



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 22, 2010 – 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:

David Roy	Peter Kast
Trudy Haines	Bill Newman
Nancy Wallace	Ted Swanson
Steve Vessey	Hugh McKean
Don Griffith	Commissioner Tom Donnelly
Patricia Brennan	

Staff:

Gary Buffington	Travis Rollins
Kerri Rollins	Zac Wiebe
Meegan Flenniken	Sue Burke
Jacob Wells	Charlie Johnson

Absent:

John Ericson	Jeff Hindman
--------------	--------------

Ted called the meeting to order at 5:09 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for February 25 and March 25, 2010.
Peter moved to approve February minutes, Don seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Patricia moved to approve the March minutes, David seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- Review Agenda and enclosures

PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda.

INFORMATION:

- The 2010 Artist of the Year has been selected by the subcommittee.
Meegan reported that the selection committee has selected Barbara Moore to be the 2010 artist of the year. Barbara is known for her water colored landscapes. Staff will be taking her on a tour of the open spaces soon.
- Applicants for County Boards and Commissions are being solicited now and are due 4/30. OLAB will have three seats coming open. Letters have gone out to those seats that are up for renewal.
Nancy will most likely be reappointed as the planning commission liaison. Ted, Bill and Don received letters and may reapply
- Morrison Trail at the Devil’s Backbone construction update.

Construction started on April 5th and is almost complete. The goal is for the trail to be ADA accessible. In the past, a citizen has asked OLAB about ADA properties. Staff will take him on a tour. The trail will be finished in June but the opening won’t be until fall after the educational signs are completed.



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Hermit Park OS wetlands update.

A head gate and weir are being installed to restore the area where the old horseshoe pits were. It should be completed next week.

- Horsetooth Mountain Open Space butterfly survey and Nomad Trail closure.

The rangers have closed the Nomad trail to protect 6-8 state and globally rare butterfly species. They were surveyed in 1996 and as part of management planning the surveys will be done every 3-5 years to inform management. The department is seeking volunteers to help with the survey.

- Forest management grants received from Colorado State Forest Service for Ramsay-Shockey and Red Mountain Open Spaces

The department has received two more grants for forest management. One for Ramsey-Shockey Open Space in the amount of \$18,800 and matched with Title 3 money from Emergency Medical Services. The second was for Red Mountain Open Space for pine beetle mitigation and also for \$18,800.

- Staff completed a GOCO survey for large-scale legacy projects. A partnership proposal with the City of Fort Collins to complete the Poudre River Trail was submitted as a potential idea.

Kerri reported that GOCO wanted to take a snapshot of possible projects around the state. All of the ideas submitted amounted to \$400 million, proving the need to have another legacy round. The GOCO Board will likely allocate money this summer. Instead of large amounts, it's likely they will allocate additional dollars to existing cycles. Staff has discussed the completion of the Poudre River trail in partnership with the City of Ft. Collins and may be asking the OLAB for money to match those grants.

- Staff has been invited to attend a wellness fair at Rocky Mountain High School to talk to kids about outdoor activities on our parks and open spaces.
- Reminder: Starting in June OLAB meetings will be at Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E 3rd Street.
- Report from the OLAB liaison to the Parks Advisory Board (PAB) – Trudy

Trudy didn't attend the March meeting but reported on the minutes. Fee increases for camping were complained about but the Memorial Day weekend is almost full. Also, 800-1,000 Boy scouts will be at Hermit Park Open Space in September. Tom clarified the camping fee increases were for RVs only and not tent camping. Kerri mentioned the PAB seeing a presentation from a kayaking club about a proposed kayak feature at Lions Park OS.

- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis
 - Travis will be having his staff attend OLAB meetings occasionally. Ranger Jacob Wells introduced himself and talked a little about what he does.
 - Rangers will be participating in a career day at Carrie Martin elementary school. The event has been very successful in the past.
 - The COSA ranger training just finished. 45 rangers from 11 agencies throughout the state participated in a four day training that was very successful.
 - The firewood program is starting again at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Volunteers can now use chainsaws, reducing the need for staff time. Registration was full after only two days of being online.
 - There was a turkey hunting incident at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. The offender was ticketed.



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- New Longview Farm Open Space signs were installed and updated with the new sign standards.
- At River Bluffs Open Space, staff helped work with the agriculture leasee to expand his operations.
- A volunteer group, Trout Unlimited, has been secured for stream habitat restoration work at Eagle's Nest Open Space.
- There have been some trespassing issues at Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS). Camping is not allowed but has been happening on RMOS and private land nearby. Patrols have been increased and rangers are working hard to keep good relations with neighbors.
- The RMOS parking lot is closed for rattlesnake monitoring. No snakes have been seen yet but it is being monitored every three days. Nancy commented that her bull snake hibernaculum is active already. A rattlesnake was reported at Horsetooth falls. Nancy asked about lion kills at RMOS. Travis responded that CSU received a big grant to study Chronic Wasting Disease and the research, which involves around 100 collared deer, keeps good tabs on mortality. When a mortality signal is detected from a collar the researchers investigate. Nancy wondered if lion kills have impacts on visitors. It is lion country but there have been no conflicts. Travis commented that when the Division of Wildlife did population surveys there were over 500 elk on RMOS.
- Fences and signage at RMOS are being completed. Larimer County survey crew will be surveying the state line, which hasn't been surveyed since Colorado was a territory. The survey will help management.
- At RMOS, a senior tax worker is helping with pasture and fencing work around Table Mountain to add 600 acres of pasture.
- A letter was sent to the person with the claim to the alabaster mine at RMOS. It stated that Larimer County wouldn't allow camping or staying on the claim beyond the time between sunrise and sunset. The County is waiting for a response from his attorney. Peter confirmed that it is a valid claim.
- A department Twitter account currently has 77 followers. It is used to inform the public about conditions and events and will hopefully grow to provide further information. Bill asked how often messages go out. Travis responded that it's at least once a week, sometimes more often. Kerri mentioned that Sue has been working on a social media policy with Deni LaRue and the Facebook page will be launched soon.
- Natural Resource Events for May. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Update: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2009 - 2011. Gary reviewed the financial report. It hasn't changed since last month but the Board will hear from one of our managers about some possible improvements to Hermit Park Open Space.

6pm – CAKE & SMALL GRANTS AWARDS PRESENTATION:

- Small Grant for Community Partnering Awards Presentation – Larimer County Commissioners Kerri welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the Small Grants for Community Partnering program. Over the years, it's been a successful program and was expanded last year to include a broader base of projects. She thanked the subcommittee of the board, Trudy, David and Don. Sue mentioned that since the inception of the program 101 projects have been funded. Tom Donnelly introduced himself as the liaison to OLAB and thanked everyone for being here. County Commissioners Lew Gaiter, Steve Johnson and Tom Donnelly awarded each recipient with a check and recipients gave the Board a brief description of each project. See handout for award recipients.



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Devil's Backbone Open Space (DBOS) entry sign from Highway 34 – Travis Rollins, Open Lands Operations Manager

Travis reminded the Board about the first trailhead on Wild lane and that it was moved due to the popularity of DBOS. As part of the moving there was a contract between the city of Loveland and Hidden Valley estates (HV). As part of the agreement, HV was allowed to put up a sign that was to last until the lots were sold or until 2007. Around ¾ of the lots had sold and the sign was removed in 2007. The contract stated that once the sign came down, the developer could present a letter to Loveland and Larimer County to request a permanent sign in the area. The letter never came until the homeowner's association (HOA) of Hidden Valley asked for the sign in 2008. They received permission via a letter from Larimer County and the HOA has come to the department with some sign designs to consider.

There are three different proposals, all of which are a shared sign design between the County open space and the development. The HOA wants an identifier for public services to the neighborhood. Last year the DBOS parking lot was increased to 64 spaces. DBOS sees 70 to 80 thousand people every year. There used to be major capacity issues and the department didn't highlight the entrance. Now that capacity has been increased, Travis would like to "show it off". The proposed sign would be at Highway 34 and Hidden Valley Drive, facing east and would be outside the county easement. It can't be larger than 34 square feet. The HOA would like to share the cost. Travis showed the three proposals and asked the board for its opinion.

David thinks it's a bad precedent and would be worried about other properties that neighbor neighborhoods. Nancy asked what they are entitled to. Travis responded that they are entitled to an entry sign but a location isn't specified. Kerri commented that the department doesn't have to partner with them, we don't have to do a sign. Travis mentioned that there really is no place for two signs due to the topography. Steve asked David to clarify his point. David used the example of River Bluffs as a place where HOAs are neighbors. He thinks it's a distasteful way to show areas that have been paid for by the public. It shows endorsement. Steve responded that the department needs to be in a cooperative with HOA s with the economy. Don agreed with Steve that the department should cooperate with the HOA. He also mentioned that it is a case by case and not necessarily a precedent. David thinks that using citizen tax dollars to partner with an HOA is not a good use. Don commented that the HOA are citizens too. Nancy thinks there could be a compromise by coming up with a distinct sign where each part is more separate. It could still be one sign with more distinct parts. Ted asked if the board would want to form a subcommittee. David asked if there were citizens in attendance if they should be solicited for comment. Kerri talked about the process of citizen commentary. Steve thought that the public can't comment once the agenda is entered into. Nancy commented that if it is a discussion item they can have input but there is a space for public comment.

Travis added that he spoke to Brian Hayes at Loveland. Steve, Don, Hugh, Trudy and Nancy volunteered to be on a subcommittee. The subcommittee will get more information and proceed from there.

Trudy would like to hear what the staff thinks. Ted recommended to go around the room and everyone comment. Ted started and he likes the idea of sharing the cost but doesn't like the options presented. It makes it look like the HOA and department are linked and equivalent entities. Kerri agrees with Ted and liked Nancy's idea of one sign that is designed to separate the text. Patricia wondered how much it costs. Travis responded that the HOA estimated the three designs at \$3,000, \$3,500 and \$4,000. Patricia likes the idea of having a sign but is concerned that it would be a conflict of interest due to the proposed materials contributing to resource damage from sandstone quarries. Charlie commented that the department needs to keep its identity separate. Trudy agreed and commented that it could be confusing to the public and a bad precedent. She is in favor of



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

strong partnerships but not when it's presenting information to the public. David commented that he doesn't have a problem with the HOA having a sign and the existing \$90 sign is bringing plenty of visitors. He also doesn't want to join with the HOA and it sets a bad precedent. Peter isn't bothered by a shared sign and commented on many examples of shared signage in Ft. Collins. He's probably more for than against but the department should ask for a design that separates the two entities. Hugh wondered what the HOA wants in terms of safety. He thinks the signs should be separate and commented that the city of Loveland would want a logo too. Travis commented that operationally he would like to see a better sign to showcase rather than hide this area. People still have trouble finding DBOS. Don thinks that it is a partnership issue and it's particularly important to partner with neighbors of open space. He thinks that most people can identify the differences on a shared sign and would totally support sharing a sign. Meegan commented that she would rather keep the signs separate and questions the expenditure of scarce money for a sign. Steve is shocked that HV wants to add us to the sign and commented that anytime there can be one aesthetically pleasing sign instead of two it's a better option. As long as it's not a hideous sign he's for it. Nancy clarified the price of the Longview Farm signs at \$900 apiece. She thinks a compromise can be made and an advantage of having a subcommittee might be to develop some guidance for how to handle these situations in the future. Bill commented that the money is important and the policy of tying the trademark to a private entity bothers him. It's not good policy and the department should have a separate sign. Gary commented that the staff also had very different ideas and he looks forward to working with Loveland and the subcommittee to develop some options.

Steve wondered if the Board needs a subcommittee. Ted and Trudy think that a subcommittee could develop some solutions. Peter reiterated that the subcommittee could develop some policies for future similar situations. Trudy commented on a similar issue in Ft. Collins that spurred some great conversation. Peter remembered the memorial policy and how this might dovetail with it. Trudy clarified that the subcommittee will work on some underlying guidance. Ted commented that the issue will need to be addressed before policy can be developed.

- Hermit Park Open Space 2009 performance review and future development possibilities – Chris Fleming, Park Manager

Chris introduced herself and told the board about the properties that she manages. She then gave a Powerpoint presentation summarizing the progress that was made at Hermit Park in 2009. See presentation. After the presentation Chris asked for comments. Trudy asked if the horse groups that are more vocal about parking and camping would help fund better equestrian facilities. David asked about using revenue to remove the cabins. Gary answered that money isn't being set aside for demolition. Patricia asked about the adopt-a-cabin program. Chris answered that it is an annual commitment by a group to come one to two times a year and do specific projects for each cabin. Nancy asked about the percentage of use of the cabins. Chris didn't know for sure but it would be lower due to the winter months. During peak season, the cabins were full every weekend but during the week spaces are usually available. Nancy recommended tracking occupancy in order to help revenue projections. Chris commented that there is definitely room for growth. Gary said that the department can measure it next year. Peter would support the idea of closing Hermit Park for a few months in the winter because it could save a lot of money in plowing, etc. Discussion ensued about allowing access to the open space but not plowing the roads for cabin access. Trudy clarified that most of the winter use is snowshoeing or skiing and people could ski in. The Board thanked Chris for her presentation.

- Update on the 4/19 Board of County Commissioners presentation on the financial picture of the Department of Natural Resources

Staff members Marc E., Gary B., Dan R., Lori S, Kerri, and Board Chairs, Dave Coulson and Ted gave an excellent presentation. The presentation was done so well that it will be shown to OLAB next month. It was more consumer friendly than the spreadsheets that have been presented in the past. David asked what the high



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

and low points of the presentation were. Ted prefaced that two of the commissioners didn't know much about the Open Lands program. He thought that one of the commissioners as well as Marc E. showed support and didn't think there were any negative points of the presentation. Gary commented that it was an educational presentation. Peter recommended that the Board take advantage of any time with the commissioners to explain the program. Kerri mentioned that the commissioners recognize that the department is doing a lot with a little. Ted mentioned that Commissioner Johnson brought forward that Larimer County has one of the most efficient programs in the state.

BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda

The 2009 annual report has been printed and copies were handed out to the Board. Sue is on the division communications team that designed these annual reports and some changes were made to conform to other departmental reports. The department saved about \$2,000 in printing costs this year by emailing the annual reports. Peter confirmed that the sales tax piece is what is required to report per the ballot language. Kerri commented that the format has been changed to include more pictures and shorter text.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest.

Steve motioned to adjourn, Hugh seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, May 27, 2010; Loveland Library, 300 N. Adams St., Loveland