

Kern and Tulare Counties Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)

June 30, 2010 - Meeting Notes

Meeting called to order 5:06 p.m.

Priscilla Summers, designated federal official for RAC sent around sign-up sheet, handouts available at side table and booklet sent out to RAC members about Secure Rural School funding. Housekeeping, reviewed agenda.

RAC Members/Alternates: Shannon Alto, Larry Duysen, Julie Allen, Jack Shannon, Ann Lange, Larry Stoneburner, Marily Reese, Mike Ennis, Deborah Hess, Tom Moore, Judy Hyatt, Pam Canby, Dwight Chaddock, Mark Cave,

Public : Debbie Hopkins , Jim Chavack, Chuck White, Chris White

Forest Service Employees: Priscilla Summers, Designated Federal Official, Rick Larson, Assistant Federal Official, Brenda Ehmann, Kern River Deputy District Ranger, Penelope Shibley, Coordinator, Denise Alonzo, Notetaker.

Old Business

Discussed minutes from May meeting: Larry Stoneburner motioned to accept the minutes, Deborah Hess seconded, unanimously approved.

New Business

Presentation Regarding how other RACs evaluate projects to recommend to Forest Supervisor: John Exline, Hume Lake District Ranger

- co-chairs Fresno RAC with Sierra National Forest, Fresno County split with Sequoia/Sierra.
- presented several examples of Fresno RAC
- Recommends electing chairperson and vice chair person
- Fresno RAC Chair/co-chair serves on a one-year basis
- Fresno RAC reviews projects/monitors previous projects at a meeting in September, then Oct - Jan accepts proposals.
- Fresno County likes RAC form filled out, applicant to contact Forest Service to ensure project fits legislation so applicants don't waste time filling out paperwork.
- Lassen does the same, they are top players with lots of money. Lassen screens projects by asking for pre-proposals, then votes on pre-proposals.
- Applicants come in and talk to committee about proposal - 10 minute presentation.
- Fresno averages \$200 - 205,000 per year, 15 proposals. RAC ranks proposals then reconvenes to vote.

Questions (Q), Answers, (A) and Comments (C) with John Exline:

Q - Is there a ranking criteria for projects?

A - Fresno RAC decides on that as a group.

C - Should not bother to vote on project unless it's a "doable" project. (John)

- Fresno RAC likes projects that are leveraged, gives them preference.
- Lassen has presentations regarding projects, then at the end picks out which to fund. The ones at the bottom may be funded later if money left. They don't like to recommend multi-year funding projects.

Q - Consider training discussion of applicant to learn how to fill out application?

A - Recommend contact with Forest Service to clarify how best to fill out application. They have not held a "community workshop" for filling out application.

- NEPA needs to be finished on Lassen and Fresno, need "shovel ready" projects since those RACS won't fund NEPA. This RAC could choose to do things differently.

Q - Any projects on private property?

A - Yes - 2, one at Hume Lake Christian Camp (erosion project) and one in County

Q - Will you partially fund a project?

A - Yes, discuss with applicant.

Q - Will projects be fully funded?

A - Yes, normally only last one may be partially funded

*Remember - all money needs to be obligated by September 30, 2012.

- In Fresno RAC Coordinator take notes, no facilitator, chair and DFO reviews minutes/ and sets agenda.
- Committee accommodates most things, very flexible.
- Adjourn/wrap up/schedule meetings for year in September.
- Fresno County RAC meetings alternate between Prather/Clovis.
- Lassen meets in Susanville, does occasional field trips.
- Group discussions have been consistent on rating projects

Q - Can we fund interpretive/education/youth projects?

A - Original legislation specified education, but current legislation does not. Fresno County Consortium funds groups of students to do project work through RAC funds but also does education as part of their projects.

Q - Did Fresno RAC approve a project to approve/fund meeting rooms, food, advertisements, postings in federal register.

A - \$3,000 as an open account and was approved to cover several years worth of this. Originally funded snacks but nobody ate them so occasionally board members would bring goodies. Can spend money to pay for travel but neither Lassen nor Fresno do this.

Q - two counties, how are procedures handled

A - two pots of money have to be spent in county where money is collected. Rep from each county board participates but FS approves proposals, not county board of supervisors.

Q/Clarification - one project that crosses county line?

A - Ask Chris Nota, past project included paving road to trailhead in neighboring county, answer was No. RAC money needs to be spent in geographical area where derived. Perhaps could split money, check if project proposed across counties.

Closing Remarks - pleasure serving on RACs - likes collaboration, getting people around the table to review projects, even with different perspectives. This opens communication and builds relationships.

Elect Chair

- Larry Stoneburner gave out handout on ideas to consider, for RAC Chair election, followed by open discussion.
 - o Motion to have co-chairman - one from each county perhaps trade off who runs the meeting? Suggestion of every other meeting would be run by one of two co-chairs, facilitate one, advocate in the next - suggestion - Chair from Tulare County, Vice from Kern.

Q - What is distribution of Tulare County vs. Kern County assigned to RAC

A - Almost twice as many in Tulare as in Kern. Perhaps when this was assembled this was discussed that Tulare has more money.

*Our RAC doesn't have a number of years ahead of us, the money has to be obligated by September 30, 2012.

Q - What are chair duties?

A - Priscilla looked at charter and noted that chairperson should be elected for one year term.

Comment - co-chairs don't work, better to have chair/vice chair

Julie Allen motioned, Thomas Moore seconded that RAC going by "Robert's Rules," all approved.

Larry Stoneburner motioned we have a chair person from one county, vice chair from second county, Ann Lange seconded, all approved.

Nominations for Chair? Julie Allen (Tulare Co) as chairman?

- Larry Stoneburner suggested we find out who wants to do it, willing, opposed?
- Julie Allen would be willing to serve but husband having health issues so may be unavailable for extended periods of time.

Nominations for Chair: – Julie Allen and Mark Cave (Tulare Co.)

Nominations for Vice Chair: Debbie Hess (Kern Co.) as Vice Chair.

Larry Duysen moved nominations be closed, Larry Stoneburner seconded, all in favor.

Discussion by those nominated for Chair...

Julie would bring to RAC an integrated approach, knows a fair amount about Forest (35 years), Riverlands Trust, how cities grow in this county. Bring a very broad perspective, watershed mgmt, urban, all “connected” likes 2-fers and 3-fers and how do we do these.

Mark Cave, dentist, involved with Kaweah Flyfishers. Worked with them actively since 1992 helping with waterways in Forest, specifically fishing. Involved with CA association of 4-wheel drive clubs in Modesto/Kern. Want to see public maintain access. Works as volunteer, wants to become more involved with forest. Country facing issues, how to take care of recreation on forest land critical. Wants lasting relationship between people/forest. Off highway volunteer on Sierra. Graduate of volunteer leadership training. Involved with Fresno RAC.

Larry Stoneburner motioned the RAC use a secret ballot, Marily Reese seconded, all in favor.

Break - during break Priscilla handed out blank note cards for people to vote on.

Votes:

Julie - 5 votes

Mark - 8 votes - voted in as Chairman

Larry Stoneburner motioned that Deborah Hess be voted in as co-chair, Pam Canby seconded, all in favor.

By Laws or Operating Guidelines

Julie Allen motioned that we accept charter as bylaws, adopt that RAC works within charter, but on an as needed basis develop additional lines as bylaws. Adopt charter as is, utilize as operating guidelines

Larry motioned, Jack Shannon seconded to adopt regional charter as our operating charter, all if favor motion carried.

Review of “Questions to Consider” handout prepared by Priscilla:

Note taker? Penelope Shibley will take on responsibility including that of data entry.

How to deal with financing note taker, Penelope's time? website, etc. If RAC agrees to an expenditure of funds for overhead it goes to pay for employees, paid for by Forest Service.

Q - How much overhead do we need?

A - We need to receive proposal from Forest Service for overhead expenses for RAC group to evaluate.

Q - When to use email, teleconference or conference calls for business/voting, webinar?.

A - Keep options open, especially during winter months.

Q - Meeting conduct - be considerate, on time -

A - Discussion not needed at this time since it's not an issue.

C - Larry Stoneburner suggests we utilize "google" to allow each RAC member to edit documents?

Committee needs to develop own ground rules, RAC members come first, public needs to come second.

C - Publish call for projects in Bakersfield, Porterville, Visalia papers.

Q - How do we want the public to interact?

A - Suggestion on part of agenda, 15 minutes after opening of new business, write it down and provide 3 minutes for one person, total shall not exceed 9 minutes per topic for public to comment. Also consider "agendized"/non "agendized" items? Need to look at that. This is the RAC's meeting held in public. When public makes comments we don't have to comment back to them - We can simply note as a comment.

C - Identify ways to deal with conflicts of interest. A RAC member can vote on a project proposal but cannot propose the project to the RAC.

Q - Will FS employees be present even without overhead money taken off top?

A - Yes. Data entry will have to get done, and will get done by Penelope Shibley.

Q - Media - how do we advertise, how do we pay, who do we advertise with?

A - Agenda item of how do we as RAC members get record of law - Bakersfield Californian, Porterville Recorders are newspapers of record that our meeting announcements have to be included in. Formal notices need to be paid for - must be paid for. Announcements for projects may or may not have to be paid for - advertising?

C - Larry Stoneburner commented that greatest paper is Valley Voice and it's free. Kern River Courier is also free, localized.

C - In Fresno RAC, meetings are held in FS offices. Proposal needed for overhead - not to exceed 3 percent.

Q - Need for facilitator?

A – Not at this time, but hold open option to help us through project selection or how to organize and select projects.

Suggestion to get the game plan out to start getting things done - something done this year. Chair wants to see proposals of how to request proposals - put out word for proposals in August, review proposals in September.

C - Step back, consider “theme” of commonality for example water quality. Agree on common theme, then solicit projects based on themes.

Agenda for next meeting -

- Deal with types of proposals and sorts of criteria
- Julie Allen offered to re-write operating guides to represent this group
- How to consider projects, what sorts of projects, what does the law say?

C - In the next 30 days the State is changing the age of hazardous equipment operation only done by kids over 18, not 16 – may affect proposals?

Q - Is trail maintenance considered road project?

A – No – but could fall under watershed improvement if problems are identified.

C - Project proposals for operating budget - try to do most by email, focus on types of proposals and selection criteria.

C - Need to identify process, look at link on website.

Additional agenda item - each person prepare a one page of “who I am” document and interests so each of the RAC group knows about each other.

Schedule September meeting at next meeting.

Agenda Item - how to communicate on the computer?

Meeting adjourned 8:00 p.m.