



Date: February 15, 2024
Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Location: LC DNR Land Stewardship Office: 5450 Suite 110 Arena Circle, Loveland, CO 80538 & Zoom Webinar

LAND STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

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

V = virtual attendee

I = in-person attendee

A = absent

*commissioner

Call to Order – 5:07 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Removed previous Action Item “Recommendation for approval of the Weed Management Plan update”

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Pat moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Michael 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.

Tour of New Building

Board Location Change

- Casey announced, beginning in May, DNR will hold all LSAB meetings at the Horsetooth Area Information Center. This will allow for better, more sustainable internal management. The meetings will continue to have a Zoom hybrid option.

2023 Quarter 4 Board Report

- Casey noted the 2023 Q4 board report is available online. The report highlights updates and other DNR projects.

Updates/Discussion Items

Commissioner Update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally noted Larimer County's continued interest and support of numerous bills currently in the State Legislature.
- Attended a conference and separate round table discussion in Washington DC regarding disaster resiliency, weed management and restoration.
- Participated in the Colorado/Wyoming Engine for Innovation discussions on climate work, weed management and land stewardship.

2023 LC Noxious Weed Data – Maxine Guill

- Landowner Program
 - Maxine said DNR's Land Stewardship Program complies with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act, as outlined in the LC Noxious Weed Management Plan. Staff are proactive with List A and B species.
 - When responding to a formal complaint by a landowner, staff can observe neighboring properties for noxious weeds and start a case if the property is 1 acre and more than 80% covered with noxious weeds.
 - Casey noted List C species are not mandated for management. Land Stewardship staff provide education to the public and landowners regarding List C species but do not do enforcement.
 - Procedure:
 - Land Stewardship (LS) receives a complaint, logs it into the system and completes a site visit within 5 days.
 - If noxious weeds are found during the site visit, staff send a courtesy letter to the landowner, requesting they remove the weed within 10 days. After 10 days, LS staff revisits the site and sends an enforcement letter if weeds are still present, noting staff will remove the weeds at a charge.
 - If no action or contact is made by the landowner, LS approaches the Board of County Commissioners with a request for Right of Entry, allowing the LS team to enter the property and manage the noxious weeds.
 - LS sends an invoice to the landowner for the work completed to remove the weeds and places a Notice of Lien on the property if the invoice is not paid.
 - Casey noted, currently in the State Legislature, clarification is being sought regarding the Noxious Weed Act and county/municipality's ability to write fines and tickets for non-compliance versus entering the property to conduct weed management.
 - If this were to pass, LS staff would spend less time on enforcement case management.
 - Priorities to do enforcement: List A noxious weeds, List B noxious weeds outside of the containment boundary, infestations of List B species that are over 1 acre with 80% infestation, multi-year warnings where landowner still has not acted.
 - 2023 Noxious Weed Compliance Highlights:
 - Staff completed 1,114 compliance inspections and monitored 82 List A weed properties and 94 high priority weed properties.
 - 783 code cases for 2023 within and outside of the Weed District:
 - 603 follow up from 2022 (111 closed - no further action, 93 complied, 42 closed), 180 new cases, 63 public complaints (14 no violation), 100 high priority cases, 7 new owners, 7 started by staff.
 - Focus outside the Weed District: public complaints and the Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) species. The EDRR is a grant sponsored program, in which the Land Stewardship team offers free weed management services.
 - Looking ahead at 2024: 574 cases to follow up on from 2023, 57 List A monitoring inspections, 88 high priority monitoring inspections, 5 new complaints.
 - Compliance Inspections: **2023** (1,302) **2022** (1,025)

- Courtesy Letters: **2023** (261) **2022** (199)
- High Priority Weed Compliance Letters (EDRR grant): **2023** (67) **2022** (51)
- Enforcement Letters: **2023** (183 - most ever sent) **2022** (134)
 - Casey noted staff will stop enforcement if a landowner makes contacts and presents a management plan.
- Landowner Communication: **2023** (192 letters sent – 37% response rate) **2022** (134 – 34% response rate)
- Noxious Weed Enforcement Right of Entry Request: **2023** (47) **2022** (28)
- Enforcement Actions – Compliance Management: **2023** (10) **2022** (12)
- Herbicide Sales 2023: **305 sales - \$43,000**. If customers live within the Weed District, they receive 25% cost share at the time of purchase.
- Site Visits 2023: **61**
 - In district – free to anyone
 - Outside district – only done for properties DNR has sent letters to. CSU Extension will provide for all others.
- DNR received a Disaster Relief Grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture for weed management in the Cameron Peak Fire Area. The grant totaled \$13,000 and offered free herbicides from DNR Land Stewardship. Landowners could spray weeds themselves or hire someone to spray at 25% cost share. 11 did it themselves and 12 hired someone to do it at 25% cost share for labor and free herbicides.
 - DNR Weed District tax has part cost share, totaling \$3,040 (herbicides and labor).
- Questions/Feedback:
 - Ryan asked if LS staff noticed fewer new complaints over time.
 - Staff noted moisture from rain events in 2023 encouraged weed growth. They also noted an influx of new residents and subdivision of larger land parcels. New owners are not always aware of the responsibility of taking care of a property.

Overview of 2024 Land Stewardship Advisory Board work plan/agendas

- Casey said the Annual Work Plan outlines the topics DNR plans to bring to LSAB for the year including routine presentations/items.

Overview of current and planned expansion of cost share program to include dryland revegetation

- Casey said DNR currently allocates \$5,000 annually towards a cost share program funded by the Weed District mil-levy. The program assists landowners within the Weed District to implement projects that result in effective control of noxious weeds.
- The safest and most effective way to manage weeds is with an integrated approach using herbicides, mechanical, biological, and cultural controls. The ultimate goal is to create resilient plant communities.
- Reimbursement is 25% of the cost up to \$1,000. The proposed cost-share would include seed, seed bed prep and planting.
- Landowners must complete a site assessment with LS staff and have a management plan approved, including seed mixes. Plans can extend over several years, but reimbursement cannot exceed \$1,000. The property cannot be converted to crop land for a minimum of 10 years.
- LS staff plan to use targeted marketing in 2024, sending mailers to landowners within the Weed District that have had a site visit or purchased herbicides in the past.
- DNR is proposing the cost share program to include cost coverage for revegetation.
- Questions/Feedback:
 - The board inquired about preapproved sources for seeds. Casey noted there are several resources that can be found on the DNR website to purchase seed from distributors. Landowners should work with the seed distributor for recommendations based on goals and management plans.

Action Items

Recommendation to Increase Enterprise Rates

- Within DNR's LS program is the Weed Enterprise. Enterprise staff manage vegetation and noxious weeds for hire. The enterprise works with other agencies, organizations and a few select landowners with conservation easements, to apply a watershed approach to noxious weed management.
- In 2017, rates were lower than expenses and DNR requested the BOCC to approve an increase to the rates by 12% and include DNR Director discretion to raise rates to the CPI.
- In 2023, the enterprise had a net loss.
 - DNR is requesting LSAB recommend to the BOCC to approve a rate increase of 10% in 2024 and allow the DNR Director discretion to raise fees to CPI, with an additional 3% increase (as appropriate in future years).
- Rate Changes:
 - **Service** (General Labor/Backpack Sprayer) **2023 Rate per hour** (\$88.00) **2024 Rate per hour with 10% increase** (\$97.00)
 - **Service** (ATV Spray/Seed) **2023 Rate per hour** (\$162.00) **2024 Rate per hour with 10% increase** (\$178.00)
 - **Service** (Roadside Truck Spray) **2023 Rate per hour** (\$162.00) **2024 Rate per hour with 10% increase** (\$178.00)
 - **Service** (Tractor Spray/Mow/Seed) **2023 Rate per hour** (\$162.00) **2024 Rate per hour with 10% increase** (\$178.00)
 - **Service** (UTV – 2 applicators) **2023 Rate per hour** (\$244.00) **2024 Rate per hour with 10% increase** (\$268.00)
- DNR is actively engaged with 2 Larimer County business analysts to formalize a business plan for the enterprise.
- Ron moved to recommend to the BOCC the rate increase for the Weed Enterprise, Mike seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

- Daylan noted the county recently updated its policy for boards and commissions including a code of conduct. Staff will update the LSAB bylaws and bring them to LSAB for board recommendation.
- The LC Community Survey is open. He encouraged board members to take it before closing in March.
- The new LS building open house will be held in April.

Next Meeting Scheduled

May 16, 2024 @ Horsetooth Area Information Center – 4200 W County Road 38E, Fort Collins, CO 80526 – Mountain Lion 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 – 6:20 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.