

LARIMER COUNTY LAND STEWARDSHIP 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.

Date: 5/20/2021

Time: 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom Webinar. Public registration:

https://larimer-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ISu1SzS3TtCRRx9OTMYDyw

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

AGENDA

Scheduled times are subject to change.

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - a. Natural Resources events for this month: larimer.org/naturalresources.
 - b. To sign up for Land Stewardship Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Land Stewardship Advisory Board” box.
 - c. Cost-share Mailer
6. UPDATES/DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - a. 2021 Quarter 1 Board Report
 - b. 2020/2021 Annual Department Financial Review

- c. Financial Sustainability
- d. Weed and Pest Plan Updates

7. ACTION ITEMS

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 8/19/2021 at Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO, 2nd Floor, Lake Loveland Room.

10. 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.

11. ADJOURN

Included in PDF:

- Agenda
- 2021 Q1 Board Report
- Annual Department Financial Review
- Financial Sustainability Presentation

Attached Separately:

- Minutes of last meeting

This meeting will be recorded and archived according to law. Votes require a quorum.
Public can view agenda and minutes at:

<https://www.larimer.org/boards/land-stewardship-advisory-board/minutes>



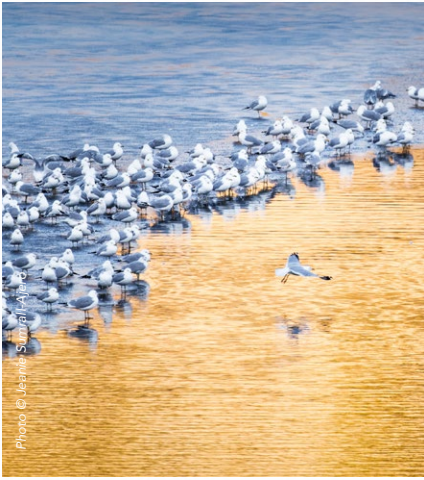


Photo © Leahna S. Smith/Photo

2021

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT
1ST QUARTER (JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH)



Never Forgotten

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) has memorialized the life and ultimate sacrifice of Ranger Brendan Unitt with a cast bronze ranger hat and memorial plaque. The memorial was dedicated by Larimer County staff and Ranger Unitt's family on Wednesday, March 10. The memorial is located near the main entrance at Horsetooth Area Information Center (HAIC). Representing the unwavering service of park rangers everywhere, the ranger hat is a meaningful symbol of the passion, dedication, and ultimate sacrifice Ranger Brendan Unitt gave in service to our community.



Staff and family members participate in a ceremony to honor Brendan Unitt on March 10, 2021. Photo courtesy Charlie Johnson.

Red Mountain Open Space trail realignments



Trail staff realign the Salt Lick trail at Red Mountain Open Space. Photo credit Joel Schwab.

Beginning March 1, visitors to Red Mountain Open Space were treated to the realignment of the Salt Lick and Big Hole trails - now out of the wash. In the fall of 2020, trails staff realigned portions of these two trails to improve visitor experience by bringing the trails up out of washes, better aligning trail junctions, and adding wayfinding signs. These realignments will also result in ecological benefits by helping clarify routes so users stay on designated trails and help eliminate social trail development.



Know Before You Go

The parking webcams at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Devil's Backbone Open Space were replaced. The cameras are back in operation and feature new data capabilities to report parking capacities, busiest hour of the day, and other info to equip visitors with important information to "Know Before You Go." The webcams connect to the website at:

larimer.org/naturalresources/parks/webcams#acc1.

Partnership secures new conservation easement

In March, Larimer County Natural Resources Department (LCDNR) partnered with Colorado Open Lands, a non-profit land trust, to conserve the 73-acre Dixon Station property, north of Wellington. Located within the Buckeye Priority Area of LCDNR's Open Lands Master Plan, this conservation easement conserves prime farmland (and associated water rights) and scenic values. The landowner, Poudre Valley Community Farms, is a co-operative with a business model to purchase or lease land to provide long-term leases to ranchers and farmers. A key part of the model involves working with local land conservation entities to protect the land they own and purchase with conservation easements. Larimer County provided \$150,000 towards purchase of the conservation easement, with the landowner donating 75 percent of the value.



Dixon Station Conservation Easement. Photo Credit Leslie Volkar.

Fire recovery underway



Cameron Peak Fire as seen from Devil's Backbone Open Space in October 2020. Photo credit Aliy Louie.

To help residents affected by the Cameron Peak Fire, the Land Stewardship Program will be conducting free weed management site visits this summer. Weeds are often invigorated by fire leading to a slower native plant community recovery, if left unchecked. Staff will help assess the plant community condition and create a site-specific weed management plan that will both benefit the environment and save landowners time and money. LCDNR is also partnering with the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Cameron Peak Recovery Collaborative to create native seed mixes that can restore ecosystem function, discourage weed invasion and stabilize soils with a diversity of grasses and wildflowers. These seed mix specifications are specific to different elevations and available for purchase from local seed distributors.

Leveraging grants to deliver results for community

Between 2018 and 2020, \$16.1 million was brought into LCDNR through grants, donations, and partnerships. These funds were secured to support capital improvements, land acquisitions, habitat restoration, weed management, and forestry projects. Collectively, between eight projects, 63 cents out of every \$1 was leveraged through grants, donations, and partnerships.

The funders and partners for these projects, listed below, included CDOT, Central Federal Lands Highway Administration, the City of Fort Collins, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State Forest Service, Department of Local Affairs, Friends of Larimer County, Great Outdoors Colorado, Northern Water, and two private landowners.

Projects receiving funding support, 2018-2020:

1. County-wide weed management, Early Detection Rapid Response Program
2. Forest management on county-owned open spaces
3. Red Mountain Open Space inholding acquisition
4. Land acquisitions as part of the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains 2020 Expansion Project
5. Poudre River restoration at River Bluffs Open Space
6. Horsetooth and Carter Lake reservoirs road and parking improvements
7. Sky View Campground at Carter Lake Reservoir
8. Poudre River Regional Trail Construction



Poudre River Regional Trail Construction



County-wide weed management, Early Detection Rapid Response Program



Land acquisitions, part of Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains 2020 Expansion Project



Sky View Campground Pavilion Design at Carter Lake Reservoir



Horsetooth and Carter Lake reservoirs road and parking improvements

Financial Summary

Larimer County Natural Resources Department has five primary revenue sources including Colorado lottery proceeds, the open spaces sales tax, user fees on open space properties, user fees on reservoir park properties, and

the weed district property tax and operating expense. Below are the Jan 1 through March 31 revenue summaries, annual and daily permit sales, and camping reservation nights compared to the same period the previous year.

Year to Date Revenue (through March 31st 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Colorado Lottery	\$161,563	\$183,563	14%
Open Spaces Sales Tax	\$611,890	\$675,136	10%
Open Spaces Generated User Fees*	\$192,494	\$294,454	53%
Reservoir Parks Generated User Fees*	\$1,031,263	\$1,252,958	21%
Weed District Property Tax	\$326,172	\$347,107	6%

*User fees include those for entrance, camping, special events, group use areas, and penalty assessments

Year to Date Operating Expenses (through March 31st 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Personnel	\$636,639	\$583,201	-8%
Operating	\$448,095	\$488,972	9%

Year to Date Number of Permit Sales (through March 31st 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Open Spaces			
Annual Permits	342	284	-17%
Daily Permits	6,390	6,478	1%
Reservoir Parks			
Annual Permits	930	1,003	8%
Daily Permits	5,911	6,652	13%

Year to Date Camping Reservation Nights (through March 31st 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Open Spaces	5	16	220%
Reservoir Parks	1,426	1,349	-5%



Larimer County
Department of Natural Resources
Quarterly Board Report
Published: April 2021

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LARIMER COUNTY: NATURAL RESOURCES



ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW

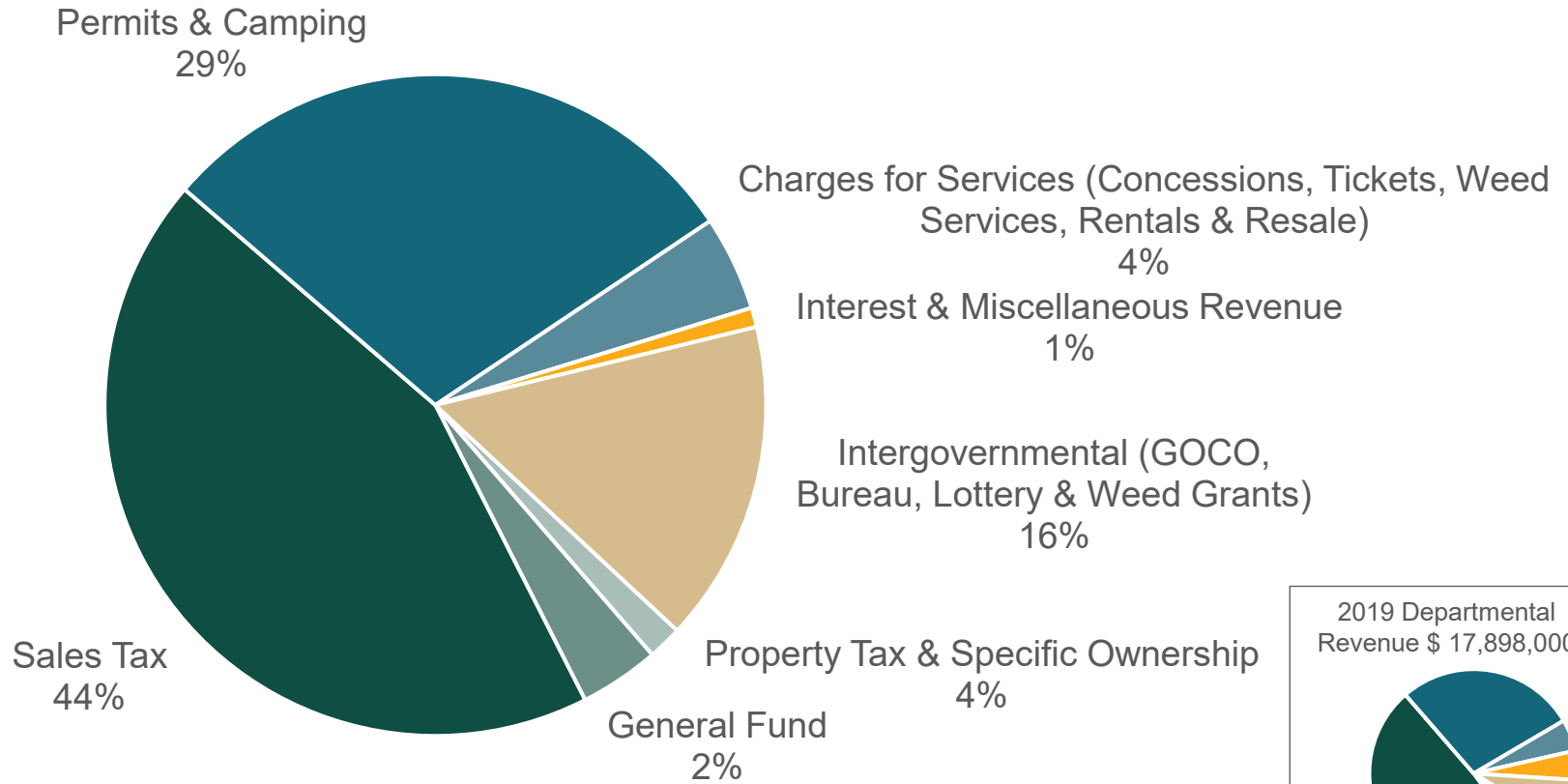
APRIL/MAY 2021



SUMMARY

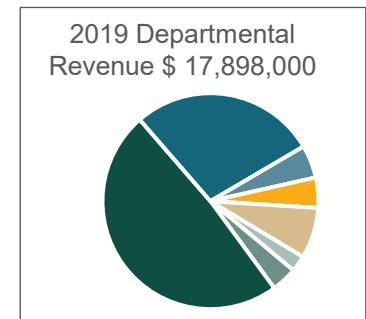
- ✓ Review of Departmental 2020 Revenues
- ✓ Reservoir Parks Operational Trends
- ✓ Park Capital Improvement Overview
- ✓ Open Spaces Operational Trends
- ✓ Projection for Sales Tax Extension
- ✓ Land Stewardship Operational Trends
- ✓ Anticipated Future Growth

2020 DEPARTMENT REVENUE



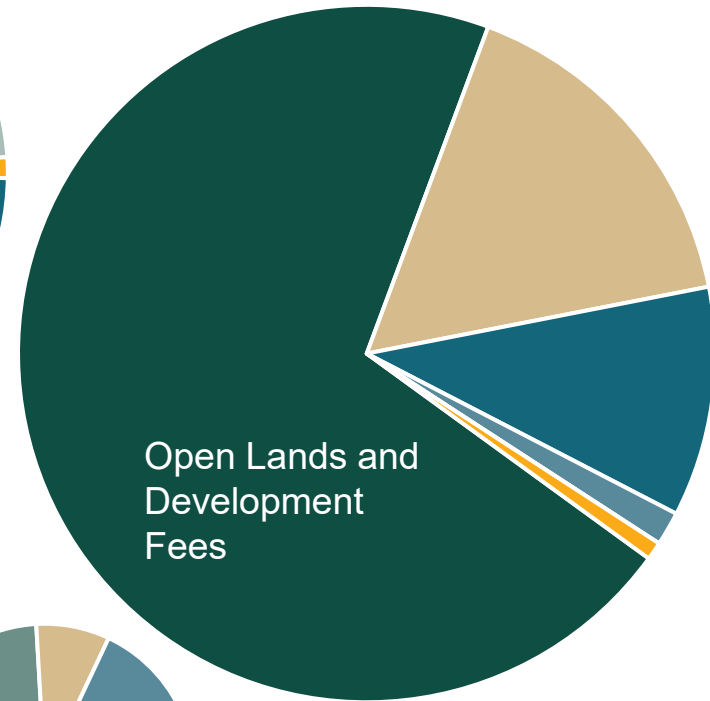
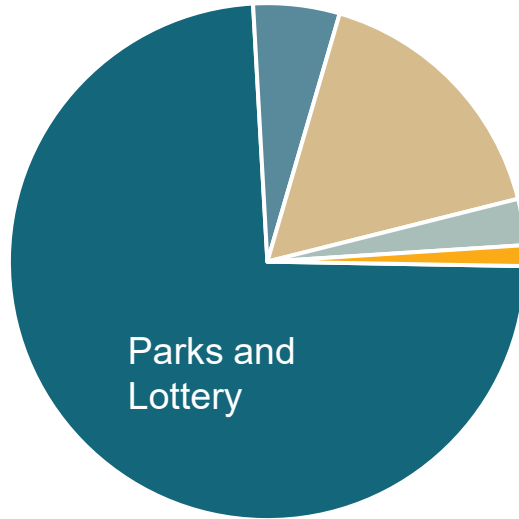
\$20,542,000

excludes intradepartmental transfers



2020 REVENUE BY SECTION

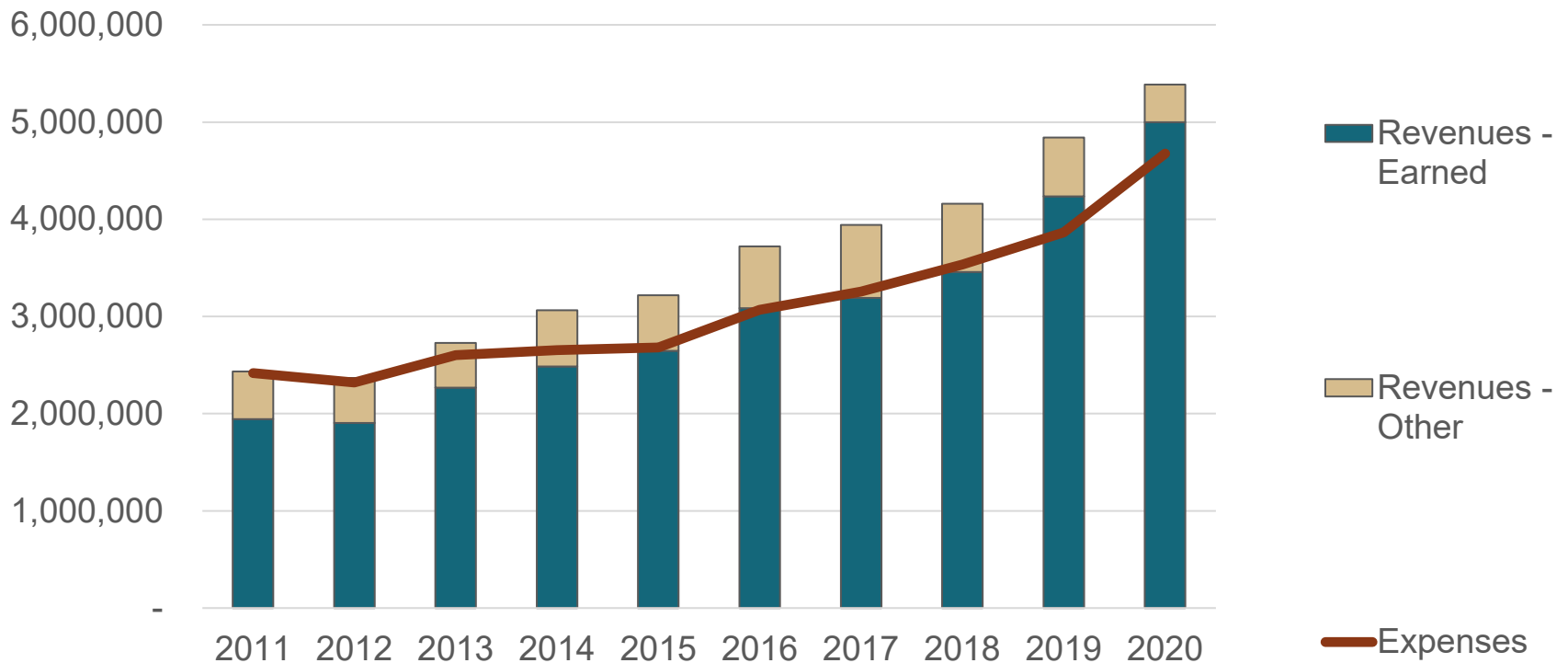
- General Fund
- Property Tax & Specific Ownership
- Sales Tax
- Permits & Camping
- Charges for Services (Concessions, Tickets, Weed Services, Rentals & Resale)
- Interest & Miscellaneous Revenue
- Intergovernmental (GOCO, Bureau, Lottery & Weed Grants)



\$ 20,542,000

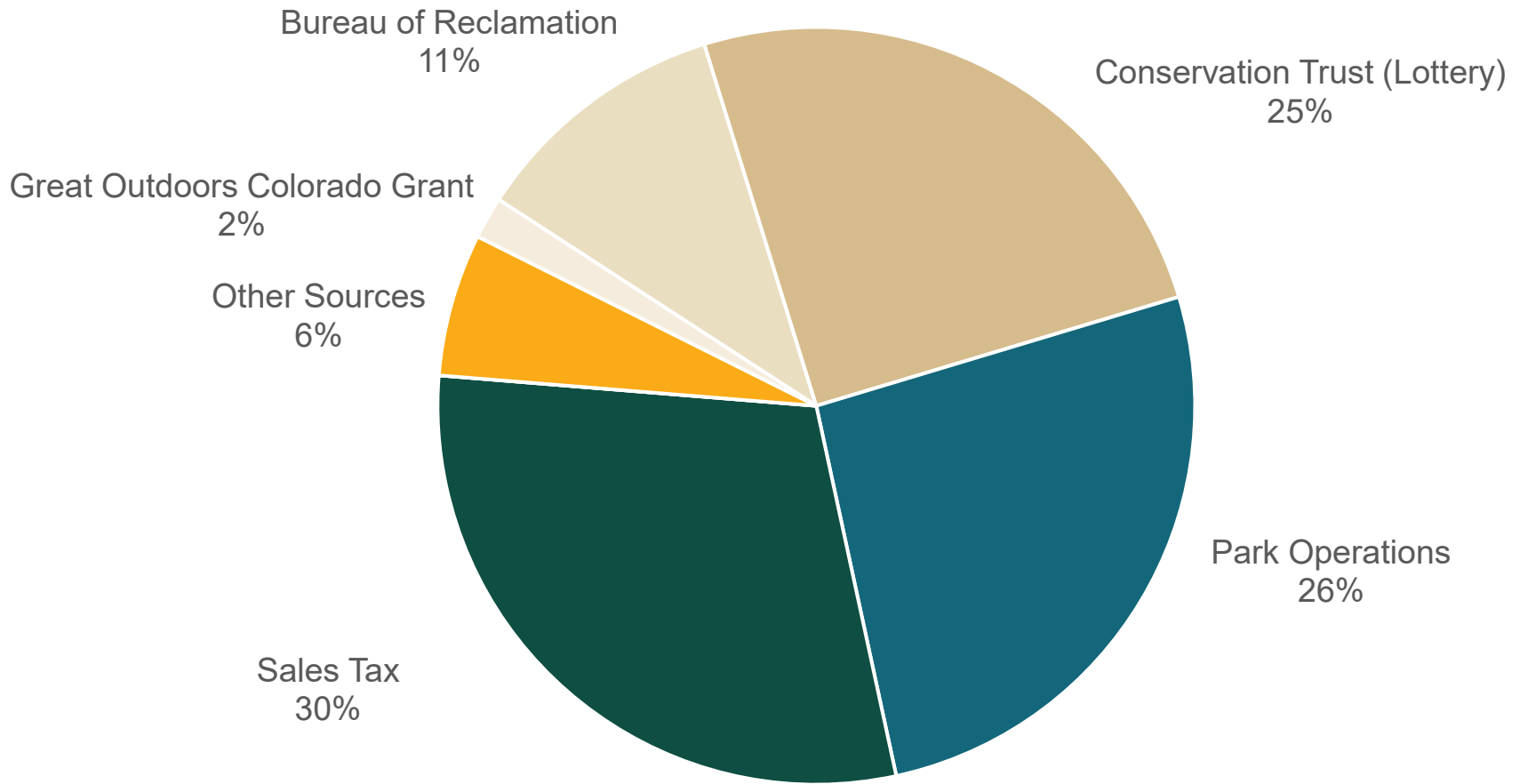
excludes intradepartmental transfers

PARKS' OPERATIONS REVENUE AND EXPENSES



Park permit fee structure was revamped in 2013,
Camping fees recorded at gross beginning in 2016,
Permit and camping fees increased in 2019.

PARKS' CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT SOURCES FOR 2011-2020



\$ 10,547,000

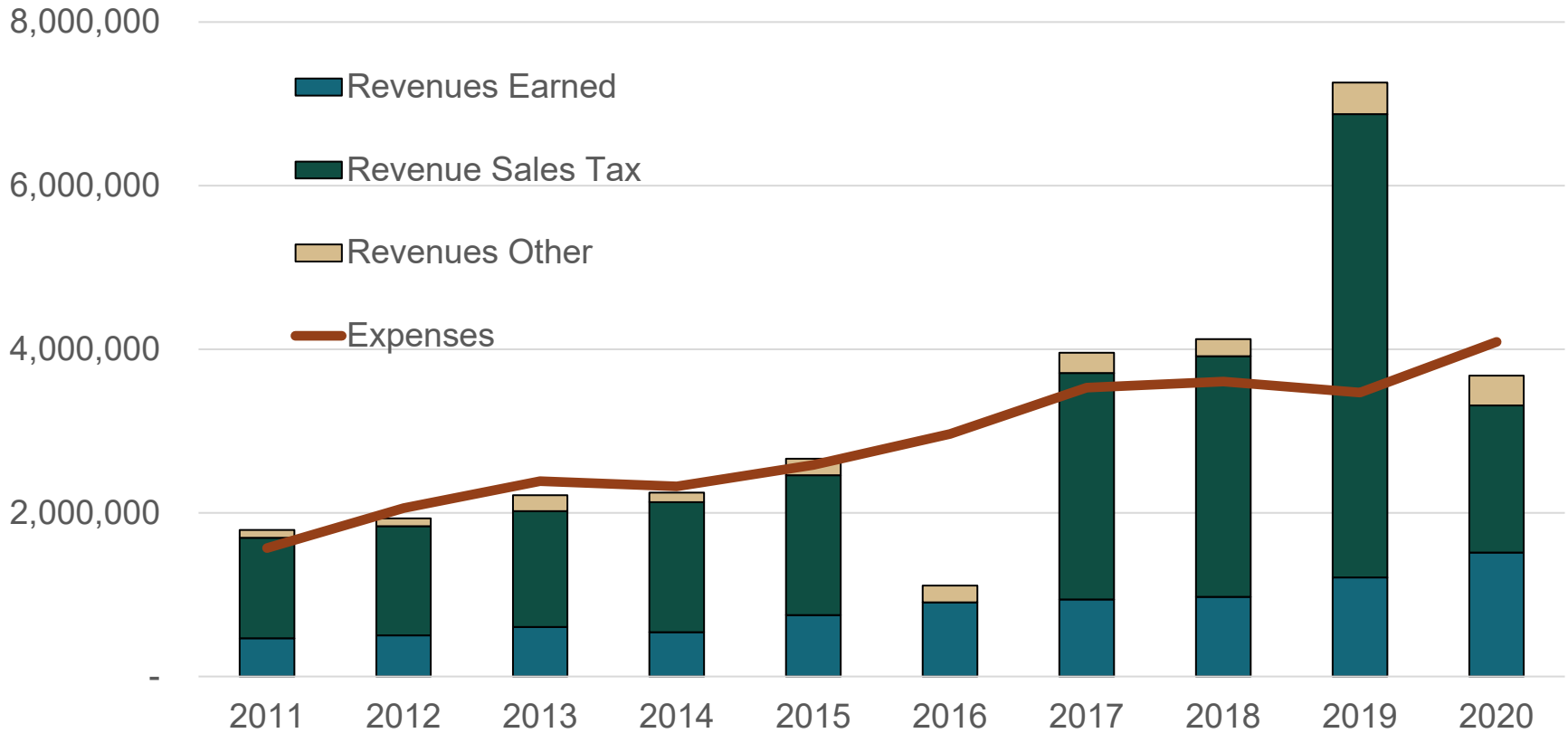
PARKS' CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR 2021-2025

Parking and Access Improvements
Sky View Group Campground
Camper Cabins
and Others

Capital Improvement Plan
Budget Submittal
\$ 16 Million

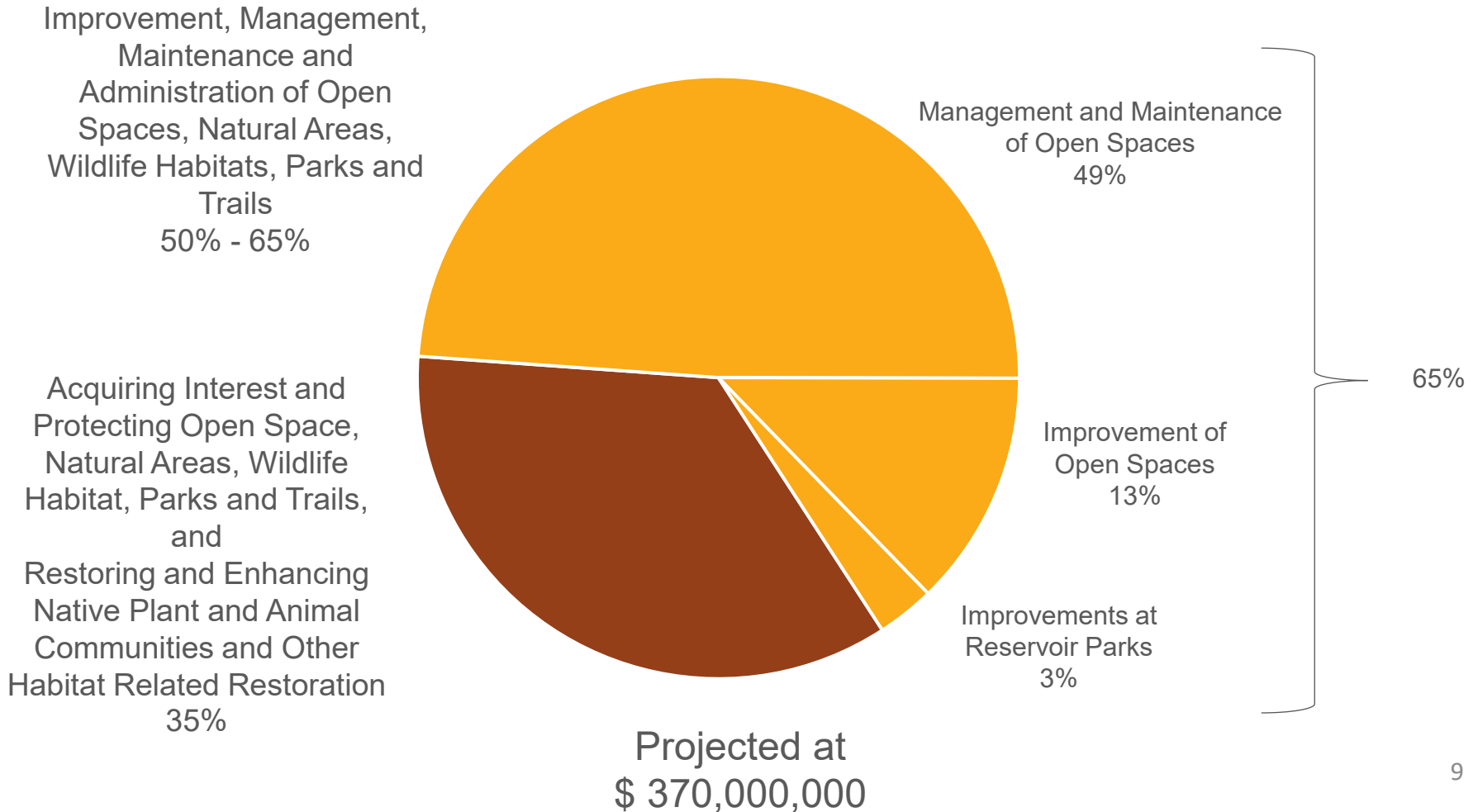
Capital Improvement and Renewal
at our
Four Reservoir Parks

OPEN LANDS OPERATIONS REVENUE AND EXPENSES

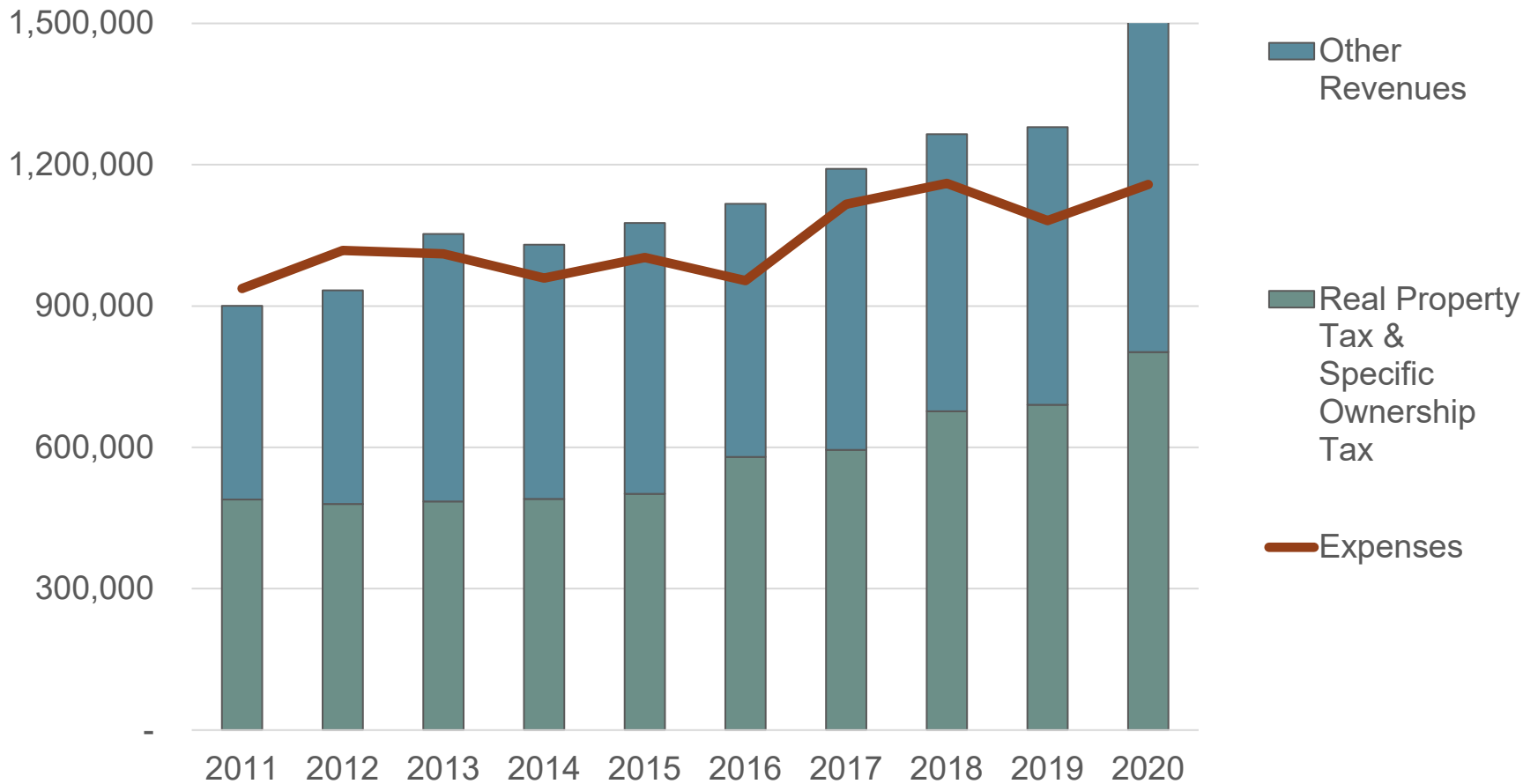


Fund balance was sufficient to cover operations so sales tax revenues were used for acquisition needs in 2016. Substantial sales tax revenue was added to operations fund balance as a beginning reserve in 2019. Fund balance was used to cover a portion of operations so acquisitions could be front loaded in 2020.

EXTENSION OF SALES TAX 2019 THROUGH 2043



LAND STEWARDSHIP REVENUES AND EXPENSES



FUTURE GROWTH LEVEL OF SERVICE PER CAPITA

2020

2043

Population 345,000



Larimer County
Population

Added Projected Population 150,000

**495,000
Population**

53,000 Acres Conserved



Acres Conserved

Add 24,000 Acres Conserved

**77,000
Acres**

98 Miles Of Trails



Miles Of Trails

Add 44 Miles Of Trails

**142
Miles**

665 Trailhead Parking Spaces



Trailhead Parking
Spaces

Add 300 Parking Spaces

**965
Parking
Spaces**

LARIMER COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

MARCH 2021



OVERVIEW

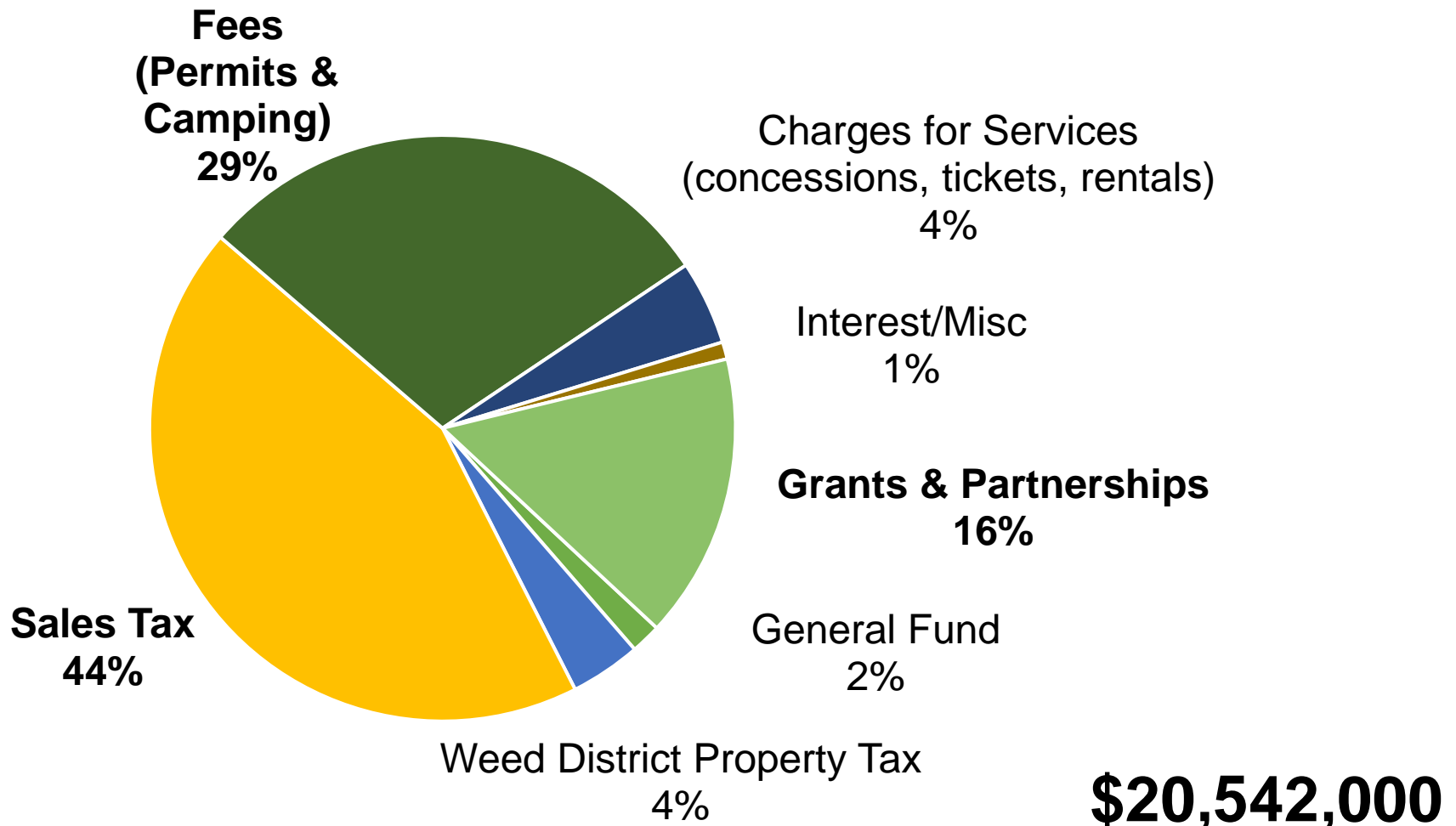


Financial decisions based on a collaborative BOCC/Department Board developed 25-year funding model.

Key Elements:

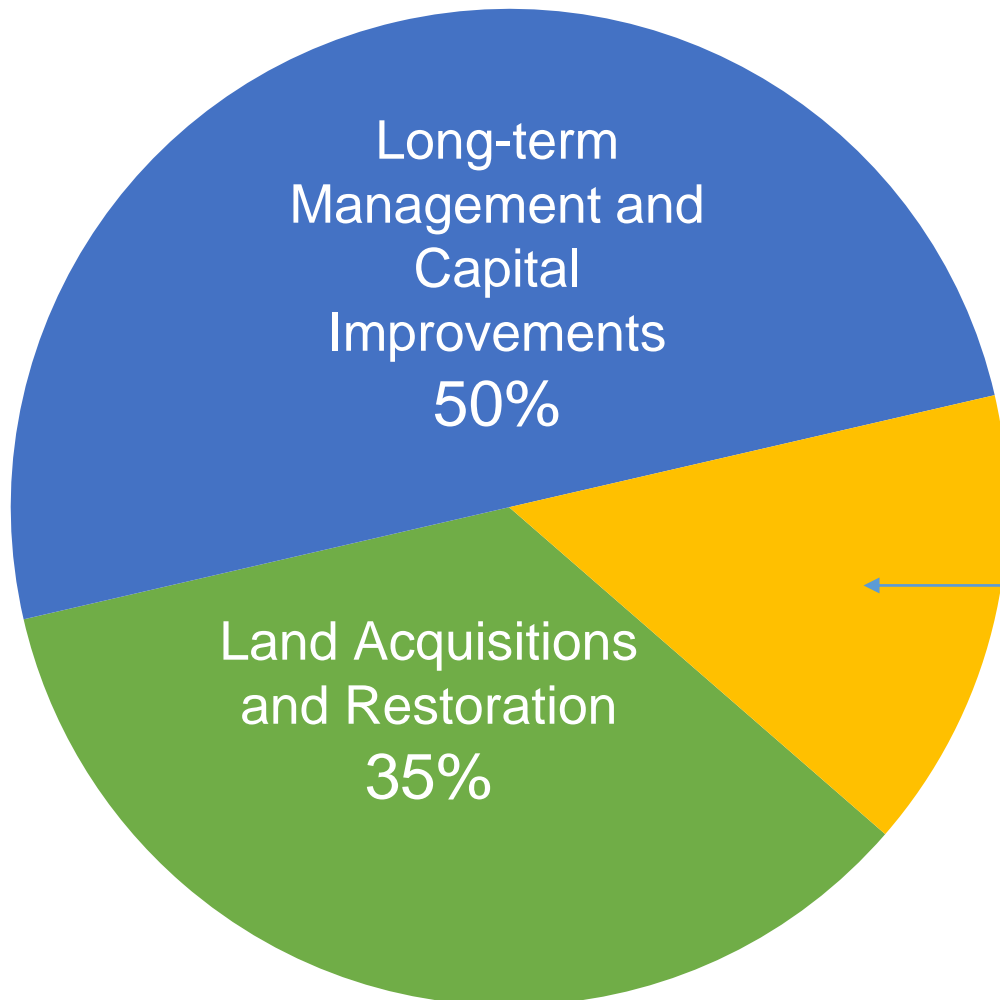
- Revenue Sources
- Tax spending allocations
- Costs and Gaps
- Accessibility

DEPARTMENT REVENUE - 2020



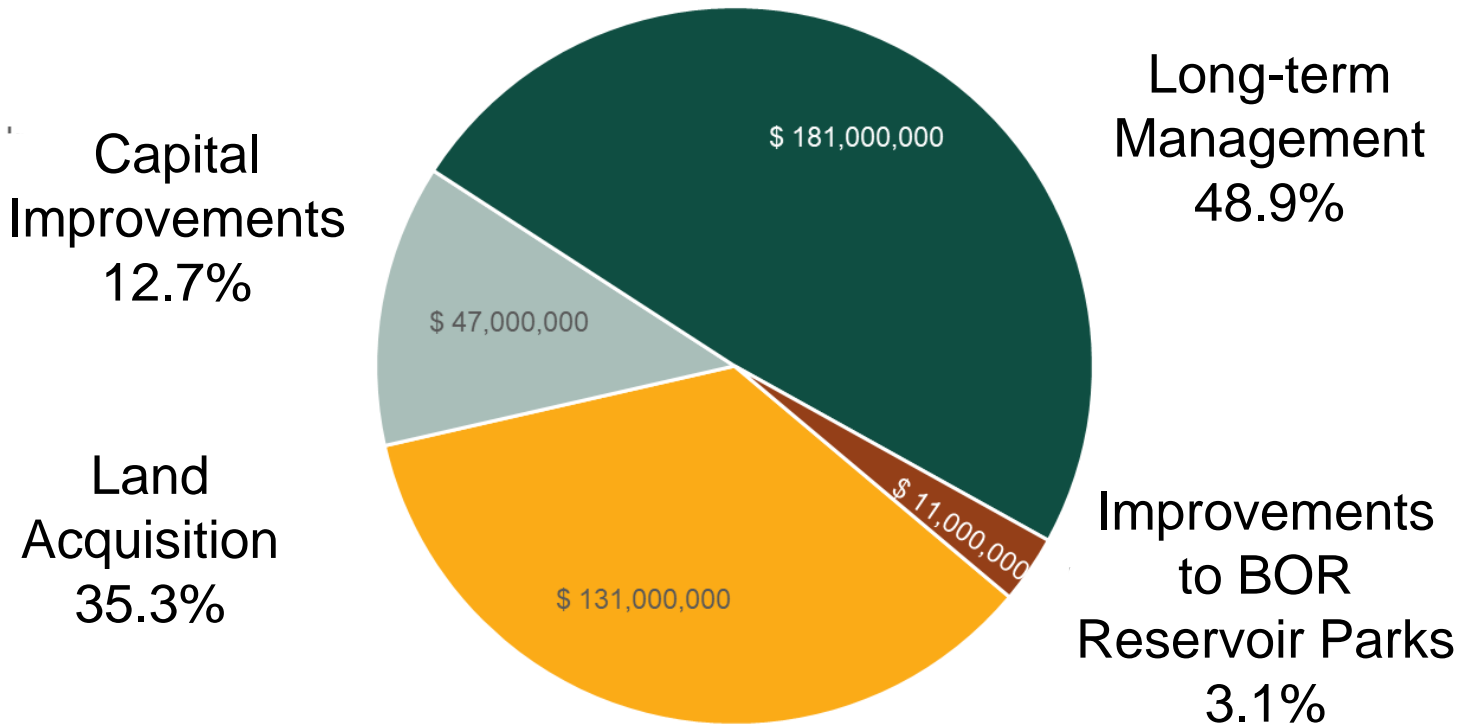
excludes intradepartmental transfers

SALES TAX ALLOCATION 2019-2043



The two main categories and/or Improvements to BOR Reservoir Parks

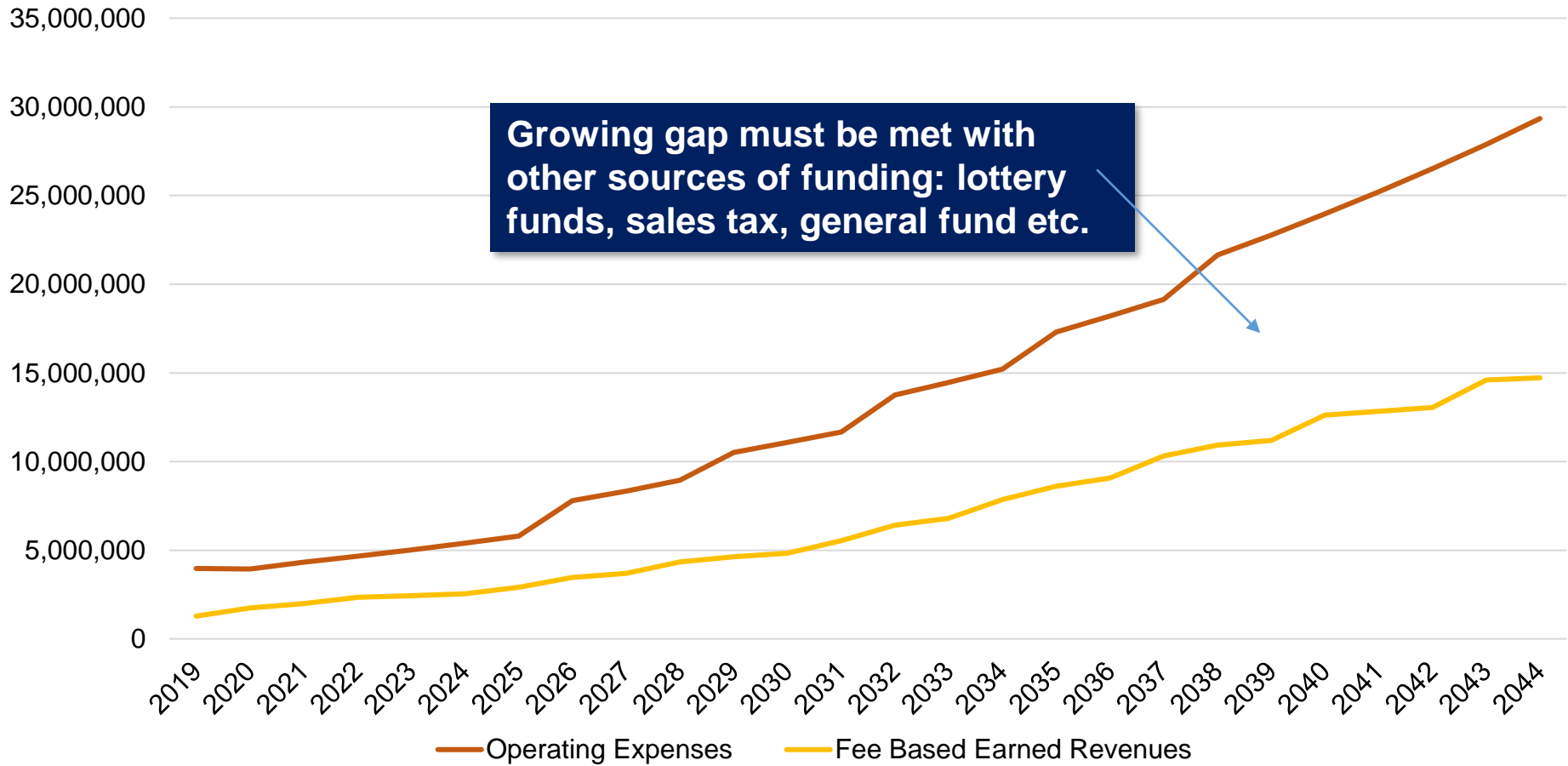
25 YEAR PROJECTIONS - SPENDING



Assumptions:

- Raising user fees every third year \$370,000,000
- Charging user fees at higher use areas

FUNDING THE GAP



RESERVOIR PARKS REVENUE - 2020

Lottery Funds

6%

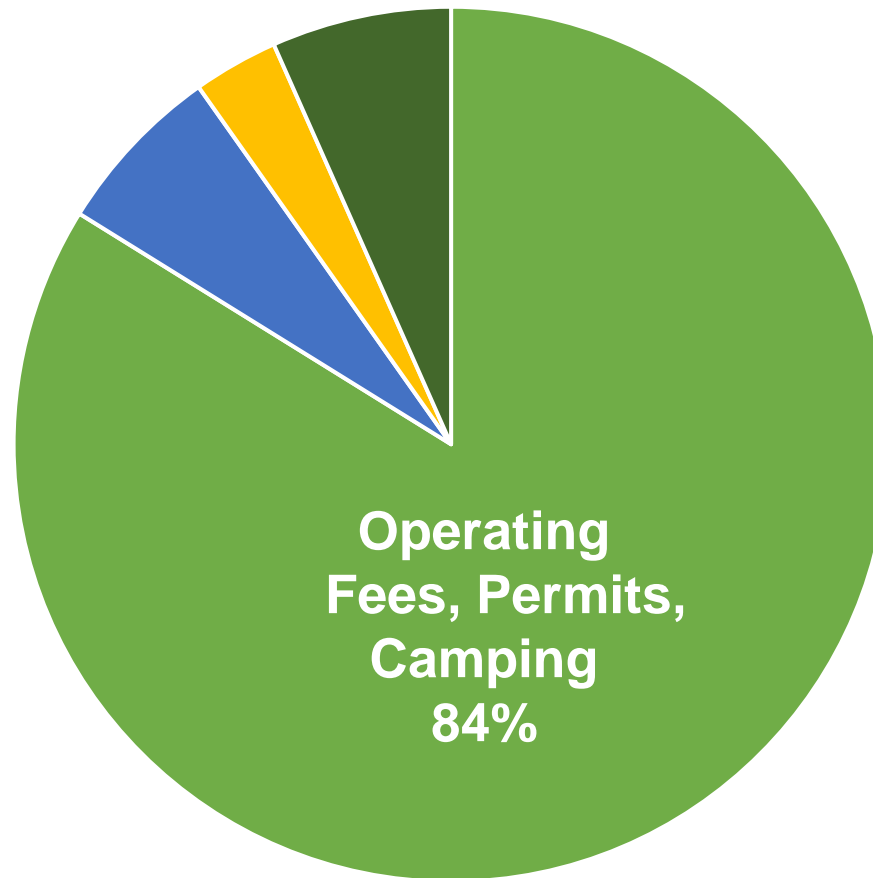
Sales Tax

3%

Partnerships

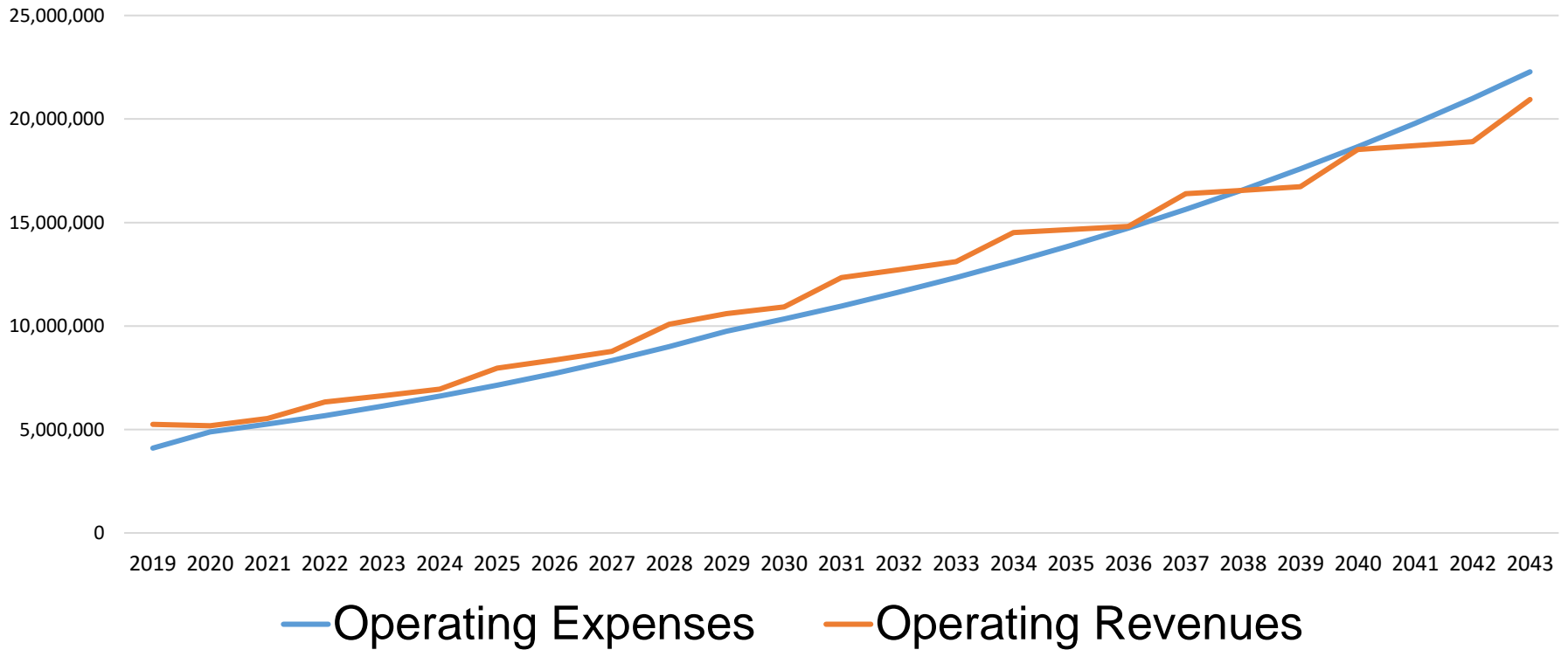
Grants

7%



25-YEAR PROJECTIONS - PARKS

BOR Reservoir Parks Operations



GAP REQUIRES TRADE-OFFS

Management and maintenance of:

- All current open spaces
- All current reservoir parks
- 100 miles of system trails
- 852 parking spaces
- Regional paved trails



Limits our capacity to grow:

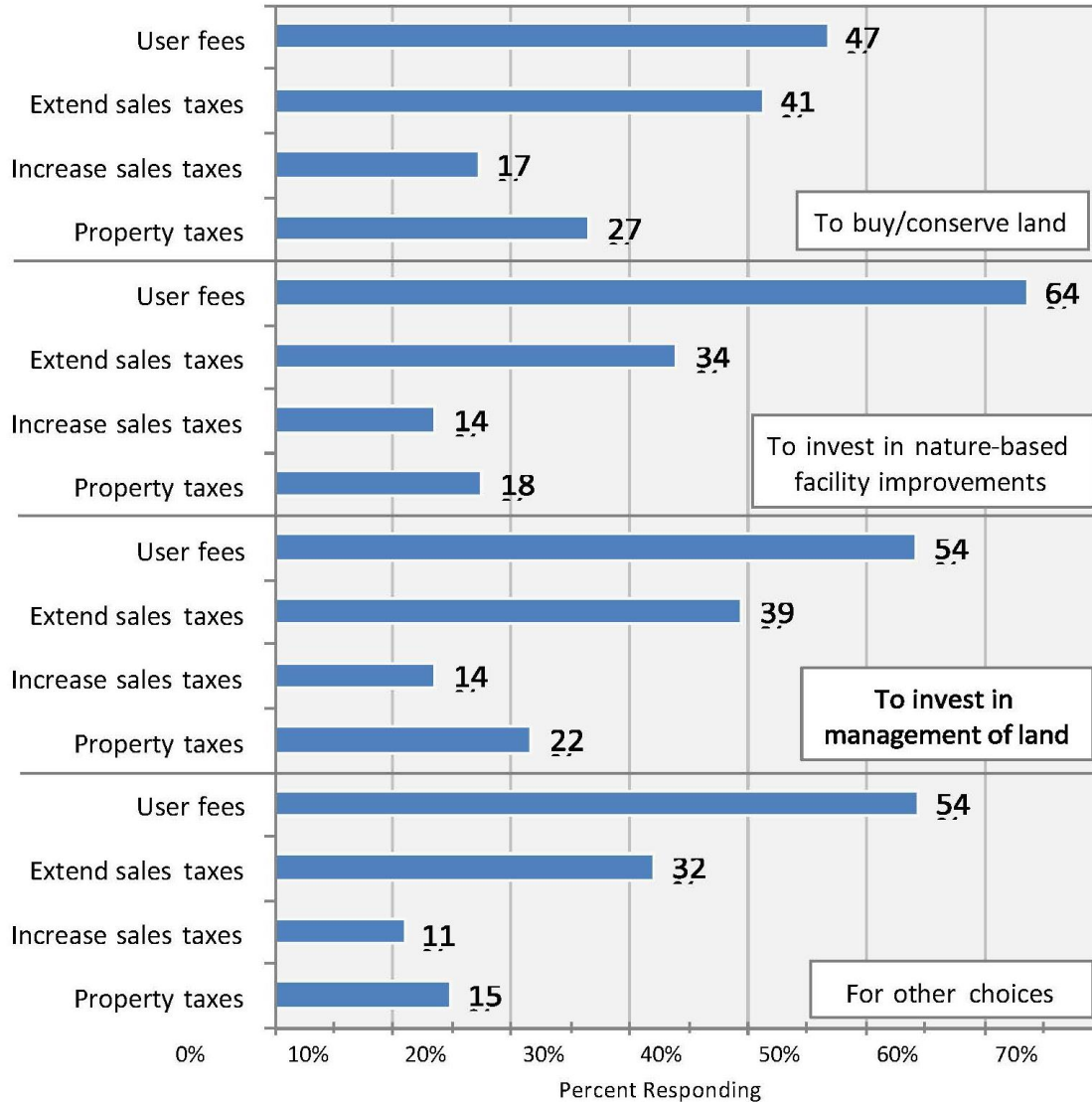
- New trails, open spaces, parks
- New conserved land
- Additional parking
- Gaps in maintenance and replacement
- Safety concerns

Our Lands, Our Future 2014

Statistically valid survey, 7,500 residents

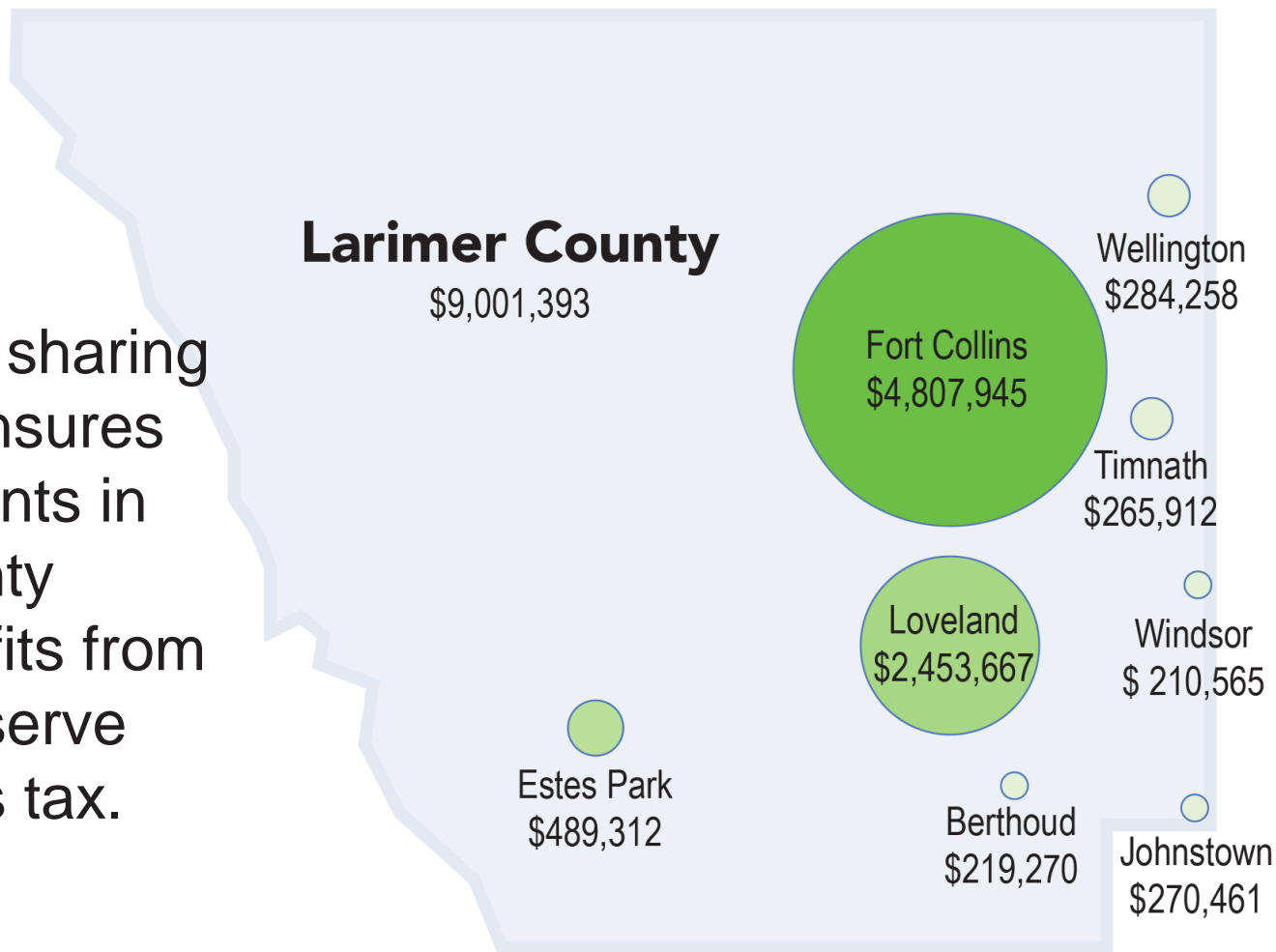


How Should Local Government Agencies Obtain Funding?



KEEPING OPEN SPACE - ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

This revenue sharing agreement ensures that all residents in Larimer County receive benefits from the Help Preserve Open Spaces tax.



Total 2020 tax revenue \$18,002,787

KEEPING OPEN SPACE - ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

We inspire young outdoor stewards through interactive education.

- Education events on site
615 avg hours of contact annually
- Trailhead table outreach
- Junior Ranger Guide
- Tiny Trekker Activity Series
- Field trip school K-8 partners
- Non-profit partners (Boys & Girls Club etc)



KEEPING OPEN SPACE - ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

A tapestry of opportunity to experience the outdoors



**Bison Pass
Low Income
Permit**



**Trail Connections
with Cities**

*Since
2008*



**Small Grants
for Community
Partnering**



**Rangers,
Trailhead Tables,
Volunteers**



**Sales Tax
Distribution
to Cities**

New!



**Digital Public
Engagement Forum
and Translation**

New!



**Space for Everyone
Community
Backpack Program**



**Busing Subsidy
for Title I Schools**