



**Date:** April 2, 2024  
**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     | A |  | Chris Fleming          | I |  | Tara Piper |  |  |
| Jill Wuertz     | V |  | Daylan Figgs           | A |  |            |  |  |
| Kathy Maher     | I |  | Steve Gibson           | I |  |            |  |  |
| Kristina Kachur | I |  | Cindy Claggett         | I |  |            |  |  |
| Adam Crossan    | A |  | *John Kefalas          | A |  |            |  |  |
| Pete Blume      | I |  | Andrea Weber (minutes) | I |  |            |  |  |
| Robert Harris   | V |  | Jenn Almstead          | I |  |            |  |  |
| Ruthie Rollins  | I |  | Zac Wiebe              | V |  |            |  |  |
| Phil Stout      | I |  |                        |   |  |            |  |  |
| Geoff Townsend  | A |  |                        |   |  |            |  |  |

V = virtual attendee      I = in-person attendee      A = Absent      \*commissioner

**Call to Order – 5:31 pm**

**Public Comment**

**Agenda Review**

**Review and Approval of Last Minutes**

Kristina moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Kathy seconded. Motion not passed. Members not in attendance of the previous meeting abstained from voting. Approval tabled until the next meeting. Editing was requested to the March minutes, page 4 discussion item 1, “board” changed to “bylaws”.

**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 2024 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

**Update and Reports**

Park District Updates – Steve/Cindy

- Steve said staff are preparing for the season.
  - Temporary Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) inspectors and rangers are being trained.
  - DNR is holding a boat academy for staff.
  - Details for Ranger Excellence School are finalized, and registration is open.
- The portable South Bay decontamination station is being replaced and should be complete in May.
- Concrete has been poured for the Satanka shelter.
- Horsetooth (HT) District hired a new full time Maintenance Tech II.
- 3.2 million walleye fry will be released into HT Reservoir in April.
- The lottery for the Inlet Bay Marina is open. The current number of applications is 165.

- Chris noted DNR released information about the lottery through press releases, social media, emails, and Cindy did a radio show. Selection of the winning applicants is done by the marina vendor once they have completed a vetting process. Entering the lottery is free.
- Cindy said Northern Water (NW) completed a large operation on Dam 1 at Carter Lake.
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) will be conducting an angler survey (what is being caught, how many, etc.) the week of April 8<sup>th</sup> at Carter Lake and later at HT.
- Maintenance has been busy opening and cleaning up from heavy snow events.
- Carter Lake Rangers are working with CPW to address fishermen with no licenses.
- The lottery for the Carter Lake Marina currently has 67 applications.

#### Grant Funding and Partnerships Update – Jenn Almstead

- 2018 – 2023 Funding Categories: landowner donations, partnerships, grants
  - Total funds = \$26.1 million (64% Grants, 30% Partnerships, 6% Landowner Donations).
- Grants and partnerships vary year to year based on the projects in que.
- Between 2018 – 2023 for every dollar that was spent on acquisition projects (a total of \$34.8 million dollars), \$1.41 was secured through grants, partnerships, and landowner donations.
- Capital Project Grants 2023
  - FY2023 BOR (Title 28): **BOR** – \$153,000 **LC Match** - \$157,000
    - Boat dock replacement at Horsetooth Reservoir (HT), broadband internet support at Admin Office (AO), and asphalt maintenance repairs at AO and Pinewood.
  - FY2024 BOR (ANS): **BOR** - \$150,000
    - Additional funds for the new ANS wash pad (decontamination) station at South Bay parking lot.
  - FY2024 BOR (Title 28): **BOR** - \$380,000 **LC Match** - \$380,000
    - Rotary Park parking lot reconfiguration project, and boat dock replacements at HT and Carter Lake.
- Trails and Forest Health Grants 2023
  - Bay to Bay Trail at Horsetooth Reservoir: **Colorado Youth Corp Association (GOCO)** - \$34,400, **BOR (Title 28)** - \$75,000, **LC match** - \$75,000
    - Connecting Blue Sky Trail to South Bay swim beach. Complete ~2025.
  - Hermit Park Open Space Forest Health Project: **Colorado State Forest Service** - \$102,000
    - Fuels reduction project.
- Vegetation Management Grants 2023
  - Early Detection Rapid Response: **Dept. of Ag.** - \$36,700, **LC and Partners Match** - \$47,000
    - At no cost to the landowner, Land Stewardship crews remove List A and B noxious weed species from their properties.
  - DNR Maintenance Equipment Conversion: **CO Regional Air Quality Council** - \$23,749, **LC Match** – \$5,938
    - Mow Down Pollution initiative to retire gas powered equipment and transition to electric.
- 2024 Pending Applications
  - GOCO: grant within land acquisition cycle for Heaven’s Door Ranch refund
  - BOR: Reservoir transportation improvements
  - CPW: DNR trail maintenance (increase trail crew capacity)
- Grants and partnerships presented here do not include cooperative partnerships, i.e. ANS funding agreement with CPW.

#### Discussion Items

##### Chimney Hollow Open Space Management Planning Overview – Zac Wiebe

- Plan Objectives: Assemble ecological data to clarify conservation values, use ecological data in combination with public feedback and stakeholder input to develop management zones, identify appropriate land and water recreation experiences, appropriate recreation infrastructure to assess trail system and reservoir, and opportunities for environmental education.

- Decision Making: ecological, cultural, and agricultural resource protection, quality recreation experience, financial and operational feasibility, and sustainability.
- Overview of Property: Jointly purchased in 2004 by LCDNR and Northern Water. The open space is ~1,700 acres, reservoir surface will be approximately 760 acre feet.
- Baseline Data and Management:
  - Data collected: raptor nests/grassland bird surveys, riparian areas, sensitive vegetation communities, cultural resources, grazing assessment.
  - Management actions: stewardship plan, vegetation monitoring, forest management plan/implementation, weed control on CHOS and NW ownership.
- Project Schedule:
  - Reservoir Construction: The dam is expected to be completed at the end of 2024. DNR has an agreement with Northern Water to not allow access to the OS until the reservoir is filled (by 2026-2027).
  - Planning & Implementation: Management plan in 2024, pursue funding in 2024 & 2025, build infrastructure & trails in 2025 & 2026, anticipated grand opening in 2027.
  - Planning Schedule for 2024: identify opportunities, benefits, and constraints, develop initial draft plan, draft plan review, finalize draft plan and present to the advisory boards and the BOCC for recommendation for adoption.
- Public Input: Stakeholder/technical advisory group includes recreation groups, ecological experts, and agency partners, online feedback tools include surveys with IP limits, a website, and open house(s).
- Agency Partners:
  - Northern Water: Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) The agreement was updated in 2020. Chimney Hollow will be managed as one property.
  - City of Loveland: Conservation easement (CE) holder
  - CPW: Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation & Enhancement Plan (FWMEP) for permitting obligations.
- Regulatory Context:
  - Northern IGA & Recreation lease (2020): No overnight use (protects water quality), wakeless boating (15 mph max), restricted areas (entire eastside of shore), footprint. DNR and Northern have been able to coordinate cost savings by using construction pads for recreation once the dam is complete.
  - CE on open space held by City of Loveland and GOCO: Approvals of any infrastructure, 15-acre footprint and non-motorized recreation.
  - CPW FWMEP: Fishery requirements
- Preliminary Design: ~260 parking spaces (90 trail access and 170 reservoir access)
- Trail System: 10-12 miles, range of difficulty, connection to South Shore
- Questions/Feedback:
  - Zac noted, for the public process, DNR will do a ¼ mile buffer for mailers, and extend if need be. The public process will shed light on the recreation opportunities residents are looking for, such as hosting concessionaires, swimming beaches, etc.
  - The members of the Parks Advisory Board's role will be to review and provide feedback to DNR throughout the management planning process. The Open Lands Advisory Board, responsible for making recommendations around the Open Space Sales Tax, will have more involvement as the tax will be assisting with funding Chimney Hollow.
    - Kristina noted there is good reason to combine boards with larger long-term projects coming up.

#### Our Lands Our Future Survey Results – Jenn Almstead/Zac Wiebe

- Zac noted the data collected will inform master planning efforts with regards to residents' desires around land conservation, recreation, and future funding. The 2023 survey used the same questions from 2012 and included new key questions around issues and access barriers.
- Methods

- Zac said RRC, a third party consultant, was hired to conduct the survey. They were the consultants on the 2012 survey, and thus were familiar with DNR concepts and natural resources.
- The survey was mailed to 7,936 Larimer County residents via random sampling with oversampling in smaller communities.
  - Total sample size (=13.4% response rate)
  - Statistically valid survey (<3% margin of error)
  - Respondents closely reflected the U.S. Census demographics of Larimer County
- Jenn shared results from the statistically valid survey (Open Link results, 2,800 responses, can be found in the appendix of the final report).
- Visitation
  - Familiarity with Open Spaces and Trails (OS & T)
    - 2023: **68%** familiar or very familiar, 2012: **46%** familiar or very familiar
  - Visitation to OS & T in a 12-month period (Top two locations)
    - 2023: City of Fort Collins **81%**, City of Loveland **50%**, 2012: City of Fort Collins **80%**, City of Loveland **48%**
  - Frequency of Visits
    - 2023: Average **37.2** times a year, 2012: Average **20.1** times a year
- Site Specific Issues
  - Top 3 Concerns: Crowding, Dog Waste, Parking \*Averages indicate minor to moderate problem.
  - Reasons For Not Visiting:
    - Lack of Time - 2023: **42%**, 2012: **30%**
    - Crowding - 2023: **33%**, 2012: **17%**
    - Not Enough Parking - 2023: **32%**, 2012: **3%**
    - Unaware of OS & T - 2023: **19%**, 2012: **34%**
    - Safety Concerns - 2023: **11%**, 2012: **2%**
- Satisfaction
  - Activities & Household Frequency (Top three activities): hiking/walking/running on natural trails (top activity choice), biking paved trails (second top activity choice), hiking/walking/running on paved trails (third top activity choice).
  - Importance and Satisfaction: In all cases, satisfaction is higher than importance for all activities (average of 3.5 or higher for satisfaction and importance), except for hiking/walking/running on natural trails. This indicates residents would like more and improved trails.
  - Top Activities (residents would like to see more of in the future): hiking/walking/running on natural trails, biking on paved trails, recreation with dogs, tent camping.
- Future Conservation and Funding
  - Public Funding (what residents would spend funds on – top 3 responses)
    - To protect lakes, rivers, streams (top choice), outdoor recreation opportunities (2<sup>nd</sup> choice), protecting wildlife habitat (3<sup>rd</sup> choice).
  - Sales Tax
    - Likelihood residents would renew sales tax and user fees at the current level – **81%** would renew the sales tax, **70%** would renew user fees.
    - Likelihood residents would increase sales taxes and user fees - **54%** in favor of increasing sales tax, **40%** in favor to increase user fees.
  - Land Acquisition (importance of where future dollars are spent – top 3 choices)
    - **86%** said maintenance of existing lands with public access, **81%** said ecologically sensitive lands, **78%** said lands within Larimer County cities and towns.
  - Land Acquisition – Single Most Important Priority (top selections): **29%** said ecologically sensitive lands, and **17%** said maintenance of existing lands.
  - Conservation vs. Recreation - 2023: **41%** of respondents wanted an equal balance between conservation and recreation, 2012: **45%** of respondents wanted an equal balance between conservation and recreation.
- Long Term Planning

- Wildfire – **3.5 average** (moderate to major problem/concern)
- Running out of land - **3.3 average** (moderate to major problem/concern)
- Drought **3.2 average** (moderate to major problem/concern)
- Accessibility was a common comment by respondents indicating a potential information gap. 3% noted it was a barrier, highlighting they were unsure of properties they could utilize.

#### By Laws Update

- Chris said Larimer County updated its boards and commissions policy and code of conduct. This initiated the update process for DNR's three advisory boards bylaws to align with this new policy. The last update to the PAB bylaws was in 2008.
- The bylaws will be updated, reviewed by the county attorney, and recommended to the BOCC for adoption by PAB.

#### Action Items

##### U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

- Tara said the work at the Pole Hill power station has been completed. Plans are being made to start moving water from the Western slope to the Eastern slope. Based on the snowpack forecast, HT and Carter should be filled by June.
- Approval for the ANS decon station and flushing toilets has been delayed by BOR.

##### Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Chris said NW held their annual water conference April 2<sup>nd</sup> and discussed water predictions for 2025.

#### Board Member Reports

##### Director's Report – Daylan Figgs (Daylan was not present, his update was given by Chris Fleming)

- DNR received a GOCO Centennial Grant of \$1.5 million dollars for reimbursement of the Heaven's Door Ranch (temporarily renamed Blue Mountain) acquisition.
- Entering budget planning for 2025. The last two years have seen a flat budget, 2025 will likely have a modest increase.
- The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) contract with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has been signed. Through the agreement, CPW provides DNR with \$300,000 - \$350,000 for the year to run and operate its ANS program. Annually the ANS program costs DNR \$700,000, which partly goes to paying 30-50 ANS inspectors.
  - Kristina inquired about state checkpoints for 2024. Chris said Jen Murray left DNR to work with CPW on the port of entry inspection program.

**Next Meeting Scheduled** May 7, 2024 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 – 7:37 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](mailto: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.