



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, November 20, 2008 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland, Library, Loveland

The mission of the Larimer County Open Lands Program is to preserve and protect significant open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations. These open lands provide opportunities for leisure, human renewal and protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Present:

Ted Swanson	Ben Manvel
Bob Streeter	Bill Newman
Sue Sparling	John Ericson
Trudy Haines	Nancy Wallace
Brian Hayes	

Staff:

K-Lynn Cameron	Olivia Hutton
Justin Scharton	Meegan Flenniken
Gary Buffington	Charlie Johnson
Rob Novak	

Absent:

Don Griffith	Jeff Hindman
Jean Carpenter	

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:13 pm.

Ben Manvel motioned to approve the October meeting minutes, John Ericson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS

Olivia Hutton- new Natural Resources Technician.

INFORMATION

- K-Lynn attended the League of Women Voters panel discussion on community separators – representatives from Johnstown, Windsor, Berthoud, Fort Collins and Larimer County were present. The Loveland/Berthoud area was controversial-land use regulations weren't going smoothly. Estes is doing open space plan to cover town & and the larger Estes Valley planning area.
- Meegan reported on the outcome of the phase III Devil's Backbone Open Space prescribed burn. Approximately 35 acres of the 125 were burned and the fire effects in the burned area were excellent and matched the goals of the burn plan. On the eastern boundary, the burn slopped over and burned 2 acres outside of the prescription area (½ acre on private land). Meegan met with the homeowner who remembered her from the management planning process when she and K-Lynn met with Springer Valley throughout that process. The homeowner was understanding of the resource objectives, asked many questions and appreciated the notification of what we are doing that he was sent in advance. Following the slop over the burn was cancelled for the day. Meegan has since contacted all the adjacent homeowners in Springer Valley



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to learn of any outstanding concerns or issues and to inform them of her plans to complete the burn this winter as conditions allow. The only request made was by one homeowner to be contacted in advance of the burn date with the specific date it will occur.

- 2009 Small Grants Program application forms are available at www.larimer.org/openlands/smallgrants.htm - Sue Burke needs another Small Grants Subcommittee Member. We will ask Don & Trudy.
- Update on Red Mountain Open Space: Meegan reported that we are finishing construction documents and the project will be put out to bid in early January. No portion of the project will be done by in-house construction staff. The trail to connect Red Mountain Open Space to Cheyenne has been laid out by Meegan and the trail crew and agreed to by Cheyenne. Meegan has an archeologist giving clearance. It is slated to be built first of spring. Currently, over 4 miles of trail have been constructed in 2008 and Phase I is on track. Meegan and K-Lynn have met with Fort Collins to match trails, trail names, markers, kiosks, etc. Moving forward & looking good!
- Reminder that the date of the annual OLAB holiday party was changed due to a conflict with the Planning Commission's party. We have moved the party to Thursday, December 11th, 2008. The party will be held at the home of Trudy Haines.
- Natural Resource events for the Winter Season. See handout.

BOARD COMMENT No December meeting.

PRESENTATIONS None

ACTION

Request to recommend approval of the Red Mountain Open Space Education Plan - Sue & Jean reviewed the plan and noted they had a few concerns. Rob shared that the overall reasoning behind the plan was centered around the concept of a low staff presence and thus educational materials will be the main interaction with visitors. This is wild space – visitors need a head's up to plan well. Funding is not available immediately, but will come in 3 phases. The management plan has a small section on educational opportunities, however the education plan is a detailed overview of the education vision, themes and products. Had staff review along with partners. Portions of the plan include: Themes which move from specific details to more general; an audience analysis – found people well-educated, middle age (thus don't have to explain details to them from scratch); Management concerns: weed free hay for equestrians, dogs on leash, etc. that will be addressed through education on the web, signs and interpreters.

We will be doing a prototype evaluation -mock ups of final products with volunteers to interact with visitors before spending final money on sign products. Educational signs are focused at the trailhead, Bent Rock Trail, and near the historic buildings. At the outdoor classroom (capacity 24 people), mural serves as windbreak and will feature a cultural timeline. Phase I content with board approval – will open in June. Phase II, after prototype testing, will be completed in fall 2009. Phase III-no detailed plan yet. Budget-starting with \$23,000 –gets us through Phase I, but short by \$14k for Phase II. Bob asked for budget clarification; specific changes & revisions in plan. Bob complimented team on systematic approach & efficiency. Sue-we wanted to make sure pre-visit info is communicated since site is so far away. Concerned about K-12 & CSU – not much on school kids-want them included. Outdoor classroom – where are seats? Meegan – will be 4 picnic tables for 6 people each + additional seating around the outdoor classroom on a rock wall. Sue – the plan needs more geologic



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info! Educated people don't necessarily know that much – need it in pre-visit info. We like the laminated cards – great idea (interpretive necklace). Like 4x6 cards better than big ones, & must leave there. Jean & Sue are happy to meet with Rob. Bob had 3 policy & 1 procedural question. 1) Ft. Collins & Larimer both have Education Programs – how can we work w/FC to have integrated education programs to reduce staff, material & advertising costs? K-Lynn – we have coordinated with FC – their items are a higher cost, so we compliment what they do. We integrated volunteer trail hosts into one group who travel on both properties, sharing canned programs. The first program completely in partnership with FC is the Volunteer Ranger Assistants. Rob talked about our shared volunteers. Bob concerned about volunteers falling through the cracks & reducing our costs – let Ft Collins foot the bill. K-Lynn addressed his question with specifics of how we work with Fort Collins. Bob-what are our options for commercial tours, education, other agencies, sponsors? K-Lynn – we are working on a commercial use policy. Bob- is the facility development already in the management plan approved by board? How are things needed included in the planning process? What is the sequence? K-Lynn & Meegan responded. Management plan identifies what we'll do, what facilities are there, themes of property – as framework for education plan/weed management/resource management/etc. We are moving to a greater level of detail than previously with the amended management plan process requested by Bob. Trudy- The Fort Collins Natural Resources board is very interested in partnering with Larimer County, & lots of volunteers stepping forward. John – Are there opportunities for electronic interpretation? Rob – absolutely! Phase III – we will have audio tours onsite & on the ride up. Most people ok with people using technology – podcasts & downloadable media on site. K-Lynn: Fort Collins museum is putting up info on Red Mountain & Soapstone for public education. Trudy-audio tours at Stonehenge in UK-can choose whose perspective you listen to. John-In the implementation stage-due to economy, I encourage you to purchase American made products & negotiate the best price you can-make the dollars go further. Bob – any opportunities for sponsorships of kiosks? Outreach to businesses? K-Lynn-yes, but we have a policy that limits how we do it. Bill – we need previsit info in as many forms as possible. What if we have brochures specific to dogs, horses, etc, so users can see where they can go & what is allowed – we can integrate with Ft. Collins & the state to develop this. Need publicity about what is or is not permitted at each area. Nancy-Can we put announcement in the Green Section of Coloradoan? This is a living document and we need board approval to go ahead, but the plan will be modified. Rob-these are the broad strokes, then we go to the content phase. Prototypes will come back to the board. Sue-we can approve phase I, then make revisions for Phases II and III.

Bob - made a motion to approve the Education Plan with amendments for phase I; phases II, III will be revised. Ben Manvel seconded motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Request to recommend approval of revisions to the Management Plan Process to include level of facility development – K-Lynn reviewed the draft Level of Facility Development process. Bill- In the description of different levels of develop-how do these relate to Lori's cost per acre summaries? K-Lynn-this will just impact the developed areas. Ex: Fossil Creek Reservoir – all facilities are in the developed areas. With plan revisions, intended level of facility development clearly stated up front. Right now we include projected management cost, but not facility development. Bill-Will staff bring development options to the board (Chevy vs. Cadillac) even within the different tiers? K-Lynn – Yes. Staff presents proposal for 'medium', and OLAB sees the detail. We will have to develop definitions of what is included in the various tiers and list requirements for basic services. Ted-I would like to see more specificity in step I, step II involved testing & refining feasibility of step I-by then we've acquired or committed to a property. Meegan – Hermit Park example – can be hard to predict what a property will need at step I or II; we didn't know we would be required to expand the turn lanes until about step 5 in the planning process when we had the information from Planning. Gary – sometimes we have surprises. Ted – There is a difference between being surprised vs. having foresight. I would like more



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specificity. Bill – On step II to survey stakeholders/user groups- can we orient step II on prioritization of needs/wishes of users so we have flexibility to choose amenities? Trudy – let’s define what basic vs. high end is so board doesn’t slow down the county from moving forward. K-Lynn – definition of zones is based on the experience people have – more of what to expect in this area – school children, adults, etc. Bob – let’s look at this some more & bring back to Jan. mtg. Trudy – I think its okay to purchase a property & have a general plan that can change over the next 10 years.

- Nancy’s request for next month -Economic downturn effects on Help Preserve Open Space Budget.
- John’s request for next month – Updated Department Organizational chart for all the members.

DISCUSSION

- K-Lynn-Whole Measures Workshop conducted by the Center for Whole Communities. –Please see map handout. Conservation organizations are good at raising money & protecting land, but need to connect people to the land. We are in the upper right corner of map. Future will require that we anticipate how to partner with community, make connections beyond our traditional realms to sustain community support & be responsive to community needs. Nancy-Ft. Collins & Larimer County have major work to do on sustainable living/agric/growth issues. Kathay attended the workshop and committed to working with the 2 new commissioners on issues. We need alternative ways of building/whole communities. Gary-new way of thinking, whole communities that rise above differences for the good of the land - I’m excited about it. Bob-need to bring water & agricultural interests in here if we want local crops sustained. Nancy-that was a major piece of the discussion. Bill-Boulder County has new program to let local farmers use land.
- Rob-Review of “No Child Left Inside Act”. Children need environmental literacy. This is a statewide Act involving partnership from all levels of government. Comprehensive plan including outdoor activities & ecology education passed Congress – still in Senate. Bob – please give this info to Markey’s staff & Salazar.
- Review of Satisfaction Surveys other agencies have done regarding their programs. Postponed to a later date.
- Update on the Laramie Foothills Mountain to Plains Project. K-Lynn-gave history on Red Mountain Open Space & Soapstone Prairie Natural Area acquisitions with map. Created over 200 sq miles of protected land. Thus far, \$29 million spent on this area and 49,000 acres protected-goal is 55,000.

FINANCIAL REPORT

None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Gary – working on a win-win on Big Thompson Parks Parcels between private landowners & recreationists. There might be a better management agency than us, such as the Division of Wildlife to manage fishing access. Will be deed restricted. Not open to public, but adjacent properties are to give fishing access. Charlie- 2 points of access so entire river corridor retained by county. Nancy –concerned about bad press; need good press to counter. Gary– will give positive reviews when complete. K-Lynn-an editorial would be great.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session – Bob moved that pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest, to enter into executive session and Nancy seconded the motion.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.