



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado's Recreational Trails Committee

Established January 1, 1985

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Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 3, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Janelle Kukuk, Jill Ozarski, Jason Meyer, Pam Denahy, Brad Schwartz, Meara McQuain*, Jack Placchi, Bevin Carithers, Heather Hormell*, Mick Daniel

CPW staff: Fletcher Jacobs, Tom Metsa, Pam O'Malley, Chrystal Read, Maggie Gillard, Jeannie MacMurtrie, Chris Sill, Felicia Lohnes, Luke Svare, Tappan Brown, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt, Ty Petersburg

Others: Ex-Officio Jeff Christenson (BLM), Brendan Kelly (USFS), Scott Segerstrom, Adrian Varney, Steve Bonowski, Scott Jones, Katie Smith, Roz McClellan

*Participated virtually via webinar.

Call to Order: Janelle Kukuk called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., opening with a roll call.

Agenda Amendments: Corrected the date for the approval of the last meeting minutes.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 02, 2022:

Motion to approve minutes – Jill Ozarski

Motion seconded – Bevin Carithers

Motion passed unanimously

Public Comment: Scott Jones thanked CPW for attending the Colorado Snowmobile Convention. He encouraged the committee to review funding allocations and decisions, to focus on Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) and maintenance projects.

Acting Director Updates: Ty Petersburg:

- General Assembly
 - Session has started, and it should be an active one. The Border Crossings Bill could create some issues with checkerboard crossings (public/private ownership).
- CPW Director Search Update
 - Announcement closed within the last two weeks. Numerous applications have been received and are being process by HR. The Commission will review 6 of the top finalists, and the process with continue with an announcement in late spring.
- SB21-249 – Keep Colorado Wild annual pass



- \$32.5M will go to park operations, \$2.5M to search and rescue, avalanche. The remainder will be split between parks cash and wildlife cash.
- There has been good response from the Front Range, and lesser interest from areas where there are no nearby State Parks.
- The pass is limited to vehicles with DMV registration fees.
- Back Country Search and Rescue
 - The administration of this program is now back with CPW. One employee from the Dept. of Local Affairs (DOLA) has been moved to CPW.
 - Statutory operations rides with the Sheriff's Office, and CPW manages funding.
 - Rescue volunteers will get some immunity so they are legally covered if something goes wrong, and injury/death benefits will be added. There is also the possibility of workers compensation.
- Outdoor Regional Partnership Update
 - Efforts are being made to get more people involved in the outdoors with a safety and education focus, and approaching groups that haven't traditionally been involved.
 - Outdoor Legacy grants - \$3M was awarded to 70 organizations. The total ask from all requests was \$20M.
- Wolf Reintroduction Update
 - Now in the public comment period. Meetings are open to the public. There is quite a bit of opposing opinions on the plan, with very compelling testimony.
 - Planning for a Commission vote in May.
 - Work is progressing on a compensation package for loss of productivity, per animal loss, methods to detract wolves from livestock areas. This is currently in draft form.
- Northwest Region
 - The region has experienced a difficult winter, with massive snow amounts. There has caused a significant impact on wildlife. Officers are patrolling and having to euthanize animals that are starving. Many animals are moving toward the towns and highways and getting killed. CPW is working on plans to move the animals from these areas.
 - Future dates and summaries for all meetings are found on the public engagement website: <https://www.wolfengagementco.org>

Public Comment: Roz McClellan suggested a higher percentage of non-motorized funding should be awarded for maintenance projects, with a focus on good management and using suggestions from the Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind document. Applicants should include good management in their plan, and concentrate on “avoid/minimize/mitigate”. Some of these issues could be addressed through changes to the criteria questions.

State Trails Program Update: Fletcher Jacobs

- The District 6 open seat for the State Trails Committee has been re-posted. Preference is for a diversified or motorized representative.
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) – a National Park Service funded program. NPS manages the funding for this grant, while the stateside LWCF grant program is managed by CPW.
 - ORLP is meant for urbanized communities with at least 30K in population. CPW did not receive any qualified applicants by the deadline this year. NPS requires a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process to be completed prior to submitting an application.

- CPW did receive one awarded project last year – Boulder’s Violet Park.
- We are working with the Park Service to find more funding for Colorado. Currently, \$125M is available nationally, and the NPS was not able to award all of it. There may be adjustments in how things work in order to award grants to more communities. NPS needs to understand the limitations of local governments.
- There is a possibility of sharing a mapping tool for applicants to use to identify eligible areas.
- If an ORLP project does not fit, or is not funded by the NPS, it may be possible to move the project to a stateside grant.
- SCORP Update – Planning to open up public comment in the spring, with the hope of a final document in 2024. There may be a need to have the current SCORP extended to allow the process to continue.

Info Item – CYCA OHV REP – Scott Segerstrom

Scott provided highlights from the 2022 season. The investment created 187 jobs and achieved gender equality with many women joining as crew members. Partners on the ground were satisfied with the work and will use crews in the future. Eight miles of OHV trails were improved or maintained. Work also included 723 ft. of bridge work, 10 campgrounds, 263 ft. of elevated tread, along with improved sustainability and user experience. Scott gave some information on how the funding is procured from unused OHV sticker money. The focus is on maintenance and resource protection. There is a healthy appetite for conservation projects, and this program received a great response to the RFP. Scott thanked staff for their hard work and support.

Action Item – Non-Motorized Trails and LWCF Funding Recommendations

Fletcher provided information on this year’s applications, including the background on the wildlife impact review process. Highest scores in each category were shown. Two applications were moved from construction to LWCF. There was public comment on the Baker’s Park Trail System project in the SW region. The committee discussed the wildlife concerns.

Motion to approve funding recommendations – Pam Denahy

Motion seconded – Jill Ozarski

Motion passed with two members recused

USFS Update – Brendan Kelly

Phase 3 hiring is in process. Half of the good management crews are filled, and there is an upcoming hiring phase. There could be some flexibility of future phases so they don’t end up returning unused grant funds. This includes hiring a trail coordinator or Youth Corps versus FS crews. A saw coordinator has been hired to conduct training and build capacity. They have a coordinator for ATV training. Phases 3 and 4 are temporary/seasonal. Some crew leads are FT. There are ongoing conversations for having a permanent crew lead. Most vacant positions are temporary.

BLM Update – Jeff Christenson

Statewide recreation development is going well. New e-bike trails in Tres Rios. Trailhead buildout for 12 miles of trail near Mancos. Working on travel planning for San Miguel, Montrose and Dolores Counties.

Volunteers are doing a lot of work and taking ownership for long-term maintenance. There has been a lot of staff turnover. State Director Doug Vilsack continues to be interested in developing new partnerships, especially with the State example of the Keep Colorado Wild pass and cooperation at various federal sites. Staffing is an issue for BLM, as well as housing. Good Management grants help with hiring permanent positions, and helps with recruitment and retention.

Info Item – OHV Grants – Tom Metsa

Tom highlighted the number of applications received, the amount of requested funding and discussed competitive grants vs. good management, Youth Corps and region locations of the projects.

Regional Trail Coordinator Quarterly Reports – Luke Svare, Randy Engle, Josh Stoult

Mitch Martin, SE Deputy Regional Manager, introduced himself and gave some background on his tenure with CPW. The SE region is short on management staff, with the Regional Manager leaving the agency. He introduced Tappan Brown as the new SE Trails Coordinator.

Info Item – Peaks to Plains Trail Update– Martha Tableman, Clear Creek County

Martha highlighted this trail, which was partially funded with Non-Motorized and LWCF grants.

Round Table

- Mr. Schwartz is working on getting a chain saw class scheduled in the near future.
- Ms. Ozarski thanked the committee for providing transparency to the grant funding process.
- Ms. Denahy stated that the GOCO annual report has been released. It is on their [website](#). GOCO's 30th anniversary was last September.
- Ms. McQuain mentioned a Trails Symposium and will provide updates. She is working with Jody Kennedy on the CO Outdoor Partnership conference. Snow totals are very high in Grand County, and they are aware of the wildlife and avalanche issues. There has been a lot of recreation and conditions at trailheads (vault toilets) is bad. Avalanche signage needs to be addressed. Grand County is working with commissioners on revising the county sales tax which will fund open lands, rivers and trails.
- Ms. Kukuk mentioned the avalanche beacon program through CSA. She will connect with Meara for further discussion. Winter Park Resort has agreed to pay for the beacons.
- Ms. Hormell thanked the committee for the discussion on the Baker's Park project.
- Mr. Daniel looks forward to being more involved with the grant review process. He mentioned the SLVGO! Plan and regional partnership. The San Luis Valley BLM has a moratorium on trail building. They are installing 5 micro cabins for crews. This will provide the ability for year-round work. The cabins are located on CO State Trust property.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. by Janelle Kukuk