

## LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS 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:** February 19, 2020

**Time:** 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room

**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
Bob Hewson	x	Daylan Figgs	x	~50 agency guests attended the Regional Board Meeting
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Jason Brothers	x	Charlie Johnson	x	
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Justin Core	x	
Ken Zornes		*Thomas Donnelly	x	
Linda Stanley	x	Korrie Johnson	x	
Mark DeGregorio		Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Nancy Wallace				
Peter Kelly				
Rick Brent	x			
Sherri Valentine	x			
Tom Shoemaker	x			

x = present

\*commissioner

#### 5:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. – Northern Colorado Regional Open Space Boards Meeting

1. 5:00 p.m. – DINNER AND NETWORKING
2. 5:30 p.m. – REGIONAL MEETING BEGINS
  - a. Welcome and introductions
    - i. Daylan gave an overview of the agenda. Round of introductions.
  - b. Agency highlight reports (5 min/agency)
    - i. Town of Estes Park – Brian Berg, Parks Maintenance Supervisor

1. Building a new section of the Fall River Trail that will connect downtown and to Aspen Glen campground within RMNP with GOCO and Open Lands funds. Then RMNP plans to build a multi-modal trail from Aspen Glen campground to the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.
  2. Paid \$11,000 on noxious weed control to Larimer County Weed District. The Town of Estes sponsored 4 public Noxious Weed Roundup events in partnership with Estes Valley Land Stewardship Association.
  3. Presented a proposal for Thumb Open Space, which the Town plans to purchase as a CE within the Estes Park valley. Partners include Estes Valley Land Trust, Access Fund, Rocky Mountain Nature Conservancy, surrounding HOAs, and the climbing community.
- ii. Town of Johnstown – Kim Meyer, Director of Planning & Development
1. Plan to revisit Open Space priorities and land use balance with the 2020 Comp Plan kickoff. Priorities include Big Thompson River Corridor and Trail, opportunities throughout town, and trail/park/open space/places connections.
- iii. Larimer County – Meegan Flenniken, Land Conservation, Planning & Resource Division Manager
1. Open Space sales tax renewed in 2019, DNR projected 25-year budget outcomes to ensure coverage of long-term management costs of existing lands. Plan is to front load acquisition funds to acquire and open 4-5 future stand-alone public access areas, buffers, and CEs.
  2. Plan to lead conservation work on 8 priority areas within Larimer County. Approximately 100 parcels within those 8 areas are 100-ac or larger and meet our conservation values. Land agents are taking a strategic, proactive approach to identify and conserve key parcels.
  3. Other highlights: completed final acquisitions for the Poudre River Trail and secured \$2M in GOCO funding for construction, acquired buffers at Forks Park, received 162-ac donation CE in Blue Mountain priority area, Poudre River restoration at River Bluffs Open Space, reconstructed Horsetooth Rock Trail, audited Open Space tax dollars with no exceptions, and received the CO Lottery Starburst Award for Long View Regional Trail.
- iv. Town of Timnath – Matt Blakely, Community Development Director
1. Partnered with Logan Simpson to develop a Comprehensive Master Plan that combines Timnath’s Parks and Recreation and Open Space plans. The Comp Plan includes park maintenance and development, general trail improvements, phase 2 of Timnath Community Park, Timnath Reservoir Outlet Canal (TROC) Trail, and construction of Poudre River Trail segments.
- v. Town of Windsor – Wade Willis, Open Space and Trails Manager
1. Plan to construct trails from Kyger Reservoir to River Bluffs Open Space and around the entirety of Kyger (~1 mile). Additional trail construction from Kyger to the Poudre River Trail (~0.5 miles) and to High Hops. Expected to be complete by mid-April.
  2. In negotiation with CPW to acquire Frank State Wildlife easement, anticipate 2020 conveyance.



3. Working with landowners in Weld County to re-establish Poudre River lease and perform riverway restoration.
  4. Project at Eastman Park Riverwalk will re-establish a riverway and wetlands area on the south side of the park as well as additional parking for soccer events.
  5. Establishing a new course at the archery range with a \$100,000 grant from CPW. Project will include fencing, shelter, overflow parking, targets, and a storage shed. The archery range accounts for 20% of trail users.
  6. Currently going through a Strategic Master Plan, the survey established that the neighborhood wants more trails and open space and is supportive of a sales tax.
- vi. Town of Berthoud – Keith Knoll, Parks Supervisor
1. 4 major projects planned for 2020:
    - a. Heron Pointe – will include trails and a natural area (east of Lonetree Reservoir) that will connect to Loveland.
    - b. Berthoud Reservoir – expected to open summer of 2020. CPW stocked the reservoir with fish. The reservoir is surrounded by open space and trails that will connect south to Waggener Farm Park.
    - c. Waggener Farm Park – will have a large recreation center. The southern half of the property is a conservation easement.
    - d. Hillsdale Park – Berthoud’s key natural area. Project includes purchasing additional land to expand the park to double its size.
- vii. City of Fort Collins – Zoe Shark, Natural Areas Public Engagement Manager
1. 4 acquisitions in 2019 totaling 647-ac in addition to expansions to Cathy Fromme Natural Area, Coyote Ridge, a site in NW Fort Collins, and area in the Foothills west of Lory State Park.
  2. 2019 Community Survey showed excellent results for the quality of Natural Areas, trails, and safety.
  3. Updated the Foothills Management Plan in 2019 (engaged 2,464 people).
  4. Other highlights: 1,245 volunteers contributed over 16,000 hours; Nature in the City program installed a pollinator walk at Sugarbeet Park; Rangers’ 2019 contacts were 87% positive; completed 24-ac restoration project at Kingfisher Natural Point; and Land Conservation & Stewardship Board produced an annual report and provided feedback for the Foothills Management Plan.
- viii. City of Loveland – Marilyn Hilgenberg, Open Lands & Trails Manager
1. Trails updates: negotiated a pedestrian underpass at I-25 and Big Thompson River with CDOT (will connect from Loveland to Johnstown and from Berthoud to Windsor); acquired a 3.3-mi trail connection at Prairie Ridge Natural Area to Coyote Ridge, Rim Rock, and Blue Sky trails; established a connector trail from Madison Ave. to senior living area and neighborhood schools; constructed 1-mi of trail and plan to build a fishing dock at Willow Bend Natural Area with grant funds; planning to finish 57th St. Railroad crossing and trail; and regional trail



connection from South Boyd Lake to Centerra will be finished in the next year with grant funds.

2. Conserved 160-ac on the East Big Thompson River Corridor and additional acreage at the West Loveland Skyline Natural Area properties.
3. Big Thompson River restoration projects: restoration of V-Smith Mountain Park (plan to re-open with environmental education this spring) and Round Mountain trail, river re-route at Wild Natural Area, installation of an overflow channel at Oxbow Natural Area, replaced the river bridge and re-routed river at Medina's Crossing, added Big Thompson River Trailhead at Wilson Ave., and restoration at Boise Bend Natural Area. Additional public access and improvement projects included trail and fishing access at Willow Bend, a Sunset Vista/Long View Trailhead restroom, prescribed fire and test restoration at Boise Bend, and Boedecker Bluff trail and shore access.
4. Stewardship and volunteer projects: native revegetation at Sunset Vista, installation of owl and kestrel cams and banding, raptor monitoring program, native plantings, and invasive tree and weed management. Developed innovative programs to engage the public.

3. 6:15 p.m. – PRESENTATION ON NOCO 2050

- a. Alex Alma (Trails and Recreation Project Manager, CO Department of Natural Resources) and Steve Coffin (Owner and Consultant, Steve Coffin Strategies) introduced NoCoPLACES 2050 as a response to Colorado's exploding population and its strain on our public lands. The project collaborates with Front Range stakeholders to protect and conserve natural and cultural resources while providing equitable access to recreation experiences for current and future generations.
- b. Three-part strategy to manage impact of growth on Colorado's mountains:
  - i. Convene Colorado's civic and community leadership
  - ii. Secure the support of elected officials
  - iii. Systemic change in public land management (NoCoPLACES 2050)
- c. Geographic efforts will be focused on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests in partnership with Jefferson, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Larimer, and Boulder Counties, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the US Forest Service, and the National Park Service.
- d. In 2020, the project will conduct a series of half-day meetings that focus on core topics that affect future management decisions (behavioral science, wildlife management, forest health, equitable access, transportation, volunteer stewardship, climate change, carrying capacity, funding and economic contribution, trends in visitor use and recreation demands, etc.). Long-term outcomes include local (county) plans, a regional plan, and forest management plans. More info can be found online at [nocoplaces2050.com](http://nocoplaces2050.com).

4. 6:45 p.m. – WRAP UP AND TRANSITION TO SEPARATE BOARD MEETINGS  
(Loveland, Fort Collins, and Larimer County boards)

- a. Tom Donnelly, Larimer County Commissioner, gave closing remarks and thanked everyone for attending.

This meeting will be recorded and archived according to law. Votes require a quorum.

Public can view agenda and minutes at:

[http://legacy.larimer.org/boards/minutes/openlands\\_advisory\\_board.cfm](http://legacy.larimer.org/boards/minutes/openlands_advisory_board.cfm)



6:45 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – **Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Meeting**

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 7:01 p.m.
  - a. Daylan introduced Korrie Johnston, the new Community Relations and Public Information Supervisor. Korrie formerly worked for the City of Fort Collins and led communication, marketing, and special events for the Gardens on Spring Creek.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
  - a. Bob Hewson thanked the board for considering and voting for Colorado Youth Outdoors to be a recipient of the Small Grants for Community Partnering program.
  - b. Daylan gave a brief update on DNR’s strategic planning process.
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
  - a. Sherri requested to amend the 8aii to read, “OLAB designates [www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org) as the place for posting notice of public meetings and public notice shall also be physically posted at the bulletin boards located at the north and south entrances to the Larimer County Courthouse Offices Building at 200 West Oak Street, Fort Collins, Colorado, in accordance with Colorado’s open meeting laws.” Sherri moved to approve the minutes as amended, Bob seconded, motion passed unanimously.
5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - a. Natural Resource events for this month: See <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
  - b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board minutes, go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click ‘Subscribe,’ and then check the ‘Open Lands Advisory Board’ box.
  - c. Strategic Plan – Daylan
    - i. Starting this year, DNR will go through a strategic planning process as an opportunity to review and restart as a department. The goal is to look at DNR’s financial future and ability to keep pace with increasing recreation demands, identify inefficiencies, and review DNR’s organization and alignment. The process will be facilitated by 2 Larimer County employees in IT with the intention of setting 3-5 key goals that will be implemented in the next few years. More to come on how the strategic plan might engage the advisory boards.
      1. Bob asked about accessing survey results and public response to certain topics. Daylan mentioned Our Lands Our Future, Meegan noted the results are compiled in a fact sheet that can be distributed to the board or accessed online. Both Open Lands and Parks Master Plans also capture public input and are available on DNR’s website: [www.larimer.org/naturalresources/plans-reports-advisory-boards](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/plans-reports-advisory-boards).
      2. Discussion about Help Preserve Open Space and balancing recreation vs. conservation. Linda suggested reviewing city and county ballot



language. Commissioner Donnelly noted it's an interesting dynamic and OLAB's expertise is important in finding this balance. Given LC's seat in Northern Colorado, there's a regional component to it as well.

- ii. K-Lynn said it would be beneficial for all OLAB members (not just chair and vice chair) to be involved in the strategic planning process. Daylan agreed and said Korrie will check back in with the board as the process moves forward. Sherri suggested holding an additional meeting or work session if needed.
  - iii. Meegan said she is excited for the plan to look at DNR's process management and operational efficiencies. Daylan said the process will wrap up mid-fall and then implementation will begin.
- d. SB20-135 Conservation Easement Working Group Proposal update – Justin
- i. Keep it Colorado is a policy advocacy group that works on behalf of land trusts and open space programs across the state. Justin explained one of the directives from last year's changes to the tax credit program was the formation of a working group to develop proposals for the 2020 legislative session. The 3 key points of SB20-135 include: a tax credit formula adjustment that would allow landowners who donate an easement to claim up to 90% of its fair market value, a mechanism for landowners who had tax credits denied to apply for compensation, and a process for addressing abandoned conservation easements. Meegan clarified there are no abandoned CEs in Larimer County, DNR is most interested in following the tax credit formula portion of the bill. Justin said the bill went through the Senate Agriculture and Resources committee last week and will go through the Senate Finance committee on March 12<sup>th</sup>. No amendments have been made yet but are expected. Daylan said if DNR wants to comment for or against any amendments, they will go through the BOCC. If approved, the bill will be a significant financial resource for DNR. K-Lynn mentioned orphaned easements present far-reaching issues across CO and it's important DNR is keeping an eye on solutions. Charlie said it will ultimately make the conservation easement program better and that they are encouraging landowners to donate. More information: <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb20-135>
  - ii. Bob asked how many land trust entities are in CO, K-Lynn said there were 40 but many are consolidating. Bob asked if there's room in this bill for land trusts to create more consistent valuations. Daylan asked Charlie to explain LC's easement appraisal and review process. Charlie said when they engage with a landowner, they introduce them to appraisers within the community and jointly decide which to use (appraisers' opinions will vary). Appraisals are then reviewed at the state level and by GOCO once taxes are applied.
- e. Poudre Trail grant update – Meegan
- i. The \$400k application for the Northern Front Range MPO Multimodal Options Fund was recommended for full funding and we expect to receive official approval in April. DNR was also invited to submit a full application (due April 9<sup>th</sup>) for GOCO's Special Opportunity Open Space grant program. The concept paper

was submitted in December requesting \$1.3M and there is \$8M in funding available. Expect initial reviews at our next meeting.

6. UPDATES
7. DISCUSSION ITEMS
8. ACTION ITEMS
  - a. Resolution to accept conveyance of mineral rights donation to Larimer County
    - i. Bob moved to accept the conveyance of mineral rights donated to Larimer County, K-Lynn seconded, motion passed unanimously.
9. OTHER BUSINESS
10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: April 23, 2020 at the Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room
11. 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.
12. ADJOURN – 8:03 p.m.