



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 2, 2023 – Hybrid Meeting

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

CPW Staff: Fletcher Jacobs, Tom Metsa, Pam O'Malley, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt, Luke Svare, Tappan Brown, Gabrielle Smiley, Jeannie MacMurtrie, Eric Schuette, Felicia Lohnes\*, Jamie Goins\*, Mitch Martin\*

Others: Ex-Officio Jeff Christensen\* (BLM), Brendan Kelly (USFS) Guests: Steve Bonowski, Pete Swenson, Adrian Varney\*, Katie Smith\*, Dan Zimmerer\*

\*Participated virtually via ZOOM

**Call to Order:** Janelle Kukuk called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Agenda Amendments:** update report times from BLM & USFS. Move Non-Motorized to 1045.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2023:** typo corrections accepted

*Motion to approve minutes – Jill Ozarski*

*Motion seconded – Meara McQuain*

*Motion passed unanimously*

### **Public Comment:**

Sallie Thoreson, Great Old Broads, expressed concerns over Colorado drought affecting 3 bird species. She had concerns with an article in CPW's Colorado Outdoors Magazine, and urged the Trails Program to monitor non-game wildlife concerns. She also urged the closing of user created trails and that applicants should closely follow the *Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind* guide.

### **Director Updates: Fletcher Jacobs for Heather Dugan:**

- New CPW Director Jeff Davis started May 1, 2023.
- The 73rd legislative assembly ended on May 8th and was once again a busy one for the CPW and DNR. The Long Bill which authorizes the state budget was signed by the governor and approved:
  - 88.9 new FTE for DNR agencies
  - \$3.1 M for the Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Plan
  - \$115.7 M for CPW Capital Projects
  - It also includes the OHV and Snowmobile Cash fund spending authority.



- Colorado State Forester and other state agencies updated the governor that they are forecasting a moderate wildlife season thanks in large part to the above average snowpack and the recent spring precipitation. This of course is subject to change as temperatures increase and moisture levels decrease. On average Colorado has over 5000 wildfires that burn over 230,000 acres during a fire season based on data collected from 2011-2020.
- Keep Colorado Wild Pass update: 30.6% opt in, \$408K passes sold, \$11.6 M in revenue through first quarter (Jan – Mar).
- After more than two years of extensive statewide stakeholder meetings and outreach via a series of public hearings, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission gave final approval to the final Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan during their May 3 meeting.
- The plan was unanimously adopted through a two-step approval process that began at the April 6 CPW Commission meeting in Steamboat Springs.
- The final approval clears the way for CPW biologists to introduce wolves in the Western Slope area and meet the voter-approved deadline of reintroduction by December 31, 2023.
- CPW staff continue to work with USFWS on the development of the 10(j) rule, which will be very important to have in place to manage wolves as described in the Plan.
- The Parks and Wildlife Commission approved the current year's big-game license quota in May which included the notable changes in this year's license quotas related to the severity and duration of the historic winter in the northwest corner of the state.
- In this zone, the winter was the worst in at least 70 years because of deep, long-lasting, low-elevation snowpack.
- CPW recommended unprecedented license reductions and shortened some season dates within this severe winter zone to account for high mortality rates experienced by mule deer, elk, and pronghorn.
- These substantial reductions should allow herds to recover as quickly as possible.

#### **State Trails Program Update: Fletcher Jacobs**

- Maggie Gillard is leaving her position as Trails Coordinator for a new job with a local government. HR to post position opening later this month.
- OHV decals – problems with ink/paper stock, alternatives being looked at. Alternate Heather asked, “Have partners at BLM & USFS been notified of this issue?” Fletcher answered, “Yes, and will send update again including to New Mexico”.
- Shared CYCA media blast about OHV partnership agreement.
- Colorado Outdoor Partnership – Winter Park, CO
- International Trails Summit – Reno, NV

#### **Action Item: 2023-24 Snowmobile Grant Funding Recommendations: Tom Metsa**

- Tom shared slide show of program history/timeline and review of program funding and partnerships
- Janelle commented on funding recommendations, “hard decisions had to be made, need and urgency are the driving forces.”
- Explained how the program funds equipment, operations, fuel, and new snow cats when needed.
- Explained why Build America, Buy America policy is challenging.
- Registrations numbers pretty flat overall
- Discussed electric snow cats – more expensive, currently difficult to use in remote backcountry operations without access to chargers.

Applications for 12 eligible projects received for a total grant request of \$1,088,332.00. The subcommittee recommended funding 9 projects at a total grant request of \$536,208.00

*Motion to approve funding recommendation – Jack Placchi*  
*Motion seconded – Jason Meyer*  
*Motion passed unanimously*

### **USFS Updates: Brendan Kelly**

- Staffing issues still problematic: 30-40% unfilled
- National level look at recruitment issues, including emergency hiring authority for seasonals
- Wage grade as alternative to GS pay scale approved, should see it next year
- Trails & Wilderness Mgmt. meeting in Laramie, WY was a good meeting
- Comments from Janelle, Heather, Bevin on hiring issues

### **BLM Updates: Jeff Christensen**

- 6 of 10 field offices have hiring issues, folks turning down jobs, GS 5,6,7 series upgrade/challenges, pay equality with FTEs, housing a big issue
- Question from Jack about Public Lands Rule proposal, leasing land and trail access
- Jeff to send website link for public comment on proposal to Fletcher and share with STC

### **2024 Non-Motorized Trail and LWCF Grant Cycles: Fletcher Jacobs**

- Fletcher provided background info with goal to simplify the application process
- Meara commended those who worked on this project
- Review of all Non-Motorized Trails application language with suggested changes.
- LWCF Application: Community Benefit question discussed with possible rewrite of question
- Wildlife Review process for grant applications discussed with suggestion of recommending CODEX reports as an additional step.

### **Frisco Nordic Center Trails Update: Pete Swenson**

- Colorado the Beautiful grant success story – flexibility of program was beneficial to the project: Peninsula Recreation Area in Frisco.

### **Regional Trail Coordinators Reports: Josh Stoudt, Randy Engle, Luke Svare, Tappan Brown**

### **2024 Non-Motorized Trail Grant Cycle – Continued Discussion – NM Trail Stewardship Pilot**

Fletcher presented the new non-motorized 2-year pilot program and engaged the committee in discussion about its purpose and administration. Items discussed included; criteria for grant, funding source, funding amounts, project length, crew size, multi-grant applications, educational outreach.

### **Round Table**

- Tomorrow, June 3 is National Trails Day
- Ecological restoration with trail restoration
- Update on the Pikes Peak OHV Crew. Heather participated in spring meeting with several clubs and they are doing other projects. Looking forward to working with Trail Coordinators to review progress on trail projects.

**Meeting Adjourned 2:30 pm**