



2023

# Larimer County Natural Resources

## QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT

2ND QUARTER (APRIL MAY JUNE)



## Larimer County Partners with Land Trusts to Achieve Conservation Successes



*Cheley Conservation Easement.  
Credit: Estes Valley Land Trust*

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) regularly partners with land trusts to help fund conservation projects within the county that match LCDNR goals. In late 2022, LCDNR provided funds to partially cover the transaction costs associated with the 195-acre Cheley Conservation Easement in the Estes Valley. The Cheley family donated the conservation easement to the Estes Valley Land Trust ensuring protection of wildlife habitat and continuation of an existing public trail on this parcel surrounded by national forest and Comanche Peak Wilderness. And in spring 2023, LCDNR contributed

funds towards transaction costs and to acquire a trail and trailhead easement on the 225-acre Lewis Farm Conservation Easement along the Little Thompson River. The Lewis Farm Conservation Easement is a partnership between the Lewis Family, Trust for Public Land, Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust, various grant funders and Colorado Future Farmers of America who will manage the property for agricultural education purposes. LCDNR is pleased to be able to collaborate with the many entities that work to conserve land within the county to advance our common goals.



# Red Mountain Open Space Stream Restoration



Earthen dam restoration site (before) at Red Mountain Open Space.  
Credit: Zac Wiebe

This past April, staff completed an important restoration project by removing an earthen dam on a small spring at Red Mountain Open Space. Dams can have multiple negative impacts on the environment, including blocking aquatic species migration, trapping sediment and nutrients, and altering flow patterns. The main objective of the project was to return the creek to a natural state and promote ecological improvement by increasing riparian habitat. This, in turn, can help improve water quality, support native plants, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and reduce flood risks.

Almost a year of planning and coordination took place before the dam could be removed, which took approximately one month. The footprint was regraded back to the original contour and the area amended and seeded with a native seed mix. Willow stakes were also cut and propagated from another area at Red Mountain Open Space and planted in the new streambed. Monitoring will continue for three to five years and management will adapt as needed.

## Rangers Join Naturalists for Educational Programming

This spring, the Larimer County Natural Resources Public Engagement team invited two Big Thompson Rangers to attend their Volunteer Naturalist training seminar.

After completing classes to better understand how to educate our visiting public effectively, a ranger co-led Tiny Trekkers pre-school program in May at River Bluffs Open Space. The class focused on animal communication and used bird song to connect them to their environment.

The ranger and a volunteer naturalist led ten students on a hike around the sunny park where they listened to birds, noticed mushrooms and flowers, and worked on fostering positive stewardship behaviors.



Tiny Trekkers listening for animal communication and connecting with the surrounding environment.  
Credit: Breyer Kinzer



Rangers and Public Engagement staff with tools of the trade.  
Credit: Breyer Kinzer



# Ranger Annual Boat Academy - REVAMPED!



Credit: Luke Brough



With Honor We Serve By Duty We Protect

This spring, all seasonal rangers received specialized training at the Seasonal Boat Academy with some attending additional instruction to become operators of Larimer County Natural Resources patrol boats. This revamped training resulted in every ranger having the ability to respond when needed and in all weather conditions.

It takes over 60 hours to complete this course, including

swimming across indoor pools for water survival training, spanning the shorelines, and being aboard patrol boats in open water during both day and night.

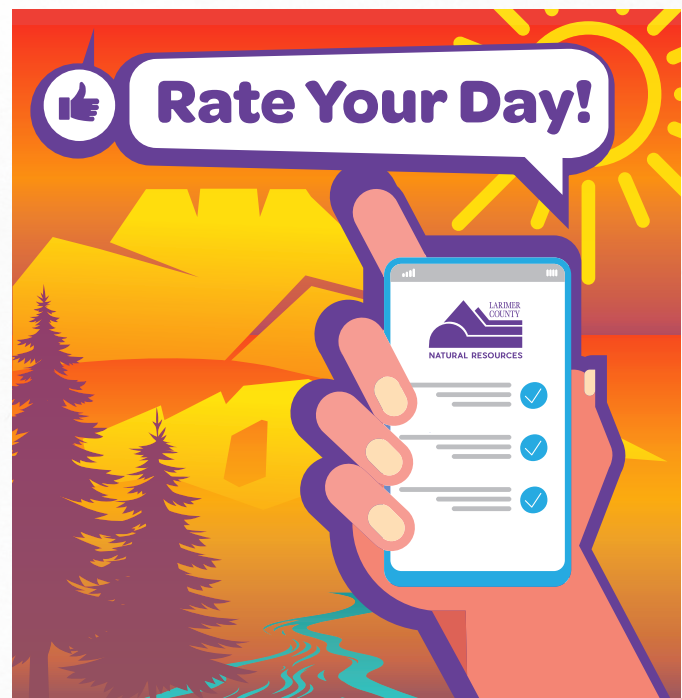
Additionally, Maintenance staff, also on the water aboard their job-specific pontoon boats, were provided new, upgraded equipment and the same rescue training to handle a boater-overboard or water emergency during their work.

## Visitor Feedback Campaign Launches

In an effort to better connect people, nature, and place, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) is piloting a customer service feedback campaign, called Rate Your Day, this summer to assess visitor satisfaction, identify barriers that may be limiting access, and identify areas of customer service improvement.

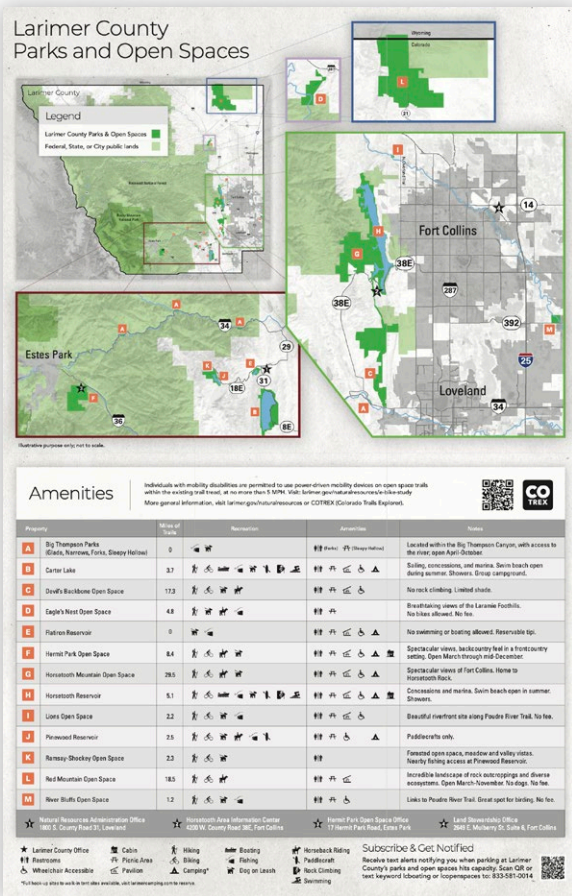
Visitors will see posters, flyers, and small handouts that invite them to "Rate Your Day" online. Three simple questions will measure the satisfaction rating and takes less than two minutes to complete. LCDNR's goal is to get a pulse on a collective satisfaction level rating across all parks and open spaces in Larimer County.

The campaign will end in October when staff will assess the results and compile a preliminary feedback rating.



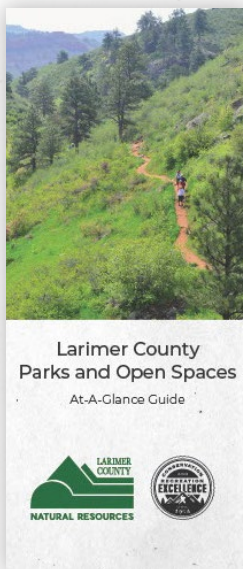


# 'At a Glance Guide' Now Available



Locating and enjoying a favorite reservoir park or open space in Larimer County just got a bit easier, especially for those new to the county or visiting for a short time. In July, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources released a new visitor brochure called the Larimer County Parks and Open Spaces "At a Glance Guide." This resource was developed in-house and offers an overview of the location and amenities on county-managed open space and park properties and helpful stewardship tips to

recreate responsibly. The free resource replaces a multi-fold unwieldy Recreation Map that had been in use since the early 2000s allowing for a simpler reference for visitors and less printing cost. The resource is available in English and Spanish at all Larimer County trailheads, visitor centers, and via a PDF download at [larimer.gov/naturalresources/parks](http://larimer.gov/naturalresources/parks).



## Discover Pack Concludes Pilot Year

This May, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) Discover Pack completed its first full year in service, and 2022 was a successful pilot year for the program. With six library district partners, the Discover Packs were checked out 826 times. The feedback from users in 2022 indicated about half used a Discover Pack to access two or more open spaces, leading to a LCDNR in-kind benefit to citizens of over \$12,000. Many community members said that without the Discover Pack, they would not have known about or been able to afford the opportunity to connect with nature.

So far in 2023, the check-out rate is trending about 10% higher than in 2022, and this year we will be increasing awareness through refreshed social media and by adding three Discover Packs to the Poudre Libraries' new electric mobile library, Evie.





# 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 April 1 through June 30 revenue summaries and operating

expenses as compared to the same period the previous year. Significant discrepancies between Operating Expense lines reflect changes by Larimer County Finance Department in categorizing in Quarter 3 of 2022 and will be more accurate to compare next quarter when the categories are consistent.

## Open Spaces

	2022	2023	
<b>Revenue</b>			
Intergovernment Revenue	\$39,894	-	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$113,607	\$84,418	
Service Charges Revenue	\$106,333	\$89,872	
Specific Designated Taxes	\$3,413,954	\$3,373,249	
User Fees Revenue	\$716,520	\$821,447	
Total	\$4,390,308	\$4,368,986	-0%
<b>Significant Donation/Other Revenue</b>			
Quarter Circle Lazy H Ranch	\$1,121,971	-	
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$676,807	\$884,184	
Operating Expenses	\$344,282	\$851,153	
Total	\$1,021,089	\$1,735,337	70%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$117,448	\$182,635	56%
<b>Acquisition Capital Expenses</b>			
Quarter Circle Lazy H Ranch	\$1,204,220	-	
Eagle Canyon Ranch CE	\$1,000,000	-	
Other	\$99,010	\$221,487	

## Reservoir Parks

	2022	2023	
<b>Revenue</b>			
General Fund	\$94,356	\$99,073	
Intergovernment Revenue	-	-	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$2,205	\$3,500	
Service Charges Revenue	\$127,859	\$121,972	
User Fees Revenue	\$3,045,138	\$3,066,225	
Total	\$3,269,603	\$3,290,770	1%
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$1,935,884	\$2,311,058	
Operating Expenses	\$1,175,605	\$788,926	
Total	\$3,111,489	\$3,099,985	-0%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$279,509	\$365,387	31%
<b>Capital Expenses</b>			
Other	-	-	

## Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2022	2023	
<b>Revenue</b>			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	\$424,509	\$470,235	11%

## County Weed District & Enterprise

	2022	2023	
<b>Revenue</b>			
General Fund	\$53,232	\$55,898	
Intergovernment Revenue	-	-	
Service Charges Revenue	\$89,944	\$88,329	
Specific Designated Taxes	\$813,327	\$844,164	
Total	\$956,503	\$988,390	3%
<b>Expense</b>			
Personnel Expenses	\$282,217	\$299,895	
Operating Expenses	\$153,577	\$386,201	
Total	\$435,794	\$686,096	57%
<b>Countywide Indirects</b>	\$13,939	\$15,882	14%



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