

Secure Rural Schools Title II
Southern Arizona Resource Advisory Committee
September 29, 2022
9:00-11:00 Virtual

Welcome and Congratulations to RAC Chair Patti Caldwell

Welcome from Kerwin Dewberry

Request for Assistance for Recreation Fee increase at Coronado
Presentation (Regional Office: Ryan Means) 30 minute
Discussion (Patti)
Decision

Recruit New RAC members in category C (Patti) 15 minutes
Recruitment to target audience – state, county, & local elected officials, tribal representative,
and school representative. Details provided below agenda.

Approved Project Status (Dana) 20 minutes
Report out from survey to FS Program Contacts and Partner Organizations
Tucson Audubon Society’s saguaro restoration project funded in part by SRS, was highlighted on
[PBS Newshour](#)

2021 SRS New Funds (Patti and Dana) 30 minutes
Options: Fully fund projects underfunded in 2021, Utilize list of ranked projects from 2021 that
fell below the funding line, new Request for Proposal, postpone allocating funding until have
built up additional funds from 2022, 2023, etc.

Other Options:??
Details provided below agenda.
Discussion
Decision

Chair Signature: *Patti Caldwell*

Print Chair Name: Patti Caldwell

Date:10/27/22

NOTES and SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Participants: Caldwell Patti (chair), Backer, Dana (Coordinator), Franklin Kimberly; Girard Michele, Guiterman Eli; Hoerig Karl; Mouras Theodore; Strauss Alan; Suzanne Dhruv, Winfield Joe; Zander Ault, Ryan Means, Kerwin Dewberry (DFO), ASL Interpreter

Decisions were determined to be simple majority, not using categories to determine quorum.

REA Fee Proposal

Present need to RAC and determine if RAC will take on this assignment

Regional Rec Fee Manager for R3 – Ryan Means presentation

Did you know...

| Overview | FS | BLM |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Visits per year | 168 Million | 73 Million |
| Acres managed | 232 Million | 245 Million |
| Campsites/ Picnic sites | 122,000/ 11,000 | 19,452 |
| Miles of trails | 158,070 | 27,627 |

Largest source of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Largest acreage available for recreation.

Did you know...

The Forest Service has **200** units:

- 154 National Forests
- 20 National Grasslands
- 20 National Recreation Areas
- 6 National Monuments

REA Recreation Enhancement Act passed in 2004 and allowed for fee collection at sites meeting specific requirements

Authority for National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Forest Service (FS). Currently extended to Sept. 2023.

Permits these agencies to retain fees at developed recreation sites such as:

- campgrounds
- rental cabins
- day-use sites

Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) continued 1

Kinds of Fees Authorized for the FS & BLM:

- Standard Amenity Fees
- Expanded Amenity Fees
- Special Recreation Permits

Standard Amenity Fees:

Day-use fees where certain services and facilities must be in place at individual sites.

Requirements are:

- Permanent Toilet
- Permanent Trash
- Picnic Table
- Parking
- Security
- Interpretive Sign

Expanded Amenity Fees:

Fees for facilities or services that provide direct benefits to people.

Examples include:

- Developed campgrounds
- Highly developed boat launches
- Cabin rentals
- Hook-ups and dump stations
- Enhanced interpretive programming
- Transportation services
- Reservation services

Special Recreation Permits

Permit for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and where extra measures are needed for natural and cultural resource protection, the health and safety of visitors, to allocate capacity or disperse recreation use.

Examples include:

- Wilderness Areas
- Shooting ranges
- Specialized trails
- Motorized recreational vehicle use

A SRS RAC may make recommendations to move forward for the final approval by the Regional Forester on:

Implementing or eliminating standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation (special use) permit fee;

Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and

Implementing fee level changes.

Questions

Does the Recreation Enhancement Act process/information meet your needs to consider making recommendations?

If no, what else should we be considering?

Is this SRS RAC willing to consider review/recommendations of Forest Service fee proposals?

Schedule the next public meeting to review/recommendations of Forest Service fee proposal? timeline?

REA 101 training – 1 hour training by Ryan if RAC decides to take this on

Public Involvement and RACs role.

Reviewed the process of doing a fee proposal – internal forest->region-> Washington-> public announcement, scoping, comments and review process

How much of this will there be in the future? Kerwin – very little but some. Just had big fee structure implemented in 2020.

Public would be required for next meeting (Federal Register)

Time commitment by the committee – training (45min), time to review proposal. Training could be ahead of the meeting or as part of the public meeting (same meeting). Only the Coronado fee proposal for 2 cabins. Package incl proposal, public comment, economic analysis, review time 1 hour; meeting time 1-1.5 hours. Plus 30 minutes of opportunity for public comment.

Timeline of when this should all take place. CNF would like to implement these fees by summer 2023. Another meeting in winter 2023 would be appropriate. Comment period closes Sept 30, 2022.

RAC involvement is the last piece. Review items such as the public involvement sufficient, what were the comments, was there due diligence. Recommendations can and cannot make during the process. FS does have ability to charge a fee w/o public involvement. The forest gets to keep 90% of the fees collected on forest.

Site specifics for those particular projects would be provided at the next meeting if decide to take this on. Operating costs, who uses it – equity and accessibility, location, fee, etc. would all be in the package.

RAC Discussion – time commitment, distraction from primary duties, importance of doing this, precedent setting, is this within scope of duties (see charter)

Decision on whether or not to take on evaluating fee proposal:

Tied vote 5:5. No majority.

Dana to reply to Ryan

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RECRUITING RAC MEMBERS

The current RAC has 13 members and we need to recruit 2 additional members in Category C (there are currently two public-at-large reps and one tribal representative). I appreciate those of you who have been assisting with this and I ask that each of you please help out and ask your colleagues, civic minded friends, professional or special interest organization members, etc. to consider playing a role in shaping how tax payer dollars can be used to support local economies while improving overall watershed conditions.

Across all RACs, a civil rights analysis resulted in very poor diversity of membership which could impact future approval of the SRS Charter. Please reach out to those that make up the diversity of the communities around the various districts of Coronado National Forest.

Any interested individual can find more information here: [Advisory Committees | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#). The background check form (AD-755) and resume can be sent directly to me.

Recommendations:

Individual members assist with recruiting

Dana contact District Rangers and ask them to reach out to their constituents and volunteers.

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SRS PROJECT STATUS – Survey Results (September 2022)

- Twenty-six contacts for thirteen projects. Some project partners and FS program managers are the same and were specifically asked to respond to each project on a separate survey form.
- Total number of responses = 11 partners responded (85%) and 8 FS responses (62%)
- Every project had at least one response; six projects had both the partner and the PM respond.
- Responses for three projects said no agreement in place but two are pending in the GA system.
- FS contact for Mesa District Project “Building a future with saguaros” no agreement. Partner has reached out multiple times as has the RAC Coordinator. Last correspondence w you cc: June 27th, 2022. Next steps: Kerwin contacted Neil B (Forest supervisor)
- Three of the projects (out of 12 with executed agreements) are working on environmental compliance and one has not initiated it yet. Four projects (of 12) have cultural compliance in progress and one has not initiated it yet.
- Eight projects will be ready for field visit in March 2023 and two maybes.
- Where there was discrepancy b/w partner and FS response was whether more funding was needed and if compliance (environmental and cultural) was not needed (NA) or in progress (three situations).
- The following projects had “Yes” more funds could be used as a Partner response (three partners had no response to the survey:
 - Bust Fire Replanting Project
 - AZ Trail Rainwater harvesting
 - Wild Chile Botanical Area Native Vegetation Restoration
 - Connectivity of CNF through Watershed Restoration and Community Engagement (underfunded)
 - New Generation of Cottonwoods on Sonoita Creek
 - Santa Catalina Cobblestone WUI Invasive Trmt (underfunded)

Discussion: Situation with delay in getting agreements executed so work can begin. Delay caused hardship for partners. Partner costs have increased.

Decision: Provide more lead time when doing new projects and the associated agreements. Identify single FS person for contact. Partners bring the situation to the attention of DFO and RAC Coordinator.

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SRS TITLE II FUNDS

With the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Congress approved the Secure Rural Schools Charter through October 1, 2025. Within the BIL, Counties have the option to change their percent allocations between Titles I, II, and III. This will not impact the 2021 SRS payments which have already been distributed to the states. The Southern Arizona SRS funds by county are below. During our last meeting (October 2021), there was discussion on how the RAC would disseminate future funds but no final decision was made. As of now, all funds through 2023 must have projects initiated (RAC recommended) by 9/30/2025 and obligated by 9/30/2026 (this does not mean spent out but obligated to a partner through a contract or agreement).

2021 SRS payments Title II

| County | Amount |
|----------|-----------|
| Cochise | 66,123.19 |
| Maricopa | 34,743.65 |
| Pima | 21,897.56 |
| Pinal | 48,262.30 |

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Santa Cruz | 88,634.69 |
| | |
| Total | 259,661.39 |

Options of what to do with FY2021 funds: Fully fund projects underfunded in 2021, Utilize list of ranked projects from 2021 that fell below the funding line, new Request for Proposal, postpone allocating funding until have built up additional funds

Discussion: pros/cons of funding current projects, underfunded projects, new projects previously approved, or a new request for proposals. Holding funds until first set of projects further along in process, the RAC and FS have process further developed and FS can turn out agreements in a timelier fashion, or RAC has opportunity to learn and re-evaluate how they do business. Funding projects that request additional funds due to inflation, organizational changes. Understanding the need for additional funds. Efficiencies in the processes – RAC review, DFO approval, assigning PM, responsibility of PM and their supervisor, budget, agreements, compliance. Determination of county preference for title allocations (due September 30, 2022 to Washington Office), when will FY22 funds come (guessed sometime spring),

Decision:

Majority (6:3) preference is to move forward with assessing projects that did not receive full funding request and projects that need additional funds. Present that to committee and consider using FY21 funds. Need to include county funding and location of projects in need of funds.