



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537

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

### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

June 13, 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: May 9, 2018

City Council Liaison Report

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

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

1. Property Reviews – East Big Thompson River (2 Properties)
2. Open Lands Property Naming (4 Sites)
3. Review of Maintenance Reserve Policy

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

4. Environmental Education and Community Outreach Update – Michele Van Hare
5. Property Acquisition Updates
6. Open Lands Project Report
7. 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:**

["Hike, bike and build" – Reporter-Herald, May 31, 2018](#)

June 16 – [Dog Day of Summer Canine Event at River's Edge Natural Area](#), 6:00-8:00 pm

June 21 – [PEEPs Preschool Program "Those Awesome Osprey" at Namaqua Park](#), 9:30 and 11:00 am

June 23 – [Astronomy Night with NoCo Astronomical Society at Morey/Ward Trust](#), 9:00-11:00 pm

June 27 – [Wednesday Weed Warriors - Volunteer Stewardship Project](#), 9:00 am-12:00 pm

July 7 – [Guided Bird Walk](#), 8:00-9:30 am

**Commission Member Discussion Topics**

**Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting: July 11, 2018**

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2018

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

**Commissioners Present:** Mike Hinterberg, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Bill Zawacki.

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

**Guests:** Mayor Jacki Marsh, Councilor Kathi Wright.

**The public meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.**

**Approval of April 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Hinterberg seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment.** Nan Daniels and Curt Cole, north Loveland residents, were in attendance.

**City Council Liaison Report:** Marilyn Hilgenberg reported that Council continues to examine the Capital Expansion Fee (CEF) funding mechanism, to get a complete picture of how Loveland compares to other communities with respect to affordability and livability. A study session will be planned with Council for the Open Lands Advisory Commission to provide an update on tangible results of CEF funding and future plans. Mayor Jacki Marsh reported on the following items: 1) Council will have a discussion with the Thompson School District, Police and Emergency Services regarding school safety; 2) Aims Community College is moving its Aviation Program to the Regional Airport; 3) Bill Reed Middle School celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Councilor Kathi Wright reported that the Youth Advisory Commission is actively involved in efforts to boost ridership in the city's mass transit system. Council Liaison Don Overcash reported that the increased presence of police officers on bike trails and open lands will improve safety and police awareness.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report:** Marilyn reported on several items: 1) Larimer County is working on its capital plan and will perform an audit on the Open Lands Sales Tax funds, since 2018 is the final year of the original sales tax percentages and allocations. Loveland's share will be reduced beginning in 2019, which helps justify the continuation of the Open Lands CEF; 2) the county is also looking into charging an entrance fee at Devil's Backbone Open Space. As a partial owner, Loveland would not be in favor of a fee at the only foothills trail available to this community. Staff will check the IGAs for these acquisitions and follow up with the county.

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

**1. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Project Update.** Kelly Smith, Project Manager for the reconstruction project, provided an update on Phase II of the project. Phase II includes improvements to historic structures, environmental education facilities, interpretive signage, expanded parking capacity, ADA walkway, and an overlook to the river. The construction contract will go before Council on May 15. If approved, construction would begin in June and be completed in September. Art in Public Places funding for this project will be combined with other AIPP funding for a plan of recreating a flood

memorial in an artistic way. Interpretive signage will include information about the history of water and power facilities in the canyon, flooding, wildlife and fisheries, native vegetation, history of the Louis Papa cabin and the CCC-era structures. The State Historic Preservation Commission must review and approve improvements to historic structures, which will be implemented in fall-winter 2019. An IGA with Larimer County Natural Resources will provide for maintenance and patrol of the park.

**2. Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan Review.** The draft management plan for Sunset Vista Natural Area has been developed over the past several years with input from partners, stakeholders, resource specialists and the public. The property is the site of the Long View Trail connecting Loveland and Fort Collins, which provided the basis for the management plan. Documentation of existing conditions included vegetation resource inventories, historical assessments, wildlife monitoring, and wetland delineation. The management plan includes the paved Long View Trail and Loveland Recreation Trail sections, a new parking area/trailhead, a soft-surface trail through restored short-grass prairie and wetlands south of the Loudon Ditch, continued agricultural use of areas north of the ditch, and historical interpretation in the former farmstead area. Darren Pape made a motion to recommend approval of the Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan. Jim Roode seconded the motion. Ross Livingston noted that minimizing rattlesnake encounters would be ideal. The plan calls for on-trail access only, and trail margins will be mowed to increase visibility and safety. The motion passed unanimously. The plan will be made available online for public comment.

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

**3. Property Acquisition Updates.** Staff has been working with Larimer County on a transfer of two county-owned parcels at the south end of Madison Ave. to provide an off-street trail connection from the Mirasol/Winona neighborhood to Old St. Louis Natural Area and the Big Thompson River corridor. Crossing of the Farmers Ditch will also be required for this project. Three possible property additions to Skyline Natural Area are being resolved, along with a trail easement near Morning Drive to provide public access to Skyline. Two properties with potential trail components are being discussed in the Namaqua Rd. area, and three properties in the east Big Thompson River corridor are still under negotiation. A crossing of the Buckingham Ditch has been requested and a trail is under development at the north Boedecker property. The equipment shed at Oxbow East will be maintained, but the small depot building will be demolished due to its condition and location in the floodway. A trail easement from Denver Ave. east to Boyd Lake and two park acquisitions are also being negotiated.

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

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

- Flush restrooms and drinking water at River's Edge Natural Area have been turned on for the season. Public use has noticeably increased with the warm weather.
- At 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

- The Loveland Municipal Court is assigning youth to help with open lands projects this summer through a new Alternative Sentencing program, to help complete stewardship projects and provide a sense of purpose and community ownership to these youth.

- The possibility of an “eagle cam” is being discussed with researchers, sponsors, and staff, to provide a live nest cam on an active raptor nest at a Loveland natural area site.
- 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 available online.

#### Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- A new event at River's Edge, “Fishing Your Loveland Open Lands,” attracted 100 participants of all ages on April 28. Activities included learning to cast, identifying insects, 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 excellent feedback to the spring programs.

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

- Recent Long View Trail construction includes bridges being placed and concrete trail being poured. 57<sup>th</sup> Street has been widened for a left-turn lane into the new parking lot.
- The contractor has resolved the issue on the North Front Range Trail with the uneven surface on Loveland’s section of the trail.
- 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.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

**/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair**



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

### **AGENDA ITEM: 2**

**MEETING DATE:** June 13, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Property Naming (4 Sites)

### **SUMMARY:**

Open Lands properties are named in accordance with the Open Lands Naming Policy. Several properties have been acquired that need to be officially named through the Naming Policy process. The four sites being considered for naming are currently referred to as:

1. Ryans Gulch II – 185-acre parcel in SW Loveland along Ryans Gulch (2400 W CR 16)
2. Namaqua West – 58-acre site across from Namaqua Park and Natural Area (731 N. Namaqua Ave.)
3. Ward Boise – 13-acre addition to Old St. Louis Natural Area (1321 S. Boise Ave.)
4. Boedecker Parkside – 17-acre site adjacent to Boedecker Reservoir on W. 1<sup>st</sup> St.

The Open Lands Naming Policy includes three levels of priority criteria. *Priority 1* criteria apply to donations or contiguous areas. Donors may select a name for sites where a significant charitable donation was made. Contiguous areas will be known by the name of the existing adjacent natural area.

*Priority 2* criteria include names that reflect a site's unique ecological or geological features, habitat types, or historical references. Proposed names should not create confusion with existing parks, streets, or subdivisions.

*Priority 3* criteria include naming after persons other than donors, or naming after subdivisions. These criteria are considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Background Information**

The four properties have been acquired over the past two years with Open Lands and CEF funding and each falls under a different priority level.

**Ryans Gulch II:** Purchased in 2016, this site is in southwest Loveland, adjacent to three privately-owned conservation easements held or co-held by the City of Loveland. The property is located along the southeast shoreline of Southside Reservoir and contains upland prairie habitat, two irrigation ditches (Southside and Lake Ditch), associated riparian vegetation, and an active golden eagle nest. The south Front Range Trail is planned to traverse the property,

connecting the trail systems of Loveland and Berthoud. The large upland site provides grazing land for elk and deer, and food and cover for small and medium size mammals. Vegetated ditch corridors provide a means for wildlife movement and cover, as well as foraging and nesting habitat for raptors and songbirds. Names for this site will be solicited from the public.

Namaqua West: Acquired in early 2017, this west Loveland property contains Big Thompson River frontage and was the original townsite for the city of Loveland and homestead of Mariano Medina. The riparian habitat and river channel were damaged in the 2013 flood but are in the process of being restored with the help of grant funding. The upland portion of the property is leased for agricultural purposes. The historical significance of this site lends itself to a name with reference to the Medina homestead and river crossing. The name *Medina's Crossing* is recommended.

Ward Boise: Acquired in June 2017 and adjacent to Old St. Louis Natural Area, this site is bisected by the Big Thompson River. The northern portion of the property will be the location of the future east Big Thompson Trail and will be known (and managed) as part of Old St. Louis. The portion of the property south of the river will have a separate entrance and soft-surface trail system and as such, a distinct name is recommended to avoid confusion. The site offers healthy riparian habitat, including mature cottonwoods and other trees, native shrub canopy and a diverse herbaceous understory, to support a variety of wildlife species. The river contains several large point bars that support upland and wetland vegetation, important waterfowl resting habitat and potential breeding areas. The river itself provides very good aquatic habitat for a healthy fish population. Names for this site will be solicited from the public.

Boedecker Parkside: Acquired in November 2017, this parcel is on the north side of Boedecker Reservoir and State Wildlife Area. A trail corridor will be developed along the Buckingham Ditch for access from the wildlife area and W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street to provide a neighborhood natural area in west Loveland. The ditch and reservoir support large cottonwood trees and a healthy shrub understory, benefiting raptors, songbirds, and a variety of mammals that use the area for foraging, nesting, cover, and as a movement corridor to and from the lake. Names for this site will be solicited from the public.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Recommend approval of naming process for four identified Open Land properties.



## **OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM:**           **3**

**MEETING DATE:**       June 13, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:**       Review of Maintenance Reserve Policy

**STAFF PRESENTER:**   Marilyn Hilgenberg

### **SUMMARY:**

### **Review of Open Lands Maintenance Reserve Policy**

Since 2001, the Parks and Recreation Department has designated a portion of its cash from Loveland's share of the Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax in a designated cash account for "Maintenance/Restoration" of open lands in Loveland. This policy was incorporated to assure that Loveland would have adequate funds to maintain its Open Lands into the future. The tax was originally scheduled to sunset in 2018 but in November of 2014, Larimer County citizens approved the extension of the Larimer County Open Space Tax until 2043. This extension ensures that Loveland has a dedicated funding source for "maintenance/restoration" and can reduce the amount of its Designated Cash Reserve. Therefore, we are requesting that the Finance Department adjust the designated cash on the Innoprise System to allow Loveland to utilize available funds for acquisitions while still having adequate funds to accommodate emergencies.

#### Current Policy: (Loveland Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Policy B18)

B18 REVISED 5/2015.   *Loveland will set aside a minimum of \$3,000,000 in the Open Lands Fund as an Emergency/Liability reserve. These funds will be held in a designated reserve account and would only be utilized in an emergency situation, to assure the long-term sustainability of the open lands properties.*

#### Proposed Revised Policy:

*B18 Recommended for 2019 Budget.   Loveland will set aside a minimum of \$1,200,000 in the Open Lands Fund as an Emergency/Liability reserve. These funds will be held in a designated reserve account and would only be utilized in an emergency situation, to assure the long-term sustainability of the open lands properties.*

### **COMMISSION ACTION**

**RECOMMENDED:** Approval of Reserve Policy Change





## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

**MEETING DATE:** June 13, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

### **SUMMARY:**

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

- ❖ The Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan is available online for citizen feedback. The Plan incorporates initial citizen input on concept plans, resource expertise from Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Larimer County, Fort Collins, Natural Resources Conservation Service, High Plains Environmental Center, the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission, and City staff.
- ❖ Wet weather in late spring has stimulated abundant growth of natural vegetation, requiring intensive staff time to mow, trim branches, and perform weed management. Sites have all greened up and are very busy with activity.



#### **Partnerships, Planning and Grants**

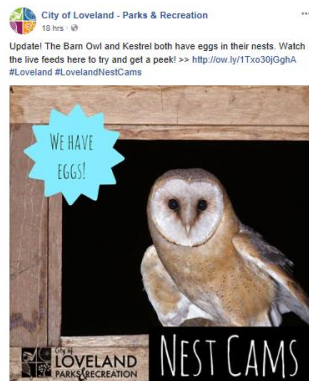


- ❖ Governor Hickenlooper signed HB18-1400 on May 18, with Sunset Vista Natural Area and the Long View Regional Trail as a backdrop. Trails and regional connectivity are high priorities for the governor's office and local communities and popular amenities with Colorado citizens statewide. The governor talked with those present about regional trails and challenges.
- ❖ Utilizing grant funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Loveland was able to complete an additional \$7,000 worth of Invasive Species removal along the Big Thompson River through Fairgrounds Park. Removal of nearly 500 Russian olives in this stretch will allow the native vegetation to flourish, and improve safety and visibility along the trail.



- ❖ As part of the annual Governors Art Show Event, this year River's Edge Natural Area was a host mobile location for plein air painters to demonstrate their work in action on Saturday, June 2.

## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program



- ❖ The Open Lands and Trails Division is working with the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute in monitoring a barn owl and a kestrel box on the City's open land property. Webcams in the nest boxes allow researchers and the public to observe the birds during the nesting season. Both nests are active and eggs are beginning to hatch. The nestcams have become very popular with citizens. The link to watch these cams is <http://ow.ly/1Txo30jGghA>.
- ❖ On May 12, more than 20 members of the community participated in a stewardship project at River's Edge Natural Area, planting thousands of native milkweed seeds to encourage pollinator species, including the Monarch Butterfly. Staff worked with Bob Trout from the Loveland Initiative for Monarch Butterflies to promote and coordinate the project.
- ❖ Volunteer trail host training on May 20 recruited 8 new trail hosts and provided comprehensive information and authentic training situations with visitors at River's Edge Natural Area. Trail hosts actively help monitor and report on public use of open lands and trails.
- ❖ Spring environmental education programs wrapped up the season on May 23, hosting programs at River's Edge for 25 school groups, from kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Volunteer educators help make these programs possible, donating hundreds of hours of their time and talents.
- ❖ A special Astronomy Night program was held on May 25, in partnership with Sylvan Dale Ranch and the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Public response was overwhelming and space was limited to the first 50 to register, due to limitations on space and available telescopes from NoCoAstro volunteers.
- ❖ There are many more special events and volunteer stewardship projects planned on Loveland's open lands for this summer. Keep an eye on the Offero calendar at: <https://offero.cityofloveland.org>.



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM: 7**

**MEETING DATE:** June 13, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

### **SUMMARY:**

- ❖ Open Lands & Trails staff hosted a very successful National Trails Day event at Oxbow Natural Area, featuring the new Rossum Drive trail connection, a stewardship project to build a new soft-surface trail through Oxbow East, a guided bird walk at Morey Wildlife Reserve, and a public expo event with demos on bike safety, trail etiquette, Leave-No-Trace, and wildlife activities. More than 50 volunteers and staff helped with the trail-building project, 18 participants attended the bird walk, and many neighbors and trail users stopped by the expo and signed up for Offero to be eligible for door prizes.
- ❖ Construction of the Long View Regional Trail is proceeding, with bridge work and concrete paving, widening of 57<sup>th</sup> Street, and planting of hundreds of native trees, shrubs, and wetland plants by volunteers and crews. We anticipate a mid-summer trail completion.
- ❖ Crews recently completed the replacement of concrete on two large stretches of trail that were cracked and posed safety concerns to trail users at Boise and Wilson Avenues. In addition, raised concrete cracks are systematically being addressed throughout the Recreation Trail System to remove trip hazards and comply with infrastructure standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ❖ Loveland is working with the developer of the Parkside residential area to cut in a trail corridor for Loveland's planned trail along the north shore of Boedecker Reservoir on property recently purchased for Open Land purposes.
- ❖ A segment of Loveland's Recreation Trail System successfully hosted the Loveland McKee Classic Bike Race on May 20<sup>th</sup>.



**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.