

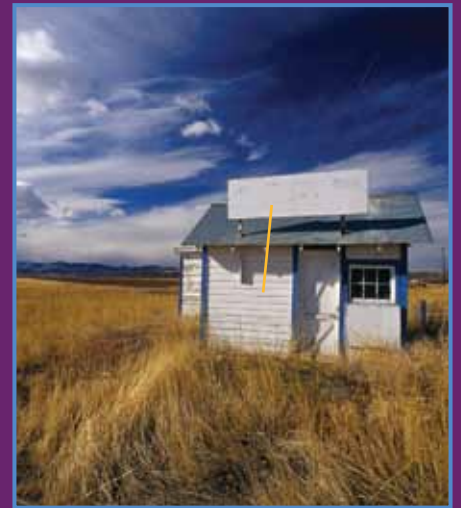


Larimer County Public Works Division

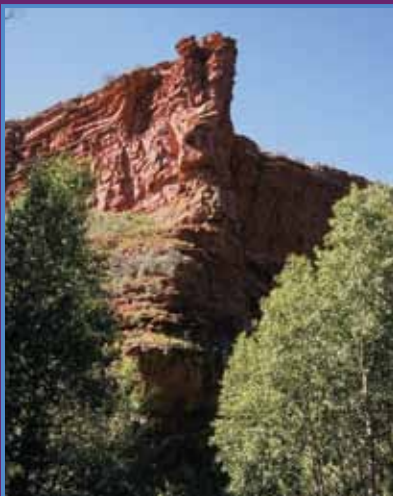
Department of Natural Resources

Visitor Services / Open Lands /
Weed Management & Forestry

Annual Report 2008



*The Great Outdoors
– Delivered*



A message from the Director

Take It Outdoors!

Dear Larimer County Citizens,

One of the pleasures of living in Northern Colorado is enjoying the great outdoors. We are so fortunate to live in an area with so many outdoor opportunities.

Whether it is hiking the newly constructed Kruger Rock Trail at Hermit Park Open Space that will give you one of the best views of the majestic peaks in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Estes Valley below, or watching a sunset from your boat at the ever-popular Horsetooth Reservoir County Park, we are certainly blessed with the Great Outdoors!

Larimer County government officials

2008 Board of County Commissioners:

Glenn Gibson, Kathay Rennels, Randy Eubanks

2009 Board of County Commissioners:

Kathay Rennels, Steve Johnson, Tom Donnelly

County Manager: Frank Lancaster

Public Works Director: Marc Engemoen

This past year, over 1.6 million visitors experienced the outdoors on open spaces and parks owned and operated by Larimer County. In 2009, we will continue to offer our visitors new and exciting opportunities such as the chance to visit and hike our newest area, Red Mountain Open Space. We also will have new camper services buildings at Horsetooth Reservoir that will offer showers and flush restrooms to our campers for the first time ever!

On behalf of the staff of the Department of Natural Resources, *Take It Outdoors* in a park or open space in Larimer County this year!

Many thanks to the citizen boards, volunteers, department staff, and the Board of County Commissioners who



Management team with 2008 Larimer County Commissioners. Top from left: Deb Wykoff, Tim D'Amato, Gary Buffington, Marc Engemoen, Dan Rieves, Mark Caughlan, K-Lynn Cameron. Bottom from left: Randy Eubanks, Kathay Rennels, Glenn Gibson. Photo: Charlie Johnson

support our efforts in delivering the Great Outdoors to our citizens and visitors in Larimer County.

Gary K. Buffington

Director, Dept. of Natural Resources

Education Strategic Plan Complete

The Education Program began in 2001 as a means to manage the burgeoning Volunteer Naturalist Program. Now, seven years later, it has evolved significantly. In order to make sure the growing Education Program would continue to meet departmental needs, a strategic planning process began in mid 2007 and wrapped up in late 2008. Internal stakeholders were brought together to define how it will serve the department into the future.

Exciting new opportunities were identified, ensuring the program will continue to evolve. For instance, in 2008 the types of events and activities available to the

public expanded to include recreation clinics and art programs. In addition, the Education Coordinator and a sub-committee of youth will create a Junior Ranger Program in 2009 so that families staying at reservoir parks have more activities to do.

The goal of the strategic planning process was to ensure that the Education Program would continue to meet the diverse needs of the Department of Natural Resources. Now complete, this plan will guide the program for the next three to five years as it provides top-quality educational opportunities for the visitors and citizens of Larimer County.



School kids learn about the Devil's Backbone. Photo: Rob Novak

“Volunteering is a GREAT THING! Good for the public by keeping the parks clean and regulated and helps me with my health by getting me outside and moving.” Barbara Schuldt, Volunteer Park Ranger Assistant

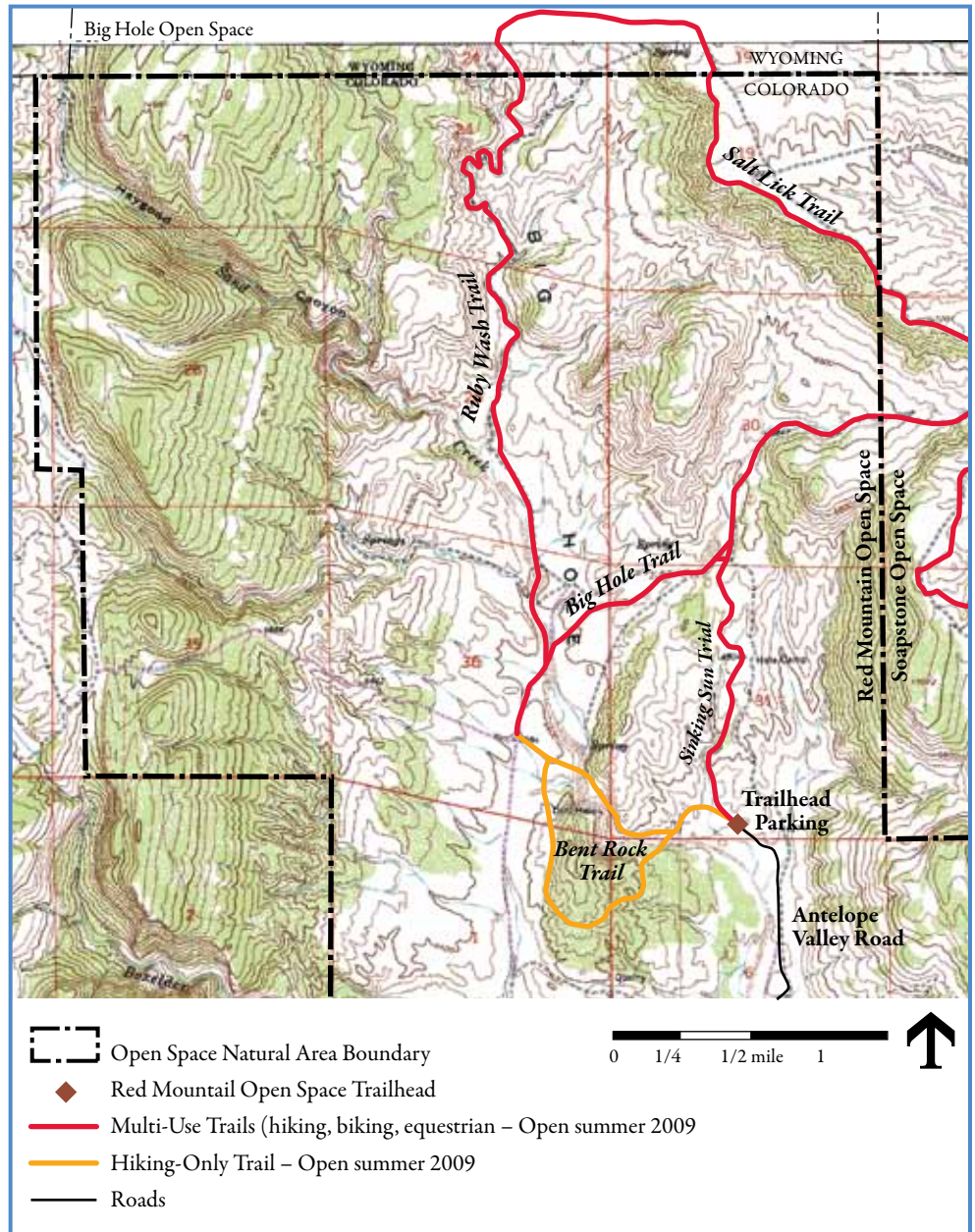
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| 1 | 2 | 3 |
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- Cover:
 1. Fossil Creek Regional Open Space, Mac McNeill
 2. Hermit Park Open Space, Charlie Johnson
 3. Buckeye, Walt Hubis
 4. Red Mountain Open Space, Charlie Johnson
 5. Horsetooth Reservoir, Sue Burke

Something's Coming on the Northern Horizon— Grand Opening of Red Mountain Open Space

What might have seemed far off a couple years ago when Red Mountain Open Space was purchased is just around the corner! Slated to open to the public in summer 2009, the trails and trailhead at Red Mountain Open Space have been under construction over the past year. Visitors to the open space this coming summer will be able to hike, bike, and horseback ride on trails that slowly unfold to reveal diverse landforms, vast views, and intimate geologic formations and wildflowers.

Part of the highly successful Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project, that to date has protected over 55,000 acres of lands boasting high-quality ecological and cultural resources, Red Mountain Open Space comprises 14,980 acres. Both Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area (managed by the City of Fort Collins) will provide public access while protecting important resource values and continued ranching in partnership with local landowners.

Specifically, Red Mountain Open Space will provide a trailhead with parking for 30 vehicles and 10 horse trailers, and will include an outdoor classroom, educational displays, and picnic shelters. Over 14 miles of trails linking to the trail system at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area will provide a diversity of experiences and sense of adventure in this remarkable landscape. Join us at the grand opening celebration in June or come discover this area on your own beginning summer 2009!



Come Celebrate the Grand Unveiling of Red Mountain Open Space!

June, 2009

Festivities will include:
Presentations and guided hikes to learn about this amazing and dynamic landscape, plants that parallel geology, and a culture over 12,000 years old!

For more details check:
www.larimer.org/naturalresources



Wildflowers. Photo: David Coulson

“The acquisition of RMOS will give so many people the gift I have had for over 30 years. That is the opportunity to experience one of the most beautiful landscapes in Northern Colorado.”

Kathay Rennels,
County Commissioner District 1

Horsetooth Mountain Park Becomes Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

Vibrant open vistas, challenging trails, rare butterflies, vivid history, and a thriving ecosystem...

Welcome to your own Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, a breathtaking 2,711-acre adventure waiting to be explored. People, livestock, and wildlife have enjoyed this special mountain for centuries; and when the first parcel was placed under the care of Larimer County in the mid 1980s, thanks to visionary CSU students and a 1-cent sales tax, it was cause for rejoicing. The beautiful acreage surrounding this landmark was no longer under threat of development.

From 1998-2003, Larimer County utilized the ¼-cent *Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax* to acquire Hughey, Culver, and Soderberg Open Spaces, providing a buffer from surrounding development and offering greater trail accessibility. In 2006, the Horsetooth Mountain resource management plan was updated to maintain the property on a level commensurate with park resources. Consequently, the park was designated as open space in 2008, so



The new entrance sign designates Horsetooth Mountain as a Larimer County Open Space. Photo: Sue Burke

resource management funding not covered by user fees is provided by open space tax dollars. We welcome Horsetooth Mountain into our portfolio of protected open spaces, and cheers to

Larimer County citizens who have ensured long-term stewardship of the lovely masterpiece now known as *Horsetooth Mountain Open Space*.

A Thin Black Line... Prescribed Burning for Grassland Restoration



Controlling cheatgrass with fire. Photo: Charlie Johnson

If you've noticed changes this past year at Devil's Backbone Open Space, know they are for the better! Non-native species, primarily cheatgrass (a highly invasive grass), have dominated some areas here. One primary stewardship goal is restoration of native, mixed-grass prairie to this popular open space west of Loveland.

Tools used to achieve this goal are prescribed fire, grazing, and herbicide treatment. Although the objectives may take several years to realize, benefits include:

- Restoring native mixed-grass prairie, hence improving wildlife habitat;
- Improving aesthetics;
- Educating the public about the roles of fire, grazing, and herbicides in restoration.

With its early germination and rapid growth, cheatgrass out-competes native grasses. Fire as a natural disturbance of native grasslands consumes dead plants from previous years and kills cheatgrass seeds in the soil. Less cheatgrass means less competition for resources (i.e., water, nutrients, light) means native plants gain stronger footholds.

Prescribed fires, as a restoration management strategy, were conducted in the fall of 2007 and in the spring and fall of 2008. Partners were: Larimer County Open Lands Program, Larimer County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, Colorado State Forest Service, and local fire departments.

Come back and watch the change!

Projects on the Ground

When the Parks Master Plan was completed in 2007, it identified and prioritized several park improvement projects. One of the departmental goals was to complete many of the priority-one projects in the first five years of the plan. As we stand today, almost every priority-one project will be completed in the first two years of the plan!

2008 was the busiest construction year the department has ever seen. Visitors to Carter Lake County Park watched the completion of the Carter Lake Marina project with its new access road, parking, and marina store and maintenance facilities. What a facelift to the north end of the lake! Visitors to the boat-in campsites at Horsetooth Reservoir County Park saw new back-country restrooms, making this unique camping opportunity even more desirable. This fall, construction crews were out making ADA retrofits to help those with mobility limitations enjoy even more of our facilities.

In 2009 construction projects will continue as Horsetooth Reservoir County Park gets two new flush-restroom/shower buildings, one in Inlet Bay and one in South Bay. Campers visiting South Bay will have the option of staying at a new, full-service campground with eight campsites featuring water, sewer, and

electrical hookups, the department's first full-service campsites. South Bay will also add four electrical campsites.

The master plan is jumping off the pages and hitting the ground at your favorite park. Come check out these exciting projects!



A new marina store welcomes Carter Lake visitors. Photo: Staff

From the Chair of the Parks Advisory Board

An Exciting Year!

This past year was an exciting one for the Parks Advisory Board. Parks Master Plan projects started and came to fruition, such as Horsetooth Reservoir County Park's new camper services facilities and Carter Lake County Park's new marina building. We also saw the opening of Hermit Park Open Space, a hybrid property managed both as "protected open space" and as a "park" with developed campgrounds and cabins.

The Board spent much time and took much public comment on the disposition of county-owned properties in the Big Thompson Canyon, properties purchased after the 1976 flood. We toured properties in question and with

staff developed and approved criteria to evaluate parcels for sale or retention. We are confident this very open process serves private landowners and the public into the future.

The Board believes the Visitor Services Program provides excellent service and value for Larimer County residents and visitors. It is nearly self-supporting with the bulk of funding provided by fees, the county's share of state lottery dollars, the federal government, and grants, producing little impact on the county's general fund.

Linda Knowlton

Linda Knowlton,
Chair, Parks Advisory Board



A special thanks to our **Parks Advisory Board Members**. Top from left: Barry Lewis, Tom Miller, *Mark Caughlan, Dave Coulson, Frank Cada, *Dan Rieves, Russell Fruits, *Gary Buffington. Front from left: *Debra Wykoff, Linda Knowlton, Rob Harris, Rich Harter, Ivan Andrade, Chad LaChance. * = Staff Photo: Sue Burke

“Great strides were made last year on Hermit Park Open Space and the Master Plan. While future opportunities will be tempered by economic challenges, I have no doubt our outstanding staff is up to the task.”

Dave Coulson, Parks Advisory Board Member

Getting Out and About in Your Parks and Open Spaces!

Carter Lake County Park

Carter Lake with its new marina complex is 1,100 acres of water fun surrounded by 1,000 acres of public lands with pine forests and hogback ridges. Just southwest of Loveland it is a premier recreation destination for the entire state. With motor boating, water skiing, sailing, fishing, rock climbing, scuba diving, swimming, hiking, tent camping, and electric campsites, it is one stop for every desire.



Eagle's Nest Open Space

Eagle's Nest and nearby Livermore are remnants of the Old West. A long documented history of ranching lives on today through a grazing lease that operates side by side with five miles of recreation trails and 755 acres of wildlife habitat. The Eagle Watch Program offers views of nesting golden eagles. The winter CSI (Critter Scene Investigation) Program lets visitors identify wildlife tracks.



Hermit Park Open Space

Unique among the county parks and open spaces, Hermit Park Open Space is 1,362 acres of high-country forest, meadows, and granite ridges two miles southeast of Estes Park. Along with great views and wildlife there are camper cabins, rustic campsites, RV sites, and hiking, biking, and riding trails. A group use area makes a perfect location for weddings, family reunions, and company picnics.



Devil's Backbone Open Space and Rimrock Open Space

The Devil's Backbone has become an icon for suburban open space. The fabled rock formation is the backdrop for seven great miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding. It is also the gateway to the Blue Sky Trail going north to 4,000 acres of Rimrock Open Space, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, and Coyote Ridge Natural Area. Nineteen miles of trails wind through the foothills valleys and red rock ridges that are part of this wild and large complex of protected wildlife habitat which is so close to the urban Front Range.



Flatiron Reservoir County Park

Everything about this 47-acre reservoir says "relax" with shady tent and electrical hookup campsites, camper cabins, individual or group picnic areas, and fishing. Looking up through the shimmering leaves the red rock cliffs of the Flatiron formation are constantly changing hues from sunrise to sunset.



Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

The 29 miles of hiking, biking and riding trails through 2,711 acres of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space provide views through ponderosa pines, across hogback ridges and Horsetooth Reservoir below, to the horizon. Climbing up to the legendary Horsetooth Rock the view west is layer upon layer of rising peaks. Being just minutes away Fort Collins makes this a popular destination any time of the day or year.



Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space

So accessible and so close. Fossil Creek Reservoir is on the southeast side of Fort Collins and provides the opportunity to view more than 210 species of birds from two miles of trails, observation decks, and viewing blinds. Common visitors are bald eagles and migrating waterfowl.



Horsetooth Reservoir County Park

Beauty and recreation combine on the 2,000 acres of blue water stretched between foothills ridges above Fort Collins.



Recreation at a Glance	Acres	Vehicle Permit Required	Camping with Permit	Camper Cabins	Camping/Cabin Reservations	Electrical Hookups	Sanitary Dump Station	Back Country Camping	Miles of Trail
Carter Lake County Park	2,100	●	● A		●	●	●		4
Devil's Backbone Open Space	2,198								12.5
Eagle's Nest Open Space	755								5
Flatiron Reservoir County Park	247	●	● A	● A	●	●			
Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space	843								2 A
Glade Park County Park	3								
Hermit Park Open Space	1,362	●	●	● A	●		●		5.5
Horsetooth Mountain Open Space	2,711	●						●	29
Horsetooth Reservoir County Park	3,900	●	● A	● A	●	●	●	●	1
Pinewood Reservoir County Park	427	●	● A		●				
Pleasant Valley Trail at Lions' Open Space	20								2 A
Ramsay-Shockey Open Space	177	●							4 A
Rimrock Open Space	472								7

A — Meets Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

Waterskiing, boating, fishing, a swim beach, picnic areas, hiking, rock climbing, electric and non-electric campsites, and camper cabins make this reservoir one of the most popular recreation areas in the state. Continual improvement of the facilities has created a premier park.

**Pinewood Reservoir
County Park**

There is picnicking, camping, and some great fishing in the intimate setting of this 327-acre park and 100-acre reservoir located in the mountains southwest of Loveland. Pine-covered slopes coming down to the water make an ideal location for an afternoon outing or a week-long camping trip.



A study in blue and red - a lone hiker at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Photo: Harry Strbarsky

**Pleasant Valley Trail and
Lions' Open Space**

At Lions' Open Space on the Poudre River in Laporte you can picnic and fish, or walk or bike the Poudre River Trail east to Fort Collins or the Pleasant Valley Trail west to Watson Lake at Bellvue. Interpretive signs provide information about the early, nearby settlements.



**Ramsay-Shockey
Open Space**

Seeming much larger than its 177 acres, the wooded slopes of Ramsay-Shockey have four



miles of trails above Pinewood Reservoir with numbered stops corresponding to an interpretive brochure available at the trailhead.

**Guided Public Hikes
and Tours**

Get ready to lace up your hiking boots and sneakers because we are outward bound! Larimer County Natural Resources is offering a plethora of guided public hikes and tours in 2009 with themes including the full moon, bald and golden eagle watches, wildlife, wildflowers, and Critter Scene Investigations (animal tracking). Some new inclusions are recreation clinics and art programs, as well as preview tours of our Chimney Hollow Open Space, slated to open to the public in 2015.



Are you involved in a school, class, or community group such as 4-H? You may request a Volunteer Naturalist-led program by contacting Rob Novak at 970-679-4561 a month in advance.

For more details about events and volunteer opportunities, check our website, the local paper, or simply subscribe to the Department of Natural Resources monthly flyer at www.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm and select *Natural Resources Monthly Flyer*.

Photo Thumbnails Page 6:

- 1. Sue Burke
- 2. Sol Miller
- 3. Bill Schultze
- 4. Judy Swenson
- 5. Gregory Mayse
- 6. Gregory Mayse

Page 7:

- 7. Rick Price
- 8. Charlie Johnson
- 9. Cindy Claggett
- 10. Unknown
- 11. Scott Bacon
- 12. Patricia Brennan

Hiking	Horseback Riding	Mountain Biking	Leashed Dogs Allowed	Boating	Boat Ramp	Marina	Fishing	Swimming Beach	Bird Watching	Picnic Tables	Drinking Fountains	Restrooms
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● A	●	● A
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“One of the things that made the Laramie Foothills Mountain to Plains Project so compelling when GOCO provided Legacy funding in 2004 was that the public would be able to access and enjoy a portion of this incredible landscape via an extensive trails system. Granting additional funding to complete that trail work in 2008 was the next logical investment of GOCO! Lottery dollars.”

Lise Aangeenbrug, GOCO Executive Director



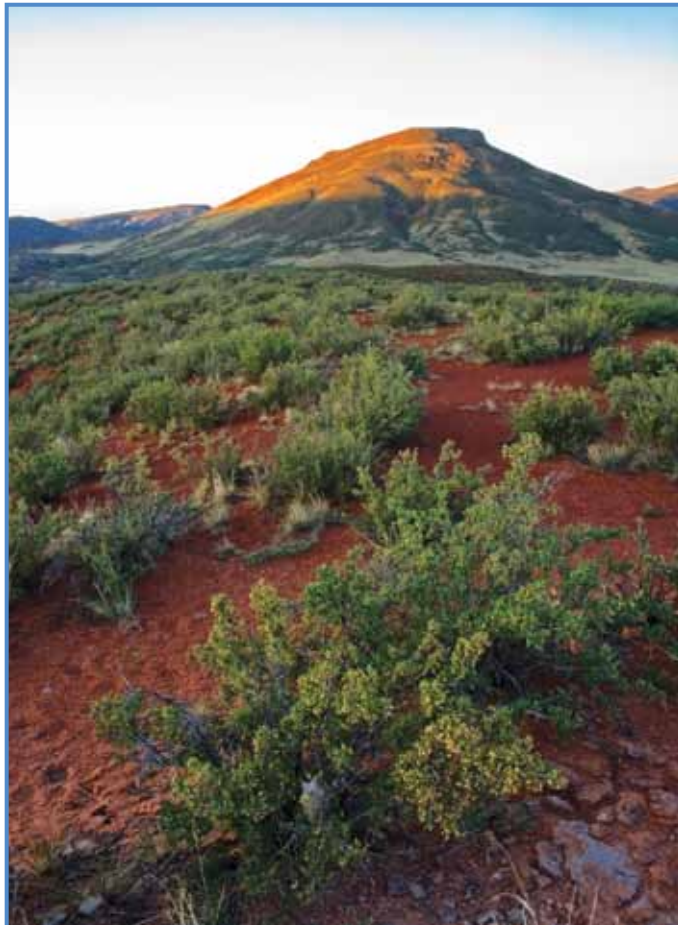
Carter Lake. Photo: Sue Burke



Fossil Creek. Photo: Mac McNeill



Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Photo: Rick Price



Red Mountain Open Space. Photo: Gregory Mayse



Moose. Photo: Rick Goltz



Hiking. Photo: Charlie Johnson

“The Open Lands of Larimer County are as valuable as any treasure. They are spread throughout the County and provide habitats that can be enjoyed by “explorers” of all ages. I have loved being on the Open Lands Advisory Board because it is a unique opportunity to work with county leaders, expert staff, and county residents who volunteer to share their knowledge. Open Lands are a resource that contributes to the quality of life that we can all enjoy. They help make our communities more desirable places to live and elevate local real estate values.”

Jean Carpenter, Open Lands Advisory Board Member At-Large, 2003 – 2009

“A visit here kind of sets you up for the rest of the day.”

Beverly Harrison, from Boulder County, visitor at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space



“The lands protected by the Larimer County Open Space Sales Taxes are gems, a string of diamonds and pearls, that will be a legacy for all future residents of the county.”

Bob Streeter, Open Lands Advisory Board Member At-Large, 2003 – 2009



Hermit Park Open Space. Photo: Walt Hubis



Horsetooth Reservoir. Photo: Jacquie Hadwick



Sailboats. Photo: Walt Hubis



Carter Lake. Photo: Charlie Johnson

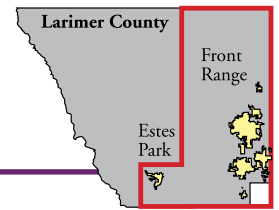
“It is important to learn about our environment. If we don't, then someday maybe houses will take over the world, even in the mountains.”

4th grader from Cottonwood Plains Elementary School

“We were able to touch the sandstone and see how it may fleck off. This helped us see that the area was once an ancient seabed.”

4th grader from Dunn Elementary School

2008 Improvements



Facility Development

A. Carter Lake.

The Carter Lake marina complex was completed, including access road, parking lot, marina store, marina maintenance facilities, and marina onsite caretaker residence.

2008 Project Cost: \$2,478,000

Partners:

Larimer County Engineering Dept.

Bureau of Reclamation: \$791,000

Conservation Trust Fund (Lottery): \$1,498,000

Larimer County Dept. of Natural Resources:
\$189,000

B. Hermit Park Open Space.

Development of recreation facilities continued as outlined in the management plan, including group use pavilion, turn lanes on Highway 36, routing and realignment road work, Kruger Rock Trail, Homestead Meadows Connector trailhead, and modular office building.

2007–2008 Project Cost: \$1,361,000

Partners:

Larimer County Engineering Dept.

Larimer County Road & Bridge Dept.

Conservation Trust Fund (Lottery): \$80,850

Friends of Larimer County Parks & Open

Lands/Private Donors: \$55,700

Larimer County Open Lands: *\$1,224,450*

C. Devil's Backbone Open Space.

The Luke Altmix Simmons outdoor classroom was constructed, with all materials and construction donated by his family.

2008 Project Cost: \$70,000

Partners: Luke Altmix Simmons family

Weitz Construction, Denver

Larimer County Open Lands: *\$0*

*** Lead agency on project**



6th graders from Walt Clark Middle School gather at the Luke Altmix Simmons classroom to learn about the geologic timeline. Photo: Rob Novak

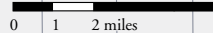
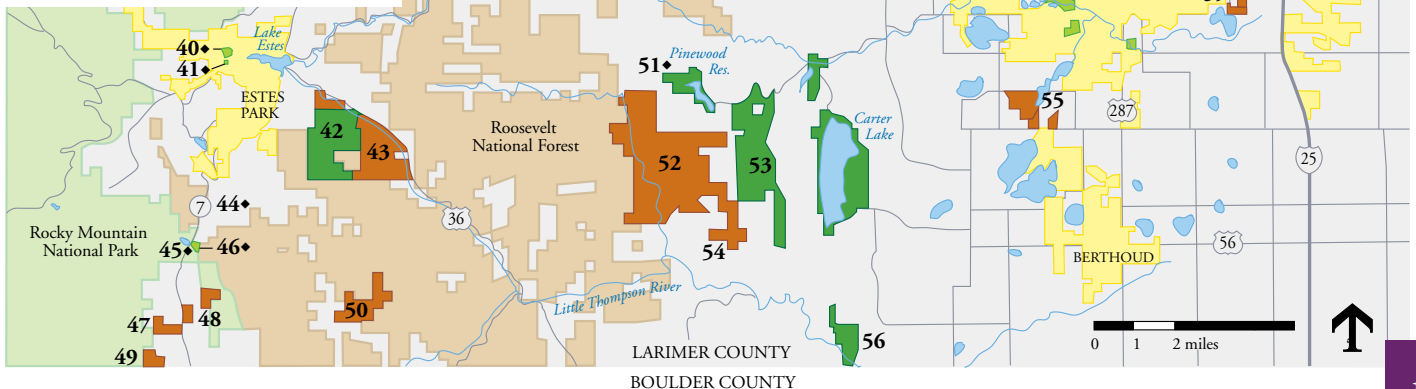


Local schools benefit from the donation of an outdoor classroom at the Devil's Backbone Open Space. Photo: Paul Hedquist

1996-2008 Acquisitions & Partnerships

- 1 Red Mountain Open Space
- 2 Ackerman II CE
- 3 Ackerman CE
- 4 Roberts Ranch CE
- 5 Tepee Rings CE
- 6 Buckeye Agricultural Partnership CEs
- 7 Miller-Simon CE
- 8 Ackerman Land & Livestock CE
- 9 Bradley CE
- 10 Miller CE
- 11 Eagle's Nest Open Space
- 12 Eagle's Nest CE
- 13 Fonken CE
- 14 Kerbel Farm CE
- 15 Bee Farm CE
- 16 Weber Farm CE
- 17 Kraft CE
- 18 Lions' Open Space
- 19 Pleasant Valley Trail
- 20 Soderberg Open Space
- 21 Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- 22 Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area
- 23 Spring Canyon Covenants
- 24 Rim Rock CE
- 25 Siefke CE
- 26 Coyote Ridge Natural Area
- 27 Rimrock Open Space
- 28 Prairie Ridge Natural Area
- 29 Long View Farm Open Space
- 30 Fossil Creek-Everitt North CE
- 31 Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space
- 32 Fossil Creek-Everitt South CE
- 33 Fossil Creek-Dickinson CE
- 34 River Bluffs Open Space
- 35 Boyd Lake State Park Addition
- 36 Sylvan Dale Ranch CE
- 37 Indian Creek CE
- 38 Devil's Backbone Open Space
- 39 Kauffman CE
- 40 Knoll-Willows Open Space
- 41 American Legion Open Space
- 42 Hermit Park Open Space
- 43 Meadowdale CE
- 44 Homer Rouse Trail
- 45 Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
- 46 Lily Lake (Roessler)
- 47 Childers/Henning CE
- 48 Mills/Kiley CE
- 49 Cohen CE
- 50 Smitherman Ranch CE
- 51 Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
- 52 Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE
- 53 Chimney Hollow Open Space
- 54 Harper CE
- 55 Ryan's Gulch CE
- 56 Red-tail Ridge Open Space

- Open Space (OS) Managed by Larimer Co.
- Other Open Space
- Conservation Easements (CE)
- ◆ Project Currently Open to the Public



Open Space Tax Revenues Benefit All of Larimer County

The 1/4-cent *Help Preserve Open Spaces* (HPOS) sales and use tax revenue is shared with the County's eight municipalities. The tax continues through 2018, and is not imposed on food or prescription drugs. The total revenue collected to date is over \$105 million.

Distributions to municipalities are based upon the highest yield of either population or sales tax generation. This revenue sharing agreement ensures that residents throughout the county receive benefits from the Open Space sales tax.

Annual Revenue Receipt of Open Space Tax Dollars*

	Larimer CO	Berthoud	Estes Park	Fort Collins	Johnstown	Loveland	Timnath	Wellington	Windsor
1996	2,259,975	71,154	161,905	2,107,473	–	847,210	4,221	29,848	–
1997	2,485,421	80,969	178,198	2,319,562	–	932,139	4,646	32,520	–
1998	2,707,553	87,574	193,453	2,487,606	–	1,003,872	5,025	40,557	–
1999	3,067,810	101,539	224,779	2,850,066	–	1,146,823	5,732	47,494	–
2000	3,294,869	110,862	222,608	3,109,001	–	1,234,060	5,742	53,444	–
2001	3,565,146	122,889	229,886	3,323,372	–	1,321,205	5,887	64,589	–
2002	3,527,084	124,139	218,802	3,235,748	–	1,304,378	5,599	67,642	–
2003	3,532,580	123,913	218,445	3,205,119	–	1,314,655	7,083	66,730	–
2004	3,750,211	126,810	234,908	3,374,671	9,457	1,405,098	11,480	75,185	17,416
2005	3,811,306	127,480	239,502	3,417,517	8,932	1,432,898	11,684	79,698	20,115
2006	4,033,795	136,930	250,110	3,599,786	11,965	1,506,477	13,196	77,782	13,379
2007	4,152,187	129,513	252,524	3,529,570	34,285	1,554,153	10,563	122,196	54,760
2008	3,956,426	120,359	240,167	3,189,107	38,772	1,470,884	9,121	122,125	55,744
Total	44,144,364	1,464,132	2,865,286	39,748,597	103,411	16,473,851	99,980	879,810	161,413

* These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2009. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

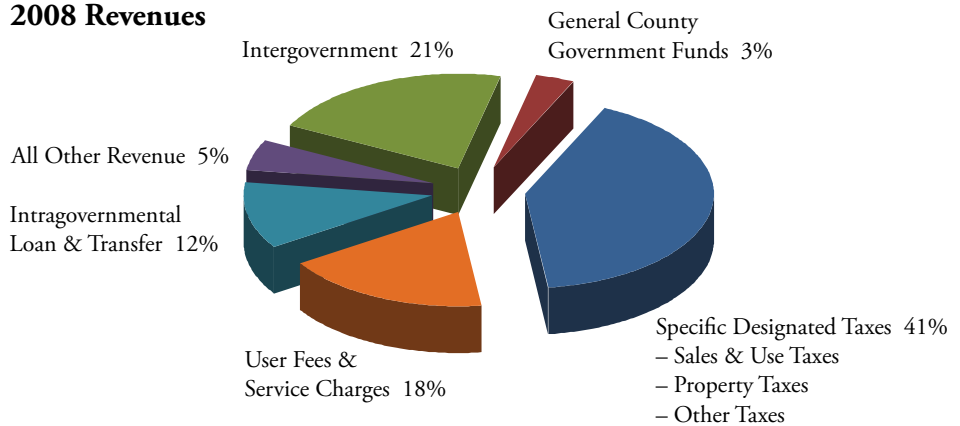
Summary of Finances

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources includes the Visitor Services Program, the Open Lands Program, and the Weed Management & Forestry Program.

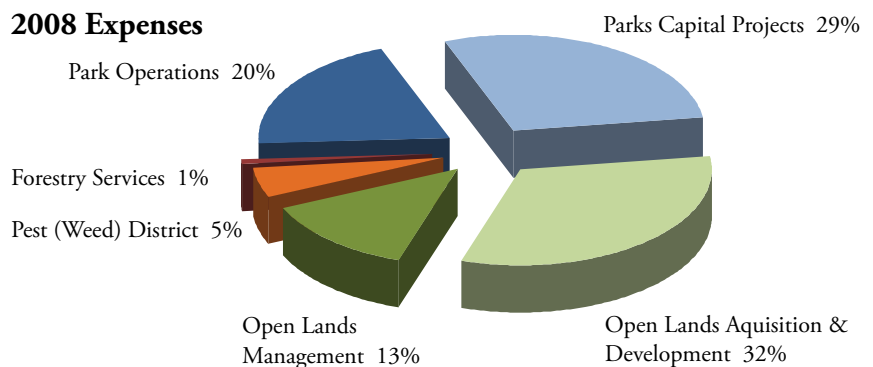
Revenues are realized from a number of sources and totaled \$11 million in 2008. Expenses for 2008 were \$10.5 million including a number of one-time capital development projects for both Parks and Open Lands.

Major capital projects in 2008 included development at Hermit Park Open Space and construction of a new marina building and access at Carter Lake. Work has also begun for development at Red Mountain Open Space, and on the Horsetooth South Bay and Inlet Bay camper services buildings. Additional work is being done relating to ADA compliance and retrofits at all reservoirs.

2008 Revenues



2008 Expenses



* These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2009.

Certification Program for Entities Holding Conservation Easements

The conservation community in Colorado is looking forward to the pending development of a certification program for entities holding conservation easements. The certification program is one of several steps being taken to protect the integrity of the Colorado Tax Credit Program, and to assure that conservation easements are donated only to those land trusts and government agencies which are qualified and able to enforce them.

The Colorado Division of Real Estate and the newly formed Conservation Easement Oversight Commission are developing the certification program which will examine an entity's process for approving easements, its system of monitoring those easements, and the agency's governance and financial stability. The program will initially focus on certification of land trusts, with applications being accepted

starting in January 2009 and certification being completed within one year. For government programs, the applications will be accepted starting in January 2010 with certification to be granted by January of 2011. An application fee (amount undetermined at this point) must be paid to help fund the program, and the Division of Real Estate will maintain an online list of all entities that have applied for certification and their status. The provisions of the certification program will not apply to any tax credit that was claimed prior to the time that certification is required by a particular entity.

It is recognized there are significant differences between a non-profit land trust and a publicly funded government open space program; therefore, Larimer County Open Lands' staff have been participating in the creation of a "Best Practices" document which is likely to

be used in establishing the standards for certification of local government programs. Larimer County supports the certification program and looks forward to applying when application requirements are established.

The "Complete Mineral Handbook"

The Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts (CCLT) in collaboration with private law firms, land trusts, and public agencies, including Larimer County, brought forward a document known as the *Complete Mineral Handbook*. The purpose of the document is to assist land trusts and local governments in effectively dealing with severed mineral interests when contemplating the receipt of a donation of the value of a conservation easement. For more information, please contact the CCLT at 303-271-1577.

Weed Management — Part of the Land Stewardship Program

Weed management can be a challenge in Larimer County with its extreme variations in topography and climatic conditions. Subdividing of farms and ranches across the county has led to large-scale disturbances of many mountain, shrubland, and plains areas leaving sites open to weed invasion. Introduction of exotic weed species occurs with a steady influx of people from all parts of the country transporting livestock, animal feed, off-road vehicles, and other vectors for weed seed movement.

Weed management is a major function of the Land Stewardship Program in the Department of Natural Resources. This includes: managing noxious weeds on all county-owned properties (including parks and open spaces) and county road rights-of-way; assisting county residents through education and outreach programs,

site visits, recommendations, and cost-share and equipment loan projects; and carrying out enforcement procedures stipulated in the County Weed Management Plan.

Partial funding for the program is provided by the Larimer County Weed District which encompasses the eastern one fourth of Larimer County. Activities conducted outside the Weed District are supported through an enterprise system which obtains funds from contracted weed management work with private landowners; from federal, state, and local agencies; and from state and federal grants.

The Larimer County weed management program strives to minimize the occurrence of weeds and associated negative impacts on native plant communities, agricultural lands, and public corridors in Larimer County. Its staff work to



Weedeating—one of the tools in the weed management toolbox.
Photo: Bobby Goeman

establish and maintain relationships within the community based on best land stewardship practices. To achieve this, the program uses collaborative research and discourse, makes staff and resources accessible to the public, and continues education among the general public as well as land stewardship professionals.

“The field research partnership between Colorado State University and the Larimer County Weed District focuses on noxious weed management issues in Larimer County, and has been a great benefit to county residents.” Dr. Phil Westra, Colorado State University Weed Science

Inventory of Open Lands Acquisitions

Name	Acreege	Acquisition Cost	Larimer Co. Open Lands	Donation/Bargain Sale	Partnerships	Public Access	Comments
Laramie Foothills							
Red Mountain Open Space	13,448	9,700,800	1,846,400		GOCO 7,854,400	Yes 2010	FC hold GOCO CE
Red Mountain Open Space	1480	4,000,000	2,689,000		TNC/FC 1,311,000	Yes 2010	Red Mountain Trailhead
Eagle's Nest Open Space	755*72	2,054,500	1,360,000	54,500	3 Partners 640,000	Yes	LLT holds covenants
Teepee Rings CE	*504	170,000	69,000	100,000	LLT 1,000	No	Monitored by LLT
Roberts Ranch CE Phase I	*4,960	3,000,000	200,000	109,000	3 Partners 2,691,000	No	Monitored by TNC
Ackerman CEs I & II, L&L Co. I	*885	934,000	490,774	167,000	NRCS/FRPP 276,226	No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Buckeye/Waverly Ag Lands							
Buckeye CE	*494	197,853	28,000		TNC/LLT 169,853	No	Monitored by LLT
Buckeye CE 3 & 4	*70	60,000	60,000	130,000		No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Bradley CE	*184	95,000		95,000		No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Miller CE	*90	50,000		50,000		No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Wellington Ag Lands							
Kerbel Farm CE	*83	197,498	98,749		Fort Collins 98,749	No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Bee Farm CE	*139	365,302	182,651		Fort Collins 182,651	No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Weber Farm CE	*69.1	198,138	99,069		Fort Collins 99,069	No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Kraft Farm CE	*130	460,000	460,000			No	Monitored by Larimer Co.
Poudre River							
Fonken CE Phases 1-5	*245	650,000		650,000		No	Five donations completed
Lions' Open Space	20					Yes	20-acre, 25 year lease
River Bluffs Open Space	161	1,920,000	720,000		GOCO 1,200,000	Future Trail	Greeley holds GOCO CE
Fort Collins/Loveland Separator							
Long View Farm Open Space	599.4	3,027,000	1,594,500		3 Partners 1,432,499	Future Trail	Leased for dryland farming
Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area	240	1,000,000	180,000		2 Partners 820,000	Yes	Managed by Fort Collins
Prairie Ridge Natural Area	792	3,139,000	437,881		3 Partners 2,701,119	Future Trail	Managed by Loveland
Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space	843.5	7,988,750	3,744,550	19,650	Fort Collins 4,224,550	Yes	Transfer to FC in 2010
Coyote Ridge Natural Area	839.3	1,885,500	523,583	21,500	Fort Collins 1,340,416	Yes	Managed by Fort Collins
Boyd Lake State Park Addition	30	405,000	90,000		5 Partners 315,000	Yes	Managed by State Parks
Devil's Backbone to Horsetooth							
Horsetooth Mountain Open Space	***1,975	3,000,000				Yes	Transferred to Open Lands in 2008
Rimrock Open Space	472/*274	2,362,240	2,262,240		Fort Collins 100,000	Yes	Monitored by Larimer Co
Siefke CE	*35	93,000		93,000		No	Monitored by Larimer Co
Soderberg Open Space (HTMOS)	114	460,000	460,000			Yes	Managed as part of HTMOS
Devil's Backbone Open Space	2,197*11.3	9,365,020	2,283,920		4 Partners 6,783,100	Yes	Monitored by Larimer Co
Hughey Open Space (HTMOS)	282	310,000	129,000	31,000	GOCO 150,000	Yes	Managed as part of HTMOS
Culver Open Space (HTMOS)	287.9	1,500,000	975,000		FC/GOCO 525,000	No	FC holds GOCO CE
Big Thompson River							
Sylvan Dale CE	*1160.7	1,297,676	922,436	1,325,240	Loveland/GOCO 375,000	Potential	Monitored by Larimer Co
Block CE	*35	200,000	100,000	100,000	2 Partners	No	Monitored by Larimer Co
Kauffman CE	*73.55	800,000		800,000		Future Trail	Monitored by Larimer Co
Berthoud/Loveland Separator							
Ryan Gulch CE	*438	2,027,844	290,900	381,000	4 Partners 1,355,944	Future Trail	Monitored by Loveland
Blue Mountain							
Ramsay-Shockey Open Space	177	325,000		325,000		Yes	Adj. to Pinewood Reservoir
Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE	*4,100	2,666,000	1,350,000	666,000	GOCO 650,000	Guided Tours	Monitored by LLT & LC
Chimney Hollow Open Space	1,847	3,842,000	2,892,000		GOCO 950,000	2015	Loveland holds GOCO CE
Harper CE	*240	295,000		295,000		No	Monitored by LLT
Little Thompson River							
Red-tail Ridge Open Space	320	951,559	286,500		4 Partners 665,000	Future Trail	Monitored by LLT
Red-tail Ridge Trailhead/Trail	**	43,699		43,699		Future Trail	15.1 ac. trail & trailhead
Estes Valley							
Childers/Henning CE	*160	800,000		752,000	Private 48,000	No	Monitored by EVLT
Hermit Park Open Space	1362	8,700,000	4,000,000	2,200,000	7+ Partners 2,500,000	Yes	Monitored by EVLT
Cohen CE	*131	500,000	75,000	850,000	4 Partners 425,000	No	Monitored by EVLT
Smitherman CE	*520	520,000	130,000		EVLT/GOCO 390,000	No	Monitored by EVLT
Homer Rouse Memorial Trail	**	40,000	10,000		Estes Park 30,000	Yes	Managed by EVRPD 1.5 mi.
Lake Estes Trail	**	232,500	100,000		4 Partners 132,500	Yes	Managed by EVRPD 4 mi.
Lion Gulch Trailhead		21,521	10,000		USFS 11,521	Yes	Managed by USFS
Lily Lake/Roessler	18.2	400,000	40,000		3 Partners 360,000	No	Managed by RMNP
Lily Lake Water & Rec. Rights		551,000	45,000	236,000	6 Partners 270,000	Yes	Managed by RMNP
Enos-Kiley CE	*192	335,000	45,000		EVLT/Estes Park 290,000	Limited	Monitored by EVLT
Knoll-Willows Open Space	20	210,000	50,000		EVLT/Estes Park 160,000	Yes	Monitored by EVLT
American Legion Open Space	1.6	200,000	25,000	125,000	EVLT/Estes Park 50,000	Limited	Monitored by EVLT
Fee Simple Acreage Total	28,282						
CE Acreage Total	15,296						
Fee Simple & CE Acreage Total	43,578	83,547,400	31,356,153	9,619,589	41,578,597		

Managed or monitored by Larimer Co.

* Conservation Easement

** Trail Easement

*** Purchased in 1982 by Sales Tax

EPk Estes Park

EVLT Estes Valley Land Trust

EVRPD Estes Valley Rec. & Park Dist.

GOCO Great Outdoors Colorado

HTMOS Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

NRCS Nat. Res. Conservation Service

LLT Legacy Land Trust

RMNP Rocky Mountain Nat. Park

TNC The Nature Conservancy

USFS U.S. Forest Service

Open Lands Program Hosts Statewide Conference

Something about the 2008 Colorado Open Space Alliance (COSA) conference was special. The conference, initiated in 2000 by the Open Lands Program staff, was in its ninth year and returning to Larimer County.

Staff and partners worked to provide the best conference ever—and they did not fail! With beautiful Estes Park as a back drop, 250 open space professionals from across the state came to listen, learn, and network. Field trips to Hermit Park Open Space, Rocky Mountain National Park, MacGregor Ranch, and many more places gave participants on-the-ground opportunities for experiential learning right here in Larimer County.

County staff continue to be strong leaders within COSA. Planning is nearly complete for the ranger training event held in Larimer County every March, while steering and subcommittee members get to work on the September 2009 conference to be held in Breckenridge.



Meegan Flenniken accepts COSA's Blue Grama Award for Larimer County's forest management practices at Ramsay-Shockey Open Space.
Photo: Kerry Rollins

“As a father, I care deeply about our future quality of life here in Larimer County. I am proud of Larimer County's commitment to preserving open lands and honored to serve as liaison to the Open Lands Advisory Board.”

Tom Donnelly,
County Commissioner District 3



A special thanks to our **Open Lands Board Members and staff**: Top from left: *Meegan Flenniken, Bob Streeter, John Ericson, Ben Manuel, Ted Swanson, *Gary Buffington. Middle from left: *Sue Burke, Nancy Wallace, *K-Lynn Cameron, Trudy Haines, Bill Newman. Front from left: *CJ Cullins, *Lori Smith, *Olivia Hutton, *Kerri Rollins, Sue Sparling, *Charlie Johnson.
* = Staff Photo: Charlie Johnson

The Inaugural Year at Hermit Park Open Space

Prior to the public opening of Hermit Park Open Space, the main road was upgraded to meet County standards, a large parking area was completed to accommodate visitors utilizing the group use area, several buildings were demolished, the entry way was realigned, and two camp host sites were completed. Capital construction projects continued throughout the summer: a turnaround with trail head parking for the Homestead Meadows Trail, construction of the Kruger Rock trail, turn lanes from U.S. Highway 36, a modular building, and a new vault restroom at the group use area. Over \$100,000 in revenue was generated from user fees and over 825 camping reservations were made. Six guided hikes and eleven campground programs were offered to the public, and volunteers contributed 3,245 hours!

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Editor: Sue Burke 4/09

Open Space—Accomplishments and Goals for the Future

During 2008, the Open Lands Program reviewed and approved the resource management plan for River Bluffs Open Space and monitored implementation of the Red Mountain Open Space management plan. River Bluffs Open Space, on the Poudre River west of Windsor, provides the location for a segment of the Poudre River Trail. Red Mountain Open Space, in the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains project, will open in early 2009. Management plans provide guidance to protect the resource and sensitive areas while allowing appropriate levels of infrastructure and public use. The Board struggled to balance the cost of infrastructure with need and levels of services anticipated. While never perfect, we hope we achieved an appropriate balance.

On May 3, 2008, Hermit Park Open Space opened for visitor use. It is a welcome addition to our open space program. Costs to develop the park for visitor use were higher than anticipated, and several items in the management plan were delayed.

While we might all wish for substantial open space acquisition and expansion in the future, it is more likely our goals will be more modest. Management of present resources will be a high priority. The Board is committed to continued fiscal monitoring of open space tax dollars, not only those spent for acquisition but also those spent for management and development.

As the Board reflects on the accomplishments of the Open Lands Program and plans for a successful future, we appreciate and acknowledge the support of Larimer County citizens. You have made this program a reality for all generations! Thank you.

Nancy S. Wallace

Nancy Wallace
Chair, Open Lands Advisory Board



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