

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 26, 2021**

The August 26, 2021 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted by Zoom virtual online meeting.

Committee Members Present:

Kevin Alexander, Chair	Matt McCombs, U.S. Forest Service
Brandon Diamond, CPW	Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
Hedda Peterson, MetRec	Jake Jones, Crested Butte Land Trust
Kimberly Schappert, At-Large Community Member	Scott Borden, WCU
Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison	Mark Voegeli, CBMR
Hannah Cranor, Stockgrowers' Association	James Lovelace, BLM
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails	Mona Merrill, Crested Butte
Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County Commissioner	Roman Kolodziej, Mt. Crested Butte Town Council

Others in Audience:

Celeste Heminski, Gunnison Chamber of Commerce
Joey Carpenter, Town of Crested Butte
Janna Hansen, Town of Crested Butte
Leonard Mason
Greg Austin
Sara Gutterman, Hinsdale County Tourism & Recreation Management Group
Joshua Futterman, Travel Crested Butte
Andrew Sandstrom, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association

Staff:

Joe Lavorini, Gunnison County Stewardship Coordinator-National Forest Foundation

CALL TO ORDER: Alexander called the August 26, 2021 meeting to order at 2:03 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF July 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Kugler and seconded by Borden to approve the July 22, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

HINSDALE COUNTY TOURISM & RECREATION MANAGEMENT GROUP

Gutterman reported that as more people discover the area for recreation and tourism the more impacts to the natural resources. Hinsdale County is small and limited to financial and human resources. They are a little different from STOR because they don't currently sit under Hinsdale County. They found the not for profit, Lake Fork Valley Conservation (LFVC) to sit under. There is alignment between the groups to find solutions that support tourism but are very protective of the natural resources, before they overload the Alpine Loop and the places that bring people there in the first place. They have been approved to sit as an entity under the LFVC and have been talking with Lavorini to collaborate with STOR. They would like to house their group under the STOR Committee in some way. They are looking at ways to collaborate

with the Committee. There are nonpolitical topics to look at, natural resources, etc. and political issues such as the OHVs topic, which has torn their community apart, and they want to find a middle ground. If they can collaborate they could possibly look at regional funding. They have spoken about a grant that is due in a couple of weeks to find ways for Hinsdale, Gunnison County, the Travel & Recreation Management (TRM) group and the STOR group to work together to deal with trails and the Big Loop. They are trying to find a way to streamline the TRM group in the best way possible and believes it would be beneficial for all to collaborate.

Lavorini stated that over the last couple of months the STOR committee has been looking at the Regional Conservation Initiative grant. Their application was not accepted and they got some good feedback from the State. The State was looking for geographic diversity. They said that they are looking to bring in groups that aren't solely focused on recreation but also conservation and the other reason was that they are really trying to push for a regional approach, rather than a County approach. Only one of the applications was fully funded, Ouray County. Lavorini said the STOR Committee has a successful model focused on Gunnison County and said that it is up to the group to decide where they go in the future. There is a push from the State and Colorado Outdoor Partnership to endorse and support regional coalitions and believes that they would love for the committee to apply again with more partnerships with other counties.

Diamond stated that the idea of regional and bigger is better is where they are now. From a wildlife standpoint it makes sense to partner with Hinsdale County, as well as Saguache from a Gunnison Basin standpoint. He says that he can see it both ways. Diamond stated that the conservation piece is critical and believes that with STOR it is in the background all of the time, even if it isn't in the name, but that for funding from the program it needs to be a focus. Gutterman stated that the TRM group is more focused on the comprehensive perspective, tourism recreation management and preservation of their natural resources.

Schappert stated that with TAPP pulling their advertising money to educate people on how to be in the backcountry and to preserve the research she isn't sure how much more conservation they would need to show them. That was a huge step they took and she finds it interesting that they weren't picked on that point.

Ochs asked what the greatest impacts or issues are that brought the organization together. Gutterman stated that their greatest issue right now are OHVs and how to manage them and how to manage the environmental impacts. Because it is so politically charged they want to start with issues that are less politically charged, trail management and looking at watershed management issues. LFVC has done a lot with habitat and river restoration, a dual end goal of protecting their natural resources and looking at how they can bolster sustainable tourism. They want to look at expanding recreational activities at Lake San Cristobal. Hinsdale County got a grant to buy the island at the lake. They haven't talked about problems that can occur with bringing boats in, etc.

Houck believes that having a robust conversation on the pros of cons of the collaboration is a good idea. Thinks what is difficult with this one in general is the size of Gunnison County. It's huge. Believes the challenge is the demographic differences. One of the things they have learned is to talk about how the resources get distributed and believes it is good to have it on the table and he believes a positive is that they are all working on the same models. Challenges with each County are drastically different. He isn't suggesting it's good or bad, but complicated.

Alexander stated that he doesn't understand how recreation management is different than conservation. Gutterman's groups' title is Tourism & Recreation Management and doesn't have conservation in their title either, and he doesn't understand the State's reasoning. Houck stated that it may be that the State has given Gunnison County a lot of money already. Lavorini stated that he was told if they had requested to join the co-op only, instead of requesting funding and to join the co-op, they would have been in. Diamond thinks that the STOR Committee is going to be highly competitive in the future and believes the State will come back to STOR. He believes the conservation aspect is going to be focused on the strategic plans and planning processes down the road and recommends that they, STOR, highlight the

conservation efforts that have been made. Diamond also said that he sees some promise with TRM because they aren't a County run entity. Gutterman stated they had a lot of discussion of the pros and cons of being under the County. There is some flexibility to do things under LFVC that they may not be able to do under the County.

Jones stated that he is intrigued by the notion of basin wide conversations, from a conservation perspective. The recognized conservation values, in the eyes of the State to issue tax credits on donated conservation easements, as well as from the federal government, include recreation and public access across conserved lands and if there is any desire to craft more language around the nexus between recreation management and conservation he would be happy to participate in that. STOR is doing a good job with recreation and a better job conserving.

Kolodziej stated that it seems like other groups are modeling their groups after STOR and the challenge is how to align the different groups with reasonable efforts so they don't miss out on certain funding and focus on areas of collaboration where they make sense geographically. Trying to see where areas of collaboration could occur without being too problematic. Lavorini stated that is fair to say and that the Colorado Outdoor Partnership sends their representatives out to different regions to work towards a statewide conservation and recreation plan. CPW eventually wants the entire map of Colorado to have the regional partnerships, not multiple coalitions. Kugler thinks it would be worthwhile to collaborate with managing motorized use.

Houck said that they need to look at what they do with their Land Management partners. Gutterman stated that there are several of those groups here at the meeting that TRM has already asked to participate in their group, or at least are aware and suspects they would be happier to just have one group to track everything. She understands there are going to be different issues in each County. They are trying to come at it in a way to streamline everything.

Peterson asked if they are looking on collaborating on an issue basis or to merge the groups. Lavorini stated that they could do either. Houck stated that they would have to do a deeper dive of the pros and cons. He thinks it's a little more difficult to make the decision before they lay out the approach to serve both their goals and STOR's. Peterson stated that her only caution is she feels that the STOR committee has been very successful on providing a unified voice of support, or not support, of localized issues and she worries about the political and community perception of that. Alexander proposed that him, Lavorini and Gutterman get together for a conversation to discuss and bring it in front of the group with more information in the future.

Houck asked if there is support from Hinsdale County and Gutterman stated that yes there is.

CBGTRAILS APP

Sandstrom reported that Tara Quest is changing their business model and will no longer be supporting the app and doing the updates and the app will be gone on October 31, 2021. Based off the number of users per month the cost of a new developer would not cover it. It is worth noting the success, best mapped trail systems in the Country, all of the data is still available and is free for anyone to update their maps. He asked what they can do moving forward after decommissioning the map. They will be setting up a redirect from the website. They are looking at developing a high-quality sticker to cover the QR code on the kiosks to better develop the keys. They are looking at a social campaign to let the public know. They need to look at alternatives. They are actively pursuing another partner. He would like to know what the group thinks they cover the kiosks with. They should all keep their eye on the curation of the data.

Ochs stated that the winter thing is unique. Most people use Trail Forks and it would be a shame to see that go away. Sandstrom stated he has been talking to CB Nordic and Gunnison Nordic about options also. He is actively looking at what they are doing during the winter.

Kolodziej asked if there is an opportunity to reach out to the different projects to try and work with them to migrate some data over and have an agreement to get access to future data. Sandstrom stated all of the

data is there and anyone can pull it at any time. Sandstrom stated they need a platform to feed the data back out. They are pursuing potential partnerships with those groups.

Ochs stated that those apps are great and the groups are receptive to the information but winter is hard. Sandstrom asked how they can continue to get that data and get it into the apps. Kugler thinks pushing visitors to one app that has the most up to date information would make sense, even if they have a paywall. For the winter time mapping it isn't as complex as the summer mapping and asked if Sandstrom has reached out to Freed at Single Track maps, based out of Denver. Sandstrom said that it is easy to get paper maps and stated it gets trickier in the winter because people don't dive into the maps as much. Kugler stated they can create pdf maps that go online. Sandstrom said the pdf is a great fall back but an app would be great for real time. Lovelace asked if CoTrex has been a part of the conversation. Sandstrom said yes but they don't update that often.

Ochs stated that whatever sticker they use to cover the 42 kiosks needs to be durable.

Kolodziej asked what TAPP does with the information collected, what happens with the data and what their end goal is. Sandstrom stated that the goal was to get everyone to make the entire ride to get details of the full trail. That data was updated to the map.

HUNTER STEWARDSHIP CONSERVATION

Diamond stated that he appreciates the conversations on the apps. He is open to ideas, from a hunting standpoint. He thinks it will be a turbulent year for hunters to figure out what they are supposed to do. They can float the information on their social meeting and have maps available. They will have conversations with hunters in the field. They also are looking at the OnX Backcountry app and a lot of hunters have it on their phone already and he has been talking to them. They already have a trail and rec layer and they could add the campsites to that layer. He talked with Heminski at the Chamber today for hunter hospitality outreach. That will be opportunity to get the information on designated camping out there.

Sandstrom asked if that when they get their license if they get an email. Diamond stated that there is some opportunity to send blanket emails to go out for successful license holders but that they don't want to overwhelm them with multiple emails because they have emails that they need a response to. Houck asked if it would be a good idea to add it to the initial email that they got the license. Diamond wasn't sure because it is automated. Alexander asked if it would be better if it came from a different entity.

Lavorini stated that Josh Futterman has added stats to their website, Travel Crested Butte. They have pushed their ads out of the valley to hit up visitors coming here to let them know about the designated camping. Futterman went over the stats from their website. In terms of targeting those ads, they pushed their ads out of the valley and hit up visitors who could come to the Valley and notified them about the designated camping. Lavorini stated that the STOR Committee purchased advertising with TAPP. Futterman stated they have about 200,000 impressions with their ads across their media platforms. All of the ads have had links in them that lead back to the camping page to get the most updated information. They have sent 3,600 people to the website.

Voegeli stated that the OnX Backcountry app would be a great place to have all sites available to view for hunters and all other recreational users.

WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Carpenter reported that they had a great conversation on Wednesday about where they are at with the dump station. The phase they are in now, is they are doing a super diligence option and elimination of all the plants in the North Valley. There are four options. They are essentially working from the least complicated option that they could find, which is locating a plant directly next to a wastewater treatment facility. They will have a stepped process until they get to what would be the most complicated option, acquiring a piece of land through the private sector, which would include major utility extensions to reach

that piece of property. The next step is through the Assessor website to see if there are any public lands that surround those plants that they may be able to utilize with short utility extensions to a piece of land that is big enough. They talked to the point manager in Gunnison for their dump station project and one of their biggest problems has been getting enough of a turn radius that can fit the Class A vehicles. The next process will be to find a private piece of land but they won't go down that road until the other options have been looked at.

One of the main concerns is that they want to make sure they aren't offloading the problem from one neighborhood to a new neighborhood. There are still a lot of hurdles to jump through. No matter what, it will be an expensive project. They are still charging forward and doing their due diligence to find a place to put it.

Houck asked if there is an opportunity to put in more work and effort and leaving it where it is at. Carpenter stated that if the measures are working they can extend the sunshine date or take the date off completely. Houck asked what the level of complaints is now, compared to last year. Carpenter reported that the complaints are mainly from the people who live adjacent to the station.

Schappert asked if the Gunnison Sewer Plant update is still on track. Carpenter said it is and they are going to try and keep it online. Logan reported it is still on track and they approved a larger budget for the project because they are adding a water fill station. They are trying to have an alternative so it doesn't close completely.

GUNNISON STEWARDSHIP FUND STICKER CAMPAIGN

Logan reported that Lavorini and her have been communicating with Matt McCombs on the stewardship concept and how to encourage a continued membership for conservation to fund NFF and STOR Committee. The jumping off point would be the sticker that they would pay a yearly subscription. They are working on finalizing what it looks like. Ask the committee to think about their tagline. There are three options: public land owner, public land steward and public land defender.

Discussion followed on what would work best. Lavorini stated that they are hoping to get individuals through the campaign. The Tourism Association will be working on a video to tell a story of the STOR Committee. Hopefully this will help to raise the profile. The group liked "public land steward".

Schappert asked on the size and price. Logan stated they were possibly looking at \$25 and it would be 3x3. Ochs asked if it will be in retail settings. Lavorini stated yes and Ochs stated that if they could add it to a paper with the information so the retailer doesn't have to explain it. Lavorini stated that they could do that.

Lavorini stated that they should leave the ultimate decision to the Gunnison County Stewardship Fund Committee.

OPEN FORUM

Borden asked Houck about the State Park efforts by the IBAR ranch. Houck reported that he was called back by the initial committee it was going through and was told that pursuing the whole parcel together as a State Park is not a high priority, that the bigger interest is the river corridor and how to connect everything. Was told it could come back around but the goal was to get a couple of the for sure parks started now and then coming back.

Houck recommended that everyone drive through the Shady Island Park. It is free this year. They are working on doing the facilities. Borden asked if anyone can help and Houck stated that not at this time. He will bring any requests back to the Committee.

Lavorini stated that the open house for the Gunnison Area Forest Service Plan Revision will be September 28, 2021 for the Gunnison Ranger District via Zoom. He went to the Slate River Trailhead this

week and anticipates bringing the subcommittee together in the next couple of months. They had a meeting about the Economic Development Authority Grant to pursue some funding. The CB to CB South Trail subcommittee will meet in the next few weeks. The Waste management subcommittee will also meet in the next few weeks.

ADJOURN: The August 26, 2021 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Prepared by Rebecca Ricord, Community Development Administrative Assistant III