



Date: April 5, 2022
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	I	Chris Fleming	I	Tara Piper (BOR) - V
Jill Wuertz	V	Daylan Figgs	I	Jeff Stahla (Northern) - I
Kathy Maher	V	Dan Rieves	I	
Kristina Kachur	I	Cindy Claggett	I	
Mandy Peters	V	*John Kefalas		
Pete Blume	V	Jordan Williams (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	V			
Ruthie Rollins (Chair)	I			
Scott Murray	I			
Spencer Clark				

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order - 5:31pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

- Daylan noted that a Vice Chair will be elected at this meeting, but normal elections for Chair and Vice Chair will take place in July also.

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

- Scott moved to approve the minutes, Kristina 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

[Northern Water: Bridge Install for Chimney Hollow Reservoir Access Road](#)

[Fort Collins Natural Areas Feedback: Poudre River, Soapstone, and Kestrel Fields](#)

Loveland Reporter Herald: Larimer County's Bill Wilson receives national award for fishing event

- Daylan added that Bill was recognized at a recent meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

December 2021 and January 2022 Open Land Sales Tax Distribution

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Final Plan Recommendations

- Daylan said document is near finalized, and it does include the updated timeframe for the nighttime closure (11pm-4am) and reservation options at the backcountry campsites.
- Jill had some questions about the Redstone Creek Riparian Corridor and how that area would be impacted by future trails. Daylan said that the Open Lands Advisory Board (OLAB) shared those same concerns, and the reasoning behind the management plan decisions would be included in the final version.
- Daylan added that since the plan is department-level, it was presented to the BOCC after OLAB approved it. The campaign information will go online this summer, and some trail building efforts may begin this year as well.

Updates and Reports

DNR Quarterly Board Report – Q4 2021

- The more complete financial information will be presented in April/May to the Advisory Boards. Daylan noted that revenues were up 12% and expenses were down 6% for Open Spaces. The Reservoir Parks revenues were up 19% and expenses also increased by 14% largely due to capital expenses such as the Sky View Campground, the new cabins at Horsetooth, and the new ANS shelters.

Park District updates - Dan/Cindy

- Cindy: The Sky View Campground Grand Opening is May 12, and the Airstream group will be staying in the campsites overnight. There is a new Volunteer Ranger Assistant program where the VRAs get to use paddlecrafts to provide education to members of the public on the Reservoirs regarding life jacket usage and other regulations. A new Camera was installed at the Carter Lake Marina facing the parking lot and the water. It will be viewable online like the Horsetooth South Bay Camera. Pinewood Reservoir's water level is down because Northern Water is doing work on the penstocks, but the water level will come up in the next couple weeks. The new Senior Ranger for the Carter District, Trevor Knight, has started. Cindy is coordinating the Ranger Excellence School program for May 16-20. About 70 students have registered, including many non-Larimer County Rangers. Cindy also noted that hiring has been a challenge for the whole department.
- Dan: Boat ramps opened April 1st at Horsetooth South Bay and Carter Lake North Pines. Dan went to the Parks Law Enforcement Association conference in South Carolina and noted that many other agencies are experiencing the same issues with capacity and overcrowding. Staff is doing the final prep work for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant, which was awarded to DNR for upgrades to the parking lots and other amenities at the Reservoir Parks.
- Daylan added that DNR received \$2 million through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) from the Board of County Commissioners for water/wastewater projects. There will also be an opportunity to apply for additional funding through the Federal infrastructure bill.
- Bill asked about ANS inspections on bad weather days. Dan said that the ANS shelters help staff stay protected so that the boat launches remain in operation during adverse weather conditions. However, if it is unsafe to boat then the ramps can be closed, and the public will be notified. Discussion regarding future reservation system options for recreational access and boat inspections followed, but staff said due to public opposition and limits on DNR's ability to implement that type of system, a reservation-based model for Reservoir access will not happen for some time.
- Ruthie asked whether the upcoming parking lot upgrades will include additional spots for vehicles. Dan explained how parking correctly in areas like Inlet Bay make a big difference in terms of capacity. Therefore, with additional parking lot features the net loss will be small and can be made up by properly aligned striping in other areas.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

BOR Overview and Responsibilities – Tara Piper

- Tara shared her screen. The Bureau of Reclamation was created by Congress in 1902 with a mission to develop water projects to “reclaim” arid western lands for irrigated farming. The concept of “homemaking” places for new settlers was integral to BOR’s early projects. Now BOR’s mission has expanded to include water development for municipal/industrial use, flood control, generation of hydroelectric power, and recreation.
- Map of 17 western United States and Reclamation Regions 5-9: Colorado is technically in Region 7, but the state operates in the Missouri Basin Region 5.
- BOR Organizational Chart: Camille Calimlim Touton is the Commissioner, with many high-level staff members located in Washington DC. There is a Legislative side of the BOR and separate regional offices that are location-based as well.
- Reclamation’s Mission: 1) Flood Control 2) Water Delivery 3) Energy production 4) Recreation
 - Since projects rely on the movement of water, water levels can change quickly which may impact recreation based opportunities in accordance with the first three priorities.
- BOR Project Definition: A single financial entity which can be composed of several units or divisions, integrated projects, or participating projects.
 - BOR operates according to a project beneficiary system, although some Federal-specific projects don’t require repayment. Most projects were constructed and operating by the 1970s, and they must maintain state water rights and operate within state law.
- Recreation Authority: The Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-72, 79 Stat. 213) allows BOR to seek qualified non-Federal government partners to manage recreation at its water projects. (Example: The Frying pan-Arkansas Act of 1962)
 - Prior to this act, BOR was only allowed to construct basic recreational facilities.
 - These laws were used to develop additional guidelines (directives/standards), which can be found in the online manual.
- Federal and Non-Federal Managing Partners: A few partners have turned back to their lands to BOR due to a lack of support/financial issues. But overall, there has been BOR partnership growth.
- Overview of Recreation
 - BOR owns approximately 7.8 million acres of land and water for public outdoor recreation.
 - 245 developed recreation areas with over 45 million visitors annually that are managed by federal, non-federal partners, and BOR.
- Website: www.usbr.gov/recreation
 - The public can do trip planning online based on the locations they want to visit. Laws and regulations are also posted online.
- Bill asked about other partner County Agencies in Colorado besides Larimer County. Tara said that she did not know of another Colorado County partner, but she did cite the Town of Granby which has a management agreement with BOR.
- Ruthie thanked Tara for the presentation and Kathy said she really appreciated the information as well.
- Kristina asked if BOR uses the WALROS guidelines for water recreation. Tara said those protocols are encouraged and listed as a resource on the management plan website.

Norther Water Update

- Jeff noted that Northern Water is an example of a BOR partner that has paid back their Federal management agreement.
- Chimney Hollow is a non-BOR reservoir that is being coordinated and constructed in conjunction with 12 water providers in the area. The Memorandum of Understanding for recreational operations at Chimney Hollow will be between Northern Water and Larimer County.
- Northern Water is offering their infrastructure tours this year to water community members and users only, not the general public. The day long tours will take place on May 17 and June 15, and they will include stops at Glade Reservoir, Horsetooth, lunch at Flatiron, the hydroelectric plant near Carter Lake, and the Northern Water office in Berthoud.

- Jeff noted that Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir filled very early this year. Both reservoirs did not get too low last fall, and water providers have been conservative with their usage. Agriculture, utilities, recreation, and environmental concerns are priorities for both BOR and Northern Water.
- Jeff addressed the construction on the penstocks that required the water level at Pinewood to drop. BOR manages the water distribution until the water gets to Carter and Horsetooth, and Northern Water needed access to the penstocks so they could assess the best way to divert some water to Chimney Hollow. Jeff also noted that the water levels of the other reservoirs downstream from Carter/Horsetooth are determined based on the water users' needs.
- Regarding Northern Water's involvement in delivering water from Carter/Horsetooth, Jeff mentioned that one of their main concerns right now are potential impacts from the East Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires.
 - Dan noted that there is a conference call once a month so that the water managers can plan for these types of issues and projects.

Discussion Items

Bureau of Reclamation MOU next steps.

- Chris said the County has reached an agreement with BOR. Only four items are left to finalize the wording.
- After the MOU is signed, then DNR can extend the concessions agreements with the Marinas and the Carter Lake Sail Club. The RFP process will start for both Marinas in 2023 after an 18 month extension. The new contracts would take effect in 2024. Dan clarified that agreements with concessionaires cannot extend beyond DNR's agreement with BOR.

Capacity and Closure Options – Dan Rieves

- Dan noted that while a reservation system for Horsetooth Reservoir is not currently planned, the current system is not sustainable either due to several factors: The acceleration in population growth and recreational interest after 2020; staff intensiveness when managing a one-in-one-out system; a lack of forecasting for potential visitors; no places for cars to wait in line; and issues with parking availability based on types of boats versus acres of open water.
- At the PLEA conference, Dan talked with the former Director of South Carolina State Parks about their approach to managing capacity at Myrtle Beach, which involved a hard closure in the early afternoon and reopening later in the day.
- The ANS process is helpful for DNR because it provides data on when boaters arrive and leave the Reservoir, and 2pm seems like the time when parking availability increases. Therefore, Dan wants to do a pilot project in 2022 over a few dates in the summer at Horsetooth that would involve a hard closure so visitors can leave and come back later in the day. There will be a roadside message board with this information, and it will be communicated to the public in a multitude of ways. Dan noted that DNR has made other changes to boating in the past, such as a specific April 1st opening date.
- Daylan reiterated the challenges with more people visiting the parks and issues with hiring needed support staff. Chris mentioned travel complaints from locals not being able to get to their houses due to backed up traffic at Carter and Horsetooth. Dan added that they will consider potential issues like camping reservations, paddleboard rentals, and events.
- Mandy thinks that people should not anticipate showing up in the afternoon on a weekend in the summer and expect to find a spot at Horsetooth. She thinks the hard closure is not a bad idea, and that ultimately a reservation system could be helpful.
- Tara recommended not using the word closure since there are regulations regarding public access to Federal property. Dan clarified that parking capacity would trigger the closure. In the summer after the first week of June, almost every Saturday and Sunday at Horsetooth reaches capacity. Carter reached capacity about eight times in 2021, but there is a spillover effect when Horsetooth gets full visitors drive to Carter Lake instead.

- Rob mentioned his experience in Florida where they instituted a similar closure in the late morning and a reopening in the afternoon, which seemed to deter people from trying to show up on a busy Saturday.
- Bill mentioned his experience at Arches National Park, which had signs about the closure well in advance of the entrance telling people to come back later in the day. Bill also recommended that DNR staff talk with Boyd Lake since they are dealing with the same issues.
- Kristina reiterated the importance of communication and how to connect with people who do not live here so that they have the information before they show up.

Action Items

Vice Chair Nominations/Vote

- Daylan said Ruthie's term as Chair ends in July, but the board needs to elect a Vice Chair today whose term will go through July as well. Kristina nominated herself.
- Vice Chair Vote for Kristina was taken orally. Motion passed unanimously. The Chair and Vice Chair positions will be voted on again in July.
- Daylan said two current Board members have terms that are ending in July, but they can reapply. There are a couple vacant positions, so please let people know to apply if they are interested.

Board Member Reports

- None

Director's Report – Daylan Figgs

- Daylan said that it is nice to be meeting in-person again, but hybrid options will be available as the PAB meetings rotate between the Administrative Offices and Horsetooth.
- There is an in-person DNR All Staff meeting on 4/6. The main topic is the Strategic Plan, which will be brought to PAB after it is finished and ready for implementation. Conversations around the Strategic plan involve looking at the future, funding through the Open Space Tax, self-generated revenue, and finding additional grants. DNR is looking at its levels of service, and how funding is utilized to take care of staff and add support while still balancing operations and capital projects. DNR is sound financially due in part to support from grants like FLAP which includes \$8.5 million in funding.
- Daylan thanked the Board for sticking with things through all the Zoom meetings and welcomed any additional ideas going forward. Jill requested a presentation on the how the different trails and roads are managed by DNR. Daylan said that DNR has its own in-house trail crew as part of the planning division, but roads are typically overseen by the Road and Bridge department at the County.

Update on Future Board Communications

- Jordan mentioned that the existing calendar invites to the board members will be deleted, and he will send out an email with further directions on how to RSVP for future hybrid meetings.

Next Meeting Scheduled

May 3, 2022 -- 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 – 7:19pm

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 williajo@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.