

AMERICA 250 – COLORADO 150
Mountains and Mesas Region – South LOC Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2024, 4-5:30 PM at La Plata County Fairgrounds

Introductions

4-4:20

- Introduction and ice breaker: What fun and interesting factoid about our region could you share that others might not know about?
- Present: Ellen Babers, Ellen Roberts, Scott Perez, Sherri Rochford Figgs, Beth Drum, Kathy Meyrick, Patricia Joy, Wendy Allen, Ruth Lambert, Susan Jones, Jeff Susor, Briana Paxton, Allen Harper, Richard Ballantine, Ann McCoy Herald, Audrey Garcher (for Steve Garcher), Carolyn Snowbarger, Amanda Kuenzi, Caroline Kinser, Cheryl Miller, Mette Flynn, Priscilla Walker, Paul DeBell

Overview/Project Updates

4:20-4:35

THEMES: State has moved to these three primary themes for the 250-150 work:

- Engage
- Educate
- Unite

COMMUNICATION

- Next newsletter will be coming out in June and features Ouray County. We're looking for the next county to feature in the September newsletter as well as other newsletter content, so get in touch with Bill LeMaire (his email is blemaire@me.com) if you're interested in writing or connecting a writer to our 250-150 newsletter. Length of 250-500 words desired, photo(s) a plus as well.
- Identified some funding that will cover the cost of a stand-alone website for Mountains and Mesas South LOC with possible inclusion of other two LOCs if they desire.
- This stand-alone website for Mountains and Mesas will transition from the webpage we currently have hosted on the Animas Museum website – thanks to the Animas Museum for their generous help in getting our web presence started!
- Backdrop posters for event tabling are soon to be in development to facilitate outreach at events and will be available to share across the South LOC.
- Goal of having a 250-150 regional press kit for community partners in the works and will ideally be complete by early 2025 or sooner.
- Working on social media presence and identifying which hashtags we can use.
- There's an updated [America 250 website](#) with a lot more content. The [CO 250-150](#) site is also live.

APRIL 19 REGIONAL MEETING

- Learned that city/county governments are starting to set aside money for 2026 commemoration projects in their communities.

- Ellen Roberts, representing the South LOC of the Mountains & Mesas region, along with other regional advisory panel members from the western slope 250-150 regions, and including Katie Roach, History Colorado staff and liaison to the state commission, will make a presentation to Club 20's Tourism Committee on July 12 – thanks to South LOC core team member Mary Jo Coulehan of Pagosa for arranging that on Club 20's committee calendar.

Signature Projects: Confirmation & Exploration

4:35-5:30

1.) SOUTH LOC PASSPORT – “Engage” theme

- Goal is to be ready to go live January 1, 2025 to promote within the Western Slope. By 2026 it will be available for all and marketed more widely.
- Folks at Ballantine Communications helping to design the passport based upon an existing template from another state.
- Al Harper is working with an artist to develop logo for both print media and for things like t-shirts. We'll have something in the next few weeks.
 - Proceeding with our own branding and marketing as we wait on state and national commissions to work through some trademark issues.
- **Passport Testers Needed!** We need folks to try out the program and provide feedback on the process, the specific sites, etc. The template won't include all of our ideas, but it will be an important starting point and opportunity to improve the basic structure.
- Eco-museum could be a part of the passport program, inspired by the Isle of Skye ecomuseum in Scotland. This is aspirational and would require a lot of web development (and funding), but it gives us something exciting to work towards.
- At state level there was a lot of interest in this but has lagged given other things they need to work on and concerns over price, accessibility, etc. State is really looking forward to what we come up with but that means we are drafting and leading rather than building on existing resources.
- Activity: Small group discussions on how to use / roll out passport, what to include, how to maximize educational value. Resulting suggestions:
 - Including digital elements to allow for more entries and flexibility:
 - Use QR codes to link to website and more information and resources, such as maps, downloadable PDF, websites of the organizations involved, etc.
 - State of Kansas uses a smartphone app for a similar program focused on engaging kids.
 - This would allow for a tiered approach with some things in the physical booklet but much more accessible online.
 - Note that many places of interest in our region lack good digital access. It will be important to have a downloadable option as well.
 - Question to consider: How to capture additions by folks who use the passport?
 - Could also create different tabs/tags for themes. For instance, a family might want to focus specifically on railroad history, geology or outdoor recreation, etc.

- How to balance:
 - Size of the pamphlet as it could get really dense really quickly among 9 counties. Starting with a small publication with 27 spots (3 for each county) but we will see how testing and resources go in terms of scaling up, digital elements, etc.
 - A mix of big popular (somewhat obvious) sites and more hard to find, unique Easter egg hunt type entries.
- Would be useful to have some core themes to provide a sense of cohesion, and making sure some of these themes lead to year-round opportunities.
- Think about diversity and how we can engage the many types of people who live in and visit our area.
 - Make sure to also include Ute Tribes
- Engaging young people and think about activities for kids to keep them engaged and curious as well
 - National Parks Junior Ranger Program as a general template and specific guidance for
 - Scouts, summer camps
- Flora, fauna, and geological features and how different groups/cultures have related to them.
- Include: the Powerhouse Science Center; Vallecito Dam; Hesperus Hill; True West Rodeos; great hikes/walks; public art

2.) SING COLORADO! – “Unite” theme

- Champion: Ouray County, Carolyn Snowbarger
- Mountains and Mesas regional choral and other musical groups singing or performing Colorado-connected/themed music.
- Composers and singers. Concerts throughout the region.
- Still at the ideas stage and interested to hear more.
- Group brainstorming ideas:
 - Have all different types of music, which would be easiest with different groups. E.g. Indigenous, Americana and folk, orchestral. Aligns with power of place and diversity themes of our project.
 - Leverage Music in the Mountains and other existing musical events, as well as music schools.
 - Think about engaging local composers, songwriters, and musicians to create original pieces and performances for this commemoration.
 - To fundraise for a historical renovation the San Juan Society created an album of local miners’ music.
 - Animas Museum collaborating with a Princeton professor connected to this area who is creating a “1619 Trilogy” with a “Finding Freedom in the West” theme and 2026 might be a good time to debut.

3.) POWER OF PLACE, Natural and human histories project – “Educate” theme

- A legacy program involving collaboration among key science, history, and educational sectors locally and statewide to develop educational materials to use in K-12 “5th day”

and summer educational programs, especially focused on experiential education in the field.

- Both Mountain Studies Institute and Powerhouse Science Center are in early stages of brainstorming and development on this. Initial idea is three themed weeks that will happen in three locations across the region.
- Target dates: Expanded environmental education summer camp - summer 2025
- There is a lot of great work happening with existing organizations and even some funding, but we need some 250-150 folks from the history, archeological, museum pillars for the human history element of the “localized instructional materials.”

Action list/Wrap-up

5:28-5:33

Reschedule early August meeting? Set next LOC meeting for September 11 instead? Agreed.

Next LOC meeting on September 11th, 4:00-5:30pm, LPC Fairgrounds

OVERVIEW:

- 2025 soft launch for events and educational opportunities with a “Get to know our regional neighbors” theme.
- 2026 is the big push with state and national collaborations.
- Q1 2027 is wrap-up, legacy hand-off and celebration meeting for the LOC.

NEEDS

- Passport testers willing to test out the template, preferably to at least 3 locations outside of their own county. Please volunteer!
- Passport content writers and organizers also needed.
- Start tracking/linking relevant events to fill out our website calendar in 2025.
- Get in touch with Bill LeMaire for content for the newsletters
- Get in touch with Carolyn Snowbarger (her email is carolynsnowbarger@gmail.com) with ideas/contacts for the Sing Colorado! project.

Notes by Paul DeBell, Southern LOC Core Team Secretary