

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday at 3 pm, March 10th, 2022
Sand Flats Office 156 East 100 North**

In Attendance:

SFRA Staff:

- Andrea Brand (AB) Director
- Matt Olding (MO) SFRA Staff
- David Bernstein SFRA Intern

Grand County Commission:

- Evan Clapper (EC)

BLM:

- Jennifer Jones, (JJ) Assistant Field Manager

Stewardship Committee Members:

- Mike Kelso (MK)
- Tom Dillon (TD)
- Molly Taylor (MT)

GCATT

- Maddie Logowitz (ML) arrives at 4 pm

Call to Order

3:11 pm

Approval of Minutes

December 9th, 2022 approved. EC made a motion to approve and MT seconded it, passes unanimously.

Agency Reports

2022 Budget

AB shows remit graph- \$41,611 so far, \$24,000 from booth sales and online day use sales. \$17,000 from online Recreation.gov sales for 6 group sites which can be reserved 6 months out. Up 22% for January and down 3% for February compared to last year. Well above 5 and 10 year averages.

JJ- Are you considering moving some campground loops to Rec.gov?

AB- Was waiting to see how Ken's Lake reservation system went for the (Moab) BLM.

JJ- Gripe right now is that people can cancel day of. Maybe SFRA is better equipped. Right now daily problems include reserved sites remaining vacant.

AB- Maybe by fall Sand Flats could have some reservable sites, depending on BLM getting kinks worked out. We have some issues just with our 6 reservable group sites- people taking sites from those with reservations or people overstaying their reservation. Maps aren't right in the Datura campground on Rec.gov even though requests have been made for fixes.

JJ- This changes workload.

AB- December balance sheets. Cash in combined cash fund is close to correct. Off by about \$4,000, probably just off one day of sales. Sand Flats fees for period actual last year-\$700,330. \$19,000 Youth Initiative grant between 2021- \$14,500 and 2022- \$5,000. It reads \$60,000 in online (group campsite) sales but it is closer to \$80,000. \$814,000 and with the Youth grant is \$828,000. Audit wasn't finalized until October last year. The last page doesn't show that Search and Rescue and Clerk's office monies taken out. Over \$100,000 wasn't spent last year.

2022 Budget to date. Normal expenses. Capital improvements monies have been spent for engineering for the parking lot.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens

Presentation

Maddie Logowitz, GCATT at 4 pm

Raptor Route timeline and Trail Ambassador program (See below)

Consent Agenda

General Business- Action Items

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meeting:

Fee change and SFRA business plan

AB- Commission passed proposed fee changes in December as presented at the last meeting. Since then it has been suggested by the BLM that SFRA propose a fee increase range like the Moab BLM field office did when they went before the RAC board for approval. Range could be implemented over time. Power point shows range. Propose camping go from \$15 up to \$25 in the next 5 years.

JJ- Pay what you think this camping experience is worth. At Hanksville BLM camping was \$4 a night but people were not paying the fee. After implementing this program they started bringing in money. Some BLM sites in CA with hook ups are \$80 a night. Purpose of Business plan, fees meet expenses of the program costs. Moab BLM wanted to use the CPI index as a model for raising fees but the RAC board did not like this.

MK- When did SFRA camping become \$15? Expenses go up.

AB- Fall 2015. Group sites were \$50 and moved up to \$60. And annual passes went from \$20 to \$25. What GC Commission passed was removing the day fee. \$10 for a week, instead of \$5 a day.

JJ- Explains the RAC board infrastructure.

AB- When I went before them last time, we could say that we completed all the projects we said we would.

TD- Questions on going from a weekly to a daily pass. Will it increase traffic?

EC- It would cut down on transactions.

AB- Shows slide that compares SFRA fees with surrounding parks

COVID19 and SFRA operations update

AB- Back to normal operations at the booth. If folks want to wear masks or put up Plexiglas screen they can.

JJ- Do you stop people in the outbound lane?

AB- SFRA went down to one person in the booth during Covid so stopped doing that. Even before Covid we weren't catching many people who hadn't paid. Mostly they just wanted to pay for more nights and they can do that when they return.

MO- Before, outbound lane person would help make tags and support inbound person. Still happens at times.

Mill Creek Community Collaborative group update

AB- Small group met with representatives from the BLM, Grand County and homeowners.

JJ- Mentions installation of new signs at Mill Creek, including anti- graffiti signs. Also working on new interpretation signs.

EC-Will there be Responsible Recreation info on these signs?

JJ- Not sure, should be room on final design.

AB- Maddie from GCAT will be in at 4 pm to speak to the group, can ask then.

Introduction to Sand Flats video

AB-In holding pattern due to editor for filmmaker Mark Finley out with Covid.

Parking lot expansion project

AB-Project will start next week. The contract was a process, County Attorney had to approve it. There will be a preconstruction meeting this week and then they have 30 days to complete it except for paving.

JJ- Paved parking lot?

AB- Just the egress and ingress will be paved and that could be delayed depending on LeGrand and when they are firing up the asphalt plant this spring. Hopefully, it will be a pretty quick project. Sonja and others removed quite a few plants and replanted them at the Pinion trailhead.

Sand Flats Entrance area and Sand Flats road

AB- Have not met with BLM engineers on this yet. Will do another "Already paid" survey this spring.

MT- Recommend you have a second person to help in the morning on the weekends.

MO- Campers is what slows lines down with their questions and decisions. Maybe send campers to one of the parking lots like Slickrock or Fins to get camping information.

EC- Can you have a person walking the line at the booth?

AB- Too many close calls years ago. Road department and the Sheriff said no, not engineered for two lanes.

Sand Flats Application for International Dark Sky Park lighting and events

AB- Crystal White as part of her NASA Ambassadorship will present 4 programs at Sand Flats again this year. Crystal has also been helping AB choose new lights for the entrance booth that are Dark Sky compliant. AB shows photos of the lights to the group.

Presentation- Maddie Logowitz, GCATT

Raptor route timeline:

ML- Working on the grant right now, deadline May 1st. Awarded in August. Hopefully all paperwork will be completed quickly and then weather dependent, will build Hawk's Glide, Sept. 1st to November 15th. Then assess whether we can build Kestrel in the same time frame or will need to wait until spring. Depends on how Hawk's Glide build goes.

Responsible Recreation program update including Trail Ambassadors:

Partnership between the BLM and GCATT. Pilot program last year. 6 people in the field, 3 teams of 2. Everything is Kelly green in color, pop up tent and uniform shirts. Sandwich boards show partners and Leave No Trace information.

JJ- Really like the trail reports, (mud reports) from GCATT.

ML- Water bottles, wag bags are given out. Jacques (Hadler, Commission Chair) is working on getting Gatorade tablets to give out. Enamel pins and patches that say Trail Stewards are on order. Would like to do something similar to Junior Ranger programs. One person returning and Anna Sprout is new full time employee heading up the program. Looking for 3 more folks. Need to be flexible with scheduling, week days and weekends. Hiking and biking focus. More focus on hiking because this is where masses are.

AB- Chris Baird said to work with Clif Koontz, (Chair of Motorized Trails Committee) on vision for Motorized Trail Ambassadors.

JJ- Have you seen the Junior Ranger brochures from the BLM. Not area specific but might have ideas.

ML- Want to do a Junior Ranger Trail Steward program, don't have concept yet.

AB- Pick up trash is something NPS has kids do to earn a badge or sticker. I SPY brochure.

JJ- If Trail Ambassadors leave before visitors return, have a way to get patches or pins to them after.

MK- Easy enough to station on top of a hill with two volunteers in jeeps to talk to folks. When we do Easter Jeep Safari we have sandwich boards. Would be nice to have a sandwich board like GCATT, more professional looking.

EC- Do you know much about the marketing side, new kiosks, posting things in toilets, Travel Council?

JJ- That was Friends of Arches and Canyonlands posting things in toilets. BLM did this too.

EC- Who is doing signs- August at Travel council? Dedicated TRT funding for more on the ground education. This grew out of the meetings with the first Responsible Recreation group.

ML and AB- Could combine Responsible Rec and Travel Council education efforts.

JJ- What is the Responsible Rec committee?

AB- It is Maddie, myself, Jacques Hadler and Kevin Walker from the GC commission and August Granath, GC Travel Council.

ML- Last year we did not get the OK for purchasing the kiosks from legal review. This new full time person will manage that committee and projects so that money is getting spent in a responsible fashion. Legal review now complete.

JJ- Please involve BLM early on, on anything on for kiosks BLM lands.

AB- Do we need Leave No Trace symbol on our signs?

ML- Grand County is Leave no Trace member, but no requirements.

JJ- Different practices in different environments. Leave no Trace is not area specific.

MO- Having ambassadors with these sandwich boards along Sand Flats trails would be great.

JJ- Interesting watching people on Hell's Revenge last week. Dogs running loose. Signs are signs, presence even better.

ML- Anna and Tyson will go to next MTC meeting. Talk about a motorized trail ambassadors program.

MO- Doing a patrol on Hell's. Would be nice to have motorized trail patrol logo on our vehicles. "Stay on the Trail"

ML- TRT is paying for full time and Trail Ambassadors positions. And \$250,000 is left over for RTP grants for signage and education for non-motorized grants is what Chris Baird is thinking.

JJ- Water bottles for motorized could be handed out at the Jeep Safari. Shade structure for Moab Brands, can these be funded by TRT funds?

ML- Shade structure is grey area regarding TRT funding but TRT could pay for signs.

EC- Shuttle stop at Lion's Park, do something like that at Moab Brands.

JJ- Spent years with alternative transportation stops. Outfitters wanted to be paid for doing this.

EC- Pushing for Hotel hopper.

EC- As part of my commission update, wanted to talk about Bears Ears land swap. Found out about this only today.

JJ- These things can take years to happen or quickly. Valuation of properties, things fall out at the end.

AB- The BLM parcel next to Lion's Back that Hell's Revenge runs through is part of the proposed land swap. ML thanks for all this information.

Updated "5 Tips for an Awesome Moab Adventure" video & others on Emery Telcom TV

AB- Mark Finley is here this week filming biological crust and pothole videos funded by the Travel Council. I suggested this to the Responsible Recreation committee and they agreed it was a good idea and August said he could fund it. Tim Graham, Jayne Belknap and Christina Young will be interviewed. Sonja, SFRA, found some good locations for photos of tires going through biological soil crust. Edits that Mark Finley did on the 5 Tips video were approved by the commission and this new updated video is running on Emery Telecom TV along with the other 5 videos on hiking, biking and Search and Rescue, etc. that were shown last year. There were concerns about 5 Tips video not being inclusive enough of all user groups. Mark added footage of Johnny Jew and he took out Police Chief Winder section.

JJ- Maybe change the 5 Tips short videos now?

New Topics

Opening of approved routes on Hell's Revenge trail

AB- Tip over to Abyss section of trail: Joe and Brenden, SFRA went out and hung temporary signs this week. MTC and SFRA had a work day 3 weeks ago and brush lined trail and did some painting. Clif Koontz said he will paint the updraft trail before the end of the month. AB shows the signs in photos.

MK- Announced this trail opening at the Jeep Safari meeting.

AB- Opened on March 4th. Clif was suggesting we change signs to say north short cut and south short cut.

JJ- QR code of georeferenced map would be a good idea.

Group discusses signage issues on Hell's Revenge.

MK- Make it a one way trail.

Group discusses Jeep Safari and one way travel.

MO- Jeep week is not an issue. It is the week before and after that an issue.

EC- Use booth instead of trailhead for sign orientation.

Hiring 2022

AB- Sand Flats intern David Bernstein. Discusses seasonal housing issues.

EC- Could intern work as a camp host or could a trailer be put up at Sand Flats for an intern.

Jeep, Red Rock Four-wheelers, BLM and SFRA volunteer work day on Fins.

Joe and Brenden, SFRA will come in for volunteer day on April 9th. Jeep photo op. Probably 20 people.

JJ- This was planned for 2020 but got shut down. Jeep is waiting for a cost list for materials and supplies, fencing and paint.

Grand County Commission updates

EC no more than SITLA/ BLM land swap.

BLM updates

JJ- Are SFRA Maps on Avenza?

AB- SFRA maps have been on Avenza for last 2 years. QR code on brochures go to SFRA website. If you go to Avenza maps Sand Flats maps are there for free. We could put the QR code on signs and on our brochures at next printing.

JJ- None of the apps are using corporate layers. Such as Onyx, so roads that are not open show up. Many apps are wrong. Removed buildings below old tram and working on interpretive signs. River road, Colorado overlook will have toilet and shade structure and picnic area. Trying to develop some day use picnic areas so less conflict with Take-out beach and other places.

Klondike campground opened in October. Trying out a machine at Horsethief called the Rock that will take payments for camping. \$10,000 for the machine. Moab BLM is pilot for this program. This should help with fee collection process. Wanted to do this with rec.gov but no cellular connectivity. Sanistar is the company that makes this. This company makes these units for dump stations. Labyrinth and Gemini travel plan, designated dispersed camping zones. Poison Spider trailhead will be expanded and paved in 2023.

EC- We have been approached about putting up a cell tower which could improve cellular service up there.

Adjourn