



USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region

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USDI Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office

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To: Non-Federal Recreation Resources Advisory
Committee Members

Subject: Summary Notes From the May 16, 2007
Recreation Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

This memo transmits summary meeting notes from the May 16, 2007 Recreation Resources Advisory Committee meeting held at the Marriot Residence Inn, Portland Oregon.

If you have questions related to these notes please contact me (541-308-1706) or Abbie Josie (541-471-6500). I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Sincerely,

/S/ DANIEL HARKENRIDER
Designated Federal Official

/S/ ABBIE JOSSIE
Ex Officio/BLM Official



Agenda
Recreation Resources Advisory Committee
May 16, 2007
Residence Inn by Marriot – Corporate Room - Portland, Oregon

Time	Topics for May 16, 2007	Purpose	Presenter
8:15	Welcome/Logistics/Introductions/Participation And opening statements	Housekeeping	Dennis Oliphant (Chairperson) Dan Harkenrider (FS) Abbie Jossie (BLM)
8:40	Recreation Facility Master Planning overview	Background	Jocelyn Biro
10:00	Break		
10:30	Public Comment	Required	
11:00	Begin Fee Proposal overview/discussion		Malhuer National Forest
11:45	Lunch		
12:45	Continue Fee Proposal		BLM Salem District
1:15			Ochoco National Forest
1:45			Siuslaw National Forest
2:15	Break		
2:45	Continue Fee Proposals/discussions		Willamette National Forest
3:15			Gifford Pinchot National Forest
3:45	Final Discussion time – summarize recommendations		Dennis Oliphant
4:15	Wrap Up - Critique		Dennis Oliphant

Present:	
John W. Vogel	Winter Motorized Recreation
Gustav W. Bekker	Winter Non-Motorized Recreation
Carol P. Jensen	Summer Motorized Recreation
Elizabeth Lunney	Summer Non-Motorized Recreation
Frank Bird	Hunting and Fishing
Dennis Oliphant	Non-Motorized, Outfitters/Guides, Chairman
John T. Walker	Tribal
Charles Hurliman	Local Government
Daniel Harkenrider	Designated Federal Official
Abbie Jossie	Ex Officio/BLM Official
Via Phone:	

Robert Hamlyn	Motorized, Outfitters/Guides
Absent:	
Joyce Pisnanont	Local Environmental
Todd E. Davidson	State Tourism
Guests:	
Julie Cox	National Recreation RAC Coordinator
Jennifer Harris	Malheur NF/Rec Staff
Kathy Ludlow	RS-FMP Presenter
Becky Hope	Alternate – Summer Non-Motorized/BCHO Equestrian Rep.
Margaret Wolf	BLM - SO Rec Lead
Jocelyn Biro	FS Regional Fee Program Coordinator
Mike Harvey	Siuslaw NF
Cathy Lund	Ochoco NF
Zach Jarrett	BLM - Salem District
Dani Pavoni	Willamette National Forest
Robin Rose	Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Julie Knudson	Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Topic Summaries

Topic: Welcome/Logistics/Introductions/Participation/Opening Statements
Presenter: Dennis Oliphant (Chairperson), Dan Harkenrider (FS), and Abbie Jossie (BLM)
<p>Summary of Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennis welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He pointed out that there were three people absent. Consequently, Group 1 does not have a quorum. He suggested going through the business of today and following up with a conference call with the recommendations. A question was raised whether the Committee could take the consensus of those present, brief the missing members, and then vote via conference call. If so, public comment/participation would have to be worked out. Another question was raised regarding meeting quorum requirements and could a member participate via phone. Since this was a viable option and Robert Hamlyn, one of the missing members was available by phone, Dennis agreed to brief him throughout the day and call him periodically for voting. • The importance of being present for all meetings was stressed. According to the bylaws, if a member misses two consecutive meetings it falls to chair and DFO to make a determination what to do. Charles reiterated importance having a quorum and taking a hard line on it. • Dan went through the logistics/housekeeping items - restrooms, lunch, etc. • Abbie introduced this meeting's note taker, Barbara Zurhellen, from Medford District, BLM. • John wanted to make sure the notes are being made available to public, which they are on the RAC website. • There was continued discussion from last meeting regarding agencies reporting back the Committee periodically on approved fee increases. Also, whether or not incremental increases or projected increases should be part of the agency briefings. It was explained that this was not oversight and that the agencies have to report yearly (by unit) on fees

collected and number of users vs. percent occupancy, but that these figures are only available down to forest level. How occupancy is derived was explained. There was reluctance on the part of agencies to recommend scheduled increases but it could be done if the appropriate public process were followed. However, the RAC could make a recommendation to the agencies that proposals encompass a long range plan and anticipate fee increases over time. One of the options in a proposal could be to have a longer term scenario in fee proposal. For any current proposals, it would all depend on how the public was notified and their expectation. No recommendations on behalf of the RAC at this time but agencies agreed to take this into consideration.

Topic: Recreation Facility Master Planning Overview

Presenters: Kathy Ludlow (FS)

Summary of Presentation:

- Kathy gave a presentation on the FS planning process (how projects get to the RAC). The six-month process looks at recreation sites across the country and how to best align resources. The outcome is a five-year proposed program of work.
- Niche recreation: individual forests incorporate demand (what public wants) with supply (what forest has to offer) and determines what piece of the overlap can the forest can offer.
- The “what” involves a focused look at facilities and the “why” is to operate efficiently while meeting increasing needs and mission. The goals are to provide recreation opportunities, operate and maintain recreation sites, and eliminate deferred maintenance.
- Steps in the RFA process: facilitated meetings with the forests, public involvement, and finally coming to RAC with a proposal.
- Public involvement tools: on-site, web, mailings, public meetings, ect.
- Workshop outcomes: data preparation, niche workshop, ranking workshop, action plan. Raising fees is one of the tools identified in the action plan.

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Clarification on fee increases and how FS determines appropriate fee structure for sites.
- Raising fees for health and safety reasons.
- Whether the process includes a component of fee structure to increase law enforcement. Jocelyn clarified that an increased presence (LE or FS employee) is an appropriate use of fees.
- Appearance of too narrow a niche and favoritism. Joyce explained that it is broad but focused. Dan clarified appropriate uses and what is in the plan. Example of a niche – look at physical or social settings, appropriate recreation uses and facilities that correspond. Can’t be all things to all people on every acre.
- Seems like we are responding to a backlog in forest needs and whether it would be beneficial in the future to present a step increase over time so we are not constantly revisiting fee increases.
- Would it be more acceptable to the public to propose increases one at a time?
- Shifting recreation activities from one area to another other and would that make it more concentrated and result in increased costs to provide that recreation opportunity. It was explained that dispersed recreation has a high cost to maintain and that grouping activities into sites that could support them results in less impact on the resource.
- Question to Chairman - would it be helpful to know the niche when proposals are brought forward to RAC? Dennis responded that while we might see the need to look deeper into some projects down the road, he does not see a need to make it part of the formal proposal at this time.

- A discussion ensued regarding fee structure and affordability for local users and other available opportunities and amenities.

Topic: Public Comments May 16, 2007

Comments received from: Becky Hope (Alternate – Summer Non-Motorized/BCHO Equestrian Rep.)

Summary of Comments:

Becky brought forth comments behalf of the Harralson Horse Council regarding public input into the proposed fee increase for Harralson Horse Camp. The FS posted a notice at the site notifying public comment period on proposal. The Council met as a committee with a Forest representative, leaving that meeting with the understanding that the Council would get word out to the horse community regarding a survey. The current fee for use of the site in \$5.00, NW Forest Pass. The proposal is to change it to a \$10 camping fee plus a \$5 use fee. Becky pointed out that there are no amenities except a new vault toilet. Thirty one surveys were collected but not submitted in time to be included as part of the comment period. She and the Council felt that the comment period got shortchanged. A summary of surveys was distributed to the RAC members. The Council would like, at a minimum, to see water at the site. There was a question regarding impact of high lining vs. corals.

Topic: Malheur National Forest

Presenter: Jennifer Harris (FS)

Sites:

1) *Rustic, forested setting:* Tamarack, Tip Top, Buck Springs, Rock Springs, Lower Camp Creek, Wickiup, and Starr (current fee is \$5). These sites are primarily the new fee sites and are proposed for \$6.

2) *Moderately developed, attraction oriented:* Emigrant, Falls, Joaquin Miller, Parish Cabin, Murray, Big Creek, Trout Farm, Dixie, Strawberry, Slide Horse, Middle Fork, and Deerhorn. The level of improvements varies among these sites, but they are all essentially similar as a group and the proposed fee is going from \$6 to \$8.

3) *Highly developed and/or lake oriented:* Delintment Lake, Yellowjacket Lake, Idlewild and Magone Lake. The fee proposed for these sites is \$10, except for Magone Lake Campground which is proposed for \$13. These sites also have separate fee scales for group sites and picnic shelter reservations.

Summary of Presentation:

- Jennifer’s presentation covered their location, the primary visitor activities, and three categories of recreation settings: wilderness, scenic drives, and open spaces.
- Their niche is, “a destination for dispersed recreation.”
- She gave examples of what the fee program dollars have been used for in the past, highlights of their communication plan, and results of the fee proposal.
- Their budget shortfall in operating costs is \$72,000.
- They did due diligence in public notice with little opposition.
- The sites are below pricing norms for comparable sites.

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Buck Springs and dealing with dispersed camping.
- Balancing the budget if fees and appropriations do not cover operating costs.
- Current condition of amenities at sites.
- Breakdown of rustic, moderate, and highly developed for 11 no-fee sites.
- Local feeling about fees.
- Capturing OHV funding for road maintenance.
- What the labor maintenance dollars are based on.
- Demographics and recreation models.
- Reservations, prepaying on line, and “camp stamps.”

Motion: Motion to accept proposed fee increases.
(Robert Hamlyn was called, put on speaker phone, and briefed.)

Discussion: There was a recommendation that the Forest report back on what happens with the new fee sites. A remark was made that setting the fee structures based on comparables is inappropriate. Clarification was given about moving monies around to cover other areas and start up costs. The pre-work materials were valuable in explaining the proposed fee structures.

Vote: Unanimous (Group 1 = 5; Group 2 = 2; Group 3 = 3)

Topic: BLM – Salem District

Presenter: Zack Jarrett (BLM)

Site: Wildwood Recreation Site

Summary of Presentation:

- The site has numerous amenities, a high level of development, and has seen 20 million in capitalized improvements.
- Zack explained where they are located, the fee history, visitor demographics, primary activities, visitor amenities, and the breakdown of existing fees and proposed fees (approx 10% increase).
- They have a standard amenity recreation fee (entrance fee) and rentals (shelters). There are no comparables in the basin.
- Public involvement included postings, press release, and stakeholders meetings. Most of the feedback was favorable but they did receive some constructive criticism.
- There is a shortfall in operations and maintenance. The fee increase would approximately double what they are bringing in now but there would still be a shortfall (\$38,000 now, \$70,000 after increase).

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Inquiry about the occupancy rate of the rental of shelters.
- With all the capital improvements, has there or are there plans to do a cost analysis and a maintenance plan on the facilities?
- Staffing inquiry – The site is open seasonally but there is a year round facility manager.
- Was the previous per vehicle fee broken down by number of people per vehicle? No.
- Would like to see cost recovery of facilities and whole picture in future presentations – how fee collections fit in with appropriated funds, partnerships, volunteer hours, and

grants.

Motion: Move to accept proposed increases for standard and expanded amenity recreation fees.

Vote: Unanimous (Group 1 = 5; Group 2 = 2; Group 3 = 3)

Topic: Ochoco National Forest

Presenter: Cathy Lund (FS)

Site: Cold Springs Guard Station, Lookout Mountain Ranger District

Summary of Presentation:

- Niche: “at the edge of solitude.” This includes settings, special places, and values in your back yard and in the back 40.
- The Guard Station entered the rental program in 1996 at \$50/night and has never been increased.
- The cabin affords a wide range of amenities including running water, 2 bathrooms, a refrigerator, and sleeps 6-8 people. It is rented seasonally with an occupancy rate of 90%, approximately from mid-May to mid October.
- Improvements and upgrades are planned, i.e. replace galvanized plumbing with PVC.
- With fee increase, expected annual revenue will go from \$6,250 to \$9,375.
- A feasibility study was done but it was hard to find anything similar. The study did recommend \$90/night but the Forest felt this was too big a jump. Fee demo dollars will continue to subsidize the shortfall.
- Public comments support an increase if maintenance is kept up.

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- There was some concern that the agency’s proposal was not consistent with the market analysis and that there are areas that can be subsidized other areas that can not. It was explained that the Feasibility study based on other cabins in area including private, concessionaire, and state park.
- Someone commented that cost comparisons should not be taken as gospel. There was a question regarding meeting Willamette’s goal of meeting 100% operating costs in recreation rentals.
- Inquiry about how often the cabin is rented and other rentals nearby.
- One of the committee members expressed support in raising fees to \$90/night rather than the \$75/night. Ramifications of voting against a proposal were discussed and what to do if the Committee has recommendations other than what the Agency proposes in special rentals. The DFO commented that if it appears that the Committee would vote to reject a proposal, he would prefer to withdraw proposal rather than have it rejected. Julie explained that the Committee could, however, recommend Agencies reconsider and allow come back with a revised proposal. Being able to do so would depend on how the proposal was presented to public in the first place.

Motion: Recommend fee increase to \$75/night.

Vote: Passed (Group 1 = 5; Group 2 = 2; Group 3 = 2 in favor, 1 opposed)

Topic: Siuslaw National Forest

Presenters: Mike Harvey (NF)

Site: Old Bark Road OHV Staging Area, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

Summary of Presentation:

- This is a new 42-unit OHV staging area currently under construction in the Horsfall Corridor. The site is day use only.
- Mike covered in his presentation the location, history of the legislation, 1994 management plan, public involvement, planning history, and open/closed OHV areas.
- The staging area is being constructed using a combination of funding from partners and recreation fee funds. Expectation of partners is that a fee will be charged in order to maintain the site.
- Showed typical vehicles and equipment used by riders.
- The current fee at Horsfall is \$5 per street legal vehicle that drives in or is being towed.
- Acceptance of Forest passes significantly reduces fees coming into site.

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- People having to pay fees at the staging area if they have paid to camp at the campground.
- Concern about the increased use this facility might incur on surrounding campgrounds.
- Clarification on number of sites/vehicles.
- 70% occupancy year round.
- Accounting for OR coast pass and other passes.
- Communicating/partnering with local chambers and lodging accommodations
- No fee access sites.
- Monitoring use of those staying in campground vs. day use area.

Motion: Approve, as presented, the \$5.00 standard amenity fee for each street legal vehicle.

Vote: Unanimous (Group 1 = 5; Group 2 = 2 ; Group 3 = 3)

Topic: Middle Fork Ranger District, Willamette National Forest

Presenters: Dani Pavoni (FS)

Sites: Timber Butte Lookout, Whitewater Trailhead, and Elk Lake Campground

Summary of Presentation:

- Niche is “follow the water” and focused in three major areas: scenic travel ways, interior forest, high cascades. The Forest sees over 1.5 million visitors/year.
- Presentation included: visitor profile; activities visitors participate in; visitor origin; market area; recreation site facility inventory; cabins in rental program; concessionaire run sites; ranking and evaluating sites; 5-year proposed program of work; and baseline condition in 2006.
- A proposed summary of work was presented along with the expected results.
- Summarized changes in the fee program over the next 5 years; recreation fee sites and programs; findings of recreation lodging feasibility study; demand factors; market demand; financial analysis indicators; and public involvement.
- Willamette wide operating costs and deferred maintenance is high.

Proposal for new fee sites:

Timber Butte Lookout – Summarized facilities, services, and setting. This site would go into the national reservation system. No public comments in opposition. Recommended fee is \$65/night.

Whitewater Trailhead – standard amenity, recreation passes honored, access to wilderness, currently adding facilities (toilet). Start up costs \$1,000. No public comments on this site. Recommended fee: \$5/day at the site

Elk Lake Campground – Has become a “hot spot” with vegetation damage and sanitation issues. Facilities are being installed for resource protection, health and safety, and visitor use and convenience. Start up costs \$1,000. Positive feedback, no opposition. Recommend fees: \$8 for single unit/night; \$16 for a double unit/night. Extra vehicle fee: \$5/vehicle/night.

Motion: To approve as proposed.

Vote: Unanimous (Group 1 = 5; Group 2 = 2; Group 3 = 3)

Topic: Middle Fork Ranger District, Willamette National Forest

Presenters: Dani Pavoni (FS)

Site: Harralson Horse Camp

Summary of Presentation:

- Site is popular for stock use.
- A new toilet has been added and garbage service is available.
- FS is working with horse users on site improvements, i.e. water.
- There is a perception that it is being changed from free to fee site.
- Proposal is to change from Recreation Pass day use fee to camping fee of \$10/site night, plus \$5/night for an extra vehicle.

Summary of Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- What is the average length of visitor use and how is that monitored?
- Deferred maintenance backlog.
- Difference between concessionaire run campgrounds fees vs. service run campgrounds
- Decrease in deferred maintenance costs.
- Off road use, damage, and prevention.
- Appearance that FS is just adding amenities at trailheads so they meet criteria for charging fees and recouping costs.
- Support of the volunteers that assisted in building cabin to put in fee program.

Motion: None. The proposal was withdrawn at this time. The Committee recommended that the Agency get back with primary user group and look at developing a cooperative plan.

Vote: N/A

Topic: Gifford Pinchot National Forest – Mt. Adams Ranger District
Presenters: Robin Rose & Julie Knudson (NF)
<p>Site: Forlorn Lakes, Trout Lake Creek, and Cultus Creek</p> <p>Summary of Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation provided background on forest, location, operations and maintenance costs, consequences of not changing fee structure, need for change, market analysis, fee proposal, results of fee increase, and proposed accomplishments. • One of the significant objectives is to increase FS and volunteer presence at the sites. • Public involvement included several phone calls and one letter complaining about the fee increase. • There has not been an extra vehicle fee in the past. • Market analysis indicates proposed fees are below or comparable. • Proposal for all three sites is to raise fees from \$5 to \$10/night (6 guests and 2 vehicles). \$20/night per double site (12 guests and 4 vehicles). \$5.00 extra vehicle – No extra vehicles at Forlorn but have free overflow parking. <p>Forlorn Lakes Campground – There are 25 camp sites (3 double sites) scattered around a series of small lakes. June – October use. Site has evolved from unmanaged dispersed to managed developed. Costs 6-700/month to maintain camp host. Currently \$5/night, recommendation \$10/night.</p> <p>Cultus Creek Campground – 50 campsites, 2 vault toilets, poplar camping during summer and fall huckleberry season. Currently \$5/night, recommendation \$10/night.</p> <p>Trout Lake Creek Campground – 17 campsites, a lot of local use, presence of camp host is valuable to deter drinking parties, enforcement rules and regulations, and provide security. Currently \$5/night, recommendation \$10/night.</p> <p>Motion: Accept proposal to increase fees.</p> <p>Comment: Fees are high in comparison to amenities, consider continuing to seek other funding.</p> <p>Vote: Unanimous (Group 1 = 5 ; Group 2 = 2; Group 3 = 3)</p>

Topic: Wrap Up - Critique
Presenters: Dennis Oliphant
<p>Comments/Questions on Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting went well. • Need process for providing formal meaningful feedback to agencies – uncomfortable with way Horse Camp issue was resolved. Julie explained the committee can make recommendations to the agencies but the process needs to be clarified. Dan reminded

them of purpose of the RAC which is to look at proposals, public sentiment, and vote accordingly. However, the Agencies are interested in and will to recommendations.

- Appreciate process but everyone needs to be aware that there will be times when we will have to make some unfavorable/hard decisions.
- Heard loud and clear that the agencies have a responsibility to report back to committee and the committee has the right to ask for that.
- Question regarding process other RAC's are following.
- Like to see what we do here makes a difference. We need to be careful about cost, effect, and gas prices.
- Would like more information on system of fees and would like to see the free sites continue.
- Question regarding level of detail in meeting notes. It was explained that at the last meeting there were two sets of notes. One was more detailed, but both went into the public record.
- Would like to see a summary of what happens with recommendations that come out of this committee.
- In early October Elizabeth Lunney needs to take maternity leave and will not be able to attend fall meeting. Becky Hope (alternate) will be attend the meeting as a guest and fill her in, possibly speaking during the public comment period.

Comments on Presentations:

- Less background, focus on project themselves.
- Limit presentation time.
- Include volunteer costs.
- Liked seeing what is going on across the individual Forests. It gave an overall sense of the plan and how fits into whole forest.

Next Meeting:

- Tentatively set for Thursday & Friday, October 18 & 19, 2007. Location to be determined.

Follow-Up Tasks:

Who	When	What
Jocelyn	Next meeting	Agency briefing on fee increases: what is allowable, the range, and incremental increases.
???		Send out summary of recommendations from committee and what happens with recommendations that come out of this committee.
Julie	Next meeting	Information on the process other RAC's are following.