



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado's Recreational Trails Committee

Established January 1, 1985

1313 Sherman Street, Room #618 • Denver, CO 80201

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Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 18, 2020

Via Zoom Virtual Meeting

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

CPW Staff Present: Heather Dugan, Justin Rutter, Fletcher Jacobs, Tom Metsa, Pam O'Malley, Megan Sims, Jeannie MacMurtrie, Gabby Smiley, Ben Plankis, Randy Engle, Luke Svare, Josh Stoudt, Elena Lazarevska, Garrett Watson

Others in Attendance: Ex-Officio Jack Placchi (BLM), Chad Schneckenberger (USFS)

Guests: Roz McClellan, Nancy Working, Chad Hixon

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

Agenda Amendments: None presented

Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 19, 2020 – No changes presented

Motion to approve minutes – Janelle Kukuk

Motion seconded – Christian Meyer

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

Roz McClellan, Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative. Commented on the Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind process. She commended the work group on doing a great job of getting buy-in from stakeholders with mention of partnerships, outreach, and public engagement. Education is key to address incompatibilities between wildlife and trail users. Important to integrate the science of trail planning with user needs and the needs of wildlife.

New Committee Member:

Scott introduced Heather Hormell as the new representative for District 3. The Parks and Wildlife Commission approved her appointment at their July, 2020 meeting. Heather will take on the additional role of OHV Subcommittee Chair.

Director's Update – Heather Dugan and Justin Rutter

Heather introduced Justin Rutter, CPW Chief Financial Officer. Justin reported on the recent Legislative Joint Budget Committee's (JBC) sweep of \$5 million from the OHV fund. He explained that



when we accrue a larger balance, it becomes a temptation to re-appropriate the money. We should distribute the money quickly to benefit trail users. A robust discussion ensued. Highlights:

- Legislature asked staff to evaluate funds over \$1M. When asked about OHV funds, it was determined that we have grants that are active but are not currently using funds. The JBC heard from the community about using the funds for other purposes, but a last minute meeting about bills up for approval resulted in a motion to appropriate the funds.
- Justin shared and discussed a Comparative Budget Sheet. The goal is to have money in and out the door in equal measure. Heather Dugan asked if the committee would like to have periodic updates from Justin. Consensus is to see reports bi-annually.
- Tom Metsa mentioned that the program tries to expend as much as possible, but we are required to follow a spending authority.
- Jerry spoke about the legislative process and how the JBC was informed that we could use excess monies to clear timber, clean up trash, etc. They swept it anyway, so we will continue to have this problem until we address how to decrease our excess funds.
- Christian asked if we could create a legacy grant. Scott said the option was explored, but the funds were swept before we could address it. Fletcher said excess grant funds that are returned (unused) are rolled into the next cycle. A supplemental grant round may be an option to use the money in the current cycle, thereby avoiding a huge overage.
- Tom reported that we are collecting funds at the same time of year (end of fiscal year) when the legislature is looking for cash. We could start to contract sooner with applications that were not funded during the first round, but we are a victim of our own success. We have a six-seven month review process due to inputs that are needed for a public process.
- Heather D. is open to brainstorming ideas. The Registration Unit handles OHV, snowmobile and boat registrations. We need to be cognizant of federal guidelines as it relates to boating. She is not opposed to speeding up the process, but the PWC is much attuned to trails grants. The vetting process is very important.
- Consensus is to make the program as responsive as possible. We are expecting a large return of funds due to COVID-19. We should come up with ways to spend that money quickly.

Trails Program Update - Fletcher Jacobs

Chad Schneckenberger, US Forest Service update:

- Record use this year, started slowing down after Labor Day, but still seeing more activity in the backcountry and dispersed areas. They are working with Stay the Trail to look at ways to have more presence at trailheads. They are also working with Leave No Trace to complete an assessment in the region on how the increase usage is affecting things.
- The Great American Outdoors Act was passed, and they have 90 days to figure out how to spend the money. There are region projects worth about \$60M. The recommendations go from the Dept. of Agriculture to Congress. They need to have the FY22 budget prepared by the end of 2020. FY21

spending runs up against FY22 proposals this first year. The region is looking forward to having funds for deferred maintenance needs.

- New e-bike directives are coming out within a few weeks. The Forest Service is taking steps to classify e-bikes.

Jack Placchi, BLM:

- Usage was slowed with warmer temperatures, but an increase is expected with cooler conditions.
- The BLM became a member of the Care for Colorado Coalition.
- The agency is still working on how things will work with the Great American Outdoors Act. They anticipate having \$55M nationwide. Jack will update the committee as more information becomes available.
- E-bike comments have been received, and there were over 11 million. A decision for final rule is expected this month. The rule allows the BLM to exempt an e-bike on travel plans and call it non-motorized. Some travel management plans already have rules for some routes and could designate others to the type of e-bike classification.

Action Item – Election of Officers, Subcommittee Appointments, 2021 Meeting Dates

Scott asked for nominations for FY21 officers.

Christian Meyer self nominated for Chair

Seconded by Scott Jones

Motion passed unanimously

Scott Jones self nominated for Vice Chair

Seconded by Wally Piccone

Motion passed unanimously

Appointments:

Snowmobile Subcommittee Chair – Janelle Kukuk

OHV Subcommittee Chair – Heather Hormell

Non-motorized Construction Subcommittee Chair – Jill Ozarski

Non-motorized Maintenance Subcommittee Chair – Scott Jones

Non-motorized Planning/Support Subcommittee Chair – Wally Piccone

Motion to approve appointments – Scott Jones

Seconded by Christian Meyer

Motion passed unanimously

2021 Meeting Dates:

January 29, 2021

April 2, 2021

June 4, 2021

September 16-17, 2021 (if away meeting is not authorized, Friday, 9/17/21 will be the date)

December 3, 2021 (if needed)

Motion to approve meeting dates – Wally Piccone

Seconded by Scott Jones

Motion passed unanimously

Snowmobile Grooming Allocations – Tom Metsa

Tom reported that grooming money comes from 33,000 (\$30.25 each) users and from federal Recreational Trail Program (RTP) funds. This money funds grooming operations, rider safety classes, and avalanche awareness. They work closely with the Colorado Snowmobile Association (CSA). There are currently 35 clubs. There is \$769,415.00 for this year, and 27 grooming programs. They will groom approximately 3300 miles of trail. Trails can be used by motorized and non-motorized users. Grooming is allowed under permit by the USFS and BLM, as well as individual counties. No club can get more than \$5,000.00. Janelle reported that the per-mile amount was changed to \$115/per hour in order to use allocations appropriately. This covers equipment, repairs, maintenance, fuel operators and contingency.

Regional Trail Coordinator Updates

In an effort to stay on schedule, RTC reports will be sent to committee members and posted on the State Trails Committee webpage.

Round Table:

Linda Strand reported that her representation on the State Trails Committee is based on her GOCO Board membership. Her term is now expired. GOCO Board member Pam Denahy from La Junta, CO will assume the GOCO representative position. Pam serves as the Director of Tourism for SE Colorado, and is serving her second term on the GOCO board. She is an outdoor recreation user and enjoys dirt bikes, ATVs and hiking. Linda has enjoyed her time on the committee and has agreed to serve as a non-motorized grant reviewer this cycle.

Members thanked Linda for her service.

Jerry thanked CPW for helping with the Care of Colorado Initiative.

Bill reported that Ring the Peak around Pikes Peak continues with high usage.

Janelle reported that the Town of Creede saw an economically good summer with increased tax revenues.

Fletcher reported that with the increase in non-motorized grant applications, there is a question on using LWCF funds. The LWCF grant was separated from the other non-moto grants years ago, but applicants are now asking if they can apply for both an LWCF grant and a non-motorized grant. Members agree that if the applicants are willing to go through the process of applying for both, they should be allowed to do so. Fletcher shared the Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind outline and next steps.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Adjourned by Scott Jones at 11:30 a.m.