

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: September 11, 2018

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Location: Horsetooth Area Information Center (HAIC), 4200 W. County Road 38E, Fort Collins, CO 80526

Contact: Please contact Emmy at ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Brian Rasch	x	Ken Brink	x	Jake Hoffman (BOR)
Chris Klaas	x	Gary Buffington	x	
Deborah Shulman	x	Dan Rieves		
Kathy Maher	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Mark De Gregorio		*Stephen Johnson	x	
Michael Robinson	x	Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
Robert Harris	x			
Russell Fruits	x			
Stephanie Hansen				
Steve Ambrose	x			

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:38 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Kathy Maher questioned wording on page 2 regarding “unintended” fires. Rob Harris motions to approve minutes, Deborah Shulman seconds, motion passed unanimously.

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. The long-awaited Long View Trail officially opened on August 18th with a grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony. More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/LongViewTrail> – Gary
 - i. Rob Harris commented on problematic corner at 57th and Taft, NW corner. It was noted that the comment would be relayed to Loveland.
 - ii. Brian Rasch asked when the maps will be updated as City of Ft. Collins, Google, etc., do not have updated online maps. It was noted that LC would look into it.
 - iii. Loveland and Fort Collins will maintain in winter.
- d. Larimer County recently acquired an 800-acre ranch within Red Mountain Open Space for \$2.25 million, utilizing funds from the Help Preserve Open Spaces sales and use tax – Gary
 - i. Fort Collins is potential partner, working through administrative glitch. Fee simple, Fort Collins will have conservation easement. LC will be inventorying the property for resources (ecological, archaeological, etc.) and will be managed through the Master Plan.
 - ii. Deborah Shulman asked how many other private parcels are within the Red Mountain OS. It was noted that that was the last one.
 - iii. Kathy Maher asked how the public will access the inventory information. It was noted that it will be published in the management plan. It could take up to 1.5 years to finish inventory, there will then be public engagement process. Limited recreational possibilities, possible trail.
 - iv. Michael Robinson inquired about bison in the area. It was noted that the herd at Soapstone and Red Mountain is up to 54 now, including the 2018 calves. Genetics from Yellowstone, moved in the 1970's by Teddy Roosevelt. Grazing patterns are being studied.

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Park District updates and reports – Dan/Mark
 - i. August was good, campgrounds always full. Satanka always busy, great fishing, boating. East side busy through August, day use slower, campgrounds full. Hiking and biking on east side up. Trail cams and trail counters are installed for study data. Eagle Scout project with graffiti, new graffiti at Rotary, gate closures helping slow the activity. Study data will be very helpful.
 - ii. Deborah Shulman discussed her experience at the Horsetooth Swim Races: 10k race is now an Olympic event, all swimmers needs a paddler with them. Also a 1-mile and a 2.4-mile collegiate race. Benefit for teen health and wellness. Water temps were 66 degrees, Search & Rescue on hand, wetsuit and non-

- wetsuit divisions, 4 of top 6 were women in 10k. Mark and staff were wonderful, ranger presence was appreciated.
- iii. 2 races per year, growing in popularity, had to move outside of summer holidays, largest event that HT can comfortably handle. Wednesday nights in summer have HT Tri Training & Open Water Swim at South Bay, averages 80 people. Boats are very considerate.
 - iv. 150 people came for Jaws movie showing at the swim beach. Sponsored by Poudre Heritage Alliance, fundraiser for river safety awareness “Play it Safe on the Poudre.” Bought safety signs, will be installed at Lions Park this week.
 - v. Ken – highlight in Dan’s district: lifesaving call at Flatiron, bystanders started CPR, DNR staff continued care upon arrival, patient left hospital a few days later, enhanced CPR helped thanks to continued emphasis on ranger training. Mark attended firearms instructor training in Oregon, will be sharing knowledge. Ken had ride along for night patrol on Saturday of Labor Day weekend, parking and visitation challenges were clear, as were the high skill levels and prioritization abilities of the staff.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Board feedback on staff recommended regulation changes – Ken (1 hr.)
 - i. Multi-step process, agency procedure policy, committee includes District Managers and several staff. Will discuss with PAB & OLAB, will then be sent to County Attorney, then to BOCC for feedback and vote. Tremendous internal conversations involved with this document.
 - ii. A1 – Deborah commented that campers are occasionally on or too close to the actual trail, asked if they will be educated. It was noted that the marker location depends on the water level and campers will continue to be educated by rangers who will have more control regarding that issue with this change. Kathy noted that ‘post pad marker’ language could be improved.
 - iii. A6 – 8 is too many for Hermit, 6 is norm for both the State and the Forest Service, more reasonable for smaller sites. Deb asked if boat-in sites are included, it was noted that the boat-in sites are still 8. Kathy commented that the language was ambiguous regarding how many units are allowed, also that the cabin info was confusing.
 - iv. A11 – Steve commented that the propane cook stoves have a flame. It was noted that language would be added to clarify that. To add this at A11, the existing 11-13 in section A would be renumbered.
 - v. F10 – Adding clarity with proposed language. Exceptions require written permission from District Manager and BOR. Jake clarified that it is illegal to launch or land a drone on BOR property without proper licenses and permitting.
 - vi. F13 (A4) – loud, projecting speakers are becoming more popular on trails, complaints increasing. Natural soundscape is strong value to visitors. Brian asked how it is measured. It was noted that the max is 86 decibels, somewhat

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subjective, also applies to boats, decibel measurement apps can be used. Steve recommends language addition 'to operate any device producing sound.' It was noted that would be added.

- vii. F14 – e-bikes increasing in popularity, want to have consistency with partner agencies on trails, discussion with other agencies and internally. State Patrol classified e-bike types. Recommendation to allow 1's and 2's on hard surface trails, none on natural surface trails. Brian added that new properties should include space for e-bikes. Crowding and resource management issues already, will observe and make modifications if necessary over time.
- viii. I6 – Since bear boxes were added at Hermit's Hollow, no bear/food issues. This clarifies storage, includes bear box language, suggestion to hyphenate bear-proof.
- ix. L1 – complicated, alcohol codes changing Jan. 1st, in contact with CPW. 3.2 beer going away, was only exception, public consumption regulations in parks will change. Limit consumption to camping units (camper, cabin, etc.) may be best legal stance. Successful standards already in California. It was noted that the language would be clarified regarding camping units. Middle ground is ideal, cultural norms have impact.
- x. W30 – not much use currently but tend to have high accident rates and high impact on other users. State parks don't allow.
- xi. X5 & X6 – effort to increase penalties for those who don't honor locked gate standard. Change has been quite smooth, only allowing launches and retrievals when inspectors are present. Increasing fine amounts, max is \$300 per state statute. Rob commented that the fine is exorbitantly low. Commissioner Johnson commented that he felt the BOCC would support the \$300 fine based on the high level of potential harm the infraction could create. Being proactive. Jake asked what the protocol was of someone put in on the res and the gate was closed. It was noted that no one gets out until gates are open. Fees go toward management of department properties. Commissioner Johnson asked how to prove that someone 'knowingly' launched/recovered a vessel. It was noted that the offender generally tells the ranger. Option on any of the offenses to summons the violator in to talk to a judge with possibility of increased fines. Commissioner Johnson suggested that all ANS violations be increased to \$300. Rob suggested adding a boulder near the gate at Pinewood. Will look into combining X5 and X6 as language is similar.
- xii. Definition of Resident – intent is that if someone is getting a price break on a pass, they should be following all state statutes with their vehicles. Kathy mentioned the scenario of peeling off pass and attaching to visiting sister's car. It was noted that immediate family only is allowed for pass transference, though unlikely ticket in that scenario.
- xiii. Increase fine amounts – state is increasing many of theirs by 50%, seeking proper level of deterrence, staying current with industry standards. Rob stated

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that the ANS should all go up to \$300. Chris commented that he believes revenue needs to be increased through fines and fees and that there should be fully commissioned rangers on duty at all times. Michael stated his support for the fee increases. Regulation brochures are available at every kiosk, parking lot and front desk.

- xiv. Commissioner Johnson asked about R1, swimming in non-designated areas and how people know that specific information. It was noted that swimming around boats has been allowed, some by campgrounds, kids under 13 need lifejacket. For boaters, they have to stay an arms-length from boat otherwise are considered to be swimming in non-designated. No deeper than knees by campgrounds. Ranger contacts are primary tool for educating about those details, can't watch everyone. Deb asked about waterskiing and it was noted that red flags and lifejackets are required when in water. Swimming not allowed on the main reservoir with the exception of the swim events, special events.
 - xv. Final changes? Ken will be meeting with OLAB, then BOCC, will make suggested adjustments before OLAB.
- b. Board feedback on staff recommended fee increases – Gary (1 hr.)
- i. Process started in June, put out RFP, got 2-3 bids, selected Harvey Economics out of Denver, \$49k, should finish in Oct. or Nov. Subcommittees have met, LC has sent HE a large amount of data. Haven't raised fees for many years. Going to OLAB next, will return to PAB with draft report in October. Looking to have fees cover 100% of operations, no profit on fees. Seeking recommendation for 2019, will review every few years, unbiased consultant recommendation may help avoid decisions based on politics.
 - ii. Michael asked what the current operations funding gap is. It was noted that it is currently about 60%, goal is to make up the other 40%.
 - iii. Investigating creative ways to charge fees, camping will be easiest through the reservation system, holidays and weekends can go up. Sifted through a great deal of data, considered a number of new ideas. Day passes have biggest potential impact, not annual, will be systematic increase. Iron rangers may be set up differently on weekends. Boyd Lake increasing passes next year to \$9. Administration costs for the fees are considered.
 - iv. Possible fee implementation at DBB. For intensively managed open space properties, costs include maintenance of trails and restrooms as well as ranger staffing for safety. Partnership with Loveland on DBB, need to consider their views. Dollars collected at open spaces go directly to management, frees up acquisition dollars for purchasing.
 - v. Pushing high-use areas to lower-use areas, hoping to lessen misuse of the reservation system.
 - vi. Fee discussion has allowed for updates about overbooking and cancellation. Found that there are a few individuals that do it hundreds of times. Will not be

allowing limitless, free cancellations. Fee schedule implementation will include a review every 2 years.

- vii. Brian asked whether the DBB fees should wait until the Big T parks that are still closed from the flood are reopened. It was noted that LC is bleeding money at DBB for restroom/trail maintenance and patrol, spent same amount of money at DBB as at HT Mountain. Viestenz-Smith is reopening soon, there are other parks in the Big T area that are also open.
- viii. Chris stated that goal is to do something that is simple to implement, manage and review periodically. Want to be consistent.
- ix. Steve commented that Hermit cabins seemed quiet during week in the spring. It was noted that Hermit season starts later and lasts longer.
- x. Steve commented on effect of raising fees for minorities and lower income groups. It was noted that in the parks in general, you don't see very much diversity and can be related to cultural differences, some groups prefer the picnic or beach areas for family gatherings over hiking. Deb commented that we need to make enough money to operate the park. Organized programs are an opportunity for underprivileged youth, will still consider low income. Goal is reasonable access for all incomes.
- xi. BOR cost sharing was set for 50% but in reality is about 68% LC, 42% BOR over last 30 years.
- xii. Will return in October with draft, have hearing soon.
- xiii. Steve mentioned that the report said the LC population will increase 60k by 2030, asked if surrounding counties face the same issue regarding population expansion and impact on LC recreational lands. It was noted that Weld County as an example does not have the recreational lands to support the population growth.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Board recommendation on staff recommended regulation changes
 - i. Rob Harris motions to approve to go to BOCC with suggestions, Steve Ambrose seconds, motion passed unanimously.

9. U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE

- a. Jake – no updates but can answer questions. Mark asked if there are any big changes of note in the next 6 months and if BOR is working through the Master Plan Items. It was noted that there are no big changes that Jake is aware of and they are working through the MP items. Ken noted that Laura is working on the RMP, Jake said it was done and being reviewed.
- b. Ken received parameters for cultural study from Missy, has been sent to CSU, have grad student working on it. Laura and Ken will set deadline for late night access for boat ramps. Northern will be assisting with gate parts. Goal is to have access and exit areas done at Carter and HT done this fall, finish in November, press release.

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- c. DOI planning organization changes, region splitting up, not sure what changes to expect outside of administrative.
- d. Pinewood being drained to dead pool at end of month for maintenance. Good communication with CPW about fish delivery being diverted from Pinewood to Carter.

10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- a. Deborah – concerns about paddleboards at Satanka Cove, chaos between paddleboards and boats putting in. Vendor is bad, many paddleboarders are beginners and don't use dock etiquette, becoming dangerous, could use a ranger or better signage there, would like to shut down the vendor. It was noted that it may be useful to have a conversation with Planning (Leslie, Planning Director) and the BOCC (Commissioner Johnson) as a board member, focus first on the vendor. New perspective helpful. Russell requested that if Deborah decides to meet with them, to let him know so they can coordinate more members to attend discussion.

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Gary Buffington

- a. Ken – Gary and the District Managers are taking trip to visit 5 different State Parks to examine different cabin types before making decision on how to re-do the cabins at HT and Carter with limited resources. Will bring findings/photos back to board. Also visiting archery range at Cheyenne Mountain. Park Managers at different sites will be bringing numbers on cost to build, revenue, and things they'd change if given the chance.
- b. Russell – reminder to board members to complete the new, required Board Member testing.

12. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 10/9/2018 at Natural Resources Administrative Offices (AO), 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, CO 80537

13. 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.

14. ADJOURN – 8:39pm