

SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of the January 10, 2024, Regular Meeting

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Turk Montepare, Jeff Zimmerman, Paul Semmer, Dave Bittner, John Taylor, Terry Craig, Bob Gregory, Peter Grosshuesch, John Uban

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Meagan Graham, Arthur Hardin, and Laura Rossetter.

STAFF PRESENT: Katherine King, Jordan Mead, Allison Morton, Brad Kremske

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Cindy Ebbert – USFS, Kristi D’Agati – Town of Silverthorne, Anne Lowe – Town of Breckenridge

Call to Order: Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Council members approved the agenda as submitted.

Approval of Minutes: Council members approved the November 2023 OSAC minutes unanimously.

Approval of Summary Report: Council members approved the summary report as submitted.

Public Comments:

Paul Semmer mentioned that the Open Space Advisory Council for the Town of Blue River was dissolved effective December 2023.

Cindy Ebbert noted that the Sapphire Point scoping period is ongoing and encouraged OSAC members to look at the scoping notice and provide comments. The Frisco Backyard Decision Notice is expected in spring 2024 after an additional round of scoping.

Turk Montepare noted that this was his last meeting, and he was thankful to have had the opportunity to serve on the Council for many years.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Open Space Management:

2023 Field Season Overview

Brad Kremske gave a presentation summarizing the accomplishments of the Open Space and Trails seasonal crew. Accomplishments included volunteer days in Dillon Valley and at the Swan River Reach B. Natural surface trail projects included Dillon Valley rerouting, Swan’s Nest boardwalks and bridge, reroute of the Spiral Staircase trail, and improvements to the Landfill Trails.

For Recpath maintenance, the bridge on the Swan Mountain Recpath above Summit Cove was re-decked in the early summer. The crew experimented with alternative crack sealing methods on the Recpath behind the high school. Last year, the OST field crew took over sweeping of the Recpath from Road and Bridge. Council members asked if this has resulted in increased overall costs for the department. Director King responded that more Open Space staff time is now dedicated to sweeping, but the direct costs have decreased since Road and Bridge is no longer billing OST for hours spent sweeping.

2023 Wildlife Monitoring Overview

Allison Morton gave a summary of the 2023 wildlife camera and beaver monitoring programs on County and joint Town/County Open Space properties.

Staff detected 705 individual bird species representing 59 unique species. These species were observed during 64 point counts at 4 properties, including Tenderfoot Meadows, Swan River Restoration, Doig Homestead, and Cobb & Ebert. These surveys will set a baseline for future observations and help document changes over time.

Allison was the sole monitor in 2023 but increasing the scope of this monitoring with volunteers is a goal for the future. All observations were made between 6-10am from June 15 - July 21, twice per month at each site. The general takeaway was that all four properties were high in biodiversity, and three Tier 2 species were recorded. The “tiered” classification represent species of highest conservation priority and ones that Colorado Parks and Wildlife focus on protecting.

Council members asked about the requirement for monitoring in the management plans and requested that new requirements be added to these plans in the future to ensure that monitoring efforts continue. GOCO does not require monitoring on the properties they helped to fund the purchase of, but the chair requested that staff share the monitoring results with GOCO as an example.

Beaver monitoring occurred at Montecristo and Sawlog (wetland properties adjacent to the Quandary Trailhead), Swan’s Nest, and the Frisco Kayak (Park and Ride) Lot. This was the first year of beaver monitoring using protocols developed by the Town of Breckenridge. Our goal for managing beavers is to maintain the beaver population in these areas while avoiding damage to infrastructure like Highway 9, I-70, and the Swan’s Nest condos.

Of note, the beavers in Frisco created a new wetland habitat at the Kayak lot and this has facilitated establishment of wetland dependent bird species. Volunteers have installed “beaver deceivers” to allow the beavers to co-exist with the nearby infrastructure, while providing ecological function. Maintaining the deceivers at all locations, as needed, will be critical for meeting the management goals on Open Space properties.

2023 was the third year of wildlife camera monitoring at Knorr Ranch, Cow Camp, Mesa Cortina, Doig Homestead, and Tenderfoot Meadows. Doig Homestead had the highest species diversity, and many animals came to the ditch to drink. Cow Camp had many animals jumping the fence and taking the fences out, where possible, was recommended.

Discussion of OSAC applicants and recommendation on appointments

Rae Moody was present to introduce herself to the council. She has lived in Breckenridge, Colorado for 23 years and is originally from New Zealand. She has experience working for the Park Service in New Zealand and is interested in making connections between the trail networks and the Recpath, and getting users to points-of-interest and trailheads. She is also looking to do more in the realm of climate action through the Open Space program. Director King explained the process of selections and appointments to Rae and thanked her for being at the meeting in person.

Council members reviewed and discussed the applicants for the vacant positions to be filled in 2024. There are currently seven vacancies on the Council: four At Large, one Lower Blue, one Upper Blue, and one Tenmile representative. Art Hardin, Bob Gregory, Peter Grosshuesch and Paul Semmer have elected to apply for reappointment.

New applicants include: Daniel Dunn (Upper Blue), Drew Goldsmith (Upper Blue), Elizabeth (Libby) Pansing (Lower Blue), Erin Gigliello (Upper Blue), Greg Guevara (Upper Blue), Haley Littleton (Upper Blue) , Holly Blando (Upper Blue), Jerod Swanson (Tenmile), Rae Moody (Upper Blue), and Tim Figge (Upper Blue).

Paul Semmer, Peter Grosshuesch, and Bob Gregory stated their qualifications for reappointment to the sitting members. Bob Gregory also put in a word for Greg Guevara, who is the director of the Summit Huts association.

Council members mentioned that the real estate knowledge that Turk brings to the table will be sorely missed. This needs to be considered when assessing new members. Turk would like to be allowed to stay involved with the Council in an advisory role.

After discussion, the sitting Council members recommended reappointment of Art Hardin (Lower Blue), Bob Gregory (At Large), Peter Grosshuesch (Upper Blue), and Paul Semmer (At Large). Council members recommended new appointments for Libby Pansing (At Large) and Greg Guevara (At Large). For the final spot, Rae Moody (At Large) or Jerod Swanson (Tenmile), if the BOCC would like to appoint a second Tenmile representative as outlined in the by-laws.

These recommendations will be taken to the BOCC for review and final appointments.

Motion to allow Turk Montepare to serve in an advisory role moving forward and attend Executive Session.
Motion by: Dave Bittner
Second by: John Uban
Motion approved unanimously.

Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property Interests: Bob Gregory made a motion to enter Executive Session and Turk Montepare seconded the motion. OSAC entered Executive Session at 7:14 p.m.

John Taylor made a motion to leave Executive Session and Terry Craig seconded the motion. OSAC left Executive Session at 7:40 p.m.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Katherine King thanked John Taylor and Turk Montepare for their time on the council. She presented a plaque and resolution to John Taylor recognizing his time on the Council. John expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve and work with the staff and council members.

Turk Montepare served on OSAC for 25 years with 13 of those years as the Chair. Director King presented Turk with a BOCC Resolution recognizing his service and a photo of Bald Mountain from Red Peak, taken by Anne Lowe from the Town of Breckenridge Open Space Department. Turk's dedication to Open Space protection has left a legacy on the landscape and the quality of life for all Summit County residents.

BOCC would like to host a joint OSAC and BOCC meeting on March 12 during their work session. The director will send a follow-up email to confirm scheduling for this meeting.

Blue River Watershed Group is hosting an Open House to introduce their preliminary design plans for Blue River restoration at 5:30pm at the Silverthorne Pavilion tomorrow, January 11, 2024. OSAC members were encouraged to attend.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Mead

Jordan Mead, Open Space and Trails Resource Specialist