



Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 8, 2020
Via Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Scott Jones, Dustin Wilkinson, Jill Ozarski, Christian Meyer, Bill Koerner, Jerry Abboud, Wally Piccone, Janelle Kukuk, Linda Strand

CPW Staff Present: Heather Dugan, Fletcher Jacobs, Tom Metsa, Pam O'Malley, Megan Sims, Felicia Lohnes, Jeannie MacMurtrie, Ben Plankis, Randy Engle, Luke Svare, Josh Stoudt, Garrett Wilson, Joe O'Brien

Others in Attendance: Ex-Officio Jack Placchi (BLM), Chad Schneckenberger (USFS Region 2), Emily Orbanek and Chris Yuan-Farrell (GOCO)

Guests: Steve Bonowski, Grover Cleveland, Whitney Yeldell

Call to Order: Chair Scott Jones called the meeting to order at 9:00, opening with roll call.

Agenda Amendments: None presented

Motion to accept meeting agenda – Bill Koerner

Motion seconded – Dustin Wilkinson

Motion passes unanimously

Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 3, 2020 – No changes presented

Motion to approve minutes – Linda Strand

Motion seconded – Jill Ozarski

Motion passes unanimously

Public Comment:

Steve Bonowski, Colorado Mountain Club. Sent written comments (see letter in file) re: Resolution from Parks and Wildlife Commission on new requirement for a valid hunting or fishing license to access all State Wildlife Areas and State Trust Lands.

Member, Bill Koerner was not aware of the regulation requiring a license and stated that more clarification was needed. NOTE: The rule was enacted on April 30, 2020.



Director's Update – Heather Dugan

Gave an overview of the most recent Commission meeting:

- OHV & SNOW cash funds are on the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) list of funding to review.
- Update on COVID-19 and understanding the budget issues from closures and other activities that have had an impact on funding.
- Parks are open and CPW is hoping to have camping open by May 18th.
- Office opening to customers, soon, on a limited basis. Staff still working at home
- 30-day extension on OHV Registrations and Permits - now valid to May 31, due to backlog on record merges. Merge operations are temporarily closed due to draw. Anyone having an issue should email dnr_wildlife.cpwinfo@state.co.us. Provide name, DOB, Registration number and issue date. Postcards, email notification and video will be available.

Jerry Abboud - Addressing CMC's written public comment asked if any rules were passed by emergency rule making at the Parks & Wildlife Commission meeting (State Administrative Procedures Act requirements are suspended for 120 days under Emergency Rule). If they didn't provide notice but it was under emergency meeting, it would apply.

Scott Jones - Wondering about ongoing registration renewal issues.

Heather responded – Merging CID numbers continues to be a problem but will be less intense compared to the past year. Each machine had a CID in addition to a person with a fishing license. Agency is working on merging all of those things to one CID per customer and working through glitches between new stickers and renewals for current year.

Scott Jones – The JBC considering funds from cash sources is concerning, being that these are voluntarily paid. As this process is currently happening, CPW is constrained on what they are allowed to say. The STC may want to consider their possible options to respond to help educate the JBC on this issue. Decided to discuss further during the roundtable discussion.

Trails Program Update - Fletcher Jacobs

Chad Schneckenberger, United State Forest Service, shared information coming out regarding COVID-19:

- 3 rounds of guidance issued from DC. Round 4 coming out soon.
- Detailed information was sent to the regions on how to phase-in the next steps to reopen: Stage 1 Mitigation and monitoring; Stage 2 Prep and planning; Stage 3 Implementation; Stage 4 Monitoring and adapting. The situation will not be a one size fits all and will be edited to regions. Guidance is going out to campground hosts, permittee guides, etc., and is based on CDC guidelines.
- Conditions are different throughout the region. Would expect gradual reopening as much as possible. Less developed, more remote areas might open sooner. Other, more popular areas might be slower to open. Awaiting guidance for concessionaires, outfitters, partners and volunteers.

- Region 2 is much further along than others in the country, due to good relationships and partnerships in getting crews out and getting work done. Will have crews on the ground this summer. Closure notices are still in effect - might be rescinded sooner than later. Fire ban may be the exception.
- Public lands are seeing unprecedented visitation. This shows the importance of trails partnerships and underscores the need for maintenance. Counties are struggling with trailheads and parking lots. Maintenance is so important. Focus on how to maintain what we have and keep it in good shape.

Linda Strand – asked if additional youth corps crews would help and if there are people available who can supervise them. Chad commented that due to capacity and management options, it could be looked at district by district. CYCA is working on getting crews up and ready to do the work and USDA is a high priority agency. How it trickles down remains to be seen. Linda stated that GOCO dollars could possibly be used to help with COVID-19 issues. She is open to suggestions. Chad responded that there is a challenge with people working remotely. Social distancing questions, etc., still up in the air. Appreciated staff outreach to districts on issues.

Jack Placchi gave a brief update as to how the BLM is handling COVID-19 concerns. At this time, the BLM Directive/guidance is coming mostly from CDC. Each BLM Field Office has different discretionary allowances. Hiring issues are priority for HR. Will stagger crews to address social distancing to get work done. Thanks given to CPW (Jeannie and Tom) for reaching out to BLM partners. Enduro is still going on at Sand Wash at the end of May. Will be a “have no contact” function. May want to follow up after to see how it went.

Update on Grants – Fletcher Jacobs and Tom Metsa

Trying to be flexible with funding through grants and some things are changing due to restrictions. Figuring out COVID-19 needs/limitations, i.e. social distancing. Still want/need to have a meaningful season. At this time, most are still trying to figure out what and how. Non-moto grants/LWCF grants are approved. CPW Financial Services is working with us to get things set up on the front end so dollars can get out to the field as soon as possible.

Tom Metsa gave brief update regarding OHV projects:

Reached out early to good management crews. We are hearing different ideas on how to resolve issues, i.e. needing to use more vehicles and ban on travel. May lift travel ban later. It is important to be flexible and creative. Considered adding funds to contracts to meet needs, but that is not a viable solution. Added budget category for COVID-19 to allow 10% changes within budget. They may need to rent vehicles, which can be \$750-\$1000 per month for 1 vehicle. Most are holding off on adjusting their budgets, waiting to see what things will alter when *safer at home* is lifted.

Trail coordinators are going to try to help at Rampart (opening now or soon will be), due to losing use of statewide crew. Seasonal crew is onboard and working now on some clearing work within their district. Some crews working through COVID rules to share vehicles – *group quarantine approach* to be able to work together. Chad & Al, CPW’s LE Seasonal Staff,

are working on clearing trail. They have spent time at Peach Valley training course and Hartman Rocks. Some crews are working through COVID-19 rules, sharing vehicles, group quarantine approach – to be able to work together as a unit.

Tom Metsa gave a brief update of the Snowmobile Program:

Snow Capital Grant Cycle extended – not much response. Only 2 applications submitted.

Janelle Kukuk talked to CSA clubs about extended deadline and we now have 10 projects.

Committee discussion:

–Member asked if there was an increase in OHV use. Replies follow:

- Yes, especially at Rampart Range, opening this week. Ben confirmed high use.
- Issues with social trails due to people trying to do effective social distancing.
- Use on Jefferson Trail is causing damage. Hikers walking side by side. Motorized riders don't have same trail-use perception. Staying in line is normal.
- Janelle not seeing a lot of visitation due to gates still closed. Staggering the opening of roads & routes. Seeing normal amount of motorized traffic for this time of year.
- Chad – 14ers are seeing overwhelming use on the trails and unauthorized social trails causing trail braiding. Not sure how to manage this problem. Asked if GOCO could help get the message out or do some advertising/publicizing for Stay the Trail, Leave No Trace, etc. Emily and Chris from GOCO will investigate.
- Jeffco and Boulder are seeing higher use and are trying to figure out how to maintain the damage they are already seeing with future funding challenges. Fletcher will send link about increased usage and damage to single-track trail.
- The Maintenance category in the Non-Motorized Pilot should see an increase in applications. Maintenance needs are higher than ever.

Chair, Scott Jones made some final statements. He mentioned the need to dedicate funding to land managers for Stay the Trail issues to respond to issues like this. Thanks to all the partners, BLM, USFS, GOCO, and CPW. These partnerships really help with response to challenges. Trails Program does everything from soup to nuts. We need to rely on staff to be responsive by working with each grantee case by case. Trail crews are very important – look at projects on a one by one basis and being flexible.

Motion to support staff with ongoing flexibility to adjust Scopes of Work and Budgets as needed for COVID-19 responses – Scott Jones

Motion seconded by Janelle Kukuk

Motion passes unanimously

Committee Discussion:

Janelle Kukuk asked, with funds being susceptible, what actions can this committee take to educate on this issue to support CPW? Is there information that we could provide? Staff would appreciate any support from STC. Committee presented thoughts and options. The committee could write letters to the JBC voicing concerns that the funds are volunteers and that they provide important and needed annual trail maintenance. Staff said that any letter would need to come from committee members, not staff. Scott offered to draft a letter and distribute it to committee (May 11th) to finalize and all members agreed.

Jill Ozarski revisited CMC Comment about licenses required on SWAs. Confirmed with Steve that the letter went to the State Trails Committee and has not yet been sent to the PWC. Steve responded that the letter stated their issue and that he didn't have anything to add. Linda feels like this should be sent to the Commission since they are the licensing and SWA side of the organization. It's more of a wildlife issue than a trail issue. Fletcher will work directly with Steve on how to raise the issue with the Commission and will keep the committee in the loop, as requested by Scott Jones. Linda Strand thanked Steve for bring the issue forward, though this committee might not be the right body to address the issue.

Round Table:

Jill Ozarski – Please keep federal stimulus funds in mind (to supplement/maintain recreational assets) and when writing the letter to the JBC. She would like to see some of that stimulus money go towards recreation.

Linda Strand – GOCO is looking at funding and how to address COVID-19 issues. Looking at next year's GOCO funding, grant cycles, etc., and welcomed ideas from this committee.

Bill – Manitou Incline is still closed and will remain closed until COVID-19 issues are resolved. The Incline is popular recreation commodity to both the city and county. The USFS and the cities of Colo. Springs and Manitou Springs will make revisions in how the incline is used.

Christian Meyer – Will have discussion with forest districts in his area (Boulder) on what they are seeing, recreational pressures (like trail maintenance), and let them know the STC is also having conversations at the state level.

Dustin Wilkinson – Is looking forward to signing the letter to the JBC.

Janelle Kukuk – Is learning that it is harder to open a county than it is to close one.

Fletcher Jacobs – Was hoping to hold June 5th STC meeting in person but recommends it be again be held virtually. Heather agreed, stating that we don't yet have a solid reopening for 6060 Broadway. Virtual meeting recommendation was agreeable to all.

Fletcher will schedule more time for STC June 5th, since we commonly go over time. Same timeframe, Snow Action Item will be presented. Dustin's term with the STC will be ending after June meeting. Currently taking nominations for a replacement. Fletcher will share information regarding the open member position. Heather Hormell is one person interested in that seat.

The Partnership Conference will go live with podcasts next week. Sessions to be announced. Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind and COTREX sessions back to back next Thursday, May 14th.

Meeting Adjourned by Scott Jones at 11:06 a.m.