Grand County Motorized Trails Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 23, 2024
DRAFT

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

In attendance:
Clif Koontz, Chair
Reid Bakken, eBike Rep (arrived 1:22 pm)
Payton Blasco, BLM
Dave Cozzens
Keri Nelson, BLM (left at 1:48)
David O'Neill, BLM
Jeff Stevens, Vice Chair
Keltain Reece-Sullivan (left at 1:35 pm)
Tyson Swasey, GCATT
Kathy Tustanowski, Secretary
Bill Winfield, Grand County Commission Member

Guests:
Lena Pace, Superintendent, of Southeast Utah Group, National Park Service
Paul Larsen, Chief Ranger, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks
Chris Swenson, Chief of Maintenance, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks

A. Approval of Minutes

Jeff Stevens made a motion to approve the September 12, 2024 minutes, Clif Koontz seconded, motion passed unanimously.

B. Citizens to be Heard

None

C. Introducing Lena Pace, Superintendent of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks

Clif introduced Lena Pace, Superintendent of the Southeast Utah Group which includes Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Hovenweep National Monument and Natural Bridges National Monument. Lena provided a short bio about herself which included her arrival in Moab in January to be the Acting Superintendent and then in April becoming the new Superintendent. Paul Larsen, Chief Ranger and Chris Swenson, Chief of Maintenance then introduced themselves. Chris provided and overview of how the NPS maintains roads and trails based on Standard Operating Procedures. He shared that some maintenance on a 4 year schedule was delayed to 8 years for several

reasons. They are getting caught up and anticipate to keep focused on the established maintenance schedule. Lena, Paul and Chris appreciated being invited to the meeting. Lena stated her door is always open and don't hesitate to contact her with any questions. When the group was asked if they had any questions Clif shared Reid Bakken's suggestion about making more minimum-impact information available on the White Rim, which could be placed at both entrances and inside bathrooms. Clif has also received feedback about the permitting process pertaining to speed limits and group size. Clif offered assistance from the Motorized Trails Committee (MTC) to schedule a Rake and Ride within the parks to provide labor and equipment.

D. Commenting on BLM Environmental Assessment regarding E-bikes on Designated Mountain Bike Trails https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/20234672/510

Keri started by sharing the public scoping deadline has been extended to November 8 for comments associated with allowing Class 1 eBikes on non-motorized trails excluding any trails that have portions in the national forest or in Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). No alternatives have been identified yet. The Draft EA will be done which will have alternatives. It will take about a year for the process. Clif shared that Trail Mix met and voted on a letter to the County Commissioners. The Motorized Trail Committee (MTC) requested the extension, Trail Mix said they could use the extra time as well. Clif noted that the MTC has an eBike representative, Trail Mix does not, but Trail Mix established most of the trails under consideration.

Keri provided an overview of BLM's legal authority with eBikes being defined as motorized but can be excluded based on Code of Federal Regulations authority or Travel Management Plan amendment.

Bill asked about what the public is wanting based on comments received. Keri shared it is mixed input so far, no pattern one way or the other. She has been in contact with other BLM locations where eBikes are allowed and they have indicated no negative impacts have been realized. She also provided an explanation on Class 1 versus other classifications of eBikes. Clif commented that it can be a slippery slope of classification including eMotorcycles with monitoring and enforcement being difficult. Reid asked the question of why don't we have a dirt bike problem at the Brands? Because of self enforcement.

The topic of drafting a letter from the MTC to the County Commission included a lengthy discussion. An alternative should be included that allows Class 1 eBikes on all the trails that BLM listed. Reid said the BLM ought to consider allowing all classes, or any pedal assisted bikes on these trails, but he realizes it's out of the current scope . The eBike survey data should be referenced. The following should also be included in the letter:

- Benefits (health and exercise, go further and see more, reduce vehicles on the road, economic growth, allows for different abilities in the same group)

- Current practices should be referenced
- Letter should be concise

Reid made a motion, Dave Cozzens seconded, with unanimous approval for Clif to draft a letter.

Clif also suggested GCATT and Sand Flats be included as a “cc” on the letter.

Keri shared the general takeaway from the Federal Highways Administration study at Slickrock and Dead Horse State Park is that eBikes travel 1 to 2 miles per hour faster than non-motorized bikes.

Before excusing himself from the rest of the meeting, Chris Swenson said about managing recreation across boundaries that he wants the National Park Service to be part of the conversation and welcoming the MTC to contact him with any questions or concerns.

E. Scheduling Trail Projects

October 26 Top of the World, 9 am meet at Dewey Bridge. Fencing to be installed at 4 locations. Will require some drilling. BLM to provide T-posts and wire.

November 23 Pritchett SAVE THE DATE. Jeff shared that Bill Stevens asked if the MTC could address replacing some fiberglass signs and that in some locations the road has been obliterated from recent floods. Keri asked if there was a more sustainable solution. Clif said that swing fences are effective but expensive, and that signs beside the wash will often suffice if they're large enough to be noticed from the wash. Jeff invited BLM staff to go scout the project.

December 7 Amasa Back, Cliffhanger. David suggested a project day with GCATT and MTC to relocate the gate and install a motorcycle cattle guard.

In regards to future work on Top of the World to designate open the western bypass of the main ledge, Keri shared that a project proposal to implement it on the ground will be needed if the BLM does amend the Travel Plan.

Clif shared the state trail crew has been working on Upper Two Mile and will soon be working with BLM staff at Grandstaff. They have a new acting supervisor, Anthony Ash. The crew consists of four members and they are working 50% on motorized and 50% on non-motorized trails.

F. Updates from MTC Stakeholder Representatives and Executive Subcommittee members

Payton Blasco shared that three projects were completed in September: Cliffhanger ledge removal, White Knuckle which was a revisit to complete an earlier project, and Wicked Ledge fence work for National Public Lands Day. Steelbender to be completed in November. Work at Poison Spider is completed, complaints have been received about the parking area's lack of striping for trailers, and the BLM response has been that trailers can park alongside the road below the lot.

Bill Winfield shared the County Commission has not voted negatively on any special events that have applied. The new process that was developed seems to be helping. More work can be done at the Old Spanish Trail Arena to make it more compatible to host more events. The Mud Springs project is moving along. He shared he is an advocate for outdoor recreation getting people out of the house and encourages anyone to reach out to him if they have questions or concerns.

Tyson Swasey recently met with BLM about moving the gate on Cliffhanger to a better location to include a bike/motorcycle cattle guard. At Porcupine Rim, Tyson will install signs to encourage 4WD use of the Coffee Pot Rock loop. Above there, Porcupine Rim use doesn't quite follow the currently-designated route, so the BLM may adjust its TMP accordingly. There will be a mountain bike race on Amasa Back this weekend. Clif shared he received information from Chile Pepper Bike Shop about getting word out that the 4WD route will be congested in the morning. Tyson also commented the Gemini Bridges Road is messed up at the bottom.

Jeff Stevens shared that White Knuckle is holding up well and he has received positive feedback on the work done recently at Cliffhanger.

Clif shared that he recently attended the American Motorcyclist Association Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. The NOHVCC Annual Conference is scheduled for October 2025 in Bend, Oregon and October 2026 in South Dakota.

G. Adjournment

Clif adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm.