



2024

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT
3RD QUARTER (JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER)



Public tours launch at Canyon Edge Open Space



Education and Volunteer Specialist Ellen Harris discusses geologic features of Canyon Edge Open Space during a September tour. Photo: Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero



In September, LCDNR launched the first round of limited public tours at Larimer County's newest open space, Canyon Edge Open Space, west of Loveland. These popular walking tours invited the public to learn about the property's features, current stewardship activities, and our management

planning process while enjoying views of dramatic hogbacks and valley grasslands. Additional tours will be facilitated during the multi-year planning and development phase to highlight the progress of opening a new space and engage with the community during the process.

LCDNR contributes to summer fire suppression



A ranger patrol boat with a water scooper plane on Carter Lake during the Pearl Fire.



As the Alexander Mountain Fire was burning west of Loveland in August, LCDNR staff kicked into action to support fire suppression and ensure safe evacuation of visitors at sites close to fire areas. Rangers swiftly cleared Horsetooth Reservoir (and later Carter Lake) of all boats and water recreators to make way for incoming water scooper planes – a first time in our history. The team also supported the closure of Pinewood and Flatiron reservoirs due to their location within mandatory fire evacuation zones. DNR staff managed an all-hands-on-deck effort to keep recreators safely off the water while helping campers with reservation refunds for campgrounds affected by closures and evacuations. Then, once again in September, rangers successfully cleared Carter Lake to allow water scooping operations to suppress the Pearl Fire near Red Feather Lakes.

Seeing is believing in grassland recovery



Grassland and foothill plant communities at the Devil's Backbone

and Eagles Nest open spaces are rebounding after years of being suppressed due to competition from invasive grasses - cheatgrass and feral cereale rye. Portions of these two open spaces were treated with herbicide that kills cheatgrass and feral rye seeds, allowing native perennial plants to thrive. For years, these invasive grasses have taken away vital nutrients, sunlight and water, and in doing so, have degraded the native ecosystem. Once the native plant communities have recovered, they will provide greater wildlife habitat value, carbon sequestration and resilience to climate change.



Photos show before and after results of cheatgrass treatment on the same hill at Devil's Backbone Open Space.

Less drive time improves efficiency in the Laramie River Valley




A LCDNR crew in the Laramie River Valley.



Managing noxious weeds in the Laramie River Valley is a challenge every year as it is a 2.5 hour drive one way from LCDNR's offices. To increase efficiency and time on the ground controlling noxious weeds, LCDNR staff have arranged to stay at U.S. Forest Service bunk houses near the Laramie River Valley for a week at a time. This action saves LCDNR fifteen hours of drive time every week allowing staff to focus on multiple projects in a week rather than only focusing on the U.S. Forest Service lands. Rather than commuting, staff can instead spend valuable time implementing weed management in this beautiful location.

A more sustainable RV dump station

 This quarter, LCDNR staff were able to complete a programmatic shift in the way we provide RV dump services to the public. In the past, RV dump stations were free of charge and were being used by the general public, not just visitors to county open spaces and parks. We were able to partner with a company to deploy their latest technology to both automate and charge a fee for dump station use. Consequently, the new solar powered RV dump system and fee will help the Department ensure long-term financial sustainability with maintenance and replacement costs to continue to provide this service. In the first few weeks following installation, these units are working successfully and cost recovery has been right on target.



The new pay-as-you-go dump stations will help support replacement and maintenance costs.

Historic structure rehab: Goodbye graffiti!



Volunteers remove graffiti from a historic structure at Devil's Backbone Open Space.



LCDNR volunteers continue to help keep county open spaces and our parks clean, safe and well-maintained.

Early in September, a small group of volunteers paired up with ranger staff to paint over graffiti at a historic structure at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Staff will continue to monitor to ensure future graffiti does not take hold and manage accordingly.

Keeping water recreation safe in Larimer County

When summer is in full swing, public safety on the water is a key priority, which was highlighted by two successful programs this year. In July, rangers increased patrols at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir for July 4th weekend as part of Operation Dry Water, a national campaign to heighten awareness around the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI). Staff contacted over 380 people aboard vessels, which resulted in several citations, including three BUI arrests, and one DUI arrest of a driver trailering a boat. In August, LCDNR hosted a successful Brendan Unitt Boat Rescue Training Day attended by area medics, firefighters, and rangers. Not only does this training help first responders be better prepared for water emergencies, but it also honors the late Brendan Unitt, a Larimer County ranger who lost his life on Aug. 20, 2020, responding to a water emergency at Horsetooth Reservoir.



Staff at the Brendan Unitt Boat Rescue Training Day.

Financial summary



Larimer County Department of Natural Resources has five primary revenue sources including Colorado Lottery proceeds, the Help Preserve Open Space Sales Tax, user fees

on open spaces, user fees on reservoir parks, and the weed district property tax. Below are the July 1 through Sept. 30 revenue summaries and operating expenses as compared to the same period the previous year.

Open Spaces

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
Help Preserve Open Space Tax	\$6,447,454	\$6,583,604	
User Fees Revenue	\$1,282,198	\$1,202,684	
Service Charges Revenue	\$123,782	\$137,162	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$40,700	\$4,550	
Grants/Partnerships	\$117,160	\$165,761	
Interest Revenue	\$689,876	\$923,225	
Total	\$8,701,170	\$9,016,987	4%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$1,391,272	\$1,461,841	
Operating Expenses	\$1,880,030	\$1,714,471	
Total	\$3,271,303	\$3,176,312	-3%
Countywide Indirects	\$157,011	\$171,593	9%
Acquisitions/Projects	\$284,776	\$314,958	
Land Stewardship Building	\$418,000		

Reservoir Parks

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
User Fees Revenue	\$4,592,062	\$4,384,547	
Service Charges Revenue	\$222,620	\$269,186	
Grants/Partnerships	(\$7,960)	\$145,413	
General Fund	\$148,609	\$100,561	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$63,500	\$68,317	
Total	\$5,018,831	\$4,968,024	-1%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$4,042,535	\$4,071,038	
Operating Expenses	\$956,649	\$792,217	
Total	\$4,999,185	\$4,863,255	-3%
Countywide Indirects	\$454,178	\$477,104	5%
Projects	\$10,768	\$429,497*	
Other	\$154,000		

*Includes \$350k for a new ANS station and \$75k for asphalt projects.

Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	\$765,674	\$764,081	0%

County Weed District & Enterprise

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
Property Taxes	\$876,354	\$1,063,355	
Service Charges Revenue	\$273,675	\$259,446	
General Fund	\$83,846	\$78,862	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$44,198	\$34,878	
Total	\$1,278,073	\$1,436,541	12%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue			
Sale of Mulberry Building	-	\$516,474	
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$526,313	\$516,537	
Operating Expenses	\$562,750	\$481,814	
Total	\$1,089,062	\$998,351	-8%
Countywide Indirects	\$28,687	\$30,318	6%
Capital Expenses			
Land Stewardship Building	\$1,128,000		



MISSION: We connect people, nature and place.
VISION: Healthy Landscapes, Healthy People.



Nature-Based Opportunities



Proactive Land Conservation & Management



Levels of Service



Regional Leadership



Sustainable Funding Strategy



Positive Work Culture



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