

TRAIL USE TASK FORCE MEETING

October 21, 2008 - 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 and make recommendations for their solution 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:

Ralph Schell, OS Director	Colleen Gadd, OS Staff	Nancy Woodson, Hiker	Paul Murphy, Biker
Kevin Burke, OSAC	Dave Cohen, Biker	Adam Feerst, Hiker	Idalyn Foley, Equestrian
Amy Ito, OS Staff	Nancy Hathaway, Equestrian	Peter Morales, Biker	
Jean Reince-Schwartz OS Staff	Alene Lind, Equestrian	Tim Morrison, Biker	
Craig Topp, Biker	Joe Hendrickson, Biker		

Meeting began: 7:02 p.m.

Welcome/Agenda Review:

Kevin Burke thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

User Group Updates and Feedback:

Equestrian Representatives: Alene Lind, Nancy Hathaway, Idalyn Foley

Equestrian update: No update.

Hiker Representative: Nancy Woodson, Adam Feerst

Hiker Update: A new Task Force member was welcomed, with Colorado Mountain Club. Nancy Woodson will take back information to the club. Adam Feerst noted that people would like better enforcement and education of alternate days especially at Centennial Cone would be good. They are not seeing as many rangers in order to enforce these rules.. He commented on the trail degradation from bikes at Centennial Cone. There is also a need for more signage. Colleen Gadd stated that the survey will clarify a lot of these matters. It is a big park. Kevin Burke commented that staff recently changed the signs. Amy Ito addressed the new signage. She was pleased with the good feedback, but suggested we give the updated signage more time to see if it works. Ralph suggested that some of the problem or concern is not the signage but that people are just going when they feel like it and ignoring alternate days. Adam Feerst felt more rangers were needed. Dave Cohen felt most people say they realize after they are there but will continue to go anyway. Next time they say they will remember now that they have the information. Adam Feerst asked if there were any plans to build a trail

to the Cone. Ralph responded, no. Adam complained of the dogs off leash and the poop which is a constant problem. Any asked if he was being park specific and he answered, it was just in general. Adam said he has mentioned this next item before and hopes that night usage can be considered. Adam also reported about the signage at the bathroom at Lair o' the Bear. Amy indicated this had come up at the last meeting. She stated that Park Management Plan (PMP) groups have been meeting over this last month or so, and the Lair o' the Bear PMP Team was looking at upgrading the Park signs; including to the restroom and the new shelter. Adam referred to the congestion at Apex. Generally, most people get along and are courteous. There are few trail runner conflicts with bikes. Nancy mentioned the biggest issue is probably having bikers come up behind hikers without any warning.

Mountain Biker Representatives: Dave Cohen, Peter Morales, Joe Hendrickson

Biker Update: Peter Morales noted that Paul Murphy was going to be an alternate for TTF. Tim Morrison is stepping down and Joe Hendrickson will be a regular member, instead of an alternate. Everyone thanked Tim for his years of involvement.

Ralph commented that he has been hearing from Denver Mountain Parks regarding the equestrian crossing requested to the restaurant by Little Park, and the equestrians have gotten their attention. Ann Smith has been in touch with Susan Baird on this matter. Peter Morales noted that there are hitching posts at the restaurant. Ralph also commented on the safety concerns regarding the traffic and crossing over the street.

COMBA Meeting Update:

Peter Morales provided an update of this August 19, 2008 meeting. Peter noted that Colleen had discussed the number of tickets issued for not yielding. Paul had worked with Peter to have a room at the Taj for this meeting and invited the public to speak on any issues of concern; a staff presentation was provided by Kim Frederick and Colleen Gadd on trail maintenance and yielding. The statistic was shared that 35 tickets have been issued over the entire program history, a 36 year period. Peter said that there were follow-up ideas such as providing "yielding" video clips for U-Tube; illustrating slowing down; communicating trail width and yielding issues; providing biker only trails; posting a trail maintenance schedule on the website and other ideas. There was a suggestion for an Adopt-A-Trails

program by using word of mouth process to get individuals involved. Ralph thought these comments were all good feedback. He thought the COMBA meeting was beneficial. Attendees spoke with Ralph afterwards and were very responsive. Amy mentioned that we sent out an email and flyer to the TTF representatives and asked anyone interested to attend the meeting and communicate this information to their user group. Adam pointed out that a similar meeting years ago is how he originally got involved with TTF. It was called the 180 Group. Ralph stated that the Denver Post representative provided a good article on the meeting.

Discussion regarding an alternate schedule at Apex Park

Peter requested alternating trail use be discussed as a follow-up to the COMBA meeting and to provide feedback. Amy asked for opinions around the room on this. The survey this summer at Centennial Cone can provide some feedback but the data is not completed as yet. Ralph suggested that Apex will be a continued challenge. Dave offered his opinion on both directional and downhill biking. Ralph informed TTF that the consensus is that Open Space is not going to endorse downhill biking. Dave Cohen said this is the first that he had heard that. Dave stated that Apex Park shows a high usage by mountain bikers.

Ralph indicated that opinions on this topic split if restrictions are placed on days of use but we have also had a lot of pressure from hikers wanting to enjoy a bike-free opportunity at Apex. He suggested alternating days is something to look at. Dave indicated there still may be some confusion regarding the directional issue if it were a biker day. Ralph indicated it was more the speed issue than anything.

Dave stated that Boulder changes directions periodically at Botasso Park. Ralph stated he was not talking about downhill biking. Kevin said we could reference directional as one-way so it is not confusing. Craig and Dave said if you have clockwise one week, and counterclockwise the next week at CNT you could anticipate traffic. It was asked of Jean Reince-Schwartz if there was conflict at Centennial Cone Park with the alternating schedule. Jean indicated that we have completed the first survey at this Park and we are still tabulating the results and could not provide any information yet. Peter Morales indicated that they were putting on their COMBA website information regarding feedback to Apex alternating days. We don't have the money for a large survey but more of a poll and Q&A and will share with OS. He indicated some bike users feel that any concession on Apex will

lead to the road to ruin. On the other hand, you have the people that realize there is a limited resource and more people on it will cause a volatile situation so some limitations on use are a good idea. When he first heard of the alternating schedule at CNT, he tried it out and enjoyed it. He has received similar opinions from others. Overall, literally, when asked about CNT, the people love it. Those who are down on it have not ridden it. Ralph noted that in the past we have had a lot of comments on Apex on the weekends for one day bikers and one day hikers. Nancy Woodson pointed out that one thing that should be considered is that Apex is so different from Centennial Cone Park because there are a lot of people living near Apex. Kevin indicated that directions at Apex could assist with bikers going uphill so that the speed differential is not a problem. Adam has heard opinions both ways and has heard the neighbors are very opposed to the alternate days. He believes it is worth a try and also include week nights. The bikers are growing in numbers all the time and Apex is a fairly technical Park. There are certain trails that would have to be considered such as Enchanted Forest and Apex Trail for one loop/direction and Pick N' Sledge and Sluicebox for another loop/direction and maybe during the summer months on weeknights for the alternate use. He prefers directional trails but enforcement is a problem. We need more discussion. Ralph suggested we might have a study session with OSAC. It would be helpful to have TTF perspective to share with OSAC. He does not want a reverse Reynolds Park. Kevin said we would need to involve the community. Peter Morales stated he would not want it to look like an experiment; that a PR campaign is needed. Nancy Hawthorne indicated the equestrians like the parking lot at Apex since it is so big. Ralph mentioned that there is no "clean" solution since some people are looking at Apex for a portion of a bigger loop, including the hogback, and we need to rethink Apex. The study session with OSAC is a good idea. All attending said they would go back to their user groups and the community for feedback. We need to encourage ideas and discussion. Tim Morrison stated that the lack of trust with the decision for no bikes at Reynolds Park is why he was here for many years on TTF. His preference is for decisions to not be so management intensive. He would rather have suggestions for trails and parks (such as directional trails or consideration for using a different park) rather than rules and concentrating on enforcement. He feels it would enhance the trust issue. It was suggested we would have a study session with OSAC possibly in February or March of 2009. A lot of the ideas presented this evening will be reviewed. Kevin reiterated that it was important to try something and Ralph said it was important to stay focused on Apex.

Discussion Regarding Lair o' the Bear:

Peter Morales told of going out in the field and joining rangers as they addressed the public. He mentioned his profession as an attorney for the Aurora police and overall, the situations by rangers are well handled and professional. A directed education and enforcement program (DEEP) was at LOB when Peter was with the rangers. Ticketing, signage, trail width and enforcement was discussed. A new beaver dam has flooded a trail, however, there is a re-route in place. Discussion also covered the wide section of trail that comes into the parking lot and the need for bikers to slow down in this area. Kevin Burke mentioned that he has picked up speed in this area without even realized it, and some additional signage may be helpful. Rocks were placed in this area to control speeds. Dave indicated that speed breaks in this area would be helpful.

Adam asked if we were aware of the Denver Mountain Parks Plan. Amy indicated we were in touch with Denver and had provided many comments. Dave asked about the trail from Reynolds Park. Ralph mentioned that we recently acquired the land we need for this regional trail connection. Amy indicated that she had distributed some draft support letters and would appreciate each user group signing one for an application JCOS is making for a State Trails Grant to help fund this multiple use trail from Reynolds Park to the Colorado Trail.

Discuss Mission Statement:

Adam noted that the current mission statement is focused mainly on trail conflict and the purpose of TTF is broader than that and includes feedback communication and ideas. Amy Ito read the current mission statement; everyone agreed that the meeting this evening was good for communication and feedback. Kevin Burke suggested some new language and Amy offered to email this to the group for their input.

Staff Updates:

Special activity permits were discussed, for races specifically. A permit is considered for running races, but not for bike races and it depends on the park. Colleen said she would make available the criteria for a special activity permit and restrictions.

Amy mentioned the Crown Hill Trail mitigation plan (and brochure distributed); CNT permanent restrooms and water cistern being installed; Mayhem Gulch parking lot coming in at a high cost so the design is being value engineered and may be phased or placed further into the future for construction; CDOT has provided an agreement for the parking in their right of way and OSAC concur with this location but oil prices are determining costs at this time. Pictures on the wall show the dog off leash area at Elk Meadows, and parking on the southside of Stagecoach; Hildebrand entry road off Deer Creek Canyon Road will have pavers in the parking lot, construction for the parking lot and entry road will be next year, and we will separate equestrian parking; North Table Mountain a new parking lot and entry road off 93 will be under construction next year. Adam asked about South Table Mountain. Amy responded that trail progress has been made with crusher fine trails on the east of the Mesa top: parking is being reviewed; a trail was constructed connecting Pleasantview Park with STM, however, we need NREL to fence this section for it to open to the public,. There is also a desire to have parking near Denver West, near the elementary school; we are working with the City of Lakewood.

Future Meeting Date:

June 9th, the second Tuesday in 2009 is suggested for the next meeting. Tim Morrison thanked everyone for letting him serve for the past 5 years. Ralph mentioned that we have worked with some CDOT staff and Joe Jehn, a former OSAC member, about closing Clear Creek Canyon in September 2009 for recreation and a possible event, such as a half marathon, bike race, or other attraction to show awareness of open space, climbing, biking, racing, hiking and all the other recreational uses of the Canyon.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.