



## STOR Committee Meeting Agenda

September 26nd, 2 – 4PM

Hybrid Meeting

**For STOR Committee Members & Guests:** *This meeting will be held in-person at the Blackstock Building – 200 W Virginia Ave, Gunnison, CO 81230.*

**For the General Public:** *The meeting will also be held virtually on Zoom at the following link:*  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87637105265?pwd=Rkt2d2NoM3NubTJWMIz5bnJzNjVvUT09>

- 2:00 pm      **Call to Order & Agenda Preview** – *Jake Jones (Committee Chair)*
- 2:05 pm      **Approval of August 2024 Meeting Minutes** – *Committee Chair*
- 2:07 pm      **Ranching and Recreation Subcommittee Report & Discussion** – *Committee Members, Nick Catmur*
- 3:00 pm      **Scenic Byway Toilet Installation Opportunity with Hinsdale County** – *Nick Catmur*
- 3:20 pm      **Spanish Language Translation Update** – *Nick Catmur*
- 3:35 pm      **Letter of Support, Non-motorized Trails grant, BLM** – *Nod of approval*
- 3:40 pm      **Adjourn**

# **Gunnison Field Office | Bureau of Land Management**

## **Non-motorized Trail Grant – Trail Stewardship Crew**

### **Pre-application Submission 2025**

Dear District Wildlife Manager,

Thank you for providing a Wildlife Review for the BLM Gunnison Field Office's planned CPW Non-Motorized Trail Stewardship Crew Grant Application (fall 2024). BLM Gunnison Field Office has a long history of good management status with CPW's motorized grant program; it is our intent to expand that good management into the non-motorized components of the Gunnison Field Office. The Gunnison Field Office was a recipient of the 2024 Non-motorized Trail Grant, which funded a non-motorized crew that was able to complete our defined priority projects on the non-motorized trails within our resource area.

#### **Project Scope & Background**

BLM Gunnison Field Office is seeking funding to support a non-motorized trail crew to perform needed trail maintenance in our non-motorized trail system to benefit hikers, equestrian users, and bicyclists where appropriate. Non-motorized trails managed by the Gunnison Field Office range from the Powderhorn Wilderness, Redcloud and Handies Wilderness Study Areas, the Silverton Area (Boulder Gulch, Silver Lake, Maggie Gulch, Highland Mary, Whitehead Gulch, and the Colorado Trail), Crested Butte area (GB Loop, Lower Loop and Oh Be Joyful Trails), and the Gunnison Area (Signal Peak Trail System, Hartman Rocks Trail System, Beaver Creek Trail). Together, the non-motorized trail network managed by BLM Gunnison Field Office totals over 100 miles of trails and spans much of our 658,000 acre resource area.

During the 2024 season our non-motorized crew developed and implemented a trail maintenance database; documenting all trail issues and built features and thereby providing data to prioritize trails in the greatest need. Alongside the inventory effort, rangers cleared trails of fallen trees working deep into the backlog of Wilderness work addressing trails that hadn't been cleared for over a decade (e.g. Middle Fork, Powderhorn Wilderness). Trail improvement projects focused on drainage reinforcement and tread armoring to reduce soil loss were taken on by the non-motorized crew in the Hartman Rocks and Signal Peak trail systems in concert with routine maintenance. Beyond the trail work completed in 2024, rangers also provided visitor education about responsible non-motorized recreation through formal interpretive programs and informal visitor contacts.

The 2024 summer season's efforts with the trail maintenance database have defined areas where backlog remains and allowed us to create a list of high priority projects for the 2025 season. We are applying for funding to support the non-motorized crew for another season and to address these high priority projects to better meet the needs of the non-motorized recreating public.

#### **Priority projects for summer 2025:**

- Address lingering backlog in the Powderhorn Wilderness including fully clearing the East Fork and Middle Fork trails (>150 trees down) and redefining tread where it has become overgrown.

- Trail re-definition projects for undefined trails in the Silverton Area (primarily cairn building to limit impacts in alpine tundra environments).
- Downfall removal and trail maintenance throughout the entire non-motorized trail network, prioritizing high-use trails in the Handies Peak and Redcloud Peak WSA.
- Visitor education and further development of formal interpretive programs focused on responsible non-motorized recreation.
- Continue geodatabase weed inventory mapping infestations where humans are a vector.
- Signal Peak and Hartman Rocks management of seasonal closures for wintering big game and Gunnison Sage-Grouse conservation.

The launch of our trail maintenance database in 2024 was a success, with each trail inventoried receiving a detailed assessment of issues and built features, providing the information necessary to prioritize projects for the 2025 season (see Grizzly Gulch example below). With this information we have defined two high priority projects and a slew of continuing maintenance work needed across the extent of the trail system (drainage improvements, bridge building, backlog corridor clearing, etc.). In 2025 the non-motorized field crew hopes to maintain the same momentum by clearing all non-motorized trails and addressing any lingering backlog. The non-motorized field crew will do so through two high priority projects: 1) fully clearing fallen trees from the East Fork and Middle Fork trails in the Powderhorn Wilderness as well as reestablishing tread on sections of these trails where it has become overgrown, 2) defining currently undefined trail on more than 5 trails in the Silverton area by building cairns, marker posts, and enhancing tread where appropriate helping to limit off route impacts. These two projects were identified based on issues documented in the trail maintenance database which led these trails to have a low sustainability grade when compared to others surveyed in 2024.

A well-managed trail is an invaluable land management tool. Trails provide access to our public lands as well as the physical and mental health benefits associated with hiking, trail running, biking, equestrian use, hunting, and fishing. Trail systems that are functionally sustainable and purposefully managed for their intended uses benefit connected and distant habitats by keeping users on the trail, thus preventing habitat fragmentation, riparian impacts, and soil loss from braided routes.

All trail maintenance projects identified in this grant application are located on BLM lands, and no easements or land acquisitions will be necessary. The BLM Recreation Staff has worked closely with Andrew Stokes, Gunnison Field Office Wildlife Biologist to articulate and refine the scope of this proposal: we are requesting funding to maintain existing non-motorized trails managed by the BLM Gunnison Field Office.

BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Guided by this multiple-use mission, the trail system on BLM lands plays an important role in the ability of our communities to access and benefit from their public lands. All work in the Wilderness will be completed with primitive tools in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

**Species of Concern:** Federally Listed T&E: Canada lynx (Threatened), Gunnison Sage-grouse (Threatened), Uncompaghre Fritillary Butterfly (Endangered), Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Threatened), Monarch Butterfly (Candidate). Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need: Brown-

capped Rosy-Finch, Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, Greater Sandhill Crane, Gunnison Sage-grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, American Pika, Fringed Myotis, Canada lynx, Townsend's big-eared bat.

**Habitats and their Values:** Project work is proposed only for existing trails. There are BLM trails through Critical Habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse in the Gunnison Basin and Snow willow habitat where there is an Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly colony.

Project work will take place on existing trails throughout Gunnison, Hinsdale, San Juan, and Saguache Counties and from elevations from approximately 7,500 to over 14,000. There are a wide variety of habitats including forest and woodland, shrubland, riparian, cliffs and canyons, and alpine.

**Wildlife Impacts:** Trail maintenance is likely to create short-term disturbance to wildlife that may be present in the area. However, many of the existing non-motorized trails in the Gunnison Field Office have a high level of existing use and human disturbance is a baseline factor that already exists. Maintenance activities that create disturbance above what is baseline would be short-term.

All projects would follow conservation measures identified in the BLM's NEPA and Section 7 Consultation for Federally listed species.

**Mitigation:** No mitigation has been identified for maintenance of existing non-motorized trails.

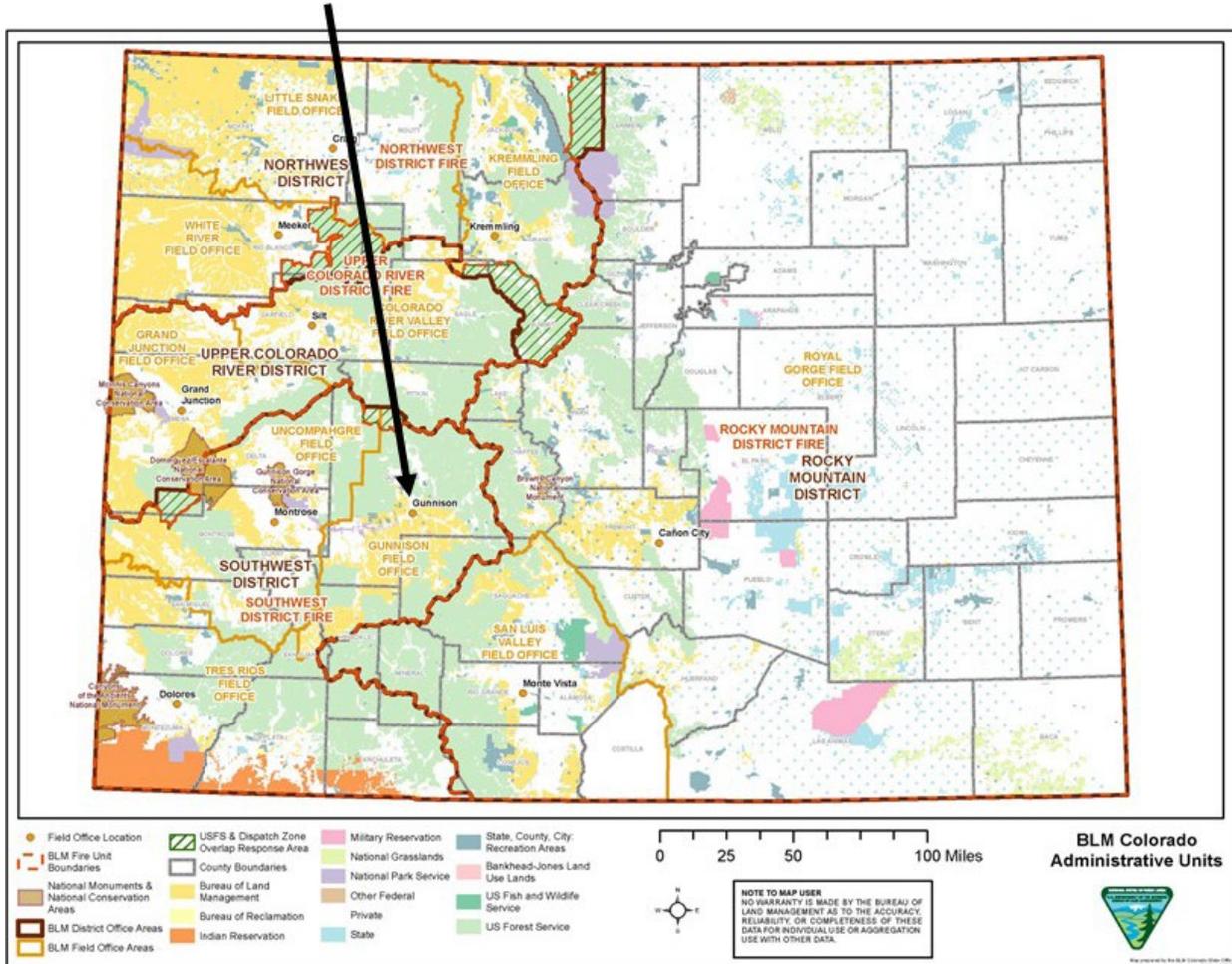
Part of the project work for the non-motorized trail crew will be helping to manage seasonal closures at Signal Peak and Hartman Rocks for wintering big game and Gunnison Sage-grouse.

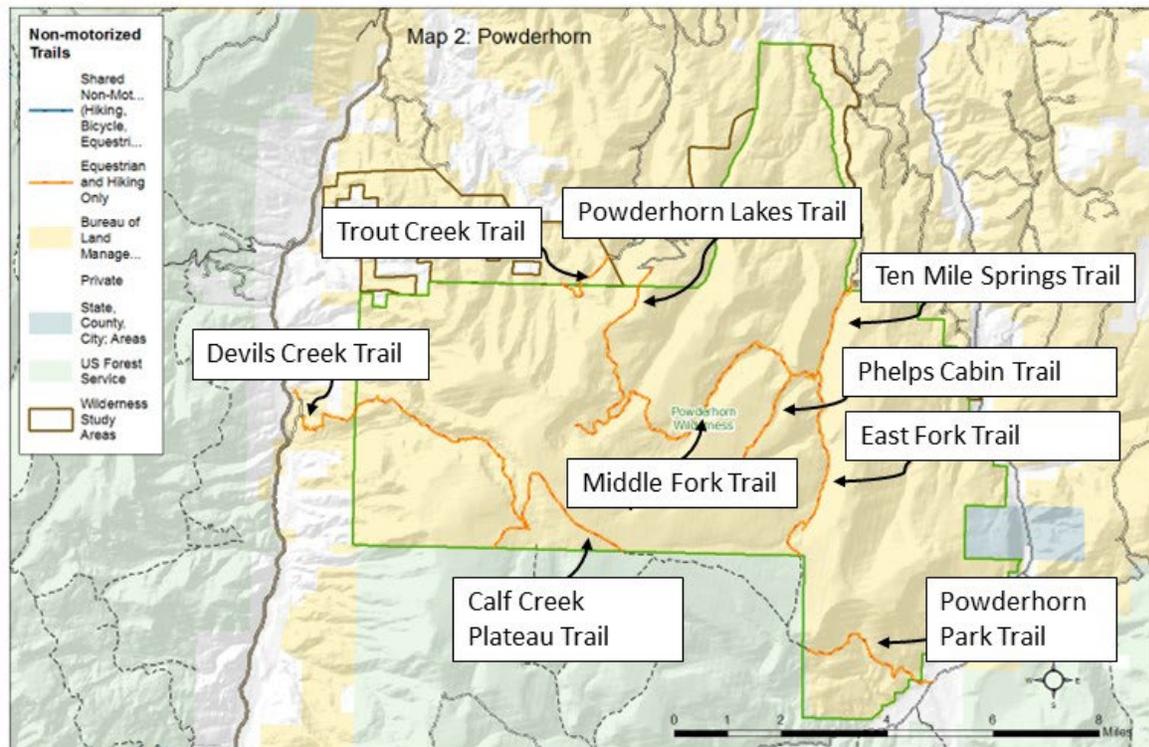
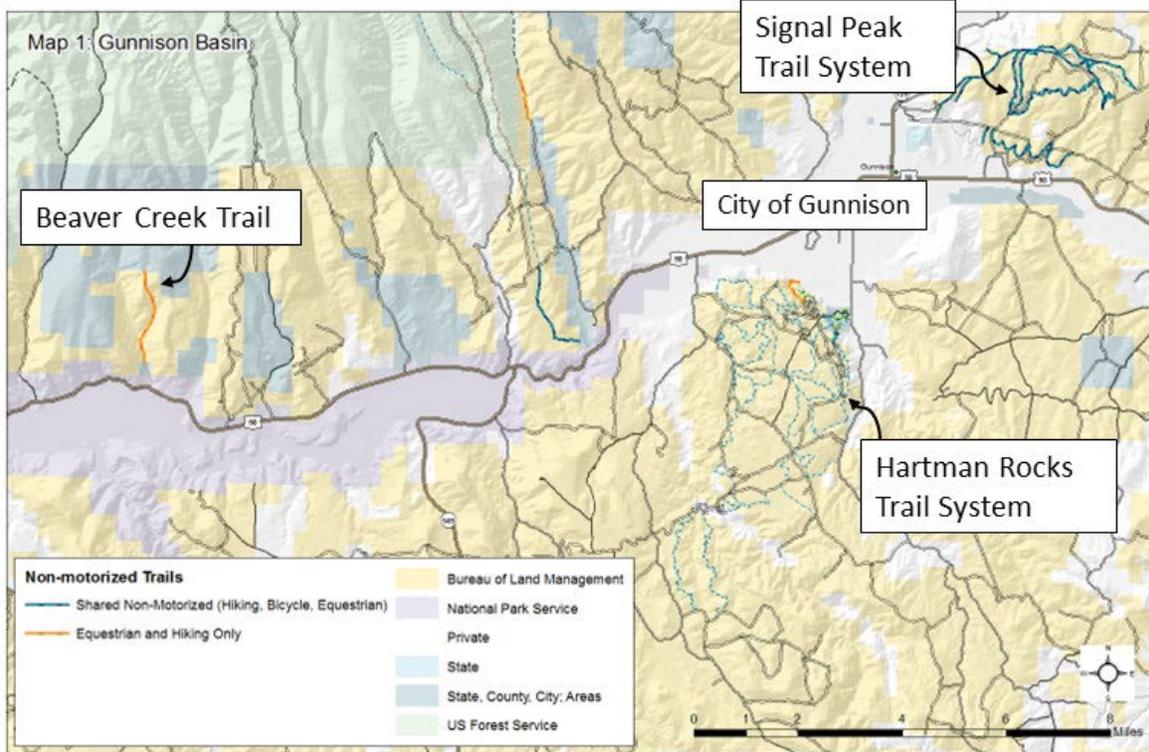
Work will be done on the Silver Creek trail, in partnership with CFI, adjacent to a Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly colony to limit erosion and remove braided trails to avoid damage to known habitat from off route travel.

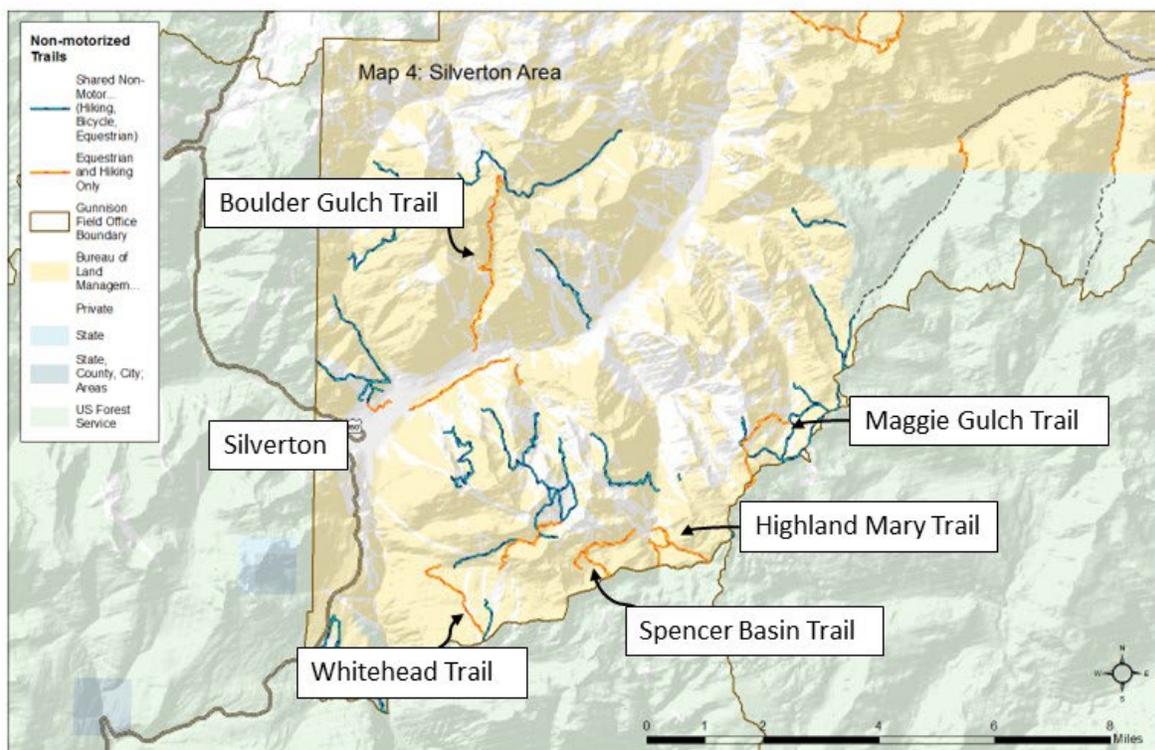
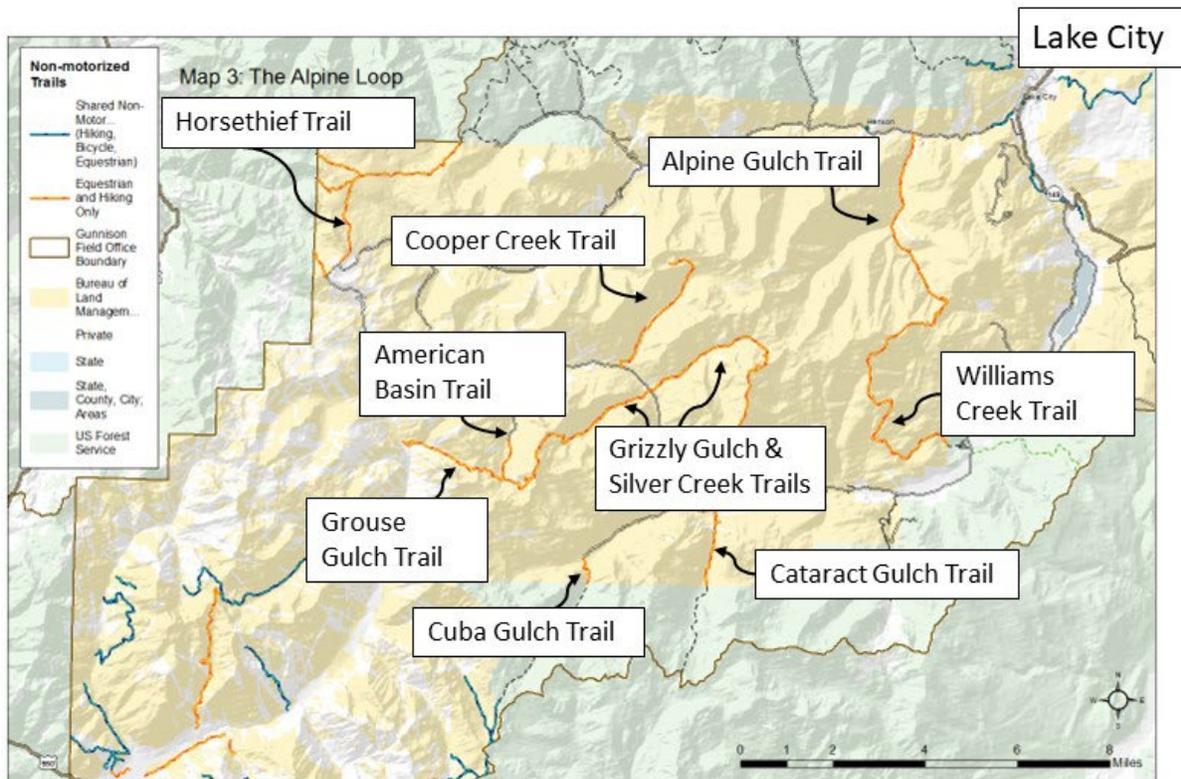
**Education/Interpretation:** BLM field going staff frequently encounter visitors enjoying their public lands. While most BLM staff do not have law enforcement capability, we remain in close contact with our law enforcement officer, and frequently educate visitors on rules and regulations. BLM staff regularly employ the 'Authority of the Resource' Leave No Trace methodology to educate the public on Leave No Trace principles such as 'Minimize Campfire Impacts', 'Respect Wildlife', and 'Respect Other Visitors'; particularly during sensitive times such as fire bans and seasonal closures.

**Environmental Compliance:** Gunnison Field Office Travel Management Plan (2010), Alpine Triangle Recreation Area Management Plan (2010).

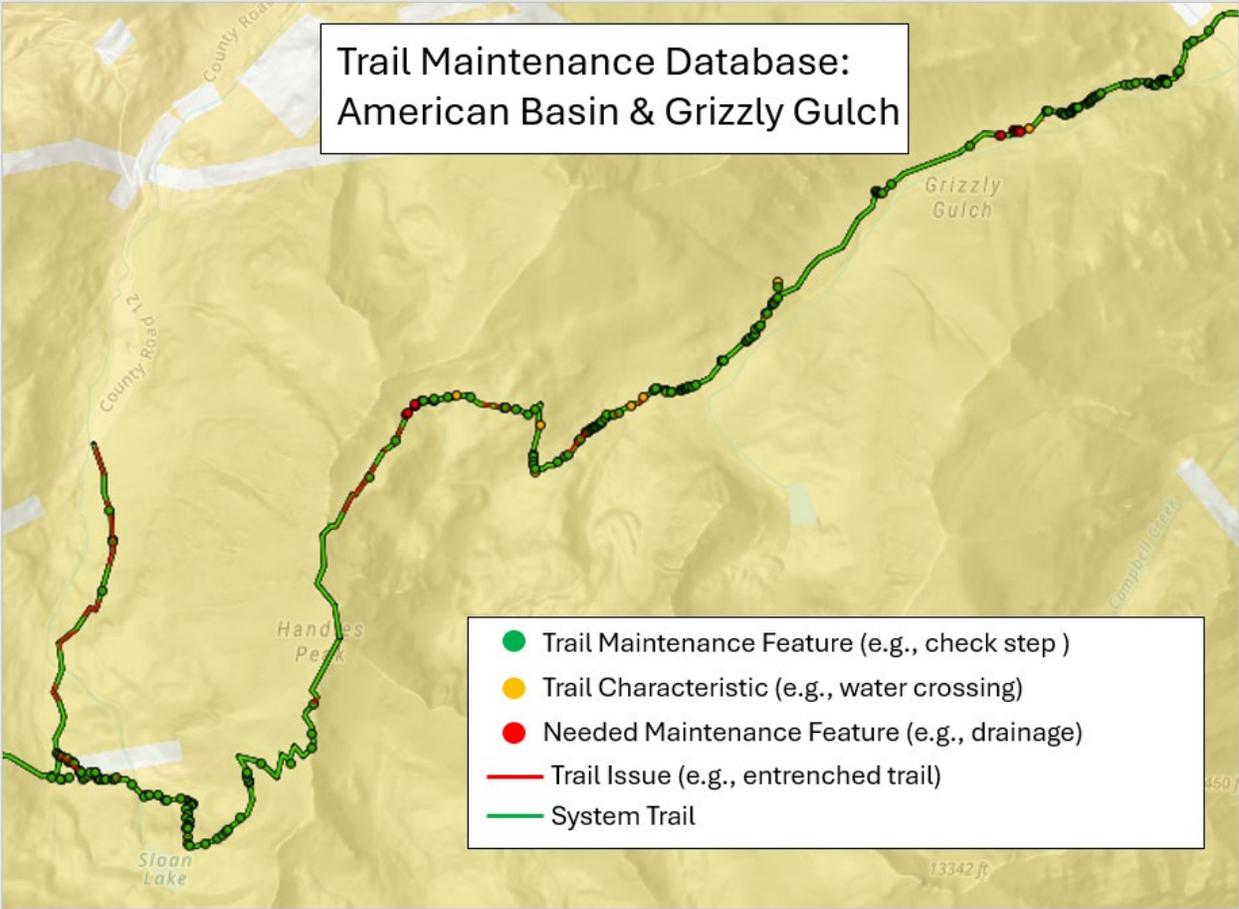
# Statewide Vicinity Map: Gunnison Field Office





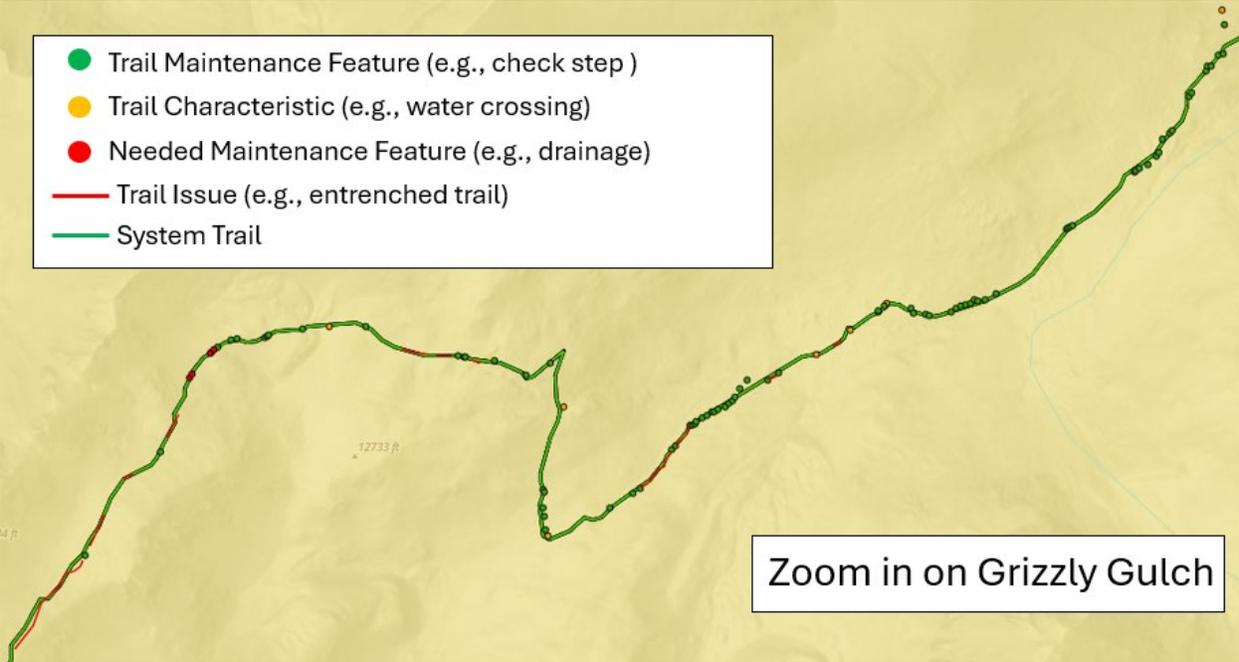


# Trail Maintenance Database: American Basin & Grizzly Gulch



- Trail Maintenance Feature (e.g., check step)
- Trail Characteristic (e.g., water crossing)
- Needed Maintenance Feature (e.g., drainage)
- Trail Issue (e.g., entrenched trail)
- System Trail

Zoom in on Grizzly Gulch



## Draft Letter of Support for Gunnison Field Office Non-Motorized Trails Grant

Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
State Trails Program  
6060 Broadway,  
Denver, CO 80216

Dear CPW Non-Motorized Grant Committee,

**Partner** would like to share our support for the BLM Gunnison Field Office's Non-Motorized trail maintenance grant application.

With increasing visitation to **Partner** County and surrounding public lands, dedicated trail maintenance is more important than ever. This grant will help the BLM Gunnison Non-Motorized trail crew maintain our diverse network of trails and educate visitors on responsible recreation.

The BLM Gunnison Field Office manages nearly 100 miles of non-motorized trails, including trails in the fragile alpine tundra. Ongoing maintenance of the non-motorized trail system is integral to upholding the highest quality stewardship of natural and cultural resources on our public lands. This grant will enable the crew to complete priority projects on non-motorized trails including building drainage structures, redefining trail in overgrown areas, installing new signs, clearing corridor, and other necessary maintenance projects.

In addition to supporting sustainability, we recognize the important work the BLM Gunnison Field Office trails crew performs supports a high-quality visitor experience. The trail crew works to increase public access and wayfinding on public lands, helps provide for visitor safety, and to support recreational opportunities. The trail crew members are friendly and helpful to trail users; providing education to the public on Leave No Trace, wildlife, and area history.

Public lands and trails are a valuable component of our community's recreation offerings. We encourage the State Trails grant committee to consider the BLM Gunnison Field Office Non-Motorized Trail Crew Grant Proposal to support the maintenance of these trails during the 2025 summer season.

Sincerely,



## STOR Committee Meeting

### Minutes August 22, 2024

### Hybrid Meeting

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**For the General Public:** *The meeting will also be held virtually on Zoom at the following link:*  
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#### **Committee Members Present:**

Jake Jones, Kim Schappert, Cathie Pagano, Jennifer DeBoer, Andrew Sandstrom, Steve Duke, Dave Ochs, Chris Parmeter, Laura Pucket Daniels, Gabi Prochaska, Brandon Diamond, LB Mullins, Jim Lovelace, Dayle Funka, Jeremy Johndrow, Jana Hanson

Other: Heather Leonard, Julie Shapiro, Tori Manogue, Dan Zimmerer, Noah Shum

#### **Jake Jones (Committee Chair) called to order**

##### **Approval of July 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Prochaska made a motion to approve the minutes and DeBoer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Colorado's Outdoor Strategy (COS) Presentation**

Dan Zimmerer from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) presented the Colorado Outdoor Strategy, recognizing partner contributions and outlining the vision to balance community recreation and wildlife protection while advancing conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. The strategy focuses on shared goals, statewide leadership, strategic funding, data-driven decision-making, and regionally based efforts. Zimmerer highlighted 20 regional partnerships covering 75% of the state, with \$4.9 million in funding and new partnerships in Pagosa Springs and the southeast. Shapiro discussed the goals, objectives, and milestones, including climate-resilient conservation, sustainable outdoor recreation, and coordinated planning. She emphasized creating high-quality outdoor experiences through data mapping, local tools, and a resource toolkit showing how conservation, climate, and recreation intersect. A data dashboard would provide a statewide baseline, and CODEX could serve as a foundation for other tools. Zimmerer shared their timeline through 2026 and a link to their webpage ([engagecpw.org/cos-learn-more](https://engagecpw.org/cos-learn-more)). The committee discussed challenges in messaging and securing long-term funding, with Shapiro and Zimmerer acknowledging these concerns and highlighting the importance of advocacy. GOCO is also completing a five-year strategic planning update.

## **Summer 2024 Stewardship Messaging update/report**

Sandstrom presented the media campaign, covering the timeline (June-August 2024), budget (\$5,000), platforms (Meta and Spotify), topics (campfire safety, leave no trace), and audience (Gunnison and Crested Butte). Meta received \$4,000, using "Do Colorado Right" messaging and reached around 77,000 people with a 1.65% CTR. Spotify's \$1,000 audio campaign generated 10,000 impressions and a 0.21% CTR, mostly for awareness. The website landing page saw 5,000 views with low engagement. Meta proved more effective than Spotify, though limited budget prevented using display ads. The committee discussed engagement levels, with Sandstrom noting it was a learning experience but lower than expected and discussed making content more engaging and focusing on one key issue rather than several. Sandstrom explained tourist trends based on cell phone data, showing fewer tourists but longer stays due to the Hwy 50 closure. Camping in Gunnison was identified as a key issue for future campaigns and explored effective engagement methods, such as Facebook groups, camping vacancy signage, and law enforcement campaigns. Suggestions included clearer messaging when campsites are full, prohibiting campfires, promoting alternative accommodations, and implementing a "Plan B" campaign for next summer. They agreed that signs and messages should emphasize the consequences of illegal camping.

### **Future Stewardship Messaging**

The committee discussed launching a "Plan B" campaign and implementing a camping reservation system. Sandstrom noted that the Spanish translation is still pending and that messaging around cattle isn't a priority for most people. The ranching subcommittee saw potential to further share insights about living in cattle country and the committee discussed a Plan B campaign, signage, law enforcement outreach (LEO) and effective ways to engage the community. Leonard observed that the visitor center significantly influenced where people would go and suggested their messaging should help distribute visitors more evenly, as wildflower trails and camping were the most common inquiries. Social media played a key role in their efforts, and the visitor center staff was overwhelmed so Leonard proposed using QR codes on signs and Facebook pages to assist visitors and welcomed additional suggestions. Pagano recommended consulting with park services for strategic ideas.

**Jones adjourned the meeting.**