



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado's Recreational Trails Committee

Established January 1, 1985

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Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 5, 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, Eric Schuette, Katya Karp, Felicia Lohnes, Jamie Goins, Jared Rubin, Josh Mabis, Lauren Zubick*, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt, Luke Svare, Tappan Brown,

Others: Ex-Officio Jeff Christensen* (BLM), Brendan Kelly* (USFS). Guests: Katie Smith*, Keith McBrearty, Ken Gardner, Mark Buckland*, Rosalind McClellan*, Steve Bonowski*, Scott Jones*

*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 February 9, 2024

Motion to approve minutes - Jill Ozarski

Motion seconded - seconded by Bevin Carithers

Motion passes unanimously

Public Comment: No public comments

Director Updates: Fletcher Jacobs

- **DNR staffing updates:** Fletcher Jacobs was promoted from within CPW's State Trails Program to the new role of Assistant Director of the Outdoor Recreation and Lands Branch. Fletcher shared with the State Trails Committee that he looks forward to the opportunity to amplify the work that the State Trails Program does to inspire current and future trail stewardship. The State Trails Program Manager role will be posted soon.
- **CPW Reorganization:** The State Trails Program is part of the CPW reorganization and will now be housed within the Outdoor Recreation and Lands Branch. Other Departments within the Branch include: Regional Partnerships, Outdoor Equity grant program, Philanthropy, Real Estate, Habitat Partnership Program, State Trust Lands and Big Game Damage. Wolf Reintroduction Coordination will be managed under a new unit, housed within the Terrestrial section.
- **Big Game Season Structure** - Parks & Wildlife Commission meeting on 4/5/2024 to review the Big Game Structure, sample survey data that was sent to 6,000 Colorado Elk Hunters, and to invite public comment.
- **Elk Research Study** - The Research Policy and Planning Branch is focused on the impacts of recreation on wildlife and is currently finishing a study on Elk.



- **Legislative update:**
 - [Senate Bill 24-056](#) Out-of-State Snowmobile Permit & Search and Rescue Fee. SB 24-056 passed the House and Senate. This bill creates an out-of-state snowmobile permit that an owner or operator of an out-of-state snowmobile must obtain and display to drive the snowmobile on publicly owned land. CPW worked with the Governor's Office to support the bill. The bill adds the search and rescue fee to out-of-state snowmobile permits and off-highway use permits, a \$0.25 surcharge for backcountry search and rescue. Strong Bi-Partisan support.
 - [Senate Bill 24-171](#) is introduced in the Senate for the Restoration of Wolverines. SB24-171 authorizes the reintroduction of the North American wolverine in the state by the division of parks and wildlife. The bill also provides provisions for the compensation of owners of livestock for losses caused by the North American wolverine.
 - [House Bill 24-1117](#) Invertebrates & Rare Plants, Parks & Wildlife Commission. The bill has passed both the House and the Senate and gives CPW authority and resources to study invertebrates and rare plants.
- **Other Updates:**
 - [Keep Colorado Wild Pass](#) - Justin Rutter, CFO, CWP previously provided a financial update on the full calendar year's revenue for the Keep Colorado Wild Pass with just over \$41M in revenue. Goal is to generate at least \$36M annually. Looking at year two's data thus far, shows a slight drop off from reviewing two months of data. The Agency will continue to review year two's data prior to determining where and how any remaining funds after the first \$36M are distributed.
 - [State Recreational Trails Committee](#) (2) Vacancies - The eleven committee members are volunteers: one from each of Colorado's eight Congressional Districts, two At-Large Representatives, and one GOCO Representative.
 - [Congressional District 6](#) Representative
 - At-Large Snowmobile Representative.

State Trails Program Update: Fletcher Jacobs

- [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#) - At the February Meeting the possibility of presenting or hosting a workshop was proposed. Ultimately, it was decided to not include the Recreational Trails Committee in the Partners in the Outdoors Conference due to Colorado Outdoor Regional Partners Initiatives (RPI) scheduling conflicts.
- [Mountain West Trails Conference 2024](#) - Utah is hosting an inaugural regional trails conference to unite trail advocates, volunteers, land managers, industry professionals, users, and community leaders from the Mountain West states. CPW staff will attend.
- State Trails Program and Recreational State Trails Committee to consider having further conversations regarding hosting a Trails Symposium again.

Action Item - 2024-2025 OHV Grant Funding Recommendations - Tom Metsa

Tom provided information on the OHV Program's funding sources, the program's history and this year's applications. The OHV Program received 76 grant applications for a total funding request of \$8,030,255. The program staff estimated the total amount of funding available to be \$6,433,868. The OHV Subcommittee recommended funding all 25 Good Management projects at \$2,891,696 and funding 34 Competitive projects in order for the remaining \$3,542,171 of available funding.

The State Recreational Trails Committee were asked to approve the scores and associated ranking results from the OHV Subcommittee as presented, and to recommend funding 59 projects in the total amount of \$6,433,868 and to fund additional projects in the order of rank that scored a 70% or higher, as additional funding becomes available.

Motion to approve funding recommendations - Heather Hormell
Motion seconded - Pam Denahy
Mick Daniel recused
Motion passed

Break: 10:16 am - 10:25 am

Info Item - Non-Motorized Grant Funding Review - Fletcher Jacobs

Fletcher provided a review of the Trails Stewardship Pilot program. Discussion included applicant criteria, funding recommendations, and feedback received from the Maintenance subcommittee. Janelle Kukuk and Mick Daniel provided their feedback and proposed that the process and funding amounts remain consistent into the next year to better measure the success of the pilot program.

BLM Update - Jeff Christensen

Jeff thanked both the Committee and the Subcommittee for the support the BLM will receive from the 2024-2025 OHV grant cycle. The BLM Federal budget was passed, showing a 9% cut across the board; waiting to see the budget at the state level. Staffing challenges continue, BLM is trying to combat seasonal hiring difficulties by hiring career seasonals and interns through the [Colorado Youth Corps Association \(CYCA\)](#).

Two BLM statewide planning efforts are being reviewed internally after the public comment period. One is to preserve and enhance habitat for eight [Gunnison sage-grouse](#) populations on public lands across southwest Colorado. And the second is for [big game habitat conservation](#) resource management along with consideration of alternative management approaches for the Bureau's oil and gas planning decisions in existing BLM Colorado resource management plans to maintain, conserve, and protect migration and movement corridors and other important habitat for bighorn sheep, pronghorn, elk, and mule deer as part of a legal settlement with the State of Colorado.

USFS Update - Brendan Kelly

Brendan thanked CPW staff and the Committees for the 2025 grant cycle approval process and for helping to get dollars on the ground for OHV trail work. He reported that the USFS budget is down and in years like this they rely even more on funding from CPW grants. In this vein, the Forest Service is limiting travel and decreasing conference attendance. Like the BLM a few Forests have pivoted to permanent seasonal positions and plan to use interns and partners to staff trail crews.

ArcGIS Survey 123 is a new trail assessment phone application that is being rolled out for users to send in current trail conditions. Currently, only Forest Service staff can be approved to use it. They hope to have partner organizations be able to use it in the future, but that capability still needs to be built out, it's a priority and would be the same across the nation. Brendan mentioned how it might be possible to be used with grant applications to show pictures of when and where trail work is done.

Discussion with Federal partners on Federal Lands Stay Limits - introduced by Brad Schwartz

Brendan Kelly provided information on USFS stay limits, sharing that each Forest sets their own stay limit. This USFS stay limit is generally 7-14 days within a 30 day period. Jeff Christensen provided BLM stay limits are 14 days and an individual must be camping for recreational purposes. The BLM defers to law enforcement to determine if the user is camping for recreational purposes.

Info Item -Summit Sno-Riderz- Keith McBrearty and Ken Gardner

[Summit Sno-Riderz](#) is a non-profit founded in 1977 and currently has 60 volunteers who coordinate and provide avalanche education and avalanche beacon practice opportunities. The Club is responsible for grooming 18 miles of the Spring Creek Trail System, and these routes are critical in the event of any life/safety issues encountered by local law enforcement and other agencies. Both shared that Snowmobile Clubs could always use additional funding to purchase and maintain Snowcats used for grooming trails used by user groups and law enforcement.

The club will host a 2025 Colorado Snowmobile Convention in January.

Info Item -COTREX- Joe O'Brien

Joe presented on Colorado Trail Explorer ([COTREX](#)). COTREX provides Colorado trail data for Non-Motorized and Motorized Trails for the following recreational purposes: hiking, biking, equestrian use, Off-Highway Vehicles, snowmobiles, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Break for lunch: 12:16 pm- 12:50 pm.

Regional Trail Coordinator Reports: Luke Svare, Tappan Brown

Luke and Tappan presented on the Winter Skills Training Academy that is provided twice a year for CPW Park Rangers, District Wildlife Managers and partner agencies.

Roundtable Discussion

Pam Denahy - [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) (GOCO) to distribute over \$117M for partner led conservation, recreation, and outdoor access efforts statewide. Press release found [here](#).

Brad Schwartz - shared with the Committee about the [Missile Site Park](#), which was a historic missile launch site, and is located in Greeley, Colorado.

Mick Daniel - San Luis Valley Great Outdoors ([SLV GO!](#)) is offering 5 lodging sites at the Penitente Canyon Tin Can Camp, located within 200 acres of Colorado State Trust Land and reservations can be made through [Hipcamp](#).

Jason Meyer - El Paso County is updating policy on E-Bike usage for the Pike Peak Region taking into account committee meetings and working towards building consensus from user groups.

Non-Motorized Grants Discussion Continued - Fletcher Jacobs

Pam Denahy is in favor of keeping the pilot program as is to get a good benchmark. Janelle Kukuk concurred. Bevin Carithers would like to hear input from grantees before any significant changes would be made. As such, Fletcher Jacobs will work with Chrystal Read and Pam O'Malley to report back to the Committee with a few broad tweaks but will not make any drastic changes.

Fletcher asked the Committee for input on two Non-Motorized Grants:

- 2022 Leadville RD Maintenance grant - have been unable to hire crew staff members and would like to pivot towards hiring a Colorado Youth Corps Association ([CYCA](#)) crew to do the work.
- 2023 South Park RD Maintenance grant - materials budget was zeroed out. Would like to utilize the Colorado Mountain Bike Association ([COMBA](#)).

The Committee approved these changes

State Trails Program to update internal policies on when Grant Administrators need to bring scope and budget changes to the State Recreational Trails Committee for their review in order to respect the Committee's scoring process for all State Trail Program grants.

Meeting Adjourned 2:10 p.m.