

**Summary Report from the Open Space Working Group
to the Parks and Recreation Board for FY2024
January 5, 2025**

The Open Space Working Group (OSWG) was established by the Parks and Recreation Board in its FY2024 Work Plan. The Board assigned four tasks to the group at its meeting on July 11, 2024. The following summarizes the group's accomplishments for these tasks.

Task 1: Recruit new OSWG members to ensure that the group represents a wide range of perspectives on open space and trails issues.

- Recruited three new members to join the four original members of the OSWG's predecessor, the Open Space and Trail Advisory Subcommittee. OSWG held monthly meetings throughout FY2024.

Task 2: Seek public input for the Trails and Open Space Plan update.

- Publicized the August 29 Community Engagement meeting with Sites Southwest in two local online news sources, three outdoor-related email groups, several Facebook groups, Nextdoor, and through word-of-mouth.
- Reached out to trail and open space users to encourage public comment on the plan through the comment page linked to the County website.
- OSWG members participated in Sites Southwest Community Engagement sessions.
- Worked with the Los Alamos-based non-profit Places and Spaces to develop, solicit input, and summarize the results of a Los Alamos Open Space Survey. Preliminary results were submitted to Sites Southwest in September to provide additional public input for the Plan updates that were specific to open space concerns. The final survey data report was included in the PRB agenda package for December 2024.
- Scheduled a presentation from Sites Southwest on the draft plan at OSWG's October meeting. However, their presentation has been postponed to an unspecified date.

Task 3: Monitor conditions of the County open space and trails and submit recommendations for open space and trail maintenance projects to the Open Space Specialist if appropriate.

- Outlined the concept for a County Adopt-a-Trail program to encourage volunteer involvement in monitoring and maintaining County trails and open space. OSWG discussed this concept with the Open Space Specialist in December. Implemented a pilot project for crowd-sourcing trail and open space maintenance issues using the free app, CMC RIMS, from the Colorado Mountain Club. Initiated data collection with the app to evaluate its effectiveness in providing up-to-date observations of maintenance needs. Using the app, OSWG members have documented 60 trail observations thus far. The majority of these appear to be suitable volunteer tasks for the proposed Adopt-a-Trail Project but some would require a trained crew supervised by the Open Space Specialist.
- OSWG members participated in all Community Services volunteer trail work parties.
- Reported a severe infestation of about a thousand invasive Scotch thistle (*Onopordium acanthium*) plants on County open space to the Open Space Specialist, who had the Youth Conservation Corps remove the bulk of the thistles.
- Removed over 100 bull thistles in County open space that had spread from ground disturbed during the golf course renovation project. Monitoring and removing new plants will need to be an on-going seasonal task in order to succeed in eradicating the population.

Task 4: Identify open space and trail projects suitable for volunteers.

- As part of the CMC RIMS pilot project, about 45 tasks suitable for volunteers have been identified. These include litter pickup, clearing vegetation, water bar cleaning, trail tread maintenance, and invasive plant removal. With no or minimal training, most tasks can be done unsupervised. The estimated time needed to complete a specific task generally ranges from 15 minutes to 2 hours. A couple larger projects may be suitable for a Community Services volunteer work party.

OSWG assignments for 2025

We respectfully ask the Board to extend OSWG for another year and task the group with continuing its FY2024 tasks into FY2025:

- Task 1: Continue to recruit new members to ensure that the group represents a wide range of perspectives on open space and trails issues.

- Task 2: Solicit public input on the draft Open Space and Trail Plan Update once it is made available to the public.
- Task 3: Monitor conditions of the County open space and trails and submit recommendations for open space and trail maintenance projects to the Open Space Specialist if appropriate.
- Task 4: Identify open space and trail projects suitable for volunteers.

OSWG also asks the PRB to include support of an Adopt-a-Trail program in its FY2025 work plan and to request OSWG to present its proposal at one of the Board's meetings in early spring.

Respectfully submitted,

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OSWG Member

OSWG Members: Lise Brackbill, Jerry Cowan (PRB), June Fabryka-Martin, Janet Greigo, Kevin Holsapple, Celeste Raffin, Brian Watkins (PRB)