

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: October 6, 2020

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 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
Deborah Shulman	x	Ken Brink	x	Jeff Stahla (Northern Water)
Jill Wuertz	x	Daylan Figgs	x	
Kathy Maher	x	Dan Rieves	x	
Kristina Kachur	x	Mark Caughlan	x	
Mandy Peters	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Michael Robinson	x	Angela Borland	x	
Pete Blume	x	*Stephen Johnson		
Robert Harris	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	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.
 - a. Welcomed new board members, Jill Wuertz, Kristina Kachur, and Spencer Clark.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Steve 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.
- b. To sign up for Parks Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Parks Advisory Board” box.
- c. Daylan mentioned the BOCC’s annual recognition of advisory board members will be held virtually this year and encouraged board members to complete the online survey.

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Park District updates – Dan/Mark
 - i. Dan – gave a quick recap of summer visitation and impacts from COVID closures. Outdoor recreation saw a surge in demand. Campgrounds are still full and boating remains busy. Currently working on fall maintenance – closing campsites, shutting water off, scaling back boat ramp hours. Staff members continue to rise to the occasion in managing increased demands.
 - ii. Mark – described high visitation impacts on resources, staff, and budget. The Visitor Services team has never experienced as many major incidents as this summer, created new blueprint for frontline response. Rented and installed 100 “no parking” signs for exterior roads around Horsetooth Reservoir to improve traffic flow. Also working on fall maintenance, more projects and construction to come in 2021. Horsetooth Reservoir continues to drop in elevation for outlet project, boating remains busy and ramps will stay open. Gave kudos to ANS inspectors for their hard work. Campgrounds have been full, expecting high visitation again next year.
 - iii. Ken complimented the expansive roles Mark and Dan play to serve the public.
 - iv. Deborah added parks and open space services have been indispensable during these times.
- b. Quarterly board report (April-June) – Daylan
 - i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:
 1. Unprecedented visitation at reservoir parks and open spaces
 2. Land conservation in Laramie Foothills
 3. Glade Park reopening
 - ii. Kathy asked if another feral rye treatment at Devil’s Backbone Open Space is planned for the spring. Meegan affirmed and explained treatment is required a total of 3 times (every 2 years) to exhaust the seedbank.
- c. Education and Volunteer update – Meegan/Angela
 - i. Meegan introduced Angela Borland, DNR’s Education and Volunteer Supervisor, and thanked the ranger staff for their support of the program.
 - ii. Angela gave an overview of the Education and Volunteer program and its goals to foster learning and outdoor recreation, promote stewardship, and engage local communities. In 2019, there were 20,405 volunteer hours compared to 8,903 volunteer hours Jan. to Aug. 2020. COVID-19 greatly reduced volunteer hours because most are in performed in groups. However, overall visitor contacts by education and volunteer staff increased from 2,987 to 5,030 visitors due to pivoting efforts to be at trailheads and campgrounds during busy periods

to interact with visitors. This effort has been an intention shift to better connect with visitors during peak times to reinforce leave no trace or other salient messages.

iii. COVID-19 adaptations:

1. Trailhead tables at open spaces and roving programs at campgrounds provided in-person learning on stewardship and safety while still allowing social distancing.
2. Education programs switched to online, creating virtual field trips for schools.
3. Independent litter clean-up allowed volunteers to remain involved.

d. NISP 1041 update – Daylan/Ken

- i. Northern Water proposed a recreation component to Glade Reservoir with Larimer County as the managing entity and the 1041 permit was approved by the BOCC. DNR plans to manage recreation amenities not unlike those at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir to address population growth needs mentioned in the Parks Master Plan. Timeline is TBD.
- ii. Jeff added Northern purchased the KOA campground across from Ted’s Place which has recently served as a shelter for Cameron Peak Fire evacuees.
- iii. Deborah asked about legal challenges, Jeff explained the BOCC voted on Sept. 2nd to approve the 1041 permit but the finalized resolution has not been presented yet. There are currently no challenges to the County aspect of the permit. Challenges to the state 401 water quality certification will be heard in November by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission and a federal Record of Decision is anticipated by early 2021.
- iv. Deborah asked about additional campgrounds. Jeff affirmed Northern owns the property where recreation amenities are planned, including additional campgrounds. Ken added much of the details are yet to be worked out but utilities are already onsite and plans are in the works.
- v. Deborah asked about a wakeless zone, Ken affirmed plans for the west side of the reservoir to be non-motorized. A public process will occur closer to construction.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. ACTION ITEMS

9. US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION UPDATE – Jeff Stahla

- a. Jeff explained dry conditions allowed for natural use to lower water levels at Horsetooth Reservoir and an intentional release was not needed. In November, a dive team will work to rehabilitate the dam outlet. There are concerns that Poudre River water quality will be affected by ash from the Cameron Peak Fire and this project will prevent unintended consequences during high spring run-off. Water will be pushed back to

Horsetooth Reservoir once rehabilitation is complete in mid-late November. The Cottonwood Siphon Rehabilitation Project will also be completed this fall.

- b. Deborah mentioned Lake Granby appears low and asked how drought conditions might affect Horsetooth and Carter. Jeff said Granby is on par with seasonal averages and Northern anticipates there will be enough water from snowpack to push water into Horsetooth this spring. If the drought cycle continues, water managers will modify future allocations.
- c. Mark thanked Jeff and the team at Northern Water for consolidating construction projects and reducing multiple low water years.
- d. Russell asked if the Cottonwood Siphon project affected camping at Flatiron, Dan said heavy communication on our reservation site about the construction prevented complaints. Kathy added there were no impacts on residents.

10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Daylan Figgs

- a. Expect visitation rates to remain high next year. The department continues to work on capital projects to upgrade and add new facilities.
 - i. Horsetooth Reservoir:
 - 1. Replacing power pedestals and water lines at Inlet Bay beginning in November. The new water line will include a hook-up for a flush toilet and sewer lift station for the Marina.
 - 2. ANS shelters for inspectors will be constructed this fall.
 - 3. 5 new cabins will begin construction in March. Existing 7 cabins will go out for bid this month.
 - 4. 60 vehicle/boat trailer parking expansion at the north end of Horsetooth and a new turn lane northbound on CR23 will be constructed in the spring. Jill asked how the number of vehicle vs. boat spaces are determined, Mark said they are coordinating with the engineer and the number will be based off the Parks Master Plan and uptick of stand up paddle board use.
 - ii. Carter Lake:
 - 1. ANS shelters for inspectors will also be constructed this fall.
 - 2. Sky View Campground is in the final approval stage and will be constructed in line with the GOCO grant cycle.
 - 3. Road resurfacing at Flatiron Reservoir will occur at the end of October/beginning of November.
- b. Daylan added we are beginning to negotiate a new 25-year agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation and a draft will be brought to PAB to review. Ken added Reclamation would like DNR to manage debris removal and noxious weed management. The MOU is a renewal and content should not change significantly.
- c. The Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Master Plan will reopen around the first of the year, timeline is TBD.

- d. Kathy asked about additional build to the Administrative Office. Daylan said the project is on hold due to internet connectivity issues and additional space might not be needed now that staff are successfully working from home.

12. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: 12/1/2020 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 – 7:19 p.m.