

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
June 9, 2026, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

The meeting was held at Hotel Maverick, 840 Kennedy Avenue, Grand Junction, CO.

Presiding: Pat Nichols-Perrin, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Present: Julie Shafer, Dora Fang, Tevfik Demirciftci, Manon Desrosiers, Elizabeth Fortushniak

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Absent: Christina Schultz, Theresa Horvat, Brenda Greene

Visit Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

Guests: Stacey Colón, Grand Junction Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management; James Lovelace, Manager, McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Chair Pat Nichols-Perrin.

Minutes from the May 12, 2026, advisory board meeting: Elizabeth Fortushniak motioned to approve the minutes as written; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A – Bureau of Land Management, McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas

Stacey Colón, Grand Junction Field Office Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and James Lovelace, Manager of McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas (NCAs), provided an update on BLM-managed public lands, current projects, recreation trends, staffing, and public land management priorities. They noted that outdoor recreation remains popular and contributes to the Grand Junction area's economy and quality of life, with assets such as Lunch Loops, Devil's Canyon, 18 Road, the Palisade Plunge, Little Dominguez Canyon, Rattlesnake Arches, and other public lands receiving regional and national attention.

James shared information about the Escalante Ranch acquisition within Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, which added approximately 4,000 acres to public ownership, as well as BLM's work toward a Recreation.gov reservation system for designated campsites along the Gunnison River corridor. He emphasized the need for careful visitor communication due to limited infrastructure, low-water conditions, older boat launch access points, and appropriate boat and group sizes. Elizabeth Fogarty shared that Visit Grand Junction has purposely stalled sharing this new public land offering, understanding that infrastructure and other support is still in development; and promotion will remain aligned with readiness. James expressed appreciation for this thoughtful approach to destination stewardship. Stacey further discussed BLM staffing and funding, noting that partnerships, volunteers, fees, and special recreation permit revenue are essential to supporting recreation management and on-the-ground improvements.

Elizabeth Fogarty shared that Visit Grand Junction continues to use data to monitor and evaluate visitation, visitor spending, quality of life, and responsible destination management. She highlighted Visit Grand Junction's ongoing support of BLM and other public land partners through responsible recreation messaging, Leave No Trace education, visitor guide and website updates, the Outdoor Adventure Pass, and strategic content shifts. She also shared year-over-year Rattlesnake Arches heat map data comparing May 2024 – May 2025 to May 2025 – May 2026. The heat map data indicated decreased trail activity along the Upper Trailhead area during the 13-month time period. Weekday visitation also increased, while weekend decreased. Particularly, Saturday decreased from 17.3% of total visitation to 12.4%. Time of day data and visitor demographics for Rattlesnake Arches specifically were also shared.

In response to a request from 2024's board meeting BLM and NCA discussion, Visit Grand Junction intentionally reduced promotional efforts for Rattlesnake Arches and shifted content toward the Grand Mesa. Over the last year, weekday content has also been a focus across all marketing efforts. Website analytics reflected this strategy, showing a reduction in Rattlesnake Arches page views and an increase in Grand Mesa page views. Fogarty also noted that this shift reflects Visit Grand Junction's deliberate destination management strategy to guide recreationists toward a wider variety of experiences while reducing pressure on heavily visited areas with limited parking and trail capacity.

Stacey and James acknowledged the value of the data shared and expressed appreciation for Visit Grand Junction's data-informed approach and responsiveness to BLM's input shared last year. James also noted that Visit Grand Junction's website provides some of the best available information for safely visiting Rattlesnake Arches.

Elizabeth thanked Stacey and James for the BLM/NCA updates and feedback. She asked how Visit Grand Junction could continue supporting their efforts. Stacey and James thanked the board and staff for the ongoing collaboration and public land education efforts. Elizabeth encouraged them to send a list of other alternative trails for Visit Grand Junction to promote and expressed support for continued coordination.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

- As a follow-up to an advisory board member's question from the previous meeting, a review of Visit Grand Junction's key lodging metrics was shared, focusing on an eight-year span of departmental growth and impact under Elizabeth Fogarty's leadership. The data review detailed significant improvement in lodging metrics, including increases in occupancy, average daily rate, length of stay, and revenue per available room. Year-to-date results when comparing YTD April 2026 to YTD April 2018 (Elizabeth's arrival) showed considerable growth. The information reinforced the success of Visit Grand Junction's expanded use of data, technology, attribution reporting, strategic marketing, and ROI focus. These strategies guide decision-making, support responsible destination management, and communicate tourism's value to the Grand Junction area.
- A review of the Advisory Board's involvement in Visit Grand Junction activities, projects, initiatives, partnerships, and strategic efforts was shared. Examples included the department's reorganization into a data science-based department (2018); Palisade and Fruita branding partnership (2019); destination branding (2020 – 2021, and ongoing); Grand Junction Area Tourism Membership Program (2021 – 2022); Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance joint meeting (2024); and upcoming strategies related to the Aspen Airport closure in 2027. It was noted that the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board serves in an advisory capacity. Although there are not numerous projects to advise on each year, advisory board members may choose to participate in community events and partner volunteer opportunities if there is an interest in more direct involvement with the industry.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Grand Junction and the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance was adopted by City Council at the May 20, 2026, regular meeting.

Due to lack of time, updates on lodging tax collections and hotel metrics for April 2026's business month, as well as recent public relations activity, were not reviewed and will be shared at the next advisory board meeting.

There being no further business, Julie Shafer motioned to adjourn; Dora Fang seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.