



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, January 22, 2009 – 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:

Nancy Wallace	Ben Manvel
Brian Hayes	Bill Newman
Jean Carpenter	John Ericson
Jeff Hindman	Don Griffith

Staff:

Charlie Johnson	Olivia Hutton
Kerri Rollins	Meegan Flenniken
Garry Buffington	Tom Donnelly

Absent:

Bob Streeter	Trudy Haines
Ted Swanson	
Sue Sparling	

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm.

John Ericson motioned to approve the November meeting minutes, Bill Newman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS

Tom Donnelly, new County Commissioner and liaison to the Open Lands Advisory Board.

INFORMATION

- Update on Red Mountain Open Space.-Meegan noted that the structural engineering for all shelters including the vault toilet is complete. Most of the soils in the valley at Red Mountain Open Space are collapsible soils (such as gypsum) – and the best way to engineer the structures is via pier foundations. Red Mountain Open Space is in the Laramie Foothills adjacent to Fort Collin’s Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. We finished the management plan the end of 2007 and just put the construction documents out to bid Jan 7. About 20 contractors attended. Bids are due 29th of Jan – still on track with plan to select contractor, and finalize the contract within 30 days. The Grand Opening is June 6 2009. The trail crew has completed our 2008 trails, now working on 2009. The Big Hole section falls within the Nature Conservancy’s Conservation Easement and Cheyenne, WY. We will be clearing this trail with them tomorrow. Tom Donnelly – does the Red Mountain trail system extend to the Wyoming border?



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Meegan -it does, and the trails connect the two properties as well as with Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.

- Board of County Commissioners approved the Policy for Granting Easements on County owned or County Managed Open Spaces. See attachment. Kerri – we brought this to the board in November 2008, and it went to the Commissioners in December 2008. Charlie J – the Commissioners wanted some changes to soften the language, so the final copy was emailed to you. Bill-on the compensation section, it says an appraiser is chosen for that. I hope we choose appraisers who are sensitive to conservation easements and tuned in to disturbances of natural areas – let’s be on guard. Charlie J-we have a network of appraisers who are qualified and certified in this and we will be discerning.
- Received and recorded the deed to the 15-acre Crowder property donation at the south end of the Devil’s Backbone! A trail interpreting the geology of the area will be constructed and include a plaque recognizing the Crowder’s son and an education component in memory of Ann Dewey. Kerri – the water tower along Hwy 34 is down.
- CSU and Wind Holdings held 3 public meetings regarding the Maxwell Ranch Wind Farm on January 13, 14 and 15, 2009. Charlie J – Jerry and I went to the open house in Wellington – looked at maps, talked to the experts and asked questions. They are on track, moving quickly, down to 93 towers. They had maps of corridors for their project, and I pointed out that one of them clipped one of our conservation easements. Nancy – this will be the county’s first 1041 review. Charlie J – Jerry and K-Lynn are heading that team and very proactive in working with them. John – Olivia and I got a great tour to Red Mountain Open Space from K-Lynn.
- The Education Program will be sponsoring a Volunteer Naturalist Kick-off on January 24, 2009 at the Lincoln Center – about 50 responses so far.
- A joint training with the City of Fort Collins and Larimer County will be held at the Lincoln Center on February 10-14, 2009 for the volunteer Ranger Program. The volunteers can go on a city or county property and get credit for all of their hours. This started last year, and this is the second training we’ve had.
- Applications for the Larimer County Visual Artist of the Year will be accepted until February 27, 2009. For more information, contact Justin Scharton at jscharton@larimer.org. Meegan –We sent out postcards and press releases. First year of the program was 2006 and Jim Disney was the artist. One goal of the Program is to bring awareness of the Open Lands Program in long-term thinking of extending the Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax. Jim stayed on for a 2nd year; last year was the first year we targeted other artists. We are looking for people to be on this sub-committee; it’s very fun. The artwork is placed in a very prominent spot in the courthouse. Jim’s pieces were reproduced in giclee and sold. Tom D-have you thought of having a kids’ art program? Meegan – One component of the program is that the artist works with our education program to give a public educational program about their art



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- El Pomar Grant and Budweiser Grant. Kerri-we are exploring different funding sources from our grant database: El Pomar to fund the education component at Red Mountain Open Space and Anheuser Busch to fund potable well water at the Red Mountain Open Space trailhead.
- Natural Resource events for January and February. See enclosure.
- S-passes and handouts.

BOARD COMMENT

Items not on the agenda

PRESENTATIONS

- 2008 Accomplishments – Video by Meegan Flenniken and Justin Scharton See handout. Meegan – for the OLAB holiday party we put together a presentation of the Open Lands Program accomplishments to thank you all for the work you do and recognize your accomplishments from last year. Not everyone could attend the party so we wanted to show the video to you at a meeting. (Video)

ACTION

- Small Grants Program – Review and request approval of recommended Small Grant proposals. See attachment.*** Nancy – Over the last 10+ years we have yearly taken applications for small grants – most have gone to schools, other orgs. People submit their application and it comes before us this month – we either approve or deny them. A subcommittee screens what is appropriate or not. We appropriate approximately \$10,000 each year; not always the full amount. Sue Burke – Trudy H and Sue S are part of this years' subcommittee. We had 10 proposals this year for the \$10,000 – had some excellent proposals. We look to see if they meet the criteria, then do site visits. We consider geographics, level of community involvement, and if the project would likely be accomplished without us. 1st Grant-North Fork Weed Co-op –We recommend full funding on this project. 2nd -Pinewood Springs Property Owners Crescent Lake. We thought this project was unlikely to be funded without our help. Next- Trees, Water and People –Lopez Elementary – restoration of this area. We recommend partial funding of that \$1800. Next-Silver Leaf Beautification Committee – Nature Path- we recommend funding of \$200-unlikely to be funded without us. Next-Poudre Wilderness Volunteers – trail maintenance in Arapaho Roosevelt Forest – we recommend \$1,000 for tools. Next – HOA's from various parts of the county – we thought these projects had good chance of happening even if we didn't fully fund them, but they are really good projects and an opportunity to get these people involved. Front Range Community College – Russian olive removal. We've funded them continuously for 5 years – not purpose of our program to provide on-going funding for one group, so we recommend we not fund them this year. Turkey Hollow – didn't fit the purpose of our program or meet our criteria – recommend not funding them. We are asking more than the \$10,000 allotted for this year. We haven't used all the money allotted over the years, so there is money in the pot for us to use. Tom D- wondered if the board had any concerns with helping private HOA's? Jean – Yes, and one thing we look at – are other people coming into these areas and using them? And the answer is yes – they are getting that kind of use (with the exception of Huntington Hills). Sue B – it is also putting sales



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tax dollars into a neighborhood and getting their community involved. Kerri – with the marketing of our Small Grants Program, we market it to all the HOA’s in Larimer County. We haven’t had any applications from non-million dollar Homeowners’ Associations , but they would be considered as well. The Open Lands Program has been looking at the Whole Measures concept to broaden our Small Grants Program. Nancy –tax money comes from all levels – issue is does it meet the criteria – also a PR gesture for people not always cognizant or aware of the Open Lands Program. Gary – if you want a staff recommendation, staff supports an increase. Don – I agree, just the PR the Open Lands Program gets from this and when it comes to talking about tax issues, etc., this is good for us. Brian H- I think all the work you’ve done and diligence in screening these is wonderful. Bill – I am in favor of keeping to \$10,000 and let the subcommittee decide how. Jean – is that paring off 10% from each request? Tom D – The Poudre Wilderness Volunteers is not an actual project. Nancy and Jean – we have funded them twice in the past. Sue – in 2004 and 2008, different areas in the county. Jean – this is part of the Adopt a Trail program. John-I presume you have procedures to ensure these projects are 100% funded to make sure we’re covered? Nancy – we monitor them, but we don’t enforce that they do every piece of the project. Sue –we require due diligence and grant visits. John-I presume there might be another \$1500 in someone else’s pocket that we won’t get PR for. I don’t think we need to worry – if we have the money and we can find that \$1500, I support the projects presented here. Nancy – we may consider increasing the amount of our Small Grants Program at our next budget cycle. John-the whole PR aspect and grassroots efforts will get us bigger support for our large projects. Kerri- it’s been proven again and again that naysayers come around after working with us. Charlie J – also really good PR from newspapers. Nancy – any objections to including the top 8 proposals? No. Let’s take a vote for funding at the level proposed – 1st motion by Ben M, seconded by John E – all in favor say ‘aye’ – Bill N – no. It passed.

DISCUSSION

- Bernard Conservation Easement I Donation Final Report. Request recommendation. See attachment.
- Bernard Conservation Easement II Donation Final Report. Request recommendation. See attachment.
- Kerri – the LFMTTP project was a cooperative effort to protect 55,400 acres; 65% of land protected was Conservation Easements, the remainder was fee simple acquisitions for public access. All elements are completed with the exception of one parcel trade for land of equivalent value for a Conservation Easement (CE). We also wanted to protect the Slab Canyon parcel, but the landowner was unwilling due to financial reasons. We still have \$1.2 million to collect from GOCO, but we don’t have a property large enough to spend the money on; but the City of Ft. Collins (FC) does. GOCO hasn’t approved our substitutions yet. Charlie J-the proposal is for Larimer County to hold these easements – they fit right into the project. Phase I is currently owned by the City of FC. Phase II is under contract by FC – will close in March. We will bring both of these to the board for final approval. Phase I has no building sites reserved, Phase II does have building sites reserved, but gives us access to Red Mountain Open Space for maintenance. Both are written to provide for trails, but not currently slated for public access. When FC receives ownership for Phase II, there will be a building site reserved for future sale value. These are all fee simple for FC and we hold the CE. Charlie J explained what a remoteness letter is. Charlie J-there is limited water on the properties – a spring on Phase I only that is not adjudicated. Kerri – with these



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two CEs, we have met 90% of GOCO's requirements, and they are satisfied with that. Bill – We should make sure baseline documentation is complete before we accept these. Kerri – GOCO requires that this is completed within 6 months. Nancy – this is really exciting, absolutely amazing.

- Visual Artist of the Year Program:
 - View 2008 Artwork by Patty Hawkins- Meegan- We are hosting a reception on January 28th for the 2008 Artist of the Year, Patty Hawkins, who is from Estes Park. We had about 12 submittals last year that were reviewed by a subcommittee consisting of an art critic, the 2007 artist (Jim Disney) and OLAB representative (Sue Sparling). Patty was selected and is a fiber artist – a medium that is less well known, and she chose Devil's Backbone Open Space for her inspiration. The piece is not framed which gives more connection for people. It is 3 layers of fabric sewn together to add texture; she does all her own dying over various materials to create a plethora of textures.
 - Select Open Lands Board member to serve on selection committee for 2009-Nancy Wallace.
- Review cultural mural/windbreak sketches for Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) Outdoor Classroom. Kerri-Rob has been working on the education plan for RMOS; part of that is a cultural mural, made of four 4x5 foot panels depicting different eras in the RMOS landscape. Pre-history panel 20-13,000 years ago; Folsom 12-10,000 years ago; Native Americans (approved by FC museum) 10,000 – to late 1800's; Cowboys and Ranching 1890's to 2004. Future drafts will be more artistic with depth perspective.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Hermit Park Open Space – 2008 in Review and looking forward to 2009. This will be discussed at the next meeting with Chris Fleming.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gary – The forest service just released an aerial report – Larimer County (LC) is hardest hit by pine beetle of all counties on western slope. Red Feather is the next area biggest hit. Charlie J and I were just up to Big Thompson community this week. Tom D- received positive email from landowner – said LC took the high road. Gary – Public is fearful of losing public property for fishing, etc.; landowners are fearful of public in their backyards. We'll work it out and satisfy the needs of both properties. The Parks Advisory Board has made a recommendation to our County Commissioners for taking more time for public process on this issue. Jean – what is the potential treatment for pine beetle? Gary – treatment is expensive. and includes preventative spraying. We have a diversity of trees at Hermit Park Open Space– this increases our chances of success in treatment. Meegan – most of our properties are faring well since we've been actively implementing forest management plans for the last 10 years working with the Colorado State Forest Service.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session – 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. There was no executive session.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Wallace at 7:12 pm.