

## Conservation Corps crews working on new trail at Hermit Park

For the Trail-Gazette  
Estes Park Trail-Gazette

Posted: Fri Jul 21 10:39:33 MDT 2017

Members of the Larimer County Conservation Corps are assisting with work on a new trail system coming to Hermit Park Open Space. Two LCCC land crews and one LCCC sawyer crew are spending two weeks each working on the Limber Pine Trail, part of a roughly 6-mile, multi-use trail system coming to the open space 2 miles southeast of Estes Park. This is the second year that the crews are assisting with trail work at Hermit Park.

"This is a great experience for local youth to be engaged in a large-scale trail construction project," said Joel Schwab, trails and open lands project supervisor for Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. "They are a part of creating a trail that will be open for multiple uses, providing people with an opportunity to get outside and explore the amazing natural wonders of Hermit Park."

The sawyer crew is felling, bucking and cutting limbs from trees in the trail corridor, opening up the area for the trail to be constructed. Schwab said the Limber Pine Trail traverses through thick mixed conifer forest, so having the sawyer crew dedicated to clearing the corridor of trees will save his trail crew more than a month of work.

The land crews are helping to build portions of the trail by hand in the rugged terrain of Hermit Park.

"It's a slow and difficult process," Schwab said. "The land crews will give a big boost to our own trail crew."

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) awarded \$40,200 in funds to provide LCCC's work at Hermit Park in 2017.

Funds for this project at Hermit Park were awarded by GOCO, which receives a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds, to the Colorado Youth Corps Association for use by accredited youth corps, such as the LCCC. The goal of the program is to employ youth and young adults (ages 14-25) throughout the state on critical outdoor recreation and land conservation projects in partnership with local governments and open space agencies.

The Colorado Youth Corps Association stated that 200 Colorado young people ages 14-25 will get jobs this summer through the program, and 28 of those young people are working hard at Hermit Park. Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is grateful for their work and the program, Schwab said.

To learn more about the trail-building project, contact Schwab at (970) 498-5609 or jschwab@larimer.org.

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## Larimer County may share C-BT water from farm with Broomfield

### Water agreement up for approval in coming weeks

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Fri Jul 21 17:07:18 MDT 2017

Larimer County is proposing a \$3.9 million water-sharing agreement with Broomfield for the Malchow Farm it purchased southwest of Berthoud last year.

The Department of Natural Resources bought the 211-acre farm and its associated water for \$8.4 million in 2016 to preserve the property, to maintain its agricultural heritage and with the goal of entering into the first water-sharing agreement of its sort in the state.

"It's novel," said Kerri Rollins, open lands director for the Larimer County department. "It's the future. You know how water is in our state. If we don't start sharing it, we're going to have winners and losers. This is a win-win."

With the purchase of the three-generation family farm, Larimer County also received 240 shares of Colorado-Big Thompson water and 16 shares of Handy Ditch water.

The goal at the time of purchase was, with the help of a \$178,425 grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, to create an agreement to share the farm's water with a municipality in dry years — one of the methods of water conservation that is encouraged by the Colorado Water Plan.

This week, the county announced that it reached an agreement with the city and county of Broomfield that officials say fits that bill.

"It'll be the first of its kind to be a perpetual sharing agreement from agriculture to municipal," said Rollins.

If approved, Broomfield will pay Larimer County \$3.9 million, which is nearly half of what the county paid for the farm. In return, Broomfield will receive 115 shares of the Colorado-Big Thompson Water outright and, in dry years, be able to use another 80 shares of that water.

"It's a package deal," said Rollins.

During those dry years, which can be no more than three in a rolling 10-year period, the farmer that is leasing the land will either plant dryland crops or fallow some fields to make up for the water loss, according to the county.

Admittedly, the county is selling not quite half of the farm's Colorado-Big Thompson water outright. However, research by a consultant shows that with the purchase of another six shares of ditch water and planting different crops, the farm will be able to stay in full production without that water, Rollins said.

"The corn doesn't care if its C-BT or ditch water," Rollins said, explaining that C-BT is a higher quality of water for drinking, not necessarily needed for crops.

The grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board paid for a team of water experts to help Larimer County negotiate the water-sharing agreement, which was recommended as a way to protect farmland and as an alternative to a "buy-and-dry" philosophy.

Initially, Larimer County looked for a partner within the county but ultimately found the best match in Broomfield, Rollins said. Because Colorado-Big Thompson water is managed by Northern Water, the agreement could be with any city within the conservancy district's boundaries, she said.

Before the agreement is official, several boards must approve the partnership. It is on the agenda in Broomfield for July 25 and for Northern Water's board on Aug. 10. Larimer County's Open Lands Advisory Board will vote Thursday on whether to recommend the agreement, and the county commissioners will vote upon it on Aug. 1.

Once all the votes are in, Broomfield would own the 115 units of water, and the sharing agreement on the 80 units would start on Jan. 1.

Pamela Johnson: 970-699-5405, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com, www.twitter.com/RHPamelaJ.

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## River Bluffs trailhead to close for 2 months

 Reporter-Herald Staff  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Wed Jul 19 16:17:21 MDT 2017

The trailhead at River Bluffs Open Space will be closed temporarily starting Friday, July 21, because of construction on County Road 32E.

River Bluffs Open Space, which features a section of the Poudre River Trail, is located between Fort Collins and Windsor. The trail through the open space will remain open during construction, but access to the trailhead will close starting at the bridge over the Cache la Poudre River.

River access will also be closed during construction.

The trailhead is expected to reopen in mid-September.

The only road access to the trailhead is off of County Road 32E, so the trailhead will reopen once road access to it is restored.

For information, contact Steve Gibson, Red Mountain District Manager, at 498-5621 or [sgibson@larimer.org](mailto:sgibson@larimer.org).

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## Colorado Parks and Wildlife urges boaters to be cautious about mussels

Reporter-Herald Staff  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted:Wed Jul 19 16:18:37 MDT 2017

Colorado Parks and Wildlife reports success with its program aimed at keeping quagga and zebra mussels out of the state, but waters in several surrounding states are infested with mussels, causing a potential problem for Colorado.

But this spring, boats brought into Colorado from Arizona, Kentucky, Kansas, Minnesota, Texas and Utah were found to be infested with mussels, according to a press release from the agency.

"Boaters are warned that it is against the law to enter Colorado with a boat that holds any aquatic nuisance species," the release said. "Boats must be cleaned, drained, dried and completely free of aquatic nuisance species before entering the state."

State law requires that boats coming in from out-of-state be inspected prior to launching in a Colorado lake or reservoir.

"Owners can be fined and their watercraft impounded if they bring an infested boat into the state," the release said.

The agency said mussels can survive for months in wet environments in a boat, including in and on wells, bilges, equipment lockers, anchors and engines.

Nearby states with severe mussel infestations include: Arizona, California, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Utah. In addition, waters in almost all states in the Midwest, on the east coast and in the south are infested with mussels.

The agency said Lake Powell is a particular concern for Colorado, because many people keep their boats at Lake Powell for part of the year and then come to cool Colorado for the summer months, and some Colorado boaters also go to Lake Powell for long weekends, then return home to boat in local reservoirs.

Anyone who has taken their boat out of the water from a mussel-positive state in the last year should remove all vegetation and mud from the boat, trailer, all equipment and lines, and remove the drain plug, the agency said, adding, "before taking your boat to any water in Colorado, be sure it has been cleaned, drained and dried — even if it's never left the state."

Colorado boaters also should be cautious about buying boats, engines and equipment from out-of-state.

For more information and for a list of all inspection stations in Colorado, visit the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website, [cpw.co.us](http://cpw.co.us).

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## Alleged habitual vandal, graffiti artist arrested after multi-agency investigation

**Jeremy Foreman, 39, of Bellvue, was arrested by Larimer County rangers last month**

**Reporter-Herald Staff**  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Tue Jul 18 09:01:46 MDT 2017

A man suspected of leaving graffiti on structures at Horsetooth Reservoir as well as on county road signs and at other city of Fort Collins natural areas over the past four years was arrested last month for his alleged role in a March vandalism incident.

A press release from the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources sent Monday said 39-year-old Bellvue resident Jeremy Foreman was arrested June 16 on suspicion of felony criminal mischief for reportedly spray painting a dumpster and restroom on the east side of Horsetooth Reservoir.

The graffiti was left in March 2017, the release said, and Larimer County Rangers reportedly captured photographs of a man that were shared with local law enforcement as well as the public via social media.

With the public's assistance, the man in the photos was identified as Foreman, the release said.

A multi-agency investigation involving Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Larimer County Road and Bridge, city of Fort Collins Natural Areas and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation reportedly connected Foreman to graffiti done in the same style in several areas over the past four years.

Foreman was booked into the county jail and posted a \$500 bond for his release the same day of his arrest, the release said.

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## RH Line calls published July 26, 2017

Posted: Tue Jul 25 23:49:33 MDT 2017

### Loveland Sewer Smell

"I have lived in Loveland for over 17 years. The sewer smell has never as bad as it has been the last four years."

### Cory Gardner

"In Monday's RH Line, a caller compared Cory Gardner with Lucifer. In the last 8 to 10 years, the Republicans have won back the House, the Senate and the presidency. Do you think the nasty attitude shown by democrats has anything to do with this? I do."

### Dogs in grocery stores

"The Health Department should enforce a law to prohibit dogs in grocery stores and grocery carts. I don't want dogs in my grocery cart. No shirt, no shoes, no animals, no service. Please enforce this for our health reasons. Thank you."

### Trump Boy Scouts Speech

"I am sick this morning, sick at heart. First our nation is referred to as a swamp and now it is referred to as a sewer and so on by our president. How much more, how much more are we going to take? I feel so badly for our nation's capital. It's none of those things and our president saying offensive things in front of the Boy Scouts Jamboree. I mean how many more things, how many more things and then he gets on for his press conference to say that his son-in-law..."

"People we are really in trouble in this country. Just when you think it can't get any worse. The president of the United States gave a speech to the Boy Scouts of America yesterday and the left, the Democrats and the media, you might as call them one group — likened it to a Nazi youth rally. We are a nation gone under, people. You had better wake up, thank you."

### Larimer County Open Lands

This is in response to the article about Larimer County Open Lands and the Malchow property and the sale of water. I'm very concerned that Larimer County Open Lands is doing exactly what they claim they're trying not to do to protect agricultural property with their action of selling water at a discount to the city and county of Broomfield. They are in essence acting as a buy and dry conspirator and this property will nonetheless turn to weeds with this water being taken away."

### Beech and 29th

"Instead of a traffic signal on Beech Street and 29th, where there is a downhill grade to which will be trouble for rear end collisions when it snows, why not another roundabout that the city of Loveland seems to love? Just curious."

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# In the City: Help rid Fort Collins of noxious weeds

Robin MacDonald Published 7:00 a.m. MT July 26, 2017 | Updated 8:28 a.m. MT July 26, 2017



(Photo: Courtesy of the city of Fort Collins)

Noxious weeds are non-native plants that threaten our natural and agricultural lands and disrupt native ecosystems. Colorado currently lists 77 noxious weeds in three different categories, with another 24 species on a watch list.

Many of these weeds were introduced as ornamental plants because of their attractiveness but were later found to be aggressively invading natural areas and displacing the native plants. Some are poisonous to livestock and humans.

When you think of noxious weeds, you probably imagine Canada Thistle. Maybe you picture Leafy Spurge. Locally these are our most common noxious weeds and it is a smart idea to keep them out of our yards. Their

root systems can grow to more than 15 feet long!

The State of Colorado requires property owners to eradicate "A List" weeds. Purple Loosestrife, Cypress Spurge and Myrtle Spurge have been on the A List for some time now and are nearly eradicated locally. Newest additions to the A List include the Knotweeds: Giant, Bohemian and Japanese, and Hairy Willow Herb. There are currently 25 noxious weeds on the A List.

The B List contains noxious weeds that the state indicates should not be allowed to spread. Examples are Canada and Musk Thistles, Dalmatian Toadflax, Hoary Cress (whitetop) and Leafy Spurge.

List C contains common noxious weeds that may be regulated by local jurisdictions and supported by the state. The most common ones in Fort Collins include Common Burdock, Common Mullein, Downy Brome (cheatgrass), Field Bindweed, Perennial Sowthistle and Puncturevine (goatheads). Fort Collins is known for its animal and bike-friendly attitude. Please be aware that some of these noxious weeds are able to puncture bike tires, injure pets' feet or attach to their fur.

You can learn more about these and other noxious weeds online at <http://bit.ly/cityweeds> (<http://bit.ly/cityweeds>). The site includes fact sheets and multiple photos of each weed.

The presence of railroads, open ditches, creeks and rivers increases the likelihood of noxious weeds spreading. If you observe noxious weeds, please contact the appropriate jurisdiction:

- Larimer County Weed District is a wonderful local resource. They can help with a variety of control and eradication methods and offer cost share and grants for those that qualify. You can reach them at 970-498-5768.
- To report noxious weeds in Fort Collins, please call the Nuisance Hotline at 970-416-2200 or submit a request at [www.fcgov.com/accessfortcollins](http://www.fcgov.com/accessfortcollins) (<http://www.fcgov.com/accessfortcollins>).

Robin MacDonald is a code compliance inspector with the City of Fort Collins. Reach her at 970-221-6771 or [rmacdonald@fcgov.com](mailto:rmacdonald@fcgov.com)


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## Water deal perpetuates 'buy and dry' policies

 Larry Lempka

Guest Columnist  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Wed Jul 26 21:28:14 MDT 2017


Larimer County Open Lands has indicated with the purchase of the Malchow property southwest of Berthoud that they have made a valiant attempt to save valuable agricultural land from future development and will sustain agriculture for perpetuity.

Unfortunately, they have done nothing more with this proposal than to sell water to Broomfield as a perpetual act, just like thousands of acres of prime farmland have perished within the county as has been done by developers in the past.

The proposed sale of CB-T water rights to Broomfield, at less than present value, indicates the gruesome plan that the Open Lands Board has to "buy and dry" agricultural farmland within Larimer County.

They purchased the farm at what most nonagriculturalists think is an extraordinary price, which was actually less than a developer would pay because the family wanted to see the farm glisten and continue as a farm. A willing buyer and seller. But now the county wants to sell the transferable CB-T water to a municipality instead of offering it to other agricultural businesses at a discount when the municipality has the ability to pay a premium for future growth. On top of that, the farm will be dried up and the farmer will be forced to raise common low-price wheat or nothing at all in dry years, allowing weeds to flourish and ruin the incentive to grow valuable crops that require more irrigation and could possibly offer a higher return (in which the county could share the value), but instead dismantle the farm.

This will also damage downstream users that would reuse the runoff water from the Malchow farm to recharge the Little Thompson River, allowing for more water to be used by other farmers and municipalities and further drying up the river, causing increased warming of the water and damaging the habitat of fish, birds and flora as well as creating more algae to burden other water users downstream.

 comment by the county when the property was proposing the purchase was, win, win, win. The only winner in this deal is Broomfield city and county to allow additional growth in their region and again not break the cycle of "buy and dry" that Larimer County Open Lands is trying to alter.

Please raise your voice to stop this infuriating transgression and protect our valuable land and slow growth, at least this time.

*Larry Lempka is the district manager of the Big Thompson Conservation District.*

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## Lightning strikes thrice on Larimer County open lands

### Phones, computers out, but Hermit Park open for business

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Fri Jul 28 16:07:51 MDT 2017

Lightning has apparently struck Larimer County open spaces three times this summer, sparking a small fire, destroying a camera and most recently wiping out telephone and internet service at Hermit Park.

"They say things strike in threes so hopefully we're done," Chris Fleming, operations manager for Larimer County's Department of Natural Resources said at a recent open lands advisory board meeting.

Thursday and Friday, phone lines and computers were out at Hermit Park, so campers and hikers were asked to contact the main natural resources office (619-4570) with questions.

County officials believe the issue started with a lightning strike that took out Century Link service to the park and to neighboring customers, but Century Link could not immediately confirm any outages or the suspected cause.

Hermit Park is still open to campers and hikers, but all paperwork and reservations are being completed off line.

"Our computers and phones are still out here," Fleming said Friday. "We're just doing it old school, and everything's on paper now."

On Sunday, a lightning strike is believed to have sparked a small wildfire at Chimney Hollow, the site of a future reservoir and county park located west of Loveland near Carter Lake. Crews held the fire to 1.5 acres.

And just over a month ago, lightning took out the parking lot camera that was installed at the Devil's Backbone to give residents an idea if the spaces are full. The strike destroyed the camera just three days after it went live, about five weeks ago. It has since been replaced and is up and running at [www.larimer.org/naturalresources/bbone-webcam.cfm](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/bbone-webcam.cfm).

Pamela Johnson: 970-699-5405, [johnsonp@reporter-herald.com](mailto:johnsonp@reporter-herald.com), [www.titter.com/RHPamelaJ](http://www.titter.com/RHPamelaJ).

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## Larimer approves water sharing agreement with Broomfield to keep farm in production

By Pamela Johnson

*Reporter-Herald Staff Writer*  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Tue Aug 01 15:19:47 MDT 2017

FORT COLLINS — Larimer County is leading the state with the first perpetual water sharing agreement that keeps a farm in production and provides water for municipal use.

"This is a great new idea, and it's going to allow us to have a greater hand in making sure agricultural land stays in production," Commissioner Tom Donnelly said shortly before the elected commissioners approved the water agreement 3-0 on Tuesday.

"This is the first step in exciting work that can be done for years to come."

Following the lead of citizens who, in recent public outreach, expressed an interest in the county preserving agriculture and water, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources spent \$8.4 million in 2016 to buy the Malchow family farm and its associated water. The county is now calling the land the Little Thompson Farm because of its proximity to the river of that name.

The goal was to preserve the land as a working farm and to offset the cost of doing so with a water-sharing agreement, which is also a method the Colorado Water Plan endorses to stop simple "buy and dry" of farmland by municipalities that need the water to handle growth.

Extensive negotiations and studies by experts in agriculture, finance and water led to partnership agreement between Larimer County and the city and county of Broomfield. Experts made sure the farm could stay viable under the agreement by looking at water supply, economics and historic weather patterns.

That agreement, which was approved by Larimer County on Tuesday, basically sells Broomfield 115 shares of the farm's Colorado-Big Thompson water outright, allows the municipality to use another 80 during three dry years out of every 10, and preserves 45 shares for the farm use.

The water that will stay on the farm — a mix of Colorado-Big Thompson and additional shares of Handy Ditch water — will be enough to keep the farm profitable and in production, growing corn and sugar beets in wet years and dryland crops in dry years, according to information from extensive studies.

For its part of the agreement, Broomfield will pay the county \$3.7 million for the water. The price includes paying market value for the 115 shares that it will buy outright and 40 percent of market value for the 80 units that it can use only three out of every 10 years.

"It's like a time share," said Commissioner Steve Johnson. "They only get it for 30 percent of the time. They're not going to pay the whole price of the house because they can only live in it 30 percent of the time."

Yet, they agreed to pay 40 percent instead of 30 percent to ensure the water supply when needed, noted Kerri Rollins, the county's open lands director.

The municipality will be able to pull the 80 units of water in three dry years out of every 10, and the rest of the time, the water will remain on the farm to irrigate crops. During the years that the water leaves the farm, Broomfield agreed reimburse the farmer that is leasing the land from the county the cost of that farm lease to help keep the farm profitable in dry years.

Under the agreement, Larimer County will receive another \$100,000 from a grant from the Gates Family Foundation and \$52,750 from the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

This type of water sharing agreement is encouraged by the Colorado Water Plan as a way to protect farmland from the typical "buy and dry" that is occurring with growing municipal need across Colorado.

In fact, Larimer County officials noted that if the Malchow family had not wanted to sell to Larimer County to keep their family farm in production, buyers were lined up to pay top dollar just for the water.

"This water would be in the hands of a municipality right now if not for Larimer County and this plan that has been in the works for several years and this family who could have sold this property," Donnelly said.

A team of experts looked at historic weather data, financial models and water supply to determine if the farm could stay viable under this agreement, and deemed that it could.

With this model in place, Larimer County and state water officials hope this agreement, the first of its kind in the state, will result in more farmers and cities following suit instead of simply selling the water and taking the land out of production.

"We've seen what happens if we don't do something like this," Johnson said.

"The state's water plan calls for innovative solutions like this. I'm very proud that Larimer County is the first entity to produce an agreement like this that allows us to keep water on a farm."

*Pamela Johnson: 970-699-5405, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com*

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# Growing Colorado community buys water from protected farm

August 2, 2017

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LOVELAND, Colo. (AP) — A growing Colorado community will get some of its water from a farm that will continue operating under a deal that's believed to be the first of its kind in the state.

Larimer County commissioners voted Tuesday to sell and lease some of the water rights of a county-owned farm to the city and county of Broomfield for \$3.7 million. The Loveland Reporter-Herald reports the farm will still have enough water to grow corn and sugar beets in wet years.

Larimer County bought the farm last year for \$8.4 million to keep it operating, with an eye toward entering into a water sharing deal.

The Colorado Water Plan encourages such deals as a way to prevent what's known as "buy and dry" — when municipalities buy farmland just for the water, removing them from agricultural production.

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Information from: Loveland Daily Reporter-Herald, <http://www.reporterherald.com/>

# Multiuse trail opens at Hermit Park

## Limber Pines Trail open to hikers, horses and mountain bikes

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Wed Aug 02 19:42:04 MDT 2017

Limber pines are a native Colorado tree whose name is pulled from the suppleness of its branches with needles so pliable they can be tied in knots.

Stands of these pines along with ponderosa and conifer and groves of aspen surround the brand new trail at Hermit Park Open Space, a multi-use path named for that very tree.

"The wildflowers are pretty amazing along the trail," said Chris Fleming, operations manager for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources overseeing Hermit Park and other sites.

Limber Pines is the third trail in Hermit Park and the first that is a multiuse path open to horses and mountain bikes as well as hikers.

The first half of the Limber Pines Trail opened two weeks ago, the culmination of two summers of trail building by the Larimer County trail crew with help from many volunteer groups. The 2.4-mile trail kicks off at the group picnic area in Hermit Park and loops around the perimeter of the site, though it also can be accessed from the equestrian campground.

The second half of the trail is under construction with plans to be finished next spring, continuing along the perimeter of the property.

Hermit Park, which was once a private haven for Hewlett-Packard employees, was purchased by Larimer County in 2007 and opened to the public in 2008 for camping and hiking with rental cabins, campsites and a camping loop specifically designed and built for equestrians.

Located just southeast of Estes Park, Hermit Park is comprised of 1,362 acres of pine forest and wetland meadows with wildlife, wildflowers and a splash of colorful history.

Until the Limber Pines Trail, the only hiking trails in the open space area were the Kruger Rock Trail, which crews built before Hermit Park opened, and a connector to the Homestead Meadows Trail, which is on U.S. Forest Service land.

All three trails start in the same location, at the group picnic area, but the county hopes to add new separate trailheads in the future.

The Homestead Meadows Trail stretches along the Roosevelt National Forest on its way to a historic homestead site. A new connector trail, 1.1 miles, from Hermit Park to that path, called Moose Meadow, is now open.

The Kruger Rock Trail stretches less than half a mile on Hermit Park and then continues 1.25 miles to Kruger Rock, again on Forest Service land. It offers a route with majestic mountain views and a vista of the continental divide.

The meandering Limber Pines Trail is on the opposite side of the ridge from Kruger Rock and offers the sights and sounds of the interior of the park itself.

When it is complete, Limber Pines will stretch six miles along the perimeter of the Hermit Park property, a journey that remains fairly steady in elevation, and offers views of the park and its meadow. So far, a 2.4-mile stretch is complete and open, according to a trail map.

This new trail was included in the management plan for Hermit Park and fills a need fueled by demand. Hermit Park and other county recreation areas are filled to capacity during summer weekends with visitation, like that at nearby Rocky Mountain National Park, increasing every year.

Work on the new multiuse trail began last year and has involved volunteers from area businesses, mountain biking groups and trail-building specialists. Also, crews from the Larimer County Conservation Corps were hired two summers in a row to help remove trees and build the trail. This year, a \$40,200 Great Outdoors Colorado grant covered the cost of two land crews and one sawyer crew. Sawyers specialize in cutting down trees.

"This is a great experience for local youth to be engaged in a large-scale trail construction project," Joel Schwab, Larimer County's trails and open lands project supervisor, said in a press release. "They are a part of creating a trail that will be open for multiple uses, providing people with an opportunity to get outside and explore the amazing natural wonders of Hermit Park."

Though peak visitation is June through September, Hermit Park opens each year on March 1, weather permitting, and closes in December.

*Pamela Johnson: 970-699-5405, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com, www.twitter.com/RHPamelaJ.*

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## Editorial: Water-sharing deal offers good example

Posted: Sat Aug 05 20:42:58 MDT 2017

When Colorado officials drafted a water plan for the state's future, it contemplated that this state will continue to experience heavy population growth — especially on the northern Front Range — for several decades.

Clearly, under current levels of water storage and usage, there won't be enough available water for all users when the state's water supply is extrapolated for a couple of million more people.

One element of that plan has leapt from the abstract to reality — a water-sharing agreement between municipalities and agricultural users to ensure farming in the state remains a top industry and land use.

Last week, Larimer County and City and County of Broomfield officials announced an agreement that will create a sharing arrangement between the two municipalities for Colorado-Big Thompson shares on a preserved open space farm along the Little Thompson River between Longmont and Berthoud.

Under the agreement, Larimer County agrees to sell some of the water rights associated with a piece of protected farmland to Broomfield, and then another portion is set aside as a "time share" of sorts for water rights: three out of every 10 years, Broomfield will be able to access more of the water rights currently associated with the farmland. That means during the other years, the farm will be able to maintain higher value crops such as corn and sugar beets, and during the dry years it can support dryland farming crops such as winter wheat.

This is an important first step, because it can pave the way for other similar arrangements between farmers and municipal or industrial users in the future. Instead what is derisively referred to as "buy and dry," in which all of a farm's water rights are transferred to a different use, local municipalities can help to keep those farms in higher-value production and in the process reduce the threat of urban sprawl across all the remaining farmland in Northern Colorado.

Agricultural users and municipalities throughout the state should take a closer look at the Broomfield/Larimer agreement to see how it was completed and how it might prove beneficial in other parts of Colorado.

As more people move to the state, water will be an increasingly important variable to how that growth happens. This agreement offers an example for how it can work.

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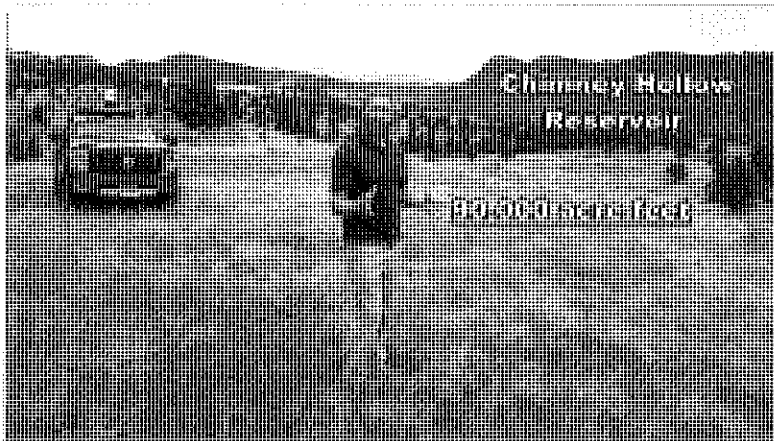
# New reservoir to be built in Larimer County

Cory Reppenhagen, KUSA 1:27 PM, MDT August 15, 2017



KUSA - Work has started on the new Chimney Hollow Reservoir in Larimer County. Final approval was granted for a 90,000 acre foot reservoir in May, and crews are now surveying and drilling at the site, to determine the extent of building materials.

Chimney Hollow will be operated by Northern Water. It is located just west of Carter Lake Reservoir, and is going to be close to the same size of twin to the east. This location was chosen for its proximity to existing Colorado Big Thompson facilities, and because there were no threatened or endangered species, no existing residences to relocate, and they were able to acquire the property from a single owner, Hewlett Packard.



**Cory Reppenhagen**  
@CReppWx

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Nearly 400,000 northern Colorado residents will benefit from this new water supply. Those areas are Broomfield, Longmont, Loveland, Greeley, Erie, Superior, Louisville, Fort Lupton, Lafayette, and the towns in the Central Weld County Water District.

"This project specifically is to make some supplies reliable year in, and year out, for those communities. They will be able to have more of a guarantee that they will be able to pull water from the Windy Gap Project, which today, is not possible. There are some years where there is either no water available, or nowhere to store it," said Brian Werner, spokesperson for Northern Water.

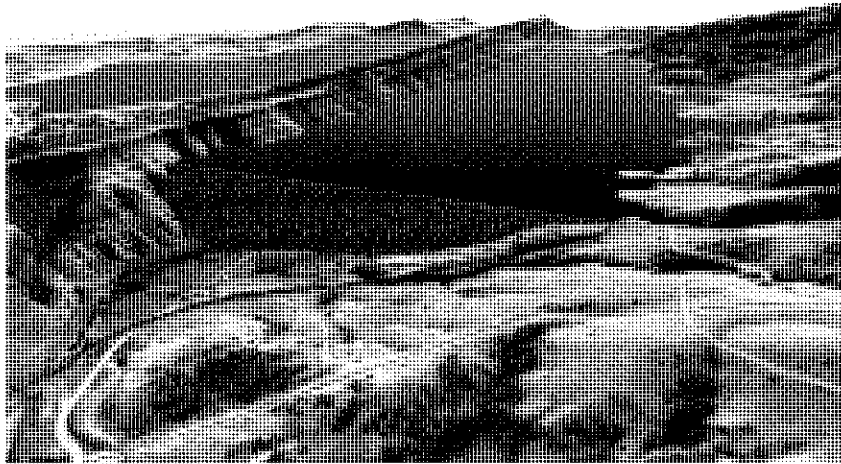
The population of this region is estimated by Northern, Water to double by the year 2050, and is the driving force behind the construction of new water storage.



Contracts will start to get awarded in 2018, and Northern Water says that construction will likely start later next year, or early in 2019. It will be a three to four year build. The next step, which could happen this fall, is to relocate power lines that run through the middle of the property, and to also start clearing the vegetation.

Once construction is complete, they can start filling the reservoir with water. According to Northern Water, that could take several years to fill up.

"There are state regulations on dam safety, on how fast we can bring the water elevation up, so it's sort of fill and seal, before we can go to that next incremental level. It could take 3, or 5, or even 10 years to fill it. A lot is dependent of mother nature as well, with how much water is available," Werner said.



The water will come from the headwaters of the Colorado River, channeled back to the east from Windy Gap Reservoir.

The Chimney Hollow project has already been 14 years in the making. The permitting process began in 2003, and there have been \$15 million spent in studies. The total estimated cost is \$400 million.

The dam is estimated to be about 340 feet tall, which makes it the tallest dam to be built in Colorado since the Morrow Point Dam in Gunnison County back in 1968. Morrow Point is still the largest dam in Colorado at 468 feet. Denver Water has recently received approval to increase the size of Gross Dam, in Boulder County, to 471, which will make that the largest dam once it is finished.

Chimney Hollow Dam could be the first in the United States with an asphalt core. This type has been used in Europe and Canada for many years. The available land material in the area, made asphalt the more cost effective choice. The asphalt will be the inner seal of the dam, but the outside appearance will be more earthy, made of sand and boulders. Arizona has also received approval to build an asphalt core dam, and could be completed about the same time as Colorado's.

Larimer County will be handling the recreation on this new reservoir, and already has some initial plans for hiking, fishing, and boating. It will be a non-motorized boating lake and a day-use area. So far, there are no plans to allow overnight camping.

There had been some opposition to this project, and other proposals to build new reservoirs in Colorado. River conservation groups are concerned about the impacts of further taxing a the Colorado River system. Werner says they are addressing the future of the river, and the future of Colorado's population at the same time.

"We are all for using water more efficiently, and water managers in this state are doing a darn good job of that, but the bottom line is that you have to provide some additional buckets, some additional water storage to meet our future demand, without drying up our agricultural lands," he said.

## Night sky monitoring volunteers sought

by Reporter-Herald Staff  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

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Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, city of Fort Collins and other open space programs in Northern Colorado will coordinate a regionwide effort to measure the quality of our night skies at 10-11 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 23, in designated open space locations.

Volunteers are welcome to help in the effort.

The data collected will help inform night sky education programs and contribute toward efforts to designate some area parks and open spaces as certified dark-sky parks.

Dates for orientation, training and distribution of sky quality meters are to be determined.

Sign up by registering at [offer0.larimer.org](http://offer0.larimer.org) or email Pam at [pmayhew@larimer.org](mailto:pmayhew@larimer.org).

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