



Larimer County Parks & Open Lands

Annual Report 2006



Our Vision

- *Building partnerships*
- *Being customer driven*
- *Empowering people to take responsibility*
- *Being a fulfilling and enjoyable place to work*
- *Being a good steward of public resources*



A message from the Director

Good to Great

As I reflect on the last 5 years of progress within this Department, there have been many accomplishments, improvements and positive changes. We have improved from a "Good" department to a "Great" customer service organization dedicated and accountable to the citizens of Larimer County. We have reinvented ourselves in many ways to meet the needs of our public. These changes have given new meaning to our purpose and existence.

Our Parks program has never been financially healthier, with park fees kept to a minimum and the promise of many new improvements supported by a new Parks Master Plan.

Larimer County government officials

Board of County Commissioners:
Glenn Gibson, Kathay Rennels, Karen Wagner
County Manager: Frank Lancaster
Public Works Director: Marc Engemoen

Our Open Lands program has acquired, protected and conserved more acres of land with our dedicated partners in the last five years than ever before in the history of the "Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax" initiative.

Our Weed District and Forestry programs are now located in a "store front" customer service center so that citizens may conveniently access our services and obtain information, weed control products and sprayer equipment at discounted rates.

These accomplishments are due to you, the citizens and visitors to our County, and a multitude of support from dedicated County staff, loyal partners, private entrepreneurs, citizen boards and a Board of County Commissioners who have had the wisdom to see the future vision of this Department.



Parks & Open Lands Management team with Larimer County Commissioners. Top from left: Tim D'Amato, Deb Wykoff, Frank Lancaster, Gary Buffington, Marc Engemoen, Dan Rieves, K-Lynn Cameron, Mark Caughlan. Bottom from left: Glenn Gibson, Karen Wagner, Kathay Rennels.

Photo: Charlie Johnson

As we take a moment to celebrate these accomplishments, we also realize there is still much to do in implementing the Mission of this Department into the future.

Gary K. Buffington
Director, Parks and Open Lands Department

State and Federal Open Space Issues...

At both the State and Federal level, there are issues of significant interest to those who support open space and resource protection in Larimer County:

- Governor Bill Ritter recently signed Senate Bill 98 (County Open Space and Parks Sales Tax Exemption). This legislation allows counties to ask voters to approve up to a half-cent sales and use tax to fund an open space program which would reflect local priorities for acquisition and management.
- House Bill 1361 (Implementation of Additional Requirements to Verify the Validity of a State Income Tax Credit for Donating a Conservation Easement)

recently was approved by the House Finance Committee on an 11-0 vote. This bill increases the program's transparency by making more information available to the public. It also increases standards for conservation easement appraisers and allows the public to learn about the organizations that hold conservation easements across the state.

- At the federal level, the Internal Revenue Service has initiated audits on approximately 250 conservation easement donations which took place in Colorado in 2003. Senators Wayne Allard and Ken Salazar have both communicated to the IRS their concerns about how and why these audits are being done. Senator Salazar stated "The Internal Revenue Service appears to be advancing a redefinition of how

conservation easements qualify for a deduction under IRC 170(h), one that is not at all consistent with past audits, private letter rulings, or practice by the IRS." While no conservation easements held by Larimer County are being audited, the outcome of the IRS actions will certainly impact the potential for future easement donations.

"Larimer County Parks & Open Lands has demonstrated excellent stewardship with current funding. Senate Bill 98 provides local voters the ability to continue to direct some of citizen's tax dollars for continuing to provide open space without impacting other public services."

Bob Bacon, Colorado Senator

1	2
3	
4	5

Cover:
1. Charlie Johnson
2. Charlie Johnson
3. Charlie Johnson
4. Charlie Johnson
5. Richard Snell

Hermit Park Open Space— A Crown Jewel

If you listen closely, you can probably still hear Larimer County citizens celebrating the acquisition of Hermit Park. Nestled in the Estes Valley, the 1,362-acre property is a crown jewel in the portfolio of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.

In August 2006, Agilent Technologies contacted Larimer County to discuss the sale of the property. Agilent wished to keep the site open for public recreational opportunities and preserved for open space. Agilent felt that Larimer County with its strong track record would be the perfect "owner" of this important open space. In a whirlwind, the county put together a number of partners and funding sources including the Estes Valley Land Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Town of Estes Park, and the City of Loveland. On February 15, 2007, the County closed on Hermit Park paving the way for future public access.

The vision for Hermit Park Open Space is to provide a "back country experience in a front country location." Visitors will be able to relax, reconnect, and recreate in a sustainable manner within the natural environment.

Hermit Park Open Space includes forests, grassy meadows, and high quality wetlands. The Rocky Mountain cinquefoil is also found on the property. This species is known to occur at only 23 sites worldwide with 19 of those occurring in Larimer County. The site is also important for bear, deer, and moose, and is within the Division of Wildlife-designated "elk migration corridor" and "elk severe winter range." There is potential habitat for three state-rare amphibian species including the northern leopard frog, wood frog, and boreal toad.



Hermit Park Open Space: a back country experience in a front country location. Photo: Charlie Johnson

A wide range of exceptional recreational amenities also come with the property. The site currently has several miles of natural surface trails, 75 campsites, 15 log camper cabins, and a large group picnic pavilion. Two historic cabins also exist on-site.

Over the next several months, Parks and Open Lands will be developing a management plan for Hermit Park that includes ample opportunity for public input. Currently, it is anticipated that the Hermit Park Open Space Management Plan will be completed by October 2007 and the open space will be fully opened in spring 2008.

“For the past 40 years, my family was able to visit Hermit Park. I’m very pleased that my grandchildren will be able to share the same experiences their parents had when they were young.”

*Glenn Gibson,
County Commissioner District 3*

Hermit Park Open Space—Taking us to the top...

Appraised value	\$8,700,000	Community Foundation of Northern Colorado*	\$11,000
Larimer County	\$4,000,000	Verigy	\$10,010
Agilent Technologies	\$2,200,000	Hewlett-Packard Corporation	\$10,000
Estes Valley Land Trust	\$700,000	Whole Foods Market*	\$10,000
Great Outdoors Colorado	\$700,000	Estes Valley Rec. & Park Dist.	\$10,000
City of Loveland	\$420,000	Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	\$5,000
Town of Estes Park	\$400,000	Haines & Colton Charitable Trust*	\$5,000
City of Fort Collins	\$90,000	Individuals	\$31,000
Town of Berthoud	\$25,000		
McWhinney Foundation	\$25,000	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	
Erion Foundation*	\$25,000	thanks our "Friends" group for their	
Anonymous challenge grant*	\$25,000	passion and devotion in raising funds for	
Mark Tabb & Julie Vida*	\$24,000	Hermit Park. Their efforts were tireless,	
Microsoft Corporation*	\$24,000	and commitment relentless. Most of all,	
Hermit Park auction benefit	\$14,000	thanks to our donors for making Hermit	
		Park a reality for generations to come!	

* Donated through the Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands

Exciting New Vision for the Parks Program

Your county parks at Pinewood, Flatiron, Horsetooth Reservoirs, and Carter Lake will receive a face lift within the next 10 years. This year, a Citizens Task Force of 13 members worked with a consultant and Parks staff to develop a new Master Plan and Resource Management Plan to better meet growing outdoor recreational needs and trends in Northern Colorado.

Larimer County parks are exceptional public resources that provide outstanding recreation opportunities. Larimer County recognizes the important role that parks fulfill in the overall lifestyle enjoyed by County residents and visitors.

The new Master Plan sets the future direction for Larimer County's park system. Carter Lake, Horsetooth, Flatiron and Pinewood Reservoirs will also have a new Resource Management Plan prepared for them this year. Two different plans, one by Larimer County and the other by the Bureau of Reclamation, will provide future guidance for the management and development of recreation facilities for these reservoirs and other county parks into the next decade.

The Resource Management Plan, or "RMP," provides the guidelines for how Larimer County Parks and Open Lands will develop and implement recreation opportunities. RMPs are revised approximately every 10 years. The Horsetooth-Carter-Flatiron-Pinewood RMP was last revised in 1995. Larimer County Parks and Open Lands will use the RMP to guide implementation of reservoir improvements and resource management within the framework of the Parks Master Plan.

Larimer County Parks and Open Lands developed an updated Comprehensive Parks Master Plan which addresses all park properties as well as the reservoirs (also covered by the Resource Management Plan). This plan will guide the Department for the next 10 years in conserving and



Camping and fishing are popular activities at all Larimer County parks. Reserve your campsite now at (800) 397-7795. Photo: Efrain Padro

developing the County's important natural, cultural and recreational resources, and effectively meeting the recreation demands of park visitors and county residents. The plan will provide a focused direction that is in harmony with the Larimer County Vision Statements, and will identify priority projects and specific strategies to accomplish the vision. The last master plan was prepared in 1993.

Contributors

Larimer County Parks and Open Lands is in charge of preparing these planning documents. The Department has partnered with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (NCWCD) to prepare the plans and manage the parks. The Parks Master Plan Task Force was created to assist in the

“ The new Parks Master Plan will raise the bar for the entire County. All of the citizens that participated can be proud of the direction set for the future. The continued integration of the outdoor experiences will continue to keep Larimer County number one ... ”

Kathay Rennels,
County Commissioner District 1



Citizen Task Force. From left: Tom Miller, Chad LaChance, Matt Buechler—USBR, Dan Rieves*, David Coulson, Rob Harris, Mark Caughlan*, Ronny Bush, Vic Grizzle—USBR, Marc Engemoen*, Kathay Rennels*, Frank Cada, Linda Knowlton, Alan Apt, Debra Wykoff*, Ivan Andrade, Gary Buffington*, Barry Lewis. Not pictured: Andre Duvall, Rich Harter, Peter Newman.

* = Staff Photo: Charlie Johnson

Exciting New Vision, continued

development and evaluation of the plans. EDAW, a local planning and landscape architecture firm, was hired to assist with the process and plan preparation. The general public and park visitors were invited to participate in the process by attending four open houses, participating in one-on-one interviews, attending Task Force meetings, providing comments, and reviewing the draft plans on the project web page. Multiple press releases and newspaper articles promoted public participation in the process.

Plan Outcome

Guiding Statements were prepared for the park system and each park. These Guiding Statements provide a general description of the desired visitor experience, resource conditions and managerial considerations. A series of goals and policies were developed to guide both the proposed actions identified in the plan as well as unforeseen opportunities. Facility changes are proposed for each of the parks to

improve and expand visitor experience. The plan includes the additional development of 37 camping sites, 24 camper cabins, 283 vehicle/trailer parking spaces, and improvements to swim beaches and group picnic sites as well as a comprehensive redesign of the Carter Lake Marina.

Implementation

After a thorough review of the financial plan dedicated for improvements in the department, a budget was identified that allows for approximately \$600,000 in capital improvements annually. This provides a total budget of approximately \$6 million over the 10-year period. These funds come from multiple sources including park user fees, grants, agency partnerships and county general fund



Experience the rhythmic dipping of the boats' bow as you head out for a spin around Carter Lake, or to explore the coves at Horsetooth Reservoir.

Photo: Charlie Johnson

dollars. Other sources of revenue will have to be found to complete the \$10 million projected budget over the next 10 years.

The Citizens Task Force and Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone who participated in the Master Plan process and will be implementing the Master Plan projects with the help of a new Parks Advisory Board in 2007.

“After a thorough planning process that featured extensive public input, the Parks Advisory Board looks forward to its role in implementing the new master plan, which features a balance of natural resource protection with exciting new recreational opportunities for Larimer County parks.” Linda Knowlton, Parks Master Plan Task Force

Ranger Program ... Help Wanted

We are currently looking to hire the following positions: law enforcement professional, emergency medical technician, search and rescue support staff, environmental education presenter, trail laborer, visitor services manager, sign installer, part-time restroom custodian, public speaker, water quality technician, and a park ranger.

There are few careers where the job duties are as diverse as those of a ranger. Over the years Larimer County Parks and Open Lands has developed a regionally and nationally known model for an exceptional ranger program. Through the dedication of our fulltime ranger corps and an extensive seasonal staff, the department fields one of the most

progressive county ranger programs in the western US. The core of the ranger program is the extensive training regiment. Each ranger attends a 50-hour training program that includes topics such as lone officer survival, verbal judo, medical response, case law, search and seizure, boat handling skills, report writing, etc., and that is just the training required for seasonal rangers!

Although the ranger program has numerous areas of responsibility, the two paramount priorities for any ranger program are visitor safety and ensuring the values of the department are preserved. Management plans and other steering documents are only as good as their implementation and the ranger program often ensures their success.



Park Rangers enjoying a day keeping reservoir visitors safe. Photo: Unknown

As the department continues to grow and accept new challenges, we look forward to putting a ranger product in the field that can adapt to the new dynamics and be a valued asset to the department, the resources and the recreating public.

Getting out and about in your parks and open spaces!

Carter Lake

Set in a foothills valley southwest of Loveland, Carter Lake has so much more to offer than just beautiful scenery. The 3-mile long lake is very popular for sailing. Motor boating and water skiing are also big attractions. There are plentiful tent, electrical and non-electrical campsites close to the lake. Fishing, rock climbing, scuba diving, swimming and hiking assure something for everyone.



Devil's Backbone and Rim Rock

So close, just 2 miles west of Loveland off Highway 34, and yet so far away from the daily hustle and bustle, is the Devil's Backbone trailhead. 7 miles of hiking trails lead into foothills, valleys and along the legendary Devil's Backbone formation. The recently dedicated 5.5-mile Blue Sky trail to the north as well as the Rimrock trail and open space to the east allow for additional hiking opportunities. Whether out for a short stroll or a good long hike, there is always a chance to spot interesting wildlife.



Eagle's Nest

This open space just south of Livermore is a classic western landscape with vast panoramas of high mountain country, mesas, craggy granite cliffs, rolling grasslands and the North Fork of the Poudre. This is home to deer, coyote, mountain lion, black bear, and nesting golden eagles on the tower cliff face of Eagle's Nest Rock. The long history of ranching continues today with cattle grazing.



Flatiron Reservoir

Shade trees scattered along the west shore of this 47-acre reservoir provide a wonderful setting for electrical hookup campsites, tent camping, camper cabins, individual or group picnic areas and fishing. But the dramatic flatiron ridge rising from the east shore always catches the eye.



Fossil Creek Reservoir

More than 210 species of birds visit this open space, including bald eagles and migrating waterfowl. Designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, the birds have a great



opportunity to observe humans as they walk along the 2 miles of trails to observation decks and viewing blinds. It is conveniently located for everyone on the southeast edge of Fort Collins.

Horsetooth Mountain

This 2,711-acre mountain retreat just west of Fort Collins rises above the plains, foothill ridges and Horsetooth Reservoir. 29 miles of hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding trails lead to expansive vistas far out onto the plains and to the high Rockies. Horsetooth Rock is the centerpiece of this rugged mountain.



Horsetooth Reservoir

6.5 miles long and 1,900 acres of water provide a lot of room for a scenic cruise in your boat. Lying below Horsetooth Mountain between sharp foothill ridges, this reservoir has 9 coves to explore, great fishing, a swim beach, picnic areas, nearby hiking opportunities, electric and non-electric campsites and camper cabins. For many years Horsetooth Reservoir has been one of the most popular recreation areas in Colorado.



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 A
Devil's Backbone Open Space	2,198								12.5
Eagle's Nest Open Space	755								5
Flatiron Reservoir County Park	247	●	● A	●	●	●			
Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space	843								2 A
Glade Park County Park	3								
Horsetooth Mountain Park	2,711	●						●	29
Horsetooth Reservoir County Park	3,900	●	● A	●	●	●	●	●	1
Pinewood Reservoir County Park	427	●	● A		●				
Pleasant Valley Trail at Lions Park	20								2 A
Ramsay-Shockey Open Space	177	●							4 A
Rimrock Open Space	742								7

A — Meets Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

Pinewood Reservoir

This gem of a reservoir is 327 acres of clear water below piney slopes of the high foothills southwest of Loveland. Campsites and picnic areas are scattered along the eastern shore. What could be better than some good fishing from your boat within waving distance of your camp?



Pleasant Valley Trail and Lions Park

Lions Park sits on a pretty bend of the Poudre River in LaPorte. There, you can picnic or wet a fly-fishing line. If the fish aren't biting, the Pleasant Valley Trail leads west from the park to Bellvue through an area very rich in the history of early white settlement of Northern Colorado.



Ramsay-Shockey

4 miles of trails lead up through ponderosa pine forest above Pinewood Reservoir. Not only are the views spectacular, but there is always a chance you might see deer, elk or wild turkeys.



Releasing rehabilitated birds back to the wild is one of many stewardship activities the Open Lands Program has to offer. Photo: Rick Price

Guided Public Tours

Guided public tours will be offered in 2007 to 3 protected areas not otherwise open to the public. Blue Mountain Conservation Area tours provide a spectacular view from the top of Bald Mountain in the beautiful pine covered hills and grassy meadows near Pinewood Reservoir. Tours to the newly acquired Hermit Park near Estes Park will give a preview of the 1,362 acres prior to being opened to the public. The tours through



the 13,448-acre Red Mountain Open Space will give a glimpse of the incredible wilderness landscape of canyons, valleys, mountains, streams and the remote Big Hole Country, scheduled to be open to the public in 2009. For tour dates and times call (970) 679-4570.

Photo Thumbnails Page 6:

- 1. Unknown
- 2. Jim Disney
- 3. Charlie Johnson
- 4. Sue Burke
- 5. Charlie Johnson
- 6. Rick Price
- 7. Chris Cleveland

Page 7:

- 8. Efrain Padro
- 9. Rick Price
- 10. Charlie Johnson
- 11. Rick Price

Hiking	Horseback Riding	Mountain Biking	Leashed Dogs Allowed	Boating	Boat Ramp	Marina	Fishing	Swimming Beach	Bird Watching	Picnic Tables	Drinking Fountains	Restrooms
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● A	●	● A
●	●	●	●						●	●	●	● A
●	●		●				●		●			● A
			●				● A		●	● A	●	● A
●									●	● A	●	● A
●	●	●	●				●		●	● A	●	● A
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	● A	●	● A
●		●	●	●	●		●		●	● A	●	● A
●		●	●						●	● A	●	● A
●	●	●							●			

It fills my heart to know such wild places exist so close to home. Thank you again for the hours and efforts you devote to preserving such places. »

Sue Schlingman, Fort Collins



Photo: Jack Hicks



Photo: Gregory Mayse



Photo: Charlie Johnson



Agilent wanted this beautiful piece of property, Hermit Park, in the best community hands possible both in terms of stewardship and heartfelt caring. That's why Larimer County was our first choice. »

Jean Mooney, Agilent Technologies



Photo: Charlie Johnson

The red soil was cool. The cactuses were small but they hurt. P.S. I was the one with the yellow hat. » Tyler, Big Thompson Elementary



Photo: Jack Hicks



“I told my parents all about the different plants and they were very interested. If my parents asked me to go back again, I would go no matter what! ”

Jacob, Carrie Martin Elementary

Photo: Richard Snell



Photo: Rick Price



Photo: Walt Hubis



Photo: Sue Burke



Photo: Walt Hubis



Photo: Charlie Johnson

“Colorado is a beautiful state and Coloradans love the outdoors. Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department brings these great experiences right to our doorstep in a way that can be enjoyed by the entire family. ”

Senator Steve Johnson, District 15



Photo: Charlie Johnson



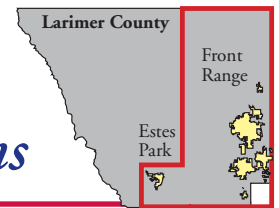
Photo: Dale Erickson

“Serving on the Open Lands Advisory Board has been a complete joy. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to help protect valuable land throughout Larimer County. ”

Mark DeGregorio, Open Lands Advisory Board 2001–2007

Five Year Accomplishments: 2001-2006

2006-2007 Acquisitions



Open Spaces

The Open Lands Program and its partners have protected over 40,000 acres of open space since 1996 with over \$9.5 million in landowner donations and \$17 million in grants. Since 2001, over 26,000 acres have been protected through strong partnerships with private landowners, GOCO, Fort Collins, Loveland, Estes Park, Estes Valley Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Northern Water (NCWCD). Major open spaces opened to the public since 2001 (8,000 acres/15 miles of trail) include Fossil Creek Reservoir, Eagle's Nest, Indian Creek, and Soderberg. Chimney Hollow and Red Mountain will follow in the near future.

Outdoor Recreation Improvements

Inspired by 1.6 million visitors annually at our nine regional parks and open spaces, over \$5 million was invested in new recreation facilities. These additions include 220 boat parking spaces, extensions to 4 boat ramps, 9 cabins, 35 campsites with electrical hookups, 4 visitor information stations, 2 group picnic shelters, 3 trailheads and 5 restrooms. Over \$8 million was generated from park permits, campground reservations, and concession leases for management of those parks. A new parks master plan was developed through an extensive public process that involved a 13-member citizen task force.

Customer Service Programs

State-of-the-art customer service programs have been established over the past 5 years including online credit card permit sales, a visitor information tree serving 22,000 callers annually, a reservation system for 300 campsites, a special event policy generating revenue to offset expenses and a department-wide cost accounting system. Over 100 special events were hosted and an innovative Boat Safety Program was initiated. Over 5 years, the Volunteer Program recruited over 1,600 people who volunteered over 140,000 hours for a value of \$2.4 million.

Land Stewardship Programs

The Weed District and Weed Enterprise Fund generated almost \$2.4 million and controlled noxious weeds on 5,500 acres of public and private lands. The Bureau of Reclamation provided \$96,000 for weed control. Anticipating customer needs, a user friendly "one stop shopping" store opened in 2006 in Fort Collins. Landowners can pick up educational information, rent equipment, and purchase weed control products. The County Forester responded to 850 calls from citizens, enforced the removal of over 200 diseased trees, and conducted 175 landscape inspections.

Special Projects

The "Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands," a private, non-profit group, formed to fund special projects. The Big Thompson River Surplus Flood Project allows recreational access to the Big Thompson River and sale of surplus properties to adjacent landowners. Proceeds from land sales improve recreational access to the Big Thompson Canyon.

Buckeye-Waverly Ag Lands

A. Bradley CE. This 184-acre parcel is located in Buckeye, a part of the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project. The landowner intends to take advantage of state tax credits to offset the donation.

Appraised Value: \$95,000

Partners: Landowner donation: \$87,860

Larimer County Open Lands: \$7,140

B. Miller CE. This 90-acre easement is the result of a small group of rural landowners who continue their grassroots effort to protect their rural lifestyle and ranching livelihoods.

Appraised Value: \$50,000

Partners: Landowner donation: \$45,000

Larimer County Open Lands: \$4,301

Poudre River

C. Fonken V CE. This 35-acre conservation easement located in the Poudre Canyon is the fifth donation by the Fonken family for a total of 245 acres protected.

Appraised Value: \$100,000

Partners: Landowner donation: \$100,000

Estes Valley

D. Hermit Park Open Space. This 1,362-acre Rocky Mountain gem was acquired from Agilent Technologies (see page 3).

Appraised Value: \$8,700,000

Partners: Landowner discount: \$2,200,000

Estes Valley Land Trust: \$700,000

Great Outdoors Colorado: \$700,000

City of Loveland: \$420,000

Town of Estes Park: \$400,000

City of Fort Collins: \$90,000

Town of Berthoud: \$25,000

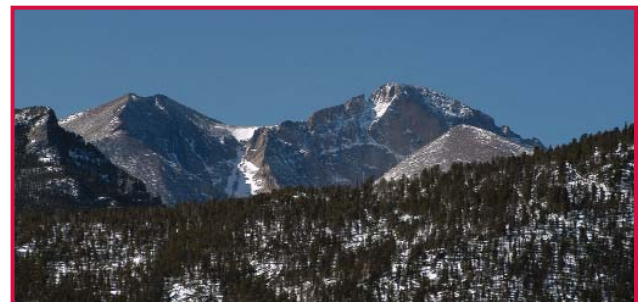
Estes Valley Rec & Park District: \$10,000

Private donors: \$31,000

Larimer County Open Lands: \$4,000,000

* lead agency on project

CE = Conservation Easement



Longs and Meeker Peaks. Photo: Jim Disney

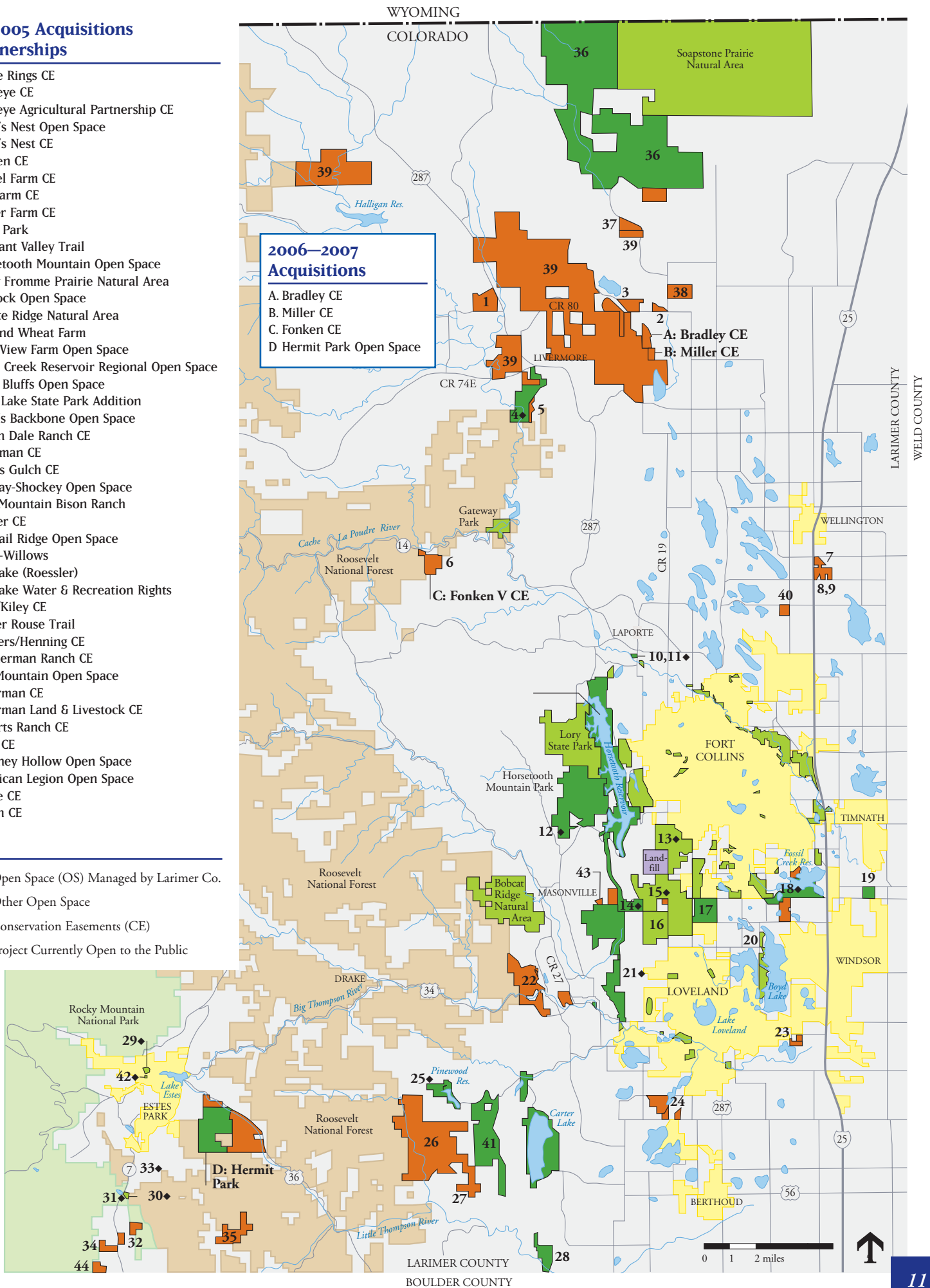
1996-2005 Acquisitions & Partnerships

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

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

2006-2007 Acquisitions

- A. Bradley CE
- B. Miller CE
- C. Fonken CE
- D. Hermit Park Open Space





Parks and Open Lands Administration and Accounting team work behind the scenes to help protect and to conserve our natural resources for generations to come. Photo: Sue Burke

Mountains of paper and rivers of ink...

Other programs manage beautiful parks and open spaces.

Administration & Accounting manages mountains of paper and rivers of ink! But the A&A team is a proud partner in every program, providing essential support to all.

This team is responsible for budgeting, accounting, financial projections, payroll, personnel; departmental signs and brochures; park entrance permit production, distribution, and accounting; campground reservation system management; Visitor Center front desk, phones and public interaction; and many other functions.

Skillful administration is an invisible art: When it is done well, nobody notices!

Working in the background, behind all the pretty pictures in this report, the Administration & Accounting Program is committed to providing efficient and professional financial and staff support services, and exemplary customer service to the public and our partners.



Staff at Bison Visitor Center welcome and enjoy visitors. Located at the north end of Carter Lake, the visitor center is open Monday thru Friday 8:00 am—4:30 pm. Photo: Sue Burke

“The professional services provided by Admin & Accounting staff provide the safety net that allows us to concentrate on our high wire act.”

Dan Rieves, Blue Mountain District Manager

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 \$86 million.

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



Mule deer appreciate the commitment of county voters to protect and to preserve Larimer County open space. Photo: Charlie Johnson

Annual Revenue Receipt of Open Space Tax Dollars*

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Larimer County	2,259,975	2,485,421	2,707,553	3,067,810	3,294,869	3,565,146	3,527,084	3,532,580	3,750,211	3,811,306	4,033,795	36,035,750
Berthoud	71,154	80,969	87,574	101,539	110,862	122,889	124,139	123,913	126,810	127,480	136,930	1,077,330
Estes Park	161,905	178,198	193,453	224,779	222,608	229,886	218,802	218,445	234,908	239,502	250,110	2,372,596
Fort Collins	2,107,473	2,319,562	2,487,606	2,850,066	3,109,001	3,323,372	3,235,748	3,205,119	3,374,671	3,417,517	3,599,786	33,029,921
Johnstown									9,457	8,932	11,965	30,354
Loveland	847,210	932,139	1,003,872	1,146,823	1,234,060	1,321,205	1,304,378	1,314,655	1,405,098	1,432,898	1,506,477	13,448,815
Timnath	4,221	4,646	5,025	5,732	5,742	5,887	5,599	7,083	11,480	11,684	13,196	80,295
Wellington	29,848	32,520	40,557	47,494	53,444	64,589	67,642	66,730	75,185	79,698	77,782	635,488
Windsor									17,416	20,115	13,379	50,910
Totals	5,481,786	6,033,455	6,525,640	7,444,243	8,030,585	8,632,974	8,483,392	8,468,525	9,005,237	9,149,131	9,643,420	86,898,388

* These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2007. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

Red Mountain Open Space: Successfully Partnering for Land Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

A Mountain of Accomplishment.

The 13,500-acre Red Mountain Open Space, located approximately 25 miles north of Fort Collins, was protected in 2004 as part of the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project. At 55,000 acres, it is our largest landscape protection effort to date! In combination with the adjacent City of Fort Collins' Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and numerous conservation easements on private ranches, Red Mountain Open Space protects an over 22-mile landscape connection east to west. This landscape-scale conservation project will be unmatched in Colorado and maintains agricultural uses by keeping historic ranches intact, conserves critical wildlife and plant habitats, and provides extensive opportunities for recreational access.

Step into Red Mountain Open Space!

A 2,000-foot sheer drop from the short-grass prairie opens into the Big Hole valley where extensive mountain mahogany shrublands and foothills grasslands are

encircled by red rock hills. Rare plant communities, perennial streams, diverse wildlife habitat and significant cultural features now protected on these areas are unparalleled in Larimer County. Can't wait to see this magnificent area? Through 2008, Larimer County Open Lands and Fort Collins Natural Areas programs, will offer guided public tours to Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.

To sign up for a tour, check out www.larimer.org/parks/parks_calendar.cfm.

Planning for Success.

Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins joined together to develop management plans for Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area beginning in 2006. Planning at this bigger scale will allow for management on a large landscape level and for such processes as sustainable livestock grazing, wildlife movement, natural fire regimes, and riparian and wetland functioning to occur. At the same time, the management plans will include design of a natural surface



Early morning sunlight bathes Table Mountain and casts a warm glow on Red Mountain Open Space. Photo: Greg Mayse

trail system to allow the public to experience this landscape and educational opportunities on the significance of the ecological, cultural, and western heritage of the sites. The management planning process includes opportunities for extensive public involvement and is anticipated for adoption in late 2007. Both properties are slated to open to public access in mid-2009. Want to share your ideas? Go to www.larimer.org/parks/laramie_foothills.htm.

Weed District Gets a New Store Front

Where is the Larimer County Weed District? Where is the County Forester? If you are used to visiting us at the Larimer County Courthouse Offices, you may have noticed that our space is empty.

The weed control and forestry team has relocated to 2649 E. Mulberry Street, Suite 6, Fort Collins. This location is ideally situated east of Fort Collins with easy access for citizens all across Larimer County. This move has allowed us to offer "one-stop shopping" in which customers can make one trip to one location and have all their needs met.

Imagine stopping by on a Friday afternoon with visions of your Saturday weed control activities dancing in your head. You are a motivated weed warrior. You will need to borrow a 65-gallon weed sprayer, purchase an appropriately labeled herbicide for your particular weedy pest, print a map of your property, and receive professional advice

on how to properly and safely apply your herbicide. This can all now be done with one stop at our office on E. Mulberry.

Perhaps you are participating in our annual leafy spurge flea beetle biological control program. We will simply call and invite you to come to our new office where you will receive your free insects along with lots of helpful information that will ensure a successful release and successful leafy spurge control.

You may have pine beetle and noxious weed infestations, needing advice or tools for both issues. The consolidation of the Weed District and Forestry Program into one location will enable you to come by and talk to a team of experts who can help steer your property back to ecological health.

Additionally, we will offer technical training courses in the summer months for citizens including proper sprayer



Larimer County Parks & Open Lands utilizes many tools to restore and enhance the native vegetation. Photo: Dave Leatherman

calibration, weed identification, and forest pest management.

We are excited to offer a new level of service to the citizens of Larimer County. Our office is open weekdays from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm. For more information call (970) 498-5768.

Remembering Ann Dewey

In late spring of 2007 our Parks and Open Lands Education Coordinator, Ann Dewey, was killed in a car accident. It was, and is, a blow to this Department.

Ann's dedication and commitment to her job and to all aspects of education ran deep. Working with "her" volunteer Naturalists to educate visitors about the natural wonders of our parks and open spaces was her passion. These volunteers educate visitors through hikes, talks and campfire storytelling and they are committed to carrying on Ann's legacy of environmental education.



Ann Dewey 1953-2007 Photo: Patricia Brennan

Ann firmly believed if she could change just one life through education that would be success. The fact is, Ann has and her legacy will continue to touch many lives

A fund has been established in memory of Ann. Donations will be used to further

an education project at Larimer County. Donations can be sent to: **Ann Dewey Memorial Fund** c/o Friends of Larimer County Parks & Open Lands P.O. Box 2715, Loveland, CO 80539

“There are few people in the world who put their heart and soul into their job. Ann was one of those people and I feel privileged to have known and worked with her.”

Duane Pond, Open Lands Advisory Board 2000–2007

Leveraging Dollars: A Priority for Larimer County Citizens and Landowners!

Larimer County families and businesses made land preservation a priority in 2006-2007 by donating land and money—nearly \$3,000,000. With these donations in 2006 and early 2007, the Open Lands Program has now received over \$9 million since 1996 through the generosity of citizens and landowners.

In addition to land, money, and bargain sale donations the Open Lands Program received almost 4,500 volunteer hours in 2006 which is equivalent to \$84,145.00.* Thanks to these volunteers, the life of our tax dollars continues to be extended to help "preserve and protect significant open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations ..."

If you are interested in preserving your land, making a cash donation, and/or volunteering with the County's Open Lands Program and want to understand the tax advantages to these types of donations, please contact us at (970) 679-4575.

* Based on estimates made by Independent Sector

Donation over \$1,000,000	Agilent Technologies (2007) David & Susan Jessup (1999-2005) Rob Cohen (2005)	Hermit Park Open Space Sylvan Dale Ranch CEs Cohen CE
\$500,000 to \$999,000	H.A. & Elaine Fonken (2002-2006) Jake Kauffman & Son, Inc. (2001) Paul Jonjak & Family (1999)	Fonken CE I—V Kauffman CE Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE
\$300,000 to \$499,000	Curt & Jennifer Heckrodt (2000) Jack & Beth White (2000) Bob Ramsay (1999)	Red-tail Ridge Open Space Rimrock Open Space Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
\$100,000 to \$299,000	Eldon & Trulie Ackerman (2004-2005) Catherine Roberts (2004) Royce Hopkins (2004) The American Legion (2004) Dan Miller & Mary Beth Simon (2002-2003) Larry & Anne Peterson (2002) Patricia Block (2002) Dave Sitzman (2001) Grace Dunkin (2001) Joe & Pat Harper (2000) Jon & Susanne Stephens (2000)	Ackerman CE I, II Roberts CE Hopkins CE American Legion Open Space Miller-Simon CE I, II Peterson CE Block CE Kerbel Farm CE Ryan Gulch CE II Harper CE Ryan Gulch CE
\$5,000 to \$99,000	Advanced Micro Devices (2007) Anonymous Donor* (2007) Erion Foundation* (2007) Hewlett-Packard (2007) McWhinney Foundation (2007) Community Foundation of No. Colo.* (2007) Haines & Colton Charitable Trust* (2007) Verigy (2007) Whole Foods Markets* (2007) Tabb, Mark D. & Julie Vida* (2006, 2007) Microsoft Corporation* (2006, 2007) Bryant & Patricia Miller (2006) Jim & Christy Bradley (2006) Charles & Judith Siefke (2005) Southdown, Inc (2001) Miller, Left Hand & Park Creek Ranches (2001) Robert & Ann Avis (2000) Byron & Beverly Williams (1999) Audra & Don Hughey (1998) Stephanie Steppel-White (1997)	Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Hermit Park Open Space Miller CE Bradley CE Siefke CE Red-tail Ridge Open Space Buckeye Agricultural Partnership CE Eagle's Nest CE Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Coyote Ridge Natural Area

Bold = 2006–2007 Donations

CE = Conservation Easement

* = Donation to Friends of Larimer County towards a specific project

Inventory of Open Lands Acquisitions

Name	Acreage	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 Fort Collins hold GOCO CE
Eagle's Nest Open Space	755/*72	2,054,500	1,360,000	54,500	2 Partners	640,000	Yes 2005 LLT holds restrictive covenant
Teepee Rings CE	*504	170,000	69,000	100,000	LLT	1,000	No Managed 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 I & II CE	*566.5	504,000	230,456	167,000	NRCS/FRPP	106,544	No
Ackerman Land & Livestock Co. I CE	*318	430,000	260,318		NRCS/FRPP	169,682	No
Buckeye/Waverly Ag Lands							
Buckeye CE	*494	203,753	28,000	5,900	2 Partners	169,853	No Monitored by LLT
Buckeye CE 3 & 4	*70	190,000	60,000	130,000			No
Bradley CE	*184	95,000	7,140	87,860			No Monitored by Larimer Co.
Miller CE	*90	49,300	4,300	45,000			No Monitored by Larimer Co.
Wellington Ag Lands							
Kerbel Farm CE	*83	376,778	98,749	179,280	Fort Collins	98,749	No
Bee Farm CE	*139	365,302	182,651		Fort Collins	182,651	No
Weber Farm CE	*69.1	198,138	99,069		Fort Collins	99,069	No
Kraft Farm CE	*130	460,000	460,000				No
Poudre River							
Fonken CE Phase 1-2-3-4-5	*245	650,000	0	650,000			No 5 of 10 CE donations complete
Lion's Park	20		0				Yes
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 Monitored by LLT & Lar. Co.
Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space	843.5	7,988,750	3,744,550	19,650	Fort Collins	4,224,550	Yes
Coyote Ridge Natural Area	839.3	1,885,499	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 as Boyd Lake SP
Devil's Backbone to Horsetooth							
Rimrock Open Space	472/*274	2,362,240	2,262,240		Fort Collins	100,000	Yes
Soderberg Open Space (HTMP)	114	460,000	460,000				Future Managed as part of HTMP
Devil's Backbone Open Space	2,197/*11.3	9,365,020	2,581,920		4 Partners	6,783,100	Yes
Hughey Open Space (HTMP)	282	310,000	129,000	31,000	GOCO	150,000	Yes Managed as part of HTMP
Culver Open Space (HTMP)	287.9	1,500,000	975,000		2 Partners	525,000	Potential Fort Collins holds GOCO CE
Siefke CE	*35	93,000	0	93,000			No Monitored by Larimer Co
Big Thompson River							
Sylvan Dale CE	*1172	2,622,616	922,436	1,325,240	2 Partners	375,000	Possible Trail
Block CE	*35	200,000	100,000	100,000			No
Kauffman CE	*73.55	800,000	0	800,000			Possible Trail
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	0	325,000			Yes
Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE	*4,100	2,666,000	1,350,000	666,000	GOCO	650,000	Guided Tours Co-monitored by LC and LLT
Chimney Hollow Open Space	1,847	3,842,000	2,892,000		GOCO	950,000	2010 Loveland holds GOCO CE
Harper CE	*240	295,000	0	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	**15.1	43,699	0	43,699			Future Trail Monitored by LLT
Estes Valley							
Childers/Henning CE	*160	800,000	0	752,000	Private	48,000	No Monitored by EVLT
Smitherman CE	*520	520,000	130,000		2 Partners	390,000	No Monitored by EVLT
Homer Rouse Memorial Trail	1.5 mi.	40,000	10,000		Estes Park	30,000	Yes Managed by EVRPD
Lake Estes Trail	4mi. (phase III)	232,500	100,000		4 Partners	132,500	Yes Managed by EVRPD
Lion Gulch Trailhead		21,521	10,000		USFS	11,521	Yes Managed by USFS
Lily Lake/Roessler	18	400,000	40,000		3 Partners	360,000	No Managed by RMNP
Lily Lake Water & Rec. Rights	14 ac.ft.	551,000	45,000	236,000	6 Partners	270,000	Yes Managed by RMNP
Mills/Kiley CE	*192	335,000	45,000		EVLT/Estes Pk	290,000	Homestead Monitored by EVLT
Knoll-Willows Open Space	20.5	345,000	55,000		EVLT/Estes Pk	290,000	Yes Monitored by EVLT
American Legion Open Space	1.6	200,000	25,000	125,000	2 Partners	50,000	Limited Monitored by EVLT
Cohen CE	131	1,500,000	100,000	1,000,000	EVLT/GOCO	400,000	No Monitored by EVLT
Hermit Park	1,362	8,700,000	4,000,000	2,200,000	7+ Partners	2,500,000	Yes 2008 Monitored by EVLT
Fee Simple Acreage Total	24,958						
CE Acreage Total	15,176						
Fee Simple & CE Acreage Total	40,134	79,321,819	29,706,593	9,942,629		40,372,597	

Properties managed or monitored by Larimer Co. Parks & Open Lands

* Conservation Easement
** Trail Easement

EVLT Estes Valley Land Trust
EVRPD Estes Valley Rec. & Park Dist.
GOCO Great Outdoors Colorado
HTMP Horsetooth Mountain Park

LLT Legacy Land Trust
RMNP Rocky Mountain Nat. Park
TNC The Nature Conservancy
USFS U.S. Forest Service

Parks & Open Lands' Visual Artist of the Year

Visual Artist Program

To celebrate 10 years of protecting open space, the Parks and Open Lands Department initiated a "Visual Artist of the Year" program to tie land protection and art together. The selected artist receives access to Larimer County's Open Lands for one year for artistic endeavors in return for an original piece of art inspired by one or all these protected special places.

2006 Visual Artist of the Year: James Disney

Jim began his career as an artist in 1963. He is known, primarily, for his mountain landscapes, although he has explored many schools of artistic expression in his forty years of painting. He has shown in several galleries and numerous exhibitions throughout the Western United States and his paintings are in collections in the U.S. and several foreign countries. Jim is an avid outdoor person. From 1993 to 2001, Jim served two terms as a Larimer County Commissioner.

Jim painted two pieces this year which were inspired by the Devil's Backbone Open Space. These will be displayed for about a year on the second-floor lobby, outside of the Commissioners' offices. Jim has graciously accepted the offer to remain as the 2007 Visual Artist of the Year.

The Devil's Backbone Open Space was acquired from 1998 to 2003. This unique open space now protects nearly 2,200 acres of rolling foothill shrub lands, rim rock capped hogbacks, and the striking geologic outcropping that is the namesake of the open space. The Devil's Backbone Open Space is very popular with trail enthusiasts for its 9-mile looping trail system that caters to families as well as hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians of all levels.

"The Open Lands Program touches us on so many levels. It provides recreational opportunities, it provides a legacy for future generations, and provides the solitude to reconnect with the earth for personal rejuvenation. It's one of those things that makes Larimer County not just a place to live, but a community in which to thrive."

Frank Lancaster, County Manager



A special thanks to our **Open Lands Board Members**. Top from left: Peter Kast, Jean Carpenter, Ted Swanson, Gary Buffington*, Glenn Gibson, Kerri Rollins*, Mark DeGregorio, Duane Pond, Brian Hayes. Bottom from left: Charlie Johnson*, Jacob Wells*, Sue Sparling, Bill Pinkham, K-Lynn Cameron*, Bob Streeter, Meegan Flenniken*, Jerry White*, Ben Manvel. Not pictured: Bill Newman, Jim White. * - Staff Photo: Charlie Johnson

"Our thoughtful investments in open lands helps preserve the Colorado we all know and love. It's been a privilege bringing today's citizens so much pleasure while ensuring a precious heritage for future generations."

Ben Manvel, Open Lands Advisory Board 2000-2007



Parks & Open Lands Department
1800 S. County Road 31
Loveland, Colorado 80537
970 679-4570

www.larimer.org/parks/

*From the Chair of the
Open Lands Advisory Board*

Open Lands Program is Accountable to You

The Open Lands Program continues to spend the Help Preserve Open Space Tax dollars wisely to protect the special places and wide open landscapes of Larimer County. The stage has been set over the past 11 years by protecting over 40,000 acres of open space!

An unforeseen opportunity that we acted upon this year was the acquisition of Hermit Park Open Space. While acquisition of this 1,362-acre recreation area was unforeseen, it was also an important and exciting chance to round out our land protection portfolio in that it provides camping in addition to trail-based outdoor recreation.

We've done such a good job of spending your open space tax dollars to protect lands identified in the Open Lands Master Plan that the remaining dollars for land acquisition are limited. In 2006 we re-evaluated county-wide land protection priorities in face of ever increasing demand for these limited dollars. In short, there are important landscapes, regional trails, high quality agricultural lands and community buffers that remain to be protected and exceed our remaining funding 10-fold. To best maintain our accountability to the citizens of Larimer County and ensure we are meeting your expectations and needs, we will be coming back sooner rather than later to revamp and extend the funding for open space into the future.

The Board and I believe the Open Lands Program is doing an outstanding job of remaining accountable to the citizens. Open space tax dollars are spent wisely on land acquisition and management. In fact, for every dollar spent on acquisition, we leverage a dollar through grants, donations, and partnerships! As we move forward into the next decade of the Program, we will maintain accountability and look to a future extension of funding to continue to meet the needs of land protection and stewardship. I look forward to what the future holds!

Peter C. Kast
Chair, Open Lands Advisory Board