

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 28, 2021**

The September 23, 2021 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 and by Zoom virtual online meeting, Gunnison, CO, 81230.

Committee Members Present:

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

Others in Audience:

Aaron Drendel, USFS
Jack Morgan, STOR Corps
Dana Omasta, Great Outdoors of Colorado (GOCO)
Greg Austin
Bella Biondini
Janna Hansen, Town of Crested Butte
Nick Catmur
Pam King, USFS
Laura Daniels
Scott Clarkson
Brett Henderson
Mary Zimmerman
Emily Olsen- National Forest Foundation

Staff:

Joe Lavorini, Gunnison County Stewardship Coordinator-National Forest Foundation
Cathie Pagano, Community and Economic Development Director

CALL TO ORDER: Alexander called the October 28, 2021 meeting to order at 2:03 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 MINUTES: Moved: by Houck and seconded by Kugler to approve the September 23, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Alexander informed the committee that the guest speaker, Robin Brown from the Colorado Wildlife Council is in route and some agenda items will have to be rearranged.

DESIGNATED CAMPING UPDATE

Nick Catmur shared screen. Summer 2021 occupancy data. Slate River and Washington Gulch were the only sites that were in effect the whole summer.



This data was collected by CBCC, STOR and US Forest Service Interns. The information was collected at random times between 8am – 5 pm. Thursday through Monday. These numbers are fairly reliable in the fact that it is working well and not as busy as anticipated. Data is good stuff to keep an eye on and add sites if occupancy gets to 80-85%. Beneficial for an organization to do this as one of their higher priorities. Some sites take time to drive to and if they want to monitor regularly it is going to take a crew who is dedicated to the project. Final number of campsites for designated camping: Slate River 43 sites, Washington Gulch 47 sites, Brush Creek 41 sites, Kebler 36 sites, Cement Creek 26 sites, and Gothic 14 sites for a total of 207 sites. Alexander asked how many days total were campsites monitored. Total of 29 days between June 11th and September 20th. CBCC monitored 41 people not at designated sites. Jake Morgan was interested to hear from forest service about success. Matt McCombs commented that he measures success by absence or substantial complaints from the public. Favorable response from public. Public outreach was incredibly helpful. Preloading substantially changed expectations. Helped with sense of loss or sense of displacement to the public. Tim Kugler asked how these numbers helped with a reservation system from a forest perspective. Matt McCombs responded need someone to monitor and manage that process. Don't have the compacity to do that. Explore with Western novel idea sustainable funding mechanisms in place, doing it through a grant. Kimberly Schappert commented when she saw the numbers she wondered if there was a way to equate with the numbers that the subcommittee put together, an estimate of what could have been collected if we were collecting fees this summer. Schappert also commented that she felt from the last meeting that we were not going to implement fees next year. McCombs next year will not be charging fees. Matt explained the fees will go into place when we have all the amenities that we need in order to charge the fee and we have gone through the public engagement process that is required. Schappert commented that we were successful with STOR Corps this year. Are we going to be able to have then until we get through until forest service makes this official? Cathie Pagano commented they have worked out a funding plan through next year. No guaranteed revenue stream. There are opportunities. Nick Catmur stated that the CBCC is willing to carry on in the capacity that they did this summer. Infrastructure upkeep. Brandon Diamond appreciates information but

would like to circle back to marketing. Would like to encourage the committee to continue to discuss marketing. Keep it conservative.

INNOVATIVE FINANCE for NATIONAL FORESTS GRANT UPDATE

Scott Borden explained to the committee, we are very fortunate to have received innovated grant totaling \$150,000. Thank you to National Forest Foundation, National Forest Service, and STOR. The goal is to look at others models to create new models to generate revenue. This could be through private donations, cutting costs, or through many other ways. The first order is to get students in this fellowship. Total of 5 fellowships. The grant needs to be spent over a year. Notices have been sent out to all students interested. It is a very rigorous application. It will be a mix of students, environmental managers and outdoor industry business students. Students will look at new models and existing models. What do the projections look like? Scott Borden stated to the committee, if you have folks interested in participating, we would be interested. It is a \$20,000 fellowship. Alexander asked, what do you anticipate the end product looks like? Scott Borden commented that he imagines it as a suite of options, benefits and drawbacks. The criteria is community buy in, how much revenue can be generated, what is the capacity of the work force, etc. There are going to be different metrics and we will score the metrics. Matt McCombs shared that the forest service is open to innovations that allow engagement with other institutions, communities and non-profit groups, etc. to fill gaps. Joe Lavorini shared with the committee that he is excited this program is going to hit on the STOR strategic goals. Matt McCombs commented that this is a big deal in recreation. Only 11 awards were issued and it was the only award in the Rocky Mountain region.

GMUG FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE

Matt McCombs reminded the committee that the deadline for comments is the November 12th. Virtual open house was on the 28th. Since the open house there has been quite a few revisions. Story map development important part. The interface is on recreation settings, recreation opportunity spectrum which is important for both summer and winter travel planning, Way to move through different alternatives and understand how the different mixes occur. Cut up the landscape for managers and public is what the underlying goal is for recreation management. Way to inform yourself. There are story maps for Wilderness and Wild and Scenic as well. There is also a story map for management areas within the draft plan. Last open house story map introduction was last week in advance to comment deadline. There has been robust participation and feedback. There has been a high level of engagement between the counties. Did a little premier at the Upper Gunnison board meeting. If you can't get planning team to your meetings McCombs stated he will make himself available. He has read the plan through and has stayed up to date on the dialogue. Roman Kolodziei asked if there is a concern or complaint about the proposed plan that dominates the comments. Locally there are still challenges on how we are going to incorporate some of the community proposals. McCombs encouraged everyone to look at comment room, it is open. Joe Lavorini added that they have had special topics meetings with the planning team. All open houses and webinars are recorded you can check them out before comment. Matt Reed stated, the deeper I got into the ROS maps the more questions I had. Reed does not believe that this is something that will be completed before the comment deadline is over. Reed believes that it would behoove the Forest Service to keep the door open on that part. Matt McCombs commented that that is fair feedback. It is a complicated component to the planning process. Any feedback that comes in will be utilized. Roman Kolodziei asked with the new reality or seeing what the results were of visitations this summer, and seemingly less panic has it given you any pause or reflection on your plan? McCombs responded that the state of Colorado continues to grow insanely rapid. Gunnison County and the Western Slope Counties are going to continue to experience growth. Anything that we do now to structure our recreational paradigm will be in all of our best interest. Everything done to date has made a lot of sense. McCombs believes they are on the right track and aggressive management approach is suitable.

GUNNISON COUNTY STEWARDSHIP FUND UPDATE

Joe Lavorini presented on the Gunnison County Stewardship Fund.

Fund Partners:

Gunnison County Stewardship Fund Fund Partners



Biggest question asked is the available amount of funding for this year. Lavorini stated it is still to be determined. In 2021 allocated \$135,000 for 2 grants. Projection is it may be at that or maybe higher in 2022 funding cycle. Primary reason for that is Vail and CBMR doubled their contributions to the fund. Projects that have been funded:

Kiosk at West Marron Trailhead
Toilet at Washington Gulch
Shady Island River Park
Gunsight Trail & Crested Butte Land Trust
Crested Butte Conservation Corps
Gunnison Trails Professional Trail Crew

Project Criteria – Joe Lavorini commented that he will share the document with the STOR committee. He will send it out. It shows what types of projects are eligible. The National Forest Foundation manages the funds.

Earlier this year the stewardship committee added: seek to allocate 50% of annual funds to trail maintenance, construction, and improvement projects. Due to the demand and beatings the trails are taking. What other partners can we bring into the mix especially around youth involvement. Additional criteria added through the STOR committee and fund partners.

Timeline and how they see the process going. 2022 Funding Cycle timeline will be sent to STOR committee members. Look to STOR committee members to bring forward proposals and help prioritize. Lavorini is hoping for the STOR committee member to send him a brief few sentences describing the project they are interested in then he will work directly with the partner. Jake Jones asked how much raised and spent? Lavorini responded that it is close to \$400,000 over the past 4 years. Emily Olsen commented this is a model that a lot of people are looking at.

Matt McCombs shared with the committee about the Great American Outdoors Act and where the district is heading with the proposals. There were no proposals made for FY 23 on the Gunnison because we are completely loaded up with projects associated with the 21/22 awards. Initial stages of building a proposal for Taylor River Canyon for FY 24 to finally put to rest some of the challenges. If anyone has any feedback in that planning effort, please contact Matt McCombs.

COLORADO WILDLIFE COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Alexander introduced Robin Brown with the Colorado Wildlife Council. New job vice president for development. Volunteer not expert but advocate.

OUR MISSION:

The Colorado wildlife council, formed by the state legislature in 1998, was conceived and developed by a diverse coalition of conservationists, outdoor recreationalists, hunters, fishers, farmers, ranchers, and community leaders coming together to ensure a bright future for Colorado's wildlife.

By statute, the council's mission is to oversee the design of a public education program to inform the general public about the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing.

The Colorado Wildlife Council has a 9-member board. 2 members each from that are hunting representatives from east and west of the Continental Divide, 1 member that makes their living from the agriculture and livestock industry, 1 that represents the county and 1 from a municipality, a member that is a media/marketing expert and a member that represents Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Hug a hunter campaign was a big campaign and most familiar to people. 4 years ago, the committee hired new marketing agency. Polling and surveying on what people understood about hunting and fishing. Found that most do not know the connection. Working to move the dial on public perception. There are people who will never support hunting and fishing, and the group that knows all about it and we don't have to inform them. Then there is the 3rd group that is in between, need to educate them. They want to trust the organization that is telling them the information. CPW is very trusted. Less focus on hunters, people like a sense of humor. Other states have reached out for hug a hunter. A lot of people do not understand the economic development but were interested when you explain the economic impacts. They created a new campaign "This is Wild Life". Hired social media influencers and it is a huge success. TV ads during sporting events. Filmed mostly on front range and used locals. The campaign is measurable, if you watch the video you get a survey. At last board meeting talking more about stewardship. Whole new round of ads next year. Colorado wildlife council has 4 vacancies. The meetings are on front range. Question was asked, "How do you measure success" Robin Brown answered, "from surveys". The last 2 years, had outreach person set up booths with educational games. Make connection, education people, economical benefits, quality of life. These campaigns are more for awareness but there has been an uptick in licenses but it is not a direct impact from the campaigns. CPW added state wild life areas where you have to have a license, people did not like that, now it is an access pass. The council is governed by CPW. The council is limited on what they can and cannot talk about. Matt McCombs asked "what interaction do you have with land management agencies?" Most board members are connected with some other agency. The council is not directly involved with them, but there is overlap. There is a good budget, about 1.7 million budget this year but it is very specific.

OPEN FORUM

Scott Borden shared the Colorado outdoor rec office did move COILS, Colorado Outdoor Industry Leaders Summit, to May. It will be in Crested Butte. Trying to get STOR on a panel. Will need volunteers. Also, Scott Borden wanted to ask about Mergelman Pond. It is not in our strategic plan but it is in the Hartman's to Mergelman Pond Trail which is included in our strategic plan. It is a high impact area with beginner anglers. It looks like it has a lot of trash and there is no sign. Seems like an opportunity there with the beginner anglers for education. Cathie Pagano has talked to Marlene Crosby about it briefly. Maybe there is an opportunity to partner with Hartman's clean-up day. Pagano recommended not having a sub- committee. Houck suggested that a way to get after the cleanup is maybe connecting it with the white-water park clean up days.

Lavorini shared that there is a little bit of funding left from GOCO grants. One project is, next month the avalanche center is going to present on the beacon park in the Town of Crested Butte. The second project is getting a toilet at Brush Creek. The money has to be used by March 2022.

Sub committees' updates: Waste management committee which was formed to focus on the RV dump station, town staff is meeting with town council next week to have a work session and update them on the work that the sub committee has done up to this point.

Marlene Hall wanted passed along is Colorado Mountain climb hosting training on December 11th 2:00 pm in Crested Butte.

Jake Jones updated the group on the Slate river working group. The group meets twice a year. The group was to mitigate the impacts of recreation on wildlife, specifically in the Upper Slate River area from Gunsight bridge to where Hwy 135 crosses the river near Brush Creek Road. Just completed 4 years of research, 3 years of on the ground stewardship. The goal was to encourage, through education, boaters to observe voluntary no float time for birds. Progress has been made through the group. It has been proposed that the group expands its scope of work and keep it intact.

Joe Lavorini asked if you have any agenda ideas, please let him know.

Houck a topic that came up for discussion for Gunnison county was the use Hartman's in winter. Plowing to the back-parking area by the bathrooms. The County will speak to BLM to see if the road service can be widened for 2 vehicles. It continues to get more use, nice amenity for winter use.

Next meeting is at the courthouse, a week earlier. November 18th.

ADJOURN: The October 23, 2021 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 3:58 PM.

Prepared by Shannon Frias, Community Development