San Miguel County
Parks & Open Space
2016 Annual Report
**Trails Projects**

- **Idarado Legacy Trail Improvements** – San Miguel County Parks hosted a volunteer work day on 6/5/16 for this trail. Volunteers participated in installing 12 new water bars and drainage features for areas suffering from erosion problems. Red breeze trail mix (15 tons) was added to the project area to improve the trail. We extend our thanks to the Telluride Mountain Club for their support with this project.

- **Galloping Goose Connector Trail Re-Alignment** – With assistance from San Miguel Bike Alliance volunteers, a section of the old trail was revegetated and a new alignment was constructed to avoid a muddy area with poor drainage. The old section of trail was seeded with native grass and wildflowers.
**Trails Projects**

- **Marshall Creek** – A new trail head sign was installed and light trail maintenance was performed. The Marshall Creek trail connects the western access to the Via Ferrata climbing route back to the Bridal Veil Road.
Trails Projects

- **Aldasoro Connector Trail Improvements** – Numerous volunteer hours were spent during the summer using hand tools to improve the trail and make it safe for hikers and bikers. Volunteer groups included participants from the Telluride Mountain Club, the San Juan Mountain Bike Alliance and Black Tie Ski Butlers. Trail improvements will continue in 2017.

- **Keystone Gorge Loop Trail Improvements** – The Southwest Conservation Corp. was contracted to install several new water bars and drainage improvements on the section from the lower bridge up to the connection with the Galloping Goose Trail. San Miguel County Parks provided materials and supervision during the 8-day project.
Trails Projects

- **M59 River Trail Maintenance** — County Park’s staff performed trail maintenance on the M59 River Trail to cut back overgrown willows, control thistle infestations, and to repair extensive damage after the 2016 mud slides near mile marker 78 on Highway 145. More repairs will be contracted with the County Road and Bridge Department in 2017.

- **Adopt-A-Trail Program** — County Park’s staff supervised several volunteer trail days on the Keystone Gorge Loop Trail with students and teachers from the Mountain School. Trail work was performed with hand tools and duties included installing a water bar, cutting fallen trees and repairing eroded areas of the trail.
Trails Projects

- **Angell Lode Trail** – This is a rough cut/natural trail. County staff installed a new sign at the trailhead in addition to new water bars and drainage features for areas suffering from erosion problems. Additional improvements such as fixing the bench, installing a fence and designating a parking area, along with more water bars are planned for spring 2017. The trailhead is located off Surprise Avenue on the eastern side of the town of Placerville. This natural area trail ascends the hill to the east and passes an old mining cave as you continue towards other vanadium mines in the hills above Placerville. This trail is fairly primitive.
Parks Projects

- **Down Valley Park Playground** – Two new elements were installed in 2016. The first element, called the Comet, was installed to provide spinning fun for children ages 3-12. A Huck Finn inspired raft was built by County Park’s staff and features a shade canopy and pirate flags to inspire young imaginations.
Parks Projects

- Pollinator Garden – This garden is located at the Down Valley Park. The County will plant approximately 7500 square feet of flower-rich habitat for local butterflies and bees. The site is located in the meadow just west of the DVP restrooms and picnic pavilion. Completed Phase One of this project - the area was tilled and then cultivated with 139 cubic yards of amended top soil. An irrigation system will be installed by April 2017 and the pollinator garden will be planted by late May 2017. This project is funded through the Payment for Ecosystem Services budget of the San Miguel Open Space Fund. We also received a $1000. grant from the Colorado Weed Management Association. A variety of flowering plants will add color to the park and benefit our local butterflies and bees.
Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)

- **Soil Health Program** – The County is piloting a Soil Health PES program to develop a protocol to assist farmers and ranchers to improve their soil and increase the water holding capacity. The pilot program added compost to three 25’ x 50’ plots in the early summer of 2016 on an area of land chosen by the land owner. Test plots are also located at the Down Valley Park adjacent to the Pollinator Garden. Soil tests include basics such as nutrients, organic matter and pH. This project will run for several years, as soil carbon and microbial populations take time to stabilize. The County is collaborating with scientists and other organizations with similar projects throughout the world on this cutting-edge work.
Open Space Program

- OA Greager – The County purchased this 160-acre property from the Boy Scouts in 2015. The property contains mapped Gunnison Sage-Grouse habitat and is adjacent to the largest population of the bird in the San Miguel basin. The fence and gate on the west boundary were removed in 2016, as they provided raptor perches, which would threaten the GuSG species. T-posts were left to provide a visual delineation of the property.
Land Conservation

- Critical wildlife habitat in the County’s West End will be preserved forever. The Washburn land conservation easement, located just east of Egna, consists of 4 parcels totaling 1,680 acres, and is an important step in securing and preserving Gunnison Sage-Grouse Habitat. This was a cooperative effort between the Marsh Family, the Montezuma Land Conservancy and the County.

- The County has once more increased the local acreage that will be preserved for future generations and for wildlife habitat and migration, thanks to the acquisition of a 125-acre conservation easement. The land, located on Wright’s Mesa south of Norwood, has been donated to the County in a cooperative effort with the Montezuma Land Conservancy.

- Land Conservation Easements are funded through the County’s Land Heritage Program. The goals are to protect open space, encourage protection of wildlife habitat and riparian areas, and to protect the natural beauty so vital to the regional economy.
Placerville Schoolhouse

- Placerville Schoolhouse – County staff led 2 educational talks with school children and teachers. Talks focused on the history of the Placerville Schoolhouse, which operated in the region from 1908-1960 for school children in grades 1-8.

- Placerville Schoolhouse – The Placerville Schoolhouse Committee, comprised of volunteer community members, hosted a Spring and a Fall potluck party for local residents. Both events were well attended. Lots of great food, funny stories and local cheer were enjoyed by all.

- The restored Placerville Schoolhouse is available for events. For more information, visit the San Miguel County website facilities calendar page or contact the Parks Supervisor.
Community Events

- **Placerville Cemetery** – The monsoons of 2016 sent mud and debris across grave sites at the cemetery. The cemetery is located at the intersection of Grigg St. and 3rd St. in Placerville. Relatives of the Haining family and other local residents volunteered to fix the damaged bar ditch above the cemetery and dig out the buried grave sites. ACM Excavation from Norwood donated a mini-excavator and an operator to do some of the heavy work.

- **Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot** – A record turn-out of approximately 60 runners and walkers participated. This was the County’s 5th Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk held in Illium Valley. It’s a free event and is open to everyone. Prizes were awarded and 2 turkeys were won by lucky raffle winners.
Indigenous People’s Day

- The County hosted its first Indigenous People’s Day Ceremony on 10/8/16. This was a day of healing and education to recognize the great injustice served upon the Ute people 135 years ago. It was a cooperative effort with the Towns of Telluride and Mountain Village. A memorial plaque was dedicated at Placerville Park to the Nuche. It was a community day, which promoted cultural and social exchange among Tribal members and County citizens.
Historic Preservation

- Courthouse – The old roof on the east porch of the historic San Miguel County Courthouse was removed and a new snow shed roof was installed by County staff. This was a HARC approved project.
Historic Preservation

- The County added 2 Deep Creek structures to the Historic Register. The Carr Structure and Aldasoro Barn are now designated as local landmarks. The Carr Structure was built in 1897 and the Aldasoro Barn was constructed between 1929-1943. In support of their voluntary nomination of the structures, the owner received a $1000. grant towards stabilization and preservation efforts.
Historic Preservation

- **Lewis Mill** - This historic structure has undergone repairs and stabilization the past few years. Additional work was performed in 2016 to stabilize the southeast roof edge and the elevator shaft. Window openings were also boarded and the upper roofing was re-attached. Work will continue in 2017 to repair the bunk room floor in addition to finishing the upper southeast roof.
Historic Preservation

- **Pandora Mill** – The County continues to work in conjunction with the Town of Telluride for the potential conveyance of the Pandora Mill. Both are working diligently with the Idarado Mining Co./Newmont to preserve and protect the structure and prevent it from being demolished. Repairs were made to the roof in 2016.
Fairgrounds

In addition to beautiful sunsets, the County Fairgrounds can boast "no overhead wires" at the Outdoor Arena due to a comprehensive electrical upgrade at the Grandstands and Outdoor Arena. Events hosted here included the San Miguel Basin Rodeo & Carnival, summer gymkhana series, roping club buckle series, the Black Canyon Horse Races and the 2nd Annual Pioneer Day Car Show. New events included a Mustang Maddy Horsemanship demonstration, a CWBRA Mountain Madness Barrel Race, a Bicycle Tour of Colorado and a Mustang Adoption event.
Fairgrounds

Two shade structures were installed near the ball fields, as well as a newly renovated parking area. Both will serve our summer baseball games, soccer programs and the Annual Telluride Baseball Festival. The Event Center is the venue for many Lone Cone Dressage Club clinics and practices, as well as the San Miguel Basin Fair & 4H Livestock Sale. The maintenance shop and scale house were also re-sized. The Annual Star-Spangled Saturday took place on the 4th of July at the Pig Palace, which serves as home to the winter skating rink.
Vegetation Management Program

- Oxeye daisy and yellow toadflax treatment in Mountain Village.
- Cooperative treatment of tamarisk in Disappointment Valley – 79 acres treated with cut stump treatments and released knapweed mites as biological control of Russian knapweed in the area.
- Worked with CDOT, Navajo and various municipalities.
- Hosted a legislative meet and greet via the Colorado Weed Management Association, while serving on their Board of Directors.
- Continue to serve as an active member of the Ag Council.
- Hired a full-time assistant – training is ongoing.
- Total acres treated in 2016 – 598.

**Goals for 2017** – Solidify the Ouray/San Miguel County Vegetation Management Agreement.
- Continue to work with CDOT.
- Continue training assistant and seasonal hires.
- Focus on tamarisk treatments in Disappointment Valley in cooperation with the Dolores River Restoration Partnership Serengeti Wild Horse Refuge.
- Seek and pursue all funding opportunities.
Non-Profit Support & Partnership Projects

- County staff provide 2-3 days of Nordic grooming each week during the winter ski season at Priest and Trout Lake. In addition, Parks & Open Space provides $10,000 per year in operating costs to the Telluride Nordic Association (TNA). POS also pays for the cost of winter snow maintenance on the Trout Lake Road from the end of the subdivision to the Trestle, typically costing $2-$4K per winter. This partnership is part of POS’s winter trail programming.
Non-Profit Support & Partnership Projects

- **Parks & Open Space Community Support Funding** –
  - POS provided $10,000. to the Telluride Nordic Association for the purchase of a new snow cat. This is in addition to the $10K POS provides annually for TNA operating costs.
  - POS provided $25,000. to the Norwood Parks & Recreation District towards the construction of trails in the Burn Canyon area.
  - POS provides $4500. annually to the OHV High Country Ranger Program.
  - POS provides $9500. annually to help fund a coordinator for the Gunnison Sage Grouse Working Group.
  - POS provides $6500. annually to the San Miguel Watershed Coalition.
  - POS provides $2500. annually to the Colorado Avalanche Center.
  - POS provides $1200. annually to the Telluride Institute’s Watershed Education Program.
  - POS provides $1000. annually to the Wright’s Mesa Historical Society.
  - POS provides $1000. annually to the Telluride Historical Museum.
  - POS provides $1000. annually to the West End Bike Alliance – Mapping.
  - POS provides $20,000. annually to support the County Vegetation Management Fund.
Parks & Open Space
2016 Summary of Finances

2016 Adopted Budget - $1,385,696.
2016 Total Spent - $952,498.33