

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
January 23, 2020**

The January 23, 2020 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:

Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association  
Matt McCombs, USFS  
Christie Hicks, Crested Butte Nordic  
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association  
Scott Borden, WCU  
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails  
Ben Breslauer, GOATS  
Steve Guerrieri, Stockgrowers' Association  
Roman Kolodziej, Mt. Crested Butte Town Council  
Sandy Snell, National Park Service  
Sue Wallace, Mountain Manners  
Noel Durant, CB Land Trust  
Joellen Fonken, Gunnison Nordic  
Chris Parmeter, CPW  
Kristi Murphy, BLM  
Greg Austin, Forest Service  
Anton Sinkich, City of Gunnison

**Staff:**

Cathie Pagano, Director Community and Economic Development  
Beth Baker, Manager of Administrative Services

**CALL TO ORDER:** Durant called the January 23, 2020 meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

**APPROVAL OF December 12, 2019 MEETING MINUTES:** Moved: by Fonken and seconded by Ochs to accept the December 12, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**GUNNISON STEWARDSHIP FUND PROJECT/ PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Emily Olsen, NFF representative was present via phone.

Pagano explained the Gunnison Stewardship Fund for 2020 has approximately \$100,000 available to fund projects. The projects under consideration are;

- Crested Butte Conservation Corps-received \$35,000 last and asking for that or more this year
- Shady Island River Park –requesting \$45,000 to \$50,000
- BLM and CB Land Trust collaboration on proposed trail expansion between Gunsight Bridge and On-Be-Joyful Campground-requesting \$29,000
- Support for Gunnison Trails Professional Trail Crew-requesting \$10,000
- CPW Digital Trail Monitoring Project-requesting \$43,000
- Any infrastructure needs for “hot spots” in the Valley- no amount specified

- Planning for solutions for “Recreation Path /Slate River”- no amount specified
- Additional bathrooms including at “Tent City ‘out Brush Creek Road-no amount specified

Dave Ochs explained CBMBA is requesting the same \$35,000 as last year, or more. They would like to plan ahead for projects.

Cathie Pagano said Gunnison County is requesting \$50,000 for Shady Island River Park for overall project costs.

Noel Durant said the Crested Butte Land Trust in partnership with the BLM are requesting \$29,000 for a trail expansion between Gunsight Bridge and the Oh-Be-Joyful Campground. The entire project will cost \$50,000. They have secured \$20,000 that must be spent this year or lost. The work could begin this summer.

Tim Kugler said Gunnison Trails is requesting \$10,000 to go towards the professional trails crew. He explained their funding comes from grants. They will be working at Signal Peak this summer.

CPW is requesting \$43,300 to conduct trail traffic monitoring and a volume study, to observe the impacts to wildlife. This would provide a digital map of the Gunnison Basin. It would be useful to many other agencies. Murphy said the BLM was concerned with this because of video aspect, capturing people on camera. Olsen explained this project doesn’t fit the NFF criteria for funding. The committee discussed finding other revenue sources for the study.

Dave Ochs requested an unspecified amount of money for infrastructure needs for “hot spots” in the Valley, planning for solutions for “Recreation Path /Slate River”, and additional bathrooms including at “Tent City ‘out Brush Creek Road.

Matt McCombs said the USFS has a vault toilet they could install at Washington Gulch, but they need \$5,000 in labor costs. It could be installed this summer. He noted if there were no funds from the committee he would find the funds elsewhere.

Following a conversation about the committee’s priorities; Durant moved and seconded by Guerrieri to recommend first - full funding of the \$29,000 requested by the Crested Butte Land Trust and the BLM, second the CPW trail research, if it complies with the funding criteria, and following those funding the remainder of the projects, except the projects that did not include a monetary amount in the proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

## **TRAILS MASTER PLANNING DISCUSSION**

Ochs said CBMBA has been working on a trails master plan for the past 11 years. In 2016 CBMBA developed a five year plan. They used a point system to identify trails. They would now like to consolidate all the data and information to come up with a new short term plan, and then take the plan to CPW to discuss it with their staff. This would be an opportunity to help CBMBA winnow down the trails that are pipe dreams. Using the concrete data from CPW, and taking out the low hanging fruit CBMBA could bring that short term plan back to the STOR committee. He would then ask for the STOR committee’s support to submit that plan to the Forest Service. In addition to that scoping and going into the public process. He asked the committee if they would consider CBMBA looking into the short term plan and in addition look ahead to a greater, broader, more comprehensive County wide master trails plan.

Ochs said CBMBA is not proposing trails haphazardly. They have a management plan and a full time trail crew on the ground for five months of the year. These trails would not require a large amount of infrastructure or create a large fragmentation of wildlife habitat. A lot of it would be connecting existing trails, fixing and maintaining sections of trails that don't work and aren't sustainable. They would also develop more parallel trails to separate different skill level of riders. They would like to work with CPW and take the comments received and implement those into CBMBA's planning. This is a living document but now we need something more concrete. They would ask the Forest Service to scope this all at once, ultimately giving them time and direction to implement the plan.

McCombs said the master plan created a lot of positive buzz but also created concerns about the potential impacts or tradeoffs coming from full implementation. He had asked CBMBA to take a step back and reengage parts of the community that shared their concerns, ensuring all those voices were in the room. He agreed STOR committee was the suitable place for those conversations to take place and figure out where the recreation emphasis should be going forward. He agreed the comprehensive trails planning concept is important and could be very viable in the long run. In the interim Met Rec did a survey noting trails are an important component of what the public wants. In the short term there may be some places where those opportunities exist, and easy to find consensus as to where we should put our limited resources for planning and implementation.

McCombs recommended focusing CBMBA's and Gunnison Trails efforts, and other entities that want to participate in trail development and maintenance. The agency wants to be ready to take on the required planning and environmental analysis; the scale of the project would determine the complexity of the analysis. The social acceptance present would also define the scope of the analysis. He could not commit the agency's limited resources to highly controversial projects.

Ochs said there is a plan that could go into scoping which contains the low hanging fruit he would like to take to CPW and the STOR committee.

McCombs said he envisions CBMBA would refine some the trail proposals. Then they would walk the committee through what those are, to see what the concerns might be, based on the stake holder representation as well as the constituent base. He recommended doing a lot of the front loading and collaborative work in the beginning. CBMBA could then come up with a bundle of work that would take two to five years to implement, analyze it and get it out the door. It meets some of the pent up demand for additional trails and development. At the same taking some pressure off to look more comprehensively.

Fonken would like to ask the other advocacy groups to be a part of this. It needs to be more of a collaborative effort and sharing of the resources. Ochs responded CBMBA has been working on this for the past eleven years and now has a formidable plan. CBMBA works with the agencies years in advance. He noted CBMBA is in a position to manage the projects they are proposing.

Kugler said he would like to think just because this plan was adopted it would not take all other projects off the table for three years.

McCombs noted the Forest Service has broad discretion which is tied to the absence of extraordinary circumstances, including wetlands and endangered species. He added substantive social conflict is a mechanism that pushes the agency into a more intensive analysis. If the ranching community, the environmental community and other partners in the community have already been engaged then that makes the process more efficient. It is more streamlined if there is broad community support and cursory analysis of impacts to wildlife and other habitats have already been done. Those factors would move the plan through fairly quickly.

Ochs said public comments are welcome and some have been submitted through their website. They will be reaching out to the stock growers with the updated plan.

Pagano requested direction from the committee. There are two questions: Are you comfortable with CBCMA bringing their trails plan to CPW and giving the committee's direction and support? How would you like to approach the greater question of a trails master planning and funding? Fonken was comfortable with the plan but said it should be specifically identified as CBCMA's trails plan.

Murphy pointed out there are other group plans, she suggested reviewing the Met Rec survey, because it was done with public input. Focus energy on what the public has already asked for.

Norton supported Ochs plan, with the caveat of reaching out to stock growers and others, coming back with a plan that is not controversial. He suggested supporting Ochs bringing the plan to the Forest Service and continuing to consider the major multiyear effort of a valley trails master plan. Kugler also supported Ochs plan.

The committee would like Ochs to bring back the public comments that have been submitted concerning the plan. McCombs will also provide the comments submitted to the Forest Service.

Pagano asked how the committee would like to proceed with a trails master plan. Kugler said a somewhat polished idea of a master plan is needed. Will it include paved and soft surface and everything in-between, or just trails and not recreation planning. Fonken said it needs to be a year round plan. She also said the Met Rec survey should be reviewed and those comments considered.

Ochs said the carrying capacity of trails is a needed component. Murphy noted it is not always the carrying capacity, but the impacts to the trail and people using it.

Fonken said we should ensure when applying for grants we are not competing with any other of the valley municipalities.

The committee agreed they are interested in pursuing a trails masterplan. Pagano noted it would be important to outline priorities- overall vision and goals, defining the time frame and monies needed. There are master planning grants from GOCO available, if awarded a grant the committee would need to know what the money would be used for, possibly a consultant.

Guerrieri asked when there are enough trails. He said we need to be aware of what has already taken place on the landscape. At what point do we say enough is enough? We need to be more proactive at protecting what we have now. The pressure is on ranchers, and the wildlife. When is it enough? Parmeter added

we should look at the older trails too, some trails should come out service. Ochs agreed there are opportunities to make things better.

Pagano said there could be a trails master plan focusing on specific trail connections, it can to be tailored in whatever way the committee deems appropriate.

Mel suggested the committee wait until next fall to pursue a planning grant. The 2016 master plan would be used in the interim. Ochs agreed this was a good idea. Durant suggested STOR write a general letter of support from the STOR committee for the various grant opportunities.

### **SHADY ISLAND LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Pagano had submitted a letter of support of Shady Island River Park. She asked if the letter could be signed and submitted to the Planning Commission.

Kugler made a motion to sign the letter of support of Shady Island River Park the motion was seconded by Ochs. The motion carried unanimously.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

Pagano reported the State Trails program manager for the CPW said they are going to revisit a guide from the 90s about best practices for trails. They asked if someone from Gunnison County would participate.

Kristy Murphy said the Oh Be Joyful campground will be on the website March 1<sup>st</sup> for reservations.

**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.

**ADJOURN:** The January 23, 2020 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Prepared by Beth Baker  
Community and Economic Development