

NOTICE AND AGENDA

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
OCTOBER 26, 2026

HYBRID MEETING ONLY
MATSON TANK
COORDINATES: 35.223062, -111.684656
4:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

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

Chair Jacqueline Thomas

Co-Chair Bruce Fox

Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison)

Commissioner William Kluwin

Commissioner Molly Joyce

Commissioner Lina Wallen

Commissioner Nat White

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, [September 24, 2026](#).

5. Open Call to the Public

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. Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve Management & Objectives

Informational Item and Discussion.

The Open Spaces Commission will be visiting the city's Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve to learn about management direction and objectives. Please come prepared with anything you might need for the duration of the field trip and be prepared to walk in rough terrain.

Directions attached.

B. Meeting Date Selection for November and December Meetings

Select future date(s) for the Commission's November and December meetings.

C. City of Flagstaff Boards and Commissions Review

Informational Update.

7. Reports and Updates

- A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence
 - B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report, Representative Mary Norton
 - C. Open Space Management Report, Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss
 - D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter - [September 2026](#)
- 8. **Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff**
 - 9. **Potential Future Agenda Items**
 - 10. **Adjournment**



Open Spaces Commission

4.

From: Lori Reynolds, PROSE Admin Specialist

DATE: 10/26/2026

SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes, [September 24, 2026](#).

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Executive Summary:

Attachments

September 2026 Minutes

MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

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

1. Call to Order

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

2. Roll Call

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

Chair Jacqueline Thomas, present

Co-Chair Bruce Fox, present

Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison), present

Commissioner William Kluwin, present

Commissioner Molly Joyce, present

Commissioner Lina Wallen, present

Commissioner Nat White, present

Councilmember Rep: David Spence, absent

Staff present: Rebecca Sayers (PROSE Director), Robert Wallace (Open Space Manager) Sylvia Struss (Open Space Coordinator), Ashlee Fliney (Open Space Educator), Lori Reynolds (Administrative Specialist), Sarah Holditch (Events & Marketing Coordinator)

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.

Read by Chair Thomas.

4. Approval of Minutes, [August 24, 2026](#)

Commissioner Wallen moved to approve the August 24, 2026 minutes as attached. Commissioner Norton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Open Call to the Public

No comments were received.

6. Business Items

A. Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Division (PROSE) Master Plan Update and Discussion

PROSE Master Plan consultants Marissa Pellegrini and Sean Wozny attended the meeting to provide an overview of the Master Plan process and facilitate a focused discussion with the Commission.

A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#).

Marissa explained that the Master Plan will establish short, mid, and long-term priorities and a shared vision for PROSE. The planning effort takes a holistic look at parks, recreation, open

space, and events, as well as supporting operations and maintenance while aligning with existing City and Council goals. The process includes a comprehensive inventory and assessment of PROSE assets, evaluation of current and desired levels of service, and analysis of operations and maintenance costs to support a sustainable and fiscally responsible plan for the next decade and beyond.

The project is anticipated to take approximately 14 months, with implementation targeted for summer 2027. The project is currently in the needs assessment phase, Step 3 of 10, with consultants gathering community input and assessing existing conditions. Roughly 40 partner groups have been identified for targeted engagement, with meetings continuing into October. Public engagement also includes in-person and virtual workshops, pop-up events, and interactive tools available through the project [website](http://www.flagstaffprose.com): www.flagstaffprose.com

Commissioner White expressed support for attending a variety of community pop-up events, noting that different events provide opportunities to reach different segments of the community. In response to his question regarding engagement methods, Marissa described interactive activities, including comment notes, dot exercises, and an anonymous mobile survey.

Consultants then facilitated a focus-group discussion with Commissioners. Chair Thomas initially questioned whether the exercise would duplicate feedback Commissioners had already submitted through the public engagement tools. Marissa clarified that the discussion was intended to gather feedback specifically from Commissioners in their advisory capacity, including their perspectives on the current PROSE system and its future direction. Sean asked Commissioners to identify the most important functions and qualities of the PROSE system. Commissioners emphasized the following themes:

- Protection and identity of Open Space: Commissioners stressed the importance of protecting remaining Open Space as Flagstaff grows and ensuring Open Space preserves remain a distinct and visible component of the broader PROSE system. Sean noted that Open Space was largely absent from the previous master plan and confirmed that it will be incorporated into the current plan. Commissioners also requested clear definitions of the City's Open Space system and emphasized ecosystem preservation, restoration, and long-term sustainability.
- Quality of life and access: Commissioners identified PROSE as an important contributor to residents' quality of life and discussed balancing resident and visitor needs. They emphasized equitable access to parks and Open Space throughout the city and better alignment and connectivity among facilities.
- Connectivity: Commissioners discussed the importance of connecting City Open Space to surrounding public lands, particularly Forest Service lands, and improving trail connections among parks, recreation facilities, and Open Space. Sean explained that the planning process will include a gap analysis to identify missing connections, barriers, and levels of service, including consideration of 10-minute walkability.
- Economic and environmental value: Commissioner Joyce noted the economic value associated with proximity to parks and Open Space and encouraged consideration of environmental economics within the Master Plan. Commissioners also emphasized maintaining healthy ecosystems and improving the resilience of Open Space to wildfire.
- Maintenance and communication: Commissioners identified concerns regarding maintenance of PROSE facilities and the need for greater transparency when public amenities are affected by weather, closures, or planned maintenance.
- Interagency coordination: Commissioners emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong working relationship with the U.S. Forest Service's Coconino National Forest and suggested exploring formal agreements or other opportunities for coordination.
- Mapping and public engagement: Commissioners requested that maps used during public engagement more clearly distinguish public and private lands so participants can better understand existing access and identify areas where additional parks or public access may be needed.

When asked which areas or populations may be underserved by the existing PROSE system, Commissioners identified the Southside, noting the lack of a neighborhood park within a 10-minute walk and the need to cross the railroad tracks to access Thorpe Park - the nearest park for the

Southside community; improved connectivity from the east side to Picture Canyon; improved access to trails and public lands north of Flagstaff, including from the Linda Vista Road area; connections from the Lake Mary area to Forest Service lands; and additional or improved pocket parks throughout the community.

A Commissioner asked whether participation in the Master Plan engagement process was limited to Flagstaff residents, noting that people living outside city limits frequently rely on Flagstaff for services and recreation. Marissa clarified that participation is open to everyone and that both resident and visitor perspectives are being considered.

Sean asked Commissioners to identify additional organizations or partnerships that should be included in the planning process. Suggestions included Girls on the Run, the Grand Canyon Trust, potential partnerships with developers, and additional community organizations that could use existing parks and Open Space to engage residents.

Commissioners also discussed key opportunities and challenges for the future PROSE system. Opportunities included incorporating PROSE facilities and amenities into future development, strengthening partnerships with the Forest Service and other organizations, and creating additional opportunities for community organizations to utilize City parks and public spaces. Acquisition of additional property for Open Space was identified as a significant challenge.

When asked to describe a "big idea" or long-term vision for PROSE, Commissioner White envisioned an interconnected network of parks, recreation facilities, Open Space, and surrounding Forest Service lands linked by trails. Commissioner Joyce expanded on this concept by noting the need for diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for youth and families beyond traditional sports courts, including running and bicycling facilities. Staff noted that a multi-use track is already included in PROSE's current five-year plan.

Additional long-term ideas included stronger partnerships with Northern Arizona University to explore public access to underutilized recreational facilities; ensuring PROSE is incorporated into future development, planning, and zoning decisions; improving connectivity between existing and future PROSE facilities; developing facilities capable of supporting PROSE events in more areas of the city; recognizing and preserving the distinct character of Flagstaff's different areas; and providing additional indoor or all-weather facilities to support winter and year-round recreation.

Following the consultant-led discussion, Commissioner Norton asked which of the online engagement tools was most useful to the consultants. Marissa identified the online survey as the most useful tool. Commissioner Kluwin referenced the 2023 Open Spaces Strategic Plan and emphasized that its core terminology related to restoration and preservation should be carried forward and explicitly reflected in how Open Space is addressed within the PROSE Master Plan.

Rebecca Sayers outlined the next steps in the Master Plan process. Consultants will conduct a similar focus-group exercise with the Parks and Recreation Commission next month. Consultants have already met with several focus groups during the current week and plan to hold a public workshop in October. Flyers and social media materials for the workshop had not yet been released. Consultants will also meet individually with other areas of the PROSE division later in the process. Marissa added that they plan to distribute a ballot-style survey to targeted City demographics near the end of 2026. The mailed survey has historically achieved approximately a 95% response/completion rate and will be used to complete the baseline of public input for the Master Plan.

Chair Thomas invited public comment regarding the PROSE Master Plan. No public comments were received.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence

Councilmember Spence was absent from this meeting.

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

Commissioner Norton reported that Planning and Zoning continues to review code text amendments related to the rezoning process. She explained that there are currently two pathways for rezoning; however, the proposed amendment would eliminate the direct-to-site-plan option and instead utilize a concept zoning map. The concept zoning map would not be binding to a specific concept plan, providing greater flexibility as development moves forward.

The amendment passed the Planning and Zoning Commission by a 4–1 vote and is expected to proceed to City Council, with the meeting date yet to be determined. Commissioner Norton noted that the proposed changes are intended to make the rezoning process faster and less costly for developers. She added that the City Council hearing will provide an opportunity for public input on the proposed changes.

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

Sylvia Struss provided the Open Space Management Report. Weed pulls have continued in areas identified or managed as Open Space, including areas along FUTS trails. Recent efforts have combined invasive weed removal with trash cleanup following monsoon storms and associated runoff.

Upcoming Open Space outreach and recreation events include Science in the Park on September 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Wheeler Park, where staff will host a booth featuring plein air painting; a Full Moon Hike at Picture Canyon at 5:45 p.m. that evening; and two Tarantula Treks on October 4, scheduled for 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

Sylvia provided Commissioners with flyers advertising upcoming Open Space events and opportunities for participation and encouraged Commissioners to help distribute them throughout the community. A sign-up sheet was also available for Commissioners interested in assisting. She also noted that staff are preparing a grant application to Arizona State Parks to support replacement of signage at Picture Canyon.

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter ([August 2026](#))

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Robert Wallace reminded the Commission that the next meeting will consist of the planned Open Space field trip. He noted that approximately 30–40 minutes of additional travel time will be needed to reach the field trip location and discussed whether Commissioners would prefer an earlier start time to accommodate the commute. Commissioners agreed to meet at 3:30 p.m. at Thorpe Park Dog Park for transportation to the field trip location.

10. Adjournment

Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:05 PM



Open Spaces Commission

6. A.

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

From: Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

DATE: 10/26/2026

SUBJECT: Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve Management & Objectives

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Informational Item and Discussion.

The Open Spaces Commission will be visiting the city's Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve to learn about management direction and objectives. Please come prepared with anything you might need for the duration of the field trip and be prepared to walk in rough terrain.

Directions attached.

Executive Summary:

Pedestrian Directions to Matson Tank

Destination: Matson Tank

Coordinates: 35.223062, -111.684656

Location: Forest Service Section 7 & Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve property boundary

Navigation Note

Matson Tank is not a prominent signed destination, so hikers should consider using the coordinates above for navigation. There are multiple trails, administrative roads, and intersections on Observatory Mesa, and some routes can be difficult to distinguish. The City describes the Mars Hill Trail as a 1.9-mile trail connecting Thorpe Park to the mesa, while the Observatory Mesa trail system includes connections with Forest Road 515. See attached map for approximate location of Matson Tank.

Option 1 – Thorpe Park / Mars Hill Trail

Approximately 2.8 miles one way

Park at Thorpe Park, near the ball fields/Bark Park area. Walk to the Mars Hill Trail and follow the trail uphill onto Observatory Mesa. The City identifies Mars Hill as an authorized pedestrian access point to the preserve.

Continue uphill on the Mars Hill Trail until you reach the gate at the top of the trail. At the gate, turn northeast onto the administrative road. Continue for ~0.1 miles and then turn north on the administrative road, following it toward Matson Tank. Continue until you reach Matson Tank at approximately 35.223062, -111.684656.

Approximate distance: 2.8 miles one way / 5.6 miles round trip.

Option 2 – N. Tillie Lane / Flagstaff Loop Trail

Approximately 2.2 miles one way

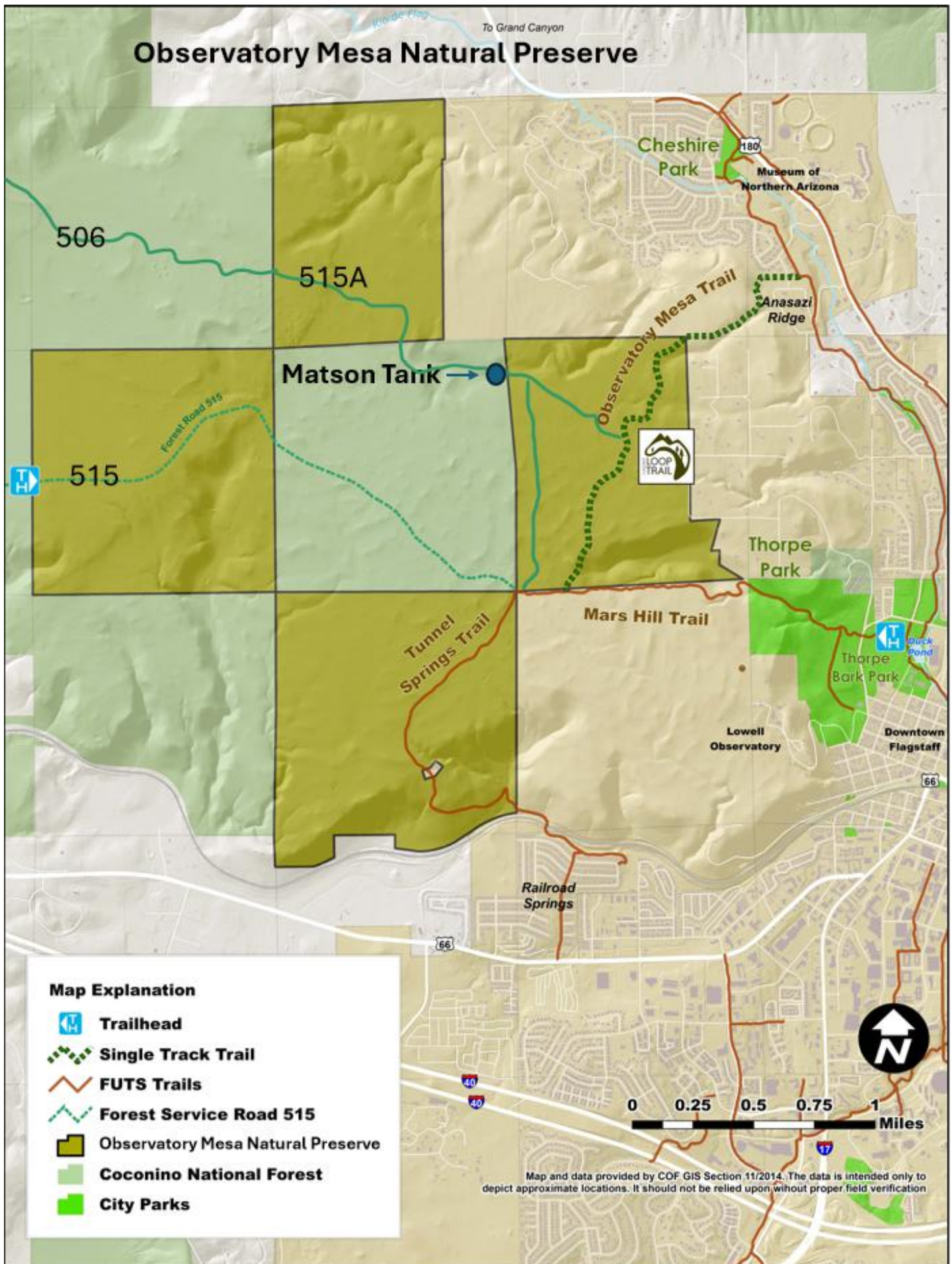
Park near N. Tillie Lane at the Flagstaff Loop Trail access. Follow the Flagstaff Loop Trail west toward Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve. This is an identified pedestrian access point to the preserve. Continue along the Flagstaff Loop Trail as it enters and crosses Observatory Mesa. Follow the trail until you reach the intersection with administrative road 515A. Turn onto 515A and follow the administrative road toward Matson Tank. Continue until you reach Matson Tank at approximately 35.223062, -111.684656.

Approximate distance: 2.2 miles one way / 4.4 miles round trip.

Attachments

Matson Tank Location Map

Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve





Open Spaces Commission

6. B.

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

From: Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

DATE: 10/26/2026

SUBJECT: Meeting Date Selection for November and December Meetings

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Select future date(s) for the Commission's November and December meetings.

Executive Summary:

The Open Spaces Commission's regular meetings are scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month, but may be rescheduled to accommodate extenuating circumstances.

The Commission has traditionally combined their November and December meetings to accommodate holidays. The Commission will consider alternative dates and make a selection.

Possible dates for consideration are November 9, December 7 or 14, 2026, from 4–6 pm.



Open Spaces Commission

6. C.

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

From: Robert Wallace, Open Space Supervisor

DATE: 10/26/2026

SUBJECT: City of Flagstaff Boards and Commissions Review

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Informational Update.

Executive Summary:

A message from the City Clerk's office:

At the direction of Council, the City Clerk's Office was asked to evaluate the Boards and Commissions program and make recommendations to Council regarding ways the program can improve effectiveness, efficiency, and service to the community. A discussion with Council and a presentation of recommendations will occur at the November 17, 2026 Council Meeting.

Materials outlining the proposed recommendations will be available in the Council agenda packet the week prior to the November 17, 2026, Council Meeting. We encourage Commissioners to attend the meeting in person or watch it live for additional information and specifics regarding the recommendations.

Recommendations may or may not be accepted by Council, and we welcome any and all public comment.



Open Spaces Commission

7. D.

From: Lori Reynolds, PROSE Admin Specialist

DATE: 10/26/2026

SUBJECT: PROSE Monthly Newsletter - [September 2026](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Executive Summary:

Attachments

PROSE September 2026 Newsletter



PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2026
NEWSLETTER

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



Kids swimming at Parents' Night Out

Parents' Night Out at the Aquaplex

This month, the Aquaplex introduced a new program, Parents' Night Out, to give parents and caregivers a safe, affordable, and enjoyable evening to themselves.

Meanwhile, their children enjoy a variety of supervised activities. The

inaugural event took place on Sunday, September 13, and was a great success, with 20 participants attending. The evening included pool play, rock climbing, gym activities, and a pizza party. The program gave participants a chance to stay active, socialize, and

enjoy a fun evening at The Aquaplex. Based on the positive response to the first event, Parents' Night Out will become a recurring program throughout the calendar year. We are excited to continue offering this service to our community and provide families with an affordable, convenient recreational option.



Kids playing Gaga Ball



Kids eating pizza

New carpet at Hal Jensen Recreation Center



RECREATION

New Flooring at Hal Jensen Recreation Center

Facility improvements at the Hal Jensen Recreation Center are moving forward, highlighted by the installation of fresh carpeting and new laminate flooring that will enhance the look and feel of the office and front desk area.





Hal Jensen Recreation Center

JR. SUNS YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE



REGISTER ONLINE
LINK IN BIO



Register By: December 21st

Early Bird:
\$45
After Nov. 22nd
\$60

SKILLS & DRILLS / DRAFT DAY
Saturday, Nov. 21st
at the Aquaplex

Jr. Suns Youth Basketball Registration NOW OPEN! - Get ready for a great season of youth basketball!

Skills & Drills - Saturday, November 21st - Skills & Drills Day is a fun, introductory session designed to help place youth basketball players into the appropriate teams for their grade level. Participants will rotate through basic skill stations, such as dribbling, passing, and shooting, so coaches can get a sense of each player's abilities and ensure balanced, supportive teams for the season.

Session Times:

- 2nd/3rd Grade: 9:00–10:00 AM
- 4th/5th Grade: 10:15–11:15 AM
- Middle School: 11:30 AM–12:30 PM

League Registration Deadline: December 21st



OPEN SPACE

Educational Field Trips

- Honors Biology students from Flagstaff High School visited Picture Canyon to investigate water quality through hands-on activities.
- AP Biology students from Flagstaff High School explored biodiversity at McMillan Mesa by comparing species diversity in disturbed and natural areas.
- Summit High School continued monthly Open Space programming, practicing birding in PE and developing nature journaling skills in Student Success class.
- Mount Elden Middle School 7th graders expanded their field journaling skills by drawing and labeling storm clouds to support their cloud curriculum.
- The Trailblazers Learning Community participated in Birding Basics at Picture Canyon, comparing bird observations in riparian and forested habitats.

Community Outreach Recap

Booth at Science Saturday event



- Science Saturday at Willow Bend Environmental Education Center: Open Space showcased the new Wildlife Discovery Trunks, allowing visitors to explore Bird and Mammal trunk materials along with ready-to-use lesson binders.
- FACTS After-School Program Lights On! Event: Kids explored local wildlife through hands-on activities focused on identifying mammal tracks and scat.
- Children of Incarcerated Parents Day at Bushmaster Park: Open Space offered a nature-inspired art activity where kids created cards using leaf rubbings and natural materials.
- Science in the Park, Flagstaff Festival of Science: To kick off the festival, Open Space hosted a plein-air watercolor activity encouraging participants to observe and paint the natural landscapes around Wheeler Park.

Public Safety Bond Initiative

Flagstaff voters will see two public safety-related questions on the November ballot - Prop 404 and Prop 405. Prop 404 would fund 77 additional public safety positions, such as firefighters, paramedics, wildland fire management personnel, and dispatch call takers. Prop 405 would fund the construction of the Wildland Fire Management Facility, a new fire station to improve response times, expansion of the Flagstaff Police Department and Evidence Warehouse facilities, and a variety of public safety equipment improvements.



CLICK HERE

to learn more about Prop 404 & 405
connect.flagstaffaz.gov/safety-committee

UPCOMING EVENTS



Winter Wonderland - December 5th

Join us on Saturday, December 5th for Winter Wonderland and the annual Tree Lighting, 2:30pm-7pm! This event is FREE, Family-Friendly, and so much fun! Stay tuned for more updates on bands and activities!



FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA



Flagstaff Aquaplex

PUMPKIN PLUNGE

**Saturday
October, 24th**

3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Flagstaff Aquaplex

\$10.00 General Admission

\$5.00 With a Costume

Entry includes a pumpkin
while supplies last!



Flagstaff Aquaplex Pumpkin Plunge - Swim and splash while picking out your own floating pumpkin! A Costume Contest will be held at 5:00 PM with prizes for the most creative looks!

Saturday, October 24th | 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Flagstaff Aquaplex | \$10 General Admission / \$5.00 in Costume

Fright Night at Hal Jensen - Grab your blanket and pillow and join us in watching a Halloween movie! We will be serving up popcorn, candy! **Friday, October 30th | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Hal Jensen Recreation Center | FREE**

Jay Lively Activity Center

SPOOKY SKATE



Costume contest with prizes! All ages welcome.
Regular Admission | Skate rentals \$4.00

Friday, October 30th

5:30pm - 8:00pm

Jay Lively Activity Center



FRIGHT NIGHT at the Rec

Bring a blanket, pillow, bean bag, or cushion, and get cozy!

Come enjoy popcorn, candy, drinks and a Halloween movie!

Friday, October 30th
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Hal Jensen Recreation Center

FREE

Spooky Skate at Jay Lively - Get your costumes ready and join us for a fun Halloween themed night on the ice! **Friday, October 30th | 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM | Jay Lively Activity Center | Regular Admission**