

Conifer Area Council

Annual Report

HISTORY, MISSION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

September, 2002 – June 30, 2008

History of Conifer Area Council

Conifer Area Council became the name of a group of concerned citizens in the Conifer area in September of 2002.

However, this group of people has a much longer and important history. Its roots go back to working on the Conifer / 285 Corridor Area Community Plan Update. A grass roots effort began in 1997 to work on the Update of the original Plan that had been adopted in 1987. The Final Draft was completed in February, 2002 after 10,000 volunteer hours of work. The final, publishable version was approved by the Jefferson County Planning Commission on September 3, 2003.

Many members of the group that spent those 10,000 hours of volunteer time then spearheaded the ongoing organization called Conifer Area Council to continue to identify concerns of our unincorporated community.

Conifer Area Council is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) IRC. Contributions are tax deductible.

Mission of Conifer Area Council

To work as a broad based group to provide a forum to identify and address community issues.

Goals of Conifer Area Council

- Promote community participation, collaboration and action in community issue decision-making,
- Sponsor the free and open exchange of information and ideas,
- Provide the venue for periodic review and support of the Conifer/285 Corridor Area Community Plan.

Board of Directors of Conifer Area Council

July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

President: Shirley M. Johnson
Vice President: Steph Millard
Secretary: Suzanne Nelson
Treasurer: Kay Thelen
Director: Angela Bassano

Director: Susan Imming
Director: Gene Lee
Director: Rocky Phelps
Director: Michael Rura
Director: Dave Watts
Director: Deb Watts

Accomplishments of Conifer Area Council

- **Town Hall Meetings**
 - 19 meetings since October, 2003 (30 to 230 in attendance at each meeting)
- **Other Public Meetings**
 - Jefferson County Public Outreach Meeting – April, 2008
 - Aspen Park Metropolitan District Public Water Meeting – May, 2008
 - Mountain Pine Beetle Workshop by Colorado State Forest Service & Others – May, 2008
- **Development of a Website at coniferareacouncil.org**
- **Development of an extensive e-mail list to get important information, such as Town Hall Meetings and other community events, to the community.**
- **Adopt-a-Highway Community Clean Up Days**
- **Flag replacement in conjunction with VFW at Windy Point gas station on Hwy 285, per citizen input on website**

History of Conifer Area Council Study / Action Teams

In 2002 and 2003, as Conifer Area Council was organized, Study / Action Team Guidelines (Appendix A) were written, along with Bylaws (Appendix B), in order to create a forum for the study and action of community issues.

In April, 2006, the Community Identity Study / Action Team was formed to determine “How to Preserve our Community Identity and Authenticity in the Face of New Development!” That Team developed the “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Survey, of which over 1000 community members responded.

The top three areas of concern which needed improvement, according to those community members were:

- **Bike paths / Hiking Trails**
- **Development Control**
- **Downtown / Main Street**

Please see the “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Community Survey and Survey Results (Appendix C):

As a result of the “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Community Survey” three new “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Study / Action Teams were formed:

- **Trails Study / Action Team**
- **Smart Growth Study / Action Team**
- **Main Street-Public Places Study / Action Team**

These three Study / Action Teams, collectively, developed the following in February, 2007 and updated in February, 2008:

Claiming Conifer’s Character Vision:

The Conifer area. . . our mountain home where natural beauty, wildlife, and independent spirits meet.

Claiming Conifer’s Character Mission:

To claim, preserve, and enhance the character and heritage of the Conifer area community.

Claiming Conifer’s Character Strategies:

Through the study of options and development of detailed plans, the following strategies may be used.

- Connect trails, create walkable neighborhoods and provide alternative transportation choices
- Create indoor and outdoor public places
- Encourage options other than strip development
- Preserve and/or enhance the Conifer area's beauty, peacefulness, rural character, heritage and wildlife
- Create healthy forests and reduce wildfire risk
- Protect and maintain water quantity and quality
- Add and maintain services that meet the community's needs
- Encourage community and stakeholder involvement, collaboration, and participation
- Promote improved communication within the community
- Identify opportunities that enhance the community while serving the community, the local economy, and the environment

Claiming Conifer's Character Policies:

- The Teams will make every attempt to involve the entire community by gathering and disseminating information through public meetings, publications, surveys and other means.
- The Teams will not favor or oppose any specific residential or commercial development, but will look at opportunities to enhance the community, as a whole, by considering connectivity and inclusiveness of all developments, neighborhoods, public and private open space areas.
- The Teams shall create more specific, detailed plans of trails, public places, and other smart growth strategies and coordinate with Jefferson County and the community to incorporate this information into the Conifer/285 Corridor Area Community Plan.

Claiming Conifer's Character Goals:

Trails Study/Action Team

"Trails" that connect neighborhoods, open space parks, schools, and shopping areas create opportunities for residents to enjoy wildlife, natural beauty and a sense of community.

- This Team will help coordinate the efforts of Jefferson County Open Space, Colorado Department of Transportation, Jefferson County Highways and Transportation, Jefferson County Planning and Zoning, Denver Mountain Parks, the Mountain Area Land Trust, all other entities involved with trails, and the Conifer community.
- Based upon the "Claiming Conifer's Character" Community Survey results, this Team will develop and offer options for a trails plan within the Conifer area and work with other communities regarding connections.
- This Team will keep track of properties in transition and will communicate with all agencies, property owners and developers to encourage trail connections to serve the Conifer community.

Claiming Conifer's Character Goals:

Smart Growth Study / Action Team

"Smart Growth" changes the focus of the development debate away from the traditional growth / no growth question to how and where should new development options be accommodated.

- This Team will gather 1) information regarding Smart Growth from all known entities dealing with smart growth, and 2) information regarding future plans and development for the Conifer area from Jefferson County and other means.
- Using this information, along with input from the community, (including the “Conifer / 285 Corridor Area Community Plan”, “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Community Survey, future conversations and surveys) the Team will assist in facilitating the communication of a more specific detailed plan for the Conifer area.
- Meanwhile, the Team will coordinate efforts and communicate with Jefferson County and the Conifer community.

Claiming Conifer’s Character Goals:

Main Street – Public Places

“Placemaking” is not about attracting people to the area, it is about providing the community with great places to enjoy the community and each other.

- This Team will identify current “Public Places” and how they might be enhanced.
- The Team will develop concepts and strategies for “Main Street.”
- The Team will coordinate with the Conifer community, Jefferson County, organizations that deal with Public Places, and the developers to identify additional “Public Places”. (According to results of the “Claiming Conifer’s Character” Community Survey, these Public Places may include Downtown, Main Street, Central Gathering Places and Community Activities Centers.)
- The Team will work with other community organizations such as artist guilds, local service organizations, schools and churches to encourage ideas, funding and maintenance for “Public Place”.

Accomplishments of the Trails Study / Action Team

The Conifer Area Council’s Trails Study / Action Team has worked hard over the last year to develop a Conifer Core and Extended Trails Plan. The Trails Study / Action Team has met monthly to continue the development of these plans. Meetings have also been held with representatives from Jefferson County Open Space, Jefferson County Highways and Transportation, Jefferson County Planning, local developers, and area landowners.

The plans developed for the Conifer Core and Extended Trails systems have been presented and reviewed at a number of public venues. These venues include the Conifer Area Council, Conifer Area Council Town Hall meetings, exhibits at public events, and area service clubs. The overall reaction for these trail plans has been very positive and supportive.

Specific items completed by the Trails Study / Action Team this year include:

- The development of a trails study action team brochure that outlines a history, goals, and a description of the trail segments.
- Identification and development of a priority list for individual trail segments.
- Displays on the trail plans have been provided at the Conifer Area Council Town Hall meetings; a Jefferson County Public Library open house at Conifer High School; at the Windstar Foundation Earth Day Activities held at Red Rocks in Morrison, Colorado; and

the Mountain Area Home and Garden Show held at Evergreen High School in Evergreen, Colorado.

- A list of recommended trail segments that would be applicable to the Jefferson County Open Space Master Plan Update were provided to Amy Ito and Mark Heron, who work with trails planning for the agency.
- A relationship has been developed with the manager of the Conifer Staples store to assist in the Trails Study / Action Team efforts. Staples has provided gift cards that can be used to pay for supplies and printing costs, currently in the amount of \$100. Staples store manager, Jeremy Miller, has been the contact and is great to work with.
- Trails Study / Action Team members will be participating in Conifer Area Council committees that work on grant writing and public relations.
- An active group of community members participate in Trails Study / Action Team meetings, planning sessions, public displays, and projects.
- The Trails Study / Action Team is applying to the Conifer Newcomers Club to be one of the two non-profit groups that participate in the Holiday Bazaar and provide a silent auction to raise funds for our efforts.

Accomplishments of the Smart Growth Study / Action Team

- Reaching out to developers going to Jefferson County for information, building permits and rezoning. County staff asked to refer them to CAC. Once contacted, CAC meets with and gives information on what the community wants through surveys, and other feedback.
- “Conifer – All Grown Up?” Powerpoint presentation at the November 14, 2007 Town Hall Meeting. This presentation was to show maximum development possible based on current zoning and development regulations, to promote smarter land use to preserve and enhance the quality of life. This can be viewed on the Conifer Area Council website.

Accomplishments of the Main Street – Public Places Study/Action Team

- Installation of a bench at Meyer Ranch Open Space Park where people can sit, meet and enjoy the scenery.
- Success in negotiating a Farmers Market for the Conifer community beginning in June 2008.
- Start of the Main Street portion of the Action Team and conducting monthly meetings.
- Development and implementation of a Public Places community survey which indicated the need for public meeting areas as well as continuation of the Main Street concept.
- Development and implementation of a Main Street community survey, results of which clearly indicate a need and community desire for a Main Street Loop for the Conifer community.
- Development of maps and drawings showing the proposed location of Main Street Loop, how it would affect local property owners, stakeholders and the dissemination of this information to the community.
- Development and presentation to the Jefferson County Planning Commission on our Main Street Loop concept and Public Places.

Goals for the next year

- Work with Jefferson County Planning & Zoning to insert wording into the Comprehensive Plan to allow for formal planning to start on the Conifer Main Street Loop.
- Work with Planning and Zoning to develop a “template” that would show a cross section of Main Street and how the vehicular and pedestrian components would work together. Insertion of this template into the Comprehensive Plan is critical to the success of our Main Street Loop project.
- Work closely with the Jefferson County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to keep them informed and aware of these and other Conifer community needs.
- Begin to identify funding sources both within and outside of the community to fund Public Places and the beginning construction of Main Street.
- Analysis of the Main Street Survey and porting of the information to the Conifer Community
- Development, with a major commercial partner, a recycling center for the Conifer community