



**Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee
Unapproved January Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 4, 2022
9:00 AM
Virtual Meeting
200 Broadway
Eagle, CO 81631**

*This agenda and the meetings can be viewed at www.Townofeagle.org.
*The public is invited to comment at the end of each agenda item**

MEETING ACCESS PUBLIC WIFI - TOEG – townofeagle2019

This was a virtual meeting. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83472864496>

Meeting ID: 834 7286 4496

9:00am CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order at: 9:02am

Absent: None

9:05am APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES

**Motion to approve the December OSRAC meeting minutes by Owens, second by Wescoatt.
Motion passes unanimously.**

9:10am DISCUSSION

9:10am (40 min) Haymeadow acquisition project presentation

- The Conservation Fund (TCF) is under contract with Abrika (developers of Haymeadow) to purchase 200 acres on the eastern side of the PUD for conservation.
- If the deal is successful, the TCF intends to convey the property, with a conservation easement, to Eagle County Open Space.
 - o TCF hopes to acquire the property in late spring. The property would be conveyed to Eagle County by the end of 2022.
- Eagle County Open Space gave a presentation on the project.
- Project Funding:
 - o Fair market value of property = \$7,910,000

- Land donation from owner = \$1,810,000
- Bargain purchase price for TCF = \$6,100,000
- Conservation easement tax credit = \$2,961,855 (estimated)
- Estimated cost for Eagle County = \$3,701,000
- County request for funding from partners = \$1,000,000
 - The County requests that project partners contribute \$1 million for the project. The only project partners identified so far are the Town of Eagle and the Eagle Ranch Wildlife Fund.
 - As of 1/1/2022, the Open Space fund balance was \$625,350, with \$473,080 earmarked for capital, operating, and transfer expenditures in 2022.
- Town staff will work with County staff as the project progresses. Updates will be provided to the Committee regularly.
- County staff will return to OSRAC and Council with a funding request for the project.

9:50am (20 min) Winter recreation conversation

- Town staff and committee members have received public comments expressing support for continuing recreation on the Haymaker trail and to close it to all uses for wildlife protection.
- VVMTA provided an update on recreation use on the trail from camera data and volunteer logs.
- VVMTA volunteers, staff, and other community partners continue to expand educational opportunities for recreationists on the trail.
- The Committee expressed support for collaborating with CPW during heavy winters and extreme weather to evaluate whether existing management approaches need temporary adjustments due to extreme weather.

Motion to advise that staff develops an adaptive closures and openings plan for Town of Eagle Open Space to address recreational use during extreme winter weather events by Saeger second by Wescoatt. Motion passes unanimously.

10:10am (15 min) Open Space and Trails Master Plan/ Community Survey update / BLM Closures update
Moved to 2/1/2022.

10:25am (5 min) Future Agenda items/ New Business
None.

Motion to ADJOURN at 11:10 by Hoban, second by Saeger. Motion passes unanimously.

BLM Wildlife Closure Discussion

Through consultation with CPW, the BLM will be adjusting seasonal closure dates for lands managed by the field office in the West Eagle/ Hardscrabble area. These changes will impact how the Town has traditionally managed seasonal closure dates on the west and south side of Town.

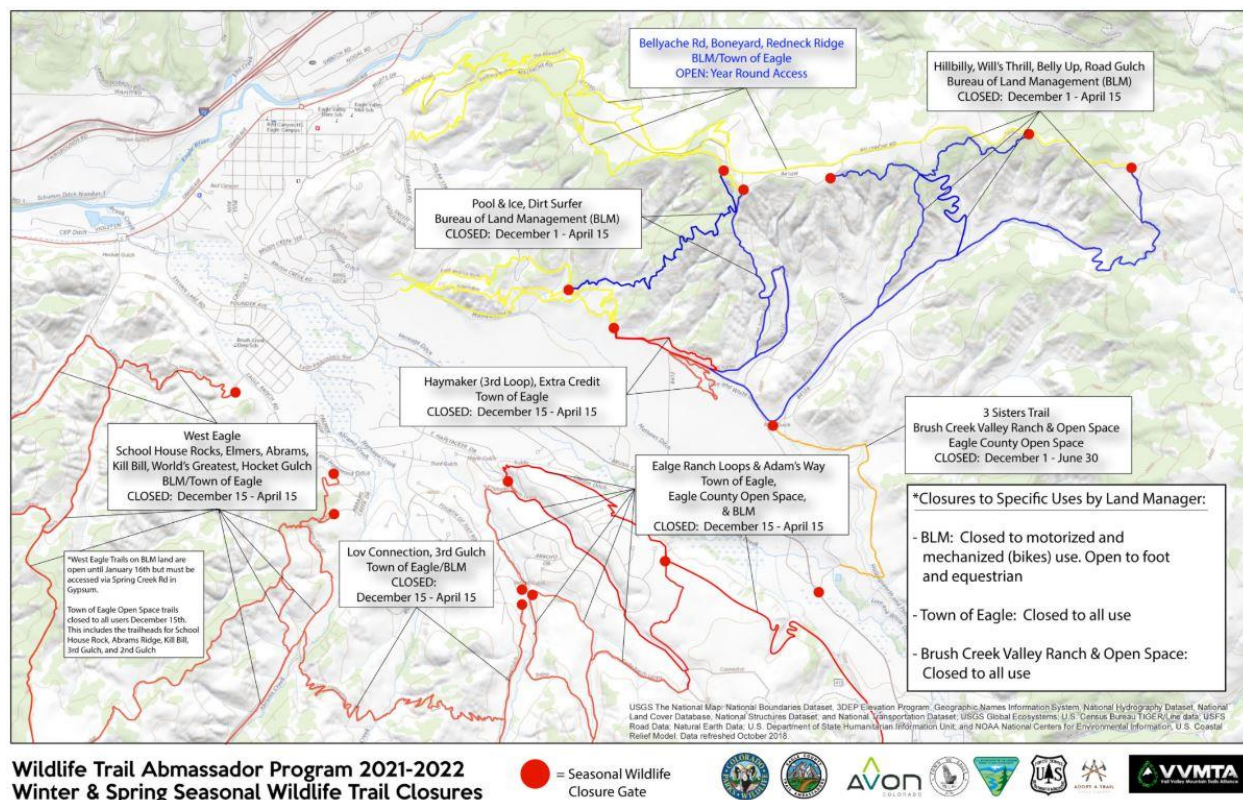


Figure one: Map of existing wildlife closures in the Eagle Area. A high-definition map and additional information can be found on [VVMTA's website](https://www.vvmta.com).

Open Space and Trails Master Plan (OSTMP) Update

SE Group continues to compile the data they collected last summer and fall into a draft master plan. They will present the draft plan to the Committee at the March meeting and ask for comments. Subsequently, a final open house and a presentation to Council will be scheduled. The plan should be finalized by April 2022 – just in time for 2023 planning. Keep an eye on the [project website](https://www.vvmta.com) for up-to-date information.

2022 Projects Overview

Town staff will provide a high-level overview of 2022 projects for the Open Space Department. Highlights include:

- Replacing aging trailhead kiosks
- Continuing to replace faded signs and/or installing new signs
- Coordinating with the BLM to accomplish trail maintenance, social trail decommissioning, campsite clean-up, and noxious weed control with a 3-week youth corps
- Contracting with VVMTA to complete regular trail maintenance and stewardship tasks
- Contracting with professional trail builders for trail maintenance
- Replacing the 2nd Gulch cattle guard
- Improvements to the LOV Connection Bridge
- Improvements to the Fishing is Fun Pond
- Haymaker Trailhead Site Plan
- Building capacity for the noxious weed management program
- Coordination with BLM on soft path trail planning and construction
- Continued planning for implementation of the Open Space and Trails Master Plan

Wildlife Trail Ambassador Program Update

VVMTA and Town staff will provide a quick update on education and recreational use at the Haymaker Trailhead since the last meeting.

Figure two (below): Public comment sent to Committee members on January 5, 2022, from the Hardscrabble Trails Coalition regarding winter use on the Haymaker Trail.



Brian Lieberman
Open Space and Trails Manager
1050 Chambers Ave
Eagle, CO 81631

January 5, 2022

Dear Brian,

At yesterday's OSRAC meeting, the committee discussed setting guidelines around closing the first and second loops of Haymaker to protect wintering elk if/when unusual winter conditions warrant. As you develop those guidelines with the town, along with considering future winter closures, Hardscrabble Trails Coalition would like to offer an opinion for your consideration.

We feel that the 1st and 2nd loop of Haymaker, designated winter accessible East Eagle trails, town paved recreation paths, and the golf course all be designated as permanent winter recreation access, no matter what winter conditions exist, to provide critical recreational access for the wellbeing and health of residents for the following reasons.

Both Craig Westcott and Phil Kirkman support the best practice of designating sacrificial winter recreation areas to provide people access in order to keep them out of more critical winter habitats. The idea supports the experience that if we don't provide adequate access, people will break closures in spite of them. Right now, Ernest Seager indicated that no one is breaking the closures on the third and fourth loop suggesting that the first and second loop are providing adequate recreational access on Haymaker.

When CPW recommended a winter closure for Haymaker, it was for the protection of the mule deer. Brian from the CPW indicated that the elk were hardier animals and were not of concern in this area. Please keep us posted if the CPW indicates that the current snow levels and temperatures this week warrant further action for the elk.

Lastly, if we close Haymaker due to snow/temps, must we close all winter recreation access to make the decision consistent and enforceable? At any given day the elk move through Eagle impacting one recreation area vs. another. Purely anecdotally, it would seem that the less space we have to recreate, the less we have the ability to chose recreation in areas where the elk/deer are not. The more choices we have for recreating, the better we are able to avoid the elk/deer herds as they move through town for the benefit of the herd.

Therefore, in order to protect the elk and balance recreation, we support a solution that keeps the current, very limited, winter access open. We support this access with continued wildlife education, monitoring, ticketing violations, and building the wildlife ambassador program in order to limit human/wildlife interaction and balance interests.

Please know, whichever way is decided, we will support you and the town with the necessary education and dissemination of information as we truly do value our wildlife. If a temporary closure is indicated, we want to ensure that it will constantly be evaluated and open again once the conditions improve and/or the elk move out of the area.

Sincerely,

Robert Tadlock, President

Charlie Brown, Vice President

Laura Turitz, Treasurer

Nicky Asselin, Secretary

Hardscrabble Trails Coalition

www.hardscrabbletrailscoalition.org

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