

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
FROM: Jeff Dillon, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Matters from the Department
DATE: June 23, 2014



A. Boulder Reservoir Site Management Plan Update

The Boulder Reservoir Master Plan (BRMP) 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 BRMP 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.

As outlined in the BRMP, the SMP will focus on several areas to further refine the master plan objectives. The SMP 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.

The Department will continue to work diligently to manage competing recreation interests using best natural resource management practices to promote a balanced approach. The intent is to allow the Reservoir to be both a passive and active recreation, while protecting its resources. This will require the use of sound science, along with a thorough understanding of community recreation values. Additionally, staff training and development, as well as an extensive public engagement processes will need to be undertaken in order to allow the community and specific user groups to be actively engaged in the management of the area.

Remaining Project Tasks for SMP:

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

The following is an overview of the near term objectives that are now underway or will begin in the next few weeks to support the SMP Plan project.

1. **Data Collection** –To provide the necessary background data and research, the Department has undertaken the following:
 - a. Traffic Study – 2014 Special Event Vehicle Counts
 - b. Biological Species – 2014 Mammalian Survey
 - c. Recreation Use Information
 - d. Water Quality Monitoring
2. **Capital Improvements** – This will include final implementation of the bond funds and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) focused on critical need projects. Currently:
 - a. 12 projects out of 22 total projects are complete with the final 10 (small-scale projects) in process or nearing completion by this fall
 - b. all projects have preliminary funding based on estimates provided by project managers
 - c. <1% of the original funding for the CIP/Bond Projects remains
3. **Community Outreach** – During summer 2014, the Department will engage user groups and local residents in two outreach events designed to learn more about specific issues or receive input on the project.
 - North Shore Walkabout (Summer 2014) – Focus on passive uses and environmental issues throughout the Reservoir.
 - South Shore Walkabout (Summer 2014) – Focus on active recreation uses, boating, and event programming.

In addition to the SMP project tasks, the following information is intended as a brief update to current activities and events at the Boulder Reservoir that support the SMP development as well as the ongoing visitor experience.

Volunteer Raptor Monitoring

- The marshes and grasslands surrounding Boulder Reservoir support more nests of Boulder County birds of special concern than any other comparably sized area in the county
- Excellent reporting from our volunteers in April and May has provided a clear picture of the harriers, ospreys, bitterns and burrowing owls at Boulder Reservoir and around Coot Lake
- Twenty volunteers have submitted reports totaling over 82 field hours

Northern Harriers: Northern harriers are listed as a Boulder County Species of Special Concern in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. The only recently successful harrier nest in Boulder County was found at the Boulder Reservoir in 2010.

- a. Harriers are currently nesting again at the Little Dry Creek/West 51st Street area of the Boulder Reservoir.
- b. Staff has worked with the CMO to institute a closure of the area. The 30 day comment period ends June 16th and so far only three comments have been received and all were in favor of the closure. Therefore, this closure should remain in effect for the rest of the year and will be enacted again in future years to aid the success of this declining species. Passing of this rule allows for enhanced protection of the area with minimal impact to user groups. The site is already managed as a “no public access” area in order to protect fragile and unique habitats important to many species.

Osprey: Both osprey nests on the west side of the Reservoir are occupied, but incubation is occurring only on the southern nest, in the Little Dry Creek drainage (between 55th and the Reservoir). For the third consecutive year, no birds are incubating on the Dry Creek nest (OSMP/Aero-model), even though a pair has been present since late April. This nest fledged 15 young over 5 years from 2007-11, but has failed the last three years.

American Bittern: Two territories have been identified on either side of the road in the Little Dry Creek marsh and two or three territories were identified in the Dry Creek marsh.

Burrowing Owls: Burrowing owls have not been reported anywhere within the Parks and Recreation monitor area this year although populations in surrounding OSMP and Boulder County lands appear to be doing well.

Boulder County Nature Association (BCNA) – Nature Camps 2014

The Department is working in conjunction with the Boulder County Audubon Society (BCAS) as part of the Water Sports Camp program at the Boulder Reservoir between June 2nd and August 14th, BCAS naturalists and staff will engage campers in a bio-blitz inventory of bird, butterfly and plant species at various locations around the reservoir.

In addition to documenting bird and plant species encountered during the session, students will help capture butterflies with nets. Experienced adult naturalists will assist the campers in transferring butterflies to clear plastic bags for viewing and identification. Jan Chu and other butterfly researchers in Boulder County have used this practice for many years. The butterflies are released within 2-3 minutes of time in captivity. Capturing the butterflies enables accurate identification and increases the scientific value of the inventory. Butterfly, bird and plant data from the surveys will be documented and eventually contribute to conservation of habitat within

the study area. Campers will gain a sense of accomplishment knowing that they have taken part in a useful scientific project.

Boulder Reservoir Special Events

Boulder Reservoir staff has worked closely with event directors, county sheriff's office, county transportation and Colorado state patrol to plan and implement several traffic control strategies to mitigate traffic associated with Boulder Reservoir events and increase access for neighbors on 51st street. These plans will be debriefed and evaluated at the end of the season with all the involved stakeholders to assess the success of the plans and make any adjustments. There has been collaboration with the neighborhood liaisons to obtain feedback and make adjustments to the plans as we move through the season.

Boulder Reservoir staff has implemented a sound (noise) monitoring protocol for all events. Based on this monitoring, event directors are notified if they reach the city sound maximum and asked to immediately reduce the sound. To date, all events have been compliant with the requests.

Reservoir staff continues to send weekly event notifications to list serves to ensure patrons are aware of events and any restrictions that are taking place. In addition, the Reservoir is using an electronic, cloud-based calendar (Calendar Wiz) that lists all Boulder Reservoir events and any anticipated restrictions. These events are updated weekly to reflect any changes. To date, 32 events are noted on the calendar for 2014 which is a decrease in comparison to 2013.

Boulder Reservoir Boating

Boating management strategies at the Boulder Reservoir have remained the same as those used in 2013. As of June 9, 2014, boat permit sales are as follows:

- 318 power boat permits
- 25 sailboat permits
- 783 small craft permits

Youth Corps: North Shore of Boulder Reservoir Trail Rehabilitation (June 23 – July 3)

Beginning on June 23rd, the Mile High Youth Corps will provide trail realignment and rehabilitation support for two trail sections in the north central area of the Boulder Reservoir and will focus on the following work:

- Two trail sections will be modified
- 1200' of new trail will be added/350' of trail to be reclaimed
- Trail realignments will provide improved user experience and trail design while decreasing erosion on-trail user conflicts

B. Operating Budget

BPRD submitted its 2015 operating budget on May 30, 2014. Staff will meet with the City's Executive Budget Team (EBT) on June 24th to discuss the department's needs and determine what items will be considered for City Council approval in the fall. In an effort to ensure decision-making and resource allocation in all department funds is aligned with the updated master plan initiatives and budget guiding principles (Attachment A), the following requests and considerations were incorporated.

BPRD's 2015 operating budget requests are targeted at *taking care of what we have*.

- Park Operations and Maintenance Resources - \$330,000 (ongoing), add 4.0 FTE
- Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management - \$80,000 (one-time)
- Civic Area Activation - \$143,900 (ongoing)
- Cost Allocation - \$154,605 (ongoing)

In 2014, the department has experienced *unanticipated expenses related to the cost of doing business* in the following areas and has reallocated/projected budget appropriations accordingly for 2015.

- Financial services fees
- Healthcare benefits increase
- Pool treatment (e.g., chemicals)
- Increase to mandated inclusionary services
- Safety – e.g., Reservoir shoulder season boat patrol coverage; additional lifeguard coverage, additional manager-on-duty coverage

Additionally, the department has experienced *unanticipated changes due to flood recovery*:

- Uncertain revenue impacts related to Flatirons Event Center lease
- Lost revenue from facility closures to be reimbursed via insurance
- Restoration/repair funded via existing appropriations that have been re-prioritized (Capital Bond, Recreation Activity, and .25 Cent Sales Tax funds)

The following *efficiencies, collaboration, and partnerships* are underway:

- Consolidated the management and operations of the East Boulder Community Center
- Coordination of youth programming at Boulder Housing sites with Humans Services Department
- Shift to facilitated service delivery – outsourcing/contracting the dance and pottery programs
- Activation of the Civic Area via catalytic programming (e.g., events and free activities), site improvements (e.g., landscaping and flood clean-up) and potential, future capital investment

BPRD continues the think-forward to ensure its infrastructure and services align with the vision, mission and master plan goals. Since voters approved an extension of the .25 Cent Sales Tax

Fund through 2035, resulting in continued dedicated funding and retired debt service, the department is considering what services could be funded with the monies. Additionally, there is a need to be agile and intentional about the services provided to the community with General Fund monies. The department is completing the following work to inform the use of the funds and development of future budget requests:

- A program-focused recreation strategic plan is underway to ensure resources (funding and staffing) are aligned with the master plan themes of health and wellness and youth engagement and activity. Current changes in programming (contracting/partnering to provide dance and pottery and restructuring the gymnastics program) are providing an opportunity to assess current and future service delivery.
- An internal analysis of park operations and maintenance has been completed and highlights the need for additional front-line managers. In addition, BPRD is engaging a consultant to develop a Maintenance Management Plan to develop maintenance standards and verify resources.
- An Organizational Assessment Update will focus on a revamped department leadership structure and shift to district/center-based facility management and park zone management.
- A training and development program is being established to address needs related to onboarding, job descriptions studies, competency survey, skill development, performance management.
- Acquisition/implementation of asset management software and development of relational database for tracking assets and planning investment priorities.
- Update the comprehensive inventory and facility condition index (FCI) of existing assets within Boulder Parks and Recreation to identify ongoing funding priorities for preventive maintenance, repair and replacement.
- Develop and implement an Asset Prioritization Index (API) that engages the community in determining the priority of various asset types to guide the departmental prioritization for managing assets.
- Develop the Total Cost of Facility Ownership (TCFO) for various asset types to guide long-term future capital investment strategies.

Attachment:

A: Operating Budget Guiding Principles

Attachment A

**City of Boulder Vision:
Service Excellence for an Inspired Future**

OPERATING BUDGET GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City of Boulder develops an annual budget (could be biennial), as required by charter and state law. This budget serves as a financial plan and guiding tool to support organizational

strategies and values. The budget allocates resources across programs and service areas in order to achieve stated outcomes, which reflect community priorities and meet legal and fiscal requirements. The operating budget is designed to provide funding for all ongoing city operations, as well as one-time, non-capital projects and work efforts, and to provide general support of the city and council work plan. The city prioritizes its operating budget resource allocation both across and within funds based on the following guiding principles.

The City of Boulder Operating Budget should be developed:

1. in accordance with the city's Budget Policies. Two of the primary policies are:
 - a. One-time revenues shall only be used to cover one-time costs. Ongoing costs should not be greater than ongoing revenues.
 - b. Debt service shall not be utilized for operating expenses.

The full list of policies can be found on-line at: [Budget Policies](#);

2. under the overarching guide of the Sustainability Framework, to reflect the principles of Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) and align resource allocation so as to have the most impact on achieving PBB results;
3. in support of the city as a whole (One City, One Boulder): maximizing outcomes, providing efficient and effective service delivery, implementing continuous improvement, meeting service needs, and supporting collaboration and community partnerships, across the city and not limited by department boundaries;
4. consistent with, and in support of, council-accepted master plans and strategic plans;
5. to maintain critical services to the greatest extent possible;
6. to fund ongoing operating and maintenance costs, and provide for appropriate and strategic levels of replacement funding;
7. strategically along with the Capital Improvement Program; aligning operating and capital investments for coordinated and efficient results; weighing the impact of capital investment on operating costs and evaluating operating savings that can be realized through capital investment;
8. to be nimble and flexible, providing capacity to respond to emerging and unanticipated needs, and in support of building resilience as an organization;
9. to invest in organizational capacity by supporting training and employee development;
10. to optimize leveraged external funding opportunities;
11. to maintain an adequate level of reserves and support a strong bond rating;
12. using sound decision-making based on robust metrics, when available.