



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

LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

October 9, 2019 – 5:30 PM

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third St., Loveland, CO 80537

www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands

Notice of Meeting Posted

Call to Order

Public Comment

Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 11, 2019

City Council Liaison Report

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

OLAC Application Open Oct. 1-Nov. 1: <http://www.cityofloveland.org/government/boards-commissions>

Joint Regional Open Space Boards Meeting – **February 19, 2020**, combined with Feb. OLAC meeting

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

1. Skyline Natural Area Management Plan Update
2. Open Lands and Trails Financial Update
3. Madison Ave. Trail Adoption Proposal
4. Walden West LLP Conservation Easement Amendment Request

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

5. Property Updates
6. Open Lands Project Report
7. Trail Updates
8. 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>):

Throughout Oct. – [Native Plant Watering Help Needed](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, flexible times

Oct. 5 – [Guided Bird Walk](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 8:00-9:30 am

Oct. 5 – [CSI \(Critic Scene Investigation\) Mystery at Morey Wildlife Reserve](#), 10:30 am-1:00 pm

Oct. 6 – [Astronomy Night with NoCo Astronomical Society](#) at Ward Trust, 7:00-9:00 pm

Oct. 11 – [Greenhouse volunteer gardening project](#) at High Plains Env. Ctr., 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Oct. 17 – [PEEPs "Marsh Monarchs - Great Blue Herons"](#) at Namaqua Park, 9:30 or 11:00 am

Oct. 18 – [Art in Nature Sketch Hike](#) at Oxbow Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

Oct. 19 – [Foothills Life-zone Guided Walk](#) at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, 9:00-11:30 am

Oct. 19 – [Evening of Storytelling](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 6:00-7:00 pm

Oct. 25+26 – [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: November 13, 2019

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2019

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Mike Hinterberg, Scott James, Ross Livingston, Jim Roode, Cindy Ticer, Bill Zawacki, Don Overcash (City Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Darren Pape, Jean Whittaker.

Staff Present: Bryan Harding, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley.

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

Public Comment: Curt Cole and Nan Daniels, Colorado Native Plant Society members, were in attendance (no comment). Diane Kristoff, Vice President of Foothills Audubon Club (FAC), distributed an invitation to commission members to the Oct. 7 FAC meeting. The guest speaker will be Dana Bove from Front Range Bald Eagle Nesting Studies. FAC meetings are open to the public.

Approval of August 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Scott James made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Jim Roode seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

City Council Liaison Report: Councilor Overcash reported that he advocates for transparency and citizen control regarding how taxes are spent so his preference was to separate out “community amenities” and “infrastructure/capital needs” into two ballot items for the sales tax initiative.

OLAB Liaison Report: Marilyn reported that Larimer County is proposing to implement a \$6 fee at Devil's Backbone beginning with the 2020 budget. The fee would generate an estimated \$32M over 20 years (with interest). Annual operational costs at Devil's Backbone are approximately \$550K, including the Backbone area and the Blue Sky, Indian Creek and Rimrock Trails. Heavy visitor use requires significant maintenance and patrol. Loveland is not in a position to take on these additional services. An MOU with Larimer Co. currently provides maintenance and enforcement at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. 2) Larimer County will consider regional connectivity when they update the Master Plan in 2020. With the completion of the Poudre River Trail, the county will have completed the regional trails outlined in the current master plan. Future connections in the Loveland area to consider would be Prairie Ridge to foothills trails, E. Big T to Johnstown, S. Front Range to Berthoud, and Boyd Lake to Kendall Parkway to Windsor trails. Jim Roode commented that a fee at Devil's Backbone would collect funding from non-residents who use the area and do not pay Larimer County taxes. Mike Hinterberg commented that the fee could impact Loveland Open Lands such as Oxbow, where free parking is available and could provide pedestrian/bicycle access to the fee area.

Discussion/Action:

1. Raptor Nest Monitoring 2019 Season Summary and Potential Nest Cam Opportunities. Staff provided an overview of the 2019 raptor nesting season, with a review of survey protocols and results from volunteer monitoring efforts of nests located on Open Lands properties. A total of 24 raptors fledged from 14 nests in 9 Open Lands areas. Volunteers contributed more than 330 hours of time. Goals proposed for 2020 included relocating the osprey platform at Medina's Crossing to reduce disturbance; adding a nest cam; cleaning out osprey nests of hazardous materials (e.g., baling twine, plastic, string); monitoring golden eagle activity year-round; continuing surveys for burrowing owls at

Prairie Ridge; assessing new acquisitions and existing properties for potential nests; and developing an application for volunteer monitors.

2. Open Lands & Trails Division Strategic Planning. 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, staff provided a framework for how the Open Lands and Trails program meets each of the initiatives. Commission members provided feedback, suggestions and ideas regarding the Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Open Lands and Trails Division. Based on this input, staff will reformulate the strategic plan initiatives and bring back for review at a future meeting.

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Acquisition Updates. Brian reported that the Kauffman CE is being updated by Larimer County before the transfer, to correct a legal description error. The new pump for the 3rd priority water right has been installed and is operational, to irrigate the agricultural property and river restoration areas. An additional 18 acres at Mehaffey Park is being acquired adjacent to the Fire Station for a future recreation center. Restoration of the Sunset Vista historical structure is complete, including a new roof, paint removal, and grouting. Interpretive signs and a soft-surface trail will be installed to provide access and information for visitors. Easements for the Boyd Lake trail are being negotiated with the City of Greeley, Greeley-Loveland Irrigation Company and Boyd Lake State Park. An easement for the new bridge over the Loudon Ditch is being finalized with the ditch company.

4. Open Lands Project Report. Staff provided the following project updates.

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 maintenance 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 other 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. 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.

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

- 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 restroom, 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.

6. Connect Loveland Updates. There have been no recent meetings or new updates.

Commission Member Discussion Topics: None.

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

/s/ Gale Bernhardt, Chair



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 1

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Skyline Natural Area Management Plan Update

SUMMARY:

The management plan process for Skyline Natural Area has included numerous resource surveys and inventories to document existing conditions, opportunities and constraints. Based on this information, concept plans for resource management and public access were developed. A public meeting was held on May 6, 2019 to present several options for proposed uses and conceptual trail alignments. Comments and preferences were gathered during the meeting and during a 3-week online comment period. Staff has reviewed the comments and input received and analyzed the trail alignment options, proposed uses, potential impacts, and mitigation options. Recommendations will be presented at the meeting for discussion and input by the commission.

Commission Action Recommended: Discuss and provide input on proposed recommendations.



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LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands and Trails Project Financial Update

SUMMARY:

As we begin the 4th quarter of the fiscal year, staff will discuss our financial progress and update the Commission on the Capital Projects completed or in progress in the 2019 budget cycle. The Accounting Figures are not yet available for month-end September so they will be distributed at the meeting.

For the most part, the funds dedicated for open lands and trails are tracking consistently with budgeted levels except for Trails and Open Lands Capital Expansion Fees, which are tracking down almost 50% from budget. However, interest rates from our funds around tracking up and 4% ahead of budget level on all funds.

2019 was the first year of the new Larimer County Open Space Tax utilizing the new calculation formula, yielding less revenue to the City. We had anticipated a revenue decrease of about \$246,000 to Loveland in 2019, but we anticipate the actual decrease will be around \$300K.

The Commission will review and discuss planned projects and priorities as we go into the final quarter of the year. Many of the 2019 projects will continue as priorities in 2020 since they were not completed. Additional 2020 projects have been requested in the 2020 City Budget but have not yet been approved through the City Council.

Commission Action Recommended: Review of Open Lands & Trail Capital Projects & Financials



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 3

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Arbor Meadows Adopt a Trail for Madison Avenue Connection

SUMMARY:

At the June 2019 Open Lands Advisory Commission, Dennis Miller, on behalf of the Arbor Meadows Homeowners Association, presented a request to have the City of Loveland name the new trail connection from Madison Avenue to Old St. Louis Natural Area in honor of Mr. Donn Conn. The City Open Lands and Trails Division has a naming and memorial policy which would not allow for the trail to be named specifically for Donn Conn. However, an alternate solution to achieve the same goal has been recommended to allow the Arbor Meadows Homeowners Association to adopt this section of trail in honor of Donn. The commitment on the HOA's side would include purchasing the sign (\$50) and a commitment to pick up trash and pull weeds in the new trail corridor off Madison Avenue. The City would install a sign that meets the Department sign standards that indicates "This section of trail is maintained by the Arbor Meadows HOA in honor of Donn Conn."

The expectation would be that the members of the HOA would keep this section of trail clear of trash and weeds adjacent to the paved trail for a two-year commitment. At the end of that time, the HOA can determine if it would like to renew or terminate its maintenance commitment. Monitoring of this section should be done at least once a week during the warm season, and as weather permits in the cold season. Volunteers from the HOA would be responsible to pack out all trash, put it in existing trash bins or leave it in bags adjacent to existing trash cans if there is no room in the bin.

This solution was recommended by one of our commission members, but the idea needed to be presented to the Open Lands Advisory Board for final approval. We are also still waiting for approval from the Arbor Meadows Homeowners Association regarding the adoption of this trail section. Once appropriate approvals are received and the trail is open, the City will order and install the sign on the trail.

Commission Action Recommended: Recommendation on Adoption of Madison Connection Trail



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 4

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Walden West LLP - CE Amendment Request
6755 N. County Road 13

SUMMARY:

Summary of request from Cliff Nemeth's e-mail dated 10-2-19:

Request to Amend the boundaries of my building envelope in the Walden West Conservation Easement.

A Conservation Easement was granted to the City of Loveland on December 20, 2004.

The CE delineated two building envelopes for single family homes. Each building envelope is approximately 1.6 acres and a separate easement of approximately 30 acres with no allowance for structures.

I am now requesting an alteration in my building envelope to allow the placement of a shed in an advantageous spot. My building envelope allows for three structures (paragraph 6k), two of which, a house and an out-building, have been built. I now would like to add a shed of approximately 14 x 26 feet. The proposed shed would be in close proximity to the current out-building. In order to preserve three medium sized evergreens and to adapt the building envelope to the existing topography (ie: to coincide with the high water line of the lake), I am requesting the alteration depicted in the accompanying survey plans. The change will not alter the overall area of the building envelope which stays approximately 1.6 acres. I have already been approved by Larimer County planning department for the new building.

Additional background, there are no lien holders on the property. The Conservation values of the property are not affected and the view shed will be improved with the enclosure of a vehicle inside the shed. There is no financial gain in building the shed.

Survey map to be available at the meeting on 10/9/19

Staff recommendation:

The Open Lands Policy for Conservation Easement Amendments (OL-14) allows for a change of a building envelope by amendment if the following conditions are met:

1. The amendment is consistent in protecting the conservation values of the property.
2. The amendment does not benefit the property owner financially.
3. The amendment does not affect the easement's perpetual duration.
4. The proposed amendment complies with the amendment language of the easement.

The Conservation Values are protected, or at least not diminished, by placement of the new building near the existing structures on the southwest part of the building envelope. The driveway area has always been road base type of material so very little vegetation will be disturbed by the building placement. The CE allows for up to three buildings as a Reserved Right under Section 6. This third building is allowed with review and approval of the CE holder. The Conservation Easement will still have perpetual duration. The proposed amendment complies with the amendment language of the easement.

Commission Action Recommended: Staff recommends the amendment request as described. Subject to verification of the building permit and final survey map.



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LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 5

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Project Report

SUMMARY:

❖ Hoff Construction has completed the paved trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area and is finalizing the grading and seeding by mid-October. The trail will now allow neighbors from the Mirasol Senior Community and the neighborhoods adjacent to Winona Elementary to safely access Old St Louis Natural Area. The majority of this trail connection was made possible by funding from partner funding (Colorado Health Foundation, a private donor, and Larimer County). Additional work is planned this winter at this location to re-build the storm water outfall and add connectivity east to the Big Thompson River via an additional soft-surface trail.



❖ A new vault restroom will be installed at Sunset Vista Natural Area and the trailhead for the regional Long View Trail in October. In addition, Loveland has contracted with the Larimer County Weed District to treat weeds and re-plant the southern portion of Sunset Vista Natural Area with native grass in order to restore the landscape. A cover crop was planted this summer to enhance the soils and assist with weed management. Native seed will be planted this fall.

❖ Transpan Bridges is scheduled to install a new pedestrian bridge over the Loudon Ditch to provide a southern connection with the future development of the Skyline Natural Area near Namaqua Hills in late October.

❖ 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 Mountain Park are being completed in-house by parks and open lands staff. Improvements include signage, kiosks, learning stations, an exploration zone of natural materials, AV equipment, benches, etc. Projects will allow for the return of environmental education programs to the site, interpretive signage, wayfinding signage, and security and lighting improvements. The Colorado Addicted

Trailbuilders contributed by building a new trail connection from Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park to the Round Mountain Trailhead. Round Mountain trailhead is closed the remainder of the year for a Water Department project to decommission the old water lines through the property, a condition for FEMA flood funding.

❖ Development of a trail from Rossum Drive at 1st Street south over the Buckingham Ditch is out to bid for winter construction on Boedecker Bluff Natural Area. Volunteers constructed a soft-surface trail that runs east-west along the shore of Boedecker Reservoir and this project will include a connector trail to Rossum Drive and a bridge over Buckingham Ditch. Currently, there is a great deal of noise going on that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) lease for Boedecker Reservoir expires next summer but Home Supply Ditch Company has not agreed to renew the surface rights lease. The Ditch Company has contacted some of the adjacent neighborhood HOAs on their interest in purchasing the lease. Since the City purchased the Boedecker Bluff Natural Area for public access and natural values, we would like to continue public access and support CPW's continued management.



Partnerships, Planning, Awards and Grants

❖ The Colorado Native Plant Society held a fall planting on Sept. 21 to supplement the two areas it has successfully re-vegetated at River's Edge Natural Area with native species. Volunteers will continue to monitor, water and weed these areas and plant in-fill plants this fall. The plantings were made possible through Larimer County's Natural Resources Small Grant program.



❖ Loveland's Open Lands and Trails were awarded the Blue Grama Award from the Colorado Open Space Alliance for organizational excellence. Loveland was recognized for its flood projects, acquisitions, volume of projects and programming. In addition, Loveland was also recognized with its partners by the Colorado Lottery with the Starburst Award for the success of the Long View Trail.

❖ A bio-blitz to monitor the progress of flood projects was completed by volunteers on Sept. 28 to provide a baseline of the success of the river restoration from Rossum Drive to Namaqua Avenue in Loveland. Big Thompson Watershed Coalition led the monitoring effort to evaluate habitat types and conditions in the streambed, measure sediment sizes, and analyze macro-invertebrates.



- ❖ The Loveland Fire Rescue Authority successfully completed wildfire training in September for its new recruits utilizing Boise Bend and Meadowbrook Natural Areas. The collaboration was a win-win in that it provided a great opportunity for the recruits and a great opportunity for natural vegetative management and re-seeding efforts.



Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- ❖ Some 20 volunteers worked building a trail and cleaning up trash at Willow Bend Natural in September. Now the project will change over to include a contractor installed fishing dock using grant funding, and a temporary trail to a small parking area off 1st Street until Willow Bend Natural Area is fully developed in conjunction with the Park.
- ❖ Fall environmental education programming and volunteer training is underway, with schools signed up for programs for grades pre-K through 5th grade and a homeschool group of varying grades.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 6

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Trail Updates

SUMMARY:

- ❖ The Prairie Ridge Natural Area trail project is underway by Delfalco Construction. 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' Coyote Ridge Trail. Construction will require the installation of a left-turn lane on Wilson Avenue which will cause some traffic delays this fall.
- ❖ Work will begin this winter on a trail connection from the Sunset Vista Natural Area parking lot to the BNSF railroad tracks on 57th Street. In addition, the BNSF Railroad has approved our design and will complete the work across the RR right-of-way next summer. The Copper Ridge Development has indicated that they plan to construct their trail portion to 57th St. in late 2019 which means we are planning to have complete trail connectivity in this area by next summer.
- ❖ 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 Avenue over the winter, 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.
- ❖ To coincide the future construction of a pedestrian underpass with Public Works' "Safe Route" new sidewalk on Wilson Avenue, an RFP for design services and project management is being released to find an engineering company to design and manage the planning components of this project.



Commission Action Recommended: Informational.