



Date: March 7, 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
Jill Wuertz	I	Daylan Figgs	I	
Kathy Maher		Steve Gibson	I	
Kristina Kachur	I	Cindy Claggett	V	
Adam Crossan	I	*John Kefalas		
Pete Blume		Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	V	Korrie Johnston	I	
Ruthie Rollins		Jennifer Murray	I	
Scott Murray	I			
Phil Stout	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:33 pm

Public Comment

Kathleen Sands lives in Larimer County and works for Lyons Climate Action. She shared her concerns about the RESTORE Colorado 22 program which intends to aerially spray an herbicide on cheatgrass. She asked for Larimer County to halt the program until further research on the environmental and health impacts are conducted. She invited DNR to meet with her to discuss the program and possible alternative options for Larimer County.

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.

December 2022 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

Updates and Reports

Park District Updates – Steve/Cindy

- Steve spoke of a recent ice rescue at Horsetooth Reservoir. Zach Cook, a DNR ranger, was the first on scene and was able to safely remove the individual from the water. This prompted further ice rescue training and certification with Poudre Fire Authority. Ice rescues are not common, but there has been a noticeable increase in the number of people on the ice. Rangers have stocked up on proper equipment and plan to acquire new ice suits and gear in the future.
- He has been working through motor vehicle accidents, and an increase in vehicle break-ins at Skyline. The break-ins have been coming in waves, and DNR is working closely with the Sheriff's Office.
 - Scott asked if the break-ins were mostly personal item thefts, i.e., grabbing items that are in sight? Steve said the thefts have been personal bags, computer laptops, money, and credit cards, which the criminals have been using to purchase gift cards at stores, making it difficult for law enforcement to track. He reminded all visitors to not leave important things in their cars and to keep car doors locked.
 - Chris noted DNR rangers are doing extra patrols in parking lots and at trail heads during busy times.
 - Phil asked if these cases fall under DNR jurisdiction, at what point the police get involved and if there are times when it happens more often. Steve said it has been difficult to identify patterns, as most thieves travel across country. DNR takes on most cases within the parks except after dark. Larimer County Sheriff works cases outside of the parks.
 - Chris noted DNR works closely with multiple agencies because most criminals commit crimes across multiple jurisdictions.
- Steve has been processing many special event and concessionaire requests for Horsetooth Reservoir and the open spaces.
- Reported Horsetooth maintenance is fully hired and seasonal ranger hiring is in the works.
- Cindy attended the Park Law Enforcement Association Conference in Tennessee hosted by Tennessee State Parks. She said it was quality training for rangers, by rangers. They discussed and shared valuable information about issues being faced across the country, including human trafficking in parks.
 - DNR has been able to assist with training and policy building by sharing information with other parks who do not yet have a formal ranger program.
- She will be hosting a neighbor, "Break the Ice", meeting on March 9th for Carter, Flatiron and Pinewood residents. The meeting will introduce DNR staff, open a discussion for topics that have been brought to DNR's attention and address any concerns residents may have. The goal is to provide clarification and education.
 - Scott asked if this was the first time DNR has done this type of neighbor meeting?
 - Chris said DNR has done a few over the years. They are usually put together when there is a need to do outreach on a big topic. Cindy is getting ahead of it and meeting people where they are at.
- Cindy reported Carter maintenance is getting buoys ready for the season.
- Hanna Beam, new hire ranger, will be starting field training and be located at Carter Lake for 5 weeks.

ANS 2022 Report – Jen Murray (ANS Coordinator)

- Jen introduced herself as the aquatic nuisance species coordinator for Larimer County. This is her 10th year inspecting boats and third season with DNR.
- Reported a high number of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) inspector applicants returning this season from last year.
- Larimer County ANS Report 2022:
 - 6 ramps between DNR managed reservoirs; 3 at Carter Lake and 3 at Horsetooth Reservoir.
 - In 2022, there were 57 total ANS employees: 1 coordinator, 2 assistant coordinators, 4 lake supervisors, and 50 inspectors.
 - The ANS program works closely with its partners, BOR, CPW, LC, and Northern Water.
 - LC inspections totaled 45,994 for Horsetooth Reservoir and 21,766 for Carter Lake.

- Average inspections per day during the summer at Horsetooth were 264 on weekdays, 516 on weekends, and 120 on weekdays and 307 on weekends for Carter Lake.
 - Slight increase of boat inspections and decontaminations over time.
 - The three most common out of state boats were from Wyoming, Nebraska, and Lake Powell. LC saw fewer out of state in 2022 than in the previous year.
- Decontaminations are triggered by out of state boats and lakes with known aquatic nuisance species. They are done using water reaching temperatures between 120 – 140 °F. No chemicals are used.
 - Horsetooth deconned 1,220 boats and Carter 820.
 - Slightly less in-state high risk inspections.
 - Newer in state high risk lakes include, Tommy's Slalom Shop, Boulder Reservoir (Eurasian watermilfoil – invasive water plant) and Highline State Park (adult zebra mussels).
 - Highline State Park recently identified adult zebra mussels in the water. In November 2022, CPW managers began dropping the water level to conduct treatment with Earth Tec QZ (2 parts per million concentration) in March 2023. The second treatment would follow. Highline will start refilling mid-April.
 - Larimer County intercepted a total of 16 mussel boats in 2022. Boats were coming from Lake Pleasant AZ, Fish Trap Lakes MN, Okaboji Lake IL, Lake Michigan, Lake Delevan WI, and the remaining 11 from Lake Powell.
- HB21-1226 Roadside Pilot Project
 - For 3 days in 2022 CPW inspectors stopped boats at the Loma Port of Entry. It was a collaboration between CPW, CSP and CDOT. The project was a success, finding a total of 26 mussel boats in 3 days. There are plans for another pilot project in 2023, dates and locations are to-be-determined.
 - These types of projects help to increase awareness and provide education to boaters.
- Virtual Trainings
 - In 2020, the state started two-day hybrid virtual classes with an in person hands on training. LC hosted 13 hands on trainings in 2022. Staff from other lakes and reservoirs, such as Union Reservoirs and Boulder Reservoir, joined LC's trainings.
- What's next:
 - Improving decontamination units to systems that are on-demand, quiet, maintain temperature, and overall cut down on decon time and save water.
 - Finishing last ANS shelter at Horsetooth/Satanka ramp which does not have one. Provides staff with an area to get out of the elements.
- Discussion/Feedback:
 - Phil asked if boats that are being inspected were motorized and personal watercraft?
 - Jen replied, anything that is motorized is inspected. If it is hand launched and human powered, it is exempt from inspections.
 - Korrie asked if the chemicals being used to treat Highline were sulfur based?
 - Jen said the chemicals are like what one would use to clean a personal pool, safe and not smelly.
 - Scott asked where the statewide ANS data comes from?
 - Jen said the state has a database that inspectors input data into through an application on tablets.
 - Bill asked of the total number of inspections, how many were wake boats versus other types of boats. He is curious what the ratios are and how this might influence boating conflict on the reservoirs.
 - Jen reported all boats are classified and documented when they come in.
 - Chris inquired about any discussion around not allowing boats onto LCDNR waters if they are coming from known contaminated waters or possibly implementing a quarantine system.
 - Jen said this has been discussed but it is a tough conversation to start and would be difficult to implement.

- Bill asked if there have been any joint decon/inspection efforts between Colorado and neighboring states.
 - Jen said it has been difficult to join forces as each states programs and processes are different, making seals from out of state tough to trust.
- Scott asked what the level of concern and damage will be with having zebra mussels in Colorado?
 - Jen said she is not overly worried about LCDNR's reservoirs. Staff do a great job during inspections and decontaminations.
- Adam asked what the training process for ANS inspectors looked like.
 - Jen said staff are sent through a CPW hands on training and are continued to be monitored throughout the season to ensure they are conducting inspections properly. The state will also send "secret shoppers" during the season to check-in on the process.

2022 Quarter 4 Board Report

- Daylan said the report highlights a few volunteer and noxious weed projects.
- Chris thanked Korrie Johnston for putting these reports together.

Compass Action Item Update – Daylan

- As DNR goes through its Strategic Plan and begins to align with what the department is doing, consideration is given to how things are implemented and what actions are taken. DNR is using diverse staff groups to create and identify projects that are new or that are ongoing.
- Priority groups are Levels of Service, Work Culture, Land Conservation, Nature Opportunities, Regional Leadership, and Sustainable Funding.
- In 2023-24, there are a few new topics that stem from things such as operational assessment, overlaps, gaps, and improvements. A significant focus is being put on staff development, growth, retention, and training.
- DNR is rethinking technology, specifically related to a new permit system which will be less labor intensive and provide a better customer experience.
- The department is comfortably funded and carefully budgeted. However, with an increase in out-of-state visitors and LC expecting continued growth, DNR must examine how it will sustain a drastic increase in visitors with current or new funding.
- Every 10 years DNR redoes its master plans (Open Lands – 2015, Parks – 2017, Weeds – 2018). There is a future desire to condense the three plans into one.
 - In 2023, DNR and its partners will conduct an Our Lands Our Future community survey. This is the first step in redoing the master plans. The boards will assist in the process.
- Jill would like to see what projected future impacts might be of specific changes DNR could make. For example, adding or changing a section of trail. The public often is unaware of some of the tradeoffs and options DNR chooses between. Daylan agreed and noted the importance of sharing these things with the community. The concept of telling the whole story of DNR is something the department is working on with its master plans.

Marina Engagement Platform Update – Korrie

- Chris provided background on the current process for the marina contracts. An RFI went out to potential operators to gather new ideas. These large contracts are only revisited every 10-15 years, so it is important they are inclusive of what DNR needs, and also of what the public/community would like to see.
- This platform allowed DNR to reach out to the public in a transparent way that would solicit ideas from the community. Engagement was not restricted to marina ideas and allowed for general comments for DNR.
- Korrie said the platform was open from February 1st to February 22nd. It asked what the public wanted to see from DNR for marina operations. The format was non-restrictive and allowed for anyone to provide comments on anything.
- The site had 195 unique users who visited. The average time spent on the page was 1 minute and 15 seconds. Input directly related to Carter or to Horsetooth was split 50/50. New marina ideas were 78% of the comments and 23% were general comments.

- Some topic ideas included: sailing vessels, parking with soft closes of lots (common theme), ice skating, additional beach areas, lakeside restaurant, food truck space, internet connectivity (common theme), short term slip rentals at both marinas, and better boating rules and regulations signage.
- Chris reported the community feedback from this platform was brought to the core team. The team will decide how this information will be included in the RFP and/or independently within DNR operations.
- Jill asked if there was additional outreach to specific clubs that use the area? Korrie said DNR wanted to keep the platform neutral and ensure outreach was done equally and fairly around community and avoid having a huge sway for or against one thing or another.

Discussion Items

Permit Systems Discussion – Daylan & Chris

- Chris explained DNR's current permit system is antiquated, and the department is looking for something new and modernized. A core team is working with an IT business analyst to identify what style of system DNR needs to achieve its goals. The system will be implemented in 2024-25.
- The team has identified a vendor being used in Wisconsin, who does the E470 license plate reader system. They are using the technology in their park and DNR plans to visit to further investigate the system functions. A few of the main challenges facing DNR is connectivity and having multiple entrance points.
- Daylan said there are two main factors when looking into a new system; improving customer experience and return on investment. The system used in Wisconsin would cost DNR around \$100,000 to get it up and running. He would like something in place allowing DNR staff to spend more time on the ground connecting with visitors and less handling permits.
- Chris noted the reservation system DNR uses is also undergoing major changes. It is one of the largest systems in the world and many clients are asking for newer technology and improvements.
- Bill asked if DNR would replace the kiosks when implementing a new system? Daylan said it is an option. There has been discussion around having a system where visitors purchase the permits from home or at the point of entry.
- Kristina shared her concerns about being able to buy a daily or annual permit the day of and on a whim. Chris said annuals permit holders would be kept in a database.

Action Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

Northern Water Update

- Jeff said a project to construct an interconnect for Chimney Hollow was halted and rescheduled. The Western Slope received an abundance of water, and the Eastern Slope did not, causing conditions for construction to be less than optimal. Carter Lake is still in fill mode for April 15th and Horsetooth in mid-June. Overnight activities will increase as the temperatures warm. Workers will be placing fill materials, coring, and pouring asphalt, leading to an increase in light and noise. The dam will be halfway up by the end of the year, reaching 180 feet tall.
- The Northern Water Board is looking at a contract for formal long-term capital planning spanning 5-10 years. The plan will include the topic of redundancy for getting water out of Horsetooth. Currently, water is delivered direct from the dam to the Poudre River or from the Soldier Canyon treatment plant complex. The plan will explore the best options for moving water out of Horsetooth.
- Northern Water planned to join Commissioner Kefalas, March 11th, at a community meeting in Laporte.
- He said April 10th, Northern Water will be hosting the Spring Water Symposium at the Embassy Suites in Loveland. Registration can be found at northernwater.org.

Board Member Reports

Director's Report – Daylan Figgs

Next Meeting Scheduled

April 4th, 2023, at Administrative Offices at 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537 and Zoom

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 – 8:13 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.