

LARIMER COUNTY PARKS 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: July 7, 2020

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 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
Mandy Peters		Ken Brink	x	Jeff Stahla (Northern Water)
Daniela Lawler		Daylan Figgs	x	
Deborah Shulman	x	Dan Rieves	x	
Kathy Maher	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Michael Robinson	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Pete Blume	X	Tim Meyer	x	
Robert Harris	x	*Stephen Johnson	x	
Russell Fruits	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Ruthie Rollins	x			
Stephen Amundson	x			
Steve Ambrose	x			

x = present

***commissioner**

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:34 p.m.
 - a. Daylan introduced new board member, Pete Blume, and thanked Stephen Amundson for his time served with the PAB as he anticipates an unexpected move.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Steve moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Kathy seconded, motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resource events for this month: larimer.org/naturalresources.
- b. To sign up for Parks Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click "Subscribe," and check the "Parks Advisory Board" box.

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Park District updates – Dan/Mark
 - i. Mark – parks are incredibly busy, difficult to manage visitation on weekends with traffic control and medical calls. Rearranged parking lots at Satanka to improve traffic flow and installed 50 mobile "no parking" signs around Horsetooth Reservoir and Inlet Bay. Horsetooth has been hitting capacity at 10:30am on Saturdays and 9:30am on Sundays. Maintenance crews are doing a great job keeping parks clean. Swim beach, cabins, shower houses, and visitor centers are open. Horsetooth Reservoir will drop 40 ft. in elevation between July and October in anticipation of outlet project, boat ramps will be open through mid-September.
 - ii. Dan – reconfigured parking at South Shore lot 4 weekends in a row, making adaptive management decisions every weekend. Responding to a lot of inquiries, Daylan and Korrie have done a good job communicating about Sky View Campground. Adjusting to being reactive vs. proactive as things with COVID change quickly. Having trash contractor and infrastructure in place has been very beneficial. Facilities are fully open now and a few special events are on the calendar, returning to some sense of normalcy. Managing morale is a challenge, maintenance crew at Carter has been amazing. Campgrounds are full 7 days a week, up to 25 days at a time. Getting a feel for future visitation rates.
 - iii. Russell asked how CPW's decision to require fishing and hunting licenses at State Wildlife Areas will affect the County. Mark said the requirement is for state properties only and not county properties.
 - iv. Kathy said her neighbor asked about recycling at Carter recreational areas. Dan said recycling has been available in the past and explained the trash bid did not include an option for a robust recycling program. DNR manages recycling internally. Daylan said our best way to address recycling needs is to provide messaging that visitors pack recyclables out for proper disposal at home.
- b. 2019 Annual Report – Daylan
 - i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:
 1. 2M visitors at reservoir parks, which will likely be exceeded in 2020
 2. 52,000 nights of camping, expect to rival or exceed in 2020 also
 3. Tremendous number of hours donated by volunteer program
 4. Visitor experience improvements from sales tax, fee increases, and grants
 5. Completion of restoration projects and historic structure work
 - ii. Ruthie commented the visuals are powerful and information is presented understandably. Daylan said Jake and Korrie did a great job and have more ideas for next year.

- iii. Russell asked where the annual report is distributed, Daylan said it gets sent to all city managers and elected officials, citizen boards, and other local supporters. Hard copies are also available at our visitor centers.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Chimney Hollow IGA update/Recreation Lease

- i. Daylan introduced Meegan and Tim Meyer, a county land agent.
- ii. Meegan gave a brief overview of Chimney Hollow Open Space. LCDNR and Northern Water (NW) purchased their respective ownerships (the County acquired 1,800 acres and NW owns 1,600 acres) in 2004. At the time of purchase, LCDNR entered an IGA with NW with the intent of Larimer County managing recreation on NW's future reservoir. The current IGA expires August 3rd, 2020 and a new IGA and recreation lease are being finalized.
- iii. Tim explained the 2004 IGA focused more on pre-construction management of the area and the new IGA will address long-term management, road repair, and access. The recreation lease will define ownership, maintenance, and services. The goal is to receive approval of these documents before NW's board meeting on July 9th.
- iv. Pete asked if the summary identified issues that will be included in the new IGA, Tim said it outlines that LC will design/build recreational facilities and provide public safety services and NW will build and maintain the road. Meegan added the 35-year recreation lease will be signed with the new IGA and is intended to provide a window between reservoir construction and public access.
- v. Kathy asked about access, Tim said the county will be seeking a perpetual road easement with NW to include access from CR18E and any connecting roads or trails. The road will be constructed before the easement is finalized so an accurate legal description can be included.
- vi. Russell asked about the timeline, Meegan said DNR staff will begin the management plan process for the site in late 2023-early 2024 which is anticipated to take 6-8 months, then construction of open space trails, boat ramp, and parking areas will occur in 2024-2026. NW is planning to complete construction and reservoir fill by the end of 2026 assuming the lawsuit is resolved in August.
- vii. Steve asked about the litigation, Jeff explained a collection of environmental groups sued the federal government for the issuance of permits to Chimney Hollow Reservoir. The suit is administrative and based on the federal agencies' issuance of the record of decision. NW is hopeful an outcome will be reached soon.
- viii. Meegan clarified we are looking for recommendation for the BOCC to adopt the new IGA and recreation lease.
- ix. Kathy asked for clarification on the description of the dam building and asphalt, Jeff explained NW will quarry aggregates from inside the dam footprint and develop an asphalt plug to create a watertight seal for the dam barrier.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Chimney Hollow IGA update/Recreation Lease recommendation to BOCC
 - i. Rob moved to recommend the IGA and recreation lease to the BOCC, Kathy seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- b. Board Election of Officers
 - i. Russell Fruits re-elected as chair, Rob Harris elected as vice chair.

9. US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE

- a. Jeff updated USBR hired Patrick Fisher, the new assistant to the area manager. Between now and October 1st, Horsetooth Reservoir will drop 40 ft. in elevation reaching a final elevation of 5,388 ft. for the Soldier Canyon dam project. Jeff has a brochure with more info that he will deliver to the LCDNR Administrative Office. Kathy asked for the timeline of the Cottonwood Siphon project, Jeff said equipment will be stored at a prep area off CR18E beginning next week and construction will start at the end of the month.

10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Daylan Figgs

- a. Current visitation rates at reservoir parks would be expected 5-10 years from now, staff have done a miraculous job responding. Challenges emphasize the importance of the Parks Master Plan to improve infrastructure and adjust to growing crowds. Some capital improvement projects in the queue: Sky View Campground, additional parking areas, hardening of surfaces. Budget is fine and visitation revenue is healthy. Campground reservations are near capacity, day use is at capacity, boat launches are double YTD. Requesting increase in operating budgets next year to keep up with maintenance needs and seasonal wages will increase 3%. Looking at an opportunity with Northern to establish fiber connectivity at some of our sites, higher connection speeds will streamline how we sell and process permits. Currently in 1041 process for Glade, the public can provide input at a hearing tomorrow night, final hearing on July 15th for rebuttal. Once Planning Commission makes recommendation, it will move to the BOCC in late July/early August.
- b. Kathy asked about pushback from Carter Lake capital improvement projects, Daylan said some see Sky View as additional recreation with environmental impacts/increased traffic. DNR has responded to concerns and is working internally to resolve issues.
- c. Russell asked about reductions in tax revenue, Daylan said the county finance team projected a 16% decline this year and a similar decline next year. A key advantage is operating expenses left over from old sales tax, which have allowed DNR to frontload money into cash reserves for land acquisition and capital improvement projects. Some projects have been delayed to shift capital funds from 2020 to 2021 but design and permitting processes are moving forward.
- d. Russell asked how we are managing staffing for increased visitation, Daylan said we've recently increased budgets for Dan and Mark to hire 2 new seasonal rangers or parking

lot/boat ramp attendants. Staff are also reviewing our volunteer program to see if we can safely acquire help at boat ramps.

12. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 9/1/2020 via Zoom Webinar
13. 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.
14. ADJOURN – 7:00 p.m.