

SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes of November 5, 2025 Joint Meeting with Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission (BOSAC)

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Nothnagel, Brandon Bruegger, George Kokoefer, Greg Guevara, Jim Alexander, Libby Pansing, Narendra De, Jerod Swanson, Paul Semmer, Jeff Zimmerman

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Meagan Yahr, John Uban, Peter Grosshuesch

BOSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Nikki LaRochelle, David Rossi, Krysten Joyce, Bobbie Zanca, Matt Powers, Jay Beckerman

BOSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Tennial

STAFF PRESENT: Katherine King, Allison Morton, Jordan Mead – Summit County Open Space and Trails; Duke Barlow, Tony Overlock, Alex Stach, Mark Truckey, Chris Kulick – Town of Breckenridge

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Meagan Wheat, Robert Martin, Craig Cummins, Kelly Ahern, Alex Lindquist, Steven Herrman – Town of Silverthorne, Pete Swenson – Town of Frisco Nordic Center and Trails Manager, Ben Rassmussen – Volpe National Transportation

Call to Order: Jeff Zimmerman called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:33 PM.

Approval of Agenda: OSAC unanimously approved the agenda as submitted.

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by: George Kokefer

Second by: Bob Nothnagel

Motion approved unanimously.

Public Comments on Items Not Included in the Agenda: None

Discussion with Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission:

Visitor Use Monitoring Study Results

Allison Mitchell and Alex Stach gave an overview of trail counter and trailhead parking lot camera data from 2025. County trailhead cameras were deployed at Hoosier Pass, Lincoln Townsite, and Lower McCullough Gulch. Town cameras were stationed at B&B and BOEC trailheads. All trailheads were full for at least one hour less than 20 days in 2025, except for Lincoln Townsite (86 days) and BOEC (39 days). Hoosier Pass (105 days) and B&B (76 days) had the highest proportion of days with overnight parking. The Lower McCullough Gulch TH was monitored to understand the potential impacts of the Quandary-McCullough Gulch Reservation program. Use was highest in June and September while Quandary was busiest in July and August indicating that the parking and reservation system was not driving high use at Lower McCullough Gulch. Council and Commission members were curious about summertime usage at Laurium with the improvements to the Laurium Mine buildings and the new parking area. Plowing at Hoosier Pass was another topic of discussion. The BOEC lot was full during the height of summer (July and August) and new spaces are being added to this lot to create a new ADA spot and increase capacity.

The Town of Breckenridge used trail cameras to study user types and number of dogs on Upper Flume, B&B, Moonstone, and Illinois Creek Trails in July, August and September 2025. Most users on all trails included in the study were hikers and this was most pronounced at Illinois Creek. Upper Flume had the

highest proportion of bikers and the least dogs, but also had the lowest overall user count, likely due to the distance from trailheads. The Town used AI to count mountain bikers and hikers, which required some additional truthing of data. This study will be expanded in the future to include more types of uses and locations while refining methodology.

Summit County presented trail counter data from Upper Blue Lakes, Quandary Trail, Lower McCullough, Upper McCullough, Spruce Creek, Horseshoe Gulch, and Fourmile Bridge Recpath. Overall, use did not increase in 2025 across locations and was either steady or slightly lower than 2022-2024. The Fourmile Bridge Recpath counter had over 132,000 detections, with over 800 detections/day in the summer and about 27/day in winter. Vehicle counters at Spruce Creek Road, Blue Lakes Road, and McCullough Gulch Road showed similar trends to trail counters with decreases on Blue Lakes and McCullough Gulch and steady numbers on Spruce Creek Road. July was the busiest month on all trails and roads. Council and Commission members asked about detections versus total use and how the numbers should be interpreted. Staff indicated that these are relative numbers between locations and from year to year to detect trends over time, not absolute counts. Use patterns differ between trails, making absolute user numbers difficult to determine. Town of Breckenridge data from B&B Trail and Sallie Barber Road also showed slight decreases in overall use in 2025. Paired Mountain Biker and Hiker counters on Slalom showed that 59-69% of all users were bikers, with 31-41% hikers from June to September, despite the “Downhill Recommended” signage added to the top and bottom of this trail. Aspen Alley was a majority hikers from July to September, with the lowest proportion of bikers in September. Duke Barlow added that his interpretation was that the overall proportion of bikers on trails was likely higher than the counter data indicated due to imperfect detection of bicycles. This was the first year these paired counters were used and methods will continue to improve as staff collect additional data.

Aspen Alley Outreach and User Study Overview

Allison Mitchell and Jordan Mead gave an overview of outreach efforts and data collection at Aspen Alley, focused on the fall foliage season in mid to late September. Overall use of the trail was 3-5x higher than average in September for both bikers and hikers. During the fall foliage season, volunteers counted an average of 174 hikers per hour between 10am-2pm on peak foliage weekends with counts ranging from 93-279 hikers per hour during the study. Bike traffic was much lower with an average of 9 bikers per hour, ranging between 4 and 12 bikers per hour, on average. Hikers accounted for more than 95% of use during this period. The volunteers and trail counters at the bottom of the trail counted more users than the upper counter, even though Wakefield has less parking than Boreas Pass. This could be because some users parked at the Ice Rink and used Illinois Creek and Blue River Trails to access Aspen Alley.

During the fall foliage season, Town and County staff also implemented additional outreach efforts at the trail including volunteer and staff ambassadors, social media posts, messaging on popular trail apps, additional signage at trailheads and on the trail, as well as roadside VMS boards. Overall, users reported positive interactions with others and parking was the primary issue caused by this surge in visitation. Mountain Bikers self-selected and avoided use during these peak times, as suggested by the overall proportion of bikers in September (18%) versus the proportion during the study (less than 5%). Many users asked about restrooms and garbage cans, highlighting the need for temporary amenities at these locations during the fall foliage season. Also, staff and volunteers witnessed many users walking along Boreas Pass Road to reach the trail from the Ice Rink. Better wayfinding signage at the Ice Rink with direction to Aspen Alley on the trails would help to improve safety and user experience in the future.

Council and Commission members asked about recommendations for 2026, if the new uphill route is not established. Staff recommended better wayfinding from the Ice Rink Trailhead, temporary garbage cans and restrooms, and the potential for a shuttle from the Ice Rink to Wakefield. Council and Commission members asked if this would continue in the future. Staff responded that some of the pieces might be reiterated in the future with changes and adjustments. An opportunity for feedback from public was suggested for 2026.

Recreation Access Management Initiative (RAMI) Study – Upper Blue Recommendations

Ben Rassmussen from the Volpe National Transportation Center gave an overview of the background and methods for the RAMI study and the recommendations for each trailhead in the “Breckenridge North” batch of trailheads. The Upper Blue also contains the “Breckenridge South” batch of trailheads, but those were addressed in detail through the Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument Access Planning effort and were not discussed in this presentation.

Volpe focused on “right-sizing” amenities for trailheads and the levels of visitation. They reviewed existing plans and management strategies and determined that batching and tiering trailheads was the right approach. Volpe identified 180 trailheads and broke them into 4 tiers. Overall, 22% of trailheads in the County were identified for increases in amenities or moving up in the tiers. In the North Breckenridge batch 26% of trailheads were identified to be moved into a higher tier.

For each trailhead, an onsite visit was conducted and coupled with available data to set context and identify issues as well as opportunities. Recommendations were then generated for each trailhead based on tools in several categories: Transit, Bike and Pedestrian Access, and Infrastructure among others.

Bike parking and racks were discussed since Council and Commission members thought that bikers would typically continue to bike past the trailhead. People who want to ride bikes to trailheads to go for a hike could use bike parking. Members asked if there would be a final version of the plan that is adopted by the County, Town, and Forest Service so that this could act as a framework for future trailhead improvements. Staff have worked on this process for the last two years and would like to wrap up the planning process as soon as possible. Feedback from OSAC and BOSAC on if the efforts are focused in the right places would be valuable to guide future trailhead improvements. Prioritization of the trailheads, identification of funding mechanisms, and recognition of the low effort, high reward projects would be useful next steps. Members asked about role of Volpe moving forward once the RAMI effort wraps up. Forest Service staff responded that Volpe could continue to work in the highest complexity locations. Members would like the opportunity to comment on specific trailhead locations and look over this plan with staff to make comments.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction Grant – Possible Upper Blue locations

Jordan Mead presented the Western Wildland Urban Interface grant opportunity, which provides up to \$300,000 in matching funds for hazardous fuels reduction (HFR) work. Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Summit County Open Space, and Red, White & Blue Fire Protection District have identified three potential locations for fuel reduction treatments on Town and County Open Space property in the Breckenridge area.

The locations include French Gulch in the vicinity of Sidedoor, Backdoor, Minnie Mine, and X10U8 trails, Copper Canyon/Fuller Placer, and Brown Gulch. The French Gulch area includes up to 155 acres of mature lodgepole pine forest with lesser amounts of aspen. Treatment in this area would focus on removing abundant standing dead and down lodgepole while preserving forest cover and recreational experience on trails with the goal of reducing wildfire intensity and increasing habitat and forest age-class diversity. Live lodgepole in and around existing aspen stands would be cut to reduce competition and expand aspen cover. This effort would build on the previous Wellington and Mineral Hill HFR work, which reduced the risk of catastrophic wildfire and encouraged aspen expansion on 90 acres of Open Space Forest Service land around Prospect Gulch.

Copper Canyon/Fuller Placer would include up to 16 acres of dense lodgepole pine between Boreas Pass Road and Baldy Road. This effort would help protect the water tank along Illinois Creek, egress along area roads, and several adjacent neighborhoods. Finally, Brown Gulch HFR would include up to 35 acres of mature lodgepole pine and spruce/fir forest along Tiger Road with the goal of diversifying age-class and

habitat types in the northern portion of the Golden Horseshoe along the Swan River, while protecting ingress and egress routes along Tiger Road. Matching funds would be provided through the Summit County Strong Futures Fund. This grant would allow the Town and County to take advantage of and maximize the available Strong Futures money while it is available.

The grant application is due on December 20 and CSFS staff would like to have an initial draft prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Mead asked OSAC and BOSAC if they were supportive of CSFS applying for this grant on behalf of the Town and County, including these locations in the grant application. There will be additional opportunities for feedback as prescriptions are developed and prior to implementation, if the grant is awarded.

Council members asked about the project prescriptions for French Gulch specifically and staff explained that live trees would only be cut within aspen stands to preserve forest cover to the greatest practical extent. Nikki asked about slope stability and erosion concerns. Staff responded that very steep slopes are not treated and the live vegetation that is present on this site would help to maintain soil stability. This fuel reduction effort would also reduce potential wildfire intensity in the future to mitigate potential post fire erosion. OSAC and BOSAC were supportive of pursuing this grant opportunity for all three locations.

Approval of Minutes: Paul Semmer pointed out a typo in last line of the minutes and asked staff to correct the time to 8:29PM. OSAC unanimously approved the October 1, 2025 OSAC minutes with the stated corrections.

Motion to approve the October 1, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion by: Libby Pansing

Second by: George Kokoefer

Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of Summary Report: OSAC unanimously approved the summary report as submitted.

Executive Session:

Libby Pansing made a motion to enter Executive Session and Paul Semmer seconded. OSAC entered Executive Session at 8:17 PM.

NAME made a motion to leave Executive Session and NAME seconded. OSAC left Executive Session at 9:04 PM.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Mead

Jordan Mead, Open Space and Trails Senior Resource Specialist