

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
May 5, 2022
Zoom Video Conference**

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1	Howie Mallory Dist. 2	Amy Barrow Dist. 3	Michael Kinsley Dist. 4, Chair	Wayne Ives Dist. 5 Not Present
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Staff Present: Gary Tennenbaum, Jessie Young, Carly Klein Janet Urquhart, Paul Holsinger, Kim Arensdorf, Dale Will, Drew Walters, Leslie Lamont, Richard Neiley

Others Present: Suzanne Stephens, Dave Erickson, Jeff Davlyn, Sarah Doran, Glen Horn

Media Present: Scott Condon, The Aspen Times, Andre Salvail, Aspen Daily News

Michael Kinsley called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Graeme Means moved for the OSTB to approve the amended 04/05/2022 OSTB Regular & OSTB/BOCC Joint Executive Draft Minutes, and 04/19/2022 OSTB & BOCC Joint Executive Draft Minutes. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Aspen Valley Land Trust (AVLT) Strategic Plan

Suzanne Stevens and Dave Erickson provided details on AVLT's recently completed Strategic Conservation Plan. The need for a conservation plan ensures that AVLT is effective by prioritizing the following:

- A Vision for the Future: Creating a vision for success over the next 10 years that highlights the importance of private land conservation and connecting communities to nature.
- Landscape-Scale Conservation: Using a science-based approach that combines data with partner expertise to select projects with a focus on increasing climate resilience.
- Community-Driven Conservation: Identifying how to solve problems and addressing community needs. The importance of including equity and diversity.
- Strong Partnerships: Fostering collaborations with local nonprofits, governments, and land management agencies.

Erickson explained that AVLT's services area includes National Forest, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Local/State public lands and private land. This service area protects over 45k acres of riparian areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

Erickson provided some community conservation highlights including the Silt River Preserve, Red Hill Recreation area, Coffman Ranch, Redstone Coke Ovens, Chapin Wright Marble Basecamp and North Star Nature Preserve.

Erickson explained that the Conservation Plan process involved working with the community and partners to evaluate and implement solutions for climate change and biodiversity loss. Community engagement included focus groups, online/mailed surveys, public listening sessions and individual interviews. Targeted discussions were conducted to serve the needs of the community and align municipality comprehensive plans. Key themes of the discussion were as follows:

- Protect agricultural land and wildlife habitat
- Promote climate resilience and biodiversity by reducing carbon, and promoting stewardship
- Concern about affordable housing
 - Importance of thoughtful land planning
- Preserving community character
- Expand community-conservation
- Reduce barriers and advance equity
- Create connection to place

Stephens commented that concern with density and keeping community character can be addressed by integrating the Plan and public input to create smart growth and green infrastructure. Gary Tennenbaum expressed the need for adaptive planning.

Stephens stressed the importance of equity and access, explaining that programs and groups can help provide the public with connection to the place they live. Tennenbaum noted that a Diversity Coordinator shared position was created to assist OST and AVLTL in working with these groups.

Erickson explained that AVLTL's Individual Priority Analysis uses data on wildlife habitat connectivity (deer and elk), riparian and wetland areas, agricultural lands, and biodiversity to map out conservation priorities in AVLTL's services area.

Erickson provided the Conservation Plan 10 year goals:

- Open Space: Protect greenbelts between towns to preserve scenic values and community identity.
- Habitat: Protect natural landscapes and habitat corridors to preserve biodiversity and the ability to adapt to climate change.
- Working Lands: Help maintain local food production and rural character.
- Climate Resilience: Ensure that natural and human communities can mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Water: Preserve and restore wetlands and riparian areas to protect water quality.
- Equity: Expand outdoor access for communities with the highest need.
- Connection: Provide recreational and educational opportunities for local residence.

Erickson explained that the project selection approach determines first the priority and location of projects, second the challenges of the project, and finally how the project will be implemented. Additionally, evaluating the goal of connection, conservation, pinch points, overall landscape and future efforts.

Stephens explained that moving forward AVLТ would like to elevate partnerships, enhance data tools to value biodiversity, climate change and sustainable agriculture.

Graeme Means asked about the funding for the project and how AVLТ has coordinated with the Watershed Biodiversity Initiative (WBI). Erickson explained that AVLТ focuses on private land, whereas WBI shows integrated lands. He noted that WBI and AVLТ have been very involved throughout the project. Stephens explained that 25k was provided by Pitkin County, as well as grants and private funding.

Howie Mallory commended AVLТ on the Plan. AVLТ covers more land than just in Aspen Valley, which is great to go outside boundaries, he said.

Dale Will noted that staff rapport with OST and AVLТ is extending capacity for these projects.

Amy Barrow applauded the community outreach and involvement as it helps expand outside of Pitkin County and get input from the whole community.

Tennenbaum stated that the AVLТ Conservation Plan will be brought back to the Board in a joint meeting with the BOCC.

Memorandum of Understanding with Colorado State University (CSU) for Extension Services

Paul Holsinger stated that OST staff began exploring the option of partnering with CSU Extension to supplement the cost of the new Agriculture Specialist position. He noted that CSU is not currently assisting with funding for the position, however the extension services will provide the County leasees and citizens access to labs and specialists at CSU that the County otherwise would have had to pay for.

Drew Walters noted interest in the position as it provides a dual role with Agriculture Specialist and Extension Agent. Having access to the extension network is a huge benefit for leasees and the County, he said. Additionally, the Extension Service benefits include youth development, afterschool programing, family consumer science, horticulture and food safety.

Walters commented on the highly pathogenic avian influenza that popped up at a residential property Pitkin County. Having access to the first response information and network services for this case is a good example of the resource benefits.

Michael Kinsley asked if there is anything the County does that can be tapped into CSU for assistance. Walters gave the example that assistance can be provided to the public with food safety.

Barrow stated that the extension service is a wealth of information and benefits it can provide to the community.

Means asked if private property owners can utilize the Extension Service for soil sampling. Yes, Walters said.

Board action below.

Land Use Referral – Turnabout Ranch

Tennenbaum stated that OST has been in conversations with Sarah Doran, owner of Turnabout Ranch, in regards to conservation efforts on the ranch. The property was subdivided in 2001 to create 11 Lots encompassing 64 acres and the remaining 398 acres were subdivided into 2 large Open Space parcels restricted to “agricultural ranching, recreational and open space use improvements”. Restoration efforts will need to take place as a result from the previous cattle operations, he said.

Tennenbaum explained that in 2016, OST worked with the landowner to subdivide a portion of the property along Prince Creek Road and dedicate a trail easement, which was never formally finalized. OST staff met with the landowner and their representatives to discuss options to amend the location of the trail. Staff recommend the boundary of the Prince Creek Open Space and Turnabout ranch be amended to reflect the forthcoming agreements between OST and the landowner.

Tennenbaum explained that the applicant is looking to vacate Subdivision Lots 3, 5 7, 8 and 9 and subdivide Open Space Parcel A into two open space parcels; Open Space Parcel A and Open Space Parcel C. The applicant is proposing to put a conservation easement on the property. Additionally, the applicant is looking to acquire two Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) as visually constrained lots, a new barn and redevelopment of the existing employee dwelling.

Sarah Doran explained that the property sits on the east side of Prince Creek Road. She noted that the parcel with the proposed conservation easement is adjacent to BLM and is crucial winter range for deer and elk. Restoration efforts will be made to address weed mitigation and enhance wildlife habitat, she said. The plan for the property is to create a horse therapy ranch. The barn and horse facility is proposed to be placed next to a bluff with tree plantings to reduce visual impacts. Glen Horn stated that all existing lots are entitled to put 7,500 sq. ft. residential homes. The applicant is proposing to remove the barn from its current location and build a new barn on lots 7, 8, & 9, with no residential development, he said. For the award of a TDR lots 3 & 5 are proposed to be sterilized, he said. Doran noted that the barn size could potentially be downsized, however the riding arena would need to be the size proposed.

Barrow asked about the proposed landscape activity envelope. Horn explained that the area is planned for revegetation and restoration.

Tennenbaum noted that staff recommends to expand the conservation easement, fence mitigation for wildlife, and amend the location of Prince Creek Trail and finalize the easement.

Leslie Lamont stated that Planning and Zoning is working to set up a site tour. The Board recommended a separate site visit.

Board action below.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

Holsinger provided an update to the Highland Bavarian Lodge and Ranch land use application. He noted that the BOCC was aligned on the OSTB referral comments. The applicant wasn't ready to commit to extending the conservation easement, he said. The application will be going back to the BOCC where they will continue to push for a trail for visual access and extension of the conservation easement.

Dale Will congratulated Gary Tennenbaum on 20 years with the Open Space and Trails.

Kinsley asked about the summary follow up to the OSTB retreat. Tennenbaum stated that staff has met with the partners to review the summary and implementation schedule. This summer staff is planning for a user survey, collect current data, and prioritize locations.

Mallory commended the ebike map/outreach. He asked if speed limit signage will be placed on trails. Tennenbaum stated that the Rio Grande Trail max speed is 20 mph and only allows for Class 1 ebikes. RFID chips will be installed on all rental bikes which can check speed.

Means recommended that the Board take advantage of the Soldner property tour as it is a great addition to culture in Aspen.

Barrow thanked Graeme Means, Howie Mallory and Dale Will for work on the Hunter Creek project.

BOARD ACTION

Memorandum of Understanding with Colorado State University (CSU) for Extension Services

Howie Mallory motioned to recommend that the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners approve the Colorado State University Extension Memorandum of Understanding with Pitkin County. Graeme Means seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Land Use Referral – Turnabout Ranch

Graeme Means motioned to approve the referral comments for the Turnabout Ranch Land Use Referral Application, with the opportunity to add comments pending the site visit. Howie Mallory seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Moore Open Space Master Plan

Howie Mallory motioned to recommend to the BOCC the \$10m acquisition within which \$1m can be put in escrow to secure the eventual inclusion of the 42.94 acres of the Moore property. Amy Barrow seconded. Graeme Means opposed. Motion passed (3-1).

ADJOURN

The OSTB meeting of May 5, 2022 adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Approved:

Michael Kinsley

Michael Kinsley, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:

Kim Arensdorf

Kimberly Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist

2022.05.05 OSTB Regular Minutes_Aproved

Final Audit Report

2022-06-09

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