



OST Memorandum



TO: Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board (OSTB)
FROM: Jessie Young, Carly Klein, Liza Mitchell
SUBJECT: Draft 2021 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan Update
DATE: August 19, 2021

Project Need and Background: The 2012 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan was a product of Pitkin County Open Space and Trails in collaboration with the Town of Snowmass Village and City of Aspen Parks, Trails and Open Space. Preservation of the 2,400-acre park for future generations of people and wildlife was a remarkable multi-jurisdictional and community effort. The 2012 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan, which followed on the heels of an interim plan in 2011, established goals for wildlife protection, habitat improvement and trail development. Now, with many of those initial management actions completed or underway, and with a decade's worth of knowledge about use of the park by humans and its wild inhabitants, this updated management plan once again draws upon the input and expertise of this partnership, including the Park's enthusiastic users, to ensure the ongoing protection and enhancement of this special place.

The 2012 Management Plan update builds on past accomplishments and celebrates the remarkable investments made to the Park. This process is an opportunity to collectively reflect on management outcomes to date and consider the path forward in the face of current conditions and trends. Sky Mountain Park, like all open space properties, is impacted by global, regional and local trends such as climate change, increasing population and interest in outdoor recreation, and changing technologies – trends that are expected to continue and that have management implications. This plan reviews the current management approach and current conditions, and guides the path forward, acknowledging adaptability as key to achieving management goals.

Draft Plan Development: The first planning phase included an evaluation of extensive natural resource and wildlife monitoring reports and existing conditions, as well as collecting public input through a community survey to better understand the community's interests and use of the Park. Staff sought community feedback by staffing outreach tables at key Park trailheads on opening day, May 16, 2021. A public survey was conducted from mid-May 2021 through mid-June 2021. It's notable that during this first outreach and data collection phase, an interactive storymap built by staff was viewed over 1,300 times and the online survey collected almost 665 responses from community members.

Utilizing the existing conditions data, reports and public input, staff compiled the 2021 draft management plan with updated action items and associated projects that look to simultaneously advance multiple benefits to natural resources, recreation, education, stewardship and maintenance. The initial plan set forth management actions for nine topic



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areas, which have been consolidated in this effort to six: natural resources; recreation; agriculture; outreach and education; monitoring and stewardship; and maintenance. These management action items were reviewed with partners from TOSV, COA and CPW.

Next Steps: Following review by the OSTB and Staff completion of directed edits, the plan will be presented to the Town of Snowmass Village Parks, Open Space and Trails Board and the City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board. After these presentations, OST staff will put the draft plan for Sky Mountain Park out for public comment for a one-month period.

RECOMMENDED OSTB ACTION: Provide comments to the Draft 2021 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan Update.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2021 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan Update
2. Sky Mountain Park Management Plan Appendices