



Date: April 1, 2025
Time: 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Location: Larimer County Natural Resources Administrative Offices: 1800 South County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537, Bison Room & Zoom Webinar

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bill Prater	V	Chris Fleming	I	Jeff Stahla
Jeannie Mounts	A	Daylan Figgs	A	Tara Piper
Kathy Maher	A	Steve Gibson	I	
Kristina Kachur	I	Cindy Claggett	I	
Adam Crossan	I	*John Kefalas	V	
Pete Blume	I	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	I	Aubrey Hilte	I	
Ruthie Rollins	I	Tom McLaughlin	I	
Joe Bakel	I			
Phil Stout	A			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = Absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:31 pm

Agenda Review

Tabled for May - Review of Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax Revenues, Land Acquisition Strategy - Daylan

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Rob moved to approve the minutes from February meeting, Joe seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Rob moved to approve the minutes from March meeting, Joe seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Information and Announcements

Natural Resources events for this month: <https://larimer.org/naturalresources>.

To sign up for Parks Advisory Board updates, go to <https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Parks Advisory Board” box.

January 2025 Tax Distribution Letter

Updates and Reports

Park District Updates - Steve/Cindy

- Cindy noted that Carter Lake, the campgrounds, boat ramps, and bathrooms were opened on April 1st.

- Maintenance staff began prep work to transition the Big Thompson campground into day use parking spaces. The fire pits were removed, the picnic tables remain, and updated visitor information boards were installed.
- Notice to proceed was received for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). The funding was approved, and the project will move forward.
- Full time rangers completed water rescue training, which included the Larimer County dive team.
- A movie scene was filmed at Carter.

Steve

- Steve noted South Bay opened April 1st. Inlet Bay, the marina and Satanka will open in the middle of April and May.
- Closures have been initiated at Inlet for walleye spawning.
- Reviewing special events applications. Currently 30 are sitting in the queue. Chris noted due to Carter's long-standing restrictions; fewer event applications come through for Carter.
- The new docks are built, and the barrel buoys are in the water. The old docks have been repurposed for things such as road base storage.
- Full time rangers completed boat training.
- New dog poop stations are being installed around the Horsetooth District.

Visitor Services Manager Updates – Chris Fleming

- The forecast for the Help Preserve Open Space (HPOS) sales tax was lower than usual, but actuals came in higher than expected. DNR is taking a conservative approach and adjusting to meet lower levels of the sales tax. The department is optimistic but conservative.
- DNR's Admin/Finance manager, Lori Smith, retired. Interviews to fill the Business Operations Manager position are scheduled. There are many vacancies on the finance team.
- Annual ANS contract with Colorado Parks and Wildlife has been executed.
- Staff are planning a phase out of the Iron Rangers (pay stations). The Text-2-Park program will go system wide this year.
- All canyon parks reopened as of April 1st.

Visitor Services 2024 Year in Review - Aubrey Hilte and Tom McLaughlin

- LCDNR Visitor Services: Full-Time Employees (FTE), Temporary and Seasonal staff, and Volunteers.
- Parks and Open Spaces: 3 districts, 11 open spaces, 4 reservoir parks, 5 smaller parks, 103 miles of trails, 49 conservation easements, and 56,000+ acres of land conserved.
- Camping: 8 gatehouse attendants, 16 volunteer camp hosts, 15 campgrounds, 436 campsites, and 71,765 reservation nights.
- Rate Your Day visitor survey, conducted over three years, received 1,112 responses in 2024, a 65% increase from 2023. Overall, DNR received a four-star rating, with 78.8% of visitors being satisfied or very satisfied and 87% feeling safe and welcome.
- Permit Sales and Visitation: Annual permits sold ~ 10,000, daily permits sold ~162,000. 57% sold on site, and 32% sold online.
 - Challenges: Removing outside vendors as a location for annual permit purchase resulted in an estimated 2,500 fewer sales. Additionally, wildfire activity had a major impact, with 36% of reservations canceled and hundreds of refunds given.
- Self-Serve Permit Challenges
 - Self-serve kiosks (Iron Rangers) were down for 38% of the year.
 - Over the 4th of July weekend, five of the eight kiosks at HT were out of service, prompting extended gatehouse hours to recover revenue.
 - After evaluating the feasibility of an automatic license plate reader system, DNR opted to implement a Text-2-Park system instead due to cost. This transition will save the department over \$1,200 annually in service fees once the Iron Rangers are fully phased out.
- ANS

- The ANS program focuses on identifying and preventing high-risk watercraft from entering DNR waters.
- With six operational boat ramps (3 at Carter, 3 at HT), the program conducted 55,089 inspections and 1,546 decons, intercepting 10 boats containing invasive mussels.
- A total of 772 high-risk vessels originated from within Colorado, and 1,094 came from out-of-state, mainly from Wyoming, Nebraska, and Arizona.
- The CPW Port of Entry Program has been instrumental in catching many of these vessels before they reach DNR waters.
- Maintenance Program
 - The team consists of 9 full-time and 14 seasonal staff, spanning 3 districts.
 - Responsibilities include: tree felling, road clearing, fire ring fabrication, snow plowing, kiosk installation, and fabricating, storing and installing over 100 buoys annually across Carter and Horsetooth Reservoirs to ensure boater safety.
 - The 2024 projects included removing old docks and building four new ones, constructing a new maintenance shop at Hermit Park, installing a solar-powered ANS station at Satanka, and building the South Bay decon station with a flush toilet.
 - Statistics: applied 500 tons of road base, stocked 24,920 rolls of toilet paper, removed 182 tons of trash, mowed 1,200 acres of grass, and pumped 237,500 gallons of human waste from vault toilets.
- Ranger Program
 - The team consists of 15 fully-commissioned officers and 35-45 limited commissioned seasonals.
 - Full-time rangers received 1,911 hours of training, many also serving as instructors for other agencies.
 - Seasonal staff accumulated over 5,000 hours of training through programs such as Mini Skills, Boat Academy, and RES.
 - Rangers' responsibilities span public engagement, trail, water, and land patrol, safety enforcement, and some daily maintenance tasks.
 - Land patrols resulted in 43,629 public interactions, with 77% classified as public relations and 1.1% resulting in citations. These were mainly for underage possession, marijuana use, cliff jumping/diving, fishing without a license, and unattended fires.
 - On the water, 27 trained boat operators patrolled 3,000 surface acres across 3 reservoirs, completing 725 patrol hours and 90 water rescues. Of 4,521 contacts, only 2% led to citations, with common cites of no PFD and missing fire extinguishers. Seven boating under the influence arrests were made.
 - Rangers responded to 2,156 calls for service, 79% of which were ranger-initiated. Common contacts included vehicle-related issues, park disturbances, welfare checks, and mental health calls.
 - A total of 145 arrests were made for offenses such as DUI/DUID, traffic stops, and warrants.
 - Crisis Intervention and Response: rangers are faced with situations that require response to mental health crises, suicides, serious crashes, drownings, and fires.
 - During the Alexander Mountain Fire, Ranger Fahrenbruch was first on the scene on July 29th. The entire ranger team played a critical role in fire response throughout the incident.
 - Rangers recognized at the Sheriff Office's Annual Award Ceremony.

Board of County Commissioners Update

- Commissioner Kefalas noted spring recruitment closed March 28th. The BOCC is reviewing candidates.
- The FLAP grant project totals \$14.3 million. The federal government will provide \$11.2 million, and the County will match \$3 million. These funds will be used to do asphalt work at Carter and Horsetooth.
- Larimer County is the lead recipient of Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant dollars.
- The D-Dart Ranch conservation easement in Livermore was approved at a BOCC admin matters meeting March 25th. LC has conserved more than 5,200 acres in the last year.

- The Haligan Water Supply project 1041 permit was approved. This project will expand the reservoir on the North fork of the Poudre River. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2026.
- The Platte River Power Authority 1041 project hearing took place on March 10th and was extended to March 24th and April 21st.

Discussion Items

OLAB and PAB Joint Board Meetings and Workplan

- Staff are coordinating the logistics of the merger including a unified workplan.
- Board members inquired about the joint department management plan (due in 2027).
- Kristina requested new board members applying to be on PAB or OLAB be informed about the merger.

Regulation Updates: Process and Timeline – Chris

- Every other year DNR completes a regulation review and update.
- The goal is to create simpler, clearer regulations that protect visitors and natural resources, while also aligning with CPW, state and U.S. Coast Guard rules and regulations.
- DNR will review and update the regulations, then follow a public process before taking them to the BOCC for approval (July timeframe). The new regulations would then go into effect in 2026.

Action Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update – Tara Piper

- Tara noted Pinewood and Flatiron will be drastically lowered starting April 1st through May 5th.

Northern Water Conservancy District Update – Jeff Stahla

- Jeff said Horsetooth and Carter Lake are both near full. Irrigation releases have begun, releasing 10 cubic feet of water per second from Horsetooth.
- Northern Water will be reviewing its ANS inspection contract.
- East Slope non-public tours are scheduled for May 13th and June 10th.
- Chimney Hollow dam construction is nearing completion. The dump trucks are being demobilized. The reservoir should receive its first water in July and fill ~50% by the end of the year.
- A settlement was reached for Glade Reservoir. Planning has started and bids are being requested. The highway relocation will start this year. Anticipated completion of the reservoir is scheduled for 2030.

Board Members Reports

Director's Report - Daylan Figgs

Next Meeting Scheduled May 6th, 2025, at Horsetooth Area Information Center: 4200 W. County Rd. 38 E. 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 – 7:31 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.