1800 South County Road 31, Loveland, Colorado 80537, (970) 619-4570, Larimer.org

Date: November 17, 2022
Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Location: Zoom Webinar

LAND STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Michael Hayes	V	Daylan Figgs	V	
Josh Wenz	V	Meegan Flenniken	V	
Janae Malpas	V	Jody Shadduck-McNally*	A	
Ronald Harris	V	Andrea Weber (minutes)	V	
Jesse Dillon	V	Melody Johnson	V	
Patrick Bickley	V	Lori Smith	V	
Ryan Blake	A	Bill Pawleshyn	V	

V = virtual attendee   I = in-person attendee   A = absent   *commissioner

Call to Order - 5:09 pm

Public Comment

None

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Jesse moved to approve the minutes from the February and May meetings, Michael seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Information and Announcements
New Board Member Introductions

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

June 2022 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

July 2022 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

August 2022 Open Space Tax Distribution Letter

Michael Hayes (primary) and Janae Malpas (alternative) both volunteered to be on the stakeholder committee for developing the Larimer County Climate Smart and Future Ready Plan

Updates/Discussion Items

2023 Budget Update – Melody Johnson

- Melody provided an overview of the 2023 Budget that was submitted to the BOCC for approval.
  - DNR requested to convert 2 full-time limited term positions to full-time regular positions (a Boat Inspector and a Land Stewardship Technician).
  - DNR also requested the addition of 4 full-time regular staff positions including a Finance and Admin Department Specialist, Trail Technician, Communications Specialist and Maintenance Technician.
  - Meegan said adding an additional land stewardship position is needed due to new land acquisitions and acres added to DNR's portfolio. Ron expressed he is in favor of these new positions and values the need to expand the crew with population growth. He asked when the new positions will take effect. Melody in 2023, if and when they are approved by the BOCC.
- DNR's total expected expenses for 2023 is $13.2 million.
  - 61% of the budget is for personnel, $8.1 million for staffing, $6 million covers full-time and $2 million covers seasonals and their benefits. The BOCC is providing all staff with a 2.5% cost of living pay increase, and those who meet all requirements will receive a 5% merit increase on their anniversary.
  - 39% of the budget will cover the operating costs, totaling ~$5.1 million.
    - 47% of operating expenses are the indirect costs that are paid directly to Larimer County. for county services provided to DNR (i.e., human resources and legal services)
    - Daylan explained that because DNR is not within the General Fund, the department pays for the services provided by the County.
    - The second highest cost is for fleet vehicles and fuel.
    - The third most significant cost is LC Facilities and IT services.
    - Land conservation - many of DNR's level of service metrics are indexed to population growth and are being met or exceeded.
  - Ron inquired about the credit card/bank fees. Melody explained with credit card sales up, the fees charged by credit card companies increases as well. Daylan noted DNR receives one-third of its revenue through fees (parking permits, etc.) and many times these are paid for with credit cards.
  - Jesse asked about one-time projects, and why a new vehicle would be included in DNR's cost and not within Fleet. Daylan explained the Fleet vehicles model. DNR will do the initial acquisition of the vehicle, it goes into the fleet, DNR then makes monthly payments towards the replacement vehicle, which Fleet will provide.
  - Pat asked if the personnel costs for the 2023 budget included the 6 new employees positions. Daylan said DNR made internal adjustments and pooled money from across the department to make a minimal impact on the overall budget to pay for the new positions.
- Melody said CIP projects will cost a total of $8.6 million. 26% is funded by grants and the remaining 74% funded by DNR.
  - $2.2 million will cover the cost for a new Land Stewardship Building co-located at the Ranch.
    - Meegan said the LS building construction will begin soon and the hope is to have staff moved in by the end of 2023.
  - The Vine Street location is being vacated and the building on Mulberry will be sold.
- The projected revenues for 2023 total $23 million. 54.24% of this is from sales and use tax, 30.58% various fees, 3.71% property taxes to the Weed District, 3.5% Lottery, 2.66% Land Stewardship Enterprise revenues, 1.56% ANS, 1.34% General Fund, plus 2.72% from others.
  - Ron asked if the revenues were planned/calculated with inflation included? Melody said yes.

2022 Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 board reports

- Daylan said board reports are provided to highlight key projects and conservation work DNR is doing. This includes stewardship work, restoration projects, land acquisitions, and public visitation. Daylan said the Q3 report discusses the Heavens Door property acquisition. This has been on DNR's "wish-list" for nearly 30 years.

- It highlights the Small Grants Program's 25-year anniversary and funded projects around the county.
- DNR is removing some old and dilapidated structures on a few properties that don't serve a department purpose.
  - Ron asked if the materials were being recycled. Meegan noted there were 2 modular buildings, one was sold and repurposed and the plan is to sell the second. A residential Quonset hut and additional house both had to be demolished and we'll have to check on if any of the material could be recycled.
- Daylan noted the report speaks to DNR's grazing practices.
  - Jesse asked if DNR was working in a rotational system with local landowners for cattle grazing.
    - Meegan said on many of DNR's fee-owned open spaces grazing is used to meet specific ecological outcomes and increase the health of native grass communities per NRCS grazing plans. DNR puts out a competitive request for proposals for a 5-year term with a 5-year renewal option. An RFP will be released for Devil's Backbone Open Space in November. DNR has had many good partnerships with its lessees.
    - Ron asked if the lessees and DNR have a plan for weed control and mitigation. Meegan said in 95% of these situations DNR retains the responsibility of weed control. There are a few properties, for example a small area at River Bluffs Open Space, where the lessee manages weeds in a hay storage area.

LSAB Workplan Discussion – Daylan

- Daylan explained that DNR keeps a running calendar of topics the department would like to bring to each board. This year, the BOCC asked DNR to provide the annual work plan for each board that hit on key topics.
- A few topic items include compliance with noxious weed laws, revisiting and updating board by-laws (if needed), budget plans for 2023 and 2024 and board elections.

Land Stewardship Enterprise Program Update – Bill Pawleshyn

- Bill introduced himself as the Senior Land Stewardship Technician who runs the Land Stewardship Enterprise Program and shared a presentation.
  - 2022 Enterprise Weed Management Program was created by LC Commissioner Resolution in 1998 to operate county-wide to perform vegetation management services for hire.
- Land Stewardship Program Goals:
  - Focus on long-term stewardship, weed management, and ecological restoration efforts on a watershed scale.
  - Foster responsible land stewardship though education and outreach that promotes best management practices.
  - Assist private and public land managers to minimize invasive species and promote resilient vegetation resources.
  - Assist responsible parties to comply with CO state law for the management of invasive species.
- Enterprise Staff:
  - 3 full-time staff with Qualified Supervisor (Q.S.) licenses (licensed by CO DEPT of AG to perform herbicide treatments on project sites);1 crew lead with Q.S. licensed and 7-10 seasonal 6-mo staff.
  - All staff receive first aid/CPR, applicator tech and ATV safety certifications.
- Funding and rate schedule:
  - projected 2022 revenue = $646K (45% increase since 2018)
  - projected 2023 revenue = $646K generated through grants, partnership agreements, services for hire and office sales (educational materials, herbicides, etc.)
  - Fees/rates: (based on consumer price index (CPI) – changes as the general prices increase)

        - $152.00/hr. per single ATV/UTV applicator, $152.00/hr. for tractor/misc. equipment, $228.00/hr. per 2 UTV applicators, $82.00/hr. per backpack applicator and general labor
        - Meegan said these prices were established with the BOCC and can be adjusted annually to the current CPI. They were not increased in 2021, but DNR will look at increases for 2023 and bring them to the board if a change to these rates occurs.
        - Ron asked Bill if he anticipated any supply chain issues for herbicides or materials in 2023.
            - Bill said there have been some issues, and vendors informed staff they will probably see some issues with specific products, such as herbicides.
- Strategic Partnerships:
    - Enterprise program: allows us to achieve watershed scale beneficial outcomes on key, larger, conserved, or impactful parcels.
    - Municipalities: Estes Park, Loveland, Timnath. State: CPW, SLB, CDOT. Larimer County: R&B, engineering, solid waste. Others: USFS, Watershed Coalitions, Conservation Districts, Northern Water and Private landowners/corporations.
    - Partnership Examples: Larimer Conservation District
        - Generated $99K in revenue in 2022 ($84K in 2021)
        - Newest partnership (year 3)
        - Assist districts with Healthy Forest Initiative
            - Began in 2016 after High Park Fire, covers watershed concerns including (forest health, water quality, wildlife habitat), focused primarily on private lands.
        - Sites include Pole Hill, McGregor Ranch, Meadowdale, Cheley Camp, Diamond Peak, MRQT, Drala Mountain Campus, Lewis Park, Maxwell Ranch
            - Heavy disturbance (logging, fire, etc.), we manage vegetation for 2-3 years depending on how much money is allotted by the conservation district for the specific project/property.
    - Partnership Examples: United States Forest Service
        - Generated $168K revenue 2022 ($107K in 2021)
        - Log time partner with Canyon Lakes Ranger District
        - Focus on Rx burns, past forest fire scars, timber management units.
        - Focused primarily on Cameron Peak burn scar in 2022.
        - Sites include Stringtown Gulch Complex, Monument Gulch, Pennock Pass, Long Draw Area, Hewlett Gulch
        - Primarily vegetation management, covered 6,600 acres, treated 220 acres of noxious weeds, 90% by foot.
        - Areas are high intensity temp burn areas- so often the only things that are growing are state listed noxious weeds.
    - Partnership Examples: Colorado State Agencies
        - Generated $60k revenue 2022.
        - Longstanding partnerships with CDOT, CPW, and State Land Board
        - Assist with noxious week management in grazing allotments, recreational sites, and wildlife areas.
        - Sites include Lory State Park, Cherokee Park SWA, Crystal Mountain, Poudre Land Trust, Meadow Creek
    - Partnership Examples: Estes Valley and Big Thompson Watershed Coalitions
        - Generated ~$10K in revenue in 2022.
        - Assist with vegetation management on post restoration efforts from 2013 flood.
        - 2022 is final year of Big T funding; and renewed project funding for Estes Valley in 2023
        - Estes Valley sites: Upper Big Thompson, Fish Creek, Fall River
        - Big Thompson sites: Sweetheart Winery, Wild, Whitesides, Oxbow, Namaqua
    - Partnership Examples: Private Landowners and CE’s
        - Generated ~$45K in revenue in 2022.
        - Criteria around large, strategically located, or conserved lands:

        - Wright CE, Steputis CE, Meadowdale CE, Abbey of St. Walburga, Szaloczi Property (Blue Mountain), A&H Ranch
- Discussion/Feedback:
    - Ron asked what lead time is anticipated for next summer, and what Bill would recommend timewise for an HOA in Estes.
        - Bill said most partners are annual contracts. Staff meet with the contract holders every winter and discuss needs for the upcoming grow season (tends to remain consistent). The contracts that change are the private contracts, CEs and properties that are funded by state/other agencies (funding increase or decreases). Work plans are put together now for next year. He suggested that if any entity is interested, to reach out sooner rather than later so staff can schedule a site visit.
    - Janae asked what crew size is typically needed for the hourly rates listed. Bill said USFS contracts typically have 3 seasonals and 1 FTE and the remainder have 1 crew leader (Bill), one 10-month seasonal and four 6-month seasonals that come on in May. It would be ideal to have the seasonals hired on in early April for training and out in the field sooner. He said preferred staffing would be six 6-month seasonals.
    - Janae asked how many acres are covered per hour (cost per acre)?
        - Bill said there is not a cost per acre. Landowners are charged for the cost of labor and the herbicide used on site. They pay a per ounces fee for product that was used, not a set charge.
    - Josh asked what percentage of time is spent on weed management in open spaces vs at these other spaces?
        - Bill explained a dedicated crew works on parks and open spaces. The Enterprise crew focus on lands not owned by LCDNR.
        - Meegan said the crew for P&OS looks like the Enterprise crew, 1 FTE, one 10-month seasonal and 4-6 seasonals.

Action Items
Board Election of Officers

- Board elections began with the chair election. Ron ran the election of the chair and called for nominations. Ron nominated himself for chair. After a unanimous vote by board members, Ron accepted the chair position.
- Ron opened the floor for vice chair and called for nominations. Michael nominated himself for vice chair. All board members voted unanimously. Michael accepted the vice chair position.

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled
February 16, 2023 @ 200 W. Oak Street Fort Collins, CO 80524 – Lake Loveland 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 – 6:26 pm