



MINUTES - **Draft**

City of Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation Commission Zoom Meeting

May 13, 2020 6:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call: 6:00pm
 - a. Commission: James Fosnaught, Laura Speck, Aeson Akins, Bill Coleman, Dawn Randolph, Andrew Mueller
 - b. Staff: Brian Smith, Karstin Moser, Dan Roper, Al Laurette
 - c. City Council Representative:
2. Citizen Comments:
3. Approval of March Minutes:
 - a. Bill motion to approve. Laura second. All in favor, none opposed.
4. Trail Opening Date
 - a. Purpose of this item is for the commission to weigh the study and citizen comments in making a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation department about when to open the Coal Camp Trail in South Canyon and how to determine a date to open in the future.
 - b. John Sovell, study co-author and examiner of zoological resources, stated that the outcome of study indicates biological resources worth noting and protecting, if possible, in South Canyon. From a wildlife standpoint, some of the most significant issues that might occur with recreation in the area is disturbance to the large game animals, the elk and mule deer. Most of the activity of these animals is within the Paradise Creek area and westside of Horse Mountain. Movement patterns across the eastside of the Coal Camp Trail property from private ranch land on westside of property as well as the BLM land in southwest corner of property.
 - c. Questions from Commission for John Sovell
 - i. Elk winter concentration areas are west and north of the property and Coal Camp Trail?
 1. John Sovell – Correct.

- ii. Elk production area is in Paradise Creek area but does not overlap existing trail system?
 - 1. John Sovell – Correct. Right now, there is not use by elk on the existing trail systems.
- iii. Was the elk migration pattern area on the south side of the map created primarily by reports by landowner, Tye Richardson, and other evidence such as elk scatt and brows along that area, not photographic evidence?
 - 1. John Sovell – Correct. That information was not ascertained through seeing the elk take those routes; however, there was other evidence of elk movement through that area and information from Tye Richardson.
- iv. What was the source of the “other evidence”?
 - 1. John Sovell – After talking with Tye Richardson who indicated where he has seen the elk coming from and going to, John observed elk scatt and evidence of use in the south side elk migration pattern area.

d. Public Comments

- i. Kirk Oldman - CPW Area-7 Wildlife Manager
 - 1. The map in the report contains CPW data that has been compiled and tweaked over 3 decades. These maps are done on large scale, so the areas indicated are general areas. Whole area is winter *range* (versus *concentration* area) for elk which supports a winter closure of the area. Additionally, the arrows on the map indicate a movement *patterns*, not movement *corridors*.
 - a. Andy’s Questions – Are the elk migration arrows in the map CPW’s data?
 - i. John Sovell – North/South arrows are CPW’s data. The East/West arrow was created by John Sovell based on the information he gathered from Tye Richardson and evidence he spotted on the ground.
- ii. Jim Olp - Resident
 - 1. In addition to wildlife, there are other reasons to manage recreation in South Canyon. Its full of historical sites and artifacts and unique geological features. Requests the Commission consider all these factors when making a master plan for the area.

- iii. Jennifer Vanion - Resident
 - 1. Mountain bike trails will expand and lead to motorized bikes. This will disturb elk calving. Requests Commission consider closure until June 10th.
- iv. Breanna McCallum - Resident
 - 1. Recommending closure until June 15th to protect wildlife and habitat. Also recommend signage explaining important of preservation. Adjacent landowners to the area and they plan to conserve the area as well.
- v. Tye Richardson – Resident
 - 1. Elk need one square mile for calving. Observed 7 elk on the Coal Camp trail on April 21st, after a proposed open date of April 15th. If the calving areas are disturbed it will decrease the heard size.
- vi. Michaela Richardson – previous South Canyon resident, Flathead Conservation District
 - 1. Recommends closure to June 15th and additional studies on the elk in the area to better understand where they are.
- vii. Craig Amichaux – South Canyon Coalition
 - 1. Box Canyon is a wilderness area and should be closed through elk calving and springs recovery seasons; June 1st, 10th, or 15th.
- viii. Davis
 - 1. Area has been impacted by human activity for over 100 years; landfill, shooting range, trails. Closure dates should be based on science not antidotal information. Recommends closure dates of December 1st to April 15th unless future studies support different dates. Hunting on the Barton private property may be driving elk into canyon.
- ix. Mike Pritchard – Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA)
 - 1. Association is interested in managing the trail system well. Recommends May 1st for lower trail and May 15th for upper trail.
 - a. James' question – Is BLMs current closure is December 1st to April 15th?
 - i. Mike Pritchard – That is correct. It is a motorized/mechanized closure not all human activity like what is being done with this trail area.
- x. Randy Tuggle – GSHS Mountain Bike Team Coach

1. The growth of the high school and middle school mountain bike programs is due to availability of trails. There is a high importance on trail stewardship, building, and maintenance being instilled in youth.

e. Commission Discussion

- i. Laura – Values the residents' concerns. Wildlife should have priority. Recommends Commission respect residents requested opening date of June 15th for upper Coal Camp Trail.
- ii. Bill – Does not feel that a June opening date is necessary. Suggests a comprised opening date of May 15th.
- iii. Dawn – Recently started mountain biking. Though the study does not contain a lot of quantitative data, there was qualitative data that expressed a need to protect wildlife. Feels that April 15th is too soon and would recommend a June 15th open date and June 1st would be compromise. More studies recommended.
- iv. Andy – The property does not overlap with the winter concentration area for the elk. The elk production zone is a mile away. If trail were closer to elk production area, June 15th would be reasonable but since it is not near, May 15th sounds more reasonable for upper coal camp.
- v. James - Study's factual data does not indicate significant impact to the elk population with use of this trail. BLM land is closed until April 15th and CPW closes their areas until April 30th. Trail needs to be gated and signed with open and close dates and reasons why. May 15th would be an appropriate date to open and discretion should be given the Parks and Recreation department when the trails should be opened in year to come based on trail conditions and additional data.
- f. Andy makes a motion that the Commission recommend the lower Coal Camp loop open on May 1st and the upper loop open on May 16th annually unless elk in area of trail or poor trail conditions due to weather. Bill second. Three votes in favor, two votes against, one abstained. The motion carries.

5. Director's Report

a. COVID-19 Impacts on the Parks and Recreation Department

- i. Reduction in force. All part-time staff have been temporarily laid off. The Parks crew has been highly impacted, so recreation staff has been assisting. Remaining full-time staff is taking a 10% cut in pay.
- ii. Sections within department have made 20% operations budget cuts.
- iii. Most Capital Projects have been cut. Those NOT cut include:

1. Two Rivers Park Improvements. Proposing a reopening on Monday, May 18th to avoid heavy weekend use. Boat ramp attendants will be stationed at the ramp for at least the first week to monitor utilization and evaluate the traffic pattern.
 2. Sayre Park Improvements – Project will move forward slowly. Utility relocation will happen first. \$25k FMLD grant received. Potential \$100k ARP grant. Grand River Construction still contributing services.
 3. River Trail connections to Rio Grande Trail and retaining wall replacement.
 - iv. Coordinating with other parks and recreation agencies in the region on closing and reopening.
 - v. Trails, park green spaces, tennis and pickleball courts, whitewater park, and skate park are open with restrictions. Community Center, pavilions, playgrounds, and basketball courts closed.
 - b. Virtual Recreation opportunities being provided.
 - c. Possible public facilities reopening sometime in June. Modified hours and operations (i.e. single lap lane reservations, equipment will be spread out for smaller groups, small meeting reservations, childcare for small numbers, individual and household group play on basketball courts). Later, outdoor sports resume, small group fitness classes, small group events.
 - d. County applying for exemption from the state health order closures.
 - e. Applying heavily for grants; 100k ARP grant, 50k NEA Cares grant, and more. Community Garden expansion grant denied. COGS awarded \$25k to LiftUp.
 - f. Hanging Lake will not be operating a welcome center at the ice rink rather they will be a modified “drive your own car to the gate” possibly in June.
 - g. Fourth of July light show and gathering has been cancelled. Department is looking at virtual events and other alternatives.
6. June Agenda Items
- a. Reopening Plans
 - b. Assistance with Trail, River, and Walkway clean-up
7. Adjourn at 8:21 pm.