

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

Citizen Task Force (CTF)

Thursday, December 7, 2023 • 10:00a - 12:00p

AHRA Visitor Center @ 307 W Sackett Ave, Salida • Zoom: ahra.mobi/ctf

Anglers: Braden Baker, Larry Payne • Commercial Permittees: Trey Shelton, Bob Hamel
Private Boaters: Leslie Tyson, Dede de Percin • Environmental Interests: Logan Myers, Christina King
Water Users: Ed Perko, Lisa Walters • Government Organizations: Greg Felt, Dwayne McFall
River Front Property Owners: Gail Tubbs, Drew Elder • Outdoor Recreation/Other: Mike Sugaski, Mark Zinkula

NOTES

Present: Larry Payne, Trey Shelton, Bob Hamel, Logan Myers, Mike Sugaski, Gabe Hobson

Zoom: Dede de Percin, Leslie Tyson, Drew Elder, Ed Perko, Gail Tubbs, Greg Felt, Christina King, Hannah Harn

In attendance: Tom Waters, Corrine Servis, Glenn Cottone, John Kreski, Madi Mares

1. Welcome & Introductions

Bob Hamel, CTF Chair

- Welcome to Gabe Hobson from USFS Salida, Perry could not make it.

2. Public Attendees and CTF Members Roundtable

5 minutes/person

- Mike Sugaski- update on SWA access. Talked to the Area 13 front desk. He was told that outfitters/private boaters can drop off someone to fish from the shoreline, but they cannot park. All access is intended to be walk-in from the gate area.
 - Need to check back in with Sean Shepherd, issue is tabled until the next meeting.
 - It was determined that this did not coincide with previous guidance. Tom stated that Sean Shepherd would be at the next meeting to provide clarification

3. AHRA Park Manager Updates

Tom Waters, AHRA Park Manager

- Dam recap
 - Planting still needs to be done at the site. AHRA met with the contractor and determined that the dam is finished until phase 2 (planting vegetation) begins. The plan is for the contractor to come after highwater to start planting
 - We have received a lot of positive feedback from community and others
 - Thank you to Chaffee County for their contribution to the Challenge Grant to help fund dam removal.
 - Thank you to CPW staff at the hatchery, Area 13, and the Denver office for their help in this project
 - The community float celebrating the river opening went well and had a good turnout

2023-2024 CTF Meetings:

November 2, 2023 • December 7, 2023 • January 4, 2024 • February 1, 2024 • March 7, 2024

- Holiday Party
 - Everyone should have received an invite from Jen to attend the AHRA Christmas party at Split Happens
 - Please RSVP to Jen if you can attend

- Black Hills
 - Ryan Stevens (City administrator for Canon) wants to discuss AHRA involvement in the development of the Black Hills property. The city has also reached out to BLM regarding this project
 - We are optimistic that there will be movement in the future.
 - Canon City is currently in discussion with Black Hills to purchase the property
 - Clark Station is the proper name; do we need to look into its historical significance?
 - The goal for the property is to have a take-out for the Royal Gorge that also serves as a put-in for a town run in Canon
 - There is potential for this site to also connect to Tunnel Drive and surrounding trails

- Scout Wave
 - Construction is scheduled to start in January 2024
 - AHRA, Area 13, and SE region are concerned about fish passage with new construction
 - AHRA, CPW, and the City of Salida met with Alex Townsend, CPW staff, stakeholders, and engineers with REP.
 - AHRA stressed the importance of fish passage to the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); this was already a concern for them
 - Refer to blueprints
 - Fish passage doubles as boat chute at high water and will serve as a permanent boat chute
 - High water concerns have been communicated to USACE and the engineer with REP, and the goal is for the wave to be accessible regardless of flows
 - The planned boat chute will be tight still but passable
 - Open to all watercraft
 - Construction will have to adjust the elevation higher up in the river to lessen hydraulic effect of the wave below the feature, along with other changes to address the issues we saw last season.
 - May have to take some trees to accommodate changes

- Keith Berger retirement
 - Keith Berger is the BLM Field Manager for Royal Gorge field office
 - He will be retiring in May
 - There is currently no information on his replacement at this point

- Snomo/Avy training
 - CPW is responsible for registering OHVs and Snowmobiles in Colorado

- AHRA partners with local snowmobile clubs to do a lot of work on the maintenance and signing of winter trails
 - This group then invoices CPW for their work
 - AHRA staff inspects the trails and offers training for snowmobiles- maintenance, skills, etc.,
 - Skills training for all CPW will be hosted at Rabbit Ears Pass on January 11th.
 - Skills Training Academy will have two sessions: January 30th- February 2nd and February 13th-February 16th at Steamboat Lake State Park
 - There will be a snowmobile and avalanche safety refresher training put on by CPW and CAIC (Colorado Avalanche Information Center) at Cottonwood Pass (snow condition permitting) on December 19th.
 - Jeff will be putting on ICE rescue training, a one day course. Please let us know if you are interested.
- Fred Rasmussen Award
 - We want to keep this award going and are currently looking for nominations. Please send to Tom by mid-January at the latest.
 - This is an award that remembers Fred Rasmussen, who was an active member of Trout Unlimited; the award honors someone who helps with interest in AHRA from all stakeholders
 - Granite Bridge
 - Work has begun on the bridge that goes into the town of Granite
 - Crews anticipate two months of work in the river
 - They will be setting a cofferdam to work on buttresses and then flip over to other side
 - The river will be passable still, width-wise
 - The goal is to market the Granite boat ramp better to avoid people using the Clear Creek Fishing access as a boat ramp
 - AHRA is working on better signage to encourage this
 - The temporary bridge at Granite will likely be taken out, and a new bridge will be put in
 - The goal is for construction to take one day for that project

4. AHRA Operations Manager Update

Corrine Servis, Operations Manager

- Parkdale wetland delineation
 - AHRA is working on the Parkdale boat ramp to reduce erosion
 - The delineation plan is a pre-construction requirement of the USACE, and it will be submitted by end of week
 - AHRA is internally working on the permitting at this point
 - Then, the process moves to bidding
 - We are hoping for completion by summer 2024
- Rec Ranger funding / Chaffee County assistance
 - This program has been successful over the last couple years with help from Chaffee County.

- Last season, AHRA hired 4 rec rangers.
 1. The goal is for a similar crew this next season, with locals, high school students, and community members.
 - This program has helped address a lot of concerns with dispersed camping, trash, and other issues on dispersed lands
 - AHRA is currently looking for funding to keep the program running, and it will be put in as a decision item for the budget
 - Rec Rangers typically start in the early spring, around April/May. They help us address use on the park outside of the normal season.
 - Budget requests
 - With budget requests coming up, AHRA has a few decision items regarding temp wage increases, support for the rec ranger program, help from KCW revenue
 1. The county is willing and would love to help with funding for rec rangers
 - Small and large cap projects are due this week. AHRA is requesting the following:
 1. Large: housing for staff over shop, Five Points revamp, Vallie Bridge revamp, Big Bend Boat Ramp (adding new one upstream and widening current one)
 2. Small: office space for new staff and seasonal staff, materials for parking/roads, working with USFS to put in a vault toilet at Elephant Rock, support to City for the development of a boat ramp at Marvin Park
 - Is AHRA looking at a new facility for multi-agency buildings? AHRA is currently not in priority to have that done.
 - Decision item: more staff positions request
 1. Park Resource Technician positions
 2. Admin II to help with volunteers, education, etc.
 - Electric Vehicle (EV) station
 - AHRA has the charging station infrastructure installed. With that, utilities will increase. We have a request to have an increased operating budget to accommodate the rise in utility
 - AHRA is supposed to get two electric trucks from State Fleet, we are still not sure if that will happen
 - Cost-to-benefit ratio is still unknown

5. AHRA Rationing and Permit Updates John Kreski, AHRA Rationing & Permits

- Private boat counts have been posted, John presented numbers
 - We anticipate an increase in section 2D because of Low Head dam removal
 1. There is a potential to see a variety of different vessels on the water because of the removal

2. Does AHRA start managing tubers if an increase in use is seen?

- John is asking for opinions on the necessity of posting redistribution days on the AHRA website for private boaters, given that there were only two days at capacity.

1. Unanimously, please keep it up for now.

- Looking at new technology for better boat counts, we are currently using AVDI photography to get these numbers.
- Pirates on river? (Leslie)
 - Please report if you see someone/suspect commercial activity - pictures are best
 - Concern that private boater count is being affected
- Tubing
 - Need to get ahead of increased use- Felt
 - Tubes are not currently considered in private boater count
- Preliminary 2023 commercial numbers
 - Boating- clients down 9.6% from 2022. Training runs are not considered in counts
 - W&W - clients down 25% from 2022.
 - Imaging - down 2.5%
 - Hike/Climb/Bike - down 7.97%
 - Shuttle - down 13.09%
 - Total for activities - clients down by 9%, gross down by 4.25%
 - John will continue to finish reports and get them out, breakdown by outfitter will come out later
 - Numbers likely down because of cold June in 2023

6. BLM Updates

Kalem Lenard, BLM RGFO Asst Field Mgr

- Kalem not here, will present next time

7. USFS Updates

Gabe Hobson, Salida Ranger District

- Refer questions to Perry, Gabe will try to address what he can
- The Porter Gulch trail connection decision has been made, the goal is to be finished with the project by next season
 - moving trailhead and re-routing trail off private property
 - better emergency access
 - Dec.1 - April 15th closure
- Monarch Crest/Hutchinson Cabin Improvement
 - close to decision, meeting with CDT coalition

- goal is to reroute to avoid snow drift and conflict of use
- No Name Expansion
 - backside of Monarch, still hoping to get a decision
- Designated/Dispersed
- Issuing permit for ice rink to Chaffee @ Chalk Lake
 - The rink will open for public use, fee is donation-based
 - They will not be requiring a day-use fee from USFS
 - Goal of the rink is to teach local kids how to skate and play hockey
- replacing Lisa Melick
- There is a new trail crew lead at USFS, they are part of the non-motorized crew
- Rec rangers
 - We currently have no one hired right now but want to fill positions
 - There is a potential to work with AHRA to hire people for the position

8. CTF Chair/Roundtable & Enviro/Recreation Committee Updates

Bob Hamel

9. Roundtable

(All)

- Tabled for next meeting:
 - SWA access and walk and wade
- KCW
 - CPW has seen good numbers
 - The budget request decision process will help distribute that money
 - Tom will get numbers of actual opt-ins for next the meeting
 - Enforcement looks different at every park. Visitors do not need to/should not place registration on the dashboard at any park. Parks have the ability to look up KCW participation by plate number. If we contact you, we may ask to see your registration, but it's likely this contact would be initiated by something other than a question of whether or not you have a park pass.
- March Meeting
 - Tom hoping to move due to Water Forum taking place at the same time
 - Move to March 5th OR March 13th
 - Tom will reach back out with dates