Teton Waterways Recreation Advisory Committee

Thursday Jan 25st  3:00 – 5:00pm

Commissioners Room – Teton County Courthouse

**Minutes 1.25.24**

Welcome:(3:00-3:10)

* Pay infrastructure? Boots asks what is the status of pay infrastructure systems?This was later discussed in the Waterways Ordinance discussion.

New committee members: (3:10-3:25)

* David Breckenridge is present. He thought that this meeting was for the Teton Water Users Association, but stayed and participated, giving insight on his perspective as a river adjacent landowner.

Discussion: Teton Waterways Recreation Ordinance Review(3:25 - 4:25)

Review ordinance by section

* 14-1-6: 4.c- Dogs must be leashed…
  + Concern is that this section could be used to prohibit legal hunting with dogs.
  + Could be corrected with a statement that dogs are permitted with hunting. Only hunting waterfowl is listed. Suggestion - take out the word “waterfowl”
  + Joe- uses the river to train dogs off season. Joe recommends that language should steer towards dogs being under effective voice control.
  + Dave B - How do you define effective voice control?
  + Kyle recommends - if you have a valid hunting license that could be an exemption for having dogs in the water.
  + Joe- change to “This is not intended to prohibit the use of dogs for hunting purposes” clarify the statement. Joe suggest that he will work on statement of this section
* 14-1-6: 4.e Waterway users shall refrain from harassing…
  + Joe. This reads in a way that could prohibit trapping. Statement could be added to qualify hunting with a valid license to be allowed.
  + There needs to be a section describing how the ordinance gets changed over time and on what schedule.
* Review process? Committee reports out to the committee each year? This could be added to the River Management plan eventually?
* 14-1-6: 1 Group Size Limitations
  + Joe thinks that the group size limit should not be the same for all sections of the river. There are many examples of family groups that are larger than 15. Potentially increasing the group size for buxton to big eddy. Suggest setting the group size limit by which reaches are already busy, also taking into account parking capacity.
  + Amy mentions that group size came up during charrettes. Suggests keeping the group's size where it is for now. At the time of creation of a recreation management plan, then start to define reaches that may be designated for more recreation/larger groups or sections that remain small groups and preserve more natural character floating experience.
  + 8-10 users could be a number for the sections that have a smaller group size.
  + Boots suggests larger group sizes South Bates to Big Eddy, Big Eddy to Harrops- smaller group sizes. Try to keep it simple by grouping sections into group sizes.
  + River Recreation Management plan is the next step to handle this
  + Kyle- perspective from the commercial side- mostly visitors look to commercial operators for direction on where to float. Larger group sizes often have children/grandparents etc. these groups also prefer shorter floats.
* 14-1-5: B, 2a Operation of a vessel of certain horsepower.
  + Joe proposes that there is a season of use that aligns with waterfowl season. So that duck boats with larger horsepower are allowed.
  + Boots brings up the question of habitat conservation and is there a concern about motors of a certain size disturbing habitat?
* 14-1-6: 5a Commercial use
  + Brett recommends separating F&G commercial agreements and the agreements made with the County. Omit IDFG from the Ordinance. They have the ability to make/change management decisions annually and should not be codified in the county code.
* 14-1-6: 5b, iii
  + IDFG is not going to put Cache bridge in the commercial use agreement because it is privately owned. IDFG can’t grant commercial use on this access point.
* Both 14-1-6:5a & 5b, iii. represent a tenuous legal position that IDFG is working to resolve. Brett recommends both be removed from the Ordinance.
* 14-1-6: 5b, i - This is not a rule that IDFG has set, this sentence should be removed.
* 14-1-6: 1c - To allow for groups larger than 15..
  + There needs to be a specific process defined for a special or temporary use permit. This section references 14-1-12 but the ordinance ends at 14-1-11.
  + Joe and Brett both have special use permit applications that they are open to sharing with the County to help start this process.
  + Joe mentions that there is weekly illegal activity on the national forest. And there is likely this kind of activity on the river, starting with writing a special use permit process is the first step to addressing this.
  + There is confusion about whether the County has already developed a special use permit application that is already being used.
* 14-1-6: 2b
  + “As of May 1 2024, mandatory parking passes will be required” - this needs to be addressed before the beginning of the summer. Maybe language could be changed to “a fee may be assessed as early as may, 1, 2024” or something to that nature.
  + We either need to make this happen soon or change the ordinance to reflect the next steps.

Recommendations for amendments to ordinance for BOCC

* Re cap:

Joe has suggestions for dog language

Brett has 3 recommendations to make ordinance stand alone from F&G

Boots highlight group size and motor horsepower .

Group size could be defined by above Big eddy and below eddy.

* 14-1-10 Exceptions
  + This section defines the process for special permits. The reference in the section above needs to be edited to the correct section.
  + Committee needs an update from Rob on how the special use permit process is going.

River Management Plans-

* Joe recommends breaking out river management plans by sections and doing research.
* Amy likes the idea by is concerned about time constraints to do outside research on river management plans.
* Do we need to recruit people for writing management plans?
* Brett likes both ideas, and thinks the Advisory Committee could start with an outline that gives the bones of a river management plan as a starting point.
* Start to transition towards a working meeting directed at the river management plan.
* David B recommends prioritizing the things that need to happen right now. For example, what's the most important ten things? 1. Enforcement, 2. Group size,...
* Boots clarifies are we planning to hire a consulting firm or doing this in house?

Old Business

* IDPR Grants - Fox creek East, Rainey
  + Last meeting we defined two access points to be considered -
  + Still wanting to hear from IDFG about grants
  + IDFG visited with IDPR - IDPR has a lot of requests this year and suggested that we aim to apply next year, starting in July with applications.
  + Michael suggests getting the management plan going to inform grant applications.
  + Joe asks if there is still an opportunity to get a toilet at Fox Creek. The deadline was today…

Public comment:

* David B- five sections of the river that are of concern. Each section is different. South Bates to Bates- good for larger groups. Bates to Big Eddy-not as ideal for large groups. Also, thinking about hunting. Which sections are good for hunting?
* Michael brings up the county budget that could be dedicated to writing the management plan. Michael thinks we could hire someone like a facilitator to carry work from one meeting to the next.
* Joe thinks we could have a clear idea of what our ask of a contractor would be after the next meeting.

Adjourn