



Date: July 27, 2023
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
Paul Hudnut	A	Daylan Figgs	I	Lesli Ellis
David Marvin	I	Meegan Flenniken	I	Heidi Pruess
Gale Bernhardt	V	Justin Core	I	
Ellis Carpenter	I	Alex Swartz	V	
Linda Stanley	I	Zach Cook	I	
Mark DeGregorio	V	*Jody Shadduck-McNally	I	
Gary Miller	V	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Peter Kelly	I			
Ward Nelson	I			
Mike Carter	A			
Steve VanderMeer	A			
Tom Shoemaker	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:07 pm

Public Comment

Steve Miller joined the meeting to listen in.

Agenda Review

Added Quarter 2 Board Report

Board Member and Staff Introductions for Ellis Carpenter, new Open Lands Advisory Board member.

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Tom moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Linda 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.

April 2023 Open Space Sales Tax Distribution Letter

Update and Reports

2023 Quarter 2 Board Report

- Daylan said the report shares stories on land conservation, a stream restoration project done in-house and highlights a new trailhead survey.
 - The trailhead survey, [Rate Your Day!](#), is accessed via a QR code with the goal to get a real time feedback loop from visitors of how they are experiencing DNR properties. Combined with cell phone data acquired, the two projects should provide DNR insight to visitor use and desires on LC properties.
- DNR has a new, refined, and condensed “At a Glance” map of DNR properties.
- In 2022, the department released a Discover Pack Program, available for check out through the library systems. After the first year, the packs were checked out 800 times. The goal is to remove the financial barrier for citizens and give them an opportunity to explore DNR properties that they may have not been able to previously.
- Revenue and visitation at DNR properties is flattening out and reducing slightly. For 2023, the department is seeing lower HPOS tax dollar revenues by half a million dollars. There is uncertainty what revenue will look like for 2024 but DNR will adjust accordingly. While the HPOS sales tax is not the sole revenue source, it is important at 44% of the total department revenues.
- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally inquired about the large difference in operating expenses for open spaces between 2022 and 2023. Daylan said he would reach out to the finance/accounting team to inquire. Pete noted it was also occurring for the parks operating expenses.
- Dave asked what the current visitation numbers were compared to. Daylan said the department looks at 2019 and 2022, omitting numbers collected during COVID.
 - Linda noted many people are travelling further distances to get to destinations. Daylan agreed, noting some of these destinations are LC properties.
 - Dave asked if Hermit Park Open Space was hitting capacity. Zach said camping during the weekends is full but there is some availability during the weekdays.

County Commissioner Update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally said she participated in the National Association of Counties annual conference. She was asked to speak on safeguarding communities against wildfire and natural disasters including forest health initiatives and the continued recovery and response to these events.
 - There was discussion around land use, DNR work and the Department of Defense with regards to properties (including other federal properties) and CEs, digging deep into protections and partnerships.
 - Many conversations and resolutions with the Environment, Energy and Land Use policy have been happening. Focusing in on housing and supportive workforce development for counties.
- The BOCC hosted the Community Leaders Summit last week on the 2024-2028 Countywide Strategic Plan at the Ranch with over 200 attendees. Productive dialog was had, and the community was very engaged. The new plan will include items such as things residents don’t know that LC does, i.e., LC is currently engaged in a water assessment led by CPIR. Many themes will be linked to open spaces and preservation.
 - A community survey will be coming out soon, please participate and send out to others. These plans are informed by the community.
- The LC Fair is celebrating its 140th year, the Rodeo its 25th, and the Ranch Complex its 20th.
- Hosting a wildfire panel talk August 2nd from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Oak St in the 1st floor Hearing Room.
 - The meeting will display the collaboration of entities working on restoration and preparing for future watershed and forest health.
- Toured Chimney Hollow construction site with the State Director and U.S. Senator Hickenlooper’s interns. Daylan provided information on the future open space.

County Climate, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Policy - Heidi Pruess, Climate Smart Program

- Heidi introduced the Larimer County Climate, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Policy as a two-page document updated in January 2023 from the previous 2019 policy, which centered around environmental stewardship. The purpose of this policy is to highlight priority climate actions for LC and be a communication piece to both staff and the community.
 - She pointed out, on page 2, the bulleted list exhibits specific climate impacts the county has identified to act towards.
- The Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA) document is a policy statement effective July 1st, 2023. LC is a member of this coalition which includes 50 counties and cities. The CC4CA assists with legislative decisions, rulemaking and informs internal county policy that follows state legislative efforts.
- Heidi said the ask of the board is to provide feedback on LC's policy, using the CC4CA policy as a reference. She is looking for suggestions on verbiage and content from all LC advisory boards to present to the BOCC.
- Discussion:
 - Gale asked if there were baseline measurements to know if the policy was successful after implementation.
 - Heidi noted some measurement tools for these policies are already in place. For example, number of acres conserved is imbedded into the Climate Strategy based on the Open Lands Master Plan. In addition, LC has the initiative, Climate Smart and Future Ready, and through this process there will be a suite of metrics the county will utilize.
 - The metrics will help the county identify if progress is being made and is the progress seen due to circumstances within the community with/without the plan.
 - Mark noted there is no specific mention of the agricultural sector and greenhouse gas emissions/air quality in either of the policies.
 - Heidi said she has approached the Agricultural Advisory Board for feedback. There is brief mention of the ag sector in the CC4CA #19 and 3-L in the LC policy, but the language is vague.
 - Linda requested the topic be revisited at the August OLAB meeting to allow for more in-depth discussion.
 - Daylan said board members can send input via email to Andrea and it will be brought back for discussion to the next board meeting in August. Responses will be due 1 week before the August meeting. All board members agreed. Heidi confirmed this worked for her.

Discussion Items

None

Action Items

Recommendation for approval of amendment to Signature Bluffs CE

- Meegan said LCDNR co-holds a CE with Windsor in Weld County. In 2014-2015, the City of Greeley was awarded a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant, which they used to purchase several small properties along the Poudre River. At the time of the grant award, an IGA was developed specifying LCDNR to co-hold the CEs on the properties, not as the lead, only the back stop. The current needed amendment to the CE arose a few years ago and is now ready for a recommendation from OLAB.
- Justin noted the CE is a 29-acre property on the northeast side of Greeley and includes a portion of the Poudre River Trail.
 - In 2021, LCDNR learned of two items that occurred on the property; encroachment from improvements associated with the development of stairs entering the natural area and a landscape area of turf inserted by the HOA to "fix" drainage and pondage issues. Both items are violations of the CE.

- In 2022, in collaboration with Greeley and Windsor, LCDNR identified the best course of action to address these violations was to amend the CE to provide positive benefit to the CE.
- Justin said the purpose of the proposed amendment is to address a violation of the conservation easement and provide a positive benefit to the Conservation Values of the Natural Area property by incorporating the following items:
 - The inclusion of an additional 1.86 acres, to be acquired by Greeley, to be encumbered by the conservation easement.
 - Requirement for Grantor to develop a "Landscape Plan", to be approved by Grantees (Windsor and Larimer County), that outlines management practices within the "Landscape Area" and "encroachment Area".
 - Strict prohibition on the expansion of the "Landscape Area" and "Encroachment Area".
 - In addition to approval by Windsor and LCDNR, the CE amendment will require approval by GOCO.
- Feedback/Discussion:
 - Tom asked if the agreement would specify the habitat plans. Justin confirmed, noting the added language would prohibit the expansion of the encroachment and landscape areas.
 - Linda commented, the City of Fort Collins often sees more of these violations in comparison to LCDNR, due to natural area proximity to urban development.
 - Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked if the CE would require the encroachment to be reversed. Justin said reversal was the original intention, but for reasons beyond the CE holder's control, stakeholders have chosen to increase land and tighten the rules/restrictions. Daylan added, the CE holders are not forcing the reversal of the violations but will ensure Greeley has the backing to enforce the CE.
 - Linda asked if LC holds CEs on City of Fort Collins properties. Meegan said LC holds CEs on parts of Soapstone, the Bobcat Ridge, Cathy Fromme Prairie and Coyote Ridge natural areas.
 - Daylan added, LC is contemplating reciprocal easements with Fort Collins on some properties not yet encumbered.
 - Dave asked for a motion to amend the Signature Bluffs Conservation Easement.
 - Pete moved to amend the CE; Linda seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Elections of Board Chair and Vice Chair

- The board elections began with the Vice Chair. Dave called for nominations. Linda Stanley was nominated by Tom Shoemaker. Pete Kelly self-nominated. A ballot vote went to the board. Linda won the vice chair election. Dave called for a motion; motion carried.
- Linda called for nominations for the chair. Dave nominated himself. The board voted unanimously. Dave's position stands as Chair.

Other Business

- Zach Cook noted Greeley does not have ranger staff so things can sometimes be missed.
- Pete commented on a trail study he came across on the west slope. The Utah State University Ecology Department set a tent on the side of the trail and was handing out GPS trackers to visitors to see how visitors were using the space. He inquired if DNR staff have considered this method (or something similar) to help identify where and how visitors are using DNR properties.
 - Daylan said DNR has used counters in the past as well as the statistically valid visitor survey Colorado State University developed and implemented at various county open spaces over the past 5 years. Additionally, DNR has purchased cell phone data through NOCO 2050 to look at how visitors are using LCDNR properties. The cell data provides similar results to the GPS tracking. Daylan also noted the Ranch is using a system, Placer AI, which include cell data that DNR is looking into.
 - Pete said he would like to know how the tracking ties to actual trail usage and if there is a way to track on specific trails. Daylan confirmed they can track specific trail usage. More will come with further exploration of the data.

- Meegan said in 2022, the Nomad Extension was complete. The new trail at Horsetooth is called the Stout Connector. In the Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan, there are several modifications to the Carey Springs cluster that are identified. The name may change based on the plans for the future trails further up the mountain. Pete provided kudos and gave good feedback on the new trail.

Next Meeting Scheduled

August 24th, 2023 - Larimer County Loveland Campus Building: 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537
Poudre River 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 – 6:20 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.