



## 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)

### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Special Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2016

The Lake Club, Centerra, 4555 Long Pine Lake Drive, Loveland, CO 80538

**Commissioners Present:** Rick Brent, Gale Bernhardt, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Jean Whittaker.

**Staff Present:** Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Michele Van Hare.

**Guests:** High Plains Environmental Center Staff Jim Tolstrup, Eric Blewitt; High Plains Foundation Board Members Joe Knopinski, Paul Mueller; High Plains Environmental Center Board Members Denise Bretting, Irene Foster; High Plains School Principal Diane Feeney; Reporter-Herald Staff Pamela Dickman.

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

**Guest Presentation:** Jim Tolstrup opened the discussion about possible collaboration and partnerships between HPEC and Loveland Open Lands for the benefit of both organizations and the public, creating a culture of environmental stewardship in Loveland. HPEC and OLAC ideas included joint planning and programming for community education, native plant seed harvesting/cultivating, vegetation/restoration establishment and management on open lands, coordinated environmental education curriculum with school district, partnering on grants and open lands acquisitions, community opportunities to promote agriculture, sharing of volunteers and volunteer projects, joining trail systems and extending trail rules and enforcement to both systems, and sharing joint-use community facilities.

**Approval of November 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes:** Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Jim Roode seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

**City Council Liaison Report.** Hugh McKean noted that Council recently amended the Centerra Master Financing Agreement for a parking garage and the Open Space agreement was not brought up.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report.** Kerri Rollins reported on the following items: 1) LCDNR staff will attend the GOCO Inspire kickoff in Denver on January 14-15. Larimer County recommends that the Inspire planning process include Loveland and Wellington simultaneously with the effort in NW Fort Collins at the Boys & Girls Club; 2) GOCO awarded open space funding for a project in the Horsetooth area; 3) the county and municipalities are working on an “Alternative Transfer Mechanism” for irrigated farmland, as part of the State Water Plan recently adopted; 4) the 2016 COSA conference in Estes Park September 12-14 will be sponsored by Larimer County; 5) events to celebrate the Help Preserve Open Spaces 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary will kick off in March; 6) the Poudre River Forum will be held at the Ranch on Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>; 7) the county anticipates numerous acquisitions in 2016; 8) minutes from the November regional meeting will be provided, with information on how we can collaborate and complement each other’s efforts; 9) the county and Loveland are coordinating to provide environmental education preschool programming.

## **Reports/Correspondence:**

### **1. Open Lands Project Report.**

Quick Win Projects/Property Management. Oxbow Natural Area is now open, with a soft-surface trail, fencing, and gates installed. Trail work at Morey Wildlife Reserve is about 50% complete. Fencing and signage have been installed at the Wenninger and Black (*Namaqua Skyline*) properties. Mariana Butte trails are partially completed and expected to be finished in the spring.

Christmas Bird Count. Members of Foothills Audubon and other local birders completed the Loveland count on Dec. 31-Jan. 1, including a thorough survey of Open Lands sites both open and closed to the public. Total bird numbers were down, probably due to recent cold weather and fewer geese.

River's Edge Natural Area. Installation of sign kiosks is nearly complete. The Swisher property is being graded and incorporated into the site. The Mineral addition trail and bridge are being designed for installation this spring. Volunteer trail hosts continue to monitor use and educate the public about site rules, including encouraging visitors to keep dogs on leash for resource protection and safety.

GOCO Grants. *Ward Trust Property.* The Ward Trust Open Space project was awarded full funding (\$500,000) by the GOCO Board. *Youth Corps.* Loveland was also awarded 2 weeks of Conservation Corps saw crew time (\$15,000), for removal of Russian olives in Cottonwood Run Natural Area.

Environmental Education. Staff and volunteers reached more than 1,200 youth and adults with educational programming in 2015. Also in 2015, the Trail Host Program was re-initiated at River's Edge, a monthly EE program for pre-schoolers was developed, and the first active generation tour program was held. New curriculum options for school groups will be offered this spring at River's Edge, and numerous other programs and offerings will encourage people to experience their open lands.

**2. Property Acquisition Updates.** Fee simple acquisition of the Luxor property is scheduled for Jan. 22, with Larimer County and Berthoud as partners. Staff continues due diligence on the E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. property towards a contract to close in April.

**3. Open Lands and Trails Division Reorganization.** Elizabeth Anderson explained the process over the past 8 months to determine the best course for the success of the Open Lands Division. There was a need for more direct contact with the field maintenance crews, resulting in the creation of a new crew supervisor position. Education and community outreach are a priority, so additional programs and staff hours were allocated. Planning assistance to help plan, design, and open sites for public access call for additional staff time. Trails were previously managed under the Parks Division but are more similar to Open Lands in management and maintenance needs. Management plans need to be developed, to balance preservation and access, and communication and public outreach will continue to be a focus. These changes resulted in the restructuring of the Open Lands and Trails Manager position, with Marilyn Hilgenberg shifting from interim to permanent status. Funding will be split among Open Lands and Trails funds for the manager and crew supervisor salaries and maintenance costs.

## **Discussion/Action Items:**

**4. Election of Officers.** Rick Brent nominated Bill Zawacki as Chair and Ross Livingston as Vice Chair. Gale Bernhardt seconded the nominations and they were approved unanimously.

**5. Property Naming – Wenninger/Black Properties.** Based on more than 120 unique submissions, the name *Namaqua Skyline Natural Area* was selected by the commission.

**Executive Session:** The regular meeting was suspended and Executive Session convened at 7:38pm. At 8:12 pm, the Executive Session adjourned and the regular session reconvened.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.