OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 23, 2017
5:00-8:00 PM • Civic Center Municipal Bldg • Council Chambers • 500 E 3rd St., 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.

Members Present
Suzan Fritchel At-large
Trudy Haines At-large
Marilyn Hilgenberg City of Loveland
Jeff Hindman Town of Berthoud
Gerry Horak City of Fort Collins
David Marvin At-large
Carl Sorrentino At-large
Sherri Valentine At-large
Nancy Wallace Planning Commission

Staff Present
Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Director
Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager
Charlie Johnson, Senior Land Agent
Alex Castino, Land Agent
Sandy Werkmeister, Department Specialist
Chris Fleming, Big Thompson District Manager
Steve Gibson, Red Mountain District Manager
Jenn Almstead, Fund Development & Special Projects
Danielle Levine, Restoration Ecologist
Alex Wendorf, Weed Control Technician

Members Absent
Pete Kelly At-large
Ward Nelson Town of Estes Park
Jason Brothers At-large

1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS
Nancy Wallace called the meeting to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT
The Board heard public comment from three citizens.

- Noelle Guernsey, Program Manager and Wildlife Biologist for the Prairie Dog Coalition (Coalition) of the Humane Society of the United States, who spoke regarding the Prairie Dog colony located at 1st and Denver, and their opinion about relocation sites for the colony.

- Ashley Waddel, a citizen of Larimer County (County) and Fort Collins, shared the population history of the prairie dog back to the early 1800’s and made her request that the County work with the Prairie Dog Coalition to relocate the colony to County public lands.

- Christi Brockway, a resident of Larimer County and one of the people who made the initial request to the Board of County Commissioners about the prairie dog colony, made a request for an extension of time to work on this issue [a request that the Open Lands Advisory Board is not authorized to grant.]

Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager, provided a brief overview of the Department of Natural Resources (Department) reasoning and goals on the issue. She provided handouts of the Department’s Good Neighbor Practices policy.

Ken Cooper, Larimer County Facilities Director provided a review of the County’s response to this issue, which is documented in a request for a decision from the Board of County Commissioners at their February 28 meeting. In summary, County staff has pursued an agreement since late 2016 with the Prairie Dog Coalition

The terms offered by the County included some reimbursement of relocation expenses, assumption of liability by the Coalition for relocation activities and responsibility by the Coalition to secure permitting and a suitable relocation site off of County land holdings. A March 1 deadline to reach agreement was established by the
County to allow time prior to the onset of prairie dog breeding season in mid-March for the County to pursue other options in the event agreement with the Coalition cannot be achieved. On February 21, the County received correspondence from the Coalition seeking: 1) an extension of time for signing the contract, and 2) reconsideration of the County’s policy to prohibit the relocation of the prairie dogs onto County land. Staff recommends maintaining the March 1st deadline for achieving agreement with the Coalition and proceeding with trap, euthanize, and donation of the prairie dogs to the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program and will be making this request to the Board of County Commissioners on February 28, 2017.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – The order of the agenda will be adjusted to accommodate guest arrivals and departures.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
   Motion by Carl Sorrentino and second by Dave Marvin to approve the January 26, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted in this month’s packet. Motion carried unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
   a. Inspire Initiative – Project Outdoors Fort Collins hosted a community prioritization meeting on February 2. Project Outdoors Loveland hosted a teacher workshop on February 9.
   b. Offero, a new event and volunteer system (initial design by Fort Collins) launches March 1!
   c. Seven bison will join the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd for a total of 23 bison. The capacity of the pasture at Red Mountain/Soapstone is 25 AUMs (animal units/month).
   d. Meetings with Fort Collins are beginning in preparation for updating Red Mountain/Soapstone management plans in 2018
   e. Hired a new Education Assistant for the season. Welcome to Andy Grinstead.
   f. The Volunteers for Outdoors Colorado (VOC) project for 2017 at Hermit Park Open Space is confirmed for Aug. 26-27.
   g. The two regional trail projects (Front Range and Long View trails) connecting Loveland and Fort Collins will be going to bid soon for construction this summer.
   h. Staff are partnering with Boulder County and Colorado Open Lands on a potential shared field trip opportunity for the October Land Trust Alliance Rally 2017 (National Land Conservation Conference) in Denver. The proposed trip would feature accomplishments in agricultural conservation and include the Malchow purchase.

6. UPDATES
   a. Marilyn Hilgenberg distributed copies of Loveland’s Open Lands Program annual report. She highlighted that two of the five properties they acquired last year were partnerships with Larimer County!
   b. Open Space Operations District Reports – Red Mountain and Big Thompson Districts
      Steve Gibson reported that Red Mountain District rangers have been working a lot of spot fires with the hot weather, forestry work (blown down trees) and working on Red Mountain roads in preparation to opening on March 1. Chris Fleming shared that we are able to use FEMA dollars for equipment to replace hand-held radios across the entire Visitor Services program. Current radios are 8-12 years old, so this is a great use of the dollars while also a savings for us. The turnstiles at Devils Backbone are done, and more signs added, to try to resolve complaints and user conflicts. So far so good!
      Nancy Wallace asked if we receive reimbursement for rangers responding to motor vehicle accidents and otherwise assisting the Sheriff’s office and whether we track that time. Steve responded that we do track the time spent and when the Sheriff deputizes us, part of that exchange includes responding to incidents in times of need and when we are the closest available responder. Chris added that the accidents and enforcements we help with are most often on the roads adjacent to our properties. Even so, the time spent is a small fraction of overall time. Nancy is interested in seeing such a report and Gary Buffington interjected that a more in depth report on ranger activity is going to become a regular report to this board.
Dave Marvin commented on his observance that hiking and biking usage is so high that they are yielding to each other constantly. He asked if we have considered trail closures for one activity or the other (on a schedule) or will the resource sustain two trails for different uses close to each other? Steve responded that when we began addressing over-capacity about two years ago, separating use by time was considered and is likely the next phase.

7. PRESENTATION
   a. Small Grants for Community Partnering Awards – Board of County Commissioners
      • Jennifer Almstead thanked the OLAB committee members–Carl, Sherri and Suzan–for their work this year and thanked each of the Small Grant recipients who came out tonight. Jennifer provided a brief historic overview of the program and related that this year we received over $28,000 in requests, making it our most competitive grant cycle to date.
      • Commissioner Donnelly spoke highly about the program and his pleasure to see familiar faces and ongoing projects. Each grantee in attendance gave a 5-minute overview of their project and accepted their award check and congratulations from Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Donnelly. Awardees are attached to these minutes.

8. SALES TAX & ACQUISITION DEVELOPMENT REPORTS
   a. Sales Tax Revenue December Distribution Report & 2016 Sales Tax overview
      HPOS money collected is up from last year!
   b. Review Acquisition & Development Summary sheet
   c. Kerri pointed out any changes since last month, which includes action items for tonight of $400,000 and $360,000 and moving $40,000 from LTM adjustment to the Horsetooth complex development, specifically for fiber optic. The Board questioned if that was planned.

9. ACTION ITEMS
   a. Kerri Rollins presented a final review of the Stegner Farm conservation easement purchase partnership with Colorado Open Lands (COL), Poudre Valley Community Farms (PVCF), and Great Outdoors Colorado. The request to OLAB is to contribute $400,000 toward the value of the easement. COL will be the legal holder of the easement. Carmen Farmer, a project manager for Colorado Open Lands, said they are tremendously thankful to Larimer County and others for working with them to make this happen. Finding these smaller parcels that are located near towns and cities, and preserving them for future farmers is going to be a priority for COL as they grow as a land trust. Seth Jansen with PVCF reiterated that this is the result of two years of a citizen effort to address the issue of land access for young farmers in the community. PVCF is a Cooperative, where instead of buying a membership in a food store, you are buying a membership in land ownership. They are planning to do a 20-30 year lease to the established Native Hill Farm, who could potentially feed about 1400 households on vegetables year round. When the lease is up, it will go back to the Co-op to lease to another young farmer. So far they have 85 households in Larimer County who have bought in at a $2500 membership level. They have also attracted some investors from the Boulder and Denver area.
      Motion by Dave Marvin and second by Sherry Valentine to recommend allocation of $400,000 toward the conservation easement of this parcel. Jeff Hindman added that it is great to see Larimer County finding innovative ways to get involved in these projects. Motion carried unanimously.

   b. Poudre River Restoration and Resiliency Project at River Bluffs Open Space
      Danielle Levine reminded the Board that she provided a full presentation on this project in July of 2016, when we first began applying for grants, none of which were awarded to us. Now that our conceptual planning is complete, we think we can compete well. The total project cost is estimated to be $2,957,354 and is anticipated to be completed in phases as grant funding becomes available. The current anticipated cost to Larimer County is $360,000 to complete phase 1, pending a successful 1.3 million grant application to DOLA. Dave Marvin asked if we have approached the Town of Windsor.
Zac Wiebe responded that they have been involved in the planning process and are certainly supportive, but they are not able and/or willing to offer financial assistance at this time. In terms of partnerships, Danielle added that the Poudre Watershed Coalition is looking at this project as part of their master plan.

In answer to a question about potential for destruction due to another flood, Danielle responded that part of the prudence of the work we are putting in is to make the area more resilient to flooding by making the river sinuous to slow velocity and to reconnect to the flood plain to create wetland features and wildlife habitat.

Zac added that we are potentially applying for two more grants after this one and would like to earmark this amount for the project, whether for this grant, a future grant, or bank stabilization. The Board discussed the project at length, up to Suzan Fritchel making a motion to recommend dedicating $360,000 toward the project, not contingent on the grant. Second by Trudy Haines. The Board discussed further and agreed that a project update about how the money is ultimately spent is expected as the project moves forward. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Parks and open lands weeds update –
Meegan introduced Alex Wendorf, our parks and open spaces weed specialist (the position formerly held by Casey Cisneros.) Alex works on post construction development, weed management and restoration projects, or as he says “anything plant related on our properties except trees.” He presented on volunteer activities for land stewardship in 2016, providing entertaining education at the same time. The presentation is attached to these meetings.

10. OTHER BUSINESS - None

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion by Suzan Fritchel that pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(a) for discussion regarding the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest, motion by Suzan Fritchel and second by Marilyn Hilgenberg to move into Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously and the Board moved into Executive Session at 7:20 p.m.

12. ADJOURN - The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.
## BOCC Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Location</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Specific Items Funded</th>
<th>Small Grants Dollars Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Rockies</td>
<td>Audubon Rockies-Habitat Hero</td>
<td>Loveland-I-25</td>
<td>Install a Healthy Hero Demonstration Garden at the Loveland Visitor’s Center</td>
<td>Native plantings and fabrication of a 24” x 36” durafame sign as part of a Healthy Hero Demonstration garden at the Loveland Visitor’s Center.</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</td>
<td>Larimer County Bluebird Project</td>
<td>Devil’s Backbone, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and other locations throughout Larimer County.</td>
<td>To recruit volunteers and provide supplies to expand artificial nest sites for suitable habitat to increase Mountain Bluebird and Western Bluebird populations</td>
<td>Hardware for nest boxes, metal posts, supply boxes, travel expenses, and salary expenses.</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Youth Outdoors Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Swift Ponds Invasive Weed Project</td>
<td>Fort Collins</td>
<td>Noxious weed mitigation, roughly 36 acres, primarily along waterways at Swift Ponds.</td>
<td>Weed sprayer to help eradicate noxious and invasive weeds at Swift Ponds.</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estes Land Stewardship Assoc</td>
<td>Estes Land Stewardship Assoc (ELSA) Weed Booklet</td>
<td>Estes Valley</td>
<td>Weed identification and management guide to help promote awareness of invasive plans and their impacts, through education and outreach efforts in the Estes Valley.</td>
<td>Printing costs of 1,000 guides for public outreach and education materials.</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estes Valley Community Garden</td>
<td>Estes Valley Community Garden Gathering Area</td>
<td>Estes Park</td>
<td>The creation of a gathering area at the community garden to host educational workshops and provide a rest area for community gardeners.</td>
<td>Provide benches, fruit trees, shrub and perennial plantings, lattice fencing, signage and corner posts at the gathering area of the community garden.</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier View Meadows Subdivision</td>
<td>Crellin Canyon Weed Mitigation Project</td>
<td>Livermore</td>
<td>Noxious weed mitigation at Greenbelt #20 within Crellin natural area at Glacier View Meadows Subdivision</td>
<td>Two weed backpack sprayers and herbicide to help eradicate noxious weeds in Crellin Canyon</td>
<td>$423.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Wilkins</td>
<td>Effects of Bison reintroduction to grassland birds, mammals &amp; vegetation in the Laramie Foothills</td>
<td>Estes Park</td>
<td>Evaluate the effects of bison reintroduction to Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Natural Area on Colorado grassland bird and mammal habitat use, species interactions and vegetation composition and structure.</td>
<td>Labor costs for undergraduate assistant to monitor and maintain wildlife cameras at Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area</td>
<td>$1,994.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overland Mountain Bike Club</td>
<td>Diamond Peaks Mountain Bike Patrol</td>
<td>Throughout Northern Larimer County</td>
<td>Provide First Aid/Wilderness trainings for more Diamond Peaks Mountain Bike Patrol volunteers and to support Overland’s general outreach and patrol supplies needed to assist, inform and educate trail users on public open lands trails.</td>
<td>Basic First Aid/CPR Medical trainings, patrol supplies and patrol events.</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Feather Lakes</td>
<td>Library in the Landscape</td>
<td>Red Feather Lakes</td>
<td>Provide mountain ecosystem interpretive graphics and signage that will be displayed year-round in the new grassland and natural play area adjacent to the library.</td>
<td>Educational graphic design for two to four mountain ecosystem interpretive signs.</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain Cat Conservancy</td>
<td>Communities, Camerases, and Conservation</td>
<td>Hermit Park &amp; Chimney Hollow</td>
<td>Continuation of camera wildlife monitoring at Chimney Hollow and Hermit Park and summary report including the comparisons between 2016 and 2017 monitoring data.</td>
<td>Purchase of up to four cameras and associated camera supplies for wildlife monitoring at Hermit Park and Chimney Hollow</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growing Project</td>
<td>Young Farmer Training Program</td>
<td>Fort Collins</td>
<td>To support the new Youth Farmers Training Program to provide 8 teens, ages 14-17, with part-time work at The Growing Project's Educational Garden for two months in the summer.</td>
<td>Development of Young Farmer Training curriculum and associated printing costs, educational and training supplies, and special income generating projects.</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trails at Vista Bonita Homeowners Association</td>
<td>Baker Lake Improved Access Project</td>
<td>Fort Collins</td>
<td>Regrade the slope and add mason sand to the northern access point of Baker Lake to improve recreational safety and minimize flooding.</td>
<td>Purchase of mason sand to help improve the northern access point of Baker Lake.</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildland Restoration Volunteers</td>
<td>North Fork Big Thompson River Revetation Project</td>
<td>County Road 43 (Between Drake &amp; Glen Haven)</td>
<td>To support a site rehabilitation and restoration project along a section of the North Fork Big Thompson River to help restore and enhance the river's fishery, water quality, physical stability and aesthetic value. Specifically, to provide two different types of soil amendments, crucial to the success of the project, in an area completely devoid of organic matter and nutrients</td>
<td>Spreading of compost soil and application of nutrient fertilizer along a section of the North Fork Big Thompson River</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Dollars Awarded:** $19,217.29
Department of Natural Resources
Volunteer Projects within the Land Stewardship Program

Parks and Open Lands Weed Specialist
Alex Wendorf

Weed Specialist

- Noxious weed control through Integrated Pest Management
  - Site assessment – Identification of problem
    - Scouting and Mapping
  - Best Management Practices
    - Chemical, Mechanical, Cultural, or a mix of control options
  - Evaluation – Monitoring
    - Assessment after management options
- Restoration after disturbances – Construction, Infestations, and Road/Trail Removal
  - Seeding, Mulching, and Erosion Control
What Kind of volunteers?

• Individual and Group Volunteers
• Senior tax workers
• Alternative Sentencing
• Advisory Board members
  • Thank you for your time and efforts!!!

2016 Volunteer Projects

• 4 projects
  • rehabilitation after slash pile burning
  • 2 noxious weed management projects along trails
  • Invasive exotic tree removal
• Recruitment and Planning
  • Pam Mayhew – Volunteer Coordinator
  • Casey Cisneros – Land Stewardship Manager
  • Danielle Levine – Restoration Ecologist
  • Alex Wendorf – Parks and Open Lands Weed Specialist
Hermit Park Fire Scar Rehabilitation

- May 6, 2016
- 19 volunteers for 8 hours
- Rehabbed 65 fire scars and seeded/mulched disturbed area
Blue Sky Trail Weed Pull

- June 17, 2016
- 9 volunteers for 6 hours
- Weed control measures on a mile of trail
Ramsay-Shockey Weed Pull

- July 23, 2016
- 16 volunteers for 4 hours
- Weed control measures on a mile and half of trail
Lions Park Buckthorn Removal

- October 22, 2016
- 19 volunteers for 6 hours
- Common buckthorn control on 2 Acres, 300 buckthorn removed
What do we get from volunteers?

- 2016 Project Totals
  - 384 hours of work in the field
  - 63 volunteers

- Dollars and Cents
  - Volunteer hours are valued at an average of $23.56/hour
  - Using this average each volunteer would have made $143.60 for a total of $9047.04

What do they get from volunteering?

- Better understanding of
  - Larimer County's Parks and Open Lands
  - Noxious weed species and importance of management
  - Plant Identification/biology
  - Weed management measures they could use at home

- Sense of
  - Ownership – I did something to help
  - Community – Like minded individuals from different user groups, and segments of the population
  - Scope of the work involved within the dept. – Glimpse at the work being done on their lands
Upcoming Projects 2017

• CSU Unity Day – April 22. Hand pulling/Digging along the Fossil Creek restoration area at River Bluffs Open Space
• Fire Scar Rehabilitation – Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
• Blue Sky Trail Weed Management
• Ramsay-Shockey Open Space Weed Management
• Lions Park Buckthorn Removal

Questions/Comments?

• Interested in Volunteer projects?
  • Pam Mayhew – Volunteer Coordinator mayhwpj@larimer.org
Thank you

- Alex Wendorf
- Larimer County Department of Natural Resources
- Parks and Open Lands Weed Specialist
- wendora@larimer.org