

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Thursday, December 12th, 2024
3:07 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)

BLM- Jennifer Jones (JJ)

Sand Flats Director Andrea Brand (AB), and SFRA Recreation Technicians Matt Olding (MO) via zoom.

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Minutes 9/12/24 and 10/28/24

EC makes a motion to approve the minutes from 9/12/24 and 10/28/24.

MK seconds, all vote in favor.

Agency Reports

Budget 2024

AB- Shows Graph- Revenue is up 7% over 2023 to date and of this 4% is in visitation and 3% is in fee revenue. EC- Does not include December. MT- Numbers very similar to last year. AB- Down some in September maybe because weather was so nice in the Colorado mountains and still hot in Moab.

AB- Balance sheet is not correct. \$614,000 carried over and have \$62,000 in interest which are not reflected here. Spent \$721,000 and brought in \$730,000.

MP- Are you understaffed part of the year?

AB- Seasonals don't work in the summer or winter just fill in a little bit. Could work up to 1200 hours, usually under 1080 though. MT- Larger line items but underspent by \$100,000.

AB- HR has been over allocating what they thought we would spend for wages because they were calculating the seasonal hours too high. Usually, seasonals work 2 or 3 days a week because they have other jobs.

AB- Cash in Combined Cash fund Clerk's office said they would update this quarterly for us.

MT- Why so different? AB- Well for the last three years or so HR and Budget officer was calculating these higher than they should have. I discussed this again as I do each year. I think working with Steven Vowles numbers will be more accurate going forward. Balance sheet expenditures- Overall Sand Flats is under budget for the year. Picking out some line items that are over- Vehicle maintenance up some because bought new tires for truck; Contract services up due to night sky video; uniforms up bought uniform sun hoodies for staff; insurance is up a little bit because I found out that shed contents were underinsured. Now that is fixed to cover our

stored brochures; new booth surveillance cameras brought inventories over; staff training up as we were able to participate in 4x4 training this year and director attended trail conference. Didn't fund the RAISE grant as SFRA did not get that. AB- 2024 revenue will be closer to \$800,000. MT and MP discuss projected revenue for 2025 and agree that with the increase to group campsite fee of at least \$20,000, total revenue projection of \$833,000 is OK. MP- Ballpark. AB- Estimated that we will spend \$400,000 in wages, but this is high and the benefits will end up lower too. Contract professional at \$20,000 and Search and Rescue at \$10,000 as we discussed last time.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens to be heard

Presentation

Consent Agenda

General Business- Action Items

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meeting:

Youth grant

BLM Youth grant. JJ- No funding available. Never seen this type of a budget shortfall. We will find ways that we can partner in terms of materials, supplies, labor and continue to support Sand Flats, support one another in the great work you do at Sand Flats. Continue to help with Force account, Lee's work, engineering, NEPA. Admit that we can't help with funding youth at this time. Need to brainstorm, look 5 years out, how we can help support SFRA. Highly value partnership. AB- Mainly this money would go to support youth intern. JJ- Happy that you can hire youth with collected revenues.

E-Bike letter for BLM update

AB- SFRA Stewardship E-bike letter went to the BLM as was written. Commission sent an overall letter summarizing comments from SFRA, Trail Mix and MTC as well.

JJ- We are working diligently to parse the public comments by the middle of January.

EC- Is decision local?

JJ- Pre-decision at this point. But decision will most likely be at local level.

RAISE grant 2024 Rating and Debrief

AB- I had the debrief meeting yesterday with Bill Jackson, Dan Stenta and man named Logan with DOT in Washington DC. We were highly recommended but at lower level than last year. Last time were in top 4 in Utah, and they chose 2 of these 4 applicants in 2023. Our application did not make it to that level this time. I did talk about scaling project back closer to application in 2023 and look for other funding for separated path. Bill and Dan want to keep it the way it is. Logan did not think this was a factor. We rated a 7 this time for Environmental impact of not doing this project. Katie Stevens told us about dust study done in the past that we should

add in to the application. Deadline now is January 30th, instead of February 28th. We have been asking for our ratings since August. Logan said that we did not reach the level where this rating sheet is sent out. Still confusing, how can we rate 7 out of 8 highly recommended but at a lower level? EC- How many chosen per state? AB- Only two in each state are chosen. MT- What can we add to help? AB- There were 1,040 applicants, 477 advanced to the level we advanced to. Of these 360 were highly rated. 148 were awarded across the nation. EC- Sounds like it is the competitiveness of it. AB- Yes. Logan said they were concerned with a few small things in the application. They said that we did not explain when the NEPA would be completed, but there is a table with these dates. They asked if the dates for the cost estimate was for 2024 costs. I think that should have been clear. We showed a contingency. They would not send us a follow up email with the rating and their concerns. Very frustrating this time around. EC- Who was involved? AB- Myself and Jones and DeMille and Dan Stenta looked it over. Elisa Martin from planning office and myself worked on the survey and she really did a good job with that. MP- How different was this year's application? AB- 20 million dollars this time, 12 million last time. Separate path along road instead of bike lanes. Prices have gone up. If we end up spending 22 million instead of 20 million, County has to make up the difference. We were projecting costs 2 to 4 years out. MP- Did we just price ourselves out of it? AB- I think so because the two projects in the state together were 15 million. I asked Logan that and he said not necessarily. But they have to choose two per state. AB and MT and MP- Scale it back to Falcon Flow with bike lanes, get other money for paths. AB- I will tell them the committee is in favor of this, back to 10 or 12 million again with 3 to 4 miles instead of 7 miles. EC- Project should go just to the Crack. AB- Days Crack is a big safety issue and they liked that the project would address this last time. Since 2015 I have wanted it to go to Pinyon trail but really Falcon Flow parking would be better now because drivers would have a place to turn around. MP and MT- Scale back cost, shorten it, add bike lane. MP- Once you get through the crack. Phase 1 is Falcon Flow parking lot. Phase 2 to USFS maybe. JJ- I like the phases. AB- BLM is in support of doing the NEPA for the project. AB- Straw poll vote? EC- Discussion is enough.

SFRA Dark Sky

Video trailer shown to group

EC- Great. MT- Lots of Arches in it. JJ- Arches and state parks. AB- We did have two rangers from state parks and one from NPS. Don Montoya, retired BLM archeologist and amateur astronomer shared an indigenous perspective on the night sky. EC- Where available? AB- On SFRA and Finley Holiday Facebook pages right now. And it will be done by spring.

Leave No Trace Gold Star application

AB- Chugging along on this. Will be working on it in January with Anna Sprout again. Anna gave my staff a Leave No Trace training last week. In the spring she plans to do a more intensive class for NPS and SFRA. I plan to attend and one or two of SFRA staff. SFRA staff need to have a higher level of training for the application.

Traffic counters/ slow sign installation

AB- They are in the office and GC road dept. plan to install them in late February. I didn't want them up through the winter as I was worried about vandalism.

Fairy Shrimp video

AB- Tim Graham OK'ed everything and Travel Council posted the video on their website last week. We will post ours maybe for Christmas on Facebook. I also recently posted Walt Dabney's Public Lands history video. JJ- Public lands video is cool and was funded by CNHA.

Update on work with BLM for parking/ picnic area and relocation of campsites

AB- This is Lee Palfreyman of BLM second week working up at SFRA. AB shows photos of level parking area, tiered into 3 parking areas. Photo of shade structure hole for footers. Photo of new buried toilet tank. AB- Toilets will have metal surround and shows photo of what toilet will look like when completed. Will be using old tank for other one.

Toilet contract 2025

Toilet contract will go out for bid in January. No change in per unit cost for cleaning or pumping.

New Topics

Updating ten kiosks and tree signs

AB- Jason is updating all maps on all kiosks so that they have Raptor route and also Staircase route on Hell's Revenge. We plan to have these to the prison by the end of the year. JJ- Has this been checked for color blindness? TD- There is a website that will tell you what this looks like for different types of color blindness. AB- I will ask Jason to do this. MO and JJ like the colors with the google earth image. New campground signs concerning tree damage to put in the ground near damaged trees. We have had signs on picnic tables and camp posts and on the camping permits for years. Dave Hoepper, BLM LE approved the signs. Sign for group sites that reiterates that site must be reserved and \$250 dollar fine for camping without a reservation. MT- Is there a calendar? AB- There is a QR code for rec.gov that will show them what is available. Dave Hoepper and Keri Nelson, BLM said their sites have calendars updated once a week. JJ- Something visual, the calendar is help. MT- At the entrance booths in California parks they have a sign that says show the ranger your wood regardless if you will have a fire or not. Suggests sign at the booth. Fines might not work. Make it a positive message. TD- Buying wood in town is cheaper than the fine. JJ- Business opportunity, automatic firewood dispenser. But instead, we have camp hosts that sell wood. AB- SFRA used to have wood by the booth, cheap but people would still just take it and not pay for it. MT- Put it in their mind that they need to have their own wood when you give them their camping permit, no wood collecting. MT- Do we want to still do art in the bathrooms? AB- Yes, bathrooms are not off the table just pushed to the back burner for now.

Reprinting plant book

AB- I think CNHA is going to sell SFRA plant book. Looks like for next spring.

Emery Telecom contract 2025 for videos on channel 6 TV

AB- SFRA will pay for three videos. Maddie Logowitz of GCATT does not have money to pay for any. I talked to Mick Soleta at Travel Council and am not sure if they can fund them. EC- Did you talk to Ben Alter at Economic Development? AB- Not yet. Mick wanted an advertising component. The Biking video pushes Moab, but the science ones maybe don't fit into their marketing scheme. EC- Talk to Ben, I think it fits with their department more.

Where does it play? AB- In Price and Monticello and Moab. EC- Playing in other counties, this will help. AB- Will do.

BLM updates

JJ- Relevant. E-Bike thing is a big deal. Tight budget reality is real deal. Upcoming administrative change will have a pendulum swing, we can't anticipate specifics. Discusses new cattle guard at Cliffhanger for motorized and non-motorized bike access. Great partnering between motorized and non-motorized. Want to show that BLM works with all user groups. No down time anymore. Any questions? EC- Year end visitation numbers? JJ- Bill Stevens is working on showing economic benefits to the local community for different activities on public lands in Grand County. Should have this ready soon. AB- Bill did update this for SFRA as part of the business plan. JJ- Overview huge appreciation for GCATT for Mud Springs trails system grant. Glad to have this in San Juan County. This was a part of the 2008 management plan. Big ticket item is the pathway on highway 128, contract was awarded. Within two years will be complete. 12.5 million dollars may not be enough. Application was from the BLM but UDOT and Grand County initially started this. EC- SFRA kiosk maps should show bike path along river or at least mention it in wording somewhere. JJ- Moab Guide Summit 2025 will be on March 13th. AB- I am in committee and will be speaking too. Glad you are mentioning this. JJ- Dovetail Trail consulting will be speaking there and at the MIC that evening and doing a field day. CNHA supported this. Continue to expand our interest and focus on universal accessibility to the best of our opportunities. CNHA also funded for a review and assessment of Goose Island campgrounds and connectivity to paved pathway and Horsethief campground and connectivity with associated dirt trails. Cool stuff. AB- Owner of Ancient Wayves will be a speaker as well as Tim Graham. JJ- All can attend. Also, in partnership with UDOT, who paved additional pull out for safety on 313 a few years ago, there is now a new informational sign about nearby rock art panel. And at the Skyway there is a new kiosk sign about Emmet Mays family and the Skyway history. We had a ribbon cutting ceremony for the sign with the May family and CNHA supported this too. Sego canyon also has new informational signs in place. AB will you do a brown bag lunch about SFRA for our office? AB- Sure. JJ- So many new folks at BLM that don't know the history of Sand Flats.

GC Commission updates

EC- Service Day with outfitters at Medieval Chamber to clean up graffiti. Loop road update I think they are done the 12th. I don't know how many folks are using SFs road. AB- We didn't see a whole bunch of folks this year. Crews stop work on December 11th and will return to work in February 2025. EC- Commission budget season. Not fully finalized but some battling of GCATT funding but I think it will stay funded at same level but not sure where cuts will be. Priority is to keep staff funded. EC- Asks committee who they might want to replace him and he can reach out to them. Group mentions recreation connection of Jacques and Brian. EC- This is an opportunity to weigh in. Jacques was interested before and may have more time now. AB- Anyone else expressed interest? EC- Brian may be interested. Also some folks have budget expertise, if there is a strength needed. MP- Brian would understand customer base. EC- there will be a bunch of vacancies to committees from people leaving. AB- We will miss you Evan and thank you for your service over the years. Group agrees.

Adjourn