

TRAIL USE TASK FORCE MEETING

May 25, 2010– 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Trail Use Task Force Mission Statement:

The purpose of the Trail Use Task Force is to identify trail conflicts; communicate with and among user groups; and make recommendations for improvement of the trail use experience to the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Open Space staff and the BCC that will not deprive any user of a safe, quality experience when using the parks and trails while considering protection of the natural resource.

In attendance:

Kevin Burke, OSAC	Stanton La Breche, OS Staff	Nancy Woodson, Hiker	Thea Rock, OS Staff
Tom Hoby, OS Director	Colleen Gadd, OS Staff	Kyle Henley, Biker	Wayne Foreman, OSAC
John Litz, OSAC & Plan Jeffco	Paul Murphey, Biker	Tookie Scherder, Hiker	Dan Shier, Equestrian
Amy Ito, OS Staff	Dave Cohen, Biker	Doug Torza, Equestrian	Jan Kray, Equestrian
Don Klima, OS Staff	Peter Morales, Biker	Marc Peot, Biker	Kim Frederick, OS Staff
Joe Hendrickson, Biker			

Meeting began: 7:02 p.m.

Welcome/Agenda Review:

Kevin Burke thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Amy asked for attendees to introduce themselves and then introduced the new Director of Open Space, Tom Hoby. Tom thanked everyone for coming and for their efforts on behalf of our parks to make them more enjoyable and safe. He indicated that we have two major responsibilities: sustaining and creating safe and enjoyable experiences for everyone, which comes from volunteers such as the Task Force members, and also natural resources protection and equal stewardship from everyone who uses parks and trails to sustain the resources. He stated that everyone in the room is for the outdoors and we cannot lose sight of that. He suggested we extend the culture of friendliness on the trail. He stated he had just run at Apex and had many good interactions and that we can create and make that scenario simply by being friendly. He could see the care and dedication of the staff and appreciated Kim Frederick's focus on detail as it was evident today out on the trail.

Amy Ito asked if there were any changes to the agenda and it was pointed out to correct the mission statement.

User Group Updates/ Feedback:

Equestrian Representatives: Doug Torza, Jan Kray, Dan Shier:

Doug Torza stated that some of the Task Force members had just finished eating together prior to the meeting and they discussed the need for more communication and direction. He indicated that they were very pleased and thanked the Open Space staff for the new equestrian related parking signs. He said they were very well received by the group and hopes that everyone abides by them. He indicated that the one complaint is the communication amongst park users as far as letting the horse people know of their presence on the trail and allowing enough reaction time. Dan Shier read the posted rules at White Ranch. He would like to see 40 feet instead of a 15 foot allowance for advance communication when approaching an equestrian. He also

mentioned the gate needing to be fixed at White Ranch. Stanton indicated that he will address the gate. Don Klima read the trail etiquette which calls out 50 feet as the amount of notice preferred and is one of the educational elements we are trying to distribute to users. Jan Kray welcomed Tom Hoby and stated she looked forward to working with him and stated that the representatives have gotten to know one another better in the past year and are working together well.

Bikers Representatives: Dave Cohen, Paul Murphey (Alt.), Kyle Henley (Alt.), Marc Peot (Alt.), Peter Morales, Joe Hendrickson:

Peter Morales stated that some of the biker members had met with Tom Hoby and they had welcomed him and suggested that some of the differences that exist within the community could be set aside and he also stated that Paul Murphey had attended the Bicycle Colorado event in Salida and a good discussion was had about sitting down with the parties who may not agree with us and talk about these differences. Kyle indicated that it is starting to get busy out at the parks. He also noted that more mountain bikers appear to be riding the Chimney Gulch Trail on odd days, due to the new rules at Apex.

Hiker Representatives: Tookie Scherder, Nancy Woodson:

Tookie Scherder stated that she has gotten very favorable remarks about the new equestrian signs and that the consensus is that it is a very good idea. She indicated that people at Apex are still learning about the new rules and hopefully that would continue. She stated that Adam has gotten comments regarding a request to allow for night time visitation at a few parks. Nancy indicated that she is not getting complaints.

General Comments:

Amy asked Thea Rock to discuss the communication prospects for the Task Force. She indicated that there is a Trail Use Task Force web page. It lists the agendas, has a list of citizen members/representatives, and will be amended to also include the Mission Statement. She stated the County would have security issues on an open web page. She encouraged the use of social media such as facebook, twitter, and indicated that Open Space already has a facebook page. Marc Peot indicated that the members would not represent themselves as County employees. Kyle Henly stated the Open Space logo would not be used. Peter Morales stated the members would form a committee and bring recommendations for an internal platform. Dave Cohen stated that sharing information was the main issue. Tookie stated that Adam Feerst has put together a facebook page recently. He is trying to put up information regarding current conditions and experiences. Thea shared that things can be misrepresented so easily. She would like to see what the group is wanting to communicate since that will help us as well to be prepared for comments. Peter Morales stated he will form a committee and in a month or so he should have the information needed. Jan Kray wanted a disclaimer so that the web page is indicated as a citizen group forum. Dave Cohen indicated that the committee is aware that this has to be handled responsibly. Thea stated that all of these venues are typically free and require an ID and log in. She wanted to clarify that she was hearing from the group that the County website would be

referred to only as a link for more information, and that the facebook page would simply point to our website. Peter Morales stated he was looking for a more internal platform where Task Force members could have more conversation prior to these meetings and have more frequent contact, not just using emails. Amy wanted to clarify what she was hearing in that there are two elements that are being considered: one is communication between the members; and second, is to potentially gather more public feedback. Tom Hoby stated the ability to communicate to one another should be a fairly easy task.

Tom provided an update that we have done park surveys for the last 8-9 years and we are not doing the same type of survey this year. He stated we are rethinking these and how they help us. He indicated we may want to do an electronic newsletter indicating updates, such things as the new construction at Apex.

Peter Morales presented some examples of signage that indicate "switchbacks", "caution", "cliffs ahead", "slow down". He indicated that these types of signs would be a good teaching forum. He suggested that the South Valley Park area could be used to teach novice bikers how to navigate as well as learn the rules of the trail and biking. Jan Kray stated it was similar to the COMBA project in Golden. It would be a place to learn new skill sets. There are specific etiquette issues and messages such as how to maneuver a bike that could be communicated. Nancy Woodson stated she does not like to see a lot of signage. Peter Morales indicated that there are a lot of people who ride but don't know how to ride. He suggested that it is better to teach at a specific park and improve their skills. We are talking no more than 5 or 6 signs. They would be placed discriminately, and suggested that is why South Valley Park is excellent for this. Tookie questioned whether the signs we have now are adequate. Peter Morales feels that we had better educate our beginners. Don Klima indicated that we have 275 volunteers in the program that communicate with users as well as information that is shared at bicycle shops, bike ride programs, and one-on-one opportunities. He stated that personal contact to reaffirm regulations, awareness, surroundings, and the big issue of trail etiquette was important. Thea read the rules of etiquette and introduced the new yellow bandana project. Marc stated looking at Rustler's Trail could be of benefit. Some trail groups are setting up this type of activity to interact with user groups. If there was a beginning interpretive trail this could be an asset. Jan Kray indicated that most ski areas list trail difficulty and she wondered if this could be considered. Dave Cohen relayed information that there are several books out there that follow a rating system and he too would like to see this considered.

Colleen mentioned that this had been discussed amongst Open Space staff and not implemented due to the different interpretations of the ratings. Now our brochures list distance and elevation for this purpose. Tom Hoby stated he would like to continue on the path with more visitor user information. He asked if we should be in the business of teaching and answered "yes" when it pertains to sustaining and making experiences more fulfilling. He believes there is a role for us but questions if we should rate these trails. He appreciates the discussion. He sees some very interesting opportunities. Kevin Burke indicated one idea for certain parks, like Elk Meadow or South Valley, is to

place an insert into the brochure map for new rider pointers. Dave Cohen indicated that he is also trying to communicate with the people who do not join organizations like COMBA and provide more outreach. Thea handed out the yellow bandanas for the park etiquette program and indicated this was the first printing and open to anyone who wanted to get their logo on it and we could provide a bulk price.

Kim Frederick described the new trail segments at Apex. Thea indicated that everyone here at this meeting has been part of this process and we will be sending a letter to neighbors that will also be on the website regarding the changes at Apex. Kim stated that volunteers and Trails personnel will be working both of these new trail sites west and east approximately 1.5 to 2 miles. Kim also stated there are two maps of the new trail alignments that are being routed and presented at this meeting. He indicated that back in June of 2009 there were lots of ideas on how to improve the experience for all users at Apex Park. Kim stated that we launched the new management at Apex on March 15, 2010 and volunteers throughout the summer will be answering questions, handing out new brochures, and new kiosks are being put in place. He thanked everyone for all their efforts. Information has been put on the web as to the new trail alignments and calming devices. We will also be monitoring this change in management. It was suggested that a sign be at the top to remind people whether the day is odd or even.

Staff Updates: Amy Ito

Hildebrand Ranch Park parking lot is open and we have gotten feedback, comments and suggestions that are very positive. We continue to evolve with all our parks and have tried a new technique at the Hildebrand Ranch Park parking lot with porous pavers that is noteworthy for us and the State.

North Table Mountain Park parking lot will be opening soon. The opening date is June 21st, the first day of summer, and it is located off Highway 93. Everything will be in place as far as signage and kiosks.

Hildebrand Ranch Park and North Table Mountain have equestrian only parking lots. Design plans are in the works for a parking lot at South Table Mountain.

We will continue to work at Apex and anticipate a permanent restroom and improved parking by next year.

We are working on having potable water for North Table Mountain and Apex parks. The new trail from Reynolds Park going south, along Denver Water Board property towards the Colorado Trail is in process. It will be multi-use and should be a great regional draw and we received State Trail Funds for a portion of the trail. We are looking at the existing parking lots to determine how to meet the anticipated needs. The trail will be multi-use and cover approximately 8 miles. Reynolds Park will remain hiker and equestrian only.

Determination of Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 26, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Trail Use Task Force
May 25, 2010

Amy thanked everyone for their support and thoughtful comments and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.