

John Day-Snake RAC Planning Subcommittee Meeting

6 p.m. PT, June 9, 2021, via Zoom

Meeting convened at 6 pm, via Zoom.

Attendance: RAC members Shay White, Art Waugh, and Gary Gustafson; Designated Federal Official/Vale DM Wayne Monger; Prineville DM Dennis Teitzel; Dave Plummer and Teresa Fraser, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest; and members of the public Bill Ables and Mary Fleischmann.

Art asked Shay if he was resigning, and Shay said he is not resigning. Art was concerned there were not enough RAC members present to have a quorum but would be able to vote for consensus for the record.

Meeting began at 6:35, and Teresa Fraser provided a Power Point presentation. She detailed and explained each slide. Data that was used for the presentation was collected from national visitor use monitoring.

The WWNF is proposing increases to fees in multiple campgrounds and recreational use areas. There would also be 3 sites where fees would be dropped due to distances involved for maintenance and fee collection. They would like to simplify the fee schedules and make the charges easier to apply.

Horse campgrounds would increase to \$10.00 per night; Day use would be \$5.00, instead of no charge; Campgrounds with water would increase to \$15.00; Campgrounds with no water would be \$10.00; Cabins/Guard Station rentals would be less confusing, by implementing a flat rate per night, not per person. Would like to add Lostine Cabin to the rental que, at \$80.00 per night.

Power Point overview was completed at 6:55 p.m. Next was the review of public comments. Teresa and Dave both mentioned that public comments were the driving force to drop a proposed \$5.00 extra vehicle fee, as it was unpopular. Fees for renting the cabins were adjusted to one price, rather than an occupancy fee, as it was too confusing.

Gus Gustafson wanted to know what the problems were at Pittsburgh, and Dave Plummer was able to provide information regarding that Rec site. Dave said the issues were very broad, stemming from retirement of staff that knew the schematics and inner workings of that site. No one has performed any maintenance in 10 years due to budget constraints, irrigation and water systems have fallen apart, and it is a big mess/disaster. It will take significant effort to restore back to what it once was. Maybe this process can be pared down? Maybe volunteers can be utilized, or organized recreation groups. There is potable water at the Pittsburgh site, irrigation system is not operational.

There was a discussion by Shay White, Art Waugh and Dave Plummer regarding what groups could possibly provide services to this site, how would they be paid, and where would the money go? Dave Plummer said the constraints of budget, staffing, and then the COVID restrictions created a mess.

Mary Fleischman wanted to convey that the public has little to no idea about the budget issues and constraints and wishes there was some way to educate the public about this problem/issue.

The vote was taken, and of the 3 RAC members present, 2 were in favor of fee increases and 1 was not.

Gus Gustafson said fees have not been increased in a really long time; everything costs more money. Increases are reasonable and would not go into effect until 2022. This would give everyone a chance to absorb the increase, and he supports the proposal.

Shay White said he cannot support the increases because the stakeholders he represents do not support the increase in fees, when there are not any improvements being provided or maintained.

Art Waugh said he supports the increase, and says it is long overdue.

Dave Plummer suggested a few improvements to the Power Point, such as a clearer view of intake vs. outcome. Also, would like to put together a clearer budget input/output sheet for the full RAC meeting. Teresa said she would get that together before the next meeting.

Wayne Monger introduced himself and said he had an open-door policy and if anyone needed assistance with any of these items, he is happy to assist.

Meeting adjourned on time.