

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

May 5, 2021
Meeting Held by Zoom Conference

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Rankin, Diane Hunt, Laura Rossetter, Terry Craig, Turk Montepare, John Uban, Paul Semmer, Bruce Fitch, Peter Grosshuesch

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Leigh

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Curnutte, Brian Lorch, Jordan Mead, Allison Mitchell, Christine Zenel

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Anne Lowe – Town of Breckenridge, Pete Swenson – Town of Frisco, Anna Bengtson – USFS, John Taylor, Art Hardin, Mark Leidal

Call to Order: Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Public Comments not included on the Agenda: No public comments.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Discussion of Open Space Management Activities:

Piney Acres Trail:

In partnership with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, OST plans to construct the Piney Acres Trail this summer to create access in Dillon Valley from Little Beaver Road to Piney Acres Road. Staff are considering additional trail connections with the Town of Dillon and US Forest Service, and working to solidify partnerships and proposals.

Mine Cleanup Projects:

On May 4, OST staff and the EPA presented two mine cleanups scheduled for this summer to the BOCC, involving the Illinois Gulch and Manila Lode. After the completion of both projects, the anticipated future land use is green space.

- **Illinois Gulch:** The EPA will construct an access road, place the upper Illinois Gulch stream in a pipe, plug the puzzle extension shaft, re-work the waste pile and drainage, and determine future needs for the five adjacent properties that exhibited elevated levels of lead in their soils. After the work is completed, the EPA will evaluate the need for water treatment, design and install the water treatment system, and assess the need for underground work. We anticipate future conversations regarding ownership of the properties at the Illinois Gulch site, including working with the EPA and current owners to create an endowment for future maintenance needs.
- **Manila Lode-** Staff are finalizing details related to access and liability for the Manila Lode cleanup. This summer, the EPA will lead and fund the removal project to divert adit discharge into a lined channel from Toledo Tunnel, re-work and consolidate the waste pile, remove waste from the adjacent property, and install a cover with proper drainage controls. Summit County is finalizing contractual details to accept ownership of the Manila Lode following the successful cleanup.

Quandary Peak Visitor Use Planning:

Staff presented the initial finding from the OTAK consulting group about the Quandary Peak, Blue Lakes, and McCullough Gulch parking lot and capacity project.

- From August to September 2020, OTAK collected over 500 intercept surveys to gauge visitor experience. A majority of survey respondents were non-Summit County residents. Results demonstrated that visitors have a positive overall experience and do not think crowding is a concern. On the other hand, roughly 30 residents who responded are frustrated with capacity issues and view the congestion as a nuisance. OTAK believes that visitors do not see parking as an issue because there is a perceived availability of parking, as visitors are parking along Highway 9 and in front of no parking signs.
- TRAFx trail counters were deployed during the summer and use significantly increased in 2020. The counters showed a large increase during weekdays, and use on the weekends was roughly double the weekday use.
- OTAK recently closed an online public survey to gauge support for potential management solutions. Roughly 90% of respondents were Colorado residents, and preliminary results demonstrated support for the least intrusive management options involving education and outreach as well as increased enforcement. Respondents disliked solutions involving permits, parking reservations, and a mandatory shuttle.
- Staff stated that a first step in this Adaptive Management Strategy is to retain the core group of management entities to meet regularly to discuss management options. The success of strategies would be evaluated and adapted through additional user surveys, trail data, and education programs.
- A question was asked if there is a correlation between parking and trail capacity. In other words, when is the trail getting overused? It was recommended that a threshold be created that would trigger trail improvements or other management strategies.
- A comment was made that even if the trail can handle the current levels of use, there are a lot of visitors wandering off trail and negatively impacting the vegetation and wildlife communities. We also need to be aware of the trash situation.
- A comment was made that Summit County needs maintain leadership in determining what experience we provide to visitors. The county needs to prepare for the “next Quandary” at a different location.
- A recommendation was made that the County should begin enforcement this spring to ticket or tow any vehicles parked along Highway 9 or in front of the no parking signs. Staff stated that the Sheriff Department did begin ticketing and towing this winter at a variety of trailheads. Staff will work this summer to identify parking lot capacities and constraints at all Summit County trailheads.

Wetland Mitigation and TDR's:

Staff is working on two separate Requests for Proposals to engage a wetland contractor:

- The first project will identify OS properties that are over 50% “High Value” wetland sites that would make the property eligible to be entered into the Upper Blue Transferable Development Rights program.
- The second project will identify all OS properties where it might be feasible to undertake wetland mitigation to meet US Army Corps of Engineers requirements and foster the County’s “no net loss” policy. Over the past 20 years, Summit County has ensured wetlands are preserved within County boundaries with the establishment of a no net loss policy. However due to recent policy and leadership changes, the Army Corps of Engineers now prefers to use mitigation banks or in lieu fee programs, rather than promoting on-site wetland. This change is threatening the no net loss policy. Unless Summit County can establish wetland mitigation options within the County, the Army Corps of Engineers will direct people to mitigate wetland loss outside of Summit County.
 - Staff is currently working with the National Forest Foundation to coordinate an in-lieu fee program. A Request for Proposal will be issued to identify sites on County-owned land that can be entered into the program.
 - Currently, staff is working with the National Forest Foundation (NFF) to propose potential wetland mitigation sites within the Swan River Restoration project area.

Staff have two upcoming meetings scheduled with the BOCC:

- May 18: Presentation of the Draft strategies for the Quandary Peak, Blue Lakes, and McCullough Gulch interagency effort to address parking and capacity challenges.
- June 1: Update on the Swan River Restoration Project. Staff received a near-final design of the next phase of the restoration project, which will be built this summer. Staff has notified the public/residents up Tiger Road regarding this on project update, as they do annually.
- June 1: Staff will present revisions to the Dillon Reservoir regulations, primarily focused on clarifying the rules regarding body contact with the water.

Open Space and Trails Master Plan:

Staff conducted a pre-proposal Zoom meeting on April 27 to inform potential contractors on the scope of work for the Master Plan project and answer any questions. All Request for Proposals are due Thursday, May 6 at 5:00pm. The bid opening is scheduled for Friday, May 7 at 9:00am over Zoom. If OSAC members would like to help review proposals, please contact Christine Zenel.

Open Space Forest Management Activities:

See Summary Report.

Discussion of Recpath Management:

All sections of the Rec Path are now open for the 2021 season. The Road & Bridge Department plowed the Recpath during the week of April 26 and will finish sweeping this week. Portions of Vail Pass continue to have ice and snow, so users are advised to be cautious in these sections until it melts. This year, avalanche activity in Tenmile Canyon was negligible, so there is no reported damage or downed trees.

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. A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC leaves Executive Session at 7:28 p.m.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Lorch

Brian Lorch, Open Space and Trails Director