

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of March 1, 2023 Regular Meeting

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Meagan Graham, John Taylor, Turk Montepare, Jeff Zimmerman, John Uban, Peter Grosshuesch, Terry Craig, Robert Gregory, Paul Semmer

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Rossetter, Dave Bittner, Arthur Hardin

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

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, Gretchen Curlander – Ranch at Breckenridge Phase I Resident and HOA Representative

Call to Order: Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:31 p.m.

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

Approval of Minutes: Peter Grosshuesch made a motion to approve the February 2023 OSAC minutes, John Taylor seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items: No public comments.

Election of Officers:

John Taylor made a motion to reappoint Turk Montepare and Terry Craig as chair and vice-chair; Jeff Zimmerman seconded; the motion passed unanimously at 5:37 p.m.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Request to Rename “Spiral Staircase” Trail within Ranch at Breckenridge Phase I

Jessica Forsyth gave an overview of the request from RAB Phase I to rename the Spiral Staircase Trail including an overview of the applicable sections of the “Naming Criteria for Open Space and Trails.”

Gretchen Curlander from the Phase I HOA summarized their request to rename the trail to a more neutral sounding name to discourage overuse of the steep trail.

The Chair stated that he was not supportive of the rename and was confused by the request to discourage usage, since, for example, the Highlands Neighborhood in Breckenridge has more trail use and that neighborhood does not have complaints about trail users near homes. Staff underscored that the County is supportive of making it a pedestrian-only trail, which could help to reduce conflicts with bikes and pedestrians on the trail.

Additional discussion centered on keeping the Spiral Staircase name, particularly considering the naming criteria adopted by the BOCC which is resistant to changing the name of a trail once the name is bestowed. OSAC was supportive of a “compromise” to utilize different names for the new trails extending from the Spiral Staircase. Paul Semmer stated that the Spiral Staircase has been the name for decades and the name and reputation of the trail implies it is steep. Other members agreed and suggested that staff consider a management strategy that encourage ped-only usage. Staff discussed signage and other options to encourage

pedestrian-only use. The Chair added that the trail has been called the “Spiral Staircase” since 1985 as best as he could ascertain.

OSAC unanimously recommended that: Spiral Staircase remain the name, extensions from the trail utilize different names, and that staff work to make the trail ped-only.

Open Space Management:

Tenderfoot Meadows Management Plan

Jordan Mead gave an overview of the draft Tenderfoot Management Plan at the February OSAC meeting. Staff wanted to follow up about specific portions of the plan:

- Proposed Seasonal Wildlife Closure: Jordan Mead presented that the property contains resident herds and severe winter habitat range for deer and elk and the populations of these animals is declining south of I-70. This is one of the only south-facing meadows which provides this specific habitat for these populations. One of the goals in the master plan relates to balancing recreation with resource protection and a seasonal wildlife closure would speak to that goal.
 - The Chair and other members spoke in support of the wildlife closure. Paul Semmer stated that the herd historically roamed in the entire region into the Upper Blue and that due to development, the herd has been pinched into two smaller herds. He suggested the management plan incorporate some of this historic information and interjurisdictional measures concerning wildlife. A member wondered if the County could pursue a wildlife crossing in this area. Allison Mitchell responded that the Safe Passages group has ID'd high priority crossings.
- Criteria for new trails: Jordan Mead presented on the criteria for new trails as proposed in the plan (no impacts to wetlands, seasonal wildlife closure to apply to all trails / trail construction, ID user conflict, concurrent with improvements to access, compatible with current and future uses).
 - Paul Semmer suggested staff review the trail criteria for new trails in the Golden Horseshoe and emphasized analyzing capacity issues. Jeff Zimmerman provided input that proposed criteria is good, but suggested defining what “zero impact to wetlands” means in practice.
- Public Engagement: Jordan Mead presented the plan for the public engagement process, which will include public intercept surveys, public scoping and comment period, and one public open house.

OSAC was supportive of all topics as proposed by staff.

Update on Trailhead Improvements

Jordan Mead introduced a discussion about planned trailhead (TH) improvements.

- Laurium TH: Jordan Mead presented that the goal for this TH is to create an expanded and easier to maintain parking area, which would allow for up to 20 vehicles. Cost estimates are in the range of \$20K. The plan received unanimous support from BOSAC.
 - OSAC Discussion: The Chair was supportive of this improvement and stated that recently a lot came up for sale near the TH and that with this improvement we would not need to purchase a developable lot for TH parking. A member asked who will maintain the expanded parking and stressed that there should be clear management agreements and that snow storage should be taken into consideration – both for plowing and vehicle capacity. Peter Grosshuesch wondered if 20 might be too much for this area, and suggested the improvements could start with 10 spaces. He also suggested staff consider a trail behind the homes on the road to create a loop with Bankers Tank. Katherine King offered that the data on the existing use supports more than 10 vehicles and there are cost efficiencies to take into consideration.
- Browns Gulch TH: Jordan Mead presented that this is proposed as a new TH across from Muggins Gulch, adjacent to Reach A of the Swan River Restoration. The plan includes an informational kiosk

with interpretative signage. Staff stressed that the restoration is a resource created with nearly \$4 million in public funds and a next step is to provide public access. Additionally, vehicles are parking in this area, so a TH would formalize parking. BOSAC did not unanimously support.

- OSAC stressed the need for formalized trails. Paul Semmer summarized the BOSAC discussion as some members were hesitant to create more parking which would then allow more use. Mr. Semmer suggested that the County consider constructing a portal at this location and construct a more formal TH further to the east in the middle of the restoration project. Benefits could include a larger parking area parallel to Tiger Road, which would allow for easier maintenance and less tree removal, as well as allowing anglers to walk both up and down the river. Staff mentioned that the County is having issues with trailers parking on the road and expansion of parking on the side of the road could exacerbate the issue. Mr. Zimmerman was supportive of the proposal made by staff and supportive of removing the parking by Muggins Gulch and even considering an additional TH or portal. Mr. Gregory echoed these comments emphasized safety concerns crossing Tiger Road and recommended the parking on the north side of Tiger Road be removed. OSAC discussed that a considerable amount of public money went into the project and a management next-step is to consider formalized access.
 - OSAC was supportive of the proposal as outlined by staff and some members recommended that staff look into options including removing the parking on the north side of the road as well as consider another parking area upstream.

Overview of 2021 – 2022 Trail Counter Data Analysis

Allison Mitchell gave an update on the trail counters. Lily Pad Lake TH (from Wildernest), Willow Brook, and Horseshoe Dredge were the most popular THs in 2021-2022. OSAC emphasized that it is very important to capture the baseline data and is supportive of staff's efforts. Allison also updated the Council that staff has placed cameras at Miners Creek, Tiger Road, Boreas, and Lily Pad trailheads to gather baseline information about trailhead capacity.

OSAC Comments on Summary Report

- Paul Semmer commented there were typos in the Summary Report which were corrected by staff.
- Concerning the East Blue River wildfire mitigation project, at the time the USFS had not adopted its Travel Management Plan and the USFS had not recognized the trails as resources to protect. Paul Semmer suggested that the partners should work on which trails to protect and which to obliterate.

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 7:26 p.m. A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC left Executive Session at 8:09 p.m.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Forsyth

Jessica Forsyth, Open Space and Trails Senior Resource Specialist