



Date: July 24, 2025
Time: 5:00 – 7:00 PM (PUBLIC MEETING) 7:00 – 8:00 PM (EXECUTIVE SESSION)
Location: Larimer County Longview Health Services Building 2260 W. Trilby Road, Fort Collins 80526 – Goldfinch/Sparrow Room & Zoom Webinar

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD & PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

OLAB MEMBERS		PAB MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Jim Wurz	I	Rob Harris	I	Daylan Figgs	I	
Debbie Hayhow	A	Joe Bakel	V	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Gale Bernhardt	I	Kathy Maher	I	Chris Fleming	I	
Mike Roccanti	A	Jeannie Mounts	I	*Commissioner Shadduck-McNally	I	
Wes Knoll	I	Adam Crossan	I	*John Kefalas	I	
Gary Miller	V	Pete Blume	I	Zac Wiebe	I	
Ward Nelson	I	Bill Prater	I	Alex Swartz	I	
Mike Carter	V	Kristina Kachur	I	Jon Plybon	I	
Ellis Carpenter	I	Ruthie Rollins	I	Lesli Ellis	I	
		Andy Te Slaa	A	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:04 pm

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Rob moved to approve the minutes from the May PAB meeting, Adam seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Rob moved to approve the minutes from the June PAB meeting, Adam seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Wes moved to approve the minutes from the June OLAB meeting, Jim 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 and Parks Advisory Board updates, go to <https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Open Lands Advisory Board” and the “Parks Advisory Board” boxes.

Reporter Herald: Canyon Edge People’s Choice Award

March 2025 Tax Distribution Letter

April 2025 Tax Distribution Letter

May 2025 Tax Distribution Letter

- Daylan provided an update on the status of Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax revenue, noting that it remains in a stable and positive position, with no signs of decline. The existing sales tax measure, which is set to expire in 2043, includes specific allocation requirements: 35% must be used for land restoration or acquisition, 50% may be used for management and maintenance of open spaces, and 15% is flexible and can be applied to either operations or acquisition. User fees collected on open spaces must be reinvested in those same lands. The program front-loaded a significant portion of its acquisition funding early on to stay ahead of increasing land prices. Over time, there will be a gradual shift underway to place more emphasis on funding long-term management.
- With the Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), user fees collected on federal lands must be reinvested in those same lands.
- Additionally, the Conservation Trust Fund was mentioned as a flexible resource that can be used for either operations or acquisitions, though it comes with certain restrictions on how the funds can be applied.

Introductions all around

Board of County Commissioners Update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally reported that the Wildfire Resiliency Board met with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), announcing a new dispatch office at the LETA/OEM building. The USDA is restructuring into five national hubs, with Fort Collins as one of them, making Larimer County a central hub for wildfire resources. She also noted a productive NOCO Places meeting with the introduction of a new director and shared that the Forest Health Council released a 30-year forest health vision. She praised the 2,000+ County employees, highlighting the professionalism of rangers she joined on a Fourth of July ride-along.
- Commissioner Kefalas shared that the County is midway through the 2026 budget process, with adoption expected by December and a draft due October 15th. A new program service inventory aims to guide \$6 million in planned reductions over two years. He also discussed the Transportation Master Plan, with a decision on a possible sales tax ballot measure expected by August 12th. An early childhood development measure is also under consideration.
- Kathy asked about new wildfire mitigation legislation allowing fire districts to help homeowners remove debris. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally explained that Larimer County already engages in these efforts, including Firewise and a new insurance incentive bill. Commissioner Kefalas referenced the Wildfire Partners Program, and it was noted that the County is ahead in efforts of mitigation and education.

Discussion Items

Jointly held Board Meetings: Format, Chair Roles, Timeframe, etc.

- Daylan reflected on the department's evolution, noting that county owned open spaces, and management of the BOR reservoir recreation, and county-wide vegetation management, once separate programs, are now integrated under the Department of Natural Resources. However, board discussions have remained siloed despite this consolidation.
- To encourage more cross-program collaboration and reflect how staff work across these areas, the department is piloting a joint board meeting format. This approach aims to foster broader dialogue, tap into members' collective expertise, and strengthen collaboration. While formal decisions will still go through individual boards per their mandates or bylaws, joint meetings will be used for shared discussions and learning.
- Going forward, meetings will be held in a unique format, including one set of meeting minutes and agenda, while each board will continue to maintain a designated chair and vice chairperson. Staff

emphasized the importance of engaging across topics, regardless of board assignment, to support more inclusive and informed conversations.

Capital Projects Update – Jon Plybon, Capital Projects Manager

- 2024 Capital Projects (Funding – DNR \$575k, Grants \$1.1M): Hermit Park Open Space Maintenance Building, System-wide RV dump pay/kiosks, Horsetooth Area Info Center (HAIC) bank stabilization, Horsetooth Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) inspector shelter, Horsetooth flush toilet and ANS decontamination station, Boat dock replacements
- 2025 Capital Asset Maintenance Projects
 - Asset Maintenance: Inlet stabilization, boat docks, kiosks
 - ADA Improvements: DNR main office entry
 - Asphalt Maintenance: Pleasant Valley Trail, HAIC lot, Sunrise day use area parking
- 2025 Capital Projects
 - Poudre River Trail (1-mile section to complete)
 - Schedule:
 - Bid results received
 - Summer 2025: Under contract
 - Fall 2025: start construction
 - Partnerships: GOCO (\$432k) CPW (\$250k) CDOT (\$400k) LCDNR (\$975k)
 - Total Budget: \$2.056M
 - Chimney Hollow Open Space
 - Schedule
 - Fall 2025: Construct the boat ramp to meet the water filling schedule
 - 2026: Project out to bid
 - 2026/2027: Facility construction
 - Partnerships: LCDNR (\$2.8M) Northern Water (\$2.7M) Pending Grants (\$2.5M)
 - Total Budget: \$8M
 - BOR Reservoir Parking and Roadway Improvements (FLAP Project)
 - Schedule
 - 2025 Carter Lake: Eagle Campground, North Pines, Quarry Parking Lot
 - 2026 Carter Lake: CR 31 auxiliary lane, Big Thompson day use
 - 2026 HT: Inlet and South Bay
 - 2027 HT: South Bay CR 38 auxiliary lane
 - Partnerships: LCDNR (\$3M) FLAP Grant (\$11M) FLTP (\$1M)
 - Total Budget: \$15M
 - Hermit Park Open Space – Power Upgrade
 - August 2025: Completion
 - Partnerships: DNR (\$0) ARPA Funds (\$156k)
 - Total Budget: \$156k
 - The department is converting its diesel generator to a renewable solar power system to support climate goals and reduce long-term fuel and maintenance costs.
- Questions:
 - Bill asked about the Poudre River Trail and its connection to Kyger Open Space (managed/owned by the town of Windsor). Zac explained that the trail will currently links out to Kyger with the main trail through River Bluffs Open Space.

Action Items (OLAB)

Final Review Fonay Conservation Easement

- Meegan noted the 800-acre donated Fonay CE is in the Livermore Priority Conservation Area identified in the Open Lands Master Plan, where over half the identified acres have been conserved with partners

including state-wide land trusts, the State of Colorado, USFS, City of Fort Collins, and Larimer County. CEs are preferred in this area over fee simple acquisitions due to their affordability and ease of management. A CE is a perpetual agreement tied to the property title, permanently protecting conservation values; Larimer County is state-accredited to hold them.

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked about monitoring frequency. Meegan said all 54 CEs held by Larimer County are inspected annually via aerial surveys, drive-by photos, or on-site visits.
- Alex presented that the Fonay Ranch, owned by Fonay Land Co LLC, borders Red Mountain Open Space for one mile. Its conservation values include buffering existing conserved lands, supporting significant wildlife corridors and native vegetation, preserving riparian drainages, rocky outcrops, and hogback formations. The CE will be a full donation from the landowner with no reserved subdivision rights, limited access via an existing road through Red Mountain Open Space, and it requires the property to be sold as a whole. One 8-acre building envelope has been identified for the existing residence, and the agreement allows for one additional residence within that same area. Primary access is through Maxwell Ranch off Red Mountain Road.
- Jim asked about Red Mountain road restrictions. Alex said emergency rights remain, but the road is unsuitable for regular use; the Maxwell Ranch route is more practical and under an existing agreement.
- Ruthie asked if water rights are included. Alex said not with this easement, but when possible, the County secures them with an owner agreement, attaching them to the CE.
- Ellis asked about tax credits. Alex said landowners can use County documentation with a broker for federal or state credits. Meegan added that Colorado offers a 90% credit of appraised value (dropping to 80% in 2027); credits can be sold, transferred, or used.
- Estimated County costs: \$30,000–\$50,000 for assessments, baseline report, and appraisal (shared with landowner).
- Ward moved to recommend approval of the Fonay CE to the Board of County Commissioners; Wes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Chair and Vice Chair Elections

- Gale nominated Jim for Vice Chair. Jim accepted the nomination. Motion passed unanimously.
- Wes nominated Gale for Chair. Gale accepted the nomination. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Action Items (PAB)

Board Chair and Vice Chair Elections

- Ruthie nominated Rob for Vice Chair. Rob accepted the nomination. Motion passed unanimously.
- Ruthie nominated Kristina for Chair. Kristina accepted the nomination. Motion passed unanimously.

Department Updates

Quarter 2 Board Report

- Daylan noted that the financial numbers appeared somewhat inconsistent, but this is attributed to the timing within the fiscal year. The expectation is that the numbers will normalize by the next quarter.

Key Department Updates – Meegan/Chris

- Meegan reported that the department has successfully identified eight grant opportunities, approximately four of which are related to constructing Chimney Hollow Open Space public access infrastructure. Additional initiatives include several river restoration projects on county open spaces and aquatic nuisance species inspections.
- The recently recommended by OLAB amendment to the Little Ponderosa Conservation Easement (CE) has also been finalized.
- She noted 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Help Preserve Open Space Sales Tax, which launched the key growth of the department in 1996, as a significant milestone that will be celebrated this year in a variety of ways.

- The Canyon Edge Open Space building removal project has been completed, with extensive fencing removal and ongoing restoration efforts across the site.
- Chris provided an operational update, noting a busy summer reservoir use season.
- She commented on increased incidents involving bears at both Carter Lake and Hermit Park Open Space. The department continues to focus on public education regarding wildlife interactions and proper food storage.
- The Text-2-Park program is performing well, generating strong revenue.
- Changes in visitor management in partnership with Lory State Park avoided issues over weekends.
- Kristina inquired about the status of construction at Chimney Hollow Reservoir. Meegan responded that the reservoir/dam construction by Northern Water is nearing completion. Larimer County's construction work was described by Jon Plybon and will occur in 2026/2027.
 - Ruthie raised a question regarding the presence of uranium in the area and its potential impact on nearby neighbors and their wells. Meegan responded that our current understanding is that the parts-per-million levels of uranium are below the threshold for drinking water; however, complete information is not available at this time.
 - Pete questioned if groundwater would undergo a filtration process. Wes suggested that wells in the region likely already have some exposure to uranium, given the area's geological characteristics. Meegan recommended that anyone seeking more detailed or technical information should consult Northern Water directly. Gale advised subscribing to the Northern Water newsletter to receive ongoing updates about the project.

Other Business

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally shared information about a recent film screening. She highlighted Nick Molle's "Water: The Sacred Gift," which is currently airing on PBS. The film explores the relationship between water, people, and the environment.

Next Meeting Scheduled

August 28, 2025 – Larimer County Longview Health Services Building 2260 W. Trilby Road, Fort Collins 80526
– Goldfinch/Sparrow Room & 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 – 7:15 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.

These meeting minutes were primarily prepared by staff, with the assistance of AI technology to support formatting and clarity. All content has been reviewed for accuracy.