

Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Special Meeting Minutes
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Monday, October 28th, 2024
12:00 pm

In attendance:

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

Grand County Commission representative- Evan Clapper

GCATT- Maddie Logowitz (ML)

BLM- Keri Nelson (KN). Jennifer Jones (JJ) entered at approximately 12:15 pm

Sand Flats- Andrea Brand (AB) Director and Matt Olding (MO) Recreation Tech.

Scott Escott- Grand County citizen and former Trail Mix member

Call to Order

General Business- Action Items

Discussion concerning the “Moab Field Office- Allowing for Class 1 E-Bike use on Designated Mountain Bike Trails” in relation to Sand Flats’ Raptor Route.

Vote to approve letter to Grand County Commission and the Moab BLM

KN- BLM has initiated a public scoping period concerning allowing E-bikes on non-motorized trails. Scope of project is to look at all mountain bike trails in the district and decide which ones we should allow for class 1 E-bikes and which ones should be excluded. Exceptions- BLM decided to exclude any trails that crossed USFS lands. Two trails fall within Wilderness Study Areas- Porcupine single track (at bottom of Whole Enchilada trail) and Hidden Valley trail. Public scoping utilizes comments to come up with alternatives. Draft EIS should be available by late spring. Process time should be one year and BLM should have a decision by October 2025. Class 1 E-Bikes, pedals, motor assist, max. speed 20 mph.

MP- Do you expect the USFS position will change in the future?

KN- Other USFS districts are looking into this, but don’t know about here.

MP- Is objective to provide single track experience on E-bikes?

KN- Yes and for people with disabilities too. Currently the Reasonable Modification Rehabilitation Act allows for people to make a request to ride E-bikes on non-motorized trails if they have a disability.

MP- The scope of what we are doing today is specific to Sand Flats?

AB- Yes, only Sand Flats that is scope of our directive.

MT- The letter seems thorough. I would like to approve letter as written. MT makes a motion, MK seconds it.

AB- Discussion?

MT- As stated in the letter, committee does not approve of use of class 1 E-bikes on the Raptor route.

EC- Can committee submit these comments directly? Is there a reason that this needs to go through the commission? I feel that this body is separate and has a more formal relationship with the BLM. Because SFRA is managing these trails it shouldn't be politicized. There is a Motorized Trail committee and Trail Mix. We might end up with a high-level decision that ends up vague. BLM- Do you recognize SFRA as a cooperating agency?

ML- GCATT helps take care of all non-motorized trails for the BLM and we have skin in the game too and we have been told that we have to go before the GC commission.

JJ- I would defer to county policy.

AB- My understanding is that we have to go through the commission as per our Resolution. The Resolution is quoted at the top of the letter.

EC- Highlight that this is a statement for SFRA.

AB- Two entities said yes and one said no.

EC- I think it should have a signed letter from SFRA and then the County Commission's letter too. I will try to carry this letter through, unedited addressed to the BLM. I will check with Quinn Hall too.

MT- If we need more meat in the letter, we could mention the Fruita, CO BLM Field office and how they chose 29 miles to open to E-bikes and kept many other miles of trails closed to E-bikes.

AB- The letter has a part at the end that I think should be removed based on the feedback I got in emails from the committee.

MT and MP- Don't mention anything outside of SFRA.

ML- As of right now, I am not making a stance on it after speaking with Quinn and him recommending that it just come from the Trail Mix committee.

AB- As a department head you could comment.

ML- Trail Mix didn't vote on this issue yet.

EC- I don't know if GCATT would weigh in on SFRA.

ML- I can clarify with Quinn.

AB- I will remove all of the last part of the letter.

MP- Paragraph that bothers me. I don't know that we need to change it but want to point it out. Paragraph that talks about number of miles. How many miles is enough? Don't know if that is the best argument. Sand Flats has an obligation to provide a unique non-motorized experience. This is strongest argument.

MT- The Raptor route is the only route that provides a trail without a motor on it.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens on zoom

SE- That was the RMP's goal, separate the use, that was why we worked so hard to create non-motorized trails.

MP- SFRA already offers a unique experience for E-bikers with the Slickrock bike trail.

Group makes some edits to letter to reflect this.

SE- BLM is already dealing with a user group that is willing to deface federal signs that say no E-Bikes and use non-motorized trails.

EC- Raptor route is a stand-alone trail now and even more so with the proposed Falcon Climb trail.

ES- Has group read my letter and Sharon's letter.

AB- Yes, I sent this to group last week. Committee members agree.

MT- Can we vote to approve the letter? Group decides to write a concluding paragraph.

EC- What might the findings from the BLM sound like?

KN and JJ- BLM will use the comments from scoping process to help form alternatives. This is the initial process and then next phase would be comments on the draft.

AB- Committee needs to vote. MT has made a motion to approve the letter. MK seconded it.

EC- In full disclosure, I have a SRP with the BLM and I am permitted for mountain biking along the Raptor route and so I will abstain.

AB- EC abstains and all others vote in favor. Thanks everyone.

Adjourn