

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

May 10, 2017

The regularly scheduled public meeting of the Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2017, in the Citizens' Meeting Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Parks and Recreation Commission members in attendance were
Chair Alan Koermer, Frank Alfone, Sarah Floyd, Kady Watson and Holly Weik.
Absent: Tumminello

Staff members present were Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager Craig Robinson and Staff Assistant Ally Press.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

Approval of Minutes: April 12

Commissioner Watson moved to approve the April 12, 2017 meeting minutes;
Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

Ice Rink Advisory Committee Interviews

Committee Members Reappointed:
Brent Pearson, Nikki Fausett [?], Peter Van De Carr, Stephen Moore,
Sarah Katherman, Trip Hartigan
New Member: Collin Taylor

**STEAMBOAT DIGS DOGS: TRIAL OFF LEASH DOG PROGRAM AT
SPECIFIC PARKS AND TRAILS**

STAFF PRESENTATION

Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager:
At this point in time, the fiscal impacts are not exactly known. It depends what's approved, what's being paid for and what type of work is necessary to move forward with any plan.

The Parks and Rec Commission, through an ordinance that was done through City Council, has a role in the process to approve these off-leash

areas. There's a list of trails and parks within the submittal. I'm going to let Kathy speak to these throughout the evening.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Kathy Connell, Steamboat Digs Dogs:

We've spent nine months working on concepts, talking to you, talking with the public, observing, using, doing specifics. We are a large user group and growing. We are now being told that we have 5600 registered dogs, and more and more guests are going to be bringing dogs. We're a community that is woefully short on areas for dogs to recreate, play with their owners and play with other dogs in safe areas.

Everything you're looking at tonight you have the capacity to endorse as a trial. We're not saying anything permanent. We have looked at seasons and times because all our parks are over-used and over-loved, and we do know that dogs are a part of the parks. When they're on-leash versus off-leash is really important to all of us because we do not want to have conflicts. We have also spent time with Colorado Parks and Wildlife because we as dog owners do not want conflicts with wildlife; we're very sensitive to how we deal with that.

Our organization has money committed up to \$52,000. Now we're at the next step so we can tell people this is what we're doing with their money.

We have many trails and parks listed because we recognize that people in our community are very concerned about parks in their neighborhood. We are one of the few communities in our state of our size or larger that do not have a dog master plan. We have looked at this as starting to work with the city to develop a dog master plan so that we spread out our dogs and don't have too much conflict or too much impact on neighborhoods. That's why a trial on just one park or one trail won't work. It will just create a lot of conflict.

We are ready to move forward. Our parks are clean because of our efforts. We are listening and talking to other user groups and have received support from user groups.

Ulrich Salzgeber, 783 Amethyst:

I'm very familiar with the Spring Creek Trail area. What we found out during this process is although we generally just walk our dogs, the user groups that have dogs off leash are tremendously varied: equestrian, bike riders, cross-country skiers, runners, snowshoers. These groups have for decades been using these trails with very little conflict. What we're requesting is to validate those. We're asking you tonight to approve our plans so we can move to the next step.

Salzgeber highlighted the maps of Spring Creek.

Salzgeber: We want to work with staff in regards to where we need signage or if there are other incidents. What we're requesting at Spring Creek is from where people park on the corner of Amethyst and Maple, people will keep their dogs on leash up to the Van Bach's driveway and cabin on the right. From there, we would like to request that dogs are allowed off leash the rest of the entire Spring Creek Trail. Lower Spring Creek we would like to have them on leash until they are specifically on the trail and then request that they're allowed to be off leash also. Though this is on a trial basis, we've basically have decades of trials, and they've been very successful in the past. We don't see that changing. We think that's going to be enhanced by more engagement with our group. When riders are coming down, we'd like to have some signage that says please be cautious; you're entering a higher-traffic area. We'll also have signage as to when dogs are allowed off leash and when they need to be back on leash.

Deborah Black:

The majority of these Emerald Mountain trails are in the county, so they're operating right now with voice and sight control legally.

Robinson: It is the property owner's responsibility to decide how they want to manage their property. For city property, we have a leash law that we enforce. We theoretically say a leash law is enforced on city property, but the city cannot enforce it; we have to call the county sheriff. So it's perceived as off-leash, yet the city does have a leash law on all city property and requires poop pickup.

Black: I did have a conversation with Corey Christensen and a quick conversation with John yesterday. Corey said these areas in the county are not going to be enforced by the city. John felt that we didn't really need to address these trails because they are in the county.

For the moment, I thought I would direct our attention to these lower trails that are within city jurisdiction. We would like to have these trails designated as off-leash areas because that would mean that this whole area could be operating the same. We feel that it would benefit to have a whole area operating with the same set of expectations of how we operate with our dogs instead of changing it after we cross into the county. It would reduce signage, reduce confusion, and we think it would increase safety. We've been operating off-leash in this whole area for decades. Spreading out our dogs we believe would create more safety. There's one group that likes to take their dogs on Blackmere; another group prefers the lower loop and the bluffs loop overlook, Howelsen Meadows area; we have another group from Fairview.

Black showed each area.

Black: By having access to all these areas, people get spread out depending upon what time of day they come and go and so forth, so it has

not been that big of a problem at all. So we were hoping you would be able to give us these areas today. We are not requesting to have off-leash dogs in the area of the NPR Trail.

Commissioner Weik:

What does voice and sight control mean to you guys?

Black: For right now we're going with what the ordinance states, which is that your dog has to be within your sight range, and you have to be able to control them through basic commands: come, stay, that type of thing. So it's pretty mellow right now. We haven't really had discussion yet about any type of special program such as the one Boulder has for certification. It's not off our radar, but we just thought we needed to get through certain phases of this process before we went down that path too far.

Weik pointed out that the ordinance indicates that the dog should respond after only one iteration of the command.

Salzgeber highlighted winter suggested trails versus summer suggested trails as indicated in the packet.

Black: For winter, we're requesting parts of Blackmere, Orton's Trail, and a new trail from Molly's up to Blackmere. On Spring Creek, our stop point is the sign that talks about elk wintering.

Salzgeber: The community has proven that off-leash dog areas work. We're asking for your approval so we can keep working hard to make sure these are validated and that we can continue recreating with our pets.

Connell: Steamboat Digs Dogs is looking at some really good signage that will help on both Spring Creek and Blackmere as well as the education component concerning composting and composting pickup. The city has said that any trash container needs to be bear-proof, but there's other communities who have bear-proof trash, and then they have the poop receptacle stations that are used in such a way that they're not necessarily bear-proof, though you do have to open them up. They have not had problems with bears going after poop. Our last phase of this is we're working on the first digester for composting that we're hoping to install very soon at the Humane Society. Based on the operation, we're going to be looking in the future for on-trail composting stations. But first we want to make sure these digesting stations work like they have in other parts of the world.

Paula Silverman, 1502 Fish Creek Falls Road:

Parks:

The parks we've chosen to present to you move across the town from south to northwest and are evenly spread out. The five that we had

indicated in your packets are: Whistler Park, River Creek Park, Fetcher Park, Staley Park with Butcherknife and Gas Line Meadow. We've highlighted three of the top concerns of different groups in the use of multiple areas. Having multiple areas would help ease those concerns. One of them was to reduce the car traffic to any one place, so by having five locations as well as trails, it spreads it out so there won't be a crowding of cars coming to one place. This was a primary concern of neighborhood groups.

The other one was the number of dogs at any one time at any one place. This is the main concern of dog owners as well as neighborhood groups. Spreading it out will take away that concern.

The third main goal was to reduce the impact to any one park's maintenance, which is one of the big concerns of Parks staff. Spreading it out isn't going to increase wear and tear any more than is already being recognized.

We also have suggested seasons because we recognize that there are key times in the year when the parks are in multiple use, but there are other times when they are not in a big use and could be utilized better by our community. Steamboat is a seasonal town, so to transfer back and forth with a community that is already dialed into that concept wouldn't be hard to do. So that's why we have the June 1 to September 30 for all pets to be on leash until they reach the off-leash area defined by the signs and maps that we hope to work on with Parks and Rec and the city. October 1 to May 31: Dogs are allowed in all areas of the park but subject to leashing when there's other groups that are there.

The five parks we have also have minimum requirements making them good areas to utilize. In the packets you'll find additional things that we see as big enhancements to them.

Whistler Park:

We've talked with the school district and Mount Werner Waste about using their areas as off-leash areas. It already has trashcans in place; it already has a parking area. It has water access. Those are easily accessed spaces with a lot of room for dedicated off-leash play and minimal signage that would have to go up.

A concern of this neighborhood is of people parking along the street and not in the parking lot. So if no-parking signs were put up on the residential side, it would help direct people to this small parking lot.

In terms of not having everyone coming in the same entrance, if we had a little bridge that came from the parking lot, it gets us more immediately towards the off-leash areas and would also alleviate everybody coming in at this one spot.

We've also looked at the park court coming into the area. That's what we'd like to work with having signage to help direct dog owners immediately

into off-leash areas and also having our trash and compostable bags up here so that there's two different places to enter and exit the park area.

If we had morning hours from early in the morning till 9 as being off-leash area for people walking their dogs prior to going to work, that would also help the community that lives out in that direction.

River Creek Park:

This is at Highway 40 and Walton Creek Road. There's a lot of parking in here. There's tubing, kayaking, fishing, so there are a lot of other user groups. What we're looking at is this first little path, which is a direct trail going to the river access. We're looking at this small area as the off-leash area for dogs that comes down to the river. That wouldn't impact on the other user groups.

This park already has a lot of parking, water access, and it has shade in one area.

One of the first steps in working with the city would be to have a fence that would be a visual reminder for people to keep their dog on leash from the parking lot until they've passed that fence and to re-leash when they're going back for the safety of other dogs and people using that parking area.

Fetcher Park:

Silverman showed the city-owned property.

Silverman: We were looking at dedicating this small park here just for small dogs.

Already has fence, water, trashcans and nearby parking.

We would like to put mesh at the bottom of that log fence.

We're suggesting 30 pounds and under for how to define a small dog.

Staley Park:

Silverman showed the park in relation to the school route, bridge and Butcherknife.

Has fence, trashcans, water, and a good area to dedicate to off-leash play.

Small parking area, but many people who come here are bike riders or pedestrians.

Dogs stay on leash through the groomed area. Move the trashcan by the bridge. Right across the bridge is an area that has not been used and could easily be dedicated as an off-leash area. It has natural boundaries: stream, high incline with thick trees/brush.

Trash spot over by the Y.

There would be school timing on signs during school season September 1-May 30. Dogs would be on leash Mon-Fri from 7:30-8:30, and then again from 3:00-4:00.

Gas Line Meadows:

Good parking at Blackmere Trailhead, trashcans. It's a nice open area for play below Gas Line Trail.

It's our belief that the area the wildlife travels through is up higher and comes down through the ravine. So using the Gas Line Trail as one indicator and putting signs in the other corners to help people know where the off-leash area would be. This is closest to the parking lot and would be accessible for people in this part of town who want to walk their dogs during lunch hour or whenever.

Weik asked if the group plans to exclude prime school walking hours on Lower Spring Creek.

Salzgeber: We'd certainly be amenable to those types of things. I think generally Spring Creek is not used by high school students except as their smoking section.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION

Adams highlighted the concerns brought up by Yampa Valley Land Trust in terms of easement issues with wildlife.

Robinson pointed out that these are in the Bluffs/Orton area.

Connell said they have not had an opportunity to see those comments.

Robinson: Our Emerald Mountain Plan that we did in 2013 emphasized the protection of wildlife specifically. That's what the conservation values are that we're protecting on Emerald. It recommended enforcing leash laws, promoting better education and peer enforcement in those areas. There is an adopted plan with strategies to have leashed recreation up there only.

Connell: We would like to have an opportunity to look at this letter of concern and address it in this area.

Press said it was emailed at 3:30 today.

Robinson: And there was some other public comment that came in today.

Weik: Probably what we're going to need is an overlay map that shows the two conservation easements that YVLT is discussing and where that sits on top of these trails.

Weik asked if SDD has a position on where an off-leash dog ranks in the who-yields-to-whom hierarchy.

Black: Theoretically, we could add a little dog to each of the spaces on the triangle. Fundamentally, everything on wheels is supposed to yield to everything not on wheels. When someone from another user group is approaching an area where a dog walker has a dog off leash, the

appropriate thing would be for that person to leash the dog or at least take hold of the dog and make sure it's off the trail to let the horse or the bike get by. I think we have that awareness and we would be planning to do that. That would have to be something that we sign. We would want to work with Parks and Rec to dial in what information we need to put on signs at the base area that would clarify those rules. It's real important to us that we try to make everything really consistent and easy for users but also for enforcement so that it's really clear when someone can step in and have the ability to enforce if something's going wrong.

Weik: If your dog is off leash, I would suggest that at that point you need to yield to all other users until your dog is leashed, and then you go back in the hierarchy.

Black: That makes sense, except maybe for those on horses with a dog off leash. I suppose they could jump down and collect their dog.

Weik: The horse situation is an interesting question. I don't know how to resolve that. Once the dog is loose, the biker will stop for the horse, but if the horse and the dog are separated by enough distance, where do you ask the biker to stop? I think demonstrating compliance is going to be so, so key. I'd seen previous iterations of this where the discussion was that dogs should remain on leash half a mile from the parking lot of Blackmere Road/Trail before being released. The more that the Dogs group can demonstrate that compliance, the more likely it is that other people will be in favor of expanding the off-leash areas.

Black: We kind of fell back on using 100 yards because we felt like people might understand that a little bit better than half a mile.

Weik: I don't think the specific distance is as important as setting a distance and then having everybody comply with it using peer pressure.

Black: We hope to have those points signed.

Weik: I think that's critical. One of the things I've heard anecdotally is complaints from people in the Fairview neighborhood that dogs are released from the car off leash, go into their yards, harass their dogs. That backlash will not happen so much if you can set a distance and enforce it.

Black: I think that's very doable, and we're willing to monitor it and try to make sure that it continues to happen. All of the education that we want to be offering the community, we intend to keep it going and not just have it at the beginning of this program and then it goes away. We want all of our users to see it all the time so they're aware it still exists. We also want it to be clear for visitors.

Adams: I know we talked about for the parks we'd arrange for these trails to be at certain times of the day. Are you also thinking that for the trails?

Black: No. We felt like with the exception of the Butcherknife Trail where there's kids coming through that area, for these trails at Emerald Mountain and Spring Creek that we didn't need to enforce any specific times of day – just seasons.

Floyd was concerned with keeping off-leash dogs away from the playground at Whistler Park.

Connell agreed and said the suggested walking bridge would help with that. She also suggested that there would be a proposal that the city plow part of that lot in winter so that people wouldn't be forced to park on the street.

Adams: To me, Whistler seems the least viable option to pilot these ideas just because of the fact that there is a playground there; there's so many children's' activities: lacrosse, soccer, rugby. That particular parcel concerns me; the rest of them seem like great ideas.

Connell: We presently have a lot of people who are there every day with their dogs off leash. I'm one of them. I'd just like to not be a criminal anymore. I think if we don't do something, people will still be there. One of the reasons for the holistic approach to look at every neighborhood is we don't want people from other neighborhoods or out of town coming down there because with no signage right now, it could get worse. That was our reason for the dog path and trying the times. At least consider the seasonality, because in the winter it's a very important place for the dog user group.

Silverman showed how they would direct people with dogs to go beyond the sports fields.

Black pointed out that neighborhood dog owners really need an area to recreate and that they have coexisted with kids' activities/sports for years.

Connell: CPW has concerns in this area because wildlife does frequent this area, particularly in the very early mornings and at night. That's why we'd like to see some signage that we're willing to foot the bill for about the fact that we do have moose and other animals in this area and not having your dog off leash in the evening or very early morning because of those conflicts.

Koermer asked if there has been any research on what that walking bridge may cost; Connell said they are looking into that right now. They're looking at temporary structures that could be used on a trial basis.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnny Walker described the history of the users of the Spring Creek area, from cows to ATV's to mountain bikers to moose. He mentioned the new mountain bike trails on Buff Pass and how that's going to have a huge impact on Spring Creek.

He cautioned that the proposed off-leash zone may not be compatible with the increased mountain bike traffic. They're forced to go slowly through narrow areas, but then it opens up and bikes and vehicles are likely to speed up significantly as they come down the wider part of the road. He suggested a smaller off-leash area rather than larger section of county road.

Evelyn Burke, 240 Sundance CT:

Commended SDD for their work and urged the community to come up with a positive way to allow dogs and their owners to recreate off leash. Expressed the simple pleasure and health benefits of being able to walk a dog off leash.

Jim Linville, 1347 Marabou:

Frequent user of Emerald on foot, skis, bicycles along with everybody in the neighborhood.

Never owned a leash until about two years ago. Off-leash users find secluded areas and/or go at times of day with less people.

Having a hard time avoiding animal control officers because their only criteria is leash or no leash.

Education for dog owners to teach things like commands to order the dog off trail is important.

Need to educate bikers as well.

Black showed the place where there's a need for a sign indicating a high-traffic area on Spring Creek.

Connell mentioned a trail along the river by the road that could possibly be used by one of the user groups to lessen conflicts around Spring Creek.

J.G. Walker:

Reminded that people don't read signs in her experience.

Would like to see this worked out but hopes it's not in Spring Creek.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Weik suggested a gate as a traffic mitigation measure. It wouldn't impede dog traffic. Bikers would either need to dismount or go around a post to get down to the next section. Would need to find a way to get horses through there, and the gate would need to be openable by people who have the right to take a vehicle through

there. It would serve as a visual and physical barrier rather than simply placing a sign.

Weik said she agreed with most of the parks recommendations with the stipulations of seasonal and time-of-day access. She would recommend scoping back some of the trails proposals. She suggested the need for one more public comment period before the commission makes a decision, since this will not go to Council.

Weik: I don't think the rest of the community understands that this could be a final decision.

Adams clarified that this is not a final decision but a temporary policy and argued that the Commission has gone above and beyond to meet with all user groups and do education and give presentations in this area. She acknowledged the recent feedback after the newspaper article.

Koermer said he thought the public process for this item has been robust.

Weik wanted to give everyone one more chance to weigh in on SDD's most recent proposals.

Koermer: I think we need to whittle down this list and identify the parks and trails that we recommend and take more public comment and move forward with this at our next meeting.

Floyd reiterated her concerns for kids and the playground at Whistler. She expressed her support for requiring dogs to be on a leash for 100 yards or some distance from the car. She supported River Creek, Staley and Fetcher Park as long as dogs didn't overrun picnickers on the grassy part of Fetcher. She had no comment on Gas Line Meadows. She noted that many dogs and owners are respectable, but some dogs are better trained than others. It's about training dogs and dog owners.

Koermer: Whistler Park I think would be great in the winter. River Creek I'm concerned about the riparian component, Canadian geese, wildlife. Fetcher Park I'm wary of land that is not owned by the city. Staley Park I like a lot. Gas Line Meadow I think is a great idea. Spring Creek Trail: Based on comments from the Walkers and others, that whole conflict of multiple usage is hard to get my head around. Signage can be added, but will it be paid attention to? Can we look at segments of it? We already have an off-leash area by the pond; it's just the access to it.

Blackmere: The concern with the neighborhood there is what I struggle with.

Weik: I think Blackmere is a golden opportunity for people to demonstrate remaining on leash for a designated space before going off leash. I would be in favor of approving it as an off-leash area passed a certain point, tie it into Gas Line Meadows, and have that be the demonstrated compliance period.

I would also be okay with opening up the access route out of the stables, The Bluffs, Ricky's Ridge up to Lupin but probably not beyond until we can see improved community-wide compliance there.

Spring Creek: Opening up for off leash beyond a certain point but making that the test bed.

You guys had a big list, and I think those are good options. But I'd like to see compliance on a limited number of those first before we open it up wide – just so that that's demonstrated and people have a warm fuzzy that when we add other trails to that off-leash area list they know that it's happening and there's less frustration with that.

Adams: I would agree with what you noted for Emerald as well as Spring Creek. That also goes into some of the easement issues that were identified.

Weik pointed out the bail-out at the beginning of Lupin that she would like to see as a boundary.

Adams: Spring Creek is such a high-traffic area that I struggle. I think at the ponds letting off leash is great. If we can build a downhill-only for bikes, then I think it's definitely more doable.

Parks: Gas Line, Staley, Fetcher, River Creek I think are great options. Whistler I don't love it. Maybe in the winter as a trial, but in the summer, I can't support that.

Robinson said he doesn't understand the proposal around Gas Line Meadows. There's a Gas Line Trail and an open area with grass and scrub oak and native vegetation. He was concerned that there would be social trails through there, which are highly discouraged off the trail system.

He wondered whether the Fairview neighborhood was aware of this proposal.

Black: We've had comments coming from that area that people liked to walk with their dogs to that area and walk through that area to Orton and go up from there. So it's kind of a pass-through. We've had people concerned about dogs being off leash in their yards. I don't know if that's coming from that Blackmere parking area. The

concept was to be able to play with your dogs off leash in that open area rather than just walking a trail.

Koermer set trial periods: June 15-October 1 for summer parks and trails and October 1-May 1 for winter parks and trails. Commissioners agreed.

Connell confirmed that the off-leash area in Whistler Park would not be near the playground. She will bring a better clarification of the off-leash area and access to it to the next meeting.

Koermer: Have you talked to Mount Werner Water and Sanitation about those trails that are over there by the river?

Connell: Yes. Both of them recognize that they don't want to have to make a board decision and say they allow it because that creates certain liabilities. Both of them have not had any problem with dogs playing off leash. What they don't want to have is additional expense or liability. That's why we had talks with them about paying the cost of signage or a fence if necessary along with any trash receptacles. We know that the Whistler area is shrinking in availability with the potential school development. We're aware of the wildlife on the other side of the river down there, and we have to continue the education process.

Koermer confirmed that commissioners would be willing to entertain a proposal to create an on-leash connector that would bring people and dogs to an off-leash area in the northern portion of Whistler Park.

Weik outlined her proposal of the upper limit of the initial trial period for off-leash dog use on Emerald trails.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Parks:

Whistler: Winter, with potentially the north end for the summer after additional presentation.

Staley Park: Leash to the bridge and off-leash above that.

Trails:

Emerald Meadows, Howelsen Meadows, Ricky's Ridge, Bluffs, Orton and Gas Line.

Blackmere and Upper Spring Creek with an on-leash buffer from the trailhead to a designated distance.

Butcherknife and Lower Spring Creek with school hours stipulations.

To be finalized at the next meeting.

Steamboat Digs Dogs: Rita Valentine Park Proposal

Commissioner Koermer said in speaking with staff and some other commissioners that they would like to see some hard cost numbers including ongoing maintenance, improvements and perhaps a phasing plan along with funding sources before it can be recommended to Council.

Connell will get more numbers for the next meeting.

John Lanterman, 1053 Pine Street, Architect, Applicant Representative: We're kind of still at 30,000 feet so to speak in terms of the concept, and there's a lot of refinement that needs to be done to begin to develop any kind of reasonable budget numbers. We can do that and do it based on phasing and linear foot costs for different fencing materials and all that. The only thing that might be worth a short discussion tonight: One of the big items is the idea of fencing not fencing it. So even to get some sort of direction or your thoughts on that.

Connell: I think CPW input is extremely important, then we can go back to the drawing board as far as to fence or not to fence or phase the fence.

Chris Middledorf, Colorado Parks and Wildlife: As a position statement for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, it's almost impossible for us to condone dogs being off leash. We've seen conflicts in the past here in Steamboat Springs and across Colorado. It goes beyond just dogs, but there are cumulative impacts that are happening to our wildlife. The two biggest things for us is the conservation of these animals to make sure that they are safe in their habitats and that they have an opportunity to grow and be out there. The other one that's equally important is the public safety for our community. The worst day that I can imagine is when somebody gets hurt by a moose. I know there's going to be at least one outcome from that: That animal will be put down, whether it was the animal's fault or not. The other problem is myself or one of the officers that I work with needs to go and visit with the family member or someone else who is injured.

I really can't be supportive of dogs off leash. The one thing I can do is look at them and prioritize them based on the probability of a conflict – a human wildlife conflict where there is an attack or interaction, or where it might have an effect on an individual species' recruitment or reproduction. I can prioritize these, and I'd like to provide that to you in written form.

As we move forward with your recommendations and possibly Council recommendation is thinking of a conditional use policy for short term and long term so that if there are problems that come up, the user groups need to remedy or try to fix those problems. Part of that is because there's a lack of law enforcement. We just don't have that many law enforcement officers available. I look at this for other user groups as well. If you want it, please show us that you can do it very responsibly. If you can't, can you fix the problem? If not, we take away that ability to do something.

Another thing Deborah and I talked about this morning that I thought was great is collaborative signage through volunteers and CPW. We can work with SDD to develop a volunteer group that can provide education specific to moose and other wildlife interactions. CPW could provide a couple of our sandwich-board signs and purchase a couple more that could reside with this group. When we receive calls about a moose in an area or on one of these trails or parks, they could go out there and set up a sign and help us out by providing education on site. I think that would be very helpful. We need to be diligent about putting up signage when it's needed and taking it down when the problem is gone. I'm working on trying to develop volunteers in Steamboat Springs that can help us on a variety of issues because we really need it.

We have had some conflicts. Since 2013, we've had five attacks by moose. Each one of those has been related to a dog being in that area, whether on leash or off leash. Moose don't have natural predators here in Colorado; their natural predator is the grey wolf, and our domestic dogs remind them of that. That's why we see that alarm response, whether being aggressive or defensive. So there are incidents here in Steamboat that we need to be aware of.

There was a citation issued in July, 2015 where we had a calf elk that was severely damaged up around Emerald Mountain where its rear legs and entrails were really taken out of the animal alive. That was by a domestic dog that was off leash. I know everybody in this room is a responsible dog owner just like myself and that we would never allow something like that to happen. But it is an example. I don't like to be that guy who uses one example to try to shut down something; I just want it to be out there.

Spring Creek: High likelihood of conflict. We've had it there before. The reason is we have high-density use, whether it be equestrians, foot travel, dogs and bikes. We have moose that frequent that area. I think there is a good chance that something could happen in the future.

Emerald Mountain: Higher elevations is very important. It's a wintering ground and reproduction area. As we move to lower elevations, I think there's a lot of human use already there, which does tend to push wildlife away. Elk are fairly low on that mountain.

Whistler Park: Moderate likelihood of conflict. I think we need to avoid Walton Creek entirely. There are moose in the riparian area; elk visit there occasionally; other riparian species live in the area. I think that northern part of Whistler that belongs to the school district could function well as a dog park with a fence.

River Creek Park: Pretty complex riparian area. I've seen the area being suggested for off-leash use, and I'm hesitant there. I think there are

conflicts that we could have with moose and also having those animals moving through nesting bird habitat potentially.

Fetcher Park: I think it's low to moderate. There are certain places where the moose gravitate because of the riparian corridor because of willow complexes. I don't see it being as big of an issue there. I also see it as a good place for a fenced dog park.

Staley Park: Moderate chances of conflict. We've had problems in the past with moose, bear and lion in this area. The nice thing about Staley Park is it does about urban development on two sides. So we're not going to have as many animals coming into that area.
As we go further down into Butcherknife, I do start to raise the bar on my concern with conflicts.

Gas Line Meadows: I haven't been out there; I'd like to spend a little more time looking at that. It is along the urban interface; it's closer to town, which is probably better than higher up on the mountain. I would say that there are moderate chances of conflict there.
Coyotes can take dogs left and right, whether they're unattended off leash or in a back yard. So as we add these animals to the landscape, there's a potential conflict where we might lose our dogs.

Rita Valentine: Based on its location being in the center of town, its size, and the view shed, I think this would be a good place for a park when I weigh it against everything else. I'm on the fence about a fence because we tell people not to build fences for a lot of reasons. A wire-woven fence can create problems. But this could be a place where we could have a fenced-in dog off-leash park that hopefully would minimize conflicts with wildlife where a dog wouldn't be able to escape and chase after an animal. The only question I had today is whether the fence line would be in the view shed within view of the dog owner when they got there to see if there were actually animals on the park before letting their dog off the leash. The terrain there is a little bit complex, especially as you go north. I also want to commend the group on avoiding the creek to the northeast; we see a lot of moose and other animals travelling through that area.

Summarize:

Least conflict to most: Rita Valentine would be the preferred alternative. Fetcher, Staley, Butcherknife, Gas Line Meadows, River Creek, Whistler Park, Emerald Mountain, Spring creek

It's very difficult for me to do that, though. I don't like to use statistics in the sense of what might happen; I like to base it off of what has happened.

Middledorf will provide more comprehensive written comment before the next meeting.

MOTION

Commissioner Koermer moved to table this proposal to the next meeting; Commissioner Weik seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Steamboat Digs Dogs: Request To Include Compostable Dog Waste Bags in 2018 Budget

Koermer asked about sponsors as discussed in the past and wondered whether these stations would be put at areas recommended as dog-friendly parks and trails.

Connell pointed out that the prior stations funded by the city made it difficult to pull out one bag, which may have led to so many of them being stolen. She described good pet stations from which people can only pull one bag at a time.

Connell: We are looking at having stations sponsored by individual sponsors. We do think it's incumbent upon the city in some way for their parks to be a partner with us. We've been making several calls to other communities throughout Colorado our size, smaller and larger, and we have yet to find one where the city does not participate in having trash bags in their parks. So we think it's appropriate that it become a line item in the budget. We certainly are going to be funding it, too, because we want the poop bags to be compostable, and we know those are a little bit more expensive. We are planning to partner with the city on that to help supplement any shortfall. But we do think the city can make a statement with us that unlike other areas which are losing dog parks because of people not picking up the poop, we're going to be very involved in picking up the poop, composting the poop and maybe down the line making money off the poop.

Koermer asked about annual cost and locations.

Connell: Wherever we have dog waste stations we want to replace them with these stations. In the other off-leash areas, we want to work with city staff on proper placement of poop bag stations along with education. The educational component is huge. Last time the city did this it was a \$9,000 per year budget.

Koermer confirmed with Robinson that that number was for bags only.

Connell said SDD wants to work with staff to figure out how to best replace bags.

Laura said the first phase would be placing dispensers at the locations of existing trashcans. They would be 100% sponsored. Then maybe it could be expanded to condo associations, resorts, hotels, etc. One Steamboat Place is paying for their own dispenser program at the mountain, which

could trickle into other locations. Catamount is looking at the same option as well with the compostable bags. They're not any more expensive than the biodegradable bags that some HOAs are supplying, and those don't break down in landfills. So the first phase was to get the better bags out there, paid for by the community, in locations that already have bear-proof trashcans. So that's little or no cost.

Koermer asked what happens if a compostable bag goes into the trash; Laura: They take 10-45 days to break down in a landfill, whereas the biodegradable bags will not break down and plastic bags can explode, sometimes even before they get into the waste management truck. 1,000 of these compostable bags costs \$83. They need to have a BPI rating. The dispensers are \$59 if we order multiple; they start off with 59 bags in them. What John and I talked about doing was having sponsors sign a contract for a certain term or permanently. On the dispensers, there's enough room to thank that sponsor and thank the public to please only take the bags they need for their hike that day.

MOTION

Commissioner Koermer moved to table this item until the next meeting; Commissioner Weik seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.