



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
SEPTEMBER 9, 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 (August 12, 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. Larimer County Partnership Request – Devil’s Backbone Trailhead/Trail (*attached*)
2. Naming of Big Thompson River Greenway Properties (*attached*)

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Open Lands Projects Report (*attached*)
4. Property Acquisition Updates (*verbal*)

Executive Session (*if necessary*)

(24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S.) For information or discussion of the purchase or acquisition of real property

Reminders:

Sept. 17 – PEEPs (Pre-School Environmental Education), 9:30 and 11am at Fairgrounds Park
“Autumn Leaves are Falling Down” <http://www.cityofloveland.org/index.aspx?page=225>

Sept. 19 – Volunteer Trail Project at Mariana Butte Trail – C.A.T.S., 8am – 2pm
Sign up online: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b45aaad2fa02-cats>

** Sept. 24 – River’s Edge Grand Re-Opening, 5:00 pm ** www.cityofloveland.org/riversedge

Commission Member Discussion Topics

Adjournment

Next Meeting Date: October 14, 2015

Special November Meeting Date: November 18, 2015, 4:00-9:00 pm

The City of Loveland is committed to providing an equal opportunity for citizens and does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, age, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender. The City will make reasonable accommodations for citizens in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, please contact the City's ADA Coordinator at bettie.greenberg@cityofloveland.org or 970-962-3319.



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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – August 12, 2015

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

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

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt, Jim Roode, Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Staff Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

Guests: Mark Sears, Fort Collins Natural Areas Department.

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

Public Comment: None.

Approval of July 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ross Livingston seconded the motion. Debbie Eley corrected the minutes to state that the meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm. The minutes were approved unanimously with this change.

City Council Liaison Report. Hugh McKean noted that Council will discuss the budget at the September 25th meeting.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Not present.

Discussion/Action Items:

1. Fort Collins Partnership Request/Property Review/Separator Area Plan. Staff visited the CR 30 property and other separator area properties with Fort Collins Natural Areas staff to look at potential acquisition, restoration and trail projects. The terms of the IGA for the 113-acre CR 30 property partnership include \$1.5M from Fort Collins Natural Areas and \$1.5M from Loveland, with \$1.1M from the Water Department for 50 units of CBT water, and \$400K from Open Lands. Fort Collins would own and manage the property and 4 shares of Louden Ditch water. Loveland would have a right of first refusal if Fort Collins sells the property, and would co-hold the conservation easement (CE) if the property is sold to a third party with a CE. If the property is sold without a CE, Loveland would receive 22% of the proceeds, in proportion to the open lands acquisition percentage. Mark Sears added that this is the first opportunity Fort Collins and Loveland have had to partner in several years. The western separator area has been successful and this property adds to the Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space. Fort Collins would like to keep the property in irrigated ag use, restoring wetlands in the northwest corner (5-10 acres), leaving about 100 acres to be farmed, with ideal soils and flood irrigation. Partners could include CSU or CSA leases. Loveland would lease the CBT water to Fort Collins unless it was needed for drought or future use. Current CBT assessments are \$50/unit plus a 5% administrative fee charged by Northern Water. *Rick Brent made a motion that OLAC recommend*

a \$400K Open Lands partnership towards the acquisition of the CR 30 property by Fort Collins. Jean Whittaker seconded the motion. The IGA would go to City Council for approval on September 1, with closing scheduled for September 30. The Open Lands budget includes \$200K annually for partnerships, so \$400K represents 2 years' worth (2014 and 2015). *The motion passed unanimously.* Staff from Loveland and Fort Collins also discussed other opportunities in the separator area, including connecting trails from Prairie Ridge (LV) to Coyote Ridge (FC), and a possible trail corridor and parking in NW Loveland. Other projects could include restoration of separator properties currently farmed to native short-grass prairie.

2. Lazy J Bar S/Raptor Ridge CE Amendment Request. Staff presented an amendment request from the owner of the Raptor Ridge property to: 1) change the location of the building envelope on Parcel 1; 2) allow for hard-surface driveway connects (recycled asphalt or road base) from public roads to the building envelopes on Parcels 1 and 2; and 3) allow for winter shelters or "loafing sheds" for livestock on Parcels 1 and 2. The Conservation Easement Amendment Policy states that amendments cannot give the owner a financial gain or harm the property's conservation values. The owner plans to hold equestrian "combined driving events" on the property and develop and implement a habitat restoration plan. Colorado Parks & Wildlife recommended that the building envelope remain outside the ¼-mile buffer (no surface occupancy) from the active golden eagle nest, and if within the ½-mile buffer (seasonal restrictions), a monitoring plan should be coordinated with CPW and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to monitor nest activity if construction occurs during the breeding season. The location of the building envelopes and the nest site would be surveyed and recorded. *Darren Pape made a motion recommending approval of the proposed conservation easement amendment with the restrictions outlined above. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

3. Hopkins/Hollander CE Amendment Request. Staff presented an amendment request from the owner of the Hopkins CE property to change the location of the building envelope due to slope and soil constraints for building and septic. The building envelopes were originally laid out to be clustered and the new location remains adjacent to the second building envelope. Staff recommends the same restrictions for construction during the golden eagle breeding season as for Lazy J Bar S CE above – development and implementation of a monitoring plan in consultation with CPW and USFWS. *Andy Hawbaker recommended approval of the CE amendment with the restrictions outlined above. Nate Thompson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Reports/Correspondence:

4. Property Acquisition Updates. Staff provided an update on property acquisitions. The city has closed on the Mineral Addition, Boedecker, and Nicholson properties. The hogback property is scheduled to close on August 20, and the adjacent parcel that provides additional access is scheduled to close on August 31. The 1st Street enclave property is scheduled to close on September 1.

Executive Session:

Bill Zawacki made a motion to suspend the regular session and convene Executive Session at 6:29 pm. Executive Session concluded and the regular session reconvened at 6:46 pm.

5. Open Lands Projects Report.

River's Edge Natural Area. The Grand Re-Opening is scheduled for Thursday, September 24 at 5:00 pm and will include fishing and environmental education activities for the public. The stone amphitheater, rock retaining walls, trails and pond access points are nearly complete. Concrete walks in the Core Area, asphalt paving of the access road, and demolition and reconstruction of the

boardwalk will begin soon. A sign plan has been developed, including new kiosks with maps, rules, fishing regulations, and interpretive information.

Morey Wildlife Reserve. The “Pre-Assessment Environmental Report” identified potential habitat for two plant species. Occurrence surveys conducted the first week of August did not locate any populations of either plant. Post-flood re-construction at Mariana Butte Golf Course will use the Morey haul road so trail and access road re-construction at Morey is planned for late fall/winter.

Sunset Vista Natural Area. Staff is working with Fort Collins and Larimer County on an IGA to design, plan and construct the Long View Corridor Trail cooperatively. Construction is planned for fall 2016. The Sunset Vista management plan will include evaluation and analysis of site resources, opportunities, constraints, and proposed uses.

Big Thompson Recreation and Conservation Plan. *A Bigger Vision for the Big T* was approved by City Council on July 21. Larimer County will take the plan to Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners for approval in August/September.

GOCO Grants. Staff worked with the Trust for Public Land to submit a GOCO Open Space grant request for \$500,000 for a 73-acre west Loveland property near Morey Wildlife Reserve. Larimer County has committed a \$250,000 partnership to the project. Awards will be announced in December. Larimer County and Fort Collins are also working with other entities, including Loveland, to submit a planning grant request for the GOCO Inspire Initiative. These awards will be announced in October.

Quick-Win Projects. Staff is planning public access on five natural areas, to include soft-surface trails and two gravel parking areas for 5-10 vehicles, as part of an effort to open more sites and provide more access to open lands. New sign kiosks similar to those developed for River's Edge will be used to identify each site and increase Open Lands visibility. Sites along the river will be named as part of the public Big Thompson Greenway Naming contest. The deadline to submit names is August 31 and proposed names will be presented to OLAC for selection in September.

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. Pre-school environmental education programs (PEEPs) continue to grow, with two sessions now offered each month. Fall sessions for 4th and 5th grade Urban Wilderness programs are being scheduled. Due to construction at River's Edge, fall programs will be held at Namaqua Park, and the program will be moved to River's Edge for spring 2016 sessions.

Conservation Easement Monitoring. Staff has completed 8 of the 16 required annual CE monitoring visits with Legacy Land Trust, Larimer County, and Fort Collins. The remaining site visits will be scheduled in the next few months. No major violations have been observed.

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Nate Thompson inquired about the status of the 2015 budget, considering the recent property closings. Staff reported that total amount spent is similar to the budgeted amount, but some properties have changed. Approximately \$5M is budgeted for 2015 including rollovers and current year funding. Darren Pape requested a spreadsheet showing the 2015 budget and properties closed. Staff can provide a summary at the October meeting, after all scheduled closings are completed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 1

MEETING DATE: September 9, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Larimer County Partnership Request – Devil's Backbone Trailhead/Trail

SUMMARY:

From Larimer County Natural Resources Department:

Background

Larimer County and the City of Loveland partnered on the purchases of the Hidden Valley and Wild properties that comprise portions of the Devil's Backbone Open Space. Larimer County is the managing entity of the properties which contain the existing 64-vehicle trailhead and the existing Wild Loop Trail that ties in with over 15 miles of trails on the entire open space. In 2014, the Devil's Backbone Open Space Management Plan was updated through a public process that included input from the City of Loveland as well as other stakeholders. The primary impetus for the plan's update was to address carrying capacity issues resulting from the over 100,000 visitors annually. Major outcomes included:

- Post and enforce no parking on Hidden Valley Drive (the main access road to the trailhead off Hwy 34) where on busy days up to 35 cars line the roadway causing issues with Hidden Valley neighborhood traffic and safety concerns.
- Reconfiguring the trailhead to increase total parking capacity to ~99 vehicle spaces (this number represents essentially putting the 35 cars that might park on the access road in a parking spot in the trailhead, increasing the total number of spots from 64 to 99).
- Developing the new 1.25-mile Hidden Valley Trail as a biking/equestrian alternative to the Wild Loop Trail and designating the Wild Loop as hiking-only.

Project Costs

Trailhead (survey, earthwork, retaining wall, plaza)	\$ 122,000
Education signs/kiosk updates/plaza benches/playscape	\$ 45,000
Web Cam at Trailhead	\$ 5,000
Construction of Hidden Valley Trail	\$ 50,000
Fencing (around trailhead and Hidden Valley parcel)	<u>\$ 20,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 242,000

Timeline

It is anticipated that the construction of both the trailhead and Hidden Valley Trail will occur late winter/early spring 2016.

Partnerships

Larimer County is submitting a grant request to Overland Mountain Bike Club (OMBC) for \$5,000 towards trail construction. We are also requesting a partnership with the City of Loveland on this project to split the project costs (minus the \$5,000 from OMBC) 50-50, for a total request of \$118,500. If the OMBC grant request is not successful, Larimer County will cover the \$5,000 in addition to its \$118,500 share.

Commission Action Recommended: Recommendation for partnering with Larimer County for the full amount requested (\$118,500).



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MEETING DATE: September 9, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Naming of Big Thompson River Greenway Properties

SUMMARY:

Four natural areas in the Big Thompson River corridor were part of a public outreach effort this summer to solicit names based on each site's unique natural features and habitat types. The naming contest was initiated in July and in response, more than 130 names were submitted, via the Open Lands website/email, Facebook, and Open City Hall.

The following Big Thompson Greenway properties were included in the public naming effort:

1. 1135 Rossum Drive (Nicholson Tract U)
2. Recreation Trail natural area from Taft to Wilson Ave.
3. 990 S. Lincoln Ave. (RFJY/CTM Place parcels)
4. 1010 S. St. Louis Ave. (Brose parcel)

Based on the Open Lands Naming Policy, the following criteria should be followed:

- A natural area name should reflect its unique ecological features, such as wildlife or vegetation species found on the site, geological features, or physical features.
- When feasible, the name should include the type of natural area, e.g., prairie, wetland, forest, upland, riparian area, lake, pond, corridor, marsh, hogback, creek, river, etc.
- Names similar to streets, subdivisions, and parks should be avoided to prevent confusion.
- Where appropriate, names may be based on historical use of a site, e.g., stagecoach use, settlements of native people, etc.
- Natural areas involving significant charitable donations may be named after the donor.
- It may be appropriate to name a natural area after a person other than a donor, if the community wishes to honor a person highly influential in the acquisition of specific natural areas or a person who has significantly strengthened the field of natural area protection.
- In certain situations, it may be appropriate to name a natural area after a subdivision.

Names meeting these criteria will be presented to the commission for review and selection.

Commission Action Recommended: Select names based on the Naming Policy.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: **3**

MEETING DATE: September 9, 2015

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Projects Report

SUMMARY:

River's Edge Natural Area. The Grand Re-Opening is scheduled for Thursday, September 24 at 5:00 pm. The public event will include an opening ceremony, guided bird and plant walks, fishing and environmental education, demonstrations and kids' activities. Construction is nearing completion and a volunteer group will help with site plantings, cleanup and final preparations on Sept. 12. The re-opening of River's Edge was featured in the September *City Update* utility bill newsletter.

Quick-Win Projects. Planning for public access on five natural areas is continuing and will be coordinated with city and county development review teams to comply with all regulations. All projects will be bid together for construction. The Mariana Butte Trail is being built by a local trail-building group (C.A.T.S.) and a volunteer work day is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 19 from 8am-2pm. Sign up online at:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b45aaad2fa02-cats>

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. Volunteer Trail Hosts have been patrolling River's Edge and entering data online into a GoogleDocs spreadsheet for staff to access. Volunteers have also been recruited to help with guided bird and plant walks at River's Edge and other natural areas this fall, as well as scheduled environmental education programs and other public events.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.