



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

May 9, 2018 – 5:30 PM

**Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third St., 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:** April 11, 2018

### City Council Liaison Report

### Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report

#### 5:45-6:30 pm – Discussion/Action Items:

1. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Project Update
2. Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan Review

#### 6:30-7:30 pm – Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Acquisition Updates
4. Open Lands Project Report
5. Trail Updates

#### Executive Session (if necessary)

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

#### Events/Reminders/News:

May 2018 City Update – Open Lands feature article – [Trails Day to-do list: Bike, hike, build](#)

May 5 – [Guided Bird Walk at High Plains Env. Ctr.](#) (8 am) & [Native Plant Sale & Habitat Fair](#) (9am-3pm)

May 12 – [Milkweed for Monarchs Volunteer Project at River's Edge Natural Area](#), 9am-12pm

May 17 – [PEEPs Preschool Program "Bees in the Trees" at Namaqua Park](#), 9:30 and 11:00 am

May 19 – [Astronomy Night with NoCo Astronomical Society at Sylvan Dale Ranch](#), 8:45-11:00pm

May 20 – [Volunteer Trail Host Training at River's Edge Natural Area](#), 1:00-5:00pm

June 2 – [National Trails Day – Volunteer Trail-building Project](#), 9am-12pm and [Guided Bird Walk](#), 8-9:30am

#### Commission Member Discussion Topics

#### Adjournment

**Next Regular Meeting:** June 13, 2018

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## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – April 11, 2018

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Loveland, CO 80537

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Mike Hinterberg, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki.

**Commissioners Absent:** Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

**Staff Present:** Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley, Steve Adams (City Manager).

**Guests:** Mayor Jacki Marsh.

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

**Approval of March 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Bill Zawacki recommended amending the minutes to remove the text “was completed” under Item 7. Gale Bernhardt made a motion to approve the minutes with this correction. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of February 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Hinterberg seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment.** None present.

**Boards and Commissions Survey:** City Manager Steve Adams was asked by City Council to visit with all boards and commissions to get direct feedback and then set up joint study sessions with council. Steve distributed a survey to commission members and requested they be returned by April 27.

**City Council Liaison Report:** Mayor Jacki Marsh reported on the following items: 1) The VA Clinic ribbon-cutting will be April 14, with the goal to “treat the whole soldier;” 2) Council is considering a policy on metro districts as a bonding mechanism for developers to cover up-front infrastructure costs, with annual fees charged to homeowners; 3) I-25 widening will start this summer, from Hwy 402 north; 4) New agricultural operations in the city include hemp growing and hydroponics; 5) The airport will soon function with a remote tower site, which could attract more commercial airlines and promote more commercial uses around the airport.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report:** As Liaison to the OLAB, Marilyn reported on several items: 1) Charlie Johnson, Land Agent, is serving as interim Open Lands Manager; 2) Sites closed for winter are opening for the season, including Hermit Park and Red Mountain Open Space; 3) An audit will be completed regarding open space, parks and trails funding for acquisitions, capital projects, and operations and maintenance. On January 1, 2019, the county open space sales tax funding percentages will change, for municipalities vs. county, and internally for the county’s acquisitions vs. operations and maintenance.

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

**1. 2019 Proposed Open Lands and Trails CORE Budgets.** Based on priority acquisitions and projects discussed last month, the CORE 2019 Operating Budgets for Open Lands and Trails were presented, including four funds: Open Lands Fund (County sales tax), Open Lands CEF, Trails

Conservation Trust Fund (Lottery) and Trails CEF. The budgets show revised 2018 expenses for rollovers for items that haven't closed out, including Long View Trail, Front Range Trail, and Prairie Ridge development. The 2019 budget are based on 2018 numbers, with small increases for personnel and transfers. Decision packets include items beyond the current base budget, including a new vehicle, an irrigation pump and river restoration work at Namaqua West in the open lands budget. Additional items in the trails budget include costs to include a trail underpass at the new Namaqua Ave bridge, a N. Wilson Ave underpass, and trail connection at Copper Ridge. Capital costs include primarily additions to existing open lands and development projects at Sunset Vista, Oxbow, Boedecker N. and Willow Bend. The budget package is due in May for City Council review.

**Reports/Correspondence:**

**2. ADA Transition Plan and Priorities.** In the spring of 2017, the Parks & Recreation Dept. hired consultants to assist in developing an ADA Transition Plan to address compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, updated in 2010. A self-evaluation and audit of existing conditions were conducted, resulting in a list of 1,800 "deficiencies" to be in compliance with the Act, about half of which are free to update, such as changing the height of dog bag dispensers. Others will be prioritized and funded systematically as funding and time permit.

**3. Parks & Recreation Department Accreditation (CAPRA).** The Parks & Recreation Department is applying for accreditation through the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Accreditation demonstrates that an agency is in compliance with national standards of excellence, further supporting the legitimacy and credibility of the agency, the work they do, and the services they provide to the community. Accreditation is an extremely comprehensive process that takes about 2 years to complete. The process is based on compliance in 10 categories related to the department's goals and responsibilities, planning, financial management, programs and services, facility and land use, public safety, risk management, and performance evaluation. The commission suggested that staff document the time spent on the application process to determine whether it is justified, as well as to maximize the benefits and determine areas of improvement.

**4. Property Acquisition Updates.** Acquisition updates were discussed during Executive Session.

**5. Open Lands Projects Report.** Staff provided the following project updates.

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- Crews are working on early season projects including fencing, signage, trail repairs, and removal of hazard trees and invasive species. Employees attended Safety Training and Orientation. The Division heavily relies on seasonal staff to help with maintenance of open lands and trails.
- Loveland hosted 30 students for the NOCO Trail Coalition Crew Leader Training, which helps teach Crew Leaders to lead volunteers on trail construction and other work projects.
- Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) will be helping with trail construction again this season, including a trail at the new Ward Boise property (Old St. Louis) on the south side of the river and a trail at the new Boedecker North property.
- A successful cleanup project on April 7 at Oxbow Natural Area cleared the way for a new nature trail to be built this spring. 20 hard-working volunteers removed about 50 cubic yards of flood debris from the river corridor.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- Loveland has been granted a \$200K Trail grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife and a \$260K Great Outdoors Colorado grant for the development of public access features at Prairie Ridge Natural Area.

- Loveland was selected for a site visit with representatives from the Colorado Health Foundation in response to an Infrastructure Grant request for a trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area. Staff and volunteers led a tour of the project area and described the plans to promote intergenerational use and programming.
- Local volunteers are helping to monitor raptor nests on Open Land sites throughout Loveland, to provide data on nest timing, activity and success, in order to make sound management decisions. Species vary from golden & bald eagles, osprey, owls, hawks and falcons. Several nests are active and adults have been tending to nests, eggs, and nestlings.
- In cooperation with volunteers from the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute, nest boxes have been placed for nesting barn owls and kestrels, to provide nesting cavities for these beneficial species. Webcams are mounted inside the boxes to help with remote monitoring of activity and nesting. High Plains Environmental Center also has a barn owl box with webcam in their barn. All three boxes have had some bird activity, but eggs have not yet been laid.
- Commission members suggested a possible eagle nest cam and local sponsorship.
- Many stewardship projects are planned on Loveland's open lands this year, including trail building, restoration and native planting projects, weed removal, and waterway clean-up projects.
- Students from R2-J Agricultural Science classes and school clubs, as well as Front Range Community College, are helping with vegetation projects on open land properties.
- Staff supported a recent Boy Scout Eagle Project at Oxbow Natural Area with the creation of an environmental interpretive sign, installation of a bench, small connector trail, and planting of native trees and shrubs.

#### Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- Spring environmental education programs are starting this month, with 20 school programs scheduled for Kindergarten through 5th grades at River's Edge and Namaqua Park. PEEPs preschool programs will move outdoors for the season this month, weather permitting.
- Monthly bird walks will be held on the first Saturday of each month at several different natural areas from March through October.
- A variety public programs will be offered throughout the year (astronomy nights, Dog Day, Critter Scene Investigations, storytelling, and Friday Fun events). All programs, events, classes, and trainings are listed on Offero (<https://offero.cityofloveland.org>).
- Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tamarisk trees were removed from a section of the Big Thompson River corridor south of Fairgrounds Park with funding from a Colorado Water Conservation Board grant.

#### **6. Trail Updates.** Staff provided the following trail updates.

- Construction of the Long View Regional Trail is proceeding with a planned completion of Summer-Fall 2018. Bridges will be placed in April. Environmental mitigation has been completed and the old structures removed.
- Muller Engineering has begun design services for a new trail pedestrian underpass at Namaqua Avenue and the Big Barnes Ditch. The Department received \$98,500 from a GOCO Planning Grant to fund this design for a planned construction in 2019-2020 also utilizing grant funding.
- National Trails Day will be celebrated on Saturday, June 2 with a theme of Bike|Hike|Build. *Bike* on a new section of the recreation trail, *hike* the Mariana Butte Trail and then join other volunteers to help *build* Loveland's newest soft-surface trail at Oxbow Natural Area. Demonstrations, giveaways, and bike parking will be available.

**Executive Session.**

At 7:04 pm, Ross Livingston made a motion to suspend the regular session and convene Executive Session. Rick Brent seconded the motion and Executive Session was convened. At 8:00 pm, Executive Session ended and the regular meeting resumed.

**Commission Member Discussion Topics.**

1. Rick Brent noted that a section of the Big Thompson River near Morey Wildlife Reserve is severely eroding along the west bank.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.



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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM:** 2

**MEETING DATE:** May 9, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan Review

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan has been developed over the past two years with significant input from staff, partners, other experts, and the public. The location of the Long View Trail connecting to Fort Collins provided the basis for the initial concept plan.

The scope of the plan was then widened to include evaluation of opportunities and constraints with respect to resource management (natural, agricultural, historic/cultural, visual) and public access to the site separate from the Long View Trail corridor. Open Lands and Park Planning staff, as well as staff from High Plains Environmental Center and the Natural Resource Conservation Service provided valuable input and information for the management plan. Public input on the initial concept plan was gathered via an open house meeting and online surveys in July 2016. The concept plan was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission in September 2017.

The management plan will be presented at the meeting and available online for public review and comment.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Review and recommendation of the Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan for approval.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

**MEETING DATE:** May 9, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

### SUMMARY:

#### Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- As the weather warms, public use of sites has increased. Flush restrooms and drinking water at River's Edge Natural Area have been turned on for the season.



- Several of Loveland's open lands benefited from high citizen and staff participation on the annual Waterway Cleanup on April 28. Dozens of volunteers helped clean up the Big Thompson River corridor, River's Edge Natural Area, and Kings Crossing Natural Area.



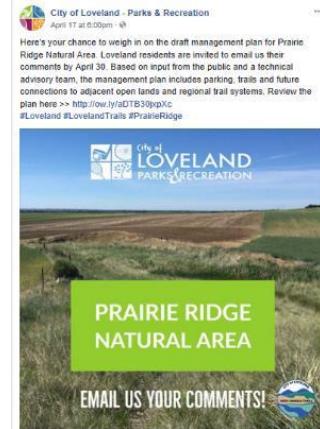
- Volunteer planting projects on April 18 and April 28 at Sunset Vista Natural Area installed 280+ native shrubs and 15 cottonwood trees, to enhance and improve the wetland corridors and wildlife habitat on the property.



#### Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- Staff is coordinating with the Loveland Municipal Court on a new Alternative Sentencing program for youth to help with open land projects this summer. This new program will not only help complete stewardship projects in the community, but also provide a sense of purpose and community ownership to these youth who have found themselves in our court system.
- The possibility of an "eagle cam" is being discussed with researchers, sponsors, and staff, to provide a live nest cam on an active eagle nest at a Loveland natural area site. Once the nesting season is over this year, sites can be investigated further.

- Staff will present the Fishing is Fun grant to Colorado Parks & Wildlife on May 22, for their consideration of funding a fishing dock and access for youth fishing at Willow Bend.
- The final draft Prairie Ridge Natural Area Management Plan was presented for public review and feedback until April 30. Comments were incorporated into the final plan, which is now available online.



## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- A new event at River's Edge Natural Area, "Fishing Your Loveland Open Lands," attracted 100 participants of all ages on April 28. Activities included learning to cast, identifying insects, good fishing stewardship, rules and regulations, and where to fish in the Loveland area. The Loveland Fishing Club helped Loveland's volunteers with this family-friendly event.



- School programs at River's Edge have been going smoothly, with 13 programs held in April and only two classes rescheduled due to weather. Teachers, students, parents and volunteers have all given good feedback to the spring programs.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 5**

**MEETING DATE:** May 9, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

### **SUMMARY:**

- Construction of the Long View Regional Trail is proceeding. Several bridges have been placed and the concrete trail is being poured, moving from Sunset Vista towards Fort Collins. In addition to the trail, 57<sup>th</sup> Street has been widened for a left-turn lane into the new parking lot. We anticipate a mid-summer trail completion and will plan a ribbon-cutting event for the grand opening.
- The contractor has resolved the issue on the North Front Range Trail with the uneven surface on Loveland's section of the trail. Trail users are happy with the correction and very excited about this new regional trail connecting Loveland and Fort Collins.
- National Trails Day will be celebrated on June 2 at Oxbow Natural Area, to feature the new paved recreation trail connection to Rossum Drive and a stewardship project to build a soft-surface trail through Oxbow East, both of which provide more opportunities to connect with Loveland's natural areas. There will be a variety of opportunities for public participation, with a theme of Bike/Hike/Build.



**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.