



**1525 Blue Spruce Drive
Fort Collins, Colorado 80524
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www.larimer.org/ext**

Extension Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2025
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Advisory Board members attending: Kara Rudnick, Dick Christensen, Kelly Pollard, K-Lynn Cameron, Scott Hapner

Commissioners' Office: Commissioner Kristin Stephens

Extension staff attending: Cary Weiner, Andy Weakland, Analecia Vasquez, Diana Rios Esquivel, Maggie Switzer, Lisa Auer, Lexie Casper, Jess Callen, Christa Timmerman, Alison O'Connor

Public Attendees: Brigid McDonnell

CALL TO ORDER: at 8:03 a.m.

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved as is

APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES: July 9, 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK: Kelly Pollard: Appreciates that she can come get her pressure gauge tested at the Extension office.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORT/COMMENTS:

- Larimer County will be borrowing over 102 million dollars for Ranch upgrades and additions. The goal is for the Ranch to be self-sufficient by 2039. These upgrades will not just support private events like concerts, but will also support all buildings being used by public and private partners.
- The county will need to cut six million dollars from its budget over the next two years.
- Question by Cary Weiner: Will there be a tax influx for the county anytime soon?
- In 2029/2030, there will be a tax influx from the town of Timnath and Centerra. This will help with the financial situation, but it will not impact us until then.
- Question by Scott Hapner: What is the definition of blight?

- For urban blight to be considered, four of the ten criteria must be met. The definition of urban blight was stretched when the county accepted Timnath and Centerra. The rules are now more restrictive.
- There will be a childcare sales tax and another attempt for a transportation sales tax on the ballot this November.

INFORMATION ITEMS: (10 minutes, highlights)

4-H: (Bailey, Britney, Rachel, Roxanne)

- We miss you all today! We are meeting families to pick up their projects that went to the state fair this morning.
- There were more than 18 state fair static exhibit entries.
- The state fair results will be coming out soon.
- Thank you for a successful county fair!

Ag & Natural Resources: (Jess)

- Soil Health Day at the Farmers' Market was a success. Each vendor received a poster that listed their soil health practices and we had a fun interactive activity for the public.
- The Taste the Difference event was very successful with more than 160 customers participating in blind taste tests. This will most likely be an annual event. It took a lot of time to prepare and set up, but we will be more prepared next year. Thank you to Analecia, Kara, and Scott for your support at this event. Here are the results:
 - 83% thought the local Colorado peach was the best
 - 74% thought the local grass-fed steak was tastier
 - 75% thought the local tomato tasted better
 - 67% thought the local milk was tastier
 - 76% thought the local mushrooms were better
 - 62% thought the local chorizo was better
- Maggie, Lexie, and Jess have been working on a new project called the Know Your Farmer Campaign. We are interviewing farmers and ranchers at the Larimer County Farmers' Market about their farms. So far we have filmed at five farms and are hoping to film four more farms and ranches by the end of October. Lexie will work on editing and uploading these videos on YouTube and we will promote the campaign through our social media.
- The NoCo Farm Hop was a successful event with 45 participants, including nine Spanish speaking participants. We toured Well Fed Farmstead, Hazel Dell Mushrooms, and Hungenberg Produce.
- Jess conducted six site visits in July in Fort Collins, Masonville, and Lyons.
- Native Plant Masters classes are officially finished for the summer.

Community Development: (Lisa)

- Currently Lisa is co-facilitating a ten week virtual FLTI family, schools and community partnership on Thursday evenings. We are currently halfway through the program and have participants from both the Poudre and Thompson School Districts.
- Recruitment is underway for the Spanish Aging Mastery program. Classes will be held at the Extension Office on Mondays from 12:45-2:30 p.m., from September 15th

- through November 17th. Please let Lisa know if you would like a copy of the flyer.
- The Aging Mastery alumni group had a picnic at the Primrose Studio where they learned about the City of Fort Collins natural areas and had a focus group with Ginger Williams from the state team regarding older adults' needs in programming.
- FLTI is continuing to assist with coordination and facilitation for the Nueva Vida monthly community meetings.
- Grace just completed her extension internship collecting data regarding how being on a waitlist for childcare subsidies affects families. Lisa mentored Grace through the internship.
- Lisa held a webinar for Mosaic on August 19, 2025, highlighting Larimer Extension offerings, FLTI and included an advocacy lesson.

Farmers' Market and Food Systems: (Maggie)

- A special thank you to Kara and Scott for your help at the market on July 26, 2025 with Soil Health Day and the Taste the Difference food demonstration. Taste the Difference was a huge hit and a very unique event; the vendors gave great feedback on it too.
- Congressman Joe Neguse visited the market on July 26, 2025 as well, and participated in the "Taste the Difference" food demonstration.
- We celebrated National Farmers' Market Week from August 3-9, 2025, with events such as a Proclamation from the County Commissioners on August 5th, and the always popular zucchini decorating and races at the market on August 9, 2025.
- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union also attended the market on August 9, 2025 and gave goodie bags to all the farmers.
- On August 9, 2025, we believe we hit a record in SNAP distribution at the market with \$1,632.00 "purchased" SNAP vouchers in one market day.
- On August 2, 2025, we hit a gross sales (not including federal benefits programs) record, with over one hundred thousand dollars in overall sales for the day. Including federal benefits programs, the total was one hundred and two thousand dollars.
- We are partnering with SAINT Volunteer Transportation to provide rides to the market for Market Days participants on voucher pick-up days, helping with access to the program and to the market.
- We are implementing a visitor survey at the market - [click here to take the survey](#) (only if you have visited the LCFM).
- We are once again competing for the Best Farmers' Market in the U.S. with American Farmland Trust - [VOTE FOR US HERE](#). Our goal is to be number one in the state of Colorado. Last year we placed second to Louisville in this public-voted contest.
- Upcoming market events:
 - September 6, 2025: Health fair, with booths from North Colorado Health Alliance, UCHealth Aspen Club, and other nonprofits/community groups offering public health services/programs (partnering with Christa to organize and implement).
 - October 4, 2025: Celebrating dogs at the market in conjunction with Tour de Corgi.
- Maggie and Alison are running the Second Annual Ag Week Farmers Market on CSU's campus tomorrow, September 4, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. Stop by to shop with a handful of local Larimer County Farmers' Market vendors.

- In partnership with CSU College of Agriculture and Rams Against Hunger, Amber Obermaier, 2025 LCFM intern through Extension, finished her internship on August 11, 2025, and was incredibly instrumental in Market Days coordination and support, as well as general market operations and community outreach.

Food Safety: (Analecia)

- See Presentation for updates.

Health and Well-Being: (Christa)

- We will be facilitating Branch Out, an eight-week nature and health program, with Berthoud middle school students starting on September 3rd. The program was co-developed with Adams and Boulder County health specialists and this will be the first pilot of the program. Lexie has created flyers and social media materials to promote the program. Christa attended the Turner Middle School back-to-school event and is partnering with Berthoud Community Library to host the sessions.
- We learned that the Larimer County Office on Aging will no longer be providing their Answers on Aging booklet in print due to budget restraints. This will be a larger loss for the older community and their caretakers who have relied on a print version of local resources. Our website, Senior Access Points, will be revamped and promoted this fall with a social media campaign. We continue to meet with Partnership for Age Friendly Communities and Larimer County Office on Aging to assess program needs and avoid duplicative work.
- At the August pick-up for Market Days for Older adults, we shared advance care planning materials (UCHealth) and File for Life magnets and card holders. Many participants do not have advance care planning documents on file, so we hope our encouragement and connection to UCHealth was beneficial in planting the seed that these documents are important.
- We continue to prepare for Healthy by Nature, a nature and wellness event at Lee Martinez Park on September 27, 2025. We are hosting the event with CSU Human Dimensions of Natural Resources (HDNR) and City of Fort Collins Natural Areas. HDNR staff were able to secure three sponsors to help support event costs. Please share the event flyer in your networks.

Horticulture: (Alison)

- Our office, CSU Extension, and the Master Gardener program suffered a devastating loss of longtime volunteer, Dr. Tony Koski, on July 12, 2025. Tony was a Larimer County 4-H volunteer when his children were young and became a Master Gardener in 2011. He served as the CSU Extension Turf Specialist for 37 years.
- The Master Gardener 50th Conference (held August 8 and 9, 2025 on campus) was a huge success! We had over 220 Master Gardeners across the state attend. Attendees did tours on Friday, had a banquet celebration in the CSU Annual Trial Gardens, and concluded the evening by watching the premier of “Bigger than Backyards”, a 27-minute video about the Colorado Master Gardener program. It’s [worth the watch!](#)
- The CMG winter squash trials will be featured at the ARDEC-South Field Day on August 28, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It’s free to attend and includes lunch. [Register here.](#)

- Green School is open! While Larimer County is not training new Master Gardener volunteers for 2026, interested individuals can take the training to obtain a Colorado Gardener Certificate. Pricing varies and there is a 50% discount for CSU or Larimer County employees (email greenschool@colostate.edu for the link). Early bird registration costs \$495 and ends September 30, 2025.
- Alison and Erica Wharton, CMG and horticultural therapist, recorded a presentation for the Washington State University Master Gardener conference on the Evergreen Elders program. The conference will be held at the end of September.
- Master Gardeners Deb and Susan will do presentations at the Council Tree Library in Fort Collins this fall.
- Grow & Give continues to support backyard produce donations to support food insecurity in our community; we have added new partners this season: the Wolf Pantry with Front Range Community College and Laurene Edmondson Elementary School in Loveland.
- Alison will travel to Estes Park in October to present on harvesting and sowing wildflowers. This will be her fourth presentation to the Estes Parks community this season.

General/Other: (Cary)

- Family & Consumer Sciences position and staffing update: Amber Webb has resigned from Larimer County Extension as an Family and Consumer Science Specialist. We are refilling her position by having Christa taking on the nutrition programming and Analeica to take on the home food safety programming.
- We will rehire for a Natural Resources Coordinator position. This position is currently posted. This position will allow Jess to focus 100% on Agriculture.
- Marketing & Communications plan: this is currently being developed by Lexie Casper. Hopefully in our November meeting we will have something more to share.

PRESENTATION: (Food Safety/EFNEP - Analecia Vasquez/Diana Esquivel)

- Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation for further information.

DISCUSSION:

- 2026 Committee meeting frequency and scheduling: possibly meeting quarterly for 2026 with email engagement between meetings to keep everyone updated on volunteer opportunities and other major events. Committee feedback is that every two months is currently a good idea.
- 2026 Work Plan ideas: think about ideas for the next meeting to discuss.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Open Streets, September 14, 2025, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., on Lady Moon Dr, between LeFever Dr. and Shallow Pond Dr.
- Healthy by Nature Fair, September 27, 2025, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at Lee Martinez Park.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: November 5, 2025 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Weakland
September 3, 2025