

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Thursday, September 12th, 2024
3:08 pm**

In attendance:

SFRA Stewardship Committee members- Molly Taylor (MT), Mark Pope (MP) Mike Kelso, (MK), Tom Dillon (TD)
Grand County Commission representative- Evan Clapper (EC) via zoom
BLM- Katie Stevens (KS) via zoom
Sand Flats Director Andrea Brand (AB), and SFRA Recreation Technicians Eric Boxrud (EB) in person and Matt Olding (MO) via zoom.

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

MK makes a motion to approve the minutes, MT seconds, all vote in favor.

Agency Reports

Budget 2024

AB- To date SFRA is 14% up in revenue compared to 2023 due to fee increase. Doing well revenue wise, a little confused visitation wise. Spoke with Bill Stevens, BLM and he thinks SFRA visitation is similar to what BLM is seeing.

MP-Increase numbers by 14% until the end of the year and SFRA should bring in \$845-\$855,000 this year.

AB- We don't know if the 14% will continue. That \$965,000 for the budget is not what will be spent. I have more confidence moving forward since county has hired Finance officer Steve Vowles. For the last three years estimations for what SFRA will spend in wages and benefits and what SFRA will bring in revenue wise has been estimated too high. We will spend less but also bring in less in revenue than the estimates. I know that the estimates for wages and benefits have been off because they have been based on seasonals working more hours than they actually work. Balance sheet- \$598,515 so still close to the \$600,000 in savings. Discuss revenue. Expenditures sheet no real changes except in Capital Improvements because steel for toilets and shade structure and toilet tank will be purchased before December when work is slated to begin at the Hawk campground since BLM is now able to help us with this project. Contract for Professional Services will increase due to making of the new Night Sky video. Travel Council will pay for the editing. We will not spend as much as it shows in Salaries and Benefits.

Proposed Budget 2025

Salaries should be \$440,000 and not 473,000 as shown on budget sheet. However, COLA is not included.

MP- When will we know about COLA?

EC- Final budget approval will happen in mid-December.

AB- Goes down budget, most line items same as 2024. Increased travel by \$500 for training opportunities. Vehicle maintenance budget up a little since we have more vehicles now, 5 trucks, 3 UTVs. Utilities, GCATT will pay half of costs for city garbage, sewer and water. Contract Professional Services- budget for one to two videos next year. Can do one with this budget but if other entities help split costs, two educational videos could be produced.

Group discusses videos.

EC- Videos are a nice contribution. Science Moab has smaller mission, can't tap into user fees like we do. Maybe even make donations to Science Moab even. Videos help educate to get us ahead of some resource issues. We have a nice revenue stream for these videos. Comfortable with budget at \$20,000. I think having these videos on channel 6 TV is good advertising for SFRA, might help lessen crowds in the NPs and these videos educate visitors.

AB- Old Growth Forest video idea is a Science Moab idea. People don't appreciate our trees.

EC- Videos are cheaper than trying to run around and fix trees afterwards, not possible.

MP- Blackbrush is 1,000 years old.

AB- Second video subject is creatures, rodents, insects, etc. that come out at night in Moab area. Important to capture Tim Graham's vast and unique knowledge on this subject. Previous Ephemeral pools video with Tim Graham had 1.2 million views.

MP- Great thing is these videos don't become obsolete. Quality is outstanding. Pay once and benefit for years and years.

MT- Awesome that Ephemeral pools video had that many hits.

AB- Yes, the most of any video Mark has made and posted online. I will reach out for support from other entities. Lease payment vehicles, County Road department has us keep these vehicles for a year and then trades them in and we get equity so this year, will not spend \$24,000.

Accounting/ Bookkeeping account will be calculated by Clerk's office. The new amount for 2025 should be similar to 2024. Search and Rescue- Planning on giving them \$15,000 this year. We used 2022 data for their expenses, hours for labor, vehicles, ATVs, etc. and it was \$13,000 so we gave them \$15,000. AB looked at S&R expenses for 2023 and they were \$6,000.

MT- I think we should go back to \$10,000.

Group decides \$10,000 is reasonable.

EC- They don't make a ask, do they?

AB- We were just giving them \$10,000 for years. A few years ago, we were considering giving them more and Jim Webster said they were doing fine. Two years ago, Kevin Walker asked what the amount was based on. AB always looked at S&R statistics and added up how many happened at SFRA but never looked at the cost before. We calculated it out.

MP- Good basis.

AB- We need Search and Rescue up there.

EC- Organizations usually make a request to a funder. Maybe there is something else that would help them. Like having a trailer stored somewhere. I would like to know what their needs are.

Maybe we could increase Scholarship fund, because S&R has funding from taxes, etc.

Maybe we could donate to other community organizations other than them. Maybe Science Moab. Ride with Respect or other jeeping organizations. Maybe we give them \$1,000 or feed them breakfast on a trail project. Might be interesting to consider other impactful uses for those dollars. Late for this budget.

AB- Last year I went on a walk as part of the Science Moab and he was talking to Tim Graham about the need for research funding.

RAISE grant people don't realize the impact of fugitive dust. Maybe fund a scientific study that shows where dust from SFRA goes to. To help people reviewing these grants understand the impact that dust is. Ends up in Greeley, CO. Might strengthen application.

KS- USGS did a bunch of studies on dust around Arches NP. It would be great to get some data on SFRA. Contact dust study editor at USGS. Call and find out what you can for the application.

AB- Scholarship fund. Change the criteria, used to be if they worked 200 hours then get a scholarship for \$500 each.

MK- It is a good thing.

AB- We could up it to \$2,000. But maybe we need new criteria for it. I will speak with Jason Turner, SFRA.

MT- Why is Small Tools budgeted at zero?

AB- This actually falls under Supplies and Equipment. Once you have a line item it never goes away. It is not worth our time sorting out small tools separately. Printing and publishing- we have a good supply. We will not need to reprint main brochures next year. We may need to stamp them with new rating for Fins from 5 to 4. Smaller brochure will get updated and reprinted. AB goes down the list.

MP- Money carries over in connection to RAISE grant from this year to next year.

AB- Budgeted \$10,000 and we bought the two traffic counters, slow signs, can shut off at night but still be recording traffic speed. We can move them around. Can be in the cloud to look at data. Road department happy with the ones in the valley, but I got ones that are more vandalism proof if shot at, for example. Also new surveillance cameras for in the booth and approaching the booth. We already paid for the existing one that is looking at Hell's parking lot.

MT- A camera in the booth?

AB- Jason felt like time to do this, would protect us. NPS and state parks have had these for years. Clerk's office has cameras. Many GC county offices do. Campground host- Need to up this a little bit because BLM has raised their stipend. SFRA campground host is a BLM campground host, we pay stipend but BLM handles the insurance. Have had Fred Wilkinson as our campground host for a few years. Does a great job.

MP- Question about budget

AB- Relays budget process to group with the GC commission.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens to be heard

Presentation

Consent Agenda

General Business- Action Items

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meeting:

Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) Survey

AB- 98% of visitors were satisfied with visitor information, facilities management, interpretive education, staff service and programs related to SFRA and the Hell's Revenge trail. I wish it had been for all of SFRA but just Hell's Revenge was chosen.

KS- Congressionally mandated, have to choose one facility not all of a park. Very admiral that people thought that highly of Hell's Revenge trail.

Youth grant

AB- We did not get grant. Deadline was missed internally by the BLM and not SFRA.

KS- The person that was in charge of this took another job and so it was missed. Don't be discouraged, try again.

AB- Deadline may be June 2025, will ask Jen Jones.

RAISE grant 2024

AB- Waiting to hear from DOT on our rating and to set up a debriefing.

Proposed plan for changing Hawk Campground to parking and picnic area

AB- SFRA and the BLM will start working on this in late November. We will buy the steel and toilet vault.

Fairy Shrimp video

AB- Edited out the static due to windy interview. You heard static more on some devices than others. Just waiting for Tim Graham to give his final ok.

SFRA Dark sky programs and application

AB- Koye Willis from Dead Horse Point State Park will be holding a Scorpion walk on the Falcon Flow trail tonight. State is doing this with us for free. I have offered to pay for time and travel but they said they are fine. 14 people already signed up. Come join us. Moab Festival of Science will be happening at SFRA and Mark Finley will be filming the night sky video for us. Interviews are set up with the State and NPS night sky rangers and others. We are looking for a family to be in a staged star party too for the video.

MT- Todd Murdock and his two boys that might be interested.

Leave No Trace Gold Star application

AB- Close to giving everything to Anna Sprout on this and she will also do Leave No Trace training for my staff next week. One or two of SFRA staff need to have a higher level of training, myself and one staff member will participate in here training next spring with NPS.

Purchase of traffic counters with flashing slow sign approved

Discussed already.

New Topics

SFRA Annual report presented to Grand County (GC) Commission

AB- I presented to the commission and updates were in Moab Sun News.

Fee change for group campsites approved by GC Commission

AB- People can reserve group campsites six months ahead on Rec.gov. SFRA has the same amenities as the BLM and they have had their group sites at the \$80 rate since 2017. SFRA Stewardship Committee approved this range of fees as part of the fee change process a few years ago. GC commission approved the increase from \$60 to \$80 on August 20th. All reservations for 2025 are now \$80 per night.

BLM updates

KS- We will figure out the visitation due to the complications with the fee increase but I think article in the paper was correct. I can't think of anything going on that wasn't mentioned.

AB- I want to update you on help we received from BLM and Road dept. after the storm. The little dam in campground G was damaged and BLM came right up and fixed it along with two campsites with deep ruts that would have been unsafe to use. The Road Department came up and fixed big ruts in the Sand Flats Road just past Juniper campground early this week after blocking it off with signs and cones for the weekend.

KS- Falcon Climb proposal is moving along.

AB- Tyson said he was thinking 2026 for build.

KS- Archeologist's list is long. We will do a plant survey by new BLM botanist as well.

AB- Botanist should come up and map in the Biscuit root in campground G.

GC Commission updates

EC- I don't have anything other than what was mentioned unless any questions. None.

Adjourn