

## NOTICE AND AGENDA

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION  
MONDAY  
MARCH 24, 2025

HYBRID MEETING  
FLAGSTAFF AQUAPLEX  
AND [MICROSOFT TEAMS](#)  
1702 N FOURTH STREET  
4:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

*NOTE: One or more Commissioner may be in attendance through other technological means.*

Chair Jacqueline Thomas  
Co-Chair Bruce Fox  
Commissioner Lina Wallen

Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison)

Commissioner Molly Joyce

Commissioner Nat White

Commissioner William Kluwin

Councilmember Representative David Spence

3. Land Acknowledgment

The Flagstaff Open Space Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Open Spaces Commission Meeting Minutes - 1/27/25

B. Parks & Recreation and Open Spaces Combined Commission Meeting Minutes - 2/24/25

5. Public Comment

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on this day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or taking action on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

6. Business Items

A. Open Spaces Commission Introductions

Open Spaces Commission introductions for the benefit of new members.

B. Jack Welch Memorial Bridge Naming

Decision Item.

Jack Welch made a definitive contribution to the betterment of the Flagstaff community and its citizens. The community would like to honor his memory by naming the Rio de Flag Bridge, located at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve, the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge.

On October 28, 2024, the commission was provided with a general presentation on naming the bridge at Picture Canyon the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge. At that time, the Open Space Commission indicated that they wanted to see the item move forward. The citizen group is returning to provide an update on their progress and staff are asking the Commission for their

formal recommendation to the City Council on this item.

C. Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve: New Proposed Trail - Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route

Informational and discussion item.

Consideration and discussion of a project that proposes to construct a new trail that parallels the canyon on the north side. Staff will provide a presentation to the Open Spaces Commission to enhance understanding of a trail project proposal, offer the opportunity for feedback, and prepare the Commission for a future request to vote on the potential addition of a trail at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve.

D. Recreational Trails Program, Picture Canyon Trail Restoration Project Completion Update  
Informational Item.

Staff will provide the commission with an update on the Recreational Trails Program Grant for Picture Canyon Preserve.

E. Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan Update  
Informational Item.

Staff will provide the commission with an update on the Trail Plan regarding the next steps for presenting the plan to the City Council.

7. Reports and Updates

A. City Council Liaison Report

B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report

C. Open Space Management Report

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter - February 2025

8. Informational Items to and from Commissioners and Staff

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

10. Adjournment

CERTIFICATE OF POSTING OF NOTICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Flagstaff City Hall on March 20, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. This notice has been posted on the City's website and can be downloaded at [www.flagstaff.az.gov](http://www.flagstaff.az.gov).

Dated this 19th day of March, 2024.

*Cathy Guetschow*

Cathy Guetschow, Administrative Specialist

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Cathy Guetschow ([cguetschow@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:cguetschow@flagstaffaz.gov)) at least two business days prior to the scheduled meeting time to enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.



**Open Spaces Commission**

4. A.

**From:** Cathy Guetschow, Administrative Specialist

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Open Spaces Commission Meeting Minutes - 1/27/25

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**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**Executive Summary:**

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**Attachments**

Open Spaces Commission Meeting Minutes - 1/27/25

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Open Spaces Commission Minutes

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION  
MONDAY  
JANUARY 27, 2025

HYBRID MEETING  
FLAGSTAFF AQUAPLEX  
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS  
1702 N FOURTH STREET  
4:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Thomas started the meeting at 4:02 PM.

2. Roll Call

*NOTE: One or more Commissioner may be in attendance through other technological means.*

Chair - Vacant	Commissioner Molly Joyce
Vice Chair Jacqueline Thomas	Commissioner Lina Wallen
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison)	Commissioner Nat White
Commissioner Bruce Fox	Councilmember Representative: David Spence

Others present: Robert Wallace, Sylvia Struss, Ashlee Fliney, Rebecca Sayers, Mark Loeth, Michael Wilson, Joe Hazel, Ryan Randazzo, Jeremy Morse, Bill Case, Gisela Kluwin, Rob Lockey, Forest Service Matt McGrath & Pat McGervey, and Annie Ridgell

Present on Teams: Steve Stawisky, Jessica Archibald, Anthony Quintile, Carmen Pryer, Georganna Staskey, Jessica Archibald, Scott Saville, Michele James, Martin Ince, Jen Blue, Rick Moore, David Zimmerman, Sara Holditch, Presley Hoover, Danielle, and Lori

3. Land Acknowledgment

The Flagstaff Open Space Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

4. Approval of the December 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Thomas motioned to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting as written. Commissioner Norton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. Public Comment

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on this day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or taking action on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

There were no public comments.

6. Business Items

A. Council Liaison and Open Spaces Commission Introductions

Molly Joyce was introduced as a Commission Member and David Spence was introduced as the City Council liaison. Both are looking forward to working with us and bringing their skills on board. The Commission members and staff introduced themselves.

#### B. Chair/Vice Chair Seat Selection

Commissioner Thomas expressed interest in being Chair, and Commissioner Fox expressed interest in being Co-Chair. Commissioner White nominated and motioned for Commissioner Thomas as Chair and Bruce Fox as Co-Chair. Commissioner Norton seconded, and all voted in favor.

#### C. Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan: Public Comment Synthesis Review & Recommendation

Mark Loseth from Southwest Decision Resources (SDR) presented on the Public Engagement Process. This is the third public engagement phase of the Greater Observatory Mesa Area (GOMA) trail plan. He provided an overview of the public process and plan development. This was followed by reviewing the public feedback for the following survey questions.

- Design a trail plan for GOMA based on community feedback and input, guiding policy, and best practices of sustainable trail design
- Reduce the impacts of motorized use in the GOMA, and work toward a non-motorized trail system
- Address unsustainable and unauthorized trails to improve environmental conditions in GOMA
- Increase local access to the formal trail system to advance the "10 minutes walking distance to open space" goal of the City of Flagstaff
- Design a sustainable trail system that addresses impacts of unauthorized recreation and balances allowed user experiences with open space conservation
- Provide a variety of experiences to accommodate the desires of the community
- Improve safety and wayfinding with increased signage and information for the formal trail system
- How well does the trail plan meet your desired recreation experience?

Information on the survey results as it pertains to the question categories: Achieves, Mostly achieves, but could do better, and Does not achieve, were shared and discussed.

#### Public Engagement Takeaways:

- There is a fundamental difference in how the public thinks that the Observatory Mesa Natural Area should be used; varying from primarily a place for preservation for a quiet refuge and natural experience to an interest in a denser trail system that provides more outdoor recreational experiences
- Continued concern for environmental and wildlife impact
- Overall, the public feels the current draft is a better balance than previous drafts
- Single-track trails are more desired than roadbeds in the third round of comments, which varies from what staff heard in the second round of public engagement
- The current plan does not provide enough diversity and trail experiences for different types of users, primarily winter and bike use
- Hiking trails could be improved, especially moderate lengths that allow loops
- Adaptive mountain biking connections and offerings could be improved
- Maintenance of existing roads and trails should be a priority
- Additional mountain biking experiences are desired, including additional bike-optimized alignments and the adoption of alignment 3.36 (Hot Pockets)

Robert Wallace spoke next and shared additional details on what was heard in the public feedback. He provided new information from land manager partners, offered the Open Space Section management perspectives, and reviewed options for the Open Spaces Commission to consider.

Forest Service representatives Matt McGrath and Pat McGervey shared information on the Forest

## Service's perspective.

- They reminded the Commission that the Flagstaff Trail Initiative conducted public outreach in 2020, which led to the development of the Flagstaff Regional Trail Strategy. This document identified the need for a trail system in this location.
- The GOMA Trail Plan supports the Forest Plan for the project area Flagstaff Neighborhoods Management Area.
- No additional public scoping is anticipated for issuing a special use permit to the city of Flagstaff. The Forest Service plans to utilize the City's public participation to analyze public scoping.

## Trail 3.36 / Hot pockets

- A summary of the public feedback was given. Link for [public input synthesis](#)
- New information
  - Arizona Game and Fish Department currently does not have any concerns with the trail plan or Hot Pockets alignment.
  - Arizona State Parks and Trails. Has no concerns about Hot Pockets. They commented that adopting this trail would count towards the 20 acres that can be developed as specified in the Deed of Conservation Easement contract. Hot Pockets increased the total number of developed acreages by 0.1 acre. The current density is 11.44 miles/sq mile; this would increase to 11.86 miles/sq mile if adopted
- Open Space Section Management Perspective
  - Staff were concerned with adopting a trail that's not just user-created from traffic but purposely built with no public process, as it may send a message that illegally built trails are likely to be adopted.
  - It may also be more difficult to maintain than other alignments due to steep terrain.
  - This trail received substantial support from the mountain biking community and will likely be difficult to close permanently due to its popularity.
  - Though this trail may require more maintenance over time due to steeper terrain, volunteer trail maintenance with the mountain biking community could be a successful solution.
  - Adopting this alignment where there is terrain can provide an intentional mountain biking experience that would help meet the need for places to ride close to the community without substantially increasing disturbance to the landscape.
  - When the trail condition was assessed, it was found that it's not badly constructed, but adjustments should be considered to limit watershed impacts and make it more sustainable.
  - Overall, it's our perspective that support for keeping the alignment outweighs restoration and that our land manager partners have no concerns with adoption.
- Options:
  - Options for consideration: 1. Keep the plan unchanged with the current restoration designation for the Hot Pockets alignment; or 2. To revise the plan to adopt the Hot Pockets alignment.

## Mountain Bike-optimized Trails

- A summary of the public feedback was given. Link for [public input synthesis](#)
- New information
  - The Open Space Section met with partners at the Flagstaff Biking Organization. They reconfirmed that considering the additional mountain-bike optimized alignments is important to meet the community's needs.
  - Arizona State Parks reviewed the additional alignments in section 13 and shared that they are not in conflict with the Deed of the Conservation Easement. The AZ State Parks and Trails defer to the Forest Service since they are the property managers for this area.
- Open Space Section Management Perspective
  - The GOMA trail plan current draft has two existing bike-optimized alignments 5.25: It creates a loop with 5.2 along the south slope of the Mesa and is 1.25 miles. And 5.26 creates a short loop with 3.10 and FUTS Mars Hill at 0.5 miles.
  - Based on community feedback, two additional potential trails were mapped between 5.7

and 5.8. The western alignment totals 0.65 miles, and the eastern alignment is 0.85 miles. Instead of adding a route that would parallel the existing trail 5.7, this concept is updated so that 5.7 now loses elevation more quickly, thus extending the flow type experience without adding an additional alignment.

- The new mileage in Section 13 would total 6.46 miles. These two bike alignments increase the density from 4.96 trail miles/sq mile to 6.36 trail miles/sq mile in Section 13.
- These additional alignments could help create an inclusive trail system that meets the needs of different user groups. They may also help alleviate concerns about user conflicts on the entire proposed system. These bike-optimized trails will likely appeal more to bikers and could reduce bike travel on other trail locations, thus reducing user conflicts.
- Options:
  - The options for consideration: 1. Keep the plan unchanged and not include additional mountain bike-optimized trail alignments in the final version for City Council review, or 2. recommend that the GOMA trail plan be updated to include these two additional mountain bike-optimized trail alignments.

Clarification on trail density was provided which included the following details.

- Low Density: 1 to 3 miles of trail per square mile
- Moderate Density: from 4 to 10 miles of trail per square mile
- High Density: can exceed 10 miles of trail per square mile

The way density is defined was used as a reference point for overall trail density considerations.

- Current plan trail density = 6.7 miles / square mile.
- Total road/trail length= 53.19 miles
- Proposed Changes trail density = 6.86 trail miles / square mile
- Total road/trail length= 61.78 miles

#### Public Comments:

Anthony Quintile expressed that the people voting don't understand what they are voting on, that the current plan was not ideal for mountain bike users. He said that the new plan had plenty of multi-use trails and encouraged voting in favor of the new plan.

Rick Moore was concerned that the word "natural" kept getting dropped out. 80-90% of folks agree that the current plan was workable, and he does not want the plan to be modified since the new plan was too heavy mountain bike use. He agreed with the historical aspect of the plan.

Steve Stawisky did not understand the numbers presented and was concerned that 2/3 of public said we were not succeeding. He likes the current draft.

Joe Hazel liked the new revision of the plan that it has good stuff for all uses. He indicated that Flagstaff Biking Organization would be happy to help with implementation going forward.

Jeremy Morse lives in Railroad Springs and uses Observatory Mesa there with his family for mountain biking. Although he was new to the plan, he feels that the plan didn't feel ready and so should not be sent to City Council.

Michael Wilson provided written comments: This plan is a culmination of a lot of hard work over several years, having been a part of the Commission for much of that time. I believe this third version of the plan strikes a balance for all users and not to modify the plan.

Jen Blue provided written comments: She fears that the latest version of the plan was an attempt to take away quiet spaces and was too focused on recreation. She is not for it.

#### Commission Discussion:

The Commission had a lengthy discussion about the information presented. Concerns were raised

about the timing of the availability of new information including guidance from partner agencies and the map showing additional alignments; continued concern about the founding documents and baseline conditions establishing Observatory Mesa Natural Area; and concern around ensuring that the public's comments from the last round of engagement are listened to, including plan modification to address them.

Staff provided information that if the Commission continues to request the closure of Trail 3.36, or "Hot Pockets," it will be extremely difficult to close and restore, as we have experience in other areas that closed trails continue to be used, creating a difficult cycle for staff resources. This is a well known and well used trail, partner agencies have provided letters stating they have no concerns with the trail, and public comment was clear in the latest round of engagement that the trail is highly valued.

Ultimately the Commission decided to take a vote to determine the path forward.

Commissioner Norton motioned to recommend to City Council the adoption of the current Observatory Mesa Trail Plan without the added trails, and Commissioner Wallen seconded the motion. The vote was a tie 3-3, and so the motion failed. The "no" votes included Commissioner Joyce and Co-Chair Fox, and Chair Thomas.

Co-Chair Fox motioned to recommend to City Council the updated January 27 Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan, and Commissioner Joyce seconded the motion. The vote was 4-2 in favor, and the motion passed. The "no" votes included Commissioners Norton and Wallen.

**D. Beautification Grant Application Commission Letter of Support**

Decision Item: This item will be managed by staff due to upcoming deadlines.

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**E. Project Prioritization and Multi-year Project Planning Update**

Information and discussion Item. Moved to the March 24, 2025 meeting.

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**7. Reports and Updates**

**A. Council Representative Report, Councilmember David Spence**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report, Representative Mary Norton**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**C. Open Space Management Report, Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**D. PROSE December 2024 Newsletter**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

**9. Potential Future Agenda Items**

Due to the extended length of the meeting, the rest of the agenda was suspended until March.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.



**Open Spaces Commission**

4. B.

**From:** Cathy Guetschow, Administrative Specialist

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Parks & Recreation and Open Spaces Combined Commission Meeting Minutes - 2/24/25

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**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**Executive Summary:**

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**Attachments**

Parks & Recreation and Open Spaces Combined Commission Meeting Minutes - 2/24/25

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# DRAFT

## Parks & Rec and Open Spaces Commission Minutes

PARKS AND RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSIONS  
JOINT MEETING  
MONDAY  
FEBRUARY 24, 2025

HYBRID MEETING  
FLAGSTAFF AQUAPLEX  
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS  
1702 N. FOURTH STREET  
4:00 P.M.

1. **Call to Order**

Open Spaces Commissioner Thomas Call to Order at 4:02 pm.

2. **Roll Call**

*NOTE: One or more Commissioners may be in attendance through other technological means.*

Parks and Recreation Commission

Stephen Parsons (Chair) - Present  
Austin Kerr (Co-Chair) -- Present  
Neil Frazer -- Present  
Autumn Layden-McLeod -- Present on Teams  
Ryan Martin -- Not Present  
Jill Christensen -- Present  
Josh Stackhouse -- Present  
Anthony Garcia -- Council Liaison -- Present on Teams

Open Spaces Commission

Jacqueline Thomas (Chair) - Present  
Bruce Fox (Co-Chair) -- Present  
Mary Norton -- Planning & Zoning Rep - Present  
Lina Wallen - Present  
Molly Joyce - Present  
Nat White -- Not Present  
Vacant  
David Spence -- Council Liaison - Present

Staff Present: Robert Wallace, Rebecca Sayers, Amy Hagin, Haley Reynolds, Sylvia Struss, Gino Leoni, Tyrone Johnson, Ashlee Fliney, Annie Ridgell, Tiffany Antol, Georganna Staskey and Anne Thompson

Others Present: Mike Wilson

Introductions were made with all present in person and on Teams.

3. **Land Acknowledgment**

The Flagstaff Open Space Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

Parks and Recreation Chair Stephen Parsons read the Land Acknowledgment

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Rebecca Sayers stated that the separate Commissions will do their own approvals at their next regular Commission meeting.

5. **Public Comment**

FLAGSTAFF, Arizona -- This portion of the meeting is for items that are NOT on the agenda. The Commission cannot act on items presented during the public participation of the agenda. The Commission is prohibited by the open meeting law from discussing or considering the item until the item is officially placed on an agenda. Please limit comments to five minutes.

Open Spaces Chair Jacqueline Thomas asked if there were any public comments. There were no public or online Teams comments.

6. **Business Items**

A. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Capital Improvement Project Plan Update and Discussion

Discussion Item: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Capital Improvement Project Plan.

Rebecca Sayers opened the discussion. The first discussion involved the tally and prioritization process that the Open Spaces Commission performed and the direct results as evident in the five- and ten-year capital plans.

Robert Wallace stated that the Commissioners were asked to vote on their priorities on a scale of 1-10. Below are the tally results from top priority to lowest priority:

- Open Space Acquisitions
- Picture Canyon Restroom
- McMillan Mesa Trail Rehabilitation.
- Picture Canyon Trail Connection
- Observatory Mesa Trail Plan Implementation
- Schultz Creek Trailhead
- McMillan Mesa Property Restoration

Rebecca Sayers continued with the slide presentation of the 5-Year Plan. Anne Thompson, our City Accountant, created this budget and is here on Teams to answer any questions. Rebecca went over how 5-year plans are put together inclusive of the source of funds for Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Events Division.

Open Space now has a 10-year plan with a 10% policy reserve including the other Sections of the Division.

Amy Hagin described the capital projects in the next five fiscal years for both the Parks and Recreation Sections.

- Sport Courts at Bushmaster Park -- eight pickleball courts, two basketball and two tennis courts.
- West Side park -- future neighborhood park on the west side of town currently in the design review stage.
- Heritage Square Restroom -- remodel project working with Capital Engineering for the delivery.
- Ponderosa Park -- the remodel of a neighborhood park in the Sunnyside neighborhood that was impacted because of the Museum Fire flooding events in 2021.
- Hal Jensen Recreation Center HVAC -- the design and implementation of air-conditioned space inside the gymnasium at the center.
- Thorpe Park Annex -- the future Indigenous Community Cultural Center that is in Thorpe Park.
- Cheshire Park-- 8 acres identified for a running track and multi-purpose field as part of an expansion of the neighborhood park.
- Continental Park ---- the design of a girls' softball complex and potentially the remaining 84

acres of the regional park.

- Thorpe Park -- this is an additional project -- 5-7 years out to begin developing the concept design developed in 2022.

Robert Wallace discussed the Open Space capital program for the next ten fiscal years.

- Open Space Acquisition: Identified as the top priority by the Open Spaces Commission. Will permit small steps towards implementing the Open Space System, to secure open space and connectors for equal distribution of open space throughout the City limits and providing 10 minute walking access time. Efforts may be supplemented with potential grants.
- Picture Canyon Restroom: Develop a single permanent restroom unit for the Picture Canyon Trailhead.
- McMillan Mesa Trail Rehabilitation: Evaluation and trail maintenance for the McMillan Mesa Natural Area. Will address drainage, trail tread repair, signage, and develop solutions to erosion.
- Picture Canyon FUTS Connection: Work with Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) to design and build the FUTS connection to the Picture Canyon Trailhead. Property acquisition and rights are currently being worked on using 2004 bond funds.
- Observatory Mesa Trail Plan Implementation: Implement a council-approved trail plan that includes four implementation phases. The plan would incorporate parking, signage, restroom facilities, unauthorized road and trail restoration, trail maintenance, and trail building.
- Schultz Creek Trailhead: Design a trailhead with improvements to enable proper parking, signage, delineation of trails, and appropriate facilities. Staff are currently working to complete a property trade to make this a possibility.
- McMillan Mesa Property Restoration: Evaluate property to determine restoration areas. Work will involve eradicating invasive plants in areas of high infestation, seeding, and completing erosion control in high-use areas.

Rebecca Sayers provided a conclusion on the full capital plan with the emphasis on the amount of funds identified through the special revenue fund, BBB, for the Sections. After the conclusion, a motion was requested by each Commission for approval of the capital plan.

A motion was made by Open Spaces Chair Thomas to approve the 5-Year Capital plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Co-Chair Fox. Motion passed unanimously with five (5) yea votes.

A motion was made by Parks & Recreation Chair Parsons to approve the Capital plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse. Motion passed unanimously with six (6) yea votes.

## B. Land Availability and Suitability Study and Code Analysis Project (LASS+CAP) Update and Discussion

Discussion Item: This is an update on the status of the [Land Availability and Suitability Study and Code Analysis Project](#)

Tiffany Antol, Zoning Code Manager who works in the Community Development Division under Planning & Development Services gave the presentation. The title of the presentation is Resource Protection Overlay -- LASS (Land Availability & Site Suitability Study) + CAP Project (Code Analysis Project) -- LASS discusses what is the suitability of lands in Flagstaff.

Staff are looking at the larger regional area along with Coconino County, who also have land and climate goals, and are partners in this project. The Diagnostic Report is basically finished and the reason I am here today.

The LASS & CAP project is currently mostly involved on our code analysis portion, which is intended to evaluate development codes and processes to identify areas of improvement towards our housing incentive goals.

Staff are working on simplifying this project, hoping to engage the public, identify barriers, and the way the resource protection overlay (RPO) is managed. Staff are looking to ensure core standards of safety. Our standards for our forests are meant to implement the Forest Management Plan. Looking at a work session with City Council soon.

7. **City Council Liaison Report** - Councilmember David Spence and Councilmember Anthony Garcia

No councilmember Reports

8. **Reports -- Monthly highlights of Parks and Recreation, Open Space, and Events**

A. PROSE Monthly Newsletter

9. **Informational items to and from Commissioners and Staff**

Parks & Recreation Commission update: Amy Hagin will send an email to Commissioners regarding the agenda items for the March meeting.

Open Spaces Commission update: Robert provided an update regarding the Right of Way amendment requested by private property owners through the Observatory Mesa Natural Area. Staff consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office, and they declined the need for further review, concluding that the project does not violate any of the requirements of the Deed of Conservation Easement. The project's next steps are for the property owners to finalize the driveway plans with the City's Community Development. This will inform the final legal description for the road. Once the legal description is finalized, staff will take the proposed amendment ROW easement to Council for review and decision.

10. **Potential Future Agenda Items**

- The Open Spaces Commission will hold a field meeting for their April 28, 2025 meeting.
- The Open Spaces Commission's May meeting will be rescheduled to May 12, 2025, to accommodate the Memorial Day holiday.

11. **Adjournment**

Open Spaces Chair Thomas requested a motion for adjournment, all in favor, meeting ended at 6:19 pm.

CERTIFICATE OF POSTING OF NOTICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Flagstaff City Hall on 2/20/25, at 9:00 am a.m./p.m. This notice has been posted on the City's website and can be downloaded at [www.flagstaff.az.gov](http://www.flagstaff.az.gov).

Dated this 19th day of February, 2025.

Annie Ridgell  
Annie Ridgell, Administrative Specialist

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Koren Brown ([annie.ridgell@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:annie.ridgell@flagstaffaz.gov)) at least two business days prior to the scheduled meeting time to enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.



**Open Spaces Commission**

6. A.

**Co-Submitter:** Rebecca Sayers, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director

**From:** Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Open Spaces Commission Introductions

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**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Open Spaces Commission introductions for the benefit of new members.

**Executive Summary:**

N/A

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## Open Spaces Commission

6. B.

**Co-Submitter:** Rebecca Sayers, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director

**From:** Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Jack Welch Memorial Bridge Naming

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### STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Decision Item.

Jack Welch made a definitive contribution to the betterment of the Flagstaff community and its citizens. The community would like to honor his memory by naming the Rio de Flag Bridge, located at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve, the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge. On October 28, 2024, the commission was provided with a general presentation on naming the bridge at Picture Canyon the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge. At that time, the Open Space Commission indicated that they wanted to see the item move forward. The citizen group is returning to provide an update on their progress and staff are asking the Commission for their formal recommendation to the City Council on this item.

### Executive Summary:

- The Flagstaff City Council established a policy for the naming of City of Flagstaff facilities in Resolution No. 2001-73, as amended by Resolution No. 2010-72.
- The proposal to name the Rio de Flag Bridge at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge meets the requirements outlined in the aforementioned resolutions, effective July 21, 2025.

Naming the Rio de Flag Bridge at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge was presented as a potential project to the Open Spaces Commission. At that time, the Commission shared the enthusiasm for recognizing Mr. Jack Welch, who was a devoted steward of Picture Canyon and a true champion for open spaces in Flagstaff. His contributions to preserving and enhancing this natural and cultural resource are immeasurable. As an original member of the Picture Canyon Working Group, Jack played a key role in reclaiming the area from its past as an illegal dump site and preventing development that could have threatened its ecological and historical integrity. He mobilized the community, encouraging numerous residents to advocate for the preservation of Picture Canyon.

Jack's dedication extended beyond advocacy. He actively engaged in education and outreach, co-founding the Picture Canyon Education Committee. His passion for history and stewardship was evident in his presentations during Open Space Steward trainings, and in the numerous guided hikes he led, often collaborating with others to share Picture Canyon's unique values. Jack could often be found tabling at Picture Canyon events, picking up trash, and ensuring educational brochures were stocked for visitors. Importantly, he also recognized the Indigenous history of the site and supported efforts to share these stories.

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### Attachments

Pictures

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# Jack Welch Memorial Bridge Naming



# Plaque

18"x12" cast bronze sign



# Art Work



# Installation





# Motion

Recommend that the Rio de Flag Bridge at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve be named the Jack Welch Memorial Bridge.



**Open Spaces Commission**

6. C.

**Co-Submitter:** Rebecca Sayers, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director

**From:** Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve: New Proposed Trail - Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route

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**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Informational and discussion item.

Consideration and discussion of a project that proposes to construct a new trail that parallels the canyon on the north side. Staff will provide a presentation to the Open Spaces Commission to enhance understanding of a trail project proposal, offer the opportunity for feedback, and prepare the Commission for a future request to vote on the potential addition of a trail at the Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve.

**Executive Summary:**

This project would construct a new trail that parallels the canyon on the north side. Project work would be done with hand tools, thus minimizing indirect impacts to property, resources, and vegetation. The new trail will be two feet wide. The realignment of the Don Weaver Trail would enhance the hiking experience for visitors while safeguarding archaeological features from unauthorized access. Currently, visitors often stray onto visually appealing but unsanctioned areas along the proposed realignment route. By realigning the trail, we can guide visitors along the north rim of the canyon, providing them with views and a preferred experience.

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**Attachments**

Picture Canyon Don Weaver Trail Project Letter

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City of Flagstaff  
211 West Aspen Ave.  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

January 2025

State Historic Preservation Office representative,

Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve (Grant: 231202 - Picture Canyon – 2012) features 700 petroglyphs and associated habitation and resource features, a waterfall fed by the Rio de Flag/reclaimed water, and an array of native plants and wildlife. Formal Don Weaver and Tom Moody Trails support hiking, horseback riding, cycling, educational trips, birding, etc. A section of the Arizona Trail traverses Picture Canyon. The Preserve is part of the riparian area of the Rio de Flag, the primary drainage for the San Francisco Peaks and the Flagstaff community.

In 2022, the Picture Canyon Working Group, a citizen advocacy group for the preservation and management of Picture Canyon Preserve, raised \$2,025 to support the creation of a new trail concept to realign the Don Weaver trail along a more scenic and diverse route. The following project is a direct result of their efforts, and is updated from our August 2023 letter to SHPO. In partnership with the Working Group, the City of Flagstaff Open Space Section asks SHPO to review and comment on the final proposed trail, the Don Weaver Canyon Route.

**Project Title:**

Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve: New Proposed Trail - Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route

**Project Need:**

The El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline (now known as Kinder Morgan, Inc.) was constructed through the Picture Canyon during the 1950s. The pumping station is located on adjacent private land, which visually intrudes into the SW corner of the Preserve. The pipeline and authorized access road travels NE across the Preserve. Currently, the Don Weaver Trail alignment follows the gas pipeline road. To improve the experience for

visitors in a way that is shaded from the hot sun and



Current Don Weaver Trail alignment along pipeline access road looking west at El Paso Natural Gas in background



...and looking east, with the canyon on the right

is more scenic, a new alignment is needed. Also, visitors

hear the waterfall and cut down on unauthorized trails from the pipeline trail; a new alignment will bring visitors closer to the canyon where they can see the waterfall, formalizing a section of social trail, but also reducing the impact from unsanctioned social trails.

### **Implementation Proposal:**

This project would construct a new trail that parallels the canyon on the north side, following the contours of the land, and in some sections, formalizing existing social trail. Although the new proposed alignment enters the identified archaeological polygon, #AZ I-14-346 (ASM), it does not have a direct effect on archaeology; it runs parallel with the existing pipeline road and:

- North of Locus B petroglyph panel (an existing spur off of the Don Weaver Trail)
- North of the excavated pit house
- Although several feet closer to petroglyphs near the Petroglyph Overlook (Locus A), the trail does not bring visitors to those petroglyphs. Most of those petroglyphs are either hidden, or they face south, so that visitors would not see them. We have not had issues with graffiti or other destruction to those petroglyphs accessed via social trails (now being re-naturalized), and do not anticipate anything different with the new proposed trail.
- The nearest petroglyph to it is #A-103, but that petroglyph is hidden and not particularly visible, and we do not anticipate any additional impact to it.

All project work would be done with hand tools, thus minimizing indirect impacts to property, resources, and vegetation. The new trail will be two feet wide, mainly permitting hiking experiences. While biking is permitted at Picture Canyon, the proposed trail may not be ideal for mountain biking due to terrain, so we do not expect significant impacts from biking on this trail. The project area would be accessed from the main trailhead and along the Tom Moody Trail, and the staging area would be on the north side of the pipeline road.

The realignment of the Don Weaver Trail will not negatively impact the archaeological elements protected under the historic preservation designation of Picture Canyon. In fact, the realignment enhances the hiking experience for visitors while safeguarding these archaeological features from unauthorized access. Currently, visitors often stray onto visually appealing but unsanctioned areas along the proposed realignment route. By realigning the trail, we can guide visitors along the north rim of the canyon, offering views while reducing the risk to sensitive archaeological sites located on the canyon slopes below. This effort builds on our commitment to closing and maintaining closure of damaging, unauthorized social trails.

We have presented this proposal to the City of Flagstaff **Heritage Preservation Commission** and the Open Spaces Commission, both of which expressed support for this project proposal. We also intend to consult with the Navajo Nation, The Hopi, Hualapai, Havasupai, and Yavapai Apache tribes about this proposed realignment.

### **Project Funding:**

The City of Flagstaff Open Space Section has not secured funding for this project. If SHPO believes that this project is feasible, given archaeological resources, staff will investigate funding opportunities for project implementation. City guidelines for obtaining service quotes will be followed.

### **Project Activities:**

*Cultural Resource Protection:*

Staff will be responsible for ensuring that work is completed within all guidelines. All archaeological sites have been identified and mapped. (See Attachment: Cultural Survey). The project area does enter into the identified archaeological polygon, #AZ I-14-346 (ASM).

*Project Access:*

The project location can be accessed from the existing Kinder Morgan gas line easement. All vehicles or machinery used will stay on these designated routes or within the identified project zone. The project area will be marked with flagging.

*Groundbreaking:*

Groundbreaking will be required and will consist of trail building at 24" width. This would be accomplished with a hand crew.

*Machinery/tools used:*

Trail-building hand tools would be used.

*Staging areas/stockpiling material:*

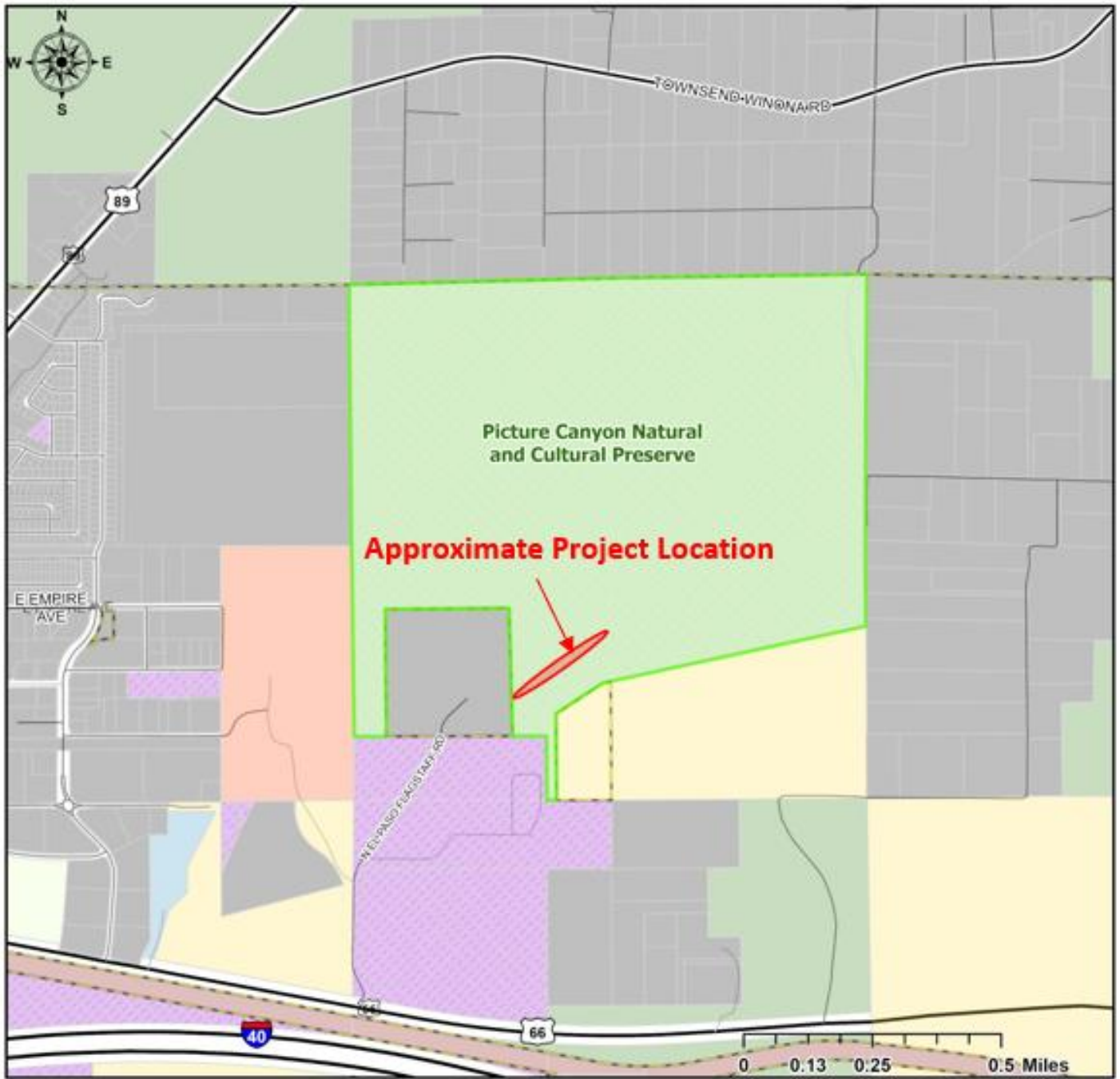
No building materials or tools will be staged or stockpiled on site.

**Project Area Exhibits:**

DRAFT

# Overview

## Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve



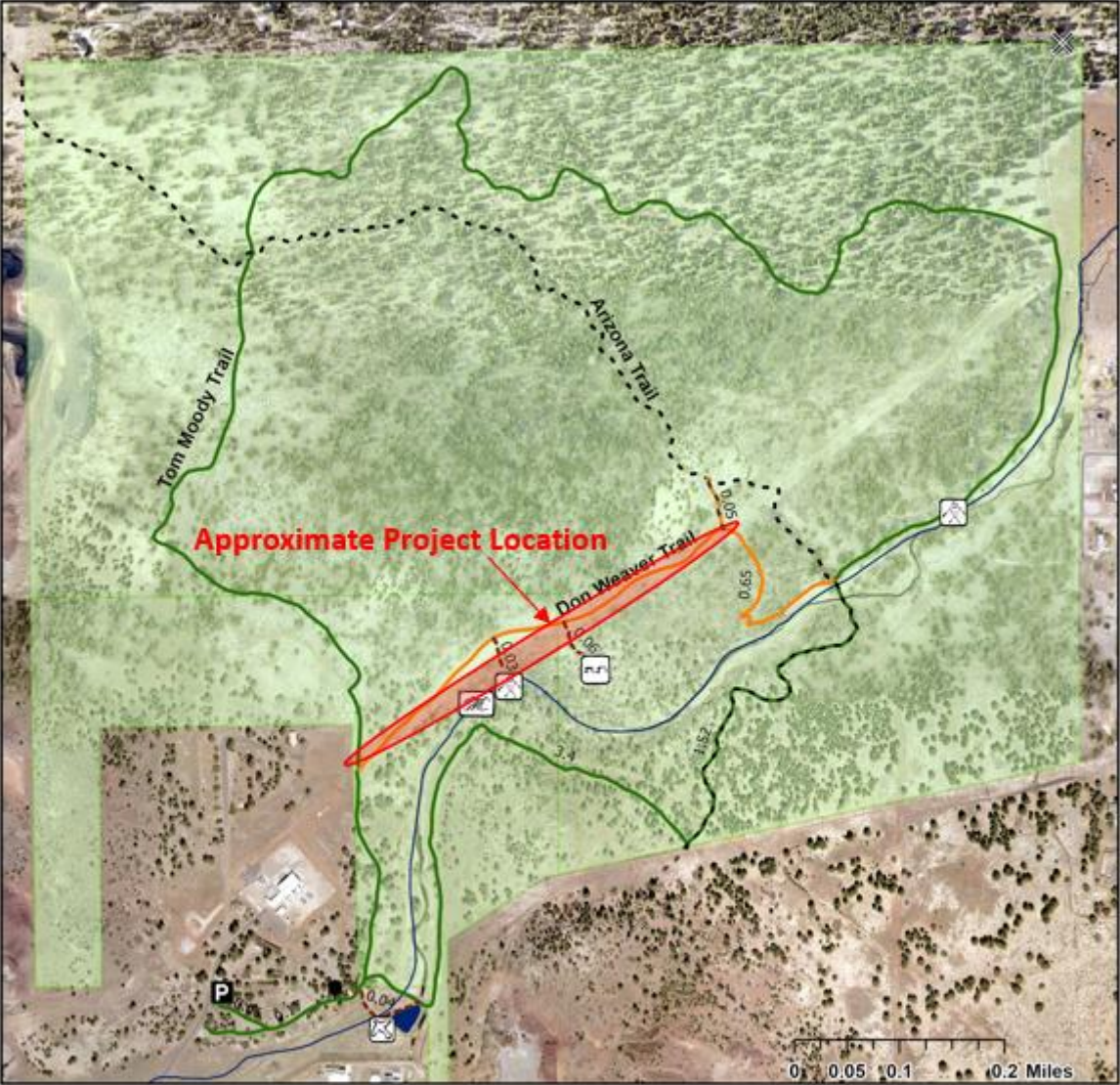
- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Picture Canyon Boundary      |  Coconino County          |
|  City Boundary                |  Coconino National Forest |
|  ADOT                         |  Private Ownership        |
|  BNSF                         |  State Trust              |
|  City of Flagstaff Management |  State of Arizona         |

4/22/2020

Exhibit A - Location Overview and Approximate Project Location

# Trails

## Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve



Picture Canyon Boundary	Pit House	To Arizona Trail / Don Weaver Trail
Waterfall	Watchable Wildlife Pond	Tom Moody Trail
Gate - No Access	Welcome Sign	Arizona Trail
Parking	Don Weaver Trail	Rio de Flag
Petroglyphs	Points of Interest Trails	Pond

4/22/2020  
 \*All trail distance calculated in Miles

Exhibit B - Approximate Project Location with Current Access Points and Trails

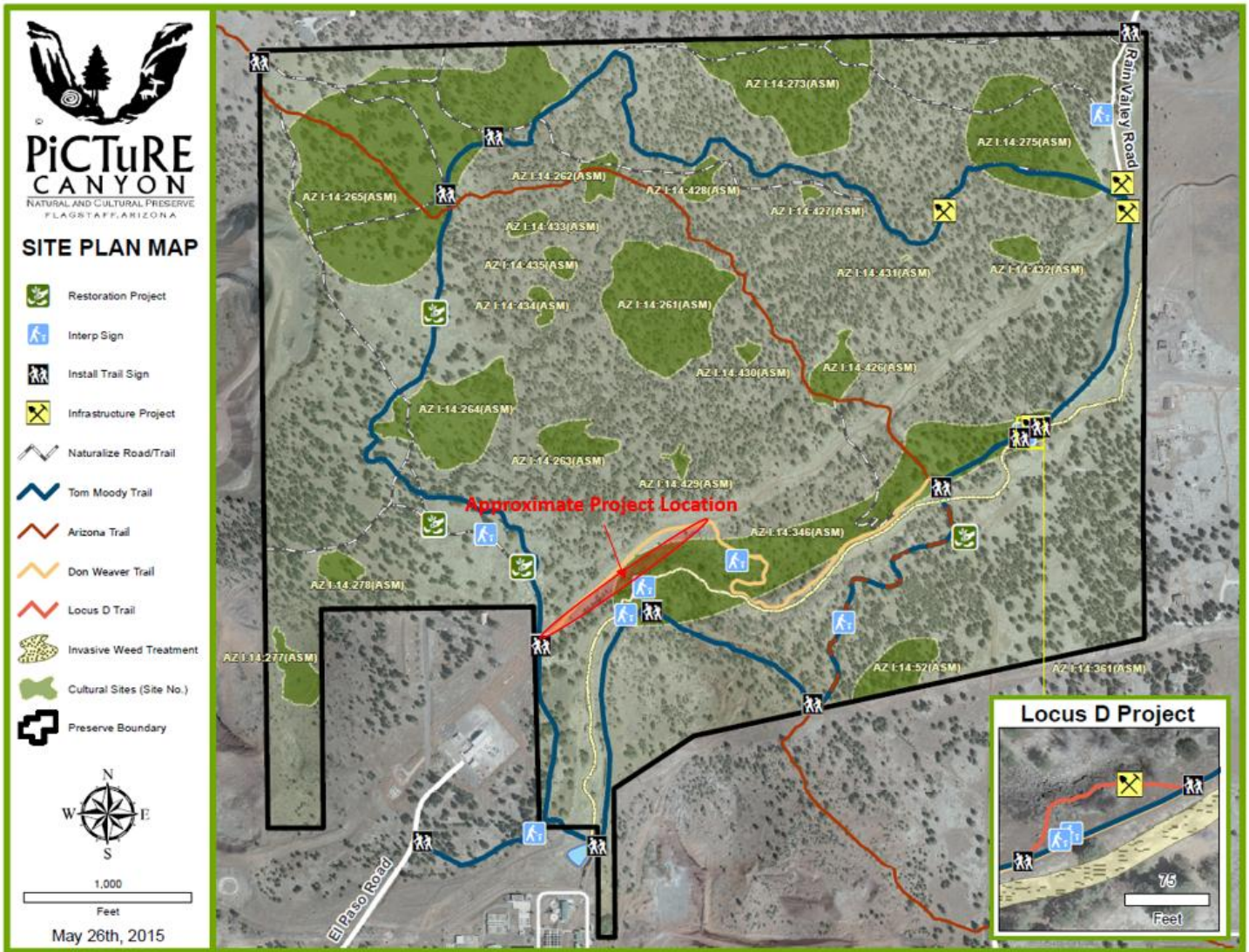
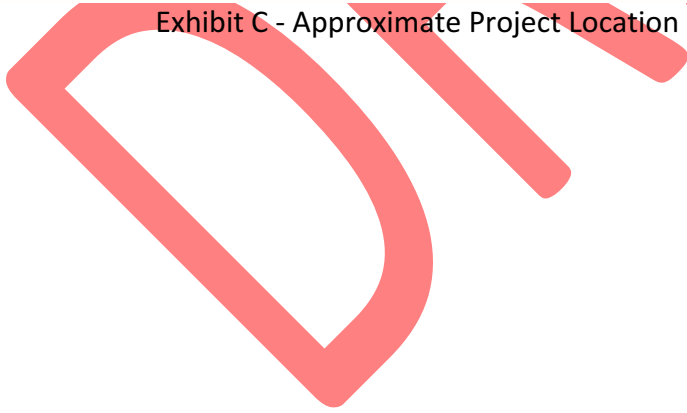


Exhibit C - Approximate Project Location on Archaeological Site Polygon Map



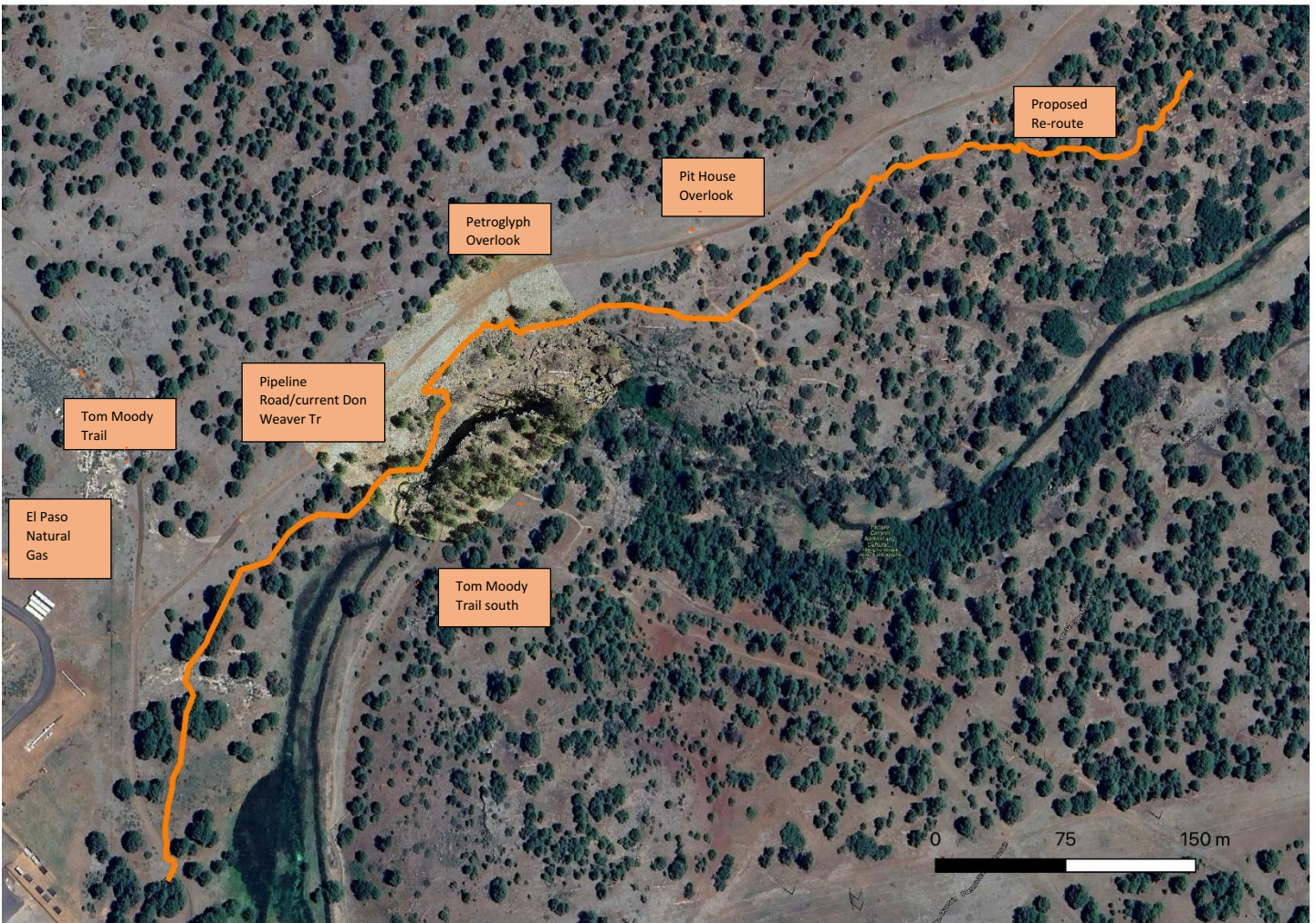


Exhibit D - New Proposed Trail – Revised Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route Concept



Exhibit E – Picture along the Approximate New Proposed Trail - Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route

Thank you for reviewing our project; we appreciate your support.

Kind Regards,



Robert Wallace | Open Space Supervisor  
City of Flagstaff Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Events  
[Robert.Wallace@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:Robert.Wallace@flagstaffaz.gov) | 928.213.2327

**Attachments Included:**

- Proposed Trail Alignment Concept
- Proposed Trail Alignment Shapefile
- Picture Canyon Cultural Survey
- Arizona State Parks and Trails - Conservation Easement
- SWCA Environmentalist Consultant Recommendation for the Proposed Don Weaver Trail Realignment at Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve, Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona

DRAFT



## Open Spaces Commission

6. D.

**Co-Submitter:** Rebecca Sayers, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director

**From:** Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Recreational Trails Program, Picture Canyon Trail Restoration Project Completion Update

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### STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Informational Item.

Staff will provide the commission with an update on the Recreational Trails Program Grant for Picture Canyon Preserve.

### Executive Summary:

The grant project titled Picture Canyon Trail Restoration, and numbered ASPT: 472303 was completed February 2025, in accordance with the terms of the project sponsor agreement, including any approved amendments, and complies with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

This project restored and repaired non-motorized trails at Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve. Work addressed maintenance and repairs and a reroute along Tom Moody and Don Weaver trails, restoration of closed roads/unauthorized trails, and implementation of regulation, boundary, archaeological site, and trail signs. As directed by the grant agreement we achieved:

- Repairs to existing trails
  - Petroglyph Overlook Trail stone steps installed
  - Reroute of the Waterbird Site Overlook Trail to better protect rock art
  - Trail repairs for 0.06 miles of the Tom Moody Trail
- Restoration that included erosion control and seeding of over 1.2 acres
  - Restoration along the AZ Trail of 0.43 miles
  - Restoration along the Don Weaver Trail of 0.55 miles
  - Restoration along Tom Moody Trail of 2.92 miles
- Installation of signage
  - Boundary signs
  - No Motorized Vehicle signs
  - Restoration Area signs
  - Protected Cultural Site signs
  - Grate additions to Welcome signs for temporary signage
- An archaeologist on site oversaw all groundbreaking within archaeological polygons
- Printing 10,000 maps for visitors

Due to inflation and the unexpected cost of needing an archaeologist to be physically present during some of the work, the City of Flagstaff spent additional city funds on the project. The City of Flagstaff provided the following extra cash match and in-kind volunteer time.

- Scope item 1: Renovation and maintenance of trails
  - Extra cash match of \$12,500 to support labor
  - Extra volunteer time match of \$84,833
- Scope item 2: Mitigate and restore damage to areas surrounding trails
  - Extra cash match of \$10,000 to support labor

- Extra cash match of 2,600 for seed
- Extra cash match of \$26,000 for hiring an archaeologist to oversee field work
- Extra cash match of \$3,600 match for purchasing mulch netting
- Extra volunteer time match of \$35,900
- Scope Item 4: Enforce existing rules and regulations
  - Extra cash match of \$1,000 on sign installation materials
  - Extra volunteer time match of \$14,260
- Scope Item 5: Provide and install trail signs
  - Extra cash match of \$1,00 to support labor
  - Extra volunteer time match of \$19,800

Out of all the grant parameters, there are four items that were not yet accomplished.

- Installation of a wayfinding sign at the entrance to the Picture Canyon Preserve. We are committed to completing this sign purchase and installation with Open Space Section base budget funds.
- Installation of an interpretive sign at the Pithouse Overlook. We are working on developing a final draft and are committed to completing this sign purchase and installation with Open Space Section base budget funds.
- Restoration along the Arizona Trail where approximately 0.66 miles of unauthorized roads and trails still need to be restored. We will continue to organize volunteer projects to complete this work.
- Trail work along the Tom Moody Trail where approximately 0.66 miles of trail still needs some repairs. We will continue to organize volunteer projects to complete this work.

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## Attachments

Picture Canyon RTP Completion Pictures

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## Repairs to Existing Trails



Tom Moody Trail Repairs Before and After



Trail Repairs



Petroglyph Overlook  
Stairs Installation



Waterbird Overlook Trail Reroute

**Restoration and Erosion Control for 1.2 acres of Unauthorized Roads and Trails**



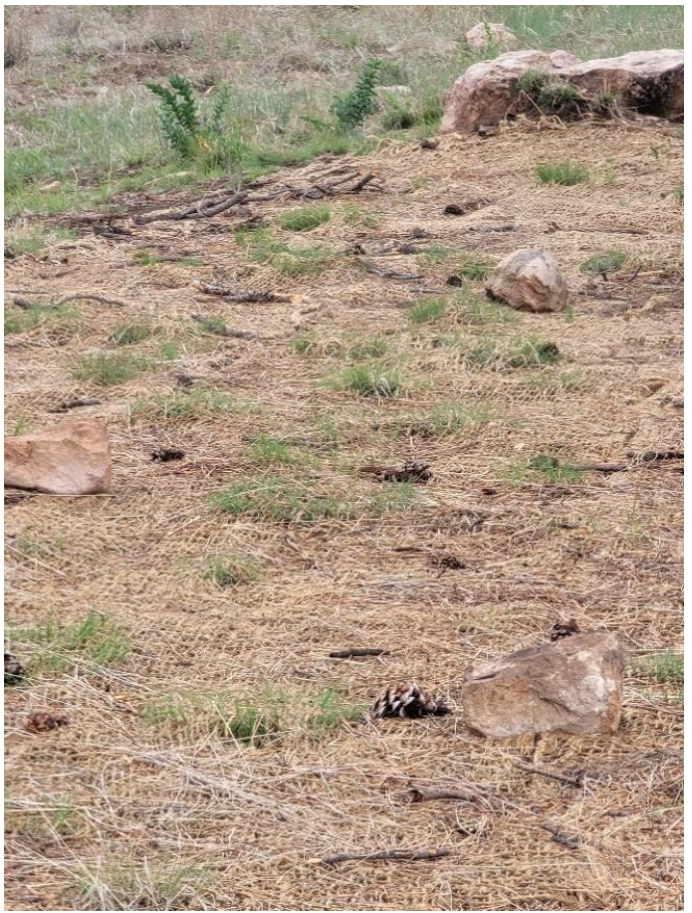
Unauthorized Road and Trail Restoration Before and After



Unauthorized Road and Trail Resotration Before and After

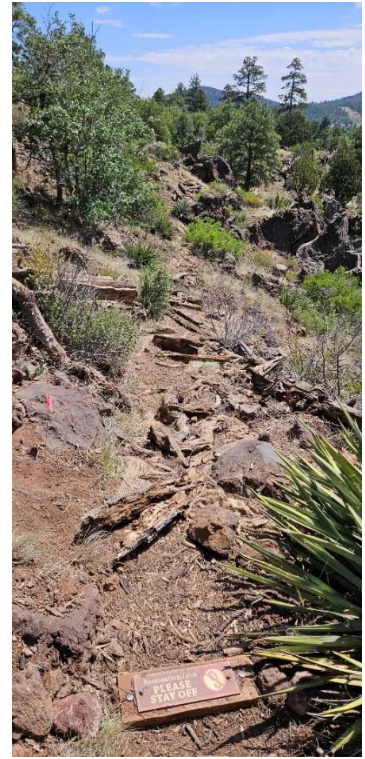


Unauthorized Road and Trail Resotration Before and After



Unauthorized Road and Trail Resotration Before and After

## Signage Installation



Signage Installation

# Visitor Maps Printed

## UNIQUE VEGETATION

A number of different vegetative communities are present throughout the Preserve given the different habitats available, including riparian areas, forest uplands, and canyons. In fact, botanists have identified over 270 separate plant species. During your visit, keep an eye out for expansive meadows of native grasses and wildflowers, wetlands with cattails and willows, and canyon walls lined with grapevines and yuccas.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The Northern Sinagua people occupied northern Arizona between 700 and 1300 A.D. As a result, Picture Canyon is home to an abundant collection of cultural resources from their occupancy. In fact, Picture Canyon has the greatest concentration of Northern Sinaguan petroglyphs in Arizona.

During your visit, you will see a few of the nearly 800 petroglyph images etched into the canyon walls and boulders. Visit the Waterbird Site to see depictions of archers, turtles, large mammals, and birds.

Please show respect and help us preserve these fragile cultural resources for future generations by not touching petroglyphs or removing any artifacts from the Preserve.



## HISTORICAL RESOURCES



From 1887 to 1966, the ponderosa pine forests of northern Arizona were home to an extensive network of logging railroads.

More than 770 miles of rail line were built for logging companies to access stands of timber for harvest. The Greenlaw Lumber Company installed a rail line at Picture Canyon to harvest timber in 1908 and 1909 using cross cut saws. The railroad beds are still visible in some places of the Preserve and there is also a historic railroad trestle on the property.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

**Prohibited Use.** Picture Canyon is closed to motorized vehicles, hunting, camping, campfires, fuelwood collection, and overnight uses.

**Respect Wildlife.** Picture Canyon provides ample opportunity to observe wildlife, but please do so from a distance to ensure your safety. Hunting is strictly prohibited within the Preserve.

**Equestrian Use.** Horses are permitted within Picture Canyon but to protect the trails, please do not ride your horse during wet conditions.

**Leave No Trace.** Dispose of your waste properly by taking it home with you.

**Respect Cultural Resources.** Picture Canyon is a very important cultural site in northern Arizona. Please help us protect these fragile resources by not touching petroglyphs or taking anything home with you.

**Keep Pets on a Leash.** Be mindful of other visitors by keeping your pet on a leash. To enhance visitor experiences and reduce environmental impacts, please pick up after your pet.

**Be Prepared.** Bring comfortable walking shoes, sun protection, and ample amounts of water with you for your visit to the Preserve.

## GET INVOLVED

Did you enjoy your visit to Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve? Do you want to get involved in trail maintenance, weed abatement, or other volunteer projects at the Preserve? Visit the City of Flagstaff's Open Space Program at [flagstaff.az.gov/4131/Volunteer-Opportunities](http://flagstaff.az.gov/4131/Volunteer-Opportunities) to get involved!



For more information about Flagstaff natural areas: [www.flagstaff.az.gov/openspace](http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/openspace) • 928-213-2154



Thank you for visiting Picture Canyon  
Natural and Cultural Preserve

The City of Flagstaff acquired 478 acres in 2012 to protect a culturally and ecologically sensitive area and provide a natural place for visitors to learn about ecology, geology, and archaeology, while participating in outdoor recreation.

Use the information outlined in this brochure to take a self-guided tour of the Preserve. We hope you enjoy your visit!



Scan this QR code to download an interactive map of the Picture Canyon trail system to your smartphone using the Avenza app.

Follow us on:  
Facebook @COFcreation  
Instagram @cityofflagstaffparks

## HOW TO GET THERE

From downtown Flagstaff, travel east on Route 66 for 4 miles. Turn right at the Auto Park sign to remain on Historic Route 66. Turn left on El Paso Flagstaff Road and a parking area is located approximately 1 mile down the road on the right side.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**TOM MOODY TRAIL - 3.9 mile loop trail** with canyon vistas, extensive petroglyph panels, and interpretive areas. Travel counter-clockwise for an easy 0.4 mile one-way walk to the waterfall.

**DON WEAVER TRAIL - 0.7 mile educational trail** that travels through a portion of the canyon and proceeds along a pipeline access road. Provides access to vistas and cultural resource points of interest. To view the spectacular Waterbird petroglyph site, proceed 0.1 miles east on the Tom Moody Trail from the bridge.

**LOOP HIKE - 2.5 miles.** Follow the Tom Moody Trail to the bridge, with a spur to the Waterbird Petroglyph site and back, and then follow the Don Weaver Trail back to the parking area.

**ARIZONA TRAIL - 1.2 mile segment** of the 800+ mile trail that stretches from Mexico to Utah traverses through the Preserve.

## WILDLIFE

Picture Canyon is one of the premiere wildlife and bird watching sites in the region given its designation as a Watchable Wildlife Site and Audubon Bird Sanctuary.

Be sure to visit the pond, a rare riparian habitat in Coconino County, for a chance to see one of the 130 bird species that visit the Preserve. Keep an eye out for raptors, owls, bats, eagles, waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, or songbirds during your visit.

Mammals also call Picture Canyon home. Elk, deer, raccoon, and porcupines are common in the area. Picture Canyon provides ample opportunity to observe wildlife, but please do so from a distance to ensure your safety.





## Open Spaces Commission

6. E.

**Co-Submitter:** Rebecca Sayers, Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director

**From:** Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan Update

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Informational Item.

Staff will provide the commission with an update on the Trail Plan regarding the next steps for presenting the plan to the City Council.

### **Executive Summary:**

#### Background

The Observatory Mesa Natural Area is a vital ecological and recreational asset for the City of Flagstaff. The land was acquired in 2016 using voter-approved bond funds from 2004, matched with an Arizona State Parks Growing Smarter grant. A conservation easement held by Arizona State Parks mandates that the property remains preserved while allowing certain recreational and educational activities. The area is adjacent to the Lowell Observatory and Coconino National Forest, making it an essential part of Flagstaff's Open Space System.

#### Plan Development

The Greater Observatory Mesa Area (GOMA) Trail Plan was developed through a collaborative effort between the City of Flagstaff, Lowell Observatory, and Coconino National Forest. The planning process included:

- Reviewing guiding documents such as conservation easements and management policies.
- Assessing current conditions, including user-created trails and environmental impacts.
- Identifying key issues such as archaeological sites, wildlife corridors, and fire management concerns.
- Incorporating public input through multiple phases of outreach and stakeholder meetings.

#### Plan's Purpose

The primary objective of the GOMA Trail Plan is to establish a formal, managed trail system that provides sustainable recreational opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources. The plan addresses:

- Habitat and watershed conservation.
- Unauthorized trail use and environmental degradation.
- Community demand for improved recreational access.

#### Public Process

The plan development involved extensive public outreach, including:

- Public engagement through social media campaigns, press releases, flyers, community calendars, property postings, physical mailer, and mass email notifications.
- Three public surveys conducted in 2022, 2023, 2024.

- Three public meetings at various locations in Flagstaff.
- Direct engagement with stakeholders, including land managers, local neighborhoods, advocacy groups, tribal consultation, commissions, and environmental organizations.

### Trail Plan Elements

The GOMA Trail Plan outlines a phased approach to trail implementation and management. Key elements include:

- Designation of approximately 20 miles of sustainable single-track trails.
- Approximately 8 miles of trail for adaptive uses.
- Addition of two formal access points, bringing the total to eight.
- Restoration of 4.1 miles of unauthorized trails and 10.5 miles of abandoned roads.
- Development of two educational zones for interpretive signage and experiential learning.
- Expansion of parking facilities and wayfinding signage.

### Next Steps

- Presentation and the opportunity to provide input for City Council on May 13, 2025
- Resolution consideration by City Council, tentatively on June 3, 2025
- Arizona State Parks and Trails plan review
- Develop interagency agreements with partners
- Design and mark trail alignments
- Cultural resource review and clearance with partners
- State Historic Preservation Office review
- Grant applications to support implementation
- Begin phased implementation of the trail plan in FY 2028-2029.

### Plan Adoption Process

After the Council reviews and provides feedback, the plan will be formally presented for adoption via resolution on June 3, 2025. If approved, implementation will proceed in collaboration with relevant land management agencies and partners. This comprehensive plan balances recreation with conservation, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Observatory Mesa Natural Area.

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**Open Spaces Commission**

7. D.

**From:** Cathy Guetschow, Administrative Specialist

**DATE:** 03/24/2025

**SUBJECT:** PROSE Monthly Newsletter - February 2025

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**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**Executive Summary:**

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**Attachments**

PROSE Monthly Newsletter - February 2025

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# PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

*Connecting our community through people, parks,  
natural areas, and programs.*



The Dominating Ducks vs The Lumberjacks (2nd /3rd Grade Basketball game)

## Exciting Season of Youth Basketball at Hal Jensen Recreation Center

This season of Youth Basketball at Hal Jensen Recreation Center was a tremendous success, with 260 kids participating —nearly doubling last year’s numbers! In total there were eight regular-season games, with practices held at the Recreation Center

Girl shoots for the hoop

and Sinagua Middle School. A highlight from the season was NAU Night, where players were granted free admission to the NAU basketball game on February 8th by wearing their jerseys. Chick-fil-A generously sponsored the league, providing a kids’ meal to one player from each team after every game. The season was filled with fun, teamwork, and plenty of smiles, thanks to the dedication of our coaches and the enthusiasm of all the players!

Boy defends the ball



# PARKS

## Welcome New Parks Maintenance Workers and Parks Technicians!

Parks is very excited to have almost a full staff again with only three current vacancies. Welcome Parks Maintenance workers Jaden Wiley and Kyle Cameron and Parks Technicians, Israel Armenta, Kob-Bar-Li (Kobi) Sillan and Jonathan Guetter.



Kobi, Jonathan, & Israel



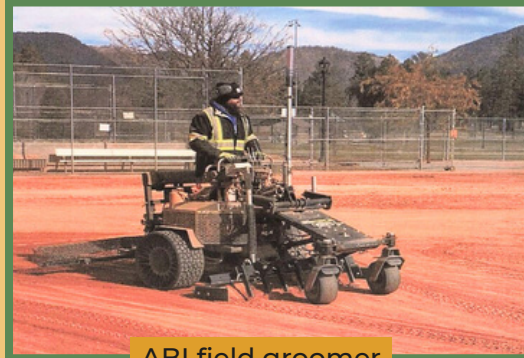
Kyle & Jaden

## Parks Projects in Full Swing

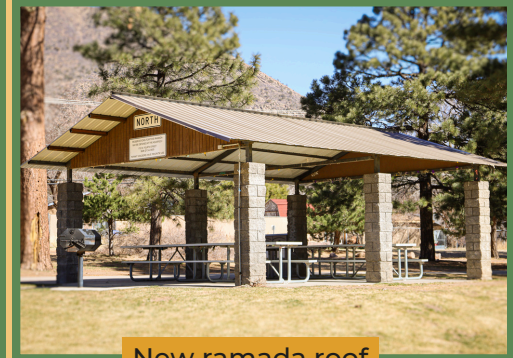
The unseasonably warm weather has allowed Parks staff to get a head start on annual baseball field maintenance and complete several improvement projects throughout the community.



New fence at the Aquaplex



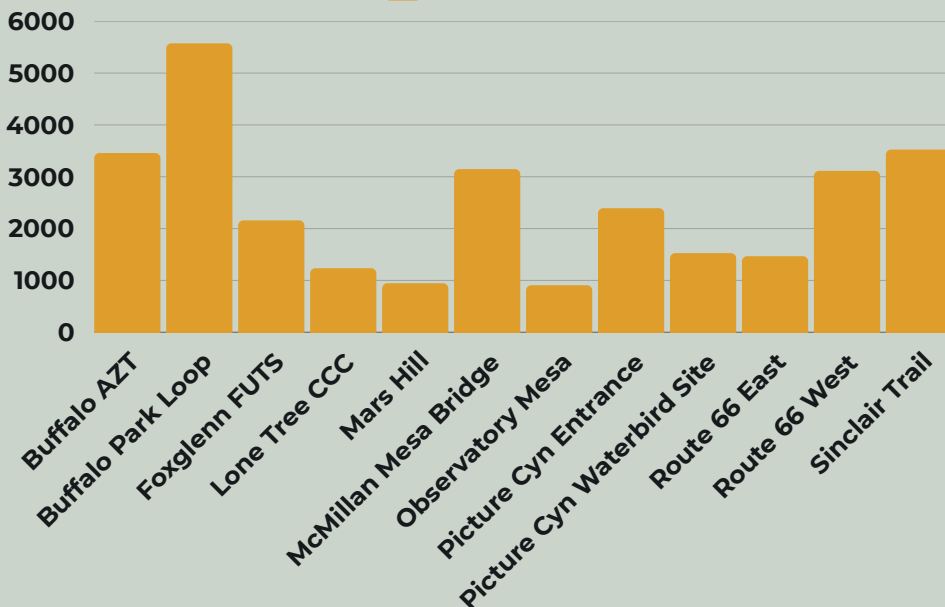
ABI field groomer



New ramada roof

## January 2024 Trail Counts

Number of Users



## Some projects complete this month:

- Installed a new steel fence on the east side of the Aquaplex
- Replaced the roof on the north ramada at Bushmaster Park
- Replaced concrete walkway at Hal Jensen Recreation Center
- Added a new memorial bench with concrete pad at Buffalo Park
- Began field maintenance, including replacing pitching rubbers and home plates, cutting grass edges, and adding fresh clay to high-use areas, and laser-leveling the infield with the ABI field groomer



Public Skate at Jay Lively

# RECREATION

## Jay Lively Activity Center - Busy Hosting Events & Facility Improvements

Jay Lively Activity Center has been busy this month hosting NAU hockey games, birthday parties, field trips and more! A new sound system was installed and has greatly improved the experience at public skate sessions. A broken bathroom door in the orange locker room was repaired, all work orders have been completed, and the backup Zamboni is back in action thanks to Fleet Services. Additionally, regular ice maintenance has kept the ice in top condition and staff have implemented a new ice measurement system to ensure consistent quality. Lastly, the April hockey tournament is filling up fast, with only three spots remaining.

## Aquaplex Kids Club Upgrade

The Aquaplex recently received a generous donation of supplies and furniture for Kids Club. These additions have made a significant improvement, creating a more inviting and functional environment for all to enjoy.



Boys playing raquetball



Kids Club

## Racquetball Courts at Hal Jensen are Back in Action!

In response to some community feedback, both racquetball courts at Hal Jensen have been cleared out and are open for play once again!

## Black History Month at Hal Jensen Recreation Center

Hal Jensen Recreation Center welcomed approximately 70 attendees for a special Dinner and Movie Night in celebration of Black History Month. Guests enjoyed a screening of a featured film while eating delicious soul food. To further honor the month, staff displayed posters of prominent historical figures throughout the facility, creating an engaging and educational atmosphere for all who came through.



# OPEN SPACE

## Restoration and Preventative Maintenance

After a couple of volunteers helped start the project in December, Open Space staff Ashlee Fliney and Sylvia Struss finished painting the foot bridge over the Rio de Flag at Picture Canyon Natural & Cultural Preserve. This long-overdue project has given the bridge a fresh, revitalized look!

In order to prevent illegal motorized travel, Parks staff lent some time and equipment to place large boulders at key trail access points to Picture Canyon and Observatory Mesa. These strategically positioned boulders serve as natural barriers, protecting the trails and preserving the area's natural beauty.



Foot bridge



Rock barriers at Observatory Mesa



Killip student at the STEM Night

## Killip Elementary STEM Night

Open Space educator, Ashlee Fliney hosted a booth at Killip Elementary School's Family STEM Night, where over 300 children and family members stopped by to explore the signs of wildlife found at Picture Canyon. Through interactive displays and hands-on learning, families had the chance to discover the diverse species that call this natural area home!



Students with their cameras

## Photography Students Visit Picture Canyon

A group of 31 photography students from Chandler High School visited Picture Canyon for a guided hike, capturing the beauty of the landscape through their lenses. The students photographed scenic vistas, wildlife, and cultural sites to feature in their end-of-quarter portfolios.



Adult Basketball

# EVENTS, MARKETING & ATHLETICS

## Adult Winter Basketball League Wraps Up Second Session

The second session of the Adult Winter Basketball League came to a close last week. The 51's claimed victory in the Monday/Wednesday circuit, while Step Bros took the title in the Tuesday/Thursday circuit. There are so many fantastic players in the community, congratulations to everyone that participated. To capture some of the excitement, the Events and Marketing Coordinator snapped some awesome action shots during one of the final games.



Action shots from Adult Basketball



## Concerts in the Park - Call for Musicians

The Events and Marketing team released their call for musicians for Concerts in the Park. They are searching for family-friendly musicians to perform a 2-hour set on a Wednesday night in June or July for the annual series.

Interested musicians should email their demo to:

[SpecialEvents@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:SpecialEvents@flagstaffaz.gov) by March 21st. Audio will be provided by Peaks Entertainment.

Stay connected!



**CONCERTS IN THE PARK**  
**Call for Musicians**

FAMILY FRIENDLY  
**Performances on Wednesday nights in June & July**

Send your demo to  
**SpecialEvents@flagstaffaz.gov**

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF  
**PROSE**