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2019 ANNUAL REPORT LOVELAND OPEN LANDS & TRAILS

LOVELAND OPEN LANDS & TRAILS



CONNECT WITH NATURE

The Loveland Open Lands & Trails Division is committed to improving local and regional conservation and connectivity through trail access and preserving important wildlife habitat and natural resources for the enjoyment of our community.

We provide fun, engaging ways to connect with nature, and 2019 was no exception. A wide range of activities including Preschool Environmental Education Programs (PEEPs), astronomy nights, guided hikes, bird walks, storytelling, fishing, river ecology, trail building and more provided endless opportunities to get outdoors and enjoy some of Loveland's most beautiful sites and scenery.

Much of the year was devoted to restoration of the Big Thompson River corridor, with projects to repair and enhance nearly 2.5 miles impacted by the 2013 flood. Improvements reconnected the river to its floodplain, improved aquatic and riparian habitat for fish and wildlife, stabilized banks and increased potential for future public use and enjoyment.

In 2019, the City acquired 163 new open land acres, installed two new trail bridges, constructed 1.6 miles of soft-surface trails, worked on a number of planning projects for future public access opportunities and started construction on the new 3.3-mile soft-surface trails at Prairie Ridge Natural Area. These efforts will offer new ways for residents to enjoy the outdoors, learn, explore, recreate and steward the environment.

OPEN LANDS & TRAILS TEAM

- **Elizabeth Kayl**, Parks & Recreation Director
- **Marilyn Hilgenberg**, Open Lands & Trails Manager
- **Brian Hayes**, Land Agent
- **Debbie Eley**, Open Lands Resource Specialist
- **Jonathan Huey**, Open Lands & Trails Crew Supervisor
- **Michele Van Hare**, Environmental Education Coordinator
- **Bree Knouse**, Open Lands & Trails Maintenance Worker
- **Thomas Shields**, Open Lands & Trails Maintenance Worker
- **Bryan Harding**, Parks & Recreation Planning Manager
- **Jeanie Vetter**, Parks & Recreation Planner
- **Kelly Zuniga**, Parks & Recreation Planner

MISSION STATEMENT

To identify, preserve, protect, connect and enhance open space, natural areas, trails and wildlife habitat to promote the enjoyment of outdoor activities while advancing environmental stewardship, environmental education and outdoor experiences.



Meadowbrook Natural Area

LOVELAND RECEIVES BLUE GRAMA AWARD FOR OPEN LANDS & TRAILS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Outstanding Achievement by an Organization

The City of Loveland Open Lands & Trails Division was selected by the Colorado Open Space Alliance for the 2019 Blue Grama Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Organization. The award was presented at the annual Colorado Open Space Alliance Conference in Steamboat Springs on September 16th.

The award is given to an organization that has made significant contributions to the conservation of Colorado's open spaces, community engagement and conservation policy. The impact extends beyond Loveland to include Northern Colorado and has lasting implications to open space conservation throughout the state.

Loveland is proud of its dedicated staff who worked diligently over the last five years to grow the program and make a meaningful difference in our community today and for generations to come. We are honored to receive this award as a state leader in open space management and conservation.

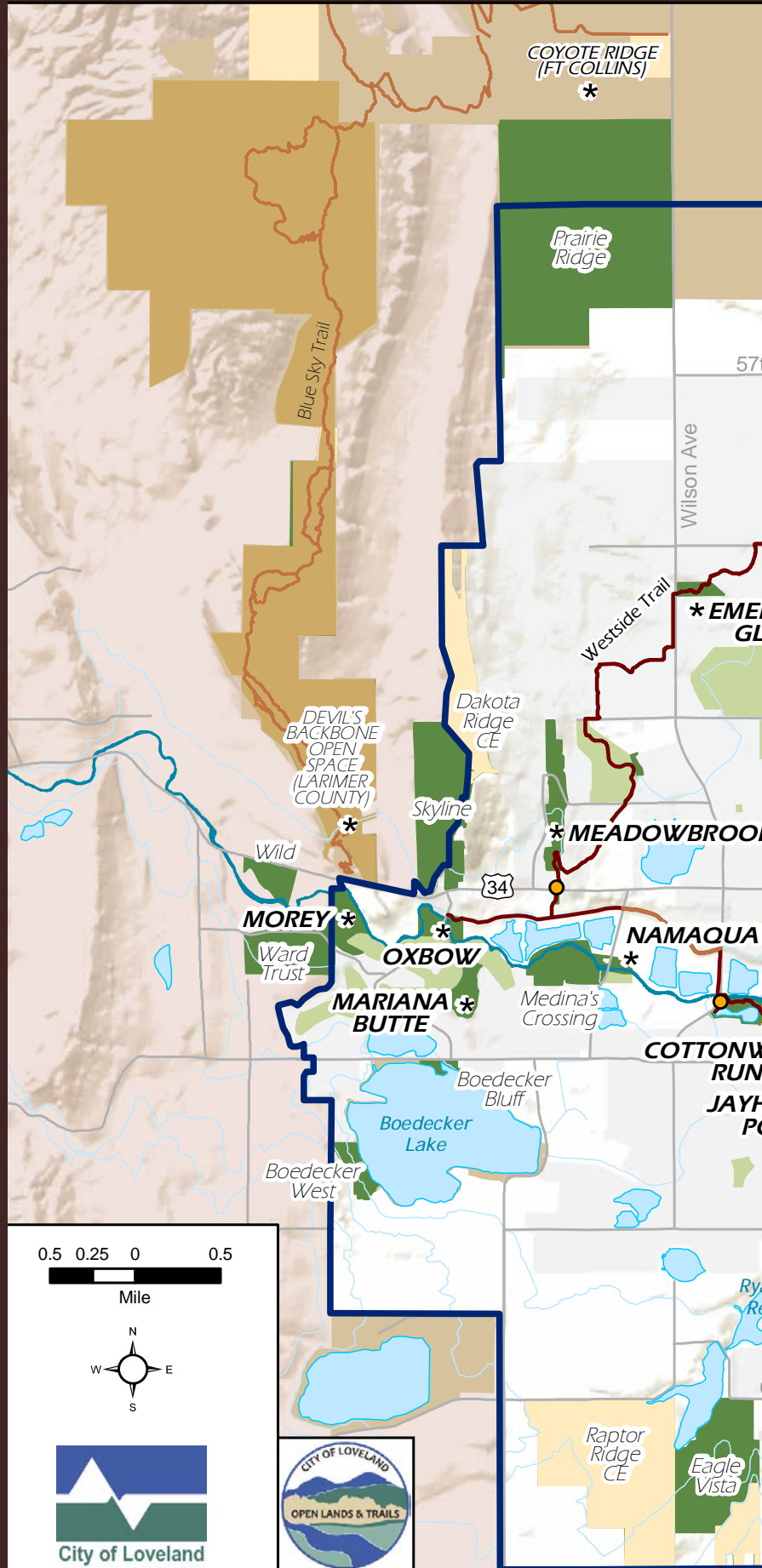
Loveland was recognized for conservation of key Northern Colorado parcels, land management and stewardship, capital improvements and river restoration following the 2013 flood, and leveraging of financial resources including grants, donations, partnerships and volunteers. Ten new miles of trails and nine new public access sites offer multiple opportunities for citizens to connect with nature. An active community engagement program provides educational programming, community outreach and volunteer stewardship as the interface between citizens and our valued open lands.

Loveland has had an amazing five years for open lands and trails and is honored to receive this recognition for its extraordinary accomplishments in such a short period of time. One of the most exciting facets is that Loveland has set the stage and expectation of conservation excellence and has a full list of new acquisitions, stewardship projects, programs and opportunities lined up to achieve this same level of accomplishment for years to come. Loveland has capitalized on the synergy created by the Big Thompson Flood to make Loveland and Northern Colorado a better and more sustainable environmental community.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

EXPLORE YOUR OPEN LANDS & TRAILS

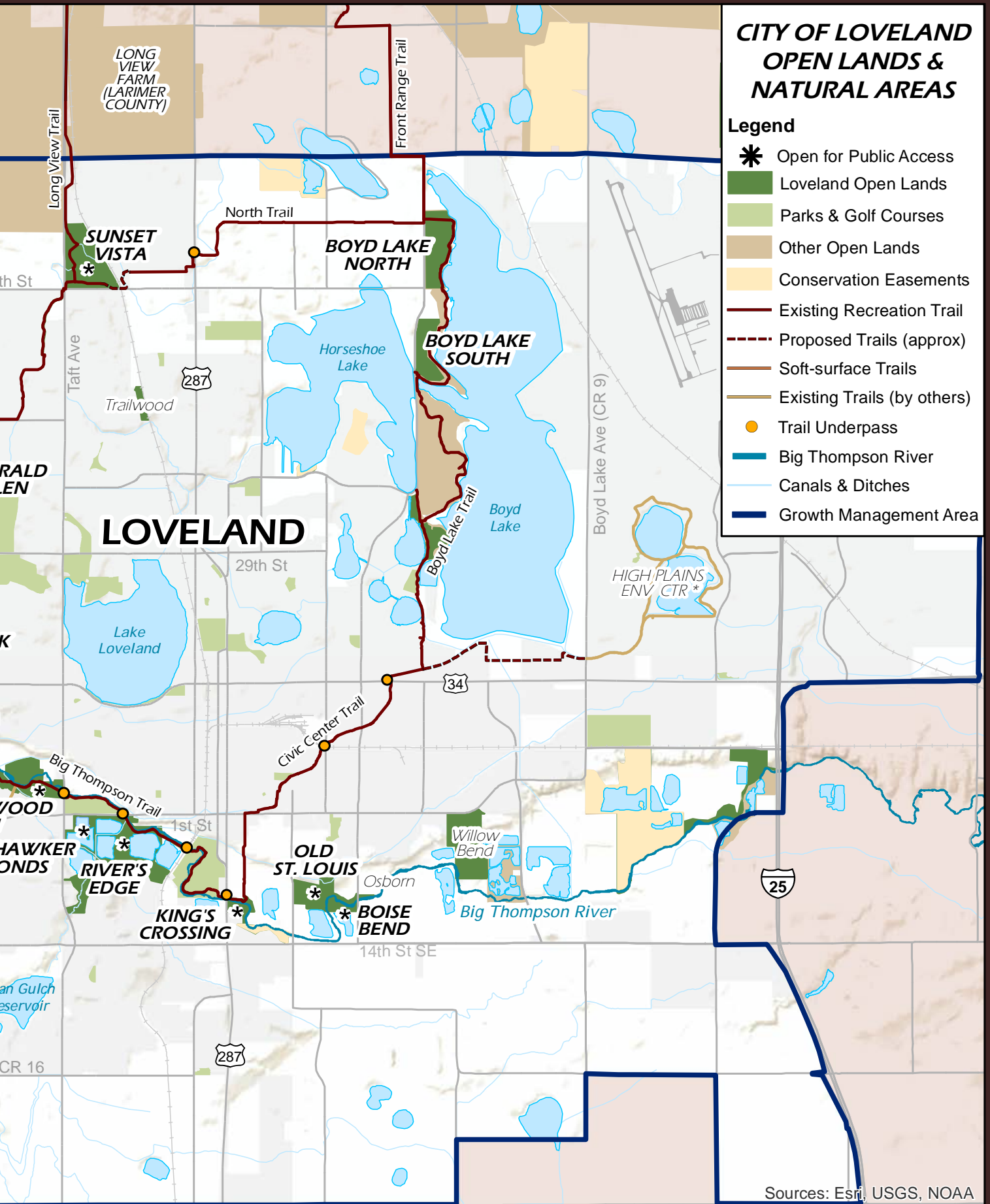
- 23 miles of paved trails
- 20 miles of soft-surface trails
- 14 open lands sites open to the public
- 38 parks and three golf courses



CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS & NATURAL AREAS

Legend

-  Open for Public Access
-  Loveland Open Lands
-  Parks & Golf Courses
-  Other Open Lands
-  Conservation Easements
-  Existing Recreation Trail
-  Proposed Trails (approx)
-  Soft-surface Trails
-  Existing Trails (by others)
-  Trail Underpass
-  Big Thompson River
-  Canals & Ditches
-  Growth Management Area



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

OPEN LANDS & NATURAL AREAS (8,409 acres)

BIG THOMPSON RIVER CORRIDOR (929 acres)

- Morey Wildlife Reserve*
- Wild Natural Area
- Ward Trust Natural Area
- Oxbow Natural Area*
- Medina's Crossing Natural Area
- Namaqua Natural Area*
- Cottonwood Run Natural Area*
- River's Edge Natural Area*
- Centennial Natural Area
- Kings Crossing Natural Area*
- Old St. Louis Natural Area*
- Boise Bend Natural Area*
- Willow Bend Natural Area
- East Big Thompson Natural Areas
- Koppes Conservation Easement
- Waterford Conservation Easement

FOOTHILLS | MOUNTAINS (5,038 acres)

- Mariana Butte Natural Area*
- Skyline Natural Area
- Hidden Valley*
- Devil's Backbone Open Space*/**
- Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Open Space*
- Hermit Park Open Space*/**
- Dakota Ridge Conservation Easement
- Chimney Hollow Conservation Easement**
- Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement**

NEIGHBORHOOD NATURAL AREAS (101 acres)

- Meadowbrook Natural Area*
- Boedecker Bluff Natural Area
- Boedecker West
- Horseshoe-Coulson Conservation Easement
- Trailwood Drive Natural Area

RECREATION TRAIL NATURAL AREAS (179 acres)

- Boyd Lake North and South*
- Emerald Glen Natural Area*
- Fairgrounds Natural Area*
- Miscellaneous recreation trail lands

COMMUNITY SEPARATOR - NORTH (1,495 acres)

- Prairie Ridge Natural Area
- Sunset Vista Natural Area*
- Long View Farm**
- Soaring Vista Natural Area (Fort Collins partnership)
- Walden West Conservation Easement

COMMUNITY SEPARATOR - SOUTH (667 acres)

- Eagle Vista Natural Area
- Lazy J Bar S (Raptor Ridge) Conservation Easement
- Hopkins Conservation Easement
- Dunkin Conservation Easement
- Heron Lakes CE (Larimer County & Berthoud partnership)



Big Thompson River at Cottonwood Run Natural Area



Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park



Mule deer bucks



River's Edge Natural Area

*Open for public access (1,081 acres managed by Loveland)
** Larimer County partnership

ACQUISITIONS & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

EAST BIG THOMPSON RIVER

Two significant Open Land properties acquired in 2019 conserve important riparian habitat along the east Big Thompson River and create opportunities for future river corridor trail connections. The Wagner and Bonser acquisitions build on preservation of the adjacent Kauffman and Koppes Conservation Easements and two State of Colorado properties nearby – Big Thompson Ponds and Simpson Ponds State Wildlife Areas. The conserved properties all contain portions of natural areas identified in the City’s 2008 Natural Area Sites Report and protect valuable river corridor habitat for wildlife, flood mitigation and public access. The 159 acre fee-simple acquisition project included \$385,700 in partnership funding from the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. The purchase will allow for approximately 3.5 miles of trails, including connections with the planned pedestrian underpass at I-25 and access to future trails east of the interstate.



East Big Thompson River acquisition

OLD ST. LOUIS NATURAL AREA

A new paved trail connection in east Loveland provides safe, off-street access to Old St. Louis Natural Area from nearby neighborhoods, with a quarter-mile ADA-accessible trail and bridge over the Farmers Irrigation Ditch. The multiuse trail was made possible by partnership funding and land deeded by Larimer County, private donations and a \$129,000 grant from the Colorado Health Foundation in support of intergenerational physical activity. Residents of Mirasol Senior Community and students from Winona Elementary School will be engaged to visit the site for learning and recreation. 2020 additions will include stormwater improvements, a spotting scope for views of a nearby heron rookery, interpretive signs, benches, natural features inspiring physical engagement and additional trail access to the Big Thompson River.



Farmers Irrigation Ditch at Old St. Louis Natural Area

SUNSET VISTA NATURAL AREA

Improvements at Sunset Vista Natural Area in 2019 provide new opportunities for visitors to enjoy the trails, wetlands, prairie and historical features of this community separator site. Restoration of wetlands continued following volunteer planting projects in 2018, and areas previously farmed for dryland wheat were prepared and planted to begin the process of restoring native short-grass prairie to enhance habitat for wildlife and provide wildlife viewing opportunities for visitors. The property’s historic stone structure also was restored with a new roof, stone pointing and woodwork. Bike racks and restrooms were added to the trailhead area for the convenience of visitors using the city’s recreation trail and the regional Long View Trail.



Restored historic structure at Sunset Vista Natural Area



West Big Thompson River restoration project

RESTORING THE BIG THOMPSON RIVER CORRIDOR

Better Resiliency After the Flood

Restoration of the Big Thompson River corridor was a major focus of 2019 with improvements to nearly 2.5 miles of riparian habitat and increasing resiliency following the 2013 flood. Wild, Oxbow, Medina's Crossing, and Namaqua Natural Areas and neighboring properties benefited from a partnership with the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, cooperation with private landowners, and funding from state and federal grants to improve the river corridor between Glade Road and Wilson Avenue. Restoration helped mitigate damage from extensive grazing and bank erosion, enhance aquatic and riparian habitat and floodplain connectivity, improve water quality and river health and increase potential for future public use and enjoyment.

In concert with the river restoration work, replacement of the Namaqua Avenue bridge by Larimer County improved safety, flood capacity, riparian habitat and fish passage with removal of the Rist-Goss diversion structure and rechanneling of the river corridor to its natural width. The new bridge offers pedestrian sidewalks, wider vehicle and bike lanes and a trail underpass connecting Namaqua Park with Medina's Crossing for future public access.

GREATER RIVER RESILIENCY

The Big Thompson River corridor has long been a conservation focus of the Open Lands & Trails program to protect wildlife habitat, improve public safety, provide flood attenuation and offer passive recreation opportunities. Restoring these areas to pre-flood or better conditions has been our goal.

At Wild Natural Area, the Reach 28 project rechanneled the river to a more resilient and meandering path, stabilized riverbanks and restored native wetland and upland vegetation along a one-mile stretch of City-owned and private lands.

The Reach 30-31 project provided new overflow channels for the river to safely spread out during high water and restored channels, banks and uplands with native species at Oxbow Natural Area, Medina's Crossing, Namaqua Natural Area and other adjacent private lands along the 1.5-mile stretch between Rossum Drive and Wilson Avenue. Also at Medina's Crossing, removal of the Rist-Goss ditch diversion structure eliminated a major barrier to fish passage along this reach. In addition, a new pump replaced the one damaged during the flood to access valuable water rights acquired with the Medina's Crossing property for irrigation of restored areas and cultivated crops.

At Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, Phase II improvements provided new interpretive and wayfinding signage, building renovations, environmental learning stations, trail connections to Round Mountain Trail and the addition of a new flood memorial sculpture.



River restoration at Wild Natural Area



Big Thompson River at Medina's Crossing



Wet well installation for new Medina's Crossing pump



Historic turbines restored at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park



Historic environmental education cabin at Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Site development and ongoing improvements enhance properties for public access and enjoyment of natural areas, trails and open lands throughout the community. Projects improve public safety, convenience and amenities to enrich the experience of visitors and provide opportunities to explore, discover and learn about their natural environment.

PRAIRIE RIDGE NATURAL AREA

Development of Prairie Ridge Natural Area for public access began in September 2019, and the northwest Loveland site is planned to open to the public in May 2020. This project includes the construction of a northbound turn lane on Wilson Avenue, a new 28-vehicle parking area and trailhead, 1.5 miles of new ADA-accessible soft-surface trail and a new 1.8-mile trail connection north to Coyote Ridge Natural Area in the City of Fort Collins. The site will provide the City's first publicly accessible foothills trails.

The multiuse trails will meander through agricultural lands, along wetland corridors and provide new access to hogback ridges and natural areas, offering opportunities for hiking, bicycling, wildlife viewing and equestrian use (via Coyote Ridge Trail). Other site amenities will include a vault restroom, bike racks and interpretive signage and benches along trails. In consideration of the site's sensitive natural resources and surrounding public land uses, dogs and e-bikes will not be permitted at Prairie Ridge.

Loveland and Fort Collins purchased Prairie Ridge in 1999 with assistance from a Great Outdoors Colorado grant. Loveland manages the 785-acre site, including a lease for the agricultural production of dryland wheat, which will continue on the eastern portion of the property outside developed areas and trails.



Prairie Ridge Natural Area foothills views



Refurbished pedestrian bridge at Oxbow Natural Area

OXBOW NATURAL AREA

Along the west Big Thompson River, Oxbow Natural Area provides a quiet refuge from nearby development and is accessible from the paved recreation trail and Rossum Drive. Features include cottonwood and willow-lined river frontage, opportunities for wildlife viewing and bird-watching and fishing access for brown and rainbow trout.

Site improvements in 2019 included the addition of two picnic tables in the shade of a cottonwood tree and renovation of the pedestrian bridge with new railings and ramps for safety and protection. Overflow channels installed as part of the Reach 30 river restoration project will improve resiliency along this stretch of the river during high water events. Sections of the nearby Mariana Butte Trail were resurfaced in 2019, and a new trail and delineated parking along Rossum Drive will more safely connect Oxbow Natural Area to the Hidden Hogback and Mariana Butte Trails in 2020.

CARING FOR CONSERVED LANDS

Land management and stewardship activities are at the core of the Open Lands & Trails Program. With more than 2,700 acres of actively managed open lands, resource projects are key to maintaining and caring for sites to benefit natural resources and improve conditions for visitors.

Stewardship and Resource Protection

RAPTOR NEST MONITORING

The second season of raptor nest monitoring yielded additional valuable data on nest activity, timing, habitat use and bird behavior. Trained volunteers monitored 13 nests of seven different raptor species, with eight of those nests successfully fledging 20 young birds.

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

Two new demonstration gardens were installed at River's Edge Natural Area with assistance from the Colorado Native Plant Society and volunteers to beautify the areas and educate the public about the value and benefits of native plants, which provide food, nectar and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife and reduce water use in landscapes.

OWL & KESTREL NEST BOX CAMS

Nest cams were popular again in 2019, allowing viewers to watch live 24/7 activity while barn owls and kestrels raised their young. Nest boxes were installed by the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI) to provide nesting habitat for these valuable birds of prey. The long-term research project involves banding adult females and young with identifying leg bands to track their movement, nesting activity and nest success over time.

FISH STOCKING

Colorado Parks & Wildlife actively manages fishery resources in Loveland's public lakes and ponds to improve angler experience. Biologists survey and evaluate each pond annually and adaptively manage these resources. At River's Edge Natural Area, more than 4,000 trout were stocked in South Jayhawker and Dragonfly Ponds in 2019. Fish also were stocked in the Willow Bend Natural Area pond in anticipation of opening the site for public access.

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

As a sign of good stewardship, wildlife sightings in open lands were abundant this year, including numerous deer, elk, coyote, wild turkey and the occasional bear, moose and mink.



Volunteers assist with banding young kestrels

Maintenance and Operations

LEASES & LAND MANAGEMENT

A significant feature of open lands management includes leases of agricultural land, property and structures to maximize use of these properties and capitalize on efficient management practices such as weed control, site presence and maintenance.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

As Loveland's inventory of conserved land increases, vegetation management is an ongoing task. The City employs a number of strategies to help control invasive species and maintain native vegetation. In 2019, an intergovernmental agreement was established with the Larimer County Weed District for their expertise, equipment and resources to help control noxious weeds and re-establish native species. In addition, the Larimer County Conservation Corps and Front Range Community College students also help combat invasive Russian olive and Siberian elm trees.



Native plant demonstration garden at River's Edge Natural Area

RESOURCE PLANNING



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River's Edge Natural Area scenic views

PLANNING INITIATIVES

The majority of Loveland Open Lands & Trails capital projects begin with the Planning Division. This team includes a staff of talented landscape architects and planners who serve the Parks & Recreation Department's five divisions. From the creation of initial concepts through the development of design drawings and oversight of construction processes, the Planning Division collaborates with other staff, project consulting and contracting teams, local and regional agencies, other city departments, and of course, the public, to ensure the best possible amenities for the city's residents and visitors.

Connecting Vision to Reality

Major planning initiatives in 2019 included:

- Skyline Natural Area Public Input & Draft Management Plan
- Big Thompson River Master Plan
- Hwy 402 Corridor Plan
- Connect Loveland Transportation Plan
- Parks & Recreation Department Design Standards
- Commission for Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies
- City, Department, and Division Strategic Plans
- Site Addressing and Signage
- GIS/GPS Inventory and Mapping
- NOCO Metropolitan Planning Organization 10-Year Trail Mapping



Public open house meeting for Skyline Natural Area

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

The Open Lands outreach and education team offer numerous opportunities for citizens to connect with nature through a variety of outdoor activities at natural areas. Programs and activities to participate and learn about nature include guided walks and hikes, night activities, outdoor skills courses, stewardship events and community celebrations.

Environmental Education Programs

- **Preschool Environmental Education Programs (PEEPs)** teach our littlest visitors about the wildlife around them. PEEPs reached 399 children and 252 adults in 2019.
- **Urban Wilderness, Plants & Places, Wildlife Around Us, and Critter Scene Investigation** field trip programs were offered for school groups from prekindergarten through 6th grade, reaching a total of 1,300 students and 350 supporting adults with programs about local wildlife, plants, watersheds and geology.

Engaging Loveland in the Outdoors

- **Guided Walks and Hikes, Outdoor Skills Programs and Art in Nature Sketch Hikes** engaged participants of all ages to identify birds, plants and wildlife; learn map and compass/orienteering skills; and study local history and nature journaling.
- **Evening programs** included astronomy nights, full moon hikes and firefly walks at various locations plus storytelling evenings at the River's Edge outdoor amphitheater.

Our **annual events** continued to grow.

- **Bike Month** included a new Bike to Work Day station at Sunset Vista Natural Area | Long View Trail.
- **Fishing Loveland Open Lands** at River's Edge with Loveland Fishing Club and Open Lands volunteers.
- **Dog Days of Summer** to recreate responsibly with pets included hands-on activities such as rally and agility courses, K-9 demo by Loveland Police and vendors exhibiting services, equipment and nutrition options.
- **Open Lands Community Picnic** included evening fun and games with help from Parks & Recreation's mobile recreation trailer.
- **National Trails Day** gave volunteers the opportunity to celebrate trails and help build new trails to provide more public access to open lands.
- **Training partnerships** included expanded certification and training opportunities for those interested in assisting the Open Lands & Trails team as volunteers. Education staff offered Certified Interpretive Guide training for community members wishing to present new programming opportunities. Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers offered crew leader training for those looking to sharpen their stewardship project skills. Biannual training sessions for environmental educators and trail hosts certified volunteers to assist with programs and public outreach throughout the year.



Public outreach event at River's Edge Natural Area



Preschool Environmental Education Program (PEEPs) kids



Guided bird walk at Morey Wildlife Reserve



Visit offerocityofloveland.org to view our calendar and sign up for programs and activities!

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY



Trail building volunteers at Willow Bend Natural Area

Together We Can Achieve More

Loveland Open Lands & Trails is committed to partnerships that align with our overall mission and provide benefits to the community. We are thankful for these partnerships that allow us to further our goal of offering quality nature-related and outdoor opportunities to all members of the community.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH AGENCIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Open Lands & Trails partnered with the following community organizations and agencies in 2019:

- 4-H Land Lovers for the Future
- Arbor Meadows Madison Street HOA
- Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS)
- Colorado Avian Research & Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI)
- Colorado Native Plant Society
- Hewlett Packard Enterprises
- High Plains Environmental Center
- Front Range Community College Invasive Species Project
- Larimer County Conservation Corps
- Loveland Initiative for Monarch Butterflies (LIMB)
- Northern Colorado Astronomical Society
- Rez Church
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Week of Hope (Group Publishing)
- Woodward Governor
- United Way
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Fort Collins Natural Areas Department
- Larimer County Department of Natural Resources
- Loveland Alternative Youth Sentencing Program
- NOCO Bicycle and Pedestrian Collaborative
- NOCO BEET - Building Environmental Education Together



Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute volunteer at barn owl nest box

VOLUNTEERS

The Open Lands & Trails team owes much of its success to the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents each year. The support of these volunteers ranges from providing environmental education and public outreach programs to building trails, assisting with administrative tasks, greeting visitors as trail hosts, removing troublesome weeds and planting native trees. More than 7,050 hours of volunteer time were generously donated by community members and service groups in 2019. Thank you to the 650+ volunteers who helped make Loveland's Open Lands & Trails shine! If you are interested in volunteering but haven't signed up yet, visit offero.cityofloveland.org to learn more.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Open Lands & Trails volunteers helped host a variety of programs and events in 2019. **Public outreach** grew as we increased the number of astronomy and storytelling events and added a special 75th birthday party for Smokey Bear. Participants in the **Certified Interpretive Guide Training** put their new skills to work, designing and offering guided walks on a number of subjects: native plants, orienteering, wildlife, local geology and history. One volunteer offered a storytelling workshop, inspiring two new storytellers to take up the microphone at a summer event.

Environmental educators kept busy with a full calendar of 33 programs scheduled by 18 local schools, including the return of the wildlife program to Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. **Trail hosting** volunteer hours grew by 63%, with many new sites to explore and engage with visitors. The results of increased trail hosting are visible, too, with fewer dogs roaming, less littering, and more visitors enjoying our sites.

Stewardship projects are still the backbone of our volunteer program, with 30 rewarding events in 2019. Gardeners and restoration volunteers planted thousands of native plants, and trailbuilders installed just over one mile of new soft-surface trails. Other endeavors included resource monitoring, photography, trail maintenance, site cleanups and weed removal. Opportunities are available for all ages, abilities and interests. **We hope you'll join us in 2020!**

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION (OLAC)

OLAC makes recommendations regarding the attributable revenue share to the City of Loveland from the Larimer County Open Space Sales & Use Tax, as well as any funds designated by the City for open lands and trail purposes.

2019 Open Lands Advisory Commission

Gale Bernhardt, <i>Chair</i>	Cindy Ticer
Rick Brent	Jean Whittaker
Michael Hinterberg	William Zawacki
Scott James	Don Overcash, <i>City Council Liaison</i>
Ross Livingston	Kathi Wright, <i>City Council Alternate</i>
Darren Pape	Marilyn Hilgenberg, <i>Staff Liaison</i>
Jim Roode, <i>Vice Chair</i>	



Wildlife Around Us environmental education program



Volunteers planting native species in River's Edge demonstration gardens

VOLUNTEER HOURS BY PROGRAM

Stewardship Projects	3,741
Environmental Education	1,029
Community Outreach	992
Trail Hosts	1,077
Administrative & Program Support	212
Total Volunteer Hours	7,051
Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours	\$179,307

TRAILS



New Madison Avenue bridge and trail connection to Old St. Louis

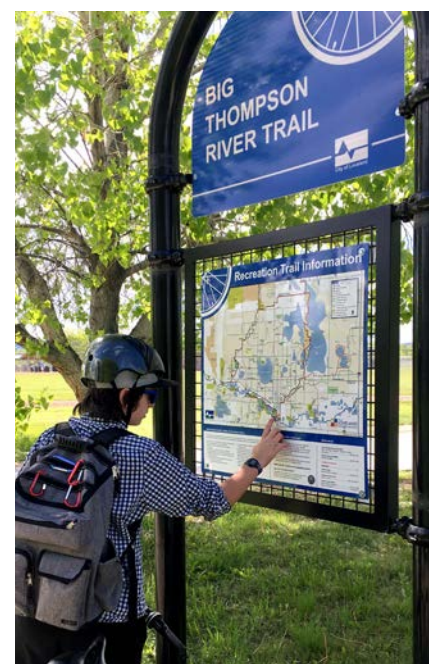
Connecting Loveland to the Outdoors

In the Parks & Recreation 2014 Master Plan, citizens identified access to open lands and trails as one of their top priorities. To meet that community expectation, Loveland provides residents and visitors with a 23-mile paved recreation trail encircling the city, as well as 20 miles of soft-surface trail opportunities at natural areas and parks throughout town. Citizens highly value and rate trails as one of Loveland's top amenities. Trails connect neighborhoods, community amenities and outdoor opportunities in a unique way and significantly contribute to the quality of life in Loveland.

MAPS AND WAYFINDING

To achieve a goal from the 2014 Master Plan and in response to citizen feedback, an inventory of trail system signage was completed in 2019, resulting in updated mapping and a new wayfinding signage program. In cooperation with the Public Works Department, the Loveland bikeways and trails map was revised to reflect recent trail and bikeway additions, new trail section names throughout the system and regional connections including Long View and Front Range Trails.

The inventory of existing wayfinding, regulatory, informational and interpretive signs yielded noticeable gaps in signage, causing user confusion and incorrect routefinding. Revised maps, new wayfinding signs, additional kiosks, striping, mirrors and an updated, comprehensive mile marker system have been added to improve safety, wayfinding and convenience for trail users throughout Loveland and the Northern Colorado regional trail system.



New signage helps trail users find their way

NEW SOFT-SURFACE TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Additions to soft-surface trails will offer new opportunities for visitors to enjoy several natural areas throughout the community. At Willow Bend, volunteers helped add one mile of new soft-surface trail around a former gravel mining pit, which will provide future access to a fishing dock and opportunities for nature exploration and wildlife viewing. At Prairie Ridge, 3.3 miles of new soft-surface trails will provide Loveland's first foothills trail experience and connect to Coyote Ridge in Fort Collins and the regional foothills trail network. A new quarter-mile trail connection from Madison Avenue opened new off-street access to Old St. Louis for east Loveland neighborhoods.



National Trails Day volunteer project

LONG VIEW TRAIL WINS STARBURST AWARD

The Loveland Parks & Recreation Department was honored to receive the Starburst Award from the Colorado Lottery for their partnership with Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins in the construction of the Long View Trail. This unique award recognizes excellence in the use of Lottery proceeds for community and conservation projects. Winners are chosen based on the creativity of the project, the economic and social impact on the community and whether the project achieved its goal. The 4.4-mile Long View Trail traverses four regional natural areas/open lands and provides multimodal off-street connectivity between Fort Collins and Loveland.



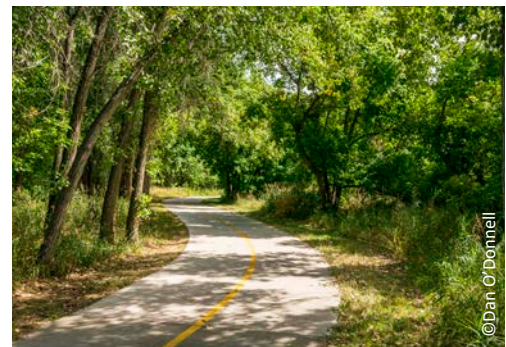
Long View Trail at Sunset Vista Natural Area

FUTURE TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Open Lands & Trails staff made significant strides on closing the last gap in the recreation trail loop at 57th Street and the Burlington Northern Railroad. The Copper Ridge Development east of the railroad tracks has completed a paved trail through the subdivision, and Loveland will construct a paved trail from the Sunset Vista Natural Area parking lot to the railroad tracks in Spring 2020. The BNSF Railroad will complete the final connection over the railroad tracks in mid-2020 to complete this last missing link in the 23-mile trail loop.

Strides also are being made to close another gap in the paved trail system along the Big Barnes Ditch between Wilson and Namaqua Avenues. This half-mile trail segment currently is unpaved, but designs are in the works to add concrete along this section once approvals are secured from the Greeley-Loveland Irrigation Company.

Loveland is working in cooperation with Centerra, the City of Greeley, the State of Colorado and Greeley-Loveland Irrigation Company to secure lands and begin design for a new trail connection from the existing recreation trail at Denver Avenue to a new pedestrian underpass at Boyd Lake Avenue. The Department has applied for multiple grants to help fund the costs of the construction of this section of trail. This link will allow users of the Centerra trail system and Loveland's recreation trail system the opportunity to connect using a multimodal, off-street trail.



Big Thompson River Trail at Cottonwood Run



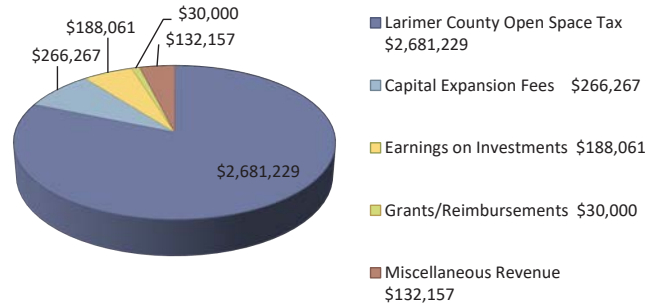
Proposed railroad trail crossing at 57th Street

OPEN LANDS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

OPEN LANDS REVENUE \$3,297,714*

The Open Lands program is funded primarily by Loveland’s share of the Larimer County quarter-cent Open Space Sales Tax, which provided \$2,681,229 in revenue in 2019. The City’s Open Lands Capital Expansion Fees are collected on new residential housing units and generated \$266,267 for acquisitions and capital improvements. Miscellaneous revenue came from utility, property and agricultural leases and reimbursements. Investment earnings amounted to \$132,157.

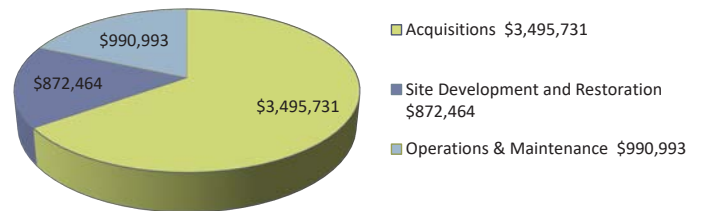
Loveland Open Lands Revenue 2019



OPEN LANDS EXPENDITURES \$5,359,188*

Capital expenditures in 2019 were the result of land acquisition, site development projects, new and rebuilt public access amenities, demolition of structures and installation of soft-surface trails totaling \$4,368,195. Operations and maintenance, encompassing professional services, personnel and supplies required \$990,993.

Loveland Open Lands Expenditures 2019



OPEN LANDS YEAR-END BALANCE \$9,750,285

**2019 unaudited year-end figures*

GRANTS & DONATIONS

Grants and donations significantly contribute to the success of Loveland’s Open Lands Program:

- Colorado Parks & Wildlife Fishing is Fun Grant of \$30,000 to build a youth fishing dock at Willow Bend Natural Area.
- Colorado Health Foundation Grant of \$129,000 for Capital Infrastructure and Intergenerational Physical Activity to construct a new bridge and pedestrian trail from South Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area and promote new intergenerational programming.
- Great Outdoors Colorado Habitat Restoration Grant of \$84,390 for re-establishment of riparian habitat severely impacted by the 2013 Big Thompson River flood at Medina’s Crossing.
- Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District contributed \$50,000 for habitat restoration at Medina’s Crossing.
- Colorado Youth Corps Association and Great Outdoors Colorado Grant of \$18,000 for removal of invasive species at Willow Bend.
- A generous local benefactor donated \$100,000 to assist with land acquisitions and a future trail at Skyline Natural Area.



Mountain Mahogany at Skyline Natural Area

OPEN SPACE SALES TAX

Thank you for supporting the Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax!

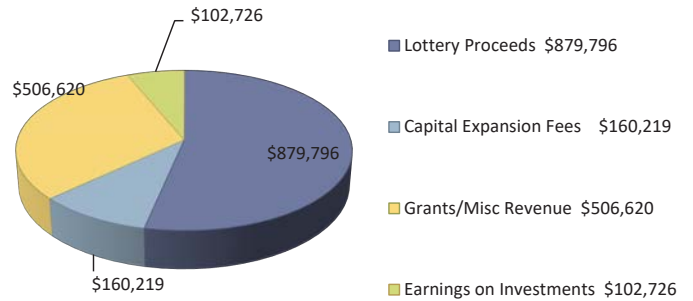
The primary funding source for Loveland’s Open Lands Program is the county-wide quarter-cent Open Space Sales Tax, originally passed in 1995. In 2014, voters supported the extension of the county tax until 2043, passing the referendum with 82% approval. Loveland’s share of this revenue is used for acquisition, development, public access, stewardship and management of open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat and trails in and around Loveland.

TRAILS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

TRAILS REVENUE \$1,649,361*

The Trails program is funded primarily by Loveland’s share of Colorado Lottery Dollars, which provided \$879,796 in revenue in 2019. The City’s Trails Capital Expansion Fees are collected on new residential housing units and generated \$160,219 for acquisitions and capital improvements. Grants and investment earnings increased in 2019, amounting to \$609,346.

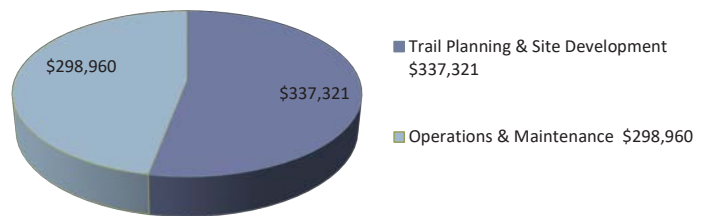
Loveland Trails Revenue 2019



TRAILS EXPENDITURES \$636,281*

Capital expenditures in 2019 for trail construction totaled \$337,321, including the Madison Avenue connector trail to Old St. Louis, Namaqua Avenue pedestrian underpass and planning for future trail construction. Operations and maintenance encompassing professional services, personnel and supplies required \$298,960.

Loveland Trails Expenditures 2019



YEAR-END BALANCE FOR TRAIL PROJECTS & OPERATIONS \$6,578,134

**2019 unaudited year-end figures*

GRANTS

A \$200,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant through Colorado Parks & Wildlife as well as a \$260,000 Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant were awarded to construct a new trailhead, parking lot and soft-surface trail at Prairie Ridge Natural Area.



Long View Trail



COLORADO LOTTERY

Thank you for supporting the Colorado Lottery!

The primary funding source for Loveland’s recreation trail program has been lottery dollars received in the Conservation Trust Fund. Loveland’s share of revenues derived from State Lottery games are restricted for recreation sites, facilities and projects.

On the Horizon for Open Lands & Trails

- Prairie Ridge Natural Area foothills trails and connection to Coyote Ridge Natural Area in Fort Collins
- Boedecker Bluff soft-surface trails and bridge for west Loveland neighborhood natural area access
- Willow Bend fishing dock and soft-surface trails for east Loveland neighborhood natural area access
- Acquisition of key open lands in west and east Loveland for conservation of additional corridors and connections
- Completion of last missing section of recreation trail at 57th Street from Sunset Vista Natural Area



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LOVELAND OPEN LANDS & TRAILS a Division of Loveland Parks & Recreation

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