



2022

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT

4TH QUARTER (OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER)



Partnership bolsters noxious weed treatment in Cameron Peak Fire burn scar



Application of select herbicides to control noxious weeds in Cameron Peak Fire burn area. Photo credit Chris Metz

Larimer County Natural Resources (LCDNR) expanded an existing vegetation management partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) in 2022 to begin treating noxious weeds within the Cameron Peak Fire burn scar. Noxious weeds thrive in recently burned areas as a result of decreased competition from native plant species and increased sunlight. Over 6,600 acres of the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest were surveyed following the fire, and the Land Stewardship Program staff treated 280 acres of the surveyed area targeting 19 state-listed noxious weeds. This effort ensures a watershed scale benefit by preventing the spread of weeds from higher elevations. LCDNR and the USFS are working to extend this partnership and effort for the 2023-25 field seasons.

Volunteers rally to 'Clean the Shoreline' at Horsetooth Reservoir

When water levels at Horsetooth Reservoir drop low, volunteers rally together to keep the reservoir clean. Larimer County of Natural Resources and Centennial Bass Club partner each fall to inspire stewardship of the land and water with a shoreline litter cleanup volunteer event. Members of Centennial Bass Club donate time and boats to ferry volunteers to more remote shoreline areas. On October 22nd, 93 volunteers filled 78 trash bags making the 'Clean the Shoreline' event the largest and most successful to date. It was truly inspiring to see so many public land stewards working towards the same goal, and we look forward to keeping the momentum going in 2023!



Volunteers gather for safety instructions before litter cleanup activities begin. Photo credit Guy Turenne

Conservation buyer sought for Little Thompson Farm



Little Thompson Farm. Photo credit Charlie Johnson

In November, Larimer County Natural Resources began the process to find a conservation buyer for Little Thompson Farm, a 211-acre property located a mile southwest of the Town of Berthoud. Several local farmers responded to the notice, and one was selected with whom the county will negotiate the transfer of the property with a conservation easement in place. The conservation easement will ensure the property and associated water portfolio are conserved in perpetuity while keeping the daily farm management in the hands of a private farmer. The prospective sale of the farm with a conservation easement in place allows the county to recover funds to reinvest back into land conservation projects. Pending negotiations, the transfer of the farm, encumbered by a perpetual conservation easement, is expected to be complete late-2023.

More trail improvements coming to Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

Larimer County Natural Resources has been awarded a Conservation Service Corps grant from the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to implement several priority trail improvements at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space in 2023. Grant funds will be used to pay for four weeks of work from the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) to work alongside Department staff to construct 3/4-mile of new trail, restore 500 feet of unsustainable trail, and install new wayfinding signs per the updated Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan. This project will help achieve the Department's adaptive management goals by continuing to provide quality outdoor recreation experiences, protect and enhance natural resource conditions, and ensure sustainable operations.



LCCC members assist building steps at Sky View Campground near Carter Lake in 2021. Photo credit Joel Schwab

Large scale habitat restoration begins in Larimer County

Larimer County, in collaboration with Boulder County, Jefferson County, the City of Fort Collins, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, was awarded a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore 4,385 acres of foothills shrubland habitat along the Front Range. RESTORE funds support aerial herbicide application to control non-native weeds and ongoing vegetation monitoring. In Larimer County, the project began at Eagle's Nest Open Space with 740 acres successfully treated in October 2022. In 2023, 1,400 acres of treatment are planned at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Both Larimer County open spaces are within elk and mule deer winter range and concentration areas and in proximity to other public lands thus providing the opportunity to achieve significant wildlife habitat benefits on a large scale. This past December, the collaboration was awarded a Colorado Weed Management Association (CWMA) Partnership Award for planning and implementing the project.



The project team poses following the award ceremony at the CWMA annual conference. Photo credit Larimer County



Helicopter application efforts at Eagle's Nest Open Space in October 2022. Photo credit Alex Wendorf

Adaptive management to address challenges at Horsetooth Reservoir



The summer sun sets behind the cove at Horsetooth Reservoir. Photo credit Jim Janicki

Larimer County Natural Resources continues to assess changing visitor use levels and patterns and apply adaptive management techniques to minimize impacts to both resources and recreationists. With this goal in mind, at Horsetooth Reservoir five of fifteen boat-in campsites in the northernmost portion of Eltuck Cove were discontinued due to congestion and associated trash, noise, and safety issues that were exacerbated by growing visitation. Ten boat-in campsites located on the southwest shore remain available for reservation. The future Reservoir Parks Master Plan update is planned for 2025 and will include opportunities for public feedback on desired recreation use at Larimer County-managed reservoirs.

Instream flow designations ensure quality riparian habitat protection

In partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), LCDNR has helped successfully secure instream flow rights for two more streams in Larimer County! By ensuring water flows are intact on portions of Redstone Creek and the North fork of the Little Thompson, these water rights will help provide quality riparian habitats into perpetuity. With these two recent designations, most streams on LCDNR properties and LCDNR-held conservation easements have been designated with this unique water right. Staff will continue to partner with CPW and the Colorado Water Conservation Board to prioritize and nominate additional streams to protect, focusing on those areas that most align with conservation priorities and high habitat values.



Water right designations help provide quality riparian habitats into perpetuity.
Photo credit Zac Wiebe

Competitive bid process begins for marina concessionaires



Boats bask in the sun at the Horsetooth Reservoir marina dock. Photo credit Ryan Burke

As a requirement for Larimer County and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), marina operation contracts at Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake are entering a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) bid process this spring. The current operators can compete in the process to remain in operation. Starting in late 2022, a nationwide Request for Information (RFI) was solicited to provide ideas for the current footprint of each marina to benefit the public. The RFI phase was followed by a community feedback period, which allowed residents to submit input on a virtual idea board to share what services they desire from a marina concessionaire. Each of these solicitation phases help inform the RFP bid requirements. A diverse selection committee composed of Larimer County staff, a BOR representative, and a Parks Advisory Board representative will select the vendor(s) for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) by this fall. Upon approval by the BOCC, the concessionaire(s) will begin operating in 2024.

Financial Summary

Larimer County Natural Resources Department has five primary revenue sources including Colorado Lottery proceeds, the Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax, user fees on open spaces, user fees on reservoir parks, and

the weed district property tax. Below are the year-to-date revenue summaries and operating expenses as compared to the same period the previous year.*

Open Spaces

	2021	2022	
Revenue			
Intergovernment Revenue	\$567,467	\$259,226	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$1,104,971	\$1,181,761	
Service Charges Revenue	\$212,885	\$203,890	
Specific Designated Taxes	\$10,823,355	\$10,936,730	
User Fees Revenue	\$1,485,959	\$1,525,152	
Total	\$14,194,638	\$14,106,759	-1%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue			
Quarter Circle Lazy H Ranch	-	\$450,000	
Heaven's Door Ranch	-	\$1,250,000	
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$1,660,090	\$1,734,833	
Operating Expenses	\$3,281,400	\$3,256,240	
Total	\$4,941,490	\$4,991,073	1%
Acquisition Capital Expenses			
Quarter Circle Lazy H Ranch	-	\$1,204,220	
Heaven's Door Ranch	-	\$7,608,565	
Eagle Canyon Ranch	-	\$1,000,000	
Pinwheel Ranch	\$1,050,000	-	
Other	\$32,725	\$2,166,208	

Reservoir Parks

	2021	2022	
Revenue			
General Fund	\$192,329	\$188,711	
Intergovernment Revenue	\$570,751	\$300,820	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$121,175	\$62,250	
Service Charges Revenue	\$342,469	\$301,485	
User Fees Revenue	\$4,659,490	\$5,030,900	
Total	\$5,886,214	\$5,884,166	0%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue			
Skyview Campground	\$804,834	-	
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$4,041,288	\$4,623,443	
Operating Expenses	\$1,799,335	\$1,069,321	
Total	\$5,840,623	\$5,692,764	-3%
Capital Expenses			
Skyview Campground	\$1,227,386	-	
Other	\$1,355,390	\$142,467	

Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2021	2022	
Revenue			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	\$803,042	\$891,617	11%

County Weed District & Enterprise

	2021	2022	
Revenue			
General Fund	\$102,870	\$106,471	
Intergovernment Revenue	\$140,520	\$192,953	
Service Charges Revenue	\$488,333	\$440,037	
Specific Designated Taxes	\$830,298	\$866,436	
Total	\$1,562,021	\$1,605,897	3%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	\$583,570	\$669,652	
Operating Expenses	\$628,477	\$721,190	
Total	\$1,212,047	\$1,390,843	15%

*As of 1.23.23 (unaudited and does not include final 2022 sales tax).



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Department of Natural Resources
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Published: February 2023

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