

2019

Larimer County Natural Resources

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Thank You Citizen Advisory Boards

Land Stewardship Advisory Board

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Renee Galeano-Popp
Ronald Harris
Ernie Marx
Richard McCulloch
Gordon Nuttall (Vice Chair)
Ed Redente (Chair)

Open Lands Advisory Board

Rick Brent
Jason Brothers
K-Lynn Cameron
Mark DeGregorio
Bob Hewson
Peter Kelly
David Marvin (Vice Chair)
Tom Shoemaker
Linda Stanley
Sherri Valentine
Nancy Wallace (Chair)
Ken Zornes

Parks Advisory Board

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Steven Amundson
Russell Fruits (Chair)
Robert Harris
Daniela Lawler
Kathy Maher
Amanda Peters
Michael Robinson
Ruthie Rollins
Deborah Shulman (Vice Chair)

Thank you to Larimer County
Government Officials:

Board of County Commissioners:

John Kefalas, Steve Johnson, Tom Donnelly

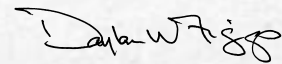
County Manager: Linda Hoffmann

**Community Planning, Infrastructure and
Resources Director:** Laurie Kadrich

Cover photo: Pinewood Reservoir Trail,
Photo © Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero

An Invitation to Connect

Our shared successes demonstrated in this 2019 Annual Report would not be possible without the willingness of our regional partners, neighboring cities and towns, and members of the community to work side by side. Much gratitude goes to the efforts of our collective work that has been demonstrated this last year. Our team worked diligently to acquire, restore, and reconstruct critical areas of our landscape as well as to reinvest in our properties to improve visitor experience and access to recreation. I invite you to join us in our mission and connect with us. Your involvement will be vital as we address the needs of our growing community.



Daylan Figgs

Director, Department of Natural Resources

Our Mission

To establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.



Eagle's Nest Open Space © Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero

2019 at a Glance



Starburst

1 Starburst Award by Colorado Lottery for the Long View Trail, a 4.4 mile regional trail connecting Fort Collins and Loveland.



55,000

Acres conserved



2 MILLION

Visitors at reservoir parks*

\$247M

total revenue collected and distributed to date from the Help Preserve Open Spaces tax



52,000

nights

camping under the stars

55%

VISITORS



choose hiking as primary activity at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space followed by 21% dog walking and 19% wildlife viewing.*



383

volunteers donated 20,405 hours of service, equivalent of 10 full-time employees



14

Open Spaces**



4

Reservoir Parks

*Data compiled during Visitor Use Study, Colorado State University, 2018 **Includes Long View Farm and Big Thompson Parks (Glade, Narrows, Forks, and Sleepy Hollow).

Grant Award



Long Awaited Connections

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) granted \$2 million to construct final sections of Poudre River Trail.

Audit Complete



20 Years of Financial Stewardship

Independent auditors, RubinBrown, issued no errors on financial management of sales tax initiative dollars accounting from 1997-2017.

Improving Visitor Experience

When visitors pay a fee to visit a Larimer County park or open space, the money collected goes to support management and improvements on the properties. In 2019, fee increases allowed the Department to begin delivering improvements at our highly visited parks and open spaces to improve visitor experience.

Highlights included:

- Major reconstruction was completed on the heavily used Horsetooth Rock Trail including rerouting portions, improving drainage, and installing steps on steep sections.
- The education pavilion at Horsetooth Reservoir got a jolt of life by adding electrical service to better support campground programs.
- Horsetooth Reservoir's Rotary Park, a heavily used day use parking lot, was repaired and resurfaced.
- Wildlife interactions are increasing as more visitors discover the outdoors. To mitigate this risk, staff installed wildlife resistant trash containers at Hermit Park, Carter Lake, and Horsetooth Reservoir. Additionally, bear boxes were added at all campgrounds in Hermit Park.
- Over \$9 million dollars of capital improvement projects were solidified in 2019 to begin first phases of work in 2020. These funds will be reinvested into our properties through projects that improve reservoir access, campground amenities, roads and other infrastructure that enhance recreational access, safety and security.



Investing in Nature

Our work in 2019 reflects the Department's dedication to conserving key landscapes, providing safe and enjoyable public access, and stewarding natural resources.

Highlights included:

- The final acquisitions of the Poudre River Trail and securing \$2M in Great Outdoors Colorado funding with City of Fort Collins, and towns of Timnath and Windsor to construct remaining portions.



- Finalizing key land acquisitions including an 800 acre inholding at Red Mountain Open Space, buffers to Forks Park, and the 162-acre Pittington Conservation Easement.

- Completing restoration of a three-quarter mile stretch of the Poudre River at River Bluffs Open Space. This project restored a previously channelized, non-functioning river by re-connecting it to the floodplain.



River Bluffs Open Space © Herb Saperstone



Soderberg restoration © Jeanie Sumrall-Ajero

- Stabilized and preserved four historic structures from the Herrington and Soderberg homesteads at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space with non-profit partner, HistoriCorps.

- To address weed management issues with a watershed approach, the Land Stewardship Program expanded to provide services to numerous agencies including U.S. Forest Service, local watershed agencies, and others.

Connecting People to Nature

Special thanks to our volunteers who dedicate time and passion to our goals. Collaborations and volunteer time all leverage public funds. Your collective "lift" equals nearly ten full-time employees.

Highlights included:



20,405
Service hours

383 volunteers



12

Trailhead outreach tables

900+ community interactions



40

Campground programs

reaching 1,000 summer visitors



1,000
Students

from 18 schools

inspiring environmental education



5,175

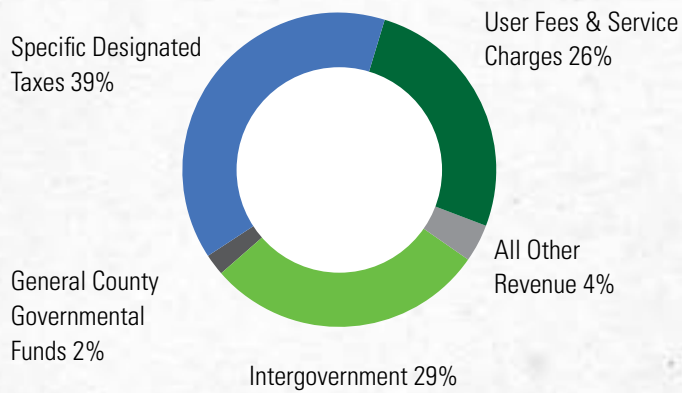
Participants in 142 activities

including guided hikes, field trips, outreach, events, and trainings

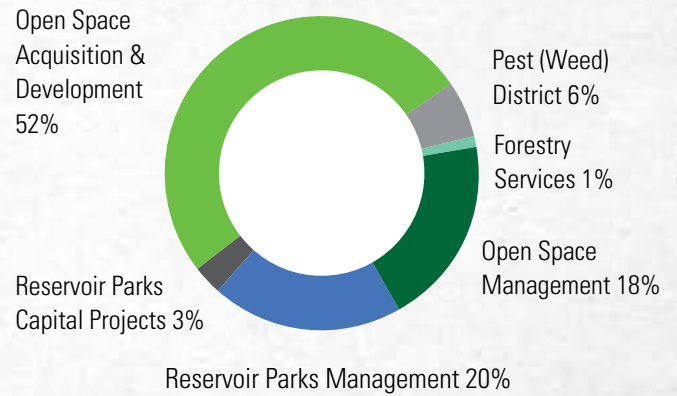
Financial Summary

Revenues for Larimer County Department of Natural Resources are realized from a number of sources and totaled **\$20.2 million** in 2019. Expenses for 2019 were **\$13.2 million**.

2019 Revenues



2019 Expenses



*These figures are not audited. Audit will be completed in mid-2020. Figures in this chart have been rounded where appropriate.

Help Preserve Open Spaces Tax Revenues

Revenue from the 1/4-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales and use tax is shared among Larimer County and eight municipalities. The tax was extended in 2014 and sunsets in 2043. It is not imposed on food or prescription drugs. The total revenue collected to date is more than \$247 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 Larimer County receive benefits from the Help Preserve Open Spaces tax.

Total tax revenue collected in 2019 was 17,483,512. This graphic illustrates how the tax was distributed per entity in 2019.

