

## 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:** March 2, 2021

**Time:** 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Zoom Webinar

**Contact:** Please contact Sidney at [smichl@larimer.org](mailto:smichl@larimer.org) or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Deborah Shulman	x	Steve Gibson	x	1 member of the public
Jill Wuertz	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
Kathy Maher	x	Dan Rieves	x	
Kristina Kachur	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Mandy Peters	x	*John Kefalas	x	
Pete Blume	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Robert Harris	x			
Russell Fruits	x			
Ruthie Rollins	x			
Spencer Clark	x			
Steve Ambrose	x			

**x = present**

**\*commissioner**

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:33 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
  - a. Deborah moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Pete seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## 5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resource events for this month: [larimer.org/naturalresources](http://larimer.org/naturalresources).
- b. To sign up for Parks Advisory Board updates, go to [apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm](https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm), enter your email, click "Subscribe," and check the "Parks Advisory Board" box.
- c. The Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan update is underway, the department will be meeting with the BOCC in March to discuss. Board members should email Daylan if they would like to be involved.

## 6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Park District updates – Dan/Mark
  - i. Dan – kudos to Mark for hosting the virtual Parks Law Enforcement Association (PLEA) conference today. Carter Lake is in project mode and taking advantage of nice weather: prep for ANS shelters, hazardous tree removal at South Shore, road resurfacing at Flatiron campground. Starting to see visitation increase as weather warms up. Campground reservations are filling through the summer, 2021 numbers are comparable to 2020. Carter Lake is almost full and starting to level off. Working with local contractor on connectivity for automated pay station at Pinewood. Reevaluating vehicle counts and frequency of data collection. Customers will soon be able to purchase daily permits with camping reservations online. The update should improve customer service and reduce gatehouse congestion.
  - ii. Mark – also in project mode and prepping for summer. PLEA conference focused on leadership and culture, emphasized the need to share DNR's story with new board members. Water levels at Horsetooth are in line with the 60-year average, expect to be ~15 feet down from full but projections are subject to change. Boating season begins April 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through the last Sunday of November. Just hired a full-time ANS supervisor and plan to hire 34 seasonal boat inspectors. Hope to begin construction for ANS shelters next week. Received bids for cabins, construction will begin in May and wrap up in early fall. Upcoming memorial for Ranger Unitt on March 10<sup>th</sup>, a bronze ranger hat and plaque will be installed at the HAIC. Ranger Unitt will also be recognized at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC in May.
- b. PLEA Conference – Mark
  - i. PLEA was established in 1979 to improve law enforcement, visitor protection, and park operation services through professional development. Primary goal is to provide leadership training through national networking opportunities. Mark has been involved since 2014 and president since 2020. The annual conference was held virtually this year with 300 attendees. Sessions included training on emotional intelligence, archaeological documentation/theft, COVID patrol strategies, and dynamic leadership (presented by Dan).
  - ii. Deborah and Russell thanked Mark and Dan for representing Larimer County.
  - iii. Daylan commented on the significance of having staff in national leadership roles.

- c. Operations Update – Steve (Red Mountain District Manager and acting Visitor Services Manager)
  - i. Recap of 2020:
    - 1. COVID-19 response – visitation at Parks and Open Spaces increased 20-40%, operational staff deemed essential
    - 2. Mountain lion incident at Riverview RV Park
    - 3. In-service death of Ranger Unitt
    - 4. Cameron Peak/East Troublesome fire response – 2 largest fires in CO history
  - 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
    - 2. Seasonal rangers logged 1,200 miles of trail patrolled by bike or foot and made more than 62k contacts (463 citations, 11,970 verbal warnings, 200+ med calls, 207 water rescues)
  - iii. Rangers are developing innovative ideas for continued COVID response in 2021:
    - 1. Modifications to Ranger Excellence School
    - 2. New trailhead cameras and field technology
    - 3. Development of core teams to improve visitor data collection
  - iv. Russell asked about trail capacity, Steve said low capacity trailheads like Eagle’s Nest and Red Mountain were full last year and similar trends are expected in 2021. It was noted Red Mountain and Soapstone reopened on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- d. Horsetooth Public Safety Plan – Mark
  - i. The plan is a multiagency approach with the LCSO, Road and Bridge, Poudre Fire Authority, and CO state patrol to address crime-related issues and outline a safe experience for visitors. A draft will be taken to the BOCC in April for review.
  - ii. Deborah asked how to address reckless driving afterhours. Mark said Road and Bridge have helped with nightly closures and road safety (e.g. new crosswalk at South Bay). LCSO and state patrol also assist with traffic control.
  - iii. Ruthie asked if the temporary parking lot cameras were effective and if they can be made permanent. Mark explained the LCSO has a mobile unit that is placed at day use areas and it’s most effective when used for 2-3 weeks at a time.
  - iv. Russell asked about Reclamation’s contribution. Mark said their security position has been vacant but Northern Water has a camera system on the dams that can be utilized to solve crimes.
  - v. Jill asked how equity and inclusion are incorporated in the plan. Mark said DNR’s Community Relations and Public Information Supervisor, Korrie, is developing new messaging to address these issues. Daylan commented on barriers to outdoor recreation and said the department is taking steps to be more inclusive. Commissioner Kefalas mentioned the County’s 5-year Strategic Plan has a strong DEI component.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. ACTION ITEMS

9. US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE – Jeff Stahla

- a. March 10<sup>th</sup> is the target fill date for Carter, then water will move to Horsetooth.
- b. Pete asked for an update on Chimney Hollow. Jeff said construction was initially expected around this time, but opponents filed an additional appeal on the issuance of permits. Briefings will take 10-12 months and construction will begin in 2022 if ruled favorably.

10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Daylan Figgs

- a. Capital improvement projects – Daylan explained the balance between daily operation costs and maintenance/improvement costs. Due to increased visitation and use in 2020, the department is refocusing how capital dollars will be spent this year.
- b. USBOR – meeting with new leadership to address communication challenges and build better partnerships. Currently working on 25-year management agreement.
- c. Technology improvements – Dan mentioned new capability to purchase daily permits with camping reservations online. Plan to integrate additional technology for site security and connectivity.
- d. Regional partnerships – working with NoCo 2050 on collective messaging campaigns around DEI, trail etiquette, safety, etc.
- e. Deborah asked for an update on concessionaire issues at Satanka Cove, Daylan said the Community Development team is managing code compliance.
- f. Jill asked about fees and how they tie to our operating vs. capital budgets. Daylan explained the reservoir parks operate through a fee structure which funds both budgets. The current fee structure will be reviewed with the BOCC later this month.
- g. Steve Ambrose asked if the board will have the opportunity to review the 2022 budget, Daylan affirmed. Lori Smith will attend an upcoming meeting for her annual budget presentation.

12. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 4/6/2021 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 – 7:05 p.m.