



## Western Oregon Resource Advisory Committee Meeting Notes



**May 12, 2022**

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM; 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

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

We have some new members today, thank you for joining us and welcome to the Western Oregon Resource Advisory Council (RAC)!

There are some members whose terms will be ending shortly after this meeting. Thank you for all you have done in the last year and a half and also for attending this meeting.

Today, we will be focusing on the recreation responsibilities that we have as a RAC. We have staff from the Coos Bay District who will share a fee proposal to vote on towards the end of the meeting.

We will do a brief Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Title II update.

For our newest members, recreation fees and SRS have been the bulk of our work as a RAC with the statutory responsibilities you have. We will get a brief update to prepare for future meetings for this calendar year.

We will have a public comment period (also statutory) which we have at every meeting.

### **Introductions (Kyle Sullivan)**

#### **Attendees:**

Elizabeth Burghard, BLM Medford District Manager and Designated Federal Officer (DFO); Kyle Sullivan, RAC Coordinator and Public Affairs Officer, BLM Medford District; Todd Forbes, DM Lakeview; Heather Whitman, DM Roseburg; Steve Lydick, DM Coos Bay; Megan Harper, Coos Bay Public Affairs Officer; John Harper, Coos Bay Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner; Denise McInturff, Coos Bay Outdoor Recreation Planner; Stephanie Messerle, Coos Bay District Fish Biologist and Title II Coordinator. Karen Schank, Acting DDM NW OR; Pat Johnston, NW OR Partnership Coordinator and Statewide Lead on SRS and Title II; Aaron Curtis, OSO Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, FLREA.

#### **RAC members:**

**Category 1:** Jack LeRoy, Bree Yednock, Dino Venti, Samara Phelps

**Category 2:** Ken McCall, Ed Anderson, Sue Martino, Sarah Rockwell

**Category 3:** Lily Morgan, Randy Smith, Tasha Livingstone, Mike Kennedy

We have three members in each of the three categories, so we have a quorum.

### **RAC Applications, Nomination Process, Expectations, and Timelines (Elizabeth)**

We have five RAC members whose terms are expiring in the next three months. Some have reapplied for positions, and for those who are moving on, we appreciate your work.



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We received applications around the beginning of April and they've been submitted to our Headquarters in Washington DC. From there, they go through various reviews and approvals until they arrive at the Secretary of the Interior's desk and then appointments are made.

It is a bit of a waiting game, some of you may have applied a few years ago, then all of a sudden you will receive a random letter saying you're on the RAC. We are hoping the appointments go more quickly this time around. It takes about 60 days to process applications.

We are looking at scheduling our next meeting in September under the assumption that we will have some additional appointments made by that day and will have a quorum.

Staggering appointments can be good in some ways, because there is some consistency with membership and helps maintain the momentum of this council. At the same time, it will be a challenge if we do not get appointments right away. We hope we get them before we lose any additional members.

### **Review and Approve Notes from Last Meeting (Elizabeth)**

- Notes still need to be reviewed by the RAC members from the last meeting.

### **Elect a Chair (Elizabeth)**

The role of the Chair for the Western Oregon RAC is to lead the discussions of this body. They work closely with Elizabeth (the DFO) to set up the agenda and provide leadership for the discussions between RAC members to have votes and move forward. They are also responsible for any recommendations that the RAC will be providing in writing to the Bureau.

- **No nominations made for this meeting.**

**Tasking for the group:** Please think about serving as a RAC Chair and we will solicit nominations before the next meeting.

### **Setting the next virtual meeting dates (Kyle)**

Group took a poll on the best dates for the Title II meetings:

Looking for one day meeting on September 19, 20, 21 or 22 to review the Title II binders and talk about how to look at project proposals.

- **Best date for the one-day meeting is September 22.**

Looking at a two-day meeting in October to review project proposals. In the past with Title II project proposals, we have found it's beneficial to allow the project proponents to present their projects, tell their story, and how the Title II funding fits into the overall picture.

- **Best date for the two-day meeting is October 11 and October 13.**



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### SRS Title II Project Process (Pat Johnston)

- We closed the application process on grants.gov on May 2, 2022, the announcement was out for over two months. We received 48 proposals.
- A technical review will be done at the Oregon State Office BLM from mid- to late-June to make sure the projects are eligible for funding.
- Approximately three to four weeks in advance of the RAC meeting, we will send out 3-ring binders with the proposals for the members to look at them.
- In August, we will hold a training for several hours, and with your binders in hand, we can talk about funding, how it's distributed, and other steps in the process.
- In October, we will have the RAC meeting for the discussion and recommendation process. Our intent is to move money to the recipients in October through December.

### Available SRS funding:

- Because legislation was reauthorized, any of the funds left on the table over the last number of years that were not allocated is still available.
- When we do allocation of funds, projects are funded basically on a county by county basis. When projects are submitted, one of the questions on the application is what county the project is in, so we know where to put the money.
- When we go to our meeting in October, we will be going county to county reviewing the projects, there will be a certain amount of funding available, we will have a discussion, and then make funding recommendations to our DFO.

### Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) (Aaron Curtis)

#### BLM OR/WA Recreation Program Overview

- 9.786 million visits in fiscal year 2021; 1.353 million visits to 80+ fee sites and areas.
- \$2.521 million of recreation fee revenue collected, all revenues remain at the District-level for recreation program priorities.
- BLM OR/WA Recreation Program directly supported \$517 million of economic output in local communities in FY2020.

#### FLREA Overview

- Provides federal agencies with the authority to collect recreation fees
- Created the interagency "*America the Beautiful Pass*"
- Establishes criteria on where recreation fees can be collected
- Identifies eligible and ineligible expenditures of recreation fee revenues
- Requires public outreach before outreach make changes to recreation fees
- Established Recreation RACs and defines their role



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### Types of Recreation Fees

1. Standard Amenity Fees:
  - Day-use fees for picnic areas and boat launches
2. Expanded Amenity Fees:
  - Campground fees
3. Special Recreation Permits:
  - Use of "Special Areas," such as the Deschutes and Rogue Rivers
  - Commercial, competitive, and organized group activities (nationally standardized fee rates for BLM and Forest Service) *These fees are established at the national level in sync with Forest Service, we don't bring those proposals to the recreation RACs.*

In order for us to require fees at those types of sites, the Act outlines the types of amenities, standard or expanded, and lays out the criteria on what types of amenities need to be provided to visitors in order for us to charge fees.

### Standard Amenity Fee Collection Criteria, must provide all of the following

- Designated developed parking
- A permanent toilet facility
- A permanent trash receptacle
- Interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk
- Picnic tables
- Security services

### Enhanced Amenity Fee Collection Criteria, must provide a majority of the following

- Tent or trailer spaces
- Picnic tables
- Drinking water
- Access roads
- The collection of the fee by an employee or agent of the Federal land management agency
- Reasonable visitor protection
- Refuse containers
- Toilet facilities
- Simple devices for containing a campfire

### When Fees Cannot Be Collected

- Entrance fees
- Standard amenity fees for people under 16
- Parking along roads and trails
- Overlooks and scenic pullouts
- Pass-through travel



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### Allowable Expenditures of Collected Fees

100 percent of collected revenues remain at the District level and these are the type of items that can be reinvested in:

- Visitor Services – volunteer support, interpretation, signs
- Habitat Restoration – fish & wildlife habitat, erosion control
- Repair, Maintenance & Facility Enhancement
- Visitor Reservation Services
- Law Enforcement related to public use
- Costs of Collection

### Public Outreach for Proposed Fees

There are some key procedural steps that agency needs to take before instituting any new or updated recreation fees:

- Public must have opportunity to participate before agencies establish new fees or change existing fees
- Advance notice must be published in local newspapers/publications near the fee site
- Notice must be published in the *Federal Register* 6 months in advance of establishing a new fee site

### BLM-Specific Fee Policy Requirements

- Fees are proposed in publicly-reviewed business plans
- Proposed fees should consider market-value comparisons from the public and private sectors
- Consider the effects of the proposed fees to low income and minority populations
- Provide the public with annual reports
- Something relatively new: We are developing annual reports specifically about our annual recreation fee program which outlines both past accomplishments from the previous year as well as our key priorities on what we will be doing with our collected fees for the upcoming year. Our first report was for FY2020 and we are working on finalizing the report for FY2021.

### Recreation RAC Duties

Make recommendations to the agencies on the following fee program components:

- Establishing or eliminating recreation fees
- Modifying existing fees
- Expanding or limiting the recreation fee programs

RAC recommendations may only be made if:

- It is approved by a majority of the Committee, and
- General public support for the recommendation has been documented

If you have any questions about the recreation program, please contact Dave Ballenger, OR/WA Recreation Program Lead at [dballenger@blm.gov](mailto:dballenger@blm.gov) or 503-808-6296.



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### **Fee Proposal from Coos Bay District (Steve Lydick, John Harper, Denise McInturff)**

Coos Bay District manages approximately 300,000 acres of public land in the Coast Range of southwestern Oregon within three counties: Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties.

There are several cities located within the Coos Bay District boundary, which extends from the Siuslaw River in the north to the California border in the south: Reedsport, Coos Bay/North Bend, Coquille, Myrtle Point, Bandon, Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings.

Many of the recreation sites and opportunities are within a 10 to 25-mile driving distance from one or more of these communities.

- 17 developed recreation sites: Bastendorff Beach, Blue Ridge, Cape Blanco Lighthouse, Dean Creek, Doerner Fir, East Shore, Edson Creek campground, Fawn Creek campground, Flores Lake, Hinsdale Garden, Loon Lake Recreation site, North Spit boat ramp, Park Creek, Sixes River campground, Smith River Falls campground, Storm Ranch at New River, Vincent Creek.
- 30 miles of trail, 10 miles in the the Blue Ridge trail system, 10 miles on the North Spit. The rest of the trails are in the other developed recreation sites.
- 1 wilderness area: Devils Staircase north of the Umpqua River.
- 2 wild and scenic river segments that were designated in the Dingell Act in 2019, Wasson in the north and Bald Mountain Creek in our southern resource area.
- 550,000 visitors average per year.

We have 5 fee sites:

- Edson Creek Campground
- Sixes River Campground
- Loon Lake and East Shore Campgrounds
- Cape Blanco Lighthouse
- \$109,000 average revenue per year. We use those fees at the sites they are collected from as much as possible.

Edson Creek and Sixes River Campgrounds are two popular campgrounds located in Curry County between Bandon and Port Orford.

### **Edson Creek Campground:**

- 27-site campground with 5 additional group sites, within 45 acres.
- Group sites can be reserved on the Recreation.gov website.
- The campground has a long history of use by local family groups as a gathering place for weddings, graduations, and family reunions.
- Day use site that allows campers easy access to fishing, swimming, and picnicking.
- Amenities: parking, tent/trailer spaces, permanent restroom facility, trash receptacle, drinking water, picnic tables, fire rings, fee collection, security service.
- Camp hosts are on duty which helps keep the campground clean, maintained, monitor camp hours, 10 pm nightly quiet hours, and sell firewood when it's permitted.



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### Sixes River Campground:

- The 19-site campground on 27 acres offers a secluded camp opportunity.
- In the 1850s, gold was discovered on the Sixes River. The small mining town is long gone but the area still attracts visitors to our day use sites trying their luck panning for gold.
- Amenities: parking, tent/trailer spaces, permanent restroom facility, trash receptacle, interpretive sign, picnic tables, fire rings, fee collection, security service.

### Why change fees now?

- Current Fees have been in place since 2004.
- Cost of goods, labor and services has steadily increased, purchasing power from recreation fees has decreased proportionately.
- Many of the amenities and facilities are over 25 years old – nearing end of life span and need repair or replacement for aesthetics, function, and safety.
- Increase in fees we are proposing would help address the cost of services, need for modernized infrastructure at both campgrounds while also providing additional revenue for special projects or resource protection to enhance the overall visitor experience.

### Fee determination

- We used the Fair Market Value analysis.
- The fair market value method determines the market price for goods, resources, or services based on competition in open markets.
- Twenty-six campgrounds, including Edson Creek and Sixes River, located in Coos, Curry, and Western Douglas Counties, were used to determine an average cost for services.
- Campgrounds included: Federal, State, County, and privately operated campgrounds.

### Fee proposal:

#### Edson Creek Campground

Single Campsite	\$16.00
Double Campsite	\$32.00
Group Campsite	\$40.00
Extra Vehicle	\$8.00
Firewood	\$6.00

#### Sixes River Campground

Day Use	\$6.00
Single Campsite	\$16.00
Extra Vehicle	\$8.00

### No new fees are being proposed, only adjustments to current fees.

Proposed fees would be comparable to other providers with similar services, amenities, and recreational opportunities.

While the majority of funding for the campgrounds come from appropriated funding, fee revenue is essential to maintain a quality visitor experience.



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### Objectives for use of fees receipts collected on campgrounds

#### Priorities:

- Health and safety concerns
- Annual operations and maintenance
- Site modernization and improvements
- Resource protection (sustainability of the natural based resource)
- Visitor services (ie. information and interpretation)
- Deferred maintenance of site and facilities

#### 11:30 AM Public Comment Period (Kyle Sullivan)

We did not have anyone register for the webinar and we don't have anyone on the attendee side of the meeting. Kyle did not receive any notification emails or phone calls prior to the meeting of people who wanted to submit a verbal comment during the meeting.

Kyle did get an email based on a *Federal Register Notice* completely unrelated to the fee proposal. It's focused on wild horse and burro, it's not unique or specific to western Oregon, however Kyle will forward that to the group for your consideration.

- **There were no public comments.**

#### Vote to approve the fee proposal:

- **Jack LeRoy motioned to approve the business plan that has been put forth by the Coos Bay District with the increases to the current fees.**
- **Several people in the group seconded the motion.**

#### Category 1:

Jack yes; Samara yes; Dino yes; Bree yes.

#### Category 2:

Ed yes; Ken yes; Sue yes; Sarah yes.

#### Category 3:

Mike yes; Tasha yes; Randy yes.

- **Eleven votes in favor with at least three votes in each category, the motion passes and the new business plan will be considered approved for Coos Bay District.**

Congratulations on your first vote with the new RAC members.

Congratulation to Coos Bay District, great job on the presentation.





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### Closing comments (Elizabeth)

Some themes that we will carry forward for the BLM.

- How are we getting the word out about the pass programs and the various options people have in light of the fees.
- What are the opportunities to create additional partnerships in order to develop programs to offset some of those costs.

A special thank you to Ken, Dino, Jack, Ed, Samara, whose terms are ending. Appreciate all of your contributions to the RAC and it has been really enjoyable working with you.

DRAFT