

LARIMER COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Horsetooth Area Information Center, 4200 W. CR 38E, Fort Collins, CO

The mission of the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department 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.

Please email Kim, butlerkm@co.larimer.co.us if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Votes require a quorum. Thank you!

PAB Members in Attendance:

Chris Klaas	x	Mark DeGregorio	x	Russell Fruits	x
Deborah Shulman	x	Nick Clark	x	Stephanie Van Dyken	x
Frank Gillespie	x	Rob Harris	x	Steve Ambrose	x
John Tipton		Ron Kainer	x	Steve Johnson, Commissioner	x

Staff in Attendance:

Gary Buffington	x	Ken Brink	x	Mark Caughlan		Lori Smith	x
Dan Rieves	x	Kim Butler	x	Charlie Johnson	x		

Guests:

Pat McCusker	x		
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1. PAB Group Photo
2. REGULAR MEETING OPENING
 - a. Meeting called to order by Chair 5:39pm.
 - b. Motion by Rob Kainer, seconded by Stephanie VanDyken to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion passed 9-0.
 - c. Reviewed agenda and enclosures.
3. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS – if any
4. PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda - None
5. GENERAL INFORMATION:
 - a. Natural Resource Events for this month: See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
 - b. To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm> put in your email and click ‘subscribe’, then check “Parks Advisory Board” box.
6. DISCUSSION ITEMS:
 - a. Review of Departmental Revenues and Expenses – Lori Smith, Finance Program Manager
 - i. **Please see PowerPoint attached.**
 - ii. What is the General Fund? The County gets different revenues coming in from different sources (ex. Property taxes), and then they decide what they’re going to do with it. That pool of money is the General Fund.

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- iii. In the 2018 tax, they calculate how much each municipality gets. We currently get 42%. In the new tax, we get 50%. Note the difference in how the new tax revenue will be spent compared to the current. The focus moves to management instead of acquisition.
 - iv. Why did 2015's permit and camping revenue decrease? We no longer had the contract for the Estes Park campgrounds.
 - v. The Shared Allocation Pools are a combination of personnel and operating expenditures. We pool those and allocate them out based on cost drivers.
 - vi. Since we went into the Fleet system, the County's Fleet program owns all of the vehicles and we rent them from them, so we have very little capital expenditures now.
 - vii. Do we ever do a shared pool outside of the Department? Within the County Government, we do have a HR, Finance, and IT, Facilities department who have their costs allocated to us.
 - viii. Slide: Reservoirs Operations Expenses: Change in 2010 because we created those allocation pools.
 - ix. Why have expenses increased? We are doing a Visitor Count Study this year. There has been an estimated 20% increase in visitation in the last few years. For example, in the last 4-year span, camping at Horsetooth almost tripled.
 - x. A bad water year is about a \$500,000 hit, so we like to keep about \$1 million in the bank in case of 2 bad years.
 - xi. Where is the extra revenue coming from? Day permits & camping
 1. 2012 – 82,000 day passes
 2. 2016 – 140,000 day passes
 3. HT 8,000 camping nights
 4. HT 22,000 camping nights
 - xii. Last year was the most lottery money we have received.
 1. Do we get the same amount each year? It's based on our proportion of the population. This is shown as Conservation Trust.
 - xiii. Right now, we have a deal to borrow money from Solid Waste at the same interest rate they would get from the bank. It is a really good deal for us. We negotiate the due date on that loan. The current is 10 years. The first loan we had for Parks is all paid off. The current loan is for Open Spaces.
 - xiv. 2007 was our first Master Plan, finishing up in 2016.
 - xv. We're in a savings mode this year.
- b. Update on the Parks Master Plan
- i. Please see powerpoint attached.
 - ii. We have had a number of meetings, drafts, and input.
 - iii. Public comment has not started, so we wanted to bring this to you without pressure to look at it and give us feedback.
 - iv. About 50% of the capital in the last Master Plan was spent in the first 5 years. About 80% of the first Master Plan has been completed. Some plans will be carried forward.
 - v. We have 2 more weeks so if you do have questions/concerns, we can address that.
 - vi. We also have the RMP being created at the same time.
 - vii. One thing unique to the MP is looking into the future, what do we want in 10, 20, 30 years.
 - viii. We are right before Phase 4 of the plan creation.
 - ix. We're going to hear more and more demand for parks and recreational opportunities.
 - x. The dip in 2013 might have been an overlap with the Highland fire and the floods.
 - xi. Comment to consider the potential population growth in surrounding counties because a lot of our visitors are not from Larimer County.
 - xii. Horsetooth:
 1. What's new: trying to manage the settings according to usage level
 2. North Dam – Archery Range potential – combination of static and moving targets
 - a. We find archers have a high environmental ethic and also generally always want to recover their arrows.

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- b. Other ideas were camping and group camping.
3. Satanka Bay – improvements to traffic flow, parking, boat launch
4. Other ideas not done – some were technically not feasible, some were dismissed in search of the highest and best use
5. Inlet Bay & South Shore, just some amending, nothing big
- xiii. Comments:
 1. Deborah - Concerned about a lot more traffic coming into Satanka Bay and how the traffic will be handled. Encourages everyone to comment on the Transportation Department's plan concern about that part of the road.
 2. The Archery Range is not a new idea, it was just a decision to keep that portion of the prior plan.
- c. Carter
 - i. North Pines – trying to reconfigure current space to improve use and create some day use areas.
 - ii. Big Thompson & Quarry – reconfiguring to optimize use; currently used for RV & Tent camping, but might instead converted to day use and swim areas. There is already an existing footprint from the old quarry.
 - iii. Big Landia & Swim Area -
 1. Concerned that it would be hard to keep sand beaches in the area. That's why it's called a Natural Swim area, because we are not moving sand.
 2. Sunrise is also rocky, and it is very popular. During a high water year, a lot of the premier sand is underwater anyways. The current Carter Beach goes from sand to mud at about 4th of July.
 3. Suggestion to address dropping people off at the old swim beach so that we create a safe way to do that.
 4. In a low water year, people will drive down on the lake bed, like they do now.
 5. Everything north of Dam 2 is a good 500 foot drop down to the water.
 6. We are losing: North Pines – 4 campsites and Big Thompson – 7 campsites; that will be recouped and even increased between Big Landia and South Shore.
 7. Potential plan for a group camping site.
 - iv. Carter Knolls
 1. Potential create cabins & RV sites instead of current use.
 - v. A full-service restaurant is not possible because of water availability.
 - vi. Also trying to separate day use from camping for management purposes.
- d. Pinewood Reservoir
 - i. Has gone through a major update in the last 4 years.
- e. Flatiron
 - i. We'll be on a 10 year rotation updating things like campsites, paving, etc.

Break 7:02pm

Reconvened 7:12pm

- f. Any further comments?
 - i. This Master Plan only addresses the 4 existing Parks. The Open Spaces MP addresses Chimney Hollow.
 - ii. Rob says they love North Pines campgrounds.
- g. Future park needs
 - i. To keep the same level of resources and crowding, you would need the equivalent of 2 more Carter Lakes and 1 more HTMOS.
 - ii. Suggestion to look at what potential for usage there might be if we change the usage, ex. How many more people can be served if it's changed from camping to day use?
 - iii. What about acquiring something like Watson Lake from CPW?
 1. A lot of those were acquired with federal money but there are rules behind that purchase that they had to be available for no fee, etc. Some of them have different entrapments.

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- iv. There's more value in acquiring private properties and adding it to the public, because then there's net gain.
- v. Where's the water come from to support the million people that are supposedly moving here? Are they building more reservoirs to hold that water? Aside from Chimney Hollow & Glade, we have not heard anything else.
 - 1. Pat McKusker – We are still working on the plans for both. Part of the Governor's water plan was to look at possibilities throughout Colorado. The BOR acquired some land out by Fort Morgan and was going to build a reservoir there but CPW stopped it because of feared habitat destruction. It's one of the few places left in CO with no reservoir but good water supply. And to reach bedrock was an extreme depth. It'd be bigger than HT, but it'd be in Morgan County. It's called "The Narrows". We're also working with Ducks Unlimited. They build shallow water retention ponds for duck migration. We have 5 properties out there that have ag leases.
- h. Funding:
 - i. Some of our assets are 70 years old. We want to take a harder look at a sustainable fund for replacing assets.
 - ii. GOCO sunsets in 2024, so the future is unknown.
 - iii. The General Fund money is very important, we often use it for matching and in arenas that we can't use the other funds.
 - iv. Differential pricing is being used by State Parks & others.
- i. Any further thoughts, please email Ken or Jeremy.
- j. Visitors are very happy and give us good ratings, so the question is how to balance that with specific interest groups.
- k. To the Board – Do you feel comfortable to answer questions from your neighbors, etc.?
 - i. Everyone feels OK.
- l. Does anyone have concerns about supporting this plan?
 - i. **Request for talking points** – Kim will send out with minutes.
- m. We have Regional Park Fees. If someone develops in the county, they can either put Open Space in their development, or pay us a fee and we use it for specific items.
 - i. Could we use that for acquisitions?
 - 1. We've used it in the past for paving, turn lanes, etc.
 - 2. We've accumulated 7 years and it's only about \$200,00, so it's not a lot of money.
 - ii. Are we taking feedback from users outside the County?
 - 1. Yes, via the website.
 - 2. About 5% of feedback has been from outside of LC.
 - 3. We sell more in-county annual permits than out-of-county. People who rent sail slips are required to buy an annual pass. Out of county users tend to buy day use permits.
 - 4. Tonight's discussion has all been about the County's Master Plan. The BOR's MRP plan is going on. Even though it's County managed park, they're still federally-owned properties. The MRP will look at a few other items.

7. ACTION ITEMS:

8. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

- a. Park District updates and Parks Master Plan Implementation Progress report
 - i. Mark Caughlan, Horsetooth District Manager – absent; Ken Brink presenting
 - 1. Challenges with hiring – still have seasonal positions open in all districts
 - 2. Ken did meet with the BOR Area Manager. They are going to be meeting 4x a year.
 - 3. We trained some new EMT's & have some FEMA grant money. Medical activity is a big deal for our Rangers. We have 150 people/year who are ill/injured to the point of ambulance transport that the Rangers care for. I think we have the highest medical training in Colorado. 8 of our 12 trainers are First Responders, 4 are EMT's.

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4. The Multipurpose Ranger model that has been developed over the year was presented at PLEA this year based on data - call volume, customer needs, etc.
 5. We have been invited to present at 2 more national conferences, the State Parks Executive Conference & National Recreation Park Association to talk about building standards for Park Rangers & what Park Ranger's do.
- ii. Dan Rieves, Carter Lake District Manager
1. Spring is crunch time through mid-June.
 2. Still dealing with trying to hire.
 3. Everything else is going well. Boat ramps are open. The ANS application and philosophy has shifted due to funding, but functionally, it's operating the same.
 4. Camp hosts are in and being trained.
 5. Ranger Excellence School is next week. We train all of our rangers and about 37 rangers from other programs.
 6. The South Shore project is moving forward. It will go out to bid in June. The bids seem to be more reasonable than they were a few months ago.
 7. We hosted CPW doing the walleye spawn at Carter Lake.
 8. The Ranger II position is still vacant. We tested some candidates today and are still in that process. Everyone is sharing rangers to fill that gap.
 9. There will be maintenance on Flatiron & Pinewood, so we have been working with guests to accommodate them. Flatiron will be mostly drained. We have been told 60% of the biomass in Flatiron is suckers, so once we stabilize the new ecosystem, we hope to have some good size trout.
 10. Down South, we'll have some challenges with water levels in the next few years, but it's a great time to go build things.
 11. Any bicycle events? A few tours. We don't approve any events between Memorial Day & Labor Day on CR 31 unless it's very small. It feels like a couple of thousand bikes come through on an average weekend day in the summer.
9. US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE – Pat McCusker
- a. We're working on a Resource Management Plan (MRP). It's a federal document and only covers the 4 reservoirs. We're doing an internal review right now. We expect to have it done May 26.
 - b. We're going to help fund Carter's South Shore camping update.
 - c. We also put money toward the noxious weed program.
 - d. CPW lost their funding for the ANS program. It was funded via an excise tax and the oil & gas industry took Colorado to court and won, so we lost that money. Larimer County, Northern Water, and CPW have come together to fund the program instead. We've made some changes to ours:
 - i. We won't staff someone at Pinewood, instead we'll put up a soft gate and signage. We're doing the same at Lake Estes.
 - e. This is a 70 year old system and things are starting to break down. A siphon between Flatiron & the trifurcation (right above the dam store as you enter the canyon), needs to be repaired. System shutdown will be from August 1 – mid-October for maintenance, so there won't be any water in Flatiron. There won't be any water going through the system from Lake Estes to Pinewood, so the water from Grand Lake is going to be sent down the Big Thompson River instead.
 - f. We're going to reintroduce quarterly meetings between LC, Northern, & BOR.
 - g. Things coming up: Cottonwood Siphon – Flatiron Reservoir under 18E into the Hansen feeder canal needs to be fixed very soon.
 - h. Some items that will impact LC:
 - i. He's been asked to put in some grants regarding:
 1. Water quality issues in Grand Lake / Shadow Mountain; looking into mats, ultrasound, etc. to get rid of algae
 2. We took a lot of rock off of the rock outcropping by Carter's Dam 1.
 - i. Ken said thank you Pat. He called this week to let NR know that BOR had an extra \$95,000 to contribute to our operations.

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- j. How's the BOR budget?
 - i. Unfortunately, our budget has been reduced by 12% and planning to be 20% reduction by next year. We have a hiring freeze. They're looking daily at taking back money, so we're (BOR) doing our best to support you.

10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Gary Buffington

- a. Thank you to Lori, we've had a busy week working on the budgets.
- b. We have 2 people in the membership here whose terms end next month, John Tipton & Ron Kainer, so we'll have a little something. We usually give folks a photograph of their favorite park/opens space.
- c. The HAIC building has been open for 9 months, but we are still going to have a grand opening. Our interpretive displays should be here next month. We'll plan for the end of June.
- d. Pat is anticipating the siphon project, so they are trying to fill Carter now.
- e. Horsetooth will continue to be filled via the Dilly Diversion.

11. 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.

12. MEETING ADJOURN

- a. Motion by Rob Harris to adjourn, seconded by Debora Shulman. Motion passed 9-0.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Next regular meeting [if needed]: June 13, 2017 Natural Resources Administration Office 1800 S. County Rd 31, Loveland, CO	Public can view agenda and minutes at http://larimer.org/boards/minutes/parks_advisory_board.cfm
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