
MINUTES
Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee
May 4, 2017 1:00 PM
405 Grand Ave., Laramie, WY
Annex Conference Room

The special meeting of the Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee met at the Historic Carnegie Building, 405 Grand Avenue, 1st Floor Conference Room and was called to order at 1:06 PM.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Marius Favret, Keith Rittle, Amy Nagler, Paul Rechar, Vicki Henry

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Cindy Williams, Cal VanZee

Guests Present: Tony Hoch, Laramie Rivers Conservation District; Jason Sherwood, WY Game & Fish; Janine Jordan, City Manager

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY Nagler, seconded by Rittle, to approve the agenda.

Aye: 5

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION BY Nagler, seconded by Rittle, to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2017 meeting as sent via email.

Aye: 5

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Sections of the Ranch and Their Best Uses (handout)

1. May want to keep use plan general for now, and work on immediate goals (conserve water rights, increase water consumptive use, keep as ranching operation for now, no sale of land during ranching operation-but open to leasing), rather than focusing on sections of the ranch.
2. Can look at specific parcels of the ranch closer to the time the water is transferred. And, may want to first look at certain parcels that are scheduled for changes (Goforth, Ducks Unlimited project) or needed improvements (Pioneer pasture).
3. It may be a good idea to look at and talk to other cities that own land similar to the Monolith Ranch and how they manage it.



B. Statements of Basic/Guiding Principles

1. City Council has requested a work session on the long-term use of the ranch. The committee would like to be in consensus with Council goals before moving forward.
2. Discussion and refining of the ranch's immediate and long-term management goals occurred. (handout) The committee would like to have a final document to take to the Council work session. Vicki will draft a revised list of goals and objectives for the next special meeting. The committee decided on August 8th as a Council work session date. City Manager will put it on the Council calendar.

C. Other

1. City Council voted 4-4 regarding appointing 2 new members to the MRAC from WY G&F and LRCD. It will be brought back up at the next Council session.

V. DATE FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING – July 13, 2017

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

VALIDATED:

Marius Favret, Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee Chair

Date

Cindy Williams, Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee Staff Liaison

Date

The signed document is on file.

Monolith Ranch Lands Future Use Options Analysis, Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee (DRAFT)

Parcel No	Parcel Description	Size (Ac)	Use Options	Pros	Cons	Comments/Recommendation?
1	East of 287 - Including Tracts South Knoll, Hunziker Rangeland, Lake Pasture, North and South Biosolids, Simpson Springs Rangeland, and Southeast Corner		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Potential land swap or sale/purchase for Casper Aquifer well-head protection lands, or for consolidation of Dowlin right Continue lease for livestock grazing Lease portions for other purposes Public use/open space, with our without developed recreational facilities Retain for potential future residential expansion Combination of the above, or other? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Positive impact for future water source protections and/or enhancement No change in operations needed Could provide for multiple purposes based on specific sub-sets of the parcel with a combination of revenue enhancement and public service uses NA Best Parcel, based on soils and substrata for residential development. Close to currently existing developments. Can be implemented on part of the Parcel Flexibility in terms of land usage and be implemented in conjunction with Option 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change Map designations to include Pasture #25 in Parcel 1 instead of Parcel 2 (Goforth) Regardless of long term option, retain well water rights and access Another option to be considered on portions of the Parcel could be development of Riding stables, horse grazing and even riding trails Solar power generation should be considered and evaluated UP tracks split this Parcel from the rest of the Ranch 	
1	East of 287 - Including Tracts South Knoll, Hunziker Rangeland, Lake Pasture, North and South Biosolids, Simpson Springs Rangeland, and Southeast Corner		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Potential land swap or sale/purchase for Casper Aquifer well-head protection lands, or for consolidation of Dowlin right Continue lease for livestock grazing Lease portions for other purposes Public use/open space, with our without developed recreational facilities Retain for potential future residential expansion Combination of the above, or other? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Good area for potential land swap for development in order to protect CAPA. Continued view sheds for Hwy 287 visitors and residents. 	<p>Simpson Springs and surrounding area must remain in City ownership to protect possible water source for municipal use.</p>	
	Hunziker parcel			Well exists for Irrigation	Liability? Potential for over-use.	
	Simpson Springs					
1	East of 287 - Including Tracts South Knoll, Hunziker Rangeland, Lake Pasture, North and South Biosolids, Simpson Springs Rangeland, and Southeast Corner		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Simpson Springs area has a wealth of relatively shallow groundwater/potential for municipal use and should not be traded off unless the water quality is not useable/sustainable. Other portions, IE Hwy 287 frontage areas would be tradable.) The property has been valuable for antelope habitat and herd management through the HMA program. This portion is in Area 37, which has very little hunting access, and no other significant hunting access exists in the area west of the Laramie Range. 30 hunters are currently permitted to use this property each fall.) Having personally searched for rural property for the last five years, I see this portion of the ranch as having the highest value/acre for development. Water depth and quality become limiting factors as you travel west. This portion is likely the only portion with the potential to drill home wells successfully, and its proximity to town make it more valuable. 	<p>Must remain in City ownership to protect possible water source for municipal use. Remove unsafe structures.</p>		

2	<p>Go Forth</p> <p>Same as for East of 287. Go Forth Reservoir will likely need to be carved into a separate parcel and conveyed to long-term ownership consistent with ecological habitat and potential recreational value, including potential retention by the City. Highway 287 frontage ("The 287 Pasture tract") may be suitable for residential or commercial development?</p>	<p>* Consider establishing a wildlife refuge with State and/or Federal support</p>
2	<p>Go Forth</p> <p>Same as for East of 287. Go Forth Reservoir will likely need to be carved into a separate parcel and conveyed to long-term ownership consistent with ecological habitat and potential recreational value, including potential retention by the City. Highway 287 frontage ("The 287 Pasture tract") may be suitable for residential or commercial development?</p>	<p>1. With the reconstruction of the dam and development of the wetland areas, does not lend itself to land swaps or sale/purchase</p> <p>2. Better options for revenue generation may be available</p> <p>Would be dependent on livestock access from other grazing areas</p> <p>3. Lease opportunities limited to area identified</p> <p>4. Little to no possibilities for revenue generation</p> <p>5. Subdividing the Parcel is limited</p>
2	<p>Go Forth</p> <p>Same as for East of 287. Go Forth Reservoir will likely need to be carved into a separate parcel and conveyed to long-term ownership consistent with ecological habitat and potential recreational value, including potential retention by the City. Highway 287 frontage ("The 287 Pasture tract") may be suitable for residential or commercial development?</p>	<p>1. NA</p> <p>2. No change in operations needed. May have better grazing opportunities with the wetlands development</p> <p>3. Portion of land between HW287 and UP railroad tracks (Pasture #25) could be useable</p> <p>4. The reconstruction of the dam and development of wetlands lends this Parcel for future public access open space</p> <p>5. Same as 4. above</p> <p>6. Flexibility in terms of land usage and timelines</p> <p>Go Forth Reservoir is being reconstructed for wildlife habitat and flood mitigation</p>
2	<p>Go Forth</p> <p>Same as for East of 287. Go Forth Reservoir will likely need to be carved into a separate parcel and conveyed to long-term ownership consistent with ecological habitat and potential recreational value, including potential retention by the City. Highway 287 frontage ("The 287 Pasture tract") may be suitable for residential or commercial development?</p>	<p>(JS-I agree, a large number of songbirds can be found along the Harney Creek riparian corridor in this area, and I expect numbers and species diversity to both increase with the planned DU improvements to the area. Swift foxes (Wyoming "Species of Greatest Conservation Need") are regularly seen in the upland portions of this pasture, and this is one of the most consistent portions of the ranch for antelope harvest through the current HIMA program.)</p>

3 Savory Pastures

Same as for East of 2877

3 Savory Pastures

Same as for East of 2877

1. Positive impact for future water source protections and/or enhancement
 2. No change in operations needed
 3. Could provide for multiple purposes based on specific sub-sets of the parcel with a combination of revenue enhancement and public service uses
 4. NA
 5. NA
 6. Flexibility in terms of land usage and timelines
1. Need to assure equivalence of any possible transaction
 2. Better options for revenue generation may be available. Classified as 4th Priority Pasture
 3. Access more limited, terrain less diverse
 4. There are better Parcels of the Ranch for public use/open space. Options for Horse type applications would be feasible
 5. Residential use not best use due to soil conditions and access.

3 Savory Pastures

Same as for East of 2877 JS-Portions of these pastures along Harney Creek are very similar to the Goforth pasture, but are somewhat more arid and I expect species diversity and wildlife numbers are slightly lower than south of the Sand Creek Road. Swift foxes are routinely observed in these pastures. Similarly, I believe this is the second-most valuable portion of the ranch west of 287 for antelope harvest. Portions of these pastures adjacent to the pivot have significant use from white-tailed deer and several intermittent lakes are important bird/waterfowl areas at times.) Portions of these pastures may have development value for homes, but I suspect there may be significant areas with problematic soils and/or drainage issues that will decrease its value to developers.)

<p>4 Dowlin Irrigated</p>	<p>Retain until all ranch water rights are converted to municipal use, then consider alternatives listed above for East of 287 parcel, with potential carve out and City retention of portions best suited for recreational use (e.g. river corridor?)</p>	<p>1. Need to retain for municipal water rights? 2. Better options for revenue generation may be available. Irrigation may be inadequate if water transferred to municipal use 3. Limited opportunity 4. There are better Parcels of the Ranch for public use/open space, except for River corridor although may require a Bridge from Pioneer to provide access 5. Terrain/soils not conducive to residential use Limited access 6. Apart from River access, no obvious alternatives</p>	<p>* This is the core of the Ranch for water rights and lends itself for continued use for grazing and forage * Need to carve out sections along the Laramie River for enhancement of Public access</p>
<p>4 Dowlin Irrigated</p>	<p>Retain until all ranch water rights are converted to municipal use, then consider alternatives listed above for East of 287 parcel, with potential carve out and City retention of portions best suited for recreational use (e.g. river corridor?)</p>	<p>1. NA 2. No change in operations needed 3. NA 4. NA 5. NA 6. Public access to River</p>	<p>Good for Laramie residents and visitors to have potential recreational access. Could also keep some land available for public garden plots available for rent with proceeds to City for maintenance of trails.</p>
<p>4 Dowlin Irrigated</p>	<p>IS I agree. With live water, canals and wet meadows along River Ranch Road provide excellent riparian habitats for a diverse bird and mammal communities. These areas, with what water remains after the municipal transfer, would likely be great park/recreation areas. Nearly all white-tailed deer harvest on this HMA, and a significant portion for the entire hunt area, occurs in these pastures.)</p>		

<p>5 Pioneer</p>	<p>1. Retain current river access for recreational use. 2. Remaining portion per options listed above for East of 287</p>	<p>1.1. This is the prime site for public access recreational use and does not lend itself to land swaps or sale/purchase 2.1. NA 2.2. Poor grazing, pastures need long term improvement 2.3. NA 2.4. same as point 1.1. above 2.5. NA 2.6. NA</p>	<p>* Restoration of the Pioneer water rights should be the 1st priority followed by long term improvement of the pastures</p>
<p>5 Pioneer</p>	<p>1. Retain current river access for recreational use. 2. Remaining portion per options listed above for East of 287</p>	<p>1.1. Current application, no change needed 2.1 Does not lend itself for transfer or sub-division 2.2. Better options for revenue generation may be available poor grazing 2.3. Lease opportunities limited 2.4 Same as 1.1 above 2.5. Not suitable terrain 2.6. Best option remains 1.1</p>	<p>Retain current river access with improved access (better road grading). Install picnic tables near parking area. Clear some brush from banks to facilitate easier access to fishing. Rehabilitate salty land for potential wildlife use, for wildlife viewing and bird-watching. Rural trails could be created with interpretive signs. Signs could show history of use and mitigation processes with explanation of plants used, etc., and showing bird/mammal species using the area.</p>
<p>5 Pioneer</p>	<p>1. Retain current river access for recreational use. 2. Remaining portion per options listed above for East of 287</p>	<p>1. Must retain current river access due to WS&F agreement.</p>	<p>2. Do not sell or trade land because it is salty and needs mitigation.</p>
<p>5 Pioneer</p>	<p>1. Retain current river access for recreational use. (JS-I'm not sure of the conditions on the current Public Access Area agreement, but I'll try to look them up. I know this is currently an extremely popular area with anglers and wildlife watchers, as well as dog-walkers, joggers, etc. We may want to discuss both the recreational value these uses demonstrate as well as what uses are "okay" on this property. I would guess the PAA agreement does not cover non-fishing uses, but they haven't excluded in practice for at least a dozen years.) 2. Remaining portion per options listed above for East of 287 (JS-This property does have a small share of water from the Pioneer Canal. In regards to protecting the water and investing in the property to better utilize it and improve the long-term land value versus simply dumping the salty, clay upland portions of this pasture, I could go either way at this point...we should discuss the investment required to make this a valuable area and the returns we most want/need.)</p>	<p>1. Retain current river access for recreational use. (JS-I'm not sure of the conditions on the current Public Access Area agreement, but I'll try to look them up. I know this is currently an extremely popular area with anglers and wildlife watchers, as well as dog-walkers, joggers, etc. We may want to discuss both the recreational value these uses demonstrate as well as what uses are "okay" on this property. I would guess the PAA agreement does not cover non-fishing uses, but they haven't excluded in practice for at least a dozen years.) 2. Remaining portion per options listed above for East of 287 (JS-This property does have a small share of water from the Pioneer Canal. In regards to protecting the water and investing in the property to better utilize it and improve the long-term land value versus simply dumping the salty, clay upland portions of this pasture, I could go either way at this point...we should discuss the investment required to make this a valuable area and the returns we most want/need.)</p>	<p>Note - all lands currently committed to approximately 7 more years of an 8-year lease with Baer Livestock. Use options are for long-range planning purposes by the Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee and do not reflect a City Intent or commitment relative to any specific use. The primary objective for the ranch is to maintain the ranch water right, for eventual conversion to municipal use. This document is intended to support long-range planning for the disposition of ranch lands once that transfer occurs.</p>

MONOLITH RANCH

LONG TERM MANAGEMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- **Maintain and maximize the water rights for eventual transfer to city for municipal use including the use of well water.**
- **Maintain current owned ranch water right to meet future City needs**
- **Rehabilitate all unused water rights**
- **Never sell off or transfer water rights**
- **Leverage salable/tradable land value toward protection of existing City water resource**
- **Leverage salable/tradable land value toward consolidation of Dowlin water right**
- **Do not sell off land but rather lease, transfer or exchange parcels for beneficial use to the community and preserve access rights regardless of ownership. Any actions in this respect should not have any detrimental impact on water rights**
- **Preserve and/or expand open space to connect with other publicly owned land**
- **The Ranch should operate, at a minimum at break even or preferably generate revenue for the City. (In this respect the Ranch should be accounted for on a stand-alone P&L basis.)**
- **Preserve and protect access to the Laramie River and protect riparian/wetland areas, including the future Goforth Reservoir**
- **Retain select lands for preservation of open space and to provide recreational opportunities for city residents**
- **Use Parks & Recreation Master Plan as basis for future recreation initiatives**
- **Provide for compatible public use, both in activities and intensity of use – minimize access for motor vehicles**
- **Review potential for uses beyond the current ranching operation, such as solar, community agriculture, business or industrial applications**