



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

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – February 13, 2019

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3rd 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://offerocityofloveland.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 57th 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