

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2021**

The December 16, 2021 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted in the Board of County Commissioner Board Room, 2nd floor meeting room, located at 221 N. Wisconsin, Gunnison, CO, 81230 and by Zoom virtual online meeting, Gunnison, CO, 81230.

Committee Members Present:

Kevin Alexander, Chair
Hedda Peterson, MetRec
Kimberly Schappert, At-Large Community
Member
Brandon Diamond, CPW
Hannah Cranor, Stockgrowers' Association
Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails
Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike
Association
Roman Kolodziej, Mount Crested Butte Town
Council

Matt McCombs, USFS
Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison
Jake Jones, Crested Butte Land Trust
Mark Voegeli, CBMR
James Lovelace, BLM
Joellen Fonken, UGRWCD
Matt Reed, High Country Conservation
Advocates
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism
Association

Others in Audience:

Ben Graves, The Nature Connect
Barrett Funka, The Nature Connect
Joey Carpenter, Town of Crested Butte
Troy Russ, CB Community Compass
Dayle Funka, USFS
Tammy Randall Parker
Mel Yemma
Bella Biondini
Rob Strickland
Matthew Merritt
Greg Austin

Staff:

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

CALL TO ORDER: Alexander called the December 16, 2021 meeting to order 2:05 at P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF November 18, 2021 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Schappert and seconded by Jones to approve the November 18, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously. Matt Reed and Mallory Logan abstained

The next meeting will be January 27, 2021.

THE NATURE CONNECTION INTRODUCTION

Ben Graves introduced himself to the committee as co- director of the Nature Connection from Delta County. Barrett Funka introduced himself to the committee as the Recreation Program Manager for the Paonia Fire District. Graves explained it is a collaborative coalition mostly based in Delta County. The goal is to break down barriers to getting outside for kids and families. The coalition was formed in 2017 through a GOCO initiative inspired by Generation Wild. Nature Connection was 1 of 15 initial coalitions and recently re-authorized through 2025. Primarily work out of Delta County school district. They are not an independent 501 3 C. All are Delta School District Employees. Built single track trails, river front trails, playground modification. Main focus is outdoor recreation for kids. There are youth programs for high schoolers that are internships. All activities were founded from a survey in Delta County, students and parents. Roughly 4000 surveys. Partners are GOCO, Delta School District, Western Colorado Community Foundation, Delta County, Western Slope Conservation Center, CPW, and USFS.

The specific project is in partnership with Paonia Ranger District:

Barrett Funka explained the project. Paonia Ranger District has 480,000 acres and 365,000 are in Gunnison County, 76%. Areas in Gunnison County are Kebler Pass Trails and Proposed Crested Butte-Carbondale Trail.

History of youth engagement with the Forest Service. Forest Service started this approximately 5 years ago. Youth conservation core designed to get Delta County kids working on the forest. With the pandemic there was a break in funding. The Forest Service is no longer funding the project. Finally partnered with the National Forest Foundation to get matching funds. Rebuild the program.

Trail crew focus on back country. There is one permanent recreation staff. 277 miles of trails in 2 wilderness areas. Routine maintenance is needed, increase in backcountry users.

There are few pathway opportunities for local youth. They lack experience and gear. As well as other institutional barriers.

Trail work Goals:

- address maintenance backlog
- improve accessibility

Youth Development Goals:

- To empower diverse local youth with the skills, experience and mentoring necessary to embark on a pathway into natural resource and outdoor careers.

Objectives:

- Hire and train 2 young adult leaders
- Hire and Train 4 youth to work 10 weeks this summer.
- Crews will complete 10 weeks of backcountry projects

2022 Projects

1. Update **signage and reroutes on the Three Lakes Loop**
2. **Build connector trail** from Beckwith Pass Trailhead to Lost Lake Day Use Area
3. **Annual maintenance** on:

○ Dark Canyon	○ Silver Basin
○ North Anthracite	○ Oh-Be-Joyful Pass
○ Ruby Anthracite	○ Munsey-Ruby
4. Dry-laid retaining wall on **Dark Canyon Trail**
5. Annual maintenance and drainage repair on **Throughline and Little Robinson Trails**

2021 Trail Data

- Over **2000 hours** of service to the National Forest System
- **133.5 Miles Addressed** (brushed, benched, checked for hazards)
- **255 logs (over 6"DBH)** cleared from trail **by traditional tools**
- **9 way-finding signs** installed/replaced (including a new kiosk at Erickson Springs.)
- **50 feet of buck-and-rail barrier** fence at HRP
- **3 low water stream crossings** constructed of rock
- **1 dry stack rock retaining wall**
- **660 ft of trail reroute**
- **Hundreds** of visitor contacts!



Funka explained that they do not treat the program as a camp. It is a job. They get paid minimum wage and work 10-hour days. They are provided all the gear. Successful in getting the work done and creating awesome experience.

Reed asked about building a connector trail. It is being reviewed through NEPA now. It is a .1-mile trail from a parking lot to a parking lot.

Alexander asked if the youth they will hire would be from Delta County. Graves answered that it is their demographics.

Graves stated that volunteering is difficult in low income communities. Most kids need to work/minimum wage.

Lavorini brought group back up to speed. Nature Connection is requesting funds through the Gunnison Stewardship Fund. There were 7 proposals for funds this year. We have \$300,000 in requests and \$200,000 to fund. No decisions will be done today. It will be done at the January 27th meeting.

CRESTED BUTTE COMMUNITY COMPASS

Troy Russ shared what the Crested Butte Community Compass is. It is the Town of Crested Butte's comprehensive plan. Comprehensive Plans are important part of legal process of setting up policy and making regulations. The vision will lead to regional coordination and maybe some IGA's. Most importantly from the towns perspective it will lead to specific area plans, code amendments and corridor plans. Community Compass is intergrading the traditional conference plan pieces with the decision-making framework.

Community Compass is different from the One Valley Prosperity Project which was a successful strategic plan. Compass is more of a decision framework and designed to resolve conflicts. Help council make decisions.

The project is in its infancy.

- Phase I October – January – Learn from the Community
- Phase II January – April – Work with Partners
- Phase III April – June – Develop the Plan

Looking for initial reactions today. What can Compass do to help STOR? What are the biggest opportunities facing Crested Butte? What would you like to see discussed during Compass?

There have been 2 webinars. They are on the Compass website.

The next meeting will be January 12, 2022 and it will be on mobility and connecting the community.

The issues that Compass are hearing about are:

- Transportation
- Recreation.
- Corridor plan
- TAP and sustainable tourism

Compass intent is to have an outreach strategy. Only collecting feedback, it is not a regional plan. The plan is only going to be developed within a 3-mile radius.

CBLT GCSF PROJECT PROPOSAL

Jake Jones presented the Crested Butte Land Trust project proposal.

Project Proposal – Crested Butte Land Trust

The Crested Butte Land Trust is requesting \$12,000 in funding from the NFF Gunnison County Stewardship Fund to support the following improvements to sustainability at recreational sites near Crested Butte:

1. Long Lake: \$5000 is requested to improve trails, mitigate erosion, restore damaged vegetation, install informational signage and other amenities, and improve accessibility for all users.
2. Peanut Lake Road winter signage: In partnership with CB Nordic, \$4000 is requested for updates to informational and directional signage along CR 4 during winter months for users of groomed Nordic ski trails on CB Land Trust parcels.
3. Parking areas: \$3000 is requested for materials to construct parking area delineation fences in order to better clarify parking area locations and prevent resource damage from the migration of parking into natural areas. These split-rail, zig zag style fences will be installed at recreation site parking areas at Peanut Mine, Long Lake and Slate River Road trailhead.



Norton asked if this would finish work at Peanut Lake. Jones responded that he believes it would.

McCombs asked if the \$3000 includes the wood materials. Jones responded that it does.

Peterson asked if the signage at Peanut Lake Road is the signage for this year or next year. Jones responded, next year.

Schappert presented the BLM proposal:

Project Proposal – BLM

1. Permanent toilet to replace the Porta Potty at the top of Kill Hill Rd just beyond the kiosks

Estimated cost: \$45-\$65,000 depending on whether we install a one or two holer.
Given the popularity of camping and general traffic, a larger toilet would better serve the growing needs of that area.

2. Camp Host to be employed at least during the shoulder seasons when the most visitation and impacts occur

Estimated cost: \$30,000

There has been difficulty getting legitimate candidates for this position due to the hardships of off-the-grid camping over long periods, the lag time between work and actual payout of the \$35/day stipend (sometimes takes months), and the workload required of the position. This money would augment the BLM budget, bypass lag time for payout, and begin to approach a living wage for the host.

3. Assessment

Estimated cost: \$30,000

There are campsites already targeted for relocation or removal and an updated inventory would be helpful to insure that any work done is in keeping with a broader look to the future. For example, clustering campsites around facilities to better serve users and mitigate impacts to the resource. In addition, pinpoint a permanent camp host campsite location that would include solar panels, cell reception, a covered shade/weather structure with lockable storage for supplies and bikes, and a UTV for patrols. Not only would these improvements enhance the success of the host's work, they would also give a clear message to users that BLM is serious about the stewardship of Hartmans.

Lovelace stated that of the 3 items that are listed the restroom facility that was specifically called for on the Hartman plan. There would need to be some environmental assessment. Of the 3 the toilet facility is the most pressing and long-term need. Creating a camp host for Hartman is problematic. They would like to hit the ground running and have someone there in the spring when Hartman's is busiest.

Alexander asked if the order that Schappert listed the requests, could that be considered the priority list? Lovelace stated he thinks so.

Alexander explained that the committee is not voting today. Each group will submit a letter of interest and the January 27th meeting is important. Plan on looking at requests.

Schappert asked Ben Graves what their asking amount was. Ben stated \$50,000.

STOR COMMITTEE TERM LIMITS, GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO FELLOWSHIP, TAPP BLOG SERIES, CBCBS SUPPORT LETTERS

Lavorini told the committee that the STOR committee member vacancies were in the paper. There were 5 Vacancies. The 5 seats are Dave Ochs, Matt Reed, Kimberly Schappert, Christie Hicks, and Kevin Alexander that will expire February 1, 2022. There is an online form that is due Monday, December 27th. Pagano asked that if they are not going to renew to please let them know.

GOCO, received a grant for \$150,000 to hire a fellow. It starts in June of 2022. It is a 2-year fellowship. The pay competitive. STOR is partnering with GOCO. There will be more information when they begin looking and a job description is created.

Schappert asked what the official title of that position will be. Lavorini responded that it is a GOCO fellowship and that STOR will work with Western Colorado University and GOCO to create a title.

The CBCBS subcommittee has been meeting and working on the planning grant application. The application is due the end of December. Lavorini spoke wawith many STOR members for letters of support to CBCBS. GOCO encourages letters of support and they also ask for creativity on the support.

TAPP blog series received funding through the State. They have upgraded their website. They are dedicating more space to STOR. They would like to start a blog and feature STORC members. Lavorini stated that a blog calendar and roster.

At the last meeting funding was approved for the Crested Butte Avalanche Center for the Jeff Schneider Memorial Beacon Park.

\$4600 for equipment

\$2700 for signage and installation

Lavorini informed the committee that Scott Borland is asking for signage at Merkleman Pond. He is asking for up to \$1000.

Jones informed the committee that CBLT is working with Gunnison County Public Works to design signage for the Slate River winter trail head. Gunnison County has been plowing to that point for years. On both sides of the county road is conserved land that does not allow motor vehicles. When the land was purchased for conservation a conservation easement was placed that allowed 8000 sq. ft. of improved parking. A project was started to optimize the trail head. Working now to improving signage, trucks and trailers on one side and cars on the other side.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

McCombs updated the committee on transition. Dayle Funka will be interim until a permanent ranger is hired. The forest supervisor, Chad Stewart, is content on filling the position. The position could be filled and in place by early March if there are applicants.

Tammy Randall Parker is committed to actively participating in STOR meetings until someone replaces McCombs.

Funka will add continuity in the interim.

McCombs last day is January 2nd and first day at the state is January 3rd. McCombs thanked everyone for working with him.

ADJOURN: The December 16, 2021, 2021 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Prepared by Shannon Frias, Community Development, Administrative Assistant III