

## Larimer County Parks 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:** May 8, 2018

**Time:** 5:30 – 8:30 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
Brian Rasch	x	Dan Rieves	x	Signe Snortland (BOR)
Chris Klaas	x	Gary Buffington	x	Traci Robb (BOR)
Deborah Shulman		*Stephen Johnson	x	Jake Hoffman (BOR)
Frank Gillespie	x	Ken Brink	x	Jeff Stahla (Northern Water)
Mark DeGregorio	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Michael Robinson	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Nick Clark		Lori Smith	x	
Robert Harris	x	Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
Russell Fruits	x			
Stephanie Hansen	x			
Steve Ambrose	x			

x = present

\*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – called to order at 5:33 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none
3. AGENDA REVIEW – 8.a. being moved to 5.n.
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES – approved

## 5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resource events for this month: See <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
- b. To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes, go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click 'Subscribe,' and then check the 'Parks Advisory Board' box.
- c. Hermit Park is famous! The Wall Street Journal ran a travel story by Kathryn O'Shea-Evans called "An Insiders' Guide to the National Parks" on April 12, 2018 in which a few locals were asked for "advice on treading wisely in and around four of the country's busiest national parks." Estee Rivera Murdock, the Executive Director at Rocky Mountain Conservancy, listed Kruger Rock Trail as a favorite, saying: "There's a beautiful area just outside Estes Park called Hermit Park Open Space. I did Hermit's 4-mile round-trip Kruger Rock hike with my 6 year old. It's switchback-y and meanders, with views of the park's peaks and Estes Valley." Full article here: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/an-insiders-guide-to-the-national-parks-1523547586> – Meegan
- d. Larimer County wrapped up a renovation of the South Shore Campground at Carter Lake. The popular camping area was upgraded with additional electric campsites, new restrooms, resurfaced parking areas and improved boat ramp access. South Shore reopened to the public on Sunday, April 15 – Dan
- e. Natural Resources has selected Loveland mixed-media painter Amelia Furman as its 2018 Visual Artist. Amelia will spend the next year exploring Larimer County's parks and open spaces and create a piece of art inspired by these scenic, protected places. Amelia graduated from Indiana Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree in art and has been a professional artist for the past 15 years. She has created commissioned pieces for numerous corporate and personal clients, including the new Elizabeth Hotel in downtown Fort Collins, and has showcased her award-winning paintings in galleries across the United States. View her work at [www.ameliafurman.com](http://www.ameliafurman.com) and work by prior visual artists at [www.larimer.org/naturalresources/photography-art/artist](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/photography-art/artist). Many thanks to Dave Marvin and Gerry Horak for serving on the selection committee! – Gary
- f. Trails staff have been working on improving/re-benching the Wild Loop Trail at Devil's Backbone Open Space where it has widened due to heavy use and become less sustainable (see photo F). They have also completed the new alignment/connection of the Sundance Trail in conjunction with the South Shore Campground renovations at Carter Lake (see photo's D & E) of this partially ADA accessible trail – Meegan
- g. Staff finished applying soil amendments, seed and hydromulch at the Soderberg & Devil's Backbone trailheads to improve post-trailhead expansion revegetation efforts (see photo A) – Meegan
- h. Through a State grant, noxious weed brush stations that match a state-wide standard have been installed at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space & Soderberg trailheads (see photo B) – Meegan
- i. Construction of the 4-mile Long View Trail (connecting Cathy Fromme Prairie to Sunset Vista through Long View Farm Open Space) is going well and on schedule to open this summer (see photo C) – Meegan



- j. Plans for reconstruction of Forks Park and restoration of the Big Thompson River through Forks Park are finalized and construction is set for post high runoff/flows – Meegan
- k. In partnership with the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, and with grant funds from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Larimer County Natural Resources will conduct vegetation management of restoration projects implemented following the 2013 flood. This two-year, grant funded effort will ensure adaptive management and ongoing success of the 47 million dollar investment in these stream and riparian restoration projects – Meegan
- l. In partnership with CDOT, we are on track moving forward with river restoration and construction of the parking area at Forks Park in the Big Thompson Canyon this summer. The toilet that was in the south bank of the river post-flood was removed in mid-April and has been inspected and deemed re-usable, just needs some minor repair and cleaning! (see photo G) – Meegan
- m. Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report – January and February’s distribution letters are included in the Electronic Packet. Last year’s reported numbers are still being used for the calculations and the contact at the Department of Revenue thinks the updated statistics will be available by the end of the month – Gary
- n. BOR Update – Overview of ANS direction – Signe, Traci and Jake
  - i. 2008, mussel veligers discovered in Granby, Shadow Mountain, Grand Lake and Pueblo. 2008, State ANS Act signed into law. 2009, Reclamation did facility risk assessments. 2016, CO Supreme Court ruling using oil and gas severance tax to fund ANS ended. 1 adult mussel can produce 1 million eggs in one year. Since the beginning of 2018, there have been 4 contaminated vessels intercepted in Colorado. Statewide ANS need is \$4.5 to 5 million. Senate Bill 17-259 provides \$3.6 million for ANS in 2018. CPW seeing additional funding from partners for Larimer and Grand Counties.
  - ii. Member question about what the \$4.5 to 5 million cost includes. It was noted that that figure is the total cost of CPW statewide ANS program in its original form. For 2019, the ANS funding bill provides \$2.4 million which is still short. To cover gap, boaters will purchase ANS stamps (\$25 resident, \$50 non-resident), there will be increased fines for violations (\$50 to \$100 for unlawful boat launch without inspection, \$150 to \$500 for knowingly importing ANS into state 1<sup>st</sup> offense) and storage during decontamination will be billed to the boat owner. Projected cost for ANS mitigation if established are millions to billions of dollars.
  - iii. Member comment that (as a boat owner and supporter of ANS programs) the fines should be higher and that the biggest risk is people by-passing the inspection process. It was noted that the fines have thresholds based on legal offense classification. Discussion of consistency (or lack thereof) and cooperation within and between agencies nationally.
  - iv. Member question about why kayaks and canoes are allowed without inspection when ANS are so dangerous. It was noted that water storage areas such as motors/bilges are the biggest havens for ANS, so kayaks and canoes are low-risk

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because they can dry out faster and more completely due to inability to store water and are not generally left in water long enough for veligers to attach. There are fewer places for mussels to attach on non-motorized boats.

- v. Suggestion to discuss ANS regulations with congressional representatives as Congress does not seem to be supporting additional regulations. Colorado is unique in its legislative support for ANS.
- vi. Eastern Colorado Area Office (ECAO) to spend \$500k this year for ANS program.
- vii. Discussion of ANS management at Green Mountain Reservoir, Willow Creek Reservoir, Granby Reservoir, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, Grand Lake, Lake Estes, Pinewood Reservoir, Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir. Management at certain locations includes new requirements stemming from recent BOR letter requiring boat launches to have an inspector present or be locked.
- viii. Member question about approximate cost of ANS staffing at Pinewood. It was noted that to justify paying for an inspector at that location, there would need to be about 5,000 boats launching (currently there are 100-200) annually. Funding is the problem.
- ix. Discussion of inspection options in the future. Examples are daily codes, swipe cards, reservation system, certifiable off-site inspections, further engagement of private sector. Will discuss short-term and long-term options over the summer, BOR still hoping for 2019 funding.
- x. News release going out tomorrow. Carter Lake ramps now being locked at 10pm and reopened in morning, more secure gates being fabricated by Northern Water. Public feedback has not been good. 10pm change is most difficult due to after-dark fishing preferences.

## 6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Park District updates and reports
  - i. Dan Rieves, Carter Lake District Manager – board will be receiving new District Reports in meeting materials prior to meeting moving forward. Expectation will be to use allotted time for questions about District Reports, increased efficiency. Visitation a little behind compared to last year likely due to wind, also South Shore was closed until April 18<sup>th</sup>. Into planning mode for 2019 CIP projects. Onboarding staff.
  - ii. Mark Caughlan, Horsetooth District Manager – very busy at HT, average month, marina open for operations, maintenance crew busy with normal spring issues, rangers hiring process. Rotary Park graffiti issues, volunteer group painted over weekend, 2 hours later it was defaced again, summonsed two people. Will be closing solid gates at night around sunset and opening in morning. Not seeing commonality among offenders at location, people are getting summonsed, cameras and video are on site, gates being installed and closed. Press release in a week or two.
- b. Update on Regional Trail Projects – 20 minutes – Meegan

- i. Paved trails only. Overview of 2015 Open Lands Master Plan, Larimer County's role in Regional Trails, discussion and map of Regional Trail priorities. Updates on Poudre River Trail (currently over 38 mi. long but will be over 45 mi. long, 2.6 miles built in 2015, 3 existing trail gaps), Front Range Trail (Loveland to Fort Collins connection-2.2 miles long, opened in fall 2017, \$1.3M total) and Long View Trail (4.4 mile concrete path, connects 5 open spaces and over 20 miles of trail, projected opening summer 2018, \$4.4M total).
- c. Phase 2 Comprehensive Plan – Gary
  - i. Request that board members respond to the survey. Meegan is rep for Phase 2 Comprehensive Plan.
- d. Project review process with partners – Ken
  - i. West side BOR requires great deal of detailed review and interaction and provides greater financial support, east side not much financial support or detailed review. Recent letter from BOR notifying Larimer County of requirement for higher level of environmental and process review for all projects. Causing tremendous work for field crews, working with Jake Hoffman to move towards balance. Challenge with maintenance on pavilion at HT.

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Continued discussion of 2018 & 2019 CIP
  - i. Review criteria for setting priorities/Review potential projects & cost – Gary
    - 1. Focus on 2018 and 2019 CIP projects tonight, all are staff recommendations, adjustments will end soon. Funding source opportunities at top, must maintain flexibility, all Master Plan ideas. Will have a fee study this year. Management and maintenance of open spaces is important. Will be seeing design work, following new policy, normal is 1<sup>st</sup> year design, 2<sup>nd</sup> year construction. Goal is reasonable balance at end of each year.
    - 2. Member question about River Bluffs grant. It was noted that the three grants were from Department of Local Affairs, CPW and CWCB.
    - 3. Member question about 3 Hermit Park trailheads. It was noted that the 3 trailheads are Saddle Trailhead at top of switchbacks, Hermit's Cabin Trailhead and Kruger Rock Trailhead. Will likely add CXT vault toilet at each trailhead.
  - ii. Sales Tax review – Gary
    - 1. Discussion of Sales Tax review PowerPoint. Old tax set up as 70% Acquiring Interest, Protecting & Improving Open Space, Natural Areas, Wildlife Habitat, Parks & Trails; 15% Cost of Operating, Maintaining and Administering Open Spaces and Regional Parks; and 15% either category. 1996 through 2017 actual expenditures were 73% Acquiring Interest, etc., 21% Cost of Operating, etc., 5% Improving Existing Regional Parks (Horsetooth, Carter, Flatiron, Pinewood) and 1% Cost of



Operating, Maintaining and Administering Regional Parks. The Sales Tax extension from 2019 through 2043 will change the percentage windows to 50% Improvement, Management, Maintenance and Administration of Open Spaces, Natural Areas, Wildlife Habitats, Parks & Trails; 35% Acquiring Interest and Protecting Open Space, Natural Areas, Wildlife Habitat, Parks & Trails AND Restoring & Enhancing Native Plant & Animal Communities & Other Habitat Related Restoration; and 15% either category.

2. Member question about whether or not that level of Sales Tax investment allows for the accomplishment of the 10 year goals set in the Master Plan. It was noted that the current CIP is 5 years and how much of the Master Plan is involved in the current CIP has not been discussed. The target would be 50% in 5 years. Will develop list to bring back to board to address that question. Discussion of balance among providing high customer service, increasing lands/spaces, appropriate staffing, necessary maintenance, and funding.

8. U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE – moved to 5.n.

9. ACTION ITEMS

a. ANS directives – Ken and Signe

- i. Based on letter from BOR regarding new requirements for either ANS inspector at all boat launches or locked gates.
- ii. 2-month plan: gates, Pinewood closure, impacts to boating. Northern Water and BOR cost sharing on new gates, secure all launch points with visually imposing gates, use of boulders where necessary, working on solution for boaters needing off after 10pm. Closing from 10pm to 6am.
- iii. 1-year plan: coded gates, install in-ground traffic spikes. Build more accommodating gate system (coded or electronic gate), improved signage (BOR and Northern paying for signs), seeking same level of water protection with less impact on boaters within 1 year.
- iv. Member question about what prompted the letter as it seemed abrupt. It was noted that the ANS issues at Green Mountain Reservoir in 2017 made BOR realize that they needed to better assist partners/land managers. Vulnerabilities found and gate closures required. Water supply can't be endangered, recreational waters need to be protected. The State law also motivated action.
- v. Budget update: ANS program is \$450k project, not \$350. State contributed \$200k this year, an increase from last year.
- vi. Jeff Stahla from Northern Water discussed the press release.
- vii. No vote necessary as the gate closure decision was made by BOR.

10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS – none

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11. RECOGNITION – Frank Gillespie, PAB board member of 10-12 years, recognized for his longstanding service before his board term comes to an end in June. Thank you, Frank!
12. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 6/12/2018 at Natural Resources Administrative Offices, 1800 S. County Rd. 31, Loveland, CO.
13. 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.
14. ADJOURN – 8:19 p.m.

*Included in PDF:*

- Agenda
- Photos related to info items
- Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report
- District Reports
- CIP 2018-2023

*Attached Separately:*

- Minutes of last meeting

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