

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

The mission of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is to establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.

MINUTES

Scheduled times are subject to change.

Date: July 26, 2018

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers, Civic Center Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO.

Contact: Please contact Emmy at ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Carl Sorrentino	x	Alex Castino	x	Mark Sears (City of Ft. Collins)
David Marvin		Charlie Johnson	x	
Gerry Horak	x	Gary Buffington		
Jason Brothers		Ken Brink	x	
Jeff Hindman		Todd Blomstrom		
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Marilyn Hilgenberg	x	Steve Gibson	x	
Nancy Wallace	x	*Thomas Donnelly		
Peter Kelly	x	Timothy Meyer		
Sherri Valentine	x	Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
Suzan Fritchel	x			
Ken Zornes	x			

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:04 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
 - a. Moving 8. up in front of Updates & Reports
 - b. Adding 5.h.

- c. Moving 5.c. to follow 6.
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
- a. Carl Sorrentino moves to approve, Nancy Wallace seconds, motion passed.
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
- a. Natural Resource events for this month: See <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
 - b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board minutes, go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click 'Subscribe,' and then check the 'Open Lands Advisory Board' box.
 - c. Applications are now open for the 2019 cycle of the Small Grants for Community Partnering program. Individual grant awards are available up to \$3,000 per project. This year, applications will be accepted through a new online form. Grant applications are due Thursday, Aug. 30, 2018, by 5 p.m., with awards announced by March 2019. If you know of an individual, organization, homeowners association or other group with a project that connects people to the land, please direct them to www.larimer.org/small-grants, or have them contact Jennifer Almstead at (970) 619-4569 or jalmstead@larimer.org – Jenn
 - d. Joint invasive exotic tree removal project with City of Loveland completed – Meegan
 - i. \$65k grant, project concluded with 13 Loveland natural areas inventoried. LC staff mapped 4,006 Russian-olives, 2,007 Siberian elms and 149 Tamarisk. On four properties, a contractor removed and applied herbicide to the stumps of 1,585 Russian-olives, 462 Siberian elms and 5 Tamarisk. LC staff will now monitor the removal sites and apply herbicide to any re-sprouts or seedlings for the next five years. Great partnership with Loveland.
 - ii. Marilyn added that Loveland matched \$25-30k into grant, it was a very high volume of large trees, has made a big difference. Contractors did the majority of the work using their own equipment, Casey mapped it out.
 - e. Update on Restoration and Stewardship Specialist position and Education Coordinator position – Meegan
 - i. Interviewed 6 candidates for Restoration and Stewardship Specialist position yesterday, position will be responsible for writing restoration plans, overseeing restoration projects, coordinating resource inventories and monitoring conservation easements. Hope to make decision in a couple of weeks.
 - ii. Advertised Education Coordinator position on Monday, it closes July 31st, have 12 applicants so far.
 - iii. Congratulations to Meegan on her new role as the Open Lands Conservation, Planning & Resource Program Manager! Both of the aforementioned positions will be under Meegan's program.
 - f. Construction of the Long View Trail (connecting Fort Collins' Cathy Fromme Prairie to Loveland's Sunset Vista Natural Area) thru Larimer County's Long View Farm Open Space will be complete in August! Elected officials will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony August 15th, with a public opening August 18th – Meegan
 - i. Everyone involved is excited about the project's completion.

- g. Project in the City of Loveland (Big Thompson Corridor), old St. Louis Natural Area, parcels LC has owned since 70's, LC approached by City to ask if we could grant the parcels to them so that they could make important trail connections and provide neighborhood and school access. BOCC signed IGA with Loveland and will be special warranty deed to them in next 30 days.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Gallegos Property Final Review

- i. Meegan gave history/background of the property, have a great tracking system for recording information about landowners and projects, have sheet on history of Laramie Foothills area (7 page document by month and year of key historical points). In 2004, grant to GOCO, a lot of conservation work launched then (City of Ft. Collins bought Soapstone Prairie, LC bought Red Mountain Open Space, 1st phase of Robert's Ranch conservation easement was acquired). Robert's Ranch 2nd phase started in 2006. In 2007, LC purchased the Gallegos Ranch between Red Mountain and Soapstone. In 2010, between fee purchases and CE's with our partners (Ft. Collins, Cheyenne, The Nature Conservancy, Legacy Land Trust, GOCO and private landowners), LC acquired about 100k acres of private land conservation. When combined with Colorado Parks & Wildlife land and US Forest Service land, it's an additional 110k acres.
- ii. Beauty of the overarching project is unifying the pieces. The Gallegos 800-acre inholding is right in the heart of RMOS and there have been management issues related to that. Property was identified 6 months ago for re-engagement, the process has been fast.
- iii. Recognition of Alex Castino's service with Larimer County as she leaves to work for GOCO, presentation of framed photo of Malchow property. Thank you, Alex!
- iv. Final review of Gallegos. Table Mountain has amazing views, potential recreation options, trail is rugged. Pursuing 50% partnership with the City of Fort Collins. Plan to put conservation easement on this piece as well as the previously purchased Gallegos piece that includes the trailhead. Minerals are severed, water rights for cattle grazing, will reserve rights for agricultural use as appropriate (grazing, haying), passive non-motorized recreation, hunting & fishing. Plan to restore road up to Table Mountain. Asking for \$2,250,000 toward closing which is scheduled for Wednesday.
- v. Member question about whether the \$2.25 million is the full amount or the amount that may be shared with Fort Collins. It was noted that it is the full amount and that it has already gone to the Land Conservation Stewardship Board with their support and will be going to the Fort Collins City Council on August 21st.
- vi. Member question about how it was determined to cost share the property with Fort Collins and comment about the need for a related policy. It was noted that the value of a Conservation Easement is usually 50%, Fort Collins would hold the CE.

- vii. Member question about whether the deal structure can be altered in order to extend the closing to allow Fort Collins to decide. It was noted that the sellers were behind the aggressive closing and Larimer County was accommodating their schedule.
- viii. Member question about whether or not there is a deal with or without the involvement of Fort Collins. It was noted that yes, there will be a deal with or without Fort Collins. Going to BOCC on Tuesday.
- ix. Member comment that paying full price without the Fort Collins partnership would still be worth it.
- x. Member comment that the last decision the board made about the property was to move forward regardless of the partnership. It was noted that that was accurate. Also noted were the challenges for staff with having private ownership in the middle of public lands which would be helped by acquiring the property.
- xi. Member comment in support of moving forward with or without Fort Collins. They have been a great partner over time and it is good to work with the landowners on their preferred schedule. Horsetooth Mountain Open Space was purchased over appraised value and will continue to increase in value as visitation increases due to population growth. Important to move forward now and it will pay off in the end.
- xii. Member question about whether or not Red Mountain is a fee area. It was noted that it is not a fee area. Further member comment about fee areas are not ideal in places where the citizens paid for half of purchase. Goal should be to encourage visitation, particularly for citizens.
- xiii. Discussion of timing of closing/decisions. The sellers were actively meeting with surveyors for plotting 35's. Trailhead access would have been affected by development. Member comment that the trailhead is currently well removed from highly populated areas.
- xiv. Member question about what the acquisitions balance is for this year. It was noted that the Cash Flow was recently reviewed and including the number of projects that have come up and will be included in Executive Session next month AND if Fort Collins does not partner on this deal, the Cash Flow would still be fine through the end of 2018.
- xv. K-Lynn Cameron motions to recommend to BOCC to move forward with this acquisition on the timeline set forth and continue to work with Fort Collins to be a 50/50 partner. Carl Sorrentino comments that he balks at the price but there seems to be enough connections and CE protections for the future that he seconds the motion. Clarification that the motion is to move forward with Fort Collins but the acquisition deal is not contingent on the partnership with Fort Collins. Motion passed without opposition.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Open Space District Reports – Ken

- i. Hermit Park development of Limber Pine Trail and parking, word spreading, all 3 parking lots are grubbed out, area excavated for the trailhead vault, all 3 should be done by the end of August. Port-o-let at end of Homestead Meadows will be replaced with a CDX. Discussing possibility of building a picnic facility by the Saddle in 1-2 years. Fire restrictions lifted for both districts. Crazy Legs event was a success. Good feedback about the Red Mountain trailhead, better care is being taken of the road, more organized this year. Red Mountain cattle trespass update, hoping to find better solution, letter being sent from the brand inspector to owner, Gallegos purchase should also help. Joel and the trail crew did a great job re-routing part of the Horsetooth Mountain trail.
- b. Update on the accomplishments and activities of the 2017 Small Grants for Community Partnering grantees (15 min.) – Jenn
 - i. The program funded 13 community projects throughout Larimer County totaling \$19,217. It is estimated that more than 70,000 people were indirectly served by the awarded projects.
 - ii. Breakdown by category: Category A with \$4,423 – provides or enhances natural areas, including wildlife habitat, river areas and wetlands; Category B with \$0 (no applicants in this category) – public linkages with existing open lands and parks; Category C with \$8,500 – Provides opportunities for environmental education, outdoor recreation or nature interpretation; Category D with \$3,300 – Opportunities for people to connect with the land via agriculture or increased access to open spaces and natural areas; Category E with \$2,994 – Research on Larimer County open spaces.
 - iii. Quantitative project results: Category A – 1,320 linear feet of Little T River restored near Pinewood Springs, 126 acres of noxious weed mitigation, improved access to Baker Lake, 4.356 sq. ft. of weeds mitigated in Crellin canyon wetland/riparian system; Category B – none; Category C – 126 native plants and sign installed for pollinator garden at Loveland Visitor Center, 73 bird fledglings from bird boxes, 1,000 printed weed booklets in Estes Valley, 3 mountain ecosystem interpretive signs, 15 patrol events and 3 first aid/CPR trainings; Category D – 9 participants in Young Farmers Training Program, new Community Garden Gathering Area and Children’s Area; Category E – bison research, wildlife cameras at Chimney Hollow and Hermit Park.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS – none

9. OTHER BUSINESS – none

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: August 23, 2018 at City Council Chambers, Civic Center Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO.



11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real, personal or other property interest. K-Lynn Cameron moves to enter Executive Session, Suzan Fritchel seconds. Motion passed at 5:57 p.m.
12. ADJOURN – 6:02 p.m.

