

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
Citizen Task Force (CTF)

Friday, May 4, 2018

Start Time 10:02 am

Location: conference call

Minutes

Present: Bob Hamel (CTF President, Commercial Permittees), Christina King (Environmental Interests), Mark Robbins (Private Boaters), Wendy Rombold (Property Owners), Rob Ferris (Property Owners), Justin Zeisler (Water Interests)

In Attendance: Jim Pitts (USFS Salida Ranger), Rob White (AHRA Park Manager), Jennifer Crawford (AHRA Admin Asst.)

Welcome and Introductions

Hayden Pass Fire Aftermath and Restoration

- USFS is monitoring the South Prong Watershed for debris movement.
- There is agency concern for water flow and resulting fish habitat.
- Due to washout, the bridge on South Prong of Hayden Creek was removed.
- Big Cottonwood Creek is being monitored. The road has been severely compromised on State lands. Engineer work will be completed this summer in attempt to stabilize and keep flow in the channel.
- Closures and restoration will occur in areas behind Coaldale where illegal routes were created from private land onto Forest Service land, causing erosion.
- USFS plans to get equipment in to Rainbow Trail after the area has been allowed to settle. There will be motorized closure through the fire area again this year, but the area will remain open to hikers and equestrian traffic. No camping is allowed within the fire perimeter area.
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) received funding for assistance of the private land owners who have been impacted by higher flows, specifically on the South Prong Drainage and Big Cottonwood Drainage.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on January 9, 2018 were approved.

Public Comment (attendees) / Roundtable (Members):

An update in regard to the Granite Diversion Structure: The 1041 permit for Chaffee County will likely have its first reading May 15th. Public awareness processes to follow around July, hopefully leading to construction staging in August, and the beginning of construction around Labor Day. This is expected to be a two-year-project. Public will be allowed access throughout construction.

New Business:

2018 CTF Nomination Results

All individuals currently serving have been elected to serve another term.

AHRA Management Plan

There are two sections still pending completion in the AHRA Management Plan revision process: the CMA (which is approximately 95% complete) and the Programmatic Agreement. Both documents have an expected completion date of June. The Record of Decision would then be signed by Keith Burger and potentially finalized by the end of this summer.

Recreation Site Updates

Hayden Ranch - Aurora Agreement

The City of Aurora has entered into an agreement with AHRA to manage the site just below Hayden Meadows. This adds two miles on river right for private and commercial fishing. AHRA is currently working with the Union Pacific to allow public pedestrian crossing onto this property.

Arkansas River Ranch - Youth Corps Project

Youth Corps will be completing work on the Arkansas River Ranch, opposite of Hayden Ranch. To be included in their work is a clean-up of old barbed wire and metal, creation of a more defined loop trail to bike, walk, or ride horseback, installation of interpretive signs, and installation of buck and rail.

Granite Rock Recreation Site - Stage & Rail Trail parking, access, restoration, and interpretive trail proposal

A "Healthy River Grant" has been drafted to restrict vehicle use in the Granite Rock Recreation Site. An interpretive trail master plan in process, as is a plan for a formalized climbing area.

Arkansas River Placer Recreation Site

The Numbers site will continue to function as a launch site throughout the summer. Construction on the new Numbers put-in will likely begin this fall. As part of the second phase, CPW will complete a land exchange with Forest Service where a campground will potentially be created.

Elephant Rock Recreation Site

The AHRA and Forest Service plan to work in conjunction to clean up and designate sites more clearly at the Elephant Rock Recreation Site. This site continues to be a no-fee camping site.

Silver Bullet Boat Chute/Portage Trail

CPW has been working with adjacent land owners to get a permanent easement into this area. When in place, AHRA hopes to improve the portage trail, and to widen and improve the eddy in attempt to reduce the number of individuals portaging on private land.

Ruby Mountain Recreation Site

The boat ramp at Ruby Mountain was recently widened. Posts will be installed for boat tie-offs.

Salida East Recreation Site

A group of 60-70 volunteers with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) will spend two days upgrading 11 primitive sites at Salida East to basic sites, adding a picnic table and tent pad to each site, as well as assisting in general cleanup of the area.

Maverick Ranch

The Maverick Ranch property, an area hoped to be converted into a State Wildlife Area, was sold to new owners.

Ford's Crossing Recreation Site

AHRA is nearing the close of acquisition on the Ford's Crossing Recreation Site.

Pink House Recreation Site

AHRA's lease on the Pink House property expired at the end of April, and will not be renewed at this time. As a result, this site is no longer accessible to the public. AROA has entered into a private agreement for access with the property owner.

Black Hills Property

AHRA continues to work with Cañon City officials on establishing a site at the Black Hills Property in Cañon. If established, this new Royal Gorge takeout would be owned by the city of Cañon and managed by AHRA.

Mackenzie Bridge Recreation Site

The City of Cañon City has leased an area of property, the Mackenzie Bridge Recreation Site, adding another 1.5 miles of boatable water to the end of the AHRA. This site is the last takeout before boaters would reach the Minnequa Dam.

Next meeting topic recommendations:

Suggestions for simple projects that CTF could discuss/assist with.

Work with partners on addressing sedimentation/siltation from small creeks

Adjournment of the Meeting

10:55 am