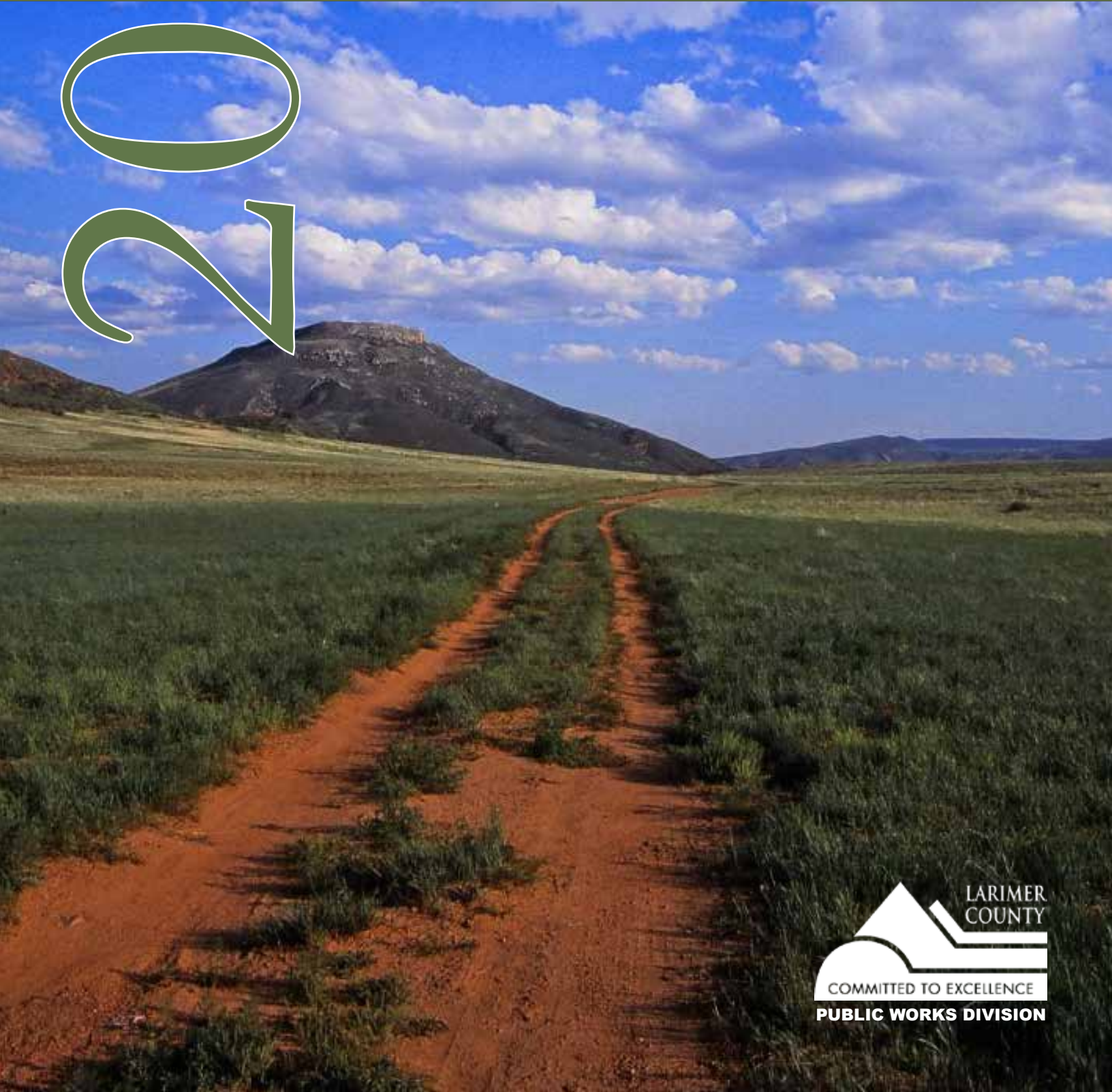


12

# NATURAL RESOURCES

*Visitor Services / Open Lands / Weed Management & Forestry*  
*Excellence in conservation and recreation since 1954*

20



*A message from the Director*

# The Path to the Future

Dear Larimer County visitors and citizens,

Can you really change the future by planning and being innovative? Yes, you can! The Department of Natural Resources embraces this philosophy and continues to plan for success by making collaborative, informed decisions that actually shape our future.

The cornerstone of our planning revolves around forward-looking master planning developed through a rigorous public process that directs our pathway into the future. We are so fortunate to have three citizen advisory boards keeping us on that path to success with innovative ideas and strategic decision making.

We recognize that we must be change agents, constantly aware of the needs of

our visitors, conserving our natural resources, and improving and maintaining our facilities. We certainly cannot predict the future, but we can be prepared through collaboration, innovation, and strategic thinking.

I would like to invite all of you to experience my three favorite outdoor recreation venues this year by hiking to Horsetooth Rock, the most recognized icon in Northern Colorado; fishing for Walleye at Carter Lake; and cabin camping at Hermit Park Open Space.

As always, a big thank you to the citizens of Larimer County, our professional



©Sue Burke

staff, our outstanding citizen boards, and especially to our Board of County Commissioners who continue to support parks, open spaces, and land stewardship programs in your Larimer County. Get Outdoors!

Gary K. Buffington  
Director, Department of Natural Resources

## A Special Thanks to our Citizen Advisory Board Members



©Charlie Johnson

### Parks Advisory Board

Back, left to right: Deb Wykoff\*; David Hattis; Gary Buffington\*; Forrest Orswell; Dan Rieves\*; John Tipton; Steve Johnson, Commissioner; Steve Ambrose; Ron Kainer. Front, left to right: Robert Harris; Mark Caughlan\*; Russell Fruits (chair); Frank Cada; Linda Knowlton; Frank Gillespie; Chris Fleming\*; Charlie Johnson\*. Not pictured: Mark DeGregorio. \* = Staff



©Charlie Johnson

### Open Lands Advisory Board

Back, left to right: Hugh McKean; Gary Buffington\*; Travis Rollins\*. Middle, left to right: Mary Banken; Paul Alaback; Tom Donnelly, Commis@ioner; Kerri Rollins\*; Ladonna Lee; Carl Sorrentino; John Phipps. Front, left to right: Charlie Johnson\*; Meg Oren\*; Nancy Wallace; Meegan Flenniken\*; Suzan Fritchel; Chris Fleming\*. Not pictured: Gerry Horak; Trudy Haines; Peter Kast (chair); Steve Vessey. \* = Staff



©Casey Cisneros

### Land Stewardship Advisory Board

Left to right: Gary Buffington\*; Dave Lentz\*; Tim D'Amato\*; Ernie Marx; Carmen Weston; Meegan Flenniken\*; Ken Matbias; Lew Gaiter, Commissioner. Not pictured: Vic Day; Matt Parker; Chuck Miller; Bob Zimdahl. \* = Staff

*"I'm continually impressed with the forethought and dedication the DNR staff brings to Larimer County. The citizens of Larimer County not only have a treasure in its natural resources but in the staff that manages those treasures. My family and I appreciate all the hard work that goes into creating and preserving a safe and vibrant natural landscape."* Russell Fruits, Parks Advisory Board

Cover photo: Red Mountain Open Space ©Charlie Johnson

### Larimer County Government Officials

2012-2013 Board of County Commissioners:  
Lew Gaiter III, Steve Johnson, Tom Donnelly

County Manager: Linda Hoffman

Public Works Director: Marc Engemoen



# Our Lands - Our Future

A continual major priority for the Department of Natural Resources is providing citizens with great opportunities for the quality outdoor experiences they desire. To achieve this goal the Department initiated a study to gather information for an update of the Open Lands Master Plan (2001).

In 2012 Larimer County and all of its municipalities joined together, in an unprecedented partnership, to evaluate the opportunities, preferences, and possible gaps in the region's land conservation and nature-based recreation. Dubbed *Our Lands-Our Future*, this grassroots study will investigate our community's vision for the critical landscapes and outdoor recreational opportunities in Northern Colorado.

Public needs and preferences are being assessed through multiple public events and meetings, two citizen surveys, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and an online interactive mapping tool. Additionally, a comprehensive financial analysis is being conducted, pairing needs and preferences with possible future funding scenarios that could support them. A separate economic analysis will provide information about how land conservation and recreation affect property values, recreation, tourism, agriculture, and overall economic development of Northern Colorado.

These products will guide future conservation and recreation master planning efforts by Larimer County and its municipalities and help determine how your Help Preserve Open Spaces tax dollars are spent both now and in the future. The study will be completed in June 2013. For more information please visit [www.larimer.org/ourlands\\_ourfuture](http://www.larimer.org/ourlands_ourfuture)



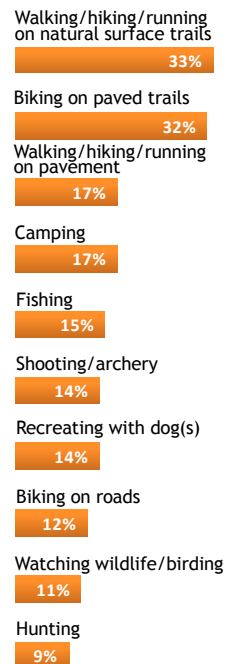
©Logan Simpson Design

This graph depicts *one* example of results from a citizen survey distributed to thousands of Larimer County residents. (Top ten selections by percentage of respondents)

For which activities would you like to see more land/facilities provided?



©Logan Simpson Design



*“Summer, winter, spring or fall - outdoors in Colorado is one of the biggest reasons we live here. Continuing to ensure our lakes, reservoirs, campgrounds, and other Open Space natural areas are available for our children and grandchildren is one of the most significant steps we can take to ensure Larimer County remains great for years to come.”*

*Lew Gaiter III, County Commissioner, District 1*



**OUR LANDS OUR FUTURE**

Recreation & Conservation  
Choices for Northern Colorado

# Meeting the Future - Head On!



©Charlie Johnson

**Mountains to Plains Energy by Design - proactive planning:** To protect the natural, cultural, and recreational resources at Red Mountain Open Space, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, and Meadow Springs Ranch, a partnership between Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, the City of Fort Collins, the State Land Board, and The Nature Conservancy developed a cutting-edge, science-based plan to minimize and mitigate impacts from possible future oil and gas development.



©Charlie Johnson

**Grazing and Drought - a plan for the future:** Drought conditions threaten range health and water supplies requiring implementation of adaptive grazing strategies. Grazing lease agreements and annual grazing plans for county open space properties have provisions to protect natural resources by reducing the number of livestock and/or reducing the duration of grazing during drought. In 2012, grazing rotations were modified to meet drought conditions in various pastures.



©Julie Perry Nelson

**Tiny Trekkers:** Volunteer Naturalists teach the future generation of land stewards at Devil's Backbone Open Space. Kids ages 2-5 hike and participate in lessons about wildlife, ecology, and more! In 2012, kids learned about bats, spiders, and how animals move. For a current schedule, visit [www.larimer.org/NReducation](http://www.larimer.org/NReducation)



**Communicating across the ages!** Rangers tweeted real-time field conditions and staff interacted with Facebook visitors to reach a broader audience.

**Using plastic instead of cash for daily entrance permits = customer convenience and less staff time.**

Throughout 2012, 11 automated pay stations replaced the old paper and cash vaults. Of the over 11,000 transactions and \$70,193 collected at these, nary a dime was physically touched, deposited, or processed by staff! Visitors and staff both love the updated technology.



©Steve McCorkel





©Charlie Johnson



©Charlie Johnson

**The Ranger Excellence School:** Hosted by Larimer County and sponsored by the Colorado Open Space Alliance, this training conference cultivates highly trained and professional rangers skilled in many disciplines. It also highlights the importance of serving the public and promotes a high level of customer service. In 2012, the second year of the conference, 85 rangers from 13 different agencies attended.

*“Our Department of Natural Resources is about creating a future, one in which our kids and their kids can enjoy the beauty of Larimer County just as we have known it.”*

*Steve Johnson, County Commissioner, District 2*



©Jon Dauzvardis

**Restoring native riparian corridors along the Poudre River:** Anglers and their quarry are better off due to the riverbank enhancement project at Lions Open Space. A new, more fish-friendly channel was formed, two new river access points created, and over 15,000 native trees and shrubs planted. Anglers are obviously happy; if only fish could smile!

**Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement partnership with Telementor:** Larimer County Department of Natural Resources’ staff partner with Preston Middle School to mentor students and future natural resource managers on how best to improve wildlife habitat. Sixth graders installed a guzzler to provide water for wildlife including elk, bears, and mountain lions, at Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement.



©David Neils

**Larimer County - 1, Aliens - 0** Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), a noxious weed, was first discovered west of Berthoud in 2003. The infestation had already spread across 500 acres in Larimer County before being reported. Due to ongoing, diligent eradication efforts of monitoring, spraying, and pulling, as of the end of 2012, this plant was virtually extinct in Larimer County.

©Steve Priest



## Open Space Tax Revenues Benefit All of Larimer County

The 1/4-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces 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 \$142 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 Help Preserve Open Spaces 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
2009	3,614,183	109,178	224,318	2,824,574	45,847	1,410,859	7,103	114,630	49,847
2010	3,920,058	118,288	244,384	3,058,106	55,501	1,558,011	6,746	123,466	59,200
2011	4,114,912	120,393	265,442	3,227,847	62,688	1,592,744	48,316	129,817	71,406
2012	4,485,954	124,545	288,754	3,554,623	75,886	1,740,460	73,910	155,336	113,641
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,279,470</b>	<b>1,936,535</b>	<b>3,888,185</b>	<b>52,413,748</b>	<b>343,333</b>	<b>22,775,926</b>	<b>236,054</b>	<b>1,403,059</b>	<b>455,508</b>

\*These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2013. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

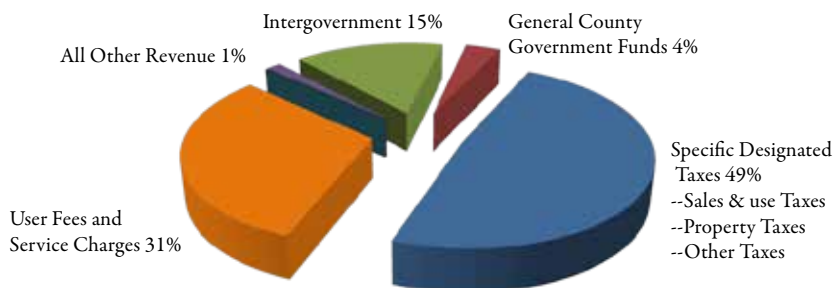
## Department of Natural Resources Summary of Finances

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

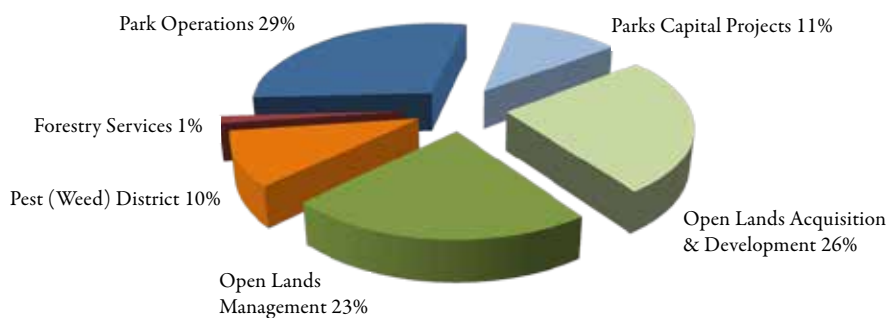
Revenues are realized from a number of sources and totaled \$10.1 million in 2012. Expenses for 2012 were \$8.9 million including a number of one-time capital development projects for both Parks and Open Lands.

Major capital projects in 2012 included continued developments at Hermit Park Open Space, improvements at South Bay Campground at Horsetooth Reservoir, and the purchase of automated pay stations.

### 2012 Revenues



### 2012 Expenses



These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2013.



# 2012 Improvements - Investing Now for the Future

## Hermit Park Open Space

### Hermit's Hollow Campground Redevelopment

Addition of 13 new campsites, 4 vault toilets, renovation of 29 campsites, and road and drainage repairs (Reported at project end.)

2011 & 2012 Project Cost: \$ 728,745

Partners:

Great Outdoors Colorado \$ 200,000

Gates Family Foundation \$ 59,000

Larimer County Open Lands: \$ 469,745

(1/4-cent sales tax)



New campsite at Bobcat Campground ©Josh Wagoner

## Kruger Equestrian Campground Redevelopment

Campground renovation with horse trailer parking, 5 campsites each with corral(s), and access to Homestead Meadows trails

2012 Project Cost: \$ 165,870

Partners:

Roundup Riders of the Rockies \$ 10,000

Friends of Larimer County Parks \$ 1,200

and Open Lands

Regional Park Fees \$ 62,861

Larimer County Open Lands: \$ 91,809

(1/4-cent sales tax)



Kruger Equestrian Campground construction ©Sue Burke



Flatiron Reservoir fishing access ©Rick Goltz

## Flatiron Reservoir County Park

### Improved Fishing Access

Bank improvements, steps, and railings on south end and Cheyenne Day Use

2012 Project Cost: \$ 21,000

Partners:

Colorado Parks & Wildlife \$ 17,700

Loveland Fishing Club (plus labor) \$ 1,000

Larimer County Dept. of Natural Resources \$ 2,300



©Sue Burke

## Horsetooth Reservoir County Park

### South Bay Campground Full Hookup Campsites

Addition of 17 new full hookup campsites

2012 Project Cost: \$ 386,300

Partners:

Bureau of Reclamation \$ 160,900

Conservation Trust Fund/Lottery \$ 70,200

Larimer County Dept. of Natural Resources \$ 155,200



Red Mountain Open Space ©Rich Ernst

*“Our citizens show such tremendous support for our open spaces, not only in their use of and care for these protected lands, but also in the donations and support for future protection and development of these important community resources.”*

*Tom Donnelly, County Commissioner, District 3*

*From the first donation in 1997 from Stephanie Steppel-White to the 2012 donation from Roundup Riders of the Rockies, citizens have invested in the future of Larimer County’s open lands.*

**Major Private Donors of the Open Lands Program**

<b>Donation Over \$1,000,000</b>	Agilent Technologies (2007) David & Susan Jessup (1999-2011) Rob Cohen (2005)	Hermit Park Open Space Sylvan Dale Ranch CEs Cohen CE
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,000</b>	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
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,000</b>	Curt & Jennifer Heckrodt (2000) Jack & Beth White (2000) Bob Ramsay (1999)	Red-tail Ridge Open Space Rimrock Open Space Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
<b>\$100,000 to \$299,000</b>	Timnath Farm Investments, LLC (2010) Jim & Beth Crowder (2009)  Jim & Christy Bradley (2006, 2009) 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)	Three Bell I CE Russ Crowder Area at Devil’s Backbone Open Space Bradley CE I, II 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
<b>\$5,000 to \$99,000</b>	<b>Roundup Riders of the Rockies, Inc.</b> (2009, 2011, 2012) C. Miller & Family (2010) Miller-Simon-Bokovoy (2009) Advanced Micro Devices (2007) Anonymous Donor* (2007) Community Foundation of No. Colo.* (2007) Erion Foundation* (2007) Hewlett-Packard Corporation (2007) Mark D. Tabb & Julie Vida* (2007) McWhinney Foundation (2007) Microsoft Corporation* (2007) Haines & Colton Charitable Trust* (2007) Verigy Corporation (2007) Whole Foods Markets* (2007) Bryant & Patricia Miller (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)	Red Mountain Open Space <b>Hermit Park Open Space</b> C. Miller CE Miller-Simon-Bokovoy CE 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 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
	<b>Bold</b> 2012 Donations <b>CE</b> Conservation Easement	<i>*Donation to Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands toward a specific project</i>



Flatiron Reservoir ©Maura Bishop



**Department of Natural Resources**

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**Public Works Division**

Engineering - Fleet  
Natural Resources - Road and Bridge  
Solid Waste - The Ranch