

# Minutes

## Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Work Group Meeting

### May 20, 2009

1. A meeting of the REA Work Group was convened via conference call at 1:30 p.m. on May 20, 2009. A toll free bridge line number was kindly arranged by Deborah Stevens for this conference call. The agenda items are shown at enclosure 1.

2. Attendees:

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

b. BLM personnel: Don Applegate, Arizona Recreation Program Lead and Maria Troche, BLM Arizona State Office; Ruben Sanchez, Field Manager; Jackie Neckels, Assistant Field Manager; Bruce Asbjorn, Outdoor Recreation Planner; Len Marceau, Outdoor Recreation Planner; and Mike Brown, Public Information Specialist; 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. Prior to the meeting, the Kingman Field Office had sent to Work Group members copies of the Draft Business Plan, PowerPoint Briefing, and published articles or press releases concerning the proposed fee increases. The Work Group's purpose was to gain a good understanding of the fee proposals and insure they were ready for presentation to the full RRAC meeting in June 2009. The Work Group members expressed appreciation for the well written documentation and timely receipt.

b. Len Marceau briefed the group on the Draft Business Plan and PowerPoint Presentation. The Draft Business Plan gave an in-depth history, background, and description of the amenity fee sites, customer trends, recreation fee objectives, revenues versus costs, fee calculation process, impacts of not increasing the fee schedule, and extent of public outreach efforts/feedback received. Work Group members posed questions on various details of the business plan. Of the four recreation sites, one is free (Packsaddle - does not offer enough amenities) and the other three are located in widely separated, rural locations within the Field Office with different customer demographics: Burro Creek, Wild Cow Springs, and Windy Point. These three sites all offered the required number of amenities for an expanded amenity fee site. The field office is managing the three sites as one unit for utilization of recreation fee revenues.

c. Some of the questions/comments/concerns that emerged from the Work Group's discussion are as follows:

-- Was a day use fee considered for Burro Creek? Yes, but this option was not selected. (No day use fee benefits local customers.)

-- Janitorial service at Burro Creek is being performed 5 times per week but could possibly be reduced to 3 times per week.

-- Overall, current fee revenues provide about 50 percent of annual expenses, with the shortfall covered by annual appropriations.

-- Current fee levels are not keeping up with inflation.

-- The stated impacts of not raising fees are worst case. If the existing budget is not reduced, existing services would continue at current or similar levels.

-- Closing the dump station should not be considered – health issue.

d. The Work Group discussed the public involvement efforts and commended the Kingman Field Office for the extensive outreach they conducted. Despite the extensive outreach, only ten comments were received, with five of those opposed, three neutral, and two in support. Most of the Work Group members felt that there was general public support for the fee proposals as evidenced by the low number of opposing comments. However, the Chair did not share that view, as it requires the RRAC to assume public support when the evidence is weak.

e. For the presentation to the full RRAC, the Work Group made some suggestions, including (1) add a table showing revenues and expenses by site, including appropriations and fee revenues, (2) display an estimate in lieu of “variable” costs, (3) highlight that there is no charge for day use at Burro Creek, and (4) emphasize that only five comments were opposed to the fee proposals. A REA Work Group meeting will be held the day before the full RRAC meeting. The agenda will include a pre-view of the Kingman Field Office presentation. It was noted that hard copies of this presentation should be mailed to all RAC members for receipt prior to their departure to the RAC and Work Group meetings. Documents will also be sent to Deborah Stevens to be posted on the RRAC web site, though this may take some time due to new requirements imposed by the BLM Washington Office.

4. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.

5. Minutes submitted by: Steve Saway, REA Work Group Chair.

6. Date approved: June 24, 2009