

To: Status Report to the Parks and Recreation Board

From: Open Space Working Group

Date: September 6, 2024

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

- Recruited one new and two potential members of OSWG. This task was somewhat delayed by the uncertain status of working groups that was partially cleared up by the County Council at its August 7 meeting by adoption of a revised Boards and Commission Orientation Manual.

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

- Contacted the Open Space Specialist and Sites Southwest to receive an update on the status of the Open Space Plan and shared the update with the public.
- Requested a presentation at the October OSWG meeting from Sites Southwest on the work so far on the Open Space Plan.
- 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.
- Conducted several one-on-one interviews with Los Alamos residents, addressing trail-related issues such as equestrian trail use, trails suitable for seniors, dogs on trails, and trailhead amenities.
- Several working group members participated in the Sites Southwest Community Engagement session.

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.

- Developed a plan for a County Adopt-a-Trail program to encourage volunteer trail maintenance. The group will continue to discuss the proposal and present it to the Open Space Specialist in September or October.
- Developed a reporting form for on-site trail assessments (see Sample in Attachment 1) and tested the form by evaluating two trails in the County trail network.
- Three working group members participated in the Community Services volunteer trail work party in August.
- Reported a severe infestation of about a thousand Scotch thistle (*Onopordium acanthium*) plants on County open space to the Open Space Specialist.
 - This infested site is the only known location of the species in the County and one of the only three known locations in northern New Mexico. This is a Class A* noxious weed species in New Mexico and because the plants had developed flower heads and were soon to drop their seeds, OSWG urged the immediate removal of the plants to prevent their spread. The Open Space Specialist assigned the task to the Youth Conservation Corps, who removed the second-year plants that were producing seeds. The OSWG will monitor this location next spring for new plants.

** Class A noxious weed species are those which are currently not present in New Mexico or which have limited distribution. Preventing new infestations of these species and eradicating existing infestations is the highest priority. (New Mexico Noxious Weed Management Act 1998, Chapter 78, Updated 2020)*

Respectfully submitted,

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Member, Open Space Working Group