



Date: February 22, 2024
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
David Marvin	V	Daylan Figgs	I	
Gale Bernhardt	I	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Tom Shoemaker	I	Zac Wiebe	I	
Linda Stanley	V	Jenn Almstead	I	
Gary Miller	V	*Jody Shaddock-McNally	I	
Peter Kelly	V	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Ward Nelson	I	Zach Cook	I	
Mike Carter	A			
Ellis Carpenter	V			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:03 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Gale moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Gary 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.

December 2023 Open Spaces Sales Tax Distribution Letter

Update and Reports

VS Update – Zach Cook

- Staff created an alternative route due to a washout on the trail at River Bluffs.
- Hermit Park and Red Mountain Open Space are set to open March 1st. Staff have completed renovations on 8 of the 13 cabins at Hermit Park.
- DNR Rangers; Chris Gardner, Hannah Beam, and Zach Cook, were recognized by the LC Sheriff’s Office with Life Saving awards.

- Ranger Excellence School will take place May 13th - May 17th. This is in partnership with Rocky Mountain Ranger Association and used to train DNR temporary rangers.
- DNR is hosting a new Volunteer Ranger Assistant (VRA) class. There are 18 participants who will engage in 20 hours of training. The VRA's are shared between DNR and the City of Fort Collins, assisting the agencies with educating visitors on things such as trail behavior. In total, there are 120 active VRAs, 68 on LC properties.
- The hunting draw for Red Mountain OS opens March 6th. There are 13 tags available at Red Mountain and 10 available at Soapstone (City of Fort Collins). Applications are accepted from February to February and the drawing in March. The lottery winners are notified and are required to apply for a tag with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The 2024 draw had 750 applicants, of which 13 will be selected.

Board of County Commissioner Update – Commissioner Shadduck-McNally

- Supporting wetland restoration and water bills.
- The County Strategic Plan is launching soon. Reminded all to complete the community survey.

2023 Quarter 4 Board Report

- Daylan noted a few completed and upcoming Horsetooth Mountain Managemnt plan projects; parking lot updates, a new bathroom, and new kiosks. Meegan added there will be improvements to the trails system with refined circulations and new signage. There will also be increased grazing and habitat restoration in the area.
- Meegan announced all appropriate county owned properties have been rezoned to NR zoning. Next steps will be to work with the Planning Department to send letters to land owning agencies in the County, requesting they opt in to rezoning to NR. Ideally, rezoning will happen in blocks of parcels versus parcel by parcel.
- Daylan said the Rate Your Day results are in. The campaign was geared towards receiving real-time visitor satisfaction feedback. The survey will be repeated in 2024 with the same QR code format.

Policy Update – Tax Credit Increase for Conservation

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally testified on the Keep It Colorado proposed Conservation Easement Tax Credit bill. She noted it passed out of committee and will continue to the Senate. The bill request is set at \$75 million. More to come on this.
- Daylan said Justin will continue to provide updates as they come.

Discussion Items

Grant Funding and Partnerships Update – Jenn Almstead

- 2018 – 2023 Funding Categories: landowner donations, partnerships, grants
 - Total funds = \$26.1 million (64% Grants, 30% Partnerships, 6% Landowner Donations).
- Grants and partnerships vary year to year based on the projects in que.
- Between 2018 – 2023 for every dollar that was spent on acquisition projects (a total of \$34.8 million dollars), \$1.41 was secured through grants, partnerships, and landowner donations.
- Capital Project Grants 2023
 - FY2023 BOR (Title 28): **BOR** – \$153,000 **LC Match** - \$157,000
 - Boat dock replacement at Horsetooth Reservoir (HT), broadband internet support at Admin Office (AO), and asphalt maintenance repairs at AO and Pinewood.
 - FY2024 BOR (ANS): **BOR** - \$150,000
 - Additional funds for the new ANS wash pad (decontamination) station at South Bay parking lot.
 - FY2024 BOR (Title 28): **BOR** - \$380,000 **LC Match** - \$380,000
 - Rotary Park parking lot reconfiguration project, and boat dock replacements at HT and Carter Lake.
- Trails and Forest Health Grants 2023

- Bay to Bay Trail at Horsetooth Reservoir: **Colorado Youth Corp Association (GOCO)** - \$34,400, **BOR (Title 28)** - \$75,000, **LC match** - \$75,000
 - Connecting Blue Sky Trail to South Bay swim beach. Complete ~2025.
- Hermit Park Open Space Forest Health Project: **Colorado State Forest Service** - \$102,000
 - Fuels reduction project.
- Vegetation Management Grants 2023
 - Early Detection Rapid Response: **Dept. of Agriculture** - \$36,700, **LC and Partners Match** - \$47,000
 - At no cost to the landowner, Land Stewardship crews remove List A and B noxious weed species from their properties.
 - DNR Maintenance Equipment Conversion: **CO Regional Air Quality Council** - \$23,749, **LC Match** – \$5,938
 - Mow Down Pollution initiative to retire gas powered equipment and transition to electric.
- 2024 Pending Applications
 - GOCO: grant within land acquisition cycle for Heaven's Door Ranch refund
 - BOR: Reservoir transportation improvements
 - CPW: DNR trail maintenance (increase trail crew capacity)

Chimney Hollow Open Space Management Planning Process – Zac Wiebe

- Plan Objectives: Assemble ecological data to clarify conservation values, use ecological data in combination with public feedback and stakeholder input to develop management zones, identify appropriate land and water recreation experiences, appropriate recreation infrastructure to assess trail system and reservoir, and opportunities for environmental education.
- Decision Making: ecological, cultural, and agricultural resource protection, quality recreation experience, financial and operational feasibility, and sustainability.
- Overview of Property: Jointly purchased in 2004 by LCDNR and Northern Water. The open space is ~1,700 acres, reservoir surface is 760 acre feet. DNR has collected ecological data since 2004, including vegetation, raptor data, cultural surveys, archaeological data, etc.
- Project Schedule:
 - Reservoir Construction: The dam is expected to be completed at the end of 2024. DNR has an agreement with Northern Water to not allow access to the OS until the reservoir is filled (by 2025-2026).
 - Planning & Implementation: Management plan in 2024, pursue funding in 2024 & 2025, build infrastructure & trails in 2025 & 2026, anticipated grand opening in 2027.
 - Planning Schedule for 2024: identify opportunities, benefits, and constraints, develop initial draft plan, draft plan review, finalize draft plan and present to the advisory boards and the BOCC for recommendation for adoption.
- Public Input: Stakeholder/technical advisory group includes recreation groups, ecological experts, and agency partners, online feedback tools include surveys with IP limits, a website, and open house(s).
- Agency Partners:
 - Northern Water: Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Meegan said the lease terms are 35 years and then 25 years. The agreement was updated in 2020.
 - City of Loveland: Conservation easement (CE) holder
 - CPW: Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation & Enhancement Plan (FWMEP) for permitting obligations.
- Regulatory Context:
 - Northern IGA & Recreation lease (2020): No overnight use (protects water quality), wakeless boating, restricted areas (entire eastside of shore), footprint. DNR and Northern have been able to coordinate cost savings by using construction pads for recreation once the dam is complete.
 - CE on open space held by City of Loveland and GOCO: Approvals of any infrastructure, 15-acre footprint and non-motorized recreation.
 - CPW FWMEP: Fishery requirements

- Preliminary Design: ~260 parking spaces (90 trail access and 170 reservoir access)
- Trail System: 10-12 miles, range of difficulty, connection to South Shore
- Discussion/Feedback:
 - Dave asked how DNR will keep HPOS tax use separate from the reservoir operations. Daylan noted DNR will track revenues and ensure funds are used appropriately.
 - Zac noted no significant rare plant or animal species on the property. It is critical elk winter range.
 - Ward volunteered to participate in the technical advisory group as the OLAB representative.

Review of Larimer County Guiding Documents for the Boards – Daylan Figgs

- LC updated their policy and code of conduct for boards and commissions. The policy focuses on the function and purpose of the boards. DNR will update the OLAB board laws to align with the new county policy, code of conduct and the Help Preserve Open Space sales tax language.

Action Items

Other Business

- Daylan announced the LC 101 program is currently taking applications. It is a 10-week commitment and an opportunity for anyone to experience different county departments.

Next Meeting Scheduled - March 28th, 2024 @ Horsetooth Area Information Center – 4200 W County Road 38E Fort Collins, CO 80526 & 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 – 6:38 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 weberan@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.