



Date: August 1, 2023
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	Jeff Stahla (Northern Water)
Jill Wuertz	I	Daylan Figgs	I	Tara Piper (BOR)
Kathy Maher	I	Cindy Claggett	I	
Kristina Kachur	I	*John Kefalas		
Adam Crossan	I	Meegan Flenniken	V	
Pete Blume	I	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	I			
Ruthie Rollins	I			
Scott Murray	I			
Phil Stout	I			
Geoff Townsend	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:32 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Phil 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.

April 2023 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

May 2023 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

New Board Member Introductions

- Geoff Townsend joined the board in July. He lives in Berthoud and works for ECI Site Construction Management. His job is detailed in many outdoor projects and focuses on the operations side of parks.

Updates and Reports

CIP Update – Meegan Flenniken

- Meegan said the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) is how DNR tracks projects across the department, on reservoir parks, open spaces and within the weed and restoration teams. Jon Plybon is the CIP manager and is responsible for maintaining the CIP.
- CIPs are created for 5-year cycles and adjustments/changes are made each year.
- DNR's CIP spans across all functions and funding sources of the department and includes both new capital projects (infrastructure/restoration) as well as replacement of existing capital assets. The CIP requires a significant portion of department funds and is where tradeoffs with budgeting long-term management costs are made.
- "New" Sales Tax Allocation Target
 - Capital Improvements/Renewal on Open Spaces = **12.7%**, Management of Open Spaces = **48.9%**, Land Acquisition and Habitat Restoration = **35.3%**, Capital Improvements/Renewal Horsetooth, Flatiron, Carter, and Pinewood Reservoirs = **3.1%**.
- CIP program goals are to increase pace of project completion, improve scheduling, cost estimating and budgeting, address asset maintenance & replacement, consider staff capacity to implement, denote grant contingent projects and create asset plans to help move forward with improving scheduling.
- Updates that have been made to the Potential Projects List are, a new gravel maintenance plan (working with engineering to rate and make whole department plans), modification for grant funding and prioritization of time-critical projects.
- 2023 Review - Total of \$8 million with \$2.7 million in grants secured.
 - Capital Replacement - **\$2M**. Includes: HT Mtn. OS Improvements (HPOS), Wastewater Infrastructure Projects (ARPA), DNR AO Connectivity (HPOS & BOR), and Red Mtn. OS Historic Barn Stabilization (HPOS & grant).
 - New Capital Infrastructure - **\$5M**. Includes: Poudre River Trail (HPOS & 3 Grants), ANS Facilities (BOR & park fees), Hermit Park OS maintenance shop expansion (HPOS) and the new LS Building (Mill Levy, Enterprise Revenues, HPOS).
 - Habitat Restoration - **\$1M**. Includes: Red Mtn. OS dam removal and creek restoration (HPOS), Eagle's Nest/Devil's Backbone RESTORE (2023 & 2024) (HPOS & grant) and River Bluffs Wetlands/Uplands Restoration (HPOS & future grant).
 - Meegan noted, DNR is entering a phase where there will be more capital replacement due to aging infrastructure. In this transition, the department is building ongoing asset management dollars and projects into the CIP. In later years there will be less investment in new capital vs. replacement/renewal of existing assets.
- 5 Year Capital Plan: 2024-2028
 - Capital Replacement - \$14M. New Capital Infrastructure - \$9M. Habitat Restoration - \$1M. Total = \$24M in capital projects.
- Ongoing Capital Asset Maintenance Projects – (Proportionally split by asset location & Funding Source)
 - Asset maintenance at \$100k a year (funded by 70% park fees and 30% sales tax), ADA improvements at \$10k a year (funded by lottery and HPOS), Asphalt maintenance at \$50k a year (funded by park fees), and Gravel maintenance at \$50k a year (funded by operating budgets). DNR is working with Engineering to identify the best schedule for gravel and asphalt.
- Capital Improvement Plan - **2024**
 - Capital Replacement - Includes: Boat dock replacements – 11 in total between Carter and HT (2024 & 2025) for **\$400k** (Lottery, BOR grant), HT Res. Satanka Bay Trails/Restoration for **\$150k** (park fees), Inlet Bay Restroom Upgrade is a vault to flush conversion and will likely be moving to South Bay with the ANS Decon Station, slotted for 2025, for **\$150k** (ARPA grant), and the Hermit Park pavilion well upgrade for **\$160k** (ARPA grant).

- New Capital - Includes: HT Res. Bay to Bay Trail for **\$158k** (Lottery, BOR grant, applied for GOCO Youth Core grant).
- Estimated cost and the funding sources are only the things included in the construction phase and do not include the work and activities happening before construction.
- **Capital Improvement Plan – 2025**
 - Capital Replacement - Includes: Rotary parking lot rebuild for **\$440k** (Lottery & BOR grant), and Carter/HT Res. Access which involves a large asphalt project to pave already existing lots (2025 & 2026) for **\$11M** (Lottery, Park Fees & FLAP grant).
 - New Capital - Includes: Chimney Hollow OS (2025 & 2026) for **\$4.3M** (HPOS, future grant) and Carter Lake Day Use/Swim Beach for **\$610k** (ARPA grant).
 - Restoration - Includes: Red Mtn OS Boxelder Creek restoration (restoration of hayfield and reconnection of divided river section) for **\$500k** (HPOS, future grant) and Heaven's Door habitat restoration for **\$300k** (HPOS, future grant).
- **Capital Improvement Plan – 2026**
 - Capital Replacement - Includes: HT Mtn. OS Soderberg parking lot rebuild for **\$156k** (HPOS).
- **Capital Improvement Plan – 2027**
 - Capital Replacement - Includes: HT Res. Satanka bay turn lane for **\$416k** (park fees, future grant).
- **Capital Improvement Plan – 2028**
 - Capital Replacement - Includes: HT Res. Satanka Bay improvements for **\$150k** (park fees).
 - DNR has been engaged in surveys to better understand use and identify how best to arrange and do management in this area.
 - New Capital - Includes: Boxelder Regional Trail construction is a joint Growth Management Area (GMA) project with Wellington and Fort Collins for **\$3.5M** (HPOS, future grant) and HDR construction (2028 & 2029) (HPOS, future grant).
 - Restoration - Includes: Long View Farm OS restoration for **\$250k** (HPOS, future grant). Long View Farm is currently on a 5-year dry wheat farming lease. DNR has requested the lessee to implement techniques that will improve the land.
- **Discussion/Feedback:**
 - Bill asked if there was any way to increase parking spaces at Satanka. Chris explained the goal of redoing the lot is not to add more spaces, but to better organize the people coming in and out. Use here has changed with an increase in paddle craft and DNR would like to have a better defined area for the type of use.
 - Bill followed up, asking if there is enough usage of the boat ramp to justify its operation. Chris said launch hours have been limited as the ANS cost per decon is significantly greater at Satanka vs other boat ramps. It is difficult to discontinue access to boaters as it can be difficult to remove what has always been offered.
 - Meegan added, in the upcoming Parks Master Plan, DNR will be focusing in on zoning and how to zone for certain uses to avoid conflicts. The department uses zoning often and it will be a key point moving forward when identifying what is missing and how to best accomplish operational sustainability.
 - Jill complimented the presentation noting her appreciation for DNR having asset management. The board echoed her comments.

Park District updates - Steve/Cindy

- **Cindy**
 - Water from the rainfall has been washing out roads and encouraging rapid vegetation growth.
 - Carter Lake Maintenance has been working hard to keep up with sinking black water tanks, washed out roads and campgrounds, and mowing. Maintenance of campgrounds has been particularly difficult without the typical break in campers during the week.
 - Carter Lake has been frequently hitting capacity or getting close. Text closures have been working well to get the word out. With multiple entry points, its difficult to place staff.
 - Losing seasonal staff leaving gaps in shifts at boat ramps.

- There have been many BUI's, DUI's, and fentanyl reported in the parks.
- Tommy Brewer (located at Horsetooth) just completed his Field Training Officer (FTO) program and Hanna Beam (located at Carter) is slated to finish by the end of August. The complete training from Academy through field training is over a year.
- Starting to see fire activity. More vegetation means more fuel.
- Observing campsites being sold "off park" through a variety of online websites and platforms.
 - Currently it is not impacting DNR to a great extent as the reservation holder is not required to be the user in the site.
 - It impacts DNR when the new user requests DNR front desk and ranger staff to update reservation information (staff time).
 - Chris noted DNR is trying to prevent people from large block buys which they turn around and sell individually at an increased rate.
 - Kathy inquired about the likelihood this was happening.
 - Cindy said not very likely at this time. The sites being sold are generally sold at the price they were purchased. She noted there have been some sold for double, but it's difficult for staff to track them.
 - Phil asked what the frequency was and how often LCDNR is aware of it happening. Chris explained staff have no way to track these transactions. The reservation holder is responsible for the site and anything that happens to it. Cindy said in a months' time, 5-6 have been brought to DNR's attention.
 - Tara asked if the reservation owner loses out if they cancel the reservation. Staff noted it depends on when they cancel. It can be anywhere from losing \$8 (Reserve America transaction fee) to the entire cost.
 - Jill inquired about the transferability of the sites and moving dates to the future. Chris said the same issue would probably still occur.
- ANS boat inspectors have stopped 16 mussel boats thus far in the season. Many of the offenders came from Lake Powell.
- Steve (Information/Update provided by Chris in Steve's absence)
 - Similar trends as Carter with mussel boats, staffing and rain fall issues.
 - Noted an uptrend in paddle crafts without required PFDs. It is time consuming for rangers to find and educate these users. Staff are increasing signage and utilizing volunteer paddle crafters for education.
 - Kristina asked if PFD's can be rented at the reservoirs. Chris confirmed, they can be rented at the ramps from the What's Up concessionaire. Ruthie questioned if the concessionaires provide PFDs to people purchasing their services. Chris confirmed they were providing PFD's and whistles, as required by State regulations.
 - Phil asked if whistles were required for paddle crafts. Chris said via the Coast Guard, a federal law requires all boats and paddle craft to have a sound producing object on them.
 - BUI and DUI arrests are up. Stats will be provided to PAB at the end of the year.
 - Scott asked if staff knew why they increased.
 - Chris noted DNR has more full-time ranger staff this year and they have been able to make this a priority, leading to an increase in detections and arrests.
 - Increase in heat injuries on the open spaces and reservoirs. Visitors are not consuming enough water and rangers are responding to roughly 2 heat related rescues a week.
 - Kathy asked about dogs. Chris said DNR can close the trails to dogs but not people, so dog heat injuries have not increased. DNR's education team and rangers set up at the trailheads to stop people from bringing dogs on the trails, letting owners know surface temperatures can reach 140°F.
 - Horsetooth Mountain nightly closure gates are installed and operational.
 - Bill inquired if visitor use is going down. Chris said compared to 2020 numbers, yes, but they are up from 2019. When capacity closures occur, it tends to be temperature dependent. The open spaces are busier early in the morning when it is cooler out and the reservoirs around 10-

12 pm. There is a difference made by the return of many city events as well, giving people something else to do.

2023 Quarter 2 Board Report

- Daylan shared the importance of training for rangers through the boating academy. Chris noted other outside agencies have been requesting to participate in DNR's boating academy.
- Daylan spoke to a new endeavor taken on by DNR, a trailhead survey.
 - The trailhead survey, [Rate Your Day!](#), is accessed via a QR code and includes 3 questions; "Overall, how would you rate your experience at the park or open space you visited today?", "Where did you visit?", and "Did you feel welcome?", which includes an optional comment box.
 - It is being directed by DNR's community outreach team. The survey has received 150 responses.
 - Scott asked about the comment box. Daylan said it is limited to 300 characters but allows the visitor to leave more detail if they would like.
 - Phil inquired about connectivity and issues with opening the QR code link.
 - Staff have not had many issues with connectivity and visitors accessing the QR code. Staff provide business cards to visitors, so they can scan into the survey when they are in internet range.
 - Kristina asked if the survey was specific to certain recreation areas (trailhead vs. boat ramp). Daylan said the second question asks where they were and has a drop down menu of specific options.
 - Chris noted DNR receives many compliments on the cleanliness of the bathrooms, and it is something staff take very seriously and care about.
- Daylan said 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.
 - Phil asked if and how the packs were marketed. Daylan explained the libraries have some marketing for them and there is information on social media as well. Phil continued, is it reaching the right audience? Daylan believes the packs are. DNR's education and outreach team is working with different community outreach groups to hit underrepresented groups.
- 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.
 - DNR parks have had internal issues with the self-pay kiosks but are working them out.
 - With the fee addition at Devil's Backbone in 2022, DNR had the option to charge for a non-resident daily but was unable to do so with the current permitting system. Roughly 45% of visitors to DNR properties are non-resident.
 - Ruthie questioned if DNR has reached the cap for what visitors are willing to pay. Daylan believes this is possible. The State Parks Pass and State camping tax might also have an impact on willingness to pay.
 - Kristina inquired about Hermit Park and the taxes being paid. Daylan explained, there are two new lodging taxes in Estes: one is state required and the other is a tax paid to the marketing districts, specific to Estes Park. Chris added, this makes it difficult for DNR to raise prices, as visitors are already paying an 8.5% increase, none of which the department will realize.

Marina RFP Update

- Chris said the RFP has been out for a few months and will close on August 25th. LC Purchasing handles the back end. The core team will review the applications and bring them to the board in September. Scott asked if there were any other updates. Chris noted, both current marina concessionaires are likely to put in a bid.

Discussion Items

None

Action Items

Elections for Board Chair and Vice Chair

- Ruthie asked for nominations for the vice chair. Kristina self-nominated. Bill motioned; Kathy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Kristina asked for nominations for the chair. Phil nominated Ruthie. Rob seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

- Tara is making note of DNR reports and assisting when she can.
- BOR hydrologists have been busy with the rainfall. They are receiving requests to take water but must decline because BOR storage is full.
- Daylan said BOR is a great partner and has been very helpful with grants and projects.

Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Jeff explained, BOR gets water into the reservoirs and Northern pulls it out to distribute it.
 - On July 10th, the entire system set a record for 800,003 acre feet.
 - With the rainfall, the system has been wet enough farmers and cities have not been requesting reservoir water.
- Big T water supply is full, and water continues to enter the system. Water is staying on the west slope and about 60,000 acre feet has spilled over the runaway.
- Chimney Hollow has struggled with construction during the rain and is about 2-3 weeks behind. Construction should complete in September 2025. Northern Water will own the reservoir (versus a joint BOR operation) and LCDNR will manage the recreation.
 - Hosted Senator Hickenlooper's staff and LC Commissioner Shadduck-McNally at Chimney Hollow for a tour. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally spoke to cooperation and joint partnerships.
 - Northern will be holding 2 tours of Chimney weekly, Mondays and Wednesdays. These tours are not offered publicly but can be signed up for through the website.
 - Chris asked Jeff for a joint board tour with Open Lands Advisory Board in October.
 - Hosting "Neighbors Day" Sunday, August 13th. Northern will open the area where the DNR entrance is located, provide information booths and construction overlook areas.
- Future Glade Reservoir is in a holding pattern. Northern is finishing the design and plans to begin construction once Chimney Hollow is complete.
 - Daylan added, Northern Water will own the reservoir and LCDNR will be first in line for recreation management.

Board Members Reports

None

Director's Report - Daylan Figgs

- Daylan reported DNR is in the 2024 budget building season. There is much uncertainty around property taxes, so DNR has two possible budgets built (one if HH passes). The department is mostly self-funded, but still receives dollars from the County General Fund. The Weed District is also funded via property taxes.
 - If the bill passes, the department must replace the loss of funds internally. There is growth within the department, inflation is hitting hard and county indirects have increased. With costs on the rise and revenue on the down slope, DNR will likely have a flat budget year in 2024. In the long term, the CIP will be slowed.
 - The outcome will be known after the election in November, and the BOCC will approve budgets in December.

- Jill congratulated DNR staff on the Stout Trail connector. Daylan said the 5% grade makes for a much smoother trail.
- Chris shared concerns about having a quorum for the September meeting as it is immediately after Labor Day. Pete will not be in attendance and Phil may not.

Next Meeting Scheduled

September 5, 2023 - 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 7:08 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.