

Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 8th, 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), Dale Parriott (DP)

Grand County Commission: Evan Clapper (EC) (via zoom)

Bureau of Land Management: Katie Stevens (KS) via zoom, Bill Stevens (BS) via phone joins at 3:11 pm

Call to Order 3:07 pm

Approval of Minutes

March 9th, 2023, MT made a motion, MK seconded it. All voted in favor.

Agency Reports

Budget 2022

AB-Audit is not complete so the first page of Balance sheet is not accurate. Carried over approximately \$651,000 in fund balance from 2022 (correction \$625,000 because Clerk's office did not take out S&R and Admin costs). Second page- Remit totals are about \$9,000 more based on SFRA remits, things haven't caught up yet. Sand Flats fees online (Recreation.gov) Clerk's is \$1,000 ahead of ours but that will even out too.

MT- Budget shows \$95,000 in online sales. Didn't bring in that much last year and doesn't look like you will this year.

AB- Yes, Chris Baird just carried this over from the 2022 budget. We should bring in about \$70,000 again this year as we did in 2022. Last page - Expenditures with Comparison to Budget SFRA is over in Office Supplies. Almost \$1,000 was spent for Adobe Suite software, purchased for brochures, (graphic artist Dan Norris moved) and for the prison for the signs. This year Jason Turner, SFRA prepared all items for printing in house. Contract Professional services is over because we funded three videos to be shown for the spring months on channel 6 TV since TRT funds were not available. This also funded Jones and DeMille engineers to help with the RAISE grant application again; SFRA didn't plan on being involved with this originally. SFRA got a new computer and lap top which put us over in Office Equipment inventory (old ones were 7 years old). SFRA will not be spending as much in Capital Improvements, not having issues with entrance station with improvements to credit cards system, so money will roll back into next year. Revenue is down 7% through May. SFRA was down 22% through March. Travel Council said parks were at the same level. KS- BLM is down too, lots of people are skiing. With fee increase I would not worry. AB- Fee increase will be in place by fall. Salaries and Benefits-Chris Baird predicted more than what we will spend.

Citizens to be Heard- None

General Business- Action Items

Approval of sending a letter of support to the BLM for the nomination of Hell's Revenge as a National Recreation Trail

KS- Moab BLM has five national recreation trails- Corona Arch, Grandstaff, Bar M Trails, Fisher Towers and Slickrock. It is like an academy award. NPS administers it and it is quite a lengthy process. BLM is asking the Stewardship Committee for a letter of support for the nomination of the Hell's Revenge Trail. Since Sand Flats is operationally administered by the county, we would like the Sand Flats Stewardship Committee to write the letter of support.

AB- Would you like Grand County Commission to give a support letter too?

BS- It would be nice if the commission would also send a letter of support. After further discussion this is deemed not necessary.

EC- It is unclear who makes determination of the trail status.

KS- NPS makes the determination although these are on USFS, BLM, city park trails. Please send the letter to BS, electronic version.

MK- Have no issues and neither does the Red Rock 4-wheelers.

KS- The nomination carries weight if you apply for a grant. There are some other motorized trails in the BLM but not many.

AB- Slickrock was the first National Recreation Trail in Utah.

DP- I appreciate this but have you looked at our current situation with noise in neighborhoods?

KS- There is little indication that these awards increase visitation. It has not happened with the others.

DP- Nice that motorized trails are getting recognition.

EC- Makes a motion to direct staff to send a letter of support to the BLM for the nomination of Hell's Revenge as a National Recreation Trail. DP seconds it. All vote in favor.

Discussion Items Follow up from previous meeting:

BLM restoration complete with H campground being seeded.

AB- Saved half the cost by just seeding from the front back about two thirds of each campsite. It is obvious that the four campsites are closed. Looks good and there is a lot of vegetation on the sides that should fill in. Same company did it that seeded around SFRA new parking lot last year.

OHV education course guide draft video- Members watch the video and have positive response.

MT- Seeking our review?

AB- Yes. It has been sent to Josh Green, GC compliance officer, and to Chase Pili, Utah OHV Program Manager for their review. Some of the state permit info is incorrect.

EC- Rental companies have Ipads for people to use when they rent vehicles to take class online in Moab.

AB- I haven't followed up with Ali. We did go online and look at her social media accounts to try and read the negative comments but could not. She has no privacy settings.

EC- Worth taking her last name out since she was targeted by social media. Is there a BLM policy for this?

KS- No and she no longer works for the BLM.

AB- We can have Mark Finley do this. I am happy to speak with Ali and see what she would like us to do. The negative comments reached her after this test was released. The video has been around for five years and no issues until now.

MO- There are negative videos out there about the test and others that discuss the pros and cons of the test.

KS- Merrimac is misspelled with a k. “Wilderness Study Areas”, not” Wilderness” but ok.

Raptor route update

KS- This section is called Kestrel route, decision record signed and the EA is done. Extend to campground H. Only 2 miles long and will get bicycles out of Day’s Crack which helps everyone. Trail Mix will start work on it on Public Lands Day, September 23rd. This route gets you off the road where visibility is poor and curves are tight, safer for vehicles and cyclists.

International Dark Sky Park application events

AB- night sky event on June 23rd with Crystal White, NASA ambassador.

EC- Solar eclipse in October.

AB-I will need letters from different community entities for application and we will keep monitoring darkness level at the seven trailhead parking lots as part of the application process.

Fee change update

Utah Resource Advisory Council (URAC) approved Fee Change Proposal unanimously. AB went to Cedar City to present. Now just waiting for the BLM state director to sign the letter and we can implement changes before Labor Day. For this year the changes are dropping the trailer fee and the one day fees- only option is \$10 week per vehicles and \$5 week per bike.

KS- AB did great on zoom and also the two managers there said the same in person. Was put through the wringer but came out shining. All the changes are in one package, all approved. PowerPoint was also great. When you choose to implement you can.

AB- Been approved at the federal level but will still need to go to commission beforehand for future changes. Thank you KS. KS did a lot of the editing on the business plan.

Sand Flats and Travel Council videos and Emery Telcom Channel 6 TV contract

AB- will present it to the commission on June 20th because Maddie Logowitz, GCATT is away. TRT funds will pay for eight videos to be on channel 6. Videos include those shown last year and new “Backcountry Tips” and “Moab’s Living Soils” plus “SFRA’s Tips for an Awesome Moab Adventure”. All were approved previously by the Commission; contract will run June-November.

Youth grant update- AB- put in for the grant. KS- No updates.

New Topics

Updated Sand Flats visitor guide

AB- hands out new guides to members. Updated maps and QR codes to videos and information like new OHV test, pets, group reservations, can link and watch “Moab Living Soils” video, “50 Years of Slickrock” film, etc.

MT- Any issues with first come, first serve camping?

AB- No, people like it. Since we expanded campgrounds it is less of an issue. AB- worked every Friday this spring and we only turned away folks three Fridays because we were full. Good turnover each morning. Jennifer Jones, BLM said some of the issues with Ken's Lake Reservation system are "No shows."

KS- Arches, Deadhorse, Ken's Lake, and all commercial campgrounds take reservations.

DP- People camped all along SFRA road all the way to the Forest. Never seen that much traffic in my life; maybe someone wrote an article? It was Memorial Day weekend

EC- There are all kinds of apps where you can camp for free.

KS- Want to save money on camping and they spent it on gas.

AB- We had a different group; burned clothes in the fire rings, people weren't using toilets.

More people asking about Porcupine campground than ever before it seemed.

EC- Should bring up this campground with Anna Sprout who is working on correcting public camping/trail apps.

MO- Camp trailers are getting bigger and bigger. We only have a few spots for those over 40 ft.

AB- When we expanded in 2019 we were answering our surveys from people that camp in vans and tents and felt left out by previous campground improvements.

Sand Flats Volunteer Day

AB- Good day out on Medieval Chamber 5 volunteers painted the trail, rock-lined, raked.

KS- Remember September 23rd is Public Lands Day. Public comment on the business plan- Most comments were locals and were concerned about raising the annual pass fee. We pointed out in the business plan that these volunteer days are held spring and fall; work 4 hours for an annual pass. Keep these volunteer days. How many you get is fine, important thing is locals have these.

OHV grant application

AB- SFRA plan to put in for grants for new UTV and a motorcycle. Some staff would like an E-bike. DP and MT discuss electric motorbikes.

MT- Not many trails to ride E-bikes on so you would think a company might donate to SFRA.

EC- They are renting Surron bikes at the Zip line.

Grand County Commission updates

EC- Spanish trails system by Mud Springs, is a cooperative venture with San Juan County. They got \$200,000 grant. Has the potential to link to the La Sals.

KS- BLM has started the EA, you can see it on Eplanning. Discussion of these new routes.

BLM updates

KS- No updates unless questions. EC- Camping on USFS, county has entered contract with Wander App and it will be a "What to do in Moab" guide, trail stuff, restaurants, proprietary. Not user generated. We can control what it is saying. USFS is assessing their camping areas. There were comments about the Porcupine campground. Collecting comments on the idea of closing out to the peninsula, have to walk, can't drive. AB- USFS sent me a copy of the campground plans and I had a list of questions and they answered them. They will charge a fee when it is done. Group looks at draft campground plan.

Adjourn