

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2022**

The December 15, 2022 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted in person and by Zoom virtual online meeting, Gunnison, CO, 81230.

Committee Members Present:

Jake Jones, Chair, Crested Butte Land Trust
Kimberly Schappert, Vice Chair, At-Large
Community Member
Dave Ochs, At Large Member
Matt Reed, High Country Conservation Advocates
Roman Kolodziej, Town of Mount Crested Butte
Emily Nutgrass, USFS
Jonathan Houck, BOCC
Steve Guerrieri, Stockgrowers

Tim Kugler, At-Large Member
Derek Nehrenberg, MetRec
John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism
Ian Billick, Town of Crested Butte
James Lovelace, BLM
Scott Borden, WCU
Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison
Brandon Diamond, CPW

Others in Audience:

Morgan Anderson
Sue Uerling
Joey Carpenter
Paul Rivera
Emily Nutgrass

Staff:

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

CALL TO ORDER: Jake Jones called the December 15, 2022 meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

Emily Nutgrass, USFS and Paul Rivera, GOCO introduced themselves.

MINUTE APPROVAL: Moved to approve by Dave Ochs seconded by John Norton to approve the minutes as presented. Passed unanimously. Steve Guerrieri abstained.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

The next meeting will be January 26, 2023

Brief Updates:

Gunnison Fund Lodging Letter

Joe Lavorini informed the committee that they had a great response. They reached out to all lodges and some property managers. Looking forward to bringing on additional lodges. Guests contribute and have a say. Put contributions in the hands of those contributing. Donor Advised Fund is what it is called. It would be good to have those contributing to have a say. John Norton stated they are on their way to increase the funding. Schappert asked about the advertising. Lavorini responded that they have not got there yet. It will be a focus in the new year. Jones stated that there is an opportunity for the visitors to have contribute and have a say. Lavorini shared the letter and stated he will send it out.

Future Agenda Items:

Gunnison County Stewardship Fund (NFF):

Stewardship Messaging Campaign (Mt. Crested Butte):

Innovative Finance for National Forests (WCU):

Winter Trailhead Restrooms:

Jones asked if anyone had anything else to add to the list. Billick stated that when speaking of winter trailheads, he would like to look at them in a bigger context including spring avalanches.

Roman Kolodziej stated that Scott Clarkson from the chamber approached the Town of Mt. Crested Butte about a campaign which they would continue the efforts of the Covid critter and work on unmasking those and have a more "boots on the ground" approach to responsible use in the valley. Request from Scott Clarkson is to get on the January agenda.

Jake Jones asked if there is any opposition to adding that to the agenda. There was no opposition.

Roman Kolodziej asked if there was any discussion regarding stewardship funding support.

Joe Lavorini commented that in the next week or so they are going to send out requests for project proposals for the next funding cycle.

Jonathan Houck suggested that the voters passed the LMD. One item called out is recreational infrastructure. Houck suggested that the board work with STOR on how to utilize some of that funding, How do they use some of that funding to leverage and open new opportunities for more money? Houck would like to make sure that is added to a future agenda. Lavorini asked if that would be 2024 budget. Houck responded yes.

Derek Nehrenberg stated that capital construction is part of the ballet passing of 6B. It is going to take time for MetRec to figure it out, but at some point, it would be nice for MetRec to give an update to the STOR committee on the recreational funding.

Thompson Divide Mineral Withdrawal:

There are some concerns of names of specific agencies going on the letter. Jake Jones reminded the committee that the letter will have his name on it as chair. What they are trying to accomplish is a consensus support of the group.

Matt Reed shared a letter to the committee

Matt Reed presented:

The what and where:

The Thompson Divide: What & Where

The Thompson Divide is a spectacular landscape of a quarter of a million acres of public land in western Colorado. It stretches west from Carbondale and south from Glenwood Springs into the North Fork Valley east of Paonia, and continues south over Kebler Pass and towards Crested Butte.

Included in the Thompson Divide Mineral Withdrawal Area are federal lands in Gunnison County, including the Upper North Fork, the iconic Kebler Pass landscape along County Road 12, and the Ohio Pass corridor.

Also included in the proposed withdrawal area are **federal lands surrounding Mt. Emmons**.

What is an administrative withdrawal:

What is An Administrative Withdrawal?

- In 2013, after hearing resounding support for protection of the Thompson Divide, Sen. Michael Bennet introduced the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act. Now part of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act - first introduced in 2019 by Sen. Bennet and Congressman Neguse - this federal legislation would permanently withdraw the Thompson Divide Area from future oil and gas leasing and mining.
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) authorizes the Department of the Interior (DOI) to withdraw – subject to valid, existing rights – lands from all forms of (1) entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws; (2) location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.
- On October 12, 2022, President Biden announced the BLM and USFS would be moving forward with a request to administratively withdraw 225,000 acres of the Thompson Divide from future oil and gas leasing, as well as **mining**, under FLPMA.

Who is supporting a Mineral Withdrawal for the Thompson Divide?

Who Has Supported a Mineral Withdrawal for the Thompson Divide?

Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado
Gunnison County Board of Commissioners
Town of Crested Butte
Town of Mt. Crested Butte
Town of Paonia
The Mountain Pact (Support from 17 towns, including Gunnison)
Gunnison Energy
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
International Mountain Bicycling Association
Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Trout Unlimited
Solar Energy International
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Trust for Public Land
Thousands of Individuals and Businesses
And Many, Many More!



How long has the community been seeking protection for Mt. Emmons/Red Lady?

How Long Has the Community Been Seeking Protection for Mt. Emmons/Red Lady?

- HCCA was founded in 1977 to protect the community from a proposed molybdenum mine on Mt. Emmons.



- A 2016 Memorandum of Intent (MOI) and a 2021 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Mt. Emmons Mining Co. (MEMC), Gunnison County, and the Town of Crested Butte established a broad framework to work towards a mineral withdrawal and end the threat of mining on Mt. Emmons.

How can STOR Committee support this effort?

How Can the STOR Committee Support This Effort?

There is broad and deep support for a mineral withdrawal for the Thompson Divide Area, including lands surrounding Mt. Emmons. Recognizing this, in October the BLM and USFS submitted a joint withdrawal petition and application to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. Secretary Haaland's approval of the petition and publication of a notice in the Federal Register initiated a process during which the USFS and BLM will seek public comment and conduct a science-based environmental analysis.

We are currently in a 90-day comment period for the BLM that concludes on January 16, 2023, and the USFS will be initiating a similar comment period soon. HCCA requests that the STOR Committee approve, sign, and submit the BLM comment letter that is included in your materials for this meeting.

Kim Schappert asked what will happen with the comments? Jonathan Houck explained the comment period structure.

Jonathan Houck stated that the Thompson divide act is supported by Garfield County, Gunnison County, and Pitkin County. The general sense is that the Thompson Divide is a productive water shed and putting oil and gas there would be detrimental. Goal is to get the 20-year protection in place and continue to work

on the withdrawal. Ian Billick stated that the Town of Crested Butte has been working on this for many years. There are a lot of things that need to come together to make this work and this is just one of them.

Ian Billick asked if STOR decides to endorse this if another topic comes up how do we maintain continuity. Helpful when someone comes on to the committee, there is something that can be looked at to show what the committee has endorsed? Jake Jones responded we are again taking minutes.

Steve Guerrieri asked if the letter is going to fit in the charter of STOR? Kim Schappert responded that it is a part of recreation. Cathie Pagano responded enumerated items of the charter, #7 states the committee will submit unified comments on recreation projects and/or related federal planning processes.

Matt Reed reminded the committee that on the other side of Kebler Pass, where the bulk of this withdrawal proposal is, is the state's largest operating coal mine. This is not all or nothing. This is striking a balance. Jonathan Houck stated that this is geographical specific to this time.

Joe Lavorini responded to Ian Billick and Roman Kolodziej request for documentation that describes previous STOR conversations – Would a memo suffice? Billick responded that what would be helpful is a list for the last 2-3 years that shows the actions that have been taken, letters of support and it included opposition and concerns. Cathie Pagano stated that this topic needs to be have some thought put into it and think how it could be done efficiently but effectively.

Joe Lavorini pointed out that Jake Jones name is the only name on the letter. At the bottom of the letter is an explanation of STOR. The committee will vote and they are looking for consensus, not looking to add names. Ian Billick moved to approve the support letter from STOR for the proposed Thompson Divide Administrative Mineral Withdrawal. Jonathan Houck seconded. Those that abstained are Forest Service, CPW, BLM There were no objections. The motion to approve the support letter passed unanimously.

STOR Committee Stakeholder Assessment Findings:

Joe Lavorini shared a snapshot of the Implantation Strategy & Timeline. Showing what has been completed, what is ongoing, and what is upcoming.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY & TIMELINE

With the support of a STORC Strategic Planning Committee, we will accomplish the following:

1. **COMPLETE:** August 25th, 2022: **Existing Strategic Plan Review:** What have we accomplished? What is left to be accomplished?
2. **ONGOING:** December 15, 2022: **New Strategic Plan Approach:** What new priorities to include in the next strategic plan?
3. **COMPLETE:** August 25th & September 22nd, 2022: **Stakeholder Assessment Creation:** STORC develops questions for the Stakeholder Assessment
4. **COMPLETE:** September 22nd, 2022: **Strategic Planning Committee:** Ask for 1-3 volunteers to conduct the stakeholder assessment and lead the next strategic planning effort.
5. **COMPLETE:** September–October: **Stakeholder Assessment:** Strategic Planning Committee interviews STORC members to Discover Current Conditions and Knowledge
6. **UPCOMING:** December 2022: **Assessment Report:** Report on Current Conditions and Knowledge
7. **UPCOMING:** September 2022 – February 2023: **Strategic Plan 2023-2025:** Establish priorities for the next 3 years

Lavorini shared information about the Stakeholders Assessments:

Assessment approach:

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The STOR Committee worked with Gunnison County and National Forest Foundation (NFF) staff to define the interview questions. In most cases, the NFF staff person was joined by one or two other STOR Committee members. All interviews were anonymous – nothing in this report is attributed directly to a specific stakeholder. Interviews were recorded by NFF staff to reference in the development of this report.

The purpose of this assessment was to:

1. Assess what is working well and what structural and functional changes are needed to improve STOR's ability to meet its mission and goals.
1. Explore opportunities to engage with state and federal agencies, and other external interests, on issues that impact stakeholders in Gunnison County.
2. Outline potential next steps to implement improvements for the structure and function of STOR.

The questions were broken down into 3 different buckets, people, process, and content.

Recommendations by each category:

People:

PEOPLE	Committee Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the structure and operation of STOR Committee and determine whether changes are needed to streamline operations. 2. Revitalize subcommittees to address strategic priorities. Subcommittees can include membership, funding, agency, and issues. 3. Develop approach for sustaining consistent engagement. 4. Maintain the chair/vice chair function. 5. Retain professional facilitation.
	Stakeholder Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Ensure that the STOR Committee is addressing the foremost priorities of its membership. 7. Create framework from which to view every STOR agenda item (Ex: Gunnison Council Strategic Criteria)

Process:

PROCESS	Decision Making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinforce, and potentially revise for clarity, consensus-based decision-making process.
	Issue Identification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revisit, refine, or develop criteria and an approach for identifying and selecting appropriate substantive topics. 2. Ensure framing of issue is appropriate, feasible, and addresses any potential conflicts or external influence. 3. Establish an emerging issues subcommittee. 4. Establish subcommittees based on priorities of FY23-25 Strategic Plan.
	STOR Systems	<p><u>Continue to:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operate as a broad and diverse stakeholder body to provide a unified voice in Gunnison County. 2. Support communications and coordination among stakeholders. 3. Work toward sound, acceptable science, and information. <p><u>Enhance capacity to:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and support federal and state issues/initiatives. 2. Identify, facilitate, and discuss emerging issues in the region. 3. Help build federal and community relationships around Gunnison County issues. 4. Conduct public outreach and education on relevant Gunnison County issues.
	Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a file sharing system for STOR Committee to access documents. 2. Host meetings in the field and in the north valley. 3. Publish quarterly updates/press releases and maintain strong relationship with local media.

Content:

CONTENT	Future of STOR	1. Maintain the current mission of STOR, allowing for regular review of goals.
	Funding	1. Reassess goals, vision, anticipated activities, and related support costs to establish anticipated funding needs. 2. Diversify STOR Committee involvement in fundraising activities. 3. Support federal and state initiatives. 4. Frame the value of the Gunnison County Stewardship Fund.
	Government Agency Involvement	1. Continue to explore partnership opportunities with local, state, and federal agencies. 2. Support outreach and education on county-wide issues. 3. Establish and communicate a process to federal agencies to explore partnership opportunities and to ask for support on initiatives. 4. Develop guidance for federal and state agencies to engage with STOR.

Joe Lavorini stated that he will share the complete report.

Timeline, Goals, and Discussion Questions:

Timeline	Goal	Discussion Questions
Immediate	Galvanize membership	1. Can all stakeholders commit to continuing involvement in STOR? 2. What issues should STOR work on that are feasible and impactful? 3. What are other activities that the STOR Committee can address which are beneficial to the group, AND will help build good will and trust?
Within the next 3 months	Develop a path forward	4. Which activities (including milestones, roles/responsibilities, and barriers) are necessary for the group to move forward? (strategic planning)
3 months and beyond	Strengthen the organization	5. What are the priority issues related to people, process, and content? 6. What are some strategies for addressing each of these issues?

Next Steps:

- Identify new STOR committee priorities (12.15.22)
- Crosswalk existing and new STOR committee priorities (1.26.23)
- Finalize STOR committee strategic plan (2.23.23)

STOR Committee Strategic Plan – GOALS

Goal 1 – Ensure the Valley’s tourism sector of the economy is resilient, vibrant, and supports our economy.

Goal 2 –Foster a resident and visitor culture that demonstrates respect for our community, culture and environmental stewardship.

Goal 3- Support collaboration between federal land agencies, local government, nonprofit, and user groups to improve management of recreation and natural resources.

Goal 4- Be productive in management of private and public natural and recreation assets to minimize degradation and enhance quality.

Joe Lavorini asked the committee to look at the goals and think about what strategic outcomes they would want. What is missing? Strategic outcome. Actionable, smart goals.

BE SMART

Specific (Simple, Sensible, Significant)
Measurable (Meaningful, Motivating)
Achievable (Agreed, Attainable)
Relevant (Reasonable, Realistic, Results-Based)
Time Bound (Time-Based, Time-Limited, Timely)

STOR Committee Strategic Planning:

Discussion using jam board/ sticky notes:

Lavorini asked the committee to brainstorm and using the sticky notes add ideas of what strategic outcomes would align with each goal.

Jake Jones asked what the next steps are. Joe Lavorini responded that members can continue to make comments on the jam board. Lavorini will put together old strategic plan, and new strategic plan priorities and present at the next meeting.

ADJOURN: The December 15, 2022 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 4:02 pm.

Prepared by Shannon Frias, Community Development, Administrative Assistant III