



2020

Larimer County Natural Resources

QUARTERLY BOARD REPORT
1ST QUARTER (JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH)



Reservoir parks receive federal funds to improve aging infrastructure

Horsetooth and Carter Lake reservoirs represent the two largest and most heavily visited reservoirs in Larimer County, and in the top 10 statewide. The Department manages the reservoir parks through an agreement with the US Bureau of Reclamation to provide high quality outdoor recreation opportunities. Without significant improvements to their aging infrastructure, these areas will not be able to keep up with increased visitor demands.

The Department received approval and now awaits final documentation for a grant from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for \$7 million dollars with a \$3 million dollar match to reconfigure and pave existing parking lots to help ease traffic congestion, improve safety and capacity, and mitigate surface run-off. As noted by Jennifer Almstead, Department Fund Development Specialist, "This grant award rounds out a successful two-year funding streak for the Department, which overall has secured 6 different grants totaling over \$11 million dollars."



Federal grant will support reconfiguration and paving of existing parking lots to ease congestion, improve safety, and mitigate surface run-off.

Shoring up Eagle Campground at Carter Lake



Volunteers at work this January at Eagle Campground.

In January, volunteers assisted staff over four days to renovate 22 campsites in the upper Eagle Campground at Carter Lake. These campsites have not been renovated in years, and the 130 hours of volunteer help allowed maintenance staff to finish within a much shorter period. Renovation included installing erosion retaining walls on the uphill sides of campsites, while the downhill sides were shored up with rock walls to level the camping area. Crusher fines were applied and tamped down for a new surface.

Waterline and electrical upgrades coming to Horsetooth

Staff are working to make improvements to critical infrastructure at Horsetooth Reservoir. The plan to replace an aging waterline at Inlet Bay was completed this quarter with its work beginning this fall. The new waterline will improve drinking water reliability and reduce staff time needed for ongoing repairs. Horsetooth also plans to replace aging electrical pedestals in the most popular camping loops. "We want to show our visitors that we are investing their fees in improved services," said Visitor Services District Manager, Mark Caughlan.



Cabin road renovations at Hermit Park Open Space



This March, contractors began actively reconstructing and resurfacing 1.1 miles of roadway along the cabin loops at Hermit Park Open Space. Original to the 1970-80s, the roads have degraded over time with sections down to the bedrock. Big Thompson Maintenance crews were spending large amounts of time and money merely keeping the roads accessible. This project was identified and funded as part of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan with total project costs in excess of \$371,000. "We are excited to make this investment to be able to repair and re-engineer these roads to our high standards; it will not only save time for our crews but will improve our visitors overall experience at Hermit Park Open Space," said Chris Fleming, Visitor Services District Manager. Completion of this project is estimated in mid-May.

Poudre River Trail garners additional support

During this quarter, the remaining trail easements and crossing agreements to complete the Larimer County section of the Poudre River Trail were nearly finalized. In addition, the county applied for another grant for \$400,000 to CDOT's multi-modal options fund (MMOF) to complement the previously awarded \$2 million GOCO grant and further leverage Department funds. The project was approved for funding and ranked #2 in the region. The section of the project between River Bluffs Open Space and Timnath will be designed in 2020 with anticipated construction in 2021. "We are excited to have the easements and funding in place to construct the County's final section north of River Bluffs Open Space, and complete the 45-mile regional Poudre River Trail," said Zac Wiebe, Planning and Resource Specialist.



Cyclists enjoying the Poudre River Trail.

New noxious weed mapped in upper Poudre Canyon

Last fall, common tansy, a State of Colorado designated noxious weed, was detected and mapped in the upper Cache La Poudre Canyon on private land. This newly discovered infestation was spotted by a grant funded Natural Resource Department land stewardship crew dedicated to the early detection and rapid response of noxious weeds. The common tansy infestation was treated, and staff will continue to monitor this year for any plants that were missed or new infestations that may have gone unnoticed.



Common tansy



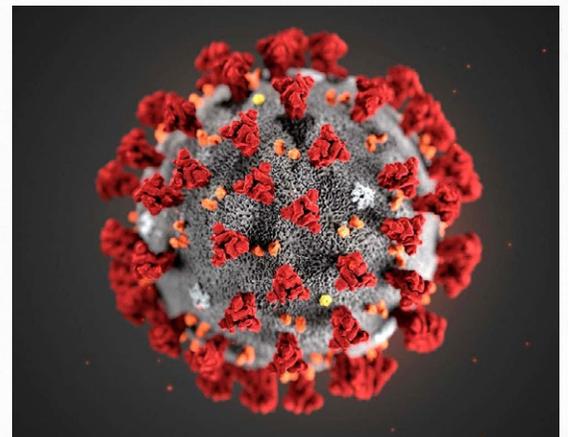
Senior Ranger Cindy Kirby and Ranger Chris Gardner

Courageous actions in face of rabid mountain lion

We are extremely proud of Senior Ranger Cindy Kirby and Ranger Trainee Chris Gardner for their courageous actions in keeping the community safe at the scene of a mountain lion attack on March 11 at Riverview RV Park in Loveland, near Hwy 34. The rabid mountain lion had attacked a construction worker, threatened residents, and attacked a Sheriff Deputy taking her to the ground. Ranger Gardner was able to kick the lion off the deputy, ending the attack. The rangers were successful in keeping the aggressive animal away from the campground, and eventually chased the lion to the east where it was euthanized.

COVID-19 Update

In mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic began to cause significant disruption in Larimer County at all levels of our community. The Department began implementing its Continuity of Operations Plan in response to the pandemic with the top priority to sustain operations while keeping our public and staff safe in its midst. The implications of the pandemic on our community continues at press time, and the entirety of its impact is unknown. Despite this uncertainty, the Department continues to work together to balance its measured COVID-19 response and the unprecedented demands it has created.



Financial Summary

Larimer County Natural Resources Department has five primary revenue sources including Colorado lottery proceeds, the open spaces sales tax, user fees on open spaces properties, user fees on reservoir parks properties, and the weed district property tax. Below are the January 1 through

March 31 revenue summaries, annual and daily permit sales, and camping reservation nights compared to the same period the previous year. Notably, significant reduction in annual permit sales this quarter may be attributed to the community's response to the ongoing pandemic.

Year to Date Revenue (through March 31st 2020)

	2019	2020	% Change
Colorado Lottery	\$255,325	\$161,563	-37%
Open Spaces Sales Tax	\$530,614	\$612,419	+15%
Open Spaces Generated User Fees*	\$179,745	\$192,491	+7%
Reservoir Parks Generated User Fees*	\$861,203	\$1,031,263	+20%
Weed District Property Tax	\$272,830	\$326,172	+20%

*User fees include those for entrance, camping, special events, group use areas, and penalty assessments

Year to Date Number of Permit Sales (through March 31st 2020)

	2019	2020	% Change
Open Spaces			
Annual Permits	184	22	-88%
Daily Permits	6,035	6,386	+6%
Reservoir Parks			
Annual Permits	838	289	-66%
Daily Permits	4,388	5,900	+34%

Year to Date Camping Reservation Nights (through March 31st 2020)

	2019	2020	% Change
Open Spaces	9	5	-44%
Reservoir Parks	1,657	1,426	-14%



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