

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2023**

The January 26, 2023 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	Mark Voegli, CBMR
Kimberly Schappert, Vice Chair, At-Large Community Member	Gabi Prochaska, Town of Crested Butte
Dave Ochs, At Large Member	Dayle Funka, USFS
Tim Kugler, At-Large Member	Celeste Helminski, At-Large Member
Derek Nehrenberg, MetRec	James Lovelace, BLM
Matt Reed, High Country Conservation Advocates	Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison
Roman Kolodziej, Town of Mount Crested Butte	Brandon Diamond, CPW
Laura Puckett Daniels, BOCC	
Steve Guerrieri, Stockgrowers	
Ian Billick, Town of Crested Butte	

Others in Audience:

Morgan Anderson	Abigail Harrison
Joey Carpenter	Ben Graves
Mike Horn	Scott Clarkson
Beverly Richards	
Bob Goettge	
Eli Smith	
Barrett Funka	

Staff:

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

CALL TO ORDER: Jake Jones called the January 26, 2023 meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

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

MINUTE APPROVAL: Moved to approve by Derek Nehrenberg seconded by Ian Billick to approve the December 15, 2022 minutes as revised. Passed unanimously. Laura Puckett Daniels abstained

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as presented.

The next meeting will be February 23, 2023

Brief Updates:

- New Appointments – Laura Puckett Daniels introduced herself. New Commissioner. She is replacing Jonathan Houck on the committee
- Tourism Management Grant – This grant was applied for last year and it was denied. The reason was the application was a little disjointed. It is a marketing matching grant. Deadline is March 22nd and the maximum is \$20,000.
- Jake Jones updated the committee on the Crested Butte Land Trust. Closed on a conservation easement, north valley, 107 acres, critical wetlands. A mile up Slate River. Big game habitat, fish habitat and Nordic skiing.
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife- Brandon Diamond updated the committee about the Gold Medal designation. The local rivers have met the gold medal standards for a long time. Based on pounds per acre that they can sustain as well as certain length of fish. 60 lbs per acre of fish and 12 fish over 14 inches per acre. The Taylor and Gunnison rivers have met the gold standard for a long time but there has been a reluctance to put our rivers in the spotlight because they are already busy. Recently there was a push by different groups, Trout Unlimited is 1. The CPW had a meeting in Colorado Springs and it was an agenda item. Portions of the Taylor River and the Gunnison River will be named a Gold Standard River. With the gold medal designation comes a little more protection and enhancing the fisheries. Jake Jones asked what happens to the regulations of the river. Diamond stated there may not be any immediate changes to the regulations, change to regulations is not automatic. Schappert asked about the increased protection. How does that happen? Diamond responded that the biologists will continue to monitor the regions as they have for years. Jones asked if the gold designation went from tail water of the Taylor River dam to the Twin Bridges. Diamond stated that that was correct. Billick asked if they have looked at instream flow protections? Brandon stated that our local water users have contributed to the gold medal designation. Kolodziej asked how does the use in recent years flow and fishing later in the summer effect the status? Diamond stated that if they detect temp or flow issues that need to be address, whether gold metal or not they deal with the issues as needed. Kolodziej asked how much of the river is going through private property? Diamond stated that a fair amount goes through private property. Reed asked if anyone is proactively looking at any other rivers in the county for future designation? Diamond said there are a few other designations. Jim Lovelace asked if the gold metal stretch that runs from Almont to the Twin Bridges runs through a lot private and city property and not much Federal lands. He wanted to know if there are any ongoing discussions on potential permitting entity on that stretch? Diamond stated that that has been talked about for years.

Joe Lavorini updated the committee that CPW will be hosting a summit in in April in Winter Park. This is for the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and Regional Partnership Initiative. If anyone is interested in that summit they can contact Joe Lavorini.

Crested Butte Chamber: Stewardship Marketing Campaign:

Scott Clarkson director of Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Chamber shared a power point. They are looking to reinvent for the CB/Mt. CB Chamber of Commerce for a Chamber of tomorrow. How a chamber functions today.

They have 2 different camps – the chamber operations and the visitors center operations.

They see 30 – 40,000 visitors a year. Opportunity to intercept and engage.

Proposal

Develop and implement a **Stewardship campaign** that serves the towns of Crested Butte and **Mt. Crested Butte** and local stewardship leadership groups **STOR, CBMBA/CBCC, TAPP, USFS.**

Intercept visitors with stewardship messaging **before they reach a trailhead**, river put-in or public lands

Commission (5) **wildlife-inspired illustrations** by local artist **John Fellows**

Craft **stewardship messaging** and aspirational **calls to action** that meet people on **common ground**

Rebrand the CB/Mt. CB Chamber's **physical spaces** to reflect the **look** and **messaging** of the campaign

Produce **signage, posters** (print + digital/social), **ads** and related deliverables

Coordinate **production** and **placements** with Chamber, towns and vendors

Re-skin **Chamber website** to reflect **stewardship** campaign colors and fonts

Why this campaign?

Creates a sense of **arrival** and entry to one of the world's most incredible **natural environments.**

Inspires **visitors** (and **locals**) to be mindful of their **impacts** on our **community** and **environment.**

Builds on the **strengths** and **familiarity** of the '**Covid Critters**' communications **campaign.**

Aligns with core values identified in the **CB Community Compass: Authentic | Connected | Accountable | Bold**

Aligns with **Mt. CB Strategic Plan**

Aligns with current **TAPP messaging** used to attract visitors to the destination.

Why this campaign?

Aligns with:

Town of Mt. Crested Butte's Strategic Plan

ENVIRONMENT: Take deliberate action to develop and advertise policies and projects that promote community-wide environmental **stewardship.**

Town of Crested Butte's Community Compass

Retain the unique character and traditions of Crested Butte.

Continue to passionately care for our natural surroundings and forever protect Red Lady.

Evaluate the Town's funding of visitor education to promote **stewardship.**

STOR Strategic Plan

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

Goal 2: Foster resident and **visitor culture demonstrates respect** for our community, culture & 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 proactive** in management of private and public natural and recreation assets to minimize degradation and enhance quality.

"We're all in this together"

Why this campaign?

Preserve our **communities** and **wild places** for the benefit of present and future **generations.**

We **love** where we live.

Tourism drives our **economy.**

Tourism has both positive and negative **impacts** on the **community** and **natural resources.**

We seek to **manage tourism** by proactively **engaging** with **visitors.**

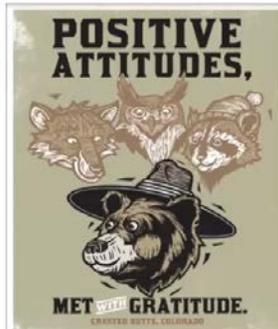
Education and **outreach** can **minimize** the negative impacts and **accentuate** the positive ones.

The Chamber has direct contact with **30,000 visitors** each year with opportunity to **educate.**

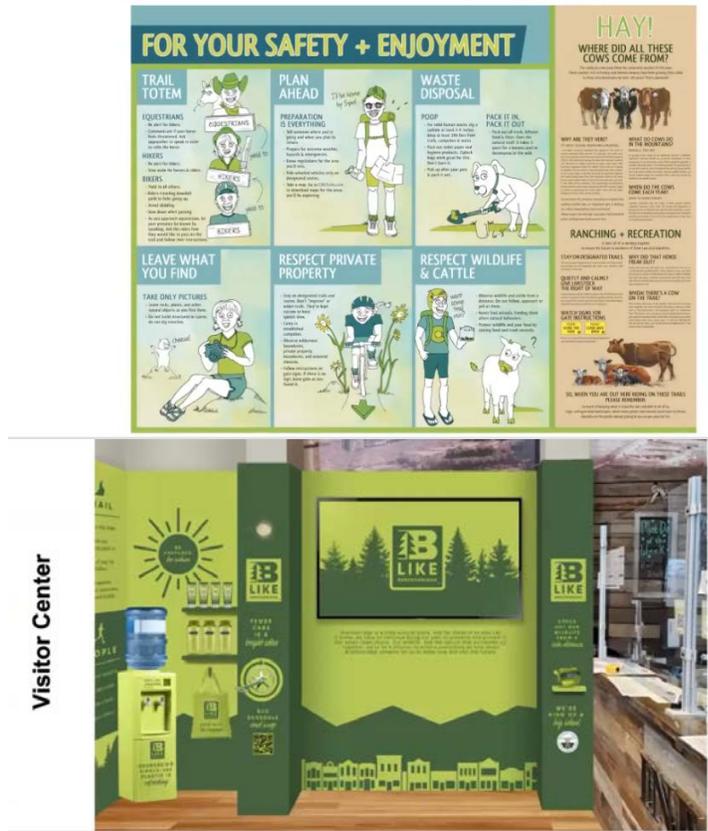
Porta Potty sponsor banner



Window signage for businesses



Existing Trailhead and River signage



Jones told the committee that the intention of this is for STOR to approve or deny a letter of support for the Stewardship Marketing Campaign. Discussion followed by STOR Committee members.

Derek Nehrenberg made a motion that the STOR committee does provide a letter of support with concerns included. Laura Puckett Daniels amended the motion. Motion to write letter of support with strong encouragement that the chambers work together for integrated messaging not silo messaging.

Jake Jones stated to the committee that seems like the committee is at a fork in the road. There are 2 choices: Fork one is create a motion with caveats. Fork two is table this topic until more information. Jones stated that the committee is at an impasse and can't clearly make a motion to approve with majority of support. Derek Nehrenberg withdrew his motion. There is not a motion on the table.

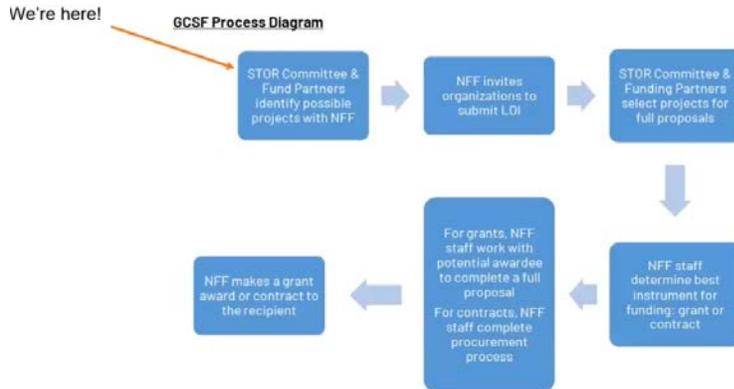
Gunnison County Stewardship Fund: 2023 Project Concepts:

Meeting Goals –

1. Review 2023 Gunnison Fund project concepts
2. Progress the STOR Committee 2023-2025 strategic plan

Process-

Gunnison Stewardship Fund Process



Lavorini is looking for thumbs up that the committee that they would like to see the project concepts submit an official proposal that will go through a more complete review next month.

Fund Partners are:

Stewardship Fund Partners
 Local, regional, and national businesses, local governments, local guides and lodgers, and other entities have stepped up to make the Gunnison County Stewardship Fund possible. When you support the Fund's partners, you are supporting the sustainability of Gunnison County's public and conserved lands.

Atmos Energy • Crested Butte Mountain Resort/Vail Resorts • Elevation Hotel & Spa
 Eleven Experience/Train Guides • Freepoint-McMoran • Gunnison County
 Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District (Met Rec) • Gunnison Energy
 Scenic River Tours • Three Rivers Resort • Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism & Prosperity Partnership (TAPP)
 National Forest Foundation

Customer dollars go even farther at Crested Butte Mountain Resort, Eleven/Train Guides and Crested Butte Nordic. At each of these businesses, the NFF matches customer donations by contributing \$0.50 to the Stewardship Fund for every \$1 donated. All contributions are leveraged by additional grant dollars raised by Gunnison County, the NFF, and others.

Our vision is to finance stewardship projects and support our economy by engaging people and leveraging resources to proactively protect our community values.

The projects overview are:

Gunnison Fund 2023 Project Concepts

Project	Partner	Funding Amount	STOR Contact
Crested Butte Conservation Corps	Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association	\$45,000	Dave Ochs, CBMBA
Professional Trail Crew	Gunnison Trails	\$45,000	Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails
MCH Packet Project	High Country Conservation Advocates	\$4,500	Matt Reed, HCCA
Wilderness Trail Crew	The Nature Connection	\$25,000	Dayle Funka, USFS
Winter Outreach Program	Crested Butte Avalanche Center	\$5,000	Roman Kolodziej, Mt Crested Butte
Town Ranch Water Attenuation Project	Town of Crested Butte	\$5,000	Ian Billick, Town of Crested Butte
Gunnison Ranger District Toilet Servicing	U.S. Forest Service	\$40,000	Dayle Funka, USFS

The project concepts are:

Project: Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association – Crested Butte Conservation Corps stewardship crew

Submitted by: Dave Ochs (Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association)

Amount Requested: \$45,000

Description: The 2023 Crested Butte Conservation Corps is planning to employ five or six crew members for the summer field season to continue the monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship around the implemented designated camping alongside the Gunnison Ranger District. CBCC crews will continue to work with the United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other stakeholders and land managers to provide a season long presence on public lands. Seasoned and experienced crews will also focus on continued efforts to maintain and steward system routes and trails, provide backcountry clean up and maintenance, and educate and inform visitors/users throughout the seven drainages that surround Crested Butte in the north end of the Gunnison Valley.

Project: Gunnison Trails – Professional Trail Crew

Submitted by: Tim Kugler (Gunnison Trails)

Amount Requested: \$45,000

Description: For the 2023 season, Gunnison Trails will employ a five-person trail crew to help with trail maintenance, backcountry campsite cleanup and education and outreach efforts. Our trail crew season begins in April as soon as the trails at Hartman Rocks open for the season and lasts until the end of October. Each season, our trail crew maintains 45 miles of trail at Hartman Rocks, over 20 miles of trail at Signal Peak and assists our partners at the USFS and BLM with additional trail work across our public lands. Our trail crew also organizes and leads weekly volunteer dig days in the spring and fall. For 2023, we are planning to align and construct the Upper Sunny D trail, a 2-mile extension of Sunny D in Signal Peak, a trail we completed during the 2022 season. We are also applying for a GAOA contract doing heavy maintenance work on the South Lottis trail in the Fossil Ridge Wilderness (5-6 weeks of work estimated for this project).

Project: MCH Packet Project

Submitted by: Matt Reed (High Country Conservation Advocates)

Amount Requested: \$4,500

Description: HCCA seeks to recruit and coordinate volunteers to assist the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) in applying MCH pheromone packets on Douglas-fir trees to protect them from the Douglas-fir beetle. The Douglas-fir beetle is the most destructive bark beetle of mature Douglas-fir forests in western North America. By protecting these native trees, volunteers would help increase the health and resiliency of the forests in the Gunnison Basin. The CSFS has applied MCH packets locally for seven years and has not had the capacity to remove old packets from the trees. Assistance from volunteers would ensure the removal of seven years' worth of packets from local forests.

Project: The Nature Connection – Wilderness Trail Crew

Submitted by: Dayle Funka (U.S. Forest Service)

Amount Requested: \$25,000

Description: The Nature Connection, in partnership with the Paonia Ranger District, would like funding for the Backcountry Youth Trail Crew to perform annual trail clearing and maintenance on the backcountry and wilderness trails accessible from the Kebler Pass Corridor in Western Gunnison County. The goal for this project is to increase accessibility and address the maintenance backlog on these increasingly popular trails, while empowering and inspiring diverse youth who have limited opportunities to engage in natural resource stewardship careers. Projects for 2022-23 include clearing downfalls and vegetation along Ruby-Anthracite, Dark Canyon, Lost Lake, Cliff Creek, Coal Creek/Throughline, Silver Basin, Beckwith Pass and more. The crew will also work with the USFS and other local youth corps to construct significant drainage improvements along the Throughline Trail.

With the increase in minimum wage (\$13.65) in 2023, salaries and benefits for 4 youth crew members for 10 weeks is approximately \$26,426.40. Salary and benefits for two crew leaders contracted through Conservation Legacy will cost: \$22,280. The total project cost including youth crew, crew leaders, food/gear stipend, project management, training and administrative overhead will be \$48,266 with another \$65,000 in Forest Service in-kind support. We are working with additional funders and may have USFS support to cover some of these direct costs to keep our total request to the STOR Fund to \$25,000.

Project: Crested Butte Avalanche Center Outreach Program

Submitted by: Roman Kolodziej (Mt Crested Butte)

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Description: We are requesting \$5,000 in support for our Outreach Program for the 2022/2023 season from STOR. The total budget for the program is \$15,000 for some equipment costs, but primarily to help cover operational expenses. This will be the third year for the program, and it continues to gain momentum each season. Zach Kinler is our Outreach Program Director with another staff member to be hired.

STOR support (via GOCO grants) in the past has been \$4,000 for operational expenses for the 20/21 winter and then \$8,000 for the Beacon Park equipment in 21/22. I've attached the season report for our Outreach Program from 21/22 and a quick description of our plan for Outreach in 22/23. Let me know if you have any additional questions or comments.

Project: Town Ranch Water Attenuation Project

Submitted by: Ian Billick (Town of Crested Butte)

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Description: In 2023, the Town of Crested Butte is working with Arable Earth to restore and rehabilitate the historic wetlands on the western flood plain of the heavily utilized Middle Slate River through Town Ranch. The historic agricultural operation that occurred on this parcel, prior to its acquisition by Town, created drainage ditches that quickly pull water off these wetlands and away from once healthy riparian habitat.

This restoration project will rehabilitate degraded willow habitat that provides valuable cover area for large game species during their fall migration, improve the wetland/riparian habitat near the banks of the Slate River, and improve natural barriers between recreationalists utilizing the river corridor and wildlife in the wetlands.

Project: Gunnison Ranger District Toilet Servicing

Submitted by: Dayle Funka (U.S. Forest Service)

Amount Requested: \$40,000

Description: The ask is for \$40,000 to meet the increased demand, use, and dispersal of free toilet facilities on the Gunnison Ranger District. The need is to identify funding and an interested contractor or other party to provide weekly routine janitorial services at the toilet facilities. The priority toilet facilities for this need are those at fee-free areas located in (A) the Crested Butte vicinity and (B) Taylor Canyon/Taylor Park areas. Funding will seek to contract or otherwise increase capacity for providing routine janitorial services (toilet facilities cleaning) to include management, supervision, personnel, transportation, labor, equipment, and supplies to clean the toilet facilities for the USDA Forest Service, Gunnison Ranger District. Work consists of routine cleaning of 15 restrooms. During higher demand seasons frequency of cleaning the facilities may be elevated to meet the demand. Usually, higher frequency is associated with summer months.

Strategic Planning Process Overview

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. COMPLETE:** September 22nd, 2022 - November: **New Strategic Plan Approach:** What new priorities to include in the next strategic plan? **Is the format of the strategic plan still appropriate?**
- 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. COMPLETE:** November 2022: **Assessment Report:** Report on Current Conditions and Knowledge
- 7. January 2023:** **Establish priorities for the next 3 years**
- 8. January - February 2023:** **Finalize STORC Strategic Plan 2023-2025**

Committee agreed that each project should submit a full application to be reviewed next month.

STOR Committee Strategic Plan:

Cathie Pagano suggested the following:

After reviewing the strategic plan, she stated that she feels that the strategic plan needs to be a little more refined. She would like to take the next month to refine it. Pagano also stated that Lavorini has created a tool that could identify top priorities. Right now, there are 30 top priorities being identified. Pagano stated that is too many in her opinion. Pagano also stated to the committee that they need time to review the complete strategic plan because it is their plan, not hers or Lavorini's. It needs to be decided who wants to lead the goals and priorities of the plan. If there is not anyone who wants to take the lead, the it may need to be removed from the plan. Agenda item tabled to a future meeting.

Future Agenda Items:

- **Add the Gold Medal River discussion**
- **Gunnison County Stewardship Fund (NFF)**
- **Innovative Finance for National Forests (WCU)**
- **Winter Trailhead Restrooms (All)**

ADJOURN: The January 26, 2023 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 3:52 pm.

Prepared by Shannon Frias, Community Development, Administrative Assistant III