

STOR Committee Meeting 2.22.24

Gunnison County Stewardship Revision Memo.

Hello Committee members, during the January 25th, 2024 STOR meeting the subject of discussing the future requirements for receiving funding through the Gunnison County Stewardship Fund was brought up. The basis for the question, should we leverage these funds for specific projects that achieve action items within STOR's strategic plan and if so, how do we change the application and selection process to accommodate this requirement. I would like to use time during the February 22 meeting to further discuss this idea and get input from the entire committee on future funding requirements through the GCSF. I've made suggested edits to the selection criteria to reflect the change I believe is being asked. We can revise these edits during the meeting. For review the complete GCSF Governance Structure is attached along with the STOR Strategic Plan.

Projects recommended for funding by the GCSF must align with the NFF's Strategic Plan and meet other criteria developed by the STOR Committee and GCSF Funding Partners. GCSF General Criteria:

- *Project is a priority of the land management entity where the project will take place. Project aligns with the values of the Gunnison County community as established by the One Valley Prosperity Project that led to the creation of the STOR Committee.*
- *Project aligns with the current STOR Committee ~~values~~ strategic plan and its overall goals*
- *-Project achieves or advances one or more of the action items within the STOR strategic plan*
- *Project is designed, to the extent possible, to benefit all public lands in Gunnison County.*
- *Project has all environmental and cultural compliance completed, including NEPA.*

Gunnison County Stewardship Fund

Governance Structure

I. WHAT: VISION STATEMENT

The Gunnison County Stewardship Fund (GCSF), working in alignment with the Gunnison County Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation (STOR) Committee, is an innovative, bold partnership dedicated to sustaining and enhancing Gunnison County's public and conserved lands. The GCSF is managed by the National Forest Foundation (NFF) as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding with Gunnison County. The NFF aggregates funding contributions from Fund Partners and makes financial awards to local organizations based on the outcomes of an invited grant application process.

The partners' vision is to finance stewardship projects and support our economy by engaging people and leveraging resources to proactively protect our stated community values¹:

- *A caring community*
- *An engaged community*
- *Connected to nature*
- *A learning community*
- *A good life*
- *A healthy and active lifestyle*
- *Family friendly*
- *A secure community*

I. WHERE: FUND GEOGRAPHY

The GCSF is associated with the STOR Committee and helps to implement NFF and STOR Committee priorities across Gunnison County's public and conserved lands. Most projects and programs supported by the GCSF occur on the Gunnison and Paonia Ranger Districts of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests in Gunnison County, Colorado. Where appropriate and aligned with the NFF Strategic Plan, occasionally projects will extend across and beyond these boundaries.

II. WHO: FUND PARTNERS AND GOVERNANCE

a. GCSF Participants

The GCSF is a partnership designed to finance stewardship projects. Many stakeholders are involved in the GCSF:

- **STOR Committee**, who provides strategic GCSF guidance and recommends GCSF investments (for a list of STOR Committee members see Appendix A),

¹ Community Values identified through the One Valley Prosperity Project:
<https://gcbeconomicdevelopment.com/learn/ovpp/>

- **GCSF Funding Partners**, who have contributed to the Fund for the current funding cycle and recommend GCSF investments,
- **NFF**, who houses the GCSF, facilitates and has fiduciary responsibility for GCSF investments, provides matching funds through select agreements, and approves GCSF investments,
- **Gunnison County**, who co-hosts the GCSF, provides strategic guidance and oversight of the STOR Committee, convenes the STOR Committee, and helps to leverage GCSF funds, and,

b. STOR Committee²

The GCSF is guided by the STOR Committee. The STOR Committee includes 22 members in addition to the NFF. NFF staff in a shared NFF/Gunnison County role facilitate the STOR Committee³.

i. STOR Committee-GCSF Funding Partner Joint Meetings

The STOR Committee hosts two special joint meetings annually with GCSF Funding Partners to review GCSF project proposals and to make funding recommendations for investments to NFF staff. GCSF Funding Partners designate one representative who participates in the annual joint meetings. During the first meeting, GCSF Funding Partners participate in STOR Committee discussions and provide project recommendations to NFF staff. During the second meeting, GCSF Funding Partners and STOR Committee members vote to make funding recommendations. NFF staff convey recommendations to its NFF Board of Directors, who retain final decision-making authority on all investments.

III. HOW: GUNNISON COUNTY STEWARDSHIP FUND PROCESS, STRUCTURE AND PROJECT CRITERIA

Making Decisions

The STOR Committee and Funding Partners will recommend project investments through the following process:

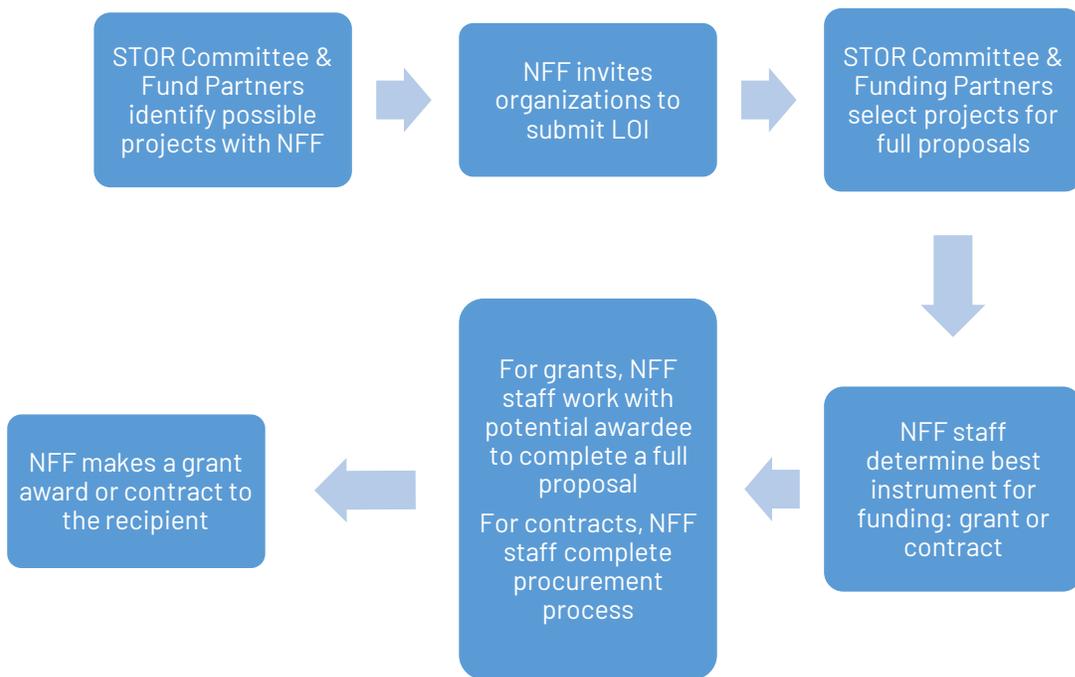
1. The STOR Committee and Funding Partners identify possible projects with NFF staff.
2. Through discussion with the STOR Committee, the NFF invites project partners to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) to the NFF.
3. STOR Committee and GCSF Funding Partners review LOIs.
4. STOR Committee and GCSF Funding Partners meet to recommend projects to move forward to the full NFF application process. The STOR Committee works together to reach consensus by voting according to the STOR Committee’s established protocols.

² See Appendix A for a current STOR Committee roster.

³ The NFF and Gunnison County have an established Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that describes the relationship between NFF, the County, and the STOR Committee.

- i. If the group is in general disagreement on an issue, dissenting members are responsible for proposing alternatives they believe might achieve consensus.
 - ii. The NFF will provide notice as early as possible to help prepare members for decision points, and in some cases may table decisions until future meetings.
5. During joint meetings, STOR Committee members and GCSF Funding Partners shall maintain confidentiality as it relates to project investment discussions and recommendations.
 6. STOR Committee members and GCSF Funding Partners must agree to the NFF's Community Committee Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest policies⁴. During joint meetings, STOR Committee members and GCSF Funding Partners will recuse themselves from the meeting and discussion of all projects if they have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with one or more projects.
 7. NFF staff will track GCSF process and recommendations to accurately document support for project investments and appropriate recusals, and to communicate the recommendations to the NFF Board of Directors.

GCSF Process Diagram



⁴ All STOR Committee and Fund Partners will sign the NFF Conflict of Interest form.

Annual Fund Cycle

The annual funding cycle generally follows the schedule below (or approximate):

STOR Committee & Funding Partners identify projects: April-November
Funding Cycle announcement: October
LOIs due to the NFF: January
STOR Committee and Funding Partners review LOI and make full application
recommendations: January/February
Full applications due to the NFF: February/March
Award recommendations confirmed by NFF and funding obligated: April

GCSF Project Selection Criteria

Projects recommended for funding by the GCSF must align with the NFF's Strategic Plan and meet other criteria developed by the STOR Committee and GCSF Funding Partners.

GCSF General Criteria

- Project is a priority of the land management entity where the project will take place. Project aligns with the values of the Gunnison County community as established by the One Valley Prosperity Project that led to the creation of the STOR Committee.
- Project aligns with the STOR Committee values.
- Project is designed, to the extent possible, to benefit all public lands in Gunnison County.
- Project has all environmental and cultural compliance completed, including NEPA.

Appendix A: STOR Committee Members & Funding Partners

STOR Committee Members

- Brandon Diamond, Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Christie Hicks, Crested Butte Nordic (Vice Chair)
- Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
- Deanna Greco, National Park Service
- Jim Lovelace, Bureau of Land Management
- Hannah Cranor, At-Large
- Hedda Peterson, Met Rec
- Jake Jones, At-Large
- Joellen Fonken, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
- John Norton, Tourism and Prosperity Partnership
- Jonathan Houck, Gunnison County
- Kevin Alexander, At-large (Chair)
- Kimberly Schappert, Public At-large
- Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison
- Mark Voegeli, Crested Butte Mountain Resort
- Matt Reed, High Country Conservation Advocates
- Dayle Funka, U.S. Forest Service
- Mona Merrill, Town of Crested Butte
- Roman Kolodziej, Town of Mt. Crested Butte
- Scott Borden, Western Colorado University
- Steve Guerrieri, Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association
- Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails

Funding Partners

- Salar Nabavian, Gunnison Energy
- Mark Schumacher, 3 Rivers Resort
- Carollynn Sherry, Scenic River Tours
- Jay Whitacre, Eleven/Irwin Guides
- David Gosen, Mt Emmons
- Jon Norton, Tourism and Prosperity Partnership

Support Staff (non-voting members)

- Cathie Pagano, Gunnison County
- Joe Lavorini, National Forest Foundation

STOR Committee 2023 Strategic Plan

Goals and Strategic Results

- A. Promote a sustainable, resilient community that supports thriving natural ecosystems and native wildlife resources; a vibrant rural and ranching culture, and a diverse recreation economy.**
 - 1. By December 31, 2023 the STOR Committee will complete the Wildlife Decision Support Tools for Recreation.
 - 2. By December 31, 2023 the STOR Committee will work with the ranching community to identify important opportunities to reduce impacts of recreation on ranching; by June, 2024 the STOR Committee will evaluate the opportunities presented and determine an implementation plan as appropriate.

- B. Foster a culture for residents and visitors that demonstrates an ethic of environmental stewardship and respect for our community.**
 - 1. By September 30, 2023 the STOR Committee will work with partners to develop a multilingual communication plan and signage needs assessment that includes but is not limited to: locating camp sites; leave no trace principles, e-bikes, and stewardship messaging.

- C. Support collaboration between federal land management agencies, state and local government, nonprofits, and user groups to improve management of recreation and natural resources.**
 - 1. By January 31st of each year the STOR Committee will prioritize annual funding recommendations for the Gunnison Stewardship Fund based on this strategic plan and overall STOR Committee mission.
 - 2. STOR Committee members will continue to engage at the state and federal level to advocate for our community on related funding and policy decisions.
 - 3. The STOR Committee will work with state and federal partners to identify and prioritize opportunities for funding support for ongoing maintenance of resources on state and federal lands.

- D. Minimize degradation of natural resources and enhance accessibility of recreational amenities by focusing recreational development close to population centers with transit connection and emphasizing conservation and wildlife habitat preservation in outlying areas.**
 - 1. By December 31, 2023, identify and prioritize additional recreation infrastructure funding needs for high use areas to support a fee proposal on high use federal and other public lands.
 - 2. By March 31, 2024 the County will develop a plan for the Crested Butte to Crested Butte South recreation path.
 - 3. By December 31, 2024, the STOR Committee will identify areas and a plan for implementation in the upper valley drainage corridors (Kebler, Slate River, Washington Gulch, Gothic, Brush Creek) that require additional infrastructure and/or transit to accommodate recreation demand and protect natural resources and recreation amenities.
 - 4. By December 31, 2024 the STOR Committee will identify additional infrastructure needs to accommodate recreation demand and a plan for implementation at Hartman Rocks Recreation Area.