



**LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION – SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

**November 14, 2018**

**5:00 PM Regional Open Space Boards Meeting**

**6:30 PM Loveland Open Lands Advisory Commission Meeting**

**Larimer County Courthouse, Carter/Boyd Lake Rooms**

**200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, CO 80521**

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

**Notice of Meeting Posted**

**Call to Order**

**Public Comment**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** October 10, 2018

**City Council Liaison Report**

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

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

1. Larimer County Fee Study Update

**6:45-7:30 pm – Reports/Correspondence:**

2. Big Thompson River Restoration Project Updates

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:**

November 15 – [PEEPs Preschool Program](#) “Yip, Yap & Yowl with Clan Coyote” at River’s Edge, 9:30 & 11:00 am

November 16 – [Art in Nature Sketch Hike](#) at River’s Edge Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

November 23 – [#OptOutside Guided Hikes](#) at Mariana Butte, 8:00 and 10:00 am

December 3 – [Open Lands & Trails Volunteer Recognition Dinner](#) at Chilson Senior Center, 6:00-7:30 pm

All events and programs are posted on Offero (<https://offero.cityofloveland.org>)

**Commission Member Discussion Topics**

**Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting:** December 12, 2018

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## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2018

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

**Commissioners Present:** Andy Hawbaker, Mike Hinterberg, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Gale Bernhardt (via phone), Rick Brent (via phone), Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** None.

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

**Guests:** Nan Daniels, Curt Cole, members of the northern chapter of Colorado Native Plant Society.

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

**Approval of September 12, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment.** None.

**City Council Liaison Report:** Don Overcash reported that: 1) The Council budget process is moving and the budget is expected to be approved. A budget subcommittee will be formed for the 2020 budget. 2) A Council decision on community broadband is expected on October 23. 3) The City Council retreat planned for the end of January 2019 will look at the city's strategic plan and a financial contingency plan. 4) Proposed fracking for oil and gas on county land meets the current easement requirements and the applicant will apply for a site pad following geologic studies. The COGCC denied Loveland's extension request, so a neutral response was filed.

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

**1. Discussion of Potential Devil's Backbone Open Space Fee Structure.** Gary Buffington, Director of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, presented information about a proposed fee increase at parks and open lands based on a fee study prepared by Harvey Economics. Gary distributed a public engagement schedule for the process of reviewing the proposed fee schedule, including a committee of OLAC and OLAB members and public open house meetings. In 2019, allocation of the county's share of the Open Space Sales Tax will change to 50% towards long-term management and development, 35% to acquisition and restoration, and 15% flexible. The county's overall share of the overall tax revenues will increase from 42% to 50%. Under this scenario, the funds would not be sufficient to fund long-term management until the end of the current sales tax period, in 2043. Visitation to county parks and open lands have seen significant increases in the past two years, with corresponding increases in degradation of resources, medical emergencies, vandalism, and maintenance and enforcement needs to maintain the county's identified "B" level of service. Funds collected at Devil's Backbone would be required to be used at that site, according to the agreement with Loveland for Larimer County to manage the property. Staff and commission members noted that sales tax funding, including the additional percentage the county will receive beginning in 2019 – approximately \$500K annually, was not considered as a source of funding for Devil's Backbone.

management in the fee study. Seniors and other fixed- and low-income populations that would be impacted by proposed fees should also be considered, possibly with a tiered system. The overall system needs to be addressed, considering which county open lands are free and which require a fee. Charging a fee at Devil's Backbone could result in additional visitation at other nearby sites, impacting Loveland open lands and natural areas. Alternatives need to be explored more extensively. The numbers provided as justification for a potential user fee at Devil's Backbone are not clear. Staff will compile commissioner's comments prior to the joint subcommittee meeting. Transparency and financial accountability would be beneficial to the process.

**2. Open Lands and Trails Financial Update.** Revenues and expenses for all open lands and trails funds and capital expansion fees were provided for 2018 to date, including operating expenses and capital expenditures/acquisitions. Major projects included development of Sunset Vista/Long View Trail, Oxbow/Rossum/Namaqua/Wilson Trail, planning for Prairie Ridge, Willow Bend, Old St. Louis, Boedecker Bluff, Medina's Crossing, Skyline, and Big T East properties and trails. Other projects in planning include Copper Ridge trail connection, Namaqua Bridge and underpass, and Centerra Trail.

**Reports/Correspondence:**

**3. Property Updates.** The East Big T properties are still on schedule to close in January. Due diligence for road access easements and trails are being worked out. Mineral rights would not be acquired with the Flying W property, but the property is in the floodway and restrictions with respect to public trails would be in place.

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

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- Open Lands and Trails staff will be participating in the Highway 402 Corridor Master Plan process to ensure that planned trails and open land areas are included in the long-term visions in this area of town. Commission members were encouraged to participate in the public survey.
- A game camera helps staff understand wildlife movement patterns and effectiveness of conservation areas.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- The Division participated in High Plain Environmental Center's fall habitat fair and supported their recent designation by the National Wildlife Federation on September 20.
- The grand opening of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park was held on September 28. About 50 attendees were present, including commission and council members, consultants, contractors, partners, and staff, to celebrate the restoration project. Visitors appreciate the new design and amenities the park offers.
- The October Astronomy Night event is planned in partnership with Sylvan Dale Ranch, to take advantage of dark skies west of town. Volunteers from Northern Colorado Astronomical Society bring telescopes and enthusiastically provide information about galaxies, nebulae, clusters and planets visible in the night sky.
- A site visit with Larimer County and the CO Native Plant Society is planned for the small grant request for pollinator garden plots at River's Edge.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- Programs for school groups and the public continue to take advantage of good fall weather.
- Volunteers stay busy helping with trail-building, trail maintenance, clean-ups, bird walks, educational programs, and administrative work.

- Training for volunteer environmental educators and trail hosts has resulted in recruitment of several new active volunteers, helping to be the hearts and hands, and eyes and ears of the Open Lands program.

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

The IGA with Larimer County has been signed to include a pedestrian trail underpass with the County's bridge replacement project on Namaqua Avenue and the Big Thompson River. The City of Loveland will pay for the extra cost of the underpass utilizing 2019 trail funding.

The new Long View Regional Trail at Sunset Vista Natural Area is getting a great amount of use by the public. A trail counter has been installed to allow the City to have a good understanding of the volume of use the trail is receiving. Trail users continue to voice frustration that there is a missing trail link from Sunset Vista east to the existing recreation trail and that there are no bike lanes on 57th Street. Parks and Recreation is working with Public Works to find solutions to the missing trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes in this area of town. This missing trail linkage is the number one priority for Loveland's trail program.

The City's Recreation Trail and all connections on Wilson Avenue are closed to accommodate the construction of the Wilson Avenue Flood Mitigation Project. At the completion of the project, citizens will have better trail connections at this location, as well as additional parking.

Public Works and Parks & Recreation are working together on connectivity issues throughout town and a "Safe Routes" grant to address missing sidewalks that will improve safety for the community.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

**/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair**



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 2**

**MEETING DATE:** November 14, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Big Thompson River Restoration Project Updates

### **SUMMARY:**

Contractors have been selected for the Big Thompson River projects that the City is collaborating with the Big Thompson River Coalition on to make significant capital/grant improvements to the river channel and restore two reaches of the Big Thompson River upstream from Wilson Avenue that run through City open lands and private properties.

The projects will have significant positive impacts on the Big Thompson River corridor including work on Namaqua Park and Natural Area, Medina's Crossing, Oxbow and Wild Natural Areas. The projects are being funded by grant funding and address several implementation projects identified in the Big Thompson River Master Plan. In addition, the Coalition and City have applied for supplemental restoration funding from Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and Northern Water. Staff will provide an update at the meeting on projects taking place on city properties.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

**MEETING DATE:** November 14, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

### **SUMMARY:**

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

- ❖ Annual monitoring of 14 conservation easements, where the City of Loveland holds or co-holds a conservation easement or owns fee simple property with an easement held by another entity, have been completed for 2018 to evaluate that conservation values are continuing to be protected.
- ❖ As we come to the end of the busy maintenance season, we are only utilizing our full-time staff and all part-time staff have been laid off for the season.
- ❖ Four Open Lands and Trails employees (Jonathan Huey, Michele Van Hare, Bree Knouse and Thomas Shields) were recognized by the City as “Shining Stars” at the annual Employee Recognition Event as a result of their excellent service.



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



- ❖ The recently-donated Open Lands & Trails van has been wrapped with eye-catching graphics to identify and promote the Open Lands & Trails Program. The interior will also be fitted with racks and shelving to maximize available space to hold and organize materials for public outreach and environmental education programs and events.

## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- ❖ Michele Van Hare, Environmental Education Coordinator, has completed all requirements and earned certification as a “Certified Interpretive Guide Trainer” by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). This allows Michele to “train the environmental education trainers” which is significant to Loveland in sustaining and growing our environmental programs.
- ❖ It was a successful month of programming and activities including a guided bird walk, Critter Scene Investigation, pre-school and grade school programs, astronomy night, “art in nature” sketch hike, and a popular activity booth at the Museum’s Halloween Festival.



- ❖ The Division utilizes volunteers to accomplish the majority of our stewardship projects on open lands and benefits from utilizing volunteers whenever possible. The number of volunteer hours donated in 2018 for all programs, events, activities and projects far surpasses previous years’ totals. A full report will be provided with the Annual Report in early 2019.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 5**

**MEETING DATE:** November 14, 2018

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

### **SUMMARY:**

- ❖ The unpaved section of the Recreation Trail between Namaqua and Wilson Ave. will be improved with grading to level the surface and application of Class 6 gravel material to provide a consistent base with a 9 ft. wide tread. A contract has been signed with a local construction company to install the improvements.
- ❖ Volunteers from the Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) and other local organizations have helped improve and build new trails at several sites planned to open to the public, including Boedecker Bluff, Boise Bend and Willow Bend.



- ❖ The Northern Colorado Bike and Ped. Collaborative organized a “leaders” bike ride in October to give local councils, dignitaries, commissions, etc. an opportunity to ride paved trails from Fort Collins to Loveland to experience the trail, learn about design challenges, funding, programming and ask questions. About 40 leaders enjoyed the ride including the mayor, advisory commission members and staff from Loveland.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.