

**MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
July 11, 2024
530 East Main Street
Aspen, CO 81611**

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1	Howie Mallory Dist. 2, Chair	Amy Barrow Dist. 3	Michael Kinsley Dist. 4	Wayne Ives Dist. 5 Not Present
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Staff Present: Gary Tennenbaum, Kim Arensdorf, Jessie Young, Carly O'Connell, Liza Mitchell, Drew Walters, Dale Will, Rich Englehart

Others Present: Elizabeth & Edgar Boyles, Cody Horn

Howie Mallory called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Graeme Means motioned for the OSTB to approve the 06/04/2024 OSTB & BOCC Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Fee Simple Open Space Management Categories Update

Carly O'Connell explained that Title 12 authorizes the OSTB to adopt individualized management plans for specific Open Space and Trails Properties. OST's Stewardship Policy #1 states that the OSTB will adopt Management Plans for lands in which a fee simple interest is acquired. Smaller parcels, or similar management needs may be grouped into management categories. She noted that the OSTB and staff have revisited the originally adopted program policies with the most recent updates occurring in 2018.

O'Connell commented that the current condition for OST management plan adoption has focused on parcels of a size and condition that warrant specific management actions; not all properties acquired have needed immediate management. With continued fee simple acquisitions, a number of open spaces lack a management plan.

O'Connell stated that OST portfolio includes 157 individual parcels totaling approx. 6,200 acres of fee simple open spaces. 86 parcels have an adopted management plan. 29 parcels are covered by Stewardship Policy #14 Backcountry Parcels Management Policy or Stewardship Policy #2A Trails and Trailheads for management purposes. Lastly, 58 parcels, totaling approximately 1,220 acres of fee simple open space, do not fall into an existing management category or do not currently have a management plan.

O'Connell explained that staff recommends proposed policy updates that would enable clear and immediate management of future acquisitions of open spaces. The proposed updates for Fee Simple Open Space management categories include:

- Open Space – Management Plan (No change)
- Nature Preserve – Management Plan (No change)
- Park – Management Plan (No change)
- Trailhead – Stewardship Policy #14 (Adopt a new Stewardship Policy - reclassify parcels)
- Backcountry - Stewardship Policy #14 (Modify the Stewardship Policy - reclassify parcels)
- Riverine - Stewardship Policy #14 (Adopt a new Stewardship Policy - reclassify parcels)
- Greenway - Stewardship Policy #14 (Adopt a new Stewardship Policy - reclassify parcels)
- Working Lands - Stewardship Policy #14 (Adopt a new Stewardship Policy - reclassify parcels)

O'Connell stated that additions/updates to Stewardship Policy 1 and 2 include:

- Fee Simple Interests management plans adoption will include Open Spaces, Nature Preserves and Parks.
- Smaller parcels or those endowed with substantially similar management categories as described in Stewardship Policy #14 and do not require individual management plans.
- Open Space Parcels; Permanent improvements to open space parcels will not be undertaken unless consistent with a duly adopted management plan and/or management categories as noted in Stewardship Policy #1 and Stewardship Policy #14.

O'Connell provided Stewardship #14 updates:

- A. All properties will be assigned a management category by OST staff according to the characteristics of the parcel.** Management categories include: Open Space, Nature Preserve, Parks, Trailheads, Backcountry Parcels, Riverine Parcels, Greenways and Working Lands. Additional categories may be added when needed.
- B. General Policy for Management Categories:** As provided in Stewardship Policy #1, inclusion of property in a management category satisfies the requirement for a management plan as a prerequisite for management and improvement of the same. OST may incorporate parcels in a management category into a management plan for more specific prescriptive actions, which would supersede this policy. Except as noted below, such lands will be administered under Title 12 of the Pitkin County Code.
- C. General Policy for Management, Stewardship and Improvements:** As provided in Stewardship Policies #2, inclusion of property in a management category enables the following:
 1. Environmental education programs and research, subject to approval by OST. Such uses are not considered commercial.
 2. Actions required to protect, enhance, monitor and restore native habitats as warranted. Properties can be incorporated into landscape scale and cross-jurisdictional efforts to manage ecological resources and/or recreation consistent with other policies outlined in this document.
 3. Revegetation improvements and noxious weed control.

4. Trails and lands may be subject to posted seasonal, temporary or emergency closures. Violations shall constitute a trespass, further detailed in Title 12.
 5. Installation of access gates, fencing and signage, according to adopted design guidelines, is permitted.
 6. Limited improvements are permitted, specific to each management category. Improvements not listed in the management categories are subject to OSTB approval.
- **Backcountry Parcels** - Description: Remote or isolated parcels owned in fee by OST that are surrounded by federal and state lands. They are acquired to prevent development that would severely impact the surrounding federal and state lands and allow for seamless management. Parcels must be fully surrounded by federal and/or state land to be included under this category.
 - Allowed Improvements/Stewardship Actions: Fuel mitigation and Wildlife habitat improvement
 - Regulations: All lands in this category will be managed with similar regulations as the surrounding federal and/or state lands. OST Title 12 regulations that will not apply to backcountry parcels are No Hunting, Dogs on Leash, Camping Prohibited, and Fires Prohibited.
 - **Riverine Parcels** - Description: Isolated or small parcels of land located along the interface of a river or stream. May be contiguous to other protected lands. Riverine areas provide environmental and recreation benefits. Public use is often intended for fishing, watercraft launch or other passive uses. Amenities vary depending on context and use levels. Some riverine areas may provide trails and parking.
 - Allowed Improvements/Stewardship Actions:
 - Define or restrict angler and river user access routes. Soft and hard surface trails and associated hardscape improvements will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - Closure of all or portions of the parcel to public use for environmental protection or human safety.
 - Modification of existing parking areas to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety and circulation. Additions and/or expansions will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - Modification of watercraft launches to enhance river user safety. Additions and/or expansions will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - Visitor infrastructures such as kiosks, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, etc. will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - **Greenway Parcels** - Description: A corridor of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection. Greenways contain or guide development and contribute to connectivity or public access to green space through preservation of land in the fringe of towns, roads or other subdivisions, or developed areas providing a buffer from development.
 - Allowed Improvements/Stewardship Actions:
 - Landscape improvements and fuel reduction projects.

- Visitor infrastructure such as kiosks, interpretive information, benches, picnic tables, overlooks, restrooms, etc. and associated hardscape improvements as needed.
 - Paved and soft surface trails. Additions and or expansions to trails will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
- **Working Lands Parcels** - Description: Parcels of land for agricultural use and stewardship. Working lands protect land from development that would impact agricultural use, continue sustainable agricultural operations and provide habitat connectivity and biodiversity benefits. Public access is often limited. Infrastructure varies depending on context and use.
 - Allowed Improvements/Stewardship Actions:
 - Maintain water rights.
 - Designation of lease areas for producers and lessees to use the parcel or portions of the parcel for agricultural purposes. Annual lease agreements may be granted. For lease terms greater than one year, the Agriculture Policy and Process will apply.
 - Agricultural activities include but are not limited to grazing, haying, livestock, crop production and community gardens.
 - Modification of existing infrastructure such as irrigation, agricultural buildings, fencing, etc. for improved function, safety, water conservation, or sustainable operations. Additions and/or expansions will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - Closure of all or portions of the parcel to public access.
 - Rehabilitate, enhance or restore impacted habitat for biodiversity and/or ecological function and preserve intact native habitats.
 - Define or restrict angler and river-user access, if applicable. Soft and hard surface trails and associated hardscape improvements will be presented to the OSTB for approval.
 - Modification of existing parking areas to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety and circulation. Additions and/or expansions will be presented to the OSTB for approval.

O'Connell stated that the recommended OSTB action is to adopt the updated policy with amendments.

Amy Barrow asked about including any necessary reductions to parcels. Tennenbaum noted that reductions language can be added to the Stewardship Policy.

Michael Kinsley recommended adding "wildlife" to the habitat portion of the Stewardship Policy #14 parcels descriptions. He commented on changing the language under Stewardship Policy #1 to include "and/or" to "Each plan will formulate a site-specific, balanced stewardship approach to the preservation, improvement, and/or use of 1) ecologically sensitive land and water resources, 2) wildlife resources, 3) visual resources, 4) cultural resources, 5) recreational and educational resources, 6) access to adjacent public land, and 7) agricultural uses. Lastly, under Stewardship Policy #14 adding "one or more" to "General Policy for Management, Stewardship and Improvements: As provided in Stewardship Policies #2, inclusion of property in a

management category enables one or more of the following”. OST Staff agreed to make the updates.

Elizabeth Boyles asked if all restroom additions would come to the board. Tennenbaum said all parcels with the exception of Trailheads would need Board approval for restroom additions.

Board action below.

Land Use Referral: BelleJackBlue, LLC

O’Connell explained that the BelleJackBlue LLC land use application does not currently offer a conservation easement. The current application subdivides the property into three 35+ acre parcels and will utilize TDR’s to build out the parcels.

Tennenbaum stated that OST staff recommends requesting a conservation easement on strategic areas of the parcel. The property possesses valuable open space and ecological benefits including riparian habitat associated with Little Woody Creek. Conservation of the property would protect winter habitat for wildlife and connectivity between public lands.

Board action Below.

Aspen Airport Business Center Bridge Location Discussion

Tennenbaum stated that the BOCC and City of Aspen Council will be conducting a joint site visit on July 15. The proposed bridge locations and feasibility was presented to the steering committee in late June and will be brought back to the OSTB and BOCC at the September meeting.

Tennenbaum explained that four connections were listed in feasibility study, and out of those two options were evaluated in further detail to determine estimated costs, trail layout, bridge layouts and wall layouts:

- AABC Connection “Switchback Alignment” trail switchbacks below the Holy Cross Energy Substation. West end alignment begins at the existing Stein Trailhead at AABC 500 Road and the East end connects to the Rio Grande Trail (RGT) approximately 350 feet from the south end of the wastewater treatment plant clarifiers.
- AABC Connection “Service Center Road Alignment” trail crosses over Service Center Road. West end alignment begins at the existing Stein Trailhead. East end of trail connects to RGT approximately 550 feet from the north end of the wastewater treatment plant reservoir (pond).

Tennenbaum provided the estimated construction and engineering costs:

- Single connection to RGT
 - Brush Creek Park and Ride: \$8m construction, \$1.6m engineering
 - AABC – Sardy: \$9.4m construction, \$1.8m engineering
 - AABC Switchback Connection: \$8.2m construction, \$1.6m engineering
 - AABC Service Center Road: \$10.4m construction, \$2m engineering
- Brush Creek to AABC complete connection
 - BCPR and AABC – Sardy: \$17.4m construction, \$3.4m engineering

- BCPR and Switchback Connection: \$16.2m construction, \$3.2m engineering
- BCPR and Service Center Road Connection: \$18.4m construction, \$3.6m engineering

Means recommended including comparison charts for the BOCC and the public which include the pros and cons regarding safety, environmental impact, costs, etc. for each alignment.

Open Space and Trails Board Retreat Discussion

Tennenbaum stated that the Board needs to decide whether to have an upcoming retreat and if so what topics to discuss. From a staff perspective prioritize upcoming budget projects is important, he said. Means recommended that staff come up with some ideas and come back to the Board to review.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

Kinsley requested a map of social trail issues listed in the monthly update.

Mallory asked for additional information on the Redstone to McClure Trail. Tennenbaum stated that the Forest Service is out conducting wildlife surveys, and staff needs to create a special use permit. Means commented that the Board needs to have control for the design components for the Redstone to McClure Trail.

Mallory asked what the ultimate goal of the center pivot irrigation on Glassier. Liza Mitchell said the major goal is water preservation, to make the area more productive with less water.

Barrow applauded the wetlands restoration at Brush Creek with the installation of wetland sod.

Barrow commented on the OPDMD plan, noting that she was approached from a consulting firm that previously worked with Challenge Aspen. They could be a good resource for accessibility recommendations and working with our partners, she said.

BOARD ACTION

Fee Simple Open Space Management Categories Update

Graeme Means motioned to adopt the amended Fee Simple Open Space Management Categories Policy Update. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Land Use Referral: BelleJackBlue, LLC

Michael Kinsley motioned for the OSTB to include OST staff's recommendation for the BelleJackBlue, LLC land use application to include a conservation easement over strategic areas of the parcel. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

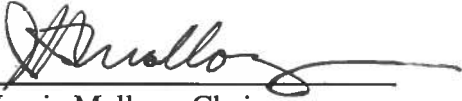
Delaney Land Donation

Graeme Means motioned to accept the donation of two parcels of land along Rapid Creek, contingent on the findings from an environmental survey analysis. Amy Barrow seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

ADJOURN

The OSTB meeting of July 11, 2024 adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Approved:



Howie Mallory, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:



Kim Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist

