

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
April 4, 2024
530 East Main Street
Aspen, CO 81611**

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1, Chair	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, Liza Mitchell, Ted O’Brien, Paul Holsinger, Janet Urquhart, Anjanette Rosas Garcia, Leslie Lamont

Others Present: Jessica Garrow, Alyson Cotey, Leah Stoltz, Austin Weiss, Elizabeth Boyles

Graeme Means called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Amy Barrow motioned for the OSTB to approve the amended 03/06/2024 OSTB & BOCC Joint Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

Introduction to Anjanette Rosas Garcia, Community Engagement Manager

Gary Tennenbaum introduced Anjanette Rosas Garcia, Community Engagement Manager, which is a shared position with PCOST and Aspen Valley Land Trust (AVLT). The County is looking to improve equity and inclusivity and how it ties to conservation, this position specifically helps with that goal, he said.

Anjanette Rosas Garcia provided her previous work experience which included work with Colorado Outward Bound. She explained how conservation is evolving through community centered conservation with ambassador properties.

Rosas Garcia provided current efforts that are being made with her position:

- Community Centered Conservation Strategy
- Building partnerships
- Developing tangible goals and a strategic work plan to achieve them
- Expanding our relationships and engagement with a broader, and more diverse community
- Raising awareness of conservation, regenerative agriculture, community
- A more equitable and connected community for all

Rosas Garcia explained that diversity includes:

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- Communities of different ages
- Cultural identities
- Socioeconomic experiences
- Geography
- Gender
- Worldviews
- Physical and cognitive disabilities
- Life and work experiences

Rosas Garcia clarified that internal systems increase programmatic capacity by modernizing technology and developing internal systems. Examples include:

- Partner outreach tracking system
- Event calendar system
- Informational packets
- Visitor feedback system

Rosas Garcia commented that the outreach and listening tour included 50 strategic conversations with local schools, nonprofits, land owners and community members, as well as on-site tours.

Rosas Garcia stated that patterns and tracking efforts include:

- Opportunities and possible solutions
- Connections
- Challenges
- Hopes and values
- Needs
- Misconceptions
- AVL and PCOST strengths, knowledge gaps, and how we can be of service

Rosas Garcia provided a list of challenges and ways to support the program:

- Scheduling
- Bilingual programing
 - A need for translated educational resources on conservation
- Class size
- Faculty expertise
- Time
- Transportation
- Need for Chaperones
 - Create a mentor program so Latinos can see it as a career path for them
- Gear
- Funding

Rosas Garcia explained that community relationships have been built through participating in partner-led events such as Hispanic Heritage Day, Dia de Los Muertos, First Friday, Aspen Farmers Market, Latino Conservation Week, etc.

Howie Mallory asked for additional information on the programming budget. Rosas Garcia explained that the costs are split between stewardship and engagement. Staff is also applying for grants to support the programs, she said. Tennenbaum noted that staff will come back to the Board with a more developed budget.

Tennenbaum explained that the position will coordinate with the other outreach programs that OST works with such as Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) and Aspen Center for Environmental Sciences (ACES). Amy Barrow applauded the work to connect non-profits in the valley.

Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition (RFOC) Update

Tennenbaum explained that this collective provides a platform to coordinate recreation and conservation priorities in a way that will drive better land management. He noted that OST funded the Watershed Biodiversity Initiative Study which provides the conservation and restoration data for the RFOC. OST received initial funding support from the Regional Partnerships Initiative Grant Program, a collaboration between Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and CPW, Tennenbaum said.

Jessica Garrow, Design Workshop, explained that today's agenda is to cover the capacity and partnership building that has been accomplished in the last 9 months, process and outcomes, and future actions.

Garrow provided the RFOC's core values:

- We are collaborative long-standing partners
- We are community oriented and value relationships
- We believe in access for all and a range of experiences
- We are driven by action for future generations
- We protect our natural resources and environment
- We value respect for others and nature

Garrow explained that RFOC is currently at the stage of creating a shared vision and goals framework, as well as community sharing. She noted that there was 55+ community collaborators involved in the 2023 listening sessions and 2024 partner symposium. Advisors of the RFOC are WBI and Utah State Recreation Ecology Lab. In 2022 and 2023 1,128 trailhead intercept surveys were conducted. The County and Municipal Boards include:

- Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners and Opens Space and Trails Board
- Aspen City Council, City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board
- Town of Snowmass Village Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Committee
- Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Committee

Alison Cotey, Design Workshop, explained that the coalition meetings, listening sessions and the coalition symposium was critical in building capacity and strengthen partnerships. The top challenges that were discussed included:

- Volume pressure and impacts
- Connectivity and wildlife balance
- Stewardship and Education / Safety
- Use, Etiquette and Conflict

- Equitable Access / Language Barriers
- Regional Growth and Climate Change
- Working in Silos and Funding

Garrow explained that the Coalition looked into identifying key tensions between conservation and recreation in the Roaring Fork Valley, and tension between accommodating increasing recreation and recreation trends and limiting recreation use and access. Additionally, the need for equitable and inclusive access to the outdoors for diverse communities within the Valley.

Garrow identified the top opportunities:

- Increase Education, Stewardship and Outreach
- Increase Diversity and Access
- Broaden Partnerships – Coordinated Land Use Management
- Manage Resources and Responsible Growth Guideposts

Garrow provided the key themes from the RFOC Symposium:

- **Cross Jurisdictional Partnerships:** There are many partnerships within the Roaring Fork Valley who care deeply about our recreation spaces and shared ecosystems. The RFOC strives to represent public municipalities and public lands that will serve as the bridge to other boards, advisors and collaborators.
- **Rec volume and impacts:** Increased use of our recreation resources impacts the environment and user experience. Proactive management is needed to ensure the longevity of our shared ecosystem, which includes plants, wildlife and humans. The RFOC strives to collaborate with land managers and community collaborators to educate, monitor and strategically plan to ensure a healthy and resilient environment in the Roaring Fork Valley.
- **Access and Equity:** Outdoor spaces should be inclusive, giving focus to underrepresented community for everyone to benefit for the diverse opportunities in the Roaring Fork Valley. The RFOC strives to and break down barriers through increased inclusion to make sure that our trails and recreational spaces are accessible and welcoming to all members of our community.
- **Education and stewardship:** Fostering relationships and connection to the outdoors is critical for individuals to have a sense of ownership and feel empowered to take action within outdoor places. Yet, cultural and systemic challenges exist which create barriers to participation. The RFOC strives to inspire individuals to become outdoor stewards by supporting accessible engagement opportunities that deepen connections with our Valley.
- **Conservation Habitat and connectivity:** The Roaring Fork Valley watershed is blessed with large public land and expansive wilderness areas and adequate space and corridors are need to support the plant and wildlife health within. Increased use threatens biodiversity, ecosystem function and quality of life. The RFOC strives to collaborate and increase land management tools that support conservation and connectivity of shared resources.

Cotey provided the RFOC Charter which specifies rules and guidelines to structure the collaboration.

Carly O'Connell explained that the next steps include:

- Visitor Use and Experience Assessment Presentation
 - Utah State University, Recreation Ecology Lab, May 2nd
- Next Round of Grant Funding
- Phase 3: Develop a Strategic Plan for Recreation and Conservation for the Roaring Fork Watershed

O'Connell provided the Strategic Plan for Recreation and Conservation:

- A Mission and Vision: The purpose of the RFOC and desired future for recreation and conservation
- Guideposts: Community-driven priorities and their measures of success
- Measurable Watershed Strategies: Cross jurisdictional objectives defined by partners, community collaborators residents and visitors
- Management tools for conservation and outdoor recreation
- Priority actions and projects for the next 5-10 years

O'Connell explained that grant funding is dependant on the resulting framework and completing the Strategic Conservation and Recreation plan for the Roaring Fork Watershed.

Graeme Means asked about PCOST's role and funding from other jurisdictions. Tennenbaum stated that the goal from the beginning was to facilitate the Coalition but then to evolve into a partner. O'Connell stated that OST is currently the fiscal sponsor for the Coalition at this time, administrating the contract with Design Workshop, and receiving the grant funding. However, decisions are being made by all the cross-jurisdictional partners and community collaborators.

Wayne Ives asked about how RFOC compare statewide for the Regional Partnerships program. O'Connell explained that the RFOC is hitting the main objectives of the grant and leading with the work that has been accomplished since receiving the grant. The Mountain Communities Outdoor Collective (MCOC) is another platform for the partnerships, (RFOC, Grand Places 2050, Summit County Outdoor Coalition, and Eagle County Community Wildlife Roundtable), to meet annually to discuss prioritizing goals and funding requests.

Kinsley stated that it is important to remember where the community started with growth management and recommended coming back with our own solutions at the end of this process, which may be considered controversial.

Mallory asked how to blend RFOC goals with the housing crisis. Tennenbaum stated that land use and growth management is a large determining factor. The different jurisdictions will need to work together on conservation and housing goals for the communities.

Means asked how to evaluate the user experience vs environmental concerns. Tennenbaum stated that the Biodiversity Policy provides guidance on OST properties. The Watershed Biodiversity Initiative Study helps to look at the valley as a whole, he said.

Land Use Referrals

Means provided the OSTB's role from the Pitkin County Home Rule Charter in regards to land use referrals: "Make recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) as warranted regarding open space/trails impacts of application filed under the Pitkin County Land Use Code and regarding exactions or dedications required to fulfill the goals of the Open Space and Trails Program..." In addition, the Charter directs OST staff to, "Review and comment as warranted on all development applications impacting existing and planned open space lands and trails." He commented that the Board is only seeing OST aspects of the applications and not the whole. Tennenbaum stated that every application is different, the Board needs to limit it to OST aspects. Barrow commented that the Board needs to look at the overall conservation benefits. Leslie Lamont added that OST staff and the OSTB input is very valuable for P&Z.

J&A Arbaney Family LLLP - Thompson Divide

Paul Holsinger explained that The Arbaney Family own 160-acres nearly surrounded by the USFS except for a ~1,300' boundary shared with TD Ranch Open Space. The northern 80 acres are encumbered by a conservation easement held by AVL. The Arbaney Family would now like to pursue TDRs by rezoning CDPUD and restricting the remaining development right to 1,250 square feet. Holsinger commented that the southern 80 acres includes over a ½ mile of North Thompson Creek and associated riparian and wetland areas and conservation and limited development of the property supports aspects of OST's mission. Tennenbaum noted that conservation aspects of TD Ranch extend to this property.

Wayne Ives stated that the conservation easement and limiting large development would be extremely valuable.

Board action below.

NMP, SEP Residence Trust (Pfister Tracts) - West Buttermilk

Holsinger provided the applicants proposal to place a conservation easement on 55 acres or 64 percent of the proposed subdivision/PUD to benefit wildlife. The conservation easement will encumber all the land on Lot 1 west of the gulley (19.8 acres) and 35.3 acres of land on Lots 3 and 4 located above the activity envelope area.

Means commented that this conservation easement fulfills the goals of the OST mission.

Holsinger explained that a critical portion of approximately 2,300 linear feet of the Owl Creek Nordic Trail that crosses Pfister Tract 1 and 2 does not have an easement in place. The Pfister family has permitted local skiers to cross their land since the inception of the Owl Creek Nordic trail in 1984. Additionally, the Pfister family has permitted Nordic skiers to park on their property on the west side of the West Buttermilk Road to access the Owl Creek Nordic trail since the establishment of the trail. This is an ideal location to start skiing the Owl Creek trail because skiers can avoid the challenging climb from Tiehack to the West Buttermilk Road. The proposal calls for a new driveway to access Lots 1, 4 and 5 to be developed on the existing Nordic trail alignment. The new Nordic trail alignment would be located just across the West Buttermilk Road from the terminus of the existing trail that crosses the main Buttermilk ski area. Nordic skiers climbing the Owl Creek Trail from Buttermilk will no longer be required to walk up the

West Buttermilk Road to access the existing trail link. The conceptual alignment would require two crossings of the driveway accessing Lot 4. The Applicant will dedicate an area for Nordic trail parking to the City of Aspen.

Holsinger provided OST staff's recommendation "Like the Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council, OST supports trail and parking area repositioning for the Owl Creek Nordic Trail. However, the two driveway crossings proposed in the conceptual alignment are not ideal. OST recommends working with the Pfister's in realigning the trail in such a way as to eliminate any road crossings, reducing the possibility of trail user and vehicle conflicts, and affording a more stable skiing and grooming platform. This could be accomplished by shifting the Nordic Trail's alignment to the existing driveway on the north side of the property and creating a new driveway just to the south of the current driveway. The new trail alignment would benefit from a direct line-of-sight connection to the existing trail, across West Buttermilk Road, and removing the uphill walk to the existing trail alignment through the Pfister Tracts as show on the eastern connection of the conceptual alignment. OST recommends that the easement holder for both the parking area and the trail be Pitkin County."

The OSTB was in favor of staff's recommendation for the realignment of the Nordic trail.

Board action below.

BOARD ACTION

J&A Arbaney Family LLLP - Thompson Divide

Graeme Means motioned to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of a conservation easement on the remaining 80 acres of the Arbaney Family parcel. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

NMP, SEP Residence Trust (Pfister Tracts) - West Buttermilk

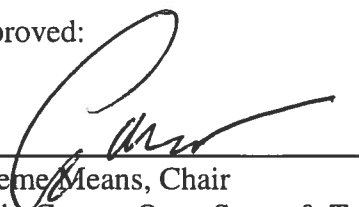
Graeme Means motioned to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the proposed conservation easement on NMP, SEP Residence Trust (Pfister Tracts). Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

Wayne Ives motioned the Board of County Commissioners accept staff's recommendation to repositioning for the Owl Creek Nordic Trail. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

ADJOURN

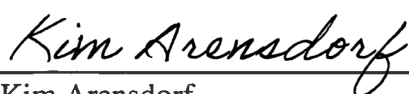
The OSTB meeting of April 4, 2024 adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Approved:



Graeme Means, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:


Kim Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist