

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: 8/19/2021

Time: 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Location: Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO, 2nd Floor, Lake Loveland Room.

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.
6. UPDATES/DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - a. 2020 Annual Report – Daylan Figgs, Director
 - b. 2021 Quarter 2 Board Report – Daylan Figgs, Director
 - c. Restoration/Resource Management Update – Zac Wiebe, Planning and Resource Specialist

d. Budget Submitted to BOCC for Consideration – Lori Smith, Finance and Admin Div.
Manager

7. ACTION ITEMS

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 11/18/2021 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
- 2020 Annual Report
- 2021 Q2 Board Report
- 2022 Budget Approach Update

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>





Larimer County Natural Resources

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Thank You Citizen Advisory Boards

Land Stewardship Advisory Board

Laura Booth
Tasha Carr
Renee Galeano-Popp
Ronald Harris (Vice Chair, November 2020)
Ernie Marx
Richard McCulloch
Gordon Nuttall (Vice Chair, Jan-May 2020)
Ed Redente (Chair)

Open Lands Advisory Board

Gale Bernhardt
Rick Brent
Jason Brothers
K-Lynn Cameron
Mark DeGregorio
Bob Hewson
Peter Kelly
David Marvin (Vice Chair)
Tom Shoemaker
Linda Stanley
Sherri Valentine
Nancy Wallace (Chair)
Ken Zornes

Parks Advisory Board

Steve Ambrose
Steven Amundson
Pete Blume
Spencer Clark
Russell Fruits (Chair)
Robert Harris (Vice Chair, July 2020)
Kristina Kachur
Daniela Lawler
Kathy Maher
Amanda Peters
Michael Robinson
Ruthie Rollins
Deborah Shulman (Vice Chair, Jan-July 2020)
Jill Wuertz

Thank you to Larimer County Government Officials:

Board of County Commissioners:

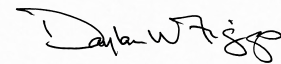
John Kefalas, Kristin Stephens, Jody Shaddock-McNally, Steve Johnson*, Tom Donnelly*
*terms expired in 2020

County Manager: Linda Hoffmann
Community Planning, Infrastructure and Resources Director: Laurie Kadrach

Cover photo: Towers Vista, Photo © Brendan Bombaci.

Nature is Open

A new decade welcomed unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the Department of Natural Resources and frankly, in our world. While public health and safety ranked priority number one, community members turned to our natural spaces in unprecedented ways in 2020. We were honored to be a haven for fresh air retreat and recreation, a safe place to connect with others and with nature. In 2020, we experienced the tragic loss of one of our own, two catastrophic wildfires, record-breaking visitation and yet – our community's resilient nature provided great moments of hope for the future. Resiliency remains our steadfast goal this year and beyond.



Daylan Figgs
Director, Department of Natural Resources

Our Mission

To establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values.



In Memory, Never Forgotten

Ranger Brendan Unitt

End of Watch: August 20, 2020

2020 at a Glance



\$12.8M

Total grants received to leverage department funds for land conservation, stewardship and capital projects



SAFETY FIRST

Covid response and 2 Wildfires



1,975

Acres of land conserved



DEVIL'S BACKBONE OPEN SPACE

Visitor Use Study completed

20  20

STARBURST AWARD

From Colorado Lottery for Poudre River Restoration & Resilience Project at River Bluffs Open Space



16,113

Volunteer service hours

30%



VISITATION & CAMPING

At open spaces, reservoir parks, and trails



Keeping the Door Open to the Great Outdoors

Our work in 2020 reflects the Department's dedication to delivering quality visitor experiences, safe and enjoyable public access to the outdoors, and the conservation and stewardship of vital Larimer County landscapes. The following summaries highlight some of the key milestones from 2020 that represent our collective work.

Covid-19 Response – Safety First

Keeping the community safe while welcoming more visitors than ever before to our parks and open spaces was focus number one in 2020. Focus shifted from “normal” operations to heightened attention on personal safety (for both public and staff) and access due to the pandemic. While we continued to serve the community in-person at our parks and open spaces, most internal operations pivoted to virtual, including new parking webcams, updating all pay station components, and converting vehicle permits to online sales. Increases in PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) supplies and processes, curbside herbicide sales, custodial operations, and remote officing all played a significant role in our attention to safety and access.

Visitor Experience Improvements

Improvements completed at Hermit Park Open Space to improve visitor experiences included a newly constructed amphitheater for education programs, building a single track alignment for the Moose Meadow Trail, and improvements to Kruger Rock Trail to ensure sustainability and minimize widening. In addition, 1.1 miles of roadway were resurfaced along the cabin loops.

At Red Mountain Open Space, realignment of the Salt Lick and Big Hole Wash trails was completed – resulting in better route navigation for visitors.

Conserving Vital Landscapes

Conservation of two working ranches, totaling 1,975-acres in the Laramie Foothills, were both finalized in 2020, providing significant visual and wildlife habitat buffers to Red Mountain Open Space. The lands were conserved in partnership between Larimer County, the City of Fort Collins and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), with a generous donation from the Steputis family to ensure perpetual conservation of their family ranch.

Restoration & Land Stewardship

At Devil's Backbone Open Space, 316 acres of mixed grass plant communities were restored, and at River Bluffs Open Space, fifteen native trees were planted in the place of non-native species.

A new noxious weed, plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*), was discovered for the first time in Larimer County (near Drake), and department staff is working to eliminate this new invader before it becomes established.

Restoration of the Herrington/Soderberg ranch buildings at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space was completed in 2020 in partnership with HistoriCorps, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Capital Improvements & Regional Trail Connections

Ten road and infrastructure improvement projects will move forward at Horsetooth and Carter Lake reservoirs, thanks to \$8.6 million of federal funding from the Colorado Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). Sky View Campground at Carter Lake will be constructed in 2021 thanks to a \$475,334 GOCO grant bolstering Department funds.

Regional trail connections were also solidified in 2020. A new 1-mile, 10-foot concrete connector trail was completed bridging the Town of Windsor's Kyger Open Space with River Bluffs Open Space. Likewise, the City of Loveland's Prairie Ridge Natural Area opened in May 2020, connecting to Devil's Backbone Open Space and Fort Collins' Coyote Ridge Natural Area.



Pinewood Reservoir © Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero

NATURE IS OPEN

Connection to nature and open spaces is proven to improve a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, but with fresh air freedom comes responsibility.

- Practice Social Distance – Keep SIX feet between each other – even on the trail
- Keep groups fewer than TEN people
- Don't congregate in groups at overlooks, rest areas, or trailheads
- Wear a mask to protect yourself and others
- Feeling sick? Stay home and visit us virtually for daily doses of nature
- Know BEFORE you go Check Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX) trails.colorado.gov for crowd and trail status

Let's all do our part in keeping our parks and open spaces open while stopping the spread of COVID-19.

LARIMER COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES larimer.org/naturalresources larimer.org/coronavirus

Meeting You Where You Are

New group gathering protocols and required social distancing forced much of our community engagement and volunteer interactions in 2020 to behind a Zoom screen. New innovations and engagement strategies were deployed to continue to connect with community while staying safe during the pandemic.

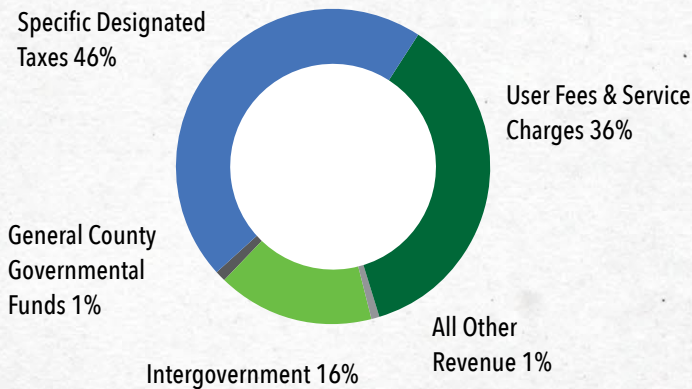
New strategies included:

- Virtual Geology Field Trip Series
- Coffee with Volunteers – Zoom Edition
- Hands-free trailhead tables and roving education
- Self-guided, Volunteer Litter Clean Up Days
- New parking webcams at Horsetooth Mountain & Devil's Backbone open spaces

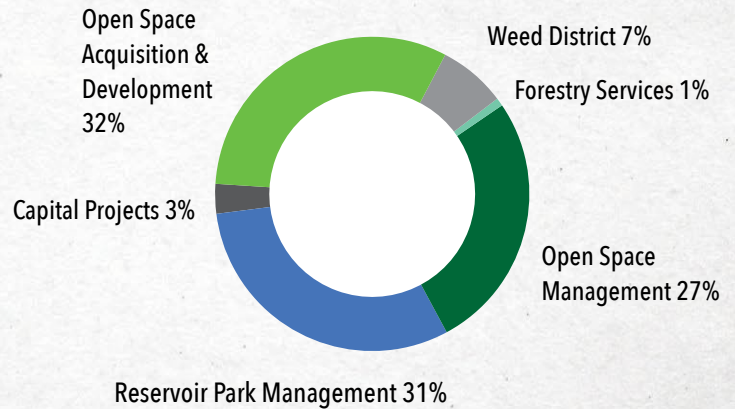
Financial Summary

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources manages over 40,000 acres of lands for public recreation and land conservation as well as provides county-wide stewardship outreach on weed and forest management. Revenues are realized from a number of sources and totaled **\$19.5 million** in 2020. Expenses for 2020 were **\$15.3 million**. Land acquisition and capital improvement projects are funded through the difference between annual revenue and expenses.

2020 Revenues



2020 Expenses



*These figures are not audited. Audit will be completed in mid-2020. 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 eight municipalities. The tax was extended in 2014 and sunsets in 2043. It is not imposed on food or prescription drugs. The total revenue collected to date is more than \$265 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.

Total tax revenue collected in 2020 was \$18,002,787. This graphic illustrates how the tax was distributed per entity in 2020.

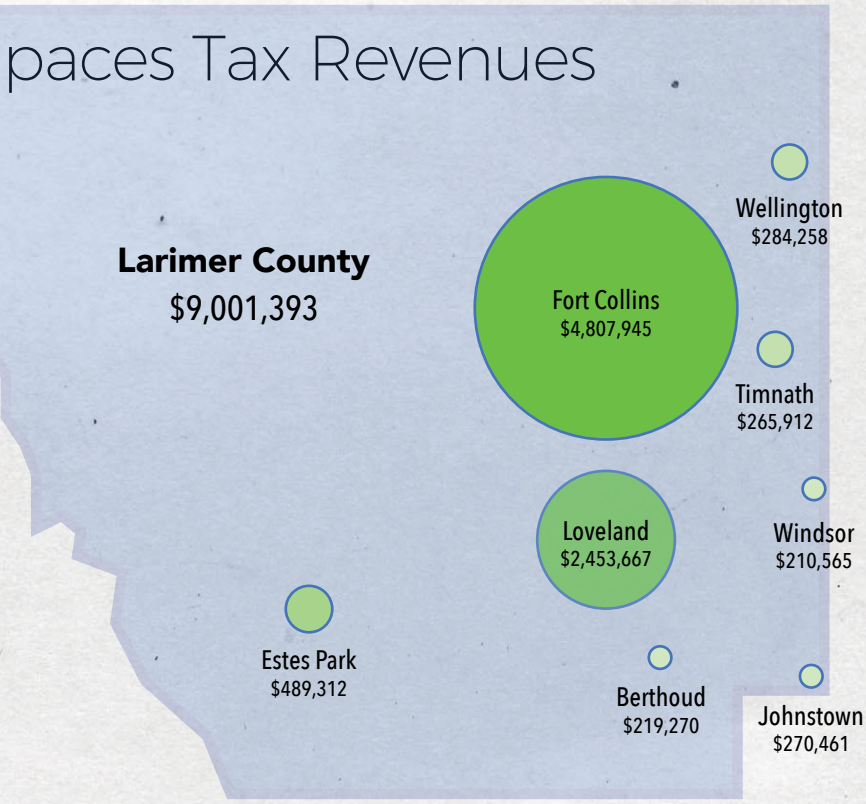




Photo © Jim Janicki

2021

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT 2ND QUARTER (APRIL MAY JUNE)



Sky View Campground construction kicks off



County Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally, staff, and sponsors of the project gather for a group photo at the ground breaking of Sky View Campground in late May. Photo Charlie Johnson.

In May, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) broke ground at Sky View Campground, the soon to be newest camping destination at Carter Lake. The groundbreaking was attended by Larimer County staff and sponsors of the project: Great Outdoors Colorado, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Friends of Larimer County. Identified in the 2017 Reservoir Parks Master Plan, this campground will enhance the group camping experience at Carter Lake. Catering to RV and tent campers alike, visitors will be able to enjoy amenities such as areas to camp together, a large group pavilion, and areas to view the night sky. Construction of the campground is expected through fall with opening slated in 2022.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) stations complete

LCDNR recently completed the construction of five new ANS inspection stations at Carter and Horsetooth reservoirs, which will provide dedicated workspace for inspector staff. The project was completed in partnership with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, who provided some of the necessary funding. At press time, a record nine infected boats have been intercepted this year and decontaminated at Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake.



A newly completed ANS station offers shade and a protected place for staff to shelter out of the elements, if needed.

Protecting prominent viewsheds and access



Dakota Ridge. Photo Charlie Johnson.

LCDNR recently contributed to an important land conservation project in the foothills west of Loveland. Along with an \$850,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado and a private donation, Larimer County contributed \$316,000 to the partnership to help the City of Loveland purchase and protect the 245-acre Dakota Ridge property. As rapid development continues in the area, conservation of the property is valuable because it is one of the last of its size in the foothills and protects a prominent viewshed directly west of the city. It is also adjacent to existing conserved land, contains important wildlife habitat, and will offer public access in the future. Loveland will complete a management plan for Dakota Ridge in 2022 to determine appropriate public use, opportunities include a trailhead and trail system, a community park, and a trail connection north to Prairie Ridge Natural Area.

Take the Loop Less Traveled

Three new suggested trail loop routes were launched in May at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Devil's Backbone Open Space. The new loop routes include the destinations of Horsetooth Rock, Horsetooth Falls, and the Keyhole at Devil's Backbone. The goal of loop trail routes is to lessen resource and trail damage and improve overall visitor experience. Colorful inviting signage was added along each route, and a visitor survey is collecting feedback.



Horsetooth Reservoir Community Forum launches



Horsetooth Reservoir. Photo Jim Janicki.

A summer-long community conversation kicked off May 20 with a virtual presentation forum hosted by Natural Resources staff. The community was invited to share their feedback via a new web engagement platform regarding potential visitor management strategies at Horsetooth Reservoir. The discussion covered separation of use on the water, public safety concerns, parking challenges, and potential timed entry/reservation systems. Over 120 citizens attended the virtual forum providing feedback, questions, and ideas. A visitor experience survey and idea board are open on the website with over 400 survey responses and 75 submitted comments/ideas.

Getting to know our visitors at Devil's Backbone

In partnership with Colorado State University last fall, LCDNR completed a statistically valid Visitor Use Study at Devil's Backbone Open Space. The study measured general satisfaction, primary activities, perceptions of crowding, and general demographics. Results showed a high amount of general satisfaction at the open space with a 99% overall satisfaction rating of "Good" or "Excellent." The results shed light on perceptions of crowding with 50% of respondents feeling crowded at the main trailhead. This valuable visitor information will be utilized in future planning efforts at the open space. The full Visitor Use Study results and a summary of key findings are now available online.



Devil's Backbone Open Space. Photo Brendan Bombaci



A welcoming volunteer invites visitors to come learn more at a stationed SEEK table at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Photo Angela Borland.

SEEK and you shall learn

After a year of more limited offerings, 2021 is ramping up to be a vibrant year of education events and activities open to the public. Programs including tiny trekkers, wildflower and raven walks, and sky gazing are available throughout the summer. Stop in at one of the Department SEEK (Safety, Education, and Eco Knowledge) Stations located at various trailheads on the weekends to learn more about topics ranging from trail etiquette to water safety to being bear aware. A new addition to our educational programming has been to provide some programs and open space area brochures in Spanish.

Volunteers make positive impact this summer

LCDNR volunteer opportunities abound this year! Independent litter cleanup days following weekend and holiday rushes of visitors into the parks and open spaces have significantly leveraged staff time. In addition, project crew volunteers have been working on a variety of maintenance projects such as fence removal, trail maintenance and tree mulching. We were excited to have volunteers help at the annual CAST (Catch a Special Thrill) event in May that pairs special needs kids and adults with anglers for a morning of fishing at Horsetooth Reservoir. Special thanks to all of our volunteers for their efforts this summer in making a positive impact on our community!



CAST event participants had a great time together at Horsetooth Reservoir. Photo credit Jessica Johnson/Jessica Johnson Photography

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. Below are the April 1 through May 31, 2021 revenue summaries, operating expenses, annual and daily permit sales, and camping reservation nights compared to the same period the previous year.

Year to Date Revenue (through June 30th 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Colorado Lottery	\$335,927	\$415,109	24%
Open Spaces Sales Tax	\$2,521,215	\$3,016,684	20%
Open Spaces Generated User Fees*	\$489,793	\$788,257	61%
Reservoir Parks Generated User Fees*	\$2,587,021	\$2,649,627	2%
Weed District Property Tax	\$717,633	\$745,250	4%

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

Year to Date Operating Expenses (through June 30th 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Personnel	\$1,901,230	\$1,661,418	-13%
Operating	\$2,084,273	\$1,787,674	-14%

Year to Date Number of Permit Sales (through June 30th 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Open Spaces			
Annual Permits	1,289	1,261	-2%
Daily Permits	30,374	30,125	-1%
Reservoir Parks			
Annual Permits	6,873	6,626	-4%
Daily Permits	73,563	61,627	-16%

Year to Date Camping Reservation Nights (through June 30th 2021)

	2020	2021	% Change
Open Spaces	2,521	4,109	63%
Reservoir Parks	14,734	20,640	40%



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

Connect With Us:
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larimer.org/naturalresources



LARIMER COUNTY: NATURAL RESOURCES



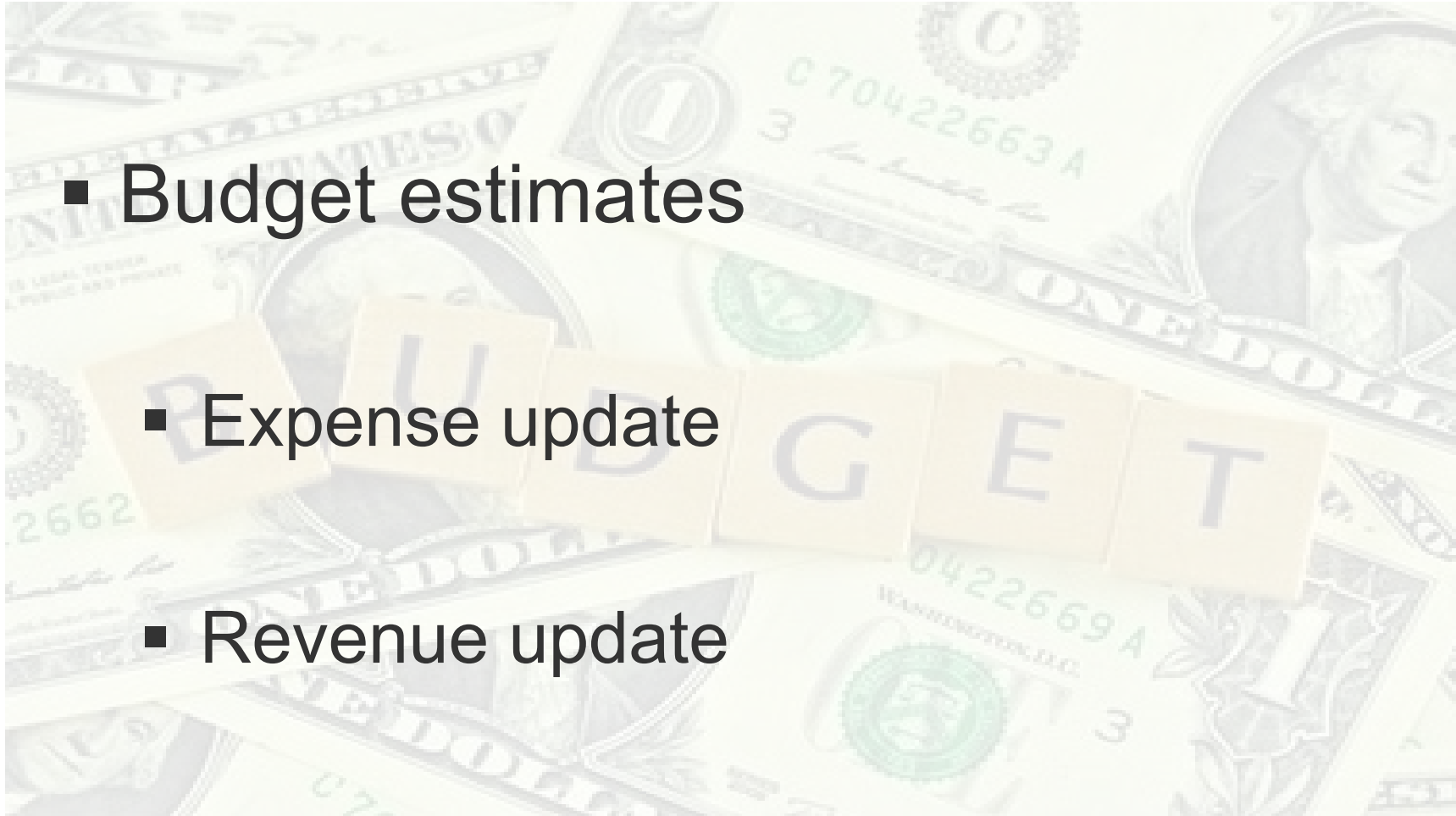
2022 BUDGET APPROACH UPDATE (LSAB)

AUGUST 2021

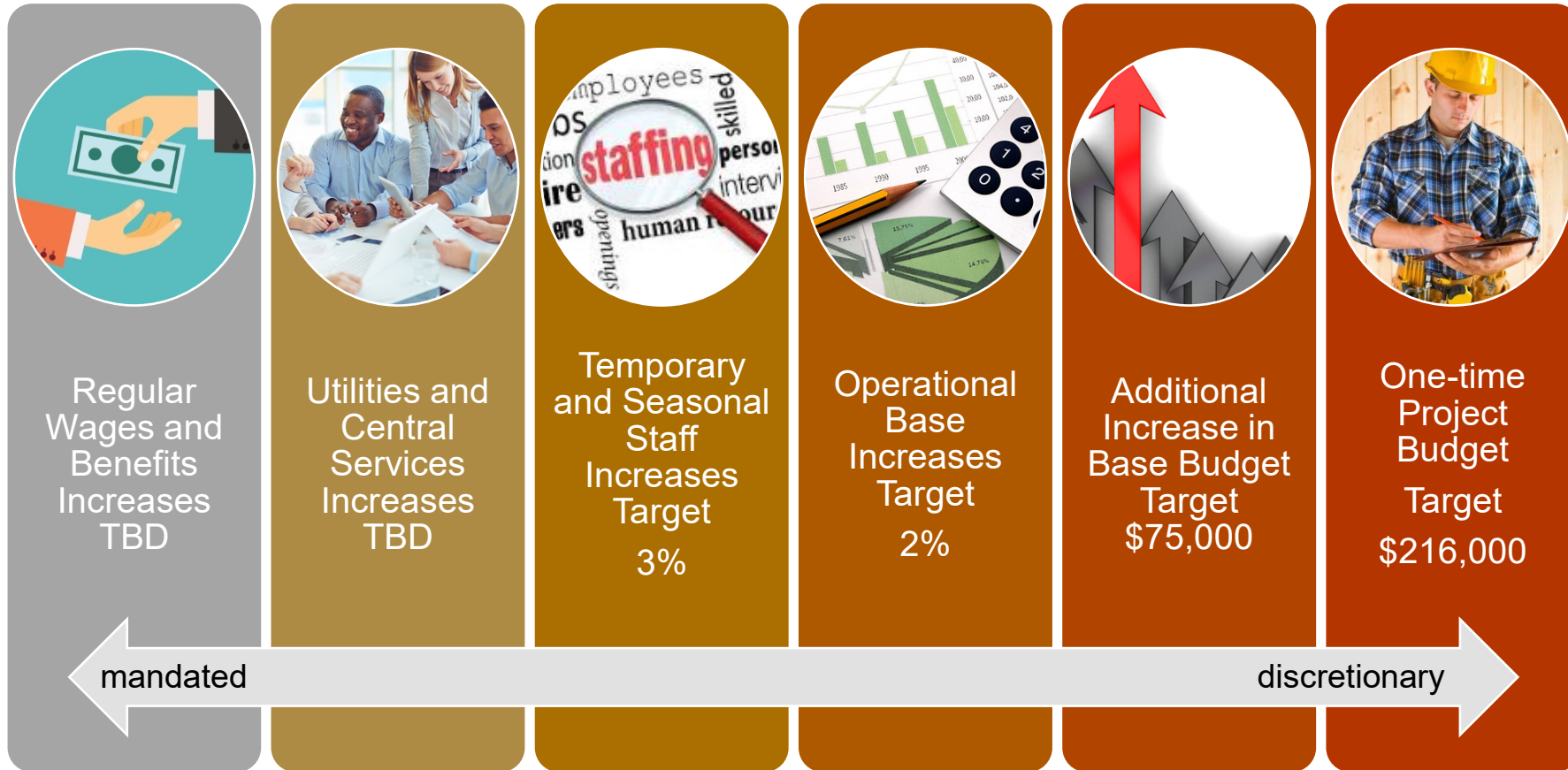


WHAT WILL BE COVERED

- Budget estimates
 - Expense update
 - Revenue update



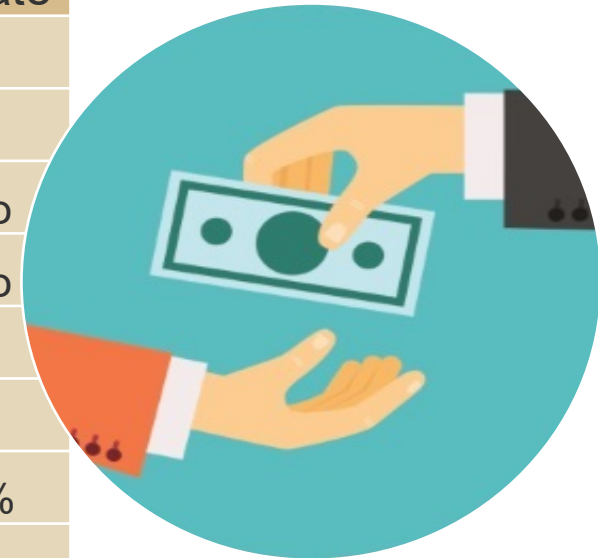
EXPENSE UPDATE





REGULAR WAGE AND BENEFITS

Expense Item	2021 Amount/Rate	2022 Amount/Rate
Range Adjustment (January)	1.50%	2 -10%
Merit Increase (Anniversary Month)	2.50%	2.00%
Health Insurance	\$1,190/Mo	\$1,190/Mo
Dental Insurance	\$38.00/Mo	\$39.15/Mo
Employee Assistance Program	\$1.50/Mo	\$1.50/Mo
Life Insurance	0.17%	0.18%
Retirement %	5%/7%/8%	5%/7%/8%
Long-Term Disability	0.44%	0.44%
Short Term Disability	0.22%	0.22%
Unemployment Insurance	0.10%	0.10%



UTILITIES



Projected

Utilities	Projected
Electric	1%
Water	1%
Sewer	8%
Gas	1%
Trash/Haz Waste Removal	11%
Credit Card/Bank Fees	8%
Telephone Charges	eliminated

2020 Budget was \$ 745,500 or 7% of Operating Budget

CENTRAL SERVICES



Central Services	Change	
IT End User Device Services	-23%	} -12%
IT End User Computing Services	62%	
IT Print Service	20%	
IT Software	53%	
Internal Telephone Charges	eliminated	
Internal Facilities Charges	4%	
Internal Fleet Equipment Rental	-8%*	
Motor Fuel	8%	
Property and Casualty Charges	62%	
County Wide Indirects	4%	
Workers' Compensation	25%	

2020 Budget was \$ 1,987,000 or 17% of Operating Budget

* Elimination of dump truck, old air compressors and misc. items

TEMPORARY AND SEASONAL STAFF

- Base increase 8% department wide
- Visitor service districts additional increases
 - Additional 5% increase for a total of 13%
 - Continuation of second boat rangers
- Continuation of marketing/communication temp position
- Departmental average increase 15% over 2021 base
- Colorado minimum wage increase not yet available



OPERATIONAL BASE

- Base increase 2% department wide
- 1% increase to support new campground at Carter
- \$10,000 routine maintenance for Big T District
- New vehicles fleet lease and fuel
- Departmental average increase 5% over base



ADDITIONAL INCREASES IN BASE



- Wage and operating base budget
 - Target \$ 75,000
 - Recommendation \$ 60,645
- One time increases for 2022 budget
 - Temp/seasonal wage increases \$ 136,291
 - Continuation depends on the future staffing model results

ONE-TIME ONLY PROJECTS

- Additional vehicles or vehicle upgrades
 - Horsetooth District
 - Red Mountain and Big Thompson*
 - Parks and Open Lands Weed Pool*
- Other one-time projects or expenses
 - Commercial lit pencil buoys for Carter
 - Replace electronic gate for Devil's Backbone*
 - Post-certified academy for new ranger*
 - Red Mountain agriculture irrigation improvements*
 - Department contingency increase*
 - Payout and overfill for key position retirement*



*Open Space funded or shared funding

SUMMARY



REVENUES PROJECTIONS

Revenue Type	BOR Parks	Open Lands	Land Stewardship
General Fund Support	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Sales Tax		6.5%	
Property Tax			2.6%
Specific Ownership			2%
Conservation Trust	1%		
User Permits	13%	15%	
Camping	17%	12%	
Weed Contracts			10%
Development Fees			3%

