



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 19, 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:

Patricia Brennan	Bill Newman
John Ericson	David Roy
Nancy Wallace	Ted Swanson
Brian Hayes	Steve Vessey

Staff:

Gary Buffington	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	Zac Wiebe
Meegan Flenniken	Charlie Johnson
	Jeffrey Boring

Absent:

Trudy Haines	Peter Kast
Commissioner Tom Donnelley	Don Griffith
	Jeff Hindman

Ted called the meeting to order at 5:19 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for October 22, 2009.

Nancy motioned to approve the October meeting minutes, Steve seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- Review Agenda and enclosures

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

INFORMATION:

- Report from the OLAB liaison to the Parks Advisory Board – Trudy
Trudy was not present.

- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis

- The firewood program at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HMOS) has been underway for three weeks. It will continue through December on the weekends and is now managed completely by volunteers. Twelve vehicles each weekend day are allowed and a large amount of wood has been removed for the citizens of Larimer County. Last weekend was cancelled due to snow.

- The Boxelder fencing at Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) has begun.

- Grazing at Eagle’s Nest Open Space (ENOS) is completed for the season. There has been recent hunting access through ENOS. Steve asked about trespassing and Travis responded that it hasn’t been a problem.



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- The HMOS Soderberg rental house water system has been repaired. The County purchased a water tap a few years ago and the connection has been completed. The water will be metered and tenants will pay for it.
- The Raptor Monitoring Report will be online soon. It includes species information, nesting areas, and success rates.
- Preparation for the RMOS closure is underway, particularly informing the public. It will be closed December, January, and February due to weather and Division of Wildlife (DOW) recommendations.
- The RMOS hunting draft has been approved by the Wildlife Commission. The process will be completed January 1st and will use a random number generator to choose seven tags. Tags will be issued for two bull elk, three cow elk, and two buck deer. These numbers are based on DOW recommendations.
- The Natural Resources holiday party for volunteer Boards will be held on 12/10 from 6pm - 9pm in the Champion Executive Club at The Ranch. Email invitations will be sent out. Please rsvp to Zac (679-4534 or zwiebe@larimer.org) by 12/4. This year's party will include all three department boards.
- John Fielder promotional tour for "Ranches of Colorado" will be held on 11/20/2009 at the CSU Lory Student Center, North Ballroom. The Board should have received an email invitation. Contact Justin at 679-4489 or jscharton@larimer.org if you would like to RSVP. Proceeds will benefit the Legacy Land Trust (LLT). Meegan commented that it's a good event and clarified that 30% of the proceeds will benefit LLT. Bill stated that the same event is taking place in Estes Park, hosted by the Estes Valley Land Trust on November 21st.
- Hibernaculum at Red Mountain Open Space, update. Meegan
The foremost rattlesnake expert in the U.S. visited RMOS along with Roto-Rooter to investigate the hibernaculum. Roto-Rooter provided a camera but couldn't confirm the existence of the hibernaculum. Meegan, Travis, Rob, C.J., and Jeffrey will meet to figure out monitoring in the spring. A Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) request was approved to build a bypass trail and improve educational materials to help avoid the hibernaculum. This trail will also help alleviate congestion. Nancy asked about the specialist's opinion and the likelihood that the hibernaculum is intact. His opinion is that it is likely that the hibernaculum is intact due to the gypsum deposit and naturally occurring holes nearby. Nancy suggested using a motion sensor camera to monitor possible entrances. Meegan commented that the expert recommended doubling the number on the ground to estimate numbers in the hibernaculum and that the RMOS hibernaculum isn't that big.
- GOCO stakeholder meeting was held on 11/9, specifically looking at youth engagement issues as part of their strategic planning process. Gary and Kerri attended.
GOCO is considering funding regional programs to help engage youth. There is a local "children in nature" group that might serve as a pilot project. GOCO is also considering increasing and solidifying the cap for open space protection and a heritage park grant cycle that might focus on maintenance instead of new construction. The strategic plan should be done around June.
- The "Friends of Larimer County Parks & Open Lands" will be pursuing a short strategic plan effort using a County facilitator in an effort to organize themselves and better meet the needs of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).



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Staff met with the Friends group about department needs and will continue to advise the group through this process.

- Many staff attended CCLT's annual "Brews, Boots and Buck" fundraiser on 11/5. Mayor of Denver, John Hickenlooper, and John Fielder also attended. It was a valuable networking opportunity.
- Natural Resource Events for December. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>
 - Charlie mentioned that the amended Fossil Creek IGA will be taken to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in December for approval.

PRESENTATIONS:

- Whole Communities/Whole Measures DVD – Peter Forbes, Center for Whole Communities – Kerri Rollins

Kerri gave a presentation highlighting Larimer County demographic information and how it is changing, particularly with regard to ethnicity and the increasing Hispanic population. She pointed out that Whole Communities (WC) is an information gathering tool that can enable us to further engage the community. This tool will help start community dialogue and could guide our next master plan. Patricia asked about total U.S. population numbers. Kerri responded that these trends are nationwide. Steve asked if there is research about Hispanic recreation preferences. Kerri responded that the Hispanic communities care about recreation. Steve asked about these trends as the population changes. Kerri said there are a lot of studies that identify the kinds of recreation Hispanics prefer, such as water-based recreation (e.g. fishing), and family picnicking. Bill commented on Hispanic use in nearby Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) in picnic areas instead of trails. Kerri mentioned the similarities in our system, specifically Glade Park, located on the Big Thompson River. Ted commented that the change in demographics may not affect the numbers of our visitors. There might still be a similar interest and use. The department shouldn't take away recreation opportunities but provide other alternatives. Kerri agreed that the department shouldn't get away from core values but rather broaden them to include changes in user groups. Bill commented on an African American director of RMNP who actively tried to get African Americans from Denver to visit RMNP with few results. Kerri commented that she has experienced something similar and these communities need to see themselves in our story. Jeffrey commented on the sheer population number increase that is projected overall. If the program wants to continue to provide the same opportunities it needs to grow with it. Charlie asked about Colorado's total population. Travis clarified the Colorado population as around 4 million. Kerri mentioned considering socioeconomic factors. Gary commented that understanding culture is important. Nancy mentioned that more seniors are more present in other ethnic groups and some areas may be more conducive to including seniors. All agreed big changes aren't necessary.

The board watched a video on WC that can be found on the COSA website. David commented on a place he used to visit in Maine that has been developed. He doesn't agree that conservationists have done a good job protecting land. Maine has a large population with little protected areas.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Whole Measures update and discussion - Kerri
 - All staff meeting 10/30
 - BOCC work session 11/16
 - Potential next steps



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Kerri solicited the Board's thoughts and feedback on WC and wondered if this is the right direction. David suggested being careful of working too hard to create relationships with other groups. People have an intellectual capacity to protect land and the visceral connection isn't necessary to value land. Kerri responded that socioeconomic factors might play a role. David commented that lower economic classes don't need the visceral connection.

Patricia asked if staff has put together the public survey discussed at the May OLAB meeting. Kerri responded that it hasn't been done but would provide great information. Staff has held off on doing a survey given how much is undecided right now concerning the master plan, open lands manager, etc. but a baseline survey now would be very beneficial accompanied by another survey closer to the tax extension vote. Gary mentioned that the BOCC will advise the timing of the tax because it will compete with other taxes. Once the timing is known, the DNR can work back towards our tax and master plan. Bill assumed that the DNR would contract with the Trust for Public Land to guide the process. He suggested meeting with Boulder County about their failed tax.

Meegan expounded on some of the reasons the Boulder tax failed. The citizens had misconceptions about county vs. city taxes, there are only about 1000 acres left to be protected, it was too early to ask for an extension, citizens were upset about access to lands, it's a difficult time to ask for a tax, and there is quite a bit of newer growth in the eastern part of the county that adds a more conservative voter base. Patricia asked if it was citizen initiative but it was not known. Staff will research Douglas County's program that will ask for the sales tax to go over and above the cap. Nancy commented that it should be worded "does the cap apply to open space". She also agreed that WC is good direction but referring to it as WC or Whole Measures is confusing to the public. It would be good to develop a short discussion about WC goals and ways to become more inclusive. Gary suggested "community thinking or building". Nancy suggested that staff develop implementation guidelines for WC and commented on the expanded small grants program. Basically, what kinds of things need to be done to get support from all groups? Kerri responded that the "selfish" view is to promote our program and the "unselfish" view is to benefit the community. Nancy didn't agree that the program is unselfish. There are known projects that won't be given up, just expanded. Kerri mentioned a possible WC pilot project with unlikely partners. It wasn't acceptable so a department wide meeting was held to examine what the department is doing already. The small grants and firewood program were used as examples of WC stories that haven't been told. The firewood program might be the best example of a successful WC story. Staff has been assessing our current projects and will continue to report to the board.

Staff held a retreat this week and used WC to guide our 2010 work plan. Jeffrey will present it in January. Patricia asked for a summary of our department WC meeting. Kerri will present it at the January meeting.

BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

ACTION ITEMS: none.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2009 - 2011.

Gary pointed out the ongoing projects at River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS) and RMOS. The Bobcat campground at Hermit Park Open Space (HPOS) is complete. Gary pointed out the increased balance on the conservation easement (CE) replacements, small grants program, resource projects, and repayment of the long-term management loan. The department is in good shape for the shortage and has put back enough money to cover any major issues from now until 2018. Hopefully that sales tax will increase but good work is continuing.



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Patricia asked about the Blue Sky trailhead and if users will be charged an entrance fee. Gary explained that no fee will be charged. This may complicate things but it is an access to an open space. Issues may include parking for access to fee areas like Soderberg and HMOS. The new Blue sky trailhead will have horse parking in response to feedback about horse riders going through campgrounds. Nancy asked about horses going under the road. Charlie clarified that the trail already accommodates them. Nancy suggested incorporating a picnic area. It is already planned along with a bathroom and grassy area. The community currently uses it a lot. A game area will be preserved in addition to the trailhead. Gary pointed out placeholders in the budget for unforeseen opportunities. Charlie mentioned continually getting contacted about opportunities. Nancy clarified that the department keeps track of all of them.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Gary is continuing to take comments regarding the Open Lands manager position and will hopefully decide how to proceed by the end of the year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:12pm. Pursuant to (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. **David motioned to enter into executive session. Nancy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Nancy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:41pm. David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned by Ted Swanson at 7:42 pm.