

**SUMMIT COUNTY  
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL  
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

February 2, 2022  
Meeting Held by Zoom Conference

**OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Craig, Turk Montepare, Laura Rossetter, Paul Semmer, John Taylor, Todd Rankin, Arthur Hardin, Meagan Graham, Dave Bittner, Jeff Zimmerman, Peter Grosshuesch, John Uban

**OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT:** Robert Gregory

**STAFF PRESENT:** Allison Mitchell, Katherine King, Jordan Mead, Steve Greer

**MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT:** Pete Swenson – Town of Frisco, Danelle Cook– Town of Silverthorne, Anne Lowe – Town of Breckenridge, Ben Ferrante – SCOMBA, Tom Liston – SCOMBA, Cindy Ebbert – USFS

**Call to Order:** Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:34 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was amended to include a Wildlife Camera presentation by staff, as well as a discussion of Quandary Peak Trailhead Parking and Shuttle Recommendations.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes were approved as submitted.  
Motion to approve the December 2021 Minutes by Paul Semmer  
Second by John Taylor  
Motion Carried.

Laura Rossetter asked if there would be a time for the public to comment on access at Blue Lakes. Katherine King responded that there is no current public process ongoing and she will inform OSAC if the public is engaged in the future on this subject.

**Approval of Summary Report:** The summary report was approved as submitted.

**Public Comments:** Katherine King introduced Steve Greer, the new Community Development director, and welcomed new OSAC appointees Dave Bittner, Meagan Graham, and Jeff Zimmerman, as well as returning members Todd Rankin, Laura Rossetter, and Terry Craig.

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

**Discussion of Open Space Management Activities:**

Wildlife Camera Presentation (Allison Mitchell)

Resource specialist Allison Mitchell shared a compilation of the highlights from six wildlife cameras that Summit County Open Space and Summit Public Television deployed in the summer of 2021. The presentation featured several bear, elk, moose and a mountain lion. Cameras at the Doig Homestead

and the Wilderrest-Mesa Cortina Open Space properties captured a wide variety of species. OSAC would like to see the images and videos shared on the OST webpage for public viewing.

### SCoMBA Trail Construction Proposal – Tenderfoot Meadows Open Space

Staff gave an overview of the proposed Tenderfoot Ride Center, focusing on a blue flow trail that SCoMBA would like to implement in the summer of 2022. The “Tenderfoot Meadows Open Space Management Plan” deemed additional trails inappropriate for this property, however OST has previously constructed additional trails on this property, including Sage and Snake River Bluffs Trails.

The proposed trail is the first step in developing an early season mountain biking destination on the east side of the County. SCoMBA president Ben Ferrante added that the proposed trail, “Bobsled”, will be a blue, downhill-oriented flow trail and it would be machine built by McGill Trails, a local trail builder. Primary access would be via Cemetery Hill to Oro Grande, or Tenderfoot Meadows Access, Sage, and Oro Grande Trails. SCRAP approval would be required for this trail to be constructed and SCoMBA has started conversation with Aaron Byrne at SCRAP to start this process. Funding is available for construction and SCoMBA is hoping to utilize that funding this summer. Laura Rossetter asked about environmental review for trail construction and any activity that is in opposition with the management plan for a given property. Staff completed a desktop analysis for High Priority Wildlife Habitat and found that Severe Winter Range for Elk is listed in this area. A winter closure could address this concern and minimize impacts to wildlife. Katherine King mentioned that Open Space and Trails does not have a formal environmental assessment process for proposed actions on Open Space lands.

Ms. Rossetter was also concerned about having large berms and features that often cater specifically to mountain bikers while displacing other users. Her desire is to keep the proposed trail as a multi-use trail, accessible to all user groups. Ms. Rossetter was also concerned about the precedent that would be set if this action against the management plan is approved. That said, management plans need to evolve over time.

Paul Semmer also had year-round wildlife concerns on a landscape scale, not limited to winter. Our communications strategy needs to be a year-long process of educating users about living with wildlife. The wording of the management plan is very specific. Staff and OSAC need to look at the impacts from a long-term management perspective. Other OSAC members reinforced this and pointed to the very specific language in the management plan that discouraged recreational use of this property.

Ben Ferrante wants to give more recreational opportunities to all users, but as a mountain biking organization, SCoMBA would like to pursue mountain bike specific trails. He is interested in updating the management plan to include recreation in this already highly developed area that has an archery range, disc golf course, motocross track, and extensive trail network. SCoMBA is working with the Forest Service to improve six trails on Forest Service lands in 2022 and would like to be able to construct a new trail on County property, since there are less perceived barriers to doing so.

John Taylor was concerned about noxious weeds and the inability of the weed department to adequately address new trails without creating UTV tracks next to the trail for access. Mr. Taylor wants SCoMBA to consider a volunteer weed treatment activity, if this project were to move forward.

Todd Rankin brought up that there are already many other uses happening in the area, so this less than 1-mile trail would not be a major change. He supports mountain biking flow trails, but thinks that other user groups need to have resources dedicated to them as well and proposed a ration system for flow

and multi-use trail construction. Mr. Rankin would like to see the Management Plan for this property updated to reflect current and future uses.

Ben Ferrante emphasized that these mountain bike downhill trails are usually coupled with an uphill multi-use trails that caters to all users. Completing the loop and including all user groups is a priority for SCoMBA. OSAC members voiced concerns about increasing uphill mountain bike traffic on Sage, which will change the experience for other user groups. Mr. Ferrante invited the council and staff to the SCoMBA Open House on February 24<sup>th</sup> at Highside Brewing in Frisco.

OSAC recommended a revision and reassessment of the management plan as the first priority before developing any other trails on this property. Noxious weeds and wildlife habitat were also concerns from OSAC members, along with user conflict. This subject will be continued and discussed as an agenda item at the next meeting.

#### SPR-TV Power Line Alignment Amendment

Staff gave an overview of the project to date and the newly proposed alignment. SPR-TV is seeking an amendment to the 2105 Utility Easement to alter the alignment of a new power line on the upper section of Bald Mountain from the Iowa Mill to the Bald Mountain Transmitter Station. The original alignment of the line followed Baldy Road from Iowa Mill to the Transmitter Station. Due to geologic constraints and cost savings, SPR-TV is requesting to run the line on a more direct route over previously undisturbed Alpine Tundra, by passing the road. Staff is seeking recommendations and ideas to bring to SPR-TV in upcoming discussion of the amendment.

Cindy Ebbert and Paul Semmer added some additional history including the original NEPA approval from 2015 of the alignment along the road and the additional assessments that have happened since that time. In 2021, Forest Service Specialists assessed this proposed alignment and were ready to issue an approval. Due to the lack of communication and agreements between SPR-TV and the adjacent landowners, the Town of Breckenridge and Summit County, the Forest Service delayed granting an approval.

Paul Semmer and Jeff Zimmerman thought that the 100' wide corridor was too wide and that some fieldwork could identify a more exact route for the amendment. Mr. Zimmerman added that restoration above treeline takes a long time and will be difficult, but it can be done successfully with proper planning and implementation. Restoration is relevant to staff because SPR-TV has had trouble completing the restoration and revegetation on Phase I of the project and have resisted spending additional dollars on the revegetation.

Todd Rankin asked if there could be a trail use for the alignment if it did not go straight up the hill. The Forest Service recommends that SPR-TV be required to hire an environmental firm to engineer and design the restoration project. The Forest Service, Town and County should require bonds for the ground disturbance and restoration for a project of this scope. Without proper execution, this could result in an ugly scar on Bald Mountain. OSAC members agreed that the restoration effort needs to be done very carefully and a bond should be required for at least 20 years. We should be prepared for some public outcry if this proposed alignment is approved and SPR-TV should do some public outreach around this project.

Laura Rossetter suggested using some of the original alignment, if possible. Mr. Zimmerman reiterated that it is always preferable to work within the previously disturbed road. A hybrid alignment on the road with diversions around geological obstacles is a potentially feasible alternative. Restoration on Peak 6 at

Breckenridge Ski Area was successful due to constant monitoring and attention from trail crews. SPR-TV does not have the same resources for monitoring and follow up work. Requesting more geotechnical documentation for this site would be advisable moving forward to vet the need for this amended alignment. Overall, there is a lot of apprehension in the group for the proposed alignment.

OSAC recommends obtaining more detailed geotechnical documentation on the route, pursuit of a hybrid route using the roadbed where possible, and requiring a bond for restoration work if the alignment is approved.

### Quandary Shuttle and Parking Reservation Improvements

Katherine King gave an overview of the parking and reservation system implemented at Quandary Peak Trailhead in 2021 to address crowding and public safety issues and requested OSAC recommendations to bring to the BoCC for continuing this system.

Parking Reservations and Shuttle Ridership peaked on the weekends and holidays. In 2021, Quandary Peak saw a 46% decrease in user numbers and McCullough Gulch saw a 76% decrease from 2020. Satisfaction was high for the shuttle system due to it being free and low for parking reservation system due to cost and large fines for going over reservation times.

Staff recommendations included more frequent shuttle services at McCullough Gulch, more shuttles on peak times and days, as well as changes to the parking reservations system including adjustment of time slots and cost of reservations. The reservation platform also needs to be adapted for 2022. Improving overall access to McCullough Gulch is major priority of staff. Increasing communications and volunteer efforts at the trailhead were also included in the recommendations.

Peter Grosshuesch asked about costs associated with the program and if this money came from the Open Space Fund. Katherine King responded that there was a \$260,000+ deficit and that this money did come from the Open Space fund. Paul Semmer thinks this program sounds like a “money pit” and that focusing on Quandary is myopic. His recommendation was a countywide effort was to assess where potential users of Quandary and McCullough Gulch went as an alternative and how we can manage the problem holistically.

Laura Rossetter reiterated that management efforts will be important in the future and we need to save some financial resources for other areas. Ms. Rossetter asked about availability of reservations and if last minute parking was available for locals who could not plan and make reservations. Staff responded that most weekday afternoons had availability, but most residents were not aware of the availability. Staff recommended a full day reservation system with free parking in the afternoon (after 3pm). OSAC members supported this recommendation.

Turk Montepare called 2021 a “volcanic event” and thinks that some of the surge will subside in the future. While high level conversation is important, the purpose of this conversation is to gain concise and brief advice from OSAC on how to continue with this program and how to adjust the parking and shuttle for 2022. Katherine King noted that the BoCC realizes that this is not a sustainable expenditure. With about 12,000 riders, a round trip would cost \$25 per rider to break even. Turk Montepare recommended a \$10 fee to ride the shuttle round trip. Peter Grosshuesch would like to do an analysis to assess how the cost might affect the ridership, but agrees that a fee should be charged for the shuttle. CFI should be involved in this discussion and have some responsibility to help address the issues created by the marketing that they do to encourage visitation of fourteeners. In the past, CFI has not wanted to limit the number of users on Quandary Peak. OSAC would like CFI to give major contributions to this

effort. Ms. Rossetter supported a fee coupled with increased monitoring of the surrounding areas that are alternatives to Quandary and McCullough Gulch. Paul Semmer does not support any additional infrastructure at the trailhead. Todd Rankin supports a fee that will at least cover the costs and would like to see some free days to allow access to the Quandary Peak Trailhead for those who cannot afford the fee.

Cindy Ebbert was concerned about the proposed fee structure and the impacts to access for a large portion of the National Forest in the Upper Blue. Access to McCullough Gulch and the connected areas was a concern from the Forest Service.

John Uban would like to see the costs kept down so the locals can use the area. At \$25 per rider for the shuttle, a party of four would have a cheaper option in the parking reservation system. More parking in the area would be useful to relieve pressure on the area. OSAC should look at property acquisition in the area.

Laura Rossetter wants staff to weigh the pros and cons of a shuttle stop at Lower McCullough Gulch. Peter Grosshuesch reiterated that this is very expensive and we will continue to see demand go down as prices for access increase. Shuttle operators may not want to serve a declining ridership. Feeling out the elasticity of the demand and pricing will be essential as we move forward.

OSAC recommends \$20 fee for the shuttle. Concerns include free times for use, impacts on nearby areas, and other...

OSAC recommended continued parking fees at the trailhead and requested staff to work on an alternative parking reservation and fee structure. Staff will send these alternatives to the council in an email for consideration.

**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 7:53 pm. A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC leaves Executive Session at 8:29 p.m.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Turk thanked the outgoing OSAC members Jeff Leigh, Bruce Fitch, and Diane Hunt for their service. Staff will pursue a BoCC Resolution to recognize term-limited members who served for 12 years.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. Motion by Terry Craig, Second by John Uban.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jordan Mead*

Jordan Mead, Open Space and Trails Resource Specialist

