

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: May 28, 2020

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 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
Bob Hewson	x	Daylan Figgs	x	2 members of the public
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Jason Brothers	x	Ken Brink	x	
K-Lynn Cameron		Charlie Johnson	x	
Ken Zornes		Justin Core	x	
Linda Stanley	x	Chris Fleming	x	
Mark DeGregorio	x	Michael Murphree	x	
Nancy Wallace		*Thomas Donnelly	x	
Peter Kelly	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x	
Rick Brent	x			
Sherri Valentine	x			
Tom Shoemaker	x			

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:08 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Addendum to the Regional Board Meeting minutes to include additional comments provided

- i. Rick moved to amend the Regional Board Meeting minutes to include additional comments, Jason seconded, Sherri abstained. Motion passed.
 - b. Approval of April minutes
 - i. Mark moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Linda seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- 5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - a. Natural Resources events for this month: larimer.org/naturalresources.
 - b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board updates, go to apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Open Lands Advisory Board” box.
- 6. UPDATES & REPORTS
 - a. Quarterly report – Q1 2020
 - i. Daylan highlighted a few stories:
 1. DNR received the FLAP grant for \$7M with \$3M match to improve aging infrastructure on federally owned reservoir parks
 2. Cabin road renovations at Hermit Park Open Space
 3. The Poudre River Trail received an additional \$400,000 from CDOT’s multi-modal options fund grant
 - ii. Sherri asked about the decline in Colorado Lottery revenue, Daylan said we receive those funds from the state and they typically do not fluctuate.
 - b. Director’s update on COVID – budget and office reopenings – Daylan
 - i. The DNR Administrative Office is managing customer service via the front window, the Hermit Park office and Horsetooth Area Information Center have limited public entry with masks and social distancing practices in place. Weed District herbicide sales are being offered via phone orders and curbside pickup. All permits are now available online and we are seeing an uptick of purchases. A phased reopening of offices and camping reservations will be implemented within the county.
 - ii. Overall, budget YTD is up 9%. Camping sales are down 12% but are expected to increase due to high occupancy rates. First quarter sales tax is up 5% YTD. Daylan explained we aren’t seeing full effects of COVID yet, more to come in April and May reports. One key advantage is operating expenses left over from old sales tax, which have allowed DNR to frontload money into cash reserves. Day use visitation and permits have also increased \$60,000 YTD.
 - iii. Dave asked about the effect of fee increases on permit sales, Daylan said there was a slight reduction in the quantity of permits sold in 2019 but revenue was up.
 - iv. Dave asked about staffing during COVID, Daylan said DNR is fully staffed. The camping freeze gave the department the time and capacity to hire commercial restroom cleaners and seasonal staff and complete some additional projects such as hazard tree removals.



- v. Linda commented keeping public restrooms open was smart to avoid creating additional waste. Mark asked about the cost for commercial cleaning, Daylan said the contract started at \$50,000 and we are determining if an extension is needed. Bob asked if it's something that might be considered for a long-term service, Daylan affirmed and said the department has a similar contract for trash services.
- c. E-bike update – Meegan
- i. DNR received direction from the BOCC to move forward with an e-bike study that would allow some form of access within our natural surface trail system. The study would be within a defined 6-8 month window of time, likely starting this summer. Around 30 random participants would be selected via a lottery and issued requirements and identification. The tentative plan is to focus on Devil's Backbone Open Space and allow class I, 2-wheeled e-bikes on trails that currently allow bikes.
 - ii. Dave asked how we determine if e-bikes increase traffic on trails, Meegan said there are limitations to the study, the focus is to provide a venue for visitors who desire e-bike access and for DNR to gauge public opinion around this new and motorized use. Meegan added there are maintenance and patrolling challenges to balance frontcountry vs. backcountry use.
 - iii. Linda commented e-bike use allows visitors to reach remote areas. Daylan said we will be working through social media and other outlets to pose questions about that. In terms of capacity, COVID has shown us what visitation might look like in 5-10 years and we need to look at ways to handle higher use.
 - iv. Bob said increased trail use is an indicator of what we might expect in the future and that it shouldn't be viewed as a consequence of e-bike use.
 - v. Sherri expressed concerned about how the study would conclude and said she was pleased by the lottery requirement and timeline. She mentioned overuse issues at Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake and referenced language from the Help Preserve Open Space sales tax. Daylan clarified the infrastructure at Horsetooth and Carter is overutilized but there is capacity at the reservoirs to accommodate more use.
 - vi. Dave commented it's a balance between conservation and use but also user experience.
 - vii. Tom, Pete, and Sherri said they would like to review a written plan of the study before voting. Dave and Daylan clarified they are not voting on a policy for use of e-bikes, but to modify regulations to allow e-bikes on designated natural surface trails for the purpose of a study. Sherri said Pete requested to review the specifics of the study before voting on it. Meegan said given the short timeframe and direction DNR was given, we plan to reach out to Jerry Vaske at CSU who helped design our 2017-2018 Visitor Use Study for assistance. Daylan said we will share study proposals as they are developed.
 - viii. Jason said to add e-bikes as a type of use does not necessarily increase the number of users and encouraged all to keep the questions separate.

- ix. Mark commented the study should consider continuity with other trail networks in the area and respective agency regulations. Daylan agreed and said DNR is in communication with both parties.
- x. Ken shared that staff in general have concerns about allowing motorized use.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Approval of e-bike pilot project special permit/modification to regulations
 - i. Rick moved to modify regulations to allow for a pilot program, Bob seconded, motion carried.
 - ii. Tom and Linda asked for specific language of the motion. Meegan stated the action item is for the board to make a recommendation to the BOCC to modify regulation F13, which states that it prohibits operation of any class of electrical bicycle on natural surface trails within our system, and modify it to allow class I, 2-wheeled e-bike use on specific designated trails for the purposes of a pilot study.
 - iii. Sherri asked about a timeframe for the study, Meegan said it will start in July for a duration of 6-8-months.
 - iv. Commissioner Donnelly asked for a rollcall to clarify votes. Those in favor: Mark, Dave, Bob, Jason, Rick. Those opposed: Linda, Tom, Sherri.
- b. New Cache Crossing Agreement – Poudre River Trail – Charlie
 - i. Charlie provided an overview of the final review for the New Cache Crossing on the Poudre River Trail. DNR will pay New Cache \$20,000 for the agreement and \$1,200 annually for the crossing. Sherri asked if there's a limit to the annual payment, Charlie said payment is indefinite and is meant to cover insurance for liability concerns. Sherri asked if they provide maintenance, Charlie said maintenance is the county's responsibility. Rick asked if these payments are common, Charlie affirmed it is a standard method of operation for ditch companies. Jason said he represents ditch companies as an engineer and that this is a typical crossing agreement in fee. Tom commented a lot of detail goes into the process and thanked Charlie.
 - ii. Rick moved to recommend to the BOCC to execute the New Cache Crossing agreement, Tom seconded. Bob asked if there should be an opportunity to add to the agreement if a phone line were to cross the canal and the company needed to use the bridge. Charlie said the phone line company would have to work with the ditch company for added use as it's not contemplated in the agreement. All in favor, motion passed.
- c. LCDNR Habitat Restoration Policy recommendation - Meegan
 - i. Meegan briefly reviewed the policy and noted that updated language was added to address the Board's recommendation to add performance criteria in the policy. Sherri moved to recommend the approval of the Habitat Restoration Policy to the BOCC, Linda seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: June 25, 2020 via Zoom Webinar

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 – 6:32 p.m.

This meeting will be recorded and archived according to law. Votes require a quorum.
Public can view agenda and minutes at:

<https://www.larimer.org/boards/open-lands-advisory-board/minutes>

