Grand County Motorized Trails Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 13, 2024

DRAFT

The meeting was held at the Grand Center and called to order by Clif Koontz at 12:35 pm with introductions by those in attendance.

In attendance:

Bill Winfield, Grand County Commission Liaison
Tyson Swasey, GCATT
Keri Nelson, BLM
Reid Bakken, E-Bike Rep
Bill Jackson, Grand County Road Department
Keltain Reece-Sullivan, GCATT
Anna Sprout, GCATT
Jeff Stevens, Vice Chair
Dave Cozzens
Clif Koontz, Chair

Guests in attendance:

None

A. Approval of Minutes

Reid Bakken made a motion to approve the May 9, 2024 minutes, Dave Cozzens seconded, motion passed unanimously.

B. Citizens to be Heard

None

C. Requesting Education for Responsible Use of Graded Roads

Clif said that he summarized the discussion from the April and May meetings, which received two responses prior to today's meeting. First Brian Murdock said graded-road education should mention that winter closures are intended to conserve the road bed. Second Anna Sprout said it should mention the forms that such education could take (e.g. a test question in the adult OHV course, social media posts, road signs, and videos).

Bill Jackson said it's worth mentioning the extent of graded roads and road crews. Grand County maintains 1,339 center-line miles of graded roads with a crew of 12 people, which is over 111 miles per person to maintain.

Jeff Stevens made a motion for Clif to write a letter to the Utah OHV Program requesting more graded-road education based on discussion from the past three MTC meetings. Bill Jackson seconded, motion passed unanimously.

D. Scheduling Trail Projects

Clif thanked GCATT for bringing several staff and friends to the May rake & ride on Poison Spider Mesa, where we blocked off several braids with Payton from the BLM.

The group scheduled the next volunteer opportunity to be assembling spill kits at the GCATT office on June 29th between 9 am and 1 pm, when GCATT will provide each volunteer with a free spill kit, wag bag, and snacks.

E. Updates from MTC Stakeholder Representatives and Executive Subcommittee members

Bill Winfield said that the most recent Commission meeting included a presentation from GCATT and a letter commenting on Bears Ears, which now (at Bill's request) recognizes that motorized recreationists have concerns, and now (at Evan Clapper's request) recognizes that commercial users have concerns.

Tyson Swasey said that his non-motorized trail crew is finishing work in the desert, and they'll start work in the mountains on July 1st.

Keri Nelson said that the Moab Field Office has wound up issuing about ten permits each day for e-bike use of mountain bike trails as a portable mobility device and a reasonable modification under the Rehabilitation Act. This act only applies to people who need such an accommodation, and it would be a cumbersome step for bike rental/tour customers, which is why some local bike shops feel like they're losing business to Fruita where more trails are open for all Class 1 e-bike use. The Moab Field Office is interested in improving e-bike opportunities around Moab as well, which could be done in different ways, and might involve Utahraptor State Park. Reid asked if we still need to survey more people about e-biking. Clif replied that it would still be useful, so he'll try to progress with a wider survey. Jeff pointed out that it may be difficult to define what constitutes a disability.

Keri also said that the Dolores River TMP scoping comment period is open, and the BLM will host a public meeting in Grand Junction. Keri said that BLM staff have implemented about 70% of the Labyrinth Rims TMP, with the closed routes being blocked off only as much as necessary to achieve compliance. Keri said that Hey Joe has a locked gate instead of a fence because administrative access was requested by search and rescue (SAR) as well as the grazing permittee. Bill Winfield said that the

SAR access sounds very sensible but, unless the road corridor is kept clear, it'll become impassable. Keri said that the BLM got a presentation from Joel Berger about recreational impacts to bighorn sheep in the greater Potash area. Joel encouraged implementing the Canyon Rims TMP to get more compliance between the Intrepid Potash plant and Shafer Canyon. Finally Keri said that a new UTV event, the Redrok Rally, will be based out of Red Cliffs Lodge.

Reid said he predicts that, by next year, e-biking will grow to become half of the business for Rim Tours. Reid pointed to Idaho as a good example of how providing a high mileage of motorized trails, as well as maintenance from the state's OHV program, can reduce conflict and erosion thereby making the trails quite useful for e-bikes.

Bill Jackson said that the Grand County Road Department has assisted Utah State Parks to develop Utahraptor.

Keltain Reece-Sullivan said that the general reception to motorized trail ambassadors has been great. He is refining the best places to set up along the trail in order to encourage communication.

Anna Sprout said that, in 2024, motorized trail ambassadors have seen 3,350 people and contacted approximately 60% of them. In terms of vehicles, they've seen 2,000 vehicles and contacted 1,100 of them. In terms of vehicle types, 950 have been ATVs / UTVs / full-size vehicles without a large license plate, 810 have been full-size vehicles with a large license plate or motorcycles with a license plate, 270 have been motorcycles without a license plate, and at least 15 have been electric vehicles of some kind (probably more since the ambassadors don't always notice if a vehicle is electric). Anna said they're hoping to go to Kane Creek more often this fall.

Dave Cozzens said he agrees with Reid that Idaho trails are a success story. Clif said that the USU Basecamp 2024 conference for outdoor recreation and gateway communities will be held in Moab from October 13th through the 19th. Clif said that the October MTC meeting should be rescheduled from the 17th, and the group identified October 22nd or 23rd as the best alternatives, so Clif will reserve a meeting room on one of those dates.

F. Adjournment

Clif adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:57 pm.