

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
October 06, 2022
Zoom Video Conference

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1 Not Present	Howie Mallory Dist. 2	Amy Barrow Dist. 3	Michael Kinsley Dist. 4 Not Present	Wayne Ives Dist. 5, Chair
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Staff Present: Gary Tennenbaum, Jessie Young, Carly Klein Liza Mitchell, Janet Urquhart, Paul Holsinger, Kim Arensdorf, Ted O'Brien, Rick Norman, Drew Walters, Richard Neiley

Others Present: Chris Petersen

Wayne Ives called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Amy Barrow motioned for the OSTB to approve the amended 09/06/2022 OSTB & BOCC Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (3-0).

Open Space and Trails 2023 Budget

Gary Tennenbaum stated that the Open Space and Trails 2023 budget will be recommended for approval from the OSTB on October 20, with the BOCC to review on November 1, 2022. For today's meeting the Board will review large maintenance items as well as staff's capacity for management plan projects, he said.

Tennenbaum noted that the recreation management study had a successful 95% response rate. The study will be expanded in 2023, focusing on the Valley's high-use trailheads. He stated that there has been a great coalition of land managers thus far, and staff is currently applying for grant funding assistance in order to take Pitkin County out for the facilitator role. The natural resource data collected from the Watershed Biodiversity Initiative (WBI) will be included in the study, Tennenbaum said.

Tennenbaum commented that staff is planning to host a joint board meeting with Aspen Valley Land Trust (AVLT) in November. The joint meeting will discuss what areas to focus on conserving over the next 5-10 years, and will require direction from the Board. Items to discuss will include landscape style conservation, strategic placement of housing, and working towards seamless boundaries.

Tennenbaum noted that Pitkin County will be reviewing the growth management process in 2023, with OSTB involved in the process.

Tennenbaum provided the OST property chart which shows 22,799 total conserved acres, and 86.3 total trail miles. He noted that the recent Conservation Easement (CE) acquisition utilized tax credits, which is a great way to leverage funds for conservation.

Tennenbaum provided the OST fund balance projections depicting approx. \$13.8m in property tax revenue for 2023. He noted that the \$24m from the bond issuance increased the programs capacity. Wayne Ives asked what is all included in the Administrative fund balance projections. Tennenbaum explained that items included are salaries (with the exception of maintenance staff and acquisition staff), cost accounting, communications and outreach.

Tennenbaum stated that the 2023 and five year plan accommodates an increase in salaries in order for Pitkin County to stay competitive in the current market. Howie Mallory asked about the increase in the OST projects. Tennenbaum explained that most of the OST fund is allocated to Acquisitions/Capitol Improvements, and that projects have increased due to more lands being acquired.

Tennenbaum explained that in 2023 staff is requesting to add an additional full-time ranger to address staff capacity. Rick Norman stated that in the winter the ranger programs is struggling to cover with only 3 rangers, along with accommodating administrative work and vacation time. Norman noted that it is hard to find seasonal employees with the current employment issues, and that year-round positions are easier to fill. During the busy summer season the North Star Nature Preserve requires high coverage, an addition of another ranger would help assist with that location and allow more coverage at other OST properties. Norman stated that there is a significant increase in special events and outreach requests, therefore adding another ranger would help support and reduce burnout with current staff. Tennenbaum noted that the Wildwood land exchange will help with seamless management of North Star. Howie Mallory asked about the ranger's role for Nordic operations. Norman explained that the rangers prioritize the busiest spots, focusing mainly on Moore and the RGT. The OSTB provided support for the additional ranger position.

Tennenbaum provided the OST organization chart, noting that staff will be expanding due to the new ranger position and additional restoration efforts under Maintenance. He noted that there has been a large growth in the valley which has hit the recreation hot spots.

Chris Petersen, Nordic Coordinator for the City of Aspen, stated that Nordic skiing increased significantly in 2020 and numbers have stayed high. The City has needed to increase wages in order to stay competitive. Petersen explained that the capital expenditures have increased due to replacing the down-valley snowcat, costing approx. \$260k. Tennenbaum noted that the current down-valley snowcat will be donated to the Mount Sopris Nordic Council. Mallory recommended utilizing an electric snowcat as a long-term objective.

Jessie Young noted that the Planning and Outreach staff has been working to check off management plan action items, while strategically planning the needs for recently acquired lands. She provided the management plans and other planning initiatives that include:

- Redstone area management plans: Filoha/Wildin/Grange Loadout, and Coke Ovens
- Recreation Capacity and Management Study: Staff seeking CPW Coalition Grant to facilitate a regional collaborative
- Wildlife Connectivity: Local group is being formed under WBI

Ives asked what OST's role will be with the wildlife connectivity group. Tennenbaum explained that OST would partner with the group assisting with a feasibility study, however would not be the facilitator.

Young provided the notable implementation (planning/design) projects proposed for 2023:

- Brush Creek Park and Ride (BCPR) to Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC) trail feasibility and public process
- Pitkin County contribution to the City of Aspen for the Maroon Creek Multi-Use Trail
- Wildwood Land Exchange: Work with the Forest Service on exchange to improve management
- Emma Town Site implementation
- RGT Interpretation Plan
- Penny Hot Springs pullout organization, river access and bank stabilization
- Glassier Management Plan actions: Renovations to Glassier House, applying for state historic grant funding
- RGT Node Plan & trailhead improvements (planning): Construction moved to 2024

Young stated that the construction management/capital improvement projects include:

- Gerbazdale/Aspen Village Bridge connection (potentially named Delores Stutsman Bridge): Re-budgeted due to new SGM estimate
- Penny Hot Springs restoration construction: Reserving \$25k for additional planning/design. Potential 2023 supplemental once costs/direction is determined

Young provided the outreach and education budget:

- Annual costs: General outreach, interpretive signage, ACES & RFC partnerships, CPW Wildlives campaign
- Revamp of Pitkin Outside website and app transition

Mallory asked for examples of the improvements to the Pitkin Outside website. Young explained that currently Pitkin Outside is a website and app, staff has determined to phase out the app and recommend COTREX free app due to better functionality. Additionally, a layer will be added to the website where people can click on specific Open Space properties values and natural resource information will be incorporated.

Liza Mitchell explained that the natural resource management is organized through phases including planning/administration, implementation and aftercare. 2023 notable projects include:

- Annual costs: Ecological on-call consulting, data management, management plan recommendations & review, stewardship, targeted weed treatments, progress reports for restoration projects
- Forest Health Planning: Study delineating treatment boundaries and methods for priority
- Thompson Creek OS Enhancement
- Restoration Aftercare at Filoha Meadows, Lazy Glen OS, Crystal Streambank, and Sky Mountain Park
- Forest Health and Biodiversity Partnerships: Partnerships with City of Aspen, landscape projects with Roaring Fork Wildfire Collaborative, and Contributions to USFS to help with prescribed fire and habitat improvement projects
- Forest Treatments on OST Properties
- North Star Fen, Aquatic Life, Avian, and Vegetation Monitoring
- Aspen Global Climate Institute (ACGI) Soil Monitoring
- Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers (RFOV) Projects

Mallory asked about bighorn sheep with regards to restoration projects. Mitchell explained that the bighorn sheep is referenced under the Forest Treatments project. She stated that there is bighorn sheep critical habitat across from Penny Hot Springs, with pinon and juniper trees encroaching onto the meadow. The benefit to bighorn sheep mastication is to improve sightlines and for forage quality, she said.

Ives commented that the budget allocated to restoration projects helps the goals of the Biodiversity Policy.

Ted O'Brien stated that the maintenance staff has been catching up on large deferred projects, and bridge improvements. He noted that the maintenance fund will be below 30% of the overall OST fund. The RGT capital improvement project construction has moved to 2024, he said.

Maintenance 2023 budgeted projects include:

- Annual Costs: Crack sealing, noxious weed control, Glassier, Redstone and Elk Park maintenance, tree care and hazardous tree removal, portable bathroom maintenance, signage
- Deer Creek Green House Renovations: Potential solar instillation and landscaping
- Wildin Housing Renovations (planning/design options) and Maintenance
- Nancy's Path to Glassier Connection
- 10th Mountain Bridge on Hunter Creek: To be grant funded
- RGT Soft Surface Maintenance
- RFOV Trail Projects

Paul Holsinger commented that since hiring Drew Walters as the Agriculture Specialist he has been able to focus more on Conservation Easements. Staff has also been able to move forward on deferred projects, he said. Annual costs for the 2023 budget include general maintenance, ditch dues, water contracts, etc.

Drew Walters stated that the Colorado State University (CSU) extension services is currently focused on consultant work. He stated that for the upcoming year staff will utilize the

programs/workshops provided by the extension services. Potential workshops include pesticide application, pruning, and gardening for Spanish speaking workshop. Walters noted that most of the workshops offered are discounted or free to the public. Additionally, Walters is looking to initiate a program for new and experienced farmers to offer budget and operational management techniques.

Walters provided the 2023 budgeted projects for Agriculture and Conservation Easements:

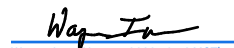
- Cramer Ditch Improvements (carry forward of 2022 budget)
- Coke Ovens OS Irrigation and Ditch Improvements
- Deer Creek Fencing
- Emma OS Pasture/Irrigation Improvements
- Wheatley OS Irrigation Improvements
- Thompson Creek Triangle Irrigation System
- Thompson Divide Ranch Cross Fencing
- Glassier Irrigation Improvements

Mallory asked if there are any water rights issues. No, Holsinger said, however staff is doing legal due diligence on Emma OS.

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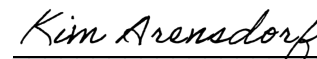
The OSTB meeting of October 6, 2022 adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Approved:


Wayne Ives (Nov 17, 2022 18:46 MST)

Wayne Ives, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:



Kimberly Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist

2022.10.06 OSTB Regular Minutes_Aproved

Final Audit Report

2022-11-18

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