

2025 Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT 2ND QUARTER (APRIL MAY JUNE)



Bay to Bay Trail provides desired connection at Horsetooth Reservoir



Scenic views are plentiful along the Bay to Bay Trail. Photo courtesy Brendan Bombaci.



The new Bay to Bay Trail at Horsetooth Reservoir opened on May 23, just in time for Memorial Day weekend. This 1.8-mile natural surface trail connects Inlet Bay to the South Bay swim beach, linking two popular areas. It offers hikers and bikers scenic views along a moderately challenging, two-foot-wide trail. Because of steep slopes, rocky terrain, and limited parking for horse trailers, the trail is only open to foot and bike traffic. Larimer County Natural Resources (LCNR) built the trail with help from the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) and volunteers. Funding was provided by LCNR, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Boating Officer of the Year



Travis Bernstein, Senior Ranger, achieved the highest recognition for boating law enforcement officers nationwide. He was named Colorado Boating Officer of the Year and received the same honor for the Western Region of the United States in May. Selected by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), Travis leads Larimer County's boating program with a strong commitment to public and staff safety on Colorado's waterways. His leadership, innovative training initiatives, and dedication to marine safety have set a high standard in boating law enforcement. Travis supervises both full-time and temporary staff, actively patrolling Larimer County's waters to ensure rescues, enforce boating regulations, and promote safety compliance.



Colorado Parks & Wildlife staff present Travis Bernstein (second from left) his Colorado Boating Officer of the Year Award alongside Steve Gibson, Visitor Services District Manager (far right).

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) improvements moving full speed ahead



Road improvements have begun at Eagle Campground at Carter Lake.



In partnership with Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD), LCDNR has officially begun a large-scale, multi-year asphalt paving project at Carter Lake. Construction is underway at several locations including paving the main road within Eagle Campground and North Pines Campground. Parking and roadway improvements at Horsetooth Reservoir are planned to follow. The project budget exceeds \$15 million, which is funded primarily with two federal grants, as well as from LCDNR reserve funds. Diligent effort is being made to minimize the disturbance to visitors and project completion is expected in 2027.

15 years of Ranger Excellence School



Nearly 90 students attended the 15th annual Ranger Excellence School (RES) in Estes Park this May.

What began as a local training for Colorado rangers in 2010 has grown into a full conference, now drawing 80–100 participants from across the country, including states like Wisconsin, Missouri, and Nevada. This week-long event offers hands-on, relevant training for rangers and natural resource professionals. Students can customize their experience and earn certifications in specialized courses like Emergency Medical Responder, Mountain Biking, and Baton. Held at the Holiday Inn in Estes Park, RES offers easy access to Hermit Park Open Space for field exercises and scenario-based training in natural environments.



Scenario training is an integral component of RES providing vital in the field practice with peers and experienced leaders.

Poudre River Trail anticipates completion this year



Completion of Larimer County's segment of the Poudre River Trail is slated for later this year.



After decades of planning and collaborating with regional partners, Larimer County is poised to complete the Poudre River Trail this year! The full vision of the Poudre River Trail spans over 45 miles along the river corridor from LaPorte (northwest of Fort Collins) to Greeley with just under one mile remaining to be completed. In an exciting development

this summer, Larimer County got the final green light to move ahead with construction on its last segment, which is slated to begin this summer and fall. The region-wide vision has been made possible by many partners and numerous grants over the years, and Larimer County is honored to bring it to the finish line.

BARK rangers on the ground and water in Larimer County



In collaboration with the City of Fort Collins, LCDNR is excited to support the expansion of the Volunteer Ranger Assistant (VRA) program to include BARK rangers. Now on patrol throughout thirteen publicly accessible properties, BARK rangers bolster education in the field regarding dogs off leash or to those who leave waste bags behind, and the impact of dogs on wildlife safety. All of which, if left unchecked, have negative impacts on visitor experience and the environment. As ambassadors for responsible recreation, stewardship, and regulation compliance, BARK rangers uphold the foundation of the VRA program and expands our reach into the field, meeting visitors where they are.



BARK Rangers now on patrol! Photo courtesy Linda Evans.

Financial Summary



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

spaces, user fees on reservoir parks, and the weed district property tax. Below are the year-to-date revenue summaries and operating expenses as compared to the same period the previous year.

Open Spaces

	2024	2025	
Revenue			
Help Preserve Open Space Tax	\$3,470,638	\$3,626,991	
User Fees Revenue	\$801,796	\$726,511	
Service Charges Revenue	\$100,138	\$85,856	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$5,385	\$3,039	
Grants/Partnerships	\$7,146	\$5,442,500	
Interest Revenue	\$551,044	\$467,148	
Total	\$4,936,146	\$10,352,046	110%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$883,721	\$795,392	
Operating Expenses	\$985,456	\$394,019	
Total	\$1,869,177	\$1,189,411	-36%
Countywide Indirects	\$108,056	\$94,121	-13%
Acquisitions/Projects	\$10,316	\$16,569,029	

Reservoir Parks

	2024	2025	
Revenue			
User Fees Revenue	\$3,070,365	\$2,679,389	
Service Charges Revenue	\$142,103	\$103,055	
Grants/Partnerships	\$23,749	\$2,548	
General Fund	\$67,041	\$67,000	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$8,250	\$2,065	
Total	\$3,311,508	\$2,854,057	-14%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$2,341,918	\$2,539,904	
Operating Expenses	\$1,096,000	\$1,501,134	
Total	\$3,437,918	\$4,041,038	18%
Countywide Indirects	\$284,773	\$298,972	5%
Projects	\$102,194	\$37,174	

Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2024	2025	
Revenue			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	\$531,255	\$501,279	-6%

County Weed District & Enterprise

	2024	2025	
Revenue			
Property Taxes	\$1,025,653	\$1,012,297	
Service Charges Revenue	\$89,360	\$139,385	
General Fund	\$52,575	\$108,000	
Miscellaneous Revenue	—	—	
Total	\$1,167,588	\$1,259,682	8%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue			
Sale of Mulberry Building	\$516,386		
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$288,023	\$311,571	
Operating Expenses	\$252,985	\$175,153	
Total	\$541,008	\$486,724	-10%
Countywide Indirects	\$15,041	—	-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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