



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537
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www.cityofloveland.org

LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

JUNE 10, 2015 – 5:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, Suite 200
500 E. Third Street, Loveland, CO 80537

Notice of Meeting Posted

Call to Order

Public Comment

Approval of Meeting Minutes (May 13, 2015)

City Council Liaison Report – Hugh McKean

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report – Kerri Rollins/Hugh McKean

OLAB Agenda/Minutes online: http://larimer.org/boards/minutes/openlands_advisory_board.cfm

Discussion/Action Items:

1. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Master Plan Update – Janet Meisel-Burns (5:45-6:15 pm)

Reports/Correspondence:

2. Naming of Properties along Big Thompson River (6:15-6:30 pm)
3. Property Acquisition Updates (6:30-6:45 pm)
4. Open Lands Projects Report (6:45-7:00 pm)

Executive Session

5. Big Thompson Recreation & Conservation Assessment – Review & discussion (7:00-7:30 pm)

Reminder:

June 13 – NoCo Get Outdoors Day, City Park Fort Collins (www.larimer.org/getoutdoorsnoco)

Commission Member Discussion Topics

Adjournment

Next Meeting Date: July 8, 2015

Wi-Fi: COLGuest Access Code: *accesswifi*

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2015

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third St., Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Michele Van Hare, Alan Krcmarik.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of April 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Ross Livingston made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Rick Brent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment: John Lewis noted that cleanup of River's Edge Natural Area should be a priority, particularly around Dragonfly Pond. Staff responded that the site will be included in the Spring Waterway cleanup if possible and crews will give increased attention to trash cleanup in this area.

City Council Liaison Report. Hugh McKean reported that representatives from Timberlane Farm have met with City staff to discuss the future ownership and management of the property.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Kerri Rollins distributed copies of the Larimer County Natural Resources 2014 Annual Report.

Capital Expansion Fee (CEF) Update. Alan Krcmarik, Executive Economic Advisor, presented the current recommendation on the Open Lands CEF, calculated using a plan-based methodology. The recommended OL CEF would be an increase over current levels for single-family units and a decrease for multi-family units. Council is scheduled to discuss the CEF recommendations on June 9, along with the Capital Plan.

Video Presentation: The Parks & Recreation Department developed a promotional video for the Gold Medal application to the National Parks & Recreation Association. The video is available online at: <http://www.cityofloveland.org/parksrecreation>.

Discussion/Action:

1. Open Lands Manager Position. P&R Director Elizabeth Anderson reported that the department plans to evaluate the Open Lands Division with the goal of creating a strong foundation for the long-term success of the program. Marilyn Hilgenberg, P&R Administrative Business Manager, has been appointed interim OL manager for day-to-day management of the program during the transition. The focus will continue to be on conserving property and opening sites for public access and trails.

2. Proposed 2016 Budget and Review of Maintenance Reserve Policy. Capital project budgets were submitted to the Finance Dept. in April and will be discussed with City Management staff and City Council during the budget process. The five-year Open Lands capital plan was provided to OLAC, including projected revenues, expenditures, acquisitions and operations. The current policy to set aside 15% of annual sales tax revenues for future operations and maintenance is not sustainable. Staff proposed a reserve emergency/operating account balance of \$3M. Rick Brent made a motion that Natural Areas Policy B18 be revised to cap the designated reserve account balance at \$3M beginning in 2016, for future emergency uses. Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A supplemental Open Lands budget request will be included for operation of newly purchased open lands (e.g., Nicholson, Sunset Vista) and development of other properties (e.g., Mineral, Ward).

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Big Thompson River Recreation & Conservation Assessment Update. Staff presented the draft vision plan, which is available on the project website (www.larimer.org/bigthompsonplan). Feedback is being sought at public meetings and via an online survey until May 31. Several focus areas relevant to Loveland were discussed, including Loveland West and Cedar Cove/Viestenz-Smith Park areas. Potential recreation uses and facilities for each area are included in the draft plan. The recommendations will be presented to City Council at the May 26 study session for discussion and feedback.

4. Property Acquisition Updates.

- Fort Collins Natural Areas would like Loveland to partner on a property in the separator area south of Fossil Creek Reservoir and identified in the *Plan for the Region between Fort Collins and Loveland* (1995). Possible uses of the property include community-supported agriculture, nature-based education, and trails. A formal partnership request will be presented in the near future.
- A west Loveland property acquisition was reviewed. Commission members visited the site in April and response was very favorable. Staff is continuing to research possible trail connections, parking, and access. Darren Pape made a motion recommending that staff proceed with negotiations to purchase the property; Ross Livingston seconded the motion. Rick Brent noted that development of the property may be difficult and expensive, so the value should reflect this, and the contract should include provisions for existing leases and maintenance costs. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Trust for Public Land is helping to negotiate acquisition of two significant parcels, one fee simple and the other a conservation easement. Appraisals are being ordered.

5. Open Lands Projects Report.

- **River's Edge Natural Area.** Construction began on April 13 with a 120-day time frame for completion. Project information, closure updates and photos are posted online on the City's website: www.cityofloveland.org/riversedge. A sign plan for the site is being developed to include informational, regulatory, directional, and interpretive signage. The flood-damaged Railroad Avenue entrance will be repaired with new fencing and maintenance access gate. Larimer County Youth Corps crews will assist with fencing and willow harvesting/staking this summer.
- **Morey Wildlife Reserve.** Amenities damaged or destroyed by the flood will be repaired or replaced, so the site can re-open to public access after the Waterway Cleanup on May 16. Plans for access trails, wetlands and riparian restoration are currently being discussed.

- **Sunset Vista Natural Area.** A structural assessment of the farmstead buildings is underway to assess four of the structures for evaluation of historic resources in the site management plan. Additional studies may be needed for recommendations on future use.
- **Big Thompson Natural Area.** Flood-damaged fences at the property south of the river at Hwy 287 are being replaced to delineate the property boundaries and provide pedestrian access. A site identification sign will be installed and damaged areas will be seeded for restoration. This site will also be included in the Waterway Cleanup on May 16.

Reminders:

6. Spring Waterway Cleanup (rescheduled) – May 16, 9 am-noon
7. Big Thompson Recreation & Conservation Assessment Tour – May 27, 1-4 pm
8. City Council Study Session – May 26, 6:30 pm

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Jim Roode noted that if the Open Space Sales Tax is used to reduce CEFs, citizens' money would be redirected from its intended purpose.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 1

MEETING DATE: June 10, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park – Master Plan Update

SUMMARY:

The consultant team for the Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park redesign has been working for the last month to develop the preferred master plan based on the public comments received and from the comments heard by the Open Lands and Parks & Recreation commissions and City Council. Logan Simpson will be presenting the master plan at the meeting and will facilitate discussion of outstanding issues before the project moves forward into design development.

During April and early May, staff solicited input from the public through Open City Hall (online) and from our web page comment form. The public comment period closed on May 15th and comments have been summarized below:

Seventy-two people responded through Open City Hall and 25 responded on the City web page comment form. Forty-five people responding visited the park quarterly and most (80%) were there to picnic. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents indicated they never rented a shelter. Those who did rent a shelter did so primarily for weddings and group or family picnics.

Overall comments were positive and most respondents were supportive of rebuilding the park with low-impact and day-use activities. Most people also understood that rebuilding the park similar to the past design wasn't possible, although a few people want to see a playground, more benches and a pond constructed. Forty-nine people did not feel the need for reservable shelters and fourteen people did not have a preference. Those who supported shelters felt that reusing the CCC shelter would be good for large groups but only if there was adequate parking that would not affect the day-use visitors. Seventy people felt that reusing the caretaker's house for the Environmental Education Center was a good option. Seventy-one percent felt that 2 bridges were valuable and needed.

Staff will be hosting a 2nd open house for public review of the master plan in late June. Staff will report back to Council on the need for shelters and the need for possible phasing of the unfunded elements in the park. Parking will remain a primary issue related to park use and ability to accommodate shelter reservations. Staff will proceed with refining the plans and details and report back to both commissions in the fall. All information presented, along with the master plan, will be available to the public in mid-June at www.cityofloveland.org/VSMP.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MEETING DATE: June 10, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Naming of Properties along Big Thompson River

SUMMARY:

The Big Thompson River has been a major focus for conservation in Loveland since the inception of the Open Lands Program, and a number of properties along the corridor have been protected over the years. Some of these acquisitions were named at the time of purchase, in accordance with the Natural Areas Naming Policy. Because of the connected nature of these sites, *Big Thompson Greenway* is recommended as the primary term for the network of open lands and natural areas in the river corridor. Individual site names would then be selected for natural areas that have not yet been named. The following *Big Thompson Greenway* properties fall into this category:

1. Nicholson Tract U
2. Recreation Trail natural area from Taft to Wilson Ave.
3. RFJY/CTM Place
4. Brose

A public naming process will solicit names for these four properties, using the guidelines of the Naming Policy. Public outreach will include a press release, website campaign, online form, and solicitation at public events and locations (e.g., Cherry Pie Celebration, summer nature programs, library). Submitted names will be presented to the commission for final selection.

The following *Big Thompson Greenway* properties have already been named:

1. Wild Natural Area (named due to seller donation)
2. Morey Wildlife Reserve at Mariana Butte (named due to seller donation)
3. Ward Trust 1 (included as part of Morey)
4. Namaqua Natural Area (named after adjacent park)
5. River's Edge Natural Area (named through public process)
6. Centennial Natural Area (named after adjacent park)

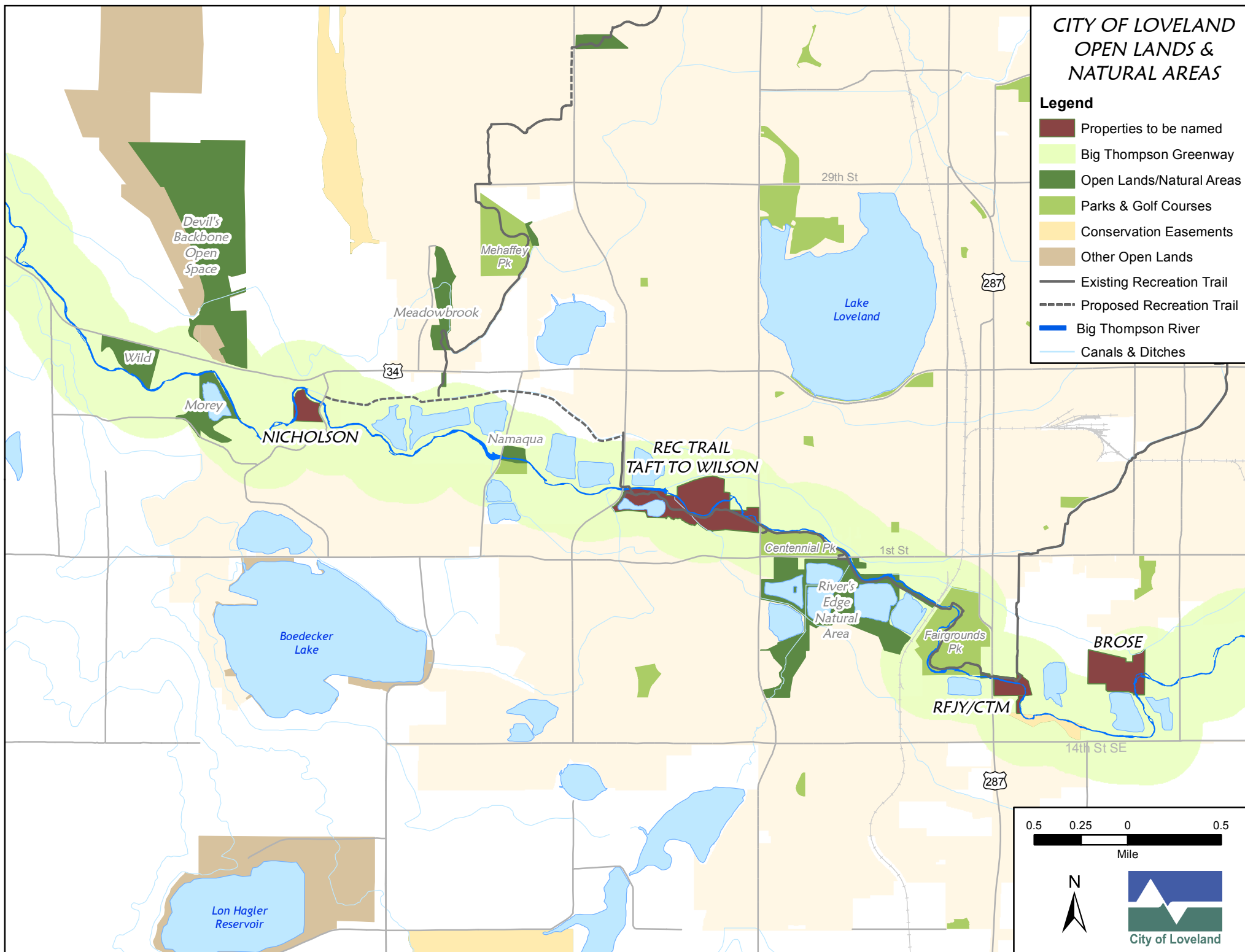
See attached map for locations of properties. The public naming process would use other identifiers for each site, such as A, B, C, with the site address for location purposes.

Commission Action Recommended: Discuss and provide feedback.

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS & NATURAL AREAS

Legend

- Properties to be named
- Big Thompson Greenway
- Open Lands/Natural Areas
- Parks & Golf Courses
- Conservation Easements
- Other Open Lands
- Existing Recreation Trail
- Proposed Recreation Trail
- Big Thompson River
- Canals & Ditches



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City of Loveland



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 4

MEETING DATE: June 10, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Projects Report

SUMMARY:

River's Edge Natural Area. The Spring Waterway Cleanup event was very successful, with approximately 15 volunteers cleaning up River's Edge, led by Bill Zawacki and Elizabeth Anderson. Staff has also increased attention to trash cleanup, particularly in the Dragonfly Pond area. Significant precipitation in May created muddy conditions and caused high water levels in ground water and ponds, temporarily affecting project progress. Project information and updates are posted online on the City's website: www.cityofloveland.org/riversedge. Development of the sign plan for the site will include a main informational kiosk near the parking lot, as well as pond and secondary entrance kiosks. Additional interpretive signs will also be developed. Larimer County Conservation Corps crews will assist with fencing projects, willow harvesting/staking, Russian olive sprout control, and pond access point/trail cleanup, as part of the GOCO flood recovery grant.

Morey Wildlife Reserve. The Spring Waterway Cleanup event was also very productive at Morey, with 30 cubic yards of debris removed from the site. Staff and crews are working on cleaning up and restoring the kiosk area for a temporary opening of the property prior to full restoration of the crusher fine trail and access road. Plans for wetland enhancement, crusher fine trails, and the parking lot on Ward Trust property are being developed.

Sunset Vista Natural Area. The structural assessment of farmstead structures will be completed in June. Planning for the trail and trailhead projects, as part of the overall master plan, will begin this summer.

Big Thompson Natural Area. This site was also included in the Spring Waterway Cleanup, with flood material and other debris removed. The fence project is complete and a new temporary site identification sign has been installed. Disturbed areas of the property were hydroseeded with a grass mix.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.