



## 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

September 11, 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: August 14, 2019

City Council Liaison Report

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

Fall Recruiting – Application Period Oct. 1-Nov. 1; Term Expirations Dec. 31, 2019 – Bernhardt, Pape, Zawacki

**5:45-7:00 pm – Discussion/Action Items:**

1. Raptor Nest Monitoring 2019 Season Summary and Potential Nest Cam Opportunities
2. Open Lands & Trails Division Strategic Planning

**7:00-7:30 pm – Reports/Correspondence:**

3. Property Updates
4. Open Lands Project Report
5. Trail Updates
6. Connect Loveland 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** (all events on <https://www.offero.cityofloveland.org>):

**Reminder: Sept. 9 – Boards & Commissions Appreciation Event (for members) at Fairgrounds Park, 5:30-8:00 pm**

Ongoing – [Native Plant Watering Opportunities](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, flexible times

Sept. 7 – [Guided Bird Walk](#) at Morey Wildlife Reserve, 8:00-9:30 am

Sept. 12, 17, 18 – [Volunteer Environmental Education Instructor Training](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 8:30 am-1:00 pm

Sept. 13 – [Harvest Moon & Old St Louis History Walk](#) at Old St. Louis Natural Area, 7:00-8:00 pm

Sept. 15 – [Evening Orienteering](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 6:00-7:30 pm

Sept. 16 – [Loveland's Open Lands & Trails Presentation](#) at Chilson Senior Center, 2:00-3:30 pm

Sept. 19 – [PEEPs Preschool Environ. Education Program](#) "Wandering Wapiti - Elk" at Namaqua Park, 9:30 or 11:00 am

Sept. 21 – [Volunteer Planting Project](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Sept. 25 – [Volunteer Training for Critter Scene Investigation \(CSI\) Instructors](#) at Namaqua Park, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Sept. 27 – [Art in Nature - Sketch Hike](#) at Oxbow Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

Sept. 27, 28 – [Volunteer Trail Host Training](#) at [Parks & Rec Office \(Fri 4-6:30pm\)](#) and [River's Edge \(Sat 9-11:30 am\)](#)

**Commission Member Discussion Topics**

**Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting:** October 9, 2019

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2019

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

**Commissioners Present:** Scott James, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Cindy Ticer.

**Commissioners Absent:** Gale Bernhardt, Mike Hinterberg, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Don Overcash (City Council Liaison).

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

**Guests:** Diane Kristoff, Vice President of Foothills Audubon and President of Foothills Audubon's Conservation Committee.

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

The commission welcomed Cindy Ticer as a regular commission member (change from alternate position). Cindy is a retired wildlife biologist who was with Arizona Game & Fish for 18 years, and also taught college and high school level science classes. Cindy was appointed to serve the remainder of Rick Brent's term, who resigned to serve on the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board (OLAB).

**Approval of June 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes.** Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Cindy Ticer seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**City Council Liaison Report:** In Councilor Overcash's absence, Marilyn Hilgenberg reported that 1) Council voted, on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, to separate the Recreation Center ballot issue from the other 7 issues on the November ballot. The citizen committee recommended that all 8 issues, including the Recreation Trail underpasses, remain as one ballot item, which Council had passed on 1<sup>st</sup> reading; 2) the municipal judge featured the city's Alternative Sentencing Program with Open Lands during her annual review. Two youth spoke in favor of their experiences. This summer, 28 youth participated and served a total of 350 hours assisting with weed removal, trails, mulching, and trash pickup during weekly work days.

**OLAB Liaison Report:** See Agenda Item #3 below.

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

**1. Approval or Revision of Department Drone Policy.** A draft policy was presented to regulate the use of drones on Parks & Recreation lands. Allowed uses may differ for each P&R division, during certain seasons, etc. A permit system will be used on a case-by-case basis to protect Open Lands' conservation values. A city-wide drone policy is being developed by the City Attorney's Office and the P&R policy will be blended with the city-wide policy. Commission members felt the proposed policy was both flexible and stringent enough and appreciated that the policy matched the National Park Service policy. Scott James made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed policy with consideration for changes to be consistent with the city-wide policy. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**2. Transfer of Kauffman Conservation Easement.** The 73-acre Kauffman CE was donated to Larimer County in 2001, with an allowance for a trail and trailhead to be built by the grantee. The CE is now surrounded by property owned or under easement by the City of Loveland and the county has proposed that that easement be assigned to Loveland. Neighboring properties are 1) under

conservation easement held by Loveland, 2) owned by the Open Lands Division, 3) owned by Water and Power for a future reservoir site, or 4) still owned by the Kauffman family. The assignment would consolidate Loveland holdings in this area and there would be no financial obligation other than annual CE monitoring. The Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board approved the transfer at its July 25 meeting. Darren Pape made a motion to accept the Kauffman Conservation Easement from Larimer County; Scott James seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**3. Larimer County Natural Resources Land Acquisition Approach.** Larimer County proposed a revision to its natural resources land acquisition approach, based on population projections and existing holdings. Current holdings are approximately 50% fee simple and 50% conservation easements. A proposed goal of 24,000 acres preserved by 2043 would include 8,000 acres in fee simple and 16,000 under CE. Priority areas near Loveland include Buckhorn/Redstone, Blue Mountain, and the Big Thompson River corridor.

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

**4. Property Acquisition Updates.** Brian reported that staff continues to work on acquisitions in the Skyline and Mehaffey Park areas. Additional property management activities include leases for structures and agricultural lands, water rights, easements for trails, bridges and other uses, and access/encroachment issues.

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

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

- The bid to make the trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area has been awarded to Hoff Construction. This trail construction project will begin in August.
- The Namaqua Bridge re-construction is complete and the road is back open to traffic. New fencing and signage at Medina's Crossing lets the public know that the site is not open for access yet.
- Construction of the Rossum-Wilson river restoration project and Rist-Goss diversion work is complete and the next phase of the projects for the fall and spring will be to complete the vegetative restoration. The trail and fence at Oxbow Natural Area have been replaced.
- Construction of the river restoration work along Wild Natural Area has also been completed. Now that runoff is slowing, final plantings can be installed this summer and fall.
- A new vault restroom has been ordered for Sunset Vista Natural Area and the trailhead for the regional Long View Trail. The restroom will be delivered and installed later this summer.
- In order to restore the landscape at Sunset Vista Natural Area to native grasses, Loveland has contracted with the Larimer County Weed District to treat weeds and re-plant the southern portion with native grass. The planting of a cover crop has been completed, and will be followed by seeding of the native grass mix this fall.
- A design-build bid has just closed for a pedestrian bridge over the Loudon Ditch in west Loveland in connection with the future development of the Skyline Natural Area near Namaqua Hills.
- Signage, structures and environmental education improvements are underway at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. Several small projects to finalize the repairs and renovation of the historical and other structures are being completed in-house by parks and open lands staff. Projects will allow for the return of environmental education programs to the site, interpretive education signage, wayfinding signage, and security and lighting improvements.

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

- The Colorado Native Plant Society, with staff assistance, has successfully re-vegetated two areas of River's Edge Natural Area with native species. Signage will be added to help identify the native plants in the gardens and throughout River's Edge. Information will provide practical advice on using these species in yards and home gardens. The plantings were made possible through Larimer County's Natural Resources Small Grant program.

## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- Parks and Recreation hosted two bike stations on Bike to Work Day, June 26th. One at Sunset Vista Natural Area/Long View Trail and another at the Civic Center. More than 200 riders visited these stations celebrating non-motorized transportation.
- The nest cams on the City's Open Lands website allow citizens to watch live the nesting activity of barn owls and kestrels. Both nests were successful this year and the fledglings and adult females were banded by Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute volunteers, to track the birds as part of their ongoing research.
- We have had a busy summer of environmental programming including Bird Walks, Storytelling, Dog Day, Art in Nature, Critter Scene Investigations, Astronomy Nights, Orienteering Programs, new Native Plant Walks, and History Walks.

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

- The Prairie Ridge Natural Area development project has been bid and awarded to Delfalco Construction and will begin in August. This natural area property in northwest Loveland will provide citizens with a 3.3 mile soft-surface trail system and the north-south trail alignment will connect to Fort Collins's Coyote Ridge Trail.
- Staff continues to work on closing the missing trail gap, known as the Copper Ridge Connector, at 57<sup>th</sup> Street and the BNSF Railroad. Design is complete for the section at Sunset Vista Natural Area and we have begun the process of permitting with the BNSF Railroad. The Copper Ridge Development has indicated that they plan to construct their trail portion to 57<sup>th</sup> Street in late 2019.
- Planning work has begun on the future trail connection between Denver Avenue and Boyd Lake Avenue. With the construction of a new pedestrian underpass at Boyd Lake Avenue later this year, Parks and Recreation is working with landowners to secure easements and a trail corridor to connect Loveland's trail system with the Centerra trail system.

**Connect Loveland Updates.** Jim reported that the group continues to monitor and address their objectives and goals for the project. Staff is representing the Parks & Recreation Dept. on an internal committee. Jim reported that the city has experienced a 29% reduction in transit ridership, due to patrons using Uber and Lyft instead.

### **Commission Member Discussion Topics:**

- 1) Ross Livingston noted that several candidates are being vetted as potential donors for commission member Bill Zawacki, who is in need of a live liver donor.
- 2) Jim Roode requested a future agenda item to address the city council liaison's advocacy for Open Lands, their interests, involvement, and support of Open Lands, as an open discussion with Council Liaison Overcash.

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

**/s/ Jim Roode, Vice Chair**



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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 1**

**MEETING DATE:** September 11, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Raptor Nest Monitoring 2019 Season Summary and Potential Nest Cam Opportunities

**SUMMARY:**

Loveland Open Lands & Trails' sites provide a variety of habitats for raptors and host several active nests as well as hunting and roosting habitat. The 2019 raptor nesting season ran from January to August and monitoring included great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, osprey, bald eagle, golden eagle, and kestrel nests. Volunteers visited nests at least weekly and reported on nest activity, nesting phases, interactions with other wildlife/birds, and number of successful fledglings. Volunteers contributed hundreds of hours to nest monitoring in 2019, providing valuable information and data for the management and stewardship of these areas and the nesting birds. A summary of nesting activity, success/fledging rates, and volunteer hours will be presented at the meeting.

Open Lands currently hosts two active nest cams in conjunction with a Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI) research project. These webcams are located in nest boxes provided for barn owls and kestrels and allow real-time viewing of active nest sites. The Open Lands Commission has previously discussed the possibility of installing a nest cam at an eagle nest site in addition to the CARRI cameras. Options for possible nest cams will be presented for discussion at the meeting.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Review 2019 raptor nest monitoring results and discuss options for adding a nest camera for public viewing of an active raptor nest.



## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

### **AGENDA ITEM: 2**

**MEETING DATE:** September 11, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands & Trails Division Strategic Planning

### **SUMMARY:**

In conjunction with City Council's Initiatives for Innovation and pursuit of a National Parks and Recreation Accreditation, the Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of creating a Strategic Plan. As part of this effort, we are evaluating and more clearly defining the goals and objectives of our Open Lands and Trails program.

At the OLAC meeting, we will discuss the Mission, Goals and Objectives of Loveland's Open Lands and Trails Division. As a Commission, we will be answering these questions.

1. What is our mission and charge?
2. Why are we in the business of Open Lands and Trails?
3. What are the goals of our program? How are we achieving those goals?
4. How do we measure what we are doing?
5. What is it that we do? What should we be doing?
6. What are the most important things we should be doing in the next 3 years?
7. How do we make the greatest impact in Loveland?
8. What is our story?
9. What are our priorities?

Find below the Vision and Mission of the City of Loveland and the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, the Mission of the Open Lands and Trails program is listed for your reference.

### **CITY OF LOVELAND VISION**

A vibrant community, surrounded by natural beauty, where you belong.

### **CITY OF LOVELAND MISSION**

Achieve Loveland's community vision through innovation, dedication and excellent service.

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VISION

### **OUR VISION**

*To provide a sustainable system of diverse parks, trails, natural areas and facilities that connect people with the natural environment, supports good health, offers outstanding community experiences, while balancing recreation opportunities with the protection of natural and cultural resources.*

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MISSION

### **Our Mission**

*To provide effective, efficient and high-quality leisure facilities, sites, services and programs for citizens of and visitors to the community*

## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS AND TRAILS MISSION

The mission of the City of Loveland Open Lands & Trails Division is to identify, preserve, protect and enhance open space, natural areas, trails and other significant lands. This is accomplished through cooperation with and respect for private and public landowners, surrounding municipalities and counties, natural resource agencies and other organizations with similar interests.

## BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR LARIMER COUNTY OPEN SPACE TAX

- CONSERVING NATURAL AREAS, OPEN SPACES, RIVERS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT,
- PROTECTING LANDS THAT PRESERVE WATER QUALITY AND RIVERS, LAKES AND STREAMS,
- OPERATING, MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS, AND
- PROTECTING WORKING FARMS AND RANCHES

## ROLE OF OPEN LANDS COMMISSION

The Open Lands Advisory Commission makes recommendations to City Council regarding the attributable revenue share to the City of Loveland of the Larimer County open space sales and use tax, and regarding the use of any funds designated by the City for open lands purposes. Further, the Commission makes recommendations concerning the acquisition, disposal, jurisdictional transfers, planning, preservation, development, use and management of open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and other associated open land issues.

**Commission Action Recommended:** Discuss goals, objectives and priorities of the Commission and the Open Lands and Trails Division





## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

**MEETING DATE:** September 11, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

### **SUMMARY:**

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

- ❖ Final plantings have been completed at the Reach 28 (Wild) and Reach 30-31 (Rossum-Wilson) river restoration projects. Project crews will continue irrigation and watering as needed through the one-year warranty periods.
- ❖ Open Lands is teaming with the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority (LFRA) for use of several open space areas for fire academy training purposes. Activities will include fire line construction, hose line training, and a small prescribed burn to improve habitat. Sites to be used are the Meadowbrook North property adjacent to the Mehaffey solar field and Boise Bend Natural Area. Public outreach and media releases will alert the public to these activities to educate people about prescribed fire and reduce the number of emergency 911 calls.
- ❖ Restoration of the historical stone structure at Sunset Vista Natural Area has been completed, with a new roof and concrete mason work. Interpretive signs will be added when soft-surface trails are complete, to provide information about the farming history of the area and natural resources features of the site.
- ❖ Transpan Bridges was awarded the bid to design and install a pedestrian bridge over the Loudon Ditch in west Loveland in connection with the future development of the Skyline Natural Area near Namaqua Hills. The bridge will be installed later this fall.
- ❖ A design-build Request for Proposals has been posted for a nature exploration area to be built at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. The area will allow children and families to explore nature, develop large motor skills, and engage in imaginative play. The area will also serve as a gathering space and lunch area for school groups attending environmental education programs.
- ❖ Loveland is working with the Parkside Development to secure fill dirt for our trail and ditch project at Boedecker Bluff Natural Area. The developer is donating the dirt and we are working with the contractor to truck the material to our natural area to get adequate slopes for a trail connection to Rossum Avenue later this fall.





- ❖ The Wilson Avenue Flood Mitigation Project was selected by the Colorado Chapter of the American Public Works Association as the best transportation project in 2018/2019 by a medium sized community. Parks and Recreation was a prominent team member on this large and complicated project which will have a significant impact on flood resiliency in Loveland for years to come.

## Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- ❖ The Loveland Open Lands and Trails Program has been selected for the Blue Grama Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Organization. The award will be presented at the Annual Colorado Open Space Alliance (COSA) Conference in Steamboat Springs on September 16<sup>th</sup>. The award is given to an organization that has made significant contributions to the conservation of Colorado's open spaces, community engagement, or conservation policy. The impact extends beyond Loveland, to include Northern Colorado and has lasting implications to open space conservation throughout the state. The award recognizes outstanding leadership, achievement through acquisition, land management actions, community engagement, and public policy.
- ❖ Larimer County and the cities of Loveland and Fort Collins will receive a Colorado Lottery Starburst Award for the Long View Trail Project completed by the three entities to provide a safe alternative transportation option connecting the trail systems of Loveland and Fort Collins.
- ❖ The GOCO-funded Medina's Crossing habitat restoration project is underway with preparation of seeding and planting areas on both sides of the river. Invasive trees were removed and treated on the north side and volunteers from CSU's Conservation Leadership program removed limbs, branches and other flood debris so the soil can be amended and prepared for seeding later this fall. On the south side, the river project contractor amended the soil, drill-seeded the native grass mix, and installed an irrigation system at considerable savings for the project.
- ❖ The final planting project at the River's Edge demonstration gardens will be held on September 21 with volunteers, members of the Colorado Native Plant Society and city crews. "Before and after" photos show the impressive transformation of the Sandpiper plot. The project was made possible through a grant from the Larimer County Small Grants for Community Partnership program.



## Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- ❖ Environmental education programs are beginning to fill up the fall calendar. Volunteer trainings will be held in September for environmental educators who help with the four EE program tracks, and trail hosts interested in patrolling trails and greeting visitors to our open lands.
- ❖ More than 30 volunteers, including families and youth, worked on August 20 building a trail and cleaning up trash at Willow Bend Natural Area as part of the Loveland LDS Stake Day. Volunteers were excited to get a sneak preview of this scenic property along the Big Thompson River corridor.





## **LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

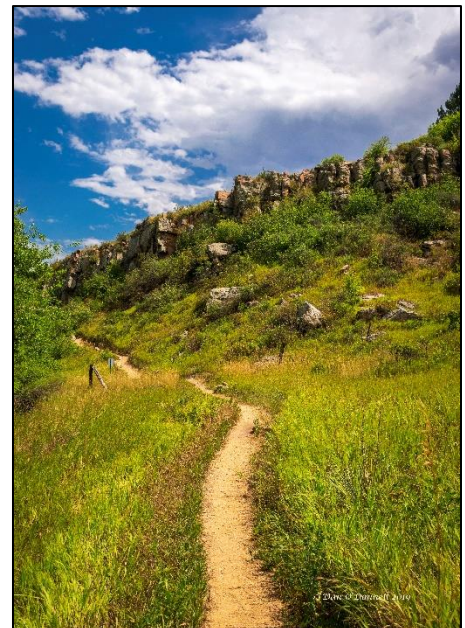
### **AGENDA ITEM: 5**

**MEETING DATE:** September 11, 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** Trail Updates

### **SUMMARY:**

- ❖ The Prairie Ridge trail and trailhead construction project will begin this month, with the addition of a new turn lane on Wilson Ave for safe access, a 37-vehicle trailhead with vault toilet, accessible trails to the foothills, and a trail connection to Fort Collins Coyote Ridge Natural Area. Dryland wheat farming will continue on the majority of the farmland as an effective land management tool.
- ❖ Hoff Construction has begun work on the paved trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area. Additional work is planned this winter at this location to re-build the Madison Ave. stormwater outfall and add connectivity to the Big Thompson River via a new soft-surface trail.
- ❖ Phase II of the Recreation Trail wayfinding signage and kiosk installation/improvements will begin this fall. In-house project crews and contractors will coordinate on the completion of various tasks.
- ❖ Bicycle trail counters are being refurbished to provide accurate trail user counts along sections of the paved recreation trail.



**Commission Action Recommended:** Informational.