

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: November 12, 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		Daylan Figgs	x		
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x		
Gale Bernhardt	x	Ken Brink	x		
Jason Brothers		Charlie Johnson	x		
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Justin Core	x		
Linda Stanley	x	Zac Wiebe	x		
Mark DeGregorio	x	Steve Gibson	x		
Nancy Wallace	x	Chris Fleming	x		
Peter Kelly	x	Lori Smith	x		
Rick Brent		*Thomas Donnelly			
Sherri Valentine	x	Sidney Michl (minutes)	x		
Tom Shoemaker	x				

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:01 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES
 - a. Linda moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Tom 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. Facility/Maintenance projects update – Steve Gibson/Chris Fleming
 - i. Chris – shared photos from projects at the Hermit’s Cabin day use area including a new amphitheater, picnic benches, and standup fire grates all completed by department maintenance/facilities staff. Natural playscape areas will be added in the spring.
 - ii. Steve – provided an overview of various projects completed by the Red Mountain maintenance crew:
 1. Finished foundation work with HistoriCorps at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.
 2. Installed mounting blocks at Eagle’s Nest and Red Mountain Open Spaces.
 3. Updated Eagle’s Nest Open Space kiosk and entry sign, improved cattle water trough.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan update timeline – Zac Wiebe
 - i. Zac presented the anticipated timeline:
 1. November-December 2020: launch webpage, develop public engagement plan, finalize stakeholders (recreation, ecological, etc.)
 2. January-March 2021: public feedback (online survey tools, trailhead tables, virtual open houses), stakeholder meeting
 3. April-May 2021: develop a draft plan
 4. June-July 2021: public review and comment period, board presentations
 5. August-September 2021: finalize plan
 - ii. Daylan asked board members to consider their involvement in the process.
 - iii. Gale asked how stakeholders are determined. Zac said the department generates a list from groups we’ve worked with in the past, agency partners, and OLAB.
 - iv. Mark asked if the department plans to reach out to neighborhood groups, Zac affirmed and said they receive notification when there’s an upcoming meeting or an opportunity for comment. Daylan added we’ve received comments over time that we are also tracking.
 - v. Linda commented that in addition to recreation users there are individuals who value open space but don’t use it directly for recreation. Daylan said online platforms should make public engagement more accessible and ensure diverse input.

- vi. K-Lynn said it would be beneficial for OLAB members to attend stakeholder meetings, Zac said we envision 2-3 board members will participate in more of an ambassador role. Nancy said that model has been successful in the past.
 - vii. Tom asked what timeframe the plan will cover. Zac said there isn't a specific timeframe, the plan will generate a list of action items to implement within 3-5 years but the management approach is intended to be dynamic/living.
- b. Regional Board Meeting 2021
- i. Daylan explained the Regional Open Space Boards Meeting has been held annually the past few years and historically focused on individual agency reports. In considering a potential meeting for 2021, he asked for board members' interest in virtual attendance.
 - ii. Linda, Nancy, Dave, Sherri, Tom, and K-Lynn noted the time-consuming elements of hosting this meeting and questioned the value/need, particularly with a virtual platform. Gale noted the Loveland OLAC unanimously supported holding a regional meeting. Pete suggested postponing but not cancelling altogether. It was decided the topic will be revisited with potential to schedule a regional meeting in late summer or fall of 2021.
- c. Department financial information/reporting discussion – Lori Smith
- i. Nancy said this discussion was initiated by a board member request for additional information regarding budget and expenditures. Daylan commented the department budget is public information and this request seeks to describe periodic program costs and the cost of daily business operations. Lori reminded the board of our current process to bring regular budget items to the OLAB: revenue/expense trends and review in March/April, overview of capital improvement projects in April/May, and key revenue indicators presented quarterly in board reports.
 - ii. Dave commented that while there's a need for the board to have a high-level understanding of department expenses, per the board's bylaws and ballot language OLAB is not tasked with thorough detailed expense line item reviews.
 - iii. Mark said as citizen representatives, OLAB is responsible to provide oversight on matters related to the budget and otherwise.
 - iv. Tom asked if additional information is needed to resolve an issue or what the purpose of reviewing detailed line item budgets would be. He commented on the benefit of continued annual big picture budget overviews to ensure we're meeting the required ballot budget percentage targets.
 - v. Nancy commented on the importance of annual projections and said reporting minor monthly expenses is unnecessary.
 - vi. Gale clarified the request was for quarterly gross numbers and big picture costs.
 - vii. Linda agreed it would be helpful to report deviations without getting in the weeds.
 - viii. Dave asked about OLAB's role in making recommendations regarding the operating budget, Lori explained that this is not the board's purview as budgets are determined via a separate process approved by the BOCC.

- ix. Daylan said staff will discuss how to best move forward with the intent to maintain high-level reporting. Lori said there are various reports/summaries available that would be relevant to continue to provide. Nancy said we will aim for the first quarterly report in January and discussion can be revisited as needed.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Steputis Conservation Easement Final Review
 - i. Justin explained West Red Mountain Ranch CE was one of four projects awarded with grant funds from the GOCO Special Opportunity Open Space cycle and highlighted its key conservation features.
 - ii. Mark asked if there are subsurface issues, Charlie said the minerals are severed but an assessment report indicated negligible quantities on the property.
 - iii. Dave asked about regional resources and the need for future surveys, K-Lynn said easements are monitored yearly. Justin said he can review the language for more opportunities.
 - iv. Linda moved to recommend the BOCC purchase the Steputis conservation easement, K-Lynn seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- b. Devil's Backbone Open Space User Fee Recommendation
 - i. Daylan said DNR is contemplating the authority to impose a fee at DBBOS.
 - ii. Ken explained this process began in June 2018, OLAB and PAB supported imposing fees at high visitor demand open space properties, but a fee was not implemented at DBBOS at that time. Staff will meet with the BOCC next week to discuss implementing a fee in 2021. Potential added revenue is significant at \$500k annually, more updates to come.
 - iii. Meegan affirmed that the recently completed Devil's Backbone Open Space Visitor Study found that a tremendous number of users are not residents of Larimer County.
 - iv. Nancy commented the County will not have the same board of commissioners when the fee recommendation is revisited. Daylan said presenting these needs during their first few months is a priority.
 - v. K-Lynn commented on the increasing cost of land management and said visitors ought to pay when they use County-managed properties.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Sherri suggested staff should consider tire size as part of the e-bike study and asked how to comment on the Estes Valley Open Space Plan. Nancy said comments should be submitted individually as citizens.

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: January 28, 2021 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 – 7:16 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>

