



Date: May 6, 2025
Time: 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Location: Horsetooth Area Information Center (HAIC) at 4200 W. County Rd. 38E, Fort Collins CO 80526 - Mountain Lion Room & Zoom Webinar

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bill Prater	I	Chris Fleming	I	Jeff Stahla
Jeannie Mounts	I	Daylan Figgs	I	Grant Brown
Kathy Maher	V	Steve Gibson	I	
Kristina Kachur Webb	I	Cindy Claggett	I	
Adam Crossan	A	*John Kefalas	V	
Pete Blume	A	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	I	Korrie Johnston	I	
Ruthie Rollins	I	Travis Bernstein	I	
Joe Bakel	I			
Phil Stout	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = Absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:32 pm

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

An edit was requested to a typo on page 3, “cliffing” will be changed to “cliff”. Ruthie moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Rob 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.

February 2025 Tax Distribution Letter

Updates and Reports

“Boating Officer of the Year” Award – State Parks

- Grant Brown, the Boating Safety Manager and Voting Law Administrator for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, announced that Senior Ranger Travis Bernstein was selected as the Colorado Boating Officer of the Year for the 2024 season.
- This achievement led to Travis being selected as the Western Regional Winner for the same award, making him the first Colorado representative to win a regional award. As a result, Travis will attend the

Western States Voting Administrators Association's annual conference in Guam and later compete for the National Voting Officer of the Year Award in Des Moines, Iowa.

- District Manager Steve Gibson read out Travis's award-winning nomination, highlighting his dedication to boating safety, leadership, and training.

Park District Updates - Steve/Cindy

- Cindy recently visited Chatfield Reservoir to observe their dock and marina setup. The visit was intended to gather ideas and insights that might inform future improvements.
- There are ongoing issues with pedestals and water leaks, and Gate 1 continues to experience operational problems. New docks have been constructed and are being installed.
- Received updated projections for water levels at Chimney Hollow, with water to begin coming in July.
- Steve reported the recent concrete canoe race hosted by CSU at Horsetooth Reservoir went smoothly. Rangers were on standby during the event in case rescue operations were needed.
- A significant decontamination event involving a large boat from the Ozarks that was infested with mussels. The decontamination process took several days, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife sent a full team to assist, particularly with cleaning the motors. Due to the extensive effort required, the boater will be invoiced for the additional time and costs incurred.
- Horsetooth Reservoir is now fully open for the season, and new docks have been built and installed.
- The new multi-use Bay-to-Bay trail is scheduled to open by the end of May. The trail includes a new informational kiosk. There was also discussion around neighborhood access to the trail, and while nothing is finalized, neighbors may submit permit requests which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate access.
- Attended a kickoff meeting for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) alongside representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, contractors, and other leadership. Improvements at Carter Lake will begin first, followed by Horsetooth next year, depending on how the project progresses.
- The South Bay parking lot has been newly striped, improving organization and accessibility.
- Some of the boat-in campsites were closed recently due to overfull vaults in the composting toilets, which had not been emptied as scheduled. While the Dixon site remains open and in good condition, the status of the other campsites is still being determined.

Visitor Services Manager Updates

- None

[2024 DNR Annual Report](#)

- Daylan noted 2024 totaled \$26 million in revenue, while operational costs were \$13 million.

Review of Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax Revenues – Daylan

- Daylan stated sales tax revenue for the year is currently down. Budget planning for the next fiscal year is underway.
- A 3–4% annual growth rate is typically projected; however, the 2025 forecast has been revised to reflect a 3% decline, correcting an overestimation made in 2023. This adjustment accounts for the ongoing decrease in revenue.
 - To address the shortfall, a core team is reviewing budget options, including identifying frozen positions, reducing operational costs, and adjusting workflows. The goal is to achieve approximately \$500,000 to \$1 million in budget reductions this year.
- The revenue decline may reflect a correction following the post-COVID visitation surge. Sales trends now appear to be returning to normal patterns. Technical challenges related to pay stations have also been improving, and overall operational processes are becoming more streamlined.
- Unlike many businesses that can grow with increased visitation, the department operates under a fixed capacity limit. This restriction continues to present challenges for revenue generation.
- Declining sales tax revenues are a broader economic trend, not limited to Larimer County.

Land Acquisition Strategy – Daylan

- The results of the 10-year Our Lands Our Future (OLOF) Survey show a strong public interest in how the county balances conservation and recreation. These findings influence land acquisition decisions, including what types of properties are pursued, where they're located, and whether they involve conservation easements (CEs) or fee simple purchases.
- From 2018 to 2043, Larimer County is projected to grow by 150,000 people. To maintain current levels of service, the county plans to conserve an additional 24,000 acres of land and build 44 miles of new trails. Acquisition strategies will need to reflect this expected growth.
- Land acquisition costs vary significantly.
- Properties with high public use, such as open spaces with recreational access, are the most expensive to manage. In contrast, conservation easements are more affordable but typically do not allow public access.
- A strategic, proactive approach is being used to identify high-priority parcels for acquisition, particularly those that buffer existing conserved lands and support future access goals. Examples include Chimney Hollow, Red Tail Ridge, and Canyon Edge.
- Per Help Preserve Open Spaces (HPOS) guidelines, 35% of funds must be spent on land acquisition or restoration. Much of this was front-loaded, and the department is now entering a long-term management phase using roughly 50% of the funding. The remaining 15% supports capital improvements and reservoir parks.
- Moving forward, more emphasis will be placed on acquiring conservation easements rather than full land purchases.
- From 2018 to 2025, the county has already added 12,141 acres, achieving 51% of the 2043 goal in the first eight years while spending just \$25 million, or 20% of the acquisition budget.
- The county uses a variety of tools to conserve land, including fee simple purchases, conservation easements, and trail easements. Community planning tools such as development reviews, restrictive covenants, and buffers also contribute to the strategy.
- Conservation easements are legal agreements that permanently limit land use to protect its conservation values. Landowners benefit through state tax credits, which can be sold or used over a 20-year period. Each CE is tailored with restricted uses and reserved rights based on the land's specific conservation values.
- Land transfers can pose challenges when ownership changes. Staff work to engage new landowners early in the process. Every CE is monitored annually, and staff collaborate with landowners to develop property-specific management plans. Currently, 51 easements are monitored annually, with no reported violations and an average stewardship cost of \$2 per acre.
- Of the current 62,000 acres conserved, the balance is roughly 60% fee simple and 40% easements. This is expected to shift closer to 50-50 by the end of the sales tax period, with approximately 30,000 acres falling under conservation easements.

Board of County Commissioners Update

- Commissioner Kefalas expressed appreciation to all staff and board members for their continued dedication and service.
- On April 21st, the Board of County Commissioners approved the Platte River Power Authority's 1041 permit application. This approval allows the Authority to move forward with shutting down the Rawhide coal power plant and replacing it with gas-powered air turbines.
- There is ongoing uncertainty regarding federal funding. A recent memo from FEMA outlines potential changes to the Public Assistance Program, which is used for disaster recovery. Proposed increases to the eligibility thresholds could make it significantly harder to access these funds in future disaster events.
- The annual budget retreat is scheduled for May 7th, focusing on planning for 2026.

Discussion Items

PAB & OLAB Joint Board Meeting Updates

- Daylan noted staff are working on the details for the upcoming joint meetings between OLAB and PAB.
- Voting will occur within each board individually and each board will hold a separate executive session.
- A combined agenda and work plan will be used, and hosting responsibilities will alternate between each board's chairs. The meeting duration will be limited to two hours, with additional time set aside for executive sessions.
- There will be no public comment period during the meeting, though members of the public are welcome to attend either in person or online.
- Planning discussions for the combined Parks and Open Lands Master Plan will begin in 2026.
- The meeting will take place at the Longview Behavioral Health Building.

Action Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Jeff announced April 22nd marked a significant milestone as the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) began including Chimney Hollow in its daily water reporting. Wet testing has started on the 40 new valves in the valve house, with minor leaks identified. Reservoir filling is still projected to begin in July.
- Construction continues on the dam, with progress on the top section, which is extremely narrow and limited to smaller dump trucks. The current phase involves backfilling with smaller rock, and fewer than 20 asphalt pours remain.
- Reservoir levels rose throughout March and April. BOR completed maintenance work at Lake Estes and associated power plants which led to both Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir being over 90% full. Water deliveries have resumed.
- No construction contractor has been selected for the Glade Reservoir project, with the timeline targeting 2026. Discussions between DNR and Northern Water will continue regarding DNR's potential role as recreation manager at Glade.

Board Members Reports

- A board member inquired about the possibility of installing no-wake buoys around the entire perimeter of the reservoirs. This concept was previously discussed in response to a state rule change allowing swimming anywhere. Staff indicated this will likely be revisited during the upcoming master plan update.
- Chri confirmed parking lot capacity closures will continue to be implemented this year as part of visitor management efforts.

Director's Report - Daylan Figgs

- The July 1st Parks Advisory Board meeting has been canceled. The next meeting will be July 24th, the first joint board meeting.

Next Meeting Scheduled

June 3, 2025 at Larimer County Natural Resources Administrative Offices: 1800 South County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537, Bison 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 – 7:23 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.

These meeting minutes were prepared with the assistance of AI technology and reviewed for accuracy by staff.