

UPPER FRYING PAN VALLEY CAUCUS

MEETING MINUTES

August 14th Thomasville Firehouse

Executive Board: Dale Coombs – Chairman; John Crowley – Vice Chairman;
Pat Crowley – Treasurer; Melanie Buchholz - Secretary – all present

Board Members: Marilyn Lee, Jean Dodd; Lea Vasten, Pam Wooley; Jacque Schoon

Members attended: Monroe Dodd, Gail Coombs, Ron Bain, Danny Hundert, Buck Buchholz, Betty L Woolley, Troy Rhudy, Chuck King, Sarge Whalen, Mary Whalen, Reuben Sadowsky, Kim Savit, Mark Savit, Kathy Block, Steve Block, Dick Shell, Carolyn Shell and Abby Stern.

Guests: Kevin Warner, District Ranger, Forest Service
Peter Boyatt, District Wildlife Manager, Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW)
Francie Jacober, Pitkin County Commissioner
Daniel Curry, Range Rider

- The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm. The minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting were approved by motion by Carolyn Shell, seconded by Steve Block and then approved.
- Pat Crowley gave the Treasurer's Report with a current balance of \$9,092.80. A motion was made and seconded, the report was then approved.
- Peter Boyatt from CPW joined us as a guest and discussed, in part, the following:
 - o Heard management open house will be on 8/23/23 6-8pm at El Jebel Eagle County community center regarding all things elk management. They are redoing the current plan and will have a 30 day comment period after this 8/23/23 meeting. Peter encourages all to submit their comments, a link will be available following the 8/23/23 meeting.
 - Cow calf ratio is historically low which is concerning. There are some proposals that will be discussed at the meeting.
 - Not just the Frying Pan Valley will be discussed but other portions of the Roaring Fork Valley will be discussed during this meeting.
 - Wolve introduction has not been factored into any possible changes because it's such an unknown at this point.
 - o Non-resident v. Resident hunting tag allocations. CPW has done a bunch of changes lately which helps more non-residents. Preference points are also a hot topic and how they will be addressed. It would not be surprising to see more changes in the next 10 years.
 - o Over the counter archery tags v. rifle tags. Peter said archery being a draw in this unit was a result of archers complaining that there were too many other archers during the season.

- Regarding the status of Lake Christine and rumors that they will be draining the lake, Peter said they are only allowed to keep it at a certain level and at that level, CPW cannot really maintain a hatchery there. A test fill run was performed last winter and spring. They have not been able to make a decision on how to handle the lake until they are off restrictions on the water level. Ultimately, CPW would like to see Lake Christine as a healthy fishery. Seepage issues are also a problem at the lake.
 - Stocking, unknown what specific species are being stocked at the Frying Pan Lakes. Peter can let us know the stocking schedule.
 - CPW has no new information regarding the wolf introduction. It is still undetermined where the wolves will be released.
 - County Commissioner Francie Jacober added that likely the first introduction will not be 10 wolves but will most likely be more like 2 wolves released in December 2023; however, the number is yet to be determined.
 - Francie noted that CPW has on their website maps that highlight what types of areas were considered.
- Kevin with the Forest Service joined us as a guest and discussed, in part, the following:
- Status:
- Peregrine Falcon closure is still in place and they will continue to monitor as the young and adults are still hanging out in the area. It is anticipated to be closed for at least another two weeks.
 - Trail clearing: Carter cutoff is still a thick blowdown area and they are working on it. Feel free to report other trail clearing needs so the forest service is aware: 970-963-2266.
 - Timber sales/planned, current and planned harvesting:
 - All traffic from current work will be going out down the road to Eagle and they should not be coming down the Frying Pan road.
 - Kuntz creek timber harvest has begun and they are doing some work on Eagle-Thomasville road.
 - Burnt Mountain and Coyote Park are not showing signs of wanting to harvest this year so they are not anticipated in 2023. It's still possible, but not probable at this time in the year.
 - Sellers has been working on after harvest activities to clean up. The Forest Service is already seeing baby lodge pole pines popping up in the area that was cut last fall. If the trees can naturally regenerate, they will be better off. Surveys will be performed 1, 3, and 5 years after harvest to see if additional supplemental saplings need to be introduced.
 - There is a planned Lime Park Prescribed Fire which will occur sometime during the window of September 15th and October 30th. The prescribed grass fire is planned for 800 acres. When the prescribed burn will occur depends on getting a conditions and weather window. This prescribed fire is a wildlife habitat improvement project. It is not anticipated that the Eagle-Thomasville Road will be closed. Dale requested if the weather window allows, the Forest Service try to burn between hunting seasons.
- Range rider and film maker Daniel Curry discussed our upcoming wolf introduction and how it may relate to his experience as a range rider in Washington State. His small business, G.R.I.P.H.

(Guarding the Respective Interests of Predators and Humans), was the first in Washington to focus on conflict mitigation between wolves and livestock as well as people. Daniel has been working with wolves for over 20 years and for last 10 years has been working in Washington State in conflict mitigation regarding wolves and livestock. He believes we need to strive for consideration of communities that could be negatively impacted. Daniel said it isn't a choice between the wolves and ranchers, communities, etc., but instead it's about how we can have both and live together. Daniel is shining some light onto some successful stories which have shown we can raise the bar as long as we work together. Daniel provided an example of a success story with a small rancher he worked with in Washington which he helped to adjust the ranchers tactics on a small scale. Through these adjustments, the rancher who previously was having significant wolf conflicts with his livestock, transitioned to a ranch with no more attacks by wolves. Daniel's documentary, Ranger Rider, shows what success can look like on a small scale.

Daniel estimated it would take approximately \$257k/year to have a range rider patrol through the Frying Pan Valley. The group discussed at length whether the program and tactics used to protect the livestock in Washington could work to protect wildlife such as elk, deer and moose in the Frying Pan Valley. Peter Boyatt noted that the rules in Colorado would not allow some of the conflict deterrence tactics (lights, visual props, human presence following/pressuring animals, etc.) because some tactics could be considered harassment of wildlife in this state. Additionally, he noted there are really only two ranches in the Frying Pan Valley and they already have employees to protect their livestock. A member also noted during the discussion there is the issue of wildlife not having one specific area that could be patrolled by a range rider like is possible with livestock on private property. Dale noted that most of the drainages are one way in and out and that only about 10% of our valley is accessible on horseback. Daniel noted more research would need to be done to see if his program could be viable in our area to protect wildlife such as elk, deer and moose.

- Francie Jacober discussed, in part, the following:
 - o Community advisory board has written a proposal which can be viewed on the Pitkin County website. If the proposal is accepted, it would go into effect before the end of the year. Topics addressed include TDRs.
 - o State passed SB 1255 which is a bill that encourages growth. Therefore, currently trying to protect the desire to protect our county.
 - o Pitkin County has the highest percentage of affordable housing units in the country. That being said, the county is moving forward to determine how additional affordable housing can be achieved.
 - o STR's have been discussed.
 - o Working with Eagle and Garfield Counties regarding community resources.
 - o Trying to acquire more open space.

- The new solar speed signs are not working. Melanie will follow up with road and bridges to confirm they are aware and find out a timeline to get them operational. *Note: As of 8/21/23, all 3 speed signs appear to be functioning correctly. Please let Melanie know if you see something different.

- Corn Boil hosted over 60 people. Donations in the jar were \$846. After all expenses, \$119.61 + another \$50.00. Unlikely that Beyeul will be able to host on any other day than a Sunday. If possible, the caucus would like to keep the Corn Boil on the first weekend in August.
- Valley Girls potluck will be held on Thursday August 31st at 12:00pm hosted at the home of Jacque Schoon. Sorry, no boys allowed! Flier will be sent via email.
- The Meredith sign has been refinished by Hank and Rueben has picked up and taken to Beyuel. Reuben noted the sign will be rehung by the end of the summer.
- Miscellaneous Community topics: Wednesday, 8/16/23, at 7:00 all interested were invited to the Thomasville Church for a meeting regarding what the community would like to do with the Church (services, etc.).
- Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Upcoming Summer 2023:

- **Thursday August 31st** – Valley Girls Potluck

The UFPV Caucus website: <https://caucus.ufpv.net/>

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Buchholz
Upper Frying Pan Valley Caucus Secretary