

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
June 25, 2020**

The June 25, 2020 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted by Zoom virtual online meeting.

**Committee Members Present:**

Voting Members:

Kevin Alexander, Hunter & Anglers- Western Colorado University (WCU)  
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners  
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  
Roman Kolodziej, Mt. Crested Butte Town Council  
Sandy Snell, National Park Service  
Noel Durant, CB Land Trust  
Joellen Fonken, Gunnison Nordic  
Chris Parmeter, CPW  
Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison  
Kimberly Shappert, At-Large Community Member  
Elijah Waters, BLM  
Joe Laughlin, US Forest Service Trails

**Others in Audience:**

Elizabeth Bauer, WCU MEM Program  
Marlene Crosby, Gunnison County Public Works  
Hedda Peterson  
Sally Thode  
Jennifer Fenwick  
Pam King  
Melanie Yemma, Town of Crested Butte  
Nick Catmur  
Aaron Drendel, USFS

**Staff:**

Cathie Pagano, Community Development Director  
Joe Lavorini, Gunnison County Stewardship Coordinator-National Forest Foundation  
Hillary Seminick, Community Development Planner  
Rachel Sabbato, Community Development Planner

**CALL TO ORDER:** Alexander called the June 25, 2020 meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Agenda approved as presented.

**APPROVAL OF MAY 28, 2020 MEETING MINUTES: Moved:** by Durant and seconded by Kolodziej to approve the May 28, 2020 meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Alexander reported that Durant will be leaving and thanked him for his work with STOR Committee. John Messner will also be leaving the committee. Houck reported that he was appointed by the governor to be a permanent on the Professional Oil and Gas Commission. He will resign from the Board of County Commissioners on June 30, 2020. The democratic party will appoint someone to replace him until election in November.

Alexander reported that he participated on a panel on the Partners and Outdoors conference where they represented the Gunnison county STOR Committee to all the people in the State and they looked at developing regional partnerships, how the STOR Committee has been functioning as an entity and looked at it as a positive example that balanced a variety of issues and they are also looking at how to take the STOR model and connect to other groups at a regional scale. One of the proposals is to connect them with the Chaffee County group. Thinking about how they are connected across boundaries and how a partnership could handle it better.

### **STOR CORPS UPDATE**

Pagano reported that they are working with the National Forest Foundation and Board of County Commissioners for a \$105,000 for the program, to hire 10 people for 12 weeks for outreach, education, restoration, maintenance, cleaning, etc. in Gunnison County over the next few months. The BOCC approved utilizing up to \$45,000 from their CARES funding allotment to help support the program. TAPP agreed to contribute \$5,000 and the STOR Committee agreed to contribute up to \$20,000 out of the GOCO Stewardship Impact Grant that they created. They are fortunate to have a partnership with national Forest Foundation. They can come in with a one to one match and can increase the impact from the Core. The pay is \$18-\$23 per hour. Lavorini reported that it is a quick turnaround, they have up to 10 slots open. Three different positions will be posted; a crew leader, volunteer coordinator, and crew members. They are shooting to get started July 13, 2020 through early October, 2020.

Shappert asked if there is an age cutoff. Cathie said no age cutoff at the top and youngest 16-18 years old. Lavorini reported that it wasn't on the job description, it is for people affected by COVID, economic hard ships due to the pandemic.

### **TRAIL PLANNING DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION OF HOW TO MOVE FORWARD**

Pagano stated that she wanted the trail planning discussion on the agenda again after Ochs gave the presentation in order to get clarity of the vote and have more opportunity for discussion to gain a consensus. Would like to look at each of the trails.

Ochs stated that personally he would like to wait a little longer, each step has put them a step further. He would like to work with stakeholders to get more feedback and put it back in front of the STOR Committee in a couple of months instead.

Durant stated that he has constituents that he needs to talk to before he gives feedback on some of the trails. He doesn't have a lot of information to add today but will have more after conversations.

Kolodziej gave a synopsis about what occurred in the last meeting regarding the trails request and discussion to clarify what transpired.

Pagano wanted to see if the Committee wanted to have a more in-depth conversation to get a better consensus on what they want to do with the process. Felt like last time there was enough dialogue and wanted to ensure the credibility of the STOR Committee stays high and wanted to revisit it and make sure everyone was on board and they could address any issues.

McCombs stated that he believes the STOR Committee was designed to prioritize and collaboratively develop solutions towards projects and develop strategies to get them to a certain place and endorse

certain projects and infrastructure development and things that will get them closer to reaching their sustainability goals while also leveraging unique economic benefits that come from being surrounded by public lands. From his point, as a local land manager, this is the place to do pre NEPA work to determine where they want their local ranger to spend it's planning efforts. This is a great place to express the community's will with the broad representation from a variety of different interests. It will make it easier to take it to NEPA when there is a variety of voices who have given their input.

Further discussion followed on the Committee's decision-making processes.

Shappert believes it is a great idea to have it in front of the committee since there are so many groups represented and easier to figure out who the dissenters are and it creates a good starting point to determine who they need to speak to.

Kolodziej wanted to know how a concern is deemed dealt with. How do you decide if that project can move forward?

Pagano stated that it is a discussion that you have. Are the impacts that you have heard mitigated to a substantial degree or is there more work that needs to be done?

Kolodziej stated is that out of the STOR Committee comes a recommendation that may or may not make it easier for the Forest Service to make a decision.

McCombs believes that as long as everyone makes the most informed decision that they can, they will be more efficient and can take more action.

Waters stated that he doesn't think it would have changed the outcome of the decision because there were a lot of groups that were already supporting the plan as a whole. They went in it with the expectation that it was the maximum ask. Believes that in regards to the trail that was presented at the last meeting that started at the Oh-Be-Joyful campground, that the campground is all on BLM land and they have made major upgrades to that campground and the use has more than doubled in the last five years and he has major concerns with putting a green destination trailhead there and that there is no way they could absorb the impact. They are at capacity with parking and there is no way that they could take it on. Wanted to point out the majority of the trail is on Forest Service but the majority of the impacts is on BLM. It is critical that they be included. Ochs stated that it was not something he considered and that he appreciated the concern.

Pagano wanted to know if they are comfortable with diving into the harder topics and trying to untangle them or do they prefer to stay at a higher level and not do that? Do they want to dive into each of the trails to give Ochs feedback?

Alexander stated that it seems like Ochs wants to wait to go over the trails and would like to reach out to everyone first. Alexander believed them addressing the bigger process questions is worthwhile to help them effectively move forward when any other issues come up. Better off if they conclude how to move forward with decision making.

Fonken stated that there are some common themes on concerns with the trails that the group should talk about, especially concerning wildlife. Would be interested in knowing a priority list of trails and keep feedback from entities in those corridors and everyone can move forward together.

Durant likes the idea of having a conversation on how the committee charts the course on working together. Believes it is beneficial to figure out where the middle ground is and striving towards a consensus is ideal.

Alexander agreed and believes it ends up at a better end point and feels good about moving forward with it or having conversations on what they disagree on.

Kolodziej stated that he didn't think they were too far off on being able to solve or address some of the issues that came up in the last meeting.

Murphy stated that it would help the group if they look at the Gunnison Basin, or the whole valley, and look at the trail system that they have and prioritize some of the issues that they are having; connectivity, mixed use patterns, safety issues, lack of trails and opportunities. They should look at the different areas and try to meet the needs the public is looking for and reduce the impacts to wildlife and cattle. Would challenge the group to a bigger planning effort. Stated that a couple of master students could help put that together.

Ochs stated that that is what they are looking for. This is their short-term plan and it was two-fold to come in front of the Committee, CBMBA would like to come with a short-term plan, Riders off the Road, and they would also like to see a countywide comprehensive trail plan. Thinks it would take a lot of time and a lot more people. Would like to see a long-term comprehensive plan.

Pagano stated that there are two conversations going on and would like to do one at a time: process of decision making and trails planning and prioritization. Do you want to thrive for consensus or strive for another number?

Shappert stated that she doesn't think in this case it is realistic that they will have a consensus. Believes that they should strive for a recommendation.

Alexander stated that they can have a goal to strive for consensus.

McCombs stated that there is a concept where you decide what you are striving for: consensus, majority etc. They can decide what they are working towards in different scenarios. You should always shoot for the broadest decision.

Alexander stated that because Ochs wanted to wait they put it off until fall to discuss the trail planning. Pagano suggested that her and Lavorini work on amending the charter to help with moving forward with future decision-making processes.

Fonken stated that they should have a subcommittee to look at the County corridors, look at some concerns and what makes sense. They can work on that in the Fall and see how some of the priorities with CBMBA work within those corridors.

Ochs asked that everyone send their comments to him.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

Norton reported the ebike subcommittee was comprised of supporters and skeptics. The supporters began hoping they could achieve something like Park City's over 65 and adaptive class 1 ebikes. Norton and Lavorini met with McCombs and the Forest Service is not set up to do an age break opportunity. They went back to the drawing board looking for trails that were relatively easy, close to population centers, and somewhat under used trails. They came up with the Cement Creek bottom trails, 409, Deer Creek and Wagon to be used as a test to see what impact there would be. McCombs stated that the potential for them being the pilot, ebikes are considered motorized. There may be some discretion to do some sort of pilot program. Reification from the STOR Committee shows that the community is ready to move forward. There would be some policy making required. Parmeter wanted to know how they would find out impacts of allowing ebikes on trails, what sort of monitoring. Norton said that would be up to the stakeholders and they haven't talked about it yet. Alexander clarified if this was an update or a request for a decision. Norton is asking that the Committee weigh in on the proposed test trails and ask McCombs if he could take it to Delta and have that discussion and possibly get an approval for an ebike trial. If the trial doesn't go well it goes away. McCombs stated that the Forest Service is actively moving forward on how they deal with ebikes and this would be a good use of their time. If they have a proposal and why that they can advance forward would be helpful. The committee decided to follow-up in the near future on the STOR Agenda to look at the proposal and decide what they would like to do at that time. Shappert

wanted to know if there is funding for oversight or resources to be able to see what is going on. McCombs stated that this would be him taking it to the Regional office and D.C. and in the future, they will have to go through a travel management decision, monitoring protocol that demonstrates the impacts. There would be no money. Fonken wanted to know whether the Wagon Road would be an out and back or if they would create a loop through Splain's? Norton stated that it is just Wagon. Fonken stated that you don't have an opportunity to look at anything other than the Dike or maybe get to Irwin and was curious about Doctor Park because so many people shuttle that and if they had a motor they might actually ride up Spring Creek and then come down that. That is just as technical as Deer Creek and just spreads things out a little bit. Parmeter believes that it is a great idea to add Doctor Park and they have had concerns with the Deer Creek Trail because that is prime elk calving and calving habitat over there. Believes that Wagon Trail, Doctor Park and Cement Creek see a lot of traffic already and that they are good trails. Hicks stated that this is a great conversation to have at the next meeting. Alexander agreed and it will be on the next agenda.

Sabbato stated that she hasn't had a chance to reach out to the Communication Committee. Parmeter stated that they talked about the kiosks. There are a couple of groups that want them but he has not been able to get ahold of anyone. Would like help with installing them at North Bridge and Almont. Crosby stated they should be able to help, probably first or second week in July. Pagano stated that the STOR Corps may be able to help the County too.

Drendel reported that Lizzy Bauer has been having weekly meetings with the subcommittee. They are making progress and talking about what kind of amenities they would like to see at day use and for overnight camping in the Crested Butte area. They are starting to work on a couple of items needed; a business plan, talking about the physical infrastructure they want to see and what they don't want to see. They are also working on a communication plan. Shappert reported that at the last meeting they talked about trash collection. Thinks it's an idea they will spend more time on and will have to figure out a way to find funding to support that.

Lavorini reported that hopefully they will start receiving applications for the STOR Corps and if there is anyone on the committee that would be willing to help with interviews and hiring support that they let him know. They are potentially looking convening in person for the next STOR meeting and that if anyone is interested that they let him know.

**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 June 25, 2020 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Prepared by Rebecca Ricord, Community Development Administrative Assistant III