

**Date:** May 2, 2023**Time:** 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM**Location:** Horsetooth Area Information Center (HAIC) at 4200 W. County Rd. 38E, Fort Collins CO 80526 & Zoom

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	V	Steve Gibson	I	Anna Perea (BOR)
Kristina Kachur		Cindy Claggett	I	
Adam Crossan	V	*John Kefalas	I	
Pete Blume		Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	V	Sarah Watson	I	
Ruthie Rollins	I	Carolyn Rasmus	I	
Scott Murray	I			
Phil Stout	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:33 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Moved the Cabin Tour earlier in the meeting agenda.

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Jill moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Phil seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Bill inquired about the member of the public who provided comment during the April meeting regarding cheatgrass and Larimer County's plans for aerial spraying. Daylan said staff have been in contact with her to follow-up and have since had many conversations. DNR is specific about herbicide selection and the processes used for weed control.

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 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

Lesli Ellis introduced herself as the new CPIR director. She previously served as the Community Development Director for LC. She is familiar with natural resources, and has a background in planning and landscape architecture, as well as trails and open space planning.

Updates and Reports

Commissioners Update

- Commissioner Kefalas reported, on May 2nd, the BOCC approved DNR to move forward with a trail easement for the Lewis Farm in collaboration with the Trust for Public Lands. This property will remain in agriculture and be used to provide the community with an educational agricultural experience.
- He has been participating in the recent legislative session. There were over 230 bills seeking closure. Two bills in specific were relevant for the counties budget. They address concerns about property valuation and tax implications. Senate Bill 303 (property tax revenue) and 304 (companion bill for the assessor – developing different methods for valuations and appraisal of properties), require referred measures (requires vote by the public/voters). LC worked through various scenarios if either or both bills were passed.
- Commissioner Kefalas noted there are upcoming board vacancies for the Board of Health opening on July 1st. The county is encouraging applications from residents with lived experience. The application will close at the end of May.

Horsetooth Cabin Tour

Park District updates - Steve/Cindy

Cindy

- Noted Carter has been getting busier. Visitor Services continues hiring and training seasonals. The changes in weather have been causing difficulties with getting things ready for the busy season.
- CPW conducted a Walleye egg retrieval (about 2 million eggs) at Carter.
 - CPW will fertilize the eggs and put them in a pressure machine to sterilize them. The fish are stocked but unable to breed. This allows better control over the predatory fishes' population.
- Reported Boyd Lake will only have 2 full-time rangers. The state is doing a test run for open swimming in state run reservoirs and lakes. There will not be a designated area for swimming. DNR is exploring this as a possible option. However, with safety in mind, measures may be required such as a swimmer's buoy following the swimmer.
 - Daylan asked if the open swimming would be DNR's choice, or if the state would require it via a rule change. Cindy explained it is a state rule change, but not one made by the coast guard, therefore it would be at the discretion of DNR. Chris continued, it is not mandatory for DNR to do, but the department tries to be in line with what the state is doing. Cindy noted it requires significant staff time enforcing swimmers and this comes with safety concerns.
 - Scott voiced his support for open swimming and believed many visitors would appreciate the expanded access.

Steve

- Steve said water at Horsetooth has been coming in and should reach peak levels by July 1st.
- South Bay and Inlet Bay boat ramps are open for the season from 7 am to 7 pm (hours will change later in the season). Satanka will open in mid-May.
- DNR's trail crew has been working on removing spiderweb trails and doing restoration work at Rotary Park.
- There are a few big events taking place over the coming weeks at Horsetooth.
- Training continues for seasonal boat rangers. This includes exercises both in a pool and on the reservoir.

- He reported incidents of poaching of walleye at Inlet Bay. When the water is low but flowing, the fish swim in and spawn. DNR closes the area off every year for a few months, but people have been entering the closed zone and taking the walleye. DNR is working with CPW on this operation.
- Satanka will be closed to boating in the back half of the bay from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked about the parking lot upgrade for Satanka that's included in the Master Plan.
 - Daylan said there is a hold on parking lot plans for now. The department would need to find funding to insert a turn lane, and an expanded lot could potentially make congestion problems worse. DNR is waiting to see what changes need to occur to address demands on recreational management.
 - Chris added, DNR will figure out what changes will happen at Satanka when the Master Plan is redone.
- Two DNR Rangers responded to a cardiac arrest incident off park. They utilized an AED and were able to save the patient. They were calm, collected and worked well through the situation.

2022 Annual Financial Summary Report – Sarah Watson

- Review of Departmental 2022 Revenues
 - Total: \$25,583,568
 - General Fund: 1%
 - Conservation Trust/Lottery: 4%
 - Sales Tax: 47%
 - Intergovernmental Revenue: 10%
 - Miscellaneous Revenue: 6%
 - Property Tax and Specific Ownership Taxes: 3%
 - User Fees Revenue: 29%
- 2022 Operational Expenses Budget to Actual Comparison
 - Open Spaces 18% under budget
 - Reservoir Parks 10% under budget
 - Land Stewardship 4% under budget
- Open Space 5-year Operational Revenue and Expense Trends
 - Increase from 2018 – 2022 in Service based/user fee revenue.
 - Increase from 2018 – 2022 in Sales tax revenue.
 - Overall revenue was largest in 2018 and has varied over the years.
 - Operating expenses have remained steady over time.
 - Project and/or capital expenses were high in 2018, 2020 and 2022, where they peak.
- Reservoir Parks 5-year Operational Revenue and Expense Trends
 - Service based/user fee revenue steadily increased from 2018 to 2022.
 - Other revenues were consistent with a large increase in 2021.
 - Operating expenses increased slightly but steadily from 2018 to 2022.
 - Project and/or capital expenses remained level and spiked in 2021 (Skyview Campground), coming back down in 2022.
- Land Stewardship 5-year Operational Revenue and Expense Trends
 - Property & specific ownership tax revenue steadily increased from 2018 to 2022.
 - Other revenue varied through the years but remained constant from 2021 to 2022.
 - Operating expenses gradually increased from 2018 to 2022.
- 2023 Capital Improvement Budget Summary by Category
 - Using various funding sources and covering multiple projects, the following is budgeted for 2023:
 - Land Acquisitions - \$5,157,637
 - Replacement of buildings/structures/grounds - \$1,984,583
 - New Capital Improvements (Buildings/Structures/Grounds) - \$5,498,046
 - New Capital Improvements (Restoration) - \$490,558

- Capital Renewal - \$937,879
- Feedback/Questions:
 - Ruthie asked if the increase in revenue of 10% is typical year to year. She continued, when DNR comes in under budget, does the “excess” money go into other places, like capital improvements. Sarah said the increase is mainly attributed to receiving grants. The “excess” funds do not automatically roll into the capital improvement fund.
 - Scott inquired if the minimal increase in open space operating expenses was correlated to visitation. Sarah noted the response to visitation in the parks required significantly more staffing than the open spaces. Daylan followed up, levels of visitation are extremely different between the parks and open spaces, thus operating costs are inherently higher and the cost-to-visitation correlate differently.
 - Ruthie asked if the Land Stewardship team are covering more area as new acquisitions are made by the department. Sarah confirmed.
 - Bill questioned if the “land acquisitions” budget was specifically for acquiring Heaven’s Door Ranch. Sarah said the budget is created for any possible acquisitions and DNR did not know it would be acquiring HDR when the budget was put together.
 - Bill asked if the revenue collected from Devil’s Backbone (DBB) matched what DNR was expecting/anticipated. Sarah said there has been a noted difference in revenue from DBB fees.
 - Daylan and Steve added, DNR used the first 6 months after implementation to educate on the new fees and were loosely enforcing/ticketing.
 - Scott asked if DNR had visitation numbers from before and after the fee implementation. Steve replied, DNR conducted a visitor survey in 2022 and the data is currently being processed.
 - Daylan noted capacity might be impacting the daily and annual permits sold. Permit sales remained relatively flat, within a 1% change.
 - Jill asked if there are any plans to increase fees in 2023.
 - Daylan said DNR is not eager to increase fees. There are many moving parts with the market and the new state permit.
 - Jill followed up, when DNR does a fee increase study, does this consider the private sector (State Parks, etc.). Daylan said he was unsure, but a consultant would be hired to examine the market.
 - Cindy noted, DNR requires boaters to have a boat permit because registration fees paid to the state, go to the state. DNR does not charge for ANS inspections or decontaminations. Thus, the department needs a means by which to collect revenue from boating visitors.
 - Jill asked how the staffing issues have been impacting the budget.
 - Daylan said staffing significantly impacts the budget. Seasonal staff were paid more seasonal hours in 2022 versus 2021, but there were 35 fewer positions filled. This led to a heavy burden on full-time employees.

Annual Report

- Available online [here](#).
- Daylan said DNR puts together an annual report every year to provide taxpayers insight into where tax dollars are being spent. The department has transitioned to an online format for ease of access.
- The 2022 At A Glance section highlights key things DNR accomplished and are proud of.
- The report focuses on the day-to-day work being done by department staff. It provides a perspective of what it takes to run and keep a reservoir operational. This annual report is the first to come out under DNR’s new mission statement and Strategic Plan.

Quarter 1 Report

Discussion Items

None

Action Items

None

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

Tara

- Tara said she has been working with LCDNR on 5 projects within the Title 28 budget. BOR is engaged in a cost share program with DNR to assist with funding projects. An example is providing \$340,000 for the CBT project. Funds are split between DNR and Estes Park.
- In the process of filtering through paperwork for grants which will be awarded later in the year.
- Daylan noted BOR has been a great partner on LCDNR properties and have helped immensely with finding funding.

Anna Perea (Public Affairs Officer for BOR) - Getting to know the Colorado Big Thompson Project (CBTP)

- What does the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) do?
 - Operates 338 reservoirs.
 - Delivers 10 trillion gallons of water to more than 31 million people each year.
 - Provides 1 out of 5 western farmers with irrigation water.
 - Make hydropower electricity, enough to power 3.5 million homes.
 - Manage, with help from partners like DNR, to provide 249 recreation sites with 90 million visitors each year.
- Anna's Office helps to manage the CBTP in conjunction with Northern Water
 - This is a transmountain/trans basin diversion project. That means it moves water from one watershed to another, and this project specifically under the Continental Divide from west to east.
- Willow Creek Dam and Reservoir
 - Everything starts here.
 - Water from Willow Creek is diverted (moved) into Willow Creek Reservoir.
 - A pumping plant lifts the reservoir water up 175 feet where it can then flow into a canal to Lake Granby.
- Granby Dam, Reservoir and Farr Pump
 - Lake Granby is the largest reservoir in the CB-T Project.
 - The Farr Pump Plant lifts water from Lake Granby into the Granby Pump Canal.
 - The water then flows into Shadow Mountain Reservoir.
- Shadow Mountain Reservoir and Grand Lake
 - Shadow Mountain Reservoir sits on the Colorado River downstream of but connected to Grand Lake.
- Three Lakes Collection System
 - Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Reservoir and Grand Lake together are called the Three Lakes Collection System.
- Alva B Adams Tunnel
 - Diversions from Grand Lake flow into the tunnel.
 - Built 1940-47
 - 13.4 miles long, below Rocky Mountain National Park
 - 9.75 feet in diameter
 - Capacity of 550 cubic feet per second (cfs).
 - From Grand Lake, the water goes through a very long tunnel and below the Continental Divide.
- East Portal Reservoir, Aspen Creek Siphon and Rams Horn Tunnel
 - Water in the Adams Tunnel flows into the East Portal Reservoir just a few miles from here. Then water flows across Aspen Creek Valley in a siphon and then under Rams Horn Mountain through a tunnel.
- Mary's Lake Power Plant and Prospect Mountain Conduit and Tunnel

- At this point, water enters a steel penstock and falls 205 feet to Mary's Lake Power Plant. This power plant is located on the west shore of Mary's Lake. Water is moved from Mary's Lake to the Estes Power Plant, on the shore of Lake Estes, by the Prospect Mountain Conduit and Prospect Mountain Tunnel.
- Estes Power Plant, Dam and Lake
 - Lake Estes, below Estes Power Plant, is formed by the Olympus Dam constructed across the Big Thompson River. The afterbay storage in Lake Estes and the forebay storage in Mary's Lake help the Estes Power Plant to meet daily variations in energy demand.
- Pole Hill Power Plant
 - Water from Lake Estes is diverted through the Olympus Siphon and travels through Olympus Tunnel to the Pole Hill Canal. It then drops 815 feet through the penstocks to the Pole Hill Power Plant.
- Pinewood Reservoir, Rattlesnake Dam and Tunnel and Bald Mountain Pressure Tunnel
 - Water exits the Pole Hill Power Plant afterbay via Rattlesnake Tunnel. It flows into Pinewood Reservoir and from the Bald Mountain Pressure Tunnel, drops 1,055 feet through two penstocks to Flatiron Power Plant.
- Flatiron Power Plants and Reservoir
 - After flowing through the Flatiron Power Plant, water enters Flatiron Reservoir, which regulates the water for release to the foothills storage and distribution system. The afterbay storage in Flatiron Reservoir and the forebay storage in Pinewood Lake enable Flatiron Power Plant to meet daily power loads.
- Water Movement Structures
 1. Charles Hansen Feeder Canal flowing downhill to Horsetooth Reservoir
 2. Big Thompson River
 3. Siphon
 4. Dille Diversion Dam (1 mile upstream)
 5. Chute to river or powerplant
 6. Big Thompson Powerplant
 - During periods of high flow (such as spring runoff season), water from the Big Thompson River can be diverted into the canal by Dille Diversion Dam one mile upstream and then used for power generation at Big Thompson Powerplant. The water re-enters the river just downstream of the powerplant.
 - Project water deliveries to the Big Thompson River descend through a chute from the feeder canal or maybe passed through the Big Thompson Powerplant to convert the available head to electrical energy.
 - The powerplant is only used on a seasonal basis.
 - Jill asked what areas the Big T Powerplant serves. Anna said all powerplants are controlled by Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). They are responsible for selling the power to customers. The revenue goes to the Colorado Department of the Treasury.
 - Phil questioned, if flow is too strong through the canal/tunnel, can it be diverted. Anna said this should never occur. Flow rates are controlled based on what water is released from Flatiron and/or into Horsetooth.
 - Jeff added, Handy Ditch takes water from the Big T. to supply water to Berthoud using the Chute to river or powerplant (#5 above). Water is sent down the river via the canal. This is how Northern Water can deliver and distribute water shares BOR gathers.
- Horsetooth Reservoir
 - Supplies water to Fort Collins, rural water districts, CSU, Dixon Feeder Canal.
- Carter Lake
 - Supplies water to Little Thompson River, St. Vrain Creek, Boulder Creek Supply Canal, Boulder Creek and Reservoir, South Platte Supply Canal (delivers water from Boulder Creek to the South Platte River).

- The Flatiron reversible pump lifts water from Flatiron Reservoir, a maximum of 297 feet and delivers it through Carter Lake Pressure Conduit and Tunnel to Carter Lake. When the flow is reversed, the unit acts as a turbine-generator and produces electric energy.
 - Ruthie asked if the energy produced goes back into the system to then lift the water. Anna confirmed.
- BOR gets help from many groups.
 - Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District helps run the collection and distribution systems.
 - Recreation Partners:
 - US Forest Service on the Western Slope
 - Estes Valley Recreation and Park District for the Estes facilities
 - Larimer County Department of Natural Resources for the Pinewood, Flatiron, Carter and Horsetooth facilities.
- Green Mountain Reservoir
 - Part of the project but is not connected, part of the project in that it compensates the western slopes for the water that is being diverted to the CO Big T project.
- Discussion/Feedback:
 - Scott asked who Alva Adams was. Anna said Alva was the congressperson responsible for getting the project up and running.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked, with the snow pack this year, what, if any, implications does this have for Granby and what water is available.
 - Jeff said Granby and Horsetooth (HT) are both scheduled to be filled and projected to spill over July 1st. (Not HT) Both bodies of water are CO Big T water.
 - Front Range cities request additional water, but it is preferred to not pull from the agricultural farming water supply. This led to the creation of the Windy Gap Project, a local district project. Northern Water has a contract with BOR to store Windy Gap water in Granby when space is available.
 - Windy Gap water is not available every year. Chimney Hollow will be a dedicated space for this water that has different water rights, not classified as CBT water.
 - Commissioner Kefalas inquired about Green Mountain.
 - Anna said Green Mountain is complex and has many agreements in place. It is in the Blue River Watershed which hosts a different runoff scheme and provides well for the Western Slope.

Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Jeff gave an operations team update. The data fiber project has reached an important milestone. Access to cell coverage is now available.
 - Daylan added, the office at Carter Lake has experienced horrible connectivity issues but fiber is very expensive. When Northern Water upgraded the fiber cables for Chimney Hollow, they allowed DNR to tie in. The overall cost to LC was \$65,000. BOR and Northern are both helping DNR cover the cost.
 - He continued; the fiber was turned on April 13th. It will include DNR pay stations, and travel around to the Marina, connecting the southern part of the county.
- Jeff noted construction at Chimney Hollow hit a big milestone. The dam is above ground level. It will be a slow and steady process and the dam should be 180 feet above ground by the end of the year. The 1 millionth man hour has been reached in the last month.

Board Members Reports

None

Director's Report - Daylan Figgs

- Daylan noted DNR has started the budget process. Staff are digging into the numbers and identifying where the department is growing. The financial model will be revamped with changes in costs. The

department is internally shifting money out of CIP to help cover operating costs. This comes with the trade-off of building fewer things.

- The Open Space Master Plan is in the lineup to be redone, followed by the Parks Master Plan. The Parks plan will focus on recreation management and combined uses on the reservoirs.
- There are property tax code changes being discussed in the legislature. These will impact LC's general fund and ultimately impact DNR's revenue.
- Larimer County 101 is a group of citizens that join different county activities to get a look behind the curtain at LC. DNR will hold its class on May 4th at HAIC.
- Commissioner Kefalas asked Daylan to provide a brief overview of the DEIA board presentation he and Meegan Flenniken (DNR's Land Acquisition Planning & Resource Division Manager) gave.
 - Daylan said he and Meegan presented to the DEIA board, providing details on what work the department does and asked the board where DNR could improve/do differently.
 - The old mission statement was long and complex. The new mission, "Connect People, Nature and Place", is inviting and shares the departments desire to support all visitors, ensuring they can enjoy DNR spaces in whatever way best fits them.
 - DNR hosts a variety of programs directed at removing barriers, encouraging all people to participate. Some examples include Discover Packs for economically impacted people, covering bus parking fees for Title 1 schools, increasing bilingual staffing, and doing community outreach through a variety of community platforms.
 - The department is focused on extending partnerships to be able to meet people where they are.
 - The DEIA board provided DNR with key contacts of people and organizations to reach out to.
 - Many of Larimer County's properties are more rural, making access difficult for some county residents. To aid in accessibility, DNR supports the municipalities, who also receive funding from the HPOS sales tax, to help create a "close to home" recreational experience for those who are unable to reach DNR spaces.
 - DNR's Small Grants Program funds projects that are embedded in the county on a smaller scale. The program allows DNR to support the community in a unique way.
 - There are many regional efforts that have been engaged in DEIA work for a long time. DNR hopes to adopt things from these regional spaces that will support what the department is trying to accomplish without reinventing the wheel.

Next Meeting Scheduled

June 6, 2023 - 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 – 8:10 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.