



MEETING OF THE PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

Regular Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Third Floor Hearing Room

County Court House

1325 Pearl Street, Boulder

Members Present: Janet George
Trace Baker
Paula Fitzgerald
Drew Adams
Kristine Johnson

Members Excused: Tony Lewis
Jackson Moller
Derek Turner
Carol Byerly

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1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**

3. **Approval of Last Month's Minutes**

4. **Presentations**

4.1 **2024 Restoration Review**

Staff Presenter: David Hirt; Resource Program Supervisor, Restoration/Plant Ecology

Action Requested: Information Only

Q: What is the current designation on the DeBerry property?

Response: The current designation is MOA (Multiple-Objective Area). There are still prairie dogs, but it's a lower density.

Q: It seems like several large-scale disturbances exist that BCPOS needs to correct. What is your capacity to fulfill your seed needs in house?

Response: We have a seed collection program with volunteers that is pretty robust, and we have a seed garden. We also use outside growers in eastern Washington. Many of our projects are small enough to use seed that we collect. The seeding project of 80 acres at Rock Creek Farm was a large project that required seed from outside producers.

Public Comment:

None

4.2 **Plans for Parks & Open Space 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2025**

Staff Presenters: Liz Northrup and Tina Nielsen

Action Requested: Information Only

Q: That other media outreach is being planned?

Response: We do plan to include radio ads - including Spanish language stations, and bus ads.

Public Comments:

Linda Parks, Boulder. She had an issue that the stamps designed represent bike riders because bikes represent active use. She would like the stamps to show wildlife and more passive use of our parks.

Staff Response: The Boulder County program does define bike use on our trails as passive recreation.

4.3 Video Celebration of Parks & Open Space 2024 Accomplishments

Staff Presenter: Mike Lohr, Buildings & Historic Preservation

Action Requested: Information Only

5. Public Comment Period for Items Not on Agenda

Carmen Porter, Boulder County. She keeps horses and she is Boulder County House Assn. She spoke against canceling the public indoor riding arena at the fairgrounds. She asked POSAC to reconsider their earlier approval.

Cindy Johnson, Boulder. She also spoke in favor of reinstating the public indoor riding arena.

Deborah Kinnett, Longmont. She asked that the the open ride at the fairgrounds. be reinstated.

Carson Sander-Ferracane, Boulder County. He spoke about the youth in the area that enjoyed using the indoor arena to exercise their horses and connect with other equestrians.

Pam Andringa, Boulder County. She works in the healthcare profession and the opportunity to use the riding arena in the winter is important for kids.

Staff Response:

Joe LaFollette, Fairgrounds Manager. He clarified that no 4-H events were cancelled. The reasons for closing the open ride arena were fiscal and that his staff doesn't have the ability to maintain the arena for that particular use. On average, only about 10 visitors used the arena during the Wednesday open rides. Many different groups have a desire the use the fairgrounds, but they cannot accommodate all of them. Joe feels that they

did their due diligence to reach the public before the final decision was made, which included several public meetings.

6. POSAC Members Comment Period for Items Not on Agenda

Kristine Johnson commented on the public input that came before. She urges staff to be creative in how they engage with the public around these issues. It would have been beneficial to hear comments like these from the public at the time of the hearings. She also had questions related to the Weed Management Plan approval.

Staff Response: We are preparing an update on the IWMP approval and plans for the annual reports and will present that to POSAC. We've asked three experts to evaluate our continued use of Indaziflam and we will also report those results soon.

Paula Fitzgerald asked that staff involved in the public process regarding the Fairgrounds decision see if any lessons can be learned and if outreach can be improved upon.

Drew Adams: Where were the gaps in the outreach regarding the Fairgrounds Manual Update and cancelling the open ride? He also asks for the exact costs of keeping the arena open for riders.

Response:

Joe: I don't have the exact numbers in front of me, but the arena seats about 1,500 people, with restrooms and two different types of heat. To do the needed work in the arena, we use approximately 1600 gallons of water and use a tractor to level the ground and make it safe. We need staff working 12-hr days. The arena needs to be prepared for multiple events Friday and Sunday with staff sometimes working late at night to get it ready for the public sessions. The average amount of revenue generated for the open ride season \$1,547 or \$5.37/hour to operate the arena. This is far less than what it costs to keep it open. In addition, our staff can't be available for these smaller activities (equestrian and dog events). When the arena is almost constantly in use, we aren't able to keep up the needed maintenance.

Therese: Several things come into play in deciding where the county spends money. Recently the county did an equity budgeting assessment. We were given direction to put the information from that assessment into practice, including increasing fees at the fairgrounds to cover costs and to look at who we are serving. When only 10 users come in for a 12-hour day, that is not serving a broad enough community to justify the costs. Open space sales tax money cannot be used to support the fairgrounds and there is a lot of competition from other departments for county funds.

7. Director's Update

- A contractor has been selected for Prairie Run to work on stream restoration, the west side parking lot, and trail design and constructions.
- The Soil Revolution conference was Thursday Dec. 12, sponsored by Boulder County, City of Boulder, and NRCS,
- Today we were notified we were awarded a \$3M FEMA grant for Prince Lake #2, to protect many residents in Erie from potential flooding from this important agricultural reservoir.
- BCPOS Budget: four positions were approved:
 - IT Tech
 - Weed Tech
 - Community Engagement Specialist
 - Fairgrounds Bilingual Tech
- The new outdoor shelter at Parks & Open Space headquarters is complete. It can be reserved for use by county staff, BCPOS volunteers, and the public.
- Cardinal Mill: staff is working with two contractors. One is monitoring water and proposing a filtering solution; the second is looking at how to stop the issue at the source with new technology.
- We are partnering with NOCO Places on mapping illegal trails by using cell phone data to help determine locations. BCPOS and partnering agencies will be working on closing and restoring the most critical of these.

8. Adjournment

8:31 p.m.

This is only a summary of the meeting. The meeting video is viewable on the [POSAC webpage](#).