

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
February 27, 2020**

The February 27, 2020 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STOR) 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:

Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners  
Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association  
Matt Feier, Crested Butte Mountain Resort  
Christie Hicks, Crested Butte Nordic  
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association  
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails  
Steve Guerrieri, Stockgrowers' Association  
Roman Kolodziej, Mt. Crested Butte Town Council  
Sandy Snell, National Park Service  
Deanna Greco, National Park Service  
Sue Wallace, Mountain Manners  
Noel Durant, CB Land Trust  
Joellen Fonken, Gunnison Nordic  
Chris Parameter, CPW  
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners  
Mona Merrill, Town of Crested Butte  
Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison  
Jim Lovelace, BLM  
Kimberly Schappert, at large committee member  
Joe Loughlin, US Forest Service Trails

**Staff:**

Cathie Pagano, Director of Community and Economic Development  
Rachel Sabbato, Gunnison County Senior Planner  
Marlene Crosby, Director of Public Works

**Audience:**

Jamie Walton, Trail Source.com  
Cory Wong, US Forest Service  
Peter Kennel, e-bikes  
Dick Allen, e-bikes  
Jake O'Conner- e-bikes  
Mel Yemma, Town of Crested Butte  
Brett Henderson, HCCA  
Dom Eymere, CB So.  
Kenny Marks, e-bikes  
Melody Marks, e-bikes  
Christian Robertson, CBMR  
Ashley Hom , US Forest Service

Durant opened the February 27, 2020 meeting of the STOR committee.

## **E-BIKES**

John Norton explained the economic benefits, to a local economy, e-bikes can provide. He noted the 2019 summer tourism numbers were down except for the month of August. He added the way to bring our summer numbers back up is to embrace new technologies, particularly e-bikes.

He pointed out STOR and OVPP place a focus on community health. Getting more people outdoors and exercising could improve the rates of Diabetes 2, obesity and even mental health issues.

He said tourism is a very competitive business. CBMR has exited their summer marking program. The designated camping ban in the north valley will mean fewer campers. In Gunnison some of the small lodges have moved to long term rentals. Many of the resorts including Aspen, Snowmass, Park City, Tahoe, and the Town of Salida have increased their e-bike presence. He noted the travel director of REI has said e-bike tourism is the fastest segment of growth.

Norton suggested forming a subcommittee to pick a number of trails in the north valley and come back to the committee with 15 trails suitable for e-biking.

Editor in chief of trailsource.com, Jami Walton explained the United States Congress defines a class one e-bike as a bicycle. The US Forest Service defines them as a motorized vehicle. The states of Colorado and California allow e-bikes on their trails. He pointed out the e-bikes are becoming less easy to identify as e-bikes, making enforcement more difficult. He has seen a dramatic shift in the global perspective of mountain biking, the majority of biking is e-bikes outside of the U.S.

Norton added this is also an access issue. As we age we slow down, but e-bikes make it easier to stay active on your bikes.

Durant said a subcommittee would need goals and chartering principles. Houck agreed clear direction is important.

Peter Kennel said as he gets older the hills are getting longer. His e-bike solves the problem of the climbs.

Dick Allen has been mountain biking for over 20 years, he is getting older and he would hate to lose that.

Kenny Marks said even on e-bike approved trails he often feels unwelcome. He said at 65 about 70% of his biking is e-biking.

Jake O'Conner builds 40 to 50 bicycles per year, of that nine out of ten have motors. He said the technology is getting better all the time, and Gunnison County is one of the only counties not embracing e-bikes. It is a great equalizer, allowing young and old to ride together. The new range of an e-bike is 50 -60 miles.

Tom Murphy has ridden over 2,500 miles on his e-bike. He said it is less about the bike and more about the rider.

Houck said we do have a healthy collection of existing trails open to e-bikes, but accessing them from town can be a problem. He pointed out the potential difficulty of managing e-bikes and where they are ridden. He said tourism is a significant amount of the local economy, and e-bikes could be a part of that.

Parameter said this would not add economic resilience, but just put another egg in the tourism basket. The Forest Service policy defines e-bikes as motorized. Until that is figured out we are not sure how much the ranger district can invest in e-bike trails. It is an evolving thing, the motors get better and better. It is a big conversation that is beyond us and nothing will happen quickly.

Kolodziej pointed out tourism being down one summer could have many reasons, from weather, carrying capacity and possibly the lack of marketing.

Ochs said we need to better educate people. There is little enforcement of e-bikes on the trails, and we don't necessarily have the capacity for e-bikes in certain places. He said there is an inventory of trails. The next step- find out where people would prefer to ride and determine where they should be riding, by identifying the barriers. Start with a sample for a pilot program.

Lovelace agreed a current inventory is a good place to start. A big part of information gathering will be what's open and where.

Durant identified inclusivity as an important core value.

Wong recommended focusing on the speed, because Class one and Class two e-bikes do not go extremely fast.

Guerrieri said decreased tourism numbers could be also attributed to weather, etc. Gunnison has been found and that won't change. He suggested not focusing on e-bikes, instead focus on non-motorized biking as our specialty. He pointed out e-biking and the increase in tourism from it will impact ranching. He reiterated we should focus on making this a specialty destination.

Snell pointed out there are other users groups, walkers, equestrians, etc. and we need to recognize they are also looking for this type of experience.

Following the discussion it was determined a subcommittee would be formed. It will comprise of both committee members and members of the public.

The subcommittee members will include Dave Ochs, John Norton, Kimberly Schappert, Tim Kugler, Steve Guerrieri Jake O'Conner, Noel Durant, Chris Parameter, Tom Murphy, Kenny Marks, and Ben Breslauer.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

Rachel Sabbato said the Communications group put together four river way kiosks. They now have about \$8,000 left in the fund.

Crested Butte South Metropolitan District has spoken with CDOT concerning the bike path in the right of way.

Durant said there has been a design team selected for the Slate River Trail. He encouraged the committee members to attend the March 25, 2020 forum.

The Gothic subcommittee met last week to talk about transportation issues. The desire is to increase public transportation ridership, increase frequency and more bikes.

**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 February 27, 2020 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Prepared by Beth Baker  
Gunnison County Community and Economic Development