

City of Aspen 2009 Open Space Ranger Field Summary

A) OPEN SPACE

As the main agent in the field for the open space program, the ranger is always on the lookout for any issue affecting our open space. No news is good news and the news is good – it was a quiet season for our open space lands. Encroachments by adjacent landowners at Marolt and Mascotte 99 open spaces were discovered and addressed, and last year's encroachment at Meadowlands open space has been restored.

2009 Successes:

- 1) Major improvements were made this year to Smuggler Mountain open space. Overall visitor impression of the property has made a major turnaround this year.
 - A. RFOV volunteer restoration and trail project
 - B. installed new signage
 - C. created a new trail map placed in on mountain kiosks

2010 Challenges:

- 1) Continue to investigate other encroachments and work towards a resolution and restoration

B) CONTACTS / ENFORCEMENT

Contacts range from enforcement to general questions about trails, restaurants and miscellaneous info. The 2009 field season generated between 1,400 to 1,500 contacts, of those 714 were specifically logged in the palm pilot and of the logged contacts 532 were enforcement related.

Enforcement duties for the Aspen Open Space program fall in several areas of coverage: city & county open space properties, city & county trail systems, city parks, and the mall. While most of the acreage is in open space, the majority of contacts with the public are in the city parks, trails, and the mall. Increased patrolling by county rangers has met with great success, particularly on trails in the county.

2009 Successes:

- 1) Open space properties saw a decreased number of illegal campsites this year. This could be explained by increased ranger presence on foot over the past few years, increased assistance in this area from the Police Department, and restoration of areas attractive to illegal camping.
- 2) 2009 was the first full season of electronic tracking of enforcement by rangers (City and County). This established data that can be used to chart how much we contact the public from year to year, as well as a log of warnings that is shared among all rangers. Enforcement totals for 2009 are below:

Open Space Rangers 2009 Citations as of 10/26/09

verbal warning written warning 1st offense 2nd offense 3rd offense Totals

Animal Litter	3	2	3			8
Dog at Large	283	3	1			287
Disposal Required			1			1
Removal of Trees						
No Park Permit	1					1
Vehicles Prohibited on Mall	201	3				204
Smuggler Management Plan	6	2	1			9
Depositing of Snow			2			2
Injury to Property			1			1
Sleeping Certain Places	3	5				8
Skatepark Helmet Regulation	8	2				10
Vehicles Prohibited on Trails	1					1
Dogs on Prohibited Trails						
Prohibited Activities						
Littering						
					Grand Total	532

By mid-season 2009 this log was already proving its worth in contacts where the individual had been spoken to previously by another ranger. It has always been the directive of the open space program to have a light hand on the enforcement side, issuing more warnings than tickets. This database has made those warnings much more meaningful to those who receive them.

2010 Challenges:

With only one city ranger on only three seasons, the ranger program is now spread more thinly inside city limits. Park staff notes a marked increase in uncollected dog waste during the winter season. While cooperation with the Police Department is great, as it stands they are still prone to leave park and trail related issues to the ranger program, particularly education of dog owners.

C) INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Aspen Open Space works closely with many entities public and private. The closest relationships are with Pitkin County Open Space, Aspen Police Department, and Pitkin County Sheriff's Office.

Operations with County Open Space have reached a level of seamless teamwork in the field. Compliance information, resource issues, and projects are shared as if the agencies were one. City *and* County rangers are now sworn officers within *both* jurisdictions, removing the frustration of operating near city limits. The APD has seen increased cooperation and confidence in the open space program, and is frequently assisted by and lending assistance to the ranger.

Of course, the Open Space program works within and very closely with the Aspen Parks Department. The ranger is the go to person when parks staff have an issue in the field involving the public. Unlike many other open space programs, Aspen's ranger maintains a very strong presence in town itself on the trails and in the parks and mall. In return parks staff are eyes and ears for the ranger throughout the realm. Staff from trails, field maintenance, mall maintenance, and irrigation have been invaluable in bringing issues to the ranger's attention.

2009 Successes:

- 1) Though less frequent than the APD, the Sheriff's Office got help from the City Open Space Ranger on more than one occasion this year including crowd control during a complicated rescue in the canyon below the Rio Grande Trail.
- 2) This fall the city open space ranger assisted the Environmental Health Department in managing the leaf bin at the Rio Grande recycling center. On several occasions the ranger contacted property management firms attempting to use the facility despite being prohibited from dumping there (one ticket was issued). Citizen users of the bin were educated on proper use of the facility.

D) YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

Aspen's open space program employs a team of four local youths in resource related projects on city lands during the summer season. This is the Youth Conservation Corp. YCC were all over the system this year, performing small projects on nearly every property in the open space system. Duties included trash sweeps, irrigation and ditch improvements, seeding and restoration, building wood fencing, removing barb wire fencing, maintenance of signage, trimming overgrowth at historical sites, and selective weeding.

E) INTERPRETIVE

2009 saw the continuation of open space interpretive programs, partnered with the Roaring Fork Conservancy. This included:

- 1) Water and mining at the Mining museum (in partnership with the Aspen Historical Society)
- 2) Three guided interpretive hikes along the river at Meadowlands Open Space
- 3) Maroon Creek Wetland Walk, a new program. This event was unique in that it was prepared and presented by the members of the Youth Conservation Corp. The YCC team received a basic crash course in interpretation from the ranger and Roaring Fork Conservancy staff, designed their own program, and presented it at Maroon Creek Wetlands.

- 1) 2010 programs are planned:

28-Jan-10	5- 6:30	Cross-Country Ski Stein Park/Rio Grand	Stein Park - Rio Grand Trail - Aspen
30-Jun-10	4 - 6pm	Meadowlands River Walk	Meadowlands Open Space – Aspen
21-Jul-10	4 - 6pm	Meadowlands River Walk	Meadowlands Open Space – Aspen
27-Jul-10	5:30 - 7pm	Mining Water: A Historical Look at Aspen's Rivers	Marolt Open Space - Aspen
4-Aug-10	4 - 6pm	Meadowlands River Walk	Meadowlands Open Space – Aspen
11-Aug-10	5:30 - 7:30	Maroon Wetland Walk – YCC	Maroon Wetlands - Aspen