

OHV Working Group Conference Call
Thursday, November 29, 2018, 1:30 p.m.

On the call: Marlene Crosby, Gunnison Co.; Shelley Grail, Forest Service; Ron Leach, Marble Town Administrator; Terry Langley, Admin.

Ron asked Shelley about permitting requirements for commercial businesses using the forest. Shelley said that anyone providing a commercial service on National Forest property needs a permit. This would include any guided trips and anyone dropping off equipment on FS land. If renting an ATV in town, no permit is necessary. Marlene asked if companies are dropping off tourists and/or equipment in town, can the town require a permit? Ron said that currently companies are bringing trailers with 3-4 ATVs into town and taking care of releases and paperwork in town. These are outside companies, not those in town. Shelley said that if the exchange would happen on FS land, a permit would be required.

The town is hoping to work toward managing the problem. One possibility would be to limit access with a paid reservation system. Marlene acknowledged that developing this will take time. She asked how we can get the process started. Shelley said one thing that would need to be determined early on is where would the access point be? In town? County? FS land? If on FS land, an environmental assessment would be required and this takes time and has to involve the public. She asked if there is a way to do this off of FS land. It would need to be partner driven with the town & county. There are three main types of systems: 1. A fee system, such as the one on Vail Pass. This does not limit numbers. 2. Limited reservations, such as at Conundrum Hot Springs. Rangers on the trail check for permits. 3. Reservations managed by a partner, such as Hanging Lake. Glenwood Springs manages this system. Shelley further stated that if the access point is on FS land, it can take 5 years to get a system in place.

Marlene asked if we are wanting to limit access to the Lead King Loop, the town of Crystal and the mill or both. Ron said that the town would like to limit both, including access from Crested Butte.

Ron asked if we would need FS permission to limit access at a point in town or in the county. Shelley said that the FS would be part of the public process. She went on to explain that in Pitkin County, the county worked with the FS to enforce state law that allows a county to prohibit ATV use on county roads. They worked together on developing an agreement including who (Pitkin) pays for enforcement, etc. Shelley will get a copy of that agreement to Marlene & Ron.

Ron asked about talking points & explaining the rationale behind this effort. This needs to include impacts created by increased use. Shelley agreed and said this helps to, avoid the appearance of “not in my backyard” and will help get the larger public on board. Marlene pointed out that this should include documented numbers rather than anecdotal complaints.

Marlene asked about getting a Federal Road & Trail Access easement granted to the county and could it be a fee area. Shelley will check on that.

Shelley said that the FS has developed a Motor Vehicle Use Map and that it is available on line.

Marlene asked if it would be permissible to put up signage such as Passing Area/No Parking to help with traffic flow. Shelley will check with road crew to see if they can do this while in the area. Marlene said that the county could also help with this.

Ron & Marlene will collaborate on documenting impacts and management options.

The next conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 18. at 3 pm. Future calls will be regularly scheduled for the third Tuesday at 3 p.m.

Notes taken by Terry Langley