

Grand County Trail Mix Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 8 2022

Held via Zoom

Draft

Meeting called to order at 11:03 am.

Attendance

Present: Colin Topper, Justin Ricks, Sam Van Wetter, Katie Stevens, Brian Murdock, Maddie Logowitz, Mike Baird, Brett Sutteer, Stephen Schultz, Kya Marienfeld, Jason Keith, Kirstin Peterson, Tyson Swasey, Laura Harris

Absent: Kim Schappert, Jacques Hadler, Luke Wojciechowski, John Guenther, Brian Torgerson, Tim Smith

Guests: Neal Clark, Walt Dabney, Paul Spencer, David Wilson

Approval Of Minutes

Stephen moved to approve 1.11 Meeting Minutes, Jason seconded. Motion passes 9-0 with 5 abstentions.

Kirstin moved to approve 2.8 Meeting Minutes, Justin seconded. Motion passes 12-0 with 2 abstentions.

Citizens to be Heard

No comments were received, except a note of condolence on Geoff Freethey's passing.

Member reports

BLM: Katie has begun the NEPA process for Kestrel trail. The ePlanning portal is open and comments can also be made directly to Katie. The BLM is working on memorial signs for Geoff Freethey. The bikejoring gathering over the weekend was a success. There were about 9 participants, and all the dogs were well-trained and did not cut corners or run off-trail. There was a veterinarian on site. The gathering will likely happen again in the future and needs better County oversight/approval in order to be a recognized event. Upcoming events include the Skinny Tire Bike Festival, Canyonlands running race, and Behind the Rocks.

Forest Service: Brian Murdock reports that ~30 inches of snow in La Sals has kept the winter parking lot full and slippery. He is collaborating with Maddie and Tyson to apply for grants. Tomorrow, he is facilitating a conversation between Whole Enchilada shuttle companies and the FS. There are no set objectives, but they will discuss usage trends and whether there needs to be a cap on shuttle service.

GCATT: Maddie reports that Trail Mix is in full hiring mode. There were two rounds of hiring for a full time position of Responsible Recreation Program Coordinator and Anna Sprout has been hired. Two new trail ambassadors start this week and two trail technicians start next week.

There are three more ambassador positions open. Full staff is back. With the Utah Conservation Corp there has been work done on Pipe Dream and the Brand Trails. They ran an Adopt-A-Trail event this weekend. Trail Mix is applying to a recreation programs trail grant which would help fund Phase 2 Whole Enchilada improvements, including Hawk's Glide and the lower connector to Campground H. She and other staff will be attending the Professional Trail Builder Conference in Bentonville during the last week of March. Maddie also attended a coordinating meeting with the Utah Raptor State Park committee. Construction will occur in 3 phases and users who wish to access Klonoa will not be required to pay a State Park entrance fee.

Tyson has been doing field work, including the Bar M connector from the kiosk. Some work has been done in N Klondike, specifically rebuilding rock ramps on Homer, Alaska, and Megasteps. Work has been done on UFO to keep motorized travel out. There has been discussion of dedicating DinoFlow to Geoff Freethey, whether by a memorial plaque, trail signage, or signage at the kiosk. With assistance from Katie, they have applied for a Cattleguard grant. Rusty Spur is a priority for cattleguard replacement.

Laura is helping to expand the Adopt-A-Trail program. About six people attended Saturday's training where they learned the responsibilities, including scouting, raking, and reporting to TM on Pipedream, Mag 7, and the Brand Trails. She is working to coordinate with local bike shops for trail adoption. This is likely her last meeting; her VISTA position ends this month.

County: Jacques absent

City: Luke absent, but sent an email saying he was looking forward to attending meetings.

Chair: Colin has been coordinating with Walt Dabney in establishing the Freethey Mountain Bike Scholarship. Walt presented further, highlighting the desire that this scholarship help high school students access the sport. He encourages committee members to share the fundraising site widely: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/freethey-mountain-bike-scholarship>

Vice chair: Justin had nothing to report

Secretary: Sam had nothing to report

Biking: Mike reported that Saturday's Adopt-A-Trail training was well-run and their handbook is especially helpful. He has adopted Pipedream. He has done some personal research into the Mill Creek Pathway connector trail between Dream Drive and Rotary Park. It was suggested he interface with the Mill Creek Community Collaborative as well.

Climbing: Brett has been cleaning bolts and extraneous gear from Funnel Arch. The bolts have been removed cleanly and there is no sign of them having been installed. The rope grooves over the arch will take time to wear away. He suggests some outreach to outfitters to discourage them from placing glue-in bolts as they are more difficult to remove cleanly. Greasegate at Big Bend Climbing area is ongoing; it has been mostly cleaned but residue remains and there are no leads on suspects.

Equestrian: Stephen began by remembering Geoff Freethey as being especially helpful in Stephen's early presence on Trail Mix. Both Geoff and Sandy have been incredibly important to the committee's success. There have been several Open Use Nights at Old Spanish Trail Arena which has helped to bring horsemen together socially. He has several metal cutouts of horsemen which were meant to be installed near UMTRA. Barriers there have made him reconsider; he is in conversation with OSTA to erect these decorative cutouts there. An

equestrian endurance race will occur April 15-17 and they will be riding 50-mile loops. He is also seeking better marking on the Johnson's Up On Top access trail.

Hiking: Kya had nothing to report.

Trail running: Jason will report later in the meeting.

Skiing: Kirstin says things are good in La Sals. Groomers are getting busy with spring conflicts so grooming will become more infrequent. Warming weather is also troublesome for maintaining groomed trails.

Action items

Letter of Support for Spanish Valley Multi-Use Path: Stephen requests a piece of the plan that will cater for equestrian needs, considering that horses are spooked by motorized traffic and prefer not to walk on concrete. He asked if there could be a trail directly from OSTA so that folks boarding their horses may ride them without trailering. Tyson suggested support for a multi-use trail plan, including biking, running, equestrians, and walking. Maddie made a motion to approve the letter with the addition of that language and Stephen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion items

Moab Rim Connector Trail Presentation: Jason presented a new non-motorized trail connecting Hidden Valley with the Moab Rim Trail, including a hike-only trail from Pipe Dream up to the Rim. He presented that the rim portion wouldn't need a lot of work, as it is primarily durable surfaces. The connector from Pipe Dream would be more extensive, though it could be built in the same way as the Castleton Tower climbing access trail. Potential problems include the Behind the Rocks Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and the Moab Rim Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). **Kya** reminded the committee that such a trail has been suggested and voted down in Trail Mix before. **Tyson** likes the idea of a hike/bike trail separation and the idea of a trail from town that could be accessed by foot. **Katie** reminded the committee that ACEC forbids surface disturbance, which means the trail could be marked but not constructed. A similar requirement is true for a WSA. Cultural clearance would be required; this is the area where the Burden Basket was found in the 1990s. **Maddie** suggested that the Rim Connector trail will likely need construction. **Kya** said that the ACEC is incompatible with this trail proposal. The proposal also likely conflicts with the 2008 Resource Management Plan (RMP). **Katie** brought up the importance of mitigating social trails in the area and **Paul** asserted that adding trails does not help social trailing and in fact can increase the problem. **Colin** was appreciative of the discussion and reminded the committee that this proposal is in an information-gathering phase. **Justin** reaffirmed that in-town trail access needs priority; driving to a trailhead is less than ideal for many local users.

Procedural checklist for trail proposals: There was a comment about America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) being named in the requirements. **Kya** offered the distinction that all WSA is covered by ARRWA but not vice-versa; ARRWA is a helpful umbrella to check for conflicts. **Maddie** appeared to agree, saying that the BLM enumerates and approves their designation conflicts but ARRWA is often a later issue. Discussion suggested that the RMP should be used as an umbrella with specific subbullets for designation areas, and perhaps language that delineates "hard filters" from "soft filters". **Maddie** will continue work on the document.

Pipedream Trailhead: The equestrian and social trails between the Hidden Valley Trailhead and the new USU Campus have been problematic for nearby property owners. Known as "Lower Pipe Dream," these probably need closer management. Some is BLM land, some SITLA, and some private. **Katie** and the BLM thanked Tyson and Steve for their quick response to property owner complaints. Horse trails are illegal to bike on. **Maddie** said USU will likely be invested in these conversations; a commuter trail from town to the college might be desirable. She suggested that the Hidden Valley trailhead might be a good candidate for volunteer presence.

Trail Mixer: Colin and Tyson will work to schedule and plan an event. Anyone else who wishes to get involved can contact Colin.

Tyson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kya seconded. Meeting adjourned at 13:15.