

# Minutes

## Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Work Group Meeting

### December 5, 2007

1. A meeting of the REA Work Group was convened at 1:15 p.m. on December 5, 2007 at the Arizona BLM State Office. The agenda items are shown at enclosure 1.

2. Attendees:

a. REA Work Group members: Glen Collins, Frances Werner, Norman Perry, and Steve Saway.

b. Other RAC members: Linda Kennedy, Richard Lunt, Linda Binder, and Laura Pinnas.

c. Forest Service personnel: Jeff Saari, Southwestern Region; Julie Cox, RRAC Enterprise Team, Portland, Oregon.

d. BLM representatives: Michael Taylor, Deputy Director for Resources; Bruce Asbjorn, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Kingman Field Office.

3. Action on agenda items:

a. The Chair asked all attendees to introduce themselves and then discussed the purpose and agenda for the meeting. This work group meeting was primarily intended to review the Recreation Resource Advisory Council's (RRAC's) past year's experience with REA, update the RRAC protocol and 2008 fee review schedule, and to prepare a draft letter to the BLM State Director on the RRAC's assessment of REA implementation.

b. Draft minutes of the September 7th REA Work Group meeting. Motion made by Norman Perry, seconded by Glen Collins, to approve the minutes as stated. Motion was approved.

c. Frequency of RRAC meetings (quarterly or semi-annually). Initially, there were divergent views on having quarterly versus semi-annual RRAC meetings to review fee proposals. One view was that the quarterly schedule is working and no change is needed. Another view was that the RAC is devoting too much time to RRAC business and that is impacting its ability to conduct regular RAC business including field trips. From the BLM representative's perspective, the schedule should be established at the annual planning meeting but should also be flexible. From the Forest Service representative's perspective, there are concerns about going to a semi-annual schedule but Forest Service personnel are willing to try it, particularly if the schedule can be modified as needs arise. The group also discussed the BLM and Forest Service fee proposals projected for review in 2008, and whether these proposals could be accommodated by the semi-annual schedule. After further discussion, there was general consensus that the RRAC should move to a semi-annual schedule but remain flexible for modifications on a case-by-case basis. For 2008, this means that the RRAC meetings to review fee proposals would be

held in March 2008 and September 2008. With this schedule, an annual RRAC planning meeting would be conducted during the December RRAC meeting.

d. Proposed modifications to the RRAC protocol, business cycle, and fee proposal guidelines. The Chair passed out copies of the draft RRAC protocol, including business cycle guidelines and guidelines for agency fee proposals. The Chair summarized the proposed changes to the initial RRAC protocol established in December 2006. These included changes to clarify responsibilities to provide input for the Federal Register notice for RRAC meetings as well as to provide documents for posting to the RRAC web site. The proposed business cycle guidelines were modified to reflect the semi-annual RRAC meeting schedule as well as the 30 day advance publication of Federal Register notices for RRAC meeting agendas. The guidelines for agency fee proposals were modified to accelerate the timeframe for submission of fee proposals to the REA Work Group and to stress the need for completing public involvement efforts before submitting fee proposals to the REA Work Group. After review and discussion, a motion was made by Glen Collins to approve the draft RRAC protocol including semi-annual meeting schedule, but keep the option to convene quarterly RRAC meetings as needed on a case-by-case basis. The motion was seconded by Norman Perry and approved by the Work Group. The Chair also discussed a point of concern regarding public involvement. He referred to the BLM guide to providing public participation for recreation fees, dated September 2006. The guide identified outreach efforts to encourage public involvement and stressed going beyond the minimum statutory requirements to assure the public is informed and involved. Regarding the Federal Register notice for the Forest Service Kentucky Camp fee proposal, Glen Collins pointed out that it was announcing a decision, not soliciting public involvement. The Work Group felt that the Forest Service should modify their Federal Register notice language to clearly solicit and provide opportunities for public comment and involvement.

e. Projected Fiscal Year 2008 Fee Review Schedule. The Chair passed out a copy of a draft schedule that had been prepared based on input from Don Applegate and Jeff Saari. However, based on new information from the Forest Service fee proponents, and to reflect the semi-annual RRAC meeting schedule, the draft was modified as shown below. The Work Group agreed to submit this schedule to the full RRAC for approval.

**Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC)**  
**FY 2008 Fee Review Schedule**  
**BLM/USFS Fee Proposals**  
**12/06/07**

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Meeting (Dec 2007 Phoenix, AZ)**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Review/update RRAC Protocol and<br>FY 2008 Fee Proposal Review Schedule | All |
|---|-----|

**2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Meeting ( March 2008 --, AZ)**

|                       |                    |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Kentucky Camp HQ Bldg | New Fee (Expanded) | Coronado National Forest |
| Apache Maid Cabin     | New Fee (Expanded) | Coconino National Forest |

**3rd Quarter Meeting ( June 2008 --, AZ)**

No proposals scheduled unless needed

**4th Quarter Meeting ( September 2008 -- , AZ)**

|                        |                         |                          |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| AZ Rental Cabins       | New Fee (Expanded)      | Arizona National Forests |
| Recreation Sites       | Fee Increase (Expanded) | Kingman Field Office     |
| Tonto OHV Pass         | New Fee/Permit (SRP)    | Tonto National Forest    |
| Forest-wide Fees CG/PA | Fee Increase (EAF/SAF)  | Prescott National Forest |

f. Lessons Learned and Proposed RAC letter to the BLM State Director. The Chair passed out a copy of a proposed RAC letter and summarized the major points. It was felt that the letter was a timely opportunity to reflect back on the first year's experience with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and what was working well and what could be improved. Members of the Work Group and the representatives from BLM and Forest Service all shared their views and perspectives. The point about FLREA training was well received and it was felt that the course could help give agency personnel a FLREA "tool box". There was also good discussion of what constitutes adequate public outreach and involvement. From a Forest Service perspective, it was felt that public involvement efforts should vary along with the complexity and controversy of the fee proposal. Staffing and budgets constrain the amount of public outreach, so the Forest Service devotes more emphasis to complex or controversial fee proposals than to routine fee proposals. After further discussion, it was felt that the letter should be modified to acknowledge that the first year has been a learning experience and the RRAC is please with the progress being made. With that change, the Work Group approved the draft letter for submission to the full RRAC for approval.

g. Overview of Kingman Field Office fee proposals. Bruce Asbjorn gave the group an overview of fee proposals that will come to the Work Group later in the fiscal year. The Kingman Field Office will be seeking fee increases for individual and group campsites at the Burro Creek, Wild Cow Springs, and Windy Point recreation sites. These sites have not seen a fee increase since 1998 and the fee proposals will be justified based on market comparisons, increasing operations and maintenance costs, and declining appropriations.

4. Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.
5. Minutes submitted by: Steve Saway, REA Work Group Chair
6. Date approved: March 5, 2008