



## Western Oregon Resource Advisory Committee Notes – June 24, 2021



**Thursday, June 24, 2021**

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM; 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Registration link: [https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_8c5vzdhiSCCZsbqMLq23LQ](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_8c5vzdhiSCCZsbqMLq23LQ)

**9 AM Welcome, meeting called to order (Elizabeth Burghard, Designated Federal Officer)**

**Introductions (Kyle Sullivan)**

**Attendees:** Elizabeth Burghard, BLM Medford District Manager and Designated Federal Officer (DFO); Kyle Sullivan, Facilitator and Public Affairs Officer, BLM Medford District; Kaard Bombe, Tech Support; Jan Mathis, notetaker.

**BLM District Managers:** Paul Tigan, Acting DM NW OR; Heather Whitman (?), Roseburg; Steve Lydick, Coos Bay; Todd Forbes, Lakeview.

**SRS Title II Coordinators:** Pat Johnston, State Lead; Christina Beslin, Medford, Roseburg, Klamath Falls; Megan Harper, Coos Bay District and Public Affairs Officer; Stephanie Messerle, Coos Bay District

**RAC members:**

**Category 1:** Dean Finnerty, Chair; Dino Venti, Samara Phelps, Jack LeRoy, Lance Powlison

**Category 2:** Matt Swanson, Edwin Anderson, Stan Vejtasa, George McKinley, Ken McCall (absent)

**Category 3:** Mike Kennedy, Kevin Christiansen, Craig Pope, Lily Morgan, Co-Chair (absent),  
Bob Main (absent)

**Presenters:** Aaron Curtis, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Oregon/Washington State Office; Amanda Moore, Supervisory Rec Planner, and Brian Amstutz, Outdoor Rec Planner, NW OR District

**Overview of agenda and meeting process**

**Elizabeth Burghard**

Today, the RAC will be looking at recreation fee proposals from the NW OR District.

Aaron Curtis has joined us today from the OSO to do a review of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) which is the statute under which we charge recreation fees.

We have a quorum today. However, we won't have a quorum tomorrow, so we will not be meeting to look at the SRS Title II project proposals. Pat Johnston will be reaching out to the funding applicants to who were going to do their presentations tomorrow and let them know.

Want to thank all of the RAC members for the work you have done, you have met for 12 days since the RAC became active, great job!

**Review and Approval of the notes - May 17, 19 & 21, 2021**

**Dean Finnerty, Chair**

- **Samara Phelps moves to approve the notes from the last meeting, George McKinley seconds the motion.**



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**Vote by simple majority, no one opposes.**

**Motion passed.**

### **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)**

**Aaron Curtis**

The FLREA was a law passed in 2004 originally and is the federal land management agencies overall statutory authority to collect recreation fees on federal lands.

Three objectives from this presentation:

1. Quickly go over the BLM Oregon/Washington (OR/WA) recreation fee program.

- In fiscal year 2020, OR/WA BLM had about 2.2 million visitors. Of that, an estimated 1.1 million visitors came to recreation fee sites in areas located across the two states. Last year, we collected about 2 million dollars in revenue in recreation fees. Those fees remain at the district office that collected them. Then that revenue is reinvested into the recreation program.
- Our recreation program supports local economies of nearby communities. In fiscal year 2019, BLM Headquarters estimated that our recreation program in OR/WA directly supported almost 600 million dollars to local economies. That's something we are very proud of.
- The statewide picture vs. the details you will be hearing from the NW OR District proposal today. No two district recreation programs are created equally. They all have their own unique niches on where they are collecting fees, how much revenue they are generating, different levels of development, etc.

2. Summarize the FLREA key components on what we can and can't do with recreation fee collection.

Key statutory authority to collect rec fees.

- Allowed the creation of the interagency America the Beautiful pass which allows either free or discounted permits to BLM and U.S. Forest Service sites and free admission to National Parks.
- Establishes criteria where fees can and can't be collected.
- Establishes what we can and can't spend revenue on.
- What the RAC's role is in the process.
- Requires us to engage with the public prior to making any changes in our recreation fee programs.

3. The parts of the law that provide the RAC's specific roles and how we manage our fee program.

- Western Oregon RAC serves the statutory recreation RAC as well as the group's broader Western Oregon RAC responsibilities.

There are three primary types of rec fees:

- Standard amenity fees are typically day use fees for picnic areas, boat launches.



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- Expanded amenity fees typically campground fees.
- Special recreation permits, there are two primary types:
  - 1) For use of special areas that are established through our planning processes. There are only a handful of these areas in the state such as the Deschutes and Rogue River.
  - 2) Commercial, competitive, and organized group activities. Last year, we issued 440 of this type. Fees for these types of permits are established at the national level in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service.

We typically are not to the point where our fee programs are self-sufficient. We are also investing appropriated funding into our recreation fee program sites in most instances. The goal of our business planning process is to be as self-sufficient as possible, but still provide an affordable option for the public. Each district's recreation program is very unique. For some districts, there may be potential to become self-sufficient, but for other districts it will be a long-term challenge.

FLREA requires us to engage with the public prior to making any changes to the rec fee program. Whether we are establishing fees or changing existing fees. The law requires that we publish a notice in the local newspapers about proposed changes to our fee program. For any proposals for any new fee sites, we are required to publish a notice in the *Federal Register* six months in advance before charging the new fees.

Recommendations from the RAC is the final step prior to implementing any of the proposed changes, such as creating fees, eliminating fees, increasing fees, expanding the scope of where permits would be required, etc.

Recommendation on the proposal can only be made if it is approved by a majority of the committee. General public support for your recommendation on the fee proposal is recorded. We will provide the information on what the public has commented on the proposals.

If you have any further questions, Dave Boucher is the primary POC, however you are always welcome to contact Aaron as well.

*Q. What is the practice for using fee dollars for law enforcement (LE)? (Craig Pope)*

A. Each district decides how they will tackle that with various partners. A big part of our expenditures from revenue collected goes to internal labor which includes recreation staff, any interdisciplinary support staff, and BLM LE labor. In some instances, districts have cooperative agreements where we're financially supporting county sheriff departments to help provide law enforcement on BLM land.

*Comment: Concerned about challenges that all of us in government are facing from a law that was recently passed in Oregon, and a Boise case that made federal level, allowing people to occupy public lands.*



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### **Presentation of the NW OR District Fee Proposals**

**Paul Tigan, Amanda Moore, Brian Amstutz**

Intent from Paul Tigan, Acting DM, NW OR District

We have needed to address the fee collection system in NW OR for a very long time, so it's great to be here in front of the RAC to discuss the issues we are facing and our desire to come into alignment with the expectations from the public and the services we provide.

Some high notes:

The amount of visitation that we have coming to NW OR is immense. At least 1.5 million visitors a year come out to our rec sites. At least 75 percent of the state's population is within the boundaries of the NW OR District and people want to recreate close to home.

Recreation use is growing. Expectations about amenities and services is increasing as well. The burden is on our staff to meet those expectations. Trash, toilets, trails (maintenance), and trouble, all these cost money. We want to make sure we are providing a safe environment for people to recreate as well.

That is why we are here today, we want to make sure the agency has a consistent amount of funding to provide the amenities listed in FLREA. It has been over a decade since we have come before the RAC to help us address the amount of fees we are collecting across NW OR District.

Thank you on behalf of the whole District for your time.

Amanda:

Nestucca River was made a wild and scenic river by the Dingell Act a couple of years ago.

Rec program is managed at the NW OR District level.

Overall, we have 47 sites and serve 1.5 million visitors a year.

We are situated between the densely populated Willamette Valley, the coast and Cascade mountains. Our land provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities, communities, and amenities. Everything from developed campgrounds and day-use areas to scenic byways and trails, off-highway vehicle trails, designated wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, a full range of recreation is found within our district. Manage public lands to allow for a variety of dispersed uses, such as hunting, fishing, and dispersed camping.

Our presentation today will focus on our existing and proposed recreation fee sites. These are our most developed and actively managed recreation assets.

In order to establish or adjust recreation fees, the BLM is required to develop business plans.

Primary objectives:

- 1) Understand how recreation fees may be situated within a broader program context and to describe what we plan to achieve through the fee program. To do this we conduct a fee analysis on potential fee rates ultimately developing a fee proposal. We then solicit and respond to public feedback while also ensuring the proposed plans demonstrate compliance with our governing authority, such as FLREA.



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In the presentation we will be covering these aspects in this order:  
Basic background of our recreation program and business plan history.  
Quick virtual visit to each of the recreation sites we will be discussing.  
Go over the financial aspects of the program.  
Review both our operational costs and revenue.  
Discuss how we interpreted this data leading into our formal fee proposal.  
Financial projections and potential effects.  
Discussion on our partners, stakeholders, and public comments that we received in the plan.  
In the afternoon, we'll open up for feedback and questions in a public outreach for anyone who called in.

Want to highlight some of the key points:  
Establishment of two fee categories.  
The authorization to create site-regional and regional passes.  
Requirement for public participation and RAC involvement.

Our plan does include fee proposals for rec sites that were impacted by the Beachie Creek and Riverside Fires. The fees brought forth are representative of the opportunities that existed at these sites prior to the 2020 fires. That said, we couldn't implement any of the existing, pre-existing, or recommended fees until the after the required amenities are in-place. If through a public planning process, it's determined that any of those pre-existing or proposed amenities are no longer viable options, we wouldn't have these fees brought forward. By continuing on with fee proposals for these sites, we are attempting to be proactive and take advantage of the opportunity to receive your feedback and be ready to hit the ground running once the areas are safe and operational again.

Brian:

This business plan is a little different than what you would normally see. One reason is its scope. Most BLM districts would cover one or two sites in a field office, this one covers 21 recreation sites.

We will be looking at the 21 fee site locations which includes 13 existing fee sites and eight new proposed fee locations.

- Day use sites: Of the 10 sites in the plan, six of these sites are in conjunction with a campground. Shotgun Creek co-exists with a specialized group facility. Fall Creek, Sandy Ridge, and Marmot are all free standing.
- Campgrounds: Each one is slightly different, but they all provide the required amenities and services. There are 14 campgrounds at the moment, we only have 12 that exist on the ground and there are two additional campgrounds that are proposed in the near future. We are seeking your approval to change camping fees at these sites once they become operational.
- Group facilities: These are primarily large shelters and gathering spaces suitable for family reunions, weddings, and youth organizations. Group facilities are typically purpose-built to meet specific needs and capacities, so you will see a wide variety of amenities at the various locations. These sites provide those unique specialized experiences provided for in FLREA.



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Overview of each site:

### Benton County:

Alsea Falls Campground, day use and trailhead site connected to the mountain bike network. Facilities are located along the south fork of the Alsea backcountry byway, about 27 miles SW of Corvallis. Day use and campground is very popular and highly visited recreation sites connected with non-motorized trail network leading folks to a waterfall and more extensive hiking and biking opportunities. Due to increased popularity of the campground, planning to transition five of the underutilized day use sites into primitive campsites which you'll see as part of our proposal.

Fall Creek mountain bike trailhead and day use site is part of our proposal. Includes all standard amenities and a bike hub with tools for small repair. The trail system has been developed and maintained in partnership with Team Dirt mountain bike association, who wrote a letter of support which you'll see later in our presentation. The campground contains the required majority of expanded amenities

### Lane County:

Clay Creek is a 10-acre camping and day use recreation facility located along the Siuslaw River in the foothills of the coast range about 40 miles west of Eugene. Popular for families while easy river access draws visitors interested in fishing and water play. Has 21 basic campsites, day use site with amenities and two group picnic shelters with capacity for up to 100 people per shelter. Additional amenities include a changing room, two-mile hiking trail, a natural play area that includes some manufactured boulders, and an amphitheater.

Whitaker Creek is about 10 miles from Clay Creek, it's a developed campground and day use recreation facility with the same river draw and campers. Has 31 basic campsites, day use facility with amenities, gazebo, foot bridge and boat ramp. Seasonal swimming opportunities, hiking trails, and watchable wildlife site where spawning salmon and trout can be observed, it's very popular with local school groups.

### Marion County

Fisherman's Bend is on 184 acres along the North Santiam River at the base of the Cascades about 30 miles from Salem. This site has been very popular for many years for the quality of the recreation sites and facilities available, river access and boat ramp. This site was heavily damaged in the Beachie Creek fire and the majority of the facilities were destroyed. Before the fire, the site provided a variety of campsites, group sites, partial hook-ups, a couple of cabins, flush toilets, showers, an RV dump station. It was the most developed site in the District. The day use area included amenities a few picnic shelters, nature center, interpretive and hiking trails. Since this site was damaged by the fire, we are working to remove all the hazard trees, hazmat work will follow, some of the larger structures will need to be repaired or removed prior before any public access. We are working to restore access to the day use area and boat ramp by the end of this summer. We will have a camp host on site during this transitional time.

### Little North Fork

Elk Horn Valley Campground was impacted by the fire. Formerly offered 23 basic campsites and five day use picnic sites.

Canyon Creek day use area provided picnic sites and opportunities for swimming and wading. It was impacted by the fire as well.



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Both of these sites will have cultural clearances before moving forward with tree removal and continued efforts to restore efforts.

### Clackamas County

The Molalla River recreation corridor spans across 13 miles of the Molalla River which was designated as wild and scenic by the Dingell Act. The area includes two campgrounds and an environmental education site (proposed for use as a group campsite), three developed day use sites, and a 25-mile non-motorized Molalla River shared trail system. There is also access through this corridor to the Table Rocks Wilderness area.

Three Bears and Cedar Grove campgrounds have 15 and 11 primitive walk-in campsites respectively. Both feature short trails to access the Molalla River with a camp host at Three Bears.

To expand the range of camping opportunities in the area, a new campground has been proposed near Pine Creek. It will include 14 campsites to accommodate RVs and camp trailers.

### Tillamook County

Nestucca River Corridor recreation sites includes four developed campgrounds along the Nestucca River back country byway. Dovre campground is the easternmost site, roughly 19 miles from Carlton while Alder Glen is about 17 miles from Beaver. This is an area of critical environmental concern and very popular for camping, fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching.

Elk Bend, Alder Glen and Fan Creek campgrounds each have 11 basic campsites.

Dovre has 10 campsites and a shelter that was replaced with a shelter with a fireplace.

Camp hosts provide service at Fan Creek.

Elk Bend has a walk-in group site which is very popular.

All four campgrounds have river access with developed natural surface trails.

### Linn County

Quartzville Creek recreation corridor which includes the Yellowbottom Rec Site and Old Miners Meadow group site.

Situated in the SE part of the county approximately 31 miles from Sweet Home.

River corridor is cooperatively managed by the BLM, Linn County, U.S. Forest Service and Army Corps of Engineers, and other private entities in the area. It follows the 50-mile Quartzville River back country byway.

Yellowbottom is 13 acres with 22 basic campsites and a day use area and river access.

Gold Miners Meadow group site on two acres and can accommodate up to 50 people. This is a very popular spot, stays busy all summer.

### Clackamas County

Sandy River Basin recreation sites include Wildwood, Sandy Ridge Trailhead Day Use Area and Marmot in the NE part of the county.

Wildwood is about 16 miles east of Sandy

Sandy Ridge and Marmot are 13 and 9 miles from Sandy respectively.





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All three sites are within one hour's drive from Portland. Because of their high resource values, they are included in the Sandy River Outstanding Natural ACEC. In addition, Wildwood is within the Salmon Wild and Scenic River corridor.

Wildwood is a highly developed 553-acre day use site and includes two miles of scenic salmon river frontage in an area typical of the lower Cascades. It offers all standard amenities as well as full service heated restrooms, ball fields, natural and developed play areas, extensive hiking trail network and interpretive facilities which includes several miles of interpretive trails and the Cascade stream watch, an underwater fish viewing area. We are in the planning process in considering additional amenities including various camping options and RV dump station. You will see those in our proposal.

Sandy Ridge Trailhead Day Use Area serves as primary access for the Sandy Ridge trail system which ranks among the premiere mountain biking venues in the Pacific Northwest. Features all standard amenities and provides access to over 15 miles of mountain bike-specific flow trails. Ongoing plans include development of a formal event area, security improvement, additional parking, drinking water, changing rooms, wash stations, bike hubs.

Marmot recreation site is a day use site includes developed and undeveloped areas. All standard amenities are included. Plans for the site include installation of interpretive displays related to the 2008 decommissioning of the historic Marmot Dam, and restoration of natural processes in the area.

### Lane County

Sharps Creek is a 20-acre campground and day use recreation facility next to a beautiful swimming area, popular for gold panning, and there are some beautiful large rock outcrops in the foothills. Located about 18 miles SE of Cottage Grove. Has 11 basic campsites with standard amenities. Additional amenities shared amenities between the day use area and campground is drinking water, trash containers, and vault toilets.

Shotgun Creek rec site is a day use area has 17 developed acres along 260 acres of undeveloped land. Located about 16 miles NE of Springfield. The site's quality of facilities and mix of recreation opportunities makes it very popular with visitors in the local area. Has the standard amenities, two group picnic shelters that can accommodate 300 people per shelter, equipped with fireplaces, electricity, lights, sinks, and picnic tables. Other amenities include heated bathrooms, flush toilets, changing room, play areas, nice trails, and a seasonal swimming area.

What it takes to keep the recreation sites available and running for the public. Brian

Oregon's population is booming, we are now the thirteenth fastest growing state in the nation. Much of that growth is centered in the Willamette Valley. We're home to over 75 percent of Oregon's population and most outdoor recreation occurs within 60 minutes of a person's home. In that transitional space between all of these new backyards where you will find our recreational sites. Visitation to our sites is increasing every year.





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With more people, there can be more problems: Seeming unending supply of trash whether in a trash can or abandoned at a campsite, sewage and waste issues; vandalism, graffiti and illegal behavior from shooting signs to breaking our gates. Then there is the basic aging of infrastructure from use.

We have been spending about 2.2 million dollars per year with almost 80 percent spent on staff labor. We have between 15 to 20 seasonal and permanent park rangers, the primary caregivers for these sites and the public. They are supervised by four park managers who coordinate the priorities of equipment, vehicles, schedules, and logistics. They also manage arrangements with volunteer camp hosts who live at and oversee basic functions at most of these sites. We have youth corps crews who rotate through as needed, devoting days of manual labor to hazard trees and other thorny issues. Then we have law enforcement for those people problems that require an extra hand.

For the longer term recreation work, we ask a broader group of BLM resource specialists to help out, ie. engineers, heavy equipment operators, biologists, soil scientists, NEPA planners, and technical gurus.

In addition to our annual operations, we are continually reinvesting back into our recreation infrastructure. Replacing or redesigning these elements allows us to maintain public safety, improve environmental conditions, meet legal accessibility requirements and adapt to changing recreation patterns.

*Q. The cost of building materials has gone up in recent months. Do your budget account for increases in building materials? (Dean Finnerty)*

A. The budget numbers displayed in this presentation are from closeout from last fiscal year, but that has been a huge hurdle for us in attempting to rebuild our sites. Hopefully we can answer your question better once we get to the proposal and some of the ways we have looked into the projections. (Amanda)

Revenues:

For the program as a whole, our revenue-to-cost ratio is about 18 percent. For every five and a half dollars for every visitor, we receive about one dollar in return.

So there is a gap from the 2.1 million that is costs to operate our sites and \$415,000 that is returned in fee revenue.

The bridge between these two figures is overwhelming provided through congressional appropriations in our annual internal budget.

While we also compete with other programs on the westside for additional funds through a portion of receipts from the BLM timber program, our recreation sites are very dependent on congressional action followed by state and district allocations that are based on administrative priorities.

As a recreation fee program operating under FLREA, we have both the guidance and mechanisms to become more financially resilient and self sustainable and those concepts and objectives are found within the business planning process.

Many of our fee sites haven't been updated for more than two decades. They haven't been adjusted for inflation, if they had, a campsite fee of \$10 in 2000 would be valued at over \$15 in 2020. This is just for inflation, not including any of the site improvements or developments that we have made over this time. However, operating costs have kept pace with inflations with the cost of labor, equipment, and services.



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*Q. In terms of determining your fee increases. One of the methodologies was to look at what level of increase would be needed to cover your operating costs. Wouldn't that push fees too high for the public? (Matt Swanson)*

A. We would have to bump the fees up to cover 2.1 million from \$415,000, and we would be looking at increasing fees that would be unaffordable for just about everyone. (Brian)

*Q. When you were doing a comparison between other federal, state and local facilities, did you look at private recreational facilities? (Matt)*

A. Primarily those providers are targeting a different recreational market. When you look at the development and amenities that private providers have, such as a KOA campground, it wouldn't help with our analysis. (Brian)

*Q. Is there a fee structure of OHV at Shotgun? (Jack LeRoy)*

A. This proposal only covers the day use area at Shotgun or at Nestucca. We are managing both of our OHV areas successfully by competing for through OPRD grants which covers labor and materials. (Amanda)

### Summary:

We have looked at the primary business aspect of our recreation sites.

Identified a need for some adjustments and developed certain methods for improvement.

Outline how our plan complies with FLREA and bring forward some categories to help prepare the RAC for your recommendation.

- FLREA only provides authority for two fee types: Standard Amenity and Expanded Amenity.
- Our proposals is split between those two fee types.

Broke the two types into three sub-categories:

#### Standard Amenity (Day use areas)

- Modify fees at existing fee sites.
- Proposed new fee sites.
- An access pass for all day use areas.

#### Expanded Amenity (Campgrounds)

- Modification to the fees.
- New amenity fees for existing sites.
- Fees proposed for future sites: Molalla and Wildwood.

#### Standard Amenity site fee proposal:

- Alsea Falls and Shotgun Creek day use area, proposed to adjust fees to fair market value. \$5 per vehicle for proportional adjustment for large capacity vehicles.
- Apply the same day use fee structure for the following eight sites: Fall Creek, Sharps Creek, Clay, Whitaker, Yellowbottom, Fish Bend, Sandy Ridge, and Marmot.
- Proposed District-wide Annual Pass for \$30 or 12 volunteer hours. This would allow entry to all day use sites except Yaquina Head which operates under its own pass system.

Expanded Amenity sites. Existing campgrounds and group sites where we would like to adjust the existing fees to reflect the current market conditions, under our proposal:

- All primitive campsites would be \$15



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- Basic campsites would be \$20
- RV campsites to a max of \$36
- Array of group facilities, whether it's an outdoor kitchen at Wildwood, a day use shelter at Clay, or a group campsite at Gold Miners Meadow.
- Each location has its own variety of capacities and amenities, so each would have its own price.

Proposed Expanded Amenity new fee sites:

- This would allow us to transition the five of the day use sites at Alsea Falls to primitive campsites.
- Establish fees along at the two campgrounds along the Mollala River.
- Double campsite at Whitaker.
- Add new large group options at five locations.
- Two campgrounds that we are working to develop. If approved, we would be apply fees to recoup expenses as soon as the gates are open.
- Considering adding an RV dump station at Wildwood and are seeking approval for not only this location, but also any others we may want to retrofit in the near future.

There is a full comprehensive packet in the appendices of the business plan with a table with all the fees broken out line by line.

*Q. Will there be a public information campaign on why fees are increasing? (Dino Venti)*

A. We have had quite bit of involvement in developing this plan which has included placing signs at each site in 2016-2017, and again 2020, that we have put forward a request for new fees. Our hope was we could implement your recommendation as soon as next summer. That would give us an entire season to go back out to the public on-line and at the sites to get the information out. (Amanda)

*Q. Is there a plan to make it easier to pay the fee at trailheads and parking lots, maybe kiosks for electronic payments? Sometimes it's hard to find where to pay the fee. (Dino Venti)*

A. We are slowly transitioning many of our campgrounds and sites to an on-line system through recreation.gov while still recognizing there are those visitors who prefer to use cash. (Amanda)

Comment: I would like to commend you on creating a pathway for people who can't pay day use fees through hours of volunteer time. Encourage you to do something really bold in getting the word out to the public about that option. (Jack Leroy)

*Q. Do you think people may get confused they won't be able to use the pass at Yaquina Head? (Mike)*

A. At Little North Fork, we have Forest Service, BLM, and county parks all in a line and we are always getting each other's fee passes. We will need to make it very clear when people purchase the pass where it can be used. (Amanda)

Break for lunch. Reconvened.

### **Roll call of RAC members:**

**Category 1:** Dean Finnerty, Chair; Dino Venti, Samara Phelps, Jack LeRoy, Lance Powlison

**Category 2:** Matt Swanson, Edwin Anderson, Stan Vejtasa, George McKinley, Ken McCall (absent)



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**Category 3:** Mike Kennedy, Kevin Christiansen, Craig Pope, Lily Morgan, Co-Chair (absent),  
Bob Main (absent)

Amanda and Brian provided a review of partners and stakeholders, and their public comment period and comment period in this process.

### Q & A Period

Dean Finnerty thanked the staff and leadership for a fantastic report and the comprehensive way the presentation was put together.

*Q. Are we at a level that we can possibly start developing more recreation sites? (Dino Venti)*

A. Yes, we would look at our resource management plan which identified recreation management areas and extensive recreation management areas, we took a long view to where it may be good to develop further recreation areas. (Paul Tigan)

*Q. How long will these fee increases help maintain current service level? (Craig Pope)*

A. Our guidance calls for us to revisit our fees every five years which would be great. There are a couple of options, we can work through our deferred maintenance issues that were devastated by the fires to use the sites that we have. Another short-term option is to expand the shoulder seasons on some existing sites. We could start that next summer. There is a definite need to expand our season.

Comments: About the passes (page 22 on the proposal). There is a precedent as far as passes, for example license fees for ODFW. I see that you are going by calendar date as opposed to an annual pass. Would ask that you consider selling it annually. It's would give you additional revenue and you won't have to manage dates, just years, which is much easier to manage. Love the idea of volunteer hours for those who can't afford the pass, however have some concern about the number of hours, it would basically be \$2.50 an hour, so maybe consider reducing the number of hours to reflect more of a minimum wage. See that you are using the honor system for the volunteer hours, they get the pass first. However, tracking volunteer hours takes time away from staff. Consider that they do the volunteer hours upfront, then they get the pass. (Lance Powlison)

*Q. How confident are you that you will be able to backfill any deficit as it increases through other revenue streams such as treasury and timber dollars? (Matt Swanson)*

A. The lack of sustainable long-term funding which makes the fee site dollars under FLREA that more important to supplement our appropriated dollars. That steady stream of funding can help us with our deferred maintenance projects and ongoing operations. (Amanda)

*Q. Can the RAC recommend to build in a simplified index for costs so the increases would be incremental instead of big increase? (Stan Vejtasa)*

Dean: Would like to make a proposal: Does the RAC have authority either under our charter or FLREA to make a change to the proposal to address our concerns about financial shortcomings moving forward over the coming years?



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Elizabeth: So appreciative that so many of you have expressed concern about the fee increases not keeping up with operating costs. That would be a great recommendation for the RAC to make. Don't know if we have an index as Stan suggests. Perhaps we could add a periodic increase after a number of years.

Certainly, you could provide a recommendation that you do X, Y & Z. Either way it will go before the Secretary's office.

Brian: Under FLREA, the RAC could consider that. I ask you to consider making two recommendations. We have one proposal that has gone through the full suite of the public view and engagement. We have received comments on the business plan which we went over today. You could tie it to some kind of consumer price index or inflation, however we explore those opportunities, those haven't been reviewed by the public yet. That would cover a lot of weight not only for NW OR District, but also for the other four districts under this RAC.

*Q. Is the federal government required to continue to support these recreation sites, is there a statute that says a contribution must be made? (Craig Pope)*

A. All federal agencies receive appropriated dollars from treasury. Congress breaks the BLM's budget down into various types of money for each of our multiple use programs. Every year we are getting a pot of recreation dollars based on whatever Congress decides. There is also the Great American Outdoors Act which is a five-year funding stream and there is a lot of opportunity there. We are just getting into the first year of implementing the projects and in the process of figuring out how to support the recreation part. Encompasses the Federal Land Management's deferred maintenance needs, not only recreation, it's also roads and bridges, etc.

*Q. Why did you exclude OHV fees included in the proposal? (Dino Venti)*

A. There were a variety of sites that were not brought forward. The OHV area in Nestucca does not meet the FLREA requirements for standard amenities. Shotgun does have restrooms and kiosks, however both sites are fully funded with grants with ORPD, operations, labor and vehicles, etc.

*Q. In Clackamas County, I can see how this will help with a lot of needs and opportunities in our recreation community. Would like to see an analysis on the social and demographic impacts that the fee increases will have on the underprivileged. (Samara Phelps)*

A. We do rely on a recreation scarcity analysis that was completed in our FEIS where we discuss the need for different recreation activities and some of that is based on diversity. We tend to cover that at the recreation area management planning level when we are looking at the type of recreation activities we are bringing into a region instead of what we build the fees around. Appreciate any suggestions on how we can do better with that in the future.

Comment: Clarify expectations on indexing fees to price increases, I didn't expect that to be done on a yearly basis, that would be impractical. (Stan Vejtasa).

Elizabeth: The recreational portion specifically is codified in your charter. You could make agreements among yourselves with the notes. You could make a recommendation to the Secretary, or you can make a recommendation for the bylaws on what your focus is on as well.



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2:05 pm Public Comment Period

Kyle Sullivan

No public comments received.

Dean would like to move forward with the proposal as it stands.

- **Mike Kennedy motions to accept the staffs recommendation and move it forward to the Secretary. Jack LeRoy seconds the motion.**

**Vote:**

Cat 2: George-yes, Stan-yes; Ken (absent); Edwin-yes; Matt-yes

Cat 1: Jack-yes; Samara-yes; Dino-yes, Dean-yes, Lance-yes

Cat 3: Mike-yes; Kevin-yes; Craig-yes, Lily (absent); Bob (absent)

- **Motion passes.**

*Q. Is this review in our bylaws every five years? Seems we could review this more often. (Edwin)*

A. Elizabeth said we could propose review the recreation fees more often to the Secretary. (Dean)

Language from the charter:

“Upon the request of the DFO, the council may make recommendations regarding a standard amenity recreation fee or an expanded amenity recreation fee whenever the recommendations related to public use concerns in the state or region covered by the council regarding its implementation, the elimination of a fee or an expansion or limitation of the fee program.”

You can draft a letter documenting that you would like to recommend that we bring these before them more often.

Dean would like to do an annual review, so the agency won't find themselves in this situation again.

*Q. Do we have the ability to recommend alternates to the Secretary in case we don't have a quorum? (Dean)*

Comment: Stan said that earlier RACs had alternates.

*Q. Did we have anyone join in to make a public comment? (Dean)*

A. No (Kyle)

Dean would like to address the RACs concerns about shortcomings on these fees. Anyone have a motion?

- **Stan Vejtasa motions to that the RAC recommends that BLM examine the feasibility of a simplified method of indexing recreational fees to cover future cost increases. Craig Pope seconds the motion.**

Craig would like to amend Stan's proposal to add that the RAC would like the authority to look at the costs and revenues on a periodic basis.



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- **Stan Vejtasa approves the amended motion: The RAC recommends that BLM examine the feasibility of a simplified method of indexing recreational fees to cover future cost increases with a RAC overview on a periodic basis.**

Dean would like to amend the motion to add: The Secretary incorporates two alternates to serve on the RAC when there is no quorum.

Alternates can also be added to the letter. Our recommendations include alternatives, concerns over operational costs, and including proposing the RAC looks at costs and projections at a minimum on a periodic basis.

Elizabeth and Craig offered to help Dean with the letter.

- **Stan Vejtasa: Stan Vejtasa approves the amended motion: The RAC recommends that BLM examine the feasibility of a simplified method of indexing recreational fees to cover future cost increases with a RAC overview on a periodic basis. The Secretary incorporates two alternates to serve on the RAC when there is no quorum**

### **Vote:**

Cat 3: Craig-yes, Kevin-yes, Mike-yes, Lily (absent), Bob (absent)

Cat 1: Lance-yes, Dean-yes, Dino-yes, Samara-yes, Jack-yes

Cat 2- Matt-yes, Edwin-yes; Stan-yes, George-yes, Ken (absent)

- **Motion passes**

**Dean amends his amendment: Three alternatives be placed by the Interior Secretary on our RAC so we have coverage when we are missing quorum. Craig Pope seconds the motion.**

- **The RAC recommends that BLM examine the feasibility of a simplified method of indexing recreational fees to cover future cost increases with a RAC overview on a periodic basis. Three alternates be placed by the Interior Secretary on the RAC so we have coverage when we are missing quorum.**

### **Vote:**

Cat 1: Jack-yes, Samara-yes, Dino-yes, Dean-yes, Lance-yes

Cat 3: Craig-yes, Kevin-y, Mike-y, Lily (absent), Bob (absent)

Cat 2: George-yes, Stan-yes; Edwin-y, Matt-yes Ken (absent)

- **Motion passes**

Closeout since one of the RAC member is leaving early: Will be losing our quorum with some members rotating off. We are working on the nominations process and hope to have that addressed so we can meet in October of this year. This is the last day this body will be here today.





## Western Oregon Resource Advisory Committee Notes – June 24, 2021



Commissioner Pope: Since you will be leaving early today, wanted to thank you for your contributions and the insight you have brought this group. It has been a pleasure working with you.

Elizabeth: Because we will not have a quorum tomorrow, we will not be meeting, and we have notified the funding applicants. The funds will continue to rollover for future proposals. Would like to note that almost all of the applicants have received some funding, so hopefully they will be able to operate this year.

If you have any feedback on the materials that we sent or on the SRS, please feel free to share your feedback today. Or if you would like, you can follow up with Kyle, Pat or Elizabeth. We want to be responsive to the questions we had in May, and also make sure that the materials meet your expectations.

### **Roseburg District Recreation Fee update**

**Steve Lydick**

Roseburg District is stepping back from putting forward proposed modifications to some recreational site fee structure at this time. The Archie Creek fire significantly impacted multiple campgrounds, day use areas, group rental locations on the Roseburg District. These impacts combined with emerging recreation resource concerns has put emphasis on the need to complete recreation areas management plans and additional public outreach with a District-wide comprehensive business plan prior to any fee modification proposals. The Roseburg District looks forward to having the RAC involved as we complete additional outreach and planning for future recreational opportunities and would be looking to come before the RAC for a fee review in FY22. If RAC members have any questions or comments for the Roseburg recreation program, please contact Cheyne Rossbach at [crossbac@blm.gov](mailto:crossbac@blm.gov) or 541-464-3245.

### **Coos Bay District Recreation fee update**

**Steve Lydick**

Coos Bay District will be coming before the RAC in the near future with a business plan for a fee increase proposal for two of our existing sites: Sixes River and Edson Creek Campgrounds. We are in the process of developing the information at this time, however here are some details:

Sixes River Campground has 19 sites on 27 acres. Edson Creek has 27 sites and five group sites on 45 acres. We updated fees in the 2004-2005 cycle, so quite a bit of time has passed since our last fee update. Certainly, we would like to revisit fees more frequently in the future.

Similar to the NW OR District proposal, we would be looking to bring those fees in line with fair market value and comparable fees for sites with the same or similar amenities. We have a draft fee structure, but we need to get that out for public comment and develop the business plan further. We would like to make some improvements to those sites: some kiosk replacements, road and site resurfacing, and adding some disability accessible camping sites.

Q. Would you like to come back to provides an additional update at the next meeting in late October, early November? (Kyle)

A. We will be well into the process with developing the business plan at that time and would be more than happy to come back to give the RAC an update. (Steve)



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### Next Steps

Kyle Sullivan

BLM process for a RAC meeting, we need to publish a notice of the meeting in the *Federal Register*. We have been advised to submit the notice at least 90 days prior HQ to give them time to process and publish the notice. The notice would need to be published 30 days before the date of the meeting, so we are looking at mid-October.

Dean suggests we plan for early November for the meeting.

Here are the dates members terms will expire:

Lance Powlison – June 27, 2021

Dean Finnerty – Sept 24 2021

Dino Venti – May 17, 2022

Samara Phelps – May 17 2022

Jack LeRoy – August 26, 2022

Matt Swanson – Sept 24, 2021

Edwin Anderson – May 17, 2022

Ken McCall – May 17, 2022

Stan Vejtasa – August 26, 2021

George McKinley – August 26, 2021

Mike Kennedy – June 27, 2021

Bob Main – Sept 24, 2021

Kevin Christiansen – August 26, 2021

Lily Morgan – August 26, 2022

Craig Pope – June 27, 2021

### Feedback on the materials on SRS projects

Elizabeth Burghard

Dean: The materials were detailed and organized and it was easy to find projects, like to see the information on paper.

Matt: From the perspective of an applicant, if the BLM could go back to a format and not require all of the documentation from Grants.gov, just use the simplified RAC application. Ideally the RAC application would mirror the budget and project narrative that is required through Grants.gov. It takes a lot of time to put everything together. It would be good for the RAC to recognizes and respects the applicants to the greatest extent possible.

Stan: I really appreciated getting paper copies of the materials. The last notebook I received had a defective ring in it, but still prefer paper.



## Western Oregon Resource Advisory Committee Notes – June 24, 2021



### Closeout

Expect to see some mail from us, we have certificates for everyone recognizing your role in the Western Oregon RAC. I have really enjoyed getting to know everyone and working with you on the issues. This is the most time I have worked with a RAC in my career. it's been one of the highlights of my year.

### Remarks on behalf of Barry Bushue, State Director and Kathy Stangl, Associate State Director

Aspiration for the BLM in Oregon and Washington:

BLM is a valued and relevant partner within our communities in creating a sustainable future for our public lands in Oregon and Washington. We also hear from the public about a desire for more collaboration and meaningful public engagement depends on the effort not just on the agency side, but also on the public side that is put into that engagement. We wanted to thank you because your recommendations have contributed to the overall operational sustainability of our organization through the recommendations today for example, the natural and cultural resources sustainability through the Title 2 projects and also through collaboration. The Western Oregon RAC is the beacon of the BLM. You are the only advisory committee responsible in the BLM for the allocation of Secure Rural School Title 2 funding. As you know, one of the main purposes of Title 2 of the Secure Rural Schools Act is to improve collaborative relationships. We saw a number of projects that will improve peoples perceptions of public lands whether it is cleaning up illegal dumping, engaging the next generation of public land stewards through youth corps projects. The BLM is a small agency with a big mission and we can't do this alone. Our partnerships allow us to expand our reach and improve effective management and your efforts have supported existing partnerships and helping us to build bridges to continue partnerships. We have asked a lot of you this year:

- 1) Form up as a new council with a new charter over a broader geographic area than any of you had signed up for before.
- 2) Make recommendations, not just for current year Secure Rural Secure spending allocations, but also to address a multi-year backlog.
- 3) To actively participate in four multi-day meetings in eight months in order to address the business of the RAC and assist the BLM throughout Western Oregon, and to do all of that in a virtual environment which also has its challenges.

Thank you for your contributions and decisions over the last year. We were impressed with how much you were able to accomplish especially in a virtual environment. You evaluated approximately 145 projects and ultimately recommended funding for 139 projects, injecting a total of \$8,479,787 into projects all across Western Oregon counties. This funding will support youth employment, clean up trash on public lands, maintain treasured hiking and mountain biking trails, improve aquatic habitat, and reduce fire risk for our local communities. This would not have happened without your dedication both during meetings and outside of the meetings. We would like you to think a moment and celebrate all you were able to accomplish this year.

Congratulations everyone!

Elizabeth: We will keep moving forward with our next meeting and I hope to see you all in October.



## Western Oregon Resource Advisory Committee Notes – June 24, 2021



Dean: Before we sign off, I wanted to thank you, along with my colleagues on the RAC, for your efforts, to steer this very unwieldy ship with all the challenges early on. To Elizabeth, Kyle, Pat and Megan, you did any amazing job!

Kyle: It's a been a pleasure working with all of you and being your RAC coordinator.

Elizabeth: Also wanted to thank the following: Jan Mathis for taking the notes, SRS coordinators, Christina Beslin and Stephanie Messerle, Kaarde Bombe, Tech Support, Paul Tigan and your staff for putting together a great proposal for our meeting today, and all the BLM staff who helped support this meeting.

**Meeting adjourned.**