

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
Citizen Task Force (CTF)

Friday, November 30, 2018

Start Time 9:37a

Location: AHRA Visitor Center
phone-in available:
(877) 820-7831, code: 615560 #

Location: conference call

Minutes

Present: Bob Hamel (CTF President, Commercial Permittees), Christina King (Environmental Interests), Fred Rasmussen (Colorado Trout Unlimited), Joe Greiner (Colorado River Outfitter Association), Wendy Rombold (Colorado Cattleman), Ed Perko (Colorado Water Congress), Greg Felt (Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments), Logan Myers (Colorado Environmental Coalition)

In Attendance: Mike Atwood (CPW Fishery Biologist), Rob White (AHRA Park Manager), Joe Vieira (Project Manager Browns Canyon Monument), John Kreski (Ration and Agreement Coordinator for AHRA), Jennifer Crawford (AHRA Admin Asst).

Phone: Kalem Lenard (Bureau of Land Management), Justin Zeisler (Colorado Springs Utilities), Leslie

Joe Vieira gave an overview of the preplanning of the Browns Canyon national monument. The first public review is being planned for February through April. The final review will end in April 17 2020. Management planning goals, objectives and environmental impacts are being reviewed for the next 20 years. Schedules are available on the website for this process.

Joe Greiner thanked Bob Hamel, Rob White, Greg Felt because instead of running out of water early the river received more flow from June through August. This helped outfitters make it through the summer "OK". The Springs and Pueblo helped to keep the river levels up. Since Greg Felt has been working with the board on the flow program relationships are improving. The flow of water is one of the major impacts on the economy.

Logan Myers was concerned about the report of cadmium a heavy metal found in the Southeast area. However, it was determined that there was a recording mistake and the levels are ok.

Greg Felt reported that conservation finance measures have been passed and focus is on forest and wildfire, and the growing impacts of recreation, with the intent to strengthen agriculture. The County will be working more with AHRA to fund projects. There are many growing concern for forest health, beetles and wildfire danger. It is likely an advisory board will be formed to evaluate projects for funding. That Board will make recommendation to Board of Commissioners. The expected tax income is \$1m per year, but it has been suggested that the funds be used as matching funds for larger grants of \$3 to \$4 million

dollar grants for more impact. The public will need to see the positive impact of these funds quickly.

Ed Perko reported Tennessee Creek and Turquoise Lake logging and mitigation projects are being worked on. Some clear cutting is being done.

Park Manager Update from Rob White.

Terms and Representation of the Citizens Task Force were discussed.

The AHRA Management Plan is scheduled for approval from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife meeting in January. The plan must be in its final form next week, or it will not be presented until the March meeting. At the November meeting of the Parks and Wildlife the fees were increased. A hang tag was created at a cost of \$120.00 for the parks pass. The big impact is going to be camping. The fees are going from \$18.00 a night to \$28.00 a night. The fee will include the reservation fee. We are going to an all reservation policy, no walk-in camping will be allowed except at Salida East. AHRA will be posting signs where phone service is available to help with reservations. Since we are going to all reservations it will cut down on the amount of money that will need to be counted by employees each day. Costs are going up so this increase is truly needed to cover operation costs.

Envision Chaffee County

Envision is still in the planning stages with around 40 different projects. AHRA could use some funding to help with dispersed campgrounds, parking, and other projects. If a plan is already in place it will make it easier to qualify for the funds. The desire is to not waste a lot of funds on studies.

Recreation Site Updates

Tunnel View camping area

Neighbors are concerned about human waste, destruction of natural resources, and wildfire. A petition request has been received to change this into a day only site, or a fees camp site. This would help set limits on where people can drive, cook and stay. Steps are being taken to address some of these concerns but major changes like setting up campsites will take time and planning. One suggestion is to put a camp host in this area until more resources are available to develop the area.

Fisherman's Bridge

A picnic stone shade shelter will be built. A memorial donation was received to help with this project. AHRA has been working with BLM because of cultural concerns. A boat ramp and parking area are also planned.

Salida East

Salida East has become more popular, last summer a buck and rail fence was installed to define sites. This next year, \$300,000 has been set aside to provide 3 additional campsites and a new vault toilet/change facility. The following year we will hopefully receive \$3 million to update the Salida East facility even further so it is comparable to the Rincon,

Ruby, and Hecla areas. It is our intent to have group camping/picnic areas that can convert into a camping area during the busy season.

Ford Crossing

A takeout just above Texas Creek has been purchased from a private owner. AHRA intends to add a non concrete basic boat ramp to this property. Many times Texas Creek flashes and becomes unusable so this will provide a backup. Hopefully this project will be completed by spring.

MacKenzie Bridge

A new AHRA site has been acquired at McKenzie Bridge in Cañon City. It is the last takeout before Minnequa Dam. Funding for parking, boat ramp and access has been set aside and construction is to take place in the spring of 2019.

Cañon City White Water Feature

Update is not available.

Bighorn Sheep Canyon and Highway 50

Funding has been approved to purchase large boulders for the Bighorn Sheep Canyon and Highway 50. This will help prevent erosion from vehicles pulling off of road. Rob and Kalem still need to define areas that need the boulder placement.

The Numbers

The Numbers will be moved downstream about ¼ of a mile onto CPW property. Access will still go through the Forest Service. Documents are ready to send out to bid in January and construction should start in spring. The new site has to be done by end of June. The old site will be used until the new site is complete. Then transition to new site will begin in June. The old site will be taken out and re-vegetation will complete the project. The USGS plans to move their gaging station to the Scotts bridge area.

CTF President Updates - Bob Hamel

Arkansas River Basin Roundtable includes Leadville to the Kansas border. They have helped with projects like the Granite Diversion. Some re-energized projects are the Oil Creek Ditch, the Cañon City ditch, the Black Hills purchase, the water quality in ditches, Monarch Project for forest health logging to get rid of beetle kill and mitigation. The Roundtable allows each basin to have input on how they would like distribute funds from Colorado Water Conservation fund board. The Roundtable has the ability to recommend projects grant funding.

Fishery Status around Hayden Pass Fire 2015/Cottonwood Creek Flood Area

Michael Atwood presented information on the area. 2018, has been the worst year since the fire for runoff damage. There are four stations monitoring the damage (Big Bend, Wellsville,

Coaldale, and Cañon City). Wellsville is the major monitoring station. The area the fire happened, downstream from Cottonwood, is very changed. The sediment, logs, trees, and structures have made their way into the river and polluted Hayden Creek. The riverbed is all sediment and does not have food to sustain a large population of fish. The population of the cutthroat trout has gone down significantly in 2018 due to sediment in the water and lower water levels. Brown Trout can thrive in lower waters but most of the adult fish are underweight due to the lack of food. The effects can be seen all the way to Cañon City. Fish are not going to be placed in the river to artificially increase the population because there is no food to sustain them. Runoff is good for the rivers but the monsoon rains bring more pollution from the burn area. The river will eventually bounce back, it will just take time.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Feb 20, 2019 at 9:30a

Meeting adjourned at 11:52a