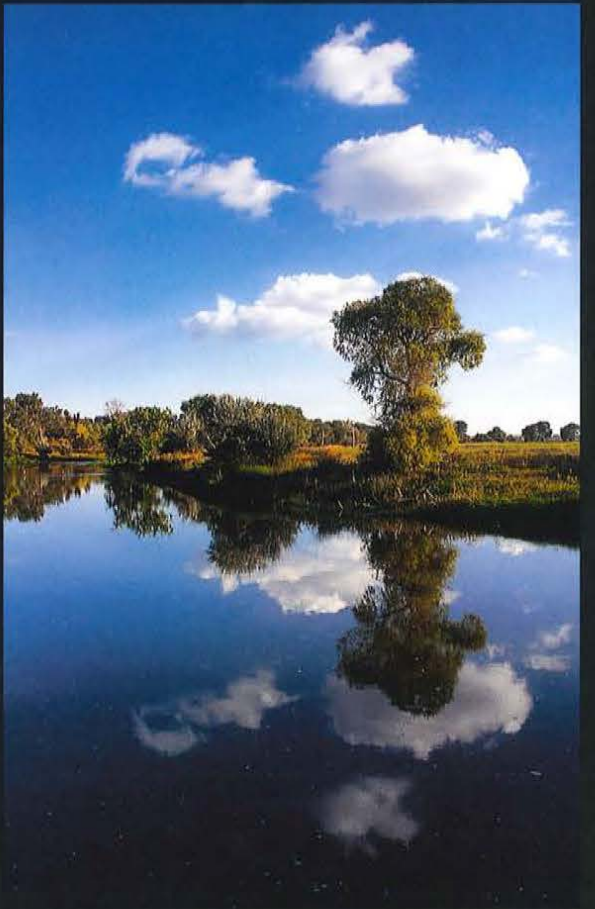
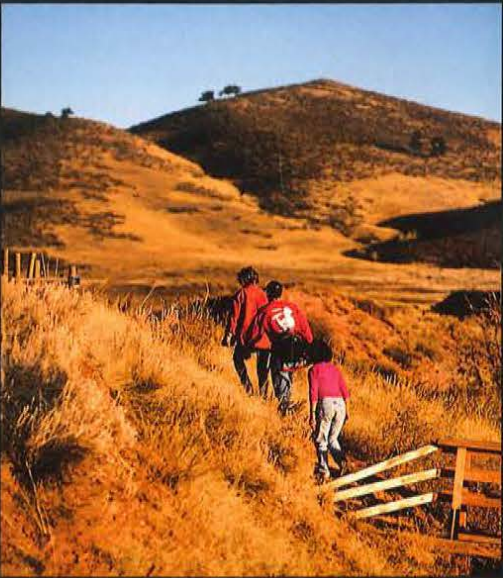




LARIMER COUNTY
OPEN LANDS PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT 2002

LARIMER COUNTY
PARKS & OPEN LANDS



A message from the chair

Open Lands: Critical for Nature and Humanity

Open space has fundamental ecological value for protecting biodiversity. More than that, most open space programs provide regional parks and trails, adding social and economic value to communities. These open space programs continue to be widely supported nationally. In November 2002, 95 of 112 open space tax proposals (85%) passed, when many other tax issues failed.

The successful continuation of the Fort Collins Open Space Yes! sales tax in the 2002 election will enhance an already rich partnership with our Larimer County program. Together, these and other partnerships in the county dramatically improve opportunities to protect biodiversity and improve connectivity among habitats, as well as provide "feet on the ground" recreational and educational opportunities.

The Larimer County Open Lands Program works closely with municipalities, local communities, and developers. Most of the 16,000 acres already protected by Larimer County and its partners is in areas where urban growth is high and where protection of ecosystems is critical.

Hidden Valley, adjacent to Devil's Backbone, is an excellent example of cooperation. A grassroots citizens group "Save the Backbone", the City of Loveland and Larimer County's Rural Land Use and Open Lands Programs worked with developers to scale down a housing project from over 500 to only 12 home sites on 415 acres.

Let's continue to help maintain a balance between our human needs and nature's needs because land converted to roads

and roofs almost never again becomes suitable habitat for native plants and animals in natural ecosystems.

Merrill R. Kaufmann
Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

I am extremely proud of the accomplishments this past year of our Open Lands Program. The Open Lands staff has worked diligently and harmoniously with our devoted Open Lands Advisory Board to meet the intent of the "Help Preserve Open Space" initiative. In addition to the outstanding parcels of Larimer County open spaces that have been protected, our staff continues to actively "give back" to the community through diverse programs such as the Small Grants Program, Volunteer Naturalist Program, Adopt a Trail Program, Volunteer Ranger Assistant Program, and the On-Site Naturalist Program. These important programs are essential to the health and future viability of our department connecting the human element to the land.

We are embarking upon a new era within the Parks and Open Lands Department. In 2004 we will be increasing outdoor recreational opportunities on our open lands with public access at Eagle's Nest and Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Spaces. These two premier resource areas will be outstanding additions to the entire menu of outdoor recreational choices that the department offers to citizens and visitors to Larimer County.

Gary Buffington
Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Director

Mission Statement 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: Ann Montoya*, Duane Pond, Jerry White*, Gary Buffington*, Charlie Johnson*; Travis Rollins*, Matt Schulz*, Eric Hamrick, Mark DeGregorio, John Heaton, Lori Smith*, Merrill Kaufmann, Tom Bender**, Charlie Gindler*; Meegan Flenniken*, Jim White, K-Lynn Cameron*, Nancy Wallace, Brian Hayes. Not Pictured: Lori Jeffrey Clark, Wendell Amos, Peter Kast, Tom Keith, Kerri Traynor*

*Open Lands Staff
**Commissioner liaison

Cover:

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1. Charlie Johnson
 2. Charlie Johnson
 3. David L. Chck
 4. David L. Chck
 5. Efrain Padro
 6. Scott Bacon
 7. Charlie Johnson
 8. Charlie Johnson

Resource Plans Guide Development at Fossil Creek Reservoir and Eagle's Nest Open Spaces

Larimer County Open Lands has been actively implementing resource management plans on open space properties since the program's beginning—2003 will be no exception! Management plans for Eagle's Nest and Fossil Creek Reservoir open spaces were completed in 2002 and Open Lands will be busy implementing those plans to enhance wildlife habitat, restore grasslands, and develop trailheads, trails and other amenities at these important areas. Both open spaces are scheduled to be open to the public in 2004.

When Fossil Creek Regional Open Space opens to the public, amenities for visitors will include a picnic area, observation deck, 2.2 miles of accessible trails, interpretive signage, bird viewing blinds, an outdoor classroom, nature hikes, and restroom and drinking water facilities. A preview of the facilities at Eagle's Nest Regional Open Space include a trailhead with restroom: six miles of trail for hiking and horseback riding; fishing in the North Fork of the Poudre River and guided nature hikes. These two open space resource areas will be welcome additions to the Parks and Open Lands system.

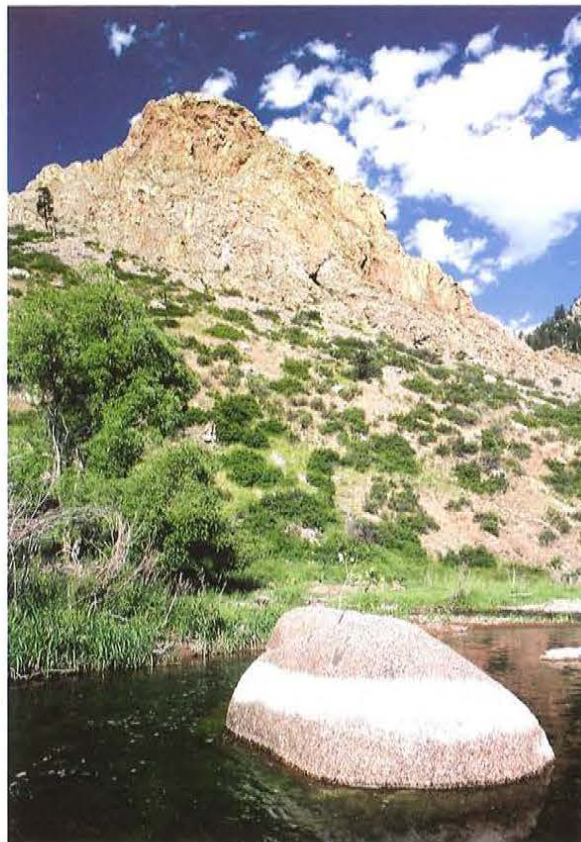
The Open Lands Program completes management plans for all open space acquisitions, a citizen driven planning process that usually takes about 6-12 months. Once management plans are completed, they are actively implemented and updated on a 5-10 year basis. Recently, the Open Lands Advisory Board has been considering the question, "What happens if a new activity is proposed that is not addressed in a current management plan?" In response to this and other questions,

the Parks and Open Lands Department created the Resource Stewardship Team. This interdepartmental group meets regularly to discuss issues, share ideas, and coordinate implementation of resource management activities. Establishment of this team will help ensure that resource management plans are being implemented at each open space, and that newly

proposed activities on Parks and Open Lands properties are appropriate and will not adversely impact important resource values. As more properties are protected and opened to public use, development and implementation of management plans is an increasingly important element of the Open Lands Program.



Preserved for its critical bird habitat, Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space is also an important community separator. Photo: Dick Snell



In 2004, Eagle's Nest Open Space will be open for hiking, horseback riding, fishing and learning about nature. Photo: Charlie Johnson



An elegant great blue heron. Photo: Charlie Johnson

“A legacy of conservation can only be achieved by private and government land-owners who practice the wise use and pro-active stewardship of all resources.”

Tom Bender,
County Commissioner District 2

2002 Acquisitions

**lead agency on project*

Laramie Foothills

A. Tepee Rings Conservation Easement. Phase I of this project protects 504-acres of this 1300-acre ranch in the Laramie Foothills. These lands provide a buffer to lands already preserved by the Nature Conservancy. Pronghorn antelope, tepee rings and the imperiled Bell's twinpod are some of the natural resources protected with this conservation easement.

Appraised Value: \$170,000

Partners: Legacy Land Trust,*

Landowner donation (\$100,000)

Larimer County Open Lands: \$69,000

Buckeye/Waverly Agricultural Lands

B. Miller-Simon Conservation Easement. This 35-acre conservation easement lies in close proximity to the 494-acre Buckeye Agricultural Partnership completed in 2001. This agricultural land was protected using tax credits, and is currently irrigated farmland.

Appraised Value: \$95,000

Partners: Landowner donation (\$40,000)

Larimer County Open Lands: \$55,000*

Poudre River

C. Fonken Conservation Easement. Phase I of this 373-acre project just south of Poudre Park protects 35 acres of forested hillsides as well as several important drainages. Adjacent to both USFS lands and other large, privately owned acreages, the landowner plans to protect the entire property over time.

Appraised Value: \$100,000

Partners: Landowner donation (\$100,000)

D. Jacoby. Purchase of this 160-acre parcel protects 1/2-mile of the Poudre River Corridor, irrigated agricultural lands and provides for a future regional trail connecting Fort Collins to Windsor and Greeley. Located along Hwy. 392 west of the Town of Windsor, this project protects one of the few stretches of the Poudre River that has not been mined for gravel.

Appraised Value: \$1,960,000

Partners: Great Outdoors Colorado

Larimer County Open Lands: \$760,000*

Fort Collins/Loveland Corridor

E. Swede Lake Conservation Easement. Preserved through the Transfer of Density Units Program, this 19.5-acre easement preserves scenic views of the western mountain landscape and adjacent Fossil Creek Reservoir. It also provides habitat for a variety of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

Devil's Backbone to Horsetooth

F. Butler. This 35-acre parcel is the final link in the foothills land conservation project from the Devil's Backbone Open Space to Horsetooth Mountain Park. A trail in this location has been a long-term vision of the Open Lands Program.

Appraised Value: \$310,000

Larimer County Open Lands: \$400,000*

G. Devil's Backbone Trailhead. A public trailhead with parking for 35 cars and 5 horse trailers, interpretive signs and a picnic area will be developed on this 9.5-acre parcel. Trailhead access will be from US Hwy. 34.

Larimer County Open Lands: \$248,000*

H. Hidden Valley I. This 219-acre buffer to the east of the Devil's Backbone Open Space protects views to and from this important geological formation. Larimer County will manage this property as part of the Devil's Backbone Open Space.

Appraised Value: \$2,084,000

Partners: City of Loveland: \$1,875,600*

Larimer County Open Lands: \$208,400

Big Thompson River

I. Sylvan Dale Conservation Easement IV. The 136-acre Red Ridge conservation easement protects over one-half mile of highly visible ridgelines, important wildlife habitat and mineral rights on hogbacks west of US Hwy. 34. The landowner is participating in the State Tax Credit Program.

Appraised Value: \$422,616

Partners: City of Loveland, Landowner donation (\$145,490)

Larimer County Open Lands: \$244,566*

J. Block Conservation Easement. Adjacent to the Sylvan Dale Ranch, this 35-acre ridgeline easement protects the backdrop views to the entrance of the Big Thompson Canyon. A large variety of wildlife frequent the area including bighorn sheep, elk and deer. The landowner is participating in the State Tax Credit Program.

Appraised Value: \$200,000

Partners: Landowner donation (\$100,000)

Larimer County Open Lands: \$100,000*

Estes Park

K. Knolls-Willow. This 19.6-acre property in the heart of downtown Estes Park provides scenic relief with its large rock outcrops scattered amongst the ponderosa pine forest. The Town of Estes Park is developing a management plan to determine the public use of this property.

Appraised Value: \$210,000

Partners: Town of Estes, Estes Valley Land Trust*

Larimer County Open Lands: \$50,000

“ Thank you again and again, times infinity. ”

Rachelle, 4th grade Stansberry Elementary

“ I really enjoyed being a member of the Open Lands Advisory Board and found it satisfying to see our goals achieved. What makes the Open Lands Program so successful is the support of the communities and their desire to protect open space, as well as a highly professional and dedicated staff. I am going to miss being on the board. ”

John Heaton,
Larimer County Open
Lands Advisory Board



Photo: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Brent Murphy



Photo: Efrain Padro



Photo: Charlie Johnson

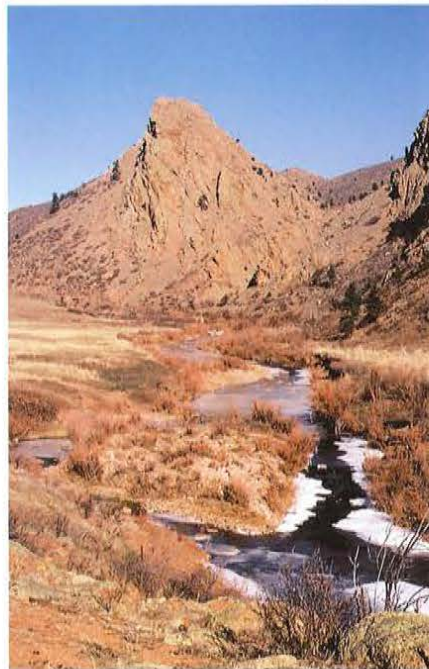


Photo: K-Lynn Cameron



Photo: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Scott Fraser



“ I enjoyed all the stuff we saw, especially the paw prints, rocks and lemonade berries. The best thing was that it was beautiful. ”

Amanda, 4th grade
Stansberry Elementary

“ My tour to the gorgeous Eagle's Nest Open Space was an unforgettable experience! ”

Jeanne Clarke, Fort Collins

Photo: David L. Clack



Photo: Efrain Padro

“ Larimer County joined with us to help protect the Knolls-Willow property in the heart of Estes Park, the premier property in the Estes Valley. Residents and future generations will benefit from our working relationship with Larimer County in protecting other valuable open spaces in this valley. ”

Wendell Amos, Estes Valley Land Trust



Photo: David L. Clack

“ An awesome use of our tax dollars. A big thank you to the Open Lands Advisory Board for protecting these properties. ”

Chris Labin, Loveland



Photo: Charlie Johnson

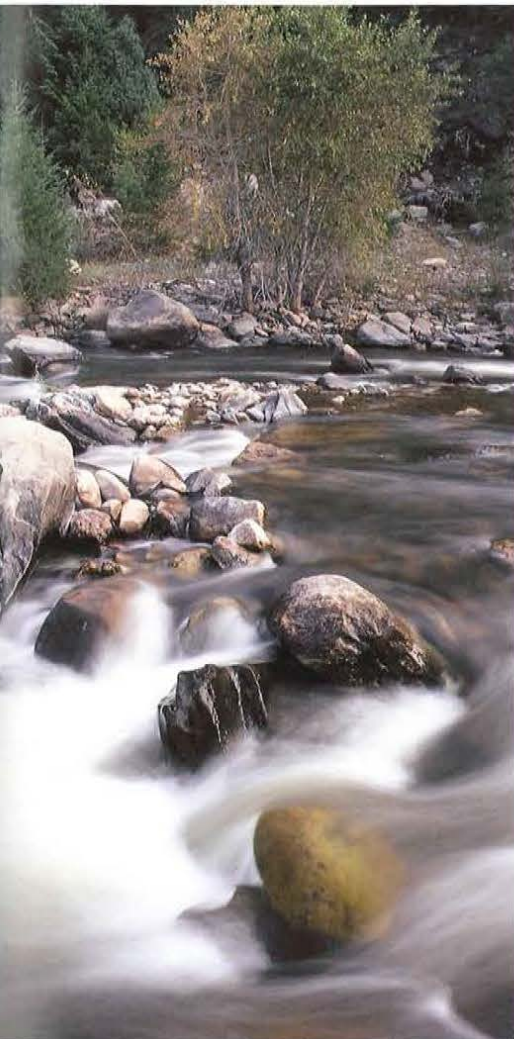


Photo: Charlie Johnson



Photo: Scott Fraser



Photo: Scott Bacon

“ As a leader of the citizen's open space campaigns in 1995 and 1999, I am very pleased with the outstanding accomplishments of the county's Open Lands staff and the Open Lands Advisory Board. Keep up the great work! ”

Kelly Ohlson, Former Mayor, City of Fort Collins

Larimer County's Cities and Towns Leverage Open Space Sales Tax Dollars

The Help Preserve Open Space (HPOS) sales tax revenue is currently 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.

Below is a summary of how the municipalities have used their shares of the tax revenue during 2002.

Berthoud

The Town contributed contributed \$20,000 in a partnership with the City of Loveland to protect a 52-acre conservation easement in the Berthoud-Loveland Corridor. Berthoud also contracted with Colorado Open Lands to assist with open space acquisitions.

Estes Park

In 2002 the Town used \$28,300 in partnership with the Estes Valley Land Trust and Larimer County to purchase the 19.6-acre Knolls-Willow property. The Lake Estes trail system was also extended to connect with Fish Creek, providing better access to schools and parks.

Fort Collins

Fort Collins celebrated its Tenth Year Anniversary of the Natural Areas Program in October, and in November the citizens of Fort Collins passed the Open Space Yes! Citizens Sales Tax Initiative to extend the City's funding till 2030. The additional funding will allow the City to greatly broaden their land conservation efforts. Using its share of Open Space Program revenue and Building Community Choice funds, the City completed 8 new acquisitions totaling 311 acres. The most exciting purchase was the Pelican Marsh Natural Area near the intersection of College Avenue and County Road 32. The site, which includes Benson Reservoir, is being restored to native vegetation prior to being opened to the public. The City also partnered with Larimer County on the 437-acre purchase of Rimrock Open Space and the 80-acre Kerbel conservation easement.

Loveland

In May, Loveland contributed \$32,620 to the 149-acre Sylvan Dale Red Ridge Conservation

Easement purchased by Larimer County. In November, a contract was negotiated for the purchase of 219 acres in Hidden Valley for a total cost of \$2.08 million, including a partnership with Larimer County for \$208,400. This strategic purchase protects land adjacent to Devil's Backbone Open Space, just west of Loveland. Also in November, the 10-acre Waterford Place Conservation Easement was donated to the City as part of the land development process. This donation protects wildlife habitat and wetlands along the Big Thompson River east of US 287 and adjacent to the RFJY Natural Area.

Timnath

The town is saving its share for future partnership opportunities to create community separators between 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

In 2002 the Town of Wellington spent a total of \$167,729 in open space sales tax funds. These funds were expended primarily on facility development at Viewpointe Town Park, a day-use area located southwest of town. Land for the park was acquired through the Viewpointe Development.

“I've had an opportunity to observe the open lands program evolve from a concept, a mere hope for a better future, to one of the leading programs in Colorado. It's been a great pleasure to be a part of it and to help build a legacy of protected lands here in Larimer County.”

Tom Keith, Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

Help Preserve Open Spaces Tax Revenues Benefit Larimer County

Annual Revenue Distribution of Open Space Tax Dollars*

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Larimer County	2,259,975	2,485,421	2,707,553	3,067,810	3,294,869	3,568,100	3,527,084	20,910,813
Berthoud	71,154	80,969	87,574	101,539	110,862	122,993	124,129	699,230
Estes Park	161,905	178,198	193,453	224,779	222,608	230,070	218,802	1,429,815
Fort Collins	2,107,473	2,319,562	2,487,606	2,850,066	3,109,001	3,326,105	3,235,748	19,435,560
Loveland	847,210	932,139	1,003,872	1,146,823	1,234,060	1,322,293	1,304,378	7,790,775
Timnath	4,221	4,646	5,025	5,732	5,742	5,892	5,599	36,875
Wellington	29,848	32,520	40,557	47,494	53,444	64,646	67,642	336,150
Totals	5,481,786	6,033,455	6,525,640	7,444,243	8,030,585	8,640,099	8,483,392	50,639,200

* These figures are unaudited. Audit to be completed in mid 2003. Figures in this chart have been rounded when appropriate.

Money to fund 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 \$50 million. Distribution to incorporated areas is based on the highest yield of either population or sales tax generation.

Conservation Easements: A Valuable Tool for Protecting Important Lands in Larimer County

In the past year, the Open Lands Program has placed more emphasis on the use of conservation easements to preserve important lands in the County.

Conservation easements are most useful when the goal is to keep the land in private ownership and to maintain the current use of the land; in most cases no public access is proposed.

There are several distinct advantages to utilizing a conservation easement:

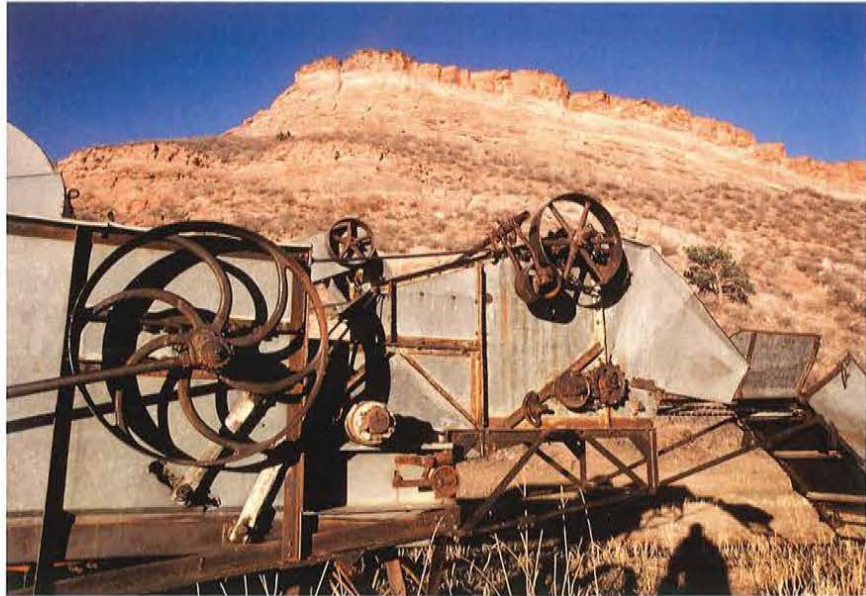
- 1) the cost to purchase an easement is normally about half that of purchasing the land outright;
- 2) the property remains in private ownership and on the tax roll;
- 3) the management and maintenance of the property remains the responsibility of the owner, rather than that of the County.

The primary goal of a conservation easement is to protect the important features/ characteristics of a specific site, e.g. natural, scenic, wildlife, ecological or agricultural. This protection is achieved by carefully defining in the document what is or is not allowed on the property. Every easement is tailored to a specific property and the needs of the individual landowners; the terms are negotiated between the landowner (grantor) and the Open Lands staff. Annual monitoring of the site and maintaining communication with the property owner are crucial in assuring that the terms of the easement are respected.

Where an easement is donated or sold at a discounted price to the County, there can be significant tax benefits to the owner. Colorado law provides income tax credits that allow donors to recover up to \$260,000 for each easement donation.



Land protection through the Open Lands Program is on a willing-seller basis. Photo: Virginia Soderberg



Conservation easements can protect important resources while keeping the land in private ownership.

Photo: Charlie Johnson

The tax credits earned by a landowner are usually sold by a broker to a business or individual who has a significant state tax liability. The first \$100,000 donated will generate a \$100,000 credit. Any donation amount over \$100,000 will be valued at 40% for tax credit purposes (up to a total maximum credit of \$260,000). Thus, a \$500,000 donation would provide a \$260,000 credit. The Larimer County Open Lands Program is one of the leading public agencies in Colorado in helping landowners utilize the tax credit program.

If the conservation easement satisfies Internal Revenue Code requirements, there are also possible Federal tax benefits in the form of a charitable income tax deduction and an estate tax reduction.

Although the Open Lands Program has received conservation easements as full donations, it is more common that there is some compensation to the owners. In any case, conservation easements are strictly on a willing-seller basis. To be successful, the protection of the resource must be the primary motivation for both the landowner and the Open Lands Program.

Landowner Tax Benefits for Easement Donations:

- Donors may recover up to \$260,000 per year from State Tax Credit Program
- Reduce annual tax liability by charitable deduction
- Reduce capital gains at time property is sold
- Reduce estate taxes
- Reduce property taxes on non-agricultural lands

“While the State is in a very unsure situation regarding the budget, I am glad there is commitment to retain the Tax Credit Program. As the economic issues remain unsteady this is a time to show stability to the future of the lands in Larimer County and the Ag-Producers who maintain them.”

Kathay Rennels,
County Commissioner District 1

The Open Lands Program Gains Five New Champions in 2002!

Numerous county residents showed their generosity toward the Open Lands program in 2002. Many land owners sold land at discounted prices, some donated land and others made cash donations. Thanks to these gifts, the Open Lands program has an additional \$1.3 million to use for land protection. Since 1996, donations of property and cash from landowners and citizens total more than \$5 million, enabling the Open Lands Program to protect even more land in other priority areas.

Programs such as the Colorado State Tax Credits have provided financial incentives for property owners to protect their land. The Open Lands Program, however, could not benefit from these programs without the willingness of landowners desiring to establish a legacy of conservation in Northern Colorado. They are truly our Open Lands Champions!

Donation Over \$500,000

Childers & Henning Families, Childers/Henning CE
Paul Jonjak & Family, Blue Mtn. Bison Ranch CE
David & Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Ranch CEs
Jake Kaufmann & Son, Inc., Kaufmann CE

\$300,000 - \$499,000

Curt & Jennifer Heckrodt, Red-tail Ridge OS
Bob Ramsay, Ramsay-Shockey OS
Jack & Beth White, Rimrock OS

\$100,000 - \$299,000

Patricia Block, Block CE
H.A. & Elaine Fonken, Fonken CE
Rex Baker, Lily Lake Water & Recreation Rights
Grace Dunkin, Ryan Gulch CE II
Joe & Pat Harper, Harper CE
Jessup Family, Sylvan Dale Ranch CE IV
Larry & Anne Peterson, Teepee Rings CE
Jeanne Roessler, Lily Lake Property
Dave Sitzman, Kerbel Agricultural CE
Jon and Susanne Stephens, Ryan Gulch CE

\$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
Dan Miller & Mary Beth Simon, Miller-Simon CE
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
Walmart of Loveland, Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space
Byron & Beverly Williams, Fossil Creek Regional OS

2002 Donations

CE = Conservation Easement

OS = Open Space

A Significant Donation in the Poudre Canyon

In 2001 the Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan was adopted. The plan identifies priority areas for protection because of their natural or agricultural values. Through a 4-month prioritization process in 2002, the Open Lands Advisory Board and the Board of County Commissioners prioritized these areas to guide future land preservation efforts.

It is exciting when a landowner wishes to partner with the Open Lands Program to preserve their land, especially in a priority area. During the past seven years, several property owners who value the natural and/or working landscapes have donated land to assure preservation of these priority areas. Thanks to willing landowners, the Open Lands Program can maximize dollars and fulfill the vision of protecting the special places of Larimer County.

Fonken Conservation Easement

H.A. (Rick) Fonken and his wife Elaine own 353 acres of land in the Poudre Canyon, a priority area for the Open Lands Program. Their beloved foot hills retreat includes forested hillsides, streams and exceptional

rock outcrops. Protection of this property with a conservation easement preserves significant wildlife habitat, geological and scenic values and provides a buffer to adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands. The Fonkens want to protect these values forever.

After attending a conservation easement seminar hosted by the Open Lands Program, the Fonkens committed to donating portions of their property every year for ten years. Using the State Tax Credit Program, the Fonkens will be able to sell their tax credits to recoup partial value of their donations. Larimer County greatly appreciates the generosity of these Open Lands Champions!

“The sky and wind, the trees and rocks, the streams and valleys, the wildlife habitat—these precious gifts of nature are here now for us to know and enjoy. Unless we actively preserve them now, the trees, rocks, streams, valleys and habitat can all be irreversibly changed—taken from the heritage of those who will follow.”

H.A. (Rick) and Elaine Fonken

Pluto Point is a significant rock outcrop on the Fonken's easement donation. Photo: Dick Snell

Inventory of Open Lands Acquisitions (through 2002)

Name	Acreage	Appraised Value	Larimer Co. Open Lands	Donation/Bargain Sale	Partnerships	Public Access	Comments
Laramie Foothills							
Eagle's Nest Open Space	755/*72	2,000,000	1,711,000	54,500	GOCO	289,000	Yes, 2004 Monitored by LLT
Tepee Rings CE	*504	170,000	69,000	100,000	LLT	1,000	No Monitored by LLT
Buckeye/Waverly Ag Lands							
Buckeye Ag Partnership CE	*494	—	28,000	5,900	TNC & LLT	169,853	No Monitored by LLT
Miller-Simon CE	*35	95,000	55,000	40,000	—	—	No
Wellington Ag Lands							
Kerbel CE	*83	—	98,749	179,280	Fort Collins	98,749	No
Poudre River							
Fonken CE	*35	100,000	0	100,000	—	—	No
Lions Park	20.0	—	0	—	—	—	Yes
Buckhorn/Redstone							
Hughey Open Space (HTMP)	282.0	310,000	129,000	31,000	GOCO	150,000	Yes Managed as part of HTMP
Fort Collins/Loveland Separator							
Long View Farm Open Space	599.4	2,955,000	1,594,500	—	3 Partners	1,432,499	Future trail Leased for dryland farming
Cathy Fromme Prairie	240.0	—	180,000	—	Fort Collins	460,000	Yes Managed by Fort Collins, monitored by LLT
Dryland Wheat Farm	792.0	3,139,000	437,881	—	3 Partners	2,701,119	Future trail Managed by Loveland, monitored by LLT & Lar. Co.
Fossil Creek Regional Open Space	833.5	155,000	3,524,550	19,650	Fort Collins	3,924,550	Yes, 2004
Heinricy	30.0	405,000	90,000	—	5 partners	320,000	Yes Managed as part of Boyd Lake State Park
Devil's Backbone							
Coyote Ridge Natural Area	839.3	1,917,000	523,583	21,500	Fort Collins	1,340,416	Yes Managed by Fort Collins
Rimrock Open Space	472/*273.6	1,920,100	1,900,980	—	Fort Collins	100,000	Yes
Soderberg Homestead (HTMP)	101.5	460,000	460,000	—	—	—	Future
Devil's Backbone Open Space	651.7/*1.6	2,948,500	1,679,420	—	3 Partners	2,225,600	Yes
Big Thompson River							
Sylvan Dale CE	*870.7	2,037,616	738,436	924,240	2 Partners	175,000	No
Block CE	*35	200,000	100,000	100,000	—	—	No
Kaufmann CE	*73.55	800,000	0	800,000	—	—	Future trail
Glade Park	3.0	—	0	—	—	—	Yes
Berthoud/Loveland Separator							
Ryan Gulch CE	*378.6	1,687,844	270,000	250,000	3 Partners	1,167,844	Future trail Monitored by Loveland
Blue Mountain							
Ramsay-Shockey Open Space	177.0	325,000	0	325,000	—	—	Yes
Blue Mountain Bison Ranch CE	*4100.0	2,666,000	1,350,000	666,000	GOCO	650,000	No Co-monitored by LC
Harper CE	*240	295,000	0	295,000	—	—	No Monitored by LLT
Little Thompson River							
Red-tail Ridge Open Space	320/**15.1	926,000	286,500	43,699	4 Partners	665,059	Future trail Monitored by LLT
Estes Valley							
Childers/Henning CE	*160.0	800,000	48,000	752,000	—	—	No Monitored by EVLT
Smitherman CE	*520.0	520,000	130,000	—	2 Partners	390,000	No Monitored by EVLT
Homer Rouse Memorial Trail	1.5 miles	—	10,000	—	4 Partners	30,000	Yes Managed by EVRPD
Lakes Estes Trail	4 mi.(ph.III)	232,500	100,000	—	4 Partners	132,500	Yes Managed by EVRPD
Lion Gulch Trailhead	—	—	10,000	—	USFS	11,521	Yes Managed by USFS
Lily Lake/Roessler	18.2	400,000	40,000	—	3 Partners	360,000	No Managed by RMNP
Lily Lake Water & Rec. Rights	14 acre-ft.	551,000	45,000	236,000	6 Partners	290,000	Yes Managed by RMNP
Enos Mills CE	*192	—	45,000	—	2 Partners	290,000	Homestead Monitored by EVLT
Knolls-Willow	20.5	210,000	55,000	—	2 Partners	290,000	Future trail Monitored by EVLT
Fee Simple Acreage Total	6,155						
CE Acreage Total	8,068						
Fee Simple & CE Acreage Total	14,223		\$15,661,599	\$4,943,769		\$10,236,716	

Properties managed by Larimer County Parks & Open Lands

EVLT Estes Valley Land Trust
 EVRPD Estes Valley Recreation & Park Dist.
 GOCO Great Outdoors Colorado
 HTMP Horsetooth Mountain Park
 LLT Legacy Land Trust
 RMNP Rocky Mountain National Park
 TNC The Nature Conservancy
 USFS U.S. Forest Service

* Conservation Easement

** Trail Easement

Perseverance Pays Off—Hidden Valley Protected as Open Space

An additional 219 acres of land has been protected from development in Hidden Valley just east of the Devil's Backbone Open Space. This valley was the location of a number of recent development proposals, including a plan for over 500 homes and a golf course that would have severely impacted Devil's Backbone Open Space. Opposition to that plan prompted the developers to propose a scaled-back proposal through Larimer County's Rural Land Use Center, which would have allowed 24 homes in the valley. Citizens felt the location of a number of these homesites still clearly impacted the Devil's Backbone.

With strong support from a local citizens group—"Save the Backbone", the City of Loveland led an effort to keep the valley free of houses. Perseverance paid off and the City of Loveland and Larimer County were able to purchase 219 acres and 11 home sites adjacent to the Devil's Backbone Open Space. Larimer County Open Lands will be responsible for management of the property as part of the Devil's Backbone Open Space. This purchase effectively buys down the density of the southern end of Hidden Valley to 12 home sites.

The City of Loveland, Larimer County Open Lands, and the Larimer County Rural Land Use Center continue to work with landowners in the surrounding area to further reduce density and preserve the unique and valued qualities of the valley and surrounding ridges. The protection of this property leaves a wonderful legacy for future generations to enjoy.

“Every time I hike the trail at Rimrock Open Space my appreciation for the hundreds of people who volunteered their time building this trail, grows. This display of commitment shows me how important these open spaces are for our citizens to enjoy.”

*Glenn Gibson,
County Commissioner District 3*



*Hundreds of volunteers turned out to build over 1-mile of the Rimrock Open Space trail in one day!
Photo: Charlie Johnson*

“Working on a project like this gives us a chance to “own” a little piece of this incredible trail system! That’s our section right there—we made it! Isn’t it beautiful?”

Deb Wykoff

Rimrock Open Space Trail Attacked by Volunteers!

More than 240 volunteers took part in a Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) trail building project at Larimer County's Rimrock Open Space in May, 2002. These volunteers constructed one mile of trail across a valley and up and over a craggy hogback connecting Fort Collins' popular Coyote Ridge trail to Rimrock Open Space.

Volunteers came from up and down the Front Range to spend the day digging in the dirt, hauling rocks and building rock walls and steps. All this hard work and what did they get in return?—Camaraderie, laughter, a day in the outdoors and finally, a sense of accomplishment! The one-mile of trail these volunteers constructed saved Larimer County's trail crew three months of work! Thanks to these volunteers and Larimer County's trail crew the 2-mile Rimrock Trail was opened to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding in August, 2002. (Please note that pets are not allowed on the Coyote Ridge or Rimrock Trails.)

Before a trail can be constructed, its location must be determined. Open Lands Program staff designs trails to minimize impacts to the ecosystem and at the same time provide the visitor with a scenic and enjoyable recreational experience. The Rimrock trail was planned to avoid the threatened Bell's Twinpod and to be screened from sensitive raptor nesting sites.

Looking to the future, the east/west Rimrock trail will eventually connect into the north/south trail system of the "Foothills Conservation Corridor" offering visitors miles of trail to explore. The "Foothills Conservation Corridor" will extend from the Devil's Backbone in Loveland to Horsetooth Mountain Park and Lory State Park west of Fort Collins.



Parks & Open Lands Department

1800 S. County Road 31
Loveland, Colorado 80537
970 679-4570