



Date: November 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 - Mountain Lion Room & Zoom Webinar

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Bill Prater	V	Chris Fleming	I	Jeff Stahla
Jill Wuertz	A	Daylan Figgs	I	
Kathy Maher	V	Steve Gibson	I	
Kristina Kachur	I	Aubrey Hilte	I	
Adam Crossan	A	*John Kefalas	V	
Pete Blume	I	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Robert Harris	I	Joel Schwab	I	
Ruthie Rollins	I			
Scott Murray	A			
Phil Stout	A			
Geoffery Townsend	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:33 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Moved Visitors Services (VS) Program update to December meeting.

Added discussion of moving December 5th meeting date.

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Rob moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Kristina seconded, motion passed unanimously with the recommended corrections made in two locations, "XXX made a motion that the Board concur with Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' recommendation that XXX be the identified vendor to fulfill the request for proposal P23-XX XXX Reservoir Marina operations and that Larimer County engage in contract negotiations".

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.

June 2022 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

July 2023 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

August 2023 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

Update and Reports

Commissioner Update

- Commissioner Kefalas said the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is amid 2024 budget planning. The County budget was submitted on October 15th and was created with the assumption that Proposition HH would pass. There is a hearing on November 16th and BOCC will be attending budget retreats. The 2024 budget will be adopted on December 14th. The overall budget proposed was \$610 million dollars, a 13% reduction from 2023 (\$160 million comes from property tax revenues). A large part of the reduction is fewer CIP projects in 2024 (2023 examples: Jail construction, Behavioral Health Center, etc.).
- He noted a community Zoom meeting for the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forest on November 9th to discuss the Black Diamond Landscape Resiliency and Risk Reduction Plan. The U.S. Forest Service is accepting permits [online here](#), for pine tree cutting in designated areas in the Canyon Lakes Area.

Park District Updates

- Steve reported visitation is slowing down at Horsetooth Reservoir and Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. The water levels are dropping but overall higher than previous years. Weekends continue to be busy. The South Bay boat ramp and campground are the only areas still open. Reported a few minor vehicle accidents. The Blue Sky Marathon was successful and went well. Red Mountain Open Space will be closed on December 1st.
- Chris provided an update for Cindy, noting visitation to Carter Lake is slowing down and staff are beginning to winterize the park. Maintenance and communications staff are finishing up the kiosk project, having completed installation of new kiosks at Flatiron and Pinewood Reservoirs. Senior Ranger Trevor is setting up training sessions and field training courses for two new full time rangers. Staff are meeting with both marina vendors to discuss marina contract negotiations.

Trails Program Update – Joel Schwab, Trails Program Manager

- Key Facts
 - Approximately 800,000 acres of public lands in LC.
 - There are nearly 1,030 miles of public trails managed by various entities.
 - LCDNR manages 100 miles of trails on 40,000 acres of public lands. 10% of the countywide trails are on 2% of the total Larimer County land base.
 - 91 miles on LC open spaces; 9 miles on BOR reservoir lands.
- Continuum of service for land conservation and recreation
 - Many DNR trails, reservoirs and open spaces are high use, high cost areas.
- Trail survey results
 - 96% of people enjoyed the trails at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS)/Red Mountain Open Space.
 - 97% of people enjoyed the trails at Devils Backbone Open Space.
 - Rate Your Day Campaign: Overall positive comments on the trails, negative comments this summer included vegetation overgrowth and erosion caused by the rains.
- Maintenance
 - Yearly maintenance goal:
 - 75% of trails to a "B" rating or higher.

- A “B” rating = Good condition, will need additional general maintenance work to focus on fixing problem areas but ensures trail is safe and passable.
 - A “C” rating = big erosion control project, “D” rating = trail needs to be closed.
 - 2022:
 - Trail maintenance completed in 2022 translated to 93% of the department’s natural surface trail system receiving a “B” rating or higher.
 - 2023:
 - Currently working on maintenance tasks and dealing with big erosion/vegetation issues. The crew will not be able to hit all trails this year, will probably cover 60-75%. The biggest thing that ruins trails is water.
 - With weather, maintenance, and user patterns, the trails are always changing.
- Volunteer/Partnership events
 - Volunteer events: 12 completed, 3 rained out.
 - Trail days: National Trails Day (Combined event with Ft. Collins Natural Areas) and National Public Lands Day.
 - Larimer County Conservation Corps: Grant to fund 4 weeks of trail work.
- Horsetooth Reservoir
 - Smaller Projects:
 - New connector between Upper Sunrise and Ridgeline Trail.
 - Fencing/restoration of social trails near Rotary Day Use area/Foothills Trail (restored 0.2 acres).
 - Fence removal/improvements between boundary with Fort Collins Natural Area (2024).
 - Upcoming in 2024:
 - Final approval process with BOR to build a 1.8 mile trail between Inlet Bay and South Bay in 2024. (Bay-to-Bay Trail). DNR applied for 4 weeks of trail building help with the Larimer County Conservation Corp.
 - Plans to improve area access in the Satanka Bay area with closing social trails, emphasizing desired trails, building stairs down to the water, creating a crush refined path, and utilizing a fence line to direct user flow.

2024 Regulation Changes and Updates

- Chris said regulation updates are done every other year to address any updates or edits needed.
- Aubrey added, many of the updates, additional regulations and adjustments were made in response to new types of recreation and reoccurring issues staff are seeing in the field.
- Updates to Regulations
 - **A2:** Extend the 14-day camping rule year-round and apply to water (boat-in camp sites and anchored boats on the water).
 - **A6:** Change the campsite capacity at Hermit Park to be uniform with all LCDNR campgrounds, 1 camping unit and two tents, or no unit and 4 tents with a maximum capacity of 8 people. This would remove regulation A12.
 - **F12:** Expand restrictions on flight apparatus including paragliders.
 - Rob asked if this included drones. Aubrey said drones are their own regulation and because it is BOR airspace, drones cannot be operated over the area while standing on LCDNR property.
 - **I1:** Expand restriction on types of waste to be left on properties (chemicals, hazardous waste, needles, etc.)
 - Ruthie asked if this regulation would allow rangers to ticket visitors for violating the regulation. Aubrey confirmed, and said the regulations also aid DNR in court and legal situations.
 - Chris noted the regulations are predominately enforced by seasonal rangers and the only citations they write are guided by the regulations.
 - **U1-4:** Restrict unregistered vessels from LCDNR properties (No operation, possession, or stowing). All vessels must be registered with the State.

- **V3:** Restrict affixing an orange flag to a vessel for a downed skier. The flag only goes up when the skier is in the water and should not be attached/fixed to the vessel.
 - Kristina questioned if this was a state regulation. Aubrey confirmed.
- **W2:** Allow non-motorized vessels within 150 ft of swim areas (paddleboards and kayaks).
- **W25:** Require boater education course for boaters 14-17 years of age. This is updated per a new Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) requirement. Education of new regulation begins in 2024 and enforcement in 2025.
- **New Regulations – Additions**
 - **A13:** To exceed check out time for a campsite or cabin.
 - Common issue for walk-in campers, where DNR does not have payment info on file.
 - Recommended: Verbal Warning (VW) and Penalty Assessment (PA) if warned multiple times.
 - **A14:** To leave trash or similar items in a cabin.
 - Recommended: PA if egregious or excessive.
 - **A15:** To camp in a designated area without a valid reservation.
 - Often occurs in shoulder seasons. Allow rangers legal reason for contact.
 - Recommended: VW if able to make reservation online with ranger present.
 - **A16:** To display lighting which disturbs other visitors.
 - Address excessive lighting on RVs/campsites, light shows, lasers, etc.
 - Recommended: VW for campground issues. PA if involved with an event/show.
 - **F14:** To violate any sign posted by LCDNR.
 - Applies to short term signage relating to projects, temporary closures, maintenance requests, etc.
 - Recommended: PA
 - **F15:** To walk or operate a vehicle on the ice.
 - Currently combined with ice fishing regulation. Made it a stand-alone regulation.
 - Recommended: PA
 - **I8:** To burn trash within a campfire grate.
 - Can be extremely difficult to clean for maintenance or camp host staff.
 - Recommended: VW unless excessive then PA.
 - **J5:** To damage a cabin.
 - Current regulations do not address well.
 - Recommended: PA depending on level of damage.
 - Ruthie asked how DNR would hold a visitor in violation financially responsible for damages. Aubrey said staff would call the visitor, have a conversation about it, and request they return and fix the damage. Steve added a full time ranger can criminally summon a visitor if needed.
 - **J6:** To metal detect on LCDNR property.
 - An activity which often leads to digging/unearthing. Aligns with the BOR regulations as a resource protection measure.
 - Recommended: VW and PA if significant damage.
 - Kristina asked if there was an uptick in searching since the finding of the dinosaur bones. Aubrey reported a small increase but nothing significant. There is some metal detecting and geocaching.
 - **Q10:** To use live bait where not permitted by CPW.
 - Align with CPW. Often used in the Big Thompson Canyon. It is not permitted at Sleepy Hollow.
 - Recommended: PA if fish caught.
 - **T6:** Require display of a white light for paddle craft sunset – sunrise.
 - Formalizes unofficial requirement of a headlamp which is generally respected. No state requirements.
 - Recommended: VW and eviction from water until remedied. PA if collision occurs.

- Rob inquired if this was already required by the Coast Guard. Steve said no, as they are not motorized vehicles. The only requirement is to create a quick light to avoid a collision. Aubrey said the intention is for visitors to be always visible and safe.
 - **W32:** Operate a hydrofoil, electric foil, or sea scooter.
 - Aligns with CPW regulations. Often operates above wake speed but are difficult to see.
 - Recommended: VW and eviction from water until remedied.
- Questions/Feedback:
 - Kristina asked the ratio of seasonals to full time rangers water patrolling. Aubrey said it is mainly seasonals.
 - Kristina continued, asking how the rangers and public will be informed and educated on the new and updated regulations. Steve said all rangers will receive the regulations and training on them. They will be provided to the public and DNR will have a grace period for education before starting enforcement. Chris added, the regulations provide the seasonal rangers with suggestions/recommendations on what action to take, but it is at their discretion.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked how often these things occurred, noting many seem to be common sense. Aubrey said the additional regulations are things staff are experiencing in the field and have been increasing in frequency. This does not necessarily mean more citations, but it allows the seasonal rangers to make contact, educate and have better conversations with visitors.
 - Commissioner Kefalas asked how the new regulations will be shared with the public. Aubrey said DNR will post the regulations on the website and provide them via brochures at all campgrounds and day use areas.
 - Daylan added, there will be a public comment period as part of the public process.
 - Aubrey noted camp hosts and volunteers will also receive the new regulations and training on how to approach and address situations/behaviors and educate visitors.
 - Ruthie asked staff to provide a summary of the effectiveness/improvements made by implementation of the new and updated regulations. Steve noted many of the regulations are meant to be preventative, and thus results would be difficult to receive.
 - Aubrey said she will return with this as an action item at the December meeting for PAB to make a recommendation to the BOCC for adoption.

Discussion Items

Action Items

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Update

Northern Water Conservancy District Update

- Jeff reported above average water levels in the reservoirs. Due to rainfall events, very little water was delivered to farms by July 1st, reaching under the expected quota. Deliveries did begin to increase later in the year.
- Horsetooth Reservoir is 70% full, Carter Lake 80% and Lake Granby 90%. There is 67,000 acre feet of available space between the DNR reservoirs and 53,000 acre feet available in Lake Granby. Combined the two areas can hold 120,000 acre feet. An average snowfall year provides 200,000 acre feet of water, thus spillover in 2024 is expected.
- Construction days at Chimney Hollow were lost due to the rain events, which will add an additional 5-6 weeks onto the 216 week projected timeline. The dam has reached 140 feet, which is less than halfway of its completed height.
 - Northern Water hosted a tour of the reservoir for the Carter Lake camp hosts which was effective for education. They plan to host another tour in 2024.
- Boulder Reservoir has an invasive species, Eurasian Watermilfoil. The City of Boulder is the recreation manager and is taking steps towards mitigation and management. This species creates mats in shallow water areas. Chris noted this is a species DNR ANS inspectors look for when conducting boat inspections.

- Kathy asked how this species is spread. Jeff said it can be from boat to water, but they are working with Boulder to find out more.
- Lake Granby has an invasive Rusty Crayfish. They are native to the Upper Ohio River, are used as bait and have become a regional issue. Horsetooth and Carter Lake have the advantage of being on the other end of multiple pumps and hydroelectric plants which will destroy them before they make it down the system. They are being monitored but are not perceived as a threat currently.
- Fall Water Symposium will be held November 15th. Over 400 guests will be attending to engage in conversations around the outlook for Summer 2024 and topics on water.
- November is maintenance time. Canal maintenance is complete and running trickles through. Carter pump is shut off. Mid-December BOR will start sending over more water through the tunnel.

Board Member Reports

- Ruthie reported she was approached by a person in casual clothing on the Stout Connector Trail, stating they were with the Overland Bike Club on patrol. This alarmed her and she asked for information on these “patrols” and requested a discussion at a future PAB meeting. Aubrey confirmed there are individuals through DNR’s education/volunteer program that volunteer their time to patrol. Steve noted they should be in logoed clothing and will follow up. He would be interested in having them go through the Volunteer Ranger Assistant program.

Director’s Report – Daylan Figgs

- 3rd Quarter Report
 - Financial year-to-date shows reservoir parks revenue down 8% (in user fees) and down 3% in open space sales tax. DNR built this expected revenue decline into the 2023 budget. Expenses are relatively low. The 2024-2025 budget and revenues are expected to be similarly flat.
- The LCDNR permit system is antiquated and the pay stations are not dependable. The department is investing in a new permit system that will lean on new technology, online purchases, license plate readers, etc. An RFP will likely be released in the first quarter of 2024 and implementation in 2025.
- DNR is working on a project to bring to the BOCC, focused on the east side of Carter Lake. ARPA dollars will be directed towards the parking lot portion of the project, which is at 95% complete for design.
 - The project will re-envision the east side of Carter Lake creating more organization, better access points and amenities, and an overall better visitor experience. The campground will be removed and replaced with all day-use. Skyview campground will help absorb the displaced camping.

Next Meeting Scheduled Wednesday December 13th at Horsetooth Area Information Center (HAIC) at 4200 W. County Rd. 38E, 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 – 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.