

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

Date: October 22, 2020

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Webinar

Contact: Please contact Sidney at smichl@larimer.org or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend

Members		Staff		Guests	
Bob Hewson		Daylan Figgs	x	Jeffrey Boring (EV Land Trust)	
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	Jeremy Call (Logan Simpson)	
Gale Bernhardt	x	Zac Wiebe	x	Carmen Farmer (CO Open Lands)	
Jason Brothers	x	Charlie Johnson	x		
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Justin Core	x		
Linda Stanley	x	Casey Cisneros	x		
Mark DeGregorio		Jenn Almstead	x		
Nancy Wallace	x	*Thomas Donnelly			
Peter Kelly	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x		
Rick Brent	x				
Sherri Valentine	x				
Tom Shoemaker	x				

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:02 p.m.
 - a. Introduced staff and board members to guests.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
 - a. Steve and Chris will present their Visitor Services project update at the next meeting.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

- a. Linda moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Dave seconded, motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resources events for this month: larimer.org/naturalresources.
- b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click "Subscribe," and check the "Open Lands Advisory Board" box.
- c. Nancy asked Daylan to provide an update on fire impacts. Hermit Park Open Space and Big Thompson Canyon properties are closed and will remain closed due to evacuations in Estes Park. Devil's Backbone Open Space, Horsetooth Reservoir, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, and Pinewood and Flatiron reservoirs will reopen this weekend. Red Mountain Open Space and Eagles Nest Open Space will remain open. Currently there is no structure damage on any LCDNR properties. Meegan said a portion of the Wright conservation easement burned. Several staff have been involved in evacuations.
- d. Submitted two grant applications this month: one to CPW's 2021 Non-Motorized Trails Program requesting \$250k towards Poudre River Trail construction and the other to GOCO's Resilient Communities Program requesting \$475k to construct the new Sky View Campground at Carter Lake Reservoir. The department is applying for a third grant due next week for grassland restoration at Devil's Backbone Open Space.
- e. Horsetooth Mountain Open Space management plan will kick off this winter. Resource inventory began with the Visitor Study in 2018 but timing of the plan update was redirected due to COVID. Background information and an overview of the process/timeline will be presented at the next meeting.
- f. Justin updated the Hawk Canyon Ranch successfully closed last Thursday.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. [Estes Valley Open Space Master Plan](#) – Jeffrey Boring and Jeremy Call
 - i. Jeffrey Boring, Estes Valley Land Trust Executive Director, and Jeremy Call, Logan Simpson Senior Planner presented the Estes Valley Open Space Master Plan. Jeffrey gave an overview of the Estes Valley Land Trust and goals to increase the pace of conservation and serve the greater community. Jeremy described the steering committee and their collaborative vision for the Valley. Conservation priorities include wildlife habitat, open space and scenery, outdoor recreation, history, and sustainable town and rural center areas. The Estes Valley board will vote to adopt the plan at their November meeting with the hope that it serves as a foundation for their upcoming comprehensive plan.
 - ii. Dave complimented the plan and asked which high priority areas fall under private ownership. Jeremy said roughly 1/5 of private, unconserved land (~70k acres) in the Valley contain overlap of all four conservation values. Jeffrey noted many of these areas are smaller than 50 acres each.
 - iii. Nancy asked if the plan will be reviewed by the BOCC, Jeremy said it is TBD but they plan to continue the dialogue with Boulder County and Estes Park Trustees.

Daylan added the plan will be brought to a work session to receive further direction from the BOCC.

- iv. Jason commented on Pinewood Springs' limited water supply and cautioned its potential for future development. Jeremy said they will forward his comment to Community Development.
- v. Jeremy asked the board members if they endorse the direction the plan is moving, Dave said it is of critical importance that Larimer County staff remain involved. Many board members commented they would like the opportunity to read the plan.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Sales tax update – Lori
 - i. Lori updated sales and use tax revenue has been higher than anticipated during COVID. The 2020 budget was adjusted from \$8M to \$8.5M last week (2019 actual revenue was \$8.7M). 2021 budget is currently 6% lower than 2020 but may be adjusted later.
- b. Land restoration project update – Zac & Casey
 - i. Zac provided an overview of the updated ballot language and restoration/habitat enhancement policy that better defines restoration for LCDNR. The policy guides projects identified in property management or disaster recovery plans, which are executed by the department's multi-disciplinary team.
 - ii. Casey presented recently completed projects (2014-2019):
 1. Devil's Backbone Open Space: road reclamation
 2. River Bluffs Open Space: Poudre River restoration
 3. Big Thompson Parks: post-flood recovery and enhancements
 4. Lions Park: stream and upland restoration
 - iii. Projects implemented in 2020:
 1. Hermit Park and Red Mountain Open Spaces: road restoration
 2. Little Thompson Farm Open Space: building demolition, site reclamation, and upland habitat restoration
 3. Devil's Backbone Open Space: grassland restoration
 - iv. Future projects:
 1. Newly acquired property evaluation
 2. Horsetooth Mountain Open Space: Redstone Creek restoration
 3. Expansion of Devil's Backbone Open Space grassland restoration: regional partnerships with the Southern Rockies Seed Network and Restore project
 4. Disaster recovery
- c. Devil's Backbone Open Space Visitor Study update – Jenn
 - i. The Visitor Study launched shortly after the e-bike pilot study this summer to help guide and inform property management at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Data collection includes survey administration and visitation counts, which

began in September and will continue through October. The study design, development, and analysis are being performed by Colorado State University to provide unbiased and statistically significant information. Results will be available in early 2021.

- ii. Pete asked if the survey can be made available online, Jenn said this survey is meant to be administered on-site to open space visitors. Pete commented on-site administration might miss certain user groups or after-sunset users. Jenn said CSU's sampling design provides a high level of confidence that a wide range of visitors are reached. Meegan added that Devil's Backbone is only open dawn to dusk.

d. Quarterly report (July-September) – Daylan

i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:

1. FLAP grant awarded for significant road and infrastructure improvements at Horsetooth and Carter Lake reservoirs
2. New noxious weed (Plumeless thistle) discovered in Larimer County
3. Hawk Canyon Ranch acquisition at Red Mountain Open Space
4. Changes in summer visitation and how COVID might affect 2021

8. ACTION ITEMS

9. OTHER BUSINESS

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: November 12, 2020 via Zoom Webinar

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real, personal or other property interest. Dave moved to enter Executive Session, Linda seconded, motion passed unanimously at 6:52 p.m.

12. ADJOURN – 7:07 p.m.