

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Agenda
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Thursday, September 11th, 2025
3:03 pm**

In Attendance:

SFRA Stewardship Committee members- Molly Taylor (MT), Mark Pope (MP) Mike Kelso, (MK), Tom Dillon (TD)

Grand County Commission representative- Melodie McCandless

BLM- Jennifer Jones (JJ)

Sand Flats Director Andrea Brand (AB), and SFRA Recreation Technician Matt Olding (MO) via zoom.

Clif Koontz (CK) of MTC joins meeting at approximately 3:40 pm

Tyson Swasey (TS) and Katie Murphy (KM) of GCATT joins meeting at approximately 4 pm

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

MT makes a motion, MK seconded it. All vote in favor.

Agency Reports

Budget Review 2025

AB- Updated remit sheet to show averages going back 5 and 10 years, this brings current averages up. SFRA is down 1.5% compared to last year. Last meeting SFRA was down 2.5%. Hot weather in May effected visitation. Not too worried going into our fall season.

MP- Isn't the County down overall?

MM- County tax revenue is down. EMS tax revenue is up 9%. Sales tax is down 4%.

AB- SFRA has a decent fund balance. Reviews Balance sheets- Fund balance is \$648,782 currently.

Carried \$600,000 over into 2025. Expense Reimbursement \$2,664 from plant book sales, spent under \$5,000 to print 300 books and already made back more than half. All stores ordered more for fall. SFRA makes about \$5 a copy, great resource. Balance sheets 2025- Discusses line items over budget.

Subscriptions- slightly over SFRA new Dark Sky subscription and application. Printing and Publishing- up but already making money back under reimbursements. Insurance- up some because contents of sheds was not assessed properly. This is budgeted at \$2,500 for 2026. SFRA actually pays from July of 2025 to June of 2026. Capital Improvements \$310,000 most will not get spent; most was for match for RAISE grant but SFRA did not apply in 2025 after all.

Proposed Budget Review 2026

AB- HR calculates Salaries and Benefits. Budgeting \$2,500 for overtime for 2026. Adobe suite and Dark Sky subscriptions line item, more this year due to increase costs Adobe suite. \$9,000 vehicle maintenance. MT- should put it up to \$10,000. Group agrees. AB- Building and Grounds, pollinator garden like Planning and Zoning, maybe do this. MT- Have staff do it. MM- Have Girl Scouts do it. MT- Stewardship Committee could help do it for you. AB- Utilities- Split sewer, water, electric with GCATT but it also pays for phones at the booth, patrol phones and internet. Professional Contracts- Part pays for Emery Telcom to run videos on channel 6 TV, \$200 per month, 4 videos is \$800 a month. Also includes next year's film- Creatures of Moab's Sand Dunes. Tim Graham said spring is better for filming this and that is why we are doing the Ancient Trees film this fall.

CNHA may partner with us. JJ- This will be discussed at the December meeting. AB- Last part is engineering for the RAISE grant and depending on what we need from Jones DeMille and when. MM- Is channel 6 seen outside the area? AB- Yes in San Juan and Emery County hotel rooms. Last year we had 8 videos running. TRT paid for 5 and SFRA paid for 3. MM- Should go to MOT board for money for this. AB- \$2,400 to lease 3 vehicles, keep it the same, not turning in any vehicles until 2027, get equity back when we turn them in and don't spend full \$24,000 those years. Toilet contract- Zunich Bros. had to raise fees due to increased costs for pumping and dumping of waste, \$85,000 for budget. This covers portable toilet rentals for the year. Should think about putting a toilet on Forest Service land at LPS, costs \$240 per cleaning for two toilets now. Search and Rescue- Calculations this year were done for last 12 months, last September to August of this year and not previous year, which was method before. Calculated out to \$14,279, close to \$15,000. Search and Rescue also came up with figure of \$50 an hour for use of UTV. With labor and federal mileage rate for 4x4 this is the amount. Last year was \$6,000 but UTVs were not at \$50 an hour. Apply this to last year and cost is closer to \$9,000 so glad we gave them \$10,000 this year. Solid Waste- \$32,000, fees may be going up. MP- How does this work? AB- Fins is on call for pick up. Slickrock is on call as we ease into and out of each season, we check on our daily campground patrols. Once we are in full season Slickrock gets picked up every Friday. Fuel- Jason Beddoes said keep it at \$8,000. Printing and Publishing keeping it at \$15,000, still have quite a few of our printed materials. Supplies and Equipment- brought that up for 2026, plan to do some more fencing in the campgrounds. Fire rings stocked up; we can switch out the last old ones. Picnic tables- Pilot Rock sent us 16 planks of recycled plastic for free to replace cracked boards at Juniper campground. Need to drill oval holes in all picnic table top boards so they stop cracking. Capital Improvements- Crack sealing, seal coating, striping Hell's and Slickrock parking lots next year and fencing out at Dinosaur track location on Hell's Revenge trail. Camp host- brought up a little bit because longer season.

Citizens to be Heard

None

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meeting AB Power Point Presentation

BLM E-Bike EA

AB- reads County Commission letter to BLM from July- "While we support Alternative C, adaptive management and phased implementation will allow trail crews to roll out this approach, we suggest opening half of the trails in year one and the remainder of the trails the following year in close collaboration between the BLM and GCATT, however we specifically request that the Raptor Route not be open to Class 1 E- Bikes until the Forest Service approves their use." MM- This is the updated letter? AB- Yes and that's why I reached out to members to make sure we were on same page and put in letter to the Grand County Commission and this is what they decided; they listened to the Stewardship committee.

Road Counter data

AB- Want to clear up questions from last time about road counter data. Shows data- Red line is the number of violators whose average speed was over 25 miles per hour. The green line represents those whose peak speed was over 25 miles per hour that slowed down. Only violators are shown, not total number of vehicles. Like MT said in the minutes, the more vehicles you have the more speeders you have. Counting bikes and runners, doesn't think it would affect data that much. All are vehicles are being counted if they go 1 mph or faster but sign does not light up unless they are going at least 15 mph. Only records vehicles going toward the sign. MP- Likes location because it is not visible from far away. AB-It is recording vehicles turning onto Fins and Things, even though it is past the trailhead.

Night Sky programs at SFRA

AB- Huge success, had 25 to 30 attend depending on the event. Wonderful to partner with Utah State parks again. Photos from scorpion hike. SFRA had black light flashlights to hand out.

Relocation of H campsites complete

AB- Shows photos of relocated campsites from campground H into B, C and D campgrounds. Work performed by heavy equipment operator Lee Palfreyman from the BLM and SFRA staff. 7 total new campsites. People like them and some moved in before picnic tables were in there.

Sand Flats plant book sales

Doing great and books are for sale at Back of Beyond, CNHA stores and Deadhorse Point State Park.

Filming contract approved

We will be filming Ancient Forests of the Colorado Plateau, working title in October, have speakers.

Update on “Leaving a Trace” Play on Slickrock Bike Trail

BLM has approved the event and it will run for 3 nights, September 25th, 26th, and 28th. An ADA accessible performance will be held in town on Saturday night. Six locations, MO and myself and other staff will help, SFRA staff will walk behind some groups and be the tail. BLM will have monitors. Cool new thing happening up at Slickrock.

Falcon Climb construction starts this winter

Most Stewardship members have walked the route.

New Topics

GC Road Dept. chip seal project on Sand Flats Road

Working on it yesterday and almost done, from cemetery up to where road turns to dirt.

SFRA Public Lands Day event 9-20-25

If folks want to join us it starts at 8:30 am. They can earn their annual pass. Volunteers usually pick up trash along the road, that really helps us out.

SFRA Annual Report

AB- emailed it to you, AB will go before the Commission next week for my presentation. MT and MP- very impressive, lots of work and details. JJ- Good detail, shows what you do, it is fantastic. AB- Thank you.

Dinosaur Track Site barrier project along Hell's Revenge trail

AB- Shows longest track site in area on SITLA land. Bryan Torgerson of SITLA wants to have metal buck and rail fence here to protect the tracks. They will pay us for materials and labor. Ironically since our visit one of the tracks popped out from weight of a large vehicle parking on it, confirmed by BLM paleontologist Emily Lessner. Shows another photo of the BLM section with the exposed tracks. No boulders on site that will work; AB met with Lee Palfreyman on site to look. Fencing is needed here too. BLM paleontologist is ok with drilling but will mark where to put the posts. MP- Buck and rail fencing could be moved in the future if more tracks get exposed. Group looks at other photos that show planned fence locations on BLM land based on paleontologist's expertise. Fences will have openings for people to enter track sites. Road will have to be relocated away from the cliff. Lee says he should be able to do this very quickly in January. Existing boulders will be moved further away from the cliff to cover exposed tracks.

Presentations

General Business- Action Items

Vote in support of MTC trail proposals for SFRA

Vote regarding SFRA and Non-motorized Trails Master Plan

MTC Trail proposals for SFRA

Clif Koontz- MTC has three letters, one from April about Fins and Things and MP talked about it at previous meeting, Hell's Revenge and one Slick Fins (trail between Practice loop and Fins). All letters approved by MTC. CK shows photo of approach to ledge after Lake Michigan on Hell's Revenge trail. Easier line is on the right, widening on right side. Main issue is people heading back from the trail surprised by the ledge, some vehicles have ended up rolling. Need signs with easier option left and harder option right when returning. Suggest piling up loose rocks and cementing them in place. Recommend signs and guidelines soon and then ramp can be done this winter. MP- At the base of the rock on the right side it is getting dug out. Drops two feet, needs to be filled in. People have trouble with easy line due to the hole. MO- People try to climb it far to the right when coming in on the trail. Many hit the fencing posts and the tree there is in trouble. MK- How much concrete, how high? CK-Couple feet, but cementing the rocks together. Shows aerial photo and where signs should go and first fence. MT- Make sure you are taking into account the needed area for turning. CK- Eighty feet wide now. MT- Make sure there is enough room for vehicles parking and waiting. CK and AB- We will make sure. MO- Backs up, traffic jam on busy days. People also stop to watch vehicles climb rough section. CK- Busy trail. AB- Lee said new road will be twenty feet wide at BLM dinosaur track site area. Work will be done in January. CK- Happy to join staff and help.

Fins section- MP went over the 5 different lines. Blocking off the section between the trees and one before this, lines 3 and 4 is what is proposed. CK-New proposed route 5 is actually Fins and Things according to state data. Group looks at photos of area and discusses trail condition and signage; adding easier and harder signs. MP- Good slickrock at bottom of route 5 so should be sustainable route. Will have to do some trimming of rock at top for easy access. Area near Fins exit, plan to block off inside line with a few boulders that would be easy to bring in. Final one is addressing area on North Fins, first mile or so trail is getting very wide. Make one line easy and one more difficult, and close off other parts. See what response is from public after these improvements. MP- With Jeep we plan to reduce the widening in a section out there.

CK- Slick Fins is section for bikes and motorcycles. We had a recent field trip out there with SFRA Stewardship committee members- TD and MT including county liaison MM, 4 SFRA staff, 5 from MTC, and Keltain from GCATT. We walked line shown in photo. Further away from campground C, 1,000 feet. Remove minimal vegetation, all on rock. Good terrain for filtering out 4x4 users. Suggested fence with 45-inch gap at junction but down in the drainage and with signs- One way on Fins and Do not enter, speed limit signs, no ATV or motorcycles permitted sign on fence, have signs that show motorcycles yielding to bikes and a sign about the Slickrock trail. Look at trail from above. Dots would not be obvious from Practice loop, would not start for 50'.

AB- Should the committee vote in support of MTC trail proposals for SFRA?

MO- Question for Tyson, any plans to get Kestrel trail to the Slickrock trail?

TS- When I first saw this, I was a little bummed because Kestrel could link here but there are 2 other route options we could use to do that.

AB- Should the committee vote on the first two MTC trail proposals?

MT- Yes

AB- Vote in favor of the Hell's Revenge Dinosaur area improvements as proposed in the MTC letter. MK makes motion and MP seconds. All vote in favor.

MP makes a motion to vote in favor of the "Decision Fins" area as proposed in the MTC letter. MK seconds it and all vote in favor.

Nonmotorized Trails Master Plan Updates concerning SFRA

Tyson Swasey shows google map with various proposed route options. The map includes 2011 plan and points out that the Slick Fins route is similar to 2020 proposal. Blue route has an option for a single track to connect to Slickrock. It also shows the campground connector in purple that travels on the north side of SF road here. It gives campers of all abilities somewhere to go. Group discusses different ways to tie in between different proposed routes.

MP- Maddie (Logowitz) was talking about connectivity as being very important. Along with this there will be an increase in difficulties of management and potential confusion but connectivity is a positive thing despite problems. CK- There is a transportation plan done every 5 years that looks at routes and praises connectivity.

MP- If you were building it from scratch what would you do here?

AB- Ironically there was a bike route here in the Slickrock bike trail 1969 map that used what is Fins and Things trail today.

MT- I propose that we vote on the Slick Fin connector as a motorized connector. I was for this in 2020. It got approved?

AB- Stewardship Committee approved it but BLM did not.

MP- Some of the concerns was management and full-size vehicles getting on the trail. Look at the way Raptor route crosses Fins and that is well managed today.

TS- Surprised with lack of issues.

AB- Have some of same concerns from 2020, if you have that many more motorcycles and think of Slickrock Practice loop as a connector trail, is that going to cause more problems for mountain bikers that are on their first time out on the Practice loop? It is not motorcyclists that want to be on the Practice loop. We don't know if this will be an issue or not. SFRA employee Eric Boxrud has been a guide for many years and did acknowledge that customers would be nervous at first about motorcycles sharing the trail but the trail is so wide it was not an issue. However, SFRA employee Kathy Dickey who has patrolled the trail for 20 years said she has seen visitors on mountain bikes be intimidated by motorcycles.

MP- Benefits think aren't huge but issues aren't either so kind of a wash in 2020 but now the variable is Ebikes and it is good to get them off the SF road and this changes the equation.

KM- To speak to the connectivity goal, connectivity for non-motorized users in our plan is getting them out of their cars and making situations safer.

CK- An 8-year-old on a motorcycle is a concern coming off Fins and going on the SF road to access Slickrock, for safety and for campers too. When this was looked at in 2020 there was concern about mountain bikes coming out on the sandy section to the SF road but now it is being proposed as cyclists doing the dog leg section of Fins and returning to Slickrock. Also, in 2020 BLM was looking at 10 other travel plan changes.

MP- In the future there will be a lot more Class 2 Ebikes and electric motorcycles. We are making decisions for 5 to 10 years from now.

MT- Recommend that we adopt the Slick Fin proposal

MK- Support all of it. Seconds the motion.

AB- Any further discussion? Vote to approve the letter for the MTC Slick Fin proposal. All vote in favor.

CK- Happy to help with implementation.

KM – Quick overview. Grand County Trails dept. is updating the Non-motorized Trails Master Plan. First drafted in 2005 and subsequently updated in 2011. Some trails planned at the time have not been built, some will probably never be built, some have been built that were not on the plan, (some were built from plan). There is public appetite for some new trails not previously planned. This process is reevaluating those 2011 plans and deciding which trails we want to hang onto, any changes we want to make to those and any additional trails public is interested in that we want to add to the plan, wish list. Everything on here is not going to be built, just showing that there is public desire for this. Then we work with land managers to decide how and when it happens. You don't necessarily need to vote to approve this. More just getting in touch with the Stewardship committee, a stakeholder in this process, and showing you, this

is what we are thinking for Sand Flats. We have talked through these with Andrea already but want to get a sense if you think anything is missing or anything you think is problematic, get a temperature check.

AB- Is there something you want to throw out or something you want to add.

KM- Up to you, if you want to vote to approve recommendations.

AB- Vote in a few years on the design and funding. Group looks at non-motorized plan map in relation to SFRA and picks out some proposed trails to discuss.

TS- Hideout trail on the 2011 map and then during public comment period someone drew this connector trail in between it and Slickrock. It is proposed as a bike and motorcycle trail.

MP- Slick fin is on the map.

TS- Some of these trails are historic cow trails, which we are trying to document, but won't get this all done during this process.

MP- Orange trails. Intent is to get from end of Raptor route to the Slickrock parking lot?

AB- Yes, we would like to utilize Slickrock trail parking and not impact another area. It doesn't fill up like it used to, and it is our biggest parking lot.

TS- Any other hiking trail ideas within SFRA let us know and we can add it and discuss it.

MT- A lot of locals don't want to advertise a trail.

JJ- Not just up at SFRA.

TS- Hiking trails, no one wants them originally but now people are coming around to the idea of designated trails because so many different routes now exist. Want to make accessible hiking trails from campgrounds along the river.

JJ- A lot visitors are not using existing routes because they are unknown. If they are signed and named, more people will use them, feel more comfortable.

TS- Currently on the Master Plan lines are purposely drawn straight, so we don't confuse them with designed routes. Later we will do the foot work. Right now, at SFRA for Raptor route to Slickrock, we have a southern and northern route. Campground D is impossible so looking at having a trail near campground C, north side for a campground family friendly trail. And then a second proposed trail is a single track on north side that will be more a recreational trail. Slick Fins we can look at opportunities of tying into this or keeping it down here.

MP- What is your gut tell you about new trails in the future about these trails being open to Ebikes.

TS- I feel that mostly around campgrounds they are going to need to be open to Ebikes Especially with the popularity of Ebikes on Slickrock. Tricky here to decide where they can overlap, where they shouldn't overlap how should they connect. As far as the Raptor route to Slickrock, we may be interested in old proposed Slick Fin route for a connector or depending on what happens with paving the Sand Flats Road the Raptor route might just go to campground C and then on a bike lane along the road to get to the parking lot.

AB- When we write the grant this fall lets go for paving road with bike lanes and then just to Falcon Flow parking lot and we will should be competitive again.

KM- You don't have to mention this plan in your grant unless it helps you, otherwise leave it out.

Consultant is doing the active transportation side of this plan and they propose a shared use path coming along the SF road.

JJ- Utah trail network is a good grant for path.

AB- The consultant showed the shared use path going a mile past the pavement.

KM- Can ask for whole thing, then it would be in writing in the plan.

AB- Falcon climb will take care of some of this.

KM- Shared use path would be also for folks coming from campgrounds.

TS- I will be working with folks on the historic trails. We will have break outs with each land manager. If we want one of these trails, we will meet with Stewardship Committee and then BLM.

KM- Dark blue lines on west side were hiking trails on the 2011 plan. Proposed hiking trail from Lion's Park and come up to SFRA near G spot. Other proposed trails from that plan are complicated because they go through private and SFRA.

JJ- Goose Island trail gets use.

KM- A lot of these would require agreements with private land owners and SITLA. Don't know if any of these would even happen, but leaving them on the map as possibilities. There is one hiking trail that is possible because it is in SFRA and on the benches.

MM- Some private land owners want the trail because it can add value to their land. And some will never allow a trail.

KM- This is a wish list.

AB- A lot more trails were proposed on earlier maps. Was concerned that SFRA would be responsible for a lot more trails.

TS- Yes there were a lot more trails, but we dropped them. Only sticking with 2011 proposals here. Some were redundant.

KM- Trails shown are not detailed, just showing connections.

JJ- Seems like much of this is being used.

TS- I think there should not be any worry with the Non-motorized master plan that we can't make an overlapping motorized trail in the future. Make decisions when trails are closer to being built.

JJ- Whole process is conceptual, a conceptual plan.

KM- Use restrictions would be the prevue of the land manager.

MT- Users would like a hiking trail from Slickrock. Tie in the emergency road, nice little family stroll.

MP- How about up to the dinosaur tracks?

MT- Easy to access and interesting, can see all the user groups.

KM- We will write in the public engagement section of the plan that we met with the SFRA Stewardship Committee and showed them the proposals and feedback was given.

MT- SFRA two hiking trails are awesome, well signed.

TS- Connecting Slickrock to the dinosaur tracks would be awesome, could use search and rescue route and then create a separate trail where it goes along Hell's Revenge trail.

AB and MT- visitors love to go up on the fins at sunset from the campgrounds and see the mountain and desert views.

After discussion Committee tables the Non-motorized Trails Master Plan vote.

Update on Raven's Rim

AB- Wanted to let group know that Raven's Rim has not put in a new application at this time.

MM- I told them they have a better chance of getting a CPU then a rezone of the entire property.

Horrocks is doing planning and zoning stuff for the county now. Recruiting for new planning and zoning director.

Adjourn