



2018

LARIMER COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

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.

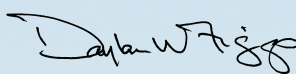
A TIME OF NEW BEGINNINGS

In January of 2019, I began my tenure as director of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. Having worked alongside this department for many years, I'm honored to lead such a dedicated, accomplished and well-respected staff. The many successes in this annual report highlight the positive impact our staff makes every day on conservation and recreation in Larimer County.

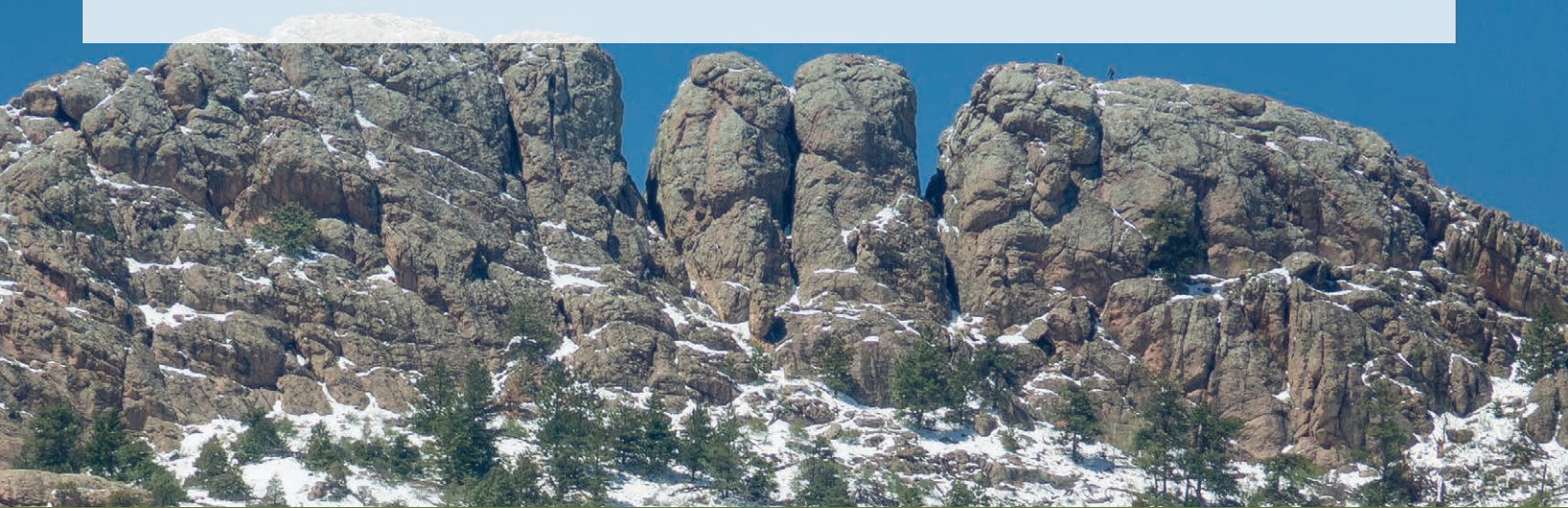
These accomplishments were made possible, in part, thanks to funding from the citizen-led, 1/4-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax. I'm grateful to those citizens who had the foresight more than 20 years ago

to initiate this important source of funding and to the residents of Larimer County who voted overwhelmingly four years ago to continue the tax beyond 2018.

With your support, this department will continue to conserve and provide access to the special places that make Larimer County our home. Get outdoors and enjoy your parks and open spaces!



Daylan Figgs, Director, Department of Natural Resources



THANK YOU TO OUR CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARDS

Land Stewardship Advisory Board

Renee Galeano-Popp
Ronald Harris
Ernie Marx
Richard "Hitch" McCulloch
Gordon Nuttall (vice chair)
Ed Redente (chair)

Open Lands Advisory Board

Paul Alaback
Jason Brothers
K-Lynn Cameron
Suzan Fritchel
Marilyn Hilgenberg
Gerry Horak
Peter Kelly (chair)
David Marvin (vice chair)
Carl Sorrentino
Sherri Valentine
Nancy Wallace
Ken Zornes

Parks Advisory Board

Steve Ambrose
Mark DeGregorio
Russell Fruits (chair)
Stephanie Hansen
Robert Harris (vice chair)
Chris Klaas
Kathy Maher
Brian Rasch
Michael Robinson
Ruthie Rollins
Deborah Shulman

Larimer County Government Officials

Board of County Commissioners:
John Kefalas, Steve Johnson, Tom Donnelly
County Manager: Linda Hoffmann
Community Planning, Infrastructure and Resources Director: Todd Blomstrom

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

CONSERVING 800 ACRES INSIDE RED MOUNTAIN

Last August, Larimer County purchased an 800-acre ranch that existed entirely within the boundary of Red Mountain Open Space, conserving this key piece of land and its ecological values. With the ranch now a part of the open space, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources can manage all of Red Mountain as one continuous landscape, which is good for both wildlife and people.

The former inholding contains a portion of the iconic Table Mountain, which dominates the view at Red Mountain Open Space. The ranch also contains habitat for deer, pronghorn, elk and other wildlife, opportunities for agriculture and known archaeological resources. Any outdoor recreation there will be determined during an upcoming management planning process for Red Mountain Open Space.

In the meantime, the open space has over 15 miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

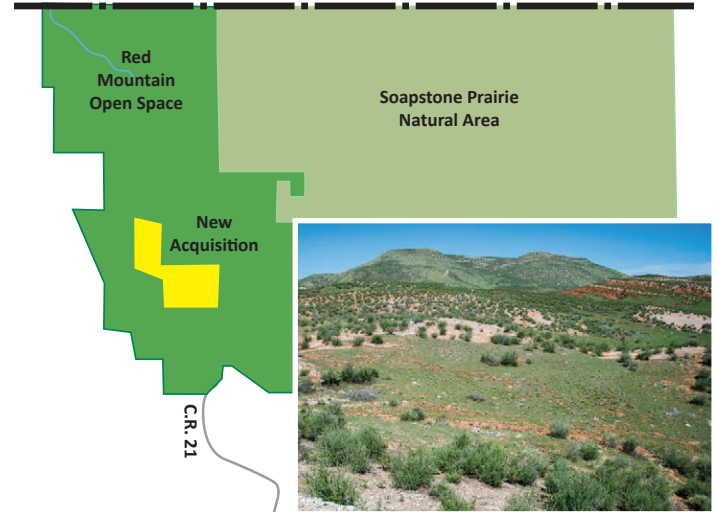


Table Mountain, Photo © Charlie Johnson

BRINGING PARKS BACK TO LIFE AFTER THE FLOOD

WHEN FLOODWATERS ROARED

Colorado is blessed with many beautiful river canyons — like the Big Thompson! But in rare weather conditions, these canyons can become raging torrents of floodwaters that tear apart roads, bridges and homes.

1976 FLOOD
July 31, 1976. In just a few hours, dark clouds over Drake Park released more than a foot of rain. Then a wall of water 20 feet high came crashing down this narrow canyon — carrying cars, mobile homes, huge boulders and everything else in its path.

2013 FLOOD
Mid-September 2013. Over 30 days, Larimer County faithfully received 13 inches of rain — that's close to the annual total for a whole year. The intense downpours broke up and swept away long stretches of U.S. Highway 34.

Highway 34 in ruins, south of Big Thompson Canyon

PUSH FOR FLOOD SAFETY
Flash floods can occur in any season. After the Big Thompson flood of 1976, early morning sirens and "Clank" in parking signs were installed in mountain areas across Colorado — and beyond.

During the flood, the overhilled canyon — and the park's old entrance were left hanging at the water's edge. (What a tricky entrance!)

Stop by the kiosks at Forks and Narrows parks when they reopen to learn about the Big Thompson River floods of 1976 and 2013.

The Big Thompson River flood devastated Forks and Narrows parks in the Big Thompson Canyon in 2013. Since then, Larimer County has been working with the Colorado Department of Transportation, Big Thompson Watershed Coalition and others to restore these parks so they can reopen to the public. This has included restoring both the river and surrounding lands, with Larimer County monitoring and maintaining much of the plant restoration work at these and other places in the canyon.

Much of the work has been completed at Forks Park in Drake, including a new parking area. At Narrows Park further down the canyon, new parking spots will be built this year, and Larimer County will build trails to the river at both parks. Forks and Narrows parks should reopen in 2019.

RECEIVING AWARD FOR LARGE-SCALE CONSERVATION

Last year, the Colorado Lottery recognized Larimer County and City of Fort Collins with a Starburst Award for a project that conserved nearly 2,500 acres of land in the Horsetooth area. Through grants from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), lottery proceeds provided \$4.8 million toward the project.

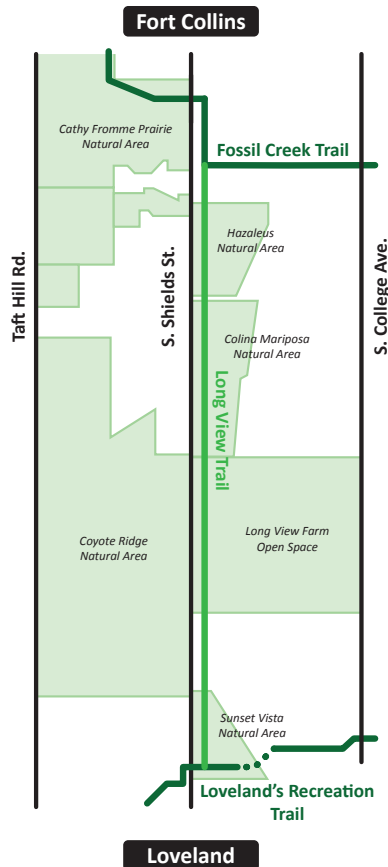


The award-winning project included lands on the west side of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Photo © Charlie Johnson

CONNECTING OUR CITIES' PAVED TRAIL SYSTEMS

On Aug. 18, 2018, eager bikers, walkers and runners joined elected officials and staff to celebrate the opening of the Long View Trail, the second paved trail to connect Loveland and Fort Collins. The 4.4-mile trail runs parallel to Taft Avenue in Loveland and Shields Street in Fort Collins, providing a safe, non-motorized alternative for traveling between the two cities.

The Long View Trail crosses through five open spaces and natural areas, offering sweeping views of the foothills and mountains as it meanders through agricultural fields and wildlife habitat. It was a joint project among Larimer County, City of Loveland and City of Fort Collins, with funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Colorado Department of Transportation.



ENHANCING AMENITIES AT HERMIT PARK OPEN SPACE

Last year, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources completed the Limber Pine Trail at Hermit Park Open Space, opening a new 2.5-mile section of the trail that connects to the Hermit's Hollow Campground and new Saddle Trailhead. The department also opened the new Kruger Rock Trailhead and upgraded the Homestead Meadows Trailhead and Hermit's Cabin day use area.

In addition to trails, the department installed bear boxes at many of the campgrounds at Hermit Park, offering campers a safe place to store food, trash and other fragrant items.

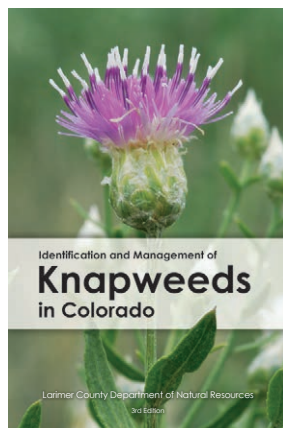


Along with a new parking area, vault toilet and other amenities at the Hermit's Cabin, volunteers from HistoriCorps stabilized the cabin itself, which dates to the early 1900s. Photo © HistoriCorps

ERADICATING PRIORITY WEEDS

For nearly a decade, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources has provided an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) crew to survey, identify and eliminate high-priority noxious weeds in the county.

After several years of treatments, the EDRR crew has successfully eradicated yellow starthistle and Chinese clematis in Larimer County. The crew will continue to monitor the locations of these invasive plants to ensure they do not return.

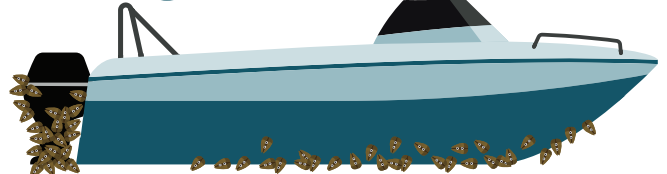


Yellow starthistle is one of the noxious weeds included in the third edition of the County's knapweed guide. Call 498-5768 for a copy.

PROTECTING RESERVOIRS FROM INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) inspectors with Larimer County intercepted 11 boats infested with zebra and quagga mussels at Horsetooth Reservoir – the most of any water body in Colorado last year. They also intercepted one infested boat at Carter Lake. Way to go, ANS team!

57,114
BOATS INSPECTED FOR
ANS at HORSETOOTH RESERVOIR
AND CARTER LAKE



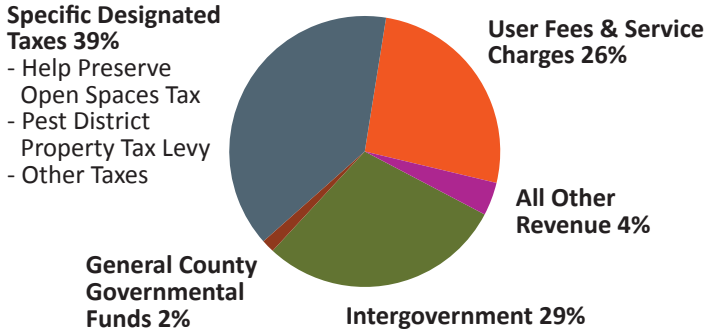


FINANCIALS

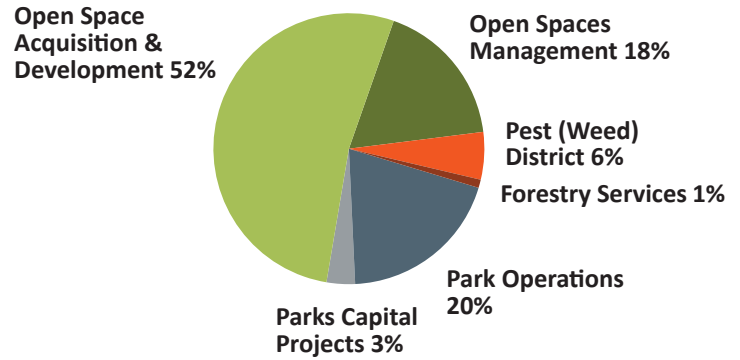
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES SUMMARY OF FINANCES

Revenues for Larimer County Department of Natural Resources are realized from a number of sources and totaled \$22.6 million in 2018. Expenses for 2018 were \$22.3 million, including a number of one-time capital development projects on County parks and open spaces.

2018 REVENUES



2018 EXPENSES



* These figures are not audited. Audit will be completed in mid-2019. Figures in this chart have been rounded where appropriate.

HELP PRESERVE OPEN SPACES TAX REVENUES

Revenue from the 1/4-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales and use tax is shared among Larimer County and the eight municipalities in the county. The tax was extended in 2014 and will sunset in 2043. It is not imposed on food or prescription drugs. The total revenue collected to date is more than \$227 million.

Distributions to municipalities are based upon the highest yield of either population or sales tax generation. This revenue sharing agreement ensures that residents throughout Larimer County receive benefits from the Help Preserve Open Spaces tax.

	Larimer Co.	Berthoud	Estes Park	Fort Collins	Johnstown	Loveland	Timnath	Wellington	Windsor
1996	2,259,975	71,154	161,905	2,107,473	—	847,210	4,221	29,848	—
1997	2,485,421	80,969	178,198	2,319,562	—	932,139	4,646	32,520	—
1998	2,707,553	87,574	193,453	2,487,606	—	1,003,872	5,025	40,557	—
1999	3,067,810	101,539	224,779	2,850,066	—	1,146,823	5,732	47,494	—
2000	3,294,869	110,862	222,608	3,109,001	—	1,234,060	5,742	53,444	—
2001	3,565,146	122,889	229,886	3,323,372	—	1,321,205	5,887	64,589	—
2002	3,527,084	124,139	218,802	3,235,748	—	1,304,378	5,599	67,642	—
2003	3,532,580	123,913	218,445	3,205,119	—	1,314,655	7,083	66,730	—
2004	3,750,211	126,810	234,908	3,374,671	9,457	1,405,098	11,480	75,185	17,416
2005	3,811,306	127,480	239,502	3,417,517	8,932	1,432,898	11,684	79,698	20,115
2006	4,033,795	136,930	250,110	3,599,786	11,965	1,506,477	13,196	77,782	13,379
2007	4,152,187	129,513	252,524	3,529,570	34,285	1,554,153	10,563	122,196	54,760
2008	3,956,426	120,359	240,167	3,189,107	38,772	1,470,884	9,121	122,125	55,744
2009	3,614,183	109,178	224,318	2,824,574	45,847	1,410,859	7,103	114,630	49,957
2010	3,920,058	118,288	244,384	3,058,106	55,501	1,558,011	6,746	123,466	59,200
2011	4,114,913	120,393	265,441	3,227,847	62,688	1,592,744	48,317	129,817	71,406
2012	4,485,954	124,545	288,754	3,554,623	75,886	1,740,460	73,910	155,336	113,641
2013	4,777,403	133,751	309,913	3,814,068	74,128	1,904,909	81,646	167,553	124,097
2014	5,388,708	151,014	347,758	4,289,731	82,150	2,229,709	94,508	190,388	141,199
2015	5,718,927	160,117	366,203	4,555,811	88,500	2,368,947	99,959	202,066	151,192
2016	6,021,598	174,706	358,252	4,782,068	105,249	2,500,949	130,089	222,412	173,375
2017	6,184,774	174,719	397,768	5,018,453	112,006	2,598,829	214,066	239,172	203,307
2018	6,558,865	185,792	422,083	5,321,313	119,215	2,755,981	226,338	253,344	214,791
Total	94,929,746	2,916,634	6,090,161	80,195,192	924,581	37,135,250	1,082,661	2,677,994	1,463,579
% Total	40.84%	1.16%	2.63%	33.14%	.74%	17.16%	1.41%	1.58%	1.34%

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: 2018 BY THE NUMBERS



173 volunteers donated
19,805 hours of service to
Larimer County Department
of Natural Resources

From monitoring wildlife to hosting campgrounds to building trails, volunteers add tremendous capacity to Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. Thank you to our amazing volunteers for their service!



5,175 people participated
in 142 activities including
guided hikes, school field
trips, campground programs,
community events, trailhead
tables, trainings and more

Explore and register for education programs:
offeror.larimer.org







GETTING TO KNOW OUR VISITORS

In 2018, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources and Colorado State University concluded a two-year visitor study that took place at three properties managed by Larimer County: Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, Red Mountain Open Space and Horsetooth Reservoir.

Using a variety of research methods, the department gained valuable insights into the numbers of visitors, who is visiting and what types of experiences these people are having. The study will serve as one of several sources for informing management decisions on these properties.

Here are some fun facts the department learned from the study. For a full copy of the visitor study report, visit larimer.org/naturalresources.

Primary Activities

	Horsetooth Mountain	Red Mountain
Hiking 	55%	55%
Mountain Biking 	15%	11%
Horseback Riding 	<1%	11%
Trail Running 	9%	4%
Walking Dog(s) 	21%	0%*
Wildlife Viewing 	0%	19%

* Dogs are not allowed at Red Mountain Open Space.

Estimated Annual Visitation



Research Partners



98+%
OVERALL SATISFACTION
Rating of "GOOD OR EXCELLENT"
AT HORSETOOTH MOUNTAIN AND
RED MOUNTAIN OPEN SPACES

Larimer County
Department of Natural Resources
1800 S. County Road 31
Loveland, CO 80537

(970) 619-4570
larimer.org/naturalresources

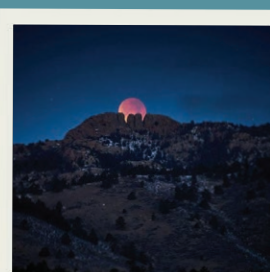


TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS OF 2018



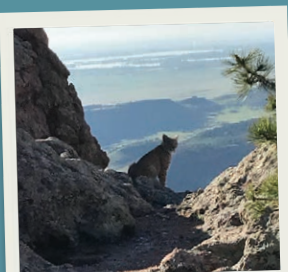
Posted to Twitter on Aug. 13, 2018, reaching 5,139 people

Photo © Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero



Posted to Instagram on Feb. 2, 2018, garnering 95 likes

Photo © Wes Morley



Posted to Facebook on May 16, 2018, reaching 55,860 people

Photo © Dan Leach