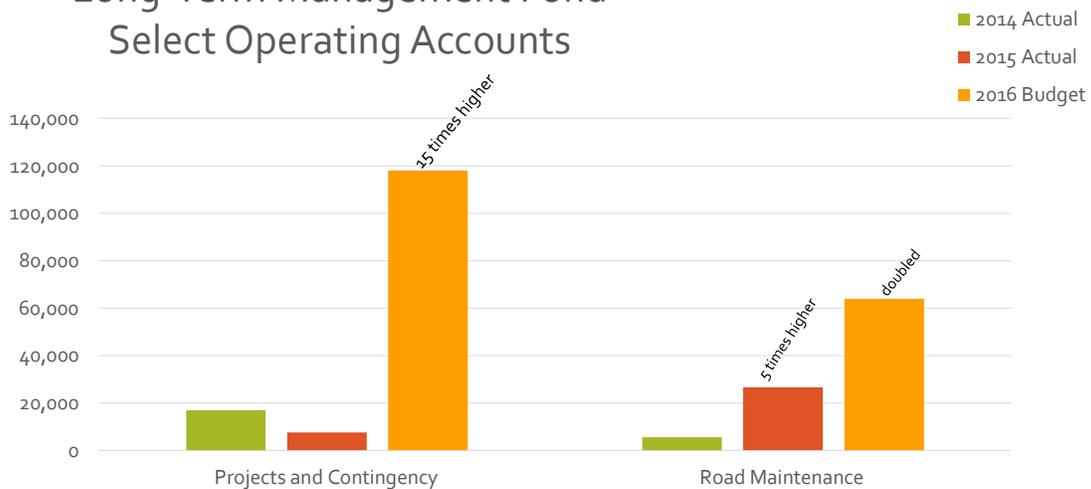
Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Other Utilities and Bank Fees

- External utility cost increased by \$17,000 in 2015 and by \$23,000 in 2016
 - The Department has little control over and few alternatives for these services

- Credit Card Bank Fees increased by \$6,000 in 2015 and by \$2,000 in 2016
 - These services are becoming more popular
 - The Department has little control over and few alternatives for these services
 - Expectation is that the 2016 Budget will need to be increased to cover cost

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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Select Operating Accounts



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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Projects and Contingency Cost

- Projects and Contingency cost decreased in 2015 but increased by \$110,000 in 2016
- One-time management projects vary by year and need
- 2016 projects include
 - Restoration at Lions Open Space \$ 70,000
 - Devil's Backbone Management Plan Consulting \$ 16,000
 - Cabin Roof and Flooring work at Hermit Park Open Space \$13,000
 - Other Small One-time Projects \$ 11,000

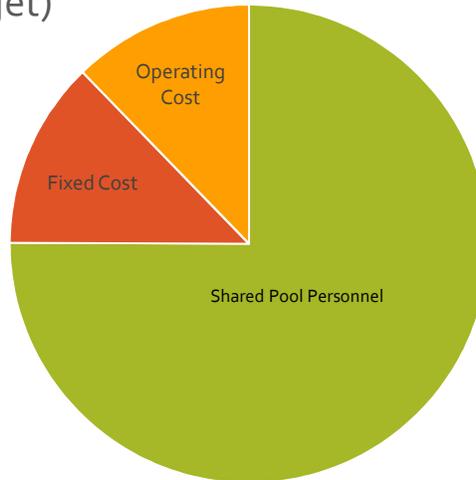
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Road Maintenance

- Road Maintenance cost at Hermit increased by \$21,000 in 2015 and by \$37,000 in 2016
- Flood recovery and FEMA restoration work
- Closures, weather and partnerships caused changes

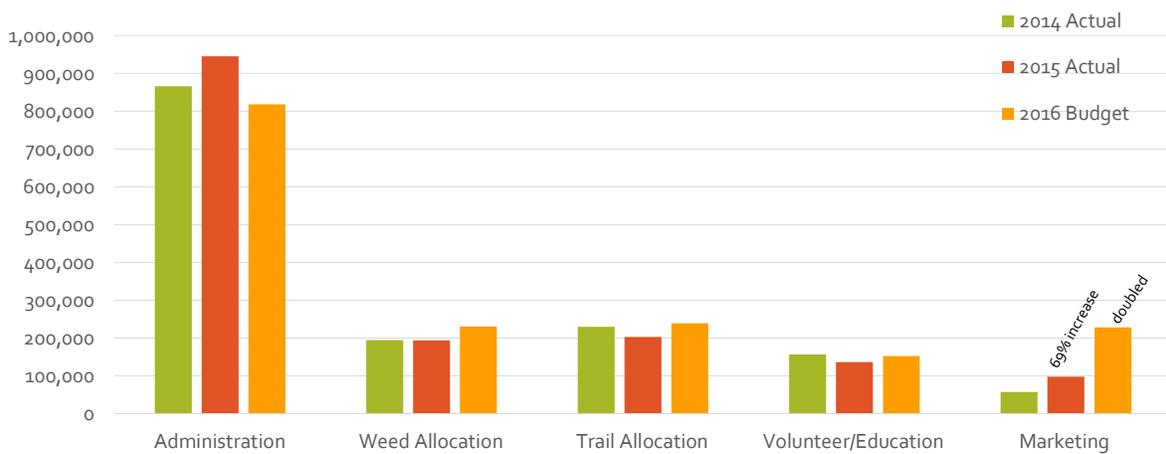
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Larimer County Natural Resources Department's Shared Allocation Pools 2016 Projected Expenses (Budget)



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Larimer County Natural Resources Department Shared Pools



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Larimer County Natural Resources Administration, Weeds, Trail and Volunteer/Education Pools

- Administration Pool cost increased by \$79,000 in 2015
 - Emergency repairs needed when a back-up valve malfunctioned at office
 - Budgeted 2016 expenses are lower than each of the prior years
- Weed Control Pool increased by \$37,000 in 2016 after a slight decrease in 2015
 - This is an average increase of less than 10% annually since 2014
- Trail Pool increased by \$36,000 in 2016
 - This is an average increase of less than 5% annually since 2014
- Volunteer/Education Pool increased by \$37,000 in 2016
 - This is an average increase of less than 5% annually since 2014

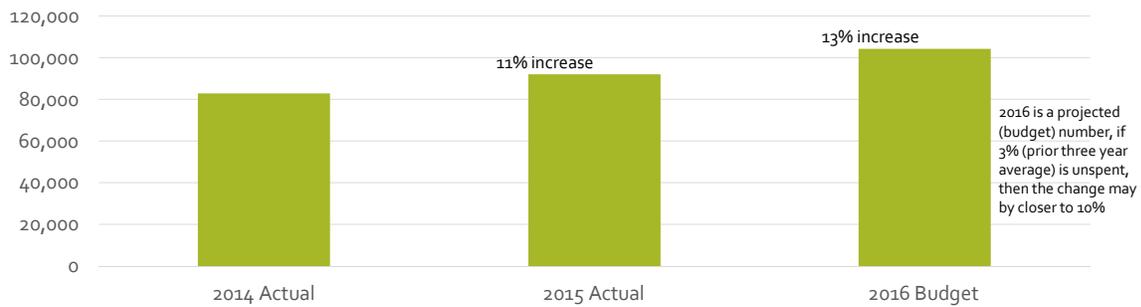
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Larimer County Natural Resources Marketing Pools

- Marketing Pool cost increased by \$40,000 in 2015 and by \$130,000 in 2016
 - Community Relations Specialist position was filled in 2016 after being open for a portion of 2015
 - Community Relations Specialist salary funding was moved to the LTM pool
 - Conversion of a seasonal Graphic Artist to a part-time benefitted position
 - One-time additional 20th Anniversary expenses in 2016 of \$16,000
 - Increase in print service requirements and cost
 - Increase in information technology, software cost and utilities

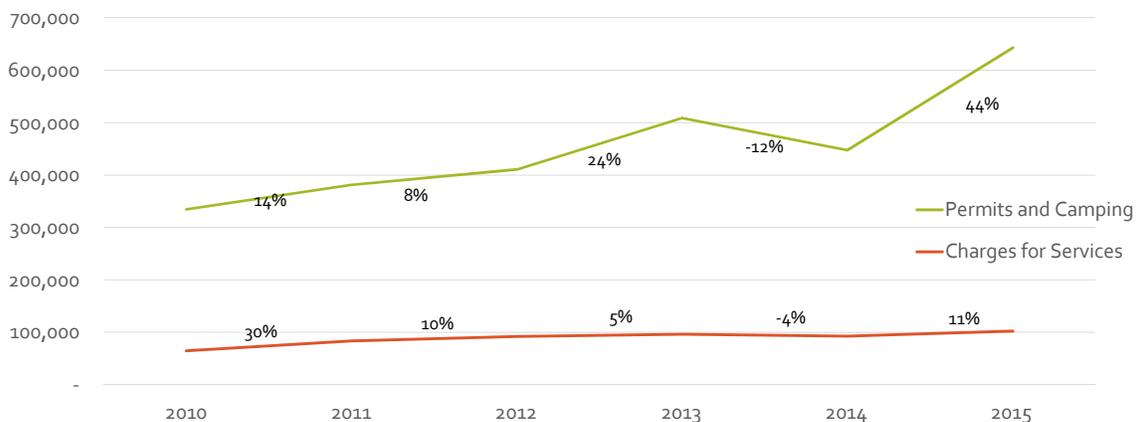
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Comparison of Select Annual Expenses excluding Direct Personnel, Utilities and Bank Fees, Projects and Contingency, Road Maintenance, & Shared Pools



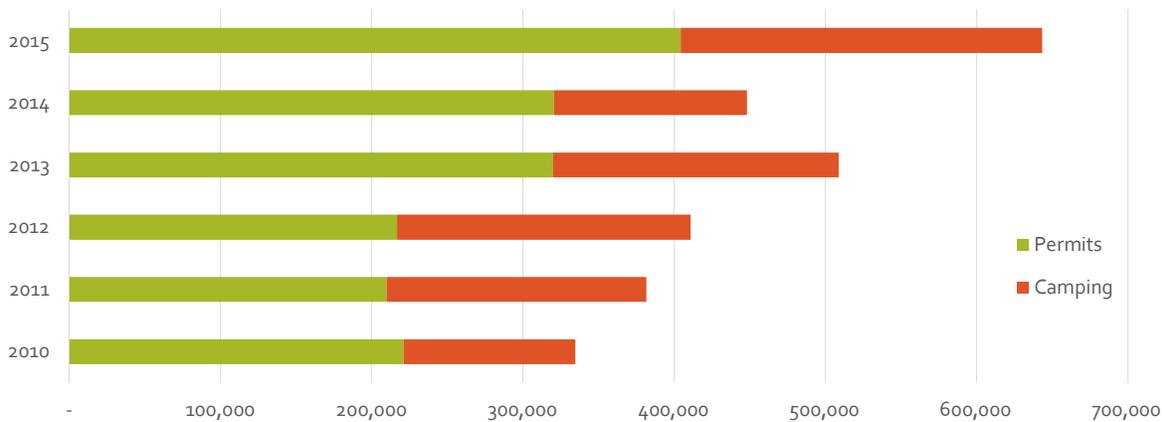
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Permits & Camping and Charges for Services Revenues



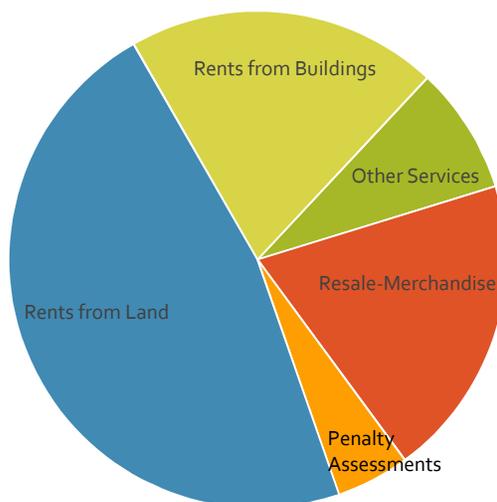
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Permits and Camping Revenues



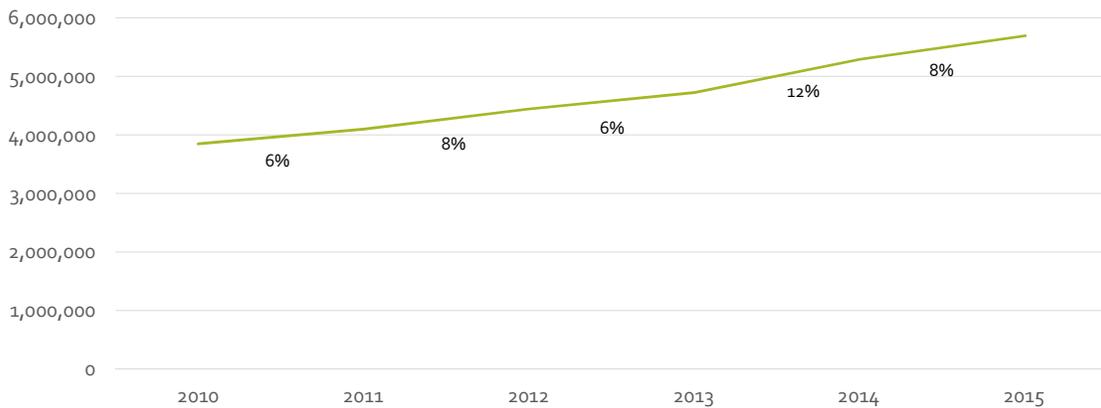
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Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Charges for Services 2015 Revenues \$ 102,000



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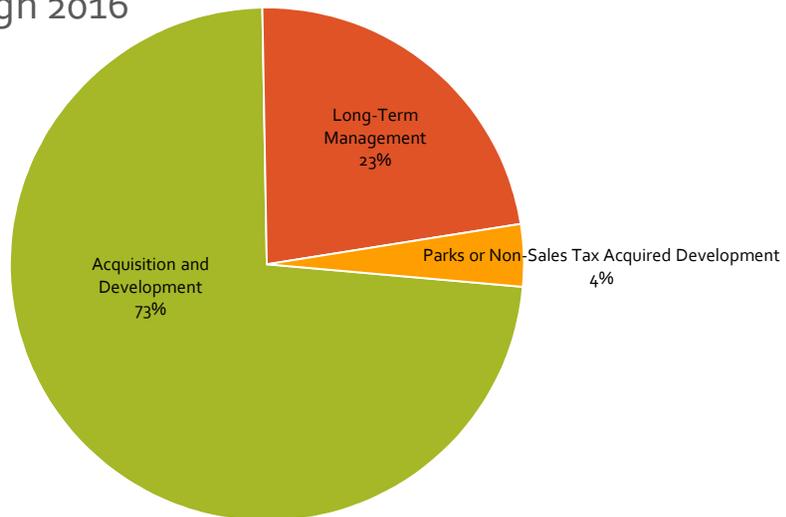
Larimer County Natural Resources Sales Tax Revenues (total)



This is the Department's total Sales Tax Revenues (Acquisition/Development and Long-Term Management)

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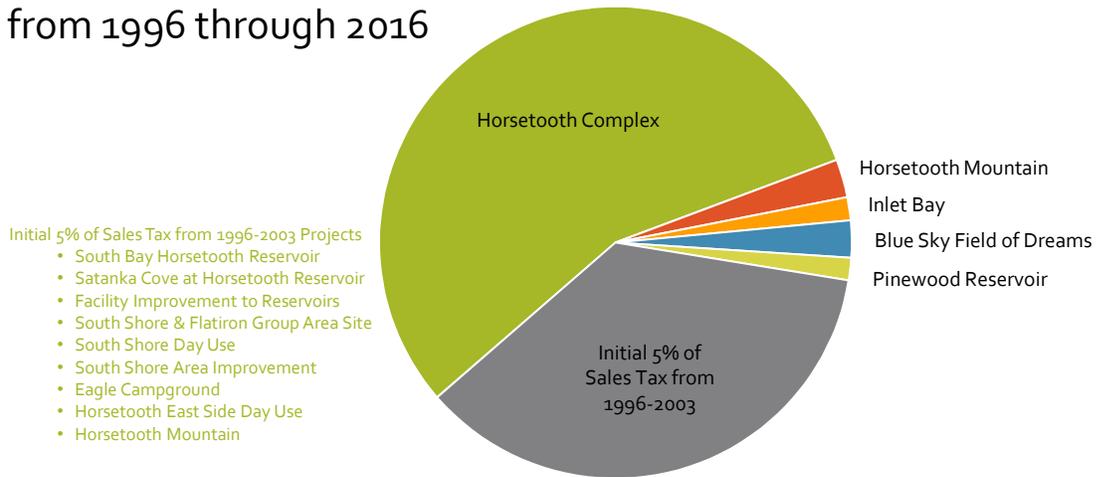
Larimer County Natural Resources County's Portion of Sales Tax from 1996 through 2016



\$ 80,867,000

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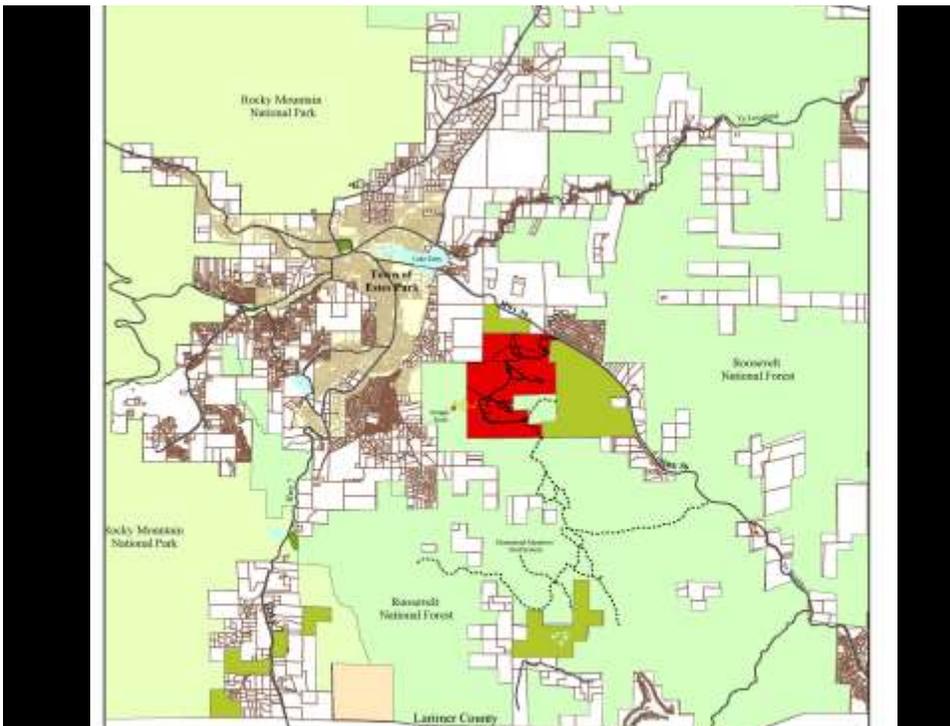
Larimer County Natural Resources 4% of the Sales Tax Used for Parks or Non-Sales Tax Acquired Developments from 1996 through 2016



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--END--

Hermit Park Open Space





Master Plan

Tied to Conservation Easement

- Master Plan – balance of resource protection and recreation (public needs & revenue generation)
- Developed (23.5%) vs. Undeveloped (76.5%) zones
- Trailheads and on-site trails as well as connections to Kruger Rock & Homestead Meadows
- Historic Buildings
- 5 new cabins & 19 new campsites (including equestrian campground)

2016-2017 Improvements Phasing

- Complete remaining 6-mile trail system

2016: From Kruger Rock Trail south into Homestead Meadows

2017: From Kruger Rock north

- Saddle Parking and Day Use Area
- Remediation/Renovation of Caretakers House



Saddle Trailhead Concept

- 20 Parking spaces (2 are ADA); pavilion; vault toilet; picnic tables



Saddle Area Day-Use and Trailhead

Saddle Trailhead Budget

- Trailhead Design & Construction Costs ~\$381,000*
 - Design and Clearances = \$175,000
 - Surveying
 - Earthwork
 - Seeding & Landscaping
 - Aggregate surfacing
 - Pavilion
 - Toilet
 - Kiosk
 - Bumpers
 - Trash Cans
- *If we come in under budget, we can apply FEMA funds to bear-proof trash cans, vault toilet at Homestead Meadows TH, or entry sign

Caretakers Residence

- Cost for mold remediation and renovation = \$188,000
 - Explored multiple options for residence, but since contains on-site water system must be retained in some way.
 - Renovation = \$188,000 vs. Demo/cap water source = \$90,000.
 - Staff recommendation to remediate and renovate house gives greatest flexibility and use options over time.
- Funds would come from LTM Fund



A&D Budget Request

Trails

Trail Crew Labor ~6 miles (\$6/l.f.)	\$222,000
Materials	\$ 2,500
10% Contingency	\$ 20,450
VOC Contribution	\$ 10,000

Saddle Trailhead \$381,138

Funding Sources:

Larimer County A&D	\$234,950
VOC In-Kind	\$ 20,000
FEMA	\$381,138
Project Total	\$636,088

--End--