

RFVHC Report on the Nancy's Path Connector Trail

8/1/2023 – Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers (RFOV), the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council and Pitkin Open Space & Trails (PCOST) met to work on the proposed connection trail easement. Joey Giampaolo of PCOST uses the mini excavator to set the trail's foundation, then volunteers remove roots, stumps, rocks and trim overhanging tree limbs and clear brush, creating a nice passable riding and hiking trail. This connector easement runs along the upper side of the "Home Supply Ditch" just below the red rock ridge above the Glassier land and ends at a ditch crossing to access the existing two track trail across the Glassier Open Space. This trail also meets up with the Glassier Equestrian Trail with Parking at the Hooks Spur / Glassier parking area.



The nice wide two track made by Joey's mini excavator is inviting for horses and hikers.



On left – Susan Cuseo, RFVHC Trail Chairman stands on the trail meandering through scrub oak woods.

Above – A little hill returning West towards Nancy's Path

What makes trails interesting are the sites along the way.



Highland beef cattle graze in the background



Red rock formation below the steep cliff above



Lichen formed on red sandstone rocks along the trail



RFOV & RFVHC volunteer work crew



The RFOV van is parked at the limited space for Nancy's Path with Sophie

To access Nancy's Path, there is limited parking for hikers only. All equestrians would park at the Hooks Spur / Glassier lot, then ride this new connector trail to the Nancy's Path Trail access point.



Charlie Eckert – RFMBA; Susan Cuseo – RFVHC; Joey Giampaolo-PCOST

At the ditch crossing, there is a splitter box, sending some water onto the Glassier Open Space agricultural leased land and some water continues to other water shareholders' properties. Ted O'Brien of PCOST will orchestrate the potential culvert / bridge to accommodate this crossing for hikers and equestrians. This work can only be done after the irrigation water is turned off, either this fall of 2023 or next spring, 2024.



Existing splitter box for the "Home Supply Ditch" crossing area.

This Glassier/Nancy's Path Connection Trail would be a great horseback riding or hiking trail by going up and back. Scheduled to be opened in Summer 2024

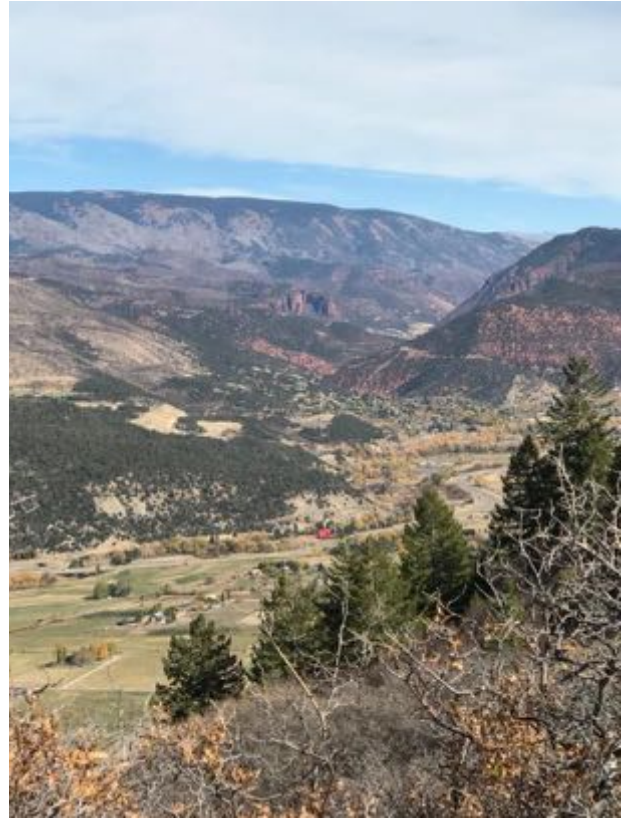
The RFOVHC does not recommend Nancy's Path trail for equestrian use, at this time. This trail starts at the bottom of a red rock ridge and heads up a steep ravine with loose gravel footing. There are steep drop offs above the valley floor with wash out sections along the way. Only expert riders and seasoned trail horses should attempt this trail. Nancy's Path also requires many stops to rest both hikers and horses, because of the steep grades ascending. Descending hikers and riders may stop frequently to assure safe passage. If rain occurs during the trail attempt, hikers or horseback riders may encounter flash flooding and lightning strikes, often seen on the ridge above.

On 8/3/2023, a rainstorm blew into the Nancy's Path area during the RFOV volunteer crew's work on the connection trail. RFOV team leaders called trail crew members back to their van and out of the area. Lightning was bouncing all around the red rock cliff area where Nancy's Path descends, and heavy rain hit the connection path area as well. If Nancy's Path is to become safe and enjoyable for the larger community, then major "road work" will be necessary. The trail needs to be widened, and properly set into the steep hillside. Guard rails, water bars, culverts and annual maintenance is recommended to secure a safe enjoyable experience for hikers and horseback riders.

2021 – photos from Nancy's Path descending from the top of the ridge



Loose large gravel & rocks make for slippery footing



Before the descent - the view looking towards Seven Castles up the Frying Pan Valley

Nancy's Path from the bottom of the valley floor



On right – The sandy path leading by the sage brush is the start of the Nancy's Path Trail. You can see the steep ravine ahead, which the trail enters. Above this photo there is a faint trail, just below the timbered rock escarpment on the upper right near the top. I believe that is part of the descending Nancy's Path trail. "Not for the faint of heart!"



2023 – Nancy's Path report by Susan Cuseo- RFVHC Trails Chairman

Glassier/Nancy's Path Connector Trail
RFOV and RFVHC Workday #3, August 8, 2023

"This was the 3rd and last work session planned to finish the "Nancy's Path Connector" trail that was made by PCOST's Joey Giampaolo working his magic with a Mini-X. Since the trail was already wonderful, the volunteers completed some finishing touches, removing roots and smoothing the tread, then reseeding. The trail awaits completion when the Home Supply ditch isn't flowing and a culvert can be installed on the west end where the trail enters Glassier agricultural lease property, later this fall or next spring.

Since the connector trail was nearing completion, volunteers were to proceed up Nancy's Path itself. I determined that I should walk the entire trail to assess for myself since certain warnings had been voiced about its danger. Will F, another crew member, offered to accompany me since he was familiar with Nancy's by hiking recently. There had been a substantial storm since our last work session, and we found incredible washout damage. What had been a level trail in the gulch's bottom was now severely washed out creating in some places a rocky gully 4ft deep. Will and I were able to walk alongside the fresh gully, then turn out of it and ascend the switchbacks to the summit where the trail travels over into the Glassier drainage. Will himself was amazed at the extensive recent damage.

After hiking up and down, listening to Will's commentary, I reached a different conclusion than I had hoped as I was originally thinking this trail effort could improve the trail for safer and easier use by equestrians.

Neither PCOST or RFOV, or RFVHC can control the trail's condition, now or ever. Mother Nature is the force here and as more and stronger weather conditions are predicted in our future, any substantial work planned for Nancy's would be "like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic", a perfect phrase to describe the situation. We all need to just let it be.

Yes, I would ride up the trail, but I am a very experienced rider on a brave and competent trail horse. And neither of us would be happy about the journey. Anyone inexperienced or riding a novice horse would be at substantial risk."



The bottom of Nancy's Path Trail condition before August 3rd, the most recent storm



Trail condition in the Nancy's Path ravine, after recent storm, neighbor & volunteer, Will standing for scale of the damage.



Incredible views looking toward Basalt from near the top of Nancy's Path



Makeshift guard rails at edge of cliff drop off



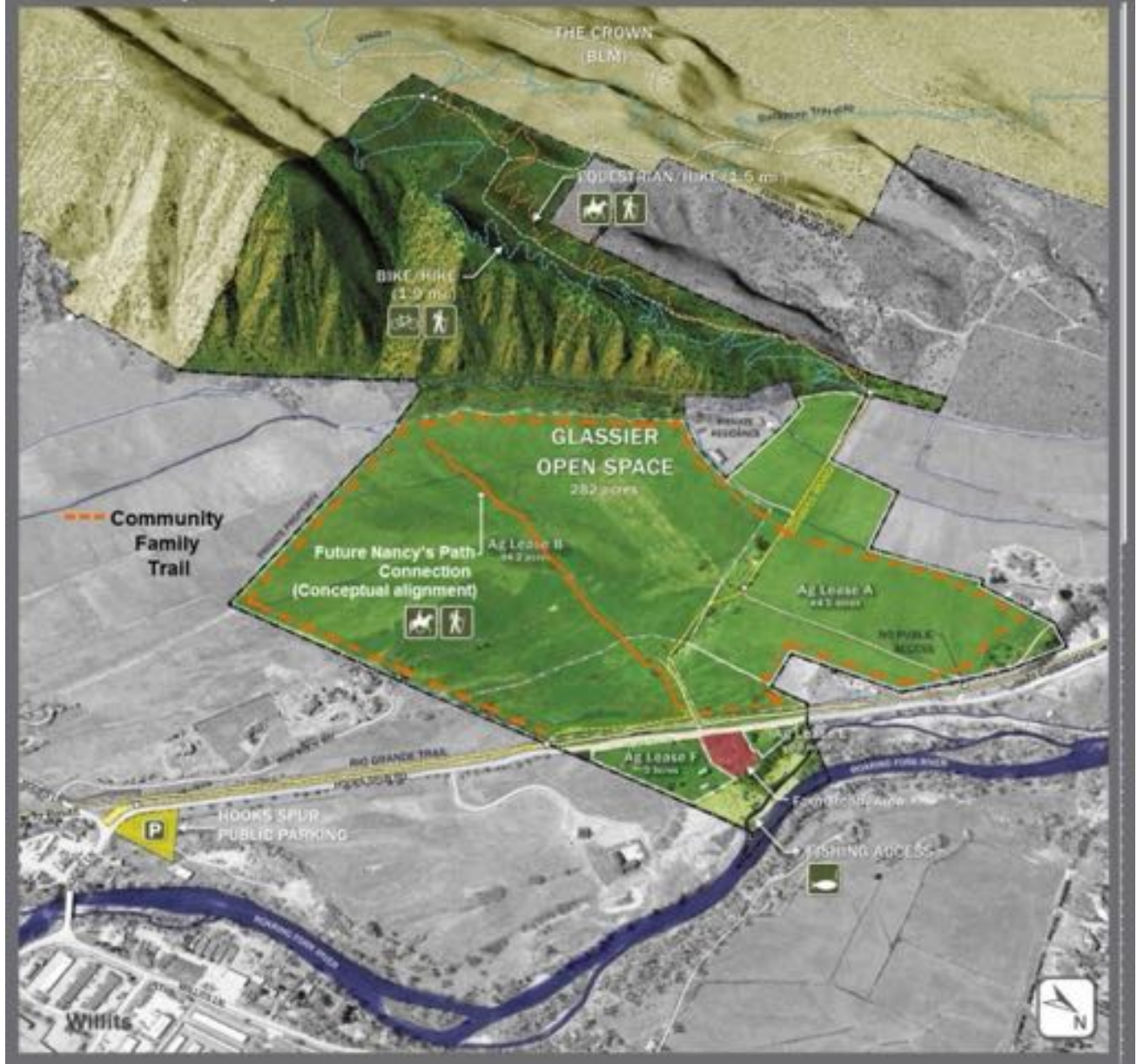
Trail is washed out. Rocks and gravel are pushed from the steep uphill side of the path on the right to this ledge littered with debris. If you look past the scattered sage brush on the left in this photo, there is a steep drop off. The trail is on this ledge. This is an example of the trail's general condition.

An excellent alternative for Hikers and Equestrians Is the “Community Family Trail”

The RFVHC has submitted the idea of a “Community Family Trail”, to PCOST which will skirt the perimeter of the Glassier Open Space agricultural leased lands and allow beginner / intermediate riders; families with children; elderly equestrians and older horses that can no longer climb mountain terrain; young / green riders; green horses and hikers of every level , to enjoy a simple two track trail experience, without fast moving mountain bikes.

Please see the attached “Community Family Trail” draft map plan below. The red broken line dots show the perimeter path that could accommodate beginner / intermediate equestrians, their novice or senior horses and hikers of all abilities. The solid red line going through the Glassier pasture was the original PCOST proposed connection trail. The new connection trail now goes above the northern boundary of the Glassier pasture, and beyond to the Nancy’s Path Parking Lot above the broken white line, which is the Home Supply ditch. After the trail crosses the ditch, it can connect to the red dotted line which is an existing two track trail.

Glassier Open Space



The sharp ravine picture just to the left of the Bike / Hike text on the map shows the difficult topography of Nancy's Path, because that ravine is where the trail starts. Nancy's path then switchbacks across the lighter colored, steep section above the Bike / Hike icons.

RFVHC wants to thank PCOST for this building this new connector trail. Nancy's Path Parking is limited in size and for hikers only. All equestrians park at the Hooks Spur / Glassier lot, and now will be able to ride this new connector trail to the Nancy's Path Trail Head. If future maintenance is successful on Nancy's Path, – the RFVHC may recommend the trail for additional users. At this time, Nancy's Path is for expert horseback riders and seasoned horses only.



Nancy's Path ravine is evident in this photo.

The Community Family Trail makes sense, as more of our community can enjoy this verdant, non-challenging, peaceful experience. We hope that PCOST will consider implementing this Community Family Trail for the benefit of the equestrian and hiking public.

