

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 14th, 2023
3:00 pm**

In attendance

Sand Flats: Andrea Brand, Director (AB); Matt Olding, staff (MO) via zoom
Stewardship Committee members: Mike Kelso (MK), Molly Taylor (MT), Tom Dillon (TM)
Grand County Commission: Evan Clapper (EC)
Bureau of Land Management: Jennifer Jones (JJ)

**Call to Order
3:05 pm**

Approval of Minutes

MT motion, MK seconds; vote unanimously for passage.

Agency Reports

Budget 2023

AB- Comparing revenue with 2022 thru August, SFRA is down 4% but was down more in June. Fee increase went into effect August 15th; SFRA should bring in an additional \$30,000 this fall.

JJ- Any feedback?

AB- Seems like folks haven't noticed. No issues so far and many say, "Oh we have a full week for \$10." The Register screen is streamlined. Compared to 2019, SFRA revenue up ½ percent.

JJ- Generally down 15% across the BLM and parks.

AB- SFRA is doing well then. Budget shown from Caselle. SFRA budget fine as far as Salaries and Benefits' probably will not spend what is shown here even with bringing on two seasonals. HR and Chris Baird calculated a little high. Line items over some include- Office supplies and equipment because of new software program; Contract professional services because SFRA paid for videos for TV channel until TRT money was available and also for engineer updates to the RAISE grant application; printing costs over because of printing more tags; also, over in Inventory because AB got a new computer after 5 plus years.

Proposed Budget 2024

MT- 2024 Budget request total?

AB- Not total budget because HR has not calculated Salaries and Benefits yet. Group reviewed the Budget Narrative. New line-item- Subscriptions 70-4270-210 for Adobe suite software for to make brochures in house. Grounds Maintenance, up from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for landscaping in front of the office. Contract professional services brought up some. Vehicle Leasing- In 2024 SFRA will get a third leased vehicle but not until April or June; budgeted \$24,000 for three leased vehicles. Cody McKinney, GC Fleet manager recommended swapping out vehicles every year to get equity back and spend a lot less, spend around \$1,000 total for the year.

EC- Explains details with Fleet program.

AB- Toilet contract budgeted at \$70,000; waiting to confirm with Zurich Bros. whether the City will be raising dumping fees at the Sewer plant. Accounting and Bookkeeping will stay at the same level as last year, \$40,920.

MT- Why does it say \$0 funds taken from SFRA for Accounting and Bookkeeping and Search and Rescue?

AB- Clerk's office showed AB separate paperwork that it was transferred out in May 2023 for 2022 Budget. Did not hear back from Search and Rescue if they want more funds. SR trail dumpster fees budget left at last year's level. In 2022 SFRA could not get a dumpster back in the fall for Fins and Things, so renting dumpster year-round now. Budget increased the uniform allowance somewhat since more people. Printing and Publishing will be less next year because visitor guide was printed this year.

MK- What about the insurance?

AB- Insurance is calculated by the Clerk's office but Gabriel Woytek, County Clerk wasn't sure what that was for. Need to get details on insurance.

Capital improvements- SFRA does not plan to do anything to the Entrance. During Covid people had to get out of their vehicles to pay and this slowed down transactions. Outfitters are saying that lines move well. Three weekends, visitors had to wait 15 minutes for entry. Two years looking at this issue.

Deadhorse has one booth and a million visitors; SFRA has about 250,000 visitors annually. We aren't there yet. Booth built in 2010, time to be painted and fix countertops and make things work better ergonomically.

SFRA Committee voted on multimodal path from F to D campgrounds at past meeting. Maddie (Logowitz, GCATT) and AB will write RTP grant for this next year. Tyson Swasey, GCATT, has also spoken about a single track on the north side of the road instead. Kestrel Run trail will come out in campground H. Biking from here would be on the road. The proposed multimodal path, purple in the image, would go from Campground F to D and then instead of building another parking lot it would be nice to link it to Slickrock parking lot which does not fill up like it used to.

EC- If SFRA gets RAISE grant for paving the road; the paved bike lane could be the connector. Group discusses this.

AB- Bill Jackson, GC Road dept. projected the multimodal path to cost around \$250,000.

MT- 2024 Budget looks like it will be similar to 2023.

AB- SFRA should bring in about \$175,000 annually with fee change. Capital Equipment- Might purchase the ROK- Remote Off- grid Kiosk.

JJ- BLM may get one or two more of these; should coordinate. BLM wants to do a test run of a new system. You pick your site on the portal and it would show what is open on the screen. 16 ROK units are on BLM lands nationwide, many more on USFS.

AB- Currently we have the Square system for online day use payment when booth is closed. Jason Turner, SFRA doesn't think it would be useful for SFRA. Thinking of changing our fee signs a bit at booth to make them even more visible.

JJ- Benefits of the ROK is selling wood and portal is in multiple languages.

MT- Move your pay system as a second reminder after the booth to pay.

AB- Passage at booth is not ideal. Could have a separate place to pay so you are not in the line of traffic.

JJ- Not easy to cheat the ROK compared to fee envelopes.

AB- Sand Flats checks fee envelope numbers. The ROK is budgeted and then we can do more research and decide. Also estimated budget for screen in the conference room and owl and will split this with GCATT.

JJ- BLM Camp hosts are paid \$35 or 40 a day.

MT, EC and AB discuss wage costs for SFRA seasonals and County as a whole.

AB- Don't have numbers for Toilet contract, Search and Rescue or Insurance, will find out about the grant and waiting for info from IT on conference room for screen and owl. Also the latest

balance sheet from August of 2022 still shows that \$40,920 has not been transferred to Clerk's office, HR and Treasurer and that \$10,000 has not been transferred to Search and Rescue. Christy Backus, Clerk's office did show AB that it has been transferred on a separate print out but still doesn't show that here in Caselle.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meeting:

Nomination for Hell's Revenge as a National Recreation Trail letter review

Edits suggested by group and letter updated to match. AB will send signed copy to Bill Stevens, BLM.

OHV education course guide video is available

Available online on the Travel Council website.

Raptor route update- trail work begins in September

GCATT will start on Kestrel trail next week.

International Dark Sky Park application events

AB waiting to hear back from Crystal White on this.

Fee change update- implementation started August 15th

Already discussed with budget.

Youth grant update

JJ- Person in charge has transferred and so process is delayed. Process should be complete before the end of the calendar year.

October GPRA Survey

JJ- Should receive survey materials in the next 2 weeks and start surveys first week of October.

AB- Anna Sprout said that the Trail Ambassadors could help. SFRA is fully staffed so seasonals could help as well. Survey is for Hell's Revenge trail and not camping.

JJ- When we get National Recreation Trail designation we can put the results from the survey into the press release.

OHV grant application update and purchases

AB- Decided not to apply for the OHV grant due to many new hoops in the process. SFRA purchased Yamaha 250 motorcycle and accessories for about \$11,000. Due to Liability concerns, Grand County only wants staff to ride County motorized equipment. SFRA just got a lightly used 2022 e-bike for patrol for just under \$5,000.

JJ- NPS and BLM got e-bikes too.

AB-SFRA will purchase Can am UTV this fall through state contract and transfer Kawasaki Mule to Grand County maintenance.

New Topics

New fall seasonal hires

AB- Had 30 plus applicants; those in Moab sent in letters and showed a lot of interest. Interviewed 5, Dave Lohner and Emily Sukiennik were hired.

No applicants for Stewardship committee membership yet

AB- Was advertised on the Facebook page, website, in the newspaper but no applicants responded. Group discussed advertising it as a non-motorized representative.

RAISE grant debrief update

AB- Attended debrief meeting with Dan Stenta, Bill Jackson representative of grant from Washington, DC; 7 out of 8 sections rated as Highly Recommended on SFRA application.

JJ- Collaboration section rated medium. How can we do better?

AB- We think they want the application to show community involvement. Road project is part of County/ City transportation plan.

JJ- SFRA/ County collaboration includes GC Commissioners, non-motorized and motorized Trail committees, State through grant programs, Division of Recreation, permittees, community members, Law Enforcement, BLM, Sheriff's dept., Search and Rescue, economic reality that is SFRA, Forest Service, events. Why is it medium rating? What better example of collaboration do we have?

MO- What is this for? Please explain for those watching the video.

AB- This is grant Grand County applied for to pave the Sand Flats road 7 miles in from entrance. Project would involve tearing up existing 1 mile of paved road and repaving and adding bike lanes on both sides up to Porcupine Rim. It is called the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity- RAISE grant, and is a 12.5-million-dollar grant. We did not get it, but were very close; encouraged to apply next year. SFRA's application was one of final 4 in Utah; 2 projects were chosen. Nationwide there were a thousand applicants and 166 were funded.

JJ- Moab Festival of Science and the Moab Mountain Bike team are other entities connected with SFRA. Congratulations, great job, impressive how close SFRA/GC came this time with this 12.5-million-dollar grant.

AB- Bill Jackson wanted me to be involved. Our rating really came up this year. I didn't have the rating document until after the debrief, if I had I would have focused on this lower rated one.

New kiosks for 10-minute parking area and paint striping by booth

Road dept. painted some road striping around booth. New metal kiosks welded by local contractor are at office yard and will be put in by SFRA and GCATT at 10 minute parking, Porcupine Rim and Hawks Glide/ Eagle Eye. SFRA is updating maps on all kiosks with new Raptor route and Staircase route.

Sand Flats Introductory video update

Missed

Responsible Recreation updates including videos

AB helping GCATT with new videos and educational program for businesses in town. They will be combining extensive library of videos from Mark Finley with new ones by this other company. There will be videos and quiz questions to answer for businesses in town. Will include trip planning, bio crust, sharing Moab trails, cultural sites, wag bags, dogs, climbing, canyoneering, mountain biking, motorized and more. They have the money. AB has been giving pointers to them on their outline.

Public Lands Day 9-23-23 Sand Flats

GCATT will be working on the Kestrel trail. SFRA will do typical trash pickup volunteer day. SFRA has 2 to 4 volunteer days a year.

EC- Did you count Outfitter volunteer day?

AB- No. SFRA had many volunteer collaborations this year. Red Rock Four-wheelers installed a fence on North Fins, Outfitters and MTC did a rake and ride and fixed fence on South fins, Friends 4 Wheelin' did work on Hell's Revenge repairing fence. Trail Mix hiking group did work on Pinion and Falcon Flow. Awesome volunteer projects in February. Anyone that wanted a pass for volunteering got one.

Update on night time trail closure scoping process

JJ-What data have you been able to collect as far as staff observations. Have to correlate counter data with trail damage. Otherwise it may be a non-issue.

AB- Jason Turner, SFRA said counter was working.

MK- Campers and the conflict with night use is important.

JJ- BLM Authorized officers want data.

AB- Night use data was pretty low. I should have given you data in June; will get it to you all.

BLM updates

JJ- National Public Lands Day Projects-7-mile trail with Red Rock Four- wheelers, and MTC and Friends 4 Wheelin' in Pritchett canyon. Other projects- completed new group site lower Onion Creek, staging material for Mineral bottom two shade shelters, using post and cable to delineate base jump area, done by middle of October. New kiosks with new look; noninvasive plant river trip on Westwater focusing on knapweed in designated campsites along river; Chicken Corners trip rescheduled; OHV BLM park ranger position posted; Todd Murdock moved into Resource position now; Maintenance workers are "Rock stars" cleaning up graffiti on backs of signs and on bathroom walls.

AB- SFRA is not having issues with graffiti but continue to have tree damage despite literature and signs. Plan to talk to local artist Pete Apicella to create paintings with messaging on trees for campground toilets.

MK- People don't realize age of these trees.

JJ- Other projects- Poison Spider paving project. Chunk of rock wall still needs to be removed.

AB- Any boulders? SFRA is always looking for boulders.

JJ- Tons of boulders from rock fall on the side of Rt. 279 before the bend. UDOT would be happy to get rid of them. BLM broke equipment here. It has been a busy fall. The Labyrinth and Gemini Bridges travel plan will hopefully be signed by the end of the month. CNHA will honor aid request for \$15,000 for UDOT corridor study for visioning plan for highway 128 to finish bike path. This study would go all the way up to Dewey Bridge.

Grand County Commission updates

EC-We did fill the Economic Development Director position and Ben Fredregill should be coming on next week.

AB- He is part of Bates Wilson clan.

EC- He is semi-local so no housing issues. Also Chris Baird is stepping down. Budgeting process- County is under contract with Cody Dieter who will put together plans for this year's budget through Clerk's office.

Adjourn

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