

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.

MINUTES

Date: November 19, 2020

Time: 5:00 – 6:30 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
Ed Redente	x	Casey Cisneros	x	2 members of the public
Richard (Hitch) McCulloch	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
Ronald Harris	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Tasha Carr	x	John Kefalas*	x	
		Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:05 p.m.
 - a. Introduced members of the public to the board.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

3. AGENDA REVIEW

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Ron moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Ed seconded, motion passed unanimously.

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. Quarterly Board Report (July-September)
 - i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:
 1. Hawk Canyon Ranch acquisition at Red Mountain Open Space
 2. New noxious weed (Plumeless thistle) discovered in Larimer County
 3. Financial summary and how COVID/changes in summer visitation might affect 2021
- d. 2021 Noxious Weed Calendars
 - i. The calendars were sponsored by Larimer County and produced by the Colorado Weed Management Association. Casey will mail them to board members.

6. UPDATES/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Department Strategic Plan – Daylan
 - i. The Strategic Plan was put on hold following COVID-19, wildfires, etc. to focus on 2021. The planning process will be restarted later next year.
- b. 2021 COVID Operations Plan – Daylan/Meegan/Casey
 - i. Daylan said staff are working remotely as COVID-19 cases increase but offices remain open and basic services are available. The Weed District will continue curbside pick-up through 2021. Meegan added the department is preordering PPE and preparing for next year. Casey thanked staff for their professionalism during a challenging year.
- c. Cameron Peak Fire Recovery – Casey
 - i. Background:
 1. Ignited on Aug. 13th, 2020 near Cameron Pass and has become the largest wildfire in CO history with a fire scar of 208,913 acres. Full containment is expected on Nov. 22nd.
 - ii. Environmental conditions that advanced its spread include:
 1. High elevation mixed conifers with moderate dead and down fuels
 2. High percentage of beetle-killed lodgepole
 3. Severe drought conditions
 - iii. USFS soil assessment indicated high burn severity at high elevations. Scientists predict minimal hillslope erosion.
 - iv. The Larimer County Recovery Collaborative: Wildfire Team is a coalition of stakeholders addressing environmental, human health, and economic concerns related to the Cameron Peak Fire. Stakeholders include the USFS, Poudre River Watershed Coalition, Workforce Center, and mental health professionals. Casey is assisting the water recovery workgroup on restoration needs within the burn scar and the infrastructure workgroup on noxious weed data.
 1. Ed asked how the workgroups were developed, Casey said they originated from a COVID-19 recovery team. Meegan added the County hired an emergency operations manager who developed an initial

response and long-term recovery model after the High Park Fire in 2012, so these networks were already in place.

- v. Recovery milestones include:
 - 1. Fire containment (anticipated next weekend)
 - 2. Incident cleanup in areas of heavy disturbance
 - 3. Protect human life and key infrastructure (focus on road erosion)
 - 4. Restoration and weed management (concern for recolonization in mid-elevation ponderosa pine forests due to climate change)
 - 5. Rebuild recreation facilities
- vi. Commissioner Kefalas asked which weeds to expect after the fire, Casey said thistles, common mullein, and leafy spurge.
- vii. DNR's role in fire recovery includes:
 - 1. Act as 3rd party to inspect incident cleanup on private lands
 - 2. Manage noxious weeds on USFS lands
 - 3. Provide landowners with resources (e.g. seed mixes) and herbicides
 - 4. Review and comment on restoration plans
- viii. Ed asked if the seed mixes are native, Casey said they are a mix of native and non-native.
- ix. Commissioner Kefalas asked about shrub regeneration and impacts on mountain mahogany. Casey said native shrub species are fire-adapted and can tolerate certain intensity burns. Mountain mahogany is expected to regenerate in Redstone Canyon.
- x. Tasha asked if hay used for erosion control can introduce weeds. Casey confirmed that hay can transport weed and said research from the High Park Fire looked at the efficacy of erosion control treatments. The application of woodchips is most effective in high risk areas. Casey will send the technical bulletin to board members.
- xi. Ron asked about the ignition source of the Cameron Peak Fire, Casey said there's speculation it was human caused.
- d. Noxious Weed Act Rule Changes – Casey
 - i. Background:
 - 1. The Colorado Noxious Weed Act was passed in 1992 and designates certain plants as noxious weed species. The act mandates local governing agencies to seek landowner compliance based on county management objectives for suppression, containment, or eradication. Rule changes occur every 2 years and are administered by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA).
 - ii. Rule update effective Oct. 31st, 2020:
 - 1. Oxeye daisy designated for eradication in Larimer County
 - 2. Adjusted containment boundaries for:
 - a. Diffuse knapweed, spotted knapweed, hoary cress, houndstongue, Russia-olive, tamarisk, leafy spurge, absinth wormwood

3. Commissioner Kefalas asked if tamarisk is in Larimer County, Casey affirmed but said it is more widespread along the western slope. It was planted in Colorado to stabilize streambanks and was likely spread by equipment and wildlife.
- e. State Pest Act Proposed Rule Changes – Casey
 - i. Background:
 1. The State Pest Act is administered by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) and provides local government with provisions to address local pest issues. Historically, Larimer County has designated a pest inspector and pest list to coordinate these efforts.
 - ii. CDA proposal:
 1. Update language to better align with federal legislation
 2. Allow the state to work with the federal government to quarantine potential pests prior to formal designation
 3. Create a cash fund for the Plant Industry Division to use on emerging pest issues
 - iii. Casey explained the emerald ash borer was a catalyst for the update and it does not present an undue burden to the County.
 - iv. Commissioner Kefalas asked about the revenue source for the cash fund, Casey said surplus budget from the plant industry division of the department agriculture for the fiscal year will be allocated into a state cash reserve for the following year.
 - v. Commissioner Kefalas asked if the update will include provisions for modern approaches to manage pests, Casey affirmed.
 - vi. Ron clarified the proposal is an update to state law and will follow a rulemaking process with various stakeholders.

7. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Board Election of Officers
 - i. Ed Redente re-elected as chair, Ron Harris elected as vice chair.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 2/18/2021 via Zoom Webinar

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 – 6:13 p.m.