

TOWN OF BRECKENRIDGE
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION
Monday, May 12, 2008
BRECKENRIDGE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
150 Ski Hill Road

- 5:30 Call to Order, Roll Call
- 5:35 Discussion/approval of Minutes – April 14th
- 5:40 Discussion/approval of Agenda
- 5:45 Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)
- 5:50 Staff Summary
- Nature/Nordic Center
 - Cucumber Gulch Monitoring (VERP)
- 6:00 Open Space and Trails
- BOSAC Chairman
 - Forest Health
 - Geocaching
 - Shock Hill / Cucumber Gulch Area Development Plans
- 8:15 Commissioner Issues
- 8:20 Adjourn

For further information, please contact the Open Space and Trails Program at 547.3110 (Heide) or 547.3155 (Scott).

Memorandum

To: Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission
From: Heide Andersen, Open Space and Trails Planner III
Mark Truckey, Asst. Director of Community Development
Scott Reid, Open Space and Trails Planner II
Re: May 12, 2008 meeting

Staff Summary**Nature/Nordic Center**

Staff will be meeting with John Niemi and Suzanne Allen-Guerra this week to further discuss the scheduling and costs of the nature/nordic center. The goal is to bring the programming element to BOSAC for the June meeting.

Cucumber Gulch Monitoring (VERP)

Dr. Christy Carello is currently working closely with Dr. Peter Newman of Colorado State University to plan the VERP study for Cucumber Gulch Preserve. The research outline is being finalized and survey days are being scheduled for this year. Dr. Carello is also scheduled to attend the June BOSAC meeting to provide an update on the previous year's Cucumber-related research results.

Open Space and Trails**BOSAC Chairman**

BOSAC members will nominate and vote on a chair and vice-chair for May 2008 through April 2009.

Forest Health

Please see the attached memo developed for the 5/13 Town Council agenda.

Open Space Forest Health efforts

The Town initially directed open space funds towards forest health efforts in 2003, when \$60,000 in open space funds were spent to evaluate and treat the West Moonstone property. The consultant hired by the Town recommended several small patch cuts and some interspersed selective thinning in an effort to increase tree species diversity on the hillside through removal of some existing 'doghair' lodgepole pine stands. Those treatments occurred in 2003 and seeding and replanting efforts have proven successful thus far.

In 2004, no money was spent either researching or implementing forest health measures. In 2005 and 2006, \$5000 was spent each year spraying, cutting and chipping newly

mountain pine beetle (MPB) infested trees. With the increasing infestation numbers, MPB-related open space expenditures also increased dramatically.

In 2007, \$77,000 was spent, on the Cucumber Gulch heli-tree extraction operation and various spraying and cutting operations at the F&D Placer, the Breckenridge Nordic Center, and various other open space parcels. The Town also commissioned Rocky Mountain Ecological Services (RMES) to conduct a systematic forest health evaluation of the Cucumber Gulch Preserve. Based on RMES recommendations, BOSAC agreed to allow MPB treatments to cease in the Preserve due to wetland considerations and the existing, diverse forest species composition, which should be able to withstand the MPB infestation relatively well. In 2007, the Golden Horseshoe Nordic expansion area was also evaluated for MPB and other forest health considerations.

For 2008, Council allocated \$200,000 (\$50,000 for GH; \$150,000 for other Town open space parcels) out of the open space fund for mountain pine beetle treatment and weed control. BOSAC has also commissioned a forest health evaluation for all Town-owned open space parcels. Ongoing spraying and cutting treatments are planned for the F&D Placer and Carter Park, but most of the budgeted money will be spent based on the results of the forthcoming RMES open space evaluation.

With the 2009 budgeting process underway, staff and BOSAC need to formulate a clear vision of forest health-related plans and expenditures for next year. Staff is currently operating under Council and BOSAC direction to limit spraying on open space parcels to critical specimen trees that are away from riparian zones, and to take necessary actions to benefit the next generation of forest in the Upper Blue Basin. Certainly, the pending results of the RMES report are a critical piece of information to determining future forest health-related initiatives.

Staff poses the following questions for BOSAC consideration:

- 1. Is there a current consensus among BOSAC members regarding the primary approaches or goals for forest health initiatives on open space? For example, is the intent to preserve a green backdrop or forsake the short term green backdrop in favor of a longer-term healthy forest?**
- 2. Given that we are still awaiting the RMES report, does BOSAC have an initial sense for the amount of funding that should be allocated by Council for FY 2009 open space forest health efforts (e.g., should we budget a similar amount to this year's \$200,000)?**

Geocaching

A recent article in the Summit Daily News (attached) highlighted the growing trend of geocaching on public lands. The activity involves the placement of a cache (a small box containing trinkets or random objects), typically somewhere on public lands. The GPS coordinates are then placed on one of a number of websites so other geocachers download the coordinates, then search for the cache, sometimes exchanging a trinket from the cache.

A quick review of a major geocaching website (www.geocaching.com) reveals a number of caches located in and around Breckenridge, including at least one on the West Moonstone Town open space property.

Staff sees this activity and the presence of these geocaches as a mixed blessing. On one hand, geocaching is a novel way to get technologically inclined people of all ages interested in exploring and enjoying public lands. Caches are generally intended to be well hidden to prevent non-geocachers (or “Muggles”) from stumbling on them and treating them as refuse.

On the other hand, the placement of geocaches in sensitive locations (e.g. Cucumber Gulch Preserve) or unstable sites (e.g. historical mines or structures) would attract visitors to locations that are undesirable or unsafe. In addition, attracting users to off-trail sites is generally contrary to resource management principles, and the placement of any debris on open space is typically considered trash.

A quick review of other land management approaches to geocaching reveals a number of different administrative approaches to the practice. Some jurisdictions outlaw geocaching and patrol common geocaching sites, then remove any installations on their properties. Others allow only permitted geocaches, which prompts an administrative burden for the entity. Others simply ignore the practice and assume that since geocaches are intended to be well hidden, the issue will remain hidden as well.

Staff seeks a general BOSAC discussion on this topic and some preliminary feedback on what the best approach is regarding geocaching on Town open space. Although this is not an extremely controversial issue at this time, staff would like to inform BOSAC of the issue and consider options for handling this practice in both the short and long term.

Shock Hill / Cucumber Gulch Area Development Plans

As requested by BOSAC, staff will provide an overview of the build-out scenario for planned developments around the Cucumber Gulch Preserve boundary.

Roll Call

Matt Stais called the April 14, 2008 BOSAC meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Other BOSAC members present included Scott Yule, Dave November, Jeff Cospolich, Ellen Hollinshead, David Rossi and Monique Merrill. Staff members present were Heide Andersen, Scott Reid, Tim Gagen and Peter Grosshuesch. Carin Faust was present from the Breckenridge Nature Series. Chris Hart of OSAC was also present. Mayor John Warner and Councilmember Jeffrey Bergeron were also in the audience.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Approval of Agenda

The Siberian Loop horse use agenda item was removed because the USFS has not released a formal scoping or public input notice. The Iowa Hill signage agenda item was added under staff summary.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Staff Summary

Cucumber Nature/Nordic Center update

Ms. Merrill inquired about the status of the Nature/Nordic Center planning.

Ms. Andersen explained that Town staff has worked with Suzanne Allen-Guerra and her staff on a design schedule that could feasibly lead to construction beginning in the latter half of 2009, if the Town wants to take advantage of the Shock Hill Lodge and Spa contractors and construction schedule. Currently, the programming of the site is underway.

Mr. Stais: We need to figure out if this project will be LEED certified from the beginning. The Town (staff and Council) should dictate that level of certification early on. It may cost more for the higher (e.g. LEED) certification.

Ms. Andersen: The Town will also need to budget \$60,000-90,000 this year for outside consultants (i.e. engineering, energy consultants, etc.).

Mr. Stais: That sounds like a lot for the outside consultants, we probably need to look at those numbers.

Mr. Rossi: Yes, the question is: Do we target LEED certification, or just their use their standards.

Iowa Hill Interpretive Signage update

Mr. Andersen: Linda Kay Peterson approached staff about adding three interpretive signs to the Iowa Hill trail and staff wanted to make sure BOSAC is alright with the concept.

There were no objections to the addition of three interpretive signs along the Iowa Hill trail.

Open Space and Trails

BOSAC Chairman

Mr. Stais offered to step down as chairperson.

Staff suggested that this decision could wait until BOSAC appointments are completed.

BOSAC agreed to wait to have its discussion regarding Chairman until all new Council and BOSAC appointments are completed.

Mayoral Presentation

Dr. Warner thanked the commissioners for their service. He mentioned that Council will select its 7th seat next Tuesday the 22nd, and then select members for the PC, BOSAC and other commissions. Mr. Warner stated his desire to have a highly functional Town Council. Filling the position with the next highest vote getter was not the choice we made because we want strong attendance on all of our core issues. Candidate interviews would occur, and then a selection. He described his history with BOSAC, starting when Ellen and Jeffrey successfully passed the sales tax initiative. He urged members to know and consult frequently with the guiding documents like the Open Space Plan, the Joint Upper Blue Master Plan, and the Town Trails Plan. The Open Space Plan in particular is akin to the Development Code with the Planning Commission. It is a revisable document. He suggested that members think about the plan and know it. He also stated his desire to protect open space whenever possible, but acknowledge that the more property we acquire, the more we have to maintain. He encouraged BOSAC to think of creative ways to acquire and protect lands that do not force the Town to have to expend large amounts money in perpetuity on management.

BOSAC Norms

Ms. Andersen: A management consultant initiated the content of this document and Peter Grosshuesch has asked the commissions to revise and adopt the content as their own. BEDAC and Planning Commission have already adopted something similar. The goal is to create ground rules that BOSAC can agree to that will help guide future meetings.

Ms. Hollinshead: They all make sense. However, I would like to get the packets earlier, say on Wednesday, so we have a few days to contact staff with any questions. Also, there is some gray area in some of these. Sidebar comments occur; that's just the way it is. Also, I'll just apologize now. I won't be able to follow #10. I will bring topics after they have been resolved.

Ms. Merrill: I agree with Ellen and would like to get the packet earlier.

Mr. Grosshuesch: These are not hard and fast rules, but hopefully they will help structure good and efficient meetings.

Mr. November: This matches what we discussed as a part of the philosophical discussion agenda item a few months back. It's about respecting one another and working for a common good. I think these make sense.

Mr. Yule: I think these just represent common courtesy.

Special Use Permit

Staff described the scoping process for the USFS to change from a one year to a 10 year permit renewal period.

Mr. Cospolich: What is staff's opinion? What is the benefit to this change from one year to ten years?

Mr. Reid explained that staff saw both positives and negatives to the proposed change, and that the greatest benefit would be for the USFS staff, which would not have to process permits every year. BOSAC should know that the Town of Breckenridge Nature Series is a current applicant to get guiding days on the National Forest.

Ms. Andersen: From an efficiency standpoint, it makes sense. However, I think we should be a little concerned about lack of oversight for ten year permits.

Mr. Rossi: Will this open up a Pandora's box? Is there an evaluation to determine whether these permits have resulted in more and unacceptable damage? Look at Lehman Gulch and the damage from the horse concessionaire. It is intended to be a non-motorized multi-use trail and it failed several years ago due to the horse use. Those trails have been severely damaged by the concessionaire.

Mr. November: Would the USFS consider scaling the timeframe for each concessionaire based on potential impacts? So horse users or ATV's would have a shorter duration permit and more review.

Mr. Cospolich: I think that we should focus on sensitive areas needing protection and make sure that there is not increased use in such areas and that they are included in the review of impacts.

Mr. Reid explained that oversight of concessionaires should occur regardless of a one or ten year permit, and any violations would result in loss of permit and/or responsibility to clean up the damage.

Mr. Cospolich: It looks like they also want info on specific routes and trails and the potential impacts. It is asking comments to focus on specific areas. We need to make sure that previous decisions (e.g. Golden Horseshoe recommendations) are honored in these decisions.

Mr. Stais: Carrying capacity changes occur more quickly than 10 year increments. I don't feel comfortable with ten years. Four years seems like a more reasonable extension. We appreciate the workload demands, but this area is growing and a lot can change in ten years.

Staff will summarize BOSAC comments and distribute to BOSAC for review.

Commissioner Issues

Mr. November: I spoke with Ken Waugh and it sounded like the USFS will take the Golden Horseshoe recommendations into account, but will treat the recommendations as a master plan. Is this what Town staff understands?

Staff responded that Golden Horseshoe recommendations were just that, recommendations submitted to the USFS as part of the Travel Management Plan, which will be released as a supplemental travel plan for public comment in early summer. We would hope that the consensus based process would carry some validity, but we also need to understand the 'management filters' and making sure that private property, natural resource and management costs are also considered. We will have to wait for the release of the USFS supplemental travel plan to next comment on the various trails and uses.

Mr. Hart: BOCC told County staff to make sure everyone is included in the process. There will definitely be large price tags on some of the recommendations made and the BOCC might have issue with that. Also, enforcement will really dictate reality in the Golden Horseshoe. Even if routes close, we will have trouble patrolling it.

Mr. Cospolich: When will we see the signs for Cucumber? (Staff: early summer. The signs are in production now.)

Ms. Hollinshead: There was a snowmobile on the B&B Trail that came from the Country Boy Mine access. We should install a larger non-motorized sign at the B&B property line, near the Country Boy Mine Road intersection. I have spoken to folks that snowshoe regularly up in Lincoln Park and have witnessed little to no snowmobile use there this winter.

Mr. Yule: Can we be updated on the Shock Hill Lodge project and surrounding developments from an open space standpoint? Signage, access, sewer lift station, nature center, and other relevant projects should be covered.

Mr. Grosshuesch: The permits are there and completed. There are some informal things to work on, but the approved development permits can't be altered at this time.

Mr. Rossi: The access to the gulch is an important part of this issue. I think we should have the review and work with John Niemi to address any existing concerns.

Mr. Stais: Regarding the Nature/Nordic Center. I am not sure how the Town will handle the construction and the costs. The idea that this will start next year is scary.

Ms. Andersen: The schedule we are working on is based on their construction schedule, but the design will be reviewed by BOSAC and Council. We will have to make decisions based on that. It could also be put out for public bid. Mr. Niemi has put the offer on the table and we are working to see if we can take advantage of it.

Next Meeting

The next BOSAC meeting is scheduled for May 12th in the Town Hall Auditorium.

Mr. November motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Merrill seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Memo

To: Town Council
From: James Phelps, Public Works and Jennifer Cram, Community Development
Date: May 7, 2008
Subject: 2008 Mountain Pine Beetle Program Update

On September 25, 2007 staff updated the Council on the 2007 Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) program and discussed program details for 2008. Below, is a brief history of the MPB program since inception and the MPB program elements for 2008. Currently, there is \$750,000 allocated for the MPB program in the Special Project Fund.

MPB Program History (by year)

<u>Infested Trees Removed</u>		<u>Preventative Spraying (TOB Properties)</u>
2007	6,600	~3500
2006	1,800	~3000
2005	544	~3000
2004	350	~1200

<u>MPB Program Cost History*</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expended</u>
2008 Budget	\$750,000	\$23,551(YTD)
2007 Budget	\$200,000	\$508,216
2006 Budget	\$110,000	\$170,000
2005 Budget	\$60,000	\$60,000
2004 Budget (Program Inception)	\$0.00	\$20,000

*These numbers do not include staff time. (2008 = approximately 3.5 FT staff)

2008 MPB Program Elements

Free Inspections

The Town is continuing to provide free inspections for private properties. We have been encouraging property owners to call the MPB hotline to schedule inspections via newspaper advertisements and on the Town’s website.

The Town has been working with the Highlands HOA’s. Inspections have been completed in the Highlands. There are over 15,010 infested trees, which represents a 150% increase over last year.

TOB property inspections resulted in 3,048 infested trees a 444% increase over last year. To date 1,270 current year infested trees have been removed from TOB properties.

Reimbursement for Cutting Infested Trees

The Town is continuing to partner with private property owners who cut current year infested trees by July 1, 2008, by reimbursing \$40 per tree. We have developed a user friendly reimbursement process for private property owners. We have also held educational sessions with local and regional contractors to bring them up to speed with the Town's requirements and program details, so that they may better serve private property owners in Breckenridge.

Spraying

With recent information on the environmental impacts of spraying, the Town will only spray specimen trees on Town owned property in areas that are not near any bodies of water or watersheds. Areas where trees will be sprayed include Valley Brook Cemetery, Golf Course, McCain, Public Works, Breckenridge Nordic Center, and Airport Rd. We are also encouraging private property owners to do the same and spray responsibly only those trees that are specimens and/or that provide good buffers. We have recently done a press release to educate the public on the potential environmental impacts of spraying.

Replanting Program

Staff is currently working on a replanting program. We are structuring it as a reimbursement program, where private property owners would be reimbursed for a percentage of trees that are replanted. Species and sizes of trees will be recommended for the program to encourage species diversity. We plan to bring the replanting program proposal to Council for review in the near future.

Long Range Planning

Staff is currently working with Eric Petterson with Rocky Mountain Ecological Services to develop a scope and plan for forest management of Town Open Space and urban areas.

Misc. Program Elements

- Waiver of Class D permit fee for MPB Infested Trees and Dead Trees
- TOB property available: Free Chip Disposal Site for Private Contractors doing work in TOB limits
- On-going Education Programs (i.e. inspection/identification, replanting, spraying, advertising, etc.)

2008 Budget Detail

\$620,000 Cost Share/Removal of Infested Trees

\$30,000 Preventative Spraying/Tree Removal on Town Owned Property

\$60,000 Contracting Services for Long Range Planning/Forest Management

\$40,000 Replanting Program

\$750,000 total

\$125,000 Additional-Open Space (OS) Funds for management of open space parcels.

Summary

With increased numbers of infested trees, staff is concerned about budget impacts. Based on the number of current year infested trees (176% increase) we may exceed the \$620,000 budget for the cost share/reimbursement program element. For example, if all 15,010 infested trees are removed from the Highlands this reimbursement amount is equal to \$600,400.

We would also like to start discussing future program efforts and priorities for 2009 and will schedule time with the Council to do so in the near future.

Staff will be available during the work session on May 13th to answer any questions regarding the MPB program. We also intend to provide the Council with regular updates on the 2008 MPB program.

Modern day treasure hunting, or geocaching, growing in popularity

BY ASHLEY DICKSON

summit daily news

Summit County, CO Colorado

April 17, 2008

SUMMIT COUNTY — It is easy to think of Silverthorne residents Stu and Liz Caren as modern day pirates. The two have scoured the globe in search of treasure, using only a compass as their guide, in a hunt where X no longer marks the spot.

But if you ask them, they would rather be referred to as Geocachers.

Geocaching is a modern day treasure hunt in which participants search for hidden caches using coordinates and a GPS device. The caches range from small to large and the treasure found inside isn't in the form of gold coinage, but rather small trinkets like buttons, magnets, and Matchbox cars.

“Four years ago we bought a GPS device for hiking and then stumbled on the Geocaching Web site and saw there were caches all around where we live,” said Stu Caren.

Only a few years later the Caren's have hit more than 536 caches, exploring all of Summit County as well as places like Hawaii, Thailand, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

To play, a Geocacher hides a log book and a small trinket hidden in a waterproof container, and then posts instructions and coordinates on the Geocaching website.

Seekers download the hints along with the cache's latitude and longitude and, once located, the finder can take the trinket and replace it with another, or simply sign the log book to describe how the cache was found.

“Geocaching has taken us to incredible places for hiking,” said Liz Caren, who admits they have found almost every cache in the area.

According to Geocaching.com, there are over 100 registered caches in Summit County, and the site also allows users to enter zip codes to find nearby caches.

Geocaching is an activity that appeals to individuals of all age ranges and can be a fun way to turn a regular mountain hike into an exciting quest for the

unknown.

In addition to harboring little trinkets some caches include Travel Bugs, which are small metal tags registered with a tracking number through the Geocaching Web site.

Many Travel Bugs have a specific mission or destination and those cachers who find them have the option to go online and see where the Travel Bug has been as well as follow any specific instructions from the owner as to where it should travel.

“We found a Travel Bug with a mission to get to New Zealand and we were able to go online and see that it had already traveled 6,151 miles,” said Caren. “So we left that Travel Bug in another cache to move it along on it’s mission, and hopefully it will make it to New Zealand.”

Matt and Nancy Wyatt are another Summit County couple who have discovered the growing popularity of Geocaching.

“It’s everywhere, and sometimes it’s a bit overwhelming how many caches there are around here,” said Matt Wyatt.

The Wyatt’s have found caches in many neighboring states and hope to someday take their hunt overseas to find a few of the estimated 552,857 active caches worldwide.

“We also like to do what we call ‘Cache in, trash out.’” said Wyatt. “We will pick a cache and bring a trash bag so while we’re searching we are also doing our part to keep the area clean.”

For those who decide to hide a cache, there is a certain amount of responsibility involved. Cachers should always get permission before hiding caches in National Forest land or on private property, and caches should be clearly marked on the outside as part of Geocaching.

Geocaching is a wonderful way for individuals to enjoy all that nature has to offer, while at the same time experiencing the thrill of the hunt.

“I don’t know if it’s a sport, or a hobby, or a game, but it defiantly gets us excited,” said Caren.

Ashley Dickson can be reached at (970) 668-4629, or at adickson@summitdaily.com.



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SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

**Summit County Commons Building, Buffalo Mountain Room
0037 Peak One Drive, Summit County Road 1005, Frisco, CO
Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 6:00 p.m.**

- 1: Call to order
- 2: Approval of Agenda
- 3: Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting (*see attached Summary of Actions*)
- 4: Acceptance of Summary Report (*see attached report*)
- 5: Public Comments on Items not included in Agenda
- 6: Update and Discussion on On-going and Potential Open Space Protection Efforts and Issues
- 7: Executive Session to Discuss Potential Open Space Acquisitions
- 8: Update on Open Space Management Activities
- 9: Update on Open Space Mill Levy
- 10: Update from Town Open Space Advisory Boards
- 11: Other Business/Announcements
- 12: Adjournment

Enclosures

- Summary of Actions, April 2, 2008 OSAC meeting
- Summary Report on Open Space Activities
- Miscellaneous Newspaper Articles

**SUMMIT COUNTY
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
April 2, 2008**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Russ Camp, Art Girten, Chris Hart, Scott Hummer, Dan Pins, Lynn Amstutz, Bob Craig, Mike Clary, Martha Mackie, Charlotte Clarke

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Redner

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Lorch, Katherine King, Steve Hill, Gary Martinez

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Leigh Girvin - Continental Divide Land Trust, Turk Montepare - public

Call to Order: Chair Scott Hummer called the meeting of the Open Space Advisory Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The February 6, 2008 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Summary Report: The summary report was approved as submitted.

Public Comments on Items Not Included in the Agenda: Leigh Girvin from Continental Divide Land Trust described the "Parade of No Homes" CDLT is organizing for August 15, 2008. The event will be a self-driving tour of open space properties in the Lower Blue, with artists, refreshments, etc. Leigh is still working on the necessary permits, but would like help if anyone is interested.

OSAC members also briefly discussed future management options for the Fishhook Property. Staff indicated that they would be working on the management of this Property in the near future.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Filing No.1, Quandary Village (Upper Blue Basin): Brian Lorch gave a brief overview of the 22 lot proposed development site that Joe Hicks has under contract in the Upper Blue. Brian explained that because 14 of the lots contain greater than 50% of high quality wetlands, they can be converted to TDR sending areas based on recent revisions of the development code which were adopted to protect wetlands. Mr. Hicks described the project in more detail, explaining that the lots were platted in 1964, giving him a vested right to develop them. Preliminary wetland delineation was done by ERC in 2001, and Mr. Hicks has been consulting with the Army Corps of Engineers on wetland issues as well. Army Corps has indicated that development could probably occur on the property. Mr. Hicks indicated he might also be interested in converting all of the lots to TDR sending areas, and/or selling all or part of them at TDR value. He met with the Upper Blue Planning Commission, in a work session. Joe's read from that worksession was that they would support his TDR concept, despite the fact that the planning department was not supportive. Otherwise, he would plan to build the maximum allowable homes or townhomes on the property on 0.5 acre lots. The OSAC thanked Joe for his proposal and stated that this would be further discussed in executive session.

Gold Run Nordic Center Expansion (Town of Breckenridge): An update on the current status of the Nordic Center Expansion was provided by Brian Lorch. The USFS has indicated that the TOB's Master Plan for the site would probably not be approved in its current form, due to the proposed expansion onto a USFS parcel considered to have high potential trade value. USFS is concerned about the potential decrease in the property's value should it be encumbered by a Nordic trail system. Consequently the TOB is scaling back their proposal on USFS lands, and concentrating trails on joint County and TOB land. Also included in the master plan were several warming huts, which Brian asked OSAC to comment on. OSAC indicated they would be ok with temporary structures as long as they were on skids (similar to current existing structures on the Siberian Loop) and not designed to be permanent.

Golden Horseshoe Update (Upper Blue): Leigh Girvin of Continental Divide Land Trust initiated discussion about winter motorized use on Sallie Barber Road. Leigh expressed concern that although the Golden Horseshoe Planning Process outlines the goal of achieving "equity" between motorized and non-motorized users, she feels this is not occurring on the ground. As an example, Leigh described greatly increased use by snowmobiles on Sallie Barber Road, and onto Open Space property in the area. She also mentioned that French Gulch Road, which has been recommended as a non-motorized winter route, has been plowed to dirt several times this winter. Gary Martinez explained that the County Attorneys have sent a "standstill agreement" to landowners on Sallie Barber Road, and have been awaiting reply for several months. Brian also explained that Open Space staff is working with the attorney's office to get concurrence about which roads in the Golden Horseshoe can be identified and established as public thoroughfares.

Open Space and Trails Department 2008 Work Program: OSAC approved the work program without changes.

Forest Health: Open Space staff described the pending contract for a 25-acre mature lodgepole pine tree removal in Mesa Cortina. Buffalo Mountain Metro District has agreed to contribute \$23,000 towards the project, and it is anticipated that the Mesa Cortina HOA will also contribute.

Staff also explained that cutting is also likely to occur on the Fiestler Property at the County Commons, stating that a grant request has been submitted to the Wildfire Council for matching funds to undertake forest health projects in the County Commons area.

Executive Session: The OSAC unanimously passed a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss potential open space acquisitions. Out of Executive Session the OSAC unanimously made the following recommendations:

Upper Blue:

OSAC did not recommend pursuing the acquisition of the Quandary Village Filing No. 1 property or its TDRs at this time.

Staff should make an offer on the two mining claims owned by McQueary at the value discussed during Executive Session.

Staff should make an offer on the Palmer Claim in Summit Gulch at the value discussed in Executive Session.

Update on Open Space Mill Levy: Gary Martinez provided an update on the upcoming mill levy. He explained that the BOCC wants to do a survey in mid-May to assess the "appetite" of voters for

the issue. Following the survey, there should be adequate time to draft the ballot language prior to the August deadline. Steve Hill indicated that OSAC should have the opportunity to review some of the key language in the phone survey before it is conducted.

Update from Town Open Space Advisory Boards: None

Other Business/Announcements: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Lorch

Brian Lorch
Open Space and Trails Director



OPEN SPACE & TRAILS DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Advisory Council
FROM: Brian Lorch
DATE: May 1, 2008
SUBJECT: Summary Report on Open Space Activities for May 7, 2008 meeting

The purpose of the summary report is to save time at the actual OSAC meetings by providing an update on open space protection activities not requiring a specific action by the OSAC, so that they do not need to be discussed during the meeting. Any questions on topics in this report can be discussed at the meeting or with staff prior to the meeting.

1. Contracts have been signed to initiate forest management on the Mesa Cortina/Wilderness buffer open space and the Fiester property at the County Commons. The contractor initiated work on the County Commons today. On Sunday, April 6, Brian attended a meeting of the Cortina Property Owners Association (CPOA) and presented a request for financial participation in the proposed project to reduce fuels in the Mesa Cortina/Wilderness Buffer. The members of the CPOA unanimously approved a contribution of \$15,000 to the project. This was the full amount of our request, based on the recently signed contract with Bowers Forestry.

The "not to exceed" contract of \$70,000 is currently anticipated to be funded as follows:

Wildfire Council Fuels Reduction Grant:	\$25,000
Cortina Property Owners Association:	\$15,000
Buffalo Mountain Metro District Contribution:	\$15,000
Summit County Open Space:	<u>\$15,000</u>
	\$70,000

2. On April 15, the Open Space and Trails Department received notice that it had been awarded a \$560,000 grant from the Federal Transportation Enhancements program administered by CDOT, toward completion of the Sapphire section of the Swan Mountain Recpath. This money will be available during summer of 2009 and requires a \$140,000 local match.

County may seek tax hike in Nov.

National economy a factor as ballot question talks begin

By **BOB BERWYN**
SUMMIT DAILY NEWS

SUMMIT COUNTY — A national economic slump could play out locally as county commissioners consider asking voters for a tax increase in November.

The state of the economy has been very much on the commissioners' minds as they held early talks on what sort of questions might be put to the voters. Budget projections for the next few years show a crunch, and a general mill levy that funds county services hasn't been hiked since the early 1990s.

Also on the table is the question of open space funding. A mill levy that provides nearly all the revenue for the county's open space and trails department will expire in 2009. Waiting until then to ask voters for more open space money would add an element of uncertainty to open space planning efforts.

"They're thinking about it. No decisions have been made yet," said county manager Gary Martinez. The plan is to survey voters in late spring or early summer to determine how residents perceive various county services, Martinez said.

"We're starting to see some escalation in prices we're not going to be able to keep up with," said Commissioner Thomas Davidson, citing spiraling health care and fuel costs. The county might have to go to voters to ask for more money or look at cutting back some services, he said.

"Obviously, we need to go to voters and ask for a continuation of the open space mill levy," Davidson said.

But timing, as it relates to the national economy, could be key.

"Is there ever a right time to go to voters and ask for a tax increase," he said. "Welcome to life in Colorado under TABOR," he added, referring to the state's strict limits on government taxing powers.

"We're a little concerned that the national economic picture is going to make people reluctant to say, 'Go ahead and raise my taxes,'" said Commissioner Bob French. "What we think we're going to do is move up the date of our annual survey. "Everything is going to cost more as we go along. We need to tell voters that, if you want the services, you have to give us the money to pay for them."

"Four or five years out, it doesn't look good," Commissioner Tom Long said of the county budget picture. "The straight that we're in now financially, it might be a question of which lights do you want us to keep on," Long said, adding that the county is facing some fundamental infrastructure costs in coming years.

Bob Berwyn can be reached at (970) 331-5996, or at bberwyn@summitdaily.com.

- Summit Daily News Thursday, March 13, 2008

BOCC: More money will help fire mitigation

Recent meeting addresses pine-beetle infestation, and the funds budgeted for forest-fuel reduction

By **ASHLEY DICKSON**

SUMMIT DAILY NEWS

SUMMIT COUNTY — The Board of County Commissioners and the U.S. Forest Service on Tuesday discussed the growing threat the pine beetle poses to wildfire mitigation.

Maps highlighting the already infested lodgepole pine population presented a grim picture as to how bad the pine beetle problem has become, and where it is headed.

"We've seen a dramatic jump in infestation from last year, and in 3 to 5 years every tree that could be infested probably will be," said Paul Cada with the Colorado State Forest Service.

According to Assistant County Manager Steve Hill, \$400,000 is budgeted in 2008

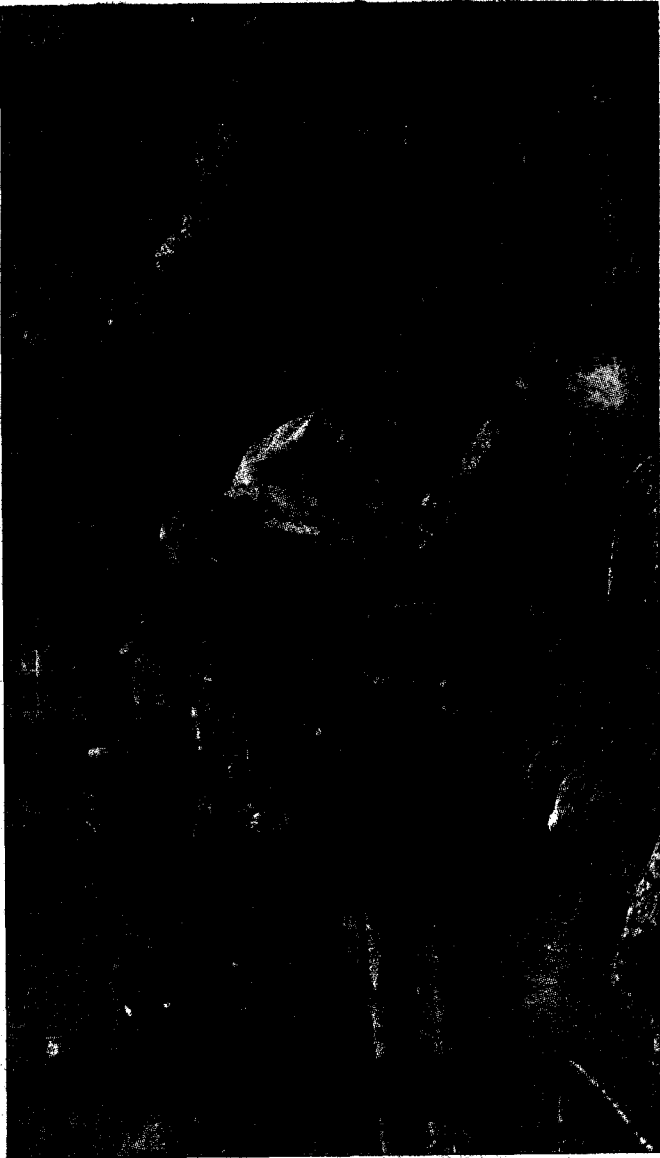
for wildfire protection, which does include state and federal funding.

"I think we have a successful program that will be even more successful now that we have more money and more experience dealing with the issue," Hill said.

The Granby District of the Colorado state Forest Service provides forestry assistance to Summit County and has implemented many fuels reduction projects through the Community Wildfire Protection Program.

In order to continue these efforts, the Board is looking to allocate \$15,000, per year, for a period of three years, to the Granby District of the Colorado State Forest Service,

SEE FIRE, PAGE A2



Summit Daily file photo/Mark Fox

Lance Arnold, a seasonal firefighter with the Forest Service, works at clearing pine-beetle infested trees on National Forest land next to the repath below Mount Royal last September as part of a fire mitigation plan. County commissioners and the Forest Service discussed upcoming mitigation efforts, including how to spend \$400,000 budgeted for the effort.

FIRE:

From A1

which would secure a minimum commitment of two days per week dedicated to assist Summit County forestry.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, 2,030 acres of forest in Summit County are under contract and in various stages of fuel reduction, and local forest service officials hope to add an additional 1,300 acres in 2008.

"It took 30 years for this problem to get this bad, so it's not logical to think we are going to solve the problem in one year," said Ron Cousineau, District Forester with the Colorado State Forest Service. "The cost associated with fire suppression is becoming a national issue, and we try to put high priority on grant applications coming from Summit County."

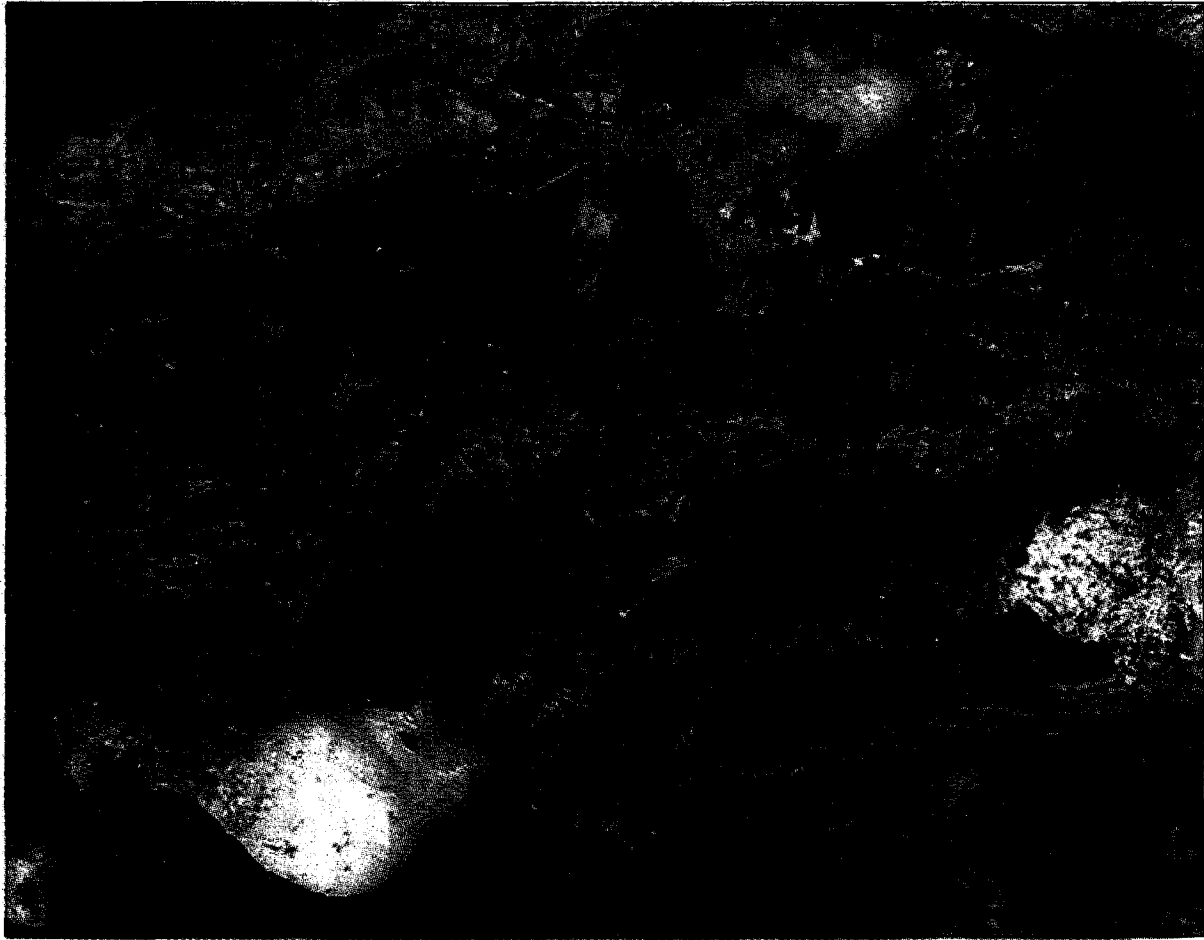
The Board also acknowledged how important public education is in reducing ground fuels and cited that dead tree removal on a private level also helps in fire mitigation.

"Folks need to learn how to reduce fuels on their properties," said Hill. "We have a great plan but in order for it to be effective it needs to be implemented."

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Summit Daily/Mark Fox

Bore holes on a beetle-infested lodgepole show how a pine tree tries to fight off the pesky insects. A new bill proposed by Rep. Christine Scanlan gives tax breaks to businesses who want to use beetle-kill trees.



**SUMMIT
DAILY
NEWS****Land trade valuations complex, secretive**

Chihuahua trade parcels 'in the ballpark,' Forest Service says

BY BOB BERWYN

summit daily news

Summit County, Co Colorado

April 22, 2008

SUMMIT COUNTY — After taking a first round of public comments on the pending Snake River land trade, the U.S. Forest Service says a draft study on the swap could be released to the public in early May.

The trade involves a private 42-acre inholding along Peru Creek and three parcels of national forest land that would go into non-federal ownership, including a 21-acre tract near the River Run gondola zoned for 24 single family homes, and 52 acres of national forest land near Breckenridge.

The draft study will include information on environmental conditions and cultural resources on the lands to be traded. But it won't give much detail on the value of the lands to be traded.

Even though the deal involves trading away more than 70 acres of publicly owned land in return for the 42-acre private parcel, the Forest Service won't release the financial particulars until the agency has made a final decision on the exchange.

In the Snake River land exchange, the Forest Service is putting three tracts into the pot:

- A 21-acre parcel near the base of the River Run gondola at Keystone zoned for development of single family homes;
- and two parcels totaling 52 acres near Breckenridge.

Releasing information on the appraised values of the parcels too early in the trade process could skew the values and subject them to speculation, Forest Service officials have said.

Federal regulations require the lands to be traded to be of equal value, give or take 25 percent. The rules also say that stakeholders in the trade can throw some cash into the pot to even out the deal. The appraisals are to be based on the potential best and highest uses for the land. The Forest Service is also supposed to look at recent land purchases in the same area to gauge what the parcels are worth.

Recent Summit County open space purchases in the Snake River Basin show that five acre mining claims have sold for about \$5,000. Another 7.8-acre chunk of land in the Peru Creek headwaters, not far from Chihuahua, sold for \$9,825 in 2004.

The wild card in the Chihuahua deal is that the inholding was platted as a mining town with 490 lots in the late 1800s. Nobody is sure what the legal status of that plat is. Neither Summit County nor the Forest Service are willing to test the plat in court.

Early consensus

Based on the initial round of public comments, there is some consensus in the community that the public will benefit from the acquiring the Chihuahua land and keeping it development-free. But the secrecy surrounding the value of the land is frustrating for some citizens and watchdog groups, who don't understand how the remote

private backcountry inholding could be worth as much — or more — than the three publicly owned parcels.

But in order to accept the trade proposal and begin the formal evaluation process, the Forest Service had to determine that the relative values of the land were in the same ballpark, according to Dillon Ranger District land specialist Paul Semmer.

That finding was based on a land valuation consultation, Semmer said. The value of the Chihuahua parcel was determined by a private Denver-based consultant hired by Gary Miller, a Keystone-area developer who owns the inholding and wants to acquire the federal parcel at River Run for development. Semmer said it's standard for a land trade proponent to pay for the early appraisal.

The value of the River Run parcel is in part determined by the county's preliminary zoning approval for 24 single family slopeside homes. Final approval for that development is dependent on completion of the trade. By conservative estimates, the River Run land could be worth tens of millions of dollars, based on what ski-in, ski-out homes are selling for at Keystone right now.

The two national forest parcels near Breckenridge were appraised by the town, which wants to keep one of the tracts for open space and use part of the other for affordable housing.

Semmer said Breckenridge likely hired an appraiser to look at the tracts, asking what they would be worth if the town simply wanted to buy them outright on the open market.

Those initial valuations of the properties won't be in play during the next phase of the swap.

"The slate will be wiped clean," Semmer said, explaining that the next round of appraisals will be done according to strict federal rules issued by the regional Forest Service office.

But the agency still won't release the preliminary financial information, claiming that those details need to remain confidential.

A Seattle-based public interest group that specializes in monitoring land trades has said that the Forest Service can't maintain its claim of confidentiality if the appraisals have been reviewed by anyone outside the agency, including the proponent or the private company that is facilitating the trade, said Chris Krupp, an attorney with the Western Lands Project.

But Krupp wasn't sure if that exception applies to the preliminary valuation consultation documents.

The bottom line is that, although the proponents of the trade claim that the public will benefit from the swap — especially the acquisition of the Chihuahua parcel — a key part of the process is completely un-transparent to citizens.

Not knowing the dollar value of the various parcels makes it hard for the public to comment on the trade in a meaningful way, Krupp said.

Bob Berwyn can be reached at (970) 331-5996, or at bberwyn@summitdaily.com.

BACK ←

May 1, 2008

Wilderness logging begins this week

DAILY NEWS STAFF REPORT

SUMMIT COUNTY—A \$70,000 forest stewardship project aimed at reducing the wildfire risk around Mesa Cortina and Wilderness begins this week.

Extensive logging in a 25-acre strip of forest around the neighborhoods began this week, with financial support from the Summit County Open Space and Trails Department, Buffalo Mountain Metro District, Cortina Property Owners Association and a \$10,000 grant from the Summit County Wildfire Council.

"Summit County Open Space and Trails has been working closely with neighboring homeown-

ers associations and Buffalo Mountain Metro District to control mountain pine beetles in the Mesa Cortina/Wilderness Buffer since 2001," said Claudia Wiley, resource specialist for Summit County open space and trails.

"Unfortunately, in that time, the number of beetle-infested trees has gone from a few dozen to several thousand. We will be removing the majority of the mature lodgepole pine trees from about 25 acres in order to reduce wildfire danger and promote a vigorous, healthy forest in the long run," Wiley said.

For more information, contact Wiley at (970) 668-4092 or via e-mail, claudiaw@co.summit.co.us.