

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 25, 2019**

The July 25, 2019 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:

Kevin Alexander, Professor of Biology WSU, Hunter & Anglers
John Messner, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners
Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
Matt Feier, Crested Butte Mountain Resort
Matt McCombs, USFS
Christie Hicks, Crested Butte Nordic
Ben Breslauer, GOATS
Joellen Fonken, Gunnison Nordic
Steve Guerrieri, Stockgrowers' Association
Noel Durant, CB Land Trust
Chris Parmeter, CPW
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association
Sue Wallace, Mountain Manners
Frank Kugel, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Noel Durant, CB Land Trust
Roman Kolodziej, Town of Mt. CB
Scott Borden, WCU

Others in Audience:

Marlene Crosby, Gunnison County Director of Public Works
Hedda Peterson, Gunnison Met Rec
Aaron Drendel, USFS
Matt Vasquez, USFS
Mel Yemma, Town of CB

Staff Members Present:

Cathie Pagano, Director of Community and Economic Development
Rachael Sabbato, Planner II

CALL TO ORDER: Alexander called the July 25, 2019 meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 27, 2019 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Kugel and seconded by Messner to accept the June 27, 2019 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

DESIGNATED DISPERSED CAMPING DISCUSSION CONTINUED

McCombs was present to discuss designated dispersed camping from last meeting. He said we are a major destination for visitors inside and outside the state. He said they believe it's time to take action related to dispersed camping and direct management approach.

Norton asked if it was possible to do the designated dispersed camping in July and August only. McCombs said the Forest Supervisor put the order in place for limitations on camping in the Gothic corridor and it has an expiration date which would then require public input and process. McCombs said that it is a difficult step to take specific types of recreation off the table.

Messner asked if you could do designated dispersed in specific time frames. McCombs said he thinks it would be difficult to manage, communicate and enforce. Kolodziej asked if the fee structure can be turned on or off for high season. McCombs said yes, when there's a fee system in place which does not exist yet. McCombs said they would be looking at proposing a fee structure for the designated dispersed camping areas, the fee money would stay in the area.

Alexander asked about the proposed substantial reduction in number of camping sites and what the displacement effect will be. McCombs said they are working with an MEM student to look at those impacts. He expects that those people will move to other areas of the Forest and may move south of Hwy 50. He said it's not likely a wholesale displacement because users will likely still want to experience and stay in the Crested Butte area. Alexander asked what drainages are being considered. McCombs said they are working with Western to fund another MEM student for data gathering and then bridging into a proposal for the Taylor Park area.

Durant asked if the types of camping that are driving demand are being evaluated such as tent, trailer, rv, etc. McCombs said the data gathering will be relatively anecdotal but that there's good data on what type of devices are being sold.

Logan asked if the designated camping at Hartman's is comparable. McCombs said yes. Messner asked if people are precluded from having a "backpacking" experience camping. He asked how far a backpacker would have to walk to a dispersed camp outside of a designated site. Drendel responded that is allowed in wilderness. Drendel said in the project area of 91,000 acres a user whether they're walking or driving would have to use a designated site. Drendel said nothing would change with outfitter camps. McCombs is not anticipating an easy work around of the designated sites. He said if it became a challenge for walk in users they would try to be flexible and find a solution.

Ochs said what kind of enforcement will occur as more people come to town. McCombs said Drendel is a forest protection officer. Drendel said the law enforcement officer for the USFS said he believes this management approach is the best way to make the rules enforceable because it's very clear and easy to explain to the public. Drendel said right now enforcement is a nightmare partly because of the lack of clarity. However, no additional funding from Congress is likely available for enforcement. Messner said in the development of a fee area that there is the opportunity to use the collected fees for enforcement. McCombs said yes. Messner said he's heard feedback from people in the Tincup area that the designated dispersed camping is working and appreciated.

McCombs said the next steps for them are to take the designated dispersed camping to the public for feedback. He said he expects some potential conflict but that he's confident in the management approach that it is the right thing to do. McCombs said an endorsement from the STOR Committee for the proposal would be very valuable. He also said that if there's a public meeting attendance would be helpful. Drendel said the timeline is dependent upon funding. Drendel said the project area includes all the major drainages of CB; Cement, Brush, Gothic, Washington, Slate, Kebler/Splains/Irwin. He said some of this use may also be displaced to the Paonia Ranger District who would match a similar approach on their district in the Kebler pass area. Drendel said he'll be working on a proposal for Taylor Park and the Spring Creek area also. The sites would not have a fee initially but if the USFS adopts a fee program they would be a target for a fee.

The designated sites would likely be first come, first serve and signage to say “camping in designated sites only.” Ochs asked about addressing pet waste and McCombs said yes.

Moved by Norton and seconded by Borden to have designated camping in the drainages surrounding Crested Butte. Passed unanimously.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION AND 2019 FUNDING (GOCO STEWARDSHIP IMPACT GRANT FUNDS)

Potential projects may overlap with where designated camping may occur.

Survey- group projects together into corridors.

Review of most recent survey.

Gothic and Slate were top two picks, Taylor Park and Shady Island tying for 3rd.

\$80k over 3 years to cover, need to identify top needs.

John Norton didn't vote for Taylor- other than its bad.

Ben can't see \$80k seeing fixing much up there, much bigger picture.

McCombs agrees, travel management and designated camping etc. Don't have management in place plus what Cottonwood Pass will contribute. Continue to partner with WSC to develop project proposals. Watershed, habitat, etc.

Four different calls to build individual homes on mining claims, another component. Pitkin and Tincup are also dealing with us.

GOCO funds are not suitable.

Pagano asked what the group wants to work on. Ochs says bathrooms and disperse camping. Messner asked if it is better for this entity to come in and do bathrooms and let Forest Service do designated camping. Guerrieri thinks that they should be addressing the landscape needs, not about adding more trails, but needs to be focused on landscape management. Our funding is directed towards recreational infrastructure. Durant says investing infrastructure, at key kiosk and trailhead points. Kolodziej stated that this may mean needing more people. Cathie stated that it would mean more people on the ground, like SCA folks is part of the other way of grant funding.

Kugler asked McCombs how they are going to handle the funding. McCombs stated that they would make small incremental steps, any funding from STOR would go to most need areas. CIP hopefully to re-develop the Irwin campground. Our goal is to target the areas most impacted, potentially Slate. Kugler asked if it would help leverage if STOR dedicated \$20,000 to this for next three years. McCombs said yes. Ochs asked how much a double vault toilet is. Drendel said around \$60,000. Discussion followed. McCombs needs planning done first

Mallory asked if they could use it as low hanging fruit, wag bag stations and education. Wallace wanted to know who would be the personnel to manning that. Mountain Manners have failed, they can't get funding and it has folded. Education and outreach can be priority through this could be great. Our efforts to education and outreach have to include people on the trail, not just social media etc. Talking to people is the best outreach. Mallory is hopeful that the coordinator position could help distill what kind of volunteer base they need and coordinate across the valley. Wallace and volunteers could be solicited from

coordinator position. Use the position and while you are out doing recreation say something. Struggling with where we are hitting the ground running. Messner well stated that he doesn't think it is clear and that's why they are having the conversation. They are trying to come up with that specificity.

Pagano stated there will be other funders to contribute as well. McCombs stated that they have over \$100,000 in NFF. McCombs designated camping, \$350,000 and that he can commit to find the other \$50,000 over the next three years so they can implement this project and hopefully in three years have this project implemented and that way they wouldn't eat up all the money. If there is a dedicated investment, then he can take that to his boss. Guerrieri stated that he thinks it's important to support McCombs, Forest Service, this group and focus on the infrastructure first. Then they can get more people on the ground and have a bigger impact quicker. McCombs stated that they need to have infrastructure first to charge people fees. Drendel said that there are nine components needed to have the fee funds implemented. Hicks said that by supporting and leveraging funds for Forest Service to get this project off the ground and that he has also heard that education and outreach is a key component too. Infrastructure is needed and identifying projects, a Peanut Lake subcommittee working group, this Forest Service project and the Gothic Corridor.

Kolodziej stated that having a low hanging fruit while they wait for all this to come on line and educate would be a good idea. Borden stated that he found the survey very helpful and asked if there is a plan to further break it down. Wallace asked if the \$80,000 all has to be spent this year. Pagano does not think it needs to be spent all this year. Messner suggested distributing funds into specific projects. Pagano stated that it gives them more flexibility and that they could re-evaluate after the first year. McCombs stated that conservation corp crew are going to install camp rings and signage. It would be great project for CBCC. Forest Service is willing to commit. Messner stated that he can support the \$50,000, but there are some major trailhead needs, such as Kebler, Slate, Gothic, Brush, etc. McCombs agreed. Alexander asked Crosby how much a parking area costs. Crosby responded that it depends on site and if it is for trail heads or parking rather than specifically identifying the use.

Ochs stated that they need more parking lots and perhaps trails to get out to Gothic, rather than people driving. Parmeter talked about the hubs and concentrating on those impacts. Group discusses.

Moved by Norton, seconded by Bordon, to commit \$50,000 to the Forest Service for the next three years. Passed unanimously.

Budget discussion followed.

Durant stated that he 100% backs Yemma on the Peanut Lake project. Hicks likes the idea of expanding winter trailhead use. Alexander asked other interests to come back with proposals or any other group for the remaining \$37,000. Kugler that if they could spend this money better to get us closer to implement the fee structure project.

Messner need to have these conversation about these million dollar projects. McCombs conversation about congress and big money projects. Norton these fees will they stay in our forest, McCombs Yes.

UPDATES INCLUDING SUBCOMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES

The committee went over the upcoming August agenda discussion. Crosby stated that the Peanut Lake project needs to be in August if they want it to happen.

Vasquez talked about weed management, specifically cheat grass, and the impacts it can have on our recreational resources. Asked the STOR committee to start integrating and address this, kiosks, bike washing stations etc. Alexander could be a funding mech from STOR.

Messner PSA- state park concept- W Mountain and Tomichi Creek and CPW just came out for new state park criteria. He'll send out the link.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Future meetings will occur on the 4th Thursday of the month in the Planning Commission meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, Co. 81230, unless changed for a specific reason.

08-22-19	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
09-26-19	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
10-24-19	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
11.28-19	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room
12-26-19	10-12	Regular Meeting	Blackstock; 221 N. Wisconsin 2 nd floor meeting room

ADJOURN: The July 25, 2019 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:23 PM.

Prepared by Cathie Pagano, Director of Community Development and Rachel Sabbato, Community Development Planner II