



Steve Watts &lt;stevenup@gmail.com&gt;

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## Open Space Questionnaire for Candidates

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To: Steve Watts <stevenup@gmail.com>

Mon, Oct 14, 2019 at 12:01 PM

Hi Steve, thanks for the extension!

Please see my answers, in green, below:

1. Survey after survey has shown that people who get out into nature have a stronger desire to save the environment. Fostering this love of nature means finding ways to excite people with different backgrounds who may not simply want to slowly hike through our open spaces. But, we know that more users means more impact. Where do you draw the line in terms of increased access for groups who may want to enjoy our open spaces in different ways like picnic areas, biking trails, fishing, etc? Can we increase and improve the recreation opportunities on Boulder's open space and also save our more-wild places like designated wilderness areas?

*Boulder has a wealth of spaces for both recreation and for preservation of our natural environment. The intent of Open Space was to preserve this natural environment to allow Mother Nature to "do her thing", uninterrupted and to allow passive recreation where it may be appropriate. We have an incredible trail system to facilitate limited access to Open Space, but the first priority should be protection of the flora and fauna that live there.*

2. The North Sky Trail, a vital multi-use connector trail between Boulder City and open space areas to the north, was approved after lengthy discussion during the North Trail Study Area process but has been stalled for nearly five years. If elected to council, how would you un-stick this process and complete the trail within your first term? *Both OSBT and City Council approved the North Sky trail. Given recent OSMP budgetary constraints, it may be that current funding is not sufficient to implement the trail. I'm a strong supporter of YES on Open Space, city ballot issue 2H to provide funding for new trails, like this one.*

3. What is your position related to acquisition versus maintenance of our current OSMP land stock? On what grounds should we acquire new properties? *I don't think acquisition vs maintenance mentality is appropriate for the 48,000 acres of Open Space land the city now owns. A better holistic approach is one that considers maintenance, preservation, restoration, and acquisition for specific issues. Certainly acquisition should be considered when there is potential for connecting properties, when there is an opportunity to protect endangered species or habitat, and when there is an opportunity to improve the safety of our city by acquiring lands for flood or fire mitigation. Likewise it is important that we maintain and restore the properties and trails we have and be responsible stewards of our land.*

4. How would you address increased visitation of OSMP? *I would charge visitors from outside Boulder (estimated to be about 30% of our 6.25 million day-visits per year) for parking, and I would limit parking at the most popular trail heads. I also would support ensuring that we don't create additional attractors for people outside of Boulder looking for a new playground. And I would discourage the Convention and Visitors' Bureau from "selling" our valuable Open Space lands as a means to attract more tourists to Boulder.*

5. What role does recreation play in a healthy society? *Recreation is important to mental and physical health and well being, of course.*

How would you support that in future policy? *I would continue to support Parks and Recreation as well as Open Space and Mountain Parks.*

6. Where do you see yourself on the conservation vs. recreation spectrum with regards to Open Space? *I lean hard toward conservation with regards to Open Space.*

Specifically, as a council member would you likely vote against an OSMP-recommended new trail or other recreation facility because of conservation or environmental concerns, or would you support it if the research showed that those concerns were insignificant or could be mitigated? *Yes, if there were documented conservation or environmental concerns, I would likely vote against an OSMP new trail. I think it more important that we maintain the trails we have*

*ensuring their safety and condition. In general, I would adhere to the precautionary principle in my approach to doing no harm.*

7. Do you feel that hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, equestrians, and other trail users can all have a positive experience on a shared multi-use trail in OSMP? *That has not been my experience, but it does vary from trail to trail. Bikers, runners and hikers seem to coexist well on the trails around Wonderland Lake and North Boulder for instance. I like the separation of uses for different trails on different days, like at Betasso.*

8. Several multi-use regional trails have been proposed over the years (including the Front Range Trail, the Boulder-to-Erie Union Pacific Rail-Trail conversion, and others) but the connectivity stalls when there is a need to include OSMP land in the process. Would you support these regional trails, and why or why not? *In general, I am supportive of regional trails, but establishing specific routes requires attention to detail regarding type of trail, uses, and habitats affected. I'm familiar with the Union Pacific route which was considered by OSMP in the mid-2000s and was not feasible because Union Pacific was not interested in removing their rail line of having a bike path on their property. Open Space also was concerned about this trail being routed through Walden Ponds, which has a lot of sensitive habitat and waterfowl nesting sites. I potentially would be interested in the Front Range Trail to get bicyclists off 93, but am not familiar with the specific issues.*

9. One of BATCO's initiatives is the Trail Around Boulder, a 34 mile multi-use trail encircling the City of Boulder, which would allow access to, and appreciation of, Boulder's amazing geographic setting. It would connect neighborhoods and would offer transportation alternatives to the car, encourage a healthy lifestyle, attract visitors to Boulder, and make trails fun again. It would link existing trails, 80% of which are already in place, and would require only about 7 miles of new trails all of which could be carefully designed to avoid sensitive habitats. Yet the City of Boulder (OSMP) has resisted all attempts to complete the Trail Around Boulder. Would you support this trail, and why or why not? *Not sure, need more info on the type of trails and specific habitats that would be affected. I also am aware of the Rocky Mountain Greenway trail whose ultimate goal is a trail from DIA to Rocky Mountain National Park that is accessible for people of all ages, including children and elders. Much of this has been completed from DIA to Rocky Flats Wildlife Refuge. The trail would continue north through Boulder, much on our bike lanes and bike paths. A critical link to this trail needs to be established from north Boulder and continue on the east side of US 36 north to Lyons. That critical link would do so much to improve safety and enjoyment for bicyclists of all ages on this popular route.*

10. Recent articles in the local media have spotlighted communication issues within several City departments, including Planning, Public Works, and Transportation. A consulting firm hired by the City found that arduous, slow, and unpredictable decision making, a lack of discipline in implementing procedures, and lack of support from Council, resulted in staff dissatisfaction. The same problems plague Open Space and Mountain Parks but the issue is much larger than staff dissatisfaction. Many members of the public have contributed thousands of hours of volunteer time, expertise, and effort to OSMP management -- only to experience similar frustration with Council overriding sensitive negotiations in seemingly arbitrary votes that promote a different preconceived agenda. As a Council member, how would you improve relations between the City and the public? *I would create better processes for polling the public in a statistically significant way on matters that are of concern to them, similar to the OSMP survey that was done in preparation for the revision of the Master Plan. I am a big believer in using technology to more closely connect the public to its governance, and getting around special interests to data that is really of the people, by the people and for the people.*

11. Do you feel that recreation is adequately represented on the current OSBT? *Yes*

Cheers,

Susan  
303.594.3844  
call or text

On Tue, Oct 8, 2019 at 12:59 PM Steve Watts <[stevenup@gmail.com](mailto:stevenup@gmail.com)> wrote:

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