

**Sand Flats Recreation Area (SFRA)
Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes
156 E 100 N and via zoom
Thursday, March 19th, 2026
3:00 pm**

In Attendance:

SFRA Stewardship Committee members- Molly Taylor (MT), Mark Pope (MP) Mike Kelso, (MK), Tom Dillon (TD)
Grand County Commission representative- Melodie McCandless (MM)
BLM- Jennifer Jones (JJ)
Sand Flats Director Andrea Brand (AB), SFRA Recreation Technicians Matt Millin (MMn) and via zoom Matt Olding (MO)

Call to Order 3:04 pm

Approval of Minutes

TM makes a motion to approve minutes from December 11th, 2025 meeting, MT seconds, AB discussion? All in favor- unanimous for all who vote.

Agency Reports

Budget Review 2025 end of year

AB- Shows Remit sheet with graph. End of year revenue \$805,644. Compare with December 31st end of year second page. The clerk's office is showing \$817,787. More is shown because of the sale of SFRA plant books under expense reimbursement. This is not included on SFRA's remit sheet. The Clerk's office shows more for Rec.gov then we do, it depends where you place the funds when they are received since it does not come in at the end of a month; it balances out. AB-rec.gov shows \$62,820 and Clerk's office shows \$69,560. They are also showing \$1,900 more in revenue which needs to be researched.

Budget Review 2026

AB- SFRA is up 4% over last year through February. MM- Fees were raised. AB- Was not separated out but not much revenue in camping those months. Current balance sheets show Cash in Combined Cash Fund as \$615,154 carry over from 2025. Fees accurate on page two balance sheets (Revenues with Comparison to Budget) through February. Last page Expenditures all in line with last year except for vehicle maintenance up because needed new Turbo for SFRA 2017 Ford truck (still under budget).

Presentation

Mark Pope- High Banking and Jeep work day at SFRA

MP- I have been concerned for a while about high banking primarily on Fins and Things 4x4 trail. All photos are taken on north side of Fins. Photos taken right after rain storm and first vehicle went on high bank. Unsightly and encourage people to go off trail. Safety issue because

vehicles go fast on high banks and continue to widen the trails. Riders are leaving the trail completely to drive on the high bank and avoid the rocks. High banking areas here are one right after the other. They are banking left and right and the trail is getting wider. Whatever we do doesn't have to be done everywhere and not all at once. There is hope, sustainable solutions. Shows photos of 3D trail. Wooden posts were added to edge of the bank March of 2023. New photo February 2026 no change. Posts 4 foot long each and buried one foot deep. Someone could knock them over with their hand but no one has over the last 3 years. We can ask MTC about recommendations, accept one of theirs or adopt one of own.

AB- History at SFRA- About a decade ago I worked with the road department for them to try an experiment and go out and knock down the high banks on the Fins and Things trail behind Fox campground. It was very accessible to them. Rd dept. knocked down the embankments and SFRA added signs. Within 3 months the high banks were all back. We also put T-posts and fencing in a few high bank places on the north trail but took them back out as it was unsafe. This simple idea of putting wooden posts seems like a good idea.

MK- Amount of time there and they are still up; easy to fix if knocked over.

MP- Really only need posts at the beginning of the curve to keep vehicles on the trail. Recommend 6-to-8-inch diameter posts 3 to 4 feet in the ground. No reason for cable.

TM- Not going to get broken, easy to put back in.

MK- They come around the corner and see them.

MMn- We have a lot more use at SFRA then 3D. Folks in UTVs want to go fast, for the rush. How do we know they won't smack them right away?

MP- We don't.

AB- SFRA we have reflective posts for highway, white and sturdy.

MM- Could we start with white?

MO- Folks want to avoid the rocks and so they go to the sides and high bank from existing trails making them deeper and wider.

MP- Posts on sides people are going to have to slow down. Couple posts space them.

AB- They will need reflectors. With Mini-X move sand around too. Speed limits are 15 mph.

MMn- I think the posts would be good.

JJ- Like a slalom course.

AB- We have high banking signs but not appropriate because they single out UTVs. Do we need to contact Red Rock 4 wheelers?

MK- Let them know what you are doing but it is fine, don't need permission. Pick 3 or 4 places and see how it works.

MMn- Maybe you need some ropes too, if we really want to funnel them onto the trail.

MP- Worried about posts with rope for motorcycles.

JJ- Do you want to do a media post or quietly do this.

AB- Quietly, we will get feedback.

MO- Simple things can work. Shows google earth photo on Hells where SFRA blocked off with a log and carsonites, lasted 8 years so far and no issues.

Citizens to be Heard

No citizens to be heard.

General Business- Action Items

Approval of BUILD grant letter

AB- Committee needs to ratify the first letter, already sent in as part of the grant process. The Stewardship Committee has been in support of improvements to the Sand Flats Road for many years. Read through the NOFO for the 2026 grant. Appeared odds not favorable for a Capital grant because not a shovel ready project. The grant is now called the BUILD grant, formerly RAISE grant. Director met with Sean Yates, Planning and Zoning, Cody McKinney, Road department, Melisa Jeffries, Economic Development and Jones and DeMille engineering and group agreed that the best course of action was to apply for a Planning and Design grant. Worked with Jones and DeMille to edit 2024 grant application and applied for 1.5-million-dollar grant. If the county is awarded the grant, we can create a shovel ready project design and apply for a BUILD Capital grant or a FLAP grant and others in the future. The GC Commission and the City of Moab approved letters of support.

MP- makes a motion to approve Build grant letter. MK seconded. All vote in favor.

Approval of letter to BLM concerning direction of travel for Hawks Glide and Eagle Eye trails.

AB- Did folks read the Trail Mix proposal? It got passed on March 10th. Here is a draft letter to Dave Pals at the BLM saying that the Stewardship Committee is in support of Trail Mix's letter.

MP- I hiked it and you are taking your life in your hands. Bikes come around corners at high speed. Proposal to go one way is a good thing.

AB- Corrected description error to east to west direction.

MT- Made a motion, seconded by TD. All vote in favor.

Discussion Items

Follow up from previous meetings

Festive tree event

AB- Reads statistics from Moab Office of Tourism (MOT) on Festive tree that was up from end of November through first week of January. Results of Broadcast and Digital PR efforts regarding the tree. 164 million total audience reach, 500,000 social impressions, 16 million broadcast and digital impressions, 148 million press release audience.

MT- Extreme, can't believe those numbers.

AB- I went up there three times and was alone. I received only positive feedback.

MT- I saw people enjoying it the times I was there. Was the bridge lighting part of this?

MM- Bridge lighting was not part of this, commission a little sad about that.

AB- I met an influencer/ journalist at the tree connected with Campstories and then a few days later Ali, MOT sent me a video with her speaking on a news show about the tree from San Antonio, TX. A few days later my sister-in-law sent me a video from Chicago about the tree and Moab and it was 5 minutes long. Ali said this was done in 16 major cities.

JJ- Ideal to pick an alternate location due to resource concerns. All happened before the permitting. Learned people really enjoyed it though.

AB- Originally MOT wanted people to visitors to hike into a remote location to view the tree. I brought up concerns about Search and Rescue in the winter. I suggested the Slickrock Bike trail as it is well known, close to town and has toilets and parking.

BLM Updates

JJ- AB please share Mark Finley's invoice with me for the Creatures of the Sand Dunes film for BLM to submit to CNHA. BLM sent reminders for outfitters to stop at the booth in and out as requested by SFRA. Big BLM updates- E- Bike stickers went out.

AB- All went up at SFRA on March 1st.

JJ- Busy season starting. Highway 128 project well underway through October 31st. MP please note that we have permission from Jeep legal for a sticker, working with Pipe Dream on this. It is supposed to have Moab Jeep on it along with Grand County, SFRA and BLM logos.

AB-I got permissions from Melisa Jeffries, PR for this.

JJ- Working with UDOT for Mud Springs access. Appreciate help from Grand County with this.

AB- Jeep work day. I have been working with Scott Brown on their reservation for Fox campground for 5 nights. Social media group will be there on March 30th.

JJ- Film permit will be coming. Tread lightly will be installing a kiosk at Kane Creek. BLM will be issuing a film permit for Lion's Back for one day with Jeep.

MP- 155 feet of fence will be added on north Fins for the Jeep work day.

JJ- Thanks for all your coordination on this project MP.

MP- The location is on a very wide section of trail. Bring many lanes down to 1.5 lanes and remove braids, SFRA staff will be there with extra T-post and signs. BLM, Jeep and Red Rock 4- Wheelers will be there too. This event happens on March 28th, the first day of Jeep Safari.

JJ leaves meeting at 3:53 pm.

MM- No other County updates for this group but I will remain the liaison to the GC commission. Jacques will stay with Trail Mix. Commission members try to give me all the health care boards because I was an EMT for 20 years. Want to stay with this too.

Discussion of Jail and courthouse and how SFRA and GCATT may have to move its office and yard if Jail expands. Other departments would be displaced temporarily to the tailings pile area, MOT, maintenance, planning and zoning, etc. This would be temporary and then departments would return. County is in negotiations with preschool and title company.

AB- I don't want Sand Flats office to be that far away. It would be very difficult for operations.

AB mentioned that SFRA used to be at corner of Sand Flats Road and Mill Creek Drive for many years and then old EMS (previously community building) and moved here in 2020. AB looked at many county properties back in 2016- racetrack, old shooting range, corner of Sand Flats road and Potato Salad Hill Road, Mosquito Abatement, maybe stay with EMS, this was the best option.

MT- Maybe move Sand Flats to animal shelter and they move? Move jail out to race track?

MM- Transporting inmates is an expense. Can't move jail to San Juan County. We are in the first phases of this, seeing what is possible and the costs, working with RP expert. I have looked at lots of lands for different reasons, housing, etc. I will update group next meeting.

AB- What we need is a visitor center at Slickrock parking lot and administrative center behind it.

MT- Put recycling and mosquito abatement out at the racetrack?

MP- Idea of a visitor center needs to be on the front burner. Group discusses idea.

MM leaves at 4 pm.

Old Growth Forest of Moab film

AB- Mark Finley just sent the film to me today. Shows film to group.

Group was pleased with film.

MP- Would like to set all the Red Rock 4 Wheelers down to see this.

Falcon Climb trail update

AB- Shows where Falcon Climb starts and where it currently ends at Juniper hiking trail. Most members have hiked this trail before built.

Porcupine 4x4 work update

Missed

Dinosaur Track Site Hell's Revenge 4x4 trail

AB- Project is complete. Shows photos of boulders moved away from the rim to protect dinosaur track site by BLM heavy equipment operator with BLM paleontologist Emily Lessner's oversight. Points out photos of boulders put in place on SITLA portion by contractor Dave Cozzens Construction. Boulders were taken from SFRA lower parking lot at Potato Salad Hill/ Sand Flats Road junction after some breaking up of large boulders there.

MT- Where is parking now?

AB- BLM heavy equipment operator put in new road and we made sure parking was adequate. Monitor for issues this spring.

MP- What about parking area past this?

AB- Some of it is fenced off because track area was more extensive than we thought. SITLA paid for contractor work on their property and reimbursed us for the boulders. I went out with the local paleontology club, the Gastonia club, Emily and other SFRA staff and we spent most of the day sweeping out all the tracks on the site. Emily was able to get a photographer from the BLM regional office in Denver to come and photograph all the tracks with photogrammetry (a 3D type of photography) the next day. That is what the BLM did in 2012 and that's why they were able to recreate that track that was stolen later. Noticing reverse track prompted AB to contact the BLM last year to get this area protected. Years ago we didn't even know tracks were there because vehicles driving on the rim hadn't exposed them yet. MT concurred.

MTC project Hell's Revenge trail

AB- MTC was really busy this spring working with us up at Sand Flats. MTC, SFRA staff and volunteers and MP were out there building this ramp. 20 bags of concrete were used. Thanks!

MTC Trail proposals BLM approved and implemented

AB- MTC, SFRA staff and volunteers worked on place on north Fins and Things that had multiple routes. Two routes were closed off and an easier route was marked and signed and some rock sections were shaved off a bit here. Another area not on the list but in need of repair and in the roadway was on South Fins. The group filled in a bad hole on the trail where it leaves Fox 5 campsite. Some rock at the top of the trail past this was shaved down so vehicles wouldn't scrape on the bottom. MO- SFRA UTV no longer scrapes here. MTC, SFRA marked Slick Fins and completed fencing. MP, MT and Zane Taylor volunteered. Thanks!

New Topics

Trail data

AB- Approximately 60,000 vehicles drive Hell's Revenge 4x4 trail annually and 40,000 vehicles travel the Fins and Things 4x4 trail annually. The Slickrock Bike trail had close to 50,000 riders

and hikers in the last 9 months of 2025 and Falcon Flow had 20,000 but this includes folks coming from the upper Raptor Route.

MO- Concern about Dinosaur track site. Will a hiking trail be built to it? A lot of people are finding the tracks on Google Earth and trying to drive their cars to it.

MT- There is deep sand on the Search and Rescue route.

AB- Master plan has been tabled by the Grand County Commission for now. Tyson Swasey, GCATT had proposed a bike/ hiking trail on the master plan to the dinosaur track site. Currently we do give out maps to folks in cars to go to other dinosaur track sites in Moab area.

MO- Draws a hiking trail on Google Earth from Slickrock Bike trail on rescue route or from back side of parking lot. Group agrees good idea.

MT- What about directing onto the Search and Rescue route from the parking lot.

AB- Can ask the BLM to allow us to designate the Search and Rescue route as a hiking trail to the dinosaur track site.

GC Commission updates above

BLM updates above

Adjourn