



# OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB)

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 23, 2017

5:00- 8:00 PM • Civic Center Municipal Bldg • Council Chambers • 500 E 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.*

<b>Members Present</b>	
Jason Brothers	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large
Trudy Haines	At-large
Marilyn Hilgenberg	City of Loveland
Jeff Hindman	Town of Berthoud
Pete Kelly	At-large
Ward Nelson	Town of Estes Park
Carl Sorrentino	At-large
Sherri Valentine	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission
<b>Members Absent</b>	
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins
David Marvin	At-large

<b>Staff Present</b>
Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Director
Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Meegan Flenniken, Resource Program Manager
Charlie Johnson, Senior Land Agent
Sandy Werkmeister, Department Specialist
Chris Fleming, Big Thompson District Manager
Steve Gibson, Red Mountain District Manager
Jenn Almstead, Fund Development & Special Projects
Lori Smith, Finance Program Manager
Jenny Miller, Accountant

### 1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Call to order by Nancy Wallace

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

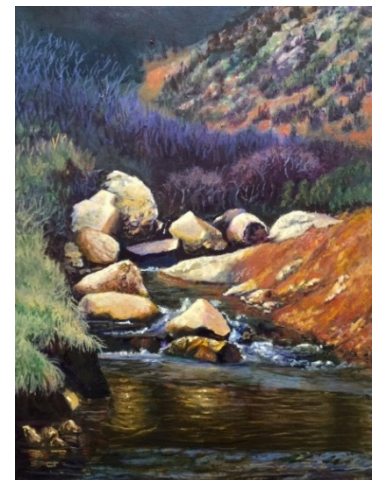
### 3. AGENDA REVIEW – no changes

### 4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Suzan Fritchel and second by Carl Fritchel to approve the *February 26, 2017 meeting minutes* as submitted in this month’s packet. Motion carried unanimously.

### 5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. [Offero](#), the new volunteer database software launched on March 1. It allows us to manage volunteers and events simultaneously.
- b. We hosted a reception for the 2016 Visual Artist Lyse Dzija (*see Figure 1*)
- c. The NOCO Trail report was nominated for a County Innovation Award and presented to the committee on March 13.
- d. The third and final phase of restoration work at Lions Open Space will take place March 20 and April 10-15. Crews will be planting trees and shrubs along the east back of the Poudre River. The Lions parking lot will remain open, and the Pleasant Valley Trail will also remain open but be rerouted during this work.
- e. Several two-track roads crisscrossing the Hidden Valley portion of Devils Backbone Open Space will be restored. Staff will begin road restoration on March 16th followed by seeding later this spring.



*Figure 1: Lyse’s donated painting, Sand Creek in Springtime*

- f. We are submitting our grant proposal for Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) final round of Implementation Funding tomorrow, March 24th. This grant is requesting support towards river infrastructure improvements and restoration work along the Cache La Poudre River at River Bluff Open Space.
- g. There have been community prioritization events including stakeholder and teacher focus groups for the [Inspire Initiative](#). Everyone is working on final projects for the implementation grant, which will be due in July. Expect a full report on the Inspire Initiative in April.
- h. The Front Range and Long View trails will both be constructed this year. We are finalizing inter-governmental agreements with Loveland and Fort Collins now.
- i. We will mail annual park permits to the Board this month.
- j. The Spring Canyon Ranch acquisition closed today.
- k. The [Colorado Open Space Alliance \(COSA\)](#) conference will be at Beaver Run Resorts in Breckenridge September 18-20, 2017.
- l. Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report – no questions

## 6. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Kerri reminded the Board that a financial committee consisting of Gerry Horak, Nancy Wallace, Dave Marvin and Pete Kelly delved into the financial side more deeply to assist in developing a the annual financial review presentation.

### a. Long Term Management (LTM) fund annual review

Jenny reviewed the 2016 column, which has moved from budgeted to actual, since last year's report. Any number highlighted in yellow changed from last year. In addition to sales tax dollars, the sheet shows revenues from park permits, camping, agriculture leases and other minor things such as fee assessments, merchandise sales, recycle revenue, etc. Money spent on properties is separated out by properties. She also highlighted new lines that show the percent of the sales tax received that is used for LTM. (Actual expenses divided by annual sales revenue.) These are projected for 2017 and 2018.

In answer to questions, the low accrual revenue number for LTM in 2016 is only showing carryover from 2015 because money was moved into Acquisition & Development (A&D) for some priority properties that became available for purchase. In answer to questions about this affecting spending requirements, Lori explained that we are required to put 70% into the A&D fund and 15% into the LTM fund. The remaining 15% is flexible. We review the numbers on an annual basis to be sure we are meeting the percentage split requirements over the life of the tax, and sometimes this provides for some adjustments.

### b. Annual Financial review

Lori thanked the committee for their input and ideas for changes. She presented on the LTM fund (the maintenance and management,) showing a comparison of annual expenses for 2015 and 2016 and the budgeted expenses for 2017. She explained the spikes and significant decreases reflected in the presentation, included in these minutes. It was suggested that it could be interesting to add a line showing the A&D fund across the same timelines and Lori agreed to explore this.

## 7. ACTION ITEMS

### c. Final Review - Sanem property, fee title land acquisition

Charlie presented the Sanem properties we are acquiring in fee simple. It is two areas of land (77 and 281 acres) one of which butts up to Horsetooth Rock and protects the view to the west. The properties are within the Redstone Canyon Home Owners Association that have protective covenants, which precludes public access. These properties are being purchased at this time for the benefit of the public, protection of the view from Horsetooth Rock and wildlife habitat. Motion by Pete Kelly and second by Suzan Fritchel to recommend \$460,000 toward the purchase of the Sanem properties.

## 8. DISCUSSION & UPDATES

### d. Stegner Farm project update

Charlie reminded the Board that we and our partners have always known there was going to be gravel mining in the vicinity. The new development is that Loveland Ready Mix is proposing a batch plant which would enable them to process concrete. The concern is any potential effects to the agricultural project we recommended last month. The intent of this update is to make sure the Board knows about this new development before the department takes your recommendation to approve it to the Board of County Commissioners. Charlie introduced partners in attendance, Seth Jansen with Poudre Valley Community Farms, Nic Koontz, the owner of Native Hill Farms (current lessee of the Stegner property) and Carmen Farmer with Colorado Open Lands (COL), who will hold the conservation easement.

Nancy Wallace, Planning Commission liaison, shared that since this project would not be part of the underlying zoning for the area, she would expect this to be a special review process, for which the first step will be to obtain input from the community. Further along there will be a public hearing in front of the Planning Commission, before their recommendation goes to the Board of Commissioners, who will also hold a public hearing before making a decision. She said there are a specific set of regulations and a series of criteria they review for compatibility issues with the community.

Seth reported that in reading the code, a concrete batch plant is listed as a general industrial use, not open zoning, and they did not anticipate this as a potential neighbor. They are still committed and ready to move forward, but they do have concerns and will be involved in the public process around the batch plant proposal, as they do not see it as being compatible with the existing neighborhood, let alone with the planned enhanced agricultural use of the Stegner property. Carmen from COL added that one of the conservation riders enumerated in the easement is production of viable agricultural land and they will be participating to the extent necessary to defend the conservation easement.

In answer to “what if” the batch plant goes in, could the CSA make it, Nic did not think so, but feels there are enough incompatibility issues, along with strong community support to defeat the proposal. The board discussed the many concerns and potential issues and recognized we do not yet have all the information on the proposed plant, but given the level of community support and financial commitments already in place, agreed to stand fast with their recommendation for approval from last month, and will monitor the project and participate as deemed most effective to help.

### e. Visitor Use Study, project overview & objectives – Jennifer

Kerri introduced the subject, reminding the Board that they have discussed the need for a visitor use study (to assist with carrying capacity decisions) several times the past year or two, and for 2017 it is one of the department’s strategic goals.

Jenn presented on where we are with the project and what we are anticipating for 2017. This is a pilot year, so we will only work at two properties, allowing us to make any tweaks before tackling the rest of the properties. We selected Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Red Mountain Open Space primarily because both management plans are in line for updates in 2018. Additionally, we will take visitation counts at Horsetooth Reservoir to get a better grasp on the numbers at this very busy reservoir. Steve Gibson went over the different methodologies chosen, planned placements and what we can record based on positioning. More details, including the budget, are available on the attached presentation. Jennifer noted that much of the equipment is a one-time cost as it can be moved and used at the other properties.

## 9. MONTHLY REPORTS

### f. Open Space Operations District Reports

- Big Thompson District - Chris Fleming reported they have already been at capacity the last six weeks at Devil’s Backbone Open Space (DBBOS) weekdays and weekends. Good news is receiving positive feedback on the new signs and turnstiles. Hermit Park opened March 1 and people are super anxious to get on the new (not quite finished) trail.

- Red Mountain District - Steve Gibson reported a lot of medical rescues at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (HTMOS) this past month. They also worked with US Fish & Wildlife Service to successfully close a portion of HTMOS for a wildlife protection need. For hunting at Red Mountain, we received 690 applicants this year. Six additional pronghorn tags were added this year, in conjunction with Soapstone Natural Area. Red Mountain Open Space opened to the public March 1.

All of the nozzles were replaced on the center pivot at the Little Thompson Farm.

- g. Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report – no questions.

10. OTHER BUSINESS - None

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 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 the Board moved into Executive Session at 7:15 p.m.

12. ADJOURN - The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

# LARIMER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

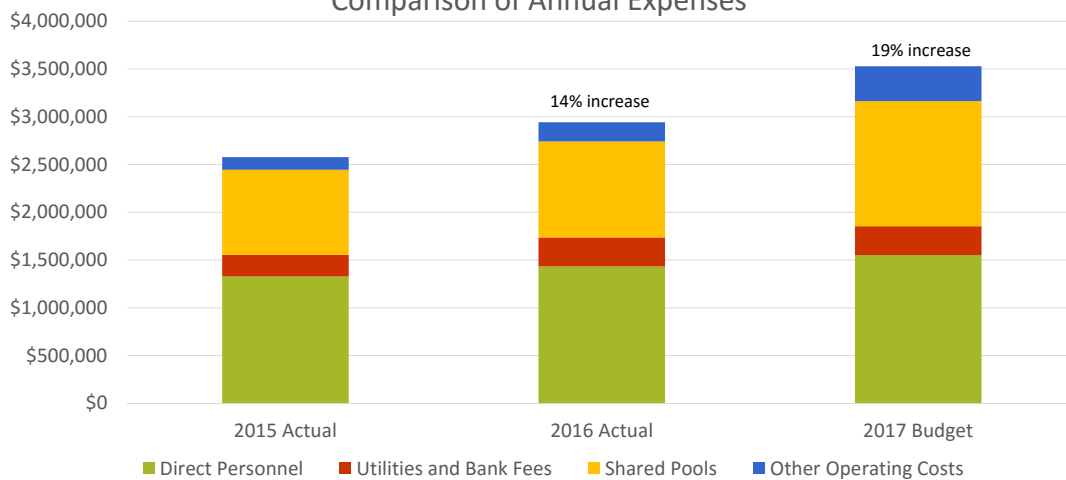
## SALES TAX – LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT FUND

Comparison Between  
Actual Expenses in 2015 and 2016  
with Projected (Budgeted) Amounts for 2017



Lori A. Smith, Natural Resources Finance Program Manager

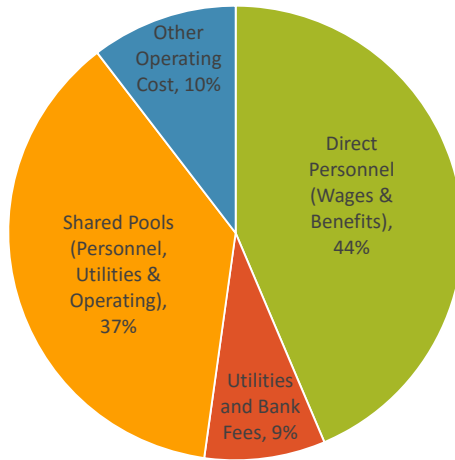
Larimer County Natural Resources  
Long-Term Management Fund  
Comparison of Annual Expenses



Budgeted 2016 projection showed a 26% increase over 2015

## Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund 2017 Projected Expenses (Budget)

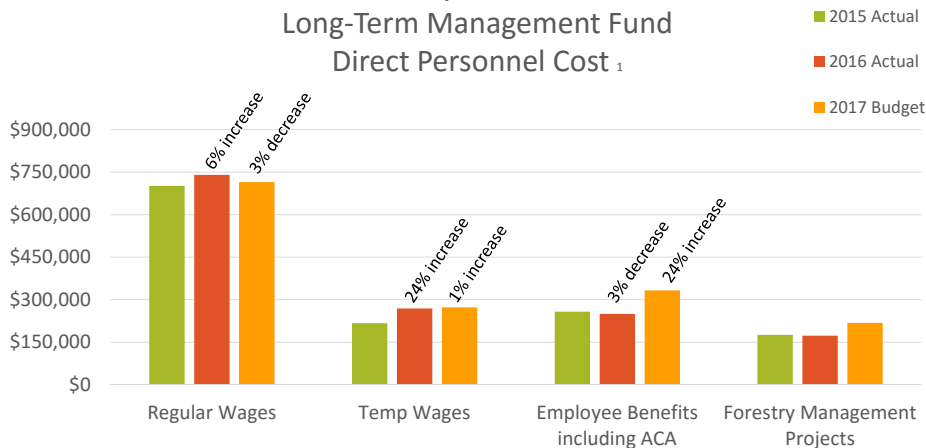
- Ramsay Shockey
- Hermit Park
- Big Thompson
- Lions Park
- Red Mountain
- River Bluff
- Redtail Ridge
- Devil's Backbone
- Chimney Hollow
- Eagle's Nest
- Longview
- Horsetooth Mountain



\$ 3,527,587

3

## Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Direct Personnel Cost <sup>1</sup>



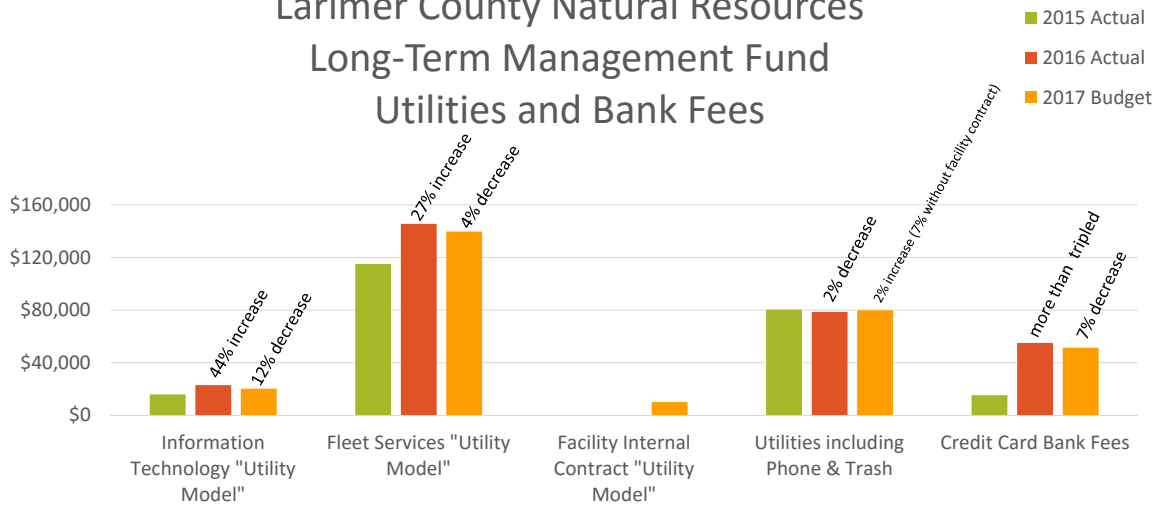
<sup>1</sup> Direct Personnel cost includes those expenses charged directly to the Open Lands Districts including regular and seasonal wages with benefits and the Forestry Management (grant funded) Programs, it excludes shared cost pools (administration, visitor services, resource ecologist, weed allocation, trail allocation, volunteer/education and marketing)

### What were the Drivers Behind the Direct Personnel Cost Increases?

- Resource Specialist (Red Mountain District) position over lap in 2016 due to re-organization
- Department's seasonal wage scale was increased in 2016 to remain competitive
- Health Coverage as well as the other benefits cost increased County-wide in 2017

4

## Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Utilities and Bank Fees

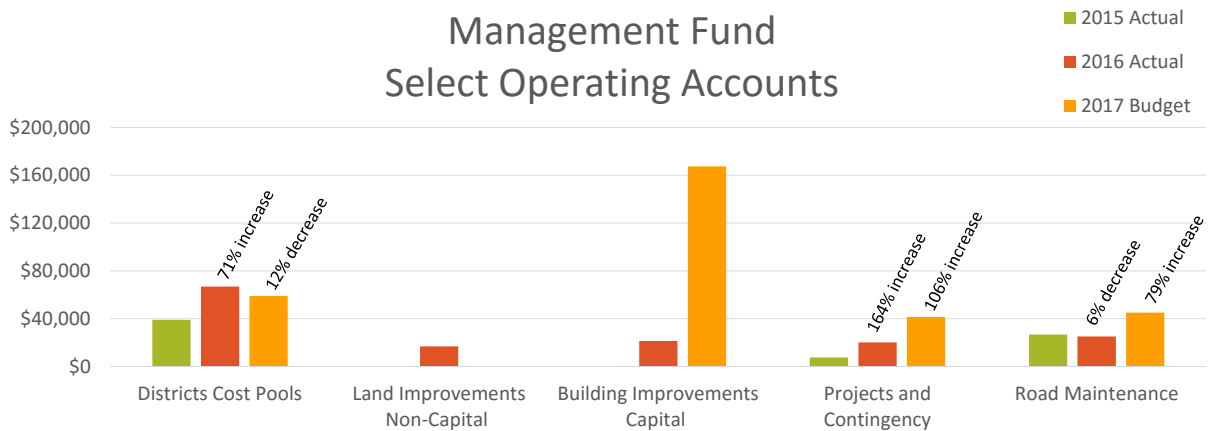


What were the drivers behind the increases?

- County-wide mandatory Information Technology, Fleet and Facility "Utility Models" were implemented
- The Department has little control over and few alternatives for external utilities and bank fees

5

## Larimer County Natural Resources Long-Term Management Fund Select Operating Accounts

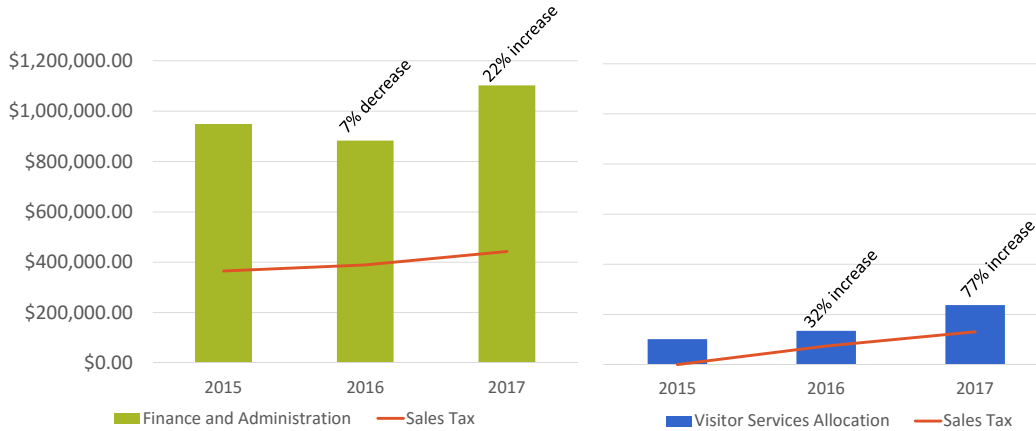


What were the drivers behind the increases?

- District Pools cost increased with the addition of the new Horsetooth Information Center
- One-time maintenance projects vary by year and need (Soderberg Trailhead and Hermit Caretaker House, etc.)
- Road Maintenance needs and cost are affected by flood restoration, closures, weather and partnerships

6

## Larimer County Natural Resources Resource Management Shared Pools

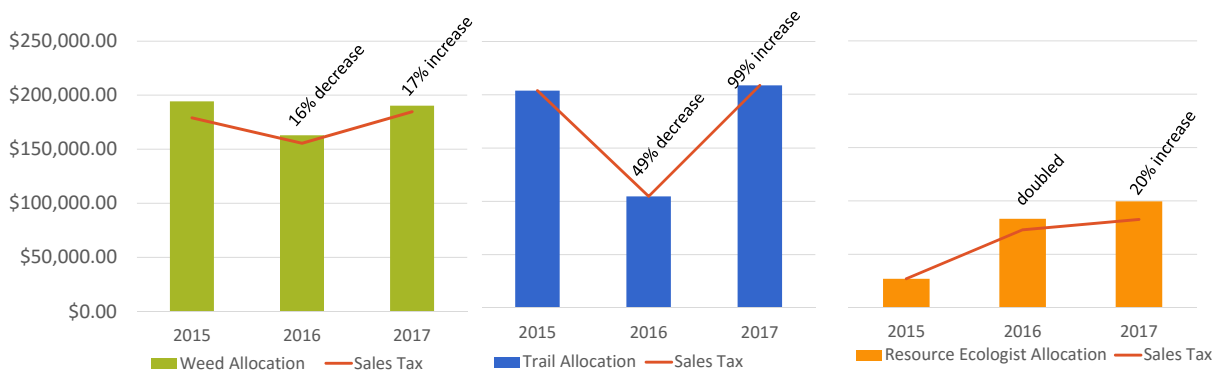


### What were the drivers behind the increases?

- Finance includes unfilled positions, insurance increases, remodeling, ADA review and public works pool
- Visitor Service position filled and cost allocation pool created between Parks and Open Lands

7

## Larimer County Natural Resources Resource Management Shared Pools



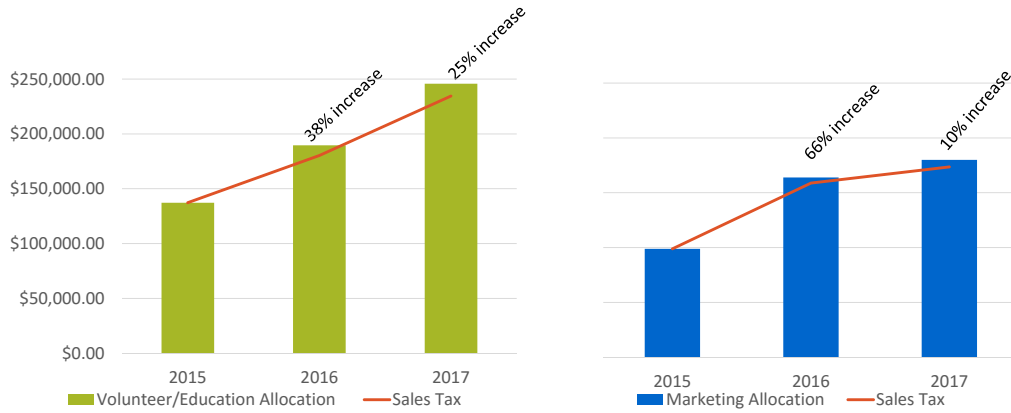
### What were the drivers behind the increases?

- Weeds experienced Finance allocation reduction, and increases in staffing, landscaping, software, chemicals and Fleet allocations
- Trail maintenance was postponed in some areas to work on new trails and FEMA restoration projects
- Resource Ecologist went from part-time temp to full-time regular staff and seasonal part-time temp added

8



## Larimer County Natural Resources Outreach Shared Pools

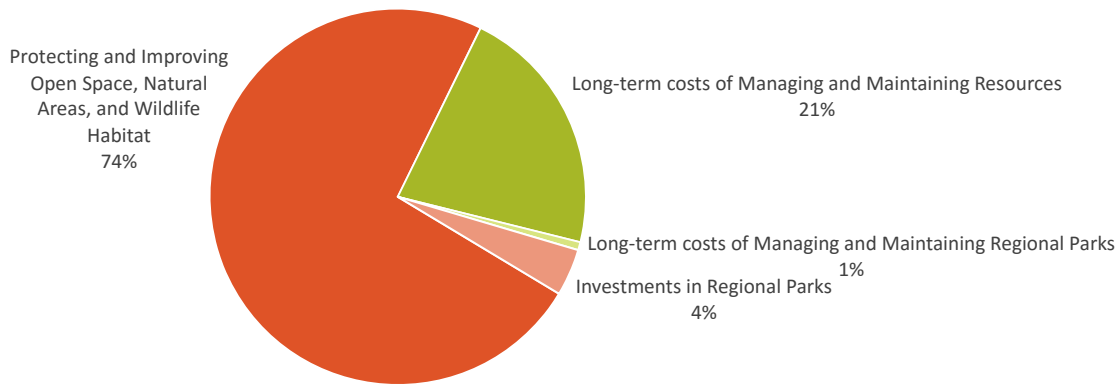


What were the drivers behind the increases?

- Volunteer/Education - Educational Specialist allocation adjusted and increase in temp staffing
- Marketing – Community Relations position filled, increase in printing and general marketing expenses

9

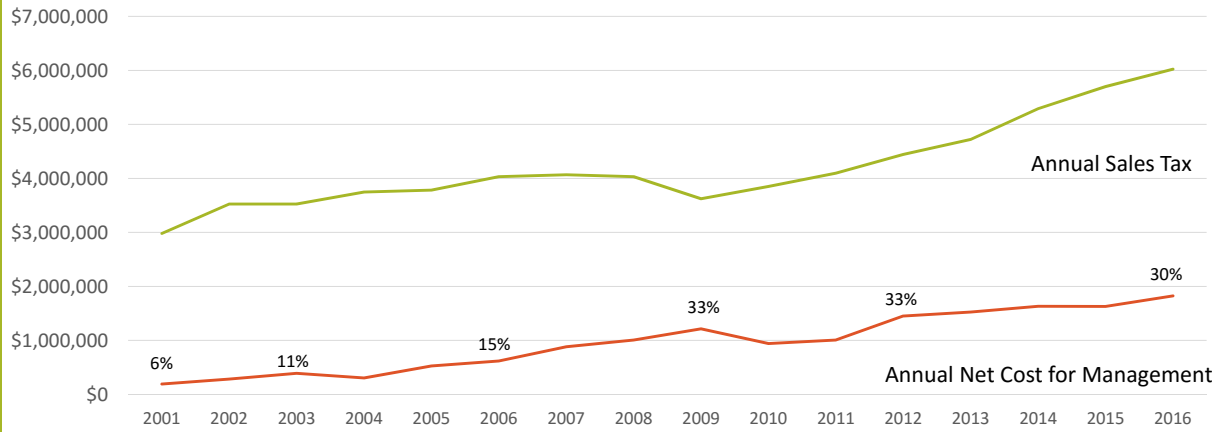
## Larimer County Department of Natural Resources Sales Tax Expenses from 1996 through 2017



\$ 80,038,000

10

## Larimer County Department of Natural Resources Percent of Sales Tax Used Annually for Managing and Maintaining Resources



# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

2017-2018

Core Team:

Kerri Rollins, Jenn Almstead, Steve Gibson,  
Mark Caughlan, and Zac Wiebe

# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

Senior Leadership Team Major Goal for 2017

*"To better understand our users at different locations"*

Direction: Pilot 1 or 2 locations in 2017 and complete for all locations by  
the end of 2019.

Core Team:

Kerri Rollins - Project lead  
Jenn Almstead - Project manager  
Steve Gibson - Red Mountain District Manager  
Mark Caughlan - Horsetooth District Manager  
Zac Wiebe - Resource Specialist II

# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

## 2017-18 Pilot Locations

### Visitor Counts:

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space  
Red Mountain Open Space  
Horsetooth Reservoir



Visitor Satisfaction Surveys:  
Horsetooth Mountain Open Space  
Red Mountain Open Space



# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

## Visitor Count Objectives:

### Horsetooth Mountain Open Space & Red Mountain Open Space:

- To accurately estimate total number of visitors annually and develop recommendations about frequency of subsequent counts
- To understand where and how deep visitors go within the trail systems to help identify the most traveled trails with approximate number of each user type
- To accurately estimate the number of vehicles frequenting each property, how often parking spaces at trailheads of varying sizes to turn over and how often the parking lots reach capacity, and to see how many vehicles are turned away at peak capacity times
- To accurately estimate the total number of backcountry campers at HTMOS

### Horsetooth Reservoir:

- To accurately estimate total number of visitors annually and develop recommendations about frequency of subsequent counts
- To understand how many users and types of users travel on the Foothills Trail, east of Horsetooth Reservoir
- To accurately estimate the number of vehicles frequenting the property, and how often the parking lots at Inlet Bay, South Bay, Rotary Park, Sunrise, Skyline, and Satanka turn over and how often the parking lots reach capacity and how many vehicles are turned away during peak capacity times.

# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

## Trail Counter



## Vehicle Counter



## Wildlife Camera

Proposed equipment is not permanent!

# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

## Visitor Survey Objectives:

### Horsetooth Mountain Open Space & Red Mountain Open Space:

- To better understand the demographics and types of user groups
- To better understand capacity of properties based on crowding and conflicts between users and if any properties are being avoided and why
- To better understand visitor use needs and satisfaction of trailhead and trail facilities

### In Partnership With:



Human Dimensions of Natural Resources



### Volunteers Secured to-date:

- 5 -Senior Tax Workers - 172 hours available
- 5-10 - Volunteer program
- 2 - CSU Students
- 3 - Friends of Larimer County

# Larimer County Natural Resources Visitor Use Study

## Six Month Full time Seasonal Position:

Dedicated solely to the study which will allow for consistent, high quality information without overburdening other seasonal park staff members during the peak visitor months.

- Fill gaps to administer satisfaction surveys which cannot otherwise be filled by volunteers
- Download, collect and record equipment data (trail/vehicle counters, wildlife cameras, regularly)
- Conduct observational surveys
- Coordinate with volunteers, replenish volunteer bins & supplies
- Assist with volunteer trainings
- Data entry from completed surveys