

Envision Chaffee County
Recreation In Balance (RIB)
February 25, 2020
Meeting Outcomes

Drivers - What's driving us to address the challenges of impacts on our natural environment?

Growth/Urgency

- Many people want to hike 14ers, Increased population growth, Outdoor recreation industry growth, Development of undeveloped land, Marketing that attracts visitors for event (i.e. music festivals, etc.), Filled campsites, Returned visitors, Increase in shoulder seasons, Exponential growth - dispersed camping, Sooner the better to address - no time to waste

Desire to protect resources

- Maintaining healthy habitats - allow for healthy forest, water and eco-systems, Don't want to lose what we have, Residents desire to keep open/natural lands, Impacts on agricultural industry and ag producers - compounding economic challenges, Campfire risk - fear of wildfires, Maintaining healthy habitats - allow for healthy forest, water and eco-systems, Desire to protect natural habitat and resources, Recreation areas adjacent to us (Summit county, etc.) - brings visitors, Don't want to lose what we have, Desire to protect our sense of place (emotional attachment)

Limited management capacity

- Limited capacity to enforce rules

Use of public lands for residential purposes

- People (seniors and others) living in their RVs, Limited affordable housing market, Non-recreational or residential use of public lands for camping, Park and rest areas (truck drivers)

Undesirable user behaviors / need to state-scale education

- Lack of education about Leave No Trace (LNT), human waste impacts on eco-systems, Lack of understanding about responsible use of land/recreation

Others

- Current political climate, State-wide marketing of Colorado's recreation areas, Perception on demographic impacts - broadening of opportunities with changing demographics

Opportunities

- Opportunity to use of trails for fire control
- Real estate and other profit motives
- Changing technology (drones)
- Limit/stop invasive species
- Reduce user conflicts between motorized, non-motorized, hikers, etc.

Barriers - What's stopping us from being able to address these challenges?

Agency framework (insufficient staff, difficulty of action)

- Land management agencies not growing at same rate as recreational use
- Bureaucracy, Agencies are not empowered to act
- Inconsistent rules and enforcement of those rules (by BLM, FS and others) in different areas within the county
- Unawareness of all that is happening within organizations and agencies on all levels (local, state and national)
- Agency non-fire funding - can't make projects happen
- Lack of education and enforcement

Lack of an overall/strategic plan

- Lack of consensus on best practices
- Totally overwhelmed by scope of the issues
- Lack of strategy and strategic plan to manage the big picture
- Lack of prioritization of issues, challenges, etc.
- Funds getting into priority areas - who gets to decide?
- Analysis paralysis

Difficulty in changing user behaviors (needs to happen at scale)

- Lack of public perception that there is a problem
- Resistance to change
- Difficult to change people's behaviors
- Lack of understanding, lack of accountability
- Us versus Them mentality
- One person/group can change and create issues and impact
- User by-pass all efforts to correct problems and create new ones
- Technology - people can get information quickly without proper understanding of impacts (geo-caching, social media, misinformation, etc.)
- People don't want to be managed - wild west mentality

Strong Drive from Recreation Industry

- Misguided marketing, Greed
- State level advertising and marketing with no education and consequence

Capacity and Funding:

- Lack of capacity and funding, availability of funding
- No marketing professionals involved in creating solutions

Collaboration:

- Silo-ed thinking - lack of collaboration and engagement on the ground
- Takes work and time to build community support
- Lack of understanding between user-groups to value of experience

Others:

- Multi-use, Fragile environments, Lack of resources for homeless and affordable housing, Lack of broad support for fees and regulation, Uniqueness of all challenges, location and each situation being different

Other insights - Observation about the data provided, barriers and drivers

Agency Framework:

- Travel management plans don't tell us much about camping impacts and issues
- Conflicts in approaches between agencies
- Recreational growth is out growing management

Lack of an overall/strategic plan

- No balanced recreation plans
- Solutions might oppose economic drivers
- No consensus on what "we" want

Opportunities:

Communications

- Fire risk over-lap can provide opportunities to get buy-in from community

Recreation "Zones"

- Three specific focus areas include wilderness, non-wilderness and near-town areas
- Different solutions in different types of areas
- Dispersed camping means different things to different people, definitions needed
- Value space (campers) want a true wilderness experience (less light and less noise)
- Others want party atmosphere in large groups (may be concerned about safety)
- Motivation for outdoor experience is different for each person

Engineered Solutions

- Approach that doesn't require human behavioral change - too difficult to change behavior - instead change physical/built environment
- Engineered vs behavior solutions

Others:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion are missing
- Ease of access has caused issues
- Camping too close to water sources - needs to be 100' not 90'
- Emotional attachment is strong
- Design of recreation is for privileged people
- Education to disrupt human behavior and change culture
- Public lands are finite

ONE – More Adopters

- 1. Challenge: How might we create a team of Adopters to monitor designated camping areas, trailheads and/or trails?**

Solution:

Barriers:

- Not getting enough adopters

Impacts:

- SLOJ
- Gather information
- Provide feedback to agencies or groups

Team:

- **Lead: Lyn??**
- Connor
- Ben Lara
- Dominique
- Lisa Mellick

Other Team Members Needed:

- More adopters

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- Encourage outdoor industry companies to adopt an area
- How can you build on RIMS vols - use RIMS?
- Can this connect to the USFS Vol Coordinator – where they are focused on getting diverse groups to fill this role?
- How will you get a long-term commitment to adopt?
- It will be difficult to find locals to adopt dispersed camp areas. Locals normally do not use dispersed camp sites (local do use and adopt trails)
- Contract user groups - CMC, SMT, BUSC
- Can this be done with a coalition of local organizations?

Two: Permits

2. **Challenge:** How might we generate funding for enforcement, maintenance, infrastructure and control use? (Recommended edit: How might we use permit or fee systems to generate funding for enforcement/maintenance/infrastructure and also control use?)

Solution: Invest in infrastructure with Common Ground funding and support through fees and infrastructure.

Barriers:

- How to come up with initial perception against fees

Impacts:

- Protect eco-system and experience
- Maintain infrastructure

Team:

- Dan M
- Nancy Anderson (?)
- Ben Lara
- Lisa M
- Sue G???

Other Team Members Needed:

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- CO H2O plan has \$
- Develop survey - is there really more support than perceived on fees?
- Permits/fees can generate funds
- Please consider user fees not related to USFS - how to charge and circumnavigate agency stopgaps (i.e. 1% for sales tax, etc.)
- How might we include enforcement for wildfire/fire bans?
- Could we use permits without fees like Sedona to help manage use?
- What can we do this summer to advance this work?

Three: Dispersed Camping - Control Growth

3. **Challenge:** How might we control growth of dispersed camping (especially in detrimental areas)?

Solution: Short-term = ID priority areas. Add signage and barriers. Long-Term = designate specific sites and prioritize.

Barriers:

- Funding
- Capacity
- Lack of enforcement
- Commitment to maintenance
- Agency approval
- Education/human behavior

Impacts:

- Protect resources
- Preservation of user experience

Team:

Lead: Tom Sobal???

- Friends of Fourmile
- Friends of Brown's Canyon
- Quiet-Use Coalition
- Lisa Mellick
- Tom Sobal
- Giff Kriebel
- Dan Murray
- Envision - Cindy

Other Team Members Needed:

- Agencies - land-use
- SWCC - sources of labor
- Youth groups
- Church groups
- Funding sources

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- Connect to SCC and their summer plan
- Use campsite hosts to enforce
- Need consistent funded supply of materials
- How can we connect this to measures from the RIMS data (Can Envision help on this?)
- Can we develop steps for this summer in the top prioritized camping areas where not much is happening yet?
(Raspberry-Browns, Shavano, Clear Creek, Horn Fork Basin).
- Can we focus the entire county clean-up green up or earth day on going to the RIMS Mapped sites with more than one fire ring or mapped trash and take action? Could we engage all the RIMS volunteers to do this?

4. **Challenge: How might we increase responsible behavior?**

Solution: Conduct social research or get research that exists and base an education campaign on this research. Peer driven. Link with CO tourism office, Visitors Bureau, businesses and influencers.

Barriers:

- Funding
- Perception of impact

Impacts:

- OIA participation in behavior change

Team:

- **Lead: Dominique**
- Natalie, Brink, Jeanne, Kim Marquis

Other Team Members Needed:

- Behavior scientists
- Marketing professionals

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

What can we do in the next 6 months on this project?

5. Challenge: How might we provide trailhead restrooms? (Recommendation: Broaden this to “How might we improve infrastructure – including trailhead restrooms?”)

Solution: Provide porta potties at established trailheads. Determine high use trailheads and create a path to establish a permanent structure with maintenance plan.

Barriers:

- Cost, maintenance and ongoing management

Impacts:

- Nancy Anderson ?
- Number 2 is the number 1 problem!

Lead: Mike Smith (?)

Team:

- State and federal and local trail organizations
- Lisa Mellick

Other Team Members Needed:

- County, municipalities
- Skills needed: funding and program management

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- Can you add signs and other infrastructure please
- What about education and standard to bring Wag Bags and their own toilets if in RV
- Improve communication with agencies as to their funding of future sanitation and facilities.
- Petition Chaffee County Visitors Bureau for funding
- Crested Butte S.T.O.A Committee toilet example
- Coalate trail use data to help target most important areas/sites.

I wonder if we take these two off line – into Strategic Planning vs. Rapid Action world since we already have teams working on them?

6. Challenge: How might we develop a framework for collaboration for CCG funding?

Solution: Have a strategic plan.

Barriers:

Impacts:

- Impactful proposals are more likely to be funded and produce results

Team:

- **Lead: Kim Marquis**

Other Team Members Needed:

- Cindy Williams, Rick
- Other working on the strategic plan

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- Chaffee Common ground encourages collaborative proposals with points in the rubrics and points for projects that come through community planning efforts.
- Can we clarify the intent on this?

Additional Top Ideas - Evaluated as High Effort and Low Impact (with no current lead)

- Create top 3 County “norms” or rules and fund enforcement
- Increase agency staff dedicated to education
- Connect recreation industry to fund/drive sustainability

Top Ideas - Evaluated as High & Low Effort and High Impact

7. Challenge: How might we develop a holistic, long-term strategy to manage county-wide recreation impact?

Solution: “A CRPP” - A collaborative, data-driven agency-community plan like the wildfire protection plan.

Note: This builds on the “Recreation Framework” that is a CTB Grant deliverable, but requires additional funding, partners, technology etc.

Barriers:

- Lack of agency resources, agency inertia, , funding for facilitation, having an implementable plan and buy-in.

Impacts:

- Inertia and analysis paralysis = action, Consensus on big-picture solutions

Team:

- **Lead: Cindy.** CFRI, CSU, Envision, USFS - Ben Lara, BLM – Kalam, CPW – Jamie, Chaffee County, Noah’s Arc.
- GARNA (CPW grant deliverable and business link for education)

Other Team Members Needed:

- Town governments/Mayors, More outfitters/recreation industry reps (fly fish shops, gear stores, rafting, bike shops), University outdoor recreation departments, Great Outdoors Colorado

Participant Post-it Note Comments:

- CCVB
- CRRPP add social scientist
- Ensure the Community Rec Action Plan can flow into a NEPA implementation agency plan
- Engage ALL stakeholders! Including those who might get overlooked expands thinking.
- When will we see results on the ground? How much time?
- Add: framework for collaborating for CCG funding
- Include prioritization of new vault toilets
- How can we identify early winds and start working on this ?
- Can we get started with collecting community/business input?
- Lets get an outline of next steps
- Need to clarify how this fits with the CtB Grant – as a “next step”

