



Date: June 23, 2022
Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room & Zoom Webinar

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bob Hewson		Daylan Figgs	I	
David Marvin	I	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Gale Bernhardt	I	Zac Wiebe	I	
K-Lynn Cameron	V	Justin Core	I	
Linda Stanley	V	Alex Swartz	V	
Mark DeGregorio		*Jody Shadduck-McNally	V	
Nancy Wallace	I	Jordan Williams (minutes)	I	
Peter Kelly	V	Joel Schwab	I	
Rick Brent	V			
Sherri Valentine	I			
Steve VanderMeer	V			
Tom Shoemaker	V			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:03pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Sherri moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Gale seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Information and Announcements

Natural Resources events for this month: <https://larimer.org/naturalresources>.

To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board updates, go to <https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Open Lands Advisory Board” box

Coloradoan Opinion Article: Preserving Open Space in Northern Colorado

Olander Farm Conservation Easement Partnership

- Meegan said DNR sets aside \$150,000 every year to support land trusts that operate in the County with transaction costs. Often there is an agreement between the County and the land trust that describes expectations for appraisal and survey costs.
- Justin shared his screen: The Olander Farm is a 108-acre agricultural property located between Loveland and Berthoud with a lot of new development all around it. The Olander family has owned the property since the 1920s, and Todd Olander manages Root Shoot Malting which ships barley to breweries across the state. Colorado Open Lands has been working to get this land conserved for several years. In the meantime, Olander Farm has been using some tax benefit proceeds to lease and purchase additional farmland. The County supported the conservation effort by paying \$19,969 in transaction costs. The conservation easement partnership effort will close on June 24th.
- Gale asked if they know the value of the irrigation water versus the land separately. Justin said that they do not know the separate values, but it's really based on the marketability of that water share. (For example, native ditch water shares may be less valuable than transferrable water shares.) Staff added that water is generally tied permanently to the conservation easement.

Larimer County and CDOT completed an exchange of properties along Hwy 34 in the Big Thompson Canyon

- Justin mentioned that Tim Meyer (our land agent with LCDNR), has been helping with the acquisitions of some properties that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) owned prior to the Big Thompson floods. Those properties have been building on the County's ownership in the Forks Park and Cedar Cove areas, which will add up to more public access. These transfers from CDOT to LCDNR should be completed in the next couple weeks.

Thank you to board members whose terms are ending

- Daylan said that they are behind on the placements for new board members, but DNR is very thankful for everyone on the advisory boards, past and present, for giving their time.
- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally thanked the board members as well. She noted that the 33 Boards and Commissions are divided between the three Commissioners. County staff has been working on scheduling interviews for new board members, and they want to be consistent with interview questions and appointments to the boards including term limits, the restriction to only serve on one board at a time, taking a term off after serving several consecutive terms on one board, balancing new people with historical knowledge, and quorum requirements.
- Nancy said that she has been on the board for 22 years but will not be coming back for another term unfortunately. K-Lynn and several others gave special thanks to Nancy for her service in helping establish the Open Lands program for Larimer County.
- Daylan mentioned that Jordan is leaving for a full-time position with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, but he will be staying on to support until his replacement can be trained.

Update and Reports

Strategic Plan Update: Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Priorities & Goals

- Daylan said that more info will be shared with the boards once the DNR's Strategic Plan information is publicly posted. He noted that this plan brings together the different master plans between Land Stewardship, Open Lands, and the Reservoir Parks.
- Mission Statement (the organizational purpose): We Connect People, Nature, and Place.
- Vision (the direction of the organization): Healthy Landscapes, Healthy People
- Core Values (ingrained principles of the organization): Pursue Excellence; Focus on the collective good; Act with Integrity, Trust, & Respect; Commit to staff well-being; Demonstrate leadership
- Strategic Priorities:
 - Provide Regional Leadership & Collaboration: Examples include COSA, RES, NoCo Places 2050, and Land Conservation partnerships
 - Proactive Land Conservation and Management Strategies
 - Foster a Positive Work Culture
 - Plan and Provide Positive Nature-based Opportunities

- Responsibility Manage Funds and Community Expectations
 - Maintain a Sustainable Funding Strategy: Examples include the Weed Tax, lottery funds, grants, sales tax, and park fees
- Daylan said the next phase for the plan is fleshing out the goals, then building the actions items over the next few years. (Send slide deck in next OLAB email)
- David asked about the process DNR went through to come up with the plan. Daylan explained that they hired a consultant who specifically works on strategic plans for natural resources-focused organizations. The consultant helped facilitate conversations and conducted interviews with all the staff members. They then boiled down that feedback and created a cross-section team to build the plan based on the data they collected, which involved multiple meetings and a lot of team collaboration.

Board of County Commissioner update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally said that they are in the middle of the hiring process for the county manager position, and it is down to the final four candidates. The Estes Valley comprehensive plan is moving forward, and they are looking for more input from the overall Larimer County community. Daylan mentioned partnering with the Estes Valley Land Trust on conservation easements and open space acquisitions such as Hermit Park. The Commissioner mentioned that she holds town halls or meetings every month in Estes, Berthoud, Loveland, and some in Windsor. Larimer County residents can sign up online for alerts regarding public engagement opportunities.

CDS and NoCo PLACES 2050 Grant Updates

- Daylan said that DNR sent in its Congressional Discretionary Spending Request which included funding for a Satanka Bay turn-in and improvements to the Rotary Park parking lot, totaling a \$500k grant request.
- NoCo PLACES 2050 received a Partners in the Outdoor grant for spatial mapping of resources in the Northern Colorado region, and they will be purchasing some anonymous user data as well. It will be Strava-style data, and they will decide what to purchase after meeting with some data companies to compare options.
 - Staff were commended for their work in writing both grants.
- Sherri asked about public access to the data that DNR receives. Staff said that the spatial mapping will be viewable online, but then they will go back to the public for input on what areas to focus on.

Discussion Items

Trails Maintenance/Construction Update – Joel Schwab, Trails Manager

- Joel shared his screen: Trails Program staff averages 10,000 hours per year maintaining trails.
 - Trails staff consists of 1 full time supervisor, 2 ten-month employees, and 3-6 seasonal employees.
 - The Trail maintenance budget is approximately \$123,00 annually, which includes seasonal wages and operating costs but not capital/project costs.
 - DNR Trails staff helped host the 2021 Colorado Trail Symposium in Fort Collins where they highlighted the new loop trail options at Horsetooth Mountain and Devil's Backbone open spaces.
- Trail Facts: There are approximately 800,000 acres of public land in Larimer County and 1,030 miles of public trails managed by various entities.
 - LCDNR manages about 100 miles of trails on 40,000 acres of public lands, which includes 10% of the county-wide trails on 2% of the total Larimer County land base. (Note: This number does not include paved trails or Forest Service roads.)
- Continuum of Service: There is a higher cost (~\$300 per acre) to maintain high recreational use areas such as Horsetooth Reservoir and Devil's Backbone Open Space versus lower recreational use areas (\$50 per acre).

- 2021 Highlights: The Trails staff achieved their maintenance goal of reaching 75% of DNR's trails after benefitting from an extended maintenance season due to nicer weather up until December 30th.
 - Sunrise Day Use Area: The Trails team put in 110 steps, added crusher fines, and closed 2000+ feet of social trails with natural barriers.
- 2022 highlights:
 - Improved wayfinding: Revamped Devil's Backbone Open Space "you are here" trail maps and added "you are here" trail maps at Hermit Park.
 - Maintenance: Formalized the Blue Sky Connector Trail as part of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS) master plan and focused on fixing the Shoreline and Nomad trails in the valley at HTMOS that get a lot of moisture.
 - Kruger Rock Trail: With the top 1,000 feet of trail in the fire area, it took about a month of work to reopen the trail. Logs supporting the trail had been burned out, so they were replaced with rock retaining walls.
 - New trail from the Soderberg Trailhead as part of the out of HTMOS plan: It will provide an additional close in easy loop and moderate single-track connection to the Stout Trail. The Trails team is planning to build the 1.75-mile trail October 15-16 with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. VOC brings crew leaders, tools, and volunteers while working closely with DNR staff. They are hoping for 75 people to sign up.
 - Volunteer projects: 14 projects planned, including a combined event with the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas that took place on June 11th just east of Horsetooth Reservoir.
- 2023 Highlights
 - Ensure maintenance within 100-mile trail system
 - Complete permitting for the Bay to Bay Trail (2024 build)
 - Implement HTMOS Management Plan trail priorities
 - Trail sustainability projects at Horsetooth Reservoir
- Questions and Comments
 - Nancy asked whether the current staffing levels allow the trails team to stay on top of all the work that needs to be done. Joel said that 75% is the yearly goal and it can be done with current staffing levels, but there are a lot of other factors including weather, other projects, and new trails that can impact their work. Meegan added that a budget request was submitted for another full-time trails manager position in 2023, and DNR will consider its overall level of service when prioritizing trail maintenance going forward.
 - David asked about user access on the Bay-to-Bay trail. Zac said the terrain will be technical and parking is limited, which will be hard for equestrian users to access, but they do not plan on restricting trail access based on user type.

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled

July 28, 2022 – Larimer County Natural Resources Administrative Offices: 1800 South County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537, Bison Room & Zoom Webinar at 5-6pm

July 28, 2022 – Chimney Hollow Reservoir and Open Space Tour at 6-7:30pm

Executive Session

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

Adjournment – 8:08 pm

Per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Larimer County will provide a reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with a disability who need assistance. Services can be arranged with at least seven (7) business days' notice. Please email us at williajo@co.larimer.co.us, or call (970) 498-7719 or Relay Colorado 711. "Walk-in" requests for auxiliary aids and services will be honored to the extent possible but may be unavailable if advance notice is not provided.