

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
February 1, 2024
530 East Main Street
Aspen, CO 81611**

OSTB Present:

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

Others Present: Rachel Bachman, Slone Shoemaker

Amy Barrow 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 01/04/2024 OSTB Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Howie Mallory seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Mount Sopris Nordic Council (MSNC)

Gary Tennenbaum explained that last year the MSNC came to the Board with to discuss changes to management and updates to Spring Gulch Nordic system. Today the MSNC is looking for funding support to assist with capital improvements and resiliency planning, he said.

Rachel Bachman noted that she attended the recent Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition Symposium. Data provided at the symposium showed the different motivations for people to recreate. Related to that data, Spring Gulch has received an outpouring of support of winter recreation from the community, she said.

Bachman stated that approximately \$660k was pledged and donated toward the \$750k goal for Spring Gulch improvements and resiliency planning, which includes the following:

- \$250K from Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
- \$250K AVSC
- \$25K from Backbone
- \$20K from Town of Carbondale
- \$115K from the local community

Bachman provided an update on improvements for Spring Gulch:

- Northeast Trail Extension (Tipple & Hejo): Climate resilient new trails despite the dry/warm season temperatures
- Marion Parking Lot and Practice Field

Bachman explained that the funding for improvements and annual operations come from local government, grants, Colorado Gives Day and memberships. Community events include:

- Nordic Social
- Marion Parking Lot Grand Opening
- Rat Race
- Independence Run
- Hike Demo Day
- Ski for Sisu Fundraiser
- Full Moon Ski

Bachman provided the 2024 summer objectives:

- Vegetation Management and Monitoring: Phase 1
 - MSNC will collaborate with OST staff
- Grooming Shed Renovations and Power
- Grooming Equipment Replacement
- Marion Parking Lot Completion
- Trailhead Kiosks and Signage

Slone Shoemaker thanked the Board for their initial support of the improvements.

Wayne Ives asked if MSNC will work with the Cattlemen's Association on vegetation management. Bachman stated that the Cattlemen's Association is allowing access for vegetation management. The goal is to enhance safety, shade and provide wind protection. Howie Mallory noted that vegetation management and resiliency will pay off in the long run.

Howie Mallory suggested that the MSNC grooming reports be more integrated with the Aspen Snowmass Nordic System reports online. Bachman stated that MSNC reports are on Nordic Pulse and staff can explore links to both system websites.

Board action below.

Coke Ovens Open Space Agriculture Lease Recommendation

Drew Walters commented that following the adoption of the Redstone Parks and Open Space Management Plan on November 2, 2023, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for a long-term lease of the property. He noted that staff received 4 applications and conducted 2 site visits. A selection committee reviewed, scored and conducted interviews for the applications. Applications were scored based on the Agricultural Lease Policy and Process and priorities listed in the Redstone Park and Open Space management plan. He explained that the agriculture will take place in the irrigated and limited irrigation pastures.

Walters stated that staff recommends a five-year lease to Pair A Dice Outfitters, Inc. DBA Avalanche Outfitters based on their criteria scoring and application details. He noted that

Avalanche Outfitters provided a lot of specifics for land management, and is in line with the management plan proposed use.

Michael Kinsley asked if a short term lease would restrict operations or capital improvements. Walters stated that the Agricultural Lease Policy and Process allows lease holders that are in good standing with OST to continue their lease, which therefore helps with long term operations and improvements. Tennenbaum added that allowing lease holders the chance of renewal and longer term leases provides them with motivation to invest in improvements.

Mallory commented that leasing the land to a tenant that will maintain the ditch is very valuable. He asked about the water quality due to previous coal mining operations up stream. Ted O'Brien commented that the adjacent wetlands serve as a natural filter. Tennenbaum added that restoration efforts are being made at Coal Creek.

Board action below.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

Tennenbaum stated that the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition (RFOC) symposium took place on January 23rd. with 60 organizations participating. He explained that the group discussed community issues between recreation and conservation and how to move forward. Carly O'Connell added that Utah State University provided the latest findings from their recreation study being conducted in Pitkin County for OST. The goal was to get group feedback and identify problem statements, she said. Tennenbaum explained that themes for the symposium were created from listening sessions. Additionally, the Watershed Biodiversity Initiative provided the wildlife biodiversity data and incorporated into RFOC's plan. O'Connell stated that the digital data that is being collected will be available next summer.

Ives noted that attendees were able to comment on other problem areas down-valley, specifically at boat ramps.

Mallory requested a summary of the symposium. Tennenbaum explained that the summary will be provided to the OSTB by March and staff will schedule time to discuss at an OSTB meeting in April or May.

Tennenbaum commented that the community survey had great results for OST, noting that 84% of the community were very satisfied or satisfied with the program. He thanked OST staff and the Board.

Tennenbaum stated that Snowmass Falls Ranch property closing will take place on Monday February 5. Staff is working on a \$10m loan from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which will assist with the financial capacity. He noted that staff plans to work with the family to give them time to say goodbye to the property this summer and to help educate on pasture management, weed mitigation, etc. Richard Neiley commented that the property has 30 cfs of senior water rights and staff will discuss with the Board on what to do with it. Tennenbaum added that there are a lot of restoration opportunities at the property.

Mallory requested clarification with regards to North Star Nature Preserves capacity comments from the property's neighbors. Tennenbaum stated that more data will be collected this coming summer and will be align with the Utah State University recreation study. He noted that the Attorney's Office is working on a proposal with the Forest Service for the Wildwood land swap.

BOARD ACTION

Mount Sopris Nordic Council

Michael Kinsley motioned to approve the \$250k funding for the NSNC capital improvement project. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Coke Ovens Agriculture Lease

Wayne Ives motioned to recommend approval for a lease to Pair A Dice Outfitters, Inc. DBA Avalanche Outfitters of five-years for the Coke Ovens Open Space Agricultural Lease at a lease rate of \$650/year to the Board of County Commissioners. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

ADJOURN

The OSTB meeting of February 1, 2024 adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Approved:



Amy Barrow, Vice Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:



Kim Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist