GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 13th, 2017

The December 13, 2017 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D, Gunnison, CO 81230.

Committee Members Present:
Voting Members:
John Messner, Gunnison County Commissioner
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Commissioner
Erica Muller, Crested Butte Mountain Resort
Christi Hicks, Crested Butte Nordic
Sandy Snell-Dobert, National Park Service
Ben Breslauer, GOATS
Bruce Allen, Gunnison Stockgrowers Association
Elijah Waters, BLM Field Manager
Kevin Alexander, Professor of Biology WSCU
Frank Kugel, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Joellen Fonken, Gunnison Nordic
Matthew McCombs, USFS District Ranger
Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association (CBMBA)
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails
Kristi Murphy, Bureau of Land Management
Noel Durant, Crested Butte Land Trust
Paul Merck, Crested Butte Town Council
Navid Navidi, Gunnison community member and business owner
Scott Borden, Graduate Faculty at WSCU
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association

Others in Audience:
Marlene Crosby
John Cattles
Jay Witticker
Phil Chamberland
Chris Haaver

Staff Members Present:
Cathie Pagano, Director of Community and Economic Development
Rachel Sabbato, Planner II

CALL TO ORDER:

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

AGENDA APPROVAL:

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:
Jonathan Houck and John Messner thanked committee members for attending the first Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee (STORC) meeting. The need to convene the group and its intent was recognized by Houck. Messner acknowledged that today's meeting would serve as a shakedown cruise and give committee members the opportunity to get to know each other.

A brief introduction was given by each committee member present.

Cathie Pagano explained that the structure for STORC has largely been based off of the County's Sage Grouse Strategic Committee. She added that STORC's intention is to act collaboratively on goals established in the One Valley Prosperity Project (OVPP). Pagano recognized that with such a large committee, it will be important to find ways to achieve results in an efficient and effective manner.

Messner spoke briefly to how STORC will function. He explained that the committee will derive its direction through the initial process and that a collaborative effort will be required to accomplish on-the ground infrastructure goals as well as messaging goals that result from the STORC's process. Messner added that STORC goals will be prioritized as a group. The decision to convene STORC was made by the Board of County Commissioners and based on input from OVPP. The need for STORC was born from conversations around broad recreational needs that were had during the OVPP process. Messner underlined the fact that STORC is intentionally focused on outdoor recreation. Pagano added that tourism is a recognized component of our economy and that there is an obvious need for the committee to recognize the stewardship of our natural resources as a community value. Dave Ochs stressed the need for STORC to also recognize visitor experience.

Noel Durant explained to the group that the Land Trust has been working to convene a group of stakeholders to act as the Slate River Working Group. The need for this group has been made evident from the rapidly increasing number of river users (i.e. SUPS) in the Upper Slate River Valley and the difficulties it poses for balancing recreation and wildlife needs. He added that the Working Group will have a geographic focus of the Upper Slate River Valley and that several STORC members have shown interest in participating in the effort. A local facilitator, Paul Duba, will facilitate 10 meetings over the course of five weeks to identify core values and key management goals within the Upper Slate River Valley. Noel suggested that the Working Group intent fits well with the larger STORC effort and asked if it could act as a sub-committee to STORC. Ideally, the Working Group would begin meeting in January. Messner suggested that STORC revisit this, and other priorities at its next meeting at which point a more robust conversation can be had about the formation of sub-committees.

Pagano explained to the group that the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Coalition, which is run by Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, is establishing a set of best practices for engaging volunteers in stewardship projects. She added that in March, the Coalition will be looking to implement large scale, shovel-ready projects for which they have $3.1 million in funding.

Messner asked that for the next meeting, each committee member come prepared to discuss what they perceive to be the burning priorities. Examples of such include signage, infrastructure maintenance, summer vs. winter tourism, and wildlife needs.

Committee Member Snapshots
Houck asked that each committee member provide a snapshot of their current STORC-related concerns.

Erica Muller: Improved management of the Gothic and Slate River corridors.
Christi Hicks: Improved winter trailhead management to eliminate overcrowding and parking issues. Big-picture, Christi stressed the need to consider what the future of recreation looks like for the Valley.
Tim Kugler: Would like for STORC to have a rational dialog about new trail development rather than it being a decisive issue. Tim also stressed the need for bathroom infrastructure across the valley.
Sandy Snell-Dobert: Would like to see water quality maintained through the continued management for invasive aquatic species. Sandy would also like to maintain the quality of visitor experiences while meeting the demand of increasing visitor numbers. Lastly, Sandy noted that the Curecanti National Recreation Area is an underutilized resource.
Ben Breslauer: Improved trail user experience through increased user education. Ben also stressed the need for better trail connectivity between valleys and the need to improve winter trailheads.
Bruce Allen: Would like to see an improved understanding of the area's recreational carrying capacity. It would also be beneficial for the Stockgrowers Association to better understand the uses taking place on their allotments so they can plan appropriately and implement grazing management plans that match the natural resource availability. Bruce also stressed the importance of monitoring how impacts effect attributes valued by the community and the need to establish an action plan to address unwanted impacts. Lastly, Bruce shared his wish to provide the recreating public with live updates on user events to help dynamically move uses appropriately.
Elijah Waters: Would like to see camping and trail needs addressed strategically and is concerned with how to do this with flat budgets. Elijah also noted the need to think about future uses and the different spaces required to accommodate them. Lastly, Elijah stressed the importance of maintaining planning flexibility to avoid having to complete an ES for each management change.
Kevin Alexander: Would like to see the quality hunting and angling spaces conserved. Also would like to address what the capacity of our landscape is.
Dave Ochs: Dave listed three main concerns; how best to tackle low-hanging fruit management projects (i.e. bathrooms and trailhead signage), would like to see a large-scale planning effort implemented to acquire funding for trail connectivity projects (i.e. Crested Butte to Crested Butte South and Mt. Crested Butte to Gothic), would like see a comparison of organizational long-term plans to assess overlaps.
Frank Kugel: The Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District could serve as financial resource for water recreation projects. He shared that they have an upcoming grant cycle in February in which they

will be awarding $150,000 in funding. Frank added that the Colorado Water Conservation Board could also serve as a financial resource.

Joellen Fonken: Concerned with the challenges associated with education between user groups. In particular, Joellen would like for winter users at Hartman Rocks to be move aware of wildlife use in the area. Joellen concluded by acknowledging the worth of the Crested Butte to Crested Butte South trail.

Kristi Murphy: Concerned over the amount of dispersed camping and associated human waste. Kristi stressed that ample time and energy is needed to clean up messes left from dispersed campers and that an effort must be made to build a stronger land ethic among visitors and residents. Kristi is also concerned with the number of homeless people that rely on public lands and would like to see more resources in place to assist homeless people. Lastly, Kristi noted the need for a single source for that can be used by the public to obtain outdoor recreation information.

Noel Durant: Would like to see the development of a strong land ethic for the Gunnison Valley and more importantly, for it to be effectively communicated to visitors.

Navid Navidi: Would like to see increased funding for enforcement. Additionally, Navid would like to see shared infrastructure and avoid the development of single-use trails in areas where space is already limited. Navid shared the potential to use the Habitat Partnership Program as a funding source for mitigation projects. Navid also questioned the ability to use TA funds to mitigate the impacts from increased user numbers.

Paul Merck: Would like to see increased engagement with established groups, such as Western's Masters in Environmental Management program, to help enforce responsible backcountry etiquette. Paul would also like to see the installation of restrooms at the Maroon Bells trailhead.

Scott Borden: Would like to see the STORC process practice the diversity of inclusion. Interested in keeping recreation in the valley fun and expand in a way that avoids areas of conflict. Also concerned with the management challenges that will accompany a dwindling water supply for our region. Lastly, Scott is interested in connecting more students to STORC related projects.

John Norton: Would like to see continued maintenance of already existing trails and also pursue the responsible building of new trail. Concerned with the need for improved river access points and river signage, and would like to determine which trailheads need the most attention.

Matt McCombs: Would like to see the development of a shared vision and the cultivation of one voice. Also noted the importance of tying the shared vision to realistic goals with the understanding that tension will arise.

Jonathan Houck: Stressed that the group must realize that certain things cannot be accomplished by STORC, and that a willingness to understand this will allow for efficiency.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Future meetings will occur on the second Thursday of each month from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D.

Date	Time	Notes	Building and location
O1-11-18	2-4	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
02-08-18	2-4	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
03-08-18	2-4	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room
04-12-18	2-4	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2nd floor meeting room

The group elected John Messner as its Chair and Kevin Alexander as its Vice Chair.

ADJOURN: The December 13, 2017 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Minutes Prepared by: Hedda Peterson