

## 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

**Date:** November 21, 2019

**Time:** 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

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

**Contact:** Please contact Sidney at [smichl@larimer.org](mailto:smichl@larimer.org) or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Ed Redente	x	Casey Cisneros	x	
Ernie Marx	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
Gordon Nuttall	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Laura Booth	x	John Kefalas*		
Renee Galeano-Popp	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Richard (Hitch) McCulloch				
Ronald Harris	x			

x = present

\*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:09 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
  - a. Gordon motioned to approve last meeting minutes, Ron seconded, motion passed unanimously.
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - a. Natural Resource events for this month: See <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.

- b. Casey will give an update on Pine Wilt.

## 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) confirmed in Larimer County. Mitigation activities conducted to date and response plan.
  - i. EAB presence is indicated by a “D” shaped exit hole. Renee asked about the timeframe from arrival of EAB to death of tree, Casey said it is difficult to determine when EAB arrives, but the tree typically dies or becomes brittle within 3 years of initial crown dieback. Ron asked if preventative spraying helps, Casey affirmed but noted treatments are most effective when applied on an annual or biannual basis. Gordon asked about public outreach, Casey mentioned our 2019 Don’t Move Firewood campaign as a best management practice, Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is the regulatory agency for tree pests and CSU Extension also has publicly available fact sheets.
  - ii. Overview of County EAB mitigation plan and strategy moving forward. For questions or more information, see <https://www.larimer.org/spotlights/2019/10/02/emerald-ash-borer-detected-larimer-county>.
- b. Pine Wilt update
  - i. Pine wilt was confirmed by CSU, they are continuing to sample more trees in the area and are in the process of revising their fact sheet. Casey noted it is a relatively new occurrence, historically ponderosa pines have been resilient but new stressors have increased their susceptibility. Renee asked about severity, it was noted it is too early to determine.
- c. Proposed Rule Changes to the Noxious Weed Act
  - i. Removal of “Part 6 Watch List Species” to increase the flexibility and relevance of the list.
  - ii. List B species management plan updates.
  - iii. Revision of scientific names to be consistent with plant data base.
  - iv. Revision of List B management plan expiration dates to reflect a biennial update cycle.
  - v. Gordon asked when the process will be finalized, Casey said the public comment period will open in December for 30-60 days, then comments will be reviewed and recommendations will be taken to the Commissioner of Agriculture for approval. It was noted the proposed changes will lend extra guidance from the state regulatory agency and will give Larimer County the opportunity to be more strategic in approaching noxious weeds. *\*Since the LSAB board meeting the rule change process was delayed. No public comment has occurred as of Jan. 11, 2020.*
- d. Overview of Natural Resources Department Agricultural Lands Strategy
  - i. Meegan introduced the Agricultural Land Strategy as a planning effort to define what agriculture means to DNR in terms of conserving ag land and using best

management practices on land that we have for best conservation outcomes. DNR's current land portfolio includes 31,000 acres of agriculture (about 2/3 of our current conserved lands; 60% fee, 40% CE). Conservation outcomes are centered around soil and water health, habitat, and continuity with other conserved lands.

- ii. Renee asked about the acquisition process, Meegan clarified that either landowners approach the County or the County proactively approaches landowners based on conservation goals. Long-term management plan funds determine the balance between fee ownership and CEs. In the case of a CE, Larimer County generally owns the development rights while the private landowner is still the fee-simple owner of the land and responsible for management.
  - iii. The Ag Strategy was recently shared with both OLAB and PAB. An internal staff core team will brainstorm conservation outcomes and management practices with stakeholder groups and ultimately share with BOCC.
  - iv. Gordon asked if any DNR ag properties are managed or researched in partnership with CSU, Meegan said partnerships are a potential outcome of the strategy.
- e. Overview of Natural Resources Department Restoration Strategy
- i. Casey explained the purpose of the Restoration Strategy is similar to the Ag Strategy, goal is to define what restoration means to DNR, create guidelines for restoration, and track costs of large-scale restoration projects (35% of County sales tax goes to land acquisition and restoration).
  - ii. First internal staff core team meeting is in a couple of weeks, anticipate a draft in February.
  - iii. Gordon asked if there are target projects in mind, Casey affirmed and said projects will be discussed at the core team meeting. Meegan noted most of our properties are in excellent condition (a handful are used by NRCS as ecological reference sites) with relatively small-scale restoration needs, so the strategy is primarily meant to consider or anticipate future needs.
- f. Larimer County Oil and Gas Regulations update
- i. Meegan introduced the Oil and Gas Task Force in response to SB 181, which granted local governments the authority to draft their own oil and gas regulations. Once finalized, the Larimer County oil and gas regs will be adopted as a new chapter in the Land Use Code.
  - ii. Presentation of Energy By Design (EBD) as an approach the County will use for surface impact issues on conserved land when surface use is the only viable alternative. EBD was applied at Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area in 2013, a similar process of resource mapping and defining surface occupancy zones would likely be replicated for future use. Overview of best management practices.

- iii. Ernie asked how conserved land is prioritized, it was noted land is identified and mapped based on biological, cultural, and recreational resource values. Further clarification that the base premise on conserved lands is no surface use, operators would need to complete a site feasibility analysis to determine opportunities outside the conserved land. EBD will not be codified in regulation but used as a collaborative tool between DNR and operators.
- iv. Renee asked if EBD is a new approach, it was noted Red Mountain Open Space has been the only property in County ownership that has had a perceived threat of oil and gas surface use.

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Board Election of Officers

- i. Ed Redente re-elected as chair, Gordon Nuttall re-elected as vice chair.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 2/20/2020 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 the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real, personal or other property interest.

11. ADJOURN – 6:29 p.m.