



- Janet Urquhart / Aspen Times file

Call it Skyline Ridge Trail (not, you know...)

Open space collection to be known as Sky Mountain Park

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ASPEN — It's official: The scenic route atop the open space formerly known as the Droste property is the Skyline Ridge Trail.

Pitkin County commissioners settled on the name Tuesday after yet another debate in which alternatives for naming the property continued to pop up. For a larger collection of open-space parcels that includes Skyline Ridge, commissioners agreed on Sky Mountain Park.

The names don't exactly reflect the outcome of a process that included submissions from the public and online voting — Open Sky Ridge and Skyline Mountain Park were the top vote-getters — but a committee charged with seeking community input strayed from the original strategy to select a name. It added its own proposals to the mix for one thing, noted Commissioner Jack Hatfield, a committee member.

"We broke the rules the first time, so I'm inclined to believe we can do whatever we want now," he said.

Cropping up Tuesday were proposals from the county Open Space and Trails board of trustees to go with Sky Ridge Trail and Sky Mountain Park, focusing on a dominant feature of the ridge and the greater area.

"You have this panorama of sky and everything else," said Tim McFlynn, Open Space board member.

John Wilkinson, a committee member and Snowmass Village town councilman, preferred Skyline for the ridge. It fits with the naming of other area trails — Lowline, Highline and Viewline among them.

Commissioner Michael Owsley suggested Assembly Line, possibly in jest, for the greater assemblage of open-space parcels, but Commissioner Rachel Richards offered the two names that ultimately won favor.

"Thank heavens we weren't all trying to name a baby or something," Richards joked.

Open Space and elected officials have been pushing to come up with a new name for the ridge before Droste became permanently stuck in the public's consciousness.

"I think we'd prefer collectively to wean that name out of this," Hatfield said.

"It will be interesting to see, in four or five years, what people are calling this place," said Hawk Greenway, open space trustee.

Skyline Ridge Trail is closed for the winter to protect wildlife; it reopens May 15. The scenic ridge is the highlight of 842 acres that the county, Aspen and Snowmass Village, plus Great Outdoors Colorado and Aspen Valley Land Trust, purchased from the Droste family late last year for \$17 million. The ridge stretches from near Snowmass Village almost to Highway 82, separating the Brush Creek and Owl Creek valleys.

The land is part of a greater conglomeration of open space parcels that encompass some 2,500 acres in all.

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