



Date: August 3, 2021
Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: Zoom Webinar

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bill Prater	x	Chris Fleming	x	
Deborah Shulman	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
Jill Wuertz	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Kathy Maher	x	Lori Smith	x	
Kristina Kachur	x	Melody Johnson	x	
Mandy Peters	x	*John Kefalas	x	
Pete Blume	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Robert Harris	x			
Ruthie Rollins	x			
Scott Murray	x			
Spencer Clark				

x = present

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:30 p.m.

Public Comment – none

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Rob moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Kathy seconded, Ruthie and Deb abstained. 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

Horsetooth Reservoir Community Forum: lconnects.mysocialpinpoint.com/horsetooth-reservoir-forum

- It was noted the public survey will close September 1st and the idea board will close September 30th.

Update and Reports

Park District updates – Dan/Mark

- Mark – visitation slowed slightly last week due to hot/dry weather, which gave crews a break. The forecast indicates monsoon season will be robust. Water levels are above average for June, expect them to fall 18-20 feet by mid-September before rising again. Flooding from burn areas up the Poudre Canyon has impacted the city water supply. Maintenance crews are fully staffed and getting caught up on backlogged projects. Rangers are doing well and in good spirits. Inlet Bay Marina has been busy and rentals/slips are full. Camper cabins are expected to be complete by mid-September.
- Deb asked about Lake Granby water quality, Mark explained there are still some unknowns, seeing some increases in cyanobacteria and blue green algae but runoff hasn't presented significant issues yet. More data will be available next year.
- Chris – provided Carter Lake update for Dan. Maintenance crews are also getting caught up on projects and rangers are doing well. Water levels are above average. It was noted Carter functions better when levels are lower due to increased parking space availability. Most significant challenge right now is technical issues at Gate 1, no phone line and trouble connecting the iron ranger to the cloud. Fiber connectivity should be available in a couple months, rangers are working on short-term solutions. Boat thefts have decreased. Sky View Campground is ahead of schedule and expected to open in October.
- Scott asked if issues at Gate 1 are impeding visitor access, Chris affirmed. When connectivity is not viable, visitors are rerouted up to the Marina and/or to Gate 2/the Admin Office to buy permits. Resolving the issue is top priority.

Discussion Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation update – Chris

- Chris explained all 4 reservoirs (Horsetooth, Carter, Flatiron, and Pinewood) are owned by Reclamation and LCDNR manages on-site recreation. The current 25-year management agreement expires this year and our department has been working on updates since March 2020. Key components include revenue and weed management. Marina contracts expire next year and contracts will go out to bid with new 5-year contracts awarded in 2023. A handful of concessionaires have expressed interest already. The process will be open to the public and updates will be brought to the board.
- Jill asked about diversifying services and opportunities for nonmotorized recreation, Deb suggested continuing this discussion under board member reports.

2022 Budget Approach continued – Daylan/Lori

- Daylan explained this presentation includes what the department intends to submit to the BOCC.
- Lori provided updated estimates for expense and revenue budgets, including Utilities and Central Services. Updates on mandated items include:
 - Regular wage and benefit increases: 2% market, 2% merit benefits
 - Utilities increases: 6%
 - Central Services increases: 3%
- Daylan added the department will likely request General Fund dollars and ARPA funding for CIP items. Mark mentioned grants helped fund ANS shelters and additional grant cycles are forthcoming.
- Kathy asked how weed contracts create revenue, Lori explained the Weed District is funded by property tax and the Weed Enterprise program offers services including site visits, herbicide sales, management, etc. and contracts with/receives revenue from other entities.

Action Items

Fee discussion and recommendation

- Systematic fee increases occur every 3-5 years and the department is currently wrapping up conversations with the community about increases based on inflation and rising visitation for 2022. The [engagement webpage](#) will close August 10th and information will be presented to the BOCC thereafter. Daylan showed the information presented at the community meetings:
 - Department budget overview 2020
 - Total revenue: \$20,542,000
 - Total expenses: \$15,800,000 (the difference between the two funds long-term maintenance and capital improvements)
 - Sales tax: 44%
 - Fees (permits and camping): 29%
 - Grants and partnerships: 16%
 - Weed District property tax: 4%
 - Charges for services (concessions, tickets, rentals): 4%
 - General Fund: 2%
 - Interest/misc.: 1%
 - 2022 proposed fee adjustments
 - 10% increase in user fees
 - Resident day use permits would increase from \$9 to \$10
 - Resident annual vehicle permits would raise from \$90 to \$100
 - (Disabled individuals and low-income permits would incur no increase)
 - Initiating a new user fee at Devil's Backbone Open Space south trailhead to align with the fee being charged at the north trailhead
 - Importance of fees
 - User fees collected at reservoir parks fund the majority of management costs and partially fund new and replacement capital facilities at parks.
 - Fees help the county stay on track with inflation and meet costs due to record increases in visitation.
 - Sales tax vs. user fees
 - Open Space Sales Tax benefits all by supporting land conservation, habitat restoration, and scenic views.
 - User fees are paid by those who recreate. The cost burden (fees) is shared among those who use the spaces.
 - A statistically valid survey of 7,500 residents produced from the 2014 Our Lands, Our Future study identified user fees as the preferred funding source. Results also emphasized a management balance between natural resource preservation/protection and outdoor recreation.
 - Overview of the continuum of service and costs as seen in the county's land conservation and recreation portfolio.
 - Future growth and level of service per capita to maintain visitor experience:
 - Larimer County population
 - 2020: 345,000 people
 - 2043: 495,000 people (150,000 projected)
 - Acres conserved
 - 2020: 53,000 acres
 - 2043: 77,000 acres (24,000 added)
 - Miles of trails
 - 2020: 98 miles
 - 2043: 142 miles (44 added)
 - Trailhead parking spaces
 - 2020: 665 parking spaces
 - 2043: 965 parking spaces (300 added)
 - What to expect if fees are adjusted:
 - Accelerated deferred maintenance schedule

- Enhanced day use areas at Carter Lake
- Hermit Park Open Space cabins
- Improvements at current parking lots (Satanka Bay, Soderberg trailhead, Rotary Park)
- Devil's Backbone Open Space Management Plan update
- South Bay to Inlet Bay trail connection
- What to expect if the gap isn't met:
 - Delays, less new or replaced recreation infrastructure
 - Limited future parks or open space properties open to the public
 - Lagging deferred maintenance and negative impacts to user experience
- Accessibility initiatives
 - Bison pass low-income permit
 - Small Grants for Community Partnering
 - Busing subsidy for title I schools
 - Sales tax share and trail connections with cities
 - Public engagement web forum and translation of key collaterals
 - Discover Pack library loan program
- Jill asked if discounted camping is available through the accessibility initiatives, Daylan clarified a daily or annual permit is required in addition to a camping reservation and the low-income bison pass is an annual pass. Discover Packs also contain a day pass.
- Scott asked for further clarification on the \$5M difference between total revenue and expenses shown on the first slide. Daylan explained the \$5M is needed not only for future growth but to fund projects in the CIP.
- Daylan summarized initial results from the online survey (~150 respondents).
- Jill suggested a survey question to ask if visitors are aware of the discounted programs we provide.
- Deborah asked about resident vs. nonresident fees on federal property, Daylan said our agreement allows for differential pricing and we are awaiting final approval from Reclamation.
- Scott asked if the county is able to determine the percentage of taxpayers that visit our parks and open spaces, it was noted 50% of users are residents of Larimer County/assumed to be paying sales tax but reservoir parks and properties like Devil's Backbone and Horsetooth Mountain open spaces continue to be regional destination points for visitors.
- Rob moved to recommend the BOCC adopt the fee increase request, Ruthie seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Reports

- Deborah encouraged board members to consider future topics for reports.
- Bill commented on the City of Durango's management of motorized vs. nonmotorized boating at Lake Nighthorse Recreation Area. It was noted that responses from the Horsetooth Reservoir Community Forum will be summarized and presented to the board for future discussion.

Director's Report – Daylan Figgs

- Reminder that the Chimney Hollow Open Space advisory tour is Friday, August 13th. An optional advisory board volunteer trail day is scheduled for Friday, September 10th.
- Chris recognized Larimer County Rangers Lane Fahrenbruch and Colton Ackerly for saving the life of a motorcyclist at Carter Lake over Father's Day weekend.
- Wrapping up Land Use Code changes, including oil and gas regulations.
- DNR recently presented a demand management system to the BOCC with plans to bring more information to PAB. We also plan to present Grand Lake Clarity updates and the economic study to the board.

Next Meeting Scheduled

September 7, 2021 via 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 – 7:24 p.m.

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 michlsl@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.