

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
January 4, 2024
Redstone Inn
82 Redstone Castle Drive
Redstone Historic District, CO 81623**

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1, Chair	Howie Mallory Dist. 2	Amy Barrow Dist. 3	Michael Kinsley Dist. 4	Wayne Ives Dist. 5
--------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------

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

Others Present: Eric & Casia Martin, Bart Johnson, Delia Malone, Will Coble, Tammy Walcott, Raleigh Burleish, Mike Fowler, Carolyn Kauffman, Bob & Lisa Dupre

Media Present: Scott Condon – Aspen Daily News, Heather Sackett – Aspen Journalism

Graeme Means called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Wayne Ives motioned for the OSTB to approve the amended 12/05/2023 & 12/20/2023 OSTB & BOCC Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

Draft 2024 Filoha Meadows Management Plan Update

Gary Tennenbaum explained that the conservation of Filoha Meadows is very important for the protection of native species and habitat. The 2008 plan provided management direction for the Filoha Meadows, Hot Springs Ranch and Filoha Greenhouse (CE) parcels. This plan update adds the 9-acre Larson-Grange Loadout to the Filoha Meadows Nature Preserve. It also accommodates administrative activities and facilities for the management of the Nature Preserve and nearby open spaces through designation of the Filoha Meadows Administrative Unit.

Liza Mitchell noted that Penny Hot Springs now has its own management plan as of 2020. She explained that the Filoha management plan’s primary purpose is to protect natural resources and biodiversity with controlled ways that the public can enjoy the property. Mitchell provided accomplishments from adaptive management of Filoha which include:

- Public recreational access has been limited to a single walking path with a seasonal closure from October 1 - June 30 for the benefit of biodiversity and wildlife.

- Noxious weeds have been controlled annually via integrated pest management, with notable improvements across all habitat types.
- Restoration of former agricultural areas on the southern end of the property was initiated.
- From 2014 to 2022, 82 programs were hosted and 1,407 participants were educated at Filoha by the Roaring Fork Conservancy.
- Numerous cross-boundary vegetation treatments have occurred since the 2011 approval of the Aspen-Sopris Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project – a large, multi-year U.S. Forest Service project to improve habitat and browse for bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk and other wildlife

Carly O’Connell explained that the first planning phase included an evaluation of existing conditions and natural resource reports. Next, staff began partner and public outreach. Staff facilitated meetings in February and March 2023 with partners from the White River National Forest, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Department of Transportation, Roaring Fork Conservancy, Healthy Rivers Board, West Elk Scenic and Historic Byway, and the Pitkin County engineer. Staff also engaged the Redstone Community Association and the Crystal Caucus before initiating broader public outreach. Next steps will be to post the draft management plan online and have another public comment period.

Mitchell provided the management plan natural resource action items:

- Action 1. Maintain the seasonal closure in effect from October 1 through June 30 and apply the same closure to all current and future parcels of the Nature Preserve.
- Action 2. Protect, enhance and restore native habitat types as appropriate.
- Action 3. Maintain collaboration with partner agencies that require access to the Nature Preserve to manage their public assets.
- Action 4. Maintain and promote healthy, resilient forests.
- Action 5. Maintain wildlife movement and migration corridors.
- Action 6. Support pollinators and pollinator habitat.
- Action 7. Monitor and protect rare orchids.
- Action 8. Continue riparian restoration
- Action 9. Preserve and protect onsite water resources
- Action 10. Control weeds and promote native plant communities
- Action 11. Wolf reintroduction awareness
- Action 12. Allow external research on a case by case basis.

Mitchell offered the education and outreach action items:

- Action 1. Coordinate public education opportunities such as firefly tours and other guided natural resource tours with Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) or similar groups.
- Action 2. Install a sign at the entrance to the Nature Preserve.

Mitchell provided the monitoring and stewardship action items:

- Action 1. Continue wildlife and vegetation monitoring at regular intervals
- Action 2. Exercise Wilke Ditch water rights.
- Action 3. Monitor geothermal wetlands.

- Action 4. Conduct a cultural resource assessment to identify and evaluate the cultural resources of the Nature Preserve.
- Action 5. Continue to monitor recreational use and non-compliance.

Jessie Young included the access and recreation action items:

- Action 1. Continue to limit public recreation access to pedestrian use only on the Filoha Meadows Trail.
- Action 2. Prohibit fishing/wading on the Filoha Meadows Nature Preserve and Larson-Grange Loadout riverbanks.

Young explained that the plan includes the designation of the Administrative Unit, (the Wildin property acquired in 2019), and management actions to support its use as an OST Ranger/Maintenance Station. She noted that staff is looking into the feasibility of renovating the existing residential units at the Administrative Unit to a habitable condition to facilitate land steward response and management within the Crystal Valley and/or provide affordable housing to county employees. Additionally, construction of an access route from the Administrative Unit to Dorais Way, facilitating direct access to the Nature Preserve for staff and educational tours.

Wayne Ives asked for more information regarding the ditch and water rights. Mitchell explained that the water rights are only used for temporary irrigation for restoration projects.

Michael Kinsley asked about the priority of action items. Tennenbaum explained that the action items listed in the updated plan will come back to the Board when discussing future budget. O'Connell provided the action item time frame listed in the management plan.

Howie Mallory asked what OST's role for wildlife enhancement, specifically with the Bighorn Sheep at Filoha. Mitchell stated that a vegetation restoration project was conducted this past summer to improve sightlines and enhance wildlife corridors. Mallory requested that the plan include additional information about Bighorn Sheep. Mitchell stated that it can be added to the history section and discussed at the Roaring Fork Conservancy tours.

Carolyn Kauffman asked if there is consideration of demolishing the house at Wildin. Yes, that is an option to be reviewed, Tennenbaum said.

Delia Malone commented that the map in the public plan shows that Dorais Way accesses Filoha Meadows, which is currently in litigation regarding public access.

Will Coble, and adjacent homeowner to Filoha, requested that the Roaring Fork Conservancy firefly tours keep their lights directed at the mountain.

Penny Hot Springs Trail Access and Parking Improvements

Young explained that following the adoption of the 2020 Penny Hot Springs Management Plan, staff has taken implementation steps, including working with CDOT, to install a port-a-potty/enclosure, place temporary regulatory signage, and execute a lease of the CDOT right-of-

way to empower rangers to enforce regulations for the area and to allow for physical improvements.

O'Connell stated that staff has been working through the design process for physical improvements to the pullout and river access/bank stabilization improvements identified in the management plan actions, and the design is now 60% complete. If the Board authorizes the design alternative the project design will go to 90%, she said.

O'Connell stated that feedback from a community survey during the 2020 management plan process identified the top concerns at Penny Hot Springs. Visitors voiced concerns for safety due to the proximity of the highway interface to the parking area. Accessibility of the trails from the pullout to the hot springs was identified as challenging due to the steep and eroded streambank. User behavior concerns were related to litter, etiquette and sanitation.

O'Connell explained that OST staff reconvened the Steering Committee in May 2022 for a half-day workshop to discuss and gather feedback on preliminary design concepts, developed based on site evaluations and initial conversations with SGM Engineering. The Board met in August 2022 and chose design Alternatives 1 & 2 for public comment. The committee's preference was for a plan that included the parking improvements from design Alternative 2 with the reduced grading and overall area for the trail improvements in Alternative 1. The preferred alternative includes:

- A defined parking area with long-term erosion solutions for streambank and slope stabilization without a retaining wall at the top of the slope.
- Adding slope stabilization to two small sections of the embankment to support access trails at two points leading down to the hot springs.
- Revegetation to reduce erosion.
- Using natural materials and prioritizing a modest aesthetic compatible with the area.
- Resurfacing the existing parking area and adding a curb and gutter which achieves a level parking platform and prevents further erosion of the parking surface.
- Approximately 19 spaces with the same head-in configuration that exists today.

O'Connell stated that the construction cost estimate is approx. \$650k - \$750k, however subject to change as the design develops. The construction timeframe needs to take place August – October, and may be pushed to 2025.

Amy Barrow expressed agreement with the direction of minimal changes, and safety orientated features.

Mallory asked about ADA guidelines. O'Connell explained that due to the landscape restrictions and cost it is impractical to be fully ADA coded, however the current plan will include a guardrail. Mitchell noted that ADA compliance was fully explored and provided to the steering committee.

Mary Dorais commented that in low water people have been accessing the protected land across the river. Mitchell explained that through the CDOT ROW lease OST Rangers can enforce violations.

Bob Dupre asked if there was a trail engineering safety study due to traffic issues at the parking area. Tennenbaum stated that highway engineering is under CDOT jurisdiction and they are currently looking at safety improvements.

Delia Malone commented that Bighorn Sheep have become more nocturnal due to human use, and people are accessing the hot springs late at night which has caused the herd to move. She recommended curtailing times of use for wildlife considerations. Mallory agreed to have curfews to help wildlife.

Wayne Ives provided support on moving forward with the project design.

Means thanked the community for their involvement in the process. He noted that Healthy Rivers and Streams has an opportunity to expand on the revegetation efforts.

Board action below.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

Amy Barrow commented that the new upper parking lot of Spring Gulch looks good and proves good signage.

BOARD ACTION

Penny Hot Springs Parking and Access Improvements.

Michael Kinsley motioned to proceed with the next steps to implement the preferred design, including completing construction documents and going to bid for construction. Howie Mallory seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

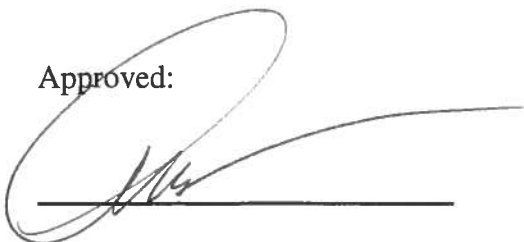
Snowmass Falls Ranch

Graeme Means motioned to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners the purchase of Snowmass Falls Ranch for the purchase price of \$34m. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (5-0)

ADJOURN

The OSTB meeting of November 2, 2023 adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Approved:

A large, stylized signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Attest:

A smaller, stylized signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Graeme Means, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Kim Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist