



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 9, 2024 - Hybrid Meeting

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

CPW Staff: Fletcher Jacobs, Tom Metsa, Pam O'Malley, Chrystal Read, Gabby Smiley, Joe O'Brien, Katya Karp, Felicia Lohnes, Jamie Goins, Jared Rubin, Josh Mabis, Lauren Zubick, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt, Luke Svare, Tappan Brown, Shannon Schaller, Lexi Hamous, Mitch Martin, Matt Thorpe, Garrett Watson

Others: Ex-Officio Jeff Christenson (BLM), Brendan Kelly (USFS). Guests: Katie Smith, Dan Zimmerer, Scott Jones

\*Members participated virtually via ZOOM webinar

**Call to Order:** Janelle Kukuk called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

### Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2023

*Motion to approve minutes – Pam Denahy*

*Motion seconded – Jill Ozarski*

*Motion passes unanimously*

### Public Comment:

Scott Jones discussed the importance of the educational component of Stay the Trail. There has been some staff turnover, with new people and acting positions. STT does a great job promoting educational tools, and this is a large success for the State Trails Program. The messaging effort is very valuable and needs to be recognized.

### Director Updates: Fletcher Jacobs for Ty Petersburg

- **DNR staffing updates:** There is an opening for the Director of Reclamation of Mining Safety. The current State Engineer is retiring. An Acting Director in place for the Division of Water Resources during the hiring process. Interview process has begun for the Federal Affairs Policy position.
- **Legislative update:**
  - Technical Clean Up Bill for Energy and Carbon Management Division.
  - A Bill has been introduced to include invertebrates in the definition of wildlife and adding oversight authority over management of rare plants. Technical Clean Up Bill regarding Title 33 and Keep Colorado Wild
  - Wolverine reintroduction – a bipartisan piece of legislation to authorize CPW to reintroduce wolverines in the State.
  - Annual Bills for Species Conservation Trust Fund
  - Water Projects Bill tied to significant funding for water projects.



- **Other Updates:**
  - Pollinator Study – DNR and Governor Polis joined together to release the study. Developed in response to Senate Bill 199.
  - DNR submitted comments on USFS proposal on mineral withdrawal of the Thompson divide.
  - DNR is working to develop comments on several wildlife habitat focused Department of Interior land use plans including Sage-grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA), Gunnison Sage-grouse RMPA and Big Game RMPA.
  - DNR submitted comments on the BLM solar project, with input from CPW staff.
  - Colorado State Forest Service in connection with the Dept. of Higher Education provided direction within Senate Bill 23-005.
  - Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Program grant cycle closed in Fall of 2023. 33 applications received including two from CPW for 16 weeks of wildlife mitigation work. Work was completed by Mile High Youth Corps on Mueller SP and Cheyenne Mountain SP. New grant round will be announcement in March with \$6-7 million available funding.
  - Energy and Carbon Management Commission (ECMC) – 2024 rule making. Anticipate rule making on cumulative impacts, deep geothermal operations, and carbon capture and sequestration projects.
  - Southern Ute Tribe concluded its runoff election in December with re-election of Chair Baker
  - Colorado Water Conservation Board participated in the Climate Change in Colorado report, focused on water. Information to help inform future management and planning of the State’s water resources.
  - Department of the Interior announced a formal process to develop the future Lake Powell and Lake Mead operating guidelines.
  - Colorado River Drought Taskforce final recommendations will go the Assembly in December.
- **CPW Reorganization and new branch – Outdoor Recreation and Lands.** The new branch includes Regional Partnerships, Outdoor Equity grant program, Philanthropy, Statewide Trails Program, Real Estate, Habitat Partnership Program, State Trust Lands and Big Game Damage.
- Staffing – Two Assistant Director positions will be advertised for the Policy and Planning and Outdoor Recreation and Lands branches.
- Wolf Reintroduction – Wolves are on the ground and another population has been secured with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. The next capture season is from December 2024 – January 2025.
  - Online collared grey wolf tracking map - <https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/Wolves-Activity-Map.aspx>. Shows watershed view of where the wolves have been active, but does not show exact locations.
- Mountain Lion, Bobcat and Lynx FAQ – staff working on draft. Final document will be released soon.
- Director Davis met with Southern Ute Tribal Council to hear priority issues and how to work together to address shared interest
- Employee Cultural Survey included listening sessions around the State. New committee formed to look at and address the culture of CPW.
- Big Game Season Structure – Sent a sample survey to 6,000 Colorado elk hunters. Results will be reviewed at the March Parks and Wildlife Commission meeting.
- Other activities include a Draw Process working group, an updated brochure on non-toxic ammunition and renewable energy policy.

**Financial Update:** Justin Rutter reported on the full calendar year revenue for the Keep Colorado Wild Pass with just over \$41M in revenue. Goal is to generate at least \$36M annually. Park visitation is reported by park managers through an internal database. 18.1M million visitors last year, this year is similar. Visitation did not take the 20-30% increase that was forecast on the survey. Website: [Keep Colorado Wild Pass](#).

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

- Possible workshop/presentation at the Partners in the Outdoors Conference, but it may be better to pause due to other events happening on the same day.
- Fletcher introduced Katya Karp as the new OHV Grant Administrator

### **Action Item – 2024 Non-Motorized Trails and LWCF Funding Recommendations – Fletcher Jacobs**

Fletcher provided information on this year's applications, including the new Trail Stewardship pilot program, funded by GOCO. Applications in this category received two scores, one for trail stewardship, and one for maintenance. The applications that did not score high enough for funding in the Stewardship category were allowed to compete in the Maintenance category with just the maintenance score. The committee discussed the new category as well as other trends noticed in this grant round. Jack Placchi asked if the stewardship projects that were moved to Maintenance would be allowed to compete for Trail Stewardship next year. This should be addressed at the April STC meeting along with what the next cycle should look like.

*Motion to approve funding recommendations – Pam Denahy*

*Motion seconded – Jill Ozarski*

*Motion passed*

### **CYCA OHV RFP Update – Fletcher Jacobs**

Fletcher reported on the approved CYCA projects for the 2024 season. Four projects were awarded in USFS Arapaho NF (Sulphur RD), USFS Rio Grande NF (Conejos Peak RD), BLM San Luis Valley Field Office and USFS White River NF (Blanco RD).

### **Info Item – 2025 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. Documents will be posted to the [State Trails Committee Archives webpage](#).

### **USFS Update – Brendan Kelly**

Chad Schneckenburger is on detail through the end of May. Brendan is the point of contact during this time. The FS has created a trail data working group in R2 with forests/partners to collaborate on updating FS public trail data which feeds into apps like COTREX. Trail Assessment Condition Overview Survey (TACOS) pilot year for deferred maintenance survey. FS is operating on a continuing resolution, as such, the budget is not finalized. Could be decreased, which will impact the number of seasonals they hire, their ability to travel, fleet, etc. R6 working on post fire recovery process for rec sites/trails, short, medium and long-range planning.

### **BLM Update – Jeff Christenson**

Jeff reported on upcoming projects for Tres Rios, Mancos, Little Snake, Royal Gorge, Uncompahgre and Grand Junction. They are sending staff to the Trails Symposium in Reno. State Director Visack continues to be very interested in developing new partnerships, especially with the State (e.g. Keep Colorado Wild Pass and cooperation at various federal sites).

Staffing challenges continue. BLM finds it difficult to compete with rising private sector wages and incentives. They must weigh appropriate GS pay levels with job complexity and GS level of supervisors. Looking for creative ways to provide housing cost offsets. State OHV grant with Good Management status allows for hiring of career seasonals to increase stability, job attraction and year to year consistency. Career seasonal employees hired for OHV Good Management cannot then work on non-motorized projects. Inflation Reduction Act to help reduce backlog, restoration landscape in San Luis Valley and North Park. \$11M for those two landscapes for ecosystem restoration, clean water, etc.

### **Info Item – Stay the Trail – Sam Logan**

Sam provided printed copies of their 2023 season summary. He discussed the organizational history, work completed, educational outreach, events, partnerships and volunteer culture. The organization works to provide accurate and up-to-date information for trail users.

### **Info Item – SCORP Update – Jody Kennedy**

Jody presented on the 2024-2028 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, including the history and objectives. She showed highlights from the 2019-2023 SCORP and discussed the Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative. Jody explained the vision for conservation, climate resilience and sustainable recreation. She mentioned that interested individuals can comment on the SCORP via the [Engage CPW](#) website.

### **Regional Trail Coordinator Reports: Josh Stoudt, Randy Engle**

Change in reporting for this quarter – Josh and Randy presented on the Ranger Summer Skills Training Academy that is provided annually for CPW Park Rangers and District Wildlife Managers.

### **Round Table**

Fletcher asked members to provide feedback on the proposed workshop at the Partners conference via email. Possibility of holding off to find the best opportunity to host this event. He encouraged members to attend the conference and the Trails Program has some funds available to help with registration.

Pam Denahy mentioned that the GOCO annual report is available on the [GOCO website](#).

Jack Placchi attended a meeting in Boulder regarding the Golden Trail, organized by Jefferson County to discuss different visions (commuter, recreationalist, etc.) and how to work together. Park City, UT has a program that gives a courtesy pass to individuals 65+ (or those with a disability) to use e-bikes on open space trails. Brendan (USFS) responded that at this time, the FS cannot follow this example as e-bikes are not considered to be adaptive devices. If they allow e-bikes, it will be for all users.

Bevin Carithers mentioned an Open Space Alliance event September 29<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Grand Junction. He can provide registration information.

Heather Hormell mentioned the OHV grant application reviews earlier in the week, and that applicant presentations will take place March 6-8 in Denver. These meetings are open to the public.

Brad Schwartz thanked staff for the efforts with the grant review process and found it very educational.

Meara McQuain will attend the Mountain West Trails conference in Vernal, UT May 13-15, 2024, and asked if CPW is aware of it. Fletcher said the organizers had reached out, and Program Coordinator Joe O'Brien is on the planning committee. Joe, Fletcher and two RTCs will attend. CPW will have a regional meeting at the event.

Mick Daniel stated that San Luis Valley Great Outdoors was able to work late into the season. They are also working on strategic planning. The Master Plan is ten years old, and they want to reach out to communities to assess if their needs are being met and to provide updates.

Janelle Kukuk mentioned the Colorado Snowmobile Association convention February 23-25 in Buena Vista.

**Meeting Adjourned 2:02 p.m.**