

Natural Areas Annual Report 2007



HISTORY

The Loveland Open Lands Plan was adopted in June 1996. This plan gave City staff direction to form an Open Lands Advisory Commission, which was completed in December 1996. Larimer County voters approved a citizens' initiative in 1996 to create an open space sales tax of 0.25%, which provides the majority of the funding for the Loveland program. In 1999, Larimer County voters extended this sales tax until the year 2018. Loveland adopted the 2003 Open Lands Plan in March of that year.

In 2002, open lands preservation efforts were enhanced by the City's adoption of a Capital Expansion Fee for open lands. A fee of \$736 for each new dwelling unit provides additional resources for open lands based on residential building activity.

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Open Lands Advisory Commission is comprised of volunteers who live in or near the City and represent the City's diverse land use interests. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. Members advise staff and City Council regarding open lands issues.

Members include:

Gale Bernhardt

Rick Brent

Karl Cordova

Kathy Hartman, Vice Chair

Sylvia Hickenlooper

John Lewis

M. Stephen McMillan

Nancy Meredith

William Zawacki, Chair

K-Lynn Cameron, Larimer County Liaison

Brian Hayes, Staff Liaison

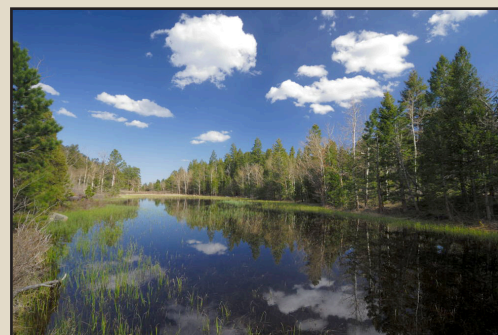
Gene Pielin, Council Liaison

Dakota Ridge Conservation Easement Donated

In December 2007, Dakota Ridge LLC donated a conservation easement on 85.6 acres of foothills property to the city. This highly visible section of the Dakota Ridge Hogback is part of an area noted as a priority for preservation in the 2003 Open Lands Plan. The hogback has also been identified as a highly rated natural area, consisting of foothills shrubs, scattered ponderosa pines, and several small riparian drainages. The property contains important habitat for mule deer, bobcat, coyote, red fox, and potential habitat for mountain lion, black bear, and elk. Prairie falcons, golden eagles and other raptor species are likely to nest in the area. A trail corridor has been reserved for a future public access trail to be built by the donor, traversing the southern portion of the conservation easement and providing scenic views both east and west. The Dakota Ridge Conservation Easement is adjacent to the Hidden Valley Estates III Rural Land Use Plan which contains residual land and open space that are also protected in perpetuity. The landowner would like to donate an additional conservation easement on adjacent land to the south in 2008.

Hermit Park Open Space Acquired

The City of Loveland participated in a partnership to preserve a spectacular property near Estes Park in 2007. The acquisition of Hermit Park from Agilent Technologies was a joint effort between Larimer County, Estes Valley Land Trust, Town of Estes Park, Great Outdoors Colorado, City of Loveland, and other public and private donors. The 1,362-acre site had been a recreational retreat for Hewlett-Packard and Agilent employees since 1967.



Hermit Park Open Space - by Charlie Johnson

Hermit Park Open Space was acquired with the intent to protect native vegetation and wildlife populations, preserve scenic views, and provide outdoor recreation. The property ranges in elevation from 7,880-8,964 feet, with ponderosa pine at the lower elevations, transitioning into Douglas fir and lodgepole pine communities at higher elevations. Wildlife commonly found on-site includes bear, elk, deer, and moose, among others. A portion of the Hermit Park property has been identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program as a high biodiversity significance site. There are also several wetlands on-site including a large intact wetland dominated by sedges and willow. Stunning views of Long's Peak, Twin Sisters and Kruger Rock comprise the backdrop to the property. Hermit Park Open Space's recreational features include cabins, campsites, reservable group use pavilion, hiking trails, horseback riding, mountain biking, and much more. Recreation is managed by Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. A conservation easement held by the Estes Valley Land Trust permanently protects the open space from development.

Adopt-A-Waterway Program

Clean waterways are valued for drinking, planting, recreation, and a healthy riparian environment. Yet some people will dispose of landscape waste, building materials, household items, and other materials into neighborhood waterways, not realizing that there's a connection between waterways and storm water quality. The City of Loveland has recently developed an Adopt-A-Waterway program that enables local organizations to participate in improving a waterway in a number of ways. The adopting group will be supplied the necessary tools and materials by the City of Loveland Stormwater Utility to perform one or all of the following tasks:

- Remove and properly dispose of unwanted materials from within and along a waterway at least three times a year.
- Stabilize eroding shorelines and/or stream-banks.
- Remove undesirable (nuisance) vegetation.
- Install native plant materials.
- Monitor water quality through sampling.
- Assist property owners in need of protecting existing vegetation from wildlife.

To recognize those who formally Adopt-A-Waterway, the City of Loveland Stormwater Utility has signs specially made for each group to display along the section of waterway that is adopted by them. The City of Loveland Stormwater Utility will also supply all the necessary materials for each of the groups including trash bags and make sure the disposal of materials is done properly and in a timely manner.

If you are interested in participating in this program please contact Joe Chaplin at: (970) 962-2772.



Students enjoy learning at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park's Environmental Education Center - by Lori Adair

Environmental Education Program

In 2007, the City of Loveland offered the *Viestenz-Smith Wildlife Program* to all fourth and fifth grade students living in Loveland, Berthoud and Fort Collins. The program was held in the spring and fall and was attended by 1,512 students.

The program, located in the Big Thompson Canyon, is an environmental education field trip which focuses on Colorado wildlife and wildlife habitat. It provides students with an opportunity to learn about Colorado's abundant natural resources in an outdoor setting. Students spend the day at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park learning about Colorado life zones, wildlife management, foothills plant communities, and the Big Thompson River. The program also provides students with an opportunity to participate in an outdoor food chain game, share knowledge during an interactive wildlife slideshow, and become wildlife detectives while hiking the south end of the park.

In 2007, a number of students who visited Viestenz-Smith Park not only learned about wildlife but also had the opportunity to see it! Mule deer, bighorn sheep, squirrels, flickers, Steller's jays, and bull snakes were seen throughout the course of the program. In October, a young black bear spent the afternoon "hanging around" the park in a tree. Students who attended the program that day were able to view the bear from a safe distance.

Volunteers remain the key factor in the success of the Viestenz-Smith Wildlife Program. In 2007, a dedicated staff of eight volunteers donated nearly 400 hours to teaching elementary students about Colorado wildlife. In addition to a variety of professional backgrounds in fields such as teaching, veterinary medicine, and air-traffic control, each volunteer brings a unique teaching style and appreciation of nature to the outdoor classroom at Viestenz-Smith. ***Individuals interested in volunteering with the City of Loveland's environmental education program can contact Pam Unfred at (970) 988-4105, or email her at: unfred@ci.loveland.co.us.***

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Loveland Natural Areas Program is to identify, preserve, protect and enhance open space, natural areas and other significant lands. This ongoing process 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. The City is assisted in this effort by the Open Lands Advisory Commission, a citizen advisory board.

Natural Areas	Acres	Acquisition Value \$	Loveland's Funds \$	Donation \$	Partnerships	Public Access/ Management
Boyd Lake/Greeley Loveland Irr.	25	302,040	13,520		GOCO, State Parks	Yes/State Park
Boyd Lake North-Hirsch	40	554,064	277,032		State Parks	Yes/State Park
Boyd Lake South-Hirsch	42	558,570	279,285		State Parks	Yes/State Park
CTM Place	1	100,000		100,000	NA	No/Loveland
Centennial Natural Area	1	150,000		150,000	NA	No/Loveland
Dakota Ridge CE	86	785,000		785,000	Legacy Land Trust	Future Trail/ Owner
Devil's Backbone-Hunter	247	833,000	75,000		Larimer County, Stryker Short	Yes/County
Devil's Backbone-Wild	135	472,500	75,000		Larimer County	Yes/County
Dunkin CE	52	294,635	104,635	100,000	Larimer County, Berthoud	Future Trail/ Owner
Hermit Park Open Space	1,362	8,700,000	140,000	2,200,000	Larimer County, Estes Valley Land Trust, GOCO, Town of Estes Park	Yes/County
Hidden Valley 1st	42	395,765	395,765		NA	No/County
Hidden Valley 2nd	178	1,688,235	1,479,835		Larimer County	No/County
Hopkins CE	60	339,700	188,100	130,700	Larimer County	No/Owner
Lazy J Bar S CE Parcel 1	100	520,000	143,994	160,006	GOCO, Larimer County, Berthoud	No/Owner
Lazy J Bar S CE Parcel 2	191	1,112,586	678,586	100,000	GOCO, Larimer County, Berthoud	No/Owner
Lazy J Bar S CE Parcel 3	35	70,847	70,847		NA	No/Owner
Long View Farm	479	2,464,507	410,669		GOCO, Larimer County, Fort Collins	Future Trail/ County
Loveland Sports Park CE	37	378,981	378,981		NA	Future Trail/ Owner
Meadowbrook Natural Area	26	600,000		600,000	NA	Yes/Loveland
Morey Wildlife Reserve	28	762,142	54,142	533,000	GOCO Legacy	Future Trail/ Loveland
Namaqua Natural Area	6	102,078	2,078		GOCO Legacy	Future Trail/ Loveland
Prairie Ridge	785	3,139,836	1,892,829		GOCO, Larimer County, Fort Collins	Future Trail/ Loveland
Sylvan Dale Ranch CE's	766	1,702,980	140,220	546,750	GOCO Legacy, Larimer County	No/Owner
Walden West CE	31	78,000		78,000	NA	No/Owner
Waterford Place CE	10	150,000		150,000	NA	Future Trail/ Owner
Totals	4,765	\$26,255,466	\$6,800,518	\$5,633,456	\$13,821,492	

Donations to the Natural Areas Program

Ken Morey	<i>Morey Wildlife Reserve</i>
Keirns Construction	<i>Meadowbrook Natural Area</i>
Jon & Susanne Stephens	<i>Lazy J Bar S Conservation Easement</i>
Allied Investments	<i>Hopkins Conservation Easement</i>
Capital Pacific	<i>Meadowbrook Natural Area</i>
Grace Dunkin	<i>Dunkin Conservation Easement</i>
Loveland Redi-Mix	<i>Conservation Easement Breakfast</i>
Doug Erion	<i>Centennial Natural Area</i>
Don Marostica	<i>CTM Place</i>
Waterford Apartments	<i>Waterford Place Conservation Easement</i>
Walden West LLP	<i>Walden West Conservation Easement</i>
Dakota Ridge LLC	<i>Dakota Ridge Conservation Easement</i>



*Black Bear
at Viestenz-Smith
Mountain Park
- by Lori Adair*

City of Loveland Natural Areas



*Yellow Warbler
- by Julie Perry Nelson*

Annual Report 2007



City of Loveland

**Natural Areas Program
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Loveland, Colorado 80537
www.CityofLoveland.org**

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