



Date: November 16, 2023
Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Location: Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO, 1st Floor Carter Lake Room 150 & Zoom Webinar

LAND STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Patrick Bickley	I	Casey Cisneros	I	
Brenda Engles	I	Daylan Figgs	I	
Ryan Blake	A	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Ronald Harris	I	Jody Shadduck-McNally*	I	
Jesse Dillon	I	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Michael Hayes	I			
Janae Malpas	I			

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:04 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Ron moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Mike seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Information and Announcements

Natural Resources events for this month: <https://larimer.org/naturalresources>.

To sign up for Land Stewardship Advisory Board updates, go to <https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Land Stewardship Advisory Board” box.

Updates/Discussion Items

Quarter 3 Board Report

- Daylan said LC has detected a noxious weed of concern. Casey noted, Meadow Hawkweed (currently just a watchlist species) is a close cousin to a List A species in the state, Orange Hawkweed. A volunteer made note of the weed in conserved lands near Longs Peak at the Boulder County line.
- The species watchlist allows municipalities and counties to track weeds of concern in their areas and for future consideration. A member of the Land Stewardship team identified and mapped 6 other parcels in the area with meadow hawkweed. It will be treated in 2024.
 - Pat asked if Boulder County knew of its presence in their county. Casey confirmed.

- Janae inquired, with species migrating north due to climate changes, how are definitions changing and species classified as either noxious, watchlist or naturally moving to preferable climate areas. Casey said the Department of Agriculture is going through the process of updating how species are listed. They are looking at how most western states are listing noxious weeds and applying that process to Colorado. Colorado focuses on invasive exotic weeds/species and less on plants moving north.
- Brenda asked how Meadow Hawkweed is spread. Casey said it is like a dandelion, very light seed travel efficiently and quickly (ex. creek corridors, wind, people, animals, etc.). Crews need to treat it before it ends bloom.
- Ron asked about the new Land Stewardship building at the Ranch. Casey said staff are still coordinating with the Ranch staff, but a grand opening will likely happen in the first few months of 2024.

Proposed Weed District Cost-Share Changes

- Casey proposed a new idea DNR is investigating. Currently, the Weed District offers a 25% rebate within its cost share program for residents with range/pasture lands. The cost share covers labor, noxious weed removal, spraying, and mowing. For residents interested in the cost share program, Land Stewardship staff conduct a site visit, create a management plan, and make herbicide recommendations that must be used.
 - The proposal is to add a revegetation component to the current cost share program that would aid in paying for seed, seed application and soil preparation. The addition to the program would reimburse 25% of revegetation cost up to \$1000.
- Questions/Feedback:
 - Pat asked if this would require additional funding. Casey noted the budget would not change. The current program budget is \$5000, and in any given year only about \$3500-\$4000 is used for rebates/reimbursements.
 - Janae asked if the program would include soil testing to ensure reseeding would be successful before applying the seed. Casey noted soil tests are \$35. It is a small dollar amount (when considering rebates) and thus might not be worth doing. However, he would advise landowners to do their own soil test beforehand.
 - Janae inquired about monitoring of the sites. Casey said this is currently in discussion, for example, what are the next steps, are there plans for development on the parcel, can adaptive management be used, etc.
 - Jesse noted different land uses/types use seeds that are both accepted and not accepted by the county. He asked if the county would take a position on what seeds could be used. Casey said seed mixes will be dry land species that have specific exclusions. There are some seed mixes on the market that include invasives (i.e. feral rye). Using native species mixes helps to limit invasives.
 - Ron asked about a source for the seed. Casey said staff will direct landowners to the seed distributors for questions and support.
 - Meegan said staff will follow-up with LSAB in 2024.

Climate Strategy Stakeholder Update – Mike Hayes

- Mike said he and Janae serve on the LC Climate Smart Future Ready Committee as board representatives. The Larimer [County Climate and Sustainability webpage](#) where the Climate Smart Future Ready draft plan can be found.
- The draft plans are very broad, built around the environment, circular economy, and business. LSAB committee members focus on sections related to the natural environment, water, and agriculture.
- Page 9, Strategy 12: Expand, protect, and improve critical regional wildlife habitats, corridors, and ecosystems.
 - Action 1: Create and/or increase incentives and education for private landowners to implement local climate-resilient and ecologically adaptive restoration projects.
 - Action 2: Coordinate across jurisdictions to conserve lands to enhance ecological connectivity and improve ecosystem services.

- Action 3: Enhance and expand existing efforts to live with fire through responsible fire management practices (e.g., forest fire mitigation, tree removal, prescribed burns, etc.).
- Motivation for the plan is to enhance merit and strengthen initiatives that are already active or existing in policy.

Board of County Commissioners Update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally noted participation in emergency meetings, called by a Governors special legislative session scheduled to begin November 17th. The session is being called to discuss the data analysis for budget impacts (including impacts to the Weed District budget). LC proposed its budget in preparation for if Proposition HH were to pass. If HH were to pass, there would be big changes and cuts.
- LC is concluding its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. A community survey for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan for LC residents will be sent out. A primary focus of the plan is to share and educate the community on what LC is actively engaged in. The plan will be adopted in the first quarter of 2024.
- Behavioral Health Center has officially opened.
- The Forest Health Council is focused on reforestation, weed management, and seed deficit. Ongoing conversations continue looking at options of what actions can be taken, and how government, municipalities and counties can work together.
 - Janae asked if there was any benefit to invasive species regenerating in a burn area and if they could potentially assist in redeveloping soil health. Casey said it depends on soil burn severity. Some places nothing will grow because the soil has been sterilized. Weedy species can be helpful in some situations. Other species, such as thistle, will take over a niche and become prolific to where no other species can grow. Brenda asked if soil regeneration was a matter of time. Casey confirmed.
 - Ron suggested reaching out to Rocky Mountain National Park to see what research they have done post-East Troublesome Fire.
 - Jesse inquired, because DNR is legally obligated by the state to manage List A and B species, would the Weed District's Forest Service (FS) contracts include these species. Casey confirmed that they will be in the Scope of work. However, the federal government has an exemption under the noxious weed act.

Action Items

Recommendation to adopt updated Larimer County Noxious Weed Management Plan

- Casey said DNR adopted the current plan in 2018. It is reviewed every 3 years. After the 2023 review, staff proposed: cleaning up generalities and verbiage, expanding staff discretion when managing noxious weeds on private lands and changing how staff addresses management on public/private land.
- The new plan includes distribution maps (maps in LC) and fact sheet hyperlinks to Colorado Department of Agriculture.
 - Janae asked how often the maps are updated. Casey noted, in compliance with the Noxious Weed Act, List A species maps are updated as the species are found. List B species maps are updated every 3 years in groups and management plans can be changed. DNR has good weed data for Larimer County.
 - Ron asked if the maps would include the new Meadow Hawkweed. Casey said the species is not in the management plan. However, [EDDMaps](#), a nationwide database, will include it.
- Ron asked for a motion to recommend to the BOCC the adoption of the updated LC Noxious Weed Management Plan. All board members in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation to sell Weed District office space at 2649 E. Mulberry, Fort Collins, CO 80525

- Casey informed the board LC plans to sell the commercial condo unit on Mulberry. The building was bought by DNR's Weed District in 2006.
- The property is currently under contract and requires a recommendation to the BOCC by LSAB for approval of the sale.

- Jesse asked for the dollar amounts it was purchased for and how much it was selling for.
 - Casey noted DNR paid \$260,000 in 2006 and it is currently under contract for \$550,000.
 - The proceeds from the sale will go back into the Weed District.
- Ron asked for a motion to recommend the BOCC approve the sale of the Weed District office space located at 2649 E. Mulberry Fort Collins, CO. All board members in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

- Ron inquired about the Climate and Sustainability plan feedback provided to Heidi Pruess. Staff noted the plan was to be presented to the BOCC in November/December. Janae shared interest in seeing how public and board feedback was integrated into the final draft.
- Jesse asked about a board field trip to see a vegetation restoration project. Meegan said the field trip will likely be in the spring of 2024 and be scheduled during the day, outside of a normal LSAB meeting date and time. Ron requested before and after photos from restoration projects. Staff confirmed DNR will present a restoration project update to the board.
- Jesse asked how many county staff plan to attend the Colorado Weed meeting in December. Casey noted 6 and highlighted the training opportunity for weed applicators to fulfil their required continued education.
- Michael inquired about weed management responsibilities of Northern Water and the Bureau of Reclamation regarding reservoir areas. Casey said DNR does weed management around the reservoir parks and dams. Meegan added, DNR will be conducting the vegetation management at Chimney Hollow. The department occasionally does weed control for hire for Northern Water.

Next Meeting Scheduled

February 15, 2024 - LC DNR Land Stewardship Office: 5450 Suite 110 Arena Circle, Loveland, CO 80538 & 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 – 6:03 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.