

LARIMER COUNTY
OPEN LANDS PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT 2001

LARIMER COUNTY
PARKS & OPEN LANDS



A message from the chair

Open Lands: A Commitment for the Future

As the process for preserving land becomes more challenging, the Larimer County Open Lands Program continues to focus on sound, long-term planning. The Open Lands Master Plan, adopted last December, provides the direction for our ongoing work and focuses on our major program guidelines.

Large Landscape Scale. Studies prove that large land parcels and connecting corridors are most effective for conserving plants, animals, and critical ecological processes. Much of our attention is directed to areas where large blocks of land are available for protection.

Access to Open Spaces and Trails. Public access is currently allowed on approximately half of the protected lands. Access is restricted, however, on property held in conservation easements. Limiting access offers extra protection for natural resources, and is a key factor for landowner participation in conservation easement partnerships.

Commitment to Agriculture. Protecting prime agricultural land is a high priority. Through agricultural preservation, we help sustain part of our economy, acknowledge our rural heritage, and maintain large areas of open space.

Sound Stewardship. The development of strict management plans assures ecological sustainability and protection of important resources. Good management also creates opportunities to teach others about effective stewardship.

Leveraging Financial Resources. The Open Lands Program has access to a limited amount of money. So we work closely with a variety of partners to leverage sales tax revenues. We've formed numerous partnerships with landowners, cities and towns, and other agencies.

On behalf of the Open Lands Advisory Board, thanks for supporting the Open Lands Program!

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to Tom Keith for his excellent leadership as chair of the Open Lands Program during the first six years!



Merrill R. Kaufmann
Chair, Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

I've had the great privilege of serving as Chair of the Advisory Board since the program began. It seemed fitting to mark this passage with a final comment. In these past six years, the concept of protecting open lands in Larimer County has moved from a glimmering hope to a reality made solid by the existence of more than 13,000 acres under some form of conservation. All work has meaning, but participating in this work has been especially meaningful. Throughout this time, and as we move forward with future projects, we've been guided by an over-riding goal of doing what's best for Larimer County and the residents who call this beautiful place home. In these times of rapid change, this is one principle that will endure.



Tom Keith
Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

of the Larimer County Open Lands Program

The Mission of the Open Lands Program is to preserve and protect significant open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations. These open lands provide opportunities for leisure, human renewal and protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Open Lands Advisory Board

As a citizen advisory group, the Open Lands Board makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding open space and agricultural protection, regional park and trail acquisitions. The membership of the board represents a balance in geography, population, and interest.



Standing, left to right: Nancy Wallace, Brian Hayes, Ann Montoya, Larry Kendall, Lori Smith*, Gary Buffington*, Kerri Traynor*, Mark DeGregorio, Milan Karspeck, Merrill Kaufmann, John Heaton, Jerry White*. Sitting: Meegan Flenniken*, Wendell Amos, K-Lynn Cameron*, Duane Pond, Tom Keith, Eric Hamrick, Charlie Johnson*. Not pictured: Lori Jeffrey, Charlie Gindler*, Tom Bender***

**Open Lands Staff
**Commissioner liaison*

The Open Lands Program Gains Six New Champions in 2001!

Numerous county residents showed their generosity toward the Open Lands program in 2001. Many people made cash donations, some property owners donated land, and others sold land at discounted prices. Thanks to these gifts, the Open Lands program has an additional \$1.3 million to use for preservation. Since 1996, donations of property and cash from landowners and citizens total more than \$4.6 million, enabling the Open Lands Program to protect even more land in other important areas.

Donation Over \$500,000

Childers & Henning Families,
Childers/Henning CE
Paul Jonjak & Family, Blue Mtn. Bison Ranch CE
Jake Kauffman & Son, Inc., Kauffman CE

\$300,000 - \$499,000

Curt & Jennifer Heckrodt, Red-tail Ridge OS
David & Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Ranch CE II
Bob Ramsay, Ramsay-Shockey OS
Jack & Beth White, Rimrock OS

\$100,000 - \$299,000

Rex Baker, Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
Grace Dunkin, Ryan Gulch CE II
Joe & Pat Harper, Harper CE
David & Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Ranch CE III
David & Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Ranch CE
Jeanne Roessler, Lily Lake Property
Dave Sitzman, Kerbel Agricultural CE
Jon and Susanne Stephens, Ryan Gulch CE

Programs such as the Conservation Tax Credit Exchange have provided even more financial incentives for property owners to protect their land. The Open Lands Program, however, could not benefit from these programs without the willingness and enthusiasm of landowners wanting to establish a legacy of conservation in Larimer County. They are truly our Open Lands Champions!

\$1,000 - \$99,000

Anonymous Donation, Future Project
Robert & Ann Avis, Eagle's Nest CE
First Choice Bank, Devil's Backbone Nature Trail
First National Bank,
Devil's Backbone Nature Trail
Audra & Don Hughey, Horsetooth Mountain Park
Loveland Wildlife Assoc., Boyd Lake Property
Miller, Left Hand & Park Creek Ranches,
Buckeye Agricultural CE
Rocky Mtn. Park Assoc., Lily Lake Property
Southdown, Inc., Red-tail Ridge OS
Martha Steinbach Estate, Childers/Henning CE
Stephanie Steppel-White, Coyote Ridge Nat. Area
Tahosa Valley Assoc.,
Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
Trout Unlimited,
Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
Byron & Beverly Williams,
Fossil Creek Regional OS

2001 Donations

CE - Conservation Easement
OS - Open Space

“The citizens of Larimer county, and particularly those of Loveland, have supported our family-owned company for years. This donation is our way of giving something back to the community, and saying thank you for their business.”

Frank Kauffman & Family

Public Gains From Mining Companies' Restoration Efforts

Kauffman Conservation Easement

Jake Kauffman and Son, Inc., a successful and longstanding family-owned gravel mining business in Loveland, made the largest single property donation ever to the Open Lands Program in 2001. The 74-acres of prime riparian habitat is near the Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area. This generous donation provides the seed for a significant and comprehensive preservation effort along the Big Thompson River corridor near Interstate 25.

The easement includes a 16-acre pond with an island, which supports abundant aquatic life, deer and bird species—including the Great Blue Heron. There are approximately 20 acres of newly-created wetlands; the remainder is a pasture meadow. Recognizing the importance of public access to the area, the Kauffman's also donated a trail easement.

Southdown, Inc. Trail Donation

Thanks to careful restoration of mined land and a generous easement donation, hikers will have future access to the Red-tail Ridge Open Space in southern Larimer County. Southdown Inc., recently merged with CEMEX, Inc. of Houston, Texas, the world's third largest cement products producers, donated an easement that provides two miles of trail and a trail-head adjacent to the open space.

The easement, which includes 15 acres of land, will prove to be invaluable to Larimer County citizens. Nestled near the border between Larimer and Boulder counties, the easement is a direct connection to Red-tail Ridge, and will facilitate other trail connections in that area. The easement meanders into the rolling foothills to the west, opening to a vista of Red-tail Ridge. CEMEX, Inc., has demonstrated that careful restoration provides significant benefits for the company and for the public.



Photo: Charlie Johnson

Waterfowl enjoy open water on the Kauffman easement donation



Scenic views are plentiful at the Red-tail Ridge Open Space

Photo: Jim Disney

New Open Lands Master Plan Sets Long-Term Priorities

After more than a year of study and evaluation, the County Commissioners and Planning Commission, last December, adopted the Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan. This plan will guide the Open Lands program in its work to protect important lands.

Work on the master plan started in the fall of 2000. Larimer County used a multi-faceted approach, which started by analyzing existing resource conditions and identifying critical areas that match the program's long-term preservation goals. More than 40 public meetings were held to solicit input from citizens, local government boards, various interest groups, and the county commissioners. Open Lands also commissioned a scientific survey, distributed three newsletters county-wide, and solicited citizen input on their web page.

The Open Lands Program Priority Areas map is a key component of the plan. It identifies important resource areas on which protection efforts will be focused. Resource areas include: river corridors, wildlife habitat, wetlands, agricultural lands, geologic features, and areas of high visual quality. The map also proposes future regional trail corridors that will connect with existing trails, public lands, and communities.

By voting overwhelmingly to support sales tax initiatives for open lands protection in 1995 and 1999, the citizens of Larimer County showed their foresight and concern for our Western landscape. In turn, Larimer County Commissioners and staff are dedicated in implementing the will of the people. Working with willing sellers only, the Open Lands Program has protected over 13,000 acres of land in six years, and Larimer County has become a recognized leader in open lands protection.

2001 Acquisitions

**lead agency on project*

Agricultural Lands

A. Buckeye Conservation Easement:

This partnership, initiated by a small group of rural landowners wanting to protect their ranching livelihood and the local landscape, protects 494-acres in the Buckeye/Waverly agricultural area. This complex, working agricultural landscape hosts a rich variety of plants, wildlife, and history. Unique features include a dinosaur track (visited annually by CSU classes), teepee rings, and close proximity to the Overland Trail.

Appraised Value: \$203,753

*Partners: Legacy Land Trust**

*The Nature Conservancy, Landowner donation
Larimer County Open Lands: \$28,000*

B. Kerbel Conservation Easement

This 83-acre farmland parcel includes several important values that the Open Lands Program is interested in protecting—prime irrigated agricultural land, scenic views along I-25, and a community separator between Wellington and Fort Collins. The Kerbel conservation easement is the first property protected under the Open Lands Agricultural Protection Program.

Appraised Value: \$376,778

Partners: Fort Collins, Landowner donation

Larimer County Open Lands: \$98,749*

“The new Open Lands Master Plan well reflects the input and support of the people of Larimer County. Being constantly vigilant to the changes in our community will allow for an Open Lands program that will mature as our county matures.”

*Kathay Rennels,
County Commissioner District 1*

Big Thompson River Corridor

C. Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement III

The 140-acre Green Ridge conservation easement connects to the 595-acre Sylvan Dale Legacy Lands Conservation Easement. Green Ridge is highly visible from the mouth of the Big Thompson Canyon on US Hwy. 34, and to the west from County Road 29. This conservation easement protects ponderosa pine, mountain mahogany woodlands, and wildlife habitat. It is also used for recreational and agricultural activities by the Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch.

Appraised Value: \$620,000

*Partners: Loveland, Division of Wildlife,
Landowner donation*

Larimer County Open Lands: \$222,620*

D. Kauffman Conservation Easement

Located north of the Big Thompson River and just west of I-25, this 73.5-acre conservation easement donation includes a 16-acre pond and approximately 16 acres of wetlands. The remainder of the property is currently being reclaimed following gravel mining operations, and will be planted with hay grass. A trail easement around the pond was also donated.

Appraised Value: \$800,000

Partners: Landowner donation

Front Range Mountain Backdrop

E. Devil's Backbone Trail Extension

Located on the Hunter addition to the Devil's Backbone Open Space, this 3-mile loop opened to the public in December 2001. The popular Devil's Backbone Open Space now boasts a 7-mile loop of beautiful trails with breathtaking views and is open to hikers, bikers and equestrians. A grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) contributed \$54,000 to this project.

F. Southdown, Inc. Trailhead

Adjacent to Red-tail Ridge Open Space, this trail-easement donation will also provide an area for trail-head development, allowing future public access to the open space. Red-tail Ridge Open Space hosts a wealth of wildlife species, including the red-tailed hawk for which it is named.

Appraised Value: \$43,699

Partners: Landowner donation

Loveland/Berthoud Corridor

G. Ryan Gulch (Dunkin conservation easement)

Preserving a community separator and a stunning viewshed between Loveland and Berthoud, this property is less than 1/4 -mile from the existing Ryan Gulch Conservation Easement and Lonetree Reservoir State Wildlife Area. Included in the protection of this working ranch was the purchase of a trail easement, and 50 percent of 3 shares of water from the Home Supply Ditch.

Appraised Value: \$294,000

Partners: Loveland, Berthoud, Landowner donation*

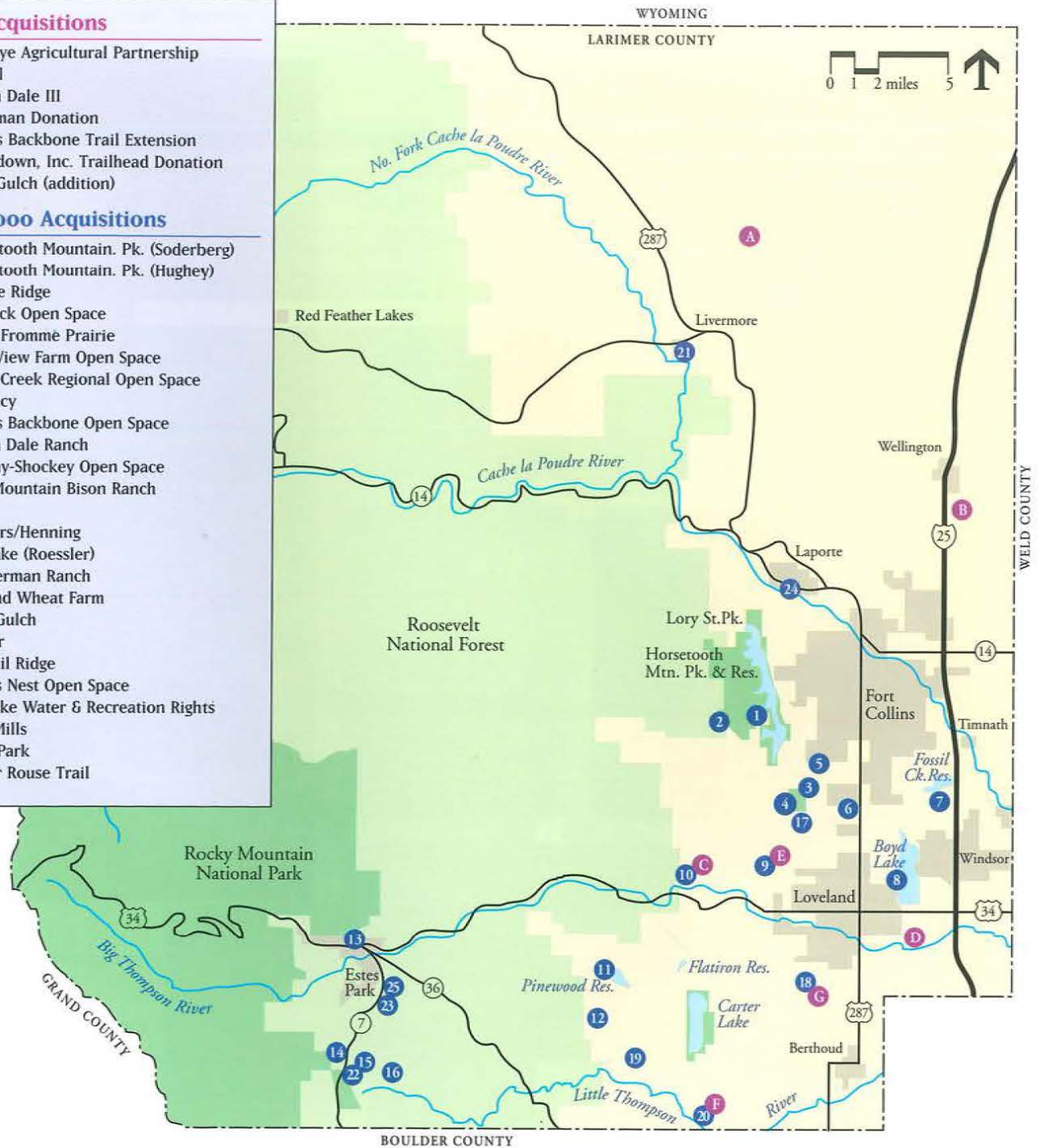
Larimer County Open Lands: \$70,000

2001 Acquisitions

- A. Buckeye Agricultural Partnership
- B. Kerbel
- C. Sylvan Dale III
- D. Kauffman Donation
- E. Devil's Backbone Trail Extension
- F. Southdown, Inc. Trailhead Donation
- G. Ryan Gulch (addition)

1996-2000 Acquisitions

- 1. Horsetooth Mountain. Pk. (Soderberg)
- 2. Horsetooth Mountain. Pk. (Hughey)
- 3. Coyote Ridge
- 4. Rimrock Open Space
- 5. Cathy Fromme Prairie
- 6. Long View Farm Open Space
- 7. Fossil Creek Regional Open Space
- 8. Heinrichy
- 9. Devil's Backbone Open Space
- 10. Sylvan Dale Ranch
- 11. Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
- 12. Blue Mountain Bison Ranch
- 13. Bikle
- 14. Childers/Henning
- 15. Lily Lake (Roessler)
- 16. Smitherman Ranch
- 17. Dryland Wheat Farm
- 18. Ryan Gulch
- 19. Harper
- 20. Red-tail Ridge
- 21. Eagle's Nest Open Space
- 22. Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
- 23. Enos Mills
- 24. Lions Park
- 25. Homer Rouse Trail



“ The Eagle’s Nest Open Space “sneak preview” tour was very exciting! My husband and I enjoyed the hike, as well as the opportunity to see the property before it opens to the public. ”

Rose & Michael Phelan, Loveland



Photo: Scott Fraser

“ The night hikes are fun. We saw bats and heard crickets. ”

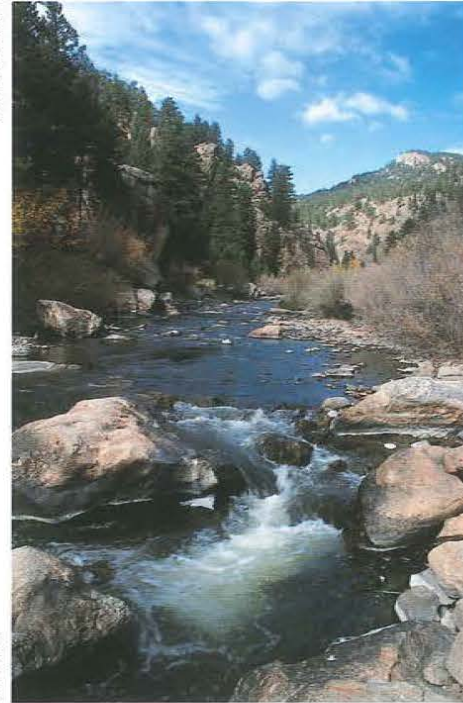
Amy (age 8) and Alyssa (age 9) Van Amerongen, Devil’s Backbone moonlight hikers



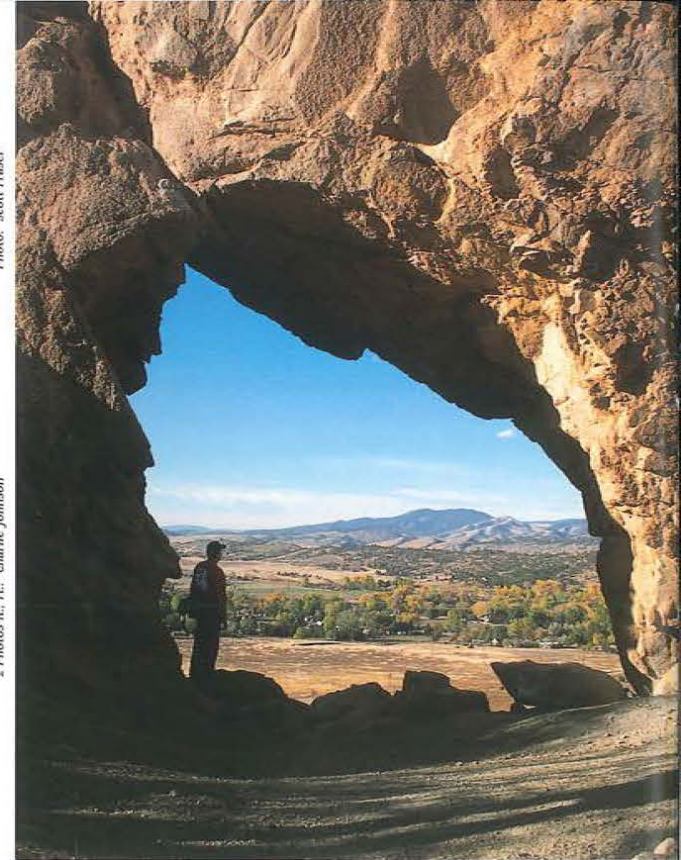
Photo: Scott Fraser



2 Photos L., R.: Scott Fraser



2 Photos L., R.: Charlie Johnson



“ The Woodland Walk will assist Gardening Angels, Inc. to help people with developmental disabilities grow. ”

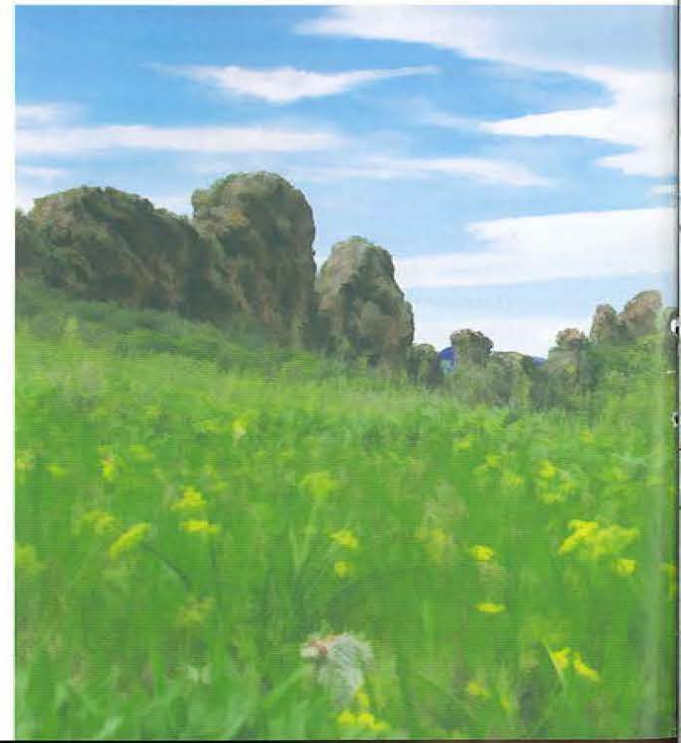
Kathleen Miller-Scheurman, Small Grants Recipient



Photo: Sharon Veit

“ River corridors remain a high priority for protection in Larimer County. The three major rivers and their tributaries are the lifeblood of our communities. ”

Glenn Gibson, County Commissioner District 3



“ I love to see the land preserved and now open to the public. I never could go there before because it was private property. ”

Jarene Pittington, Ramsay-Shockey Open Space hiker



Photo: Charlie Johnson

“ We are very comfortable in our working relationship with Larimer County. Support from the Open Lands Program has enabled us to protect some key pieces of property in the Estes Valley. This year we anticipate protecting premier property in the town of Estes, which would be the biggest catch in our 15-year existence. ”

Jim White, Estes Valley Land Trust

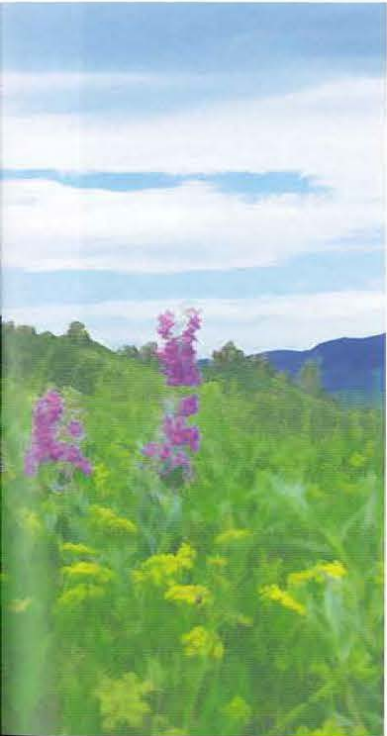


Photo: Sharon Veit

“ There is no substitute for a natural setting. ”

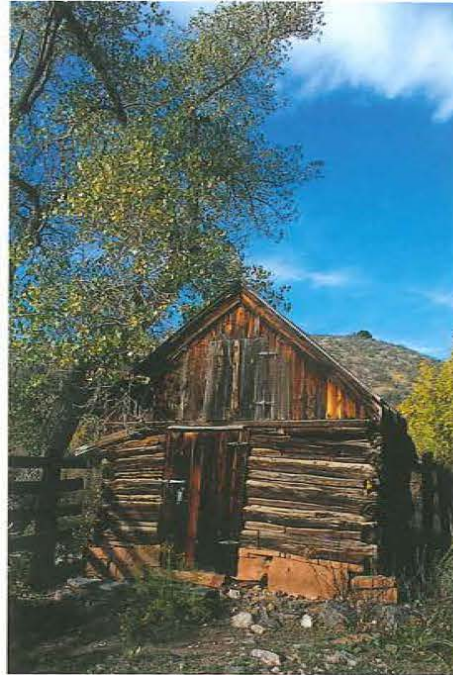
Ron Francis, Volunteer Naturalist



Photo: Virginia Soderberg

“ Stand on the Devil's Backbone or Horsetooth Rock, look out over Larimer County, and you really 'get it' as to how special this place is—and why the open lands program is so important to our quality of life. ”

Larry Kendall, Chairman, The Group, Inc., Real Estate



2 Photos l., r.: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Scott Fraser



2 Photos l., r.: Virginia Soderberg



“ The 4-mile Lake Estes Trail was a fabulous project with many partners. This popular trail is used on a daily basis by residents and visitors alike. ”

Stan Gengler, Estes Valley Recreation & Park District

Stewardship has an Impact on Open Land

The Open Lands Program invests significant resources—staff, time, and money—into the well-being and proper stewardship of Larimer County's open lands. Healthy ecosystems, including plants and wildlife, are critical for maintaining the integrity of important conservation values.

Forest thinning, a widely used stewardship practice to reduce fire hazards, increase wildlife habitat and invigorate forest health, was implemented at the Ramsay-Shockey Open Space and at Horsetooth Mountain Park in 2001. Prescribed burns are another tool often used by land managers to achieve similar results as forest thinning.

“Responsible land stewardship has always been a priority for the Open Lands Program as evidenced by setting aside open space sales tax dollars for long term management. By controlling noxious weeds, managing vegetation and wildlife populations and maintaining trails and trail-heads, I am proud to say the Open Lands Program takes stewardship seriously.”

*Tom Bender,
County Commissioner District 2*

In October of 2001 the Red-tail Ridge Open Space accidentally burned as a large wildfire burned out of control in the drought conditions. Acting like a prescribed burn, the fire eliminated much of the vegetation on the property. Within weeks of the fire, an understory of new plant life began to grow, creating new habitat for wildlife. Monitoring plots have been established to record the vegetative changes over time.

Another stewardship practice is Integrated Pest Management—IPM. This technique uses four integrated approaches for controlling weeds on open lands: biological—releasing insects that are natural predators for specific weeds; mechanical—mowing and pulling weeds; cultural—manipulating plant communities through re-seeding or fertilizing; and chemical spraying. Each method, used during different times of the year, impedes weed growth and contributes to eradication.

CWD—Chronic Wasting Disease—is a devastating, highly contagious, and fatal disease primarily occurring in deer. Larimer County has been particularly affected. In partnership with the Division of Wildlife, the Open Lands Program has implemented a culling program. By reducing the number of deer, the rate of infection will decline and aid overall health of the herd.

Downy brome (reddish-brown grass) and Dalmatian toadflax (yellow flowers) are noxious weeds currently managed at Eagle's Nest Open Space

Photo: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Charlie Johnson

Landscape-Scale Efforts Payoff

From the beginning of the Open Lands Program, we've recognized the importance of assembling large, contiguous blocks of protected lands. This preservation technique provides significant environmental benefits. After six years of conservation work, this effort is readily apparent.

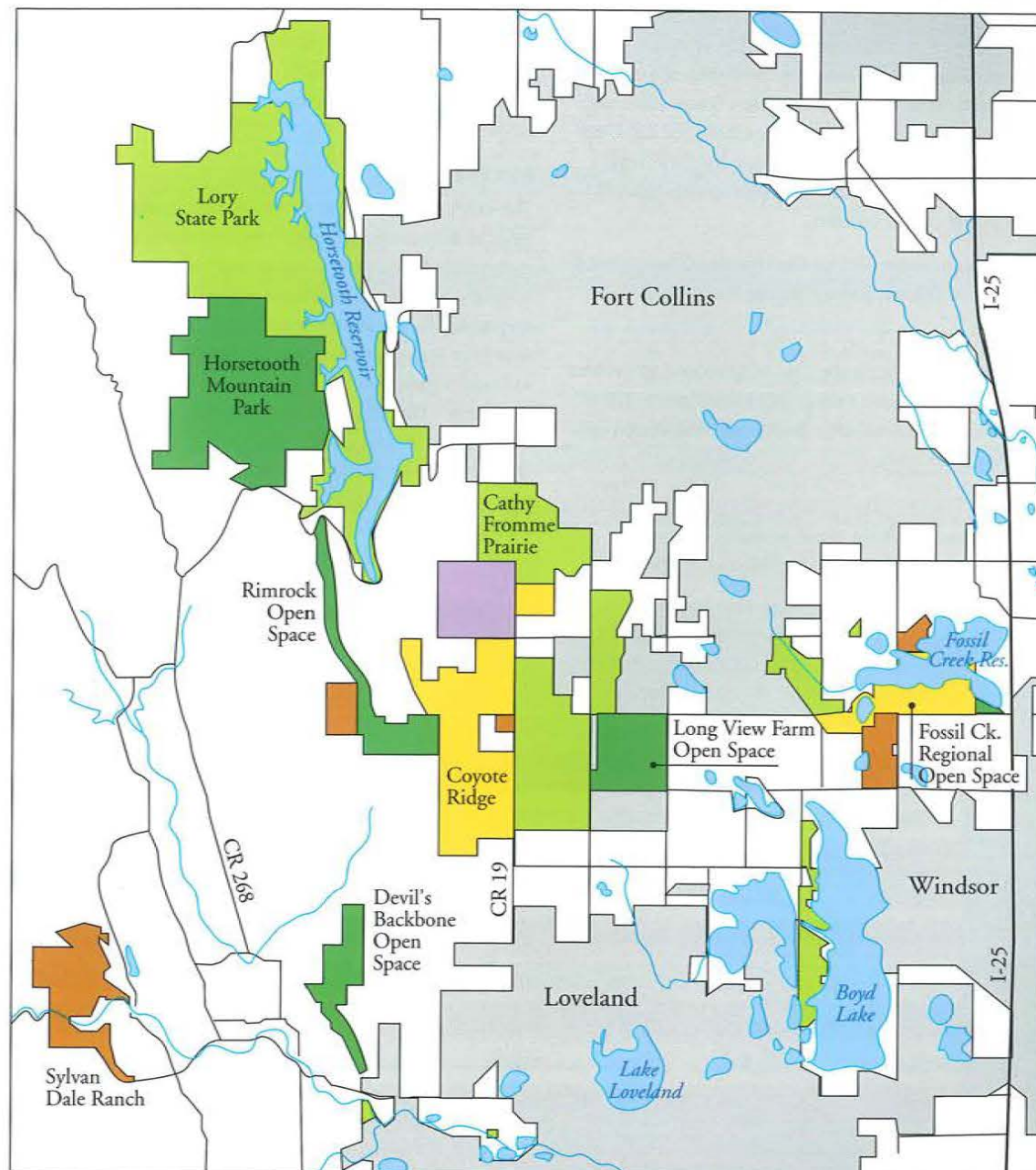
Early efforts focused on the Fort Collins-Loveland community separator, which now consists of more than 4,000 acres and is nearly three miles wide and four miles long. While all the parcels aren't contiguous, a large area is protected, extending from the first hogback to U.S. Highway 287. It also connects with the Fossil Creek Reservoir area where more than 800 acres have been protected.

A similar pattern is emerging in the county's eastern-most foothills. We are working to create a continuous corridor of protected lands extending from the Devil's Backbone north to the Bellvue area. This conservation corridor will protect areas in the foothills, establish a link to the prairie landscape, and eventually provide a trail connection between Lory State Park and the Devil's Backbone.

The Open Lands Program is working on other large scale projects in the southern foothills near the Carter Lake-Blue Mountain area, and in the Laramie Foothills northwest of Fort Collins (not pictured).

These landscape-scale conservation projects provide a wide range of benefits, including protection of meaningful blocks of wildlife habitat, and maintenance of viable agricultural lands. The scale of these projects also has a profound influence on how our residents perceive the environment in which they live.

- Larimer County Protected Open Space
- Other Protected Open Space
- Open Space Jointly Owned by Agencies
- Conservation Easements
- Landfill



Cities Use Shared Funds to Expand and Protect Open Lands Holdings

The Help Preserve Open Space sales tax revenue is shared with the county's six municipalities. The revenue sharing agreement ensures that residents from throughout the county receive benefits from the Open Space sales tax. Shares are distributed based on population or sales tax revenue—whichever is most beneficial for that town. Each town must use its share for open space, natural areas, regional parks, or trails.

Here's an explanation of how the cities and towns used their shares of the tax money during 2001.

Berthoud

The town partnered with the City of Loveland to protect the 326-acre Ryan Gulch conservation easement in the Berthoud/Loveland corridor. Berthoud contributed \$70,000 to the project.

Estes

In 2001 the town used its share to make the final payment for the purchase of the Willows property,

a 4.3-acre parcel located just north of the municipal building. The property, a valuable piece of undeveloped land within the town limits, is adjacent to another undeveloped 20-acre parcel Estes Park is currently working to protect.

Fort Collins

The city's Natural Areas Program had another successful year of acquiring and enhancing key open lands for natural resource conservation and public enjoyment. The city completed nine new acquisitions totaling 509 acres during 2001. In addition, the city secured a 19-year lease for 810 acres of surface water rights at Fossil Creek Reservoir from North Poudre Irrigation Company. The area will be managed by the city as the Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area. Just to the south is the Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, which was acquired by the city and county in 2001; it will be managed by the county's Open Lands Program.

Work continued on enhancements at other areas, including: Coyote Ridge, Pineridge, Riverbend Ponds, and Cathy Fromme Prairie. Restoration work began on Arapaho Bend, Pelican Marsh and Hazaleus Natural Areas, and continued at other sites. City staff works in partnership on these projects with community volunteer groups.

Loveland

The city expanded its inventory of protected lands in the Ryan Gulch area, southwest of the city. A conservation easement on a 52-acre property preserves agricultural land, scenic views, and recreational values. The purchase included shares of irrigation water, which will be used to maintain the property's agricultural and conservation values. It also includes a right-of-way for a future trail easement. Partners included Larimer County, Berthoud, and the landowner. Loveland also partnered with the county by contributing over \$32,000 to the Green Ridge project at Sylvan Dale Ranch, which protects scenic vistas at the mouth of the Big Thompson Canyon. A donation of 2-acres along the Big Thompson River preserves riparian habitat and maintains scenic views from the recreation trail and First Street. Loveland continued to work on fencing, revegetation, weed control, and habitat enhancement projects on other properties.

Timnath

The town is saving its share for future partnership opportunities to create community separators with Windsor and Fort Collins. Timnath also plans to contribute to the Poudre River Trail System that will eventually link Fort Collins, Timnath, Windsor, and Greeley.

Wellington

The town continues to save its dollars for future opportunities.

Help Preserve Open Spaces Tax Revenues Benefit All Communities

Money to fund the Open Lands Programs comes from a 1/4 cent sales and use tax. The tax is not imposed on food.

The tax continues through 2018, and total revenue collected to date is over \$42 million. Distribution to incorporated areas is based on the highest yield of either population or sales tax generation.

*Annual Revenue Distribution of Open Space Tax Dollars**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Larimer County	2,259,975	2,485,421	2,707,553	3,067,810	3,294,869	3,568,100	13,815,628
Berthoud	71,154	80,969	87,574	101,539	110,862	122,993	452,098
Estes Park	161,905	178,198	193,453	224,779	222,608	230,070	980,943
Fort Collins	2,107,473	2,319,562	2,487,606	2,850,066	3,109,001	3,326,105	12,873,708
Loveland	847,210	932,139	1,003,872	1,146,823	1,234,060	1,322,293	6,486,397
Timnath	4,221	4,646	5,025	5,732	5,742	5,892	31,258
Wellington	29,848	32,520	40,557	47,494	53,444	64,646	268,509
Totals	5,481,786	6,033,455	6,525,640	7,444,243	8,030,585	8,640,099	42,155,808

* These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2002. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

Inventory of Open Lands Acquisitions (through 2001)

Name	Acreage	Appraised Value	Donation/ Bargain Sale	Larimer Co. Open Lands	Partnerships	Public Access	Comments
Fort Collins/Loveland Corridor							
Long View Farm	599.4	3,027,000		1,594,500	3 Partners	1,432,499	Future Regional Trail Managed by LC; Leased for dryland farming
Cathy Fromme Prairie	240.0			180,000	2 partners	820,000	Yes Managed by Fort Collins as part of the Fromme Prairie
Dryland Wheat Farm	792.0	3,139,000		437,881	3 Partners	2,701,119	Future Regional Trail Managed by City of Loveland; Leased for dryland farming
Fossil Creek Res. Regional Open Space	836.5	7,468,750	19,650	3,524,550	Fort Collins	3,924,550	Future Regional OS Part of the Fossil Creek Resource Management Area
Loveland/Berthoud Corridor							
Ryan Gulch Conservation Easement	*378.6	1,981,844	250,000	270,000	Loveland GOCO Berthoud	772,844 325,000 70,000	No Monitored by Loveland
Front Range Mountain Backdrop							
Coyote Ridge	839.3	1,865,499	21,500	523,583	Fort Collins	1,340,416	Yes Managed by Fort Collins
Rimrock Open Space	437.0/*273.6	1,962,240		1,862,240	Fort Collins	100,000	Yes, Future Trail Managed by Larimer Co.
Blue Mountain Bison Cons. Esmnt.	*4100.0	2,666,000	666,000	1,350,000	GOCO	650,000	No Part of Blue Mountain Cons. Project; Monitored by LC
Harper Conservation Easement	*240	295,000	295,000	0	—	—	No CE and endowment funds donated; Monitored by LLT
Devil's Backbone Open Space	423.9/*1.6	1,573,020		1,223,020	Stryker Short, Loveland	350,000	Yes Managed by Larimer Co.
Red-tail Ridge Open Space	320.0/**15.1	995,258	43,699	286,500	4 partners	665,059	Future Regional Trail Managed by Larimer Co., trailhead & trail access donated
Laramie Foothills							
Eagle's Nest Open Space	770.0/*72	2,000,000	54,500	1,711,000	GOCO, Legacy—	289,000—	Future regional OS Managed by LC. Protects portion N. Fork Poudre River
Estes Valley							
Childers/Henning Conservation Esmnt.	*160.0	752,000	752,000	48,000	—	—	No Monitored by EVLT. Preserves Longs Peak viewshed
Smitherman Conservation Easement	*520.0	520,000		130,000	EVLT, GOCO	390,000	No Monitored by EVLT. Preserves pristine ponds & wetlands
Bikle	0.9	135,000		5,000	Estes Park	130,000	Yes Adjacent to Estes Municipal Center
Homer Rouse Memorial Trail	1.5 miles	40,000		10,000	Estes Park, EVLT, EVRPD	30,000	Yes, 2001 Managed by Estes Valley Recreation & Park District
Lakes Estes Trail	4 miles	232,500		100,000	4 Partners	132,500	Yes Managed by Estes Valley Recreation & Park District
Lion Gulch Trailhead		21,521		10,000	US Forest Service	11,521	Yes Managed by US Forest Service
Lily Lake/Roessler	18.2	400,000		40,000	GOCO, RMPA, Private	360,000	No Managed by Rocky Mountain National Park
Lily Lake Water and Recreation Rights	14 acre-ft.	515,000	236,000	30,000	6 Partners	285,000	Yes Managed by RMNP; water rights to maintain water levels.
Enos Mills Conservation Easement	*192	335,000		45,000	EVLT, Estes Park	290,000	Homestead Only Monitored by Estes Valley Land Trust
River Corridors							
Lions Park	20.0	0		0	Larimer County Parks		Yes Future trailhead location along Poudre River Trail
Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement	*734.5	1,615,000	778,750	498,870	Loveland, GOCO	175,000	Pos. Future Trail Con. Preserves viewshed at mouth of Big Thompson Canyon.
Kauffman Conservation Easement	*73.55	800,000	800,000	0		0	Future Trail
Agricultural Lands							
Buckeye Conservation Easement	*494	203,753	5,900	28,000	Nature Conservancy Larimer Land Trust	147,500 22,353	No Monitored by LLT. Landowners contributed by reducing cost from appraised land value.
Kerbel Conservation Easement	*83		179,280	98,749	Fort Collins	98,749	No
Expansions to Regional Parks							
Ramsay-Shockey OS (Pinewood Res.)	177.0	325,000	0	0	—	—	Yes Managed by Larimer Co.
Soderberg/Hughey (HTMP)	383.5	770,000	31,000	589,000	GOCO	150,000	Yes Managed as part of Horsetooth Mountain Park
Heinricy (Boyd Lake State Park)	30.0	405,000		90,000	5 partners	315,000	Yes Regional Trail
Easement Acreage Total	7,293.0						
Easement & Fee Simple Acreage Total	13,180.0		\$4,458,279	\$14,632,893		\$16,193,490	

Properties managed by Larimer County Parks & Open Lands

* Conservation Easement Acreage

** Trail Easement Acreage

Agricultural Program Off to a Rolling Start

In 2001, the Open Lands Program planted a seed for agricultural preservation in the Wellington area with the acquisition of the Kerbel Farm Conservation Easement. This 83-acre parcel is just one of many farms throughout the county with highly-productive soils on which agricultural production can remain viable.

With the Kerbel Farm as a great starting point, the Open Lands Program is expanding its agricultural preservation efforts. The 2001 Open Lands Master Plan has identified three areas as priorities for agricultural protection programs: Buckeye/Waverly, Wellington, and Southeastern Larimer County. These areas are home to soil resources that are nationally acclaimed for their productivity, and have well-established irrigation facilities.

A Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) system, adopted by the County Commissioners in 2001, will be used by the Open Lands Program for selecting the highest quality agricultural lands for consideration. Developed by a committee appointed by the county commissioners, LESA is a tool for analyzing property based on the quality of soils, a variety

of physical factors affecting viability for agricultural use, willingness of the property owner to participate, and public values supporting agricultural preservation.

The Open Lands Program will foster protection through conservation easements, partnerships and an array of other mechanisms with willing land owners. Our goals are to establish legal protection, as well as to make it financially feasible for farming to continue.



Native grasses await anticipated rainfall

Winds of Change

2001 brought positive changes to the Open Lands Department, including a new director and the transfer of responsibility for the Volunteer Naturalist Program to the Open Lands Program.

Last spring, Gary Buffington was hired as the director of the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department. Gary comes to the department from Colorado State Parks, where he was the Assistant Northern Regional Manager. Raised in Fort Collins,

Gary has extensive knowledge of the area, and has made many positive changes in the department.

In November, Gary reorganized the extremely successful Volunteer Naturalist Program to fall under the leadership of the Open Lands Program. Presentations by volunteer naturalists are in high demand. The transition to Open Lands will allow the program's continued growth. We have hired Ann Montoya as Education Coordinator, to spearhead the naturalist program in 2002.

Photo: Sharon Veit



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