



Date: April 28, 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	I	Daylan Figgs	I	Heidi Pruess - I
David Marvin	I	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Gale Bernhardt	V	Justin Core	I	
K-Lynn Cameron		Zac Wiebe	I	
Linda Stanley	I	Chris Fleming	I	
Mark DeGregorio	V	Alex Swartz		
Nancy Wallace	I	*Jody Shadduck-McNally	I	
Peter Kelly	I	Jordan Williams (minutes)	I	
Rick Brent		Sarah Watson	I	
Sherri Valentine	V	Stephen Gibson	I	
Steve VanderMeer	V			
Tom Shoemaker	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:04pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Linda moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Tom 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

Loveland Reporter-Herald/Denver Post: Larimer County to Help Expand Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

January and February 2022 Sales Tax Distribution

- Daylan noted that the sales tax in Larimer County is doing well. Neighboring agencies are also seeing increases.

Update and Reports

Board of County Commissioner update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally mentioned several pieces of legislation that she is working on, including a tiny home bill, and how the County will be spending its portion of the American Rescue Plan Act. The Commissioner is the ambassador for the County's rural broadband project, and she noted other project highlights such as improvements to the Estes Park electrical grid, a beam topping ceremony with Governor in May, regional water planning efforts with many stakeholder groups, and the continued search for a new County Manager after Linda Hoffman's retirement.

[2021 LCDNR Annual Report](#)

Q1 DNR Board Report 2022

- Daylan noted a couple items from the report such as the Front Range Breeding Bird Monitoring Collaborative, approval of the Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Adaptive Management plan, and some of the volunteer projects.
- Pete mentioned the pros and cons of working with trained and untrained volunteer groups to complete certain projects. Meegan said that DNR sets aside specific days with trained groups, such as Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) and Overland Mountain Bike Association (OMBA), to help with trail maintenance and construction projects.
- Tom was pleased to see the article about bird monitoring but would like more information on biological/wildlife efforts at the County as well as an OLAB agenda item in the future that discusses these types of zoning and land use issues.
- Linda would like a presentation on what kind of ecological conditions exist at different properties, including weed control efforts, future restoration work, and DNR's prioritization process. Zac has been working on what that presentation will look like.
- Dave mentioned changing the headers on the financial statements to include Quarter 1, Quarter 2, etc. so that the timeframe was clearer.

Grants Update – Zac Wiebe

- Zac shared screen and noted several recent grant opportunities:
 - Poudre River Trail
 - CPW State Trails Program: \$250,000
 - C-DOT Multi-modal Options Fund: \$399,417 in addition to the previous Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant of \$2 million that was split among two other agencies.
 - Habitat improvement
 - National Fish and Wildlife Federation RESTORE Grant of \$328,875 in partnership with other City and County agencies to eradicate cheatgrass.
 - Linda asked about herbicide options in treating cheatgrass. Staff explained that they use a pre-emergent mix with localized aerial spraying from helicopters, which allows for precise targeting, and based on area studies increases biodiversity after treatment.
 - CO Department of Agriculture Early Detection Rapid Response grant: \$41,172 (received in previous years as well)
 - ARPA Funding (total \$1,980,000)
 - Hermit Park Open Space: \$400,000 for a wastewater treatment system and \$160,000 for the pavilion well system upgrade
 - Carter Lake Reservoir: \$660,000 for a new dump station/wastewater system and \$610,000 for day-use area swim beach upgrades
 - Horsetooth Reservoir: \$150,000 for upgrades to the Inlet Bay vault toilets

NoCo PLACES (People, Land, Access, Conservation, Ecosystem, and Sustainability) Update – Daylan Figgs

- Daylan shared screen: [NoCo PLACES 2050](#) is a coalition of eight county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado who are actively collaborating on ways to address the challenges the mountains and foothills in this region are facing from high visitation and a growing population.
- Map: This is the largest natural resources partner group in the state consisting of the U.S. Forest Service (Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland), Colorado Parks & Wildlife (NE Region), National Park Service (Rocky Mountain National Park), and Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Larimer Counties.
- Mission Statement: NoCo Places 2050 collaborates to protect and conserve natural and cultural resources while providing equitable access and a quality recreation experience for current and future generations.
- Core principles: Collaborative, Holistic, Inclusive, Proactive/Deliberate, Adaptive, Financially Sustainable.
- Goals: 1) Inspire an outdoor stewardship ethic 2) Build community support for increased funding 3) Increase and protect conserved/restored lands 4) Support appropriate outdoor recreation/visitation 5) Improve the quality of the visitor experience 6) Support a wide range of outdoor opportunities 7) Encourage participation by historically underrepresented groups and ADA/ABA communities 8) Reduce conflict and promote safe outdoor experiences.
- 2020-21 Work Plan: Research Core topics including behavioral science, wildlife, Climate Change, Diversity/Equity/Inclusion, managing user conflicts, transportation/mobility/access, trends in recreation, funding/economics, volunteerism/stewardship, carrying capacity, and adaptive responses.
- Agency-Specific and Collective Actions: Each agency retains its autonomy and will continue to develop its own plans, but they will be informed through coordination/collaboration with other NoCo agencies.
- EDI Subcommittee: Enhance relationships with underrepresented communities (i.e.: Next 100 Colorado), apply EDI lens to all NoCo actions, and enhance agencies' existing projects/programs.
- Summer 2022 messaging: Tailor messages and images specific to each partner's lands/topics through joint news releases, templates for content, videos with specific messaging, and Know Before You Go checklists.
- Regional Conservation/Recreation Planning
 - Spatial analysis to create inventory of current environmental and recreation conditions in 2022 through contracting with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program at CSU to utilize/expand the CODEX tool.
 - Next steps: Engage public in 2023 to map human ecology, values, and desires.
- Timed Entry/Reservations: Develop a common framework, share/learn from others, create implementation checklist, endorsement of management tool at Rocky Mountain National Park and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.
- Additional Collaboration Opportunities: Identify hot spots, work with CDOT to expand regional transportation access, explore "best practice" regulations, explore shared contractors/commercial agreements, and share resources for trail maintenance.
- Comments and Questions
 - Commissioner Shadduck-McNally voiced her support for the group and is excited to see the scope of work and collaboration.
 - Nancy asked about requirements for fire mitigation work by homeowners who live in U.S. Forest Service areas and expressed her concern that new building codes will not impact older structures. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally noted the work being by area groups including the NoCo Fireshed as well as a bill at the State-level that includes potential changes to Wildland Urban Interface building codes.
 - Sherri mentioned that the work plan for NoCo PLACES appears to omit a discussion of farmland and water issues, which are larger topics than just a County-level approach, and she asked about future opportunities for board engagement regarding this regional work. Daylan mentioned that NoCo PLACES is built around a discussion on recreational impacts, and it will

not be replacing existing county work that more directly considers water management and agricultural preservation. These topics can be brought back to the board as appropriate.

2020/2021 Department Visitor Contacts and Aquatic Nuisance Species review – Chris Fleming

- Visitor Services staff include maintenance, rangers, ANS inspectors, and information/customer service reps (entrance station attendants).
- Permit sales: On average there has been an 11% increase in annual permit sales over the last four years, with the largest increase in daily and annual permits in 2020. DNR estimates that there are over 500,000 visitors to Larimer County Open Spaces each year and Rangers put in 12,000 miles of patrol on foot/bike. With this increased visitation, DNR is looking to adjust communication with the public through Know Before You Go campaigns, social media, and COTREX.
- Camping: 6% growth on average over the last five years means that visitors cannot show up on a weekday in the summer and expect to find an open campsite. DNR estimates that there are 1.5 million visitors at the Larimer County Reservoir Parks each year with a 56% campground occupancy rate overall and 78% rate during the peak season.
- Maintenance staff includes 7 full time and 16-20 seasonals to clean 436 fire pits and 122 vault toilets daily, plus projects such as building decks for the Hermit Park Open Space cabins.
- Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir are the 3rd and 6th busiest reservoirs in the state and include over 3000 surface acres of water.
- The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) inspections started in 2008 and currently there are no positive lakes in the State. At the 6 Larimer County-managed boat ramps at Carter/Horsetooth Reservoirs 68,679 vessel inspections were completed in 2021 and 20 mussel infested boats were intercepted prior to launching. One full time staff member oversees 30-40 ANS seasonal workers.
 - High risk inspections are coming from out of state watercraft: 100-200 in 2015, now over 1,000 in 2021. 2100 decontaminations were completed last year. The State will be doing a pilot program in 2022 on holiday weekends to intercept vessels from out of state at the border. Nancy asked about charging visitors for boat decons, but DNR staff noted that they do want to discourage people from getting decontaminated prior to launching.
 - Linda asked if DNR is charging enough for out of state boats during peak season and how DNR can better serve County residents. Staff noted that other partners help with ANS funding such as Northern Water, the Bureau of Reclamation, and CPW, and since the Reservoir Parks are Federal lands there are certain public access requirements.
- Ranger staff had over 76,000 contacts with the public in 2021, and most of them were public relations/educational in nature. Only 0.1% of all contacts ended in a citation or arrest. Rangers responded to 150+ medical calls, made 5400 fishing/wildlife contacts, and completed 2400 citizen assists such as towing a stranded boater or changing a flat tire.
 - Ranger Excellence School: 2022 is the 12th year of this one week, 40 hour training.
 - 3% of enforcement contacts result in a citation or ticket and over 80% of ranger-to-visitor enforcement contacts in 2021 were positive.
 - In 2021 boat rangers made 5,200 contacts, 124 rescues, and 221 citations, which were mostly for life jacket issues. 20 Boating Under the Influence arrests occurred in 2021 at Carter and Horsetooth.
 - Currently 12 full time rangers on staff are trained to respond to emergency scenarios, natural disaster support, and have a minimal level of EMS/EMT training.
 - 2021 Law Enforcement Contacts: 1,644 calls from the Larimer County Sheriff's Office to Parks with 80 percent being officer initiated and 20% from dispatch; 175 calls from Parks to Local agencies, and 33 DUIs.
- Comments and Questions
 - Linda noted her concerns with costs to the Open Space Program for rangers to maintain all the same certifications and training as the Reservoir Park-dedicated rangers. Chris noted that rangers may need to respond across assigned areas and having the same qualifications allows

staff to transfer between different areas. Also, the additional training helps with the overall professionalism and quality of response. Staff said that they could provide a breakdown of costs for ranger funding.

- Nancy asked about out of-county visitation at the open spaces and noted that while nonresidents can have a positive economic impact, she is concerned with access not being equitable anymore. Daylan noted based on property-specific studies, 40% of visitors at Devil's Backbone Open Space, 30% at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, and 50% at the campgrounds are from outside the County. Staff also noted that annual permits are more expensive for nonresidents and daily permit costs will be stratifying also.
- Tom inquired about how frequently rangers make it onto the trails past the parking areas. Rangers typically staff areas based on busy times/places. Meegan noted the volunteer program trains Volunteer Ranger Assistants who perform trail patrols.
- Dave mentioned the high skill level of the ranger staff and how that kind of training ultimately saves costs over time, but how it can be hard to quantify the exact budgetary savings while making sure everything is balanced.

Discussion Items

2021 Year End Financial Review – Sarah Watson

- Department Revenue: \$23,250,750 in 2021, \$3 million more than 2022 with the largest categories being the Open Space Sales Tax and User Fees.
- 2021 Open Spaces Revenues: \$14,194,638 total, with 76% coming from the Sales Tax
 - Open Space Expenses 5 year look: Operating expenses have been very level, with capital/project expenses varying more greatly.
- 2021 Reservoir Parks and Lottery Revenues: \$7,494,09 total with 62% coming from User Fees
 - Reservoir Park Expenses 5 year look: Operating expenses increased with more visitation in 2020/21.
- 2021 Operating Expenses Budget to Actual Comparison: Reservoir Parks Fund is under budget by 2%; Open Space Fund under budget by 27%.
- Capital Improvement Projects for 2022 include \$10 million in Land Acquisitions, \$1.5 million in replacements of buildings/structures, \$4 million in New Capital Improvements, and \$655,000 in Capital Renewal.
- Extension of Open Space Sales Tax 2019 – 2043: Total revenue projected \$370M
 - 2019-2021 revenues are at \$29M
 - Bob asked if DNR tracks projections on a year to year basis to determine future revenues that may change based on the initial modelling. Sarah affirmed.

Larimer County Climate Smart Plan Update – Heidi Pruess

- Heidi shared her screen: The Process for the LC Climate Smart Plan includes three phases, and currently they are in Phase 2 – Community Outreach. Phase 1 was the plan framework and Phase 3 will be plan development.
- Community Outreach:
 - Event Series #1 (5 weeks) included presentations, tabling events, newsletters/articles, social media, and a questionnaire with over 600 responses.
 - Event Series #2 (6 weeks) included workshops, newsletters/articles, social media, and additional questionnaires.
 - Geographical representation was across the county, but most of the responders came from the heavy population centers in Fort Collins and Loveland.
- In Series #1, four overarching topic areas were identified: Housing and Economy, How We Move, Nature & Our Land, Our Wellbeing
- In Series #2, key themes were identified with top responses being multisector collaboration, waste diversion, air quality, and community involvement.

- Participants were asked how the County should approach these issues, including incentives, education, rule changes, expenditures, advocacy, partnerships, etc.
- Participants were also asked to look at ways to improve the overarching categories or highlight areas that may be missing, such as Equity, wildlife, and human health.
- The complete engagement summary can be found at www.larimer.org/climatesmart and community members can sign up for a newsletter as well.
 - Next steps for external effort:
 - May 4th: Climate Smart Task Force + County Staff
 - June 8th: Finalize recommendations report
 - June/July: BOCC Adoption and Phase III begins
- Internal Plan on Climate and Sustainability is how the County can “walk-the-talk”
 - Methods will include mitigation and adaptation while focusing on areas such as sustainable transportation, efficient buildings, land use, education, partnerships, new energy systems, infrastructure upgrades, and emergency/public safety efforts.
- Final plan will include goals, objectives, short term/long term actions, departments engaged, goals/measures, costs/budget impacts, and priorities/timeline. BOCC adoption planned in July.
- Comments and Questions
 - Dave asked if they are satisfied with the community outreach efforts. Heidi said they fell short in terms of youth engagement with most participants having a high level of income/education. They also need to look at race/ethnicity more as community engagement continues throughout the final processes.
 - Meegan mentioned the City of Fort Collins’ climate plan and asked if the city/county plans dovetail. Heidi said the municipalities and other agencies have been engaged with the County’s Plan, and she sees an opportunity to learn lessons from previous efforts.
 - Heidi mentioned that some people who were interviewed did not think the County should have a climate plan, and this group will be included in future discussions also.

Action Items

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled

May 26, 2022 at Larimer County Loveland Campus Building: 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537 & Zoom Webinar

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 – 7:43pm

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.