



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 5, 2020**

Members Present: Joe Lavorini, Blaze Panariso, Bob Falcone, Paula Krantz, Lily Weissgold, Nancy Hobbs, Lee Milner, Ingrid Richter

Members Absent: Bob Shafer

Alternates Present: Scott Lewandowski

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Carol Beckman, Jason Rupinski

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Karen Palus, Anna White, David Deitemeyer, Scott Abbott, Emily Duncan, Gillian Rossi

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Joe Lavorini brought the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Joe Lavorini announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space supervisor, updated the Committee about the TOPS Ranger program's winter season thus far, as well as some foresight to the summer season. The summary included information about: positions and how they evolve and change through the season; the budget for TOPS; the hiring process for seasonal employees; and potential summer projects in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute.

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, invited the Committee to the upcoming site tour to view a property in Garden of the Gods that would take place on February 19 at 3 p.m. Britt also informed the Committee about two grants that the Department had been awarded. The first grant, in the amount of \$750,000, was awarded to the Department by State Trails Committee with Land and Water Conservation Funds to secure the northern connection of the Legacy Loop up to the Legacy Loop trailhead parking lot. The Department's application for soft surface trails at Daniel's Pass was also approved by the State Trails Committee in the amount of \$250,000.

Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Bob Falcone, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved, Unanimously

Citizen Discussion

There was no citizen discussion at this time.

Presentations

2019 Year in Review (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, presented the 2019 Year in Review for TOPS properties. The presentation highlighted many accomplishments including: the scientific discovery of fossils at Corral Bluffs, which fills a gap in the fossil record; two award winning partnerships, the Rustic Hills water project and the TOPS Traveling Trunk educational program; the extension of the Cottonwood Creek Trail; funding to continue construction on the Legacy Loop in 2020; the two grants we were awarded to continue work on the Legacy Loop and Daniel's Pass; various open space wins, including the Jimmy Camp Creek property acquisitions; expansions in Cheyenne Mountain State Park with two properties to help align the Cheyenne Mountain Heritage Trail; the Blodgett Peak interim use plan; the estimated 2020 revenue for TOPS and budget breakdown; and finally, a look at future revenue.

Bluestem Prairie Open Space Update (Presented by Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator, and Gillian Rossi, Park Ranger Supervisor)

Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator, and Gillian Rossi, Park Ranger Supervisor, informed the Committee about future improvements in Bluestem Prairie Open Space. Their presentation covered: the current two mile trail on the property next to Big Johnson Reservoir; the ecological significances of the open space, including the different types of wildlife found there; potential trail development, which would bring the two mile trail to just over nine miles; new maps and wayfinding signs; and the additional signage for the Leave No Trace Stewardship Initiative, which would be specific to the Open Space and its different users.

2019 Rocky Mountain Field Institute Year in Review (Presented by Alex Hladkyj, Program Manager at Rocky Mountain Field Institute)

Alex Hladkyj, Program Manager at Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI), gave the Committee a brief overview of the TOPS partnership with RMFI and all of their success in 2019. The presentation touched on the contract between TOPS and RMFI which will be in its final year in 2020, but is being renegotiated; RMFI's target properties and projects, most of which were heavy on restoration and closing of trails; volunteer statistics; a wide variety of before and after pictures of completed projects throughout different open spaces and parks; statistics about partnerships and events; and finally an outlook on 2020 projects.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director of the Trails and Open Space Coalition, informed the Committee that she had attended the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Board the day prior to this TOPS Working Committee meeting. One point of discussion was the possibility of electric

scooters being available for use in Colorado Springs. There is currently a Request for Proposal being developed with a goal of having the scooters available by the summer. She said there is a concern of seeing those scooters on trails, but was pleased with the willingness of the board to discuss more and learn from mistakes made in other cities in regards to the scooters.

Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked a question about how trash can locations on a trail are determined and the possibility of adding one on a trail. Scott Abbott responded that the placement is determined by the ability to service the trash can. He added that people do request trash cans in different areas on trails, and that staff try to meet those requests when they can.

Motion to adjourn

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Lily Weissgold, Approved, Unanimously

There was no Executive Session following the regular meeting due to time constraints.