

## Larimer County Land Stewardship Advisory Board

*The mission of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is to establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.*

### MINUTES

Scheduled times are subject to change.

**Date:** 2/15/2018

**Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO, 2nd Floor, Lake Loveland Room.

**Contact:** Please contact Emmy at [ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us](mailto:ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us) or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Ernie Marx	x	Casey Cisneros	x	
Ken Mathias	x	Gary Buffington	x	
Richard McCulloch	x	*Lew Gaiter III		
Timothy Koski	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
		Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
		Maxine Guill	x	

x = present

\*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 6:02 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
  - a. Hitch moves to approve minutes, Ken seconds, motion passed.
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - a. Distribution of Annual Permits to Board members.

- b. Larimer County acquires 320 acre White property adjacent to the Devil's Backbone Open Space.
  - i. From map, the largest in yellow is the conservation easement is Wright easement, two areas labeled A and B are Wright fee purchases, Sanem acquisition is fee purchase also includes 80 acre rectangle at north end of HTMOS. Intended to be buffers around HT/Devil's Backbone area. New since November is White property, overlooks Devil's BB, had a conservation easement on half, acquired fee value, City of Fort Collins holds conservation easement on LC purchase now.
  - ii. Member question about how LC got the White property. It was noted that it was purchased from the White Family. Clarifications were made about the properties on the map.
  - iii. Member question about future development/connection between DBB and Bobcat. It was noted that most of that land between DBB and Bobcat is 35's and most are developed.
- c. A leadership advisory committee was convened which consists of leader representatives from all 3 of our Boards to discuss Department Finances.
  - i. Overview of meeting from two weeks ago: discussed financial sources, how it is divided, projections and reality. Shift in spending from acquisitions toward maintenance of new properties. Will bring presentation to full boards this year to discuss financial status. Good feedback from members who attended about interacting with other board leaders at that meeting.
- d. In-stream flow decrees for Boxelder Creek and Sand Creek at Red Mountain Open Space were issued January 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - i. Have acquired 48,000 acres of land fees and/or easements, are working on protecting flow rates using a process with Colorado Water Conservation Board to find most significant needs. The two at Red Mountain Open Space, Spring and Mill creeks at HTMOS, Sulzer Gulch at Sylvan Dale Ranch Conservation Easement, and North Fork of Little Thompson River through Blue Mountain Conservation Easement. Have to nominate, provide access to land and do measurements with Water Conservation Board. Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) holds the water right, perpetual protection. Three year process, with public involvement.
  - ii. Member question about junior water rights. It was noted that Red Mountain water rights are a 2018 water right, if someone comes later and wants rights upstream, it would be junior to ours. Currently CWCB is taking flow measurements at North Fork of Little Thompson to see what is year round, if there are 3 cfs not appropriated, that's what would be filed for. Has to be tied to a biological value. Will keep most rivers and streams at minimum of what they look like today. The rights are dedicated and perpetual. Water rights are occasionally gifted, similar to conservation easement, can be kettle ponds/groundwater.

- e. Big Thompson Watershed Coalition & Engineering Dept. grant
  - i. Received grant through CWCB – project is ‘Adaptively Managing the Big Thompson Watershed for Long-term Health.’ Part of grant is earmarked for one enterprise crew to perform revegetation, maintenance and monitoring of the restoration sites. 45 million dollars in implementation costs at these sites since the flood. Will allow for protection of the investment. Member question about if crew expansion/seasonals are needed to complete the work. It was noted that the workload for 2018 is still changing, program is still unsure of timeline/workforce. 1<sup>st</sup> year will get \$34k, 2<sup>nd</sup> year will get \$26k, will try to extend it for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

## 6. UPDATES/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Review 2017 Noxious Weed Compliance data – Maxine
  - i. Compliance strategy: identified available compliance resources, prioritized noxious weed species for targeting, outlined compliance process. Prioritizing weed species addressed landowners who: ignore List A, ignore List B outside containment boundaries, ignore fence infestations, are chronic offenders. First complaint 4/24/17, last complaint 12/8/17. 140 total weed complaint code cases: 8 were ‘non-violations,’ 125 were courtesy letters sent (43 complied voluntarily, 13 herbicide purchases at LC office, 22 site visits, 21 enforcement letters sent), and 7 were cases to be investigated in 2018 due to lateness in 2017 season.
  - ii. First inspection 5/11/17, last inspection 9/29/17. 230 inspections (some sites multiple times), 72 set up for re-inspection in 2018. 50% in and 50% out of district, both List A and B.
  - iii. 2018 changes to Noxious Weed Management Plan:
    - 1. State requires that List A species be eradicated.
    - 2. Added location of weeds in letters. Can tell landowner exactly where the weeds are located in order to increase compliance effectiveness.
    - 3. Requiring a Vegetation Management Plan for all who receive enforcement letter. If someone signs up for a site visit, LC will fill out the management plan. Required in both Weld and Boulder Counties.
    - 4. Estes Park Inspection Strategy for 2018 (spend 1 or 2 full days per week in summer). Time will be spent in subdivisions where need is highest, hope is to get neighborhoods on a schedule and to get courtesy letters to appropriate people, consistency. Member question about issuing compliance letters to people inside city limits. It was noted that letters for offenders inside city limits are sent by the municipality. Hoping that the regular, clear presence in neighborhoods will be helpful.
    - 5. Hiring seasonal position to work part-time on compliance and part-time on EDRR (Early Detection Rapids Response) crew. Will help specifically with the Estes Park issues.

6. Mapping to AGOL to EDDMapS (**Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System**). Can bring up specific plants. Anyone can access and login to add data, possible data quality issue but Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) has to verify. If rare, a photo is required. Some quality control.
  7. Short discussion of Estes Land Stewardship Association and their increased organization and activity.
- b. 2018 Enterprise hourly rate increases – Casey
- i. Used to broaden scope of work, provide services to community, acts as mechanism to conduct work for hire, profit goes to maintenance, education outreach and out of county services. Grants usually break even, occasionally have to match with funding from for-hire portion of Enterprise. 2017 had operating deficit of \$10k, triggered look at rate increase. Considered different scenarios, decided on 16% fee increase which is similar to historical increases. Figuring out what public process, if any, is necessary for moving forward. New Enterprise strategy, moving away from private land/small acreage work, focusing instead on work with agency partners and larger-scale conservation. Avoiding competition with private industry.
  - ii. Member question about whether or not Road & Bridge is part of Enterprise. It was noted that it is. They get money from the General Fund that they use to hire Enterprise to do right-of-way management outside of the Weed District boundary. Within the boundary, the Mill Levy pays for right-of-way management on county roads.
  - iii. Member question about historical pushback after raising rates. It was noted that there is minimal pushback and it is commonly understood, particularly when operating under a deficit. Road & Bridge is most vocal in opposition.
  - iv. Member question about rates compared to private industry within Larimer County. It was noted that the comparison is mismatched – Enterprise charges by the hour while many private industries charge by the acre or by area. Enterprise rates are low right now based on number of requests for service from landowners. Not interested in competing with private industry, working to empower the small landowners to handle some issues themselves and provide long list of contractors to contact.
  - v. Next step is to hear back from the County Attorney regarding process needs. Hoping for board recommendation/feedback. Board indicated support.
  - vi. Member question about seasonal worker pay. It was noted that entry level is \$13/hr., with experience and/or licensure it can be \$15/hr., returning wage increases, returning career development opportunities. Department pay scale bracket is \$11.50 to \$15.20 for hiring, cap at \$20.50. Member input about private pay scale starting around \$18-20/hr. but that is with experience.
  - vii. Member question regarding pushing Enterprise rate increase further to help fund possible wage increases to keep up with increased local costs of living. It

was noted that Larimer County gives regular 5% wage increases and the seasonal scale is on a 3-year term, up for review next year. Turnover is not high for seasonal workers.

- viii. Discussion of wages vs. inflation. Trigger points for increases. Member question about hiring planning consultants if necessary. It was noted that if this try doesn't work smoothly, that will be considered. Could be possible to lump Enterprise fees in with other park fees that will have a consultant assisting but won't happen until 2019.
- ix. It was noted that the board would hold off on further action/discussion until more information is gathered from the County Attorney. A special meeting could be called if needed.

## 7. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Recommend Revised Noxious Weed Management Plan for adoption by the BOCC.
  - i. Member comment regarding adding scientific names in plant species. It was noted that that feedback will be considered.
  - ii. The Weed Section is not finished, there will be hyperlinks to CDA fact sheets and to the Larimer County maps. Draft is close to final.
  - iii. Member question about whether the distribution in Larimer County will be added to EDDMaps. It was noted that it will either be an EDDMap or pdf or web application. Only updating EDDMaps once per year. Interest in efficiency and not duplicating pdfs. Marketing personnel will add design work and copyediting.
  - iv. Member question about old plan being replaced. It was noted that the plan was that this new one would replace the old one. Member comment that new draft reads better than old one.
  - v. Comments from State Weed Coordinator were relayed to board: include in draft management dates (List A's eradicated by...), more background about what Larimer County does as a land management agency on properties, further consideration of audience.
  - vi. Member question about wording. It was noted that much of the language is based on the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and the LC Noxious Weed Plan was based on a suggested outline by the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Will go through legal review.
  - vii. Ken Mathias moves to approve the Noxious Weed Plan (with the following revisions: add hyperlinks, add Steve Ryder's recommendations, add scientific names to the species, and include copyediting) for recommendation for adoption by the commissioners. Hitch seconds. Motion passed.

- 8. OTHER BUSINESS – reminder to board members to bring binders to next meeting in order to add updated information.

9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 5/17/2018 at Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO, 2nd Floor, Lake Loveland Room.
10. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real or person property interest.
11. ADJOURN – 7:29 p.m.

This meeting will be recorded and archived according to law. Votes require a quorum.  
Public can view agenda and minutes at:  
<http://legacy.larimer.org/boards/minutes/lsabminutes.htm>

