

Roll Call

Dennis Kuhn called the April 19, 2010 BOSAC meeting to order at 5:37 pm. Other BOSAC members present included Jen McAtamney, Scott Yule, Monique Merrill, Devon O'Neil, Erin Hunter, and Jeff Cospolich. Staff members present were Heide Andersen, Scott Reid, Mark Truckey, Peter Grosshuesch, Tim Gagen and Bree Schacht. Greg Ruckman, Jack Rueppel, Kevin Ahern, Gary Shimanowitz, Christy Carello, Barbara Galloway, Lori Kennedy, Dale Wilks, and Janet Cox, John Quigley, Gene Dayton and Matt Dayton were also present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with one change. Gondola hours will be discussed on Wednesday April 21 at 11:00 am in Council Chambers and are not the purview of BOSAC.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Open Space and Trails

Cucumber Gulch Summer Trail Use

Ms. Andersen provided an overview of the issue of management of recreational use in Cucumber Gulch during summer months. Three new lodges will be operational this summer, and potentially the BreckConnect gondola will operate during summer 2010. The Cucumber Gulch Preserve is a highly valued open space area with a sensitive fen wetland within it. The goal is to balance the recreational use while preserving the ecological integrity of the area. Existing research provides a good baseline for any future changes in recreational activity and impacts.

Mr. Kuhn: The goal is to discuss recreational impacts, not gondola hour operations. That discussion will occur on 4/21 at 11:00 am. If the hiking operation is permitted, I suggest that we cut down on the number of tours from the proposed one hike per day, four days a week.

Mr. Wilks: We plan to limit the groups to eight people total on tours (including guide). We plan operate the hikes starting in Mid-June at approximately 1 pm. We are amenable to changing the route, etc. and are open to suggestions from BOSAC. Cucumber provides interesting tours. Costs will be \$14 for adults and \$9 for children for the Cucumber Gulch afternoon.

Ms. Kennedy: Our main goal is to educate the guests in Leave No Trace and other topics, while also entertaining them.

Mr. Kuhn: In the sake of full disclosure, Scott Yule and I are both employees of the ski resort.

Ms. Hunter: My office also represents the resort.

Mr. Truckey: The approach should be to divulge that info to the rest of the group. If the remainder of the commission is comfortable with you participating in this discussion, then you can remain involved in the discussion.

BOSAC unanimously agreed to allow Denis, Scott and Erin to be involved in this discussion.

Ms. Merrill: Have you all limited the number of hikes you plan to lead?

Ms. Kennedy: Our first proposal was fairly vague, so we limited the number of hikes to four days a week with one hike and seven guests and one guide (M, T, F, S). Those days have been shown to be the most popular at other places. Plus Thursday is when the Heritage Alliance and the Recreation Center offer their hikes.

Ms. Andersen: One possibility would be to start and end the hikes at Shock Hill to preclude access to the most sensitive portion of the Gulch.

Mr. Wilks: We could also start and end the hikes at the Nordic Center.

Ms. Merrill: One or two days per week in the Gulch seems like the appropriate amount.

Mr. O'Neil: Scott Cline also brought up the direct competition issue with Town run tours. Also this is on Town land, which makes me concerned. We have three new lodges in place, which will likely impact the area. Perhaps try with one or two hikes per week, then monitor from there.

Mr. Rueppel: The guided tours are able to protect the resource through a guided hike. Perhaps with some cooperation, the hiking groups could assist with the monitoring needs that the Town already has. Adding people who are educated and skilled and could assist with Cucumber protection efforts.

Ms. McAtamney: I am struggling with using public open space for an entity that has access to a large land base on the ski area in direct competition with a town program. Money raised through hiking programs should go to protecting the Cucumber Gulch Preserve. I think we should answer the other questions in the packet before addressing the hiking proposal.

Mr. Wilks: The money generated from the tours will go directly to paying the guides. We could also place more use on Sawmill and fewer hikes in the Gulch.

Mr. Kuhn: I think we should find a way to partner with the ski area to establish a new trail that would connect the Peak 7 base with the Peak 8 base, then up through Timber Trail and down Four O'clock Trail. That trail would help alleviate some of the use in the Gulch.

Mr. Shimanowitz: We are committed to building that trail this summer with Jack Rueppel's crew.

Mr. Rueppel: The goal is to have bikes on the gondola, but only those that have a bike park pass for the mountain. So, we plan to only allow bikes that have a bike haul pass for the upper mountain. These folks would use the Colorado Lift once they get to the Peak 8 base.

Ms. Merrill: I'm concerned that people will still head into the Gulch.

Mr. Rueppel: You can't really see the summer trails from the Gondola. Also, the Peaks Connect trail is not that obvious when you go to that area. The Peaks Trail is much more obvious and so I think people will not be lead to that trail. Also, I think we should discourage the concierges from spreading the word about the Peaks Connect. I think most people will head up the Peaks Trail instead of down the Peaks Connect. The gondola could also download for free with bikes. That would help reduce some of the use in the Gulch. I think signage at the Peaks Trail could also help direct people the appropriate way down, and not through the Gulch. We should be encouraging people to head downhill the more sustainable way. The busses are also a large transportation component- 140,000 people last year. Also, people like to walk uphill first (up the ski area) then downhill on the way home, so I don't think that the new bed base will have that large of an impact on recreational use in the Gulch.

Mr. Cospolich: Would you allow people to get off at Crystal Peaks Lodge?

Mr. Rueppel: We haven't really discussed that, but it is a challenge to get from the mid station to the Peaks Connect, and the Peaks Trail will be more conspicuous and obvious for a recreational user. I think the only people heading to the Gulch will seek it out because it is not that easy to get there by mistake.

Ms. Carello: I think the Peaks Connect Trail is more obvious because it is closer to the road. The Peaks Trail is less obvious because it is hard to climb up that short hill to get to the actual trail.

Mr. Cospolich: I think the lift pass restrictions make sense and are a good limit on the number of bikes that will go into the Gulch. I am fine with the hiking proposal. Some of the fees should help with Town costs. We need to reserve the right to alter the location or timing or number of hikes.

Ms. Merrill: I would like to see one hike in the Gulch and one on Sawmill. Conditions could be numerous, but I would like to think about that more. I agree with Jeff that we need to reserve the right to change the permit based on trail issues.

Mr. Yule: I like managing people, so I am in favor of organized tours. I would like to preserve as much solitude and silence as possible, because that was identified as a high value through the VERP study. I think we should require the hiking groups to be quiet. I would also like to one or two tours per week in Cucumber would be my preference. We also need to improve and change the signage at the Peaks Trailhead and the Peaks Connect access to encourage more use on the Peaks Trail and less in the Gulch.

Mr. O'Neil: I'm all right bringing people into these public lands. One hike in the Gulch, maybe two and two on Sawmill seems reasonable to me. This is Town land that also supports a Town program. During the weeks that the Town operates their tours, we should direct the BSR tours to Sawmill. It's better to have an educated person in there guiding than a free for all. I am also supportive of the Town receiving some of the proceeds from the tours to help offset trail maintenance costs. The wedge parcel is wet, so trail conditions should also be considered. If it is mucky, these tours should not run.

Ms McAtamney: One per week in Cucumber is the most I would like to see. I also like the idea of targeting the most sustainable routes. Sawmill three days per week would be fine. A partnership is ideal. Volunteer trail work could help with some of my concerns. I like educated users, so that is why I am supportive of the tours. Work with the concierges to encourage people to use other trails.

Mr. Cospolich: More education on the gondola towers would be helpful. I am still concerned that people will drop into the Gulch from the new structures at Peak 7 and 8.

Mr. Kuhn: Two hikes on Sawmill and two in Cucumber seems reasonable to me. An additional trail from the Peaks Trail to the Peak 7 and 8 and Timber Trail is really important. More info to Peaks Trail users (busses, gondola, etc.) would help as well. The ski area should craft the correct message with Town staff so that a consistent message is delivered to the users. A trail from the Peaks Trailhead across the base of Peak 7 and Peak 8 through Timber Trail and to Four O'Clock is critical. Perhaps people dismount at the base of Peak 8.

Mr. Rueppel: The Friends of Breckenridge Trails program is hosting two weed pulls in Cucumber Gulch this summer. Hopefully, ski area folks will participate.

Mr. Quigley: I live year round in Shock Hill and the biggest problem we have is people getting lost. Having a guide would ensure folks don't get lost and will also learn about the area.

BOSAC agreed to allow BSR to operate the hiking tours twice a week in Cucumber and two times a week on the Sawmill Trail. Dr. Christy Carello will also help train the hiking guides. BOSAC requested an update on the tours mid-summer.

Mr. Kuhn: What about question number two?

Mr. O'Neil: I think the lift pass requirement will help, but I am concerned that packaging the lift passes with lodging will drive more downhill traffic into the Gulch. I'm worried about people "yo-yo-ing" the gondola.

Mr. Rueppel: We could limit the number of times the gondola could be used on the lift pass.

Mr. Yule: The signage and entry point to the Peaks Trail and Peaks Connect need to be improved. Seasonal closures are also necessary.

Ms. Hunter: I am strongly supportive of a trail that goes around the Gulch- across the bases of Peaks 7 and 8 and Timber Trail, then down to Four O'clock. We might need to restrict use in the area in the future. This summer is a test run. Limiting people from "yo-yo-ing" is key. We need to post trails closed seasonally.

Ms. Merrill: I agree with Ms. Hunter. This is a great opportunity to partner with the ski area to educate people on best uses of the area. Encouraging use and descent away from the Gulch is

important. I want to see follow through, though. Let's make sure we are doing everything we can to preserve the Gulch.

Mr. Rueppel. We could not show the Peaks Connect Trail on the ski area map. That would help drive use away from the Gulch.

Mr. Cospolich: I think the ski lift pass restriction is a good first step. The only real issue is the Peaks Connect, as the rest of the trails in the Gulch are very durable. Cross referencing the level of use on the trails with the lodge occupancy will help reveal the impact of the lodges.

Ms. McAtamney: I agree with Ms. Hunter and Mr. Yule.

Mr. Kuhn: I agree. This partnership is very important. The biggest fear is that we don't know what will happen in terms of use this summer. This summer is a test.

Ms. McAtamney: I think monitoring this summer is very important. Given how special Cucumber is, we need to think about more controls on access and education in the Gulch. Perhaps only people who have taken a class can enter the Gulch. I am concerned that we are loving the area to death. This may require extreme measures.

Ms. Hunter: We are in a balancing act. We should encourage people to use other trails in other areas in lieu of the Gulch.

Mr. Kuhn: The concierge issue remains. Can the ski area get with the hospitality groups to encourage access to the Gulch only via the guided hikes?

Mr. Wilks: That is our plan.

Mr. Yule: I would like to see more information on the idea of Cucumber being a "wildlife cul-de-sac" as stated by the ski area's consultant. Can we get more detail on the wildlife that exists in 2010? Do the moose raise their offspring in the Gulch? I am looking for more information on the cumulative impacts of the development around the Gulch.

Ms. Hunter: We should monitor the counters more often.

BOSAC agreed to continue the monitoring program as is.

Mr. Gene Dayton: I would like to see us encourage people to use the gondola for transportation, so folks in Shock Hill or Peak 7 can use it to ferry their bikes and not use cars. If it is going to run in the summer, we should encourage people to use it to the maximum. We've been grooming the gulch for 31 years and only saw moose starting five years ago. The moose are now overgrazing the area. I am concerned about decisions being made with inadequate information. We want to mitigate any impacts we caused and do not want to lose the Meadow loop, since we have lost so much terrain over the years. I'm glad you are monitoring the area. Limiting the number of people on tours will just result in more uneducated people in the Gulch. They'll just go on their own. I would hope the number of tours increase with demand through the years.

Mr. Quigley: We have a lot of folks getting lost in the Gulch. There is not one map in the Gulch. I like the idea of guided tours. We want to be an equal partner. Work with us on this issue. You could make the Peaks Connect trail a black diamond to dissuade users on it. We want to ensure long term access to this area. Putting a fence around the Gulch is not a good option. We want people to have a good experience in this area.

Ms. Carello: I don't see Cucumber Gulch as a cul-de-sac. There are wildlife corridors that are very important, including the Theobald property and the Wedge parcel. The monitoring has shown that the moose use the area for reproduction and calving. We see calves during May and all summer long. We have many neo-tropical migratory songbirds that are fledging there. The area is still very valuable, and is still suitable as Boreal Toad habitat.

Summer Trail Map Review

Mr. Reid outlined the current draft of the trail map.

Ms. Merrill: Are we keeping the Recpath inset map on there?

Mr. Reid: Summit County wants us to retain that map. We could potentially try to develop a more conceptual map with arrows pointing to destinations.

Ms. Hunter: Is there language about seasonal closures? (Yes, in the existing text.) I think we should simplify the recpath map to make it more legible.

Mr. Cospolich: I think we should put the gondola alignment on there.

Ms. Merrill: I think this is a great first attempt and the map is pretty comprehensive.

Mr. Kuhn: I think it is better than anything I predicted on our first attempt.

Mr. Cospolich: Do we plan to revise and reprint the map next year? (Possibly, depending on the degree of necessary changes.) Also, I don't like the wetland symbology.

Ms. McAtamney: I think you should remove the photo associated with the one loop.

Ms. Merrill: How many do we plan to print? (10,000 for a first print run)

Mr. Reid: We plan to have this printed by Memorial Day. With a press check two weeks away, we wanted BOSAC input.

Ms. McAtamney: This is my first time seeing this and I think it looks really good. I would strongly recommend you pay Erin to go to the press check. That is important.

Xcel Tree Clearing Request

Ms. Andersen outlined the background for the Xcel tree clearing request.

Ms. McAtamney: I suggest you ask Red White and Blue Fire District what they really need to effectively fight a fire along the power lines. Go with 200 feet or so, then double check with RWB.

BOSAC agreed to target 200 feet as a width, then double check with RWB Fire District to ensure this amount is sufficient for fighting fires.

Upper Blue Nordic Task Force Discussion

Ms. Andersen updated BOSAC on the status of the UB Nordic Task Force work. The committee has made great progress and will likely have a draft by the June BOSAC meeting.

Elect BOSAC Officers

BOSAC reelected Dennis Kuhn as the Chair and Jeff Cospolich as the Vice Chair for the next year.

Commissioner Issues

Ms. Merrill: I want to see Vail Resorts/ Breckenridge Ski Area be a good partner on the Cucumber Gulch stuff. We will see more traffic up there this summer and the ski area could be a great partner. We need accountability and follow through.

Mr. Kuhn: I'd like to see a list of points of agreement between BOSAC and the ski area to be given to Jen for her discussion at the Council level on Wednesday. Perhaps we should also establish the Friends of the Cucumber Gulch Preserve to help oversee the protection of the Gulch, or help fold folks like John Quigley from Shock Hill to be a more active partner in protecting the Gulch.

Mr. Yule: We should get Shock Hill and other homeowner associations to come together for the good of the Gulch. This was spelled out in the SAIC report. Let's experiment with the hiking tours, but we should also present to their HOA meetings. BOSAC members could be a part of the presentations to the HOA groups.

Mr. O'Neil: Should we have the ski area clean up the water discharge before they are allowed to guide hikes in the Gulch? (Staff is working on this issue.)

Mr. Kuhn: Are people really getting lost in the Gulch? I am concerned about knee-jerk reactions regarding the Gulch. We should continue to monitor the Gulch and the trails in that area and leave all of our options on the table.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled BOSAC meeting is on May 17, 2010 at 5:30 pm in the Administrative Conference Room in the Breckenridge Town Hall (150 Ski Hill Road). BOSAC also agreed to change its June meeting to June 14th to accommodate the Sustainability Plan meeting on June 21st.

Ms. McAtamney motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Cospolich seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Dennis Kuhn, Chair