



## Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

*Minutes*  
*June 27, 2019*

### **Meeting Summary**

OSTAC visited Alexx & Michael's Pond to discuss the Problem-Based Learning Project with Centennial Elementary students and Broomfield Open Space Foundation volunteers, as well as the Forced Main Project going in on the east side of the open space. Next OSTAC visited the Vive Housing Project. The developer and biologist presented the plans for the construction and how the phasing would be modified to mitigate disturbance to the eagles. OSTAC also unanimously voted to approve the expansion of the Great Western prairie dog relocation site as well as to relocate prairie dogs to Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Finally, OSTAC received updates on trail connections to Boulder County, rumble strips at the Midway crossing, coyote conflicts and outreach, Rocky Mountain Greenway soil sampling, and upcoming open space events.

### **OSTAC (Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee)**

#### Present:

Patrick Tennyson, Chair  
Ray Churgovich, Vice-Chair  
Doug Grumann  
Terra Lenihan  
Michael McLane  
Chris Petrizzo  
Chris Kassel (alternate)

#### Absent:

Todd Cohen  
Councilmember Guyleen Castriotta  
Councilmember Stan Jezierski

#### Interested Citizens:

Annie Lessem, Broomfield Open Space Foundation volunteer, Broomfield resident  
Janis Lievens, Broomfield Open Space Foundation volunteer, Broomfield resident  
Carl Sawyer, Broomfield resident  
Walter Szymanski, Broomfield resident

#### Other staff, presenters, and consultants in attendance:

Kristan Pritz, Open Space and Trails Director  
Pete Dunlaevy, Open Space and Trails Manager  
Ellie Lanaghan, Open Space and Trails Technician  
Meghan Daly, Open Space and Trails Intern  
Kevin Standbridge, Deputy City and County Manager  
Libby Mojica, Vive Housing Project Engineer  
Katie Cooley, Vive Housing Project Biologist

## Agenda Minutes

### 1. Site Visits to Alexx & Michael's Pond and Vive Housing Project

OSTAC visited Alexx & Michael's Pond at Zuni Street and West 132nd Avenue. Annie Lessem and Janis Lievens from the Nature Coalition and Broomfield Open Space Foundation gave a summary of their Problem-Based Learning Project with Centennial Elementary students. Janis showed OSTAC the Adventure Backpacks that the students created and are available for families to borrow. Overall, Annie and Janis agreed that the project was a positive experience for both the teachers and students. OSTAC members then walked around the pond as Kristan explained the forced main project that will be running along the very eastern edge of the Open Space. The project will allow for the utility line to be installed and expand the sidewalk to 10 feet without impacting the native vegetation around the pond.

Next, OSTAC members visited the Vive Housing Project near Northwest Parkway and Via Varra. Kristan introduced Katy Cooley, developer representative and Libby Mojica, biologist from the project team and explained that staff will be working with them on an eagle mitigation plan. Libby explained that the project is being designed to minimize disturbance to the eagles. She showed the plans for the project and described how the 3-story townhomes will be placed in the middle of the project first to provide a visual buffer for the eagles to the rest of the construction area. Katy added that the construction phasing can also respond based on the eagle's breeding season. The project is expected to start at the end of this year to early next year, but is at least 2 years out from buildings going up. Kristan added that Broomfield is proposing to also monitor while the project is being constructed. Kristan also mentioned that two conservation easement property owners are requesting to remove prairie dogs that are impeding agricultural activities. Broomfield's Prairie Dog Conservation and Management Policy has provisions that allow for the extermination of prairie dogs on agricultural/ranching properties. The prairie dogs are one of the prey sources for the eagles and other wildlife. Open Space staff are exploring a variety of options to address the issue.

### 2. Call to Order by Patrick Tennyson, 7:50 p.m.

### 3. Introduction of Interested Citizens

All citizens held comments for items on the agenda.

### 4. Proposal to Expand the Great Western Prairie Dog Relocation Site and Allow Relocation of Prairie Dogs to Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

Kristan explained that staff is requesting an expansion of the prairie dog relocation site at Great Western, and to allow relocation to Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (Rocky Flats). The proposal for relocation to Rocky Flats was officially accepted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Jefferson County (Jeffco).

>Ray, Will there be any public outcry to relocating them to Rocky Flats?

>Kristan, We have not had any yet, but there could be at the City Council meeting.

Pete showed the most recent map of the relocation site at Great Western. He explained that the polygon is based on 500-foot setbacks from landowners and 1,000 foot buffer from the reservoir. The population has gone up again since this count, and after mapping this summer, some areas may already be infilled to the south. We are hoping that this addition of 10-15 acres in area could accommodate another 100-200 prairie dogs. We will get a formal recommendation from our biologist and save this area for the remaining prairie dogs at the Midway-Hoyt Overpass site. We will be breaking ground on the overpass in early fall (if all goes as planned), and will complete another relocation at that time. Jeffco approved our application to relocate 500 prairie dogs to Rocky Flats. We would normally come to OSTAC and City Council first on getting this approval, but we needed to meet a narrow deadline for the permit to be accepted. We also have a permit

pending with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). There are relocations needed at Midway and Lowell, Trisson and Ball Aerospace. We have never been able to relocate prairie dogs outside of Broomfield, and now have that opportunity so close to our border. We would like to get your approval for these relocation sites and a recommendation to proceed to City Council.

>Michael, Why is Jeffco offering to take prairie dogs from other counties?

>Pete, They don't have a lot of relocation sites and USFWS wants to restore the short grass prairie dog colony on Rocky Flats. Some of the prairie dog advocates heard about the applications opening up and informed us about the opportunity. Four applications were accepted through Jeffco, including Broomfield. About 300 prairie dogs have already been relocated to Rocky Flats. There has been a small population of prairie dogs in the area for years, so they are not completely introducing them. They will be allowed to grow in the northeast corner of the refuge, away from the contaminated Department of Energy (DOE) area. Any prairie dogs that propagate in the DOE area will be actively controlled.

>Michael, Since there will be soil sampling for the possible Jefferson Parkway, will there be any testing in the prairie dog relocation zone?

>Kristan, Both the Jefferson Parkway project and Rocky Mountain Greenway are currently testing only on the eastern corridor for the roadway and access entries for the Greenway Trail, but there has been a lot of testing across Rocky Flats over the years. Contamination is generally lower in the northeast corner of the site given that it is upwind from the Department of Energy retained area.

>Ray, Are people concerned about prairie dog contamination?

>Kristan, There are citizens with concerns about contamination at Rocky Flats so there could be concerns about relocating prairie dogs.

>Carl Sauer, The facility was raided by the FBI because of gross negligence. There might be burial sites with no records, but I doubt prairie dogs would be the ones to discover them.

>Doug, What kind of timeline are we working with on the Rocky Flats permit?

>Pete, It only covers us within the next year, but we could perhaps get an extension.

>Terra, Would we go through the application again for more prairie dogs?

>Pete, This might be a one shot deal, but they may also be flexible and allow extensions. Jeffco came out to the site and could clearly see our need for relocations. They are sympathetic to Broomfield since we border Rocky Flats, and they realize how affected we are by being the smallest county in Colorado. We actually have a strong case that we have no immediate, available location.

>Ray, How long will this opportunity stay open?

>Pete, We don't know. There has been no mention of a second round at this point. We can take up to 500 prairie dogs, which was the highest of the four accepted applications. They wanted projects that are ready to go within a year. It is a bit dependent on the development projects going forward, and they have to be ready and pay. We are not offering Great Western to anybody yet.

Doug motions to approve the relocation areas; Michael seconds; unanimous approval from OSTAC to send to City Council.

## 5. Northwest Parkway Underpass at Wildgrass & Trail to Rock Creek and Coal Creek Trails

>Carl, I am concerned about the Cradleboard trail closures in Boulder County that adversely affects Broomfield residents. The closure affects Lac Amora and the surrounding residents. The offered detour is not optimal. I am excited about the Midway overpass. But this area needs similar collaboration that occurred to establish the Ruth Roberts Connector Trail. The closure is from March to October, but Boulder County Open Space and Parks should be able to reroute in Broomfield rather than on the old Brainard Drive.

Kristan showed the Cradleboard trail on a map with the current reroute. She explained that the trail is closed because of burrowing owls in the area. We will be meeting with Boulder County trail staff on July 9th to explore some options. We will have to see what they are thinking.

>Carl, The detour is much longer as well. I enjoy being out on the original trail. I work at CU in Boulder and ride my bike or take the bus to work. I also like to take my kids on the trail, but I get nervous with the detour. I know many of these things are in the works, and understand it is a process.

>Kristan, We will be getting back to you on how this discussion goes. We are also working on another connection in Wildgrass by the Northwest Parkway to the Rock Creek and Coal Creek trails. We will get more of a handle on the project timeline once it is in the Capital Improvements Program schedule. This project was delayed because of the many other 2013 flood repair projects that Boulder County needed to address. We have a good relationship with Boulder County and they are advocates for pedestrians and cyclists.

>Carl, First I concluded that I would argue for the importance for human use in this area, but after some scientific research, I don't think it's necessary to close trails. I think the closure might actually be detrimental to the owls and their adaptations to environment. Owls can adapt and thrive where humans are in the ecosystem. We can coexist.

>Doug, I've never seen anybody off trail in that area.

>Ray, Or dogs off leash.

>Carl, I think the owls could be protected through education. We can have a successful ecosystem and not block off the trail.

>Patrick, We appreciate that feedback.

>Carl, I will send PDFs of this research to Kristan for dissemination.

## 6. Review and Approval of the April 25, 2019 OSTAC Meeting Minutes

Michael motioned to approve the minutes; Doug seconds; Minutes were passed unanimously.

## 7. OSTAC Updates

- Decision to not provide Rumble Strips at Industrial Lane for the Hoyt-Midway Overpass

Kristan presented OSTAC with the rendering of the overpass and the grand vision of a second overpass crossing over Industrial Lane. She explained that Broomfield's transportation engineer and transportation planner were concerned about the rumble strips along Industrial Lane. The reason for concern was if a cyclist weaved out into the road, they could get a wheel caught in the strips. Staff will still do the HAWK light, signage, and an electronic sign with monitoring. We will follow up with other options if it is determined that more is needed. The transportation engineer and planner feel that this plan will work well.

>Ray, Why will we not be going to grand plan right away?

>Kristan, We did not have the budget or land originally. We do now own the land and are waiting on more funds. We have proposed a design of the second bridge for next year. The general opinion is to see how the first crossing works, and determine what should be done from there. The Capital Improvements Program has to balance many projects, and others may be a higher priority. The first bridge is ordered, and being constructed in Greeley. The railroad also officially approved the design and construction documents.

>Pete, Delaying another year would not go over well with people who need this overpass.

- Determine Date for Our December Meeting

Kristan explained that the meeting could be on either December 5th or 12th, depending on member availability. We cannot use this room for the entire year due to elections in the fall, and staff would like to reserve rooms as soon as possible.

>Patrick, The 5th is better for me, but I can make the 12th work if need be. We could use the Butterfly Pavilion for location.

OSTAC members agreed to meet on December 5th at the Butterfly Pavilion.

- Coyote Outreach

Ellie explained the increase in coyote conflicts around Broomfield lately. Two small, unattended dogs were attacked in Redleaf near Broomfield County Commons, and one dog was attacked on-leash at noon in the Hunter Douglas business park. Staff have also received complaints of coyote activity at The Field and mounting public comments regarding coyotes on NextDoor. In total, there have been eight coyote attacks on dogs this year, which is higher than in past recent years. Overall though, conflicts are still lower than they were in 2009-2012. In response, staff have placed signs at Hunter Douglas, monitored areas for attractants and unusual behavior, and disseminated coyote awareness information through email list-serves, Enterprise ads, website, social media, digital signage, and Channel 8. The Coyote Crew has also done canvassing in the Redleaf neighborhood and several outreach booths. Finally, staff will be pursuing high intensity hazing with rubber buckshot on coyotes in the Redleaf neighborhood and Hunter Douglas business park. There may also be an issue of potential coyote feeding in the Midway Blvd. area by the office parks so staff is investigating this issue too.

>Michael, What training is required for using the rubber buckshot, and does this require a police escort?

>Pete, Staff trained in high-intensity hazing are Deputized and go through shotgun safety at the shooting range with Broomfield Police. Hazers always contact Dispatch before retrieving the shotgun and heading out into the field.

>Ray, Do you know why conflicts have gone down?

>Ellie, We hope that the decline in conflicts is due to our increased efforts in education and outreach on coyote safety, but we don't have any specific evidence on the cause.

- Rocky Mountain Greenway Soil Sampling

Kristan explained that the sampling consultant, Engineering Analytics, would be starting next week on the sampling, weather permitting. The depth of the sampling was 0-2" originally, but Broomfield City Council wanted deeper testing when the protocol was reviewed. She summarized the general testing protocol. Council will then review the results of the sampling to determine if Broomfield will be going forward with Rocky Mountain Greenway project. There will be a whole other sampling process for the Jefferson Parkway project. Kristan then showed OSTAC a map of the sampling grid. Testing will also occur on city of Westminster land.

>Ray, Is there any concern for public backlash when people see the drilling for the sampling?

>Kristan, I am not sure, but we will try to get back to people quickly and let them know what's going on out there.

>Ray, Where is the Indiana overpass and the current Westminster path located?

>Kristan, The path currently ends on our property and would continue going west. This may change based on the sampling results.

- Upcoming Events

Ellie presented the upcoming Open Space events:

- Metzger Volunteer Project to Paint the Storage Shed
  - Friday, June 28 at Metzger Farm from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Metzger Farmstead Celebration
  - Tuesday, July 23 at Metzger Farm from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- National Night Out

- Tuesday, August 6 at Broomfield County Commons from 5 to 8 p.m.
- Wildlife Masters Outreach
  - Saturdays 6/22, 7/27, and 8/24 at Home Depot from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
  - Tuesdays 7/16, 8/13, and 9/24 at Broomfield Farmer's Market from 4 to 7 p.m.
- Broomfield Nature Programs
  - Friday Kids' Classes, Wednesday Preschool Walks, and Family Sunset Hikes

## **8. Other Topics as Desired by OSTAC**

No other topics were desired by OSTAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Ellie Lanaghan.