

**EASTERN REGION RECREATION
RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2007**

The second meeting of the Eastern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) convened at 8:00 am on Tuesday, September 18, 2007, at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Eight of the eleven members of the RRAC participated in person.

RRAC members in attendance: Randy Harden, Ronald Craig, Nicholas Manjerovic, John Schnorr, Dana Johnson, Rosemary Mape, JoDeen Lowe, and Ted Sutton. Christine Jourdain joined by conference phone.

USFS attendees included: Caroline Mitchell, Marcia Heymen, Cheryl Chatham, Melanie Fullman, and Rick Lowe.

Rosemary Mape, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:10 am and introduced Melanie Fullman, Chair for the Forest Service Eastern Region Fee Board.

Discussion Items:

- Minutes from the April, 2007 meeting was approved by the Chairperson. They are posted to the Eastern Region RRAC website (www.fs.fed.us/r9/rrac).
- Susan Arnold and Christine Jourdain have family medical emergencies that do not allow them to attend this meeting in person. Jo Jourdain will join by conference phone. Craig Schowalter was also unable to attend.
- All three have sent absentee votes to Chairperson Mape for project proposals that will be discussed and voted upon during the meeting.
- Potential dates for next year's meetings. Winter/Spring 2008 – February 26 seem to work for the group. Fall 2008 – October 7 works for the group. Location: Milwaukee for February. Is there interest in a field trip for the fall meeting? Yes, however the Committee is sensitive to the extra time commitment that a field trip would take, and the cost for traveling an extra day. Chatham and Heymen will take into consideration the Committee's discussion and check into arranging an optional field trip for the fall meeting that is time sensitive, cost effective, and would focus on future Committee objectives.
- For the February 2008 meeting, there may only be a couple of project proposals from the Forests in the Eastern Region. Would the Committee consider holding the meeting by teleconference if there are a limited number of fee proposals that need committee work? Committee response: Yes, especially considering the realities of winter travel, during that time of year. The Committee also recognizes the value of face-to-face meetings for better communication and relationship building for the group.
- Meeting format: is the group okay with working longer days, thus reducing the amount of time on travel, and away from home? Committee Response: Yes. Committee is committed to coming together with pre-work completed, making the best use of time and travel dollars, and reducing the amount of money the meetings will cost.
- Chairperson Mape reviewed with the Committee the recommendation process used in the first meeting to ensure it was effective. Fullman will present each

- proposal by Forest. Map will then open the floor for discussion. If there are dual forests, a call can be made on a speakerphone, which is available in the meeting room.
- Travel vouchers will be filed like they were for the first meeting. That process worked well for both the Committee and the FS staff who submit/approve the vouchers.
- A safety briefing and housekeeping items was covered by facilitator Rick Lowe. Restrooms are located down the hall. Fire exits are to the left. In the event that a fire alarm sounds, we will meet in the parking lot across the street. If you go out alone at night, be a safety conscious and alert to your surroundings.
- Lunch will be in the hotel café.
- A reminder of Committee Ground Rules: turn off cell phones, strive for balanced participation, retain a good pace and be aware of time management—breaks will be on time. The group will follow Federal Advisory Committee rules (FACA) rules.
- There will be a critique at the end of the Committee meeting. It will include a discussion of: 1) What did you like about the meeting and pre-work? 2) What do we need to do differently to be more effective? 3) Follow-up actions needed?

Map advised the group that the agenda was an outline. If there were topics or issues that needed to be addressed, time will be taken to discuss and resolve. Please don't feel rushed. The agenda has been developed to allow ample time for Committee discussion and understanding of each other's positions.

Agenda item: Public Involvement Activities: Designated Federal Official Cheryl Chatham shared comments received from the public and passed out copies of emails responding to input. Summary of public involvement updates included: 1) Jan Holt: access to public lands, specifically retaining access to undeveloped areas of public land, asked for clarification on the Recreation Enhancement Act, and how fees costs are determined for public land use; 2) Chris Horgan, Steward of the Sierra Club, responded to a letter he had received from the Western Slope No Fee Coalition. He wanted the Forest Service to "huge fee" implementation, wants the Forest Service to look at reducing overhead costs, asks why the FS compares public land facilities and associated fees with what private businesses have to offer; 3) The committee was informed about the unexpected death of Robert Funkhouser, President of the Western Slope No Fee Coalition. He will be succeeded by WSNFC Co-founder Kitty Benzar. 4) Bryan Toy, an individual with concerns about access to public land, fees, loss of public land to recreation in the future, etc.

A discussion took place regarding how best to share information from the public. The group agreed that if the nature of the public input was urgent, the Chairperson would share information with the Committee when it was received. If the correspondence was not urgent, and informational in nature, the Committee prefers that it be shared with them with the project proposal pre-work, which is provided two weeks prior to the meeting. Chatham will remain in contact with the Chairperson between meetings to ensure the information is shared in appropriate and agreed upon time frames.

Since the April 2007 meeting, John Schnorr had received a package from the United Four-wheel Drive Association regarding Forest Service feedemoprogram information and a survey conducted by the Association. Manjerovic made a motion that the committee respond to the Association acknowledging the package. Motion approved.

Chatham and Mapew will send a response. The notebook record of the Eastern Region RRAC and will be held will become part of the official in the Regional office in Milwaukee.

Agenda item: Region 9 Recreation Program: Chatham Region's recreation program (PowerPoint Presentation) and discussed personnel changes in the Eastern Regional Office. A decision has been made to fill in behind former Recreation Director Dave Dillard (who recently accepted a job in the Washington regional Forester Randy Moore has accepted a new job as the R5 Regional Forester for California, Hawaii, Guam and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

Questions/Comments:

- What is the difference between a Forester and a Ranger? In the Forest Service, a forester is a person who has a college degree in forest management and a Ranger is the responsible official managing day-to-day activities on a certain geographical area. For purposes of the RRAC discussions, a forester is the lead person responsible for management at the district level. FS staff will clarify these terms as the Committee works to become familiar with Agency terminology.
- Is hurricane damage paid out of forest or regional emergency funding can be made available to Forests to repair recreation areas following storm damage. In other cases, the Forest and the Region will work together to solve the needs as a result of storm damage.
- What is the percent of recreation budget out of national budget? It changes each year. Thus far, the Region does not have the 2008 budget figures and does not know what % that is.
- Does the FS expect to continue to increase fees as a way to address budget reductions? Is there any correlation between budget downsizing, and request to raise fees? Fees are part of the funding for recreation areas. Agency budget allocations, volunteers, partnerships, etc. are also part of the funding mix.

BREAK at 9:30

Marcia Heymen gave an update on the recommendations made at the April 2007 meeting: **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest** implemented the new fees last summer. Sites have new signs, etc. No change in use, no complaints. **Wayne National Forest** will be implementing their fee recommendations next season. The Wayne developed a communication plan, briefed user groups, the Congressional delegation and posted fee information on the Forest website and at trailheads. Plans are to use the money to pay for service contracts, purchase restrooms, equipment, increase security, and publish trail maps and brochures for the area.

Chatham gave an update on activities of the other RRACs across the United States.

R1, Northern Region (Montana, No. Dakota, No. Idaho, NW So. Dakota)
Want to be sure their Committee is representing the public interest, that they have a good understanding of the public's support and response to the proposals. They have a workload concern. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) RRAC's have a large workload. Making recreation fee recommendations is only one piece of their work. They advise public land management agencies on a variety of other topics like oil/gas leasing, land acquisitions, etc.

R2 Rocky Mountain Region (Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, a, So. Dakota, Wyo)
Region 2 is getting organized. Have yet to hold the first meeting. Have contacted other regions for some of their work products i.e. by-law s, project proposal forms, etc.

R3 SW Region (Arizona and New Mexico)
Same as in Region 1. Want to be sure they are truly representing the public interest and that they understand what the public has said through the public involvement process. The Arizona BLM RAC has identified a sub-committee to review recreation proposals before the project goes to the full RAC. This means that each project proposal goes before two committees (the Regional Fee Board and the subcommittee) before the full RAC discusses and takes action on the proposal.

R4 Intermountain Region (So. Idaho, Nevada, Utah and Western Wyo)
Very interested in what the public thinks about fee changes. Would prefer to see fees set at what they should be set at vs. incremental increases year after year. Concerned that the FIS is not charging what should be charged.

R5 Pacific SW Region (California, Hawaii, Guam)
Need to be organized. Have yet to hold their first meeting.

R6 Pacific NW Region (Oregon and Washington)
Interested in how Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA) relates to fee proposals. The region gave an overview on RFA to each Forest in May of this year. Committee has expressed a strong interest in being sure they are publicly responsible.

R8 Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, So. Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands.)
Will hold second meeting (and optional field trip) September 26-27.

Agenda item: Public Participation Opportunity. Chairperson Mape offered the public an opportunity for the public forum. No one from the public was present. The DFO, Chairperson nor anyone from the public had additional information to present to the committee regarding public input.

Agenda item: Project Proposal Overview: Melanie Fullman thanked the group for their time and commitment to the Region's recreation fee program and discussed the business like approach that the committee has brought to the process. Fullman then presented the individual Forest project proposals, which had been shared with the Committee through pre-work two weeks earlier.

Chairperson Mape informed the Committee that three Committee members who were unable to personally attend the meeting had reviewed the proposals received in the press, the three members had submitted work package. According to provisions in the by-law their votes to the committee in writing.

Proposal 1:
National Forest: Chippewa NF - Minnesota

Proposed Action: Increase fees at 8 campgrounds: Norway, Stony Point 20, On-E-Gum-E, Knutson Dam, Winnie, Cut Foot Horse Camp, East S eelye Bay, and Clubhouse Lake.

Current Fee :\$14-\$20 Proposed Fee :\$16-\$23

Questions/Concerns:

Manjerovic made a motion to recommend the proposal. Craig seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion approved unanimously.

Proposal 2:

National Forest :Hiawatha NF-Michigan

Proposed Action :Increase fee for two rustic log cabins (McKeever and Tom's Lake).

Current Fee :\$35 Proposed Fee :\$45

Questions/Concerns:

- *Craig: How were they built? Some were Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) structures, etc. Will the FS be building any more in the future? Probably not.*
- *Harden: How were comments from the public asked to come in? By Email, phone, etc.*

Johnson made a motion to recommend the proposal. Harden seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion approved unanimously.

Proposal 3:

National Forest :Hoosier NF-Indiana

Proposed Action :Increase fee at a multi-use trails system (horse riders and mountain bikers) - sixteen trails that provide 219 miles of multiple use trails for use by horse riders and mountain bikers.

Current Fee :\$3/day; \$25/annual pass Proposed Fee :\$5/day; \$35/annual pass

Questions/Concerns:

- *Johnson: Are these separate trails or shared? Shared. How are they maintained? Maintained primarily by FS. Hikers not charged; would it be fair to keep the fee at the current price and charge all users, including hikers?*
- *Craig - Use is primarily by horse users.*
- *Sutton: Is this a trailhead where people who access that trail from that area pay? Yes. Please define horse camp. Horse camps are recreation areas where people camp and bring or rent horses to ride on the trails.*
- *Craig: Some of the designated horse use trails had soil, so there is extra expense in maintaining some of the trail systems.*
- *Does the FS have any guidance for charging hikers on specialized trails in the Region? No. Are there any issues of fairness in not charging hikers to hike? No.*

Low discussed the difference of standard amenity fee, expanded amenity fee, and special recreation permit fee:

Standard Amenity Fee :Day-use fee where certain services and facilities must be in place at individual recreation sites or areas. Requirements are: permanent toilet, permanent trash removal, picnic table, parking, security, interpretive signs.

Expanded Amenity Fee: This allows fees to be charged for facilities or services that provided direct benefits to people. Specific amenities are required. This includes developed campgrounds, highly developed boat launches, cabin rentals, hook-ups, dump stations, transportation services, and reservation services.

Special Recreation Permit Fee: 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, etc.

After some discussion, the Committee decided to call the forest with the following questions (answers from the forest follow questions):

- Are mountain bikers charged to use the trail? Yes
 - Do hikers use these trails? Yes. However, the use by hikers dropped from 34% in 2002 to 16% in 2006, less than 10% of use is by mountain bikes. Majority of use is horseback riders.
 - How do you collect fees? Local vendors (stores, private campground owners, etc) sell the forest tags and passes.
 - Why are hikers not charged, but horse riders are charged? Trail impacts are greater from extensive horse use. The additional income is needed for maintaining the impacts from the horse, not from hikers. Fees for hikers only have not been implemented throughout this region.
 - How does the FS police and gain compliance for fees? Spot compliance on trail by a trail ranger. Estimated 90% compliance.
 - Are other trails charging for hiking? No for hiking, yes for biking and horses
 - Is the use mostly from horse owners or horse rental? Horse owners are the predominant user, not horse rentals.
 - Are the private horse camps paying for outfitter/guide fees? No, they are not providing outfitter or guide services. For the most part, the private horse camps provide rental horses for private campgrounds only, not rentals or guides on forest trails.
- Johnson: Could there be a graduated fee? A mountain biker does not tear up a trail like a horse. Fees should be horse-specific.
 - Forest would like to keep the fee structure uncomplicated for the vendors who sell the tags. It is also easier for the public to understand what the fee is if it is the same for horse use and mountain bike use.
 - More discussion took place regarding no charge, or a lesser charge for mountain biking.

Schnorr made a motion to accept as proposed. Manjerovic seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Harden, Craig, Manjerovic, Schnorr, and Jourdain for
Arnold, Schowalter by absentee ballot for
Johnson, Mape, JoDeen Lowe, Sutton – against
Motion failed due to lack of majority in Categories 2 and 3.

Schnorr – This discussion has turned into an philosophical debate. This fee has worked for 20 years with no complaints. Make sense to keep fee consistent for both user groups. Not to charge less to one group than the other group.

Harden—The proposal packages say that the mountain bike community was contacted and had supported the proposed fee increase.

JoDeen Lowe made a motion to reconsider the proposal as proposed by the forest. Schnorr seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Harden, Craig, Manjerovic, Schnorr, Jourdain, Mape, and JoDeen Lowe—for Johnson, Sutton—against Arnold, Schowalter by absentee ballot—for

Motion passes.

12:30 LUNCH-Return at 1:45pm.

Proposal 4:

National Forest: Monongahela NF-West Virginia

Proposed Action: Fee increase at 6 campgrounds in the south zone of the Forest. Big Rock, Blue Bend, Cranberry, Summit Lake, Tea Creek, and Lake Sherwood Area

Current Fee: \$7-\$14

Proposed Fee: \$10-\$16

Questions/Concerns:

Manjerovic made a motion to recommend, JoDeen Lowe seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal 5:

National Forest: Monongahela NF-West Virginia

Proposed Action: Fee increase at Group Campsite in the Lake Sherwood Recreation Area.

Current Fee: \$50

Proposed Fee: \$75

Questions/Concerns:

Harden made a motion to recommend, Sutton seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal 6:

National Forest: Monongahela NF-West Virginia

Proposed Action: Fee Increase at Picnic Shelter

Current Fee: \$10

Proposed Fee: \$25

Questions/Concerns:

- *Manjerovic: Who cleans up the trash? FS will come out and pick up.*
- *Johnson: Why is the public participation the same for each of the Monongahela proposals? Proposals were sent out together. Public scoping documents were sent out together. Committee would like to see more projects specific comments from the public participation-not the same response for each individual project. Would like more specifics from the Forests on this.*

Harden made a motion to recommend. Sutton seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal 7:

National Forest : Monongahela NF - West Virginia

Proposed Action : Increase fee at Middle Mountain Cabin Complex

Current Fee : \$35 (had been \$50, but was lowered due to fire; cabin has since been rebuilt)

Proposed Fee : \$75

Questions/Concerns:

Johnson made a motion to recommend. Manjerovic seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal 8:

National Forest : Ottawa NF - Michigan

Proposed Action : Increase fees at Black River Harbor for boat mooring

Term	Boat	Current	Proposed
Season-long (May-Oct.)	Deep draft	\$12/ft.	\$17/ft.
	Regular draft	\$11/ft.	\$16/ft.
Transient	0-19'	\$7/night	\$12/night
	20-29'	\$10/night	\$15/night
	30-39'	\$15/night	\$20/night
	40-49'	\$20/night	\$25/night
Nov. - April	All	\$0	\$0

Figure 1

Current Fee : \$12/\$11 Proposed Fee : \$17/\$16

Amount of proposed increase is \$5.00

Questions/Concerns:

- Manjerovic: Increases are still very inexpensive.
- Mape - how were these prices picked? They were compared to other mooring areas in vicinity. A list of 21 factors was developed to compare docking facilities.

Manjerovic made a motion, JoDeen Lowe seconded. All absentee votes were in favor of the proposal. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal9:

NationalForest :OttawaNF-Michigan

ProposedAction :Pavilionreservation.First-come,firstserveis nofee.Thisisanewfee andithastobepublishedintheFederalRegister forsixmonths.Thesixmonthswillnot enduntilFebruaryof2008.Ifcommitteewillappro veontheconditionthatthereareno complaintsfromthepublicasaresultoftheFeder alRegisternotice,theforestcango aheadandprepareforthenewfeetobeimplemented (signs,brochures,etc).

CurrentFee :n/a–newfeeforreservationonly.

ProposedFee :\$40

Questions/Concerns:

- *Mape–wouldliketoaskfordocumentationthatthe conditionsweremet.The forestwillberequiredtosendareportafterthe sixmonthsissup.Chathamwill verifythatthisisdoneandpassontocommittee.*

SchnormmadeaMotiontoapproveontheconditiont hatthereisnosignificantopposition whichwillbereportedbyChatham.Motionwassec oinded.Allabsenteevoteswerein favoroftheproposal.Motionpassedunanimously.

BREAKat2:30pm.

Proposal10:

NationalForest :SuperiorNF-Minnesota

ProposedAction :IncreasefeesatBoundaryWatersCanoeAreaWild erness

Visitor Type	Adult	Youth	Youth Seasonal	Adult Seasonal
Current Fee	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Proposed Fee	\$16.00	\$8.00	\$32.00	\$64.00
Amount Increase	\$6.00	\$3.00	\$12.00	\$24.00

Figure2

CurrentFee :\$5-\$10;\$20-\$40

ProposedFee :\$8-\$16;\$32-\$64

Questions/Concerns:

- *JoDeenLowe:Expressedconcernattheprojectingf orward5-10years. Expressedconcernthattheforestisrestrictingth emselvesonfeecollection opportunities.*
- *Sutton:Don'twanttoseethesameproposalscomeb acktotheCommitteeevery twoyearsforincreases.*

Hardenmadeamotiontorecommend,Johnsonseconded .Allabsenteevoteswerein favoroftheproposal.Motionpassedunanimously.

Chathamthankedthegroupfortheircommitmentto hepre-workandtheirroleasa Committeemember.Thenextstepintheprocessincl udes:draftingaletterwhichwillbe

sentotheRegionalForester,advisingthattheCommitteehadmadetheseproject proposalrecommendationsandseekingapprovalfrom theRegionforfee implementation.

IssuesforChathamto researchforthenextCommittee meetingwhichwillbeheldin February2008.

--Trails:(regionalguidanceoncharginghikers);

--Budgetdetailsforfiscalyear2008:

--Specificinputfrompublicparticipationforeachprojectproposal.

CommitteeSuggestionstotheRegionandtheFSWashingtonDCofficeinclude:

- Don'tuseanincreaseinfeestoaugmentbudget reductions/shortfalls.Usefees toaddressmaintenancebacklog,operationneeds,etc.Thereisaconcernfrom theCommitteethatAgencybudgetshortfallsorreductionswillresultinuserfees continuallybeingincreased.Thatisnottheintent ofREA,andtheCommittee doessupportthatconcept.

Johnson:Wouldliketodiscusstheabsenteevoteoptionandourindividualcommitment andresponsibilitytocommittee.Ifyouaregoingtobeamemberofthecommittee,you needtobe anactivememberandcommittopersonally attendingthemeetings.

Sutton:Discussioncontinuedastowhetheritwasaproxyvoteoranabsenteevote. Itwouldbeanabsenteevote.TheBy-lawsprovideforamembertosubmitanabsenteevote. Thereisadifference.Aproxyvotewouldauthorizeorallowone persontovoteforanotherperson.Essentially,thatwouldallowoneCommitteemember tohavetwovotes,whichwouldbeunfairandnotintheintentoftheCommitteeby-laws.

ChairpersonMape:Byallowingsomeoneelsetovoteforyou,inasense,theyare servingasanalternateandthat isnotallowedinthecharter.Thealternatesforour committee donotserveifweareabsent,theyserveifweareunableto fulfilltheterms of ourCommittee assignments.As membersofthisRRAC,weneedtomakethe commitmentto behere.

Preferenceforcommittee'svotinginvolvement:Inperson→byphone →absentee vote→removalfromRRACifpersistentproblem.

Dobylawsneedtobe amendedrelatedtoabsenteevotes?Decisionwasmadetoleave theby-lawsastheyare, andtablethediscussionforanothermeeting;theCommittee agreedthattheywillrevisititifbecomesaproblem.

Manjerovic: Istheresuchathingasacommittee-createdproposal?Canwecreateother proposals?

RickLowe(facilitator):No.AnyfeeproposalswouldneedtobedevelopedbytheForest Serviceandsharedinadvancewiththepublicinkeepingwithlegalandpolicy requirements.Thecommitteecansuggestslight modificationsstoexistingproposals, and iftheFSagreesto themodificationsthesecouldbeadopted.Anythingmorethanminor modificationswouldhavetogobackthroughtherequiredpublicinvolvementsteps.

Fullman: TheRegionalFeeboardviewsthiscommitteeasapartnership.Theopinionof theRRACisseenasveryvaluableinhelpingusmanageourRegionalRecreation programasitrelatestothefees,andpublicinvolvementreceivedthroughthisprocess.

Critique

What did you like?

- Pace was good.
- Balance of details in proposals and presentations good.
- Would like to see total revenue for change for each project proposal i.e. the percent of change these fees will represent? Sense of scale or magnitude of the change.
- More photographs of sites would be very helpful, both in the pre-work and the powerpoint presentations.

Committee observations & concerns on the current and future role of recreation fees

- It appears that National Forests are increasingly dependent on user fees for routine operations and maintenance, and not "special" projects or tasks.
- Fees should not supplant appropriations; that is, as fees are increased agency spending should not decrease a corresponding amount.
- Fees should not be viewed as a primary means of dealing with budget challenges. There are limits to public acceptance of new fees or increases of existing fees.
- Ensure that all applicable legal and policy guidelines are followed relating to if fees should be charged, and if so, the price.
- Loss of SCSEP, staffing, etc. is having a significant impact on the FS operations. Encourage DOL to reconsider the national program guidelines.

Manjerovic: I would like to say that I appreciate the work of our Chairperson and the relationship of our committee.

Motion to adjourn at 4:15pm.



I certify that each member of the Eastern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee has been given an opportunity to review and comment on the September 2007 meeting notes; and I officially approve the above notes.

Rosemary Mape
Eastern Region RRAC Chairperson

DATE

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