



Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

*Minutes
February 25, 2021*

Meeting Summary

OSTAC members heard a presentation on the Final Draft of the Plaster Reservoir Open Space Management Plan and a review of the ERO Resources Bald Eagle Monitoring history and 2021 plan. The committee also discussed the appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair, and a summary of the current Open Space and Trails projects. The planned discussion of the Harmer Open Space Naming and the Shep's Crossing kiosk review were rescheduled for the March meeting.

OSTAC (Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee)

Present:

Patrick Tennyson, Chair
Ray Churgovich, Vice-Chair
Terra Lenihan
Michael McLane
Renaë Stavros
Doug Grumann
Chris Petrizzo
Ryan Gelston
Todd Cohen
Councilmember Liz Law-Evans
Councilmember Stan Jezierski

Absent:

Kristan Pritz, Excused Emergency

Interested Citizens:

Nancie Brackett
Nancy Ferraro
Nicole Huntley

Other staff, presenters, and consultants in attendance:

Pete Dunlaevy, Open Space and Trails Manager
Jack Pritchard, Open Space and Trails Specialist
Beverly Burbach, Open Space and Trails Administrative Analyst
Nancy Rogers, City and County of Broomfield City Attorney
Kelly Behling, CIP Project Manager
Rebecca Hannon, Project Manager and Certified Ecologist, Smith Environmental and Engineering
Jonathan Diller, P.E., Water Resources Engineer, Smith Environmental and Engineering
Rebecca Baker, Civil Engineer/Floodplain Manager
Ron Beane, Principal and Wildlife Biologist, ERO Resources Corporation
Heidi Gerstung, Ecologist, ERO Resources Corporation
Dana Bove, Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies

Agenda Minutes

1. Call to Order by Patrick Tennyson, 6:00 p.m.

Patrick called the meeting to order and welcomed any citizens from the public. Beverly Burbach reviewed the Google Meeting tips.

2. Public Comment on Items Not on Agenda

Nancy Rogers, the new City and County of Broomfield Attorney introduced herself to the committee.

3. Presentation on the Final Draft Plaster Reservoir Open Space Management Plan and Discussion

Kelly Behling introduced the proposed Plaster Reservoir Open Space Management Plan; she thanked everyone for their comments and thoughts on the plan, stating that this is the final draft plan. Kelly introduced herself and the following project staff: Jonathan Diller and Rebecca Hannon. Rebecca Hannon discussed the timeline of the project. She gave an overview of the planned flood capacity recommendations, ecological recommendations, and water quality/recreation recommendations. Rebecca discussed the phasing plan and the years in which they will be implemented, ending with a summary of the plan and recommendations.

-Ray, is there any sort of aerator in the reservoir?

-Rebecca, yes, there is an aerator that is solar powered that sits on the water. The device is called a "Solar Bee."

-Chris, this is great, but I was not clear on the saline soil piece, can you comment on this?

-Rebecca, yes, saline soil is common in Colorado and we see areas like Plaster with those white deposits on the surface. We don't recommend removing it, but instead getting vegetation that is more tolerant of this condition.

-Ray, where will the dredging waste be taken to?

-Jonathan, where it will end up, eventually, is up to the contractor. So my guess is that the disposal cost will be minimal, as it is very organic material and can be used for topsoil.

-Doug, it was mentioned that flood control would be above the waterline, but the spillway is fixed so can you clarify this, as dredging is recommended and takes place below the line?

-Johnathan, we could use the term excavation instead, since the outlet structure regulates the flow as the water level rises. This is what we focus on. Since the flow in does not equal the amount out for a short period of time, the excavation above the water line is just to bring the water level back to normal. There will be a survey done before excavation to return it to its designed flood storage capacity.

-Doug, so the dredging will not make the reservoir deeper?

-Johnathan, correct. At some point there will be an excavation below the water level for ecological reasons, 10-20 years down the road.

-Nancy Ferraro, Referring to some cattail mediation around the viewing dock and on the far west side. How far back are we planning on moving the cattails?

-Rebecca, we will mostly be working on the south-west side, thinning that out and trying to increase the flow.

-Nancy, along the entire west side will we be moving cattails back to increase the surface area of the reservoir?

-Rebecca, we do not have plans to do that right now, but there is flexibility to pursue that. The cattails are currently holding that sediment in place. I did look at the surface area of the reservoir and the possibility of increasing that, but not that much has been lost so we have not pursued that. The equipment in there may remove some of those cattails, but it is a disruptive process.

-Nancy, thank you.

Doug motioned to approve the plan; Chris seconds; plan was passed unanimously.

4. Presentation of ERO Resources Bald Eagle Monitoring 2020 Annual Report, Proposed 2021 Monitoring Plan and Update on Vive Eagle Monitoring 2021 Plan

Pete introduced the topic and Ron Beane, Senior Wildlife Biologist from ERO Resources, who provided some quick background and handed off the presentation to colleague Heidi Gerstung, ERO Ecologist. Heidi summarized the 2020 annual Bald Eagle monitoring report and updated the committee on the status of the nesting pair in the lead-up to calendar year 2021. She began the presentation by giving an overview of the Bald Eagle monitoring program in the study area, summarizing the significant dates and events from the 2018 and 2019 seasons, including observation and management actions in response to the Calibre Development project and other activities that may have adversely affected the eagles at the time. Ron Beane reviewed the scaled-back plan for monitoring in 2021, the relationship to Boulder County Open Space (where the new 'Nest E' is located), and the ongoing Vive construction project's relationship to the nest and surrounding area.

-Terra, with the nest being on perch E, what is the protocol for when the trail will be closed?

-Ron, they have closed a portion of the trail that bisected their foraging areas, but they have kept the trail along Stearns Lake open. They do have signs asking people to keep moving in that area, but we have not heard anything on plans to close additional trails.

-Pete, yes, we are not aware of closure plans at this time, although it seems very possible that the Cradleboard trail may close again, due to burrowing owls.

-Doug, I am curious what Boulder County is doing as far as monitoring?

-Ron, I know they did have some monitoring at Del Corso Park, but I am not sure what their plan or schedule is for now.

-Pete, I am not aware of outside consulting for monitoring on their part (like ERO), but they have staff and volunteers that actively monitor raptor sites, including this one.

-Doug, one would think they would close the trail as the nest is so close to the trail.

-Ron, if we determine that there is a need for that in our monitoring, we will talk to Broomfield staff and they can relay that information to Boulder County.

-Pete, We have found Boulder County to be pretty responsive to issues like nest disturbances. They have rangers who can come out and respond to concerns.

-Jack, we do have volunteers going out to monitor the nest as well.

-Doug, I am concerned about the part of the trail that is not closed.

-Dana, I agree, we do not go over to that area, but I do check in with friends who do go to that area and have them report back with any issues. Please report back to us with any issues.

-Heidi, I did go into that area. There are not specific signs at the trailhead about the nest.

-Dana, there was one sign for a while, and we have asked for more signage.

-Ray, I was not aware the signs were for the eagles, I thought it was about COVID. They are not specific.

-Rena, yes, the signs do not say anything about the eagles.

-Ray, perhaps more signage is needed at the main parking lot.

-Dana, we have provided them this feedback, but I believe they are trying to balance between advertising the eagles nest and keeping people moving.

-Pete, that is something we have heard as well -- about the balance between notifying people about the nest without creating an attraction where the signage inadvertently draws people towards the area. We can share those suggestions with Boulder staff, but I know they are trying to avoid creating an attraction with signage too.

-Dana, perch F was built in a dead cotton tree and therefore it did not have a suitable crotch to hold up a nest. We do not feel the chicks died due to the winter storm last April, but instead due to the poor nest structure in general. I also want to note that incubation started February 18th, this year.

5. Presentation on Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies 2020 Research: Mutualistic Association of Wintering Ferruginous hawks in Nesting Bald Eagle Territories

Dana Bove introduced himself and made some comments on the previous presentation, regarding the different perches and the eagles usage of different trees for nesting and foraging. Dana discussed the Ferruginous Hawks that winter in the Bald Eagle nest territory, their mutualistic relationship, and the numerous Bald Eagle perches.

-Doug, is perch E compromised in any way, like some of the past perches?

-Ron, I think that it is a good nesting tree and has a better crotch than the original nest, and is not as subject to the high winds. There are limited trees for them to nest in this area, but it is one of the better trees in the area.

-Dana, I think they have two choices in this area, and they got one of the best suited ones with that tree.

-Doug, in summary, you believe nest A would have been best with all things considered though?

-Dana, I think it is not great given several factors, but structure is the main reason. Ideally, I would like to see some structure support given to help, and we have talked about that possibility in the past.

-Ray, will this area be used by another set of eagles at some point?

-Dana, I think there is a possibility to get more eagles if there are trees and a good food source available.

-Ron, space, food source, and a good structure to build a nest in are the three things they will be seeking at any location.

6. Review of Shep's Crossing SECOND DRAFT Interpretive Sign

This agenda item was postponed until March, but the committee viewed the recent 9NEWS story on the bridge.

7. Request Recommendation on Name(s) for the Broomfield-owned Harmer Open Space and Professors Park Properties located west of I-25, east of County Road 7 and north of County Road 4

This agenda item was postponed until March.

8. Discussion of Transition to a New Chair and Vice Chair and Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for OSTAC

Pete introduced the topic.

-Doug, Ray, are you interested in being chair?

Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

February 25, 2021

Page 5

-Ray, I am waiting to see who may want to have a turn to participate. If no one else is interested, I will take it.

-Terra, I would be happy to do either the Chair or Vice Chair.

-Todd, I second those choices.

-Ray, I will stay Vice Chair if Terra is willing to be Chair.

-Terra, I would be happy to do that or vice versa.

-Ray, I would be happy staying Vice Chair.

Doug motioned to approve Terra as the Chair and Ray as the Vice Chair; Chris seconds; Chair- Terra Lenihan and Vice Chair-Ray Churgovich was passed unanimously.

9. Review and Approval of the January 28, 2021 OSTAC Meeting Minutes

1/28/21 Minutes: Terra motioned to approve the minutes; Michael seconds; Minutes were passed unanimously.

10. OSTAC Updates

Commerce St. and Old Wadsworth Blvd. Transportation Improvements

Pete discussed transportation improvements in the vicinity of Commerce Street and Old Wadsworth near the RTD Park and Ride at US 36. He noted some of the limited bike/pedestrian connections in general, and highlighted several upcoming connectivity opportunities for both the immediate sidewalks and bike lanes, as well as connections with the greater trails network beyond that neighborhood. Pete explained connections and upcoming projects near the mobile home neighborhood, with the new Hwy. 128/120th Avenue connection, street improvements along Upham Street, and scheduled improvements to the local section of 120th Avenue

-Ray, does this street crossing (Hwy. 128 and Wadsworth) have a crosswalk with a pedestrian median in between the two lanes of traffic? Could this crossing have signage and flashing lights for when pedestrians are present?

-Pete, no this one does not have a pedestrian median or flashers, but there is a full traffic light there and a crosswalk. So, pedestrians can safely cross there or further to the east at the Upham St. intersection

-Ray and Terra, thank you for looking into that.

Broomfield Community Center Trail

Pete discussed the trail on the east side of Broomfield Community Center adjacent to Brunner Reservoir and showed pictures, as it is now open.

Coyote Activity

Pete discussed coyote activity and public outreach, including response to concerns in the Anthem Highlands neighborhood.

Yates Neighborhood Trail Connection

Pete discussed the Yates Neighborhood Trail Connection, which was discussed at the January meeting and will be proposed and added to the CIP Planning Process. Open Space staff has discussed this project with the transportation planning staff as well, and they supported the project.

-Doug, have you spoken with the homeowners?

-Pete, not yet, as we do not know the timeline on the project yet. We will reach out when we have that confirmed, and there will be a public process.

Trail Counters

Jack discussed the Trail Counter at Shep's Crossing which was installed this week, and is up and running.

Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

February 25, 2021

Page 6

-Doug, what is the power source?

-Jack, on-board batteries, which will need to be replaced from time to time.

-Ranae, do you go out to collect the counters or does it upload automatically?

-Jack, you do need to go directly to the counters and get the data, as there is not wifi or bluetooth capability yet.

-Doug, what have we learned from our previous counters?

-Pete, we do not have much for current data. That is what has prompted this effort. The CDOT counters have not provided reliable data in recent years. We hope to have at least 5 counters in the field in 2021.

Wayfinding Project

Pete discussed the upcoming wayfinding project. OSTAC was asked to select three members to represent OSTAC on the Technical Committee to look at wayfinding signage, design as well as trail/pedestrian standpoints. Todd, Ranae, and Michael all volunteered to be a part of that committee. (Doug has previously volunteered to serve on this committee as well and was on the RFP selection committee. All four members will be involved at this time, since some meetings may be difficult for each person to attend).

Open Space Speakers Series

Pete discussed the upcoming Open Space Speakers Series, Owls of Broomfield by Emily Davenport, March 3, 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 25 OSTAC Meeting Attendance

Upcoming March 25 OSTAC Meeting--Attendance Check.

-Ranae, I will not be there.

-Terra, I will plan to be there at this time, and can probably attend virtually even if we travel.

-Ray, I may or may not be around.

-Pete, we will keep it on the schedule for now, as it seems like we will have enough members, but please let us know if you cannot attend.

Trails Day

-Terra, Trails Day for 2021, has that been canceled?

-Pete, We will have an event, but will not have the typical in-person gathering. We would like to design some kind of a self-guided walk with some interpretive features and/or scavenger hunt event at a specific location. We are working through some of the details now. If you have any specific ideas please let us know.

-Terra, that sounds great.

-Pete, yes that is not one where we can really move the date as it aligns with National Trails Day (June 5). We also want to note that Bike to Work Day has been rescheduled from June to October 22, at this time.

Other topics as requested by Citizens

None.

Other Topic Desired by OSTAC

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Minutes were prepared by Beverly Burbach and Jack Pritchard.