**Tipton Listening Session Colorado REC Act  - Ouray town hall October 1, 2019**

**Attendees:**

Ouray County Commissioner Ben Tisdel

San Miguel County Commissioner Hilary Cooper

Robyn Cascade (Broads)

Leah Lopez (WCA)

Will Roush (WW)

Juli Slivka (WW)

Bob Kingsley & Allison Snyder (Opus Hut owners)

Liza Clarke (Ferguson Family Ranches)

Tim Patterson (RIGS Flyfishing Guide Service & Fly Shop)

Gabriel Otero (TWS)

Sarah McCarthy (CoCO)

Gunnison County Commissioners John Messner, Jonathan Houck & Rolan Mason

Ridgway Mayor John Clark

Bruce Noble (Supervisor, Black Canyon of the Gunnison NPS/Curecanti)

Garrett Hanks (TU)

Chris Rourke (Gunnison Times reporter)

Mesa County Commissioner John Justman

Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen

Nancy Fishering (Club 20)

CO Representative Barbara McLauchlan

Representative Scott Tipton

From Tipton’s GJ office:

Michael Melneck - Field Rep (replaced Brian Meinhart)

Brandon Bainer - Constituent Services

George Rossman - Constituent Services and Field Rep

Introductions around the room.

Tipton: reiterated the draft is just a draft. Inviting feedback and appreciate us all coming today. Recognized the discussion around corrections on maps mentioned in the listening sessions previously.

Ben Tisdel - Ouray: Thank you for being here. The county has submitted and stands by the letters of support for SJMWA and CORE Act. The county asked for boundary adjustments for avalanche mitigation and believes the CORE Act represents the county’s wishes.

John Clark: Constituents continue to give him feedback in the support of SJMWA and subsequently the CORE Act. Asks Tipton to support it.

Tipton: My focus is specifically within CD3. And continue to find voices that haven’t been included in these conversations.

Hillary Cooper: Referenced San Miguel Co’s letter stating their support of CORE and the problems they find with REC Act.  Stakeholders within the county came together to collaborate and get consensus on CORE Act. Asked Tipton to continue to consider the broad conversations and negotiations that have been developed by locals over a decade’s time It reflects the deep process that is important in this feedback.

Tipton: Said he did not get adequate information regarding the wilderness acts. (Hillary pushed back on this.Have been working with Tipton’s office for 7 years now.)

Jonathan H.: over half the acreage is within Gunnison Co and have spent a lot of time vetting within the community. Appreciated where the conversation was left in the Rifle meeting. Highlighted the Thompson Divide and Curecanti Rec. areas. Hope to continue with Tipton looking at Thompson Divide within CORE Act. Curecanti is unique and believes the conversations and meetings with Gardner & Tipton staff with Gunnison Co, Montrose Co and others reached a good consensus around Curecanti Rec. boundaries (?referencing a spring 2017 meeting.)

John M.: County residents and outdoors people were given promises that the 26 miles of fishing access lost to the Aspinall Unit would be mitigated. The entire mileage has yet to be given in total. (About 13 and half miles have been mitigated. Have shared with the Bureau of Recl. that the mitigation has NOT been completed as of yet. Asking the Fed Gov and Bureau of Recl. to finish the promises and expectations to the residents of the counties. This area is incredibly important to sportspeople. Disappointing to see it minimized in the REC Act. Encourages Tipton to reinclude the elements as they’re found in the CORE Act. See detailed reference to Soap Creek in Gunnison newspaper article to include here

Tipton: Had report back regarding the rest of the mileage...the Bureau of Recl. did not have access to these final miles.

John M.: Refuted BOR claim.  Properties available now for purchase and easements have ability to be acquired now, property owners have opportunity to participate in these easements. The Fed. gov. has not provided structure for securing these acres. (Tipton asked for names and info) No to providing a list of ranchers who might be open to conservation easements. I might get shot if I approach landowners with conservation easement info. The Feds. need to memorialize their commitments and develop a plan for property acquisitions and easement plans.

Jonathan H.: It’s not as simple as looking up a list for easement. It’s a local, relationship building job to reach individuals.

Sue Hansen, Montrose Co Commish: On board with Curecanti rec. Area. But want to protect all users when speaking of the broader CORE or REC Act.

Bruce Noble: Mostly here to listen. Doesn’t see Curecanti as a National Park’s issue.

Jonathan H.: Referenced travel management plan up to the waters edge. Much of these areas are Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat. The current travel management plan accounts for habitat and user groups and believes should be followed and considered in Tipton draft.

Tim Patterson, RIGS owner: Ouray outfitting business: Permits within many affected counties. Curecanti promise would be extremely important and a legacy for the area. Important to reclaim the lost access for users, businesses, and counties.

Garrett - Trout Unlimited: Curecanti is important for river access of all kinds. Important to work with willing buyers and sellers to identify the last 1 additional miles of access.

Formula for classification of waters. (missed the details of this explanation)  The 26 promised miles were to be Class 1

Sue H. -Montrose: yields to Nancy Fishering - Club 20 Public Lands/Natural Resources Committee Montrose Co: So much of this is regional in nature, mapping is not readily available to analyze what land is suitable or not. Hard to get the right number of people in the same room to give feedback. Watershed areas have not been addressed in CORE Act or REC Act. Many communities don’t understand their watershed areas. No maps show the entire pipelines. Fighting a wildfire could deplete Blue Mesa reserv. Wildfire mitigation important along these areas. Planning should reflect these watershed and pipelines. Suggests to Tipton that we need to take a step back and involve ditch companies while drafting the plan and thinking around conservation.

John Justman: Will the wilderness additions around Sneffels close jeep roads?

Hillary Cooper: No. None of the boundaries in CORE or REC Act close existing jeep roads.

Justman: Comments on the “hypocrisy” *(my reading on the sarcasm used)* of Thompson Divide mineral withdrawal and yet ski resorts using piped gas for heat. Mesa county wants to get rid of wilderness areas. Must manage it in order to protect it. Makes the forest healthier when managed; logged. Concerned with landowners pressured into easements. Worried that wilderness will close off more and more areas and the number of people that can access or use. How much is enough? I’d like to use some of it today, instead of saving for my grandchildren. Supports getting rid of WSAs and not adding any more wilderness within any public lands act. ….we say we want people to come and recreate but then turn around and close off access and roads. …

Robyn Cascade: respectfully disagrees with Commissioner Justman and speaks to the value of wilderness beyond the human uses. Ecosystems, watershed protection, forest health, wildlife health are all just as important. If we let nature take care of herself wildfires would be mitigated. Carbon sequestration, air and water quality all part of the intrinsic value of wilderness. Air, water and wildlife know no judicial boundary. Bring the Sangre de Christo additions to the CORE Act, thank you for your work in this area. Ask Tipton not to just look at CD3 but look at state and national constituent support for the CORE and San Juan region.

Also concerned with the release of multiple WCAs...these have not been evaluated by agencies and local stakeholders .

Bob & Allison Opus Hut: Mission is to provide lodging in the backcounty in a location that you, Mr. Justman could access the wilderness. Our main reason for being present today  is the concern that Tipton has labeled Paradise Basin open to snowmobiling. It’s a danger to users/snowmobilers as well as the other users/backcoutnry skiers in the basin. Opus Hut worksclosely with Helitraks and the snowmobilers affect their customers as well. We cater to families and those of different ages. Have helped others develop similar lodges in region. Important for protecting wilderness for wilderness sake and also manage for many types of users as appropriate to the area. If you have questions we have years of anecdotal experience in the area.

Tipton: Had comments from Durango and also feedback from snowmobiling community, as well as Forest Service. Maybe some options to open up other areas for snowmobilers as a compromise. The CORE Act does not provide other areas of access.

Hillary: Have worked with Tipton’s predecessors and snowmobiling community to draw boundaries of the basin to exclude from Sheep Mtn SMA  large areas at top of Lizardhead Pass and parts of Ophir Rd. so snowmobiles had access. There’s been massive amounts of hard work and conversations that deeply reflect the past 10 years. Technology has changed but that doesn’t mean additional dangerous access should be made newly available.

Liza Clarke: Cattle ranch in Ridgway and grazing permit in and adjacent to the proposed Whitehouse Addition. Been in favor of SJMWA since beginning and my cows are fine with it too. Grazing helps with grassland conditions. People are usually happy to see the cows on the trail. Father and Uncle trained at Camp Hale.Proponent of National Historic Landscape designation. Drove back to the site together and father was pleased to still be able to see it and share stories.

Will R. : Thompson Divide is an area where multiple use can occur and the mineral withdrawal is supported by ranching community, energy, counties,recreation, and others. Garfield and Pitkin Co supports the mineral withdrawal. Would like to see Tipton consider this.

Tipton: Garfield CO sent letter that supports the language in CORE Act regarding Thompson Divide, but does not support CORE Act in entirety. Exact quote from Tipton = “Garfield County came out and said they would not oppose the language in the CORE Act, but they oppose the CORE Act...”

Gunnison Commish: Excited that Gunn, Pitkin and Garfield Co agreed on the Thompson Divide mineral withdrawal. While protecting existing uses.

Will R. : Community is saying multiple use doesn’t mean everything is allowed everywhere. And the community there has had those conversations. If there’s a way to partner with Neguse to continue protecting these valuable places.

Justman: Brought up anecdote about a person who did not get compensated and told they couldn’t drill.

Tipton: Appreciates the feedback. Have reached out to Neguse office and outline some of the concerns they have. Waiting to hear back. Please let him know where and when there are further important conversations that he can be a part of.