



# LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES Thursday, January 24, 2013 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. Loveland Municipal Building

*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:

Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Peter Kast	At-large	Trudy Haines	At-large
Mary Banken	At-large	Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud
Carl Sorrentino	At-large	Steve Vessey	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large	Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
John Phipps	Town of Estes Park	Commissioner Tom Donnelly	BOCC

Staff Present:

Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Meegan Flenniken	Resource Program Manager
Gary Buffington	Director	Charlie Johnson	Land Agent
Zac Wiebe	Fund Development & Special Projects	Rob Novak	Outreach Coordinator
Dan Rieves	Visitor Services Manager	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager

Absent:

Ladonna Lee	At-large	
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**Peter called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.**

**5:15-5:45 - EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest. **Suzan motioned to move into executive session, Steve seconded and the motion passed unanimously**

- Annual Cash Flow review for Acquisitions/Development and Longterm Management – Lori Smith, CPA
- Real estate negotiations

**5:45pm – REGULAR MEETING**

- Approval of the meeting minutes for January 3, 2013 **Nancy motioned to approve the minutes, Carl seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.**
- Review Agenda and enclosures

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda. None**

**INFORMATION:**

- Visual Artist of the Year selection committee member needed. Meegan explained the composition of the committee and asked for a volunteer. Gerry volunteered to be the OLAB representative.
- Meg Oren, Department Specialist, is leaving for a position at CSU. Her last day is 1/18. The position will be rehired.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager – Travis Rollins



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### **General-**

- Attended Agricultural Advisory Board , Habitat Protection Program and Open Lands Advisory Board meetings

### **Rangers-**

- Visitor count using new 'Trafx' laser counters will begin at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space on 1/1/13, two trail counters at Horsetooth Mountain trail head and one trail counter at Soderberg trail head
- Charged ten hours of patrol to the Grant's near Red Mountain Open Space for security on their property
- Investigated report of someone shooting prairie dogs on open space property at Indian Creek/Devil's Backbone
- Developed spreadsheet to track hunter information and harvest rates for Red Mountain hunting program
- Horsetooth Mountain gatehouse (Kim) has sold 77 annual permits in December
- Took pictures to document new heron rookery that established this spring at Fossil Creek Reservoir

### **Maintenance/Projects/Leases-**

- Wrote 2013 annual grazing plans for Red Mountain, Eagle's Nest and North Property (Solid Waste) and sent to lessees for review
- Finished River Bluffs' five year agricultural lease draft agreement and sent it to lessee for review
- Installed rail fence around pipe inlet of livestock tank at Red Mountain
- Signed road maintenance agreement with Indian Creek Ranch HOA to finish road re-surfacing work in Indian Creek valley/Devil's Backbone area
- Installed smaller 'Long View Farm' signs on east side of Hwy 287 in agreement with Manor Ridge Estates HOA to identify as county land
- Removed approximately ¼ mile of silt barrier along entry road at Red Mountain Open Space
- To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm> put in your email and click 'subscribe', then check "Parks Advisory Board" box
- Natural Resource Events for February. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- Updated: Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2011 – 2013

### **ACTION:**

- Roberts Ranch Final review –
  - Overview of project and more information on management options and costs, as well as waste tire site.

Kerri went through the presentation and gave a quick overview. The Roberts Ranch consists of over 16,500 acres and Catherine Roberts, the sole owner, is offering to gift the ranch in fee title. It would include 350 cow/calf pairs, 5-8 vintage Chryslers, and associated outbuildings. On Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>, OLAB requested more information and staff has spent the last three weeks compiling it for tonight. Kerri and Marc E. discussed different options for cattle management, including lease options and grass banking, and waste tires on the property. Regarding the tires, the County Environmental Health and Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) joined staff for a tour of the property just this morning and had many ideas for how to treat the tire situation. There is also \$600,000 -700,000 available from the state to help fund tire removal projects. For the full PowerPoint presentation, contact Zac Wiebe at [zwiebe@larimer.org](mailto:zwiebe@larimer.org)



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Hugh asked if there was competition for the \$600,000 -700,000 of state money, Kerri answered yes, but there currently aren't applications for it. Marc E. discussed the tires further, they aren't in one particular spot, a lot are imbedded and many have been buried for 25 years. The state is trying to be cautious but they said there's not one solution. It might make sense to remove the piles but some of the tires used for erosion control may do more harm than good if removed, disturbing earth and vegetation, etc. In some cases the best solution may be to leave them in place. Hugh asked about the process to develop a plan. Marc answered that the State took many photos and will also use Google earth to review the extent. Now, state engineers will discuss potential solutions, including baling them, using them to control erosion, etc., review the history of the property, and then come back with thoughts. Hugh asked if it has to be declared an illegal dump to have access to the state funds. It doesn't but the state may declare the piles an illegal dump. It wouldn't necessarily apply to the whole situation. Carl asked which agency is reviewing the situation. Marc answered CDPHE. They have a staff person who works entirely on tires, a staff of engineers, and a solid waste department. Another piece of good news is that almost all the tires are normal car tires, not big tires that are more expensive and difficult to deal with.

Marc then showed a graphic depiction of management costs. It is important to have a diversity of investments and portfolio, which has been a goal. The Open Lands program has such diversity and thus has experience managing a spectrum of properties. Marc discussed the graphic and pointed out the higher operating cost properties that typically include camping, cabins, high public access, etc. Including revenue, costs range from \$75-200/acre, in bad years could be as high as \$400/ac. Then there are properties like Eagles Nest Open Space (ENOS) with more limited public use, not as much revenue, and lower costs, around \$19-22/ac. Next are conservation easements with no public access, very little effort to manage, and negligible costs very close to \$0. Next, the Roberts Ranch in its current operation generates revenue of \$2.42/ac. Finally, there are agricultural leases like Longview that generate profits of around \$20/ac. There's a whole range, where would Roberts Ranch fit should the county manage it? There will be some limited public access, there will be some costs but also some potential revenue. Staff's best estimation, based on the current land portfolio and experience with other properties but without doing mgmt plan, cost would be about \$17-22/acre or \$385-370k/yr. Being a steward of land isn't inexpensive which is why the voters passed an open space sales tax. Staff believes this is a realistic estimate that fits into the budget through the life of the sales tax.

Trudy wondered what percent of the property had public access under this scenario. Marc answered that the closest comparison is Red Mountain Open Space or ENOS but it's very likely there would be less public access. John asked if other things have been dumped on the property. Marc answered that there has been trash has been generated by the family over the years and, based on circumstantial evidence, there have been efforts in the past with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to collect and concentrate the trash and bury it. It's not known if it was legal but USFWS had oversight. To our understanding it isn't a big problem. John asked about if there was plenty of water to raise 200 acres of hay. Marc answered that, based on current water rights and infrastructure, there is enough water to support that level of production.

- Public comment – Peter welcomed comment from anyone, regardless if they have spoken before

### ***Kay Sinclair - Waverly***

“The very fact that the Roberts Ranch is in dispute should be a huge, and I mean huge, red flag to the county to even consider this property for their own, you shouldn't even be considering it. With County taxes already high how many people do you think can really afford any more taxation to accommodate a few recreationalists (sic) that would use this property and when did the county become cattle rancher. I've heard this property is a gift to the county, however there are no free gifts, there's always a cost associated with any gift as stated in your



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presentation. With the diminishing economy and that the tax would be devastating to property owners who are barely getting by and even without the taxes being raised, we're still barely getting by. Why must property owners bear the brunt of this property and who really benefits from the property? Many open space properties are closed part time during the year and people can't use them. Why aren't they open all year long? People in the county paid for them. Larimer County has more than enough open space for people to recreate in and not enough funding to properly maintain all of them. On any given day an open space property may host 10-12 people unless there is some big organization having an event. The Roberts Ranch is part of Colorado's ranching heritage and has been for over 130 years. It's one of the reminders that the old west still survives in our busy, modern-day civilization. Some things need to remain untouched by government hands to leave that history. I sat at the last meeting and watched the presentation and the board. I was totally dismayed to see the attitudes emanating from this board. The attitude reminded me of the bureaucratic land grabbers of the old west, grab this property any way we can and use it to our benefit, screw the landowners. If the board decides to go ahead with this acquisition, I hope that someday your homes will be put in the same position as this family has been placed. If you think for one moment you would roll over and relinquish your property, you're lying to yourselves. The Roberts Ranch deserves to have the opportunity to continue their efforts to keep the ranch as one of the most pristine ranches in northern Colorado. With all the years of experience they have, I believe they could manage it much better than the county ever could. The ranch belongs to the Roberts family and not part of a recreational plan for the county. Thank you."

Rebecca Judson – lifelong Larimer County resident

"I've known all the Roberts family intimately my entire life. I live on the next ranch north of Catherine Roberts' house and am familiar with the Livermore community having served as president of the Livermore Women's Club four years ago. I would like to read a brief statement in opposition to Larimer County accepting the proposed gift of the Roberts Ranch on the following grounds. Larimer County has a role to play in the protection and encouragement of traditional family agricultural in the county. Participating in a transaction that will irrevocably disinherit the fifth and sixth generation heirs to a 138 year old ranch runs counter to that objective. Agriculture in Larimer County is a private enterprise. It is inappropriate for the government of Larimer County to compete with the private sector agriculture for resources when there are legitimate private sector options. Development in Larimer County is eroding the critical mass of agricultural resources available to Larimer County farms and ranches. Converting the Roberts Ranch to a government enterprise will hasten that erosion. The Roberts Ranch has an average carrying capacity, in good years and bad, of about 400 animal units, including its modest hay production capacity. To give a rough measure of its income generating potential, the current rate for rental grazing in Larimer County is about \$12 per AUM (Animal Unit Month). This means that gross income potential for Roberts Ranch is about \$60,000 per year. Even if these rough numbers are underestimated by half, it would be very difficult for the Roberts Ranch to generate positive cash flow for Larimer County, particularly under the type of aggressive management proposed by the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board. The Roberts Ranch is already protected from development by two very restrictive ces that prohibit development and provide for the ranch to remain as an agricultural enterprise. The taking of the Roberts Ranch by Larimer County is unnecessarily redundant for purposes of conservation. When private land is confiscated by governments in the third world the process is usually disguised in ways that are purportedly for the benefit of society. The current situation of the Roberts Ranch where an elderly stepmother has been flattered and lobbied by Larimer County officials and/or the (39:49?) has a "too close for comfort" resemblance to such a process. I understand that Larimer County's lawyers have determined that it is completely legal for the county to receive this proposed gift. Nonetheless, I respectfully remind you that what is legal is not always right."

Maxine Weaver-neighbors of Roberts Ranch to the southeast –



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“I’m here representing my family ranch which is Weaver Ranch, I’m joined with my sister here this evening, Susan. We neighbor the Roberts Ranch, we’re to the south of them. Our family was established in Larimer County in 1886 so we’re not the age of the Roberts Ranch but we’ve been here quite a while. We moved to our current location which was a quarter on Owl Canyon Rd., 300 W County Rd. 70, in 1969 because at that time we were running our operation between Virginia Dale, which is where the family originated, and Tie Siding, Wyoming. If anyone has been through Tie Siding or Laramie in the winter time, we now winter in Owl Canyon, which is 2000 feet lower in elevation. We set our headquarters there, we have our production bull sale there on February 18<sup>th</sup>, on President’s Day and run our operation based out of that headquarters. As neighbors to Roberts Ranch and if the county looks at taking over this property, we have a few issues, one would be access. The Roberts Ranch does not access off of County Road 72. Access through the Roberts Ranch off of 72 is usually through Weaver Ranch. So if the county looks at taking over that, we would be moving that access location to west of where it is off of County Road 70 there on Campbell Springs. We wouldn’t bother with the other access off to the east over by the Reservoir 15. The access the Roberts use there currently is, as historically been between neighbors, to my knowledge there is no easement and to my knowledge the Roberts aren’t asserting that there’s an easement. It’s been a neighborly agreement for them to come in and put salt out for their livestock on an as-needed basis. For the most part, if they’ve had any other access in there or needed anything else in there for equipment or whatever, they’ve called us to let us know they’re going in there. Likewise over the years, once we bought the property in 1969, we historically access the Roberts Ranch by trailing cattle down from Wyoming to the ranch there in Ft. Collins. We haven’t done that in the last few years but there has been a historic use of that access. Between those two accesses, that would be something we’d want to discuss with the county if they were to take that property over. The other issue you heard some about tonight is the tire issue. On the tire issue, the estimate that there has been somewhere between 10,000 and 500,000 tires and I’ll put it as “dumped” on the ranch. Most of those were dumped in arroyos and our understanding was that they had attempted to do erosion control but at the time that they were dumped in there they were not stabilized in any manner to facilitate erosion control. They were just taken in there and dumped.

R.Nichel

“A Soviet is a system of councils that report to an apex council and implement a predetermined outcome, often by consensus, affecting a region or a neighborhood. Change agents are working with opportunists and other foolish people by coordinating government business NGOs and non-profit partners to implement a Soviet system in our county also. Shame on them, those of you who are greedy land grabbers or have a vested interest in this confiscation, and you know who you are. We consistently see these advisory boards comprised of the same people who are in agreement with the pre-arranged outcome. Is that why you needed 45 minutes to come to your pre-arranged outcome? On the other hand, I want to thank you, to those of you who might still have a moral compass, willing to be public servants and do the right thing. Mrs. Rollins, how does one become a willing seller or, in this case, a gifter? Is it death by a thousand cuts by zoning, overregulation, deception, coercion or a myriad of other immoral tactics? Your lies to lure the willing seller out. Isn’t it true that members of The Nature Conservancy were courting Mrs. Roberts before Mr. Roberts was even cold in the ground, just because a few other land grabbers see this as a gift or opportunity? Is it moral or just? In all of this smoke screen and fluff talk from those who push open space, conservation easements, ‘we need to “preserve” the heritage and culture’. If this were the true motive, what better way to preserve that heritage and culture than to leave this property with the family whose heritage and culture goes back 138 years? The true environmental stewards of the land are the private ranchers and farmers who make their living from that land. As a county and state, we have recent examples of environmental mismanagement to the tune of over 385,000 acres burned. Environmentalists in the name of preserving the forest have blocked efforts at timber harvesting or new access roads for decades. Even CSU has stated that by timber harvesting we are able to increase water yield. In our county, those that claim they want to preserve the forest and wildlife saw 100,000 acres just this summer go up



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in smoke. With this track record do we really want county environmentalists to preserve the Roberts Ranch? History shows us that what happens when government becomes the landlord is called Soviet Russia. If you have any heart or moral code, put yourself on this side of the podium. How would you want to be treated if this was your family's heritage up for debate in public forum by total strangers? This is a relationship between a family and their land, the county has no business involved. Another history lesson: George Washington said 'private property and freedom are inseparable'. Please listen to us. Do not facilitate this land grab. Thank you."

Maggie Claiser

"I have known the Roberts my entire life. I've had family that's worked for them including my uncle, my dad, my cousins, my nephew, my grandmother even worked on that ranch. I'm sorry that there is a family problem but it seems to me that you've determined that Catherine Roberts has legal right to do what she wants with this property. My question is what happens to this property if it's left in the family? Have they expressed their conservation ideas for this, other than the conservation easements that are already in place? The other question I have, does this include mineral rights? This is a very hot issue in Colorado right now where you can get property, you can buy it, you can have it gifted to you, and still not know. I've not heard one word about mineral rights. I think the ranch needs to be preserved. I'm not sure that we are discussing Evan Roberts's wishes for this place. But I wanted to make it known that I've known Catherine since I was 13 year old, I'm now 60, and am not afraid to admit that she is a stubborn, willful woman but she is also in her right mind. This is not a 92 year old with Alzheimer's. This is a woman that knows what she wants, knows what her husband wanted. I'm sticking up for the Claiser clan and the Roberts clan including Derek because I've known him my entire life also. I just want what's best for this ranch. It's my little piece of heaven in Colorado and I would like to see it stay that way. I don't know if I've helped you make any decisions but I want to personally say we love that place and we need to preserve it however possible. That's all I have to say about that."

Jaime Sands

"I have more questions than I care to think about so I'm not going to ask them, I will find them out on my own. One of the problems I see that when a ranch becomes a public entity, I mean are you people here to govern or are you here to run a business? It always becomes a conflict and when government starts running all the business then we end up with socialism the way I see it. And I don't know but there seems like there is always hidden costs. Most of them are in maintenance but I thought they did a pretty good job in showing that at the beginning. Another thing I wanted to bring up because I've seen it happen where I grew up, and that's where they get big trouble lying like that and then city county employees get together and they think it's their own private hunting preserve and then you really have problems. You know that doesn't happen right away, it's a deal where people just want to sneak in there and they think they got first right. As far as I'm concerned on a ranch like that it's the family that runs the ranch and employees that work there that should have first right when it comes to that. Otherwise then you get into a fee hunting situation where you can generate a awful lot of money and you do have a lot of liability insurance and then you totally change the concept of what you were given anyway because from what I read is it was suppose to stay a cattle operation if the county decided to keep it. Isn't that correct?"

Frank Cada

"I live west of Loveland, lived out there for 40 years and I'm somewhat familiar with the Roberts Ranch. I have volunteered for the Nature Conservancy at Phantom Canyon. I helped put up the first fence across the river back when they first got the property. Later on I found out that perhaps bringing cattle on to the property was a healthy thing to do for the land. On the way to the preserve I drove through the Roberts Ranch and I was always really glad to be able to have the opportunity to be on that land. It's the only place I've ever seen 3 antelope fawns. I think that that land would be a real asset to the citizens of Larimer County. Right now of course it's a



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ranch with limited public access and the Department of Natural Resources I think has the capability of managing that property properly and making it available to the public. I come from Montana. I worked on a ranch, my back still hurts from throwing hay bails. My granddaughters go to Martinez Park and they see the little corral, they see the cows and the horses. I think it would be really neat for them to see a working ranch. I don't know if that is possible but it would be cool, they could get a little bit of taste of some of the association you people have had with the ranch. It's part of Colorado, it's their past. I think it would be a great thing for them to actually go out there spend some time on a ranch at some point, I know it will be limited access because its going to continue to be a ranch. I have couple of other points, along with visiting Phantom Canyon I also go to Cherokee Park and the national forest. I don't know if some of you recall public money was used to purchase Cherokee Park and also some of the national forest checkerboard land up there I believe Senator Allard was instrumental in spending more than million dollars to buy that national forest checkerboard land, bought it from the railroad and it was also a public funded park. I think most importantly the citizens of Larimer County voted to use their sales tax dollars to purchase open space land it was important to them and I think the county has a obligation. You know, when it has an opportunity to receive land as a gift I think the citizens of the county are going to really question the sincerity of the county managing open land. They are asking for it and I think its up to the county to accept it. I think the county is able to manage it, I'm familiar with the work they do at Carter lake and Horsetooth and other open space areas. It turns out they do operate as a business and they do a very good job they get very little money from the general fund and they've done a wonderful job I think so far and I expect that to continue. Let me just finish up by and say that if the county doesn't accept this gift I think there will be other entities, state or government and conservation groups, that would be interested in the land."

Marilyn Hendrix, read a letter from her son

"My name is Marilyn Hendrix and I'm here to read a letter for my son who is out of the country right now but is very compassionate about this ranch. "To whom it may concern I am writing in the matter of the outcome of the future of the Roberts Ranch and as of historical observation on the matter of the family and business of the Roberts Ranch with hope of bringing clarity and mind to a troubled situation. My first visit to the Robert Ranch was at age 14 I was invited up by Ben Roberts to help with the cattle branding operation that year. In the following 18 years I developed close ties to Ben, Burke and Derek by visiting the ranch frequently and becoming familiar with the ranch and family dynamics. I feel I have gained the unique perspective of the unfolding situation that might help the media; public and county take caution into the Roberts Ranch family matter. Having the opportunity to grow up on the Roberts Ranch and my own family ranch Diamond Peak Ranch inspired me to become a steward of the land management. I studied natural resources management at Colorado State University; I stay current on land issues of the west. I currently work for US forest service perusing a career in natural resources management. What I know about the Roberts Ranch is that it is a beautiful unique piece of Larimer County history. The land was pioneered by the Roberts Family and in my opinion should remain in the family holding and care. It is a large track of continuous land and in this it is unique to our Larimer County area the land would not be in such great ecological shape if it were not for the Roberts historical preservation and ancestral ties to this land. It is because of the family management that this land has not be bothered and remains preserved and ecologically intact. The Roberts have been the greatest environmentalists through the ownership of this land by preventing land fracturing. I know that current family Roberts have the best intentions for using best management practices will continue their family legacy. I met Evan and Catherine Roberts at a young age. I've seen the documentation of Evan's wishes and believe that it was his intention to leave the property in the family I also believe that Catherine has made poor management decisions while has hired incompetent and uneducated ranch managers. The cattle herd is now in poor shape and the fields are perpetually over grazed making them susceptible to soil lose and evasive species the irrigation system had been completely destroyed the base hay operation has long been neglected. The Roberts are working hard to continue the family legacy I have listened to and read their business plans. Plans backed by generations of ranching practice. Derek went back to school to the University of Wyoming for ranch



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management and has solid advisors with educated backgrounds to ranching. I believe that the Roberts have the best intentions for the property are the most qualified to continue the family history I also believe that the people of Larimer County should embrace and support the Roberts as living history honoring their not so distant past as a agricultural community.”

Baron Wachsmann – Ft. Collins native partner in the group

“I’m a fort Collins native and a partner at the Group. Grandson of Donald McMan who helped start Hall & Hall Farm and Ranch which had a legacy in ranch stewardship second to none. Cattle ranching has been in my family as long as I can remember. I also a friend of the Roberts family for over 25 years. Burke wrote a letter I’m going to read here today. ‘I wrote this letter for a friend to read to you because from what I understand this meeting has implemented yet another little political hocus pocus to stop anyone who voiced their opposition at the last meeting from doing so again. I want you all to know that every step this committee has taken is painfully transparent, we can all smell the sulfur. The public whom your suppose to serve is quickly seeing the obvious self serving motives of those of you that are trying to squeak this transactions by. I know that your attorney advised go to answer for any opposition raised regarding the family feud is that Catherine holds clear title so it is not our concern you should not be so confident in that. This rouse happened in a easily challenged chain of fraudulent circumstance that will reverse that fact clearly and quickly in a court of legal proceeding that are in the horizon and this pretense that if it doesn’t go to the county it may end up in less confident hands has now become absurd after the damage your half truth riddled newspaper articles have already caused I can’t think of less confident hands then the county. In case you are not aware of the quickly escalating repercussions of your premature and reckless press release the public has misinterpreted which basically amounted to a advertisement for them to run rampant on a property that has never happened in the 140 years of my history in my families care. Everyday we endure more and more ill informed trespassers, trucks leaving donut tracks in supposedly TNC protected fields, people riding horses on dangerous terrain and worst of all ATV’s tearing up the land including driving over 500 year old teepee rings. Nice one county. There is trash accumulating all around the area and one neighbors dog was hit and killed because of the new onslaught of traffic. Of course the county isn’t doing any patrolling to try and corral the mess that they started nor is the so called ranch manager anywhere around to stop this fiasco. If this is what is considered protecting open space then I think some serious investigation into the tactics is called for. So are all the other apparent risks that are laid to the tax payer in this barley legal attempt you have now already put the county into liability and for what nothing more than a peacock display public vanity how much more irresponsibility are you going to saddle the citizens of Larimer County and the people they elected to represent them. No matter who the 92 year old second wife of my grandfather tries to give our heritage to that party will also be inheriting a huge legal battle and they to will lose its unmistakably despicable behavior to attempt to capitalize on a old woman senile spite in her twilight hours and its no secret who on your board is doing exactly that you are making a enemy out of a family who has for over a century been a allies in helping to do your job description. The funny thing is Catherine already rescinded her gift in question as a result of all this incompetent behavior so the vote tonight again nothing more then a continuation of the vanity and precarious hopes from some of the shrewd members of your board that think they can apply undo influence on a old woman in rehab to get her to flip flop back to you. I ask you as rational people does this seem like the behavior of a woman competent to make this kind of decision. I hope you can sleep at night because not only do you know this is ethically wrong and soon to be not even legally correct but more over you should be worried about the eye brows that will be raised if you are even capable of the job you’ve been appointed to. Given much evidence that has been uncovered pointing to personal profit for some of your board members the unofficial and quite obvious ties that will profit TNC one had to wonder if nice title like open land protection and conserving nature are actually just code for insider profit trading. I forgot to thank you the last time for your considerate plan to take our families home from us and generously turn it into a museum about us. This is far from over unless you walk away peacefully. Sincerely Burke Evan Roberts’

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Denise Morrison

“I’ve know the Roberts family for about 13 years and I other than the fact I’ve heard and I think its disturbing to think that a ranch is been in the family for this many years could be given to Larimer County without the family consent. But something I haven’t heard very much about with this process is how Larimer County would be able to manage the historically and culturally significant site on this property I think the family has already experienced some of the problems with having this particular property in public domain there are as I said there are some of the most archeological, historically, culturally significant sites in the west on this property. Derek has always been very generous sharing all of this with students from universities and I’ve had school groups up there and they have been excellent stewards in protecting all of this if this becomes a piece of property where there is any kind of public access I can’t see how the Arapahoe camp would survive, signature rock. I don’t see how any of these particular sites need to be opened up to the general public. As Burke’s letter said too, the family is already having trouble with trespassers because of newspaper articles but I don’t know if any of that has stopped. I don’t see any of the costs that Larimer County would have to endure to protect and to keep people out of the ranch. Its not a matter of limited public access it would be a responsibility of Larimer County to keep people off the these historic sites and Roberts Family so far have done a amazing job protecting all of these sites. Thank you.”

Ken Morrison

“I’m a 30 year resident of Larimer County we spent most of that time living in the north end of Larimer County in the general vicinity we live on CR 66 we’re friends with the Roberts family and have been blessed with some minor access to the ranch property my question to you folks as potential stewards of this property is the complexity of this chunk of land its 16,000 plus acres but its not all together its all over and my question would be has there been a lot of study as to how it might be managed and how the management costs of all these little unconnected because it is a chunk, all these little unconnected pieces. Its been brought up that there has already been incursions upon the property, a lot of this property isn’t fenced and there is easy access from the road. Once the public thinks well this is a public park its open like Horsetooth there are historic sites on this property that once they’re destroyed, they’re destroyed. And my concern would be they’re there now and questions to you would be have you thought about the cost of protecting these properties. This is a very complex ranch almost 140 years old and are we ready as a county to sit down and really be able to figure out what it’s going to cost us to property manage this and is it going to turn out to be the biggest mess that we’ve ever seen in Larimer County trying to keep it together the way it is now because its pristine you know if you haven’t been up there you need to look it is being properly managed and public access is not what it needs in my humble opinion. Thank you for your time.”

George Wallace – Livermore – submitted letter

“The Roberts Ranch has many wonderful features – agricultural, hydrological, geological, cultural, historical, and many others and we are very fortunate that Katherine and Evan Roberts have chosen to place a conservation easement on it and gift it to the County. It helps meet our County master plan goals of minimizing the loss of our remaining ag land and water. It can provide opportunities for local producers via leasing, a grazing association, grass banking or providing a dynamic ranch manager and others with an opportunity for employment. It is also a necessary piece of the 25 year effort involving many players ( The County, Fort Collins, The Nature Conservancy, RM Elk Foundation, GOCO, and a number of ranching families) to maintain a sustainable “Mountains to Plains” landscape connection in at least one place along the Front Range. Regarding the question of management of such a property that is owned and guided by local government, I think we have two good examples in Red Mountain and Soapstone each using a different approach. In both cases, there is integrated resource management, public access and a working livestock operation that benefits local producers enhancing the value of their base properties. One is leased to a large operator who has land



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adjacent and who has turned out to be a good cooperater with both City and County. The other is leased to a grazing association and helps keep from 7 – 9 producers in business by providing summer pasture. Both have management plans/grazing plans developed collaboratively between resource managers and the producers themselves. Both have allowed the public to view participate in some ranch activities and understand livestock production better. They are a part of our local “foodshed” and some of the producers involved have increased their direct marketing of beef in the community. More of this could be done in the future.

The Roberts Ranch could either follow one of these approaches, hire a manager to work with Open Lands staff or take another approach - perhaps by serving as an incubator for one or more young producers that would later have the option of a long-term lease or purchase. Whatever approach is taken, the County would want to continue to make improvements over time that are needed as the other two properties have had to do. The management and viability of the cattle/livestock operation which already makes a modest return however might best be seen as separate from other investments that would be made in over time. Enhancing visitor opportunities (proposed museum, restoration of the alabaster factory), or infrastructure for visitor management or restoration of degraded sites can be done as time and resources become available. The obvious response to critics of ranch related start- up costs (higher initially partially a result of Mrs. Robert’s need to sell this year’s calf crop) is that this is a small price to pay for a spectacular ranch of this type worth many millions. The calculations and discussion of start-up costs might also reflect immediate needs of the ranching operation and the longer term projects. The ranch does have some resource management problems like the need for continued erosion control in Campbell Valley, removal of the tires that were brought to the ranch during a poorly conceived plan to use them for erosion control, fence maintenance improved watering facilities that need to be worked on over time. These are related to the livestock operation to some degree but not entirely. It might help to have a small group of people that know the ranch (Tom Peden, Charlie Gindler, Larry Peterson etc.) help compile an inventory of management actions, prioritize them and sort them into long term and shorter term as well as deciding which are most important for the livestock operation.

As one who has land along Dry Creek downstream from Campbell Valley, I would note that this part of the ranch is also a headwater area for the Dry Creek watershed which is an important concern for the City of Fort Collins and those of us who own water rights, storage rights land along Dry Creek. I personally am glad that the County is likely to be managing the ranch as I feel these resource issues will be better addressed than if the ranch had gone to a wealthy buyer who might not attend to such issues in the same way. The volunteer work currently being done in Campbell Valley by the Wildland Restoration Volunteers is more likely to continue for example. It should be possible to involve the Fort Collins Natural Resources department given all the other investment they have made in the Dry Creek watershed below the ranch.

The improvements on the home place are an important resource that will make management easier, allow those managing (or creating a museum and other visitor facilities) to have a base of operations. There are a number of structures early log cabins, an alabaster factory with high historical value. Hunting management on Red Mountain has been very successful and has become popular with hunters because of the high quality experience it provides while helping managers to control numbers and prevent wildlife habituation to human presence. It is important that the County follow the precedent set on other Open Lands properties of continuing to pay special district and other taxes to counter the criticism sometimes made that open space takes land off the tax rolls. As Richard Seaworth pointed out in his testimony to the Open Lands Board, the County should make every effort to see that the ranch contributes to the local ag economy in a diversity of ways as start up money is invested in things like seed stock, supplies, fencing etc.

In summary, I feel that the County should accept the gift and management responsibilities. If a manger is hired, It will be very important to find a dynamic manager or operators to work with the current manager Tom Peden who has agreed to stay on and advise during the transition. He knows a good deal about what needs to happen to optimize the ranching operation and had already started to implement some of those things (calving dates, water improvements etc.) This will do more than anything else to insure management success within a reasonable period of time. There are a whole group of young highly trained ranch managers out there now and



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many have worked with public entities that have multiple objectives. I am attaching a description of one such person which has many useful references about the new breed of managers. Finally, If the County decides to manage the ranch with staff and a professional manager and that should prove to be difficult after a 4-5 year pilot period, it can always be leased to a local rancher or grazing association, grass banked, or even sold to a conservation buyer that is willing to manage under the terms of the Roberts easement. It should be remembered, however, that what the people of Larimer County are getting with this gift are many benefits in addition to those provided by a working cattle ranch. Eventual access to places like Steamboat and Signature rocks, the Overland Trail in its original setting, many other cultural sites, spectacular geology, wildlife and wildlife habitat, the North Fork of the Poudre above Eagle's Nest OS, the biological corridor connection with other protected lands, educational, recreational, ecological, historical and many other benefits that can be enhanced for all of us through County ownership in ways that it may not be by other owners who might end up managing for a narrower range of values and in a more exclusive way."

John Clark

"I've been working with Robert's Family to help them with some of the political issues involved with this gift of the ranch to the county. One of the things that concerns me as I was commissioner at the time was the tax that was past on open space and also the taxes that were passed to fund other improvements for the county. You have a new building here in the Loveland area that was built with that money, the new Justice Center in Fort Collins, the new courthouse, the Sheriff's headquarters and all of those things were part of the capital improvement programs that we put together and took to the voters and had those passed. Twice now we have tried to extend those taxes for additional things that need to be done in the county. The voters have seen fit not to do that and the funds that were available at that time have now gone away. I want to tell you that I think the commissioners have done a very good job in adjusting county revenue, but they have had to do some very serious work on the budget in terms of cutting things and so to make it all balance. I don't see any time in the future where people in Larimer County are going to feel inclined to extend or replace even those taxes. In 2018, the tax that you guys advise on goes away. My question in my mind is what happens if that goes away. The county has acquired a lot of important and valuable and I have been supportive of that whole process like that requirement land but what if in 2018 the voters decide not to replace the money I should say in the general fund if that goes away. This is not the time to be taking on a project with this kind of potential downside, I see from the piece that was passed out tonight that there is a potential \$2.40 per acre profit that's about \$40,000 dollars give or take a little given the size of that land that money could go away pretty fast. I don't think it would even buy a new bailer with that kind of money, I haven't bought one lately though. Nevertheless, I'm very concerned about what happens, I think the process of the open lands acquisition of maintenance has been has been an important thing for Larimer County. But I am very concerned and I would sure hate to be a commissioner in 2018 and if that tax goes away and then they have to absorbed all the O&M of all the properties they've been purchasing through the budget at that point that could be a very, very serious situation for the county and I would caution against jumping in to deep at this point. Thank you for your time."

Maxine Weaver (again)

"I was just trying to discuss the problems with the tires up there in Campbell Valley the estimate that you heard earlier that they could be up to 500,000 tires. This became an issue for our property when we had flash floods in the area in the early 90's. Our estimate was 100s to 1000s of tires came down on our property and over 3 miles over Campbell Creek. They came down across County Road 72 to our northern part of the property across County Road 21 through section 9 where our building are and down across where our hay meadow down through a state section that we lease and down at the neighbors that we share a cross section with down on CR 70 and down through us and the state section a cross into CR19. I don't know how far east of that that the tires went. When the flood had stopped we had tires out standing in our pasture that looked like we had planted them like you've seen in the picture in the paper you've seen in November of December. We had other tires that were



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up in the trees that had come down from the valley, to the point that I could not reach them on a horse. We went to the Robert's and asked for them to help with clean up and that is when we found out they had been dumped there and not had been stabilized. We were forced at that time in the early 90's to file a lawsuit against the Roberts in order to get a settlement from them to pay for part of the clean up of the tires. The tires and what we've heard today we've not had the problem with them flooding through there, that was a result of flash floods at that time. When that creek floods and, like I said, it crosses all those county roads down through our property. It's just a matter of time when the next flash flood comes and we see more tires. Because they are not stabilized and with a flood they will resurface and move out and a lot of those arroyos up there have 1000's of tires in them dumped and covered over. You get a flash flood and that soft soil is eroded and the tires are going to come down. Our creek through our property has never been the same, we still have tires surfacing 20 years later when we filed that lawsuit. It's still an ongoing problem and will continue to be a problem until all those tires are removed from the property and I understand that could be a considerable cost. If the county were to take over this property we would like assurance from the county that they accept that responsibility and that liability so that if we get flash floods in the future and tires cross over on to our property that they will be taken care of. I know the comment was made that, that is rural property um rural area land. I implied that it wouldn't need to be concerned about the number of tires. However as Dr. Wallace mentioned that it does affect our irrigation water, we water out of that creek it effects the people below us that water out of that waters it also effects the water that goes to the city of Fort Collins. If those tires are going to remain they need to be stabilized, they are a fire hazard, environmental hazard and I'm running out of time again so."

Tom Buchanan –

"Unlike many people here that have testified, I do not know the Robert's, never been to their ranch. I want to talk to you about principles about private property rights. I didn't vote for this tax to go and take the land for the government to get the land, that's not the government's job. Private property is private property and that is one of the foundations of this United States of America and there is nobody that will take care of land better than the land owner. Because it looks like from the county's view point this is going to be a business decision and I don't know how open its going to be but if you let people in there to do this it's going to be destroyed. There is nobody better like I said to take care of the property than a property owner. Thank you very much."

DL Roberts –

"I'm DL Roberts, the direct heir to this property. For the last 15 to 20 years the Nature Conservancy has been hustling my step mother to give this land to them and um they have been pretty successful getting her to do things like she is doing now. I can only tell you that the family is ah, we don't have an argument about doing it. Everything that Katherine says she wants done to the land is exactly what we do to it. This is kind of a personal thing and I know that Heather Knight has been in there hustling Katherine ever since she got here 15 or 20 years ago and I'm very resentful of her interfering in our family business. I don't think the Nature Conservancy has any business doing that. They got the easements on the ranch, we were supportive of that we still are and I have no problem with there having easements but I do have a problem with them trying to get the land away from us. I'm quite satisfied that you people are pawns to The Nature Conservancy, they know damn well that you aren't going to be able to take care of this land for very long and it's going to go to them. We know that is part of their scheme. I don't know exactly what were going to do; Burke said it pretty well in his letter. We have every intention of raising as much hell as we possibly can about this thing and we've got some high powered lawyers ready to go on this so if you people get this property bear in mind that you are going to be in the middle of a long litigation. I'm going to put it the way my father would have put it. J Evan Roberts would have said, "We're going raise hell and put a block under it."



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Ben Roberts –

“Listen, this is offensive, maybe I should be honored by this offensiveness because you’re so interested in this land. Funny thing, this “gift”. Even “free” but it’s not going to be free for you at all. You have to realize the liabilities that come in. Remember a little bit of talk about 4-wheelers out there, about no ranch manager out there? Well that was me that saw that, I’m out there every single day. I’m watching this land. I’m making sure things go right on this land and how to improve this land for the future, I’m ready for this. I understand a lot of your choices are made on the assumption that she has title legally. But do you guys know what we have, because we were not coming out with just yet because we were trying to avoid embarrassment for this step grandmother of ours who has been so wicked to us for way too long and we’ve done nothing to her. We do have legal right, she doesn’t have as much right as you think and you need to step away from that. I was born with a rusty spoon in my mouth and I’m all about using it, utilizing it, making it work for me, making the land work for me. So I just ask you please let’s work together on the other open lands procedures, we don’t need to fight you. This will put a negative light on you guys we don’t need that we can work together on this, okay thank you.”

There are written comments that were also submitted to the board, they are included in public record.

### Board discussion

John asked about the mineral rights. Charlie answered that there are severed mineral interests on parts of the property, both oil and gas and other minerals. John: Is there legal access? There is legal access and multiple handshake deals. John asked about hunting access. Kerri answered that we don’t know until we go through the management plan process. John: Current update on title insurance? Charlie: Yes, a title is in place and title insurance would be secured. Steve asked if staff will work with the Weavers and other neighbors to clean up the tires. Kerri answered that staff is happy to work with neighbors but can’t speculate on the specifics of tire cleanup until a plan is in place. Hugh asked about access since it isn’t a continuous property. Is there access to all parts? Charlie: There are two access points, through the ranch manager historic access points have also been identified.

Steve: If we turn this down, what happens? We aren’t making a decision just a recommendation. Charlie: it is unknown what Catherine would do. She could give it or sell it to anyone. Gerry asked about protecting historical sites. Charlie answered that staff currently manages lots of similar sites. There are Rangers and Volunteer Ranger Assistants that patrol along with closed areas. Hugh clarified the language in the letter of intent which states that ranching must take place if it’s “economically feasible”. Trudy clarified, if the county were to sell it, that the stipulation that it stay a ranch stays with it. Gerry: If it’s a stipulation of the gift, it goes with anyone else who buys it. John wondered what happens if the county takes it and the tax isn’t renewed. The objective is to be able to divest it? Kerri: Yes, the restriction of having to ranch may limit available buyers. Steve: What if we turn this down and she gives it to CSU, could they sell it immediately? Kerri: it depends on the conditions of the gift. With us, if DNR transferred the property we don’t get to keep the money, it has to stay in the Laramie foothills, or Larimer County, or the state, in that order.

Hugh: the concern is a lack of answers to a lot of the questions. He doesn’t want to step off the ledge. We have an opportunity to do a management plan. Is it right that Catherine’s leaving it to Larimer County? Not necessarily, we don’t know what her will states. He feels pushed into a corner to acquire the property, then do the management plan, why can’t we take more time? The amount of fence and reseeded is expensive; he doesn’t know what it will cost. He can’t sit here in good conscience and hear “I don’t know” over again. The cost side is still too vague. Do we stick with the process and figure it out, possibly violating the agreement? Hugh’s concern is that it will cost an enormous amount of money. He doesn’t know what the costs are. He appreciates the work to get a ball park but it’s a big park.



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Trudy: this property is similar to Red Mountain Open Space (RMOS) and Soapstone and the costs seem very viable and a good comparison. Hugh said cost is in the neighborhood of \$383k. Marc: To put it into context, they're comparable. We're not trying to sugarcoat, it's expensive to manage the costs, not sure of Hugh's questions. Hugh: this is dissimilar enough that there are cost questions. We don't ranch Hermit Park, we lease RMOS. Without a management plan we can't have the discussion. Marc: if there wasn't a ranching operation, would it be similar. Hugh: Yes, but it's not. Marc: if you take the ranch out of the equation it's the same. Over time, we don't see that it will be a money pit. If we think it is, we could always just lease the property, not taking the risk. Hugh doesn't think we have enough information. We're not going to bankrupt the county, we're talking about management plan options. Marc: Given our situation, we have given you the best information possible. Nancy: Management planning comes later, we never have them in place before acquiring a property, it's impossible to know in any case how best to manage, this isn't any different. This process tells us roughly, Hermit Park is in a category, etc. Over time, we have processes to determine costs. The plans always come through careful processing after acquisitions.

Carl: We've heard a lot tonight and earlier, he's heard a lot and thought about it for 3 weeks. We're trying to get answers about accepting a property, each property is a work in progress, we're still getting answers for existing properties. No matter what the vote is, it is just a recommendation. The commissioners will make the final decision on 2/4. Like everyone here, he feels badly for the family, we can't casually accept the property after all the blood and sweat. It's unlikely the land will go to the Roberts. It could go to a variety of recipients, what about drought, fire? Tires in the Campbell drainage? We've had a lot of information, it's time to start to wrap this up and vote.

Suzan: agrees that this isn't the proper forum to decide, she's not threatened by the threats of litigation. She believes that the county is the best entity to take care of the tires. Our open spaces are being loved to death, we need more. We would like to see our funds to alleviate user impact but Roberts isn't the place.

Mary commented that she's been on the board for a couple of years and is impressed by the professionalism and dedication on the board and staff and can assure that if we end up being neighbors we'll be good ones.

Gerry: what is the current thinking about what would happen to all lands if the tax didn't pass? Kerri: Options that have been discussed are closing public access, then potentially selling properties. Gerry: what's the current budget for operations and maintenance. Gary: \$3 million. Kerri: it depends what properties we keep.

Trudy has sympathy for the family, her family lost a farm similarly, the county cannot and should not be involved in a similar situation but Catherine has the right to do what she wants, it's a gift of incredible magnitude. People assume that if we say no that the family will get it, we don't know that and it's likely they wouldn't. Larimer County has a strong history of respect and stewardship and if the gift is accepted, utmost care would be taken to respect her wishes and the land. Would some other organization be as diligent? That's what worries her. She looks at the properties as a jewel that are extremely valued, people rate them extremely highly, the tax passes overwhelmingly, these are investments, not costs. Larimer County has been asked by the voters to secure land and manage funds responsibly. They also said to provide land for recreation, habitat, conservation easements, ranches.etc. If we said no to a gift of this generosity, it would be irresponsible to those citizens who voted.

Peter: his questions had to do with the costs and feels comfortable with what's been provided. We didn't open RMOS for two years so we could figure it out, a management plan isn't necessary at this point. It could be a very low cost to the county.

Gerry clarified that OLAB didn't talk about the Roberts ranch during executive session. It is a tremendous opportunity but it isn't the same as lands currently managed. The work that was done was very helpful and a good way to display the range of costs and what could come out and range, it was a common sense way to display. He is still troubled by issues around it, we could get into the middle of something with



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press and media attention. He doesn't think it's a clear yes or no. Suzan: the most important thing is that it is subject to the conservation easements, it's a jewel and beautiful, thank god the easements are there.

**Nancy motioned that OLAB recommend to BOCC that they approve that they accept the donation, Mary seconded.**

Suzan: N

Gerry: N

Nancy: Y

Steve: Y

Mary: Y

Trudy: Y

Hugh: N

Carl: Y

John: N

Peter: Y

Paul: Y

### **The motion passed 7-4**

- OLAB recommendation will go to a public hearing with the County Commissioners on February 4, 2012 in the Hearing Room, 200 W Oak St, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, at 6:30pm.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

- Pinewood Reservoir proposed improvements – Chris Fleming, Park Manager, see presentation  
Chris gave a presentation showing an overview of the proposed improvements including improved tent and RV campsites, an extended boat ramp, new day use facilities, new restrooms. The current conditions are unacceptable and need to be upgraded to ensure a better visitor experience and desired management scenario. Trudy: doesn't rustic mean no electricity? Chris: there will still be walk-in sites with no electricity. Paul really likes the design, it keeps better habitat undisturbed and provides different camping experiences. Chris pointed out that an outdoor classroom may go in the area. Rob explained the education components. The outdoor classroom will expand campground programs, this would be the 8<sup>th</sup> site for programs. Carl: is the outdoor classroom the same as Devil's Backbone. Rob: we base the size on the number of campsites and similar campgrounds. We envision no roof. Carl: what's the history of Osprey? Rob: it's been active for the last few years. Rob showed the dot exercise from the public meeting about different components of the playscape, a kid sized nest was one of the most popular components. Paul clarified that Pinewood is wakeless. Gerry asked how we reached users. Chris, we used our reservation system to send postcards to people who used it. It's also available on the website for comment. Carl: what about kayaks? Chris: Plans to do an improvement to the beach to facilitate easier access for canoes and kayaks. Paul thinks there is a good opportunity to educate about fire.



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### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- River Bluffs crops, Roundup Ready Alfalfa – Charlie Gindler

Charlie introduced himself as a Resource Specialist who manages the agriculture leases on open spaces. River Bluffs Open Space (RBOS) has a lease that went out to bid last year, the same lessee was awarded the bid. Now that the lessee has a five year lease, he's interested in planting roundup-ready (RR) alfalfa. His reasons are listed in the handout. There's been a lot of research but there doesn't seem to be a consensus that there is any detrimental effect. One consideration is pollination of nearby areas, there aren't any organic farms nearby but if there were they're could be an affect. He took this to the Agricultural Advisory Board, they didn't say yay or nay but had comments. See handout. There are no staff that are opposed to this but we want comments. Nancy wondered if there was a feeling that RR alfalfa is the least appropriate of the RR crops, the most likely to get into other crops and be hard to control. Charlie: Boulder county did go through a similar process and decided to not allow it but to allow other crops. The problem is cross pollination, he read a study about bees and range of pollination is about a mile. Nancy: is it a particularly weedy field? CG: some say that RR alfalfa fields are more lush with fewer weed problems. One of the problems is invasion of grass, lessee wants to split them. Hugh clarified that there is no detriment to the soil. There is concern about the appearance of the field and neighbors, knowing that they lease them, reflected badly on their reputation. Paul: is this a first? Yes, this is our only property that's irrigated for crop production. Paul is worried about setting policy, it seems logical for the area but it's complicated. He's been following it a lot and wonders why we should be trying this, potentially opening ourselves up to a big public conversation. We should proceed very carefully. Charlie: Is it a weedy field. Tim D'Amato, weed control specialist, says there are other ways to control weeds. Paul: the problem for genetically modifying for one species is that you select for other species, there's more flexibility with using different herbicides. Charlie: this particular plant has only been used since 2005 so there's not a lot of evidence. Nancy clarified that its about 45 acres. Trudy is biased against RR, in her Iowa community where everyone uses RR, there cancer rates are high enough that the University of Iowa is doing a study. In the small grants program, we go to great lengths to ensure that we use native plants and this could send the wrong message. She's against it for the message, if the Agriculture Advisory Board can't say yes, why should we? Charlie: point well taken but research shows that roundup is one of the safer chemicals because it breaks down quickly, we are allowing herbicide. Trudy: there's a lot of uncertainty. Peter: it's mostly surrounded by gravel mines, the only place it could be an issue is to the north. Charlie: There is a nearby farm in Weld County. Nancy suspects that it's so commonly used that the 45 acres won't make much of a difference. The board did not have a recommendation.

**BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda. None.**  
**Peter adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm.**