



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537  
(970) 962-2727 • FAX (970) 962-2903 • TDD (970) 962-2620

[www.cityofloveland.org](http://www.cityofloveland.org)

### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

#### REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

APRIL 12, 2017 – 5:30 PM

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

[www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands](http://www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands)

#### Notice of Meeting Posted

#### Call to Order

#### Public Comment

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes: March 8, 2017

#### City Council Liaison Report

#### [Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board](#) Liaison Report

#### 5:45-6:00 pm Discussion/Action Items:

1. Open Lands Policy Review (*link [HERE](#), copies to be provided at meeting*)
2. Boedecker North Property Review (*at meeting*)
3. Fort Collins Natural Areas Partnership Request (*at meeting*)
4. Naming of E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. Open Lands Property (*in packet*)

#### 6:00-7:00 pm Reports/Correspondence:

5. Boards and Commissions Summit Report (*verbal*)
6. Property Acquisition Updates (*verbal*)
7. Open Lands Projects Report (*in packet*)
8. Trail Updates (*in packet*)

#### Executive Session (*if necessary*)

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

#### News/Reminders/Events:

[Loveland Rec Trail to reopen early](#) – Reporter Herald article, March 30, 2017

April 15 – [Guided Nature Walk](#) at [Morey Wildlife Reserve](#) – 9:00-10:30 am

April 20 – [PEEPs Preschool Program “Backyard Buddies or Bandits?”](#) at [Namaqua Park](#) – 9:30, 11:00am

April 22 – Earth Day [Volunteer Trail Project](#) at [River’s Edge Natural Area](#) – 9 am-12 noon

April 29 – [Volunteer Trail Project](#) with CATS – meet at [Oxbow Natural Area](#) – 1:00-6:00 pm

May 6 – [Volunteer Planting Project](#) at [Morey Wildlife Reserve](#) – 9:00 am-12 noon

May 9 – [HPEC Lecture – Native Pollinators & their Habitats](#) at High Plains Env Ctr – 6:00-7:00 pm

May 13 – [High Plains Environmental Center Grand Opening and Native Plant Sale](#) – 9:00 am-3:00 pm

May 13 – Guided Bird Walks at High Plains Environmental Center (Equalizer Lake) – 7:00, 10:00 am

Submit your favorite natural areas & wildlife photos: [Parks & Recreation Photo Contest](#)

## Commission Member Discussion Topics

## Adjournment

**Next Regular Meeting:** May 10, 2017

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2017

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

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Kerri Rollins (LC OLAB Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Nathan Thompson, Leah Johnson (Interim City Council Liaison).

**Staff Present:** Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

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

**Approval of February 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes:** Jim Roode made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report.** Kerri Rollins reported on the following items: 1) The county recently launched Offero software for managing volunteer activity, event scheduling, participant registration and public outreach, the same software system to be implemented by Loveland; 2) The Spring Canyon Ranch acquisition was recently approved, including a 500-ac fee simple addition near Coyote Ridge and a 277-ac CE. A 400-acre fee simple addition to Horsetooth Mtn Open Space is part of 2,700 ac to be acquired in 5 transactions over the next 3 months, with funding from GOCO Protect Initiative and Open Space grants; 3) The Stegner Farm in Laporte is scheduled to close in April with \$600K in GOCO funding, \$400K in county funding. This partnership project includes a 50-ac CE held by CO Open Lands, contract water, and purchase of the residual land by a CSA farm through community fundraising efforts; 4) The Malchow Farm has been leased for corn, sugar beet, and alfalfa farming, and the water sharing agreement is being finalized.

#### **Discussion/Action:**

**1. 2018 Open Lands & Trails Budget Information.** Marilyn presented the for Open Lands sales tax and CEF funds, including projects, properties, management planning and development that will be submitted to the Budget Office in June for the 2018 budget process. The preliminary 5-year capital plans for Trails (Conservation Trust Funds and Trails CEF) were also presented. A City Council Study Session will be held in September, with public hearings planned for October. Expected operational costs are included on capital budgets. Soft-surface trails on open lands properties are funded by Open Lands, and the Recreation Trail System and regional trail connections are paid for using Conservation Trust Funds. The CEF funds are collected to provide capital improvements based on growth. Underpasses have not been included in these budgets as they are considered transportation infrastructure for safe passage and could possibly be included in a future city-wide tax.

#### **Reports/Correspondence:**

**2. Property Acquisition Updates.** The Ehrlich/Nomina property closed on March 1. The adverse possession lawsuit on 1.5 acres north of the river is still in mediation between the landowner and neighbor. The remainder of the property was purchased, along with the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority water right on the

river. An escrow of \$35K will be held for the future purchase of the 1.5-ac parcel pending successful mediation. Other property acquisitions still in process include two river parcels near the wastewater treatment plant, land near the Morey/Ward properties along the river, property on the north side of Boedecker Reservoir, and possibly additional property near the south end of Skyline Natural Area to address issues of trespassing, dumping, etc.

### **3. Open Lands Projects Report**

Project Outdoors. Staff continues to work with teachers, schools, partners, program providers, and the Youth Advisory Council. Public input will help prioritize projects to include in the implementation grant. GOCO recently announced that the application process will include site visits after full applications are submitted in July, to determine which projects will move forward for Board consideration. OLAC members suggested ideas for public outreach including City Update, web apps, and a passport stamp/badge program.

Invasive Phreatophyte Removal Grant. Grant funding from the CO Water Conservation Board will help pay for the removal and treatment of hundreds of Russian olive, tamarisk and Siberian elm trees from Cottonwood Run North, Old St. Louis and Oxbow natural areas beginning this spring. Larimer County Weed District will provide monitoring and follow-up treatment as in-kind match.

Kings Crossing Pollinator Garden. The local chapter of Pheasants Unlimited will plant and maintain a pollinator garden at Kings Crossing Natural Area to improve wildlife habitat.

Barn Owl Nest Boxes. The Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute ([CARRI](#)) has installed two nest boxes for barn owls. One box has a live [webcam](#) which is monitored by CARRI staff daily.

Colorado Health Foundation Grant. CHF awarded full funding (\$85,200) for the purchase and implementation of Offero (formerly NatureTracker), a database management system for participant activity registration and volunteer management (<http://demo.offero.com>). The CHF grant will also help fund additional equipment and materials for public outreach and events, as well as a pilot program for middle school students in orienteering, art in nature, and technology mapping.

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. The spring EE program includes 12 schools registered for a total of 18 days at River's Edge. Volunteers helped build and install three new Watershed activity boxes for students to create sand watersheds and learn about erosion, deposition and flooding. Two local high school students will be completing 40-hour internships in our EE program, arranged through Front Range Community College's Natural Resources Career Pathways Program.

### **4. Trail Updates**

Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua to West US 34 underpass – The contractor plans to set the old Viestenz-Smith bridge in March. The north trail connection is complete and work is progressing with the first 200' of south trail poured in mid-February. The schedule is still tracking for the trail to open this spring.

Front Range Trail – Minor plan corrections were completed in February and advertising for the bids will start in March. Bids will open in early April and construction should start in late May and be completed in late August 2017. Clearances for Utilities, ROW and final environmental review are complete.

Long View Corridor Trail – Staff completed their review of the 35% plans and the biological report. The project budget has increased \$200K due to 57<sup>th</sup> St. left turn lanes and construction administrative expenses but these costs were anticipated and appropriated in the 2017 budget. Staff anticipates final designs will be completed by the end of March. The schedule now puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in fall 2017.

Trail Segment 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Staff is preparing final concept plans for the new Namaqua underpass and the trail connection back to Wilson Avenue. Once the conceptual alignment is approved by the City, staff will meet with the landowner to discuss final easements. Funding has been appropriated in the 2017 budget for design and construction.

Grant awards – City Council approved the GOCO Connect Initiative Planning Grant agreement for \$97,000 to fund 75% of the design of the Namaqua Avenue Trail Underpass. Staff will be bringing the \$600,000 CDOT Transportation Alternative Program grant agreement to City Council for approval in March, which will provide almost half of the needed funds to construct the underpass in 2019 for a safe, grade-separated crossing.

Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – The new Wilson pedestrian bridge was placed on the abutments February 15. Progress on the remaining bank protection, concrete trail and stormwater improvements is going well and the trail is expected to re-open in late April 2017. The grand opening will be celebrated on National Trails Day on June 3 with a trail ride from the Fairgrounds Park event to the new bridge.

#### **Commission Member Discussion Topics.**

1. Rick Brent suggested that Open Lands leased for farming should practice conservation-appropriate techniques to reduce impacts to nearby water bodies.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.



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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 1**

**MEETING DATE:** April 12, 2017

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Policy Review

**SUMMARY:**

Open Lands Division Policies are reviewed annually by staff and every five years by the Open Lands Advisory Commission. The Parks & Recreation Director has requested consistent departmental formatting for all division policies. Open Lands & Trails Policies #1-19 have been updated with current terminology, consistent formatting, revision dates, and references to the 2014 *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* and Open Lands Management Types, for consistency throughout. This linked [PDF](#) is provided for OLAC review; printed copies will be available at the meeting. Upon OLAC review and approval, the policies will be signed by the Open Lands & Trails Manager and the Parks & Recreation Director and posted on the city website.

Commission Action Recommended: OLAC review and approval of Open Lands & Trails Policies #1-19.



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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

#### AGENDA ITEM: 4

**MEETING DATE:** April 12, 2017

**DESCRIPTION:** Naming of E. 1st St. Open Lands Property

#### SUMMARY:

The 79-acre property at 2538 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street was acquired in May 2016 for Open Land and Park purposes and provides a buffer to nearby urban development. The site is adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club, New Vision Charter School, Timberlane Farm, and Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Area. This area is the focal point for *Project Outdoors Loveland*, the GOCO-funded, youth-led, community-driven planning initiative to connect more youth and families to the outdoors. Upland agricultural land bordering 1<sup>st</sup> Street is cultivated for alfalfa and slopes down to a lower floodplain bench along the Big Thompson River, where a trail corridor from Old St. Louis Natural Area is planned to connect east to County Rd 9.

A naming contest will be held to solicit name suggestions from the public in accordance with the Open Lands Naming Policy. Public notice of the naming contest will include a media release with map, City Update article, Project Outdoors public meeting on May 9, Facebook posting, email outreach, and online web form. Names will be accepted until May 31 and presented at the June OLAC meeting for selection.

*Description from the 2008 Natural Areas Sites report:* The (lower bench) site was mined for sand and gravel and reclaimed to a small pond and upland grassland. Emergent wetlands are developing around the pond and along small ditches and depressions throughout the property. Wetland species including plains cottonwood, coyote willow, and common cattail are present. The diverse mix of vegetation, presence of a small pond with a diverse wetland shoreline zone, and connection to the Big Thompson River provide a variety of habitats for songbirds, mammals, and reptiles/amphibians. Wildlife found in the river corridor include coyote, white-tailed and mule deer, mink, wild turkeys, red-tailed hawks, western meadowlarks, killdeer, red-winged blackbirds, song sparrows, and chorus frogs.

Priority consideration will be given to names that reflect the site's unique ecological features, such as plants or wildlife native to Big Thompson River corridor, geological features, habitat types, or physical identifying features. Proposed names should not create confusion with existing parks, streets, or subdivisions.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.





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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

#### AGENDA ITEM: 7

MEETING DATE: April 12, 2017

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Projects Report

#### SUMMARY:

**High Plains Environmental Center.** Construction of the new building is complete and the grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, May 13 in conjunction with HPEC's annual native plant sale. Open Lands staff and volunteers will assist with this event with guided bird walks and children's activities. The City contributed \$400,000 towards construction of the new center and is collaborating with High Plains on environmental education and stewardship projects.

**Invasive Phreatophyte Removal and Cleanup.** More than 1,100 Russian olive, tamarisk and Siberian elm trees have been removed and treated at Cottonwood Run North and Old St. Louis Natural Areas, with grant funding covering 75% of the cost. Herbicide effectiveness is reduced during the active growing season, so work at Oxbow and Fairgrounds Natural Areas will resume in the fall. A group of 11 CSU student volunteers spent a morning removing some 20 cubic yards of flood debris at Cottonwood Run after the invasive trees were removed to enable access.



**Project Outdoors.** Staff is working directly with program providers and partners to identify potential programs, career pathways and physical elements to consider including in the overall plan. The Youth Advisory Council will tour the E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. property on April 11 to create a draft concept plan based on their ideas and feedback received to date. They will then reach out to their peers for additional youth input. The Winona Elementary School community is also identifying potential improvements to their campus that would encourage youth and family connections to nature. These ideas will be compiled for feedback during the school carnival on April 29. A second public open house is planned for May 9 to help prioritize projects to include in the GOCO implementation grant, including places, programs and pathways. Applications are due July 26 and the GOCO site visit is scheduled for August 29. An Environmental Education grant was submitted to New Belgium Brewing to provide matching funding for Project Outdoors by developing programming for primary elementary grades (K-2) and a new outdoor learning area at the E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. property.



**Skyline Natural Area Management Plan.** Dr. Jason LaBelle, Associate Archaeology Professor from CSU, brought a team of 8 graduate and undergraduate students to Skyline Natural Area on March 25 to perform an archaeological assessment of this open lands property. Findings will be included in the Management Plan for this property and trails will be developed to protect the resources in this area.



**Colorado Health Foundation Grant.** Staff has been working with the City Attorney's Office to finalize the contract with the software developer for the purchase and implementation of the Offero database management system for volunteer management and activity registration. The existing volunteer database will be converted to the Offero system to streamline the transition process for volunteers. CHF grant funding is also being used to update and augment environmental education and public outreach materials for new and existing programming.

**Environmental Education/Public Outreach/Volunteer Program.** Nine training sessions were offered for new and returning volunteer environmental educators for programs that are presented to school groups at River's Edge Natural Area: *Urban Wilderness*, *Wildlife Around Us*, and *Plants & Places*. Twelve new volunteers have been recruited and trained this spring and the field trip season officially begins this week, with a total of 18 program days scheduled. Training for volunteer trail hosts will take place next, on May 20 – registration available at: [Signup Genius](#). *March Moose Madness* was a big hit with the PEEPs preschoolers, who helped build a life-size moose.

Twelve enthusiastic attendees participated in a guided bird walk led by Open Lands Volunteer Denise Bretting on March 25. [26 species of birds](#) were spotted along the Big Thompson River trail from Fairgrounds Park through River's Edge Natural Area, including wood ducks, mergansers, red-tailed hawks, song sparrows, red-winged blackbirds and white pelicans. Check out the [Big Thompson River Bike Trail Birding Hotspot](#) on [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

A dedicated group of volunteers from the Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) have been busy working to connect the Mariana Butte trail system to the Big Thompson River corridor with cooperation from the adjacent Golf Course. New volunteers are welcome to join the fun on Thursday evenings or the special Saturday event on April 29 – registration available at: [Signup Genius](#).

Numerous other volunteer stewardship projects are scheduled this spring including willow harvesting and staking, seeding, planting, and trail projects. See [www.cityofloveland.org/openlands](http://www.cityofloveland.org/openlands) for details and registration links.

## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 8**

**MEETING DATE:** April 12, 2017

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

**SUMMARY:**

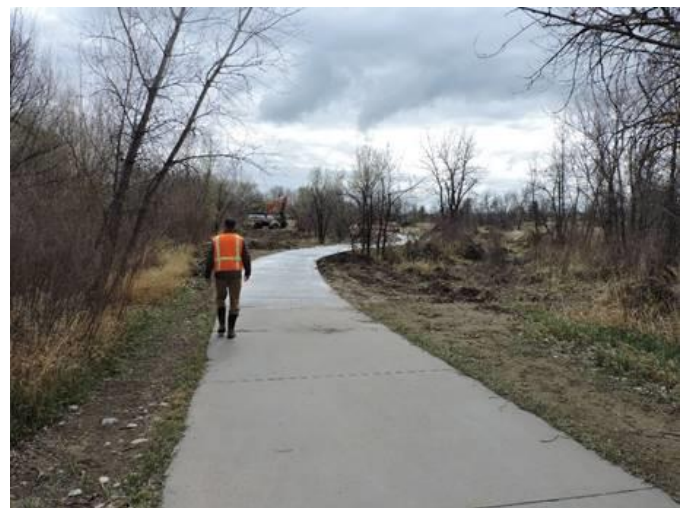
### **Recreation Trail Projects:**

- ❖ Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua Rd. to West US 34 Underpass – The old Viestenz-Smith Bridge was set over the Barnes Ditch on March 30. All but 200 feet of trail is complete; we hope to open the new trail in late April once all seeding, fencing, and signage is complete! We are a month ahead of schedule and the project is \$60K over budget due to a change in the fence design as requested by the landowner. We have made savings in other 2017 trail projects to account for the cost overrun.



*Trail Segment 10b, old Viestenz-Smith bridge being set over ditch*

- ❖ Front Range Trail – The construction bids advertised in March and a pre-bid meeting is scheduled for April 5. Bids will be opened on April 14 and construction should start in late May. Construction is scheduled for completion in late August 2017. The project is a few weeks behind schedule but should still be completed by Labor Day 2017.
- ❖ Long View Corridor Trail – The consultant completed 90% plans for CDOT FIR/FOR review and will meet with CDOT for final review in mid-April. Staff is coordinating with Xcel Energy to relocate the power lines on the south side of 57<sup>th</sup> Street and coordinating the bid schedule with the consultant. The schedule now puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in the fall of 2017.
- ❖ Trail 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Staff prepared final concept plans for the Namaqua underpass and the trail connection back to Wilson Avenue in March. The conceptual alignment is under review by City utility staff and a follow-up meeting with the landowner to discuss the final easements for this trail section is scheduled for early April. Staff hopes to secure the easements this spring and prepare the final construction plans in early summer for construction. Funding has been appropriated in the 2017 budget for design and construction.
- ❖ Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – Work has proceeded quickly on the remaining trail work and the project is wrapping up. Bank protection work for the stormwater outfall is complete and the contractor is working on the final trail connection on the west side of Taft Ave. up to the roadway. RMC also completed pipe work in Centennial Park in late March and completed trail improvements in this area. A change order was issued to relocate a small section of trail west of Taft Avenue that was undercut from the river. The riverbank in this area will be lowered to accommodate a flood plain bench and will be stabilized once the 404 permit has been issued. Staff hopes to have all the work completed by mid-April and will reopen the entire trail in late April. A formal ribbon cutting for the new bridge is scheduled for June 3 to celebrate National Trails Day.



*New trail between Taft and Wilson Ave.*