2011 Annual Report

Natural Resources



Visitor Services / Open Lands / Weed Management & Forestry Excellence in conservation and recreation since 1954



t's in Your Backyard!

Dear Larimer County visitors and citizens,

Can you believe how many outdoor opportunities are available to us just a few minutes away from where we live in Larimer County? Many of us have moved to Northern Colorado for that reason, and to enjoy the mountains and live in thriving cities and towns where we can enjoy the outdoors with our family and friends.

I want to encourage you to "Discover Your Backyard Getaway"! Whether it's taking your family to the new swim beach at Horsetooth Reservoir on a warm summer day, bike riding on the Blue Sky Trail between Fort Collins and Loveland, or hiking the Kruger Rock Trail at Hermit Park Open Space overlooking the magnificent Estes Valley, Larimer County has that outdoor experience meant for you.

A special thank you to our professional staff and volunteers who continue to ensure your outdoor experience is safe and enjoyable, to your citizen boards that make sure you have a voice and a choice, and to your elected Board of County Commissioners who continue to support your parks, open spaces, and land stewardship programs.

Get away! Discover your backyard!



Gary K. Buffington

Director, Dept. of Natural Resources



© Julie Patton

Special Thanks to our Citizen Advisory Board Members



Back, left to right: Russ Fruits, Rob Harris, Glen

left to right: Mark Caughlan*, Dan Rieves*, Chris

Doughty, Linda Knowlton, Gary Buffington*, Forrest

Orswell, Barry Lewis, Frank Cada, Ron Kainer. Front,

Fleming*, Frank Gillespie, Charlie Johnson*. Not pic-

Parks Advisory Board

tured: Mark DeGregorio. * = Staff

© Charlie Johnson



© Charlie Johnson



Back, left to right: John Ericson, Suzan Fritchel, Peter Kast (chair), Kerri Rollins*, Gary Buffington*, Zac Wiebe*, Travis Rollins*. Front, left to right: Lori Smith*, Nancy Wallace, Jeff Hindman, Trudy Haines, Mary Banken, Patricia Brennan, Charlie Johnson*. Not pictured: Steve Vessey, Don Griffith, Gerry Horak, Hugh McKean. * = Staff



© Tim D'Amato

Land Stewardship Advisory Board

Back, left to right: Ken Mathias, Bob Zimdahl, Matt Parker. Front, left to right: Chuck Miller, Ernie Marx, Carmen Weston, Duane Pond

As the Open Lands Program continues to mature, the focus is moving from acquisition to utilization. We, as a board, are moving to get more of the public out in our various properties. A proposed equestrian campground at Hermit Park, a "Wild Zone" kid's natural play area at River Bluffs, and the "Plug in to Nature" study will help facilitate this goal. >> Peter Kast, Open Lands Advisory Board

2011-2012 Board of County Commissioners: Tom Donnelly, Lew Gaiter III, Steve Johnson

County Manager: Frank Lancaster
Public Works Director: Marc Engemoen

IMBY—Now In My Back Yard!

Conservation does not mean "hands off" at Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch. Located just west of Loveland, Sylvan Dale is right in our backyard. Privately owned by the Jessup family since 1946, much of this 3,200-acre working ranch is forever conserved using public open space tax dollars, state conservation tax credits, lottery dollars via Great Outdoors Colorado, and generous landowner donations. And, though still private, the public reaps many benefits from this land, including but not limited to:

- Wildlife habitat, including lambing grounds for bighorn sheep
- Wildlife research projects, ranging from work by local middle school kids mentored by local professionals, to student and faculty research projects from CSU, UNC, and CU-Boulder
- Conservation beef, where the community can support conservation through the purchase of locally raised beef
- Research on run-off water quality, with state and federal agencies partnering with local nonprofits, the City of Loveland, and Sylvan Dale Ranch to conduct a pilot program using natural vegetation to buffer agricultural run-off
- The permanent viewshed of the natural foothills at the mouth of the Big Thompson Canyon, the "hinge-point" of North America

"While we certainly enjoy the many recreational benefits of our public lands, it is also nice to appreciate what privately conserved lands can offer."



Siblings, David and Susan Jessup, oversee all ranch activities at Sylvan Dale. © Charlie Johnson



© Gregory Mays



© Harry Strharsky

The Sylvan Dale Ranch is a working family ranch which the Jessup family has proudly operated for generations. It is part of Larimer County's vital agricultural heritage and provides excellent wildlife habitat. Here in Larimer County, we will always work hard to help farmers and ranchers find ways to pass on their traditions to future generations.

Tom Donnelly, County Commissioner, District 3

What Happened in Your Backyard?

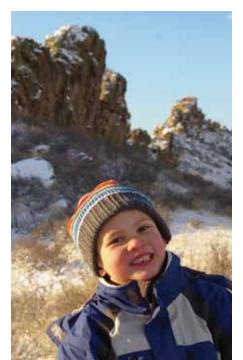
The Natural Resources
Department hosted many
special events on Larimer
County's parks and open
spaces. Citizens could
participate in a trail marathon, mountain bike race,
sailing regatta, or a fishing
tournament just minutes
from home!



© Harry Strharsky



© Walt Hubis



© Christa Ahrens



The Department completed an analysis of the connections of youth and families to the outdoors. This pilot study, "Plug in to Nature," was funded by Great Outdoors Colorado. The results will influence changes to outreach programming, land acquisition, and management to reduce the barriers families face to getting outside.



© Sue Burke

Access to Larimer County's parks and open spaces was made easier with a new recreation map. This free map, designed with input from recreation user groups, is available year-round at county trail-heads, gatehouses, and select outdoor retailers.



The new Yoga on the Swim Beach classes at the South Bay swim beach at Horsetooth Reservoir were the perfect setting to build inner strength and unwind. Join us this summer!



© Jeffrey Boring

In the fall, Larimer County partnered with The Nature Conservancy and other agencies to bring fire back to Horsetooth Mountain Open Space where it had been suppressed for decades. Prescribed fire improves forest health by maintaining an open forest canopy and increasing light and nutrient availability.

> Hiking in the parks, boating on the reservoirs and fishing with the kids are just a few of the ways we took advantage of some of the great resources in our own backyard.

Lew Gaiter III, County Commissioner, District 1 In the second year of the Red Mountain Open Space hunting program, 384 applicants applied for nine special access hunting permits.



© Steve Sailer



© Harry Strharsky

The annual C.A.S.T. event (Catch A Special Thrill), hosted by the Larimer County Natural Resources Department and the Bureau of Reclamation at Horsetooth Reservoir, allows physically challenged kids to go out on the water for a day of fun.

pen Space Tax Revenues Benefit All of Larimer County

The 1/4-cent *Help Preserve Open Spaces* (HPOS) sales and use tax revenue is shared with the County's eight municipalities. The tax continues through 2018, and is not imposed on food or prescription drugs. The total revenue collected to date is over \$114 million.

Distributions to municipalities are based upon the highest yield of either population or sales tax generation. This revenue sharing agreement ensures that residents throughout the county receive benefits from the Open Space sales tax.

Annual Revenue Receipt of Open Space Tax Dollars*

		Larimer CO	Berthoud	Estes Park	Fort Collins	Johnstown	ı Loveland	Timnath	Wellington	Windsor
	1996	2,259,975	71,154	161,905	2,107,473	-	847,210	4,221	29,848	_
	1997	2,485,421	80,969	178,198	2,319,562	-	932,139	4,646	32,520	_
	1998	2,707,553	87,574	193,453	2,487,606	-	1,003,872	5,025	40,557	_
	1999	3,067,810	101,539	224,779	2,850,066	-	1,146,823	5,732	47,494	_
	2000	3,294,869	110,862	222,608	3,109,001	_	1,234,060	5,742	53,444	_
	2001	3,565,146	122,889	229,886	3,323,372	-	1,321,205	5,887	64,589	_
	2002	3,527,084	124,139	218,802	3,235,748	-	1,304,378	5,599	67,642	_
	2003	3,532,580	123,913	218,445	3,205,119	-	1,314,655	7,083	66,730	-
	2004	3,750,211	126,810	234,908	3,374,671	9,457	1,405,098	11,480	75,185	17,416
	2005	3,811,306	127,480	239,502	3,417,517	8,932	1,432,898	11,684	79,698	20,115
	2006	4,033,795	136,930	250,110	3,599,786	11,965	1,506,477	13,196	77,782	13,379
	2007	4,152,187	129,513	252,524	3,529,570	34,285	1,554,153	10,563	122,196	54,760
	2008	3,956,426	120,359	240,167	3,189,107	38,772	1,470,884	9,121	122,125	55,744
	2009	3,614,183	109,178	224,318	2,824,574	45,847	1,410,859	7,103	114,630	49,847
Ī	2010	3,920,058	118,288	244,384	3,058,106	55,501	1,558,011	6,746	123,466	59,200
	2011	3,734,616	109,266	240,910	2,929,532	56,894	1,445,545	43,851	117,820	64,807
ĺ	Total	55,413,221	1,800,864	3,574,898	48,560,809	261,653	20,888,266	157,680	1,235,726	335,267

^{*} These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2012. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

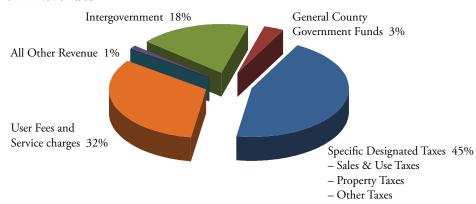
Natural Resources Department Summary of Finances

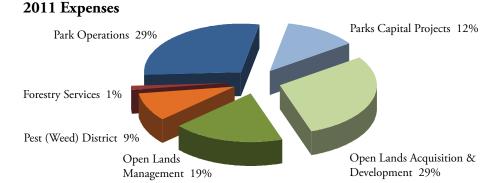
The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources includes the Parks Program, the Open Lands Program, and the Weed & Forestry Program.

Revenues are realized from a number of sources and totaled \$10.3 million in 2011. Expenses for 2011 were \$8.4 million including a number of one-time capital development projects for both Parks and Open Lands.

Major capital projects in 2011 included a partnership acquisition of Heron Lakes Open Space. Work has continued for developments at Hermit Park Open Space, Pleasant Valley Trail, Poudre River Trail, Eagle Camper Services Building, and Carter Lake Marina.

2011 Revenues





2011 Acquisitions and Improvements

Acquisitions

Heron Lakes Open Space Partnership—Phase I

Just west of the Town of Berthoud, this 43-acre acquisition will provide diverse outdoor recreational opportunities and help protect an osprey nest, a large heron rookery, and valuable wildlife habitat.

Appraised Value:	\$ 1,400,000
Partners:	
Town of Berthoud:	\$ 300,000
City of Loveland:	\$ 50,000
Great Outdoors Colorado:	\$ 950,000
Larimer County Open Lands:	\$ 100,000



Heron Lakes © Charlie Johnson

Sylvan Dale Ranch Cedar Creek CE

This 560-acre donation continues a legacy of conservation and stewardship on Sylvan Dale Ranch.

Larimer County Open Lands:	\$ 0
Landowner donation:	\$ 450,000
Appraised Value	\$ 450,000



Sylvan Dale Ranch Conservation Easement © Zac Wiebe

Improvements

Carter Lake County Park

Visitor Services Building at Eagle Campground

2011 Project Cost:	\$ 476,500
Partners:	
Bureau of Reclamation:	\$ 127,700
Great Outdoors Colorado:	\$ 185,000
Conservation Trust Fund/Lottery:	\$ 163,800
Larimer County Dept. of	
Natural Resources:	\$ 0



Carter Lake construction © Zac Wiebe

Hermit Park Open Space

Hermit's Hollow Campground Redevelopment

This project will add 13 new campsites, improve 29 others, complete major road and drainage repairs, and add four vault toilets. Scheduled completion is Spring, 2012. Financials to be reported in 2012.



 $Hermit\ Park\ construction\ @\ Steve\ McCorkel$

Working Together on the Backyard

Colorado has a longstanding commitment to the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, parks, rivers, trails, working farms and ranches, and open space. With the assistance of the Colorado Lottery dollars, the state conservation tax credit, the Larimer County Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax, and willing landowners who frequently donate all or portions of their land for conservation, good things happen here in our own backyard. Thanks to the voters of Colorado and Larimer County as well as the landowners who make it possible to conserve the quality of life and the special places of the County we call home.



Design: Lee Machado Designs Editor: Sue Burke 4/2012

Public Works Division

Engineering • Fleet • Natural Resources
Road and Bridge • Solid Waste • The Ranch



Department of Natural Resources

1800 S. County Road 31 Loveland, Colorado 80537 970-679-4570

www.larimer.org/naturalresources

Major Dor	nors of the Open Lands Program			
Donation	Agilent Technologies (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
Over	David & Susan Jessup (1999-2011)	Sylvan Dale Ranch CEs		
\$1,000,000	Rob Cohen (2005)	Cohen CE		
\$500,000 to	H.A. & Elaine Fonken (2002-2006)	Fonken CE I–V		
\$999,000	Jake Kauffman & Son, Inc. (2001)	Kauffman CE		
	Paul Jonjak & Family (1999)	Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE		
\$300,000 to	Curt & Jennifer Heckrodt (2000)	Red-tail Ridge Open Space		
\$499,000	Jack & Beth White (2000)	Rimrock Open Space		
	Bob Ramsay (1999)	Ramsay-Shockey Open Space		
\$100,000 to	Timnath Farm Investments, LLC (2010)	Three Bell I CE		
\$299,000	Jim & Beth Crowder (2009)	Russ Crowder Area at Devil's		
		Backbone Open Space		
	Jim & Christy Bradley (2006, 2009)	Bradley CE I, II		
	Eldon & Trulie Ackerman (2004-2005)	Ackerman CE I, II		
	Catherine Roberts (2004)	Roberts CE		
	Royce Hopkins (2004)	Hopkins CE		
	The American Legion (2004)	American Legion Open Space		
	Dan Miller & Mary Beth Simon (2002-2003)	Miller-Simon CE I, II		
	Larry & Anne Peterson (2002)	Peterson CE		
	Patricia Block (2002)	Block CE		
	Dave Sitzman (2001)	Kerbel Farm CE		
	Grace Dunkin (2001)	Ryan Gulch CE II		
	Joe & Pat Harper (2000)	Harper CE		
	Jon & Susanne Stephens (2000)	Ryan Gulch CE		
\$5,000 to	Roundup Riders of the Rockies, Inc.	Red Mountain Open Space,		
\$99,000	(2009, 2011)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	C. Miller & Family (2010)	C. Miller CE		
	Miller-Simon-Bokovoy (2009)	Miller-Simon-Bokovoy CE		
	Advanced Micro Devices (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Anonymous Donor* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Community Foundation of No. Colo.* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Erion Foundation* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Hewlett-Packard Corporation (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Mark D. Tabb & Julie Vida* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	McWhinney Foundation (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Microsoft Corporation* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Haines & Colton Charitable Trust* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Verigy Corporation (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Whole Foods Markets* (2007)	Hermit Park Open Space		
	Bryant & Patricia Miller (2006)	Miller CE		
	Charles & Judith Siefke (2005)	Siefke CE		
	Southdown, Inc (2001)	Red-tail Ridge Open Space		
	Miller, Left Hand, & Park Creek Ranches (2001)	Buckeye Agricultural Partnership CE		
	Robert & Ann Avis (2000)	Eagle's Nest CE		

Bold 2011 Donations
CE Conservation Easement

Byron & Beverly Williams (1999)

Audra & Don Hughey (1998)

Stephanie Steppel-White (1997)

* Donation to Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands towards a specific project

Coyote Ridge Natural Area

Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

We are all proud that Larimer County is a leader in conservation in the state. You can tell that this community values Colorado's great outdoors.

Steve Johnson, County Commissioner, District 2