

# Crested Butte News

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Arts Fest Map  
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**BIG MINE MURAL:** Local artist Luke Schroeder is working on a large mural project at the Big Mine Arena that shows the mining roots of the area as well as the environmental values of the community. PHOTO BY ROBY LLOYD

## Mt. Crested Butte council weighs public concerns over STR regs

To place a moratorium or not?

[ BY KENDRA WALKER ]

While it's still unclear whether or not the Mt. Crested Butte town council will place a moratorium on new short-term rentals (STRs), it's clear they are concerned about the unanswered questions and community impacts of STRs and are making an effort to hear from all sides of the community.

During a special town council meeting on Monday, July 26, the council provided the public an opportunity to voice their concerns about STRs and the valley-wide housing crisis, discussed regulatory changes to the STR license program, and weighed the pros and cons of issuing a moratorium on new STR licenses.

However, no decisions were made. "All of us need time to process what we hear and think this evening," said mayor Janet Farmer. She also noted the importance of finding a balance between full-time, part-time, and tourist needs.

As of June, there are 613 STR licenses in Mt. Crested Butte and since January 1 the town has received 36 requests for new licenses. A staff memo to the council reads, "Currently we have 28 pending applications, however a few recent applications were submitted just in case a moratorium went into place."

The majority of the 70-80 attendees on Monday were in favor of issuing a moratorium on STRs. The town also received more than 80 emails prior to the meeting, mostly voting against a moratorium or any changes to STRs in general.

In favor  
Speaking as a Pitchfork resident, not as community development director for the town of Crested Butte, Troy Russ strongly encouraged the town to put a moratorium on STRs to study the economic and neighborhood stability effects. "STRs have a profound impact on our neighborhood community, our neighborhood quality of life...STR is not a property right, it's a license...I believe we have too many STRs in town and we need to understand its impact because I think Mt. Crested Butte should be focused on creating community..."

## Regenerative ranching through carbon sequestration

Parker Pastures practices holistic land management

[ BY KENDRA WALKER ]

For rancher Bill Parker of Parker Pastures, photosynthesis is always on his mind.

Parker Pastures, which leases 370 acres of the Van Tuyl Ranch from the City of Gunnison, has been raising grass-fed, pasture-raised meat since 2006. Parker Pastures focuses on regenerative ranching practices that help rebuild organic matter in soils and restore degraded soil biodiversity.

Among these practices includes carbon sequestration: the process of plants using photosynthesis to store excess carbon in biomass and soils.

"As a land manager using livestock, my number one goal is to capture as much carbon through photosynthesis as possible. That's done through holistic planned grazing," says Parker. He explains that the longer he allows plants to grow before grazing, the more carbon will be stored resulting in healthier

plants. "The driving factor is the recovery period, how long are we letting plants grow before we graze them," he says. "Our tactic is to minimize overgrazing as much as possible."

Parker explains that the concept of overgrazing is often misconstrued. "For so long we thought that overgrazing was a function of animal numbers, now we know it's a function of timing," he says. If a plant starts to regrow and has tender growth while an animal comes back to graze it, the plant has to use its roots again and again to photosynthesize, he explains.

Parker's grazing periods are short and strategic to minimize the amount of time the plants are exposed to the animals. "We want to be grazing any plant for one or two days and then we're off those plants so they can recover," he says. Additionally, they rotate where they graze their animals each spring, the time period when the plants are using their root reserves. "So we're not hitting those same plants every spring," he says.

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COURTESY PHOTO

## COVID-19 remains at bay in Gunnison County

Mid-summer check-in remains positive

[ BY MARK REAMAN ]

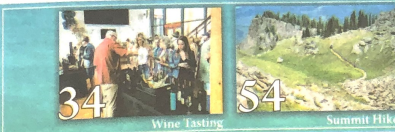
As we move through the busiest time of summer tourist season the county's coronavirus numbers remain stable. Despite a copious amount of visitors from places like Texas that have a relatively low vaccination rate, Gunnison County is seeing about seven new positive COVID-19 tests a week and that's the same rate as has been seen for several months.

"In our local testing, we continue to see about a positive test a day which has been the trend throughout the early summer," explained Gunnison County public information officer Loren Ahonen. "However, it was noted that last week we didn't have any seriously ill individuals, though we do have a county resident who continues to be hospitalized outside our community."

According to the Colorado data, 16 cases of the Delta variant have been identified in Gunnison County since sequencing that variant began. Additionally, Ahonen said the county is attempting to re-swab every positive test to send out for sequencing to the state.

Ahonen reported that Gunnison County public health director Joni Reynolds noted that we continue to see cases in the community but not at an alarming rate (similar to the rate we saw in May and June). He did say that a significant majority of these new cases have been in unvaccinated people.

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Wine Tasting

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Summit Hike

[ Overheard ]

"When we get KBUT bingo back, it will be normal."  
—At the Eldo

## Public Policy Forum interns have their hope restored

Dear Community,

As the younger generation we are often told, "you are the ones inheriting the world's issues." This is a daunting thing to hear as we are still trying to figure out how to navigate life in high school. With a polarized political climate, social justice issues peaking, and the reality of climate change manifesting worldwide, we struggle to find the positive in our future.

Before being presented with the opportunity to become interns for the Crested Butte Public Policy Forum, we were unaware of the invaluable resource the Forum provides to the Gunnison Valley community. The Forum breaks through the bubble that can sometimes isolate us by bringing in world-renowned policymakers to provide information on current world issues. With topics ranging from the importance of nuclear desecration to human rights violations in China, the Forum creates a space for civil engagement within our community.

The Forum ascribes to a motto we believe is more pertinent than ever: "The ethos of possibility." From this internship and listening to these speakers, our hope has been restored. Our eyes

have been opened to solutions happening now, and we are inspired to continue and cultivate the solutions to come. We have begun to see what is possible when we approach issues with the intent of understanding each other rather than just trying to prove that one point is better than the other.

Coming to listen, to educate oneself, is the first step anyone can make towards true, achievable change. So, as the younger generation, we ask you, to please, take the step, and join us in educating ourselves and widening our outlook at the Forum!

The Forum is a free event for all on Tuesdays at the Center for the Arts at 7 p.m. There are three more speakers to come: Paul Anderson, speaking about the Red Lady Mine, former Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, on the future of the energy economy, and lastly, Naomi Oreskes, on the importance of trusting science when our politicians don't. Check the website, [crestedbutteforum.org](http://crestedbutteforum.org), for more information on each event, or to hear recorded past speakers!

Hope to see you next Tuesday.  
Sami Lakoski, Havalin Haskell, and Erik Wasinger  
2021 Public Policy Forum Interns

## Who belongs here? Remembering all of our history is important...

Dear editor,

The first time I ever came to Gothic was in the autumn of 2009, as a field assistant on an ecology project. I fell in love with the place. I felt like many visitors past and present, entranced by the magic of the place, and welcomed by people in the valley. I've been back every year since that first trip. Gothic and the mountains around Crested Butte and Gunnison have become places where my research group carries out long-term forest monitoring, alpine plants and tracing the causes of aspen forest dieback – and more importantly, a place deep with community, somewhere I belong.

But belonging requires a dividing line – a feeling that with those who do belong, some others cannot belong. In our community today, who is in – and who is out?

The answer can be found in the stories we choose to tell about ourselves. We think of Gothic and Crested Butte both as historical mining towns, and now as research stations and beautiful tourist destinations. These are the stories we tell at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, at the Crested Butte Museum, in our schools and in our advertisements. But these are the stories that resonate with the personal experiences of many people, and that emphasize the real sense of belonging of the many people who have been part of this community for a few short

years, or those who have been here for many years longer. But these stories do not tell the full history of our region. They are the stories primarily of whites and Europeans. They only exist because of a long history of racialized violence that opened this valley to settlement. They are not the stories of the Utes, the Chinese, the Black Americans or many others who have also called this place home – and may still wish to call it home.

In failing to remember this history, not telling these stories of these people, we are implicitly telling other people that they never belonged, and that their remain uninvolved even in today's era of social justice.

What history, and what violence, are we omitting? Gothic had a post office by 1879, and Crested Butte was incorporated in 1880. We can easily call to mind the images of the white prospectors and businessmen who came in search of wealth. But we do not so easily remember the other laborers who built these towns. We have forgotten to tell other histories – like the 1881 lynching, in effigy of a Chinese man by a large mob in Gothic, as an effort to keep non-whites out of the town. We forgot the attempted lynching of a Chinese worker in Gunnison by a different mob, later that same year. We forgot the 1880 race riot in Denver, which

involved thousands of whites and which destroyed the whole of Chinatown. And we forget the numerous Black people, mainly women, who worked in laundries and other low-wage work in frontier Colorado, and who were often caught up in this violence with and against other marginalized laborers. And we forget the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (not repealed until 1943), which prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers, and which effectively secured the future of Gothic and Crested Butte as white towns.

We also forgot to tell the story of the violent removal of Native Americans from the valley. This history is intimately tied in the early days of our community. We forgot that white settlers, with the support of the United States government, pushed for the removal of the Utes from southwestern Colorado. We forgot an 1868 treaty that put the future town site of Gothic, but not most of the mineral wealth of its mountains, just a kilometer east of a new Ute reservation. We forgot that Frederick Pitkin, who was elected Colorado governor in 1879, primarily campaigned on a platform of "The Utes Must Go!" And we forgot the removal of the Utes in 1881 – of the White River and Uncompahgre Utes from millions of acres of land, including what is now Crested Butte.

I have drawn on a few examples here, but there are many more that could be found within a long and discouraging regional history. We cannot escape that this early history of violence is the foundation of our modern community. Today, there is little to be seen or heard of the marginalized groups whose stories are also here. And we cannot believe that our present world has overcome this past legacy – not in a country where racialized violence remains common, and where economic inequality keeps many people exploited and marginalized.

What is the price of our belonging, if it is founded on discrimination and violence? What should we make of a town, that until recently had an "Asian" restaurant whose logo was a



**CHURCH IN THE PARK:** The Union Congregational Church enjoyed the summer weather and held last week's Sunday service at Rainbow Park. PHOTO BY NOAH BENNEN

more that could be found within a long and discouraging regional history. We cannot escape that this early history of violence is the foundation of our modern community. Today, there is little to be seen or heard of the marginalized groups whose stories are also here. And we cannot believe that our present world has overcome this past legacy – not in a country where racialized violence remains common, and where economic inequality keeps many people exploited and marginalized.

slanty-eyed man, and whose population in the 2010 census included fewer than 60 non-white people out of almost 1,500, of which fewer than 10 were Native American? Who is paying the price of others' belonging? Our silences make it very clear who belongs, who never did, and still does not. We have to account for it, if we want to build a better future.

Benjamin Wong Blonder

Benjamin Wong Blonder is assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management at the University of California, Berkeley, and principal investigator at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory.

## E-bikes okay for seniors

Dear Editor,

This is to the biking community. If I were to pass you on a bike path in my electric wheelchair would you yell "cheater chair"? Of course not, you say.

Why then do I, a 72-year-old veteran with a 50-percent disability and many of my senior E (electric) bike friends constantly hear "cheater bike" shouted at us when we pass you on an uphill stretch?

Rather than cater to a fragile ego, embrace your good fortune that your young, strong body doesn't need an electric bike. Yet. Your excuses on why we should not be allowed on regular mountain bike trails are reminiscent of when snowboarders first showed up. "They can't negotiate lift lines; they can't get on the chairlift; they scrape off the powder," etc. Now it is "they climb up trails they can't get down; they go too far back and run out of battery (but we don't stop peeps from going into the backcountry); etc."

So why were snowboarders finally allowed? The ski companies realized they could make a lot of money and also the excuses were really bogus.

The same is true for E-bikes. The seniors may not be able to be out there helping you build new trails but we sure can contribute with our wallets. Big time. Embrace us; we are a valuable resource and fun comrades in a mutual sport if you give us a chance.

As a side note, the BLM held last year that class 1 E-bikes are not considered "motorized." Are any of your club trails on BLM land?

Gary Pax  
Carbondale

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