

**MINUTES**  
**OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**September 5, 2023**  
**530 East Main St. Aspen, CO 81611**  
**Zoom Video Conference**

**OSTB Present:**

|                                |                          |                       |                            |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Graeme Means<br>Dist. 1, Chair | Howie Mallory<br>Dist. 2 | Amy Barrow<br>Dist. 3 | Michael Kinsley<br>Dist. 4 | Wayne Ives<br>Dist. 5<br>Not Present |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|

**Staff Present:** Gary Tennenbaum, Dale Will, Kim Arensdorf, Janet Urquhart, Jessie Young, Carly O'Connell, Paul Holsinger, Drew Walters, Liza Mitchell, Rich Englehart

**Others Present:** Matt Annabel, Racheal Bachman, Slone Shumaker, Paul Perry, John Armstrong, August Teague

Graeme Means called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Michael Kinsley motioned for the OSTB to approve the 08/03/2023 OSTB Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes as amended. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

***Emma Farms Trail Easement***

Paul Holsinger explained that staff have identified a more desirable trail alignment for Glassier to Nancy's Path that necessitates an amendment to the existing Emma Farms trail easement. Holsinger stated that The Glassier Open Space Management Plan was amended in 2020 and included an action item to move forward with the Glassier to Nancy's Path connection. Staff found a preferred alignment and crossing of Home Supply Ditch that would be more beneficial for the property and user experience. He noted that the trail will be for equestrian and pedestrian use only.

Graeme Means asked if the trail alignment would have any impact on wildlife. Holsinger stated that the new alignment is along an existing trail platform. Gary Tennenbaum stated that to protect wildlife there will be a winter trail closure from December 1- April 30.

Amy Barrow commented that the new trail alignment is preferred and recommended approval.

*Board action below.*

***Mount Sopris Nordic Council***

Tennenbaum commented that the OSTB previously met with the Mount Sopris Nordic Council (MSNC) and approved an increase in OST's annual maintenance contribution to \$25k. Today the OSTB will review potential funding for trail capital improvements at Spring Gulch, he said.

Racheal Bachman, MSNC Executive Director, explained that Spring Gulch is the primary cross-country ski area serving the lower Roaring Fork Valley. The MSNC is ready to take steps forward to professionalize Spring Gulch operations and better serve local skiers. However, impacts of climate change including; variable snowpack, mid-winter melt-out, an unreliable base area, and drought damaged vegetation are among the challenges Spring Gulch faces. Additionally, the infrastructure providing a foundation for grooming operations has fallen into disrepair, she said.

Bachman explained that the proposed improvements to address issues and enhance the ski area and user experience include:

- North Parking Lot Installation
  - Improve access to areas where snow is held longer throughout the season
  - Addresses overflow issues frequently seen on N. Thompson Creek Rd
  - Completion of the parking lot will take place in mid-September, ahead of the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline required by Colorado Parks & Wildlife.
- Northeast Trail Extension
  - Build a new high-elevation trail paralleling Finlandia Trail
  - Will include boulder and hazardous tree removal
- Practice Field Installation
  - Utilized by 150 local youth and Colorado Mountain College adult education programs
- System-Wide Trail Improvements
  - Re-work a corner on the new Tipple Trail that posed safety concerns for skiers
  - Unc's Corner safety improvements
- Vegetation Management & Restoration
  - Address obtrusive boulders, improve drainage, address overgrowth, re-grade surfaces, and increase natural shading
  - Strategic removal of dead, diseased, and declining vegetation
  - Healthy restoration can be promoted while ensuring the safety of skiers and the integrity of the broader ecosystem
  - MSNC Staff consulted with OST staff for recommendations for long-term forest health and improving wildlife habitat
- Grooming Operations Facility Enhancement
  - New garage doors
  - Improved insulation and sealing
  - Drainage work
- Grooming Equipment & Operations Upgrades

August Teague added that Aspen Valley Ski Club utilizes the amenities at Spring Gulch. Additionally, the youth programs provide transportation from Crystal River Middle School.

Michael Kinsley asked if in the future trails could be extended to higher elevations. Matt Annabel explained that staff looked at incorporating trails along Aspen Gulch railroad grades, however there were safety and access concerns. He noted that staff could look at a potential Nordic trail connection between Sunlight Mountain and Spring Gulch in the future.

Means asked what the long-term nature of the easements are at Spring Gulch. Matt Annabel explained that the North Thompson Cattleman's Association owns the majority of the ski area and is conserved under the Jerome Park Conservation Easement. He stated that the northeast corner of the property is owned by Crystal River Ranch. Bachman noted that the only Rafter T Trail not covered by the Conservation Easement. Howie Mallory noted that Pitkin County already grooms Nordic trails on areas that do not have conservation easements, such as Owl Creek, therefore there is a reasonable risk.

Bachman thanked OST for its continued support and consideration of \$250k in funding for the capital improvements to Spring Gulch.

Mallory commented that Spring Gulch is a great organically made Nordic ski area that is shared by multiple counties. He recommended getting more support from other municipalities. Tennenbaum noted that there is a large component of Pitkin County residence up the Crystal Valley, and OST already funds the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Operations annually. Bachman stated that 50% of MSNC annual income is from donations/fundraisers, and they receive an annual grant from Carbondale. Additionally, MSNC is looking to widen their reach for funding support, she said. Tennenbaum clarified that the \$250k contribution would be 1/3 of the costs for MSNC's capital improvement project and the remaining funding will be raised by MSNC through other means.

Kinsley suggested that the Board approve the \$250k today as a placeholder, but to review the funding details during the OST 2024 budget review.

The OSTB will review the capital improvement funding during the budget discussion in October.

## **BOARD ACTION**

### ***Emma Farms Trail Easement Amendment***

Michael Kinsley recommended that the BOCC approve of the amendment to the Emma Farms Trail Easement. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

### ***Wyoming USMS 4190 Mining Claim Donation***

Amy Barrow motioned that Open Space and Trails accept the Wyoming USMS 4190 Mining Claim donation. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motioned passed (3-0).

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION I**

Amy Barrow motioned for the Open Space and Trails Board to enter into executive session with the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Property Interest Acquisitions CRS 246402(4)(a); Negotiations CRS 246402 (4)(e); and Legal Advice CRS 246402 (4)(b) for the

purpose of providing instruction to negotiators and discussing property interest acquisition at 10:32 a.m. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (4-0). Howie Mallory did not attend the executive session.

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**JOINT OSTB – BOCC WORK SESSION**  
**Commissioners Meeting Room; 530 E. Main St., Aspen**

**OSTB Trustees Present:** Graeme Means, Chair, Michael Kinsley, Amy Barrow, Howie Mallory

**BOCC Present:** Francie Jacober (Chair), Patti Clapper, Greg Poschman, Kelly McNicholas Kury, Steve Child

**Staff Present:** Gary Tennenbaum, Kim Arensdorf, Paul Holsinger, Drew Walters, Liza Mitchell, Jessie Young, Carly O’Connell, Dale Will, Janet Urquhart, Richard Neiley

**Others Present:** Suzannah Reid

**Media Present:** Grassroots TV, Josie Taris – The Aspen Times

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Francie Jacober called the joint work session to order at 12:19 p.m.

The entire joint work session meeting video is available from this link by selecting the meeting date: <https://pitkincounty.ompnetwork.org/embed/sessions/276286/bocc-work-session-09-05-2023>

***Glassier House***

Jessie Young stated that the Glassier Open Space Management Plan included an action item to rehabilitate the historic Glassier Farmstead structures. OST is pursuing a grant from the State Historic Fund to offset the county’s costs in rehabilitating the Glassier House. She commented that if the boards are supportive of the grant application and the budgetary implications, OST staff will return to BOCC’s regular meeting with an informal resolution supporting the grant application and committing to the matching funds for the exterior rehabilitation of the Glassier Open Space.

Suzannah Reid explained that the scope of work under this application is focused on the shell of the building. It includes the demolition of the two small additions which were completed in the 1950s, as they are structurally unsound. The State Historic Fund will grant up to \$250,000 toward the project budget. The County will need to provide a minimum of 25% matching funds. Based on the current estimates the county will be committing to approximately \$180,000 which is 42% matching funds. Young noted that staff is working currently to get more updated bid numbers. Holsinger explained that Eagle County is budgeting \$200k to contribute to this project.

Kinsley asked if the surrounding trees will be preserved. Tennenbaum stated that staff has worked with Aspen Tree Service to preserve the trees.

Means asked if the house foundation is in good shape. Reid stated that when the mason looked at the foundation 3 years ago it was found to be in good shape and needed repairs are included in the budget.

Holsinger explained that the barn will be included in a future ask for rehabilitation. Tennenbaum explained that rehabilitating this homestead will take significant funding, therefore staff is working on it in stages and will hopefully get historic grants along the way.

### ***Colorado River Basin Outstanding Waters Coalition (CRBOWC)***

Liza Mitchell stated that OST staff received a letter from the Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) regarding the State of Colorado's "Outstanding Waters" program. She explained that RFC is here today to update members of both boards on the current process of seeking designation for four stream reaches within Pitkin County, and determine if the Boards would like to submit a letter of support to the water quality support division.

Chad Rudow, RFC's Water Quality Program Manager, explained that Outstanding Waters (OW) is a designation awarded to water bodies with high water quality and exceptional recreational, ecological or conservation significance that are deemed worthy of increased water quality protections by the State of Colorado.

Rudow commented that OWs are designated by the following:

- OW designations are awarded by the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).
- Three -year (triennial) rulemaking process that rotates through the seven major water basins in the state.
- Any organization may nominate any state water for designation as an OW.
- The process to propose an OW nomination takes multiple years including substantial water sampling, rigorous data analysis and evaluation, extensive public outreach, and three public hearings.

Rudow provided the criteria for OW designation:

1. Water quality must meeting or exceed standards for 12 key parameters to support aquatic life, recreation, and/or domestic water supply uses. (PH, E. coli, Dissolved Oxygen, Ammonia, Nitrate, Cadmium, Copper, Lead, Manganese, Selenium, Silver, Zinc)
2. Waters must constitute an outstanding natural resource, with "exceptional recreational or ecological significance".
3. Waters require protection in addition to that provided by water quality classifications, standards, and protections from the CDPHE.

Rudow explained that OW pertains to water quality and does not affect water rights, which pertain to flow. Additionally, OW protections only prevent new or increased sources of pollution related to activities that are regulated and permitted by the WQCD. Preexisting uses, such as grazing and recreation, as well as WQCD permitted activities can continue at the levels

and intensities in place at the time of designation. He stated that OW designations can go through private land as long as the criteria for OW are met.

Rudow explained that within Pitkin County the CRBOWC has identified the following potential candidate streams reaches for OW protections:

- Avalanche Creek
- Hunter Creek
- Middle and South Thompson Creek
- Woody Creek

Rudow stated that OW provides a great opportunity to have a large protection impacts on these high quality streams moving forward. He noted that a letter of support would be submitted to the State of Colorado early next year.

Patty Clapper asked about long term monitoring. Rudow explained that the designated OWs will be on the State's list and therefore will share monitoring with RFC and partners.

Clapper recommended that Healthy Rivers and Streams, OST and the BOCC collaborate on the proposed letter.

Poschman asked if water temperatures should be monitored. Rudow stated that OW only monitors the 12 key parameters listed above, which shows the quality of water, however RFP does monitor temperatures.

Means asked if there is pushback from private land owners. Rudow explained that RFC reached out to government agencies, non-profit and private land owners and there has been very little response for concern. The few respondents did respond provide support, he said.

The BOCC and OSTB provided support for drafting a letter to be submitted to State of Colorado Water Quality Control Division.

## **ADJOURN**

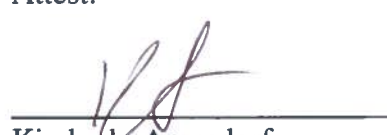
The OSTB and Joint OSTB-BOCC meetings of September 5, 2023 adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Approved:



Graeme Means, Chair  
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:



Kimberly Arensdorf  
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails  
Administrative Specialist