

Grand County Trail Mix Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Nov 12, 2024

Held Grand Center indoors

Draft

Meeting called to order at 11:07am

Attendance

Anna Sprout (GCATT), Marty Bauer (Equestrian), Brendon Cameron (Vice Chair), Brian Murdock (Forest service), Colin Topper (Chair), Dave Wilson, David Glover (Biking), Elizabeth Wright (SEU Public Health), Jacques Hadler (County), Katie Stevens (BLM), Kirstin Peterson (Skiing), Kya Marienfeld (Hiking), Madeline Logowitz (GCATT), Mark Howe (FOAB), Sam Van Wetter (Secretary), Scott Escott, Sharon Hogan, Stephen Schultz (Equestrian), Tyson Swasey (GCATT), Joy (GCATT), Samantha Derbyshire, Mark Howe, Melissa Nerone (GCSAR), Keri Nelson (BLM)

Guests: Randall Fox (citizen), Cathy Grossman, Brian Martinez (NAVTEC, GC Commission), Eran Howarth (BLM), Andrea Brand (Sand Flats)

Approval Of Minutes

Approved with fix to Sharon's affiliation.

Citizens to be Heard

Scott Escott and Sharon Hogan shared their joint disapproval of eBike approval on nonmotorized trails in Grand County, based on decades of experience on pedal bikes, motorized bikes, and as trail maintenance volunteers. Issues include classification regulation, speed disparity, trail impacts, and economic impacts.

Scott's letter [available here](#). Sharon's letter [available here](#).

Action items

There has been circulated an [eBike BLM Letter of Support](#) which is up for approval from the TrailMix committee. Discussion as to edits and amendments are open, with the acknowledgement that the public comment period has closed and TrailMix will be making a recommendation to the Grand County Commission. The Commission is a stakeholder and will make a recommendation to the BLM at their meeting next week.

Colin advocates for the two-year trial period proposed in TM's letter. He is concerned that the politicization of the issue will compromise TM's broad mission. He also noted that regional mountain bike systems, including Fruita and Richfield, have allowed ebikes on most trails and might benefit their communities economically in doing so.

Jacques shares recent experiences with mixed groups of riders which are brought together with ebikes. He expressed support for GCATT's work and hopes that they can continue their education and outreach work to the motorized community.

Kirstin recommends an addition to the letter that stipulates how to mitigate these impacts should they come to be more impactful than we expect. More disfavor should be expressed in the letter.

Stephen is uncomfortable in writing in support of motors on trails from the perspective of a nonmotorized committee.

Kya is concerned that a trial period is impractical and they will not be able to rescind permission in two years. She is concerned that most visitors who are ebiking will be new bikers and thereby less skilled. Kya also cites user conflicts in St. George which might be more similar to Moab's environment and culture.

Brendon shares experience from the bike industry, stating that most people just wish to ride bikes and we can make allowance for them. He has seen bike companies not come to Moab due to our ebike policy.

Keri agrees that a trial period could be difficult, though they could write a series of triggers into the policy to create an avenue to ensure that it's managed adaptively. She agrees with Kirstin that we could add such a stipulation to our letter.

Maddie reports that the Federal Highway Administration studies on eBikes have been primarily on forested and wet environments. They are working to gather more data about the use of these bikes on desert ecosystems.

Maddie and Tyson shared pros and cons for Bar M being a trial area: it's connected to the bike path, but it doesn't have barriers to prevent ebikers from leaving the trail. It may present more user conflict, but that might help us understand the impacts.

Kirstin make a motion to amend the letter to: 1) recommend one area for this use 2) expand as appropriate with specific criteria including trail impacts & user impacts 3) make sharper our criticism of blanket approval of ebikes on singletrack 4) cut language about bike sales and economic impacts 5) clarify reporting and enforcement of infractions.

Votes: 10 for

3 opposed

5 abstained

Discussion items

Maddie reports that GCATT is seeking to increase year-round work for staff and is soliciting ideas for how they can be helpful through the winter. Suggestions include KZMU podcasts/broadcasts, user group reports. Please send ideas!

Dave Wilson is seeking support for a Letter of Support to re-open Hey Joe Canyon to mechanized travel, at the behest of Bikepacking.com. Discussion and approval of this letter will occur at December's meeting.

Elections will occur in January. Open seats include Chair, Secretary, Trail Running, and Active Transportation.

Electric Light Parade is December 7. TrailMix will have a nonmotorized float! "The gaudier the better."

Maddie has submitted a grant for \$1.3 million for building Mud Springs. RFPs are out and proposals range from \$40,000-\$75,000/mile.

Volunteer night is next Wednesday, Nov. 20 at Dewey's! Volunteers and TM members should show up at 6pm. Joy needs some help setting up and breaking down – get in touch with her to help. Open to public at 7! Music from SUNFLOOD 8-10.

Spring Spruce Up is April 11-12, 2024.

Member reports

BLM: Katie reminds users that there is a running race on Mag 7 this weekend, Nov. 16 – the Dead Horse Ultra. Navajo Rocks, Poison Spider, and Onion Creek are being nominated for National Recreation Trails. Keri shares thanks for this Committee's input. BLM has started work on the Dubinky Wells fallen windmill.

Forest Service: Brian and the FS is in transition mode between seasons. Nordic grooming begins when the road closes, Dec. 1. Avalanche Forecasts begin Fridays and Mondays until the season begins in earnest. Loop Road paving is complete but there's culvert and shoulder work ongoing until December. Porcupine Rim campground is open and looks good! Strong summer season with collaboration with GCATT, including Clark Lake loop and other projects. Forest Service is in a budget crisis and seasonals will not be hired next year. Fortunately, all but one trail crew members are year-round employees. State Crew primarily worked on Trans La Sal exit trail, where there is much more work to do.

GCATT: Anna reports that the Trail Ambassador program for 2024 has concluded with 72,000 contacts and 47,000 visitors educated which makes a 65% contact rate very much in thanks to returning ambassadors. GCATT was runner up for the Outdoor Stewardship award, and Anna presented at the Leave No Trace Global Summit.

Tyson reports work on PipeDream is nearing completion and it's in great shape. They also collaborated with Sand Flats staff on Hawks Glide. Crew has been on Bar M doing treadwork.

Maddie and Anna presented at the USU Basecamp Conference and would like more conferences here in Moab. Next Tuesday is a state-sponsored grant workshop in Green River. Crux video project is ongoing, as well as a SAR podcast and a trails masterplan.

County: Jacques reports that it's budget season! Lots of decisions being made. Andrea reports that the Hawk Campground will be removed this winter and the parking lot there will be improved.

City: Absent

Chair: None

Vice Chair: Thanks!

Secretary: Thanks!

Biking: David reports that the Jackson Trail bridge is out again, and thanks GCATT for the work on the Canyon trail to Amasa.

Climbing: Absent

Equestrian: Stephen had a great group ride in Mill Canyon in Bears Ears, and you can see a video on their Facebook page.

Hiking: It's hiking season!

Trail running: Absent

Skiing: Kirstin shares that skiing is coming! There's enough snow on the Geyser Pass Road to deter drivers but it is currently open.

Active Transport: Absent

GCSAR: SAR just had their 128th rescue this year. Base Jump season approaches.

At Large: Dave sends appreciation for GCATT trail crew. Mark says thanks to BLM for volunteers at Anonymous Park. Samantha reports that shuttling is slowing down and will conclude by the end of the month.

Meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.