

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

The November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted in the Gunnison County Blackstock Government Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin #D, Gunnison, CO 81230.

**Committee Members Present:**

Voting Members:

John Messner, Chair, Gunnison County Commissioner  
Kevin Alexander, Vice Chair, Professor of Biology WSU  
Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association  
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails  
Matt Feier, Crested Butte Mountain Resort  
Sandy Snell, National Park Service  
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association  
Navid Navidi, Gunnison community member and business owner  
Elijah Waters, Bureau of Land Management  
Kristi Murphy, Bureau of Land Management  
Noel Durant, Crested Butte Land Trust  
Ben Breslauer, GOATS  
Frank Kugel, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District  
Matt McCombs, USFS District Ranger  
Chris Parmeter, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

**Others in Audience:**

Chris Haver, Crested Butte Town Council  
Laura Puckett, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association  
Marlene Crosby, Gunnison County

**Staff Members Present:**

Cathie Pagano, Director of Community and Economic Development

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion to approve minutes:**

**Upon Motion made by X** and seconded by **X**, the Committee voted all in favor to approve the following:

**Voted:**

That the STOR Committee hereby approves the Minutes of the meetings of the STOR Committee held on October 11, 2018.

### **Gunnison State Park Concept**

Messner shared an overview of the Gunnison State Park concept. He stressed that the project is conceptual at this point and that he's had preliminary conversations with the State Park Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife about the idea. Geographically, the area being considered is 3,000 acres south and east of the City of Gunnison. It is publicly owned land and includes 7.5 miles of Tomichi Creek, and a State wildlife area. It also includes the Tenderfoot archeological site owned and managed by the State and Western State University.

Messner explained that the next step is to develop a feasibility study to see whether the project is possible and how it might tie into the Colorado Parks and Wildlife State Park system. Currently, the State is being asked to contribute approximately 75% of the funds required to complete the feasibility study. This is estimated to be between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Messner added that there would have to be a significant outreach campaign to learn what the community would like to see as part of the project. Messner asked for committee questions and feedback. Ochs asked if the U.S. Forest Service would be involved in determining what types of recreational use would be permitted at the park. Messner responded yes, and added that he thought it would ultimately be used for fishing, hiking and other low impact recreational uses. He added that it could allow for valued trail connectivity opportunities. Again, Messner stressed there are still many details to be determined. For example, the interface of river recreation, fish habitat and irrigators would need to be considered. Alexander noted that he thought there was an undeveloped trail easement in place across a portion of the property. Messner believes it has not been pursued due to multiple ecological and financial issues, including sage grouse habitat. Waters asked if there is an advantage to making it a State park instead of a County park. Messner noted that he's not opposed to it being a County managed park, however, due to the lack of Parks and Rec Department at the County, they'd likely run up against capacity issues. The committee briefly discussed how to integrate CPW into the State Park Service model, noting that there could be an opportunity to create a model that is unique to our valley. It was noted that the project would likely bring advantageous marketing opportunities.

Messner noted that CPW's initial response to the project was positive. At a high level, they really liked it and want to move forward with a feasibility study. At a local level, CWP lacks the funding necessary to staff a project of this size. A committee member asked if there was potential for Gunnison to benefit from park fees. Messner feels that initially, Gunnison would benefit more from it being a major attraction. Other questions and concerns shared included the potential for the park to attract additional large RV's to the area, its likelihood to highlight access to the area south of Gunnison, potential conflict between SUP use and fishing, and the fear that State Parks are too expensive. Additionally, a committee member noted the difficulty in asking the community to pay to access an area that can currently be accessed for free. Alexander added that there will be concerns over how the world-class archeological site in the vicinity will be managed. A positive outcome noted by a committee member is that it could provide trail connectivity between Hartman Rocks and Signal Peak. The committee briefly discussed

concern over water temperature and fish habitat in Tomichi Creek. Messner concluded that another option is to pursue GOCO funds and go through a GOCO planning process.

### **UTVs Use in Gunnison County**

Messner shared a PowerPoint presentation with general information about Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) and his conceptual plan for developing a Working Group to look at UTV impacts and mitigation opportunities. The committee reviewed the legal definition of UTV's as used by the USFS and BLM. Messner explained that there has been a significant rise in UTV sales. The committee reviewed and discussed the benefits and drawbacks to UTV use.

**Benefits:** Practical for ranch and farm work, provide economic benefits to ancillary businesses, useful for law enforcement, search and rescue and hunting. Provide access to remote areas for mobility impaired. They are easy to operate. Murphy added that they are beneficial for accessing and enjoying public land and that she hears regular comments supporting UTVs from users of the Alpine Loop and that some users still feel that they're being challenged.

**Drawbacks:** Drawbacks include damage to infrastructure, wildlife impacts, and public safety risk. Parmeter added that they can result in impacts to other recreationists. Additionally, the UTV trailers typically do not fit in parking areas. As a result, they start to park in areas where they're not permitted and causing congestion and damage to natural resources.

Messner explained that in Gunnison County, there is no OHV use on County roads, except for small portions of road near Marble. On BLM administered lands, they are permitted to travel on roads, but not trails. On USFS administered land, their use is dictated by the motorized use map, which indicates where 50" razors can travel. Their width, he added, is measured from the outside of its wheels.

Messner noted that it's becoming increasingly important to understand where they can legally travel. The State of Colorado does not allow them to be licensed. The states of ID, UT, and MT allow them to be licensed vehicles, therefore allowing them to drive down main streets. Messner added that there is municipal jurisdiction, allowing municipalities to choose where the vehicles can travel. For example, Marble and Lake City allow UTV use on main streets.

To address and improve the situation, Messner proposes developing a Working Group to analyze the topic and develop proposed solutions. This could include identifying geographic areas of impact within Gunnison County, assessing existing infrastructure and use patterns, as well as current messaging, wayfinding and enforcement needs. A better understanding of the above-mentioned issues will help inform potential solutions. Messner asked if the committee felt it's worthwhile to convene a Working Group. The committee agreed it's worthwhile. Kugler suggested looping rental shops into the conversation. Messner agreed and noted that ultimately, he'd like to see short and long-term solutions identified.

Noel suggested that when thinking about geographic areas of impact, we have a solid engagement tool for communicating with adjacent private landowners. Messner noted that he would like a recommendation prepared by late March, for implementation in summer 2019. Kugel suggested reaching out to Hinsdale County, where they have allowed UTV street access and are now attempting to retract it. The committee briefly discussed other planning efforts that may interface with these management challenges. Snell noted that a lot of the messaging relating to this issue has already been crafted, and noted the “Tread Lightly” material.

Pagano asked if Messner would like to re-visit the topic at the next meeting, with more information. Messner agreed but asked that the Working Group be convened by January.

### **Katya Schloesser, Stewardship Communication for Youth**

Katya Schloesser currently teaches Earth Science to 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Gunnison. Her past work in Boulder County involved engaging the community with sustainability issues. In particular, she worked with K-12 students and non-profits. After a recent meeting with Messner, he asked that she share methods for involving youth in stewardship work. Schloesser shared models, opportunities and barriers to the work.

Growing Up Boulder: This is a child and youth-friendly city initiative program at the University of Colorado Boulder’s Community Design and Engagement Center. The program works with children to incorporate their input into local government decision-making and city planning, including park design. Schloesser noted that the program idea stemmed from the United Nations Compact. An example of a Growing Up Boulder project is the Valmont City Park. For this project, the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department worked with Growing Up Boulder to solicit ideas from children, youth and their families. The ideas were then incorporated into the park plan.

The Nature Connection, Delta County: The Nature Connection is a career ready program and hub of environmental education for Delta and Olathe County youth. It’s supported by the Delta County School District. Schloesser explained that it creates pathways for students to natural resource based careers.

MLK Day of Service: Schloesser explained that the MLK Day of Service takes place here in the Gunnison Valley and is a prime example for how incorporating stewardship into curriculum.

Schloesser explained the concept of collective impact and its relevance to some of these models. She noted that a collective impact requires finding a common agenda/goal and ultimately a backbone/coordinating organization to help manage the project(s). The process typically helps organizations talk and coordinate efforts.

**Barriers & Considerations:** Examples of barriers and considerations include the need for projects to be curriculum based, time and weather constraints, and the lack of capacity for many teachers.

**Opportunities:** There are a multitude of existing programs in place, as well as eager partner organizations/entities. The community approach and “real-life” aspect of the work is often very captivating for students.

Messner noted that a goal of the committee is to effectively engage the community in stewardship work, and that these examples will be helpful moving forward.

### **Chris Haver, Survey**

Chris Haver, with Crested Butte Town Council, shared the results from the survey he helped develop and execute. Haver began by sharing which outdoor recreation activities respondents categorized as needing to be maintained, grow, or not focused on:

#### **Maintain**

Hiking/backpacking

Mountain Biking

Car Camping

Horseback Riding

Rafting/Kayaking

#### **Grow**

Fly Fishing

Lake Fishing

Ice Fishing

Nordic Skiing

Fat Biking

#### **Not Focus**

Target shooting

Golf

Frisbee Golf

Ice Skating

Road Biking

Activities realized for further discussion included; trail running, dirt biking, ATV/UTV use, climbing, alpine skiing, snowmobiling, backcountry skiing, SUPing, E-biking, and big game hunting. Haver asked the committee if they felt any of the “maintain activities” need to be focused on further from a marketing perspective. The committee debated the need for marketing versus improving/maintaining the infrastructure associated with said activities.

Haver concluded by asking the committee to consider where we focus our marketing and how? The committee discussed the need to better define how attention is given to the various activities, and in

particular, the difference between marketing and targeted communication to user groups. The committee agreed the survey and topic requires additional time to discuss in detail.

**Updates from Pagano:**

- The BOCC signed an MOU with the National Forest Foundation. They're now moving forward with developing a selection criteria for forest health and recreation enhancement projects.
- Sally, from VOC will speak to the Stewardship Coordinator position at the next meeting. GOCO may roll out funding/RFP for two or three statewide demonstration sites for \$200,000 - \$300,000 each. We're currently at the top of list for this and our project plan was to increase volunteer stewardship. VOC was very interested in advocating for a volunteer coordinator position to help with this. The GOCO RFP due in January and it could include \$50,000 a year for three years for project funding. The VOC is interested in supporting that position.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.