

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: February 25, 2021

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	x	Daylan Figgs	x	Carmen Farmer	
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	Clinton Wilson	
Gale Bernhardt	x	Zac Wiebe	x		
Jason Brothers	x	Charlie Johnson	x		
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Justin Core	x		
Linda Stanley	x	Steve Gibson	x		
Mark DeGregorio	x	Jenn Almstead	x		
Nancy Wallace	x	Angela Borland	x		
Peter Kelly		Julie Enderby	x		
Rick Brent	x	*Jody Shadduck-McNally	x		
Sherri Valentine	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x		
Tom Shoemaker	x				

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:04 p.m.
 - a. Introduced Carmen Farmer (Colorado Open Lands) and Clinton Wilson (Poudre Valley Community Farms).
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

- a. Linda moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Mark 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. Instream flow dedications on N. Fork Little Thompson River and Redstone Creek in process with Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), dedication expected this year.
 - i. Meegan provided an overview of CWCB's Instream Flow Program. The department developed a list of priority stream reaches throughout our system on fee-conserved and conservation easement-conserved lands to appropriate water rights/secure minimum instream flows. Zac showed portions of the N. Fork of the Little Thompson River and Redstone Creek expected to be dedicated this year as well as Sulzer Gulch and Spring Creek expected next year.
 - ii. Mark asked about the portion of streams that will acquire water rights and their effect on landowner rights. Zac said the portion depends on the stream and these dedications will be junior to any existing water rights.
 - iii. Sherri asked how the priority list was developed, Zac said we initially prioritized lands that we own in fee and then shifted towards lands conserved by conservation easement.
 - iv. Nancy asked about obstacles to acquiring rights, Zac said the process requires limited staff time and is facilitated primarily by CPW/CWCB. There are typically few rejections as the process does not impact senior water rights.
 - v. Bob asked if we are responsible for monitoring/enforcement, Zac said once the rights are decreed, they are held by CWCB who monitor/maintain the instream flow rights and there are no further requirements on our end.
 - vi. Jason asked when the application was published in the water court resume, Zac said January. The group discussed reaching out to CWCB staff to receive further clarification on public notice for applications.
 - vii. Jason asked how much water is available for junior appropriation on these two reaches, Zac said CWCB will be presenting this info to the BOCC in mid-March.
 - viii. It was noted there are no associated costs for DNR.

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Daylan provided an update to the 2020 4th quarter report that indicated sales tax was down 17% from 2019-2020 to note that the final numbers show <1% change.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Grant Funding and Partnerships Update – Zac and Jenn

- i. Zac described the department’s effort to expand opportunities for grant sources and partnerships.
- ii. Jenn provided an overview of funding sources from the last 3 years, totaling \$16.1M. Between all these projects, 63 cents of every dollar spent was leveraged through grants, partnerships, and donations.
 - 1. Landowner donations – \$605k (4%)
 - a. Steputis CE – \$300k
 - b. Pittington CE – \$300k
 - c. Rimrock OS mineral rights – \$5k
 - 2. Partnerships – \$2.9M (18%)
 - a. City of Fort Collins – \$2.84M (96%)
 - b. Northern Water – \$116k (4%)
 - c. Friends of Larimer County – \$8.5k (<1%)
 - 3. Grants – \$12.5M (78%)
 - a. Capital improvements – \$9.9M (64%)
 - i. HT and CL Reservoir infrastructure project
 - 1. Central Federal Lands Highway Administration (FLAP grant) – \$8.6M (74%)
 - 2. LCDNR – \$3M (26%)
 - ii. Sky View Campground at CL
 - 1. GOCO – \$475k (25%)
 - 2. Friends of LC – \$2k (<1%)
 - 3. LCDNR – \$1.4M (75%)
 - iii. Poudre River Regional Trail initiative
 - 1. GOCO – \$432k (20%)
 - 2. CDOT – \$399k (19%)
 - 3. LCDNR – \$1.3M (61%)
 - 4. Friends of LC – \$3k (<1%)
 - 5. CPW (pending) – \$250k (TBD)
 - b. Restoration – \$1.5M (10%)
 - i. Poudre River Restoration and Resiliency project at RBOS
 - 1. CO Dept. of Local Affairs – \$974k (78%)
 - 2. GOCO – \$100k (8%)
 - 3. CPW – \$153k (12%)
 - 4. LCDNR – \$29k (2%)
 - c. Acquisition – \$3.6M (23%)
 - i. RMOS inholding acquisitions (Gallegos)
 - 1. City of Fort Collins – \$1.1M (50%)
 - 2. LCDNR – \$1.1M (50%)
 - ii. Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains 2020 expansion project
 - 1. City of Fort Collins – \$1.7M (30%)
 - 2. GOCO – \$812k (14%)



3. Friends of LC – \$3.5k (<1%)
4. LCDNR – \$3.2M (56%)
- d. Forestry – \$260k (2%)
 - i. Colorado State Forest Service – \$144k (44%)
 - ii. Northern Water – \$116k (36%)
 - iii. LCDNR – \$66.5k (20%)
- e. Weed management – \$120k (1%)
 - i. LC Early Detection Rapid Response crew
 1. CO Dept. of Agriculture – \$129k (53%)
 2. LCDNR – \$107k (47%)
- iii. Linda clarified the amount listed for LCDNR is the department’s contribution towards total project costs, Jenn affirmed.
- iv. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked how many acres were added in the Laramie Foothills expansion project, Jenn said we estimate ~3k acres in addition to adjacent conserved lands. The commissioner asked if any water rights were included, Meegan explained that of the four projects associated with the project, two did not acquire water rights (the Hawk Canyon fee acquisition and the Steputis CE) and the remaining two (both CEs) are under negotiation.
- v. Linda asked if the \$3M contributed by LCDNR to the HT/CL infrastructure project was funded by the Parks revenues/budget (vs. Open Spaces sales tax), Daylan affirmed the predominant funding source was Parks revenue.
- vi. Linda congratulated the department on being a model for leveraging money and asked about other funding sources such as the 30 by 30 initiative. Daylan mentioned NoCo 2050’s work with Senator Bennett on SB.173. The state DNR also formed a collaborative group that NoCo is considering joining.
- vii. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally said one of her personal priorities is to address funding for these issues and welcomed board members to provide input.
- b. Volunteer Update – Angela and Julie
 - i. Julie introduced herself to the board as DNR’s Education and Volunteer Specialist and provided an overview of the volunteer engagement program.
 - ii. Volunteers assist staff to meet our department needs in various ways. A few examples:
 1. Trail and facility maintenance projects (litter clean-up, cabin prep, campsite refurbishment, tree planting and watering, etc.)
 2. Public and school education programs
 3. Ranger assistance (VRA program, parking assistance, etc.)
 4. Campground hosts
 - iii. Staff and volunteer support:
 1. 1 full-time volunteer coordinator equivalent; 18 staff liaisons
 2. 200 individual on-going volunteers
 3. 35 annual group volunteer projects

- iv. Volunteer efforts:
 - 1. Annual average volunteer hours (2017-2019): 19,583
 - 2. 2020 annual volunteer hours: 16,113 (small decrease due to cancellation of group activities to follow COVID health and safety guidelines)
- v. Gale and Nancy commented on the magnitude of the department's volunteer program. Angela noted a significant number of new volunteers were added in 2020.
- vi. Bob said volunteer labor can be used as an in-kind match on grant applications and commented on its value to achieve department goals.
- c. Visitation/Visitor Management Update – Steve
 - i. Steve provided a recap from 2020:
 - 1. COVID-19 response
 - 2. Mountain lion incident at Riverview RV Park
 - 3. In-service death of Ranger Unitt
 - 4. Cameron Peak/East Troublesome fire response
 - 5. Kiosk and entrance sign remodels at ENOS and Soderberg
 - 6. Completed renovation of cabin road and outdoor classroom at HPOS
 - ii. Ranger contact statistics:
 - 1. Full-time, commissioned rangers performed 54 arrests and responded to 1,665 calls ranging from fire, medical, SAR, car accidents, DUI, and traffic calls
 - 2. Seasonal rangers logged 1,200 miles of patrol on trails by bike or foot and made more than 62k contacts (463 citations, 11,970 verbal warnings, 200+ med calls, 207 water rescues)
 - iii. Staff are looking into changes for 2021:
 - 1. A more robust bike patrol program
 - 2. Additional trailhead cameras and improved visitor data collection
 - iv. Bob congratulated Steve on making it through a tough year and noted most ranger-visitor interactions are positive.
 - v. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally asked about the bike patrol program. Steve said biking is an efficient way to navigate the paved trail system. The department recently purchased two more bikes and staff will complete a 3-day bike training.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Dixon Station Final Review
 - i. Meegan provided a description of the Poudre Valley Community Farms property and the \$150,000 partnership request to Colorado Open Lands towards acquisition of this 73-ac conservation easement. The landowner is donating 75% of the value of the CE.
 - ii. Jason asked if the wells are augmented, Carmen affirmed they are part of the Poudre augmentation plan. Jason asked about the nature of the encumbrance

on water rights, Carmen said the easement includes flexible water sharing language with parameters for conservation values.

- iii. Sherri thanked the group for bringing the easement together and commented on the value of acquiring agricultural properties.
- iv. K-Lynn moved to recommend the BOCC approve the partnership to acquire the Dixon Station conservation easement for \$150,000, Jason seconded, motion passed unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: March 25, 2021 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 6:41 p.m.

12. ADJOURN – 6:57 p.m.