

**Boise District and Twin Falls District Bureau of Land
Management (BLM) Recreation Resource Advisory Council
Subcommittee (RRAC) Meeting Minutes *Draft*
Boise District Dispatch Office
February 5, 2009**

Attendees:

Twin Falls District (TFD) RRAC Members:

Samantha Anderson (RRAC Vice Chair), Category Three
Hank Mayland, Category Two
Yvette Tuell, Category Three
Denise Alexander, Category Two

Boise District Office (BD) RRAC Members:

John Robison, Category Two
Rick Just, Category Two
Nate Helm, Category Two
Grant Simonds (RRAC Chairperson)
Karen Ballard, Non RAC Member, State Tourism Administrator

TFD BLM: Bill Baker, Heather Tiel-Nelson, Beckie Wagoner, Chuck Denton

BD BLM: MJ Byrne, Aden Seidlitz

Boise National Forest (BNF) and Sawtooth National Forest (SNF): Jim Keller, Terry Clark, Jane Kollmeyer, Scott Nannenga, Mike Dettori, Sara Baldwin, Carol McCoy-Brown, Jennifer Hensiek, Liz Close, Jeff Alexander, Cecilia Seesholtz

Public: Fran Simmons, Ken Odem, Rich Vaughn, Greg Dickerson, and Tom Schwarz from Congressman Walt Minnick's office.

Notetaker: Andrea Cox, Sawtooth National Forest.

At 10:05 a.m., Aden Seidlitz, BD Manager called the meeting to order, and asked all present to introduce themselves. Seidlitz talked about the last RRAC meeting and the key item was the request to have the Forest Service line officers present – The BLM and RRAC appreciates their presence at this meeting. Aden Seidlitz said that Bill Baker and Heather Tiel-Nelson had drafted a meeting protocol in early summer but it had not yet been circulated, discussed and approved.

Bill Baker welcomed all then Jane Kollmeyer thanked the group for the staffing and effort put in by the RRAC members and others present.

The meeting was convened by Samantha Anderson and called to order at 10:11 a.m. A quorum was present Samantha asked for a motion to approve the last meeting's minutes.

Rick Just moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

John Robison seconded the motion.

Motion passed

Samantha thanked the public for attending then explained that the BLM RRAC members were commissioned and volunteered their time. Anderson explained that the RRAC members are also members of the public who try to be responsible and make good decisions for all groups.

MJ Byrne asked the group if there were any changes to the agenda – Rick and Samantha thought there would need to be more time for public comment – it was agreed to be flexible in the public comment time; however, Aden pointed out that we needed to stick as closely to the agenda as possible to get through all the presentations in a timely fashion. MJ stated that all members of the public present would have the opportunity to comment.

Boise National Forest Project Presentation

Jim Keller BNF, distributed a series of handouts to the RRAC members. The Handouts included the 2009 RRAC proposal summary for BNF and SNF, a packet of photographs of most of the sites, and a handout map of Campbell Creek Boat Ramp on Lake Cascade. Jim explained the history of this project: Idaho Parks & Recreation (IDPR) grant monies had been used for the original project, so IDPR must also approve the charging of a fee at Campbell Creek. Jim met with the IDPR board in December 2008 – the fee was not approved by the IDPR board at that time, the IDPR board has agreed to reconsider the fee at their next meeting. Jim stated that if the RRAC agreed to recommend a fee, he could share that with the IDPR board and not have to come back to the RRAC after the next meeting with IDPR. Jim handed out copies of letter endorsing the fee proposal from the Valley County Board of County Commissioners, a comment letter from Hannah and Todd Gordon, a comment letter from Scott Phillips, and a comment letter from Kitty Benzar. Jim talked about the reasons for the fee: facility is in serious need of repair, also shown in the facilities master plan which the BNF is trying to implement, the FS as an agency is struggling to meet deferred maintenance needs (the BNF has a backlog of deferred maintenance of \$1.3 million).

Discussion:

- **Samantha** - How many no-fee docks are available on Cascade Lake?
Response: Donnelley is non-fee, the ramp at French Creek is free but not improved, Rainbow Point has a no fee dock; the rest charge a fee but those 4-5 are state parks leased from Bureau of Reclamation. Rick Just said there is not a specific charge for the ramps but a day use fee of \$4.00 at the state parks.
- **John Robison** asked for details about the IDPR grant
Response: Jennifer Hensiek (BNF) has applied for a grant through IDPR and the waterways committee has verbally supported the grant and the charging of a fee.
- **Samantha** asked about the parking
Response: Jennifer - the parking area is sufficient, large, paved and in great shape. Jim said there are actually two paved parking lots. Carol McCoy- Brown (BNF) said that this is the only ADA accessible ramp on the lake.
- **John** - If the grant comes through, would it be for 2009?
Response: Carol said yes – she added that the fee proposal has been posted for the past year, publicly talked about and well supported.
- **John** - asked about swimming areas.

Response: Jennifer said fees would be used to provide picnic tables, etc. to create more of a destination. Carol stated that this area gets a lot of use and she gets a lot of questions about maintenance from the public.

- **John** - What amenities are provided?
Response: Jim referred John to a handout that listed the amenities.
- **Samantha** - . Are there plans to drill a well?
Response: Jennifer, not at this time, but there is a campground just up the road that offers water.
- **Samantha** – Is there much vandalism of the ramps/docks?
Response: Jennifer said there is a small amount of vandalism from local kids but nothing major.
- **Denise Alexander** - If no grant is received, what will happen?
Response: Jennifer and Carol said that the site would probably need to be closed due to public health and safety issues.
- **John** - Is an annual pass option available to frequent users?
Response: Jennifer said that it is a possibility, and she would need to further research it. There was general discussion about how to facilitate an annual pass – Jim thought it might be like a VIP pass from several years back with other agencies involved. Jennifer stated that it would probably take a year of charging fees to determine number of users.
- **Grant Simonds** – Is the ramp open right now?
Response: Jennifer - it was snowed in right now – Carol said that they pull the docks at the end of the season due to low water levels and to minimize damage, so season of use is mid April through December.
- **Samantha** - Are the docks rubber or wood?
Response: Jennifer replied that wooden docks would be best.
- **John** - How long would it be before fees were raised again?
Response: Jennifer, Carol, and Jim said they didn't see anything in the near future (5 years), Jim said that they really try not to increase fees.
- **Grant** - Is there any use info?
Response: Jennifer - With the docks in disrepair, numbers are down – but close to full numbers historically.
- **John** - asked about invasive species.
Response: Jennifer and Carol said there are signs already present and part of the grant would provide monies for an informational board.
- **Grant** – What is the capacity of the parking lot?
Response: Jennifer said easily 30 boat trailers could fit.
- **Grant** - Is information on this site posted?
Response: Jennifer - On the BNF webpage but it is in the process of being reworked, info is available in IDPR and BOR's pamphlets.
- **John** – Will you use a normal fee tube to collect fees?
Response: Jennifer - Yes and the host from the campground just to the north will help administer this site.
- **Yvette Tuell** - How was public outreach conducted?

Response: Jim Keller - Since this is part of the master facilities plan, it has been presented to the RRAC before, at least 2 newspaper articles have been published, plus posting at the site for over a year Carol said there were 3 articles in the local paper.

Public Comment on BNF Campbell Creek Proposed Fees started at?

Ken Odem: Nampa, Idaho. He has a second home near Campbell Creek. His family uses the ramp and dock a lot. He moved his family here 15 years ago from northern California due to the ease of starting a business and good quality of life. They left the fees behind in California where they were excessive. Ken watched a site similar to Campbell Creek in California evolve from a no fee site to \$10.00 per day in a 10 year span and then to a 1.00 per linear foot boat launch fee. Ken stated that Campbell Creek is a really nice site, he is not naïve to the fact there are costs associated with the upkeep. However, he feels the proposed \$5.00/launch fee is too much so proposed a \$2.00 access fee for all users, including use for docks and beach. In his opinion, most of the use, garbage, etc. is from the day users. He picks up a bag of trash every day that he's there. Rather than relying on boat users at \$5.00/day, he feels the money collected for entering the site, at \$2.00 each, would cover the costs and spread it over all the users. Ken stated his family takes care of the area like it is his own front yard, but most users are not locals. His preference is for no fees. He doesn't recall seeing any fee proposal posted last year. He estimates that he used the area 40 times in 2008. He found out about this meeting through the legal notices and is not confident that the public was informed of the fee proposals. Ken has used the restrooms twice in the last ten years. Most toilet use is from the day users. In summary, he supports a reasonable fee.

Samantha clarified that the \$5.00 per day is a day use fee, not a launch fee. Carol reiterated that the signs have been posted and reposted over the last couple years.

Fran Simmons is a resident of Boise and owns property near the Campbell Creek boat ramp. She uses the ramp almost daily in the summer, launching about 30 times a season, depending on the fishing report. She would be very much in favor of some kind of a seasonal pass as would a large number of people that use their boats multiple times in the summer. The local people she has spoken to agree that a seasonal pass is the way to go. If not, cost can become prohibitive to the residents – many users are retirees and on a limited income.

Greg Dickerson spoke as the President of Western Whitewater Association; His group is in general opposition to any fee. He considers fees to be double taxation. He understands that the federal government is “doing things within the budget” but by charging at recreation areas, we are putting the costs on just a few people. His opinion is that a fee for boat launching is really an access issue to use of free waters of the State of Idaho: it would be like the Forest Service (FS) charging a toll on roads to get to the back-country. Boaters use the reservoir to camp, recreate, etc. He talked about fees that were charged for another ramp site on the Salmon River corridor and has been in place for several years with no visual evidence that any improvements have been made.

Discussion:

Samantha asked if the money could be ear-marked to come back to this specific site? Carol stated the policy is that 85% must go back to the funding source. John asked if there were adjacent no-fee sites. Carol said there is a free site at French Creek, but is not developed and has no amenities

Fran said that she has launched off of the French Creek ramp, and by mid July, the water level is down so far you can't use it. She said that Campbell Creek is a premier site that needs to be maintained.

Grant asked if Carol and the public to comment on widening the boat ramps – Fran replied that if the docks were on the water and not sitting on the ramp itself, you could launch three at a time (if the users know how to back down). Ken said that most people don't know how to back down; he felt it was sufficiently wide as it is, if maintained properly. Carol said the ramp was designed to accommodate 3 vehicles at a time but, the docks have had to be put in over the ramp to minimize the damage to the docks, and that this year only one dock will be placed. The reason the docks have be anchored over the concrete ramps rather than over the rip rap is to try to minimize the damage. According to Carol, her hope is that the monies collected through fees will help with the maintenance.

John asked if the FS would consider a weekly fee. There was discussion about the State Parks passes that cost \$25.00/year. Jim said that Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLEA) does provide an annual pass option which is good for all day use fees, interagency with national parks at \$80.00/year.

Ken asked for clarification on his boat registration fee – Are those used in Cascade Lake? Rick said that some money does go back to the Lake. Jennifer said the Waterways Committee told her the same thing.

Rich Vaughn said that he is not one of the people that sent “hate mail”. He is, however, opposed to any fees, and agrees with Senator Crapo that public lands should be open to the public and that operations should come from taxes. His comment is to take money from the general appropriation fund; he anticipates that the FS would say that Congress doesn't give agencies enough money. His opinion is that the dollars are so heavily filtered there isn't much left by the time it gets to the ground level. He asked the RRAC members to be diligent about what amenities are provided – hoped everyone has read the regulations regarding the amenities that must be provided before a fee can be charged. Mr. Vaughn refereed to the Salmon River corridor that costs \$4.00-\$5.00 to be on the river; however, there are no amenities included but still must pay \$4.00 per day. Senator Crapo is a co-sponsor of a bill to do away with this FLREA and revert back to free public use. There are problems with that – franchise fees for outfitters – he goes sometimes with an outfitter or his own boat – when he goes with an outfitter, there is a 3% franchise fee. Then the outfitter asks if the \$4.00 use fee has been paid. Mr. Vaughn feels he is getting triple taxed and asks the RRAC members to be diligent. Mr. Vaughn talked about three court cases – Arizona woman takes a walk after work in a day use fee area, didn't pay her fees, was charged and case is still in litigation. Taylor Jones vs. Governor of Idaho - was just fishing and was ticketed for not paying a \$4.00 use fee – if he is under another paid entity (fishing license), fees don't apply. The judge in Arizona,

when he dismissed the ticket, advised the FS to abide by their own laws. Judge Boyle, in the Idaho case, said the defendant in front of him was correct when he stated the regulations are not law.

Samantha asked for additional questions or comments. There were none; the meeting broke for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Grant reconvened the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Sawtooth National Forest Project Presentation:

Terry Clark (SNF) and MJ handed out public comment e-mails and pictures of the SNRA cabin proposals. (Sawtooth campground photos had been distributed earlier in the day by Jim).

Fairfield Ranger District Proposals (New Fee Sites): Terry started with the proposal for a new fee at the Baumgartner/Kelley Creek Group campground. The fee would be charged only for groups of 100 people or more who choose to make a reservation to reserve the site. The rate would be \$100.00 per night for groups up to 100 people. The site has all the REA specified amenities except for drinking water, which is available at Baumgartner Campground, about ½ mile away. The site is essentially a new site developed because dispersed camping was causing sedimentation in the South Fork of the Boise River, so with a grant from IDPR, camp sites were developed. Since this project was funded by an IDPR grant, FS will need to go before IDPR to ask for permission to charge a fee. FS don't expect this to be an issue since we said we anticipated charging fees prior to receiving the grant. Mike Dettori, Fairfield District Ranger, emphasized that the only time there is a fee is if the area is reserved. If the site is not reserved and not being used, there is no fee for people to camp in the group area.

Willow Creek and Bear Creek transfer camps are also being proposed as new fees sites. Transfer camps are campgrounds that are developed in conjunction with trailheads. Terry clarified there is **NO FEE FOR TRAILHEAD USE**. Bear Creek does not have trash cans or drinking water – proposed fees are \$6.00. Willow Creek does not have trash cans or drinking water – proposed fees are \$6.00. Terry asked for questions.

Discussion:

- **Grant** - Is this site directly adjacent to the hot pools?
Response: Mike said that the site is downstream of the hot pools.
- **Samantha** - Asked if there were usually a lot of groups in that area.
Response: Mike said there is a lot of group use in the area and the Kelley Corral is just down the road (undeveloped but very heavily used by larger groups) – in effect “loved to death” so the district has been doing some work to make the recreation use more economically–friendly.
- **Samantha** - asked why \$6.00, rather than \$5.00, was proposed.
Response: Terry - replied that we are trying to cover our maintenance costs and be

consistent with other fees being charged on the districts. The proposed fee would just about cover typical maintenance costs.

- **Samantha** asked about our budget, where would money we are currently spending to maintain the sites go?

Response: Terry said the recreation budget is down about 15% this year. Deferred maintenance of the top 50% most-used sites is taking precedence.

- **Samantha** - is the fee money ear-marked for the originating location?

Response: Terry - the funds go back to the district they are collected on and are pooled to take care of all the developed recreation sites on the district. They can carry over from year-to-year.

- **John** asked what is in place to lessen the impact on vegetation.

Response: Mike said that the ground has been hardened and bathrooms and fire rings are in place.

- **John** stated that National Park Service fees are \$49-\$69.00 per night for groups. He asked for clarification whether the Baumgartner/Kelley Creek Group campground fee would only be in place when the site was reserved?

Response: Mike confirmed John's statement.

- **John** asked about dividing it into two sites?

Response: Mike said the set up wouldn't lend itself to two sites.

- **Denise** asked about the reservation process – would we post it as being reserved.

Response: Mike confirmed this.

- **John** – Asked what the fees are for other group sites?

Response: Mike said the BNF has similar fees, \$100.00 for up to 100 people and Terry stated the Elmore County Commissioners wanted a lower fee than the original \$125 proposal.

- **Grant** asked what you would get for the \$100.00.

Response: Mike said the ability to reserve the site and the amenities.

- **Grant** – Would any additional activities be prohibited?

Response: Mike - nothing out of the ordinary. Mike Dettori said the intention is to provide a large, reserve-able area for groups and that the administrative costs will barely be covered with this fee.

- **Grant** asked what the public demand is for these two sites.

Response: Mike - we have many large groups that recreate in that area.

- **John** Robison asked if the Bear and Willow fees are for the existing amenities.

Response: Mike said they have horse facilities.

- **Denise** asked if we had contacted the horse groups.

Response: Mike said he didn't think so.

- **Grant** asked about use in the fall.

Response: Mike said there is a lot of use.

- **Samantha** asked if we would operate on the 1st year warning, 2nd year fine.

Response: Mike confirmed this.

- **Nate Helm** asked about trailhead parking: Is it free?

Response: Terry - There is no trailhead fee. Parking areas are clearly separate from camping units.

Fairfield Ranger District Proposals (Fee Increases): Terry presented the proposal to raise campground fees at Abbott, Bird Creek, Chaparral, Willow Creek, Bowns and Canyon campgrounds to \$6.00/night. All fees are currently \$2.00/night except Bowns which is \$4.00/night. The sites have the specified FLREA amenities except as follows: Abbott has no drinking water; Bird Creek has no drinking water or trash cans, Bowns has no trash cans, Canyon has no trash cans, Chaparral has no drinking water, and Willow Creek has no trash cans. Mike added that there are two spots in close proximity to these sites that have dumpsters provided by the FS, and that Fairfield has 4 CXT (Need this acronym spelled out) vault toilets that are not attached to any developed campgrounds that are available for dispersed recreation users. Terry asked for questions.

- **John** asked if there was signage indicating where the nearest amenities are located.
Response: Mike didn't honestly know. Agreed it would be a good idea to provide a sign that identified where amenities were located.
- **Jim** asked if we had campground hosts.
Response: Mike said yes, at Baumgartner and Chaparral.

Minidoka Ranger District Proposals (New Fee Sites): Terry presented the proposal to designate three new fee campgrounds (Schipper, Steer Basin, and Diamondfield Jack) on the Cassia division, and one new fee campground (Sublett) on the Sublett division. The proposal is to charge \$5.00/night at all except Diamondfield Jack which would be \$8.00/night. The sites have the specified FLREA amenities except as follows: Schipper has no trash cans, a water system is in place but is not maintained; Steer Basin has no trash cans or water system; Sublett has no trash cans, a water system is in place but is not maintained. Diamondfield Jack has all amenities. Diamondfield Jack is also popular with winter recreationists, but is only being proposed to charge fees in the summer for overnight camping. Scott Nannenga, Minidoka District Ranger oriented the group on the map and referred them to the pictures. Terry asked for questions.

- **Samantha** asked how we could justify only charging for summer use.
Response: Scott explained that we have a summer cleaning contract and the water is shut off in the winter.
- **Samantha** asked how we justified \$8.00 rather than \$5.00.
Response: Scott said because it is close to the other campgrounds that charge \$8.00 and is also further up the canyon, adding to the expense of maintenance.
- **John** asked about dispersed opportunities within Rock Creek canyon.
Response: Scott pointed out FS Flats and other sites on Cassia, as well as Mill Flat and many dispersed sites on Sublett Division.
- **John** asked about campground hosts.
Response: Scott said there are none on Sublett, and two hosts on Cassia that service the entire Rock Creek Canyon.
- **John** asked if there are plans to add more fees on Minidoka.
Response: Scott said we have no plans to bring on additional fee sites but he could not say what might happen if/when a new ranger came on board.
- **Denise** asked Scott to point out Magpie Basin.

Response: Scott obliged and elaborated about the area the FS closed two years ago, pointing out that we also provided additional designated dispersed camping sites.

- **Samantha** said that she has a problem with only charging summer campers and not winter campers – why should summer users pay for winter user damages? Samantha said she sees a lot more people in the winter but that could be because they are so concentrated

Response: Scott said that he isn't asking for fees to pay for damages but simply to cover the cost of summer maintenance (toilet cleaning, dumpsters, water system maintenance, etc).

- **Liz Close (Forest Service, Intermountain Region)** asked if there is overnight camping in the winter.

Response: Scott said there is a small amount.

- **Samantha** asked about Sublett – isn't it in the desert with just a little creek?

Response: Scott confirmed this.

- **Samantha** asked if there are other places to camp in the Sublett vicinity.

Response: Scott said there are lots of dispersed camping opportunities.

- **Samantha** felt strongly that there should be no charge for camping in the “damn desert”

Response: Terry said that many people like to camp in basin and range country.

Sawtooth National Recreation Area Proposals (New Cabin Rentals): Terry distributed maps that Sara Baldwin, Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA) Ranger, provided to orient RRAC members to where the proposals are located. The Sawtooth is new to the rental cabin business. The proposal is to make the Redfish Lake cabin and the Sawtooth Valley work center Rangers dwelling available for nightly rentals during the shoulder and winter seasons, essentially five months each year. There are no amenity requirements for cabin rentals per FLREA regulations. The fee would be \$65.00/night at Sawtooth Valley and \$50.00/night at the Redfish Lake cabin. Access to the cabins would be by skiing at Sawtooth Valley (about a ¼ mile ski) and ski or snowmobile about 3 miles into the Redfish Lake cabin. Terry asked for questions.

- **Samantha** asked how many cabins were available.

Response: Sara - one cabin at each location.

- **Rick Just** asked how many individuals the cabins could accommodate.

Response: Terry said that Redfish could sleep about eight and Sawtooth Valley could sleep up to 15.

- **Samantha** asked how we arrived at our rates.

Terry said that Eric McQuay called around and checked other rental cabin rates on neighboring Forests.

- **Nate** asked how we addressed the concerns that the County Commissioners raised in their letter endorsing the cabin rentals regarding the potential for the low rental fees to undercut prices at other private local rentals.

Response: Terry said that he and Kelly Jardine, Deputy Ranger on the Sawtooth NRA, had discussed the Commissioner's concerns, and feel that what the Forest is proposing is such a different experience from what is already available in Custer county that the

likelihood of unfair competition is not high, but they had not yet had the opportunity to discuss this face-to-face with the Commissioners. Nate agreed that that was the issue and felt that the Commissioners just wanted to ensure that the FS analysis incorporates a no competition feeling with local businesses.

- **Nate** asked if we felt we were on the low end.
Response: Terry replied that we stayed on the conservative side, that it was a conservative (low end) price.
- **Grant** asked if these cabins were only available in the winter.
Response: Sara Baldwin confirmed this.
- **John** commented that yurts are available In the Sawtooth NRA at \$35.00 per person, per night.
- **John** asked about the ability to reserve the cabins – would it be on the website?
Response: Sara confirmed this.
- **Nate** expressed concern about whether we fully addressed the Custer County Commissioners concerns. He read aloud the “rental fee comparison” excerpt from their endorsement letter. He wanted to make sure that these concerns were fully addressed.
Response: Sara agreed that at the next commissioner meeting she would discuss the issue with the Commissioners. Jane Kollmeyer (SNF Forest Supervisor) talked about her experience on the Flathead and Helena where the FS rental cabins were never perceived to be competition for the local businesses. She pointed out that this is a different type of experience, being a ski/hike-in with all your supplies, not just a drive up and unload your cooler. She also pointed out that these facilities have no running water.
- **John** asked about season of use.
Response: Sara - fall, winter, spring.

A general discussion on the Sawtooth proposals followed: Samantha said that she had spoken with Scott during the break about using volunteer time for some of the deferred maintenance. She suggested that 4-H; Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc could be used for trash pick up and campground cleaning. Scott said he has utilized some volunteer help for trail maintenance and talked about the new recreation staff coming on board and possibility of tapping into more volunteers. Samantha said she would speak with the 4-H board. Karen Ballard added that the FS campgrounds are already in the State of Idaho’s Tourism data website: <http://www.updateidaho.com>, click on volunteers needed, and go from there. Rick asked for clarification on what the FS considers when using the term maintenance. Terry answered that it includes cleaning, sanitation, along with fixing the picnic tables, cleaning out fire rings, repairing vandalized items, providing informational signs, pothole filling on interior roads (not building roads), replacing doors of toilets that are damaged, water system maintenance and testing and providing toilet paper. Grant asked if it is seasonals that perform most of this work – Terry said yes. Rick asked if the money collected would fund seasonals – Terry and Scott agreed that a portion would, Jim stated that we are required to report to Congress our fee fund accomplishments and there is a national website where you can review the collection and usage of recreation funds. Rick talked about the key points to keeping the camping experience positive - #1 is clean restrooms – important to the public. Grant asked Yvette Tuell if appropriate consultation with the Tribes has been completed. She said that

the FS has met with the Shoshone-Bannock tribes. John asked about hand sanitizers on the Fairfield Ranger District (RD) – are those in most campgrounds? Scott replied that he does not have those on the Minidoka RD.

Public Comment on SNF Proposed Fees:

No one from the public provided any verbal comments at this time: Ken, Rich, Fran, and Greg had left the meeting by this time, as their concerns had been primarily with Campbell Creek boat launch. At 2:40 p.m. and again at 3:00 p.m. public comments were again asked for, since that was when they were scheduled on the agenda. No comments were made.

Recommendation formulation

Grant asked for suggestions on how the group could move forward with formulating recommendations.

New Fee Site on the BNF, Cascade Ranger District (Campbell Creek Boat Ramp)

John commented on the public input on the Campbell Creek project – appreciated public comments. He felt that the FS keeps making a concerted effort to outreach to the public. Nate suggested that when there are private properties close to proposed sites, the FS should make an additional effort to outreach to the local homeowners/associations, etc. John also recommended contacting the specific groups (horse, etc) to inform and perhaps garner support before the actual meeting. Bill Baker stated we need to remember to involve our public. Yvette thanked the FS for providing the level of information and documentation of public involvement that they did – it has improved from past experiences – this year was a lot better documented. She encouraged any verbal discussions be documented and pointed out that there is some discussion on double taxation issues from the public that bears further discussion by Members of the RRAC Subcommittee.

Nate initiated the discussion on the boat launch (Campbell Creek) project. This is a new experience especially with local people/landowners versus recreationists. Nate spoke of his personal experience at Redfish Lake, where he and his family recreate annually. He recounted being given a ticket while filling out the form – his point was that he has talked with other recreationists and an overwhelming feeling exists that campers pay for sites but then have to pay for the day- use in addition. He cautioned not to allow a situation where the FS can “pile on” the fees. He believed there must be some mechanism for the local people to be able to experience access at a reasonable rate.

Samantha asked Nate if he would be offended by paying \$80.00 for an annual pass to be able to utilize more than one site.

Nate’s main concern in the repeat user (several times a week in the summer) situation is – how are we to provide the service portion of the title? John added that for frequent users, the annual passes are certainly the way to go and the better financial decision. He wants to make the program flexible, make it a good deal for the most frequent users, and have it perceived as

a good deal. Nate stated he remembers the FS getting a lecture from the Valley County Commissioners about the condition of Campbell Creek about 10 years ago – the public had approached the Commissioners about maintenance. There is a feeling from the public that maintenance is needed. His concern is how to protect the interest of the regular users without harming them but still allowing for fee collection? Bill asked if FLREA provides for an annual pass. Rick felt that this group doesn't have the authority to make that decision but certainly can recommend it. The discussion that followed centered on a motion contingent upon Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's (IDPR's) approval and the recommendation to allow an annual pass.

Grant expressed his concern (to Jim Keller) about the sentiment he detected from BNF employees to "pick up the marbles and go home" – (expressing the idea that they would need to close the docks completely if fees were not charged). Jim explained that this is in direct result of health and safety concerns as per national direction because of the current condition of the docks. Jim stated that we are looking for a long-term solution for maintenance, in addition to getting the grant. Rick pointed out that since IDPR has funded this in part, if it is closed, then the BNF has to provide the opportunity elsewhere or give the money back. John talked about this project needing time and a commitment from the various agencies, as well as an active FS presence to educate the public. Jim stated that during the first year, the BNF would be reasonable and gentler on issuing tickets. John asked how often there would be BNF enforcement personnel present? Jim said that the budget has been cut severely and right now, he is not sure if there will be any dollars available to hire Forest Protection Officers; however, his guess is some kind of presence two times a week. Hank asked if the establishment of a \$5.00 day use fee could also include establishment of a seasonal pass – Liz said yes. Jim agreed a season pass is a good idea but it will take time, could be up to a year. Jim suggested that during the first year, perhaps \$2.00 per day until such time a seasonal pass could be implemented.

Hank moved to recommend a \$5.00 daily use fee or a \$75.00 annual fee to the Campbell Creek Boat Ramp – there was **no second**. Motion failed.

Rick moved to approve the \$5.00 daily use fee contingent upon IDPR approval and urged the BNF to move forward with a season pass fee. Hank seconded. Jim asked if no specific season pass fee was part of the motion, would the FS, need to come back to the committee for approval – yes, per Rick. There was discussion about the \$75.00 being too high for that specific use

Nate had to leave. The RRAC rules were reviewed and it was determined that there was still a quorum for making recommendations.

John proposed an amendment to the motion to incorporate the \$35.00/ season pass cap and provide specific instruction to the BNF to implement it by summer, 2010 and encourage the BNF work with parks and recreation to develop a shared fee pass for all Cascade Reservoir units that are fee sites. Hank seconded.

Discussion: Rick thought all this could happen at once by implementing the fee for summer, 2010, have a seasonal pass in place, and already have IDPR's approval. Samantha Anderson agreed.

Rick and John withdrew their motions. Hank withdrew all his seconds

Rick moved that the RRAC approve the \$5.00 fee at Campbell Creek contingent upon IDPR's approval of fee, RRAC urges the BNF to work with IDPR to offer a joint season pass between the BNF and IDPR, BOR, at no more than \$35.00 annual fee for the Cascade Reservoir fee area, to be implemented no sooner than June 1, 2010. No second. Motion fails.

Discussion ensued about Reservoir fee area language – John discussed a specific annual fee for that area that encourages cooperation with other agencies. Grant asked if the FS has legal authority to implement an annual fee. Liz said the FS does. John asked for clarification on the maintenance needed and what will be available – Jim stated the ramp would be there but the docks may not be useable this summer.

Grant asked if this motion clarifies the implementation of the annual and daily fee? After some discussion, a five minute recess was called to allow a subgroup to draft language for a new motion.

After the recess: ***Rick moved that the RRAC recommends to the Joint RAC the following fees at Campbell Creek Boat Ramp: Users will pay a \$5.00 daily use fee or purchase an annual pass that is not to exceed \$35.00. These fees are contingent upon IDPR's approval of a fee, and are to be implemented no sooner than June 1, 2010. The RRAC urges the BNF to work with IDPR to offer a joint season pass between the BNF, IDPR, and BOR for all Cascade Reservoir Boat Fee Access sites. Hank seconded the motion.***

Discussion: John asked if the date should be removed if the BNF could get a season pass in place earlier than 2010. Grant asks if that could happen – Liz said that the Regional Forester would have to approve and there may need to be more public outreach- Jim stated we have had a tremendous outreach effort and have heard no comments up until today from the public. Consensus was that there would not be enough time to implement in 2009.

Grant called for the question. Motion passed unanimously. The recommendation to approve fees at Campbell Creek Boat ramp will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

New Fee Sites on the SNF, Fairfield Ranger District (Baumgartner/Kelley Creek Group campground, Willow Creek and Bear Creek Transfer camps)

Karen moved that the Baumgartner/ Kelley Creek Group campground proposed fee of \$100 per night for groups up to 100 people, if reserved. If no reservation is made, there will be no fee charged. Yvette seconded. Motion Passes unanimously. The recommendation to approve fees for group use at Baumgartner/ Kelley Creek Group campground will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

Hank moved that the proposed \$6.00 per night new fee at **Willow Creek and Bear Creek Transfer Camps** be approved. **John** seconded.

Discussion: Denise expressed a concern that the horse-user groups were not directly contacted. Terry said the camps were posted; Mike said the FS didn't contact the horse user groups specifically because although they are a portion of the users, they are not the majority users of the sites. Grant asked who are the primary users? Mike said hikers, motorcyclists, and ATV'ers. Denise asked who built the corrals. Mike Dettori said the FS. Samantha confirmed with Mike that there would be no fee charged for the trail head, just the camping site. John reiterated the need to better inform the public, through signage, about additional amenities available in the local area. Grant asked if he was not familiar with the area, how he would know there is no fee at the trailhead. Terry said the trailhead and camping sites are separate areas – there is signage explaining the fees, which sites require a fee and which are free. Mike said there are information boards in place. The suggestion was made that a sign indicating no fee at the trailhead be posted. Denise asked if there were other sites with horse facilities that would be free. Mike said no, those are the only horse-friendly sites on the district. However, the corrals are still available to day users at no charge.

Grant called for the question. The motion failed, 4-4. The recommendation to approve fees at Willow Creek and Bear Creek Transfer camp will not be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

Mike asked for clarification on the reasons people voted against the fees, so that he can address them in the future. Karen said she voted no because she is sensitive to charging fees on public lands and was looking for more outreach with additional support letters from specific user groups. Secondary reason is that the sites are rather primitive facilities and in her experience, the public expects a more developed site if they are being charged a fee. Samantha agreed with those points and added that because a neighboring site has a fee, (Willow Creek) the transfer camp should be free, especially with no trash or water.

Fee Increases on the SNF, Fairfield Ranger District (FRD) (Abbott, Bird Creek, Chaparral, Willow Creek, Bowns and Canyon campgrounds)

Rick moved that the RRAC approve the SNF recommendations for the Fairfield RD campground fee increases and recommend to the Joint RAC to follow suit [i.e. raise fees at Abbott, Bird Creek, Willow Creek, Chaparral, Bowns and Canyon campgrounds to \$6.00/night]. **Hank** seconded.

Discussion: Denise asked if the facilities that don't have water/trash have signage advising where those amenities are available. Rick suggested that many agencies are moving to a pack in/pack out policy, and we may not really want to provide trash cans everywhere. Samantha said that on the Payette National Forest, trash cans are used to resolve bear problems and stated that she isn't crazy about fee increases, but realizes the need. Grant pointed out there are a number of dispersed camping spots up and down this corridor (South Fork of the Boise) that are free of charge. Karen asked about the increase to \$6.00 rather than \$5.00, suggested that \$5.00 per night would be more practical. Grant asked for clarification on the fee

amounts. Mike replied that some of the need comes from maintenance requirements. The current charge is \$2.00 per vehicle and the proposed increase is \$6.00 per site. Most sites can accommodate two vehicles. Yvette asked how soon another increase might be proposed. Mike replied he couldn't say for sure, but did not expect to be back anytime soon. Terry pointed out that it has been \$2.00 for the last 15 years. Jim pointed out that the BNF's fees are \$15.00 at the sites closest to the SNF. Mike talked about the fact that the Fairfield RD has at least 8 CXT comfort stations dispersed throughout the area that are not attached to specific campgrounds and there is no charge for using them. There are also dumpsters available at no charge, as well as a Recreational Vehicle dump. He pointed out that the FRD provides a lot of amenities at no charge and the FS feels that there is really a good balance between sites and services and the costs. Terry talked about how we arrived at the proposed fees.– he stated that \$5.00 is better than \$2.00 but \$6.00 comes closer to covering the maintenance costs than would \$5.00.

Grant called for the question. Motion passes with one abstention. The recommendation to approve fees increases at Abbott, Bird Creek, Willow Creek, Chaparral, Bowns and Canyon campgrounds to \$6.00/night will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

New Fee Sites on the SNF, Minidoka Ranger District (Sublett, Schipper, Steer Basin, and Diamondfield Jack campgrounds)

Samantha moved to recommend denial of all four fee sites on the MRD. No second. Motion fails.

Rick moved to recommend to the Joint RAC approval of all the new fee sites on the Minidoka RD. Hank seconded.

Discussion: Samantha believes there is a lack of free sites with amenities – specifically, the Diamondfield Jack proposal imposes a fee on only the summer season and not during the winter. Rick asked if there is free camping in the area. Scott explained that the FS put in for a grant to further develop FS Flats to improve but leave it as a no fee site. Rick thought the market would quickly decide if the public would pay. Samantha asked how \$5.00 was decided upon – Scott said that decision was made several years ago, just put off due to legislation, but is intended to cover the cost of maintenance. Samantha asked when/if Scott would ask for fee increases – He replied he doesn't plan to in the next five years. Denise expressed concerns that the Sublett Campground – seems very primitive. There is a water system in place but continual bad samples caused the FS to shut the system down – Scott stated that the FS hopes to apply for a grant and/or use stimulus money to improve the water system. Yvette noted there are more letters against the fee than the one from Cassia County supporting the fee. Scott Nannenga said there has been signage for the past two years informing the public of the proposed fees. Denise asked if the Sublett Campground fee could be taken out of the motion – Grant said not at this point, the committee would need to vote, pass or fail the motion, and introduce a new motion.

Grant called for the question. The motion failed.

Denise moved to approve establishing new fee sites at Schipper and Steer Basin campgrounds and that the fees be \$5.00/night.fee. Samantha seconded.

No discussion.

Grant called for the question. The motion passed, 5-0. The recommendation to approve new fees at Schipper and Steer Basin campgrounds, at \$5.00/night will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

Samantha moved the RRAC recommend denying the proposal to charge camping fees at Sublett Campground. Denise seconded.

No discussion.

Grant called for the question. The motion passed, 6-0. The recommendation to approve fees at Sublett campground will not be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

Samantha moved the RRAC approve the proposal to charge an \$8.00/night camping fee at Diamondfield Jack campground in the summer only. Hank seconded.

No Discussion

Grant called for the question. The motion passed, 5-0. The recommendation to approve fees at Diamondfield Jack campground of \$8.00/night in the summer only will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

New Fee Sites on SNF, Sawtooth NRA (Redfish Lake Cabin and Sawtooth Valley work center cabin)

Rick moved the RRAC recommend approval for charging fees at the Redfish Lake Cabin of \$50.00/night and at the Sawtooth Valley Work Center cabin at \$65.00/night, during the winter and shoulder seasons. Hank seconded.

No discussion.

Grant called for the question. The motion passed, 7-0. The recommendation to approve fees at the Redfish Lake and Sawtooth Valley cabins will be forwarded to the Joint RAC.

Note: RRAC would like the SNF to meet with the Custer County Commissioners to ensure the Commissioners' concerns are met regarding the fees at the cabins.

The joint RAC meeting will be Thursday, April 9th, 10-2 pm. in Twin Falls, Idaho. (Note: Meeting location moved to Hagerman)

Rick moved to adjourn. Denise seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1631.

Certified By:

Grant Simonds, Chairperson
RRAC Subcommittee

Date

Aden Seidlitz
Designated Federal Official, BDO

Date

Bill Baker
Designated Federal Official, TFD

Date

Jane P. Kollmeyer
Designated Federal Official, SNF

Date

Cecilia Seesholtz
Designated Federal Official, BNF

Date