



Date: February 27, 2025
Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: Horsetooth Area Info Center - 4200 W. County Rd. 38E Fort Collins, CO 80526 & Zoom Webinar

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Wes Knoll	I	Daylan Figgs	I	
Gale Bernhardt	A	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Tom Shoemaker	I	Zac Wiebe	I	
Linda Stanley	I	Justin Core	I	
Debbie Hayhow	I	Jennifer Almstead	I	
Gary Miller	A	*Jody Shadduck-McNally	V	
Jim Wurz	I	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Ward Nelson	I	Lesli Ellis	V	
Mike Carter	V			
Ellis Carpenter	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:00 pm

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Debbie moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Wes 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 2024 Tax Distribution Letter

Updates and Reports

Board of County Commissioner Update

- Attending the National Conference for Commissioners in DC.
- Met with the Governor's Office and federal delegation to discuss the funding freeze, changes, and implications if funding is not received.

Quarter 4 Board Report

- Daylan noted that sales tax for all entities is lower than in previous years.
- DNR is exploring new technology to make operational adjustments/improvements.
- Chimney Hollow will begin filling with water this year. DNR will start construction on the open space this year and continue into 2026. The anticipated opening is set for 2027.
- Rate Your Day Survey results. Most comment trends were positive, with sections in time where comments were particular to the Alexander Mtn Fire and camping reservations. This survey, in it's last year, has allowed visitors to provide quick feedback for DNR.

Partnerships and Grants 2024 in Review – Jenn Almstead

- 2018 - 2024 Total \$27.9 million (M) - 66% Grants (\$18.6M), 28% Partnerships (\$7.7M), 6% Landowner Donations (\$1.7M)
- Landowner Donations – Banker CE (2001) \$1,050,000, Pittington CE (2018) \$320,000, Steputis CE (2020) \$300,000, Rimrock OS Mineral Rights (2019) \$5,000
- 2024 Grants Awarded (total are cash match provided by DNR – not the total project cost)
 - Canyon Edge Open Space (\$9M): GOCO **\$1.5M**, Fort Collins **\$756k**, Loveland **\$506k**, Friends of LC **\$7,500**, LCDNR Match **\$6,230,000**
 - BOR Reservoir Projects - Title 28
 - Shoreline Bank Stabilization, parking lot striping, asphalt (\$213k): BOR **\$106,500**, LC Facilities **\$70,000**, LCDNR Match **\$36,500**
 - Priority Trail Maintenance & Stewardship Project (\$312,525): CPW **\$72,625**, Friends of LC **\$1000**, LCDNR Match **\$238,900**
 - Early Detection Rapid Response (\$83,432): Colorado Department of Agriculture **\$38,146**, LCDNR Match **\$45,286**
- For every dollar spent on acquisition projects, \$1.50 was secured through grants, partnerships, and landowner donations. Total \$36.3M – 40% Larimer County, 60% grants, partnerships, and donations
- Pending grant applications:
 - GOCO Livermore Conservation Project - \$2.5M
 - Gates Family Foundation Livermore Conservation Project - \$40k
 - BOR ANS Program and Transportation grant - \$600k
 - CPW Chimney Hollow Trail Construction Project - \$250,000
- Financial Support to Partners
 - City of Fort Collins Rocky Ridge Natural Area (\$1.5M) 484 acres
 - City of Loveland Prairie Ridge Natural Area (\$400k) 140 acres
- Federal Funding Freeze Update:
 - DNR has been able to capture some reimbursement funds for completed projects. The Federal Land Access Program funding remains questionable.
 - Daylan noted that most of the federal funding DNR receives is used at the BOR reservoirs. If project funding does not make it through the freeze, projects will be put on hold and not completed until further into the future. A big concern is the availability of future grants and funding.

Annual Compliance Training Review - Daylan

- Larimer County (LC) has 93 boards, commissions, and improvement districts.
- Board(s) Purpose: To advise and adhere to state statute.
- Types of Boards: Advisory, quasi-judicial, and decision-making.
- Board Responsibilities: Attendance, preparation, engagement, decision-making, representation, conduct, etc.
- Staff Responsibilities: Administer the board (non-voting members), review and understand board authority, train members, schedule meetings, keep records, assist BOCC with board member recruitment, orientation, etc.

- County government is a constitutional subdivision of state government. Responsible for: law enforcement, social services, health services, road and bridge construction and maintenance, weed control, etc.
 - BOCC performs legislative, executive, and quasi-judicial functions.
 - Other elected offices receive an approved budget from the BOCC but make decisions and operate independently.
- Policies and Laws Boards and Commissions are subject to: board bylaws, LC Policy 100.1, Colorado Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law), Colorado Open Records Act, LC Code of Ethics, LC Code of Conduct, and Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Open meetings: if two members discuss board matters and/or business outside of the public board meeting, including phone calls, emails, or in-person, it needs to be noticed and open to the public. Minutes are to be taken and posted.
 - Conflict of interest: If there is a potential personal gain by a board member, the member should recuse themselves from the discussion and decisions.

Discussion Items

Acquisition Strategy and CE Overview – Meegan/Justin

- Meegan noted the Our Lands Our Future survey helps to inform the direction of DNR's Open Lands Master Plans. The previous survey was completed in 2012, and the most recent survey was in 2023. The Master Plan will be updated in 2026 - 2027.
 - Goal by 2043: projected population of county is 495,000; to keep pace with current level of service per capita, need to conserve a total of 74,000 acres, 141 miles of trails, and 965 parking spaces
- DNR identifies and prioritizes parcels that have high conservation values, including native habitat, community separators, scenic areas, wetlands/rivers, agriculture, and/or buffer existing conserved lands. There are 100 parcels currently under consideration.
- Current Portfolio
 - Baseline 1996 – 2017: 50k acres
 - Goal: to conserve an additional 24,000 acres (total 74,000 acres) by 2043
 - Total available acquisition funds: \$129M (35% HPOS tax)
 - Status 2018 – 2025:
 - Added 12,141 acres for a total of 62,141 acres (51% met in first 8 years).
 - Funds spent = \$25M (20% of available)
 - Conservation Easements (CE) (40%) 23,997 acres, Fee-title (60%) 38,164 acres
 - Justin discussed DNR's key tools for land conservation as fee-simple purchase, conservation easements, and trail easements
- A CE is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits the use of the land to protect conservation values. Conservation values include natural resources, wildlife habitats, recreation, scenic vistas, buffers, community separators, working farms, and ranches.
 - Restricted uses (ex. Land division, commercial development, removal of veg)
 - Reserved rights (ex. Grazing, hunting and fishing, building envelopes)
- CE Acquisition: Donation, partial donations (bargain sale), fully funded acquisition
 - Qualified conservation contributions must meet the state criteria:
- CE Best Practices
 - Maintain confidentiality until contracts are signed, follow state and GOCO best practices, use qualified appraisers to determine fair market value, protect conservation values through restricted land division, grantee approvals and proper building siting, tie water to land when necessary, develop management plan for each CE.
- Stewardship – Zac Wiebe
 - The condition of the land is monitored to ensure adherence to the terms of the CE and to protect the conservation values in perpetuity.

- Process: baseline documentation, annual monitoring, 5-year management plans.
- 2024 Monitoring Summary: 51 CEs monitored, 0 violations, \$2/acres stewardship cost

Action Items

D-Dart Conservation Easement Final Review – Justin Core

- Summary: D-Dart is 574 acres in the Livermore Priority Area. Conservation values include natural communities, an iconic viewshed, buffer and landscape connection between public lands and numerous other CEs, working lands, and water rights protection.
- Total cost: \$1,675,000
- Partnerships: LC, Fort Collins, GOCO, Nature Conservancy, Private Donor, Gates Family, Friends of LC. The CE will be held by LC.
- The closing date is scheduled for April 11th.
- Ward made a motion to recommend approval of the acquisition of the D-Dart conservation easement to the BOCC. Debbie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled

Thursday, March 27th, 2025 - Larimer County Horsetooth Area Information Center 4200 W. County Road 38E Fort Collins, CO 80526 - Mountain Lion 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 – 7:19 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.