



TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Jeff Dillon, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
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SUBJECT: Matters from the Department

DATE: December 15, 2014

A. Boulder Reservoir Management Plan Update

The Boulder Reservoir Master Plan was accepted by City Council in January 2012 and included a key recommendation of implementing a Site Management Plan (SMP) as an action item. The SMP will complement the Master Plan by addressing operational and management issues, while also prioritizing capital improvements associated with maintaining reservoir facilities, as well as improving this popular, recreational facility. A critical component of the SMP is to develop a process that will ensure a balance between recreation and resource management.

The SMP will focus on several areas to further refine the master plan objectives. It will include all four management areas of the Reservoir study area and will address the following topics:

- Site master plan and capital improvement plan
- Program and operational analysis
- Market and visitor capacity analysis
- Detailed sustainable business model and operational plan
- Noise, pollutant and safety assessment
- Biological species inventory
- Traffic impact analysis and transportation alternatives assessment
- Adaptive management thresholds and monitoring program

The SMP will result in a physical site master plan illustrating, among other things, designated passive and active use areas, building footprints, natural habitat protected areas, recreational areas, trail alignments, parking areas and possible shuttle service access points, landscape and park amenity improvements.

This fall, as part of the ongoing planning process, staff held two meetings on September 25 and October 1 to offer opportunities for community members to review and discuss the current draft management actions. The draft management actions, developed with community support over the past two and a half years, focus on four main areas of use: boating; connectivity; facility upgrades; and special events. The intention of the management actions is to provide a clear and concise direction for the management of the Reservoir as part of the SMP. The management actions, based around the Adaptive Management Process, will rely on monitoring and examining

changing use patterns throughout the Reservoir to provide the highest quality service to visitors and neighbors with consideration for the associated natural lands.

The planning process has reached a milestone in compiling key outcomes and findings from the community outreach as well as consultant studies that have been completed to date. Staff would like to inform the PRAB about the current status and review initial findings from the analysis. This includes:

1. Traffic Data
 - a. Collection – Traffic counts (automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians) have been collected and compared for major events and “Typical Summer Days” in 2008, 2012, and 2013. July 4th, Ironman, & the Muddy Buddy Event were compared in 2012 and 2013. Mid-July Fridays and Saturdays were compared between 2008, 2012, and 2013. This series of counts were completed again during the summer 2014 season to analyze baseline data to recent events and visitation.
2. Environmental
 - a. ERO: Key Recommendations (General Environmental Assessment – 2012)
 - i. Completed a sustainable biological resource management plan
 - ii. Conducted a floristic survey of the entire Reservoir area
 - iii. Mapped geological and landscape conditions
 - iv. Re-vegetated all disturbed areas
 - v. Controlled noxious weed growth
 - b. Biohabitats (Environmental Inventory and Review – 2013)
 - i. Completed Biologic Species Inventory and Impact Assessment
 - ii. Completed vegetation surveys
 - iii. Completed wildlife surveys
 - iv. Completed recreation and resource management evaluation
 - v. Final Analysis
 1. Completed graphic Material Development
 2. Completed matrix of management options and priorities
 3. Completed monitoring protocol
3. Infrastructure Assessment – Loris and Associates
 - a. Completed inventory and analysis of infrastructure
 - b. Compiled of all relevant plans and reports for Reservoir management and improvements
 - c. Tabulated summary of inventory and condition assessment outlining key action items for additional investigation and improvements.

A summary of key findings combined from community outreach, consultant recommendations, data research and PRAB involvement has been summarized below for each of the major management zones for the Reservoir:

1. South Shore

- a. Environment
 - i. Only management zone classified as poor condition ranking based on habitat suitability and species prevalence.
 - ii. Highly suitable for all forms of recreation noted at the Reservoir.
 - iii. Recommended minimum environmental protection strategies that include education, signage and continued water quality monitoring.
- b. Visitors/Recreation
 - i. Approximately 2000 parking spaces exist for events.
 - ii. Average of 4,400 visitors/week during peak season (June-August)
 - iii. 95% drive to Reservoir and median age is 34 years old.
 - iv. Two-thirds own powerboat or human powered watercraft.
 - v. Top reasons for visit include group picnics, swimming and boating.
- c. Key Management Focus
 - i. Increase maintenance and improve recreation amenities including parking, shelters, restrooms, marina, boat house, beach facilities and group picnic areas.
 - ii. Implement water quality monitoring and coordination with water resources to ensure thresholds are maintained.
 - iii. Manage special events for access, noise and frequency of events during high season.

2. West Shore

- a. Environment
 - i. Best condition ranking for habitat suitability and species populations.
 - ii. Highly suitable for education and outreach regarding conservation and species of concern.
 - iii. Maximum protection required to maintain and improve habitat and populations.
- b. Visitors / Recreation
 - i. Dog access from North Shore continues to be observed into closure areas.
 - ii. Increasing use of 51st Street as pedestrian route with vehicular conflicts.
 - iii. Aeromodeling airport in direct conflict with sensitive habitat and breeding areas. Possible

opportunity for relocation to more suitable location for users and habitat goals.

- c. Key Management Focus
 - i. Maintain and expand size and quality of existing native wetland, riparian and mixed grass prairie mosaic plant communities
 - ii. Improve condition of native habitats within management zone.
 - iii. Restore degraded non-native uplands and riparian habitat.
 - iv. Maintain wildlife habitat to support species of special concern and diversity of wildlife species.
 - v. Prairie dog management under scrutiny due to possible negative impacts on species diversity and plant quality.
 - vi. Desire to implement 51st Street path to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic due to safety concern. Need full environmental analysis depending on alignment of path options.

3. North Shore/Coot Lake

- a. Environment
 - i. Fair condition ranking for habitat and species population.
 - ii. Suitable for passive recreation opportunities on trails and designated recreation areas
 - iii. Moderate protection strategies recommended including vegetative barriers, ranger patrol and enforcement, education and interpretive signage, select social trail closures near high functioning habitat.
- b. Visitors/Recreation
 - i. Trail degradation and widening to be monitored and maintained into acceptable standards.
 - ii. Tree stands (cottonwood and willow) to be monitored and protected from trampling.
 - iii. Maintain parking areas and consider expansion and improvements.
 - iv. Manage special events for routes through recreation areas and seasonal closures.
- c. Key Management Focus
 - i. Continue seasonal leash restrictions during breeding seasons.
 - ii. Monitoring of trail use compliance and seasonal restrictions

- iii. Hire seasonal ranger staff for education and enforcement.
- iv. Improve mixed grasslands for habitat value.
- v. Improve current amenities and facilities for increased use.

PRAB members can review the consultant's reports and materials displayed at the recent public meetings on the [Boulder Reservoir Site Management Plan Web Page](#). This information includes detailed summaries, draft management actions, community feedback and supporting documentation.

Current Timelines for Site Management Plan:

- 1. Operations and Management Planning (Winter 2014 - Spring 2015)
- 2. Programming Inventory and Analysis (Winter 2014 - Spring 2015)
- 3. Financial Review and Business Plan (Winter 2014 - Spring 2015)
- 4. Site Planning (Inventory, Analysis, and Concepts – Ongoing through Spring 2015)

B. Valmont City Park Planning Update (verbal)

C. Civic Area Update (verbal)