



Date: January 17, 2024
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
Jill Wuertz	I	Daylan Figgs	A	Tara Piper
Kathy Maher	V	Steve Gibson	I	Lesli Ellis
Kristina Kachur	I	Cindy Claggett	I	
Adam Crossan	I	*John Kefalas	V	
Pete Blume	V	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	V			
Ruthie Rollins	A			
Scott Murray	A			
Phil Stout	I			
Geoff Townsend	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = Absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:35 pm

Public Comment

Julie Dunn is a member of the Fort Collins Rowing Association, joining the meeting to listen in.

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Adam moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Phil 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.

September 2023 Tax Distribution Letter

October 2023 Tax Distribution Letter

Update and Reports

Commissioner Update

- Commissioner Kefalas said the BOCC is working through mill levy certifications and entering final steps with the Treasurer. Letters should be mailed out to residents by the end of January. \$5.5 million dollars

in tax credits will be issued back to Larimer County residents. Additional documentation will accompany the mill levy credit. Residents are encouraged to reach out to the Treasurer or BOCC with questions.

Park District Updates - Steve/Cindy

- Steve
 - Noted increase in cooler weather and closures with snowfall. Staff have been plowing.
 - Polar Plunge event on Saturday Jan. 20th at Horsetooth Reservoir followed by a 5K race.
 - Emergency Services fire crew will cut the ice.
 - Expecting 200-300 participants.
 - Removing the cottonwood trees from this summer that are resting along the shoreline.
 - Kristina inquired about alternative uses for the downed trees. Steve said staff have been considering options for their use.
 - Satanka ANS shed should be coming in the next few months.
 - South Bay Decon Station will be constructed in Spring 2024. The vault toilet will be converted into a flush toilet system and boat decontaminations will be linked into the same water system.
 - Working on contracts and concessions.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked about the progress of the DNR Title 29 Regulation updates. Chris noted the BOCC signed the updated regulations, and they will go into effect immediately.
- Cindy
 - Cindy noted hiring has begun for temporary staff.
 - DNR's newest full-time rangers, RJ, and Joe, both came to the department with police certifications (did not need to go through training). Joe is currently in FTO (Field Training Officer) and RJ challenged and passed POST (test out of police academy in Colorado) and starts field training January 18th.
 - Kristina inquired about possible hiring challenges for 2024. Staff noted each year is different and comes with its oddities. Some years see many returning staff, others do not. Chris mentioned DNR tries to keep pace with similar positions and salaries but is not always successful in being able to match rates.
 - Phil asked about temporary employee retention. Chris said retention is good once people are in the door. DNR has a strong culture, however temporary positions are a challenge with students (and retirees) being offered 6-month positions when trying to enter the workforce.
 - Phil inquired about offering a retainer. Chris said DNR has budget restrictions. Steve added, staff are considering alternative options for returning temps, such as additional training or alternative job duties (boat ranger vs land ranger).

Carter Lake Swim beach/FLAP – Cindy

- DNR is reconfiguring the eastside of Carter Lake with two funding sources/projects: a FLAP grant and ARPA dollars (both Federal dollars). FLAP is a paving project that will fund parking lot paving, and ARPA will be used for shoreline infrastructure.
- This project is a management plan project identified in 2017. It has been through an extensive public process. Public outreach and community neighborhood outreach will continue through 2024 via community meetings, website updates/interaction, and visitor education and signage (including bilingual options).
 - The current swim beach area is very small with a narrow sharp entrance and the road is often covered in sand during wind events. Plans include closing the current swim beach and parking lot, removing the bathroom, and restoring the vegetation.
 - The Big Thompson campground, which includes 7 non-electric campsites, will be converted into all day use parking.
 - A new Quarry parking lot will be constructed on the south side of the county road.
 - Lot will include 99 parking spaces, a crosswalk with flashing lights for safe road crossing, picnic tables, first-come-first-served shelters, and stairs for water access.

- The swim beach areas will not be designated and will change with the rise and fall of the water levels. No boat buoys will be used along the shoreline. Motorized boats will have access to the old (current) swim beach.
 - The area will have two bathrooms (one relocated from the current swim beach and one relocated from Horsetooth Reservoir).
- The vision is to provide more day use and organize parking and visitors along the road/shoreline during peak-visitation.
- DNR plans to hold a community meeting at the Carter Lake Admin Office in February to discuss neighborhood concerns, provide process information and answer questions.
- Timeline: 2024 will be education, 2025 both projects will move forward.
- Feedback/Comments:
 - Jill asked the total cost of the project. Cindy said the FLAP grant was \$8.6 million (which includes paving at Horsetooth as well) and LC will match \$3 million. ARPA was designated by LC for \$600,000 for day use and trails.
 - Commissioner Kefalas inquired about non-designated swim areas with liability and public safety, having no lifeguards. Cindy said boat and land rangers will still patrol for safety. Currently DNR does not have lifeguards on duty. The big change is the organization of visitors. Chris noted no lifeguards on duty was a nationwide movement and DNR has worked with the County Attorney on liability. DNR has multiple safety messaging signs across its properties and signs that inform visitors they swim at their own risk.
 - Kathy asked about existing vegetation in the newly constructed areas. Cindy noted DNR does not plan to remove any vegetation and will build around some trees to keep the natural vegetation.
 - Jill asked if the swim beach areas will be like Horsetooth Reservoir swim beach. Chris said they are more gradual and sandier.
 - Kristina questioned the continued allowance of fishermen vehicles on the beach when the water levels drop. Cindy said this will likely continue but will be closely monitored.
 - Kathy inquired about possible increased dam safety concerns with the Big Thompson campground in proximity to the dam and having more day users. Cindy noted pedestrians cannot be on or near the dams.
 - Tara added the plans will go in review with BOR Safety of Dams and they will address signage and setting restrictions and limits.
 - Adam asked about a water quality feature in the plans. Cindy noted during the planning process run off concerns from the parking lot into the reservoir were addressed with a buffer of vegetation between the lot and the road.

Discussion Items

Annual Work Plan

- Chris noted the Annual Work plans come at the request of BOCC. They aid DNR in organizing what topics to bring to the boards and when. The plans are broken down by quarter and are a flexible guideline (not a set schedule) that can be adjusted throughout the year. The plan will need to be recommended by PAB for BOCC approval.
- Quarter 1: 2023 Q4 Board Report, Marina Concessions, VS Program Review, Permit System Review, Carter Eastside Improvement, OLOF survey (HPOS sales tax), Chimney Hollow Recreation Plan Updates, Compass.
- Quarter 2: 2024 Q1 Board Report, Budget Presentation/Information, 2023 Review into 2024, Update By-Laws, Special Event Process Update, short and long term concessions, Colorado River Update (Northern Water update), DNR Department Metric Report.
- Quarter 3: 2024 Q2 Board Report, legislative items, CIP update, Reservoir Parks Management Plan update and planning process, PAB board elections.
- Quarter 4: 2024 Q3 Board Report, FLAP, Glade Reservoir Recreation Plans, Volunteer Program update, Trails Program update, Budget planning update.

Action Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

- Tara reported BOR is not moving water through the system at this time. A December 11th survey review of the system found a piece in the system that was not functioning properly above Pinewood Reservoir. An afterbay concrete slab in the Rattlesnake Tunnel was floating when it should have been in a fixed location. It is suspected the slab became unanchored and shifting water levels moved it.
 - Plans are made to fix the afterbay and engineers are working on a solution design. There is no timeline yet, but staff are working quickly. Staging will take place the week of January 15th.
 - The HOA in the area has been notified and joint press releases will be sent out when more information and updates become available.
 - Jeff added, as water moves from Lake Estes toward Pinewood, there is a powerplant there that generates electricity, when the after bay was affected and lost its direct connection to direct water down into Pinewood, it impacted a power feature.
 - Kristina asked how much water is typically moving through the system this time of year. Jeff said this is a time of year when a lot of water is moved to make room up system for the spring runoff. Kristina asked about back up plans for spill over in Lake Granby. Jeff, water will likely go over the spill way into the Colorado River system.
 - Phil inquired about the domino effect and long term impacts from the pause. Jeff said water storage at Horsetooth and Carter is good, and this halt will not impact water users (agriculture, recreation, etc.). The biggest impact will be a later fill date for the two reservoirs in the spring.
 - Steve added the reservoirs are higher than usual due to the rain 2023 experienced. Jeff noted farmers used less water for irrigation, leaving more in the reservoirs.
 - Jill asked if the repairs were mostly concrete work. Tara confirmed and said plans are to repair what is there and reconnect the concrete pieces.
 - Kristina questioned potential impacts on Chimney Hollow construction. Jeff said it will not impact Chimney Hollow. There will likely be voiced concerns about the water levels at Pinewood, but there is enough water in the reservoir to adequately supply the neighborhood.
 - Tara said the latest for project completion is around May.
- Contacted by a tourism group requesting permission to fly a drone over Horsetooth Reservoir to capture video of winter recreation. There were concerns with impact on resources and creating increased visitor use during off-season times. The group backed out of the request.

Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Chimney Hollow Updates
 - Jeff reported a change order with Barnard for Chimney Hollow. There was discovery with an issue of rock swell (cubic yard of rock into crushed rock, i.e. how much fill does that rock produce, swell factor is how much space is in the rock). The swell was coming in at 16-17%, meaning the rock was compacting denser than expected. Due to this, the project will require more rock to be quarried and hauled to the dam site to achieve its height. This will add 55 days to the required completion date of August 2025.
 - Meetings and discussions have begun for Chimney Hollow recreation management and plans.
 - Kristina asked if the BOR was involved. Jeff confirmed, but only on the messaging side of things, there will be no federal involvement in the management plan.
 - Published new construction update video for Chimney Hollow on Northern Waters YouTube channel. Chris commented on the great videos Northern Water provides.
 - Adam asked about a board field trip. Jeff said the tour will likely be in the spring when the weather warms. It will be a combined trip with the Open Lands Advisory Board. The tour could potentially view the Saddle Dam, a 40 foot dam (increasing storage by 30%), which will be constructed this year.
 - Commissioner Kefalas requested the BOCC be included in the tour as well.

- The Spring Water Symposium will be held April 2nd at the Embassy Suites in Loveland. Registration opens in February.

Board Member Reports

- LC DNR Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is on January 31st to say thank you to all who volunteer their time. It will be located at the Ranch.

Director's Report – Daylan Figgs (Report given by Chris Fleming)

- Chris said historically LC DNR has had two management plans, Open Spaces and Reservoir Parks. DNR is moving forward to combined and have a single Management Plan for both. This will be a focus over the next few years. The Parks Management Plan will be moved forward a year or two to align with the time frame to update the Open Space Management Plan. The Parks Advisory Board and Open Lands Advisory board have many overlapping topics and will likely entertain a few joint meetings in the next few years.
- Working with other county departments on the Special Events Process. This is a county wide effort, and the core team has presented to the BOCC on this topic.
 - Requests include:
 - Blackout dates on holiday weekends between Memorial Day and Labor Day, with one additional weekend. Legacy events (with 10+ years of operation) will be permitted.
 - Limit to 1 event on any stretch of road within 14 days.
 - A goal is to improve safety for cyclists and visitors in the Horsetooth Reservoir Area. The roads and shoulders were not designed to host many cycles and vehicle visitors simultaneously.
 - Lesli noted the items have been included in a resolution to be finalized at an Admin Matters session Jan. 23rd.
 - Phil asked what the outcome would be for event applications when all weekends are booked. Chris said applicants will be turned away. Large road racing events have huge impacts on the roads and can shut roads down.
 - The core team is looking to implement stricter guidelines for the application window, create better criteria to judge events, and note overall benefit to county residents.
 - Phil inquired about moving events to Carter Lake. Staff noted Carter Lake does not have a shoulder/bike lane and a resolution was signed by the BOCC for blackout dates many years ago.
 - Lesli added, this will be an ongoing conversation within the community. LC will have outreach events for residents and applicants and refine the process moving forward.
 - Jill asked how DNR can be certain events are playing out the way they were proposed and noted justification for increasing number of rangers. Chris said it is on DNR staff (rangers) to check in and be sure events are following their application plans. Lesli noted following the rules and application plans can also impact an applicant's ability to get future permits.
- Continuing Marina contract negotiations. More to come.

Next Meeting Scheduled February 6th, 2024 - at Administrative Offices at 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537 - Bison Room and 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 – 6:57 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.