



## 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 – REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

March 13, 2019 – 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: February 13, 2019

City Council Liaison Report

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

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

1. Connect Loveland – Transportation Plan Updates (*Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan 2012, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan 2012, Transit Master Plan 2009*)
2. Drone Policy Discussion
3. Open Lands & Trails 2020 Capital Projects Budgeting

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

4. Property Acquisition Updates
5. Open Lands Project Report
6. 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:**

March 25, 26, 27 – [Environmental Education Volunteer Training](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, times vary

March 28 – PEEPs "[Robin Sings in Spring](#)" at Loveland Library, 9:30 and 11:00 am

March 29 – [Art in Nature Sketch Walk](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

April 6 – [Guided Bird Walk](#) at Morey Wildlife Reserve, 8:00-9:30 am

April 7 – [Astronomy Night](#) with NoCo Astronomical Society at Ward Trust, 8:00-10:00 pm

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

**Commission Member Discussion Topics**

**Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting:** April 10, 2019

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – February 13, 2019

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

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Mike Hinterberg, Scott James, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Cindy Ticer (alternate), Don Overcash (City Council Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** None.

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

**Guests:** Dan Racz; Jim and Cheryl Siegrist; Nan Daniels and Curt Cole, Colorado Native Plant Society; Diane Kristoff, Vice President of Foothills Audubon.

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

**Approval of January 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes.** Jean Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Hinterberg seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment.** Diane Kristoff commented that at its January meeting, all members of Foothills Audubon voted in favor of Open Lands activities. Some concerns that have been voiced include: 1) interruption of nesting raptor activity with the placement of cones in nests during construction projects; 2) trails and public access near nesting raptor sites; 3) protection of sensitive resources.

**City Council Liaison Report:** City Manager Steve Adams will attend an upcoming meeting to discuss the role of boards and commissions, attendance, and results from the commission member survey.

**OLAB Liaison Report:** Marilyn Hilgenberg reported that: 1) a new policy prohibiting e-bikes on county-managed soft-surface trails is still being discussed; 2) the county's funding shortfall for Devil's Backbone maintenance still needs to be identified and options explored for partnership possibilities.

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

**1. 2019 Open Lands Advisory Commission Goals.** The commission discussed possible goals to provide a framework for 2019 for the commission's priorities. Identified goals included:

1. Development of additional policies to guide operations and management practices.
2. Development of management plan for Skyline Natural Area and make significant progress on the completion of the Big Thompson River Corridor Management and Stewardship Plans.
3. Evaluate and prioritize potential open land acquisitions.
4. Participate in public outreach opportunities for support on the viability of a Sales Tax Initiative that could help fund pedestrian underpasses throughout town on the recreation trail.
5. Conserve priority Open Lands to provide connectivity to existing open lands, address fragmentation of wildlife habitat, and balance resource protection and public access on city open lands.
6. Maximize and measure public benefit from the open space sales tax, capital expansion fees and general funds, as well as grant and partnership funding sources. Measure by providing details on the

percentage of funding from each source for each project.

7. Continue to increase public outreach to learn about citizens' thoughts and interests, offer environmental education programming, and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities.
8.
  - a. Active participation in City of Loveland's update of the Transportation Plan including the Bike and Pedestrian Plan.
  - b. Close existing trail gaps and continue to expand the trail network to meet citizens' desires to provide connectivity throughout the community.

**2. Re-Authorization of Land and Water Conservation Fund.** A critical package of public lands legislation that includes a permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was recently approved by the US Senate, after being in limbo since September when funding for the program ended. The bill will move to the US House next. LWCF provides one of America's most important conservation programs for the protection of parks, forests, watersheds and open spaces. Loveland has benefitted through the years from this funding including projects at North Lake Park, the Recreation Trail and more than \$260,000 in funding for Prairie Ridge Natural Area improvements.

**3. Open Lands and Trails Policies.** The Parks & Recreation Department is going through a national certification process (CAPRA) which includes review of existing department policies. Certain department rules and regulations, such as park hours, are determined and enforced by ordinance set by City Council. Proposed additional policies will be presented to the commission monthly for review, including for example, the use of drones, paragliders, e-bikes, and scooters; commercial operations; disposition of property; prairie dog management and other environmental studies; and a management plan update trigger policy.

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

**4. 2018 Open Lands & Trails Annual Report.** The annual report of 2018 accomplishments by the division was distributed and will be available online.

**5. Property Acquisition Updates.** Brian reported that the Wagner and Bonser properties in the east Big Thompson River corridor closed as planned in January. 2018 acquisitions included the transfer of two Larimer County inholding parcels at Old St. Louis Natural Area, enabling neighborhood access via a new trail connection from Madison Ave. to the river corridor. Several interested landowners have approached the city for potential 2019 acquisitions.

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

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

- The Big Thompson Watershed Coalition's Rossum to Wilson river restoration project is making excellent progress, generally working from west to east creating new overflow channels, bank stabilization, and reconnected floodplains. The Rist-Goss Ditch diversion structure across the river has been demolished and removed, allowing for better fish passage and natural river flows. The new diversion point will be located within 500' upstream and will be less of a barrier. The Namaqua Bridge structure has also been removed by the Larimer County project and the two contractors are coordinating on dewatering and diversion for both projects in the river.
- Permits have been secured for the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition's Reach 28 river restoration project at Wild Natural Area and adjacent river properties. The project is expected to begin in the next few weeks and has received an extension until December 2019.

## Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- The Colorado Native Plant Society was awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Larimer County Small Grants program to restore and enhance areas of River's Edge Natural Area with native plants using all volunteer efforts. A soil science class from CSU will assist with soil coring and testing as a learning experience. Volunteer planting projects will begin this spring and opportunities for volunteers to assist with watering, monitoring, and maintenance will continue through fall.

## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- Michele Van Hare, Environmental Education Coordinator, will be teaching Interpretive Guide Training in February for the National Association for Interpretation. The training allows volunteers and professionals to become an interpretive guide (those who give nature talks and walks, teach environmental education courses, or give talks at open spaces).
- Raptor nesting season is active again, and volunteers have begun monitoring known nests and searching for new activity throughout open lands. Nest cams are also active and barn owls can be seen roosting in the nest box during the day and perching on the box to hunt at night. Watch live on our [Nest Cams](#) web page.
- Volunteers play a significant role in Loveland's ability to provide environmental programming and complete Open Lands & Trails stewardship projects, donating nearly 6,000 hours of volunteer time in 2018. <https://offero.cityofloveland.org>.

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

- Engineering work has been completed to install and improve three bridges over local ditches to allow for future trails and pedestrian access at Old St. Louis Natural Area from Madison Avenue, Boise Bluff Natural Area, and Oxbow Natural Area. Agreements have been signed with the ditch companies and all bridge work will be complete by year-end. Work is underway at the Madison Ave. bridge, with abutments being poured.
- Final design and environmental clearances for the Prairie Ridge Trail project will be complete in February and the project will be put out for bid early Spring. We hope to be under construction by May with completion by year-end.
- Staff continue to work on closing the missing trail gap at 57<sup>th</sup> Street and the BNSF Railroad. Design is complete for the section at Sunset Vista Natural Area and we are beginning the process of permitting with the BNSF Railroad. Lastly, the Copper Ridge Development is coming through the City's development review process including trail connections.
- The first signs and new kiosks are being installed as part of Loveland's new trail signage program to improve communications and provide better wayfinding for trail users. The ten new kiosks and more than 230 signs will provide more consistent information and a better trail experience for citizens and visitors.

## **Commission Member Discussion Topics:**

1. Commissioners asked for an update on Round Mountain Trail projects – fire mitigation and pipeline decommissioning. Staff will forward information.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

**/s/ Gale Bernhardt, Chair**



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM: 2**

**MEETING DATE:** March 13, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Discussion on Development of a Drone Policy

### **SUMMARY:**

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones, are remotely piloted aircraft that first started being used by the military when manned flights were considered too dangerous. Chronologically, drones first appeared in military operations starting in 2000, but have since gained civilian popularity. Because drone popularity has skyrocketed, local regulations regarding the use of drones for recreation have not kept up. The lack of regulations has resulted in issues regarding safety, privacy concerns, encroachment on private property and others, thereby warranting discussion regarding development of policy and regulations in Loveland. Development of a policy will involve each of the citizen Boards and Commissions related to Parks and Recreation.

New technology and the thrill of unmanned flight have made drones incredibly popular. They offer entertainment, scientific, and education value for all ages, kids and adults alike. The idea of a future where packages and pizzas are delivered to doorsteps or in parks by drones is now a reality. People take their drones to public spaces, from state parks and wilderness areas to local public parks down the block as the best open areas to fly.

An appeal of drone flying is the ability to take photos from perspectives that have never been done before except by professional photographers in a plane or helicopter. Fueling the excitement is posting such pictures on social media. The temptation of having drones for the perfect picture is high. People like to use their drones to get aerial shots of landscapes, get up closer than normal to wildlife, and catch action shots, all of which can be problematic on public lands if done irresponsibly.

There are many positive aspects to having drones in public spaces for their use in helping to manage lands and facilities. Drones can be used in conservation efforts, public safety and natural resource management. They can be used in search-and-rescue operations, wildlife monitoring, monitoring endangered areas, creating more extensive maps and managing invasive species. They truly can be a resource for assisting in research focusing on environmental threats and expanding scientific knowledge.

A law passed by Congress in July 2018 granted the FAA control over all airspace, a law that supersedes local or state law. There are no other entities that can dictate where a drone can fly. However, cities, states and other types of public agencies can regulate where a drone can take off and land. It is the responsibility of each jurisdiction to enact its own policies or regulations surrounding access for takeoffs and landings.

The Commission will discuss the development of a Drone Policy to guide the use or restriction of unmanned aerial vehicles on Loveland Parks and Recreation lands and facilities. To address the growing popularity of drones, we will explore setting in place stronger guidelines and policies about flying drones on public spaces.



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM:**           **3**

**MEETING DATE:**       March 13, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:**       Open Lands & Trails 2020 Capital Projects Budgeting

**STAFF PRESENTER:**   Marilyn Hilgenberg

### **SUMMARY:**

Staff annually evaluates and analyzes the Open Lands and Trails budget and identifies budget issues for discussion with the Open Lands Commission. Because of the timing of the 2020 Budget Schedule, information presented in this packet is preliminary and will be revised before the May submittal date.

### **1A. 2020 City Budget Proposed Schedule**

March 22, 2019	Capital Improvement Program Submittals Due
March 26, 2019	City Council Study Session for 2020 Budget Development
April 12, 2019	Base Budgets Distribution (salary, rates, allocations, etc)
May 8, 2019	Budget Presentation to OL Commission (Operations & Capital)
May 10, 2019	Base Budget & Decision Packages Due
June 11, 2019	Council Study Session to Review 2019-2028 CIP & Draft Financial Master Plan
June 14, 2019	Budget Conferences with Departments and City Manager
September 10, 2019	City Council Study Session on 2020 Recommended City Budget
October 15, 2019	Public Hearing and 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading on 2020 Adopted Budget
November 5, 2019	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading on 2020 Adopted Budget

### **1B. Open Lands and Trails Capital Plans**

Capital Project budget proposals are due by Departments to the Finance Department March 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be discussed with City Management staff and City Council during the 2020 Budget process. Open Lands Sales Tax and Open Lands Capital Expansion Fees are used to meet our capital open lands goals and Conservation Trust (Lottery) and Trails Capital Expansion Fees are used to fund trail projects. Provided below are projects identified in the next 5 years for the Department Open Land and Trail Funds. Division funding priorities align with the standards set forth in the 2014 Parks & Recreation Master Plan and priorities set by staff and the Open Lands Advisory Commission. The timing of projects is dependent upon available fund cash flow and staff resources.

**Loveland Parks and Recreation - OPEN LANDS SALES TAX FUND #202**

## Financial Forecast 2019-2024

3/7/2019

## OPEN LANDS TAX

PROJECTED FUNDS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Total Cash in Fund	9,177,321	6,385,418	6,446,001	6,809,286	4,315,013	3,822,592	
Designated Cash - Future Operation/Mnct^	1,231,809	1,231,809	1,231,809	1,231,809	1,231,809	1,231,809	
Available Cash Balance	7,945,512	5,153,609	5,214,192	5,577,477	3,083,204	2,590,783	
Revenues							
County Open Lands Tax^	2,333,321	2,379,019	2,425,631	2,473,175	2,521,670	2,571,135	14,703,951
CE, Leases, Fees & Other	148,429	148,429	148,429	148,429	148,429	148,429	890,574
Interest	117,030	159,635	193,380	221,302	151,025	143,347	985,722
Grants/Partnerships	460,000	87,000					547,000
Total Revenue	3,058,780	2,774,083	2,767,440	2,842,906	2,821,124	2,862,911	16,580,245
Total Revenue & Resources	12,236,101	9,159,501	9,213,441	9,652,192	7,136,137	6,685,503	
Expenditures							
Operating Expenditures							
Operations/Maintenance	1,208,653	1,141,000	1,224,155	1,291,780	1,351,545	1,404,451	7,621,584
New Operational Supplementals		47,500	30,000	20,400	12,000	19,584	129,484
Operating Sub-Total	1,208,653	1,188,500	1,254,155	1,312,180	1,363,545	1,424,035	9,001,073
Capital Outlay							
Operating CapitalEquipment/Vehicles/Signage	45,000	25,000	50,000	25,000	50,000	25,000	220,000
Acquisitions, Development & Water							
Bonsor	1,000,000						1,000,000
Boedecker Bluff	175,000						175,000
Big Thompson River Properties			600,000	600,000			1,200,000
East Big Thompson	50,000			1,200,000	1,200,000	500,000	2,950,000
Eagle Vista-188 acres				1,000,000			1,000,000
Meadowbrook, Skyline & Solar		150,000					150,000
Medina's Crossing	224,950				500,000	1,000,000	1,724,950
Old St. Louis Natural Area/Madison Trail	\$ 375,000						375,000
Oxbow	200,000						200,000
Prairie Ridge Trail - N 43rd to Coyote Ridge	900,000						900,000
Skyline Acquisitions	200,000						200,000
Skyline Development	375,000	150,000					525,000
Sunset Vista & Long View Trail	300,000						300,000
Ward Trust- West	10,000		300,000				310,000
West Loveland				1,000,000		400,000	1,400,000
Willow Bend	575,000						575,000
OL Properties Under Consideration	12,080	1,000,000					1,012,080
Acq/Dev/Water Sub-Total	4,442,030	1,325,000	950,000	3,825,000	1,750,000	1,925,000	14,217,030
Partnerships							
Partnerships	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,200,000
Partnership Sub-Total	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,200,000
Capital Sub-Total	4,642,030	1,525,000	1,150,000	4,025,000	1,950,000	2,125,000	15,417,030
Total Expenditures	5,850,683	2,713,500	2,404,155	5,337,180	3,313,545	3,549,035	23,168,098
Net Change in Working Cash Bal	(2,791,903)	60,583	363,285	(2,494,274)	(492,421)	(686,124)	
Ending Working Cash Balance	6,385,418	6,446,001	6,809,286	4,315,013	3,822,592	3,136,468	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL

## Anticipated Rollovers

## Larimer Cnty Sales Tax Sunsets in 2043

\* Policy: Loveland may designate up to 10% of Annual Sales Tax for projects with other agencies.

Interest and CEF projections based on figures provided by Finance Department

- ^Larimer County Open Lands Sales Tax Sunsets in 2043. Assumption is that the long term maintenance/operations of Open Lands will be funded in this fund

- ^Larimer County Open Lands Sales Tax Extension beginning in 2019 Changed % to Cities- Loveland recieves \$265K less annually

- Assumes 3% inflation on operating costs annually.

- Although not always projected in cash flow budget estimates, grants will be pursued and will costs associated with some open land projects.



**Loveland Parks and Recreation - OPEN LANDS CAPITAL EXPANSION FEES FUND #263**

**Financial Forecast 2019-2024**

3/7/2019

**OPEN LANDS CEF**

Budgeted

PROJECTED FUNDS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Beginning Working Cash Balance	2,731,315	653,415	978,329	1,311,384	1,838,292	2,151,519	
<b>Revenues</b>							
Open Lands CEF	453,000	311,380	311,380	430,680	497,270	497,270	2,500,980
Interest	7,000	6,534	14,675	26,228	45,957	53,788	154,182
City Loan for Economic Incentives	7,100	7,000	7,000	70,000	70,000	7,000	168,100
<b>Total Revenue</b>	467,100	324,914	333,055	526,908	613,227	558,058	3,038,163
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Resources</b>	3,198,415	978,329	1,311,384	1,838,292	2,451,519	2,709,577	
<b>Expenditures</b>							
OL Acquisitions							
East Loveland Accusions	2,545,000						2,545,000
West Loveland Acquisitions					300,000	2,400,000	2,700,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	2,545,000	0	0	0	300,000	2,400,000	5,245,000
<b>Net Change in Working Cash Bal</b>	(2,077,900)	324,914	333,055	526,908	313,227	(1,841,942)	
<b>Ending Working Cash Balance</b>	653,415	978,329	1,311,384	1,838,292	2,151,519	309,577	

**Loveland Parks and Recreation - CONSERVATION TRUST FUND #201**

**Financial Forecast 2019-2024**

3/7/2019

**CONSERVATION TRUST**

Revised Bdgt

PROJECTED FUNDS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL CASH</b>	4,308,837	606,910	534,714	1,556,451	1,556,451	899,205	
Designated Cash for Future Operation/Mnct	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	
Beginning Working Cash Balance	3,808,837	106,910	34,714	1,056,451	1,056,451	399,205	
<b>Revenues</b>							
Lottery Funds	740,000	743,700	747,419	751,156	754,911	762,479	5,258,351
Grants/Other	600,000		600,000				1,200,000
Interest	45,760	9,104	10,694	38,911	38,911	22,480	178,384
<b>Total Revenue</b>	1,385,760	752,804	1,358,113	790,067	793,823	784,959	6,636,735
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Resources</b>	5,694,597	1,359,714	1,892,826	2,346,518	2,350,274	1,684,165	16,600,244
<b>Expenditures</b>							
Recreation Trail Operations & Maintenance	398,083	325,000	336,375	348,148	360,333	385,998	2,526,882
<b>Capital Outlay</b>							
<b>Recreation Trail</b>							
PKTRWILSON- Wilson to Namaqua	731,853	100,000					831,853
PKTR37WIL- 29th St Imprv/43rd & Wilson	270,000						270,000
Copper Ridge- Wintergreen West to Sunset Vista	1,255,751						1,255,751
Namqua Bridge - Reimbursement to Larimer County & UP	223,500						223,500
Namaqua Avenue Underpass- (Partial MPO Grant Reimbursen	2,108,500						2,108,500
South Front Range Trail				85,000	1,489,000	790,000	2,364,000
East Big Thompson River Corridor	100,000	400,000					500,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	5,087,687	825,000	336,375	433,148	1,849,333	1,175,998	10,080,486
<b>Net Change in Working Cash Bal</b>	(3,701,927)	(72,196)	1,021,738	356,919	(1,055,511)	(391,039)	
<b>Ending Cash Balance</b>	606,910	534,714	1,556,451	1,913,370	500,941	508,167	

**Loveland Parks and Recreation - TRAILS CAPITAL EXPANSION FEES FUND #262**

**Financial Forecast 2019-2024**

3/7/2019

**TRAILS CEF**

**Budgeted**

PROJECTED FUNDS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Beginning Working Cash Balance	1,270,022	620,029	109,889	297,667	561,789	872,204	
Revenues							
Trails CEF	270,000	185,580	185,580	256,680	296,370	296,370	1,490,580
Interest	8,440	9,300	2,198	7,442	14,045	21,805	63,230
Total Revenue	278,440	194,880	187,778	264,122	310,415	318,175	1,553,810
Total Revenue & Resources	1,548,462	814,909	297,667	561,789	872,204	1,190,379	5,285,410
Expenditures - various rec trail	6,136						6,136
Rec Trail Development/Acquisition							
PKTRWILSON- Loveland Ready Mix	158,687						158,687
PKTRROS Oxbow Trailhead	150,000						150,000
PKTRDENVER- Denver to Boyd Lake	513,610	705,020					1,218,630
Madison Avenue-Trail Connector	100,000						100,000
Total Expenditures	928,433	705,020	0	0	0	0	1,633,453
Net Change in Working Cash Bal	(649,993)	(510,140)	187,778	264,122	310,415	318,175	
Ending Working Cash Balance	620,029	109,889	297,667	561,789	872,204	1,190,379	

**COMMISSION ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Informational and Capital Budget Discussion



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

### **AGENDA ITEM: 5**

**MEETING DATE:** March 13, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

### **SUMMARY:**

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

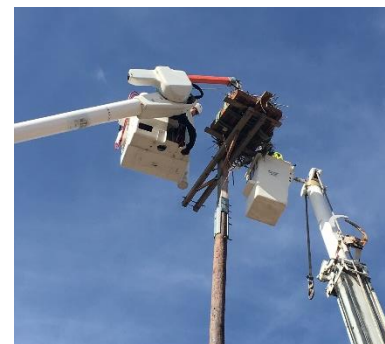
- ❖ The Rossum to Wilson river restoration project is finishing up the first phase in areas to the west between Rossum and Namaqua, and continuing to make good construction progress to the east between Namaqua and Wilson. Savings from project efficiencies has made funding available for significant removal of invasive tree species at Medina's Crossing, including Russian olive, Siberian elm, and crack willow. Funding from a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant is providing additional resources to enhance restoration in this area and will include opportunities for volunteer assistance.
- ❖ Work on the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition's Reach 28 river restoration project at Wild Natural Area and nearby river properties has begun. Realignment of the river channel and other improvements to this reach of the river corridor will significantly improve the sustainability of the river in high water events and flooding.
- ❖ Seasonal hiring for field employees has begun, with a full crew expected on board this month. Training for seasonal positions includes safety, equipment, and operational procedures. Crews will gear up for spring projects including weed management, volunteer oversight and project assistance, trail maintenance, resource management, and material and supplies requisition.

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

- ❖ Work on the Colorado Native Plant Society's project at River's Edge is getting started, with soil sampling and testing conducted by a group of students from CSU, and preparation of the plots by city staff. Volunteer planting and watering projects are planned for April and May. Students from Walt Clark Middle School's Green Team are germinating milkweed and other native species from seed for the project in their greenhouse. Other plants will be local ecotypes sourced through High Plains Env. Ctr. and other nearby growers.



- ❖ Xcel Energy relocated an osprey platform from Boise Bend Natural Area to protect the nest and eliminate potential conflicts with public access. The nest was relocated nearby and the osprey are expected to return in late March.



### **Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program**

- ❖ Volunteer training for environmental educators has begun in earnest. Training is held at River's Edge when possible and at High Plains Env. Ctr. as a backup indoor location during inclement weather. Local schools have signed up for 20 field trip dates in April and May. Three programs are offered for students in grades 2-5 (Wildlife Around Us, Urban Wilderness and Plants & Places), and one program is offered for grades K-1 (Critter Scene Investigations). Programs are led by Michele Van Hare, Environmental Education Coordinator, and primarily taught by trained volunteers.
- ❖ Public programming planned for 2019 includes monthly guided bird walks, astronomy nights with the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society, and special events such as Fishing Loveland Open Lands on April 27 and Dog Day on June 15. Ongoing programs will include Art in Nature sketch hikes, PEEPs preschool programs, orienteering classes, and storytelling evenings. Programs will take advantage of new locations available at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, Sunset Vista, and Boise Bend Natural Area. Upcoming volunteer opportunities include planting projects at River's Edge, trailbuilding and cleanup events at Willow Bend, Trail Host training on May 19, and National Trails Day on June 1. All activities and volunteer opportunities are posted on Offero:  
<https://offero.cityofloveland.org>.
- ❖ Staff hosted a volunteer open house on February 26 to recruit volunteers and provide a chance for citizens to learn the types of volunteer opportunities available. Nearly 50 people showed up to explore opportunities in education, trail hosting, trail-building and other resource stewardship projects.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

### AGENDA ITEM: 6

**MEETING DATE:** March 13, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

### SUMMARY:

- ❖ Bridge abutments have been poured for the Madison Ave. trail connection to Old St. Louis Natural Area, and the bridge is being fabricated for installation later this spring.
- ❖ Trail kiosks and maps are being updated and replaced along the recreation trail system to improve communications and provide better wayfinding for trail users.



**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.



## **Foothills Audubon Club**

February 19, 2019

To: Loveland Open Lands Advisory Commission

Thank you for the opportunity for Diane Kristoff to speak on behalf of Foothills Audubon Club membership at the February 13<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

We appreciate your consideration of our request to provide input early in the planning stages for properties that are not yet open to the public. At a recent FAC meeting, club members unanimously expressed concern over the protection of wildlife and habitat. Access, trail location and protection of nest sites are especially important to us.

We were heartened to learn that there is no longer a cone in the Osprey nest along Namaqua Road and the Osprey nest pole at Boise Bend can be relocated.

We would like to re-emphasize that it is best not to place traffic cones in nests. It's true that the cone prevents use of the nest during the breeding season but we're concerned that the nesting pair may abandon the site altogether as a result of a cone during nesting season. Also, a cone in the nest is a direct disturbance, whereas activity around a nest site is less direct and some species may be able to adapt to it. Some species appear to be more sensitive to disruption, such as Swainson's Hawk.

About Foothills Audubon Club: Membership has grown from 25 to 50 members in the last five years, partly reflecting the rising popularity of bird-watching, recently estimated at 1 in 5 Americans. Almost all members live in Larimer County; many in Loveland. We are outdoor enthusiasts and avid promoters of sharing our planet with the animals, birds and plants that reside alongside us. We fully support open space and carefully planned access and trails so that people can experience local wildlife without impacting their populations.

Best Regards,

Irene Fortune

President, Foothills Audubon Club