

Gunnison Gorge NCA Friends Network

“Connections that Work!”

Goal / Vision

Coalesce separate partner, volunteer, and interest groups into a single Friends Group Network to support stewardship projects, education and outreach in the NCA.

Use the Network to help balance the specific interests of recreation users and providers, special interest groups, permittees, landowners, and general public with the broader needs and resource management objectives of the NCA.



Network Objectives

1. Discuss strategy and get buy-in for broader-based Friends Group.
2. Determine a Group structure that best meets the needs of everyone.
3. Lay the foundation for strong communication between NCA manager and staff and Friends group leadership.
4. Identify 2 projects for the Friends group to undertake in FY09 .

Name: Karen Tucker
Title: Gunnison Gorge NCA Manager

A Network Initiative Site
National Landscape Conservation System
Bureau of Land Management
November 1, 2008



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➤ **Intra/Inter Agency Partners**

- Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP, USFS, USGS, CDOW, BOR, Colorado State Parks, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado Department of Corrections

➤ **Partners With MOU**

- Delta and Montrose Counties
- Delta Tourism Cabinet
- Montrose Visitor and Convention Bureau

➤ **Informal /Potential Partnerships**

- Colorado River Outfitters Association
- Colorado Mountain Club
- Western Slope Environ. Resource Council

➤ **Partners Venders & Contractors**

- Liz Madison Consulting
- New West Business Development
- Uncompahgre/Com. Inc

➤ **Partners with Volunteers Agreements**

- Gunnison River Alliance
- North Fork River Improvement Assoc.
- Chaco Sandals
- Western Slope 4 Wheelers
- Montrose , Delta and Olathe Schools
- Grand Valley & Gunnison Gorge Trout Unlimited
- Partners, Brown Center, EXPLORE, & NEXUS
- Cocker Kids Foundation
- Painted Sky Partnership

➤ **Partners With Assistance Agreements**

- Gunnison Sage Grouse Partnership
- Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Assoc.
- Chipeta Archeological Society
- Montrose-Delta Public Lands Partnership
- Uncompahgre Plateau Project
- Geological Society of America
- Western Wyoming University, Western State University, & Northern Arizona University

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WHEN – Stage of Network Development

November, 2008: Somewhere between R&D and Implementation Stages

- meetings with consultant and discussions with key group members
- informal social gatherings planned over the winter/early spring

June 1, 2009: Active Stage. National River Awareness Week meeting and event

September 2009 - National Public Lands Day event sponsored by Friends Network

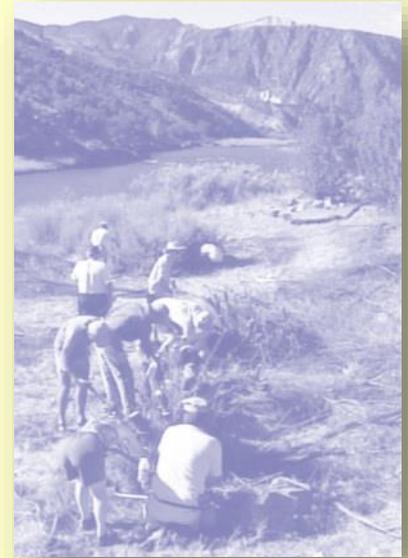
Oct. 2009 - Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the designation of the Gunnison Gorge NCA and Black Canyon National Park with the help of our new network friends.

WHERE – Network Geography

Goal is for the Network to be web-based with the local, regional, state and federal partners sharing and contributing to an event calendar, project sites, communications forum, blogs, etc.

WHO - *What communities & stakeholders will your network support, engage & reach?*

Goal is to reach local and regional NCA users, interest groups, schools, community organizations, and local, state and federal agency partners that can assist us with user education and large-scale landscape restoration projects.



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Bottom Line: Benefits of the Network



Present

- Saves time, energy, and dollars of all participants
- Keeps focus on NCA priorities
- Streamlines project development
- Improved coordination and processing of MOUs, agreements, procurement, etc.
- Sustained level of involvement - sustaining and re-building relationships
- Leverage funding
- Flexibility

Future

- Sustainability - recruitment of new partners
- Attract shared resources, grant writing, contract administration - UP Partnership , UNC/COM
- Landscape-level resource improvement projects – North Rim Landscape Improvement Strategy, Gunnison Sage Grouse Habitat Projects, Mancos Shale Restoration Projects
- Expanded education network with regional schools and colleges

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	Evaluation Criteria	Comments
1	Advance strategic priorities	Discussed new network strategy with groups and received their buy-in about a broader based Friends Network
2	Demonstrate big-picture thinking	Discussed large-scale resource protection and recreation projects that Network could help administer. Worked with key people to submit BPS, Challenge-Cost Share, GOCO, tourism grants to leverage funding.
3	Leverage BLM funding	Network partners already on board are working on projects that will leverage time, funding and expertise valued at \$ 1-3 m over next 2-3 years.
4	Demonstrate entrepreneurship	Realized late in process that we needed to restructure to primarily web-based network to best meet needs, schedules and interest level of partners. Consulted “High Performance Partnering” specialist and using on-line technologies to facilitate this change.
5	Management of volunteer and assistant agreements and contracts	Currently doing this with BLM volunteer coordinator and key network people. Created a volunteer database and signed MOUs with groups. Working on website for volunteer registration.
6	Demonstrate effective external and internal communication	Networking with BLM, NPS, DOW, USFS, USGS, NRCS, State Parks, county and city contacts, school leaders, and key community and user group individuals to learn from their experiences, get new ideas, and plan projects.
7	Actions promoting sustainability of the network	Working on Yahoo meeting site, website, databases, large-scale projects, funding opportunities, and capacity building ideas.
8	Potential as a network model	Not sure yet. Past attempts for a Friends Group failed due to competing personal interests of group members. We’re hoping the web-based approach will attract a wider audience of people truly focused on NCA objectives.

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Lessons Learned in Network Management

- Talk to everyone you can think of and ask them who else you should talk to.
- Keep dialogue going: never assume everyone in the network is on the same page with you
- Don't re-invent the wheel. Wherever possible, incorporate the strengths and capabilities of existing groups into the network (i.e., use an existing 501 3(c) rather than create a new one)

Challenges to Network Management

- **STAYING CONNECTED** – new technologies do not instantly translate into “connections” with people who are busy “connecting” with other people. It takes a lot of time calling, emailing, and leaving messages for folks trying to find time for conference calls, face-to-face meetings, etc.
- **GETTING EVERYONE TUNED IN WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES** - there's definitely a steeper learning curve for some of us more “seasoned” participants to learn how to work outside of traditional meetings.
- **THINKING, GETTING and STAYING OUTSIDE THE BLM BOX** - despite desire to leave bureaucracy behind, we must ensure network processes and projects comply with agency laws and mandates. That workload alone, can easily eat up a manager's time and zap the momentum and synergy of the network.