



# 2025 Larimer County Natural Resources

## QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT

1ST QUARTER (JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH)



## Landscape-scale conservation project Completed in Livermore Valley



*Conservation easements in Livermore will protect lands with ecological value.*



Larimer County's Department of Natural Resources recently completed efforts to conserve three contiguous ranches totaling 4,856 acres in Livermore, Colorado. The ranches are being conserved in partnership with the landowners via conservation easements, to permanently protect their intact, diverse native ecosystems and a 4-mile iconic viewshed.

For five generations, these ranches have been well-stewarded for sustainable livestock grazing and hay operations, supported by senior water rights that are tied to the conservation easements. The ranches are located

in Larimer County's Livermore Priority Conservation Area where significant land conservation efforts have already been completed by federal, state, county, city, and land trust partners. Conservation of these three ranches creates a contiguous landscape connection between over 100,000 acres of existing conserved lands. Partners in funding the conservation easements included the City of Fort Collins, Great Outdoors Colorado, The Nature Conservancy, a private individual donor, Gates Family Foundation and the Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.



# Red-tail Ridge Open Space grows



In late January, Larimer County closed on the purchase of a 196-acre addition to Red-tail Ridge Open Space, located on the Larimer-Boulder county line. Located within the Little Thompson River and Blue Mountain conservation priority areas, the addition protects the viewshed west of Berthoud, provides a buffer to existing conserved lands and boasts a mix of wildlife habitats. In addition to the county's Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax dollars, support came from the City of Loveland, the Town of Berthoud and a private individual donor.



*The Red-tail Ridge Open Space addition protects the viewshed west of Berthoud.*

## Progress made on county climate goals



*The EV charge station at the administrative offices near Flatiron Reservoir (left) and a new solar-powered RV dump station processing machine.*



LCDNR has recently made significant progress towards countywide climate goals established in 2022. One countywide goal is to reduce county facility greenhouse gas emissions by 62% by 2030. Our department has contributed to those goals by installing solar power at the following facilities:

- Aquatic Nuisance Species shelter at Satanka Bay, on the north end of Horsetooth Reservoir
- Pavilion at Hermit Park Open Space (currently underway)
- RV dump stations at select campgrounds

We have also installed highly efficient LED lights throughout South Bay of Horsetooth Reservoir, and we are helping meet the countywide goal of installing electric vehicle (EV) chargers, specifically four electric vehicle (EV) DC fast chargers and four level 2 EV chargers on county property by 2025. With the help of the facilities department, we installed a level 2 EV charger at our main Administrative Office near Flatiron Reservoir and another at the Horsetooth Area Information Center.



# Meadow hawkweed makes noxious weed list



A showy yellow perennial sunflower has found its way onto Larimer County's noxious weed list.

Meadow hawkweed (*Hieracium caespitosum*), an exotic plant species that is highly invasive in other parts of the U.S. was identified in the Estes Valley in 2022. This plant was most likely brought into Larimer County on heavy equipment during Highway 7 road work. To mitigate the environmental and economic risk this plant poses to Larimer County, the Board of County Commissioners has mandated that it be eradicated. Starting in 2025, landowners who do not voluntarily manage this noxious weed on their property will receive notices of enforcement, which if unabated could lead to county staff managing it and charging the landowner for the cost of removal. Meadow hawkweed is identifiable as a 1-3 foot tall perennial with hairy leaves at the base of the plant and a cluster of yellow flowers. Please report any possible sightings at [Larimer.org/weeds](https://larimer.org/weeds) or by calling the Larimer County Land Stewardship office at (970) 498-5768.



*The Board of County Commissioners has mandated that Meadow hawkweed be eradicated from the county.*

## New era for our shorelines



*Maintenance crews work on the new docks at Horsetooth Reservoir*



The Department of Natural Resources has begun upgrading the boat docks at Carter Lake and Horsetooth reservoirs. Staff carefully removed the outdated structures to allow for recycling the aluminum materials. The proceeds from that recycling effort went back into the green infrastructure budget, helping to support future sustainability projects.

The new boat docks arrived in December, and over the winter staff assembled the new structures, ensuring the docks would be ready to welcome boaters for the 2025 season. The new docks are safer, more durable, and built with longevity and user experience in mind.



# Another successful year for the marina slip lottery



The second successful year of the marina slip lottery finished in February with more than 400 entries from boat owners hoping to be randomly selected for a slip or mooring at Carter Lake or Horsetooth Reservoir.

LCDNR launched the annual lottery in 2024 to ensure an open process for rental reservation of slips and moorings. After a successful first year, the department conducted the same lottery by inviting boat owners to submit their names over two months. Staff then randomly selected finalists for the marinas to interview and vet. The process ensured a fair chance for all, with extra weight given to Larimer County residents. Approximately 60% of the finalists were Larimer County residents. This year, the marinas were able to offer 26 slips/moorings to the lottery.



The marina at Horsetooth Reservoir.  
Photo by Aliy Louie.

## Nature-based community projects benefit from DNR's small grants program



Kids learn about local nature through the American Adventure Sports Club.  
Photo by Jeannie Sumrall-Ajero



Earlier this year, LCDNR announced \$30,863 in grants to be given to nature-based community projects as part of the 2025 Small Grants for Community Partnering program. Eight remarkable organizations received grant money for initiatives that connect people with nature. These include the American Adventure Sports Club, Colorado Youth Outdoors, Estes Valley Recreation and Park Foundation, Hispanic Women's Farming Project, Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, Fort Collins Montessori, Fossil Creek HOA, and Sproutin' Up. Their impactful projects range from creating vibrant educational gardens in schools and community spaces to managing invasive species, developing engaging live programming for a special nature exhibit, and offering outdoor experiences for underrepresented youth.



# 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 Jan. 1 through March 31 revenue summaries and operating expenses as compared to the same period the previous year.

## Open Spaces

	2024	2025	
<b>Revenue</b>			
Help Preserve Open Space Tax	\$791,604	\$777,371	
User Fees Revenue	\$362,399	\$293,110	
Service Charges Revenue	\$73,845	\$64,544	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$3,000	\$152,000	
Grants/Partnerships	\$7,146	\$2,150,000	
Interest Revenue	\$211,756	\$193,886	
Total	\$1,449,750	\$3,630,911	150%
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$399,355	\$328,237	
Operating Expenses	\$213,728	\$142,586	
Total	\$613,083	\$470,823	-23%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$53,830	\$43,998	-18%
<b>Acquisitions/Projects</b>	\$9,827	\$14,855,771	

## Reservoir Parks

	2024	2025	
<b>Revenue</b>			
User Fees Revenue	\$1,618,168	\$1,224,427	
Service Charges Revenue	\$44,388	\$45,198	
Grants/Partnerships	–	\$2,548	
General Fund	\$33,520	\$67,000	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$6,000	\$2,061	
Total	\$1,702,077	\$1,341,234	-21%
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$986,135	\$1,118,988	
Operating Expenses	\$518,921	\$442,207	
Total	\$1,505,057	\$1,561,195	4%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$131,028	\$128,324	-2%
<b>Projects</b>	\$43,044	\$2,379	

## Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2024	2025	
<b>Revenue</b>			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	\$264,859	\$246,439	-7%

## County Weed District & Enterprise

	2024	2025	
<b>Revenue</b>			
Property Taxes	\$448,485	\$461,984	
Service Charges Revenue	\$1,016	\$11,438	
General Fund	\$26,287	\$108,000	
Miscellaneous Revenue	–	–	
Total	\$475,789	\$581,422	22%
<b>Significant Donation/Other Revenue</b>			
Sale of Mulberry Building	516,386	–	
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$121,413	\$124,162	
Operating Expenses	\$39,629	\$48,341	
Total	\$161,041	\$172,503	7%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$5,855	–	-100%

\* Note: Year-end financial information is currently under review and subject to final edits.



2022-2027 Strategic Plan

**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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Connect With Us:  
Larimer County Department of Natural Resources  
1800 S. County Road 31  
Loveland, CO 80537  
(970) 619-4570  
larimer.gov/naturalresources

