



CSU Extension Boulder County
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2025

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM via Teams.

Board Members:

Present: Hallie Adams, Rob Alexander, Donna Becker, Jay Ruggeri, and Kirsten Ruiz

Guest: Ulla Merz

Absent: Nick Cappello and Mary Mulry Quorum present? Yes

Boulder County Extension Staff:

Eric Hammond, Dena H, Tommy Roth, Sheila Prentice and Grant Orvis were in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Kirsten motioned the minutes of the Extension Advisory Board December 2, 2024, meeting be approved as presented, Rob seconded that motion; all were in favor.

Conversation with the Horticulture Team:

Horticulture is programming for homeowners around plant issues, landscapes, vegetable gardening, trees/shrubs, extends all the way to small vegetable/fruit production.

Sheila, Grant and Tommy presented 2024 highlights, challenges and goals for the Horticulture year.

Sustainable Landscapes:

- Goals: reduce commercial landscape water use while preserving aesthetics; support landscape ecology by increasing the use of native plants in commercial landscapes; mitigate risk of climate related impacts (fire safety and drought)
- Upcoming Events: Fire Recovery Program with Small Acreage Management on April 19 from 8:30am to 12pm at Lyons Regional Library District; Tree Walks in Fall 2025 at Thompson Park; Native Grass Walks on August 21 at 9am at South Boulder Creek and on September 11 at 9am at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain; Native Plant Master returning in 2026.

Community Gardens:

- Questions for Advisory Board: research vs. food for donations? Removed all the research plots and grown food for donation; donated 1035 pounds of food; connected with CSU Potato Research Center in San Luis Valley to do research on potato varieties; removal of Community Gardeners, overuse of water

Discussions were held. One of Boulder County goals is around food security, this directly aligns around some of Boulder County initiatives. Maybe could do social sciences research, how can Community Gardens better

support food security? Specialty foods? May want to ask farmers which vegetable they want to try out to see whether you can scale grow them. If there are written guidelines for participating in the gardens it would make compliance “enforcement” simpler. Educate gardeners on water usage.

Home Horticulture:

- Plant Mobile: grant funded, 10k plant seedlings distributed in 2024, 20k native seedlings are the goal for 2025, first giveaway is Earth Day events in Lafayette, Erie and Boulder
- Downtown Longmont Native Garden: planting day is June 2nd, grant funded, partnership with City of Longmont Parks and Natural Resources
- Master Gardeners: diagnostic services, classes, outreach events, food pantry garden, Ask-a-Master Gardener, help desk, tree team; growth needed to meet demand
- Future goals/obstacles: reaching groups who don't know about Extension; social media presence; Emerald Ash Borer; funding; diagnostic services

Discussions were held.

In the programming that you offer do you include irrigation systems? As an office we do have training (talks) at the statewide level regarding irrigation systems. During our site visits for lawn checks, we do talk about watering concerns.

For the City of Longmont project, will there be an educational component to the plants such as labeling, a documentary and/or signage with our name for marketing/branding? Yes, there will be labeling for every plant, a sign that explains what the garden is with the science behind native plants and the ecology in both English and Spanish and a sign with CSU Extension name.

Board members would like to see more information shared to homeowners about noxious weeds/invasive species. We are planning to offer programming on noxious weeds/invasive species. Plan to have several columns in the local newspapers on how to identify and remove Tree of Heaven and Russian Olive. Always looking for partnerships to help spread the word.

What about something with parents and kids, young families? Boulder County does not meet parity among Hispanic communities and Extension services are very underutilized with younger people. Maybe reach out to new homeowners, renters/condo folks for patio gardening/food. Try putting up posters/information at libraries, recreation centers, where young children programming already occurs. Parents pay attention to email listservs/newsletters. Local parenting/homeschooling Facebook groups. Difficulties in connecting in schools for programming.

Extension Advisory Board Updates:

A. Election of new chair. Jay nominated Rob. Discussions were held. Rob accepted nomination. Eric will reach out to help with transition.

Director's Update:

Current CSU and County staffing

- Sustainable Landscapes Specialist position hired. Sheila Prentice started January 13, 2025
- Front Desk Receptionist Amy Lippold retirement is April 4, 2025. Hired Shannon Kime to start March 25, 2025.

Extension program updates

- Federal funding. Extension does receive federal funding through the Smith-Lever Act. That money goes to the State of Colorado and then the state makes decisions on how to use it. It's about 10% of the

statewide budget from the federal government. We have no indication currently that we are at risk of losing it. What would happen if we lost that 10%? We would start by not refilling open positions, could ask our funding partners for more money, etc. The university is dealing with other changes to policy, some as to do with terminology, DEI programs and such. Extension programming is for all, and we are mandated to serve all members of the community to help them find scientific/fact-based answers to their problems, which means serving the demographic breakdown of our communities (parity).

- Research. Extension CSU staff are all faculty. Part of our performance evaluation is that all faculty participate in some sort of applied research. An example of that would be our demonstration gardens as we are monitoring how plants grow, formally or informally. Could be doing variety trials. Extension could be a bridge to the community for faculty on campus. We have an interest in locally driven research in response to community needs.

Open Discussion:

- A. Feedback on website/communication/factsheets – will add to agenda for a focused discussion at a future board meeting. CSU is working on a project called Learner Front Door to standardize the digital presence of CSU across all platforms. Anticipated rollout date is June for the main website, with county websites scheduled throughout the remainder of the year. CSU main website is the parent theme, and we are the child theme, so limited on design and content locally. With new system, more options will be available.
- B. June Board Meeting
 - Dena will create a doodle poll for this meeting.

Old Business:

None

The meeting adjourned

Minutes prepared by Dena.

[2024-2026 Boulder County Commissioners' Strategic Priorities](#): Economic Security and Social Stability, Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship, and Good Governance.