



OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E. Third St., Loveland

The mission of the Larimer County Open Lands Program is to preserve and protect significant open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations. These open lands provide opportunities for leisure, human renewal and protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Members Present

Carl Sorrentino	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
Peter Kast	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
Hugh McKean	City of Loveland
Steve Vessey	At-large

Staff Present

Charlie Johnson, Land Agent
Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager
Sandy Werkmeister, Dept Specialist
Travis Rollins, Natural Resource Mgr Visitor Services

Members Absent

John Phipps	Town of Estes Park
Mary Banken	At-large
Paul Alaback	Town of Berthoud
Ladonna Lee	At-large

INFORMATION

- Kerri reported that the database pilot project, a grant through CCLT, is nearly complete. Data has been migrated from Access to Sales Force, a powerful data management system. We are also getting LOCATE, an app through the Salesforce database program, for free through the pilot (thanks to our Friends Group) as well. Staff trainings are being scheduled and soon we should be able to upload reports, maps, baseline inventories, etc. People around the state and nation are looking to have access to this database and this LOCATE app that was developed by CCLT.
- We are in the drafting stage of the regional study. You will receive the draft report, probably in the next week. You can go through it and edit page by page or just read it through and give general feedback. Zac and other staff will be reviewing it page by page.
- Kerri reported that of the 5.1 million grant we received last year to continue the Poudre River Trail Project, a lot of the money was granted to Greeley for some acquisitions along the Poudre River. As part of GOCO due diligence requirements, those acquisitions require third party easements over them to protect GOCO's investments. Greeley asked the Town of Windsor to hold those third party easements. Windsor is new to this, having just completed their certification process with the State to monitor and hold conservation easements, so GOCO has asked us to co-hold for these four acquisitions. We have finalized an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Town of Windsor. Once these acquisitions are done and Windsor is monitoring the easements, GOCO will allow Windsor to hold easements on their own in the future.
- Kerri reminded the Board that through our prioritization exercise, we allocated \$100,000 toward the Pinewood Improvement Project. However, the GOCO grant for the project was not funded. After

receiving feedback from GOCO, we were encouraged us to reapply with an updated application. We are amending the grant and will submit back to GOCO this fall. The \$43,000 Boat Colorado grant for the improvements has been funded, which will address one of the concerns (an unsecured match) on the first submittal.

- Kerri reported that National Get Outdoors Day and Land Conservation Appreciation Day were both great successes. This was our first time participating at the Get Outdoors Day at Spring Canyon Park in Fort Collins. It was a broad partnership, and attendance was about 1000. The free day at Hermit Park to celebrate Land Conservation Appreciation Day saw approximately 200-250 participants, mostly families attending from Loveland and Estes Park. Most prevalent comment of the day was “We didn’t know this was here!” Thanks to Mary Banken for the idea and to EVLT for coordinating the very popular treasure hunt for the kids.
- We paid to be a part of a Facebook contest in the Reporter-Herald to increase our “likes.” There was regular advertising about our pages and we gave some in-kind prizes to people who “liked” us on Facebook. We are now at 1500 Facebook “likes,” a 60% increase.
- Kerri responded to the question that Mary Banken had last month about how current legislation regarding web based purchases will impact our sales tax. Our sales tax administrator within the county reports there are two marketplace bills going on, one at the State and one at the Federal level. The bill in Colorado passed and was signed by the governor, but only goes into effect if the Federal bill passes. So far the federal bill has passed the senate, but is held up in the house. If it goes into effect, it would hard to predict the increase in revenue. Brainstorming with other Colorado counties, a guess is anywhere from 5-15% increase.

Highlights from the Open Lands Operations Report

- Travis reminded the board that the over-capacity issues he shared with them last month continues and they are working on an action plan.
- At Horsetooth Mtn Open Space they are working with a local non-profit to replace some 1970s fixed hardware on Horsetooth Rock this year. “Forty in the Fort” mountain bike race is this weekend, a 40 mile race which starts and finishes at Lory, riding in and out of Horsetooth. A couple of lost person calls from Horsetooth Open Space, which is becoming a weekly occurrence.
- Regarding the recent incidents of a coyote attacking dogs on leash at River Bluffs Open Space, Travis speculates that we are in coyote denning season and a den is close by. Mother coyote is being very protective for her pups. Yell, scream, and get out of the circle of vicinity that she is protecting as quickly as possible. We also had a lot of initial vandalism to River Bluffs. Patrols have been increased and the vandalism has backed off at this time.
- Maintenance completed on all the various bird boxes at Fossil Creek Reservoir, put in by the County some years back.
- 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 Upcoming Events, see website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

PRESENTATIONS

Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District - update on Windy Gap Firing Project

- Brian Werner, Northern Water Public Information Officer, shared that he has been involved with open space issues since the very beginning, when he was helping promote an open space tax. He still follows OLAB activity and enjoys watching how far the program has come. Jeff Drager, Project Manager for the Windy Gap Firing Project related that it was 1996 when Northern Water first identified the chimney hollow site as a good location for a reservoir to complete the project, and they approached the owner

(Hewlett Packard) about conducting engineering studies on the site. About the same time Larimer County had identified the parcel in their Open Space Master Plan and also contacted Hewlett Packard.

- Jeff provided the progress of the project from start to present day, including the Environmental Impact Studies, various permitting requirements, mitigation plans and voluntary enhancement plans. They have also renegotiated with Grand County, to provide some funding to build a bypass around Windy Gap dam. Brian pointed out the press release from Trout Unlimited supporting the project, which really highlights the efforts Northern Water has made. Next steps are Federal and State approvals and permits. They plan to be designing in 2014-2015, constructing in 2016-2019 and start filling in 2019.
- Handouts were provided to all board members detailing all of the mitigation plans and enhancement efforts, as well as a historical timeline and the anticipated timeline of the project.
- Jeff hopes that once Northern Water has all of their permits, Larimer County can start their planning processes as well so some recreation could start when Northern Water is done with construction. They have been in touch with Heather Young about tours this summer and will start to add signs for the hikes of what the reservoir will look like from various locations. An open offer for tours was offered to OLAB members.

On a different topic, Brian mentioned that someone from Northern Water may be in touch with Larimer County about shooting video about water projects, which would include the Chimney Hollow project and their partnership with Larimer County on the project.

City of Loveland Natural Areas 2012 Annual Report – Rob Burdine, Natural Areas Manager

- Rob Burdine, Natural Areas Manager for the City of Loveland presented on their latest open area project, the Rivers Edge Natural Area. It is a 121 acre open space (155 acres when including the adjacent Jay Hocker pond.) It adds three new fishing ponds, for five total ponds and four new acres of wetland habitat plus the upper buffer. There will be two miles of trails and wildlife viewing. Because of the close proximity to downtown there will be picnic shelters too. They are also planning for some environmental education around the conversion of old gravel mine ponds to native habitat areas. He showed the board many pictures of amenities in progress, including an ADA dock, belly boat access point, pier and amphitheater areas. They received a Fishing is Fun grant for \$90,000 to help with the ADA dock. Fishing floating apparatus' will be allowed. They have an easement with Thompson R2J to use a portion of their parking lot for south entry into the area.
- In response to several questions from the board, Rob said dogs are allowed on leash only. No swimming by dogs or people, as neither really promotes fishing. Regarding the Swartz farmstead and buildings on the east side, they are working on a design and plan to satisfy both parties' interests. There are currently no plans for a trail to cross to Fairgrounds Park, as there is no planned access on that side of the Rivers Edge Park, plus it is a double cross with the railroad, so it would be prohibitively expensive. There is access by going up and around via the existing trail. Rob is and will continue to work on patrol/ranger issues in Loveland as projects move forward. Larimer County rangers do not have jurisdiction inside city limits so any type of partnership to help out is not easily possible. Colorado Parks & Wildlife will be onsite a lot because of the fishing so that will help with this particular open area.
- Rob finished up by sharing that they are working on a natural areas specific logo, better signage of areas that they currently own and better access to Morey Wildlife Reserve

Colorado Lottery video

The video for lottery was finalized just this morning and Kerri will be sure a link is sent tomorrow to the board.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Department of Natural Resources Special Events Process

Travis Rollins shared the philosophy of the department regarding special events on open spaces which is that we do not want to host special events every weekend, but we do want to show the community that we are willing to work with specialty groups on a variety of activities that are outside the scope of our normal daily operations. It can include varying types of groups from recreation to research to education to outreach.

Three or four years ago a committee was put together to formalize a Special Events Process, including our definition of what qualifies for using the process. On the definition, the board questioned what “departmental values” are exactly and thought this should be clarified to some specific program values. Travis responded that this can be looked at upon next review, which is at least annually. Travis went over the steps of the special events process:

1. The process was moved online. Previously groups had to come in or send in an application. Today it is tied to the same overall county process for any event applications. Once an application for open spaces comes in, it is transferred over to Natural Resources.
2. The initial \$25 application fee covers the staff time to review the application. This goes up to \$100 if not submitted at least four weeks in advance. Travis pointed out that they want to be consistent with groups and fees so each manager brings their special event applications to the senior management team meeting so it is always a group decision. We do not host an event without having gone through the process.
3. The limit in advance to schedule an event is not set, but is generally one year. Recurring events tend to submit directly after the current year event ends.
4. Travis walked the board through the Activities Fee Worksheet, and all possible fees, depending on the needs of the group. The goal for fees is to be in the range of \$10 per participant. There is always a cap for the number of participants for any one event. To date 200 is our maximum.
5. Keeping with the statement that we cannot host an event every weekend, each area also has an annual cap for the number of events, based on popularity and visitation of that area and any habitat concerns.

REGULAR MEETING BUSINESS

- Motion by Nancy Wallace and second by Steve Vessey to approve the minutes for April and May, 2013 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- No update to Natural Resources Capital Development and Acquisition Summary 2012 – 2014. Refer to latest report prepared 3-04-2013.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Per (24-6-402(4) (a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest, Nancy Wallace motioned that the Board enter into Executive Session. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, August 22, 2013 - Loveland Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 500 E Third St., Loveland.

PLEASE NOTE: No meeting in July.