



Date: January 27, 2022
Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: Zoom Webinar

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bob Hewson	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Gale Bernhardt	x	Zac Wiebe	x	
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Justin Core	x	
Linda Stanley	x	Alex Swartz	x	
Mark DeGregorio	x	Jordan Williams (minutes)	x	
Nancy Wallace	x	Jennifer Almstead	x	
Peter Kelly	x	Stephen Gibson	x	
Rick Brent	x	Korrie Johnston	x	
Sherri Valentine		*Jody Shaddock-McNally	x	
Steve VanderMeer	x			
Tom Shoemaker	x			

x = present

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:01pm

Public Comment – None

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Mark 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

Sep, Oct, Nov Open Space Sales Tax

- Daylan said that sales tax performed very well this year but noted that land prices are also going up.

December news article

Update and Reports

Board of County Commissioner update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally highlighted her tour of the Marshall Fire with Boulder County. The Commissioners approved \$2.8 million for need-based grants. They are also looking at water infrastructure projects and advocating for forest management funding.

LC Boards and Commissions: Pilot Stipend Program – Daylan

- Program goal is to find ways to engage across the community while trying to make sure financial constraints are not limiting participation on county boards.
- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally added that the stipend can help pay for things like childcare or transportation.

Department Strategic Plan Update – Daylan

- Daylan explained how the plan will cover the entire Natural Resources Department by integrating the three existing master plans and reducing silos between the divisions.
 - It is a staff driven initiative to help align resources around work priorities and measurable outcomes while being an adaptable 3-5 year road map.
 - Consultants are garnering staff input through meetings and an internal webpage, with completion scheduled in the spring.
 - Discussed activities to date, next steps, and department advisory boards' role which will be to provide feedback on draft priorities in plan.
- Dave asked about required approvals for the DNR Strategic Plan. Daylan said it is departmental level, but it will be shared with the commissioners and boards.
- Steve wanted to know how the existing county-wide strategic plan can inform DNR's process. Daylan said they plan to find suitable spots to connect, such as water resources.
- Gale was thankful for the overview and excited to be part of the process.
- Mark commented that it is important to adapt regularly in this constantly changing environment.
- K-Lynn thinks it will be helpful to have a strategic plan that integrates all three department master plans.

Discussion Items

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan Update Discussion

- Zac shared his screen: In addition to two public meetings and two rounds of public feedback, the draft plan outlining management actions to improve visitor experience, ecological health, and financial stability will be posted online for a last set of public feedback.
 - The second open online survey received 411 responses, with 254 coming from mountain bikers with a focus to "Enhance the trail system" receiving the most support with 376.
 - Linda asked about the open nature of this survey vs. random sampling since our statistically valid surveys show that mountain bikers are 15% of the user demographic at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Zac noted that the online surveys are just one data point and the CSU statistically valid visitor study in 2018 was considered as well. Pete noted that population count is only one way to evaluate data.
- Enhanced ecological conditions: Goal to expand/retain intact habitat patches, restore Redstone Creek riparian corridor through appropriate grazing, utilize seasonal closures for raptors, and continue responsible forestry work.
- Improved visitor experience: Will make trail system adjustments, design improvements to main trailhead, redesign restroom/kiosk, designate and monitor rock climbing areas, and retain equestrian parking with adaptive adjustments.
- Trail system: Objectives include intermediate access to upper trails, more balanced difficulty levels, improved connections, downhill directional options, and greater sustainability. Proposals included 13 different concepts, with two nearby at the reservoir.

- Trail concept feedback has been positive, and it will help the trail crew prioritize next projects. Closure/realignment of Mill Creek will not be implemented currently but will continue to be monitored.
- Tom was impressed with the materials online and would like to know more about the metrics and tradeoffs behind the decision making. Daylan mentioned placing some trail counters to learn more about usage.
- Gale asked how to measure the impact on wildlife. Zac noted we monitor various key wildlife such as nesting raptors but rely on a large body of studies that show impacts of trails fragmenting wildlife habitat to inform a goal to keep blocks intact. HTMOS trail density is quite high.
 - Meegan noted that DNR has buffered HTMOS over time with other nearby land acquisitions. Not adding trails to those areas helps add intact habitat.
- David wants to know if this plan will consider how the area's high usage impacts the public's experience. Daylan noted that parking lots are sized based on open space capacity, but people are coming from other trails, so landscape-scale management needs to be considered.
 - Zac added that the 2018 visitor study showed visitors perception of crowding at HTMOS below the threshold for crowdedness.
- Pete complimented Zac on the outreach and expressed interest in visitor counts as recreational users migrate between different areas. Daylan commented on the ability to use GPS/cell phone data in the future.
- K-Lynn was disappointed that the Mill Creek Trail closure will not be implemented since she would like to see more opportunities to increase restoration and ecological values.
- Bob mentioned that Chimney Hollow Open Space will be an opportunity to establish a new baseline since HTMOS was not a blank slate when it was purchased by the county.
- Linda was hoping the density of the trails would be reduced and wants to revisit the closure of Mill Creek in the future. She is also concerned with off leash dogs in more remote areas.
- Nighttime Use: The initial concept was a full nighttime closure due to operational challenges, low visitation, and neighbor concerns. However, the public said they valued the before/after work access, nighttime experience, and backcountry campsites close to home.
 - New proposal: 11pm-4am closure and retain campsites (to be added to the department's reservation system with a nightly fee)
 - Will continue night-based education programs through DNR with limited appropriate special events
- The plan will be presented to Board of County Commissioners on 1/31/22 and posted on the website for public review. OLAB adoption is scheduled for 2/24/22.
 - David thinks they have found good middle ground and compromises based on public input.

Presentation of 2022 Small Grants Award Recommendations

- Jen shared her screen: She recapped the projects from 2021 and highlighted that the advertisements for the 2022 program application reached 23,301 people.
- 2022 projects applications included seven new organizations.
 - Loveland Youth Gardeners (\$2,920): Integrate solar and drip irrigation.
 - Neighbor to Neighbor (\$3,000): Garden expansion and irrigation project
 - Northern Colorado Wildlife Center (\$1,817): No charge wildlife education in Larimer County.
 - Rocky Mountain Wild (\$2,861): Community bat monitoring in Larimer County.
 - Terry Lake Recreation Association (\$3,000): Erosion control and education project
 - Trappers Point HOA (\$1,965.50): Wildlife Area restoration and wetland creation.
 - Waterglen HOA (\$2,999.50): Tree plantings to increase habitat and enhance Cooper Slough Natural Area.
 - YMCA of the Rockies (\$3,000): Enger Family Nature Trail interpretative signage.
- Subcommittee comments: Linda really enjoyed the experience and learned a lot. Steve noted the diversity of the project applications. Bob found it rewarding and complimented Jenn as a facilitator.
- Final recommendations: Approve proposed 8 projects for \$21,419.

- Dave noted that the City of Fort Collins is annexing a large property along the Mulberry corridor near Cooper Slough Natural Area. Jen added that the Waterglen Owners Association was also awarded a Nature in the City Grant, so she will follow up.
- Mark commented that most of the grant money is directed towards small organizations, while the YMCA has a large donor endowment. Jen noted the program application does not ask for financial documentation but does consider need-based organizations. Linda added that the YMCA signage will acknowledge the project funding source and Bob thinks the YMCA initiative will help increase overall program awareness.

Action Items

Small Grants Awards Approval

- Nancy moved to approve the project recommendations for the 2022 small grants, K-Lynn seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Quarter Circle Lazy H Conservation Easement Final Review

- Justin shared his screen: Quarter Circle Lazy H Ranch is owned by Chris and Janith Hansen.
 - The conservation easement will encumber 428 acres north of CR78E and provides a buffer to State Wildlife Areas, State Land Trust, and other conservation easements.
 - The area contains high conservation and scenic values including foothill grasslands, irrigated wheat fields, Lone Pine Creek and Rabbit Creek riparian corridors.
 - The property is highly visible from the county road and includes limited grazing/hay operations. Water rights are tied to the CE.
 - There are some development opportunities set aside, including one reserved building envelope of 7 acres but no subdivision options.
 - \$1,200,000 purchase recommendation. Funding sources include \$144,475 from GOCO and \$526,762.50 from the City Fort Collins, \$1500 from the Friends of Larimer Parks and Open Lands, and \$555,832.50 from Larimer County open space sales tax dollars. Closing date of February 28th.
- Linda moved for OLAB to approve Quarter Circle Lazy CE purchase of \$1,200,000 with financial participation as detailed, Nancy seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled – February 24th

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 – 7:15pm

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