

Please note that this meeting summary was partially generated using AI transcription technology and has been reviewed by the designated minute taker for accuracy and completeness.

I) CALL TO ORDER

David Rossi called the February 16, 2026, regular meeting of BOSAC to order at 5:31 pm. Other members of BOSAC present were Krysten Joyce, Matt Powers, Chris Tennal, Bobbie Zanca, and Town Council liaison Jay Beckerman. BOSAC Chair Nikki LaRochelle was absent. Staff members present were Mark Truckey, Chris Kulick, Alex Stach, Duke Barlow, and Tony Overlock. Katherine King from Summit County Open Space was also present. Members of the public present: Greg Ruckman, Robbie Layman, Colin Stingley, and Evan Hrevus. Members of the public present virtually: Alex Lindquist, Rae Moody, Sarah Watson, and Vinson Turco.

II) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved as presented.

III) PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

IV) STAFF SUMMARY

A. Field Season Update

B. Pileburning Update

C. McCain Recpath Alignment

Mr. Powers requested a briefing regarding rationale behind the McCain recpath alignment, particularly the revised alignment through the School District Parcel. Mr. Barlow shared that the shift was driven by several operational benefits and the typical review sequence (BOSAC prior to Council) was bypassed due to time constraints. The new alignment allows Public Works to maintain existing snow storage and skier parking operations without interference, while also significantly reducing the number of driveway crossings along the recpath, decreasing potential vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. In addition, the new alignment allows for the possibility of gaining additional open space acreage. Finally, Mr. Barlow stated that the initial projections suggest the new alternative will be more cost-effective to grade. Committing to this alignment quickly allows THK to proceed with construction documents for the soft-surface path scheduled for this summer. Mr. Barlow acknowledged the irregular "order of operations" regarding the approval process but emphasized the need for a timely decision to meet the upcoming construction season.

Ms. Joyce asked about easement and the status of the existing recpath. Mr. Barlow replied that the land in question is owned by the School District. Consequently, the

proposed alignment is contingent upon securing an easement. However, staff expressed confidence in obtaining this approval, noting that "Alternative B" is situated west of the active skier parking lot footprint and does not encroach upon current operations. Mr. Barlow further noted that an easement would have been necessary for the original alignment as well, and no significant obstacles to procurement are anticipated. Ms. Joyce was also curious if the current repath would be decommissioned. Mr. Barlow clarified that while the new alignment is prioritized to bypass the Fairview Roundabout and McCain Road crossings for safety reasons, there are no immediate plans to decommission the old route.

Mr. Powers expressed concern that repath congestion behind the Vista Verde complex may create potential for conflict and wondered if having both alignments could reduce that. Mr. Barlow acknowledged that was a good argument for leaving the existing path in place for the short term to monitor evolving user patterns.

Mr. Rossi asked if there were plans for any bike friendly infrastructure on McCain Road. Mr. Barlow replied that there is currently an extra wide shoulder and that he would inquire if "sharrows" would be incorporated.

D. Backcountry Cabin Signage and Closures

Mr. Beckerman requested clarification on the factors that prompted the recommendation from the Town's Attorney, Keely Ambrose, to address cabin security and access. Mr. Barlow reported that both internal staff and County legal counsel identified unsecured cabins as a significant liability. The immediate plan involves posting "No Entry" signage, followed by long-term efforts to secure the structures. It was noted that cabins not specifically remodeled for public use must remain closed.

E. OST Sign Plan Update

Ms. Joyce asked about the pilot project and if the signs would be installed by staff or a contractor. Mr. Overlock replied, stating that staff are partnering with House of Signs for fabrication. To achieve significant cost savings, the Town Trail Crew will perform the construction and installation. This approach also serves as an opportunity for the crew to learn the installation process, which will be helpful for future phases. Mr. Beckerman asked about the pilot program and how that would inform the rest of the Sign Plan process. Mr. Overlock replied that staff has high confidence in the current design, color schemes, and locations. Mr. Overlock also shared that staff is currently identifying grant opportunities to fund 8-10 kiosks within Town. These kiosks are designed to market the Town as a central trailhead hub, encouraging users to park in town and access the trail system directly. Mr. Rossi asked if staff had received updated signage samples, to which Mr. Overlock replied that staff are currently refining the visual format and specific "small details" for the trailhead kiosks. This includes a finalized list of rules, regulations, and any additional supplemental information to be displayed.

F. 2026 BreckHistory Workplan

G. Coyne Underpass Mural

Ms. Zanca asked if staff knew what the mural would look like or had any say in the design. Mr. Barlow responded that he wasn't sure what the mural would look like, but that BreckCreate will take the lead on the artistic components of the mural. The mural, and its required maintenance, will be funded by the Town's Public Works department.

H. Quandary Shuttle RFP

I. BOSAC Vacancy Posting

J. Sunnyslope Closing

Ms. Joyce asked about the future of the Sunnyslope lots and if there was potential for future trail development in the area. Mr. Barlow replied that the two parcels consist primarily of wetlands with limited public access. Given their adjacency to National Forest land and their ecological sensitivity, the current staff recommendation is to prioritize wetland preservation over development.

V) OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION

2025 CGP Avian Monitoring Report (0:14:42)

Dr. Christy Carrello presented the 2025 CGP Avian Monitoring Report. The report indicates that Cucumber Gulch remains a stable and resilient ecosystem, with bird population metrics showing no statistically significant decline despite annual fluctuations. While a 2024 dip in species diversity caused concern, the 2025 data suggest that this was a natural cycle rather than a permanent trend. The presence of indicator species like the American Dipper continues to signal high water quality, though the Wilson's Warbler remains a concern due to a 35.7% local decline attributed to habitat sensitivity. To mitigate these impacts, proposed management actions should focus on maintaining forest integrity to prevent habitat fragmentation and brood parasitism by cowbirds. Key recommendations include potentially partnering with Vail Resorts to implement educational/interpretative outreach within gondola cabins to reduce noise pollution.

Ms. Zanca asked about the Wilson Warbler and if anything can be done to help stem the species' decline? Dr. Carrello noted that while reversing the trend is difficult, the goal is to see the population stabilize at a "new norm." She suggested that the decline may be linked to a reduction in willow height within the main wetland complex, potentially degrading critical nesting habitat. Dr. Carrello proposed using future data integration and vegetation surveys to confirm whether over-browsing is the cause, potentially leading to consideration of exclosures to protect willow growth and support nesting success. Ms. Zanca followed up with a question regarding willow height. Dr. Carrello explained that she plans to revisit an in-depth willow study she conducted in 2011 to provide concrete data for her hypothesis. By re-measuring the same plants from that study, she hopes to determine whether there has been a significant decrease in willow height over the last 14 years. She noted that other species, such as Red-winged Blackbirds, have already stopped nesting in the Gulch, suggesting that a loss

of willow habitat may be a broader factor in the changing avian population. Commissioner Tennial inquired whether the Gulch's habitat supports larger birds of prey and asked if installing an artificial nest project as discussed for the McCain Placer, would be beneficial. Dr. Carrello expressed skepticism that Cucumber Gulch currently has the resources to support a resident Osprey population. She noted that while Ospreys are in the general area, they require a significant fish population that the Gulch likely lacks at this time. She observed that while non-native brook trout were historically more prevalent and provided a food source for these raptors, their numbers appear to have declined. However, Dr. Carrello explicitly advised against restocking brook trout to attract birds of prey, noting that brook trout are not native to Colorado and doing so could be detrimental to Boreal toads.

2025 State of the Open Space (0:39:53)

Mr. Barlow presented the 2025 State of the Open Space Report, framing progress within the four strategic goals of the 2023 Master Plan. Staff highlighted a significant milestone in land conservation, with total protected land now exceeding 5,200 acres. A major 2025 achievement was the acquisition of the Rich Gulch parcel.

Financially, the program remains healthy with a \$7.6 million fund balance as of November 2025, supported by the dedicated 0.5% sales tax. Staff noted a shift in operational focus: with a 70-mile trail network now established, 93% of seasonal trail crew labor is dedicated to maintenance and stewardship rather than new construction.

The report detailed a transition toward data-driven discussions to inform visitor use decisions, such as maintaining a 15-spot parking capacity at the new Laurium Trailhead parking lot. Trail user studies showed a general user split of 75% hikers and 25% mountain bikers.

Key 2025 projects emphasized accessibility and community equity, notably through the "Pedal Together" mountain bike program and the completion of ADA-compliant upgrades at the Wellington Bike Park and BOEC trailhead.

Looking ahead to 2026, the program is focused on continued partner collaboration, including a seasonal shuttle system from the ice rink to the Wakefield trailhead to alleviate peak-season parking conflicts. Additionally, the Town is actively participating in the Summit County Outdoor Coalition to secure regional grant funding for large-scale projects, including the S.T.R.A.P. (Southern Tenmile Recreation Access Plan), which aims to improve infrastructure and resource protection at high visitation sites like Spruce Creek and Quandary.

Following the presentation, the Commission held a brief Q&A and feedback session. General consensus among the Commissioners was highly positive, with just a few suggestions on how to improve the presentation for Town Council. Mr. Beckerman suggested that the 2025 acquisition map include a more detailed legend and Ms. Zanca suggested providing a live link to source documents for STRAP for added context.

B&B Trailhead Bathrooms (1:22:07)

Mr. Overlock facilitated a discussion on the potential installation of permanent restrooms at the B&B trailhead. Mr. Overlock and OST staff recommended a double vault toilet over "band-aid" solutions like porta-potties. Mr. Overlock cited improved visitor experience and recommendations from Summit County Environmental Health. The group reviewed a cost analysis comparing vault toilets to portable restrooms.

Mr. Powers noted the improvement was "long overdue" and pointed out that the "optics" of a permanent structure are much better than portable units. Ms. Zanca and Ms. Joyce emphasized that the double vault provides a significantly better experience for hikers (referencing similar toilets at Jefferson County Open Space as an example) and prepares the trailhead for future growth.

The commission voted unanimously, 6:0, to approve the installation of a **double vault toilet** system at the B&B Trailhead. There was no opposition to the proposal.

VI) OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO OPEN SPACE TOPICS

Mr. Barlow proposed the possibility of recalling the seven-member trail crew up to four weeks ahead of their scheduled mid-May start date, should conditions warrant. Due to the current lean snow year early trail drying is anticipated, potentially leading to increased public demand for trail use and corresponding maintenance. BOSAC supported the idea and was comfortable with the additional labor expense.

VII) COUNCIL MATTERS RELATED TO OPEN SPACE TOPICS

Mr. Beckerman provided a brief update on council matters related to open space topics. Mr. Beckerman stated that the most relevant topic discussed was the McCain Recreation Path Alignment (which was already discussed with this group in OST Staff Summary).

Mr. Beckerman also mentioned that there is a preliminary plan to expand the Little Red Schoolhouse, which might utilize some of the open space located behind the building. Plans are currently in the early scoping phase; nothing is finalized regarding the size or design.

VIII) ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the BOSAC meeting was made by Mr. Rossi, at 7:02 PM, with Ms. Joyce seconding the motion. The February 16, 2026, regular meeting of BOSAC concluded at 7:02 PM.

The next regular meeting of BOSAC is scheduled for March 16, 2026.

Nikki LaRochelle, Chair