

Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: June 05, 2013
Location: Glenwood Suites, Glenwood Springs, CO
Note taker: Jane Leche, USFS

Agenda Item #1: Welcome, Introductions, Roll Call, RRAC/REA Overview, Travel Logistics

Meeting convened at: 8:05 am

INTRODUCTIONS/CO RRAC Members Present (quorum was reached):

1. **Janelle Kukuk** (Winter Motorized): Past president Colorado Snowmobile Association; from Creede, CO
2. **Debra Gregory-Mitchener** (Hunting/Fishing): Family owned business - Melody Lodge Cabins at Green Mountain Reservoir in Summit County.
3. **Leslie Miller** (Outfitter Guides/Non-Motorized): from Eagle, CO; horse outfitter at Copper Mountain; takes out trail rides from the resort
4. **Bret Roller** (Local Environmental Groups): Has a non-profit 501 (c) 3 dedicated to affecting (?) future generations – back to the outdoors; lives just outside of Denver in Indian Hills
5. **Steve Pittel** (Outfitter Guides/Motorized): Nova Guides – last meeting-put his 4 years in; expires in July
6. **Don Riggle** (Summer Motorized): runs a 501 (c) 3 “Trails Preservation Alliance
7. **Rob White** (Summer Non-Motorized): manager of the Arkansas Headwaters State Park – Salida, CO
8. **Kessley LaRose** (Affected Indian Tribes): Ute Indian Tribe; Ethno-Botanist and Archaeologist; from Utah
9. **Ian Steyn** (State Tourism): serves on the Colorado State Tourism Board serving on the outdoor recreation seat; chief caretaker for Yogi Bear at his Jellystone Park on I-25 halfway between Denver and Colorado Springs at Larkspur; happy to be joining the meeting by phone due to illness.

Public and US Forest Service personnel in attendance:

1. **Dave Scherer:** Member of the Western Slope No Fee Coalition (WSNFC); longtime volunteer at the Fitton Guard Station
2. **Kitty Benzar:** President of the WSNFC
3. **Scott Condon:** Aspen Times Reporter
4. **Tom Malacek:** USFS; District Ranger, Divide Ranger District out of Del Norte and Creede, CO
5. **Steve Brigham:** USFS; works in Recreation on the Divide District in Del Norte, CO
6. **Rich Doak:** USFS; Lands and Recreation Staff Officer on the White River National Forest
7. **Jane Leche:** USFS; acting Fee [Program] Coordinator and RRAC Coordinator

JK: Introduces Jim Bedwell; Arizona native; worked in CO for years; Arapaho-Roosevelt NF; went to Washington DC office (WO); worked in the mid-west where she met him; back through WO and is excited he is back in Colorado

8. **Jim Bedwell** – thanks RRAC members for giving of time on the committee; important role they play in providing services and outdoor recreation opportunities in the National Forest System; recognizes members have busy lives but it demonstrates they care enough about this area whether it is connecting children to the outdoors, representing their particular constituent group and interest, or business interests; recognizes they don't have to do this and appreciate their caring about what USFS is trying to provide. Read last meeting's minutes and bios and appreciated seeing what their interest were and why they are there. Thank you for caring. Thanks members of public, Mr. Scherer and Ms. Benzar who also care about outdoor recreation on the national forest system and put in a lot of time recreating and representing views for themselves and others – all part of the dialogue about how we provide those recreation opportunities.

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Thanks the USFS folks present who work really hard and care a lot to provide the best recreation opportunities for the public; a lot of people in the room are very interested and care a lot about providing the best recreation opportunities we can; believes the USFS has the most challenging job of providing outdoor recreation opportunities of any one entity in the country; the breadth of our mission, the diversity recreation opportunities we provide is unmatched by really a challenge to provide the opportunities that people appreciate and that benefit communities and protect the land at the same time and provide for a degree of public safety - FS triple bottom line in a way; also with the bottom line of fiscal responsibility and doing this in challenging budget environments; a lot of people caring, a lot of people involved – some real challenges.

Had read their bios, spend a little time talking about his past and getting to know him; looks forward to working with all them whether they are leaving the RRAC or continuing after today or in the interest of providing recreation and the issues surrounding that – within the Rocky Mountain Region/state of Colorado. He is a “westerner”, did not grow up rural like a lot of USFS people; grew up “suburban” – dad worked for General Electric; forged his connection to the land through outdoor recreation experiences – Boy Scouts, dad taking family fishing, camping and hiking – together; fell in love with the land through those experiences; over time got into more activities - boating, canoeing, etc – tried to raise his own kids that way. Understands the issues of a changing society and wanting to connect people to the land, long term conservation of these lands, gain an appreciation – they become involved, pursue careers either with [land] management agencies or advocacy groups, and believes recreation is a big connector to people continuing to support conservation of these landscapes that are important to all of us. Is a Viet Nam era veteran; earned a degree from the University of AZ in Landscape Architecture, had his own design/ build practice for several years; has now spent 34 years in the USFS; started out in AZ and NM, Puerto Rico (USFS’s only tropical rainforest), stint in Washington, Eastern Region (met Janelle K on snowmobile issues); brief stint in the Washington Office, then 6 years as Forest Supervisor on Arapaho-Roosevelt NF/ Pawnee National Grassland in Ft. Collins, CO, high recreation/urban interface forest; back to WO- Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources Director for over 6 years; his wife became weary of WA DC, kids live out in CO, finally reassigned out here [Denver area]. Grateful to be home, closer to the land and family and to continue to enjoy the outdoors. Now has Recreation, Heritage, Wilderness, Lands and Minerals programs. Big scope, working on consolidating staff – managing Recreation, Lands and Minerals – happy to be here.

Touched on earlier, is proud of USFS, has the biggest challenge and most diverse opportunities for recreation than any entity in the world; total visitation is about 177 million nation-wide - 22 million (?) in the Rocky Mountain Region; Colorado and this region are known for outdoor recreation opportunities. Other than being a forest supervisor, has been in recreation his entire career. Face those challenges How can we do the best recreation possible and [still] protect the environment, maintain the resource and provide for public safety. Established the [national] Framework for Sustainable Recreation. Primary aspect is “sustainable” - a key word; “sustainable financial foundation” – one of the ways to sustain recreation. Four pillars of the framework: 1. appropriated funds 2. Non-profits and volunteers to help manage and provide opportunities; 3.) For-profit outfitter/guides, concessions, service partners with us have a pretty high value, have the means to provide opportunities that would be too costly otherwise 4.) Fees – authorized and retained under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). All are part of the “formula” – some appropriate in some places others are appropriate in other places; there is no magic formula - which is the right tool for what use (except maybe operating ski areas – USFS started out operating ski areas with non-profits in the beginning, that model has moved). All about a balance in choosing the right “tool”. They all support one another; appropriations are at the heart of this - they provide the staffing capacity to exercise the other three to make decisions about what the best tool is at the time. Fees also provide some core capacity often - that we use support non-profits and volunteers and to leverage those dollars quite a bit. Considers all four pillars to be vital components in working to advance every one of those and making them the optimal approach. It’s all about sustainability – huge challenge, hundreds of millions of acres, tens of thousands of facilities, choosing wisely what investments we maintain over time, how we maintain those investments, and how we sustain them into the future so we can continue to provide those benefits for

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outdoor recreation – what it’s all about. Recreation Facilities Analysis – which are providing the best benefit for the cost and meeting the “niches” and demands that people look for with us. RFA worked hand in hand with our four sources of resources so we can be as most efficient as we can. When we apply those kind of tools like RFA it considers all four of the means of providing those resources – what fits best for what situation. It’s all about sustainability; protecting and maintaining those investments so we can provide the best recreation opportunities and meet the triple bottom line. RRAC has a big role in one of those but it interacts with many others. His role as Designated Federal Officer (DFO) is to make sure laws and bylaws are followed in the conduct of the meeting. It is your meeting – turns over to the chair.

JL: Covered logistics: trip up Maroon Valley, anyone who wants to come along; figure out what to do for lunch; sign-in sheet; recording – careful of boundary mics and cords and passed out forms for travel reimbursement. Questions?

JB: Reiterates taking advantage of the trip up to Maroon Bells and getting to know each other better.

JK: Public comment?

Agenda Item #2: Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Update

JB: FLREA – sunsets end of 2014; efforts are underway for reauthorization of that either for 10 years or permanent authority; there is an interagency team in WA DC working together to define what that might look like; the interagency team is composed of national directors of recreation or equivalents in the different agencies: BLM, NPS, USFWS and USFS – also USACE is participating in the discussion but not covered in FLREA. There is general support for reauthorization on the Hill, long way to go, much of Congress understands federal deficit and federal budget situation and the general distaste for additional taxes – but also the job there is to do in providing for outdoor recreation and the benefits thereof on the federal estate. A lot of details to work through; big question is do we reauthorize as is? Make some changes? That may result in a temporary extension of the existing authority for a year or two; new Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, is probably familiar with issue but may not have given it a lot of thought in terms of policy/law – this may be contributing to the one or two year extension; no one knows how much change is going to happen - team is working together to propose some legislation when working on the Hill.

JK: not much has changed except it is sun setting. Questions from the RRAC on FLREA; sunsetting?

Agenda Item #3: Public Comment Period

KB: procedural question: bylaws in the past - public comment after presentation and before you take a vote – still the case? - or do they comment on these proposals now and only now?

JK: Ask for your comments on the proposals and if something comes up during the presentation that you would like to comment on, we will allow some time after the presentation for those comments before the vote.

KB: needs clarification on procedure for when to speak – how should they signal?

JK: we’ll ask when the presentation is done. Keep comments to 5 minutes.

KB: 1.) Follow up on Jim’s comments on FLREA - Sunset is December, 2014, NPS – but the key date is Dec. 2013, \$80 interagency pass available to the public, NPS relies on the pass and sells the majority of them, good for one year from the date of purchase so after Dec. 2013 they can no longer assure people who are getting those passes that they are getting the full benefit unless something is done to extend FLREA beyond the sunset date – this year is key to the legislative process and what is happening to FLREA.

2.) Oversight hearing scheduled in the House in a couple of weeks to take a closer look at FLREA; doesn’t know who will be testifying for the agency (short an Undersecretary of Ag, etc.); she will be testifying, doesn’t know who else; other agencies have jointly requested a one year extension of FLREA as part of their 2014 budget proposals - see where that goes, Congress is taking a look.

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3.) Both in agency publications and people she's talked to in Congress and some draft language that is floating around the Hill, nobody thinks the Rec RAC process is working, no one is advocating the RecRAC process to continue. Broken down for USFS, this is the only RecRAC that currently has enough members; is assured that the Charter is signed but the old Charter expired in February but she hasn't seen it, Jim/Jane hasn't seen it, hopes there's a new charter, trusts Jane that what she knows is true; under FACA RRAC can't meet without a current Charter; get pressure on WO to get a copy. (DFO clarifies the Charter has been signed.)

4.) Last meeting in Colorado Springs she and Dave did an overview of cabin rentals in general, how fee based overnight rental is good for some cabins but not only solution and there are some cabins that don't fit as well; mentioned at last year's meeting that they did not have anything specific but on the next agenda there would be a specific proposal and they would be addressing that. *That* proposal is on the agenda today regarding the Fitton Guard Station (FGS) and Off-Cow Camp (OCC) cabins on the RGNF. When the new information was put up on website she was not pleased to see "incorrect information"; sent an email to JK and JB highlighting the various incorrect information in the proposal and it appears to be in there in order to induce RRAC to approve cabin rental based on incorrect information. Specifically it says the FGS has never been available to the public; anybody who has used it, used it illegally and is being investigated by law enforcement. They have documentation back at least as far as 1997 most likely back as far as the '80s, FGS was unlocked in 1907 or 1908, it's an historic building, it was unlocked, wasn't advertised in any way, on a remote trail, people stumbled upon it, could open the door, occasionally take shelter from a storm, first aid, just looked around and had lunch, swept the place out, kept it in good shape, and left – more than a hundred years now FGS has done very well under that regime. In October 2009 the Rio Grande NF Heritage Program Manager Angie Krall, wrote an email to SB and TM, "there are no proposed changes for FGS at this time, the Guard Station is in great shape, and "folks are taking great care of it." In the public participation summary that has been posted, assumes will be presented today, says the public was trashing the place and leaving stuff behind and the USFS has law enforcement issues there and are being investigated, there has never been a log book – there were log books that were unofficial – none of that is true – <out of time> – She is concerned about the proposal and doesn't lightly accuse people of doing things that would be somewhat lacking in integrity but in this case she can't interpret it in any other way.

JK: Dave has something to say?

DS: (Passes out handouts) Clarifies he can respond again after presentation.

JK: She will ask if there is any need for response...yes.

DS: Has people pick a number between 1 and 12. (Passes out more handouts) First heard of FGS from Vince Spero, USFS Archaeologist, back in the early 1990s; told him the cabin was open and unlocked and he took advantage of it, very enjoyable. Back in 2008 – first RecRAC meeting USFS brought the same type of proposal to the RRAC, John Murphy stated the cabin was unlocked and left unlocked. Prior to the meeting DS skied in, asked the USFS if it is unlocked (didn't want to ski in 7 hours to find it locked); was assured it was unlocked, skied in, checked log books and got some information and presented it to the RecRRAC who at the time said "no we don't feel that Fitton is a good rental" and they declined to pass it as a facility at that point.. Concurred with KB - Angie Krall, Archaeologist sent an email to John Murphy in 2010 – people are taking great care of it and we do – sweep it out, empty the mouse feces. When they go through they find the door unlocked, they go in there, see what it needs, they take care of it. The best thing it can do for the Forest Service is teach stewardship; it says we all own a part of that, we all own these resources, we all take care of it, we all do our part. Has a letter from an Archaeologist in the Pacific Northwest, restored a fire lookout, he doesn't mind if people go in there – even if they camp in there – as long as they're careful with it; so it's not a problem administratively. Also has a petition with 41 signatures asking the USFS to keep it open, not the only one suggesting by the comments. (Gets large calendar with blue dots) Took logbook; went through, looked at how heavily it is used – calendar only goes back to 1999, blue dots are the days people visited; there are no gaps; there is no time that he's been able to find that says it was locked and people couldn't get in. Logbook entries are evidence to the fact that it was open. However, points out it was day use – on an OHV trail, people have been using it as a day use site. Can explain later if there are questions, basically OHVs he's talked to say they don't want the complication of packing an OHV, driving a mile and a half, and then having to drive back to the road to fill up with gas, or put air in their tires, etc. Same thing with horse packers – a little bit different, riders don't want to ride on an OHV trail. (Cites a great video on YouTube showing 2 motorcycles

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barreling down trail and running into one of the gates because they were going so fast they couldn't stop- not a good situation. When he volunteered there in 2010, friend came up on his horse, he was the only horseback rider he had seen all year; DS was the only hiker he saw all year. It's not a hiking area it's not a horseback area - it's an OHV trail, which is great but it doesn't mean OHVers want to go in and stay in the cabins. <Out of time>

DR: clarification on discussing the public's comments/presentations first?

JK: presentation first to get both sides and then discuss; clarifies the presenter goes through proposal presentation, if the RRAC has questions – ask and then dialogue based on that.

Agenda Item #3: Presentation #1- Fitton Guard Station and Off Cow Camp Cabins - Steve Brigham (41:00)

SB: presentation – Fitton and Off Cow cabins

He took over in 2007; has interviewed a lot of Forest Service people and public; got a lot of information. Main objectives for FGS and OCC - beautiful area; unique lodging and recreation experience; 2010 got stimulus money; fixed 3 of the 4 structures and added an outhouse to OCC; through the rental program will try to prevent unauthorized use and protect the investments and also maintain USFS buildings that could be decommissioned or move them somewhere else.

Location of the cabins are depicted on a map: from Del Norte, CO about 12 miles, cabins sit in a basin on Burro Creek and Burro Creek ATV trail; from the lower trailhead closer to Del Norte (about 12 miles to get to trailhead) it's about 6 to 6.5 miles up; or drive 24-28 miles around the top towards Bennett Peak then it's about 1.5 miles to get to the cabins. 2007 crew put on a new deck, fixed the stovepipe; over the years keeping the cabin in good shape; originally on the San Juan National Forest, built in 1906-1907.

During the reconstruction, used horses to drag the logs in.

FGS – took the barn apart, all the way down to the ground, 2 guys were paid/HistoriCorps ...

TM: ATV trail goes along FGS, 10 yards from the cabin and also a trail on top of the mountain (Bennett Peak)

SB: Some of the amenities; someone stole the original stove in the 1980's; redid the floor, cleaned out all the trash; new pots and pans; sleeps 4; 2 bunk beds; no electricity; very rustic; table and chairs; firewood for the wood stove; an outhouse; creek nearby but no potable water – [visitors] would have to boil the water; old spring but water needs to be tested; fix the spring box; will try to fix it; no trash – pack in/pack out; customers would clean up for the next visitor (references similar situation at Alder Guard Station on the rental system since 2008 – very successful); also moved the toilet; replaced sill logs in the barn.

Archaeologist Vince Spero - trying to get on rental system or concession for almost 30 years but did not have a proper toilet - until an official vault toilet was put in in 2010. (More photos of ATV trail, outhouse, north side of cabin.)

Photo of the hasp with the lock hanging off taken in 2006/2007; so over the years they have attempted to keep it locked and secure but it's been broken off.

Photo of the door, sign at the top – was down lower but it was ripped off; says cannot commit trespass unless you're authorized.

Photo of public notice for comment on the door.

Photo of note; people were leaving food; if the 40 or 50 people who signed the petition left their food in the tiny little cabin how much food would be there? Rental program is a good way to stop that practice. References similar situation on his past experience on the Gallatin NF [MT] – works well.

Photo – many recreation opportunities; talked with different users and front desk staff who get phone calls from people who are interested in renting the cabin.

Proposed fee is \$25/night; occupancy in the first year possibly 25-50%; compared with Alder Guard Station which is open 6 months and is occupied 90% of the time.

Kept it \$25; locals use the area for access; hiking, ATV; amenities are “bare bone”; can't drive a pick up to it; talked of varying fees \$25-35, settled on \$25.

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Public Involvement: Rec Site monitoring, talked to the public, Federal Register notice, newspaper articles, website listing, emails, personal contacts, and visitor information staff at the front desk, and had quite a few people inquiring about the cabins. Most common question they have is when will the cabins be ready and available to rent. Fee Comparison: Elwood Cabin – at Elwood Pass on the Rio Grande NF; private cabins – very rustic, sleep 3-4 people; Lonesome Dove on Highway 160 near South Fork and then Platoro Cabin near Platoro Lake; hard to get a good comparison for similar type cabins; FGS/OCC so unique because of location. Spoke with lodge owners in South Fork regarding project to see if they were OK with it; they were fine and even referred some people who wanted a more rustic experience to Lonesome Dove (has electricity and some amenities). Prices: USFS cabin - \$50, can drive right to it; access is easy; Platoro \$55; Goodnight's wanted \$75 and \$70 at the Skyline Ranch. FGS/OCC thought that \$25 was fair; public using the cabin – locals, nationwide, people get on Recreation.gov, some people want to visit all different types of cabins across the country; some spend their whole summer vacation staying in different cabins.

How Fees Will Be Used: major – get some cookware (and replacements); FGS – stain the exterior with linseed oil (per Archaeologist's recommendation), mix with a little paint thinner or mineral spirits seem to work best to preserve the wood; issues with marmots living beneath FGS so they want to repair the foundation and take care of the marmots; there is also a corral and around the barn that they want to maintain. Also, pumping the toilet, company can come in on an ATV and pump the toilet every couple of years; could do some interpretation, will talk to the Landscape Architect and Archaeologist for what would be appropriate there – great to have some interpretation at the cabin; replacing stove pipes that will go bad, CO2 alarms – just general maintenance. OCC – within a ¼ mile, in sight of FGS, just downstream; built by Simon Off; documented comments from the family; very supportive; [Off] family currently has a special use permit on the district; was ready to fall to the ground; HistoriCorps said they could save the cabin; new sill logs; completed and chinked; brand new outhouse with a vault toilet; could actually rent it out; still in process of putting in barbwire fence. The hope is to have the horse people stay at this cabin, will probably get a few groups at first but thinks it will be very popular for all users. New floor on the inside, tiny kitchen area, sleeps 3-4, one small room, outhouse, cook stove, pack in and out water, similar rec opportunities; \$25 per night per occupancy, could be lower between 20-25% at first; used the same comparisons and costs as FGS.

How Fees Will Be Used: some issues with the barn floors, crews may have buried some logs in the floor, more clean up needs to be done; chinking may be a little too thick, may be a major job in a few years; foundation is always something they'll have to work on; pump toilets, do some interpretation, maintenance, splitting maul breaks or walks away they will be sure to replace it.

Thank you.

TM: a couple of things to add: they are tiny cabins, pictures in presentation don't do them justice; can actually sleep 4 people and sit around the kitchen table but the important thing is they are out of the elements when you need to be out [bad weather]. Looked at OCC for the first time he thought it was beyond repair one of things looked at on the forest when you have old cabins.

Fitton and Alder cabins were built in 1908 - intent was to have cabins within a day's ride of each other, about 20 miles or so; one of the District Rangers duties back then and the skill set they needed to be able to build a cabin like that; doesn't know if he would qualify to fill the ranger position he's in now as a district ranger himself, doesn't know if he could do it; agrees with some of what KB and DS but to say being 100% sure of what was done the last hundred years or so he doesn't know; certainly in the past and particularly the long ago past we had cabins that were open; it was a different society then; since he came in '04 they have attempted to keep FGS locked, but locks get broken, cabin is 2 hours away from the office and if there are not a lot of projects going on around there then certainly a summer could go by and nobody from the USFS might even venture there; 2010 spent a substantial amount of money, now has legal bathrooms; never advertised Alder but people found it on the website, had around 80% occupancy the first year; vowed would have a journal at Alder (brought it with him), going about the third year but if you open it, people are passionate about the cabin and the country it allows them to see; they feel safer than just say staying in a tent. Expects the same thing for FGS and OCC; Steve puts out \$[25], a possible rate that it's rented but people are looking for different opportunities to stay in different places; if able to rent it allows people to count on, through the reservation system, the ability to count on have the place being available. Doesn't want visitors from far away show up and someone is already there or get a knock on the door in the middle of the

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night saying it is an open cabin. Has a lot of support to open to the public. Be honored to open it up if RRAC grants opportunity.

Chair: opens it up for RRAC discussion.

DISCUSSION:

DR: Knows the cabins. Has TM ever prosecuted [when] LEOs have found locals staying in cabins and violating [orders]? **TM:** No. Told law enforcement not to pursue – didn't want to do that. **DR:** 10th Mtn. Division does very well with rentals and upkeep – has SB/TM ever checked them out? **SB:** Yes. Has been to several of those cabins- it works out very well. They also have a history with Alder where it works out very well for the last 3 years. **DR:** was referring to scheduling system, fee, registration - don't have others coming in [when rented], etc. **SB:** Yes. It would be similar. **TM:** The way this would go, 10th Mtn. cabins part of the reservation system? They would have to follow the same procedure for campgrounds and Alder Cabin – fee you pay on the reservation system - go online, look at calendar, pick out your dates and be assured you would get the cabin at that time.

DR: Other than individual volunteers did they get any volunteers established groups from Del Norte to take this over and volunteer to manage it? **TM:** no – but didn't pursue as much as maybe he could because 1.) went to the local snowmobile clubs who do snowmobile and hiking, they weren't interested because it was remote; they looked pursuing it prior to 2010 before they got the ARRA money; 2.) the RGNF due to its remote location and relative isolation does not have the user groups like in other places to come out and certainly on other forests in the region; references the Sedona Area [AZ] where they have a lot of user groups helping out. **DR:** No group has stepped up then.

KL: how many lives saved in the past – people stranded or cold, saved their lives? **TM:** nothing is documented – partly due to the remoteness; wasn't even an ATV trail until about 10 years ago; some people “say” it's critical for first aid, he can't really verify that, people who go out there are usually self-sufficient if they weren't expecting a cabin [to be there]. **SB:** has worked on other forests with cabins and there's an unwritten western rule; if it's a life or death situation people are going to try to get into anything that is available; cites an example about a break-in into the Cumbres Train Station at Cumbres Pass, people had to huddle in there for a few days, these occurrences are rare; happens probably every 5 or 10 years in a certain location; if it's a true emergency – or somebody is just “messing around” law enforcement can usually figure that out. Another example was on the backside of Wolf Creek, somebody broke into a USFS cabin – it is up to the local ranger to determine an emergency or criminal act. Case by case basis. None of the cabins they have are left specifically left for that purpose for saving somebody but if it's a true life or death emergency people are going to do what they need to do.

SP: Is there a minimum fee - it sleeps 4 but only 2 want to rent it for the weekend and another 2 want to rent it for the weekend, is there a minimum fee or is it \$25/head and if there are only 2 of us we get the cabin and nobody else? - how will the rental work? **TM:** only the person who rents it gets the cabin through the reservation system, the days you're there are the days you have it nobody else would use. Like Alder – people are given the combination to the lock. **SP:** If 2 people is it \$50? **TM:** (clarifies) If it's 2 people or 4 people, it's \$25 for the cabin [not per person] – for their people only. Envisions people can rent both cabins since they are in close proximity of each other and can hold 4 people [each] a group that wants to go riding or hiking or a family that has more than 4, they might rent both of those...put the loud people in one cabin....**JK:** ...or kids in one cabin and the adults in the other...

RW: What was the impetus for renovation? Demand from the public or Forest Service driven wanting to preserve these facilities? **TM:** Trying to do something with FGS for quite a while because it was deteriorating. OCC was almost a total loss and not worth trying to save. Wanted to do something but little funding. Tried to get a “legal” outhouse there. Saw the success of cabins on the Saguache RD and other forests and recently Alder. Cabins were worth saving. Saw benefits of Alder. When ARRA dollars became available the cabins fit the criteria and fit the public, were able to restore the two facilities. **SB:** Facilities Master Plan (FMP) process looked at all the facilities

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on the RGNF and picked these two cabins – concluded that both cabins rated high for rental under Rec Fee Demo in the future. Archaeologists, HistoriCorps, Engineers and others said it was do-able.

RW: Was there an opportunity for the public to comment [on the facility master plan]? **TM:** No. It was an internal document [process]. **TM:** Interesting point – These facilities needed logs - whole area was in roadless and creating trails off road with mechanized equipment wasn't compatible with roadless; had locals who wanted to try horse logging for practice so had a crew go out and mark trees and all the logs [used to restore the cabins] were skidded by horse. "Interesting undertaking."

RW: Still wanted clarification on public involvement during the FMP stage to restore the cabins.

JB: Clarified FMP not to be confused with the Recreation Facility Analysis in his opening remarks; along the same lines; the USFS has some 40,000 buildings and around 35,000 employees so that's more than one building per employee to take care of – that includes anything from supervisor's offices to research stations...laboratories to outhouses so it's not just recreation – it looks at ALL facilities to determine how we can reduce costs and still provide the best public service we can throughout all facilities which includes recreation but primarily it was driven by administrative facilities; RFA – look at which facilities do we really need to keep, which ones are high cost to keep and are in better shape - and what alternative means to sustaining some of those if it is not an administrative building that we decide to keep; crosses over into fees could help sustain this historic structure and provide recreation opportunities as in this case; other cases they get documented and USFS gets rid of them in various ways; this is a public process – RFA is. Public involvement is done for REA projects. **TM:** With ARRA dollars the push was "shovel ready" and not for those that needed time for analysis – believes it was an internal not a public process - stressed campgrounds as well. **SB:** There were 3 other cabins they are looking at for future HistoriCorps [projects] if they get more funding. **TM:** Believes the ARRA \$\$ was used to fix up another cabin on the Saguache RD.

KL: How remote is the area in regards to emergency response time? **TM:** If someone got hurt really bad, no cell phone coverage, an hour drive up a dirt road, half hour hike in, unless you have a SAT phone is not part of the package)... **SB:** there are some areas where you can a cell phone signal. They have had accidents up the area in the past.

KL: Does the rental contract include aid or shelter in case of altercations with others? **TM:** No rental contract. People sign up. In the case of Alder Cabin there are very few rules which are mostly clean up after yourself, etc. but anyone who is renting these cabins will know what the situation is. **JL:** Cabins these cabins are on the NRRS; notes and alerts section they can put in this kind of information so people can make the decision before they rent it. **SB:** Good example MT cabins as example of remote cabins-10 or 12 miles in on foot or ski.

KL: Are people allowed to bring firearms? **TM:** Yes. People bring firearms and can recreational/target shoot as long as they follow USFS rules such as don't shoot across roads, shoot into a hillside, know where your bullets go – one concern is shotgun shells and clay pigeons, people don't think this is trash – don't anticipate this illegal use at these cabins.

LM: Lawsuits? Would we have to tear cabins down in case of liability if they weren't maintained? **SB:** depending on the ranger we would have taken a photo, measurements, we would have removed it or burn it down – whatever the ranger thought appropriate for that building. (Worst case scenario) **TM:** Don't usually remove buildings because it costs money. Off Cow would've been typical; had 2 feet of dirt and cow "poop" in it was so deteriorated they would've let it go into the dirt; FGS – people who had been using it either legally or unauthorized loved the place and therefore took care of it, it had historic value, over the decades there was some work put into it, built solid, as long as the roof stayed in place, whether we had ARRA \$\$ or rent the cabin, FGS would've been worth it; we would not have allowed it to go into the ground. And it was far from that.

JB: When we do provide facilities for a certain use we assume a certain level of liability. Complex mission – people using the backcountry need to be responsible for themselves and prepared; the more developed we are the

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more we have to address liability and a degree of safety; we have responsibility have buildings up to code within reason realizing that they are rustic and under the weather; having fees and ARRA money help us meet that standard; otherwise you couldn't allow the public to use them and it would increase liability.

LM: It is a roadless area yet ATVs go into the area? **TM:** Yes; but it is a motorized trail not a road; could put in a new trail in a roadless area (a little hard) but these are motorized trails not roads. **LM:** Are there non-motorized trails that people could use to get into the area? **TM:** Yes, there are closed logging roads that are gated that should we be able to develop this as a rental we could consider for people hiking in because it's shorter, could be a little more complicated, but there are a myriad of hiking trails in the area as well as ATV trails. Spent a lot of time last summer trying to improve the trail but it is still rough. Doesn't mean it gets used all the time – most weekdays, you don't see people.

LM: (not anti-ATVs) What are the recreation opportunities for a horse person on the ATV road? **TM:** We could consider alternative routes; **LM:** once you're in you can actually ride other areas? **TM:** Yes. Motorized route is one line through 100,000 acres; plenty of places. **JK:** When she visited the cabins she thought these would be a great place to pack into; nice corral area to keep a horse; lovely place. **TM:** RGNF prides themselves in being more remote; more backcountry; more rural setting; forest would like to see a circular route for horse users staying at different facilities that are 20-30 miles apart. **JK:** It would be easy to access the area without being on any ATV trail.

Chair: Other questions from the RRAC? Defers to KB and DS for comment.

DS: look in the 8 page handout of comments at #17 and #91 people have used the cabins for shelter; spent the night to protect themselves from the weather; scenario if cabin is locked or unlocked –shelter issue; read side by side comparison (see handout) give you an idea. Problem with restricted access is people who rent the cabin are the only ones allowed to be at the cabin – creates conflicts; people are used to coming there for years and visited the cabin. **KB** asked for **TM** to also bring the logbook from FGS which he didn't; – shows the same the love of the place; difference between a “pay” cabin and “free” cabin is the people who can't afford the pay cabin don't get to enjoy it; one of the big differences between FGS and most of cabins that go into the rental system; most of the cabins that go into the rental system, like Alder, have always been closed to the public; so when they are rented out they are now expanding the public's opportunities; with FGS that has always been open, you're not expanding you're limiting – you're saying if you can't afford it or you can't plan ahead to get a reservation, then you can't go into this cabin. You'll always hear the USFS say they don't have any money for outhouse – with FGS, if someone uses the outhouse and you're renting it you're basically paying \$34 (with the reservation fee) to clean up somebody else's mess in the outhouse, there also may not be toilet paper in the outhouse - people could keep it in the cabin, also a first aid kit that was in the cabin; expects USFS to do the same, if someone is injured they would have access to that. People tried to protect the OCC – tried to put on a roof on it in the 1990's - USFS said no, can't put a metal roof on the cabin. **SP** brought up a great point last year regarding Squaw Mtn. Lookout; asked if day users are being displaced by making it a rental – the answer here is yes; this is primarily a day use area and people won't have access to the rental. Glad to hear Tom mention interpretation; great advantage; at any given time there are cattle in the area and a great opportunity for the USFS to show how the USFS and public lands offer multiple use.

JK: RRAC member questions to move along?

KL: Brings up emergency issue again; if someone needs help or is lost or hurt is this the location people go? **DS:** First assumption is that the people who are renting the cabin are IN the cabin and not out making the rounds. If they are out, the cabin will be locked. If the cabin is not rented it will be locked whereas right now it has always been open - until 2010. **TM:** “That's your opinion, not necessarily the USFS opinion.” **DS:** Difference of opinion - the logbooks show continuous visitation through that time. **DGM:** Comment: she has cabins with guest books in them and people who mess up the cabins are not going to write in the logbooks. It's a different society than 20 years ago, a lot of change and people don't respect that property all the time. **DS:** Thinks things are a little different in the valley than on the Front Range. Not saying all of the visitation (blue marks on the calendar) are people breaking in-were entering through an unlocked door. **DGM:** 100 year old building can't survive that without a key. **DS:** Agrees

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– it's the USFS responsibility for upkeep. Since the door has been locked, KB discovered last year that since the cabin has been locked it was broken into at least twice; KB visited it last October and found a broken window; reported it to TM, who was up there a month after it happened and it took the USFS a month to fix it. **DGM:** Someone who breaks into it may have had an emergency situation, as long as USFS is aware of that and it's an emergency, it's OK to break into it but it keeps the abusive people out. **DS:** Point: if the door is kept unlocked it won't get broken into – people can simply walk in; people have gone in and swept it out, cleaned it and put firewood in it; it has been better cared for open than the USFS admitted in 2008. It has worked well and teaches stewardship. There's a logbook entry that states they came to an old guard station that was left open, and if anybody needs shelter they can do it. It's far enough from the road....

DR: supports no fee but realizes in today's world and what the USFS is responsible for it's just not feasible in some areas; right here we've got a local guy who has spent a lot of time up there; South Fork and Del Norte are pretty remote but there's a bigger picture here.

LM: Seems a lot of emphasis on first aid and emergency care (agrees); when you go into the wilderness you usually carry your own first aid kit, always carries one in her saddle bag; if there's an emergency and no cell phone coverage, everyone usually rallies in the wilderness to help each other, not a major point; as for shelter – again when you go in the wilderness you're usually prepared – if someone is going out that far one would hope they would have a little common sense. Clarification for Dave – he mentioned earlier before that the RRAC previously voted down FGS as “not a good idea”. **DS:** Thinks he said the RRAC decided not to permit the proposal. **LM:** believes at that time they didn't commit to anything because they didn't have enough information; put it on the back burner; there's a lot of people here who weren't there at that time and it wasn't that the committee didn't approve it, it was they needed more information. **JK:** Clarified: specifically asked for greater public involvement and input and proof that the public had been notified and talked to.

TM: Jane kept them energized to do as broad an outreach as possible; you do your due diligence at minimum you put it in the newspaper asking for a public response you generally don't hear from the people who are OK with it; generally responses come from people who are against it because it's a forum to go ahead and say that. They did this twice in the local papers and got one comment from a guy in Arkansas who said you're not charging enough. The only comment they got. Of course it's also in the Federal Register but nobody ever comments on anything in the Federal Register – so tried to make it more personal – they talked to the local economic board, county commissioners - people just didn't see the problem, particularly at \$25/night.

BR: First official RRAC meeting, didn't expect to have to make a hard decision; thought it was pretty simple; both sides have tremendous points; fully believes in maintaining something, making it right and accessible; also knows one of his favorite experiences is finding a little cabin in the woods, going in and exploring it; one of his big pushes is getting people connected to the outdoors; that's the kind of experience that does it versus making an internet reservation - it doesn't. There's a real contradiction and struggle for him. Some of the comments you're going to draw a different demographic into these cabins; not going to alleviate problems, you're going to make problems for your yourselves; from the internet and you get someone from Illinois who thinks he would like to stay in an old cabin, he will NOT be prepared for what he's getting himself into, locals who go into there ARE prepared. – contradiction there. Not sure that justifies not putting it on the internet - someone who is familiar with the wilderness and self-sufficiency will be prepared and bring a first aid kit but someone from Illinois bringing his family just won't – even with a checklist on the website. Thinks that increasing the issues at the cabin needs to be looked at. Asks DS if he thinks the \$25 fee will limit the locals. Does it seem excessive for the people who typically use it and will the people using it now – their demographic and socio-economic situation will they have to say they will not be able to use it – or they've always had access to this and they want to continue with that? **DS:** a little both; it is primarily day use so no one is going to pay the \$25 and \$9 reservation fee and plan ahead for overnight – they just plan to stop in; also hears from the locals that it will be a lot cheaper to drive their camper up there and camp by the side of the road. Hunters too. Most hunters and ATV'ers park by the side of the road; sees it as an odd way to camp according to hunters and ATV'ers. Everything they need is up at the road (i.e. Gas, air for tires, etc.); easier to leave it open.

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BR: Are there other options for day use up there to support day-users? Funding is obviously an issue but if you're going to take something like this away from the public – agrees it is inhibiting the public, taking away that use, is there something you can do to add back to that? **TM:** As far as another cabin goes he doesn't think so, there aren't that many of them; questions how much of the local public they will be inhibiting if they go with the rental; there certainly is a local group who likes to go up there; once fixed up – especially the vault toilets, didn't put a lock on them and have been monitoring it periodically; free bathroom, doesn't matter how often you go there but every time they go there the toilet paper is gone; just not that much use; could lock the toilet paper with a padlock but would be out of context with the area; bad reflection on the USFS to lock up; doesn't want to lock up toilet paper; someone is taking the toilet paper.

LM: There were restored barns mentioned? Are they locked also? **SB:** No. **LM:** Facilities that people can get out of the weather then? For emergencies? **KB:** There are but they are not weather tight. Full of rolls of barbed wire and wood left over from the restoration effort. Not good. **BR:** Could you get a group of volunteers to clean all that out, could those facilities be left for day use? **KB:** Somebody is renting the cabin and someone is using the barn 10 feet away?

KB: Offered compromise – since OCC and FGS are in the same valley and within sight of each other: OCC was never open to the public before it was restored in 2010 so the public does not have this generations long expectation; proposes rent OCC and for this summer as a trial, keep FGS unlocked; find out how many people rent OCC (thinks 180 nights occupancy is wildly optimistic); as a test – unlock FGS, go back to its previous management and then all go for a field trip at the end of the summer. **JK:** RRAC doesn't have the authority to tell the district to lock or unlock the cabin. **KB:** there is a natural opportunity here to test assumptions. Predicts if you rent both cabins you'll have a honey moon couple in OCC and 4 hunters and 6 cases of beer in FGS and they will be within sight and sound of each other and neither one will have the experience they reserved for. Just a suggestion.

Chair: Dave – other comments?

IS: Other adversarial situations at other cabins where there were negative effects? **JK:** clarifies adversarial – in a rental situation has anyone wandered into a cabin that has not reserved or paid for - like Alder? Anyone wanted to use the cabin for day use? **TM:** We only have Alder and that certainly was never open to the public for day use. **JB:** Not aware of any situation. **KB:** San Juan Huts-(private) where someone skied in and realized they couldn't make it out so they stayed in a cabin with people there. In the Durango Herald, didn't know how it settled out.

BR: wanted USFS perspective on the compromise suggestion. **TM:** Thought about it earlier; uniqueness of the cabin in terms of not being as accessible as other cabins – 25% projection might be a little high for first summer but can see it increasing as it catches on; can't guarantee what it would be; may be a while before they rent it due to USFS internal processes. Wants to be rented by July 4th. ATV'ers will most likely want to rent them together. Contest that we've had it open to the public; have had it locked but due its remote location USFS staff can't frequent area so if someone breaks a lock then it is “open” for the rest of the summer.

KB: Has there been other damage besides breaking a lock? **TM:** A wood stove was stolen. “The public at large would be much better off being able to reserve a cabin in that setting.” **KB:** Pictures show broken locks; in October 2012 there was a window missing; reported it to Tom who knew about it. **KB's** point was first people were breaking locks now they are breaking windows.

JK: asks Dave if he has documentation from people who are opposed to putting the cabins into the rental system? **DS:** Most people he has talked to say the USFS are going to do whatever they want; has signatures to keep it open. People are happy to have it open. Goes back to 2000. Supports Kitty's compromise. Would love to cooperate with USFS.

LM: is there any legal reason why proposal does not meet all the amenities needed? Can't see any legal reason to recommend these cabins to charge a fee; **KB:** no legal issue – management decision; **LM:** loves the idea of fixing

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up the barns as a compromise but if she's going to pack up her horses and make the drive out there – wants to be assured of a place to stay that night.

DS: huts in New Zealand; people work it out and learn to work with each other; number of ways to leave the cabin open yet encourage people not stay there – especially if developed as an interpretive site. (Showed a sign of their own posted at site explaining to people why the door is unlocked.)

KB: Just a suggestion of signage that could help educate people; western tradition – leaving the latchstring out, leaving things better than you found them, try to replace supplies when you're able to – western tradition.

Discussion about bear problems at the cabins – none.

TM: Opened the cabin to volunteers since they couldn't get it through the REA process (including Dave) – not just Forest Service.

BR: Going to have issues regardless of the cabin being open or closed.

LM: Issues with squatters? **TM:** a concern but not a problem; what they found at Alder Guard Station which is more accessible to public on a road; use pack-in-pack out and self-clean because district does not have seasonals to clean it regularly, they check it when no one has reserved it; by and large people are leaving that cabin in better shape than they found it; very few complaints about condition of cabin (passes around guest book with comments). Cleanliness not an issue but could be. **SB:** Crews will go in on occasion and check/clean.

RW: Logistics - once rented how do people get in? **TM:** Made very clear and specific in the reservation system, people will know they have to ride in on an ATV or hike in – can't drive up to cabin; renters will call up for a lock combination to get in cabin; so far has worked well at Alder. **RW:** Can someone walk up to ranger station check the cabin [status] and rent it on the spot if no one has rented it? **TM:** No. Might do it for a work party but no guarantees someone won't rent it that evening. **JB:** Ranger's decision for blocking out days, fee free days, etc. Call in, walk in, online to make a reservation on the reservation system. **SB:** Example – a trail crew who worked on the cabin 50 years ago is coming back for a little reunion at the cabin.

Chair/JK: questions to the RRAC any questions resolved?

BR: Say these cabins were put in rental program? Would KB/DS be willing to work with the USFS for barn/day use; what would be the reaction of the 50+ people who signed their letter? Compromise? Would they still want to be a part of fixing up the cabin, interpretation, etc?

DS: Would have to give it some thought; offered to help fix windows, etc gratis and was turned down; normally doesn't do volunteer work – would have trouble turning the cabin into a rental; doesn't volunteer for himself. Having a hard time accepting it. And hard time with the barn idea – would have to think about it. **KB:** in 2010 when ARRA work was underway, DS did volunteer; USFS wishy washy; Dave rescued boards that were part of the original window frame thrown away by workers; made a mirror frame and donated to the cabin – it is not there.

TM: In response to KB's proposal - if we're not getting groups who don't need both cabins through the next season, or reservations show over the next 2 years there is always one cabin open no matter what, then he would consider KB's proposal to open FGS and keep OCC rented. Feels both cabins will be used as a package a lot of people groups at the same time. If we're not getting the projected use, will reconsider and revisit with the RRAC. **KB:** That doesn't happen; usually no follow up. **TM:** KB raises a good point. For the record, if it's apparent the public and USFS are not benefitting from use – he would be all for the compromise. Wants to try renting first. **KB:** Wants to try the side-by-side compromise. **TM:** would probably fracture the start-up effort.

Chair/JK: RRAC ready to make a decision?

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LM: Can't propose a motion to put in front of RRAC in 2 years, would present "whole new can of worms" and the RRAC may not be here then. Can the USFS remove fees without a RRAC approval? **JK and JL:** No. **LM:** Then if this doesn't get approved today it may be another 3 or 4 years before it comes before the committee again. That's where the RRAC gets hung up if they don't recommend a project – it usually takes another 3 years to put a committee together.

RW: Clarification: Fees generated by the cabin go back to the cabin? **JB:** Yes.

LM: Appreciates the emotion and "attachment to special places" – refers to a cabin in Buena Vista that has special memories of younger days that was torn down that had special meaning to her- if it were put in a program like this it would still be standing...can see both sides of the story.

RW: USFS could've done better job of generating a little input from public prior to cabin restoration on whether to restore cabins or not. Good to have that feedback first vs. fixing up the cabin and "now what do we do with it?" But in reality if the public were asked whether to save these cabins or let the go the public would probably have opted to save them anyway so it's there for future generations. His opinion the fee is minimal. Concurs with Bret on making the barns available for day use and weather emergencies.

BR: Agrees. Seems the cabins were fixed up because there was easy money there and then locked. Now that they're nice we have to preserve them vs. is there a demand to make them nice? Didn't seem right to make something nice and then put it off limits to the people who had them before. Needed more public documentation – better way to approach it. (Side comment: appreciates KB and DS being allowed to have more time to discuss. Public input is very important). **RW:** Agrees. Misunderstands references that the public destroyed window frames etc... **KB:** Clarifies – it was the work crew.

JK: Also, in case of FGS – ongoing effort to try to maintain it and keep it up; ARRA money allowed them to replace things like the sill logs, floor, etc.; had ARRA money not been available there would have still been an effort [to save it]; lives on the Divide RD and knows that a lot of work has gone into the cabin over the years; it's easy to say because the money was there they can fix it, but thinks attempts to maintain it so it would not need major renovation and become a piece of the backlog has always been a priority. Their discussion is valid, she believes there was a prior attempt due to the kind of structure it was. OCC was a different story. FGS has always been a part of their maintenance piece.

Chair/JK: Asks DFO for any final comments. **DFO/JB:** None.

LM: (MOTION): "approve this proposal with the addition that the barns are cleaned up and fixed up in a nice manner that people can still get inside of them if there's a storm...for day use without a fee."

DR: Hold the USFS to that? It's a budget, manpower issue.

TM: [Regarding condition of barns] post construction stuff in there; can clean it up for people to hunker in there in bad weather; leaving them unlocked. They would commit to this if it part of the deal. SB says they have never been locked - planning on leaving the barns open either way. And leave the bathrooms open.

MOTION: JK paraphrases motion: "to approve the project with the caveat that barns are cleaned up and can be at least a haven for... **LM:**...and left unlocked without a fee associated to them."

TM: Cabins are small – it's the outside people come to see. Neither cabin has a decent place to sit and enjoy, they will be putting picnic tables outside at both places, which would encourage people to use them.

RW: SECOND.

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Chair/JK: Last call for discussion?

ROLL CALL: Need a vote for FGS and for OCC each

KL – Yes; yes

IS – Yes; yes

BR – Yes; yes

LM – Yes; yes

SP – Yes; yes

DGM – Yes; yes

RW – Yes; yes

DR – Yes; yes

JK – Yes; yes

Chair/JK: Passed unanimously.

*** BREAK – 10:25 ***

Reconvened: 10:35am

Agenda Item #4: Presentation #2 - MAROON VALLEY (MV) Area Review Implementation –Rich Doak

RD: Thanks RRAC for their time. Gave a little background on Maroon Valley, its location, the area review; MV is one of the closest things to a National Park the Forest Service has; frustrated over recent staff turnovers; Jane working with him on the past month to put together as much information as possible; Maroon is about a 7 mile long valley, has a Welcome Station; heavy use 30 years ago – roadsides beat out, fees have allowed good work to be done at MV – lots of turnover, a lot of use, roughly about 1,000 people a day -

Maroon presentation: 1983 started a mandatory bus system; RFTA was running school buses. A lot has changed in the 30 years. 112,000 visitors per season – Memorial Day through fall colors; has 3 expanded amenity fee sites; West Maroon- 6 amenities; East Maroon -6 amenities (using fees has allowed us to do upgrades); Maroon Lake-gem of the entire valley; paved road ends at Maroon Lake; destination; amenities 3 paved parking lots, 5 toilets, picnic tables, fire rings, trash, kiosks, wildlife viewing, amphitheater in the plaza area. Places to get out of weather, ACES guided tours, volunteers, do education/interpretive programs.

Over half of use comes from 52% out of state; 23% from core of the Roaring Fork valley, roughly Glenwood Springs to Aspen; 27% comes from Denver, rest is scattered around - Vail valley, rural areas. These figures do not reflect the bicycling numbers - approx. 200-300 a day. Currently Stein Meadow is paved parking and security. Biggest attraction is Maroon Lake.

JK: Looking into the Maroon –Snowmass Wilderness?

RD: Entirety of Maroon Valley you're in cherry stem in to the Wilderness.

DGM: Where does the bus go? **RD:** Aspen Highlands (underground parking), up the road – final destination is usually Maroon Lake.

DGM: But you can drive? **RD:** Bus runs Memorial Day through Labor Day; caveats people with disabilities, hauling horses, group of 10 or more; figured 6 acres of parking w/o the bus; parking control during holidays Need parking for the off-seasons. Bus runs from 9:00 am to 5:00pm, people who arrive earlier or later can pay the fee, drive up and park. Get as many people up there and protect the environment – without the bus during the peak

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season they would've had to put in approximately 6 acres of paved parking. Still have to have people up at the area after it is closed past Labor Day.

BR: Allow access for big game hunting off of this area? **RD:** Yes. Not a big issue as hunting is usually after Labor Day. Can't carry guns on the bus. People with children restrained in a car seat can also go up and park. Goal is to accommodate as many recreating public as we can and protect the environment.

JB: Update/refresher of area review: FLREA since 2004, followed fee demo; agencies demonstrated concepts of retaining fees and putting them back into the facilities and services of an area; FLREA – National Parks and Wildlife Refuges can charge an entrance fee (not a lot of controversy as parks have always charged an entrance fee); BLM and USFS were prohibited from charging entrance fees; areas experiencing high levels of use and had all the required amenities within that area; we said we can charge standard amenity fees there; always been controversial; Fee Demo to FLREA we dropped off a number of areas; retained 97 SAFAs from about 500; very controversial; heard from the public, constituent groups, the Hill etc.; started looking at the concept of high impact recreation areas or HIRAs – not a good term because of the word impact; made us look like we were creating a new definition of an area that was not spelled out in FLREA; eliminate the term HIRA; reviewed the remaining 97; are they valid and consistent with the letter and spirit of the law?; Area Review began in the spring 2011, asked forest units to take a hard look at their areas; after review Areas went from 97 to 24 nationwide; the remaining 24 were pared down to clusters of sites along corridors that had all the required 6 amenities are in the AREA and reasonable to assume that people use those; Mt. Evans, Area Review concurred that Mt. Evans could remain one of the 24; through process of litigation it was reduced to 3 distinct stand alone areas; can't implement any changes until review proposals go through the RRACs; takes time to create RRACs, etc; went with national direction and moved ahead with enforcement with national direction "as if" the public involvement process was done while actually going through the public involvement process; Maroon Valley was one of the 73 areas that we reduced – eliminate the large area and reduce to the 3 expanded fee areas and form the 3 standard amenity fee areas. National office concurred with that. Very little change in what the public experiences; can't park along roads; Stein Meadow Overlook is an exception which was a parking area in the overall MV area, the only change and very minimal to the public as no fee will apply there. We're going through the process of asking for the RRAC's recommendation it is an elimination of a fee at one small pull-off as opposed to retaining the fees at the major sites where most people go.

JK: Better to say we are taking the area out of the fee structure than eliminating a fee? **JB:** Yes. It is changing the way where fees apply.

RD: People who come back to Maroon Valley will still pay the \$10 fee because they usually go to the 3 sites anyway. Trying to make it as simple as we can, and have as little impact and confusion to the public as possible; never allowed roadside parking; Stein Meadow; did do some public participation; 2 media articles written; did local distribution up and down the Roaring Fork Valley; 2 concerns were identified: 1.) bicyclists –opposed; didn't want to see more cars 2.) The ability of the USFS to manage the site and deal with people who are not paying; non-compliance issues. Gave an example of people who just wanted to go to Stein Meadow and were allowed to go through without paying; they went to Maroon Lake (SAFA) instead and USFS followed up with them for compliance which they paid. The WRNF uses the hangtag system at MV for those who have paid; recording license numbers for those who say they were just going to Steins; experience shows that it is not a big problem.

DGM: Bicycles can go for free... **RD:** Decision made back in Fee Demo days; did a tremendous amount of public involvement.

JK: if you discover more violations than anticipated – how to mitigate that? **RD:** To be more proactive. No sign change yet, only sign plan is completed. Increase our signing, make it very apparent to the public; handouts, and communication between staff at the lake and Welcome Station; and do reinforcement. Probably have enough enforcement to catch 30-50% of the violators.

SP: Clarification on why cars/motorcycles are considered vehicles and not bicycles.

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DGM: 25% of people thinking about cheating the system is a pretty small number.

DR: Clarification on the rationale of why not charging bicycles? **RD:** A lot of public outreach back then, tremendous opposition to charging bicycles. No RRACs back then, District Ranger decision.

SP: Needs to be revisited at Vail Pass; a bicycle does same amount of damage to the great outdoors as others vehicles.

JK: Bicyclists are using the same amenities as everyone else; **SP:** still do same amount of damage – issue needs to be revisited.

BR: Discussion about special considerations for bicyclists such as availability of bike racks and places they can picnic?

RD: Possible bike racks at the lake; advantage is the bus system reduces traffic. Referring to mostly road bikes because it is paved all the way up to the lake; no bikes in Wilderness. Representing something not involved in, fairness issue. **JB:** Fairness issue is something to consider in the future.

JK: The issue becomes - if bicyclists are using the same toilets, trash cans and picnic tables as paying customers who come by vehicle, there is real evidence of inequity, it is change in transportation choice not actual use of amenities. Goes way beyond whether a motor is used or not. Bicyclists still use all the same amenities. A little disconcerting.

RD: Agrees it is a fairness issue – will take back to leadership.

BR: USFS is in for a big fight. Bicyclists are very vocal, demand equal access as vehicles but say they don't need registration – to pay. They are powerful lobbyists.

DR: Time for people to step up and call a spade a spade

LM: Clarification – Mt. Evans litigation settled? (Yes.) Prevent something similar like that at the Maroon Bells?

JB: No litigation on Maroon Bells; we are just trying to implement recommendations from national direction.

LM: Proposal the same? Or recommendation? **JB:** Similar but there is no litigation. (Gives a little background and discussion on Mt. Evans litigation).

RW: Can you drive up and come back not pay the fee? **JB:** Yes. Always could.

JK: clarifies – USFS did the Area Review and as part of that review, make clear that using Stein Meadow is not part of the fee. Fee has not changed the way the fee is applied is what changed.

BR: Could Stein Meadow potentially have the 6 amenities put in? **JB:** Would be a new proposal to create a new fee.

Discussion on what is before them – restructured fee, process, take up with the Forest Supervisor, etc.? **JK:** Area Review exposed the inequity of the fee system. Not in this particular proposal. **LM** does not want to see it get stalled like Green Mtn. Reservoir due to a particular issue. **JK:** Recommend based on Area Review however, the fee structure should be reviewed for equity purposes.

BR: Fight that should be brought in from organizations and non-profits who say this is an important issue and the inequity needs to be changed. **DR:** there is an inequity because no group stood up to fight this when it was first discussed and implemented. **RW:** It's a national issue.

SP/JK: Public involvement for the Area Review? **JB:** No. It was not a public process but made available to those who were interested.

JK: Inequity of the fee discussion at a later date.

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RW: Motion: committee support change that the USFS is proposing in the Maroon [Valley] area and the fee eliminating fee for those who drive to Stein Meadow only.

BR: Public attendees input?

KB: Clarification - "HIRA" Review done in Dec. 2011-January 2012; summarized February 2012 9th Circuit court of appeals decision, review done under internal guidance from USFS legal counsel saying if all 6 amenities are there then one could *assume* people are using them but the court disagreed (reads quote) . Question for RD: if she wants to drive through, park and hike in the Wilderness what accommodations have been made for her not to have to pay a SAF? **RD:** Getting into a bigger debate than following what attorneys say; question to RD about charging fees for someone who just parks at a designated fee – **RD:** Following advice of attorneys if we have the 6 amenities we have the authority to charge a SAF. More discussion on parking, hiking, and not using amenities, legitimate fees, court opinion and potential for more lawsuits. Her opinion: they can charge an EAF at the 3 campgrounds and a SAF for use of facilities and services at the 3 proposed sites, but there needs to be accommodation for those who merely want to pass through the area and transition from their car to the Wilderness where there are no amenities or services. Bus fees are authorized but if you drive in early in the morning and you go hiking the courts have said you're exempt. Discussion on the definition of "parking".

JK: Clarification: no fee if you park at Stein Meadow.

BR: Enforcement issue? **RD:** The enforcement issue is "we" would have to follow every person/little kid around to see if they use any of the amenities. Not an attorney but believes the intent of FLREA was that the USFS not impose on the individual rights of visitors to the extent that they have to follow them around to see if they use the facilities.

Scott Condon –Aspen Times – cyclists issue: Stein Meadow overlook, cyclists concerned about the increased traffic and the road coming down at an angle; cars pull in and back out creating a safety issue. Not addressed and was curious. RD demonstrates with pictures – understands the issue but feels there is adequate parking there and room to turn around. Somewhere around 10 parking spaces.

Discussion:

BR: Wants to take the vote – leave parking with the 6 amenities; supports the proposal (Second)

JB: we're not in the 9th circuit – the USFS and attorneys do not agree with the interpretation determined by the 9th Circuit – other pending litigation may define that further but for now it does not apply.

LM: Repercussion if they do not vote positive on this? **JB:** There is national direction that says we will enforce fees at SAFAs until such time as we can go through the process. More discussion on RRAC recommendation or not and cumbersome process.

LM: Clarification – we're not increasing fees or adding more fees, we're just eliminating fees in one area.

KB: Opinion – this doesn't need RRAC review – judicial process.

LM: Also, suggests it would be nice if this RRAC could help mitigate these lawsuits before a lot of money is spent on them.

Roll call – majority in each category

JK: Yes.

DR: No. (USFS should not be making a decision without looking at the entire picture.)

RW: Yes.

DGM: Yes.

SP: No.

LM: Yes.

BR: Yes.

IS: Yes.

KL: Yes.

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Passes – majority in each category. (JK clarifies categories...)

RD: Wants clarification on the “no” votes. **DR:** Says he can’t vote yes because the Forest needs to look at the bigger picture which is the inequity in the USFS’s fee system. Would’ve voted “yes” if the RRAC had put this in as a recommendation. Can’t “rubber stamp” a decision when there is a bigger one being ignored. **SP:** Agrees.

DR: Rampant in the WRNF. Ski areas, unlimited expansion, etc.

LM: Why can’t Don make a recommendation on the proposal? – agrees would like to see the bigger picture of USFS fee structure but didn’t keep her from voting “yes”.

DR: Fee discussion with RD about the T-Lazy-7 special use permit and turning people away at the Welcome Station.

LM: Don make a formal recommendation? **JB:** Yes – recorded in the notes for a “no” vote; reauthorization is coming up; ways to address it and have the larger conversation.

Next meeting: TBD

JK leaves (has a plane to catch) – JB takes over. Thanks JK for leading the group.

JB: Critique of the meeting?
(Critique of the meeting: handouts)

KL: Wanted Kitty’s suggestions captured. KB offered to send KL her 2007 White Paper.

JB: hands out certificates given to outgoing members.

Meeting adjourned: 11:55am

Abbreviations:

ACES: Aspen Center for Environmental Studies

ARRA: American Restoration and Recovery Act

ATV: All-Terrain Vehicle

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

FGS: Fitton Guard Station

FMP: Facilities Master Plan

FLREA: Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

HIRA: High Impact Recreation Area

OCC: Off Cow Camp Cabin

OHV: Off-Highway Vehicle

MV: Maroon Valley

RecRAC/RRAC: Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

RFTA: Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

RGNF: Rio Grande National Forest

SAF: Standard Amenity Fee

SAFA: Standard Amenity Fee Area

USACE: United States Army Corps of Engineers

USFS: United States Forest Service

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WO: Washington Office (USFS Headquarters in Washington, DC)

WRNF: White River National Forest

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_____/s/ Janelle Kukuk_____
JANELLE KUKUK
Chair, Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

____03/24/2014_____
Date

_____/s/ James S. Bedwell_____
JAMES S. BEDWELL
Designated Federal Officer
Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

____05/19/2014_____
Date