



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 27, 2009 – 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Loveland Library, 300 N Adams, Loveland CO

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	John Ericson
Jeff Hindman	Patricia Brennan
Ted Swanson	Don Griffith
Sue Sparling	Jean Carpenter
David Roy	Bill Newman
Brian Hayes	Peter Kast

Staff:

Meegan Flenniken	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	Lori Smith
Gary Buffington	Sue Burke
Charlie Johnson	Zac Wiebe
Commissioner Tom Donnelly	Rob Novak
Jerry White	

Absent:

Trudy Haines	
--------------	--

Chair, Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:14 pm.

Sue motioned to approve the June meeting minutes, Jean seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

INTRODUCTIONS:

Everyone introduced themselves to the three new board members.

INFORMATION

- Report from the OLAB liaison to the Parks Advisory Board, Parks Advisory Board liaison – None
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager Travis Rollins – Nancy reminded the board about focus on management instead of acquisition. Travis reported on visitor use of Red Mountain Open Space. There were 999 vehicles counted in the 1st month which puts the visitor count at approximately 2000 visitors, and visitors are very positive about the open space. A well will be installed for horses in September or October. A bid was put out this week for fencing at Boxelder Creek. Cattle have been breaking down a fence and getting into shade shelters at the trailhead, so they will be improving fencing there too. The issues with mismarked trail makers have been resolved. Concerning the active alabaster mine, the miner produced a quit claim deed but we do not believe it is a legal claim. He removed two large pieces of alabaster that he claimed to be worth \$100,000. We refused his request to remove the pieces from the property. He did remove his equipment. Peter asked for elaboration. Charlie responded that his deed was sold with no rights or title. Peter asked about true alabaster value. Travis explained the mining process but was not sure how we validate alabaster value. Tom asked



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Charlie if we bought the mineral rights, Charlie responded yes. Travis went on to explain that we are continuing repairs on the McGraw house. Hunting at Eagles Nest Open Space will begin soon, preparation happened this week. The Livermore Women's Club will also be taking a group there this week. Devil's Backbone Open Space and Horsetooth Mountain Open Space visitation remains high. There was a major medical incident at Horsetooth falls. While some students climbed, one fell and landed in the water. He broke his clavicle, separated his shoulder, and was unconscious. There was recently someone bit by a rattlesnake in Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.

- Per the June meeting, the Aspen Glenn Campground name at Hermit Park Open Space was changed to Granite Gulch, the second choice for that campground. Rocky Mountain National Park already has an Aspen Glenn Campground.
- New Open Lands Advisory Board and Parks Advisory Board members participated in a 2-day orientation, touring Red Mountain, River Bluffs, the Blue Mountain Conservation Area, Horsetooth, and Devil's Backbone open spaces as well as Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake. There were two days of orientation, going through the Board member handbook and touring properties. All new board members participated in some capacity. Feedback was very positive. Steve enjoyed himself and found it very interesting and informative. The orientation was integrated to share information from across the Department with the different board members.
- On 9/15 GOCO is hosting a meeting in Larimer County for grantees and all Colorado citizens about the future use of GOCO's portion of Lottery proceeds in the next five to ten years. The meeting will be held in Fort Collins and followed by a BBQ at Horsetooth Reservoir. Mark your calendars, an invitation will be forthcoming. – The session will be from 3:00-5:00 and will be held at the Ft. Collins senior center. An invitation to the following barbeque will be issued soon. Peter asked about the importance of our attendance. Kerri said that we should have input on capacity building projects and we need to show direct connection between capacity building and open spaces. We need to encourage more trail grant cycles. If there is an area lacking funding this is an opportunity to voice our opinion. Kerri will send out speaking points.
- Colorado Open Space Alliance conference 9/21-23 in Breckenridge – registration and information is available at www.coloradoopenspace.org Please check it out and decide if you would like to go. We invite 2-3 board members to go to the annual COSA conference. Kerri passed around conference information - agenda, session descriptions and registration form. Peter Forbs will be the keynote speaker.
- On 9/23 from 8-12:00 Peter Forbs from the Center for Whole Communities will facilitate a session that will build on the Whole Measures exercises we've been working on. Please plan on attending if you can. This is a visionary meeting to help guide our future planning. Kerri highly encouraged the board to attend.
- On 9/26 don't miss the 5th Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space! This is a great free event for families and birders of all skill levels. Hourly presentations, as well as birding clinics, hikes and activity booths will be available. The Friends group will have a welcome booth and the Lyons Club will serve food. The event is scheduled from 7am – 1pm. Rob introduced the birding fair, partnerships include Fort Collins, The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, and the local chapter of the Audubon Society. There will be activities for kids, clinics, and a falconer. Migration is the theme. Rob asked for volunteers to pass out poster. Nancy mentioned the good attendance. The fair is from 7:00am to 1:00 on the 9/26



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- On 10/14 from 1pm – 5pm there will a tour to Hermit Park Open Space for new OLAB & PAB members. Everyone is welcome to attend. We will see the new Bobcat Camp Area (aka Camp Area 2). RSVP's will be taken closer to the date. This is a good opportunity for the entire board to see the Bobcat Campground and Hermit Park Open Space. Charlie highly recommends campground #2.
- Red Mountain Open Space updates: Meegan- The construction budget is on track and the final announcement for contractors was posted. Our facilities are holding up well. There was a field trip with Ft. Collins to look at the “Reach for the Sky” trail and there are issues with sustainability on the Soapstone Prairie side of the trail. The crews have decided to postpone construction. We will ask Great Outdoors Colorado to transfer the money to construct other trail. Staff also hiked with the City of Cheyenne and committed to monitor the trail on the city’s conservation easement. There are two trails left to construct. The “Salt Lick” trail is laid out and it goes near the tank. The last trail is to the west and there are still questions about the name. Meegan suggested reconvening the naming committee. Nancy agreed. Nancy commented on past board discussions regarding the name. Travis asked to join the naming committee. Nancy said she’s heard very positive comments about how RMOS is user friendly. Kerri was there yesterday morning to ride Cheyenne Rim trail. She mentioned that is it beautiful and there were five cars by 9:30 a.m.
- Kerri stated that Jeffrey got a grant for the Pleasant Valley trail. It’s for \$200,000 to repave a section of it.
- OLAB annual group photo for the Annual Report and webs site was taken.
- Natural Resource Events for September - See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

PRESENTATIONS

- Small grants – Sue Burke: Sue gave a quick history of program and stated that we’ve expanded the program. Sue then gave a 2008 projects update PowerPoint presentation. The small grants program gave \$9,984 in 2008 and has given a total of \$80,827 since inception. The new grant cycle just started. She asked for volunteers for a subcommittee. David Roy volunteered. Nancy explained the process and that it is a fun committee. Don Griffith volunteered. Sue said that deadlines for applications are due October 14.
- Kerri introduced Kristen Kirkpatrick from CanDo, a program from Poudre Valley Health Systems. Kerri sees potential to work with her in the future with Whole Measures. Kristin started a participation exercise in which the board acted out the first activity they could remember as a child. The exercise showed how that activity related to the outdoors, other kids, and unstructured environments. Kristen then gave a presentation about health and how it relates to open space and natural resources. Peter commented that it’s a “hot button” issue for him and mentioned that he is wholly supportive. David asked Kristen about funding and partnerships. Kristin explained that they get significant funding in Colorado. CanDo is spending dollars in partnership with Ft. Collins and Loveland. She would be happy to discuss partnership ideas. Peter commented that it doesn’t take a lot of money to create opportunities for child health. David agrees. Kristen mentions development of a “wild zone” where kids go in and parents only get to listen. We need to shift our thinking about areas. Peter remarks that there is a mindset in our group that creating these opportunities is a “sacrifice”. We can’t be too extreme. Extreme conservation could be detrimental to opportunities for children in the outdoors. Kerri mentioned “experiential” open space opportunities. Kristen remarks that it supports Whole Measures.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Lori Smith



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2009 - 2011. Gary explained that we are using requested adjustments. Lori explained that the approved section is colored and then explained adjustments. They are as follows: **A.** Slab Canyon substitution, decrease by \$100,000 to \$175,000. **B.** Mountains to plains reduction. The reason why: Finance calculates the projected sales tax and the numbers have been short. They are down \$150,000 this year. Finance made new projections; it was \$3.76 million, now it is \$3.41 million. They recommend that we reduce our projections. 2010 projections were 3% higher. The new projection is \$3.34 million. Lori projected a 3% increase in 2011. The difference between the new and old numbers is 1.4 million. We have to make loan payment first, then allot for acquisition and development. These are just projections and they are fairly conservative. We'll observe cash flow through 2018 to see how it plays out. For the current three years we are being asked to reduce by \$175,000. That's not very possible. Gary remarks that these are just projections. Trail projects are staying in place. He asked the Board to comment. David asked if we have a list of what we don't fund. Gary said that it's a savings account for an in-holding in Red Mountain Open Space. It's for sale at a too high of a price and has been for a while. **C.** Loveland to Ft. Collins trail (Duck Lake). We've removed \$350,000 in 2011. Peter asked Brian if it would be a problem for Loveland. Brian responds that they have acquired the easements. Nancy asked why we have money for acquisitions. Kerri mentioned a non funded grant to leverage those dollars. Peter suggests letting Loveland build it. Gary stated that it was planned for 2011. Brian mentioned that the loop trail is a priority. Nancy asked if Slab Canyon is mandatory. Kerri stated that we put in substitution parcels and it looks like we will only use \$85 to \$90,000 to complete. **D.** Office space for rangers at Fossil Creek; the budget was \$200,000 and would be reduced to \$100,000. We were going to relocate to Horsetooth. Ted clarified that we put \$100,000 in because it was minimum. Is leaving 100k even going to do anything? Gary responded that it may not unless parks could come up with \$200,000 to \$300,000. Peter asked how much office space is needed. Gary answered that we need about 12 offices. Peter asked what kind of building we currently use. Gary responded that right now it's a modular building. Lori pointed out that it costs us to have rangers at fossil creek. **E.** We used to have a bigger balance than we need and we were short in acquisition. The Long Term Management fund lent 4 million to the Acquisition and Development fund. The plan was that it would be returned. In 2010 and 2011 there was to be a payment of \$200,000. Now there's a need to pay it sooner. Hermit Park hasn't reached self sustainment yet. The difference was being split between Parks and Open Lands but Parks can't do it anymore. This change covers that shortage. Gary stated that we hope that the numbers will get better. The reason for reductions is reduced general lottery funds. Peter asked what the status is with lottery money. Gary responded that it's staying similar, around \$600,000. We also found that our general fund will be reduced by 6%. Lori stated that Parks used about \$250,000 of lottery and \$200,000 of general. Every year we don't break even it gets harder. Nancy asked for clarification of how it works. Lori responded that we would be paying back funds when needed by the management fund. We are adding in Hermit Park costs to the approved budget. Gary said that we hope that additional revenue will improve the projections. Peter asked if we have a long term Hermit Park budget to see when it might break even. Gary responded that none of them break even, not even Horsetooth. We don't know but we could get 75-80% in 3-4 years hopefully. Peter asked when we think it will be stabilized and what will it cost. Gary answered that we're probably two years out but improvements can increase revenue. Don asked about the new campgrounds and if they will they help. Gary responded that we're not sure how that money will be allocated. It won't necessarily go to Hermit Park. Nancy asked about \$140,000 going to Hermit Park for management and not for acquisition and development. It doesn't belong in this report. Lori said that we will use Acquisition and Development to repay loan to Management. Nancy stated that it belongs somewhere else, it's not technically Acquisition and Development but a repayment of a loan. It should be removed and should go to management. It should go in another category to avoid being misleading to the public. Lori suggested adding "other reductions" under the projections in sales tax category. Nancy pointed out that it looks like it's going to Hermit Park but it's not. Kerri clarified that we borrowed from Management to support acquisitions. We're talking about paying that back. Nancy stated that the sales tax requires a certain amount for management, and



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

then more can go in. We started with a higher amount of sales tax than was required. Management didn't cost as much then, management got big so we borrowed money and will pay it back around now. Now that we're in recession we need to put it back more urgently. It needs to be explained well so that we are transparent when we go back to the voters. Gary said that we do have some room. We're at 19%. Lori said that the year to date 19-20% from 1996 to 2008 and projections show management through 2018 or so. We need to balance. Kerri mentioned that we discussed in June that we would bring long spreadsheets once a year, hopefully in September but maybe October. The Acquisition and Management reports are seven sheets. We need to be ready, holiday season will be a good indicator. Lori said that if we reduce these 4 years by 1.4 million, we won't see 2008 sales tax until 2015. Nancy stated that we need to remember that "requested adjustments" is just a guide. We could take that \$100,000 out. We also have a need for matching funds for the Pleasant Valley trail in the amount of \$50,000. Peter asked when we have to do the match. Meegan responded that it is needed by the end of next year. Nancy said that we can reflect it but have a negative 2010. Nancy pointed out that we need to figure out the substitution parcels also. We should be pretty close if we take out \$275,000 and put in the match. It's really a matter of figuring out what's important. Gary asked what the board would like to do. Peter asked about our agreement with the city. Gary replied that we exchange patrol for rent. Travis responded that we pay utilities but wasn't sure how much. Peter suggested that we should ask the city if we can stay and push the \$100,000 out a little bit. Lori stated that it is costing approximately \$60,000 to stay there. Nancy suggested that we put in the match and take off \$275,000. Kerri said that there needs to be \$90,000 for now in the Slab Canyon budget. Nancy suggested that we add the \$50,000 match, take off \$500,000 from the Mountains to Plains budget, take off office space, and move other things around. Lori asked if she should move the loan payment to the approved column. Don asked if we can we adjust moving the cabin at Hermit Park. Gary responded we have to because of the Conservation Easement agreement. David clarified that if an acquisition became available, we wouldn't be able to utilize it? Gary confirmed that to be correct but there are contingency plans. David asked if we have talked to Fort Collins about the \$350,000 for the Duck Lake trail. Gary stated that we had it scheduled for 2011. Kerri said that if something came up to buy it would be a scramble. Gary said that another option is to apply for a State Trails grant. We'd have to match of course. Nancy said that we should revisit this as this is just a budget exercise.

Peter motions to include the \$50,000 match for the Pleasant Valley Trail in 2010, eliminate the office space budget, put \$90,000 into Slab Canyon, move the Loveland to Fort Collins trail to 2011, and drain the inholding and Duck Lake trail. David seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

Tom thanked Peter Kast and Patricia Brennan for attending the staff and board BBQ.

ACTION ITEMS:

- OLAB needs a new Parks Advisory Board liaison since Sue Sparling is no longer on the Board Kerri mentioned Trudy's interest. **Trudy Haines was unanimously appointed.**
- It is time to nominate a Chair and Vice Chair for the Open Lands Advisory Board for another year Nancy requested volunteers. It will start in September. Nancy expressed that it wasn't appropriate for her to be chair of the planning board and the OLAB. Peter was suggested by many. Peter said he would do it if no one else is interested but it is more appropriate for someone else. Nancy asked Ted if he was interested. **Peter nominated Ted to be Chair and volunteered to be Vice-chair. David seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Acquisition Final Reviews – Jerry White. Laramie Foothills Mountain to Plains substitution parcels: Buckeye conservation easements (Buckeye 223, 224 & 226). These three parcels will protect a total of 471 acres in the Buckeye area north of Fort Collins. Jerry gave a quick background. When we got the GOCO grant we set aside 1.6 million dollars to acquire an adjacent property but the property owner backed out. GOCO allowed us to move the money elsewhere but only if it was within 6 months. These are the 3 properties in question. **Bradley CE**, 283 acres in Buckeye, ranching property. Jerry explained the map legend. The mineral rights are severed. The purchase price is \$170,000 and works out to \$600 per acre. GOCO is to pay \$111,563, Larimer County will pay \$37,187, and the land owner would pay \$21,250. Staff has gone through the evaluation criteria. These properties are significant because they lie in the Buckeye area and that landowners are very willing. **Chuck Miller CE**, they are spearheading this project and it is adjacent to preserved lands. The property is 105 acres. The price is \$80,000 at \$761 per acre. GOCO's portion is \$52,500, Larimer County will pay \$17,500, and the owner will cover \$10,000 dollars. The evaluation criteria are the same as the others. **Miller/Simon CE**, this property is 78 acres, also adjacent to protected lands. The price is \$70,000 at \$897 per acre. GOCO's money will cover \$45,938, Larimer County pays \$15,312, and the owner covers \$8,750. We have additional transaction costs, appraisals are \$10,000. The total amount that the County will contribute is around \$90,000. Brian asked if they will use tax credits. Jerry responded yes. Peter asked if this satisfies our requirements and do we have to return money? Jerry responded yes, around 1.1 million. Kerri mentioned that the Legacy Land Trust is closing on a property also. That's all we could pull together in 6 months. We will remind GOCO about the money we gave back. Nancy asks for a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve these Conservation Easements.

Brian motioned that we approve up to \$90,000 for the three conservation easements. Don seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Hermit Park Open Space Education Plan draft – Rob Novak, Education Coordinator
Rob explained that education plans are meant to identify audiences, budgets, etc. Staff did a short visitor survey with Hermit Park visitors to define a theme for Hermit Park Open Space. All activities will promote this theme. The theme is solitude and sanctuary for both people and wildlife, and the great history, including high mountain ranching. In short, it's connections to the natural world and the past. The 1st draft went to staff and volunteers. No budget estimates were created until the 2nd draft. Phrasing was tricky for this plan. Phrasing will follow development of the site and is dependent on development funding. Education will be included in any grant applications for development. The total budget is \$33,619 based on estimates of similar projects. Rob walked the Board through the budget, (see handout) and explained each section. Rob addressed comments from Bill about our agreement with the United States Forest Service (USFS). We do not have an agreement but will put most things on our property. The peak locator would have to be on USFS property and an agreement will be sought. The change in the latest budget was with the peak locator, similar to the one at Mt. Evans. It came with a \$4,000 installation cost that we could probably do "in house". Rob talked about the legend of Dutch Louie. Peter commented on the funding of the education plan and pointed out the collaborative nature of the acquisition and how we may utilize those relationships to raise money for the plan. He used a micro lending example and recommended an annual fundraising campaign. Kerri brought up the Friends group money that they receive from HP and Agilent donations. Agilent also has a small grants program, we could consider a proposal. Rob showed proposed banners for Hermit Park and asked for comments. Option B was the overwhelming choice. Rob will be back in September to request approval of the education plan for Hermit Park Open Space.
- Whole Measures – Relationships Between Land & People



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Board decided to postpone the whole measure exercise due to the time. Kerri gave a quick overview of Whole Measures for the new board members and recapped the Whole Measure process. Staff went to see Peter Forbes and got excited to look at management through a “land lens”. We are the 1st local government to use whole measures. Staff went through each measure and it spurred very interesting conversation. Keep in mind that there are no rules to these exercises. It’s a tool to guide visions and management to help connect people to the land and help them value it. The conservation community talks about acres and dollars but we can do a better job of connecting the rest of the community. Whole Measures will help connect people in a time when we need public support. Peter Forbes is coming in September. Kerri asked the Board to look through the book and ask themselves, where are we now, where should we be, how do we get there. This process is stimulating in a group setting and deepens our evaluation of our programs. This is a community tool and needs to be utilized as such. The end result of this process will result in the updating of our master plan and ultimately affect how we approach the voters. Peter asked about a deadline. Kerri wasn’t sure how the timing will play out. David pointed out that it ties well to Kristen’s presentation. We’ve been able to broaden our small grants program because of the Whole Measures exercises and broaden our reach in general.

DIRECTORS REPORT:

We’re adding a 3rd sort yard for beetle killed wood near Red Feather Lakes. There was a good turnout for the recent county seat meeting. Around 60 people and all three Commissioners were there. There were lots of comment about bicycles and bike events around the Carter Lake area. We need to share the road. Everyone was complimentary otherwise.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 8:10pm Pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. **Ted motioned to enter into executive session. Steve seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Peter motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:28. David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Wallace at 8:29 pm.