

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of February 1, 2023 Regular Meeting

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Laura Rossetter, Dave Bittner, Meagan Graham, John Taylor, Turk Montepare, Jeff Zimmerman, John Uban, Peter Grosshuesch, Arthur Hardin

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Semmer, Terry Craig, Robert Gregory

STAFF PRESENT: Katherine King, Allison Mitchell, Jordan Mead, Jessica Forsythe

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Anne Lowe – Town of Breckenridge, Cindy Ebbert – USFS Dillon Ranger District, Pete Swenson – Town of Frisco, Kristen D’Agoti – Planning Technician – Town of Silverthorne

Call to Order: Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:33 p.m.

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

Approval of Minutes: Peter Grosshuesch made a motion to approve the January 2023 OSAC minutes. Laura Rossetter seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

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

Public Comments: No public comments.

REGULAR AGENDA:

2021-2022 Wildlife Trail Camera Data

Allison Mitchell gave an overview of the wildlife camera data collected in 2021 and 2022. Open Space properties surveyed in 2021 included Mesa Cortina, Willowbrook, Buffalo Ridge Greenspace, Shane Gulch, Doig Homestead, Doig Meadows, Cow Camp, Trudy Robinson, and Valley of the Blue.

Moose, mule deer and coyote were the most abundant species in 2021. Red fox were detected frequently at the Mesa Cortina Open Space, along with moose. Mule deer, elk, and moose with young were detected at Willowbrook Open Space in June – August 2021. 6 moose individuals and mule deer with young were observed at Buffalo Ridge Green Space. Racoons were also detected at Buffalo Ridge and Mesa Cortina.

Doig Homestead had high diversity of wildlife species, with 13 unique species observed. Coyote, elk, and mule deer were the most frequently observed species.

Additional properties were surveyed in 2022, including Bob Craig, Tenderfoot Meadows, Chautauqua Extension, and Settler’s Creek. Mule deer, coyote, and pine squirrels were the most frequently detected in 2022. Overall, wildlife diversity was highest at Doig Homestead in 2021 and 2022. This site also had the most continuous camera time from July 2021 – December 2022, which may contribute to the number of species of observed in this area. However, this site contains a diversity of habitat types, and is largely undisturbed which also makes it great wildlife habitat.

Open Space Management

Tenderfoot Meadows Management Plan

Jordan Mead gave an overview of the management plan updates to the Council and reviewed the Memo

that was included in the packet for this meeting. Staff asked for OSAC input on management actions suggested in the plan, the vision for the property, ongoing management provisions, and public input to the draft.

John Taylor suggested additional trail signage to clarify wayfinding and travel management. A trailhead kiosk in concert with the Town of Dillon would be a useful addition to the Cemetery Trailhead for users to be informed about the land uses and recreation opportunities in the area. The composting facility was a topic of conversation and the impacts of this facility would need to be carefully assessed into the future. Wetland mitigation for this project could open opportunities to restore and enhance wetlands on this property. OSAC members had concerns about the visual impacts on the landfill property and asked staff to work collaboratively with the landfill and voice these concerns. There was some confusion on the planned access routes to this potential future facility and council members asked staff to clarify this with Aaron Byrne, the landfill director.

Council members expressed that existing conditions on the property and surrounding area were captured well in this draft. Jeff Zimmerman expressed his desire to continue managing the resources that exist on the property, without adding new uses. This area has become very busy in the last twenty years and is potentially as busy as the council would like to see. New uses should be the responsibility of the proponent, if proposed by third parties. Other council members mentioned that the property is already surrounded by a lot of developed uses and urbanization, so this area could be a good candidate for additional uses. Using the property for a community separator while still allowing for recreation might be a good strategy. This plan should outline the criteria for assessing recreational uses if they are proposed in the future. Balancing the new uses with the original intent of preserving the property was stressed by council members. Conflict and safety may make directional and single use trails necessary, but we should also think about the early and late season use by all, when there are limited opportunities for trail-based recreation in the county. John Uban mentioned the Snake River bridge at Bob Craig and wondered about how this might happen. Parking and access from Bob Craig could be a good use in the future. Staff added that the proposed seasonal wildlife closure could serve to balance the demand for recreation in this area with the desire to protect the wildlife resources in the area.

Dave Bittner mentioned that the original intent of this property was to preserve this as a buffer and a visual separator. How do trails impact the natural, open appearance of the property? Jeff Zimmerman mentioned a BoCC resolution and asked staff to review the Development and Land Use codes to see what this says about Open Space management and zoning. Council members asked about social trail formation if new trail uses are not approved. Staff expressed that this wasn't a major concern, but went back to the need for criteria to assess the need for new trails or recreational uses on this property. Council members asked to have the Open Space Rules and Regulations easily accessible, along with the Open Space zoning district allowed uses.

Staff asked about seasonal closures and if this would be supported by OSAC. Council members mentioned that a potential "test run" of this to understand the challenges might be in order. Education of users to understand the need for the closure and anything that can be done to ease into this closure to get public support would be useful.

Public input for the motorized trail system might be a good model for getting public input (public scoping and comment period). At least one open house for review of this management plan would be appropriate.

Lower Blue Land Exchange Update

Katherine King gave an update on the status of the Lower Blue Land Exchange between the BLM, County, and Blue Valley Ranch. A notice of decision was released by the BLM for this exchange, which has been in process for 15 years. The Land Exchange will consolidate ownership of public and private lands in and

around the Blue River, Green Mountain, and Blue Valley Ranch in Summit and Grand Counties. Public benefits include an improved trailhead and trail at Green Mountain, a boater take-out at Spring Creek Road, and a public rest area on Blue Valley Ranch with access from the river. Also included is the “Confluence Recreation Area” which will provide a boat ramp and access to the Blue and Colorado Rivers in Grand County. The Blue Valley Ranch owner will purchase 80 acres of Summit County Open Space for \$600,000 and conveyed that land to the BLM to equalize values in this exchange. This money will be returned to the Open Space fund. Evaluating improvements to the access at Camp Krusty would be a good next step, now that an official take-out will exist at Spring Creek Road.

South Cow Creek and McDonald Flats Conveyance Update

The Cow Creek parcel was assessed at \$650,000 and the McDonald Flats was assessed at \$850,000. Closing documents are being reviewed by USFS general counsel and closing should occur early this year.

Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property Interests: A motion was made to enter into Executive Session, and it was seconded. OSAC entered into Executive Session at 7:19 p.m. A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC left Executive Session at 7:53 p.m.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Appointments will be made by the Board of County Commissioners in February and election of officers can occur in March, once John Uban’s appointment is confirmed by the BoCC.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Mead

Jordan Mead, Open Space and Trails Resource Specialist