FOMP Nov 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Date of mtg: 11/10/2020, Call to order 7:00pm, meeting adjourned at 8:40pm

Attendees:

* Brian Mullin, President
* Bill Normile, Vice President
* Karen Jensen, Treasurer
* Bill Benson, Trail Boss
* Ken Baker, Secretary
* Marianne Larivee, Art Fuellenbach, Reid Wiecks (Palmer Lake Parks/Outdoor/Fire Prevention), Dave Betzler and Elizabeth Lonnquist (both from Red Rocks Ranch HOA)

Discussion:

* No update from USFS on approval to hire volunteer program coordinator, typically a key contact for interaction with FOMP
* FOMP remains under restrictions against organized trail maintenance activities
* At the same time, Monument Preserve and surrounding trails are seeing significant more use, which creates concerns for parking in unauthorized areas
* “social” or “user created” trails are also a problem; please stay on established trails
* Board discussed need to align on which social trails should be closed, how to close those trails effectively, with signage and/or other measures that are not easily reversed
* Also agreed to have future discussions around long term planning for parking, and spreading users out to relieve pressure on main trailhead
* Concerns have been raised by several people, and the Red Rocks Ranch HOA, about camping in and around the Monument Preserve area, including the parking lots on Red Rocks Ranch Drive
* There are issues with fires during burn bans, unsafe fires when burn bans are not in place, security of the Hot Shots USFS facility, trash, noise, and human waste
* Red Rocks Ranch HOA sent a letter 7/14/20 to USFS management raising these issues, and received a response on 8/3/20:
  + Response acknowledges the issues raised, and indicates those issues are seen in other USFS areas as well
  + Pikes Peak Ranger District has the authority to change parking areas to “Day Use Only” but requires a lengthy process with public disclosure, public participation, and environmental analysis
  + Regarding strengthening enforcement of existing dispersed camping regulations, USFS acknowledges increased usage and increased violations, and they have been responding to calls as they are able to
* Understanding that it may take time to drive some of these changes with USFS policy to protect the Preserve and surrounding communities, Board agreed to have further discussions on how we can partner with HOA’s, local government, etc. to start now to influence policy in the future
* A permanent ban on fires in the Preserve and surrounding area was also discussed

Reid Wiecks presentation:

* Palmer Lake Reservoir Trail/Road and surrounding network of trails has been re-opened, as USFS is back to Stage 1 vs Stage 2 restrictions
* PL is seeing the same increased use of trails, outdoor spaces, and resulting negative impacts from social trails, trash, misuse, etc.
* PL discussing a Trail Watch group, that would report issues to proper authorities (but not confront people causing issues)
* PL working on parking improvements at reservoir trailhead, to maintain safe access for emergency vehicles
* Also exploring ways to fund part time resource to assist with maintenance, clean up, etc.
* PL is discussing other alternatives and ideas with USFS to better protect Palmer Lake and watershed from wildfires

e-bikes:

* The USFS has released proposed revised directives on eMTB management on USFS land and solicited public input through Oct 26. See link below for details.
* <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=ORMS-2619>
* Based on current USFS regulations, e-bikes are not allowed within the Monument Preserve