

TOWN OF BRECKENRIDGE
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION
Monday, March 19, 2012
150 Ski Hill Road

- 5:30 Call to Order, Roll Call
- 5:35 Discussion/approval of Minutes – February 27, 2012
- 5:40 Discussion/approval of Agenda
- 5:45 Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)
- 5:50 Staff Summary
- Golden Horseshoe Management Plan update
 - Claimjumper/Wedge Land Exchange update
 - V3 Ranch PUD application update
- 6:00 Open Space and Trails
- 2011 Cucumber Gulch Preserve Conservation Monitoring presentation
 - Peaks Connect Trail discussion
- 8:00 Adjourn

For further information, please contact the Open Space and Trails Program at 970-547-3155 (Scott) or 970-453-3371 (Chris).

Memorandum

To: Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission
From: Open Space Staff
Re: March 19, 2012 meeting

Staff Summary**Golden Horseshoe Management Plan update**

The Golden Horseshoe Management Plan has been reviewed and approved by both the Town Council and the Summit Board of County Commissioners. Staff expects that the final version to be signed by the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger shortly, thereby finalizing the plan's approval.

Claimjumper/Wedge Land Exchange update

The USFS land exchange involving the Cucumber Wedge and Claimjumper parcels is on the verge of being completed and will hopefully close by the end of March. Staff will keep BOSAC updated on any progress of this land exchange.

V3 Ranch PUD application update

John Vincze, the owner of V3 Ranch, was instrumental in the dedication and construction of the Barney Ford Trail and the partially-constructed V3 Trail. Mr. Vincze has applied to Summit County Planning for a PUD amendment that would upzone his 47-acre property and add two additional units to the currently allowable two units. As part of the application, Mr. Vincze would also convey a 3.6 acre parcel of open space, which would include a significant portion of the Country Boy Road. Staff presented this application to Town Council, who generally supported the application with a few minor recommended edits. Staff will be submitting agency referral comments to Summit County shortly and will keep BOSAC updated on any progress with the V3 Trail construction.

Open Space and Trails**2011 Cucumber Gulch Preserve Conservation Monitoring presentation**

Dr. Christy Carello has completed her report detailing wildlife and vegetation research in Cucumber Gulch Preserve during the 2011 field season. The (very large) report is available at the website below. Please download (it will take awhile) and review the report, then come to the BOSAC meeting prepared to discuss the 2011 findings. The Executive Summary at the front of the document provides an overview of Dr. Carello's findings. Dr. Carello will be in attendance to present the report and answer BOSAC members' questions.

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/39124191/CGReport2011.pdf>

Peaks Connect Trail discussion

In 2011, BOSAC and the Breckenridge Ski Resort (BSR) discussed designing an alternative route from the Peaks Trail to Town that avoids Cucumber Gulch Preserve and

the dismount area at the base of Peak 8. During these meetings three main alternative designs were discussed, with each option having some logistical difficulty.

- **Bridge** – Constructing a bridge over the Alpine Slide was initially viewed as the preferred alternative. After further research, an estimated cost of \$80,000 was outlined, yielding minimal support from the Town and BSR.
- **Use of Existing Ski Resort Trails and Roads** – As an alternative to constructing the bridge, BSR proposed directing users onto existing ski area roads and trails to enable users to travel above the Alpine Slide. Following a BOSAC site visit, this option was viewed as unviable due to the amount of additional climbing required to bypass the Alpine Slide.
- **Creation of a new trail** – A new trail concept was outlined with the goal of diverting users from the Peaks Trail well before the existing trailhead, enabling users to go around the top of the Alpine Slide with minimal climbing. The primary concern with this concept is the NEPA requirements of a newly proposed trail that might cross environmentally sensitive areas. BSR was asked to approach the U.S. Forest Service to evaluate the possibility of a new trail design. No recent update has been received from BSR regarding this concept.

Staff seeks to clarify BOSAC's input on the Peaks Connect Trail completion and requests BOSAC answer the following questions:

- 1) *Does BOSAC still agree that the new trail creation is the preferred approach, even with a longer completion timeframe?*
- 2) *Does BOSAC want staff to work with BSR to pursue this option?*
- 3) *What other input does BOSAC have regarding this proposed trail connection?*

Roll Call

Dennis Kuhn called the February 27, 2012 BOSAC meeting to order at 5:38 pm. Other BOSAC members present included Scott Yule, Devon O’Neil, Jeff Carlson, Mike Dudick, Erin Hunter and Jeff Cospolich. Staff members present were Peter Grosshuesch, Mark Truckey, Chris Kulick, and Scott Reid. Gary Shimanowitz, Jeff Zimmerman, Bryce Henninger and Randy May (Breckenridge Ski Area), were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Public Comments

There were no public comments

Staff Summary

Cucumber Gulch Preserve Management Plan update

Golden Horseshoe Management Plan update

Open Space and Trails

2012 Cucumber Gulch Preserve Conservation Monitoring

Scott Reid outlined the proposed 2012 monitoring program budget.

		Cost Estimate	Description
EcoMetrics	General monitoring	\$10,400	Streamline ambient monitoring program
	Wetlands extent - Upper CG	\$27,600	More refined study of wetland extent in Upper Cucumber Gulch to track progress or loss
	Hydrology	\$13,000	Quantify water source hydrology (volumes, duration etc.) to assist with facility design and evaluate mitigation success
	Sediment	\$5,000	Quantify sediment discharge to assist with possible facility design and evaluate mitigation success
	Channel stability	\$7,600	Monitor Boreas Creek channel stability
Emerald Planet	Avian Population Monitoring	\$1,275	Survey songbird population
	Amphibia	\$1,410	Survey boreal toad population
	Beaver Lodge Survey	\$1,065	Determine activity or inactivity of area beaver lodges
	Beaver population monitoring	\$2,622	Quantify relative abundance of beavers and muskrats
	Weed Survey	\$750	Determine location and distribution of noxious weeds
	Photo documentation	\$900	Repeat photo points to track vegetation patterns

Motion sensor cameras (5 original + 4 new)	\$4,230	Evaluate human and animal behavior patterns at set locations
Report Preparation	\$2,175	Write annual report
Indirect Costs	\$2,165	Administrative costs
Batteries	\$500	Batteries for motion cameras
	<u>\$80,692</u>	TOTAL

"Cutting Room Floor"	Avian Population Monitoring	\$3,500	Increase duration of songbird surveys to match previous research timeframes
	Community Outreach	\$900	Attend public meetings and provide public education info
	Docent for July weekends	\$1,143	Train and oversee volunteer docents for some summer weekends
	Beaver suitability research	unknown	Research beaver population dynamics and requirements with respect to Cucumber Gulch

Mr. O’Neil – What would cost \$7,600 to monitor Boreas Creek’s channel stability? (Mr. Reid – The study would survey several data points along the creek bed multiple times in the year for channel incision, bank erosion etc.)

Ms. Hunter – What are we cutting out from previous years monitoring efforts? (Mr. Reid – We are cutting out many of the redundant measurements that are also conducted by Tetra Tech, eliminating heavy metals testing, and reducing the frequency of some data collection. This is consistent with the direction provided at the last BOSAC meeting.)

Mr. Kuhn – Does the Ski Resort conduct any monitoring of sedimentation? (Mr. Zimmerman – There are a few water quality monitoring wells below the base of Peak 8; also Sawmill Creek, Lehman Creek and Boreas Creek are monitored for turbidity and other hydrology values.)

Mr. Cospolich – What are the future monitoring costs anticipated to be? (Mr. Reid – Our goal is to reduce the annual overall annual costs of research in the Gulch, but we will still need to information to help us manage the area. Annual costs might fluctuate, given the need to study some measures periodically every few years.)

Mr. Cospolich – Are these the original budget numbers from the consultants? (Mr. Reid – We worked with the consultants to get the monitoring program within the \$80,000 budget. The original estimate was \$95,000.)

Mr. Dudick – We should spend more money on overall Cucumber Gulch-wide avian studies. We should not be pennywise and pound foolish. We need that information for comparison with any potential Gondola alignment study.

Mr. Yule – Is the \$1,275 avian monitoring figure just a gondola corridor study or an entire gulch study? (Mr. Reid – It is an entire Gulch study for one month. The gondola corridor research would be a separate study and cost.) I feel we need to spend more than 10 hours on an avian study.

Mr. Dudick – Does the remainder of BOSAC agree with increasing (\$3,500) the avian monitoring budget before I advocate for more funding to Council tomorrow night. (All –agree)

Mr. Kuhn – For the hydrology and sediment research (\$18,000 total), I would like the ski resort to partner with us on those costs.

Mr. Dudick – We need to know how much sediment is coming into the Gulch so we can properly design a solution to mitigate the sediment load, right? (Yes)

Mr. Shimanowitz – I can provide the data we have related to sediment in Boreas Creek. Resource Engineering has this data for the past eight years or so.

Mr. Zimmerman - We can also provide background information from other creeks for comparison.

Mr. May – We have data prior to the development on Peak 8 that may help establish a baseline.

Mr. Grosshuesch – We still have to ask if the sediment is too high even if it has remained consistent previous to the Peak 8 development.

Mr. Zimmerman & Mr. May – We are currently working with a consultant (Mike Claffey) to design an energy dissipater to mitigate the water flow into the Gulch from the Boreas Creek culvert. He also agrees that diverting water to the north into the defunct beaver ponds is a good idea. But, before that happens, we will also need to prep the site so that any beaver reintroduction efforts succeed.

Mr. Dudick – Is there a budget range from 2013 on for remediation. (Mr. Reid – I don't have solid numbers but it will primarily consist of engineering design and machine work. We need to work with the ski area and both consultants to narrow the focus of any potential solution.)

BOSAC unanimously recommended an increase in the avian budget by \$3,500 to continue the Cucumber-wide avian studies as in previous years.

Ms. Hunter – The \$3,500 is consistent with Council's prioritization of Cucumber Gulch for natural resource monitoring.

Summer Gondola Hours

Mr. Reid outlined the history of the summer operations of the gondola. Under the gondola development agreement, summer operation of the gondola is at Town Council's discretion. 2010

was the first summer in which the gondola operated and BSR requested a June 18th starting date. Dr. Christy Carello, the Town's wildlife consultant, recommended an August starting date in order to avoid gondola operations during bird nesting, chick rearing and moose calving periods, among others. Council opted for a July 1st gondola starting date in 2010, and dedicated funds to evaluate impacts of the gondola operation on wildlife. Dr. Carello conducted the 2010 gondola impacts study, which showed localized impacts to avian abundance, specifically Wilson's warbler populations, along the gondola corridor during the week in which the gondola began summer operation. In agreeing to the July 1st start date, BSR agreed to the conditions outlined in the attached 2010 letter from Tim Gagen to Pat Campbell.

In summary, those conditions included:

1. Date and time limitations.
2. Limitations on uphill loaded bicycles to only those with bike park tickets. Allowances for any downhill loaded bicycles to reduce downhill trail use in Cucumber Gulch Preserve.
3. Signage requirements, addressing both trail users and gondola passengers.
4. Cost sharing on the "Peaks Connect" trail to provide an alternate route around Cucumber Gulch Preserve.
5. Exclusion of Toad Alley trail from the BSR summer trail map.
6. Cost sharing on gondola impact research for the 2010 study.

Mr. Dudick – Would like to find causation of degradation of Gulch beyond just the impact of the Gondola. (Mr. Reid – Dr. Carello identified in 2010 that overall avian population remained consistent in the Gulch but declined along the Gondola corridor.) Is there a problem relative to nesting if the gondola opened on June 17th? (Mr. Reid – Dr. Carello hypothesizes that birds will abandon their nests if the gondola begins operating too early in the nesting period, when birds have less invested in a particular nest site.)

Mr. Dudick – What is the difference between the \$3,500 study and \$14,000 study. (Mr. Reid – essentially the amount of time devoted to the study. The \$14,000 is also a one-time study, for two weeks, and intensive along the gondola corridor.)

Mr. Cospolich What is the validity of testing in the first week, wouldn't it be better to test after the gondola is operation for awhile to see if the avian populations settle after the initial disturbance. (Mr. Reid – in this case, the recommendation would be to repeat the previous design model earlier in the season to evaluate how an earlier start date would affect avian abundance.)

Mr. Kuhn – Are the nests in the same locations from year to year. (Mr. Reid –It depends on the species. Dr. Carello is a better person to answer that question.)

Mr. Grosshuesch – The policy question to ask is what is an acceptable level of impact to the avian population? This will not be a clear cut, scientific answer, but a policy judgment.

Mr. Dudick - That is essentially how we got to the July 1st decision as a policy decision.

Mr. Shimanowitz – We believe the economic impact outweighs the overall impacts on the Gulch.

Ms. Hunter – That is an economic decision but does not necessarily reflect the best interest of the Gulch.

Mr. Shimanowitz - We are taking the extended daily hours off the table. The request is only for an operations date beginning on July 16th.

Questions for BOSAC

1. Does Council approve of the requested June 17th start date and longer operational hours for the BreckConnect Gondola?
2. If so, does Council still agree that an avian impacts study, paid for by BSR, should be required to determine impacts of June gondola operations on songbird abundance?

Ms. Hunter – I do not support the June 17 start date.

Mr. O'Neil – Concur with Ms. Hunter.

Mr. Cospolich – Not okay with June 17 but okay with June 30. Perhaps the weekend prior to July 4th should be the annual start date.

Mr. Carlson – Concur with Ms. Hunter.

Mr. Yule – Let's approve the funds to study the avian population and approve the June 17th start if the findings support that approach. It seems to me that we need to make a final decision here, and not keep revisiting it annually.

Mr. Grosshuesch – Previously, the ski resort was responsible for the cost of the studies.

Mr. Dudick – If BOSAC's mission is to protect open space, then you should advocate for an August 1 start date based on Dr. Carello's recommendation and not compromise to July 1st.

Mr. Kuhn – I support a July 1st start.

Question

3. What other conditions does Council require as part of the summertime operations approval?

Mr. Dudick – Are you prepared to spend \$14,000 for the study tomorrow? (addressed to ski resort). (Mr. Shimanowitz – Yes, subject to Pat Campbell's approval.)

Ms. Hunter – I am concerned with creep that has already happened with the existing hours. The requests keep coming for earlier and longer hours.

Pro Forma

Mr. Truckey outlined the proposed Claimjumper/Wedge land exchange that is being finalized by Council, Town staff and the U.S. Forest Service. The exchange may be finalized by the end of

March and will have significant impacts on the Open Space pro forma. Due to this anticipated deal, staff presented a revised pro forma for BOSAC's review.

Mr. Kuhn – If we spend all of money on the Wedge/ Claimjumper will we get anything back when we put housing on a portion of the site. (Mr. Truckey – No, housing is paying 80% of the cost of the Claimjumper parcel; Open Space will pay for 20% of the Claimjumper parcel and 100% of the Wedge parcel.)

Mr. Dudick – If there is an important acquisition that presents itself, there may be other funding available from Council- but it better be a very important parcel. There is no will to bypass the acquisition of the Wedge / Claimjumper.

Mr. Cospolich – What items were decreased in the pro forma? (Mr. Reid – The 2012 budget has already been established and nothing is really changed from that.)

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on March 19, 2012 in the Administrative Conference Room at the Breckenridge Town Hall (150 Ski Hill Road).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Dennis Kuhn, Chair