

**GUNNISON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND OUTDOOR TOURISM COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2021**

The February 25, 2021 Gunnison Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Tourism Committee (STORC) meeting was conducted by Zoom virtual online meeting.

Committee Members Present:

Voting Members:

Kevin Alexander, Chair

Christie Hicks, Vice-Chair, Crested Butte Nordic

Dave Ochs, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association

Tim Kugler, Gunnison Trails

Brandon Diamond, CPW

Steven Guerrieri, Stockgrowers' Association

Matt Reed, High Country Conservation Advocates

Matt McCombs, U.S. Forest Service

Mark Voegeli, CBMR

Mallory Logan, City of Gunnison

John Norton, Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association

Joellen Fonken, UGRWCD

Roman Kolodziej, Mt. Crested Butte Town Council

Hannah Cranor, Stockgrowers' Association

Scott Borden, WCU

Jake Jones, Crested Butte Land Trust

Others in Audience:

Deanna Greco

Chad Wellman, USFS

Rob Strickland

Jordan Erdie

Rob Strickland

Marlene Crosby, Gunnison County

Eddie Casebolt, Gunnison county Public Works

Aaron Drendel, USFS

Suzi Parker

Garth Gantt

Cheryl Cwelich

Greg Austin

Staff:

Cathie Pagano, Community Development Director

Joe Lavorini, Gunnison County Stewardship Coordinator-National Forest Foundation

Rachel Sabbato, Gunnison County Senior Planner

CALL TO ORDER: Alexander called the February 25, 2021 meeting to order at 2:07 PM.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Agenda approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 28, 2021 MEETING MINUTES: Moved: by Borden and seconded by Jones to approve the January 28, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

SLATE RIVER TRAILHEAD REDESIGN

Jones gave the Slate River Trailhead Redesign presentation. The Slate River Trailhead is for motorized and nonmotorized use. There are forest service lands, wilderness, BLM, private properties and conserved lands through the Crested Butte Land Trust. The trailhead location is located where the County stops plowing, in the middle of the Kikel Parcel. The Land Trust acquired the property in the early 2000s. The trailhead predated their ownership of the parcel. The need for future development of the trailhead was contemplated in the conservation easement. A vast majority of their funds and efforts have been put conserving private properties close to the Town of Crested Butte and a lot of those lands have been

conserved through various funding mechanisms, including real estate transfer taxes collected from the Town of Crested Butte.

The Slate River Winter Trailhead is located entirely within Gunnison county' right of way, surrounded by the Kikel Parcel owned and conserved by the Crested Butte Land Trust. The STOR Committee has stated that it is a priority to address the trailhead issues in the Slate River Valley, too much capacity. In August and September of 2020, the Crested Butte Land Trust took the lead on tackling the problem. The efforts being made with the Slate River working group from the Gunsight Bridge to Skyland bridge has been very successful. Jones took over the project in the Fall. He didn't feel the need to rush to develop anything before the winter season and wanted to use the season to get more work done, get STOR reengaged and take a slower approach to a solution. He would like that this be a community and stakeholder discussion.

The Land Trust is not a regulatory authority for public use on public lands. Their objective is to protect the conservation values of their conserved lands, which don't allow for motorized use. They believe people have the right to drive motorized vehicles on the Slate River Road to get to where they want to recreate on public lands further upstream. They are constantly balancing conservation values with scenic vistas, working ranch lands and wildlife habitats.

Went over the Easement Deed, R588209. "In addition, Grantor shall be allowed to place an unpaved parking lot on the Property, adjacent to the Gunnison County right of way for the Slate River Road and shall be sited so as to create the least impact on the Conservation Values. The parking lot shall not exceed 8,000 square feet in size (40 vehicles)".

Jones wants to come up with the best solution for the area with the community, neighbors and land partners.

Going into the season they will update their signage on the trail, two at the trailhead and one farther up near the river flats area to remind people to stay on the road. They have also been working with Western Colorado University to add an additional game camera. A game camera was installed at the trailhead on December 28, 2020 to capture vehicular use of the parking area. The study quantifies the number of vehicles at the parking area at four-hour intervals, 7 am, 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm. They added a toilet that is being pumped out on a weekly basis.

Looking for volunteers to rebuild a subcommittee. The past subcommittee has changed with members moving on. Alexander stated that they don't need a motion since the subcommittee already exists. They took a poll on who would like to commit to the committee. They will also email it out to everyone who wasn't at the meeting. Discussion followed on who would be interested to join. The following members were interested; Jones, Hicks, Crosby/Casebolt, Austin. Stakeholders interested: Silent Tracks and CBAC.

WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY: OUTDOOR MBA STUDENT SPONSOR

Borden talked about the idea of partnering with STOR to have Outdoor MBA student working on the project to grow the Gunnison Stewardship Fund. LAVORINI went over what the Stewardship fund is for the newer members. Borden stated that the goal would be to grow the fund and have a student work on that fund. They are the only ones in the State Outdoor MBA program. The students work on a project instead of a thesis. The projects are 200 plus hours long. They are more focused on business. Went over the program. Wanted to know if the STOR Committee was interested.

Alexander asked him what he was needing from the Committee. Borden said that as long as the Committee is happy with it they could work on moving forward in supporting the student in being

successful. McCombs shared his experience with MEM students working with the USFS. The group agreed it was a good idea.

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Lavorini went over the stewardship messaging needs assessment. They are diving into the topic of unified stewardship messaging outreach education that has been a long priority of the Committee. The communication subcommittee has been working to flush that out. They have a couple of different components that have been continuing to evolve. They are hoping to get feedback from the Committee about developing the messaging across the public lands in the Valley. They are also looking at taking advantage of the Department of Transportation CDOT grant to update some wayfinding signs from the town center out. Using the opportunity for the wayfinding to communicate the stewardship message. They are looking for feedback from the Committee where they see the need.

Pagano said that there has been messaging work done prior to the existence of the STOR Committee with TAPP, Forest Service, BLM etc. Asking the communications group to let the Committee know what their needs are.

Logan stated that Strickland put together a digital outline of their needs. Strickland stated that most people plan their travel online. Consistent messaging with how they behave in public lands is needed. There is an opportunity to educate people before they arrive with the app that is available. Then to add a reinforced messaging on the ground. Believes the piece that is missing is that there are lots of examples out for messaging. There are a couple of things they need to know, where to park and where the toilet is. The gap is the education piece and there is the opportunity for STOR to be the leader in the message.

Fonken said that early on when STOR was created one of the challenges were the parameters each of the agencies has to work through. They have three major land management tool boxes they have to move through. The app ties a lot of it together. They also talked about putting a winter layer on there to educate people and if they continue to work on getting the layer formalized and then they could possibly add it to the kiosks. Continuing to have the artistic look is going to tie a lot of it together.

Norton stated that if they can keep the signage complimentary and with the drawings, at some point it's going to make it official.

Drendel added that he agrees on a uniformed look as much as possible between BLM and Forest Service. That is what they have been and will continue to install. The STOR committee pledged \$150,00 to match the Forest Service for implementation of designated camping and each of the drainages around Crested Butte. On their three panel kiosks they are using the same design that Logan created. Those will be around Crested Butte. In addition, they will have a designated camping system implemented this summer. The three-panel signage will have Logan's artwork on one panel, a trail map on another and the new camping regulations and rules. The challenge will be getting the message out to people before they arrive, when they are planning.

Kugler that in terms of the signage out at Hartmans, wondered how much of the look they can take from what the Forest Service is implementing this year and whether or not that is fitting out there. They are ok with it looking the same as the north messaging. The City of Gunnison has been looking at ways to direct people to the various trailheads. They have discussed putting information at the IOOF park. Another great spot to have the etiquette messaging piece.

Kolodziej asked if it would make sense to put the kiosks at Town Centers. Then having a concise sign right before they breach into the natural and dirt road areas with the website information.

Strickland asked what everyone thought about a QR code to take people to the information. Alexander said it would be useful if it matches all the messaging. Pagano said they use them for COVID and have had success with them. Alexander said the same for them at Western. Strickland said that it would be easy to add that QR code to their signs. Hicks said they have been using them a lot this winter in regards

to summer and winter seasons. Having the messaging including the mapping features already developed would be helpful.

Pagano said that she is hearing that the committee is in favor of the existing signage and that there is a gap around the digital platforms. Stated that she has been speaking with Russ Forest at the City and the opportunities for wayfinding and the grant opportunity and if the Committee is interested they could move forward with that and speak with the municipalities. Kolodziej stated that the DDA has talked about a wayfinding study to approve the flow and signage. Maybe there is an opportunity for collaboration and cost sharing. Pagano said that CDOT has a grant of \$50,000 opportunity that they can apply for.

Ochs said that in 2015 they had QR readers on the maps when they originally made them. They tried to get a kiosk at the four way but were asked to move it to the visitor center. There was concern whether they would be used or not and they are being used. Believes the messaging is more important for the people who aren't stopping and are just going to their spot. The key part is location and how they get to the people who are going wherever they want without reading the signs.

McCombs asked what is actually being proposed. They like the etiquette signage, and being able to be consistent and their intent is going to be to maintain the consistency. Logan said the first idea was expanding on what they already have, what it would look like and the buildout of what they have already done with the COVID critters. How can they package it up? To have digital access or stuff for print materials and do they need that to interface with the public and whose job it is. McCombs said that their intent is to maintain the signage they have. There are other opportunities other than the kiosks. They could put it in toilets. There are other locales and opportunities on public land to put the messaging.

Jones echoed support for intercepting people from their lodging to their trail experience with the message.

Pagano said the next step would be to keep the current signage, figuring out where to put it, working to build a bigger digital platform. They need to revise the scope of work and figure out specific outcomes and products. She is asking Lavorini to work on a specific list of what they want to do and the needed funds for it.

Norton mentioned that they may miss some people but they have a plan that includes outreach with different outlets. They will capture a lot of people.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Reed asked about the letter circulated to the CPW for the State Park and if it was sent, whether anyone signed it. Lavorini said that they sent two versions of a letter to Houck, one that described rationale for a state Park in the community and then a letter that was in support of the concept of considering a State Park but was toned down in terms of being curious of where the proposal might go. They only had one recusal. They just put Kevin's name on the letter, not everyone's names. He has not heard from Houck if it went through. Diamond stated that they chose not to sign the letter because it is their process. They reached out to Lavorini on the content of the letter and are interested in seeing the final letter that was sent. Alexander said that there was talk about a string of smaller State Parks along the Gunnison River. That wasn't part of that and they were unsure of the extent of the State Park. They decided to support the concept and then get more information.

ADJOURN: The February 25, 2021 meeting of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Prepared by Rebecca Ricord, Community Development Administrative Assistant III