

**CALIFORNIA RECREATION RESIDENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**May 13, 2009**  
**Vallejo, CA**  
**Draft Meeting Notes**

Members present: Bob Warren, Nate Rangel, Patricia Gatz, Monte Hendricks, Chris Oberti, Paul McFarland, Danna Stroud, Don Klusman, Dick Dasmann,

Members Absent: Linda McMillan (Bob Warren acting as Proxy), Charlie Wilson (Monte Hendricks acting as proxy)

Designated Federal Official: Marlene Finley

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Mike Ayers, ex officio BLM

Forest Service Staff: Tamara Wilton, Sharon Yeh, Frances Enkoji

Forest Service (FS): Angela Coleman, Tina Terrell, Valerie Guardia, Judy Schaber, Sherry Reckler

The California Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) was called to order by Marlene Finley, Designated Federal Official, on May 13, 2009 at 10:03 a.m. at the Forest Service Region 5 Office and noted a quorum was present. Bob Warren had Linda McMillan's proxy and Monte Hendricks had Charlie Wilson's proxy. Introductions of all present were made.

It was noted that Peter Weichers, public attendee, was tape recording the meeting.

Marlene Finley presented draft notes from the RRAC October, 2008 meeting for approval. Edits requested by the public and RRAC members had been made. Motion made and seconded to approve minutes as corrected. Motion passed, with all members approving except for one abstention, Don Klusman due to being absent from that meeting.

Nate Rangel suggested that meeting notes link statements to individual RRAC members, especially in the proposal discussion section. Consensus around individual statements is to be captured as well. Linking statements to individuals improves the transparency of our process and allows us to better serve the public. Chairperson, Bob Warren agreed. Individuals will now be identified in notes under the proposal discussion section.

Bob Warren reiterated the need for eight RRAC members to be present to reach a quorum. While proxies are helpful, he suggested that absent individuals should seek proxies that are in the same group that they represent. Nate Rangel

suggested that he was not concerned if the proxy was in the same group or not and it should be left open and let each members choose who they would like to represent them. Don Klusman agreed and Bob said he would withdraw that suggestion.

Marlene Finley shared that 88 comments were received regarding the BLM Imperial Dunes Fee Proposal, and a summary will be provided during the public forum. This proposal was withdrawn from consideration prior to this meeting. BLM issued a press release on May 8, 2009 notifying the public.

Nate Rangel asked in the future if the group could receive the comments in advance through email. Marlene Finley stated that she forwarded comments previously, but that some of the RRAC members requested to hold the emails. Mike Ayers suggested some type of share point and Bob Warren setting up a matrix with summary. Members didn't want them sorted ahead of time by the agency but could they be posted to a website? RRAC members all agreed to posting comments on a FTP site for download. Paul McFarland suggested that public comments need to be in at least 5 working days before a meeting is scheduled to provide enough time for members to read and digest the comments. RRAC members suggested keeping the deadline to a week prior to the meeting, as the bylaws state. The public can still attend meetings to deliver testimony the day of. If comments come after the week prior deadline, those comments will still come to the RRAC; RRAC members just might not have time to consider it.

Marlene Finley announced that the RRAC is still seeking applications for RRAC membership for the members whose terms are expiring. Patricia Gatz will not be reapplying for her position with the RRAC. The announcement for the positions has been publicized.

Bob Warren made members aware that Senator Max Baucus (MT) has introduced Senate Bill 868, "Fee Repeal and Expanded Access Act of 2009", to the Senate. It is likely that there will be a companion House bill at some point.

Mike Ayers shared that Mike Pool is currently the acting BLM national director. Before Mike was appointed to that position, he created a BLM California Recreation Outreach brochure which was given to each RRAC member. It features a nice overview of BLM districts; BLM has returned to the three tier organization which includes districts.

Public Forum began at 10:30am

Peter Weichers, a resident of Kern County, distributed materials to each RRAC member that included photos and financial statements of the Sequoia NF and made the following points:

- Photos of Lake Isabella High Impact Recreation Area (HIRA) show that the South Fork toilet was clogged with trash and signs stating that

- garbage service was suspended. The fee area sign directed people to go back to town to pay FS fees. He said that the law states that you need permanent toilets and trash facilities to charge fees. Portable toilets are considered permanent toilets by agency. While the agency is following the law, Peter questions if it follows the intent of Congress.
- Shared a presentation slide from a public meeting in Kernville on Feb 2, 2009 and stated that the new financial figures posted on the forest website doesn't match the handout from that meeting.
  - Questioned the use of software that costs \$24,000 to produce these financial charts. He asked doesn't FS have accounting software? He re-created it in his personal accounting software program and shared his calculations.
  - 5% of the Forest's collections do not remain on the Forest but they do not show those collections in their reports.
  - If the Sequoia had \$625k and \$79k recreation fee cash balance for October 2008, why are the campgrounds in bad shape? Also questioned why Sequoia officials proposed closing campgrounds if fees couldn't be raised. He would like to see where money comes in, and how the money is spent. He doesn't feel that the money is being spent well.
  - For the Hume Lake District, Sequoia officials itemized expenses by program activity, but didn't itemize collections by program activity.
  - Hoag Flat and Plateau campgrounds took close to \$10k in the first quarter of 2009. However, the District Ranger said that all expanded amenity sites took in only about \$4,700.
  - The Forest shows Oak Flat Lookout as a campground on their reports.
  - Provided an article by Lois Henry, which provides an article about recreation fees in the Kern River Valley, titled "Can't see the forests for the fees".

Bob Warren stated that there is a FS HIRA review being completed that may make changes on how HIRAs are managed. The RRAC will review all HIRA and will do due diligence to every HIRA in California.

Marlene provided a summary of the 88 email comments to BLM Imperial Dunes fee proposal. 1 comment supported a fee increase, 14 comments suggested a decreased fee or a phased increase, 12 opposed and suggested other methods for managing the area, 8 opposed and wanted to understand the need for the increase. 53 comments opposed the fees. This issue was not up for discussion today because the proposal had been withdrawn.

Mike Ayers, BLM Ex Officio explained that the field office initiated the fee proposal when the RAC meeting was a few months way. The BLM Desert Advisory Council (DAC) voted on it and approved 9 to 1 through a phone poll, prior to their scheduled meeting. However, BLM didn't do enough outreach to public to explain the fee proposal, including needs and suggested use of the fees. More public input will be sought before they will bring it back to RRAC.

Bob Warren reiterated there is a disconnect between fees collected and services provided and asked Mike if this will be explained in subsequent public involvement. Mike assured that BLM will do a better job of reaching out to the public and explaining the situation before bringing before the RRAC.

### **Discussion Points:**

- Bob Warren stressed that the RRAC doesn't want poorly executed proposals to come before the board. We want you to bring forward your proposals that have met your criteria, otherwise don't bring them forward. He said the FS did not bring 26 proposals forward because they were not ready and they are only bringing the 4 forward that were ready. He then asked Don Klusman why there was so much support for the fee increase at Imperial Dunes previously. Don explained that the BLM is not stating that they lost \$2 million/year that they used to get from the State of CA Off-Road Division, but the Greensticker grant program has now declined. The BLM has completely changed the area to become more family friendly and not the renegade area that it used to be. Agencies need to be very transparent about what happened in the past, including when funding has gone away. Example: State of CA pulling trash collection funding. BLM did not have appropriated dollars to have trash collection. Originally BLM was reluctant to provide trash collection but users asked for it and requested they apply for a State Off highway vehicle (OHV) grant which is how it had been funded. Public needs to know the history and budget picture. The cost for collections is an issue with the public so take a look at that. He asked that when the agencies say the visitation is down, give the numbers, and maybe show a percentage. He said when you have high use and go from 200,000 to 190,000 that really isn't down.
- Chris Oberti stated that the mood of general public is that they are getting blasted for everything they do. What are we getting for the money that we're spending? Public is going to get angrier because they feel like they're not being told the truth. Budgets have to be accurate, agencies are targeted. Explain the money trail.
- Paul McFarland stated that BLM needs to go through public hearing for fee proposal and their DAC before they come to the RRAC, like the FS internal fee advisory board. Rather than a phone vote, or anything that isn't open to the public comment. Mike Ayers: it is our process to be public and put it forward before the DAC, we were trying to hasten the process before they met through the phone canvassing due to RRAC meeting date. Paul said the FS was in a similar boat because they wanted to get increased fees before the summer camping season, but proposals weren't completed properly so they didn't bring them forward.
- Nate Rangel said that what the agencies bring forward to the RRAC will reflect back in DC and taking this kind of responsibility will bode well.

- RRAC members commended BLM for pulling their proposal for consideration today because it needs public involvement.
- Marlene Finley shared information regarding the other 26 fee increase proposals that the board wasn't reviewing today. Stated that many weren't forwarded for consideration because they didn't follow R5 minimum standards for involving the public. In some cases, the FS was doing public involvement, but didn't meet the regional timelines. RRAC members commended the Forest Service for their emphasis on public involvement for the proposals.
- Danna Stroud stated that we have expectations of the agencies since we take the brunt of some of this and we shouldn't accept less. We should have a higher standard because these are our public lands, we shouldn't allow sloppiness. She acknowledged the workload of the agency employees but we can't be sloppy. She thanked the FS for sticking to these standards.
- Chris Oberti asked Marlene if each forest had a business plan, businesses have to look at long and short range plans but the government business plan doesn't. Marlene responded by explaining three different levels of business planning. Several years ago, each forest completed a business plan like National Park Service. FS also did the Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA) and prioritized investments that are made to facilities. The RFA was tremendously helpful for the agencies being successful in being allocated Land and Water Conservation Act fee funds that had been held by Office of Management and Budget and to guide us in project submittals for American Recovery and Restoration Act funds. FS also has operating costs and financial investment information that Tamara Wilton is going to present today. Chris said the agencies need to be more accountable; people want to enjoy public lands. She acknowledged that employees were retiring and there were vacancies but that there was still work to do.
- Dick Dasmann stated that agencies need to do a better job of public involvement, and talk to interest groups, clubs, hiking groups more than they do now. For example something still lacking in spite of all the work the Sequoia has done with the public which resulted in 200 people showing up upset at a meeting. Bob Warren asked what the agency responsibility is in posting campground increases. Tamara Wilton said that FS fee increase proposals need to be posted during the time when most of the users are visiting, and this is one of the big requirements that the Region 5 Fee Board looks at.

- Danna Stroud asked how are we engaging the public in the process, we need to be in a dialogue not a monologue. We all struggle with engaging the public.
- Don Klusman stated in the real world you don't hear from folks unless they are mad.
- Mike Ayers said the most of the comments on the Imperial Sand Dunes came from a meeting with the American Sand Rail Association on May 3 which is what generated the comments and email writing campaign.
- Angela Coleman agreed that we need to build agreement with the public and need to build legitimacy.

Tamara Wilton presented fee proposals from the Plumas NF.

<b>Proposal Name &amp; Location</b>	<b>REA Proposal</b>	<b>RRAC Recommendation</b>
<b>Gold Lake CG Plumas NF</b>	<b>New fee of \$10/night</b>	Don Klusman moved to approve the proposal. Paul McFarland seconds.  Approved unanimously.
<p><b>Discussion and Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Described public involvement process and Regional Fee Board review prior to bringing the proposal forward to the RRAC.</li> <li>▪ Some comments state that people don't agree with fees in general while others said that while the proposed price was reasonable, they appreciated that it was free. On the other hand, some commented that they didn't mind new fees and were looking forward to new facilities. Visitor Bureau and concessionaires supported fees. Elected officials thought the \$10 fee was appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Bob Warren asked how it was determined to charge a fee. Tamara Wilton responded that the Recreation Facility Analysis asked forests to look at things such as occupancy rates, backlog of maintenance, and operating costs for the program.</li> <li>▪ Bob Warren remarked that no where else but in government can one say that they're charging for something and not show the improvement right away. Tamara Wilton responded by noting that it is hard to see the invisible amenities such as a clean campground.</li> <li>▪ Don Klusman asked if proposals were going to be voted on individually, or as a block. Bob Warren confirmed that these proposals would be voted on individually.</li> <li>▪ Patricia Gatz asked if the proposals were advertised as a group or</li> </ul>		

individually. Tamara Wilton responded that proposals are posted as a group in the Federal Register and comments are for the block of proposals.

- Patricia Gatz suggested fee proposals should be advertised through flyers at the site.
- Proposals were posted for 3 years at these campgrounds. Judy Schaber, Plumas National Forest, stated that because notices were posted for so long, they had good dialogue at the field with the public. Most commented that they valued the rustic nature of the campgrounds and understood the necessity of the fee. She also described that campers are mostly from the Reno/Sparks area, Sacramento, Bay Area, and Sierra Foothill communities. While some campers visit for a maximum of two weeks, they do get a surge of visitation on the weekends. These campsites have a long history and a lot of public support.

<b>Gold Lake 4X4 CG</b>	<b>New fee of \$10/night</b>	Bob Warren moved to vote on the issue. Members all voted no except for Dick Dasmann.  Proposal did not pass.
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**Discussion:**

- Paul McFarland pointed out that the forest has agreed to free camping for OHV support groups in return for volunteer work. Judy Schaber from the Plumas said that this would be a part of the volunteer agreement. OHV support groups started and help maintain this site.
- Don Klusman asked what the \$5k in deferred maintenance \$5k was for? Schaber identified it as barrier work and replacing picnic tables.
- Don Klusman stated that he cannot support this particular fee proposal. This campsite was built with OHV state funds to begin with, and previously maintained by OHV support groups. There is no water, no permanent restroom facilities, no garbage service, and the OHV groups would rather it stay as a primitive campground and work to maintain it rather than being charged for it. He said that the agency would lose more than you'll ever gain if you charged this for this campground.
- Bob Warren asked how the level of amenities is determined, and what's considered reasonable protection. Tamara Wilton states that reasonable protection means that you can expect to see someone in a uniform sometime during your stay, and you'll get someone when you call for help.
- Nate Rangel asked Don Klusman how we should manage the campground given that funds are limited and might be going away (OHV Grant). Don replied that funds are not allocated yet. The State OHV Division has now redesigned grant funding. There has been a three year dry period of non-allocated funds, but hopefully these funds will now become available. Nate Rangel then asked Judy Schaber if the forest

has applied for these funds in the past. Judy responded that they do in fact apply for these annually, but that they have been unsuccessful in the last three years. It is soft grant money, and it is difficult to count on that for maintaining campground operations. Chris: Didn't our OHV yearly license just double to \$54/year for a green sticker? Will that fund grow and we can tap into it?

- Patricia Gatz asked Don Klusman if his constituency is against fees, or the amount of fees. Klusman responded that he previously supported other fee increases, but is just uncomfortable with this particular proposal. The dollar amount isn't the issue. It is more the fact that they are charging for something that the volunteer groups have put so much work into. Maybe at some point if the Forest is unable to get State OHV money, they might reconsider their position.
- Monte Hendricks asked the Forest what the OHV grant fund would be used for if acquired. Judy Schaber explained that grant funds would be applied towards personnel time. While they have groups that help with different projects, they still need to maintain the campground several times a week. The Forest doesn't have enough to maintain the campground without the OHV funds.
- Danna Stroud suggested to re-visit this proposal a year from now, once they have a better understanding of the OHV funding situation. The Forest should bring forward this proposal again if the funding situation doesn't improve. Paul McFarland agreed, and suggested that we need to understand the OHV funding program better, perhaps a presentation from the State at the next meeting

<b>Goose Lake CG</b>	<b>New fee of \$10/night</b>	Don Klusman moved to approve this proposal. Nate Rangel seconds. Unanimous approval.
<p>Discussion:</p> <p>Don: Motion for Nate: Second</p> <p>Yes all the way around.</p>		
<b>Haven Lake CG</b>	<b>New fee of \$5/night</b>	Nate Rangel moved to approve. Monte Hendricks seconds. Bob Warren and proxy for Linda McMillan vote No, all others vote Yes. Proposal Approved
Discussion:		

- Amenities at Haven are lower than they are at the other three. Therefore, the fee board lowered the proposed fee to \$5 dollars.
- Bob Warren asked if there is a bottom threshold for fee collection where it makes sense to collect a fee. Tamara Wilton stated that even a little bit helps, particularly when you're providing trash service, it can make a difference on whether you can provide it or not. Bob Warren also asked if the FS does charge a fee, can they upgrade the facility when the fees are implemented. Tamara said that while they can upgrade, they can't do it right away.
- Don: With 4 campsites and the amount of money that is brought in, we're spinning our wheels on that. Dick Dasmann countered that portable toilets are still provided, and a minimal \$5 fee can help with that. Garbage collection also occurs there.
- Bob Warren asked at what point does primitive campground camping become more developed campground camping. Tamara Wilton responded that one can address it with types of materials you put in, like wood picnic table vs. concrete tables.

<b>Imperial Sand Dunes</b>	<b>Increase off site permits from \$25/week to \$40/week and \$90/season to \$140/season</b> <b>Increase on site permits from \$40/week to \$60/week and \$120/season to \$180/season</b>	Note: BLM has withdrawn the proposal.
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**Additional Updates**

Marlene Finley shared that a review of High Impact Recreation Areas (HIRA) produced a report that will be coming from the Washington Office. Results will be shared when they become available. FS Manual and Handbook direction will have guidance forthcoming for dealing with area fees. RRAC members will hear about this at the next meeting. The review looked at all 96 HIRAs in nation. We learned that even though we scaled back a lot of our area fees over the years, there is still a lot of widespread support. In general, we get very few complaints. There is a high level of public acceptance, but also some vocal pockets of dissention.

Bob Warren asked if reviewers went out and talked to individual managers. Tamara Wilton responded that they did a database query and all forests

responded. Bob Warren also raised the concern that CA has 32 of 96 HIRAs, and wonders if the RRAC will have to review them by a certain time limit? Tamara confirmed that there was short time limit, but that the WO is aware of CA having 32 HIRAs. There is a rigorous timeframe so far, but nothing is set yet. Bob Warren also asked that if the report comes out before the next RRAC meeting in September, is the intent that some of those HIRAs will come up for discussion at our next meeting? Tamara Wilton responded no, because field trips would be incorporated into the review. Bob Warren and the rest of the RRAC group supported discussing the San Gabriel area at the next meeting since the group has already visited that location.

Tamara Wilton provided the following updates:

Inyo NF Update on the transition of Red's Meadow to the Upper San Joaquin Recreation Area including a shuttle to Devil's Postpile National Monument.

- The Forest and ESTA (Eastern Sierra Transit Authority) came to an agreement that ESTA will run shuttle this summer. Jeff Marsolais, Recreation Staff Officer on the Inyo NF, presented this in October 2008 and mentioned that fee would stay the same. This fee goes to ESTA to run shuttle system. Everyone who drives down to Red's Meadow also pays the fee, and can use the shuttle as well while in the area. There will be no fee when the bus is not running. The Inyo will engage the public to discuss potential options for proposed fees on the Inyo.
- Danna: Public outreach needs to be significant for this project as it will have a big impact on the local economy. We are glad to see the partnership go through between ESTA and the Inyo, but partnership is only at the agency level right now. There needs to be guest interaction.
- Dick stated that it is vitally important that the RRAC visit Red's Meadow for the fall meeting as it will be a national example.

Lee Vining campgrounds

- Five campgrounds were acquired through a land exchange three or four years ago. Campgrounds were operated temporarily by a concessionaire that came with property when the exchange happened. FS has taken over the operation of campgrounds, and will be operating two of the campgrounds this summer while completing improvements on the rest of them. The Forest will bring potential fee changes in September to RRAC.

Shasta-Trinity NF

- A concessionaire has quit their operations of x fee sites. The Forest is now operating the campgrounds with the same fee until a new prospectus can be completed to find another concessionaire.

Marlene Finley reminded the RRAC that they asked the FS to review how the agency is addressing public concerns on Sequoia NF regarding their financial tracking and public involvement. Tamara Wilton has worked with the Sequoia to

track their financial statements to be responsive to RRAC and public. However, this work is not feasible region-wide due to the amount of time and personnel it takes to produce this type of report. REA only requires the agencies to report every three years in the established format. Tina Terrell, Sequoia NF Forest Supervisor, is also here to answer questions.

Tamara Wilton shared that the FS and other Federal agencies are finishing the triennial report (2006-8) to Congress. FS collects all this info on annual basis, but doesn't roll it up nationally except for once every three years.

- Region 5 collections are down 11.24% from 2007 to 2008, partly due to the extraordinary fire season last year which closed many campgrounds.
- Our regional cost of collection is 14%. FS tries to keep this at or below 15%. We roll that up at the state and national level.
- Expense categories. REA requires us to report in expense categories – visitor services, habitat restoration, repair and maintenance, etc. and then we separate out the RRAC costs as well.

Tamara Wilton helped Sequoia NF track their financials line by line to show the collections and expenses for the forest. You heard concerns from Mr. Weichers this morning about the cost of their accounting system and cost for software spent by the Forest. The \$24,000 spent was for the CASH program, which streamlines the cash collection and handling process. Therefore, it is not an accounting system as described earlier by Mr. Weichers. It does not track expenditures or where collections come from other than in relationship to the passes sold at the district. It is similar to a "Point of Sale" inventory tracking system. The fee board supported the development of the CASH program in Southern CA, and Sequoia bought this same system. Nationally the FS is now moving forward with implementing new "Point of Sale" technologies which will include handheld credit card readers and check scanners and we will be testing this in S. Ca. It will be compatible with the CASH program.

For collections the Sequoia took the collections financial report as produced by ASC (FS Albuquerque Service Center) as the starting point to track collections. Tamara reviewed the collections for interagency pass sales and noted that 80% stays at forest level, 20% goes to national office. She reviewed collections for recreation and REA special use permit fees and noted that 80% of every dollar stays on the forest to support services and improvements and 15% is deposited in a separate job code to support collecting the revenues. She noted that because forests don't typically use 15% to support cost of collections the account does build up. Every 2 years or so, FS does an adjustment to move unused cost of collections revenue into the FDDS (80% account) and the money is used to support on- the-ground services and improvements.

Total on forest collections for the first quarter of FY 2009 for Sequoia NF are \$207,196.37. Mr. Weichers mentioned concerns about the 5% that is missing. Tamara noted that 5% of all forest's collections are deposited in a Regional Office fund, named FDAS. The regional Fee Board recommends how these funds are spent and they are used for support costs for the RRAC, travel for fee board members, and the FDAS regional grant program. This grant program funds special forest projects for maintenance and improvements, habitat restoration, and recreation interns.

Bob Warren referred back to the data mistakes that Peter Weichers pointed out in the public forum. Tamara Wilton stated that Mr. Weichers was referring to something older than the 2009 report she had worked on and since she had not worked on that she couldn't address that specifically, or how those numbers were generated and shown. Confusion could have come from the difference between fiscal and calendar year and how the expenses hit the books. She described it like your checkbook; some of those checks might not have hit the bank, so your total doesn't match. You don't always balance, but if you look at it from a fiscal year financial basis, it adds up to what was spent and collected for that year.

Tina Terrell addressed questions from RRAC members regarding Weichers' package of information and photographs. The Sequoia had a number of public meetings regarding the fees collected, and yes, fiscal and calendar year is different. For the past 1.5 yrs, the Sequoia has increased the number of staff in Kern River area. Tina reiterated that the situation with the Lake Isabella toilets should have never happened, and is being corrected now. The initial figures presented on the slide from Mr. Weichers were incorrect. We then modified that, and the second set of numbers is different, and the correct set of numbers. This is now posted on the website. We should have explained why the numbers changed.

Tamara Wilton presented the detailed expense sheet, similar to the collections sheet. Categorized expenses were detailed line by line. All expenditures were split by cost of collection, total recreation expenditures, outfitting guiding, rec events. Tina Terrell stated that a portion of the \$800k balance will be spent on renovating a campground.

Marlene Finley responded to RRAC's request for a follow-up report on fee increases and what's been done on the ground. Tamara Wilton presented a spreadsheet of how fee dollars were used, and what fees were implemented. This spreadsheet will be posted on the RRAC website. Discussion:

- Things that didn't quite get implemented. Clear Creek OHV area – BLM implemented fee, but EPA closed the site. BLM trying to move forward with reopening.
- Danna Stroud asked did we get a graphic for a "Your Fees at Work" in place? Are we getting the message out? Tamara Wilton responded that

signs are available for units to use. We also have accomplishment reports available on the website, and handouts that can be used in offices.

- Bob Warren asked to check on sites that have fees approved by the RRAC to see if they have their “Fees at Work” signs posted and provide a report. He asked to have some pictures in the report.
- Nate Rangel stated that this kind of implementation report is helpful for when Congress looks at REA. It helps people look at what’s working, and what isn’t. It also helps RRAC verify projections. It’s a tool that makes it possible for us to work in the real world.
- Chris Oberti stated that a Fresno bee article, written by Mark Janowski, has been critical of fees. It was written last December. This Implementation report can be useful in answering criticisms. Marlene Finley asked Chris to provide the contact so that the FS Public Affairs staff can work with them.
- Paul McFarland asked if they could see projected vs. actual fee revenues. Tamara Wilton stated that FS doesn’t track revenues to the site. What Tamara has done for the Sequoia is huge and labor intensive. We’re not required by Congress to report past the Forest level. We use INFRA database to make estimates about revenue and expenses, but we can’t say what we actually collected by site. She said we will look at what we can provide that type of information for some sites.
- Don Klusman asked how do you know how much to spend if you don’t know how much was taken in at the site. Tamara Wilton explained that money collected from a fee site can be spent on any other fee site on the forest and it all is deposited in to one account. This was the big switch from the Fee Demo program where it was deposited site by site. Some forests have cuff records down to the site, but it is up to the forest.
- Danna Stroud stated that the RRAC needs to look at the impact of what proposals they approve.
- Nate Rangel complimented the Sequoia, Cleveland, and Eldorado for providing implementation details.

Marlene Finley shared that the agency has received American Recovery and Restoration Act funds and started work on our first 10% projects. Just last week, a list came out for fuel reduction projects, posted on the national website. We are still waiting to hear about roads, trails, and facilities funding.

Next Meeting – September 16-17, 2009. Due to location of meeting on the Inyo NF the members will need to plan the 15 and 18 as travel days.

Thank you to Patricia Gatz for serving on the RRAC.

Meeting adjourned 3:03pm by Marlene Finley.