

LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD

The mission of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is to establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.

MINUTES

Date: June 24, 2021

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Webinar

Contact: Please contact Sidney at smichl@larimer.org or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend

Members		Staff		Guests
Bob Hewson	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Gale Bernhardt	x	Zac Wiebe	x	
Jason Brothers	x	Justin Core	x	
K-Lynn Cameron		Lori Smith	x	
Linda Stanley		Chris Fleming	x	
Mark DeGregorio	x	*Jody Shadduck-McNally	x	
Nancy Wallace		Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Peter Kelly	x			
Rick Brent	x			
Sherri Valentine				
Tom Shoemaker	x			

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:03 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
 - a. Added discussion on fee increase.
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Bob moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Gale seconded, motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resources events for this month: larimer.org/naturalresources.
- b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click "Subscribe," and check the "Open Lands Advisory Board" box.
- c. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally joined Daylan and a variety of DNR staff on a ride-along and site visit this week. The Commissioner shared a new budget tool developed by the county to help residents learn about application of county funds: larimer.org/BudgetExplorer.

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Legislative Update on HB 21-1233 – Justin
 - i. Justin explained the bill makes modifications to the conservation easement tax credit program. Key changes:
 - 1. Increase in tax credit incentive to 90% of the donated value of the landowner's conservation easement
 - 2. List of eligible entities expanded to include water entities
 - 3. Division of Conservation can accept and hold donated conservation easements
 - 4. Repeal of obsolete reporting requirements
 - ii. Mark asked if any modifications address accountability or quality of conservation easement holders, it was noted there is a state Conservation Easement Oversight Commission to advise/review tax credits.
 - iii. Meegan shared other recently passed legislation:
 - 1. Keep Colorado Wild Pass: CPW optional discounted parks and public lands access pass purchased at the time of motor vehicle registration
 - 2. HB 21-1318 Create Outdoor Equity Grant Program: increases access and opportunities for underserved youth and communities in the outdoors
 - 3. Colorado Habitat Connectivity: re: wildlife habitat connectivity and crossing, notably a tri-city initiative between Laramie, Cheyenne, and Fort Collins that seeks solutions to wildlife crossings along Hwy 287
- b. 2020 Annual Report
 - i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:
 - 1. "Keeping the door open" to county parks and open spaces
 - 2. Visitor experience and land stewardship improvements
 - 3. New graphic for sales tax distribution
- c. Gauge Board interest in resuming in-person meetings beginning in August
 - i. It was decided the board would meet in-person (200 Peridot in Loveland) in July.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. 2022 Budget Submittal Approach; Fee increase process and recommendations – Daylan/Lori
 - i. Daylan updated the final budget submittal will be presented at the July OLAB meeting. Lori presented the submittal approach:

- ii. Overview of 2021-2022 regular wage and benefits
- iii. Overview of Utilities and Central Services
 - 1. It was noted the distribution of Central Services costs is based on quantity and type of equipment, wages, department claims, etc.
- iv. Temporary and seasonal staff:
 - 1. Base increase 3% department-wide
 - 2. Visitor Services (ranger/maintenance) had additional increases to assist with hiring, retention, additional patrol, etc.
 - a. Additional 5% increase for a total of 8%
 - b. Continuation of second boat rangers, considering submittal of a service proposal
 - 3. Continuation of marketing/communication temp position
 - 4. Departmental average increase 10% over 2021 base
 - a. Gale asked to clarify the increase includes wages as well as number of personnel.
 - b. Mark asked about starting pay for seasonal rangers vs. trail employees. It was noted seasonal rangers are not POST-certified and most seasonal employees start around \$13-\$13.25/hour; supervisors earn up to \$16/hour. Returning employees typically receive a \$0.50-\$1.00/hour raise. Meegan added the department hires a breadth of seasonal employees each year and increases in pay are based on experience and category. Daylan mentioned the department considers cost of living and pay rates in surrounding counties.
 - 5. CO minimum wage increase not yet available
- v. Operational base:
 - 1. Base increase 2% department-wide
 - 2. 1% increase to support new campground at Carter Lake
 - 3. \$10k increase routine maintenance for maintenance at Hermit Park Open Space
 - 4. New vehicles fleet lease and fuel
 - 5. Department average increase 5% over base
 - a. Daylan explained DNR is a vehicle-heavy organization; the increase is due to inflation and increased visitation.
 - b. Pete asked if the county has a motor pool, Lori explained DNR purchases vehicles and transfers ownership to Fleet. DNR is charged for maintenance and future replacements.
- vi. Additional increases in base
 - 1. Wage and operating budget: target \$75k, recommendation \$60,045
 - 2. One-time increases for 2022 budget: temp/seasonal wage increase \$136,291, continuation depends on future staffing model results
- vii. One-time only projects
 - 1. Additional vehicles or vehicle upgrades:

- a. Visitor Services – ranger vehicles
 - b. Parks and Open Lands Land Stewardship vehicles
- 2. Other one-time projects or expenses:
 - a. Commercial lit pencil buoys for Carter Lake
 - b. Replace electronic gate for Hermit Park Open Space
 - c. Post-certified Academy/training for new ranger
 - d. Improvements to water infrastructure to meet vegetation management goals at River Bluffs Open Space
 - e. Department contingency increase
 - f. Payout and overfill for employee retirement
- viii. Expense update on scale of mandated to discretionary items:
 - 1. Regular wages and benefits increase: 2% market, 3% merit benefits
 - 2. Central Services increase: TBD
 - 3. Temporary and seasonal staff increase: generally 3%, average 10%
 - 4. Operational base increase: 5%
 - 5. Additional increase in base budget: \$60,045
 - 6. One-time project budget: \$202,915
- ix. Overview of Reservoir Parks, Open Spaces, and Land Stewardship revenue projections
 - 1. Daylan added this budget aligns with the sales tax ballot language and maintains a positive cash flow.
 - 2. Mark asked about the projected increase in General Fund support, Daylan said the department currently receives ~\$130k total; \$60k is allocated to the Land Stewardship program to perform weed compliance outside the Weed District. The projected 3.5% increase would affect the remaining funds.
 - 3. Jason suggested providing a scale to clarify revenue projections, Lori said it will be included in the next presentation.
 - 4. Dave clarified OLAB's role in the budget process is to provide feedback to the department and does not include a recommendation to the BOCC.
- b. Fee increase discussion – Daylan
 - i. Department leadership attended a BOCC Work Session on Monday to seek direction on a proposed 10% fee increase (CPI increase of 6.75% plus operating and maintenance costs to support record increase in visitation) and initiating a day use fee at Devil's Backbone Open Space.
 - ii. The proposed fee memo, schedule, and meeting information can be found on the online engagement platform: lconnects.mysocialpinpoint.com/fee-adjustments/fee-adjustment-home/.
 - iii. Mark commented on technology for a timed-entry system and fees for residents vs. nonresidents. It was noted the county currently sells resident and non-resident annual passes.

- iv. Dave asked if the approach for the Devil's Backbone fee will involve the City of Loveland, Daylan affirmed and mentioned the Loveland Open House with Commissioner Shadduck-McNally. Pete commented the trail system intercepts three municipalities and fee collection will require a regional conversation.
- v. Gale mentioned potential conflict from the new City of Loveland Skyline Natural Area.
- vi. Daylan mentioned the recent Visitor Use Study completed at Devil's Backbone. The study indicated 42% of visitors to the South trailhead were non-residents. Of the visitors who were county residents, 59% lived in Loveland.
- vii. Bob commented on the impact to the underserved community; it was noted the fee increase would not apply to the county's low-income pass.
- c. Electric Motorized-Bike Study Review/Summary – Zac/Chris
 - i. Zac provided an overview of motorized bike use (electric or e-bike) and the results of the recent e-bike study/public feedback.
 - 1. Background:
 - a. State classification – 2017
 - i. Designated e-bikes as non-motorized, defined 3 classes
 - ii. Gave local jurisdictions authority to allow or prohibit their use on pedestrian and bike paths
 - b. DNR survey and updated regulations – 2018
 - i. 65% opposed, 35% support, 771 respondents
 - ii. E-bikes prohibited on natural surface trails
 - c. E-bike study based on BOCC direction – 2020-2021
 - i. Temporary permit program
 - ii. Online survey
 - 1. 64% opposed, 36% support, 584 respondents
 - iii. Social media monitoring
 - 1. 63% opposed, 37% support, 93 comments
 - d. Devil's Backbone Open Space Visitor Use Study – 2020
 - i. 48% opposed, 23% support, 22% neutral, 8% not sure
 - 2. Policy criteria:
 - a. Public survey data
 - b. Accessibility
 - c. Regional opportunities
 - d. Alternative transportation needs
 - e. Trail congestion
 - f. Regulatory consistency
 - g. Administration and enforcement
 - 3. Staff recommendation and BOCC direction:
 - a. Allow class 1 and 2 e-bikes on all paved surface trails managed by LCDNR
 - b. Allow individuals with a mobility disability to use e-bikes as an "other powered mobility device" where bikes are allowed and

expand to include all natural surface trails where bikes are allowed

- c. Continue to prohibit e-bikes and other motorized devices on natural surface trails managed by LCDNR
- d. Continue conversations with partners and community
- ii. Pete commented the location of the study might influence survey responses; Zac clarified the 2018 survey was not property specific.
- iii. Gale suggested a local bike shop could bring a fleet of bikes to a trailhead where e-bikes are allowed for public use, it was noted the department tries not to advocate for a particular user group or in this case e-bikes or not e-bikes.
- iv. Dave asked if this was approved as policy, Zac explained the commissioners were supportive of staff recommendations so the department will update the existing mobility device policy to reflect the change. Daylan concluded that given the data and uncertainty around the topic, the core team landed on the recommendation as a step to increase inclusivity for those with a mobility disability.

8. ACTION ITEMS

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Daylan announced this is Jason's last meeting and he, Meegan, and other board members recognized his time spent serving on the board.

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: July 22, 2021 at the Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room

11. 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. Jason moved to enter executive session, Pete seconded, motion passed unanimously at 7:11 p.m.

12. ADJOURN – 7:37 p.m.