

**RECREATION RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RRAC)**  
***Final* MINUTES**  
**September 6, 2007**

**BLM National Training Center**  
**9828 North 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue**  
**Phoenix, Arizona**

**AGENDA ITEM: Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) Session**  
**REA Work Group Report, Steve Saway**  
**Forest Service Fee Proposal: Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private**  
**River Permit System, Tonto National Forest, Globe Ranger District**  
**Jeff Saari, FS Region 3, Developed Sites Program Manager**

**DISCUSSION:** Meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m.

**REA Work Group Report:** Steve Saway, REA Work Group Chair, gave a summary of two meetings held by the REA Work Group since the last RAC meeting.

1. The August 22nd meeting was held via conference call to review and discuss a fee change proposal by the Tonto National Forest for the Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private River Permit System. The meeting was productive and enabled the Work Group members to raise questions/concerns and better understand the fee proposal and scope. Since the public comment period was still ongoing, the Tonto agreed to present an updated fee proposal showing additional public comments at the September 5th Work Group meeting. The conference call format for the August 22nd Work Group meeting was well received and thanks go to Deborah Stevens for coordinating the toll free bridge number.

2. The September 5th meeting was held at the BLM National Training Center to review the updated fee proposal for the Tonto's Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private River Permit System and to review the initial draft quarterly schedule of Forest Service and BLM fiscal year 2008 fee proposals to be brought to the RAC. Dave Killebrew gave the Work Group an update on the Tonto's fee proposal with emphasis on public outreach and comments received. The public notification process had used various outlets, including the Forest Service website, emails to prior applicants, and press releases to local newspapers. Comments received were mixed and two major concerns were raised: (a) the one size fee for any group size (one kayaker pays the same fee as a fifteen person group), and (b) no refund when the river is too low to run. The Work Group discussed the public comments and how to gauge whether there was general public support for the proposal. Most of the RAC members attending the Work Group meeting voted to support the proposal as there was no overwhelming public opposition. With regard to the fiscal year 2008 quarterly schedule, the Work Group also received initial projections from Jeff Saari and Don Applegate on fiscal year 2008 fee proposals to be reviewed. These will be firmed up at the December 07 RAC meeting.

**Fee Proposal: Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private River Permit System.** Jeff Saari gave a PowerPoint presentation, which included a project summary, site location, reason for the fee change, financial analysis, projected annual revenues and costs, public participation and input, and posted notices of permit details and program accomplishments (see handout). Jeff focused mainly on the public outreach efforts and summarized the public comments. Dave Killebrew,

who had been delayed by traffic, came forward to assist Jeff in responding to RAC member questions. Question: is the average group size nine? Yes. Question: why only four groups per day? This was determined by limits of acceptable change (LAC) analysis. It was noted by one RAC member that there were more comments opposed to the fee proposal than in favor, and that newspaper press releases had not been out for 30 days prior to close of the comment period. Another RAC member stated that if the public was opposed, there would be more negative comments expressed; and with a low response rate, one could say the public is OK with the proposal. However, this view was not universally shared by other RAC members. One RAC member expressed concern about the low response rate and was not sure the RAC could say there is public support for the fee proposal.

**ACTION: RAC to vote on proposals after public comment period**

**AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment on Recreation Fee Proposal**

**DISCUSSION:** Public comment period opened at 2:26 p.m. There being no public comments, the public comment period was closed at 2:27 p.m.

**ACTION: None.**

**AGENDA ITEM: RAC Reconvenes to provide Fee Proposal Recommendations to BLM Arizona State Director (RAC members)**

**DISCUSSION:**

**Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private River Permit System** - RAC members discussed their concerns and had differing views on the fee proposal. There was concern over the small number of public comments and whether the fee proposal had good public support. However, all legal requirements were met and the Forest Service demonstrated good faith in doing what is required. Also, it was noted that the RAC is representative of the public and can be viewed as a proxy for public opinion. Some members felt the “one size fits all” fee structure should be modified so that individuals and small groups are not charged the same fee as larger groups.

**Motion:** I move that the Arizona RRAC support the Salt River Canyon Wilderness Private River Permit System fee proposal as presented in the attached briefing and recommend it be forwarded for approval. Made by: Norman Perry. Seconded by: Lee Aitken. Motion passes with 9 ayes and 4 nays.

**ACTION: RRAC meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.**

**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Next REA Work Group Meeting and Upcoming BLM and FS Recreation Fee Proposals (RAC members and BLM/FS Staff)**

**DISCUSSION:** The Forest Service initial projections indicate two fee proposals may be ready for the 1st quarter meeting: Kentucky Camp Cabin Rental and Tonto Pass Fee Modification. The REA Work Group will meet as needed to review these proposals, firm up the fiscal year 2008 schedule, and update the RRAC protocol based on lessons learned from this past year. Also, the RAC wishes to re-look the frequency of RRAC meetings and determine whether the RRAC should meet quarterly or semi-annually to review fee proposals.

**ACTION: None.**