



**Minutes  
August 24, 2018  
Mt. Crested Butte, Colorado**

**I. Call to Order and Introductions, Greg Clifton, CAST President**

**II. Approval of June 2018 Meeting Minutes**

There was a motion and a second to approve the June 21, 2018 meeting minutes, which passed unanimously.

**III. Welcome to Mt. Crested Butte, Mayor Todd Barnes**

**IV. Luis Benitez, Director, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office**

The Outdoor Recreation Industry generates as much as the auto and pharmaceutical industries combined according to a Dept. of Commerce report. We currently depend on nonprofits to maintain our outdoor rec assets. Coloradans in years past have prided themselves on educating and programs like Outboard Bound teach ethics but that is no longer enough when you consider the current volume of users. The state wants to support the ethics education and the Colorado Tourism Office has engaged with Leave No Trace principals. It is a “chicken and egg” situation that while we want to celebrate our public lands, that generates more users and potential overuse. The issues we have in Colorado around public land use and outdoor recreation are being experienced and discussed globally. Conserving public lands can spark conversations about sustainable economic development. Academia is helping with building the leadership pipeline with the Masters of Environment, Masters of Adventure Tourism and other degrees.

There are now ten states with an Outdoor Recreation Industry Office. They all recently met to generate a consensus Confluence Accord which will be a benchmark for future state offices. State directors will get together twice a year. Innovation is key, especially in mountain towns. The passion drive and innovation grows every year. The Rural Venture Fund was started at the office to identify and support the garage-entrepreneur in bringing their product to the market place. We need to creatively help cover this funding gap.

Pay to play is being utilized but there is debate around if this is the right answer. The State might need to be brave enough to do a Recreation sticker like a hunting tag. Colorado is realizing that we have to figure out how to manage these resources. A tax that supports conservation (like hunting has) has been discussed, but the Dept. of Interior is currently focused on National Park maintenance. This needs to be figured out at state level. Conservation Colorado does good work on advocacy at the federal level.

Local governments are starting to invest in managing our federal lands. That is a slippery slope as it might result in a demand to own the land locally if locals are paying to manage it.

Are we already at capacity and if so why are we advertising Colorado? The anti-growth movement without looking at the economy and ecosystem is dangerous. Mr. Benitez sees dangers in going down the path of separating uses. Americans like freedom and independence so this doesn't always work well.

The Walton Family bought local land, built an integrated trail system in and around town and created a Trust to take care of it. This initiative was successful in attracting more people to that rural town. This is a shining example of what is possible with the right funding, the right access and local support.

#### **V. ICE Lab: Growing and Attracting Entrepreneurs in Paradise**

*Russell Forrest, Manager, City of Gunnison*

*Delaney Keating, Executive Director, ICE Lab*

*Luis Benitez, Director, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office*

Gunnison Valley started to look at what they could do to support entrepreneurs. They found lots of entrepreneurs needed to connect to marketing expertise, assistance with developing a business plan and other resources. ICE Lab studied the local landscape to determine how it can best serve Western Colorado. ICE Lab, currently grant funded, is a shared work space that also provides access to a network of 75 consultants. There is cultural trust in the space which is so important. They have created 4.5 jobs in six months that are new jobs with new companies that have potential for growth. Ms. Keating invited anyone who is interested to tour the space. As a County, they have a goal of growing, retaining, attracting or building five \$10M companies over the next seven years.

Ms. Keating recently proposed a thought experiment called the Outdoor Industry Accelerator to Luis Benitez and she values his office's willingness to partner. Western State University has a new MBA program that Mr. Benitez has helped get that off the ground. ICE integrates with the University and engages with graduate students. Western's program will have a conservation component in addition to the business side. There are many industry leaders who are supporting this program because they believe in it. They are looking at building programming for the outdoor industry in partnership with the Outdoor Industry Association. Under this model, there is industry programming to raise companies and Higher Ed to groom the entrepreneurs. The MBA candidates will be tasked with working on-site with an outdoor company.

Attracting startups to the Valley is of interest. A community has the best chance of growing place-based companies if they start up locally. Rural Venture Funding is a rural program that can't be accessed on Front Range. The ICE Lab has a huge community component. Love of place and love of community sparks a lot of these entrepreneurs.

What part of scaling companies is myth or fact? Do small companies really eventually have to move? Hewlett Packard is a major employer in Buena Vista with remote workers. There can be market fluidity or a blend of keeping a foot in a community even if they need to go to other location for growth.

A lack of broadband is a limitation for some small town companies and a collective voice on broadband is needed. ICE has bilingual consultants and they are trying to engage the Hispanic population. Locally, the Catholic Church facilitates a conversation so a bridge has been created to engage that population with ICE Lab. Colorado is out in front to define opportunity zones where capital gains can be parked in a community. It is unfolding quickly but will likely take another 2-4 years to see this in action. It will take a few investors to do it and see how it will work.

**VI. Member Discussion: Ski Area Fee Retention Act,**

*John Whitney, Western Slope Regional Director, Sen. Bennet's Office*

Mr. Whitney first gave an update on the Flexible Partnership Act. They recently made some revisions based on CAST input at the October 2017 meeting in Silverton. It now states that the local governments would have first right of refusal on the leasing of federal facilities and also mandates that any work done under that Act must comply with local zoning and regulations.

The Ski Area Fee Retention Act is a way of keeping some of the money generated on a local forest in that local USFS district, rather than sending all that money back to the Treasury in Washington DC. There is a big backlog of work at the USFS for permitting and environmental review for ski industry expansion so the retained fees would be dedicated to that specific purpose. Ski Areas were the driver of this bill. It would allow \$22-24M/year to stay in Colorado. Senator Bennet is asking stakeholders to weigh in on the Act. The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments stated they want to see this bill have more flexibility to fund recreation management across forest, rather than just support ski area permitting and environmental review. Summit County is currently supporting the local USFS ranger district budget with summer rangers and Vail is considering doing something similar. Summit County would like to a broader scope to this Act. The criteria currently in bill are too narrow and Summit County would like to see trail maintenance and USFS enforcement added. The Gunnison Ranger District is one of the bigger districts in the country with a very limited staff to manage recreation on 1.3 million acres. The Crested Butte ski area draws a lot of people who then also recreate heavily on the surrounding forest. There are plenty of community impacts that result from ski area visitation.

The bill passed the House Natural Resources Committee, but is not going anywhere in the Senate Natural Resources Committee as the hearing won't occur this year. This bill will move into the next Congress to consider so we have time to offer input. Mr. Whitney encouraged CAST to put these specifics in a letter that goes to the eight Senators supporting this bill. The letter should include examples of local communities funding local and seasonal USFS employees for enforcement and maintenance as real world examples of why we need more dollars.

**VII. CAST Multi Modal Transportation Best Practices Study – Final Report**

*Cady Dawson, Transportation Planner, Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig*

Ms. Dawson reviewed the final CAST Multi Modal Best Practices report. (Presentation)

### VIII. Member Dialogue: Local Impacts & Actions Around a Changing Climate

*Candace Vahlsing, Senior Advisor on Energy, Climate, and Environment, Sen. Bennet's Office*

Senator Bennet sees “climate change” as a politically charged term and referencing “changing weather” allows for broader dialogue.

The Agriculture community is seeing impacts of extreme weather and is starting to engage in these conversations. Some mountain towns see summer tourism eventually replacing the winter season. Colorado is seeing extreme drought and resulting floods.

- Eagle County cited social services impacts from workers who were unemployed because of a late and lean ski season.
- Durango had huge smoke impacts and saw lots of guests leaving early because of the smoke. Rafting season was much shorter this year. They saw a decrease in sales tax.
- Telluride was flat on sales tax after a dry ski season. They get lots of “climate refugees” who are escaping extreme heat in their home communities.
- Crested Butte sees changing animal populations as well as a change in elevation for plants, trees and wildflowers. Summers are warmer but with extreme heat elsewhere they are still getting visitors. There are questions on if there will be enough water to make snow. If not, there will be lots of unemployed seasonal workers.
- Water storage is becoming an issue for Avon and they are moving forward on building reservoirs more quickly than anticipated. There is a long-time community event that depends on a local lake to freeze, but due to warmer winter temps it often isn't cold enough for that lake to freeze.
- Vail-Because of lack of snow cover early in the season, the local golf course experienced extreme turf damage. As a result the course opened in mid-July rather than early May. This impacted the golf course revenue, but also resulted in much higher expenditures than planned to get the golf course up and running.
- In Beaver Creek a World Cup event had to be canceled due to a lack of snow. This had local financial impacts, but there is now a global perception of a lack of snow in Colorado. This message can have a negative impact.
- Denver Water is anticipating that they might not be able to keep Dillon Reservoir as full as they have the last 20 years. This could have negative impacts to Summit County tourism.
- Aspen implemented water restrictions this summer for the first time. They had 30 more frost-free days than is typical which is a month of winter gone from Aspen. Aspen is doing a resiliency plan. They produced a report on how to mathematically get to their carbon reduction goals and are happy to share this plan.

Sen. Bennet supports policies that work through collaborations as he believes those policies are more durable. What can Sen. Bennet do to assist?

-Federal funding for wildfire mitigation is very important. Mitigation efforts saved a Summit County community this summer.

-Colorado is a headwater state. The Senator could help look at demands from other basins and hold lower basins to drought contingency plans.

## **IX. Innovators' Showcase**

- Crested Butte Conservation Corps

In 2014-2016 they hit a tipping point with negative impacts to local trails. The Corps focuses on conservation and stewardship. The crew works to remove human waste which is one of the worst issues, performs trail maintenance and also do things like shovel snow from backcountry roads so users don't go around and damaging surrounding land. They work with USFS, ranchers, land trusts, BLM, and other land use groups.

- Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, Gunnison County

There are lots of land agencies in the valley and they all manage individually rather than looking at public lands holistically. Gunnison County created this Committee with the focus to develop a collaborative approach to how they manage outdoor recreation aspects. Land management agencies, user groups, towns, the County, the water conservation district, and tourism entities work together. They look at stewardship and ethics, how to improve messaging and way finding (better distribute use), look at outdoor infrastructure and what is needed for maintenance and enforcement.

- Dillon Amphitheater Improvement Project

The Town of Dillon did a major expansion and redesign of their outdoor amphitheater. It has enabled them to have ticketed concerts, in addition to the free community concerts. They are able to attract much bigger names thanks to the expanded and improved facility.

## **X. Updates/Other Business**

- In the past, the community hosting a CAST meeting would also host a department head meeting. This was a valuable exercise. For instance, all member Finance department heads would join the CAST dinner and then have their own meeting the following morning. The board will consider this for future meetings.
- Initiative 108, called the "Takings" initiative, will be on the November ballot and if passed would have far reaching impacts to resort communities. It proposes changing the Colorado constitution with added language that is vague and really opens up local governments to lawsuits. CML is opposed. Although proposed by the Colorado Farm Bureau, the oil and gas industry is behind this. The CAST Board recommends to the full membership a position of opposition to Initiative 108. Clint Kinney made a motion to formally oppose and Leia Morrison seconded the motion. Discussion: Oregon had a similar law and it limited any meaningful planning. This would put shackles on local government and is a lawyers dream. All in were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

*Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.*