



**TOWN OF BRECKENRIDGE**  
**OPEN SPACE & TRAILS**

**Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission**

September 25, 2023

Council Chambers in Town Hall

150 Ski Hill Road, Breckenridge, CO 80424

THE TOWN OF BRECKENRIDGE IS NOW HOLDING HYBRID MEETINGS. THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN PERSON AT BRECKENRIDGE TOWN HALL. ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND. IN PERSON ATTENDEES MUST NOT ACCESS THE VIRTUAL MEETING WHILE IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

This meeting will also be broadcast live over Zoom. Log-in information is available in the calendar section of our website: [www.townofbreckenridge.com](http://www.townofbreckenridge.com). Questions and comments can be submitted prior to the meeting to [websiteopenspace@townofbreckenridge.com](mailto:websiteopenspace@townofbreckenridge.com).

- |                |   |           |
|----------------|---|-----------|
| <b>4:00 pm</b> | <b>Site Visit</b> – Reiling Dredge Wheelchair and ADA improvements. Meet on site.   |           |
| <b>5:30 pm</b> | <b>Call to Order</b>  |           |
| <b>5:35 pm</b> | <b>Discussion/Approval of Minutes</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• August 28, 2023 Draft BOSAC Meeting Minutes</li></ul>   |           |
| <b>5:40 pm</b> | <b>Discussion/Approval of Agenda</b>  |           |
| <b>5:45 pm</b> | <b>Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)</b>  |           |
| <b>5:50 pm</b> | <b>Staff Summary</b>  | <b>14</b> |
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Field Season Update</li><li>• Friends of Breckenridge Trails Events</li><li>• 2023 BIFA Numbers</li><li>• Naturalist Programming Update</li><li>• Peabody Placer Forest Health Project</li><li>• State Trails Grant</li></ul> |           |
| <b>5:55 pm</b> | <b>Open Space Discussion</b>  | <b>17</b> |
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cucumber Gulch Preserve Trail</li><li>• Leave No Trace Gold Standard Site Certification</li><li>• Council Matters Related to Open Space Topics</li><li>• Other Matters</li></ul>  |           |
| <b>7:15 pm</b> | <b>Executive Session</b>  |           |
| <b>7:30 pm</b> | <b>Adjournment</b>  |           |

**I) CALL TO ORDER**

Duke Barlow called the August 28, 2023, regular meeting of BOSAC to order at 5:30 pm. Other members of BOSAC present included Nikki LaRochelle, Chris Tennal, Bobbie Zanca, David Rossi. Town Council liaison Jeffrey Bergeron and BOSAC member Krysten Joyce were absent. Staff members present included Scott Reid, Anne Lowe, Tony Overlock, Alex Stach, Mark Truckey, and Julia Puester. Katherine King from Summit County Open Space & Trails was present. Peter Grosshuesch (OSAC) was present virtually. Members of the public included: Marika Page & Greg Ruckman (introduced themselves during Public Comment period) and a few other unnamed members of public attending in-person.

**II) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) BOSAC REGULAR MEETING – July 24, 2023**

The minutes were approved as presented.

**III) PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Marika Page: Hello, I am here as a neighbor and supporter of Cucumber Gulch Preserve. I was unable to attend the July meeting but watched the recording afterwards. I believe either Mr. Tennal or Mr. Rossi proposed the idea of a “Friends Support Group” for Cucumber Gulch Preserve. We wanted to let council know that a group was formed earlier this year and has been trademarked and registered. Currently, we are still working through the non-profit status portion in Colorado, which I do expect to take some time. Our goal is to have 200 members by this time next year, ideally a combination of neighbors, HOAs, Nordic skiers, and trail users. We are hoping this group will be able to mobilize volunteers to aid staff with weed pulls, trail maintenance, and any education that BOST feels appropriate. We also have enough interest in membership that we can commit to financial support of \$100,000 over the next 4-5 years, starting this year, for trail maintenance around the Preserve if that is something that seems appropriate. We know that there are a lot of options regarding the Toad Alley Trail, and we certainly have our preferences, but would like to stay involved regardless.

Greg Ruckman: Hello, I met with staff earlier this month. We found where we were aligned and where we had differences. At that meeting, staff agreed to support the Friends of Cucumber Gulch hiring Tony Boone to prepare a proposal for your consideration. I believe many people here know and have worked with Tony before. He has 28 years of experience building environmentally responsible trail systems in Breckenridge and elsewhere. Tony Boone has been hired by the Friends of Cucumber Gulch Preserve to prepare a proposal to improve trails in the Gulch. This proposal will consider all the concerns and ideas proposed by staff and BOSAC. His starting point would be “Option #3” (New trail constructions to avoid wetlands) proposed by staff at last month’s BOSAC meeting. This proposal would include a reroute around the fens, moving the trail closer to the perimeter of the Preserve, and including all necessary work to remove and revegetate the old summer trail. Tony’s proposal will be to do all of this work as a private contractor, under the direction supervision of staff and BOSAC. This would be at no cost to the Town and Friends of Cucumber Gulch will donate the money to cover his work. We ask a lot of our trail crews throughout the summer; we view this as a way we can help aid their workload. We hope to have Mr. Boone’s proposal ready for consideration at the September BOSAC meeting. He will arrive on September 6<sup>th</sup>, if anyone is interested in meeting with him. We have invited staff and trail crew.

**IV) STAFF SUMMARY**

**A) FIELD SEASON UPDATE**

Bobbie Zanca: \*Question on location of Fall Classic Trail\*

**B) FRIENDS OF BRECKENRIDGE TRAILS EVENTS**

Anne Lowe: One last Friends of Breckenridge Trails event planned for summer on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Our end of season party will be at Carter Park on September 21<sup>st</sup> and we invite you all to join us.

Bobbie Zanca: What time is end of season party?

Tony Overlock: It usually starts around 5:30pm, but we will create an official invite soon.

**C) 2023 BIFA**

**D) CUCUMBER GULCH PRESERVE NEIGHBORS**

**E) PEABODY PLACER FOREST HEALTH PROJECT**

Anne Lowe: Project is now underway. For the last week, we've had the harvester onsite already getting to work. No disturbances to the trail network yet, but those closures will start later this week or at the beginning of next week. The rate at which they're moving seems to be fast, so we're hoping those trails will only be closed for a couple of days as opposed to five days. They will not be working on the weekend and trails will be open on Saturdays/Sundays. Things are moving along, as they're taking advantage of good weather. Hopefully they will be in and out quickly. The Summit County project website has more and updated information, and the link is included in your packet.

Duke Barlow: Can you remind us of the duration of the Peabody Placer Project? They need to be done by October, correct?

Anne Lowe: October 31<sup>st</sup>, yes. We're hopeful they'll be done by then, as they're moving quickly.

Bobbie Zanca: Are the HOA's in the area aware?

Anne Lowe: Yes, we've done a lot of press/information releases and onsite meetings with the HOAs there. There is also a lot of physical signage at trail portals. We're thinking that people are getting a bit more used to this type of forest health project.

**V) OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION**

Laurium Trailhead Improvements Update

Anne Lowe: Thanks to everyone that came out to look at the site this afternoon. We thought it would be really helpful to see that location without snow cover. We do a lot of our planning process during the winter months, because that is when we have the most time to sit down with engineers and really plan/budget. When we brought this to you last year, BOSAC was in favor of putting a trailhead behind the green gate at Laurium. Town Council was not in favor of this decision. It was difficult to visualize what that area truly looked like with a couple feet of snow on top of it. We wanted to get you all out there today to take a look at it, consider pros and cons to each approach (road work vs new trailhead.). The area behind the green gate is pin-flagged. We wanted to get your thoughts as we plan which projects we would like to tackle next year.

Duke Barlow: What does everyone think about this?

Chris Tennal: I definitely think this is an area we need to pay attention to, based primarily on the safety of access to the trailhead. Especially now that it's become a main trailhead for Baldy Mountain access and the related wintertime parking limitations. After the site visit, I am much more open to building a new parking lot. It could be the type of parking where we might consider amenities. Maybe a shelter structure for backcountry skiers/riders? Restrooms if necessary? There's no good way to mitigate the parking issues on the road based on the grading issues Tony explained that at the site visit.

Bobbie Zanca: Shouldn't we completely close the road parking as well? Isn't that still going to be a safety issue? If we create a new parking lot past the green gate, but leave the overflow parking, we will still get cars sliding down the hill. We should consider a way to eliminate that overflow parking on the road.

Nikki LaRochelle: We would potentially use this overflow space for snow storage, correct?

Tony Overlock: Yes, that would eliminate a lot of those spots. Another possibility is to bring in topsoil/native seed mix and revegetate that area a little bit. There are certainly ways to mitigate that parking area.

Bobbie Zanca: The installation of a better parking area beyond the gate could potentially create a much more popular route, including in the summer. If we don't want people to park on the road it might be a good idea to find a way to keep them from doing so, regardless of season.

Nikki LaRochelle: I pretty much agree with everything Chris said. Going back to the Town Council meeting referenced before when they were not supportive of this, was their main grievance the meadow beyond the gate?

Anne Lowe: Correct. I think they thought this meadow was a pristine meadow and we'd be destroying valuable habitat, but it is in fact a heavily disturbed area with road access.

Nikki LaRochelle: The 20 parking spots you came up Tony, is that sized for accommodating users on a busy Saturday?

Tony Overlock: Correct. Looking at the existing parking there, counting cars on a busy day is how we came up with that. If everyone parked correctly, it would be more like 15 spots, which is slightly more than the current amount of parking.

Bobbie Zanca: If it's easier to park, there will be growth.

David Rossi: I wasn't out there today but have been there plenty of times in the winter. I agree with the ideas here, but I believe that Bobbie has a good point when it comes to addressing the safety/overflow parking issue. I would like to avoid the B&B conundrum; I think we kind of regretted the process for that and the lot expanded and is often full. I'd like to make sure we are referencing our Master Plan to understand if this a mid-country zone or is it more backcountry? Is improving that trailhead fitting our Master Plan guidelines? We also need to make sure we are reaching out to neighbors who are going to be impacted and let them have a voice in this. I agree with Bobbie that we will see a large bump in popularity here. It already is a popular spot, backcountry skiing/riding is growing, and it's a safe spot as far as avalanche danger is concerned. Sorry I couldn't make it today, I but will check it out before the snow flies.

Bobbie Zanca: I would like to see Breck History do some signage around the remaining buildings. Easy hike/access, but not a lot of information.

Duke Barlow: I agree with what's been said. It's a safety concern and I don't believe the parking area inside the gate is as impactful as once thought. I would recommend that Town Council see it while it's flagged to get a clearer vision.

Anne Lowe: We appreciate that, we will reach out to council and neighbors. There is a process involved here and we don't envision this happening before this winter.

#### Trails Workplan – Trail Loops & Parking Strategy

Anne Lowe: The last couple of BOSAC meetings we've had some great discussions around this trail loop concept. To recap, we view this as a way to provide better wayfinding to both visitors and residents alike, as we have so many trail names and intersections in the Town's network of trails. It also disperses our users across the network and encourages them try different trails. We've collected a lot of ideas and have begun to experiment and analyze those trail profiles – the time, distance, elevation, and how we would want to display those to users. What we are currently struggling with is deciding on the best physical marker to use on these loops. We have considered carsonite trail markers, but it can be a pain to install so many of these. We are wondering if there is something we could add to our existing 6x6 posts, like the "wingers" used on some portal posts in European trail networks. Ideally, changing the physically markers would not be a large burden on staff. We are still figuring this piece out and would hope to implement them by next season, so there is plenty of time to come back to this topic.

Bobbie Zanca: Reading back through the minutes, it was emphasized the loop's duration would be for one year. I don't quite understand going through all the effort of designing, publicizing, and signing the loop. If it's a popular loop, why would we take it down after a year?

Anne Lowe: The idea is to continually push people out to different areas. We would want to avoid one area/loop being hammered repeatedly. Coming up with new loops disperse users around and helps keep it fresh and interesting for both visitors and residents alike.

Bobbie Zanca: Ok, but couldn't we just keep adding additional loops? If loops are an effective way of wayfinding, why would we want to remove that after a year?

Tony Overlock: We don't have to remove loops or set a timeline on them necessarily. If a particular loop is really working and people are loving it, we'd say "lets keep it for another year, its great!" We will gauge feedback and adjust loops based on what we are hearing. I think there is certainly opportunity to keep a loop the same for many years.

Nikkie LaRochelle: Two questions. From what I remember, last we left it, staff was going to talk to USFS about using our loop symbols on their property. Also, after reviewing last meeting's minutes, I believe we had chosen Blair Witch as our "short mountain bike loop", which is on USFS land.

Anne Lowe: We have not yet had a meeting with USFS. We're hoping to have one soon where we can vet some of these questions. Whether we can physically mark our loops on USFS trails remains an unanswered question for us.

Nikkie LaRochelle: I know from talking with Duke, that you guys spoke with the ski area. Any updates in this context regarding this conversation?

Anne Lowe: We mentioned that we are trying to develop some new trail loops and I think there are a lot of great opportunities for connections between ski resort trails and Town trails. Hopefully this will be an ongoing discussion and we will be able to mark loops on the ski area network.

Duke Barlow: Initial impression is, yes, the ski area would support that, and we would be able to work trails that are both ski area and town, into a loop.

Chris Tennial: Do we have plans in place to see if these loops are effective in mitigating crowds and dispersing users? How can we measure if we are getting the outcomes we want?

Tony Overlock: That is always a tough question to answer based on measurables. One, we would have on-the-ground staff and trail crew observations. Two, we could determine popularity through third-party apps and analyze the traffic on specific loops. Also, we can communicate with the Breckenridge Tourism Office and bike/outdoor shops to gauge with storefronts who are interacting with visitors directly.

Chris Tennial: I think it would be beneficial to choose loops away from French Gulch. Maybe our first couple loops we could make sure to spread them to places like Peabody Placer. Somewhere where we are having less usage, but still have a trail counter. Observe if there is an increase in trail use on counters in response to the creation of a new loop.

Bobbie Zanca: Could the Breckenridge Tourism Office have an ongoing survey with users who participate in a loop and follow up with them?

Anne Lowe: We can certainly work with them on something like that. There is a big resident survey going out sometime this fall and the BTO is working with a citizen group to help shape those questions. We have tossed some Open Space & Trails relevant questions at them initially, but we don't know yet if they will make the final cut. We are aiming to get a little bit more information from the public on how they feel about Open Space and how some of our trails and amenities are utilized. The Welcome Center staff are always a good source of information for us.

Bobbie Zanca: Is the survey with BTO just for residents or are visitors included?

Scott Reid: I was a part of the discussion with BTO last week about the survey. They are attempting to capture as many responses from both groups as they can. Visitors get a separate survey from residents. It is likely that there will be at least a couple of Open Space-related questions, primarily regarding "quality of life." Something along the lines of "Are Open Space & Trails a driver for people wanting to live here?" The other questions are more related to congestion issues on the trails and at trailheads.

Nikki LaRochelle: One thing that came to mind. It could be counterintuitive to have a loop beginning from Tiger Dredge parking lot as there is not public transit access there.

Bobbie Zanca: Good point, we should be trying to combine those two concepts (transit and loops) together as much as we can.

Anne Lowe: Summit County is beginning to get their Transit to Trails Program off the ground. I am meeting with them this week to bring in Free Ride and determine how we can best utilize that. Given that we have around 500 portal points around Town and so many of them are in fact close to public transportation, but if you're not familiar with the network and you're taking the bus, you might not have any idea how close you can get to these portals using public transit. We want to be able to marry our system with transit. Again, these loops are going to be a bit of an experiment to see what works best. We may initially use a parking lot to start, but going forward we would want to use as much public transportation as possible.

Duke Barlow: Sounds like at this point, staff is still experimenting with what actual physical markers we will use, and we will talk more about this before we implement it next summer. Any other thoughts on this?

Nikkie LaRochelle: Do you think the loops we decided on at the last BOSAC meeting are set or will we circle back before you go out and mark them?

Tony Overlock: I think we were definitely planning on touching base with you all before this moves forward. Maybe we will have a few more options and we can decide together on this at a future meeting.

Nikki LaRochelle: Maybe the USFS marking piece will play a bigger factor in what we decide to do.

#### Parking Strategy

Anne Lowe: Another complicated issue we talked about during last month's meeting is a parking strategy. We really want to figure out how we can meet the goals set in our Master Plan regarding this parking strategy. We are beginning to work with Summit County, the USFS, and the US Department of Transportation's Volpe Center. They help solve and strategize visitor use management issues at high use areas like Maroon Bells and Hanging Lake. Our local Forest Service, the Dillon Ranger District, brought them into Summit County to work with our different municipalities to see if we could look at trailhead parking congestion holistically and come up with some a tool box of strategies. One of the discussed strategies was a trailhead assessment, which we thought would be a great first step in designing our own parking strategy. A thorough assessment of all our parking infrastructure to determine size, management zone, and what type of use is happening there. The County has been conducting a trailhead study with webcams to count the number of cars every hour to gauge capacity and use at various trailheads. If staff were to work on a trailhead assessment, it would give us a better understanding and inventory of our parking areas and then the capacity to categorize our parking areas similar to the Boulder County example included in last month's BOSAC packet. This could lead to the establishment of a "High, Medium, and Low" level parking areas. High Level (busiest parking areas) would have higher levels of amenities (bathrooms, trashcans, dog waste bags, etc..) while lesser used parking areas would be more primitive. We view this assessment as a good first step to take, completing an inventory of what we have in our system and how we can categorize these parking areas. USFS and Volpe Center have invited me to Sedona to take a look at how the city is managing all their trailheads. They had a parking fee structure for a while and now they're doing a shuttle system. The Volpe Center will be working with them to set them up strategies and priorities going forward and I am hoping to learn a lot from this to bring back to our own parking strategy. It can be really helpful to see how other resort communities are thinking about parking at trailheads.

Bobbie Zanca: What is your timeline on a final, comprehensive parking strategy/plan?

Anne Lowe: I think we can do an assessment this fall and winter. Hopefully at some time this winter we can have a finished inventory of all our parking areas and what capacity each one can handle. From there we could categorize them.

David Rossi: I'm not sure if Volpe was involved in the micro-transit conversation at the Senior Center a couple of weeks ago, but they've started the planning process for their vision. The Forest Service asked if public transportation had been considered to the trails. If there is any way to make sure everything we do regarding point-to-point transportation is interfaced to what the County and Summit Stage are doing, it would be great to have something that's comprehensive, that the whole County could get around. If we ever end up going the Transit



Authority route, it would be great to have the “Transit-To-Trails” idea be commonplace across the system. Hats off to the Forest Service for pushing this and resisting the consultation that advised against this piece.

Bobbie Zanca: Would it be easier to sell specific parking projects after the parking strategy is established?

Anne Lowe: For sure. I think they do go hand in hand. We will be examining the Laurium Trailhead over the winter months, at the same time as we are working on the parking strategy. We will definitely want to see where the Laurium fits into that strategy.

Bobbie Zanca: I think that will be a powerful motivator.

Duke Barlow: Still need Town Council there before it snows!

Chris Tennial: One thing Nikki’s comment about transit and trail access had me thinking about is “parking deletes.” We might find a place where people have parked forever that isn’t necessarily sanctioned. Deleting small, rogue parking areas should be a part of the larger plan. A lot of these are parking areas are detrimental to our open spaces.

Nikki LaRoche: Another general thought: How parking areas change from summer to winter. The number of spots, etc. Laurium is a good example. It’s highly popular in the winter, but not as much in the summer. It’s important to consider seasonality in our analysis.

Duke Barlow: I think this is great. Over the past few months we have formalized a few “one offs” regarding existing parking, ADA, and safety. We don’t have a broad view yet and formalizing a systematic approach is what we need. Otherwise, we could be in danger of losing standards and consistency.

Bobbie Zanca: Would you need volunteers to help inventory trailhead parking? There’s a lot of trails to look at.

Tony Overlock: I feel like we have a good database, it’s more just organizing them in a format we’d want to dissect them. We know where they are, it’s just about organizing them with all the right information we’d want to include.

Anne Lowe: It never hurts to count cars and spot check at various locations. Happy to field any emails if you have an observation.

Bobbie Zanca: Summit Seniors has multiple hiking groups. Is that something we could send over to them and encourage their hikes to take note.

Tony Overlock: Good point. Friends of Dillon Ranger District has an Adopt A Trailhead program, where they have multiple volunteers checking in on trailheads.

Katherine King: Are you focused on Town of Breckenridge Trailheads or the entire Upper Blue River’s Trailheads?

Anne Lowe: I think we would like to inventory the entire Upper Blue River.

Katherine King: I would encourage you to include “overflow parking” in your data collection. Tiger Road comes to mind. Too many examples of roadside parking which lead to Sheriff’s Office placing additional “No Parking on County Roads” signage, no more overflow parking at Horseshoe Dredge, etc. This will probably be the next spot the public reaches out to say, “Can you expand the trailhead parking here.” Think broadly as you’re inventorying and consider what needs/capacity beyond just the number of spaces. If you know that roadside/overflow parking is happening next door, let’s make note of that.

Nikki LaRochelle: Is there a parking in your new Master Plan? (Summit County Open Space & Trails Master Plan)

Katherine King: No, there is not. This conversation is making me think we need one. There are definitely safety concerns about people parking on Tiger Road. You’re basically standing in the traffic lane while unloading your bike. We’re thinking long term about whether or not we want access in particular spots is important; we don’t want to just be reacting to each new problem spot that comes up.

Anne Lowe: I’d like to suggest that as we work on this parking strategy, we start to work on a Transit-To-Trails program as well and figure out how transit can fit into this parking piece.

#### Aspen Alley Trail

Anne Lowe: The Aspen Alley trail often comes up late summer/early fall during the fall color. This trail sees a lot of congestion and is a popular downhill mountain biking trail, as well as hiking trail, especially when fall color is at its peak. To provide some additional context: it is primarily located on National Forest property, aside from a small parcel owned (near the end of the trail) by Town of Breckenridge near the Wakefield site. This is an interpretive site used by Breckenridge History and there is legal parking for up to six vehicles (including one ADA spot). There is also an easement that crosses this area to get to a ranch just beyond the gate. For two weeks every year, this does become a bit of a challenging place to be, given all the competing uses out there. This has been on our radar long term to try and see what we can do to alleviate these conflicts. To preface, our partners at the Forest Service have been pretty hesitant on using both directional trails and alternating use days. That said, the Aspen Alley Trail is located within our Special Use Authorization that we hold with the County and USFS. When we did our Special Use Authorization in 2019, we put it on the radar that at some point in time we’d really like to explore an uphill route on Aspen Alley so that we could help with some of that congestion, especially as there are more and more users on the trails. That would have to go through a NEPA process with the USFS. We had it solidified as a potential route to consider in that Special Use Authorization and we have been compiling a lot of these type of trails passing through USFS land. We typically save up a decent number of trails to run through a NEPA analysis because it’s a complicated and expensive process. We like to have a collection of trails to have a consultant run through the NEPA. This is something that’s been under consideration and we understand it can be a challenging place, especially these couple of weeks in the fall.

Bobbie Zanca: I hike this trail a lot and not just in the fall. My friends and I are always on high alert when it comes to hiking Aspen Alley and trying our hardest to avoid conflicts with downhill bikers. I've gotten a lot of feedback now that I'm on BOSAC about making Aspen Alley a good experience for all users that enjoy it. I have a question about the Special Use Authorization. Does the Special Use Authorization actually give you anything if you still need to go through a NEPA Analysis?

Anne Lowe: It's sort of like a "fast track" to NEPA. It's on our local radar and folks at the Ranger District know it's part of a working group we have. It helps streamline a lot of the initial process and we have good support from our local Forest Service folks in shepherding projects through all the approvals needed. First line of approval is nudged through more quickly.

Bobbie Zanca: Is getting another trail that parallels Aspen Alley, is that a realistic thing or something more in the distant future?

Anne Lowe: Even with our streamlined process still takes a while; the last NEPA took about two years.

Tony Overlock: To get a trail on the ground, the quickest it would be is about two years. One summer of NEPA process and the following year would be the actual construction.

Bobbie Zanca: So not all that distant future, if we got moving on it, we could do something soon.

Anne Lowe: That's where we are considering our other trail options to run through the NEPA process at the same time since it is such an arduous, long process. There were a couple of other trails that were noted in the Special Use Authorization, but we're not sure if we are ready for NEPA on any of those yet as they were more "high level" concept ideas at the same time.

Tony Overlock: We are coordinating with Summit County Open Space and the Golden Horseshoe Committee to gather a list of trail projects so we can move forward with another NEPA package.

Bobbie Zanca: What's the expected timeline for that? And would it include Aspen Alley?

Tony Overlock: Yes. An alternate route for Aspen Alley would be one of top priorities to move forward with.

Bobbie Zanca: Is that moving forward within the next year?

Tony Overlock: Many players on the team are involved. There is a process of getting everyone's opinion, including BOSAC, OSAC, and Town Council, which takes some time. We've had conversations, but we need to dive deeper into this project, so thanks for bringing it up because it kind of forces the issue as well.

Bobbie Zanca: Why does the Forest Service even care about directional trails/alternate days?

Anne Lowe: Their stance is that public lands are open for all users. They mainly differentiate between motorized and non-motorized, so if it's a non-motorized trail they want all users to be able to use it.

Tony Overlock: We have had some luck with them. The Hard Luck Trail is a "Recommended Bike Specific" Trail. During the construction process, we kept the elements low to the ground and just used berms. So they can be receptive to this process, but there needs to be more discussion around it.

Bobbie Zanca: Is there any hope of alternate days or is that something they will generally say no to?

Anne Lowe: We could certainly ask them again to see what they. Generally, they are not in favor of that approach. Also, we not sure our staff is on board with that because we don't have a way to enforce it. It can be a really challenging thing (alternate user days) to mix things up on different days of the week. It might be a different story if we had rangers and the enforcement piece.

David Rossi: Are there examples of USFS doing this in the Front Range for example? I think it's coming, and this will be a common practice going forward. I'm not sure this is necessarily the best idea, but Bobbie is right, there is certainly some safety issues on this trail.

Nikki LaRochelle: I agree with David that idea of directional trails is kind of the "writing on the wall" for the Forest Service and USFS is going to be forced to change their tune on this. This trail is a great example (of where this is needed) and I'm shocked there has not been a catastrophic injury yet. If we are need of a compelling argument, stressing how dangerous this trail is should be highlighted.

David Rossi: Another thing to consider about alternate days are options. For example, you get to the top of Aspen Alley and see that it's an alternate day... you don't really have an alternate route from there. Might make more sense in an area where there are other options and signage to guide you to that alternative.

Nikki LaRochelle: Why does the USFS require we submit a bulk of trail projects, as opposed to one off trail proposals.

Tony Overlock: They don't, but through the NEPA Process you are looking at all these multiple studies that require a single individual expert to come out and do field work. When you have a bulk of projects, it's ultimately more cost effective.

Nikki LaRochelle: If you're not at a point where you're ready to submit a package of trails, could you just proceed with Aspen Alley? I appreciate the consolidation and not duplicate efforts, but maybe the timing of the other projects is a factor?

Duke Barlow: To get a NEPA study for next summer, when would you need to request it?

David Rossi: Last year.

Duke Barlow: So, the earliest this could happen is more like three years?

Tony Overlock: Yes.

Nikki LaRochelle: How concerned is staff with this trail from a safety perspective?

Tony Overlock: It's concerning. As a user, I've experienced this before. We would love to move forward with something.

Katherine King: As far as timing goes, I definitely think it's feasible to meet and start talking about the next round of NEPA projects. When we submit these NEPA proposals, we are funding all the studies relevant to the project. If the Forest Service is going to take on your NEPA project anymore, they not going to put it on their work program unless you are paying for all the archeologists, botanists, biologists, etc. That's part of the reason it's much more cost effective to do a package of trails. Also, when thinking about Aspen Alley in the short term, we should consider "low hanging fruit" like: Do we need to clear the corridor? Do we need better sightlines and signage? Do we need to cut some trees down? I've definitely had close calls there too. An approval for another route is at least 2-3 years out and may not be approved at all. We should also be thinking about other creative solutions.

Nikki LaRochelle: Would we need to correspond with USFS at all for some of those "low hanging fruit" options?

Scott Reid: Special Use Authorization allows us to maintain non-motorized trails on the National Forest without going through a significant permission process. That's one of the biggest advantages we have. From a background standpoint, when we realigned Aspen Alley, we considered it a wild success. At the time, this trail was inherently one way because it was unsustainably steep, rutted, and went by one of the most dangerous sink holes in the entire Upper Blue River. For years, most people were only using this as downhill-only route. Since then, the trail has been realigned. It was a hard project and now we are, frankly, victims of our own success. Now the trail is super fun, safer, no hazards and has become incredibly popular. We've had an evolution of the challenge there. Another thing, talking about constructing an uphill route on the USFS land there; a significant amount of Transamerica property is up there and we would need to own or have permission to cross, otherwise we would be constrained on where this proposed trail could go. It typically takes us about a year to complete a plan and create reports, another year for USFS to conduct their analysis, and if everything goes well, the third year would be the construction. This is why we typically group 5-6 of these NEPA analysis projects together.

Anne Lowe: We will meet with our partners at the County and the Forest Service and start developing a game plan. Will let you all know where we land and if we can get a collection of projects or what we can bring forward.

Duke Barlow: Can we look into a simple sightline idea before then?

Tony Overlock: Both the County and the Town will be up there for basic patience in the next week reshaping berms, drainages, and corridor clearing.

Duke Barlow: One small point. For me, it doesn't really matter if it's "recommended" or "required" downhill trail. They both work great, it's just a formality at the point.

Council Matters Related to Open Space Topics

N/A

Other Matters

Nikki LaRochelle: This weekend I witnessed a crash on Sallie Barber near the Barney Ford gate. Are the gates too small for modern handlebar sizes? Is this something that's been discussed before?

Tony Overlock: We've certainly talked about the width of the gates with staff before. The infrastructure behind those gates is pretty solid. Lots of concrete and steel and were created this way so no one could alter/move them. Thanks for bringing this up and we will take a look at it.

**VI) EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Barlow moved that BOSAC go into executive session under C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4) for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategies for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators concerning a property that the Town may be interested in acquiring for open space purposes. Ms. Zanca seconded the motion. BOSAC went into an executive session at 6:46 pm.

The executive session of BOSAC concluded at 7:53 pm. The participants in the executive session were Nikki LaRochelle, David Rossi, Bobbie Zanca, Chris Tennal and Duke Barlow. Staff present included Anne Lowe, Alex Stach, Tony Overlock, Scott Reid and Mark Truckey. Katherine King from Summit County Open Space & Trails was also present.

**VII) ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the BOSAC meeting was made by Mr. Barlow and Mr. Tennal seconded it. The August 28, 2023, regular meeting of BOSAC ended at 6:44 pm.

The next regular meeting of BOSAC is scheduled for September 25, 2023.

---

Duke Barlow, Chair

Memorandum

To: Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission  
From: Open Space & Trails Staff  
Re: September 25, 2023 Meeting

---

**Staff Summary**

**Field Season Update**

The OST Technicians have been busy completing the following:

- Harvested buck & rail fencing material.
- Installed closure signs for the Illinois Creek Trail.
- Completed Reiling Dredge ADA Trailhead.
- Completed reshaping bike elements on the ZL Trail.
- Extensive maintenance work on Slalom, which includes installing drainages, reshaping bike elements, and hazardous tree removal along trail corridor.
- Completed replacing deteriorated buck & rail fencing in the interior of Cucumber Gulch Preserve.
- Installed locks and signage in Dry Gulch.
- Repaired outflow structure on retention pond along Park Forest.

**FOBT Events**

September 9th – B&B Trail Maintenance: 15 volunteers conducted maintenance projects on Mineral Hill Hiking Trail (Hiker’s Gold), X10U8, Minnie Mine, V3, and Barney Ford. Work included limbing of trail corridors, installing drainages, repairing brake bumps, and slope stabilization.

Highlights from the 2023 Season:

- 8 events focusing on trailhead cleanup, trail maintenance, restoration, and noxious weed removal.
- 110 volunteers totaling 435 hours and, \$13,833 donated labor of value
- 600 lbs. of weeds pulled at Cucumber Gulch Preserve and Blue River Trail
- 2,000 ft. of restoration fencing constructed
- 13 trails restored

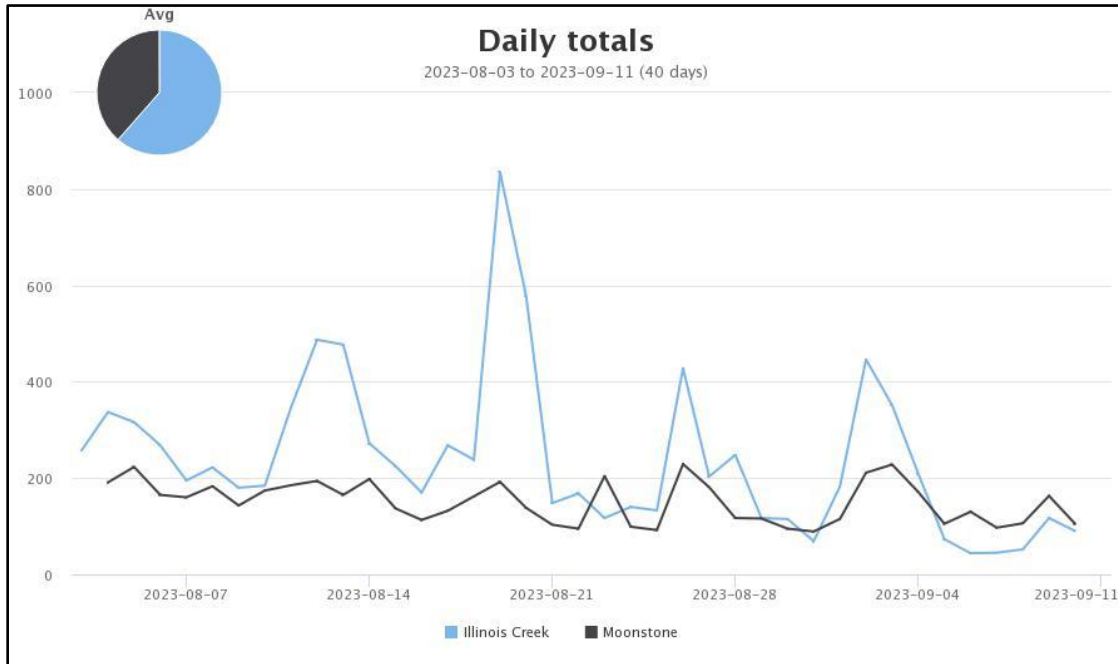
On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Open Space staff hosted the end of season recognition party for volunteers at the Carter Park Pavilion.

**2023 BIFA Numbers**

The 2023 Breckenridge International Festival of the Arts (BIFA), hosted by BreckCreate, wrapped up on August 20<sup>th</sup>. This year, Trail Mix featured the same artist at three locations on the Illinois Creek Trail, Moonstone Trail, and Iowa Hill Trail. The Trail Mix art installations continued through Labor Day weekend.

Staff installed trail counters prior to the start of BIFA in order to better capture numbers of people on trail while Trail Mix was occurring. Our TRAFx counter at Illinois Creek Trail observed an increase in use throughout the duration of the art installation, with August averaging the most daily traffic (291.7 users per day) and recording the highest weekly total of the year (2,585 users). The Moonstone Trail counter

was installed just prior to the event, so we do not have data to compare. The TRAFx counter at Iowa Hill is managed by Breck History and indicated quite a bit of use the first week of the installation (53 users per day), but numbers then fell for the remainder of the of the installation (9 users per day).



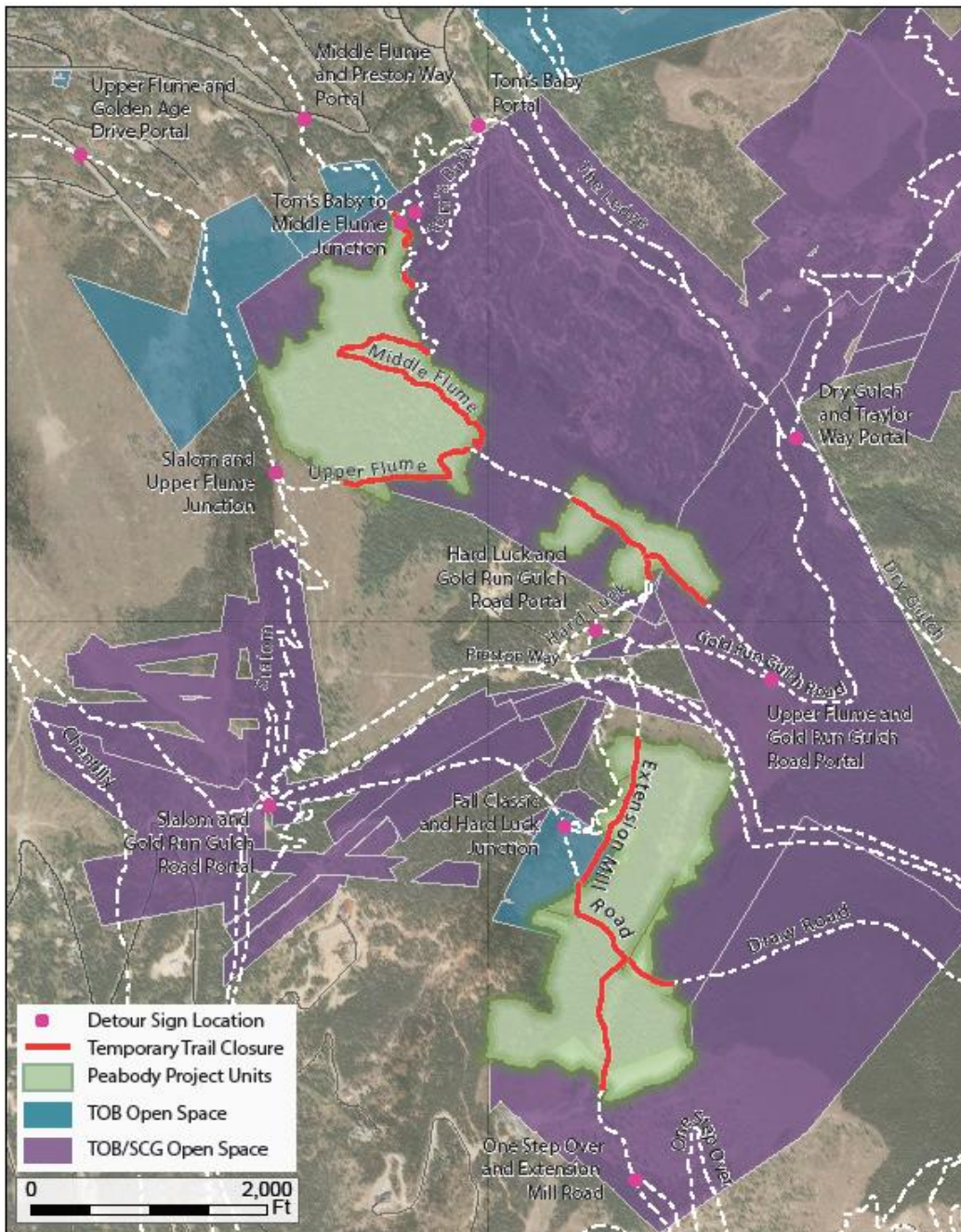
**Naturalist Programming Update**

Our team of naturalist are wrapping up their guided hikes programs for the season. They led more than 85 hikes with a total of 566 participants at Cucumber Gulch Preserve, Iowa Hill, and Illinois Creek. The programs featured five types of guided hike themes at these areas, including: Wetland Wildlife, Natural History, Wildflowers, Medicinal Plants, and Foraging. Foraging was a new theme for this season that had been requested in the past and brought a new aspect to the hikes that was exciting for both participants and the team of naturalists.

**Peabody Placer Forest Health Project**

As of September 18<sup>th</sup>, harvesting operations have begun in Treatment Area 2. Hard Luck and Upper Flume Trails are currently closed from the Middle Flume Trail to Gold Run Gulch Road. Machinery will continue to operate in the Middle Flume area of Treatment 1 and cross the Upper Flume and Little Corporal Trail. Please visit the project site for more information: [Peabody Placer Hazardous Fuels Reduction | Summit County, CO - Official Website \(summitcountyco.gov\)](https://summitcountyco.gov/peabody-placer-hazardous-fuels-reduction).





### State Trails Grant

We are exploring a Colorado Parks & Wildlife Non-Motorized Trails Maintenance Grant to help improve infrastructure and accessibility across the Town's various "frontcountry" trailheads and trails in high use areas within town limits. This project would include a number of kiosk/signage improvements to provide information on mobility, (steepest/max grades, surface types, distances and amenities), as well as add bilanguage translations or QR codes to increase inclusivity. Important infrastructure upgrades are needed on some of our more popular trails, including the replacement of a bridge along the Blue River Trail, which is a busy, multi-use trail within close proximity to a number of workforce housing units,

childcare centers, and a local community college. This grant would also allow us to retrofit our busiest trail, the Trollstigen Trail, by removing a rustic flagstone pathway to make wheelchair-friendly improvements through the use of crusher fines and a reworking of the current boardwalk/railing setup. We would also improve wheelchair and other mobility accessibility at the Cucumber Gulch Wildlife Preserve with crusher fines and improved grades.

Staff have submitted a pre-application and are currently working on completing a full application, due the first week of October. We are requesting the maximum \$250,000 grant amount, which has a minimum 25% match (10% of minimum must be cash). Staff time through construction and installation of kiosks should cover match and we would contract out the trail improvements projects at Trollstigen, Blue River Trail, and Cucumber Gulch Preserve.

## Open Space and Trails

### **Cucumber Gulch Preserve Trail**

As the July meeting, BOSAC discussed four potential options regarding the Toad Alley Trail through Cucumber Gulch Preserve (Preserve). The initial concerns that prompted staff to consider rerouting the trail first stem from the 2018 and 2019 vegetation and fen wetland mapping projects by EcoMetrics and their contractors. What staff learned from this 2019 report, in particular, is that the Preserve is far more biodiverse and unique in terms of fen wetlands than we first realized, especially in the upland areas with extensive forested fens. Toad Alley is not only cutting off hydrologic flow of rare fens, but it is also bisecting critical habitat that includes the State-endangered boreal toad.

The four options included:

1. Do nothing and keep everything as is, while trying to stabilize the existing trail.
2. Reroute the trail from the end of the boardwalk to the base of Peak 8 on what was once a trail prior to the construction of Toad Alley. Remove existing trail and its turnpikes and restore vegetation and hydrologic flow. A perimeter trail such as this could potentially open earlier in the season, as it would avoid sensitive habitat.
3. Create a new, sustainably-built trail through the Preserve that attempts to avoid wetlands and extends to Peak 7 to connect to the Peaks Trailhead, but still fragments habitat and creates new disturbance.
4. Remove trail access altogether.

Following that meeting, staff is working with the Town Engineering division to examine Ski Hill Road at the base of Peak 8, which is not considered a dangerous section of road. Our engineers have metrics in which to evaluate safety concerns, cross walks, traffic patterns, etc. Significant road improvements were installed in the regrading of Ski Hill a few short years ago and it is a viable location for trailhead access.

Also since the last meeting, Friends of Cucumber Gulch Preserve hired trail designer Tony Boone to reimagine the Toad Alley Trail in a new alignment that still connects to Peak 7. That proposal is enclosed. Staff did not commission this proposal.

Staff would like BOSAC to review trail options in context with the previously submitted EcoMetrics reports on wetland mapping, habitat sensitivity, and overall biodiversity of the Preserve. Staff needs time to fully vet the proposal we received and consult with our partners at CPW regarding any potential options and changes to trails and impacts to wildlife. Staff has serious concerns about habitat fragmentation and impacts to fens in the Preserve and it is the strong staff recommendation to realign the trail to the perimeter of the Preserve at Peak 8 (Option #2 above).

At this point in time, staff would like BOSAC to discuss the proposal, but hold off on making a recommendation until staff and partners have a chance to evaluate it.

1. ***Does BOSAC have any questions about the proposal?***
2. ***Does BOSAC have any initial feedback for staff related to the proposal?***
3. ***Does BOSAC need more time or information in order to provide a recommendation to staff?***

### **Leave No Trace Gold Standard Site Certification**

Tony Overlock recently completed the Level 2 Certification Training with Leave No Trace (LNT). With this certification, Tony will be able to train Open Space & Trails and Welcome Center staff, concessionaires, and volunteers on the LNT Principles, which help users enjoy the outdoors in a sustainable manner. Open Space and the BTO staff regularly promote LNT principles through online messaging and kiosk information, but additional training will benefit our community of land managers and those people interacting with the general public.

Staff is also pursuing the concept of obtaining the LNT Gold Standard Site Certification. By receiving this highest standard of recognition, Gold Standard Sites become exemplary models, ensuring that LNT education is part of everyone's experience when spending time outdoors. The benefits of becoming a Gold Standard Site include more sustainable use of our trails and resources and better visitor preparation to enjoy the outdoors safely. If you would like to familiarize yourself with LNT principles, please feel free take this 30-minute introductory training. [Leave No Trace 101 Course](#).

Staff requests that BOSAC review LNT principles and answer the following questions:

- 1. Does BOSAC have any questions about LNT principles?***
- 2. Does BOSAC have any feedback related to the pursuit of LNT Gold Standard Site and does BOSAC wish to pursue this designation?***

### **Council Matters Related to Open Space Topics**

Jeffrey Bergeron, in his role as Council liaison to BOSAC, will provide updates on open space-related topics that Council has recently discussed.

### **Other Matters**

This standing agenda item is intended to provide commissioners an opportunity to raise questions for a brief discussion and response, or to suggest items for upcoming agendas.



## Evaluation of Option #3 Cucumber Gulch Preserve, Breckenridge, CO



Thanks to the Town of Breckenridge and the Friends of Cucumber Gulch for the opportunity to evaluate Option #3 as presented by town staff to BOSAC in their memo dated 7/24/23. On September 6th I enjoyed a full day site visit to Cucumber Gulch Preserve. While on the trail, I was able to talk with town trail staff and naturalists as well as meeting a few visitors and locals enjoying a nice hike on a bluebird day.

It is my professional opinion that Option #3 significantly enhances the trail sustainability and user experiences on the Toad Alley Trail. It removes the steepest (15-20%) eroded fall-line sections and two 80' turnpikes through wetlands, replacing them with a trail requiring no structures in a significantly drier coniferous forest out of fen wetlands.

This conclusion is based on four decades of natural surface trail planning, design, construction and maintenance in Colorado, including numerous trails in Breckenridge over the decades. Please see our [website](#) for some of our past projects implemented under our philosophy of *“Sustainability, Stewardship, Innovation, and Integrity.”*

The following are my observations and analysis of Option #3 in Cucumber Gulch Preserve. They are based on my onsite observations hiking the existing trail and the conceptual alignment for Option #3 and while hiking with Tony Overlock on the lower sections of Toad Alley Trail that are not causing significant hydrological concerns like the upper section of trail that Option 3 concept easily successfully avoid.

### Trail Sustainability

The Option #3 alignment follows sustainable trail principles (average trail grade 6-8%) with three gentle climbing turns. Ideally it should mirror the flavor of the existing Toad Alley Trail where it is 24-30” tread width.

Option #3 allows for closure and reclamation of upper section to summer use, including removal of approximately 165 LF of turnpike helping restore proper hydrologic flow to wetland/fen ecosystem.

Removal of the armored section provides 17 large slabs (50-100#) for use on other projects.







Turnpike removal will generate approximately 30 cubic yards (CY) of 3/8" crusher fines to be re-purposed for surfacing approximately 850 LF of new trail enhancing long-term drainage in the flatter terrain (<10% sideslopes).

Turnpike removal will also be generating an additional 5-10 CY of crusher fines intermixed with native soils; these may be very helpful for revegetating the 10-12' wide sections of exposed roots on two steep fall-line sections. All areas to be reseeded by contractor with a native seed mix selected by the Town.

### Habitat Improvement

Option #3 alignment pulls Toad Alley Trail closer to the existing disturbances created by Ski Hill Road, the lodge & resort, and the Epic Discovery Peak 8 Base Camp's adventure zone.

The new alignment also pulls Toad Alley further from the large game corridor between Peak 7 base area and Discovery Road.



The new alignment travels through an area of significant downfall and dead standing lodgepole pines offering great opportunity for fire hazard reduction and timber stand improvement with easy access from nearby road.

The new alignment travels close to several patches of Canada Thistle which can be easily accessed, pulled and bagged prior to seeding in mid-September.

## User Safety & Enjoyment

Option #3 maintains safe trail access to the Peaks Trail and United States Forest Service lands without requiring users to cross roads and/or use roads without sidewalks or adequate shoulders.

Option #3 allows the Town's naturalist-led tours to continue as they have in recent years, including use of trail to the wildlife viewing platform for programming.

Option #3 allows the town to continue providing locals and visitors with a high-quality, nature-based trail experience.

## Financial Considerations:

Implementing Option #3 including: 850 LF new trail construction (24-30" wide), deconstruction/transport of 165 LF of turnpike (approx. 35-40 CY aggregate/soil), 2+ acres of fire hazard reduction, removal of 17 armoring slabs and transport to trailhead, turnpike timbers to be used for closures, native seeding on approximately 0.25 acres, and closure & reclamation of approximately 725 LF of existing trail to summer use.

Total cost including mobilization is estimated from \$45,000.00-\$50,000.00. Total does not include the design, construction or installation of closure signage.

## Proposal to Implement Option #3

Tony Boone Trails has worked with Breckenridge staff before on numerous trail design and construction projects. We would be honored to implement this project under the strict supervision and oversight of Town staff and BOSAC.

Work can be completed between the 2024 spring and fall closures in 2-3 weeks with an emphasis of "laying the trail gently on the land". We will accomplish this by using a small, mini excavator and tracked carrier, both <40" wide, provide hand finishing of trail tread & corridor using electric tools when feasible and limiting gas chainsaw use to midday only. We will be re-purposing 35-40 CY of aggregate material from the turnpikes to surface new section of trail and cover exposed root sections prior to revegetation efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

