

LARIMER COUNTY | ENGINEERING

P.O. Box 1190, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522-1190, 970.498.5738, Larimer.org

The role of the Advisory Board is to advise the Board of County Commissioners and appropriate departments on environmental and science-related issues that affect Larimer County.

MINUTES

Date: July 11th, 2023

Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Rm 150 Carter Lake, 200 West Oak St., Fort Collins, Colorado and Virtual by Zoom

Contact: Shelley Bayard de Volo, sbayard@larimer.org or 970.498.5738

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Rodger Ames – Chair		John Kefalas*	X	Larimer Conservation District
Tasha Carr		Shelley Bayard de Volo [¥]	X	Matt Marshall
Anna Cloud	X	Rebecca Everette [‡]	X	Gretchen Reuning
Jim Gerek	X	Lesli Ellis [€]	X	
Matthew Haag	X	Heidi Pruess [§]	X	
Ted Hendrickx	X			
Allyson Little	X			
Andrew Newman	X			
Barry Noon	X			
Nicole Poncelet-Johnson	X			
George Rinker	X			
Shelby Sommer - Vice-Chair	X			
Natalie Walsh	X			
Katrina Winborn-Miller	X			
Chris Wood	X			

X = present; * = Commissioner Liaison; ‡ = Community Planning; ¥ = ESAB Liaison; § = Larimer County Environmental and Sustainability Program; € = Community Planning, Infrastructure, and Resources

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

1. **Amendments or additions to the agenda –**
2. **Introduction of members, staff and guests –** members introduced themselves.
3. **Public Comment –** None
4. **Discussion Items**
 - Introduction of new Community Development Director - Rebecca Everette, Community Development Director, introduced herself to the members. She has been with the County for 3 months, and in the past worked for the City of Fort





Collins as the City Planner and most recently as the Senior Environmental Planner. Rebecca is really interested in the relationship between conservation and development and how development can happen responsibly.

Lesli Ellis also introduced herself and welcomed new members. She oversees Community Planning, Infrastructure, Resources, Solid Waste and The Ranch.

Shelby reminded members how staff sometimes participate in our meetings; to just listen in on topics of interest, or to provide updates to the Board.

- **Larimer County Conservation District** – Matt Marshall and Gretchen Reuning presented on the Conservation District's programs. Matt is Director of Forestry and Gretchen is the District's Executive Director. They provided background on how Conservation Districts (CD) developed following the Dust Bowl, focusing primarily on soil conservation. The goal of the CD is to assist landowners with soil conservation, water conservation, forest restoration and improving watershed health. They operate under a Board of Directors, who identified the biggest need in Larimer County right now as forest health. Since the Cameron Peak Fire there have been a lot of post-fire impacts (sediment and debris flows) to the Big Thompson and Poudre River watersheds. Water quality is compromised and mitigating those impacts requires treating uplands as well as riparian areas. In response they have developed three programs 1) Forest Restoration 2) Riverscape Restoration and 3) Agricultural Solutions.

The Forestry Program started in 2017 and operates on private lands. To create functional landscapes, they focus goals on wildlife, water quality and wildfire resilience. Matt showed an image from 1940 and the same landscape in 2017. The images showed the encroachment of trees into areas that were historically more open. They use this historical context with on the ground observations to inform decisions about forest treatments to restore the landscape to its historical spatial distribution and density of trees.

They do whole tree removal, which eliminates chain sawing and slash-pile burning. They are looking for markets for the forest products they remove, including merchantable lumber. They have worked with 78 landowners in 6 years and restored over 3000 acres of forested private lands.

Barry asked where they get their criteria for how they treat. Matt noted the work of others including the Colorado Forest Institute and the Rocky Mountain Research Station General Technical Report GTR-373 and GTR-310. They have worked with the authors of these reports as well as other local scientists to gain guidance. Matt noted how cost effective their approach is compared to other approaches and while they do remove a lot of trees it's an ecologically based restorative approach.

Gretchen then discussed their Riverscape program. She showed slides of wide floodplain systems where the river has access to its entire floodplain. She presented their six restoration solutions including restoring fluvial processes, floodplain connectivity, water quality, using beavers to slow flooding and creating wildlife habitat. They focus on low-tech projects that do not require environmental permitting. They have several projects that they are implementing this year and have more in the pipeline. The question came up about working on



public lands. Right now, the CD works on private lands, but they are open to working with partners on public lands. Question about water rights and the slowing of water within streams. Gretchen noted that their work does not impound water and does not jeopardize access to water rights. Gretchen showed several slides that displayed beaver dam analogs and the positive effects they have on stream channels.

The Agricultural Programs include riparian fencing, grazing management, noxious weeds management, and soil health program (STAR). For noxious weeds they lean heavily on the Larimer County Weed District.

Board members had more questions. Matt noted how landowners take over the management of the land once the CD's work is completed. They also discussed their education program as part of Expedition Colorado. Chris asked how the ESAB can help? Gretchen noted that partnering with Larimer County Natural Resources to implement projects on County Open Spaces. Providing venue space for their education programs working with 4th graders could be very helpful. They work with Wildland Restoration Volunteers to get volunteer help on their projects.

- Air Pollution Control Commission proceedings/ozon SIP rulemaking – Chris Wood discussed what he learned listening into the meeting. He noted that Denver Metro area and the Front Range has surprising bad air quality. The area has been out of attainment for ozone for a very long time. Over the years, the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) made rulemakings, and they have updated the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) updated the SIP and provided it to the AQCC, and during that process several errors were identified that make the SIP unusable (cannot be submitted to the EPA). Errors in the emission inventory, and the modeling. The agency decided to submit a partial to the EPA because they were required to submit something by a deadline. They have since hired consultants to help develop the SIP. Chris is not aware of any compliance strategies. The State is planning to take credit for things they have already done and that are already part of their implementation plan. There was concern that it's not enough and that the State should be doing more. There will be public outreach prior to their next meeting. Environmental groups are suing EPA claiming that the State is non-compliant for not submitting an updated SIP. Question about whether there was discussion about electrification of oil and gas facilities? That is on the list of things that the state has in place and is taking credit for those reductions. Question of whether the Front Range has ever been in compliance with EPA air quality regulations? Chris noted that because the criteria keep getting stricter, that compliance is hard to meet, but that does not mean pollution reduction is not happening. Katrina noted that in the 80's the Front Range's air-pollution non-attainment had to do with Carbon Monoxide (CO) non-attainment standard, and they are now in attainment and in maintenance. The Commissioner asked where the Air Quality Council fits into the process and Chris noted that they develop the SIP. It's a Board appointed by the Governor made up of stakeholders. They develop the intent of the SIP, the APCD then adds the regulatory language. The AQCC approves the SIP before it goes onto the State legislature. Discussion of the yard maintenance equipment and its



role in the SIP because its not an enforceable program. Question about what is left in terms of controls? Transportation is really the only big emission item. Commissioner Kefalas noted the attendance at the next ESAB meeting of Chris Manley and Lea Schneider and their plan to update the board on the air quality programs they are implementing. Chris passed on a comment from Rodger regarding the work of the CSU researchers Dr.s Emily Fischer and Jeffrey Collett Jr. They applied for funding from the Air Quality Enterprise Board to support their ozone precursor study. Chris said he would keep tabs on the State's next steps and update the Board as things happen.

5. **Approval of Minutes** –Jim moved to approve the June minutes, and Ted seconded. The June minutes were approved by acclamation.

6. **Updates and Round Table**

- Commissioner's Update – Heidi Pruess provided an update to the BOCC on the County's internal operations GHG inventory, produced as part of the Climate Smart and Future Ready process. Next month they will have another worksession to discuss the community level GHG inventory. Yesterday a presentation from Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy on their EV charging stations in Larimer County. The commissioner invited Heidi, who was in attendance, to provide additional comments. Heidi noted the CSFR website and new items there. The EV charging road map is under the transportation tab (<https://www.larimer.gov/climate-and-sustainability/transportation/electric-vehicles>), and the internal GHG inventory is under the other resources tab (<https://www.larimer.gov/climate-and-sustainability/other-resources>). To provide feedback on the Phase 3 plan you can go to the social point portal (<https://larimercsfr.mysocialpinpoint.com/improvement-map>) and drop a pin on the map and make a comment. The second box on the website is "Our Focus Areas" where you can go to provide extended comments. Next week they will present the community wide GHG inventory to the workgroups and solicit feedback. They will post the full inventory (the data spreadsheets and summary).

The commissioner passed out the flyer on the Commissioner's Water Education Series. He is collaborating with CSU on this effort. The first session will be Water Supply and Risk, August 21st, 1st floor Hearing Room 6-8PM. The BOCC will be hearing about the County's update to the Stormwater Standards that Engineering has developed.

- Climate Smart and Future Ready – Tasha was not in attendance this evening, but Heidi covered the relevant updates.
- 2023 Colorado Water Plan Webinar summary – Nicole provided an update from the recent Water Education Colorado's webinar summarizing the 2023 updates to the Colorado Water Plan. There were four guest speakers, including Daniel Sands from the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Nicole explained how the 2023 update really takes what was an aspirational document and sets goals into action. There are 50 partners and 50 actions described in the Plan, and the work that the Larimer Conservation District described tonight was an example of the actions described in the plan. There is even a page describing how everyday citizens can



act in their own lives. There are 8 watershed basins that the Plan focuses around, with each having developed their own watershed basin implementation plan. The four focus areas in the plan include vibrant communities, robust agriculture, thriving watersheds and resilient infrastructure. Nicole then explained the four projects that were highlighted during the webinar. Nicole noted that she personally contributed to the 2015 Water Plan, and she was happy to see that the 2023 update has included water quality as an important consideration in tandem with water quantity.

- Environmental Stewardship Awards update – Shelley announced that the Stewardship Awards will take place July 17th, 1:30 PM in the BOCC conference room.
7. **Issue Index** – will be updated for tonight’s agenda items.
 8. **Agenda Topics for Future Meetings** - August will be air quality with Lea Schneider and Chris Manley, LCDHE; CSU researchers Jeff Collett and Emily Fischer.
 9. **Adjourn** – Chris moved to adjourn the meeting and Natalie seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM