



2024

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT
1ST QUARTER (JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH)



Future open space alive with activity—and funding!



In March, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) received great news for our newest open space. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) announced a \$1.5 million grant to reimburse a portion of the acquisition cost of this 1,547-acre property at the mouth of the Big Thompson Canyon, formerly known as Heaven’s Door Ranch. The grant is part of GOCO’s Centennial Program, which invests in high-value, once-in-a-generation projects that will create lasting impacts.

Since the property’s acquisition in late 2022, LCDNR has launched numerous planning and resource inventories. All the buildings on site were deconstructed in partnership with the National Center for Craftsmanship and over 53 tons of material were sold, repurposed, or recycled. Later this year the footprint left from former buildings will be restored to native habitat, and staff will complete ongoing weed control and non-native tree removal. Forest management activities are planned as well. Beginning this fall, staff-guided public tours will provide community members access to the open space.



This 1,547-acre property will rank as one of the crown jewels of northern Colorado’s open space system.

Survey says county residents support open space

OUR LANDS OUR FUTURE
Survey Results

90% OF RESIDENTS believe area open spaces and trails benefit the community by providing spaces for recreational opportunities, personal wellness, economic vitality, and overall quality of life.

81% OF RESIDENTS are supportive of renewing the ¼-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax at its current rate.

70% are supportive of renewing current user fees for trails, parks and open spaces.



As the population of Northern Colorado continues to grow and change, the demand for additional land conservation and nature-based recreation grows with it. To learn more about the community’s desires, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) launched the Our Lands, Our Future statistically valid, county-wide survey in 2023. The survey, done in partnership with the county’s incorporated cities, gathered residents’ perceptions about regional open spaces and trails throughout the county as an update to the previous iteration conducted in 2013.

The 2023 survey found that residents care deeply about public land conservation and nature-based recreational opportunities in Larimer County and strongly support ongoing open space sales taxes and existing user fees well into the future. Survey results will inform future planning efforts including adaptive management plans and sustainable funding options. The full report and appendix are available at: <https://www.larimer.gov/our-lands-our-future-2023-report>

Trails get a boost



Extreme weather, totaling 20 inches of rain, hit Larimer County in the spring and summer of 2023, causing significant erosion on our trails and a critical backlog of maintenance work across open spaces. To deal with this backlog, LCDNR staff jumped to action and applied for a non-motorized trails grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and was awarded a \$72,625 grant to support hiring three full-time trail crew staff for six months to conduct priority trail maintenance. CPW's grant will help ensure that Larimer County's trails continue to be well-maintained and thus protect the surrounding natural resources while providing high-quality visitor experiences.



A \$72,625 trails grant will support high-priority trail maintenance. Credit: Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero

Outreach effort kicks off for Carter Lake improvements



Outreach efforts have already reached 4,200 community members. Credit Aliy Louie



Larimer County Natural Resources (LCDNR) kicked off its public information outreach for the planned east-side infrastructure improvements coming soon to Carter Lake. Set to begin construction in 2025, the project will deliver significant road, parking, and day-use area improvements. Community in-person and virtual open houses, board meeting updates, and an online information hub have allowed area residents and other interested community members to learn more. To date, LCDNR has reached over 4,200 community members through digital and in-person efforts. This summer, outreach will expand to on-site at Carter Lake with a staffed pop-up booth to answer questions and provide information to interested visitors.

A new home for the Land Stewardship program



After more than a decade of planning and two years of construction, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources Land Stewardship Program has consolidated offices and operations. This includes the Larimer County Noxious Weed Management storefront where residents who own property within the Weed District can purchase herbicides and schedule free site visits. Previously, staff and operations were spread over four locations including the Weed District office complex on East Mulberry in Fort Collins. The Mulberry office complex was sold to help fund construction of the new facility at the Larimer County Ranch Events Complex. The new address is 5450 Arena Circle, Suite 101, Loveland.



Chris Brodzinski with The Ranch (left) and LCDNR staff member Bill Pawleshyn (right) attend an Open House for the new Land Stewardship Program offices at The Ranch Complex.

Larimer County updates community event permit procedures



New county rules work to lessen visitor conflict and increase public safety during large-scale community events. Credit: GNAR Runners

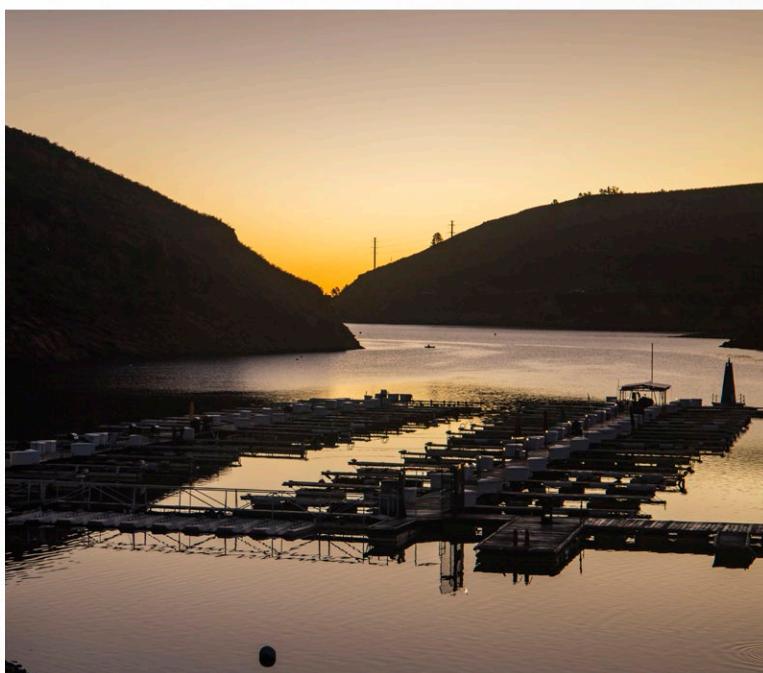


From half marathons to well-known bike races, the number of large special events in Larimer County have increased, creating conflict and safety concerns on busy county roads, especially around Horsetooth Reservoir. Responding to the demands, a core team of LCDNR staff joined the Community Planning Department, Road and Bridge, and the Larimer County's Sheriff's Office to identify areas for process improvements that support new community event permit procedures in 2024. These improvements include blackout dates on popular routes during the summer; a new tiered-pricing fee structure to allow the Department to recoup a portion of costs for helping manage larger events; limits on the number of events annually with prioritization on "Legacy" events (events that have been permitted for 10+ years), and the adjustment of a permit application window to at least 120 days prior to the event.

Bringing greater transparency to marina operations



In 2023, LCDNR identified the need to increase transparency and fairness in long-term concession contracts and slip rentals at Carter Lake Marina and Inlet Bay Marina at Horsetooth Reservoir. As a result, Larimer County asked potential and current concessionaires to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) to compete for a new contract and instituted a marina slip lottery to ensure fairness in slip leasing and mooring. To help advise, LCDNR opened an RFI (Request for Information) prior to the RFP release asking community members to submit ideas for changes they'd like to see. Marina services, such as boat mooring, came in as the top choice. Following the RFP process, the existing concessionaires won bids to continue operations on the two reservoirs. LCDNR launched the new slip lottery in March for open slips and moorings at both marinas with preference points given to Larimer County residents. Short term, overnight opportunities, transparent pricing and an increase in the gross revenue paid to LCDNR will also go into effect this year.



Marinas at Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake instituted a new slip lottery process in March. Credit: Aliy Louie

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 Jan. 1 through March 31 revenue summaries and operating expenses as compared to the same period the previous year.

Open Spaces

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
Intergovernment Revenue	-	7,146	
Miscellaneous Revenue	25,715	13,697	
Service Charges Revenue	61,364	73,845	
Specific Designated Taxes	717,190	791,604	
User Fees Revenue	415,084	362,399	
Interest Revenue	-	201,060	
Total	1,219,354	1,449,750	19%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue	-	-	
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	371,380	399,355	
Operating Expenses	159,946	203,901	
Total	531,326	603,256	14%
Countywide Indirects	85,354	53,830	-37%
Acquisition Capital Expenses	-	-	

Reservoir Parks

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
General Fund	49,536	33,520	
Intergovernment Revenue	-	-	
Miscellaneous Revenue	(7,960)	6,000	
Service Charges Revenue	22,141	44,388	
User Fees Revenue	1,638,873	1,618,168	
Total	1,702,591	1,702,077	0%
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	962,481	986,135	
Operating Expenses	720,978	561,965	
Total	1,683,459	1,548,101	-8%
Countywide Indirects	166,466	131,028	-21%
Capital Expenses	-	-	

Conservation Trust - Lottery

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
Conservation Trust/Lottery	263,451	264,859	1%

County Weed District & Enterprise

	2023	2024	
Revenue			
General Fund	27,949	26,287	
Intergovernment Revenue	-	-	
Service Charges Revenue	2,275	1,016	
Specific Designated Taxes	370,527	448,485	
Total	400,751	475,789	19%
Significant Donation/Other Revenue			
Sale of Mulberry Building	-	516,386	
Expense			
Personnel Expenses	135,053	121,413	
Operating Expenses	93,771	39,629	
Total	228,823	161,041	-30%
Countywide Indirects	7,438	5,855	-21%
Capital Expenses	-	-	



2022-2027 Strategic Plan

MISSION: We connect people, nature and place.
VISION: Healthy Landscapes, Healthy People.



Nature-Based Opportunities



Proactive Land Conservation & Management



Levels of Service



Regional Leadership



Sustainable Funding Strategy



Positive Work Culture



Larimer County
Department of Natural Resources
Quarterly Board Report
Published: May 2024

Connect With Us:
Larimer County Department of Natural Resources
1800 S. County Road 31
Loveland, CO 80537
(970) 619-4570
larimer.gov/naturalresources

