

LARIMER COUNTY | ENGINEERING

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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: September 12th, 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	X	John Kefalas*	X	Travis Rounsaville
Tasha Carr	X	Shelley Bayard de Volo [¥]	X	Richard T. Reynolds
Anna Cloud	X	Heidi Pruess [§]	X	Jenny Miller
Jim Gerek	X	Zac Wiebe [‡]	X	
Matthew Haag	X			Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
Ted Hendrickx	X			Hally Strevey
Allyson Little	X			
Andrew Newman	X			
Barry Noon				
Nicole Poncelet-Johnson	X			
George Rinker				
Shelby Sommer - Vice-Chair	X			
Natalie Walsh	X			
Katrina Winborn-Miller	X			
Chris Wood	X			

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

Call to Order: 6:05 p.m.

1. **Amendments or additions to the agenda** – Jen Almstead is not in attendance and Zac Wiebe will present on the survey.
2. **Introduction of members, staff and guests** – members and guests introduced themselves.
3. **Public Comment** – None
4. **Discussion Items**





- Post-fire restoration and incorporating wildfire mitigation to increase watershed resiliency before fire – Hally introduced herself and the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed (CPRW). The mission of the CPRW is to improve and maintain the health of the Poudre River Watershed through community collaboration. They divide their projects into the upper or lower Poudre River watershed, the latter being everything east of I-25 to the confluence with the South Platte River. They work from their master plans, which focus on education/outreach, rivers, forests, science and monitoring, all of which are tied to watershed resiliency.

Hally provided some background on how the CPRW began its work following the High Park Fire, and then the 2013 floods. She discussed impacts from wildfire like hydrophobic soils, stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation into the river. Additionally, she discussed how these impacts affect the quality of the water for downstream users like water utilities, how intermittent streams turn into perennial streams during minor rainstorms, and how debris flows negatively impact infrastructure and human life.

To prioritize allocation of resources, CPRW worked with others to model the watershed for risk using the categories of post-fire sediment inputs, soil burn severity and debris flow risk. The outcome was a map of watersheds across the Cameron Peak Fire (CPF) burn scar with five hazard rankings from lowest to highest. CPRW focused their efforts on the areas ranked as highest risk.

The restoration activities involved aerial mulching, point mitigation (low-tech process-based restoration) and reforestation. Hally went into each of those activities in detail. The aerial mulching was a big effort where the amount of mulch applied was estimated to be the highest ever implemented. The point mitigation work focuses on mitigating erosion and sedimentation. The CPRW received a grant from CDPHE to address sediment release into waterways. The CDPHE considers sediment a pollutant, so they are very interested in reducing its discharge from wildfire affected areas. One project to keep sediment in upper stream reaches and meadows is implementing post-assisted log structures (PALS) that capture sediment while also letting water flow through. Their reforestation program focuses on ponderosa pine grown from locally sourced seed. They are planting trees on private lands only, and at higher elevations than the historical range of this species to account for climate change effects. Limiting factors affecting planting trees are the need to plant in locations beyond private lands, and seed stock is limited in availability.

Hally then discussed the CPRW's Resilience Plan, which they are currently updating. They are partnering with other entities to implement fire mitigation projects like the Forest Service's Black Diamond Landscape Resiliency and Risk Reduction Project. There is a lot of funding available through various federal grants to facilitate these partnerships as well as help communities implement their wildfire protection plans (CWPPs). These partnerships are developed through the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative.

Next steps include pairing the Low-tech process-based restoration with the wildfire mitigation work – i.e., using the wood from the mitigation as material for the restoration. Hally then took some questions from members.



Our Land, Our Future Regional Survey – Zac Weibe presented the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources community survey that they will release in the coming months. Part of the impetus for this survey is that the previous study was 10 years ago, and a lot of growth has happened in the community. The results of the survey help inform the Department’s master planning process. They are working with all communities that receive the ¼-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax to develop the survey. They are ensuring that the survey is statistically valid and defensible. Some of the focal areas in the survey include:

- i. Recreation Preferences – activity location, familiarity, frequency, and satisfaction
- ii. Land Conservation Preferences – priorities, funding allocations, current and future sales tax renewals
- iii. Visitation – understanding barriers to people visiting open spaces, identify problems visiting open spaces.
- iv. Demographics – census data

The survey will be stratified by community, so that each community gets relevant results. Distribution will be through mailing to 10,000 residents this fall. They are hoping to get 1000 responses. After the initial outreach, they will open the survey to everyone through an online link. The final report will be in winter of 2023-24.

Zac went through the survey questions and members asked questions. Zac noted that the language in some cases is technical, and they may add definitions where appropriate (i.e., carbon sequestration, new and emerging technologies). One question from the Open Lands Advisory Board was on how to bring climate change into the survey, and the way that was addressed was to ask about carbon sequestration, but maybe there are additional questions that should be asked. Zac then took some general questions from members. Rodger asked how the DNR selects the properties they acquire. Zac brought up the Natural Resources Master Plan, which describes how they prioritize lands based on various land use types and values (i.e., agriculture, biodiversity, wildlife corridors, species at risk, etc.). They combined those into a single map that shows where those priorities intersect. Zac noted that moving forward the DNR is considering increasing the use of conservation easements as a mechanism for reaching some of those priority areas, as opposed to outright purchases.

- **CC4CA Policy Statement and Larimer County Climate, Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Policy** – Rodger started by summarizing the ask from last month’s meeting. Members were to review the Sustainability Policy in the context of the CC4CA policy. Natalie asked about the policy and its context. Who is the policy written for? What is its purpose? Who relies on it? Heidi said that it first works internally by informing staff on what the direction of the BOCC is in terms of project direction, how departments should proceed in their projects. It also works externally by informing the work of legislative staff who interact with policy makers outside the county government. If the County has a position on a matter, then they have written guidance. Natalie asked if there are other environmental policies? Heidi said she was unaware of any. Commissioner Kefalas noted that the current version is an update to the previous version that the ESAB created and incorporates the County Sustainability and Climate Change policies. Commissioner Kefalas also noted that it helps to inform the BOCC’s interaction with the CC4CA. Rodger asked which of the members had



comments? Nearly all members raised their hands. Rodger then gave members time to make their comments and Shelley captured them as redlines and comments in the document. She will provide the redline version to Heidi, who was also taking notes. In the end, there was too much discussion to be considered at tonight's meeting and Rodger asked that the Board allow him to capture the comments and synthesize them into a bulleted list, which can then be approved one by one at the October meeting.

5. **Approval of Minutes** – Tasha had some edits on the minutes which Shelley incorporated. Natalie moved to approve the August minutes, and Tasha seconded. The August minutes were approved by acclamation.

6. **Updates and Round Table**

- Commissioner's Update – The County held its first Larimer Water Education Series meeting August 21st, on the topic of water supply and risks. Anna shared her perspective of the meeting noting that it provided a good baseline of information. The next meeting will be September 20th in Loveland and will be on water conservation and sharing. The meetings are recorded so members can watch them at any time. There are new developments with the watershed's Solid Waste Infrastructure Master Plan (SWIMP) implementation. Negotiations with Republic Services have been terminated. They will not be building or operating the new landfill. The County will build and operate the landfill and construct a modified transfer station that will allow commercial haulers and the public to bring their loads there. There was a second RFP that covered diversion, yard and food waste and emerging technologies. They are now receiving proposals for that. The next meeting of the Solid Waste Policy Advisory Council (PAC) will be October 19th. Next, the strategic plan and annual work plan. The commissioner explained the work planning process, the completion of the current Strategic Plan (2019-2023) and development of the next Strategic Plan (2024-2029). To develop the goals of the Strategic Plan, the BOCC is doing outreach to the community to learn what is important to include. There were a lot of themes that came through during the July community leaders' summit at The Ranch. The Commissioner then talked about the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan to give members a little background. The Commissioner suggested that the issues that ESAB works on should be integrated into the Strategic Plan – i.e., air quality monitoring and how to prioritize that for a goal objective in the Strategic Plan.
- Selecting Representative for Water Master Plan – Rodger informed the Board that Lesli Ellis had requested that the ESAB select a member to serve on the County's Water Master Plan workgroup. Shelley received an email follow-up from staff requesting the selection. Rodger asked if anyone was interested. Ally asked what the time commitment was. Shelley indicated she can follow-up to learn more about the meeting schedule and time commitment. Shelley indicated that the request was for a primary representative and a back-up. Rodger asked if others were interested – Nicole, Ally and Anna all volunteered. The members all agreed to appoint Nicole as primary and Ally and Anna as back-up representatives.
- Climate Smart Future Ready – Rodger informed the Board that Ted was taking over as the representative for the CSFR workgroup. Heidi noted that the community GHG emissions data and analysis are now on the website, and anyone can go check that



out. They are now getting into the details for action items – who in the community will do the work, and who will take the lead on certain actions.

- Air Quality Community Advisory Group – Rodger announced that as part of the EPA grant, the City of Fort Collins and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment are looking for candidates to serve on a community advisory group. If anyone is interested, they can apply. The group suggested that Katrina would be a good candidate to represent the ESAB, but she is not in attendance tonight. Rodger will contact her to see if she is interested.

7. **Issue Index** – will be updated for tonight’s agenda items.
8. **Agenda Topics for Future Meetings** – October meeting will host Russ Schumacher, Colorado State Climatologist, and director of the CSU Climate Center. Brad Udall, CSU’s Colorado Water Center.
9. **Adjourn** – Ally moved to adjourn the meeting and Natalie seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM