

**SOUTHERN REGION RECREATION
RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 9-11, 2007**



The first meeting of the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) convened at 3:00 pm on Monday, April 9 at the Embassy Suites in Atlanta, Georgia (St. Simons Room). All eleven members of the RRAC participated.

RRAC members in attendance: Gail Wright, Brett Paben, Jack Terrell, Bill Alexander, Ron Fox, Hilda Morales, Taylor Stein, Larry Mashburn, Billy Smith, Morgan Sommerville, and Betty Huskins.

USFS attendees included: Roberta Willis, Caroline Mitchell, Ann Christensen, Cheryl Chatham, Dave Dillard, Julie Cox, and Rick Lowe.

Facilitator Roberta Willis welcomed the group to the meeting.

A safety briefing took place, as well as a list of “housekeeping” items discussed, including room temperature, location of restrooms and fire exits, etc.

Committee members introduced themselves. Each person answered the following questions: 1) Name, 2) Where they were from, 3) Occupation, 4) Recreation interests, 5) Expectations for the group and why the interest to serve on the committee. The Forest Service staff then introduced themselves to the group.

Meeting protocols included turning off cell phones, being respectful of others and of each other’s time, returning from breaks on time, and helping manage the meeting in the timeframes allotted. Other items discussed included a review of the agenda and group plans for an evening dinner.

Ann Christensen, Southern Region Recreation Director, presented each member with a Certificate of Appointment signed by the Chief of the Forest Service.

Cheryl Chatham, Designated Federal Official (DFO), expressed her thanks to the group for their interest in the Committee, and for taking the time to attend and serve. She discussed the history of committee development in regard to RRAC’s in the Eastern United States.

Committee members were provided a notebook of information regarding the RRAC process, a copy of the Act, charter, draft by-laws, Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), etc. The DFO went through the notebook to orient the committee as to what was included and how it would facilitate their work and participation as a member of the RRAC.

The group reviewed the agenda and schedules for the next day and adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

The first meeting of the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) continued at 8:00 am on the above date in Atlanta, Georgia. All eleven members of the RRAC participated.

RRAC members in attendance: Gail Wright, Brett Paben, Jack Terrell, Bill Alexander, Ron Fox, Hilda Morales, Taylor Stein, Larry Mashburn, Billy Smith, Morgan Sommerville, and Betty Huskins.

USFS attendees included: Roberta Willis, Caroline Mitchell, Ann Christensen, Cheryl Chatham, Dave Dillard, Julie Cox, and Rick Lowe.

Chatham presented a PowerPoint (attached) on:

- The Recreation Enhancement Act
- Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
- Public Involvement & your role
- Advisory Committee Organization
- Charter

Discussion continued regarding the history of REA, which grew from the 1994 recreation fee demonstration program that initially included 100 sites across the nation. REA was designed against the backdrop of the recreation fee demonstration program that included public and Congressional involvement.

REA benefits the public and visitors to Federal public lands by reinvesting a majority of fees back to the site of collection to enhance visitor services and reduce the backlog of maintenance needs for recreation facilities. Discussion continued regarding the RRAC role in making recommendations on implementing or eliminating standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation permit fees; expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and fee level increases and/or decreases.

The Corps of Engineers (COE) and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) were not included in REA, thus not subject to the provisions of REA.

Standard Amenity Fee: Day-use fee where certain services and facilities must be in place at individual recreation sites or areas. Requirements are: permanent toilet, permanent trash removal, picnic table, parking, security, interpretive signs.

Expanded Amenity Fee: This allows fees to be in place for facilities or services that provide direct benefits to people. This includes developed campgrounds, highly developed boat launches, cabin rentals, hook-ups, dump stations, transportation services, and reservation services.

Discussion regarding the voting process for recommendations was brought up and the role the alternate members play. A quorum of 8 members is required for a meeting to be held, and voting on a recommendation requires a majority in each of the three categories. Alternates are available to serve if a member has to resign, but does not fill in for a member unable to attend a meeting. The RRAC can make contact with alternate members as an avenue for additional public input, if they choose to do so. The members in each of the three categories can discuss project proposals within their group if they so choose; however, Committee work will include the full committee.

Discussion also took place regarding other RRACs around the country. Five new RRACs have been established, two in the eastern US, three in the west. Many other states and FS Regions are relying on existing Bureau of Land Management/US Forest Service RRACS to accomplish the recreation work.

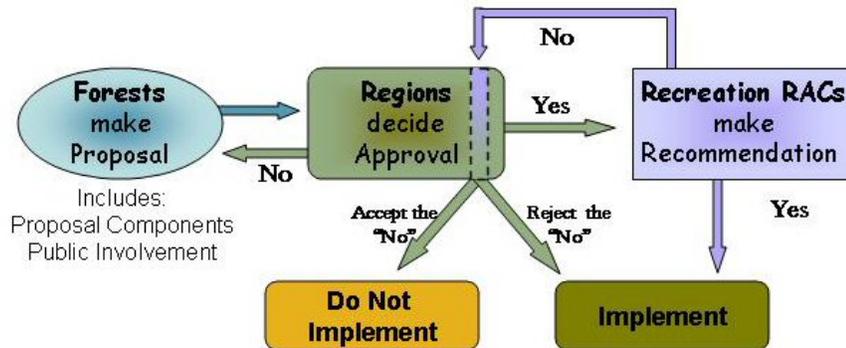
Break for lunch at 11:30.

The group worked through the draft bylaws incorporating edits and suggestions to custom fit them for this committee's operations.

Travel claim forms were passed out to the members and questions answered.

The group then elected Brett Paben as Chairperson.

The DFO went over the process for proposals, as shown in the graphic below:



Rick Lowe presented a PowerPoint describing and showing pictures of the areas related to the recreation proposals that had been provided to the committee for possible recommendations.

Proposal 1: Olustee Beach Day Use Fee (National Forests in Florida) – Increase fee to \$3/vehicle/day

Huskins made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 2: Fortney Boat Launch (George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Virginia) - Increase fee to \$3/tow vehicle/day.

Discussion Points:

- *Who owns the water that the boat launch is on? It is completely surrounded by public land managed by the Forest Service.*

Sommerville made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 3: Coles Point/Morris Hill Day Use Area (George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Virginia) - Increase fee to \$3/vehicle/day

Alexander made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 4: Lake Okhissa Day Use Area (National Forests in Mississippi) - New fee of \$5/vehicle/day & \$50 for optional annual pass.

Discussion Points:

- *Where did the funds come from? Who owns the Lake? What kind of jobs does the area now offer? It is part of an economic development package and was built with Congressional Earmarks.*

Huskins made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 5: White Cedar Horse Camp (George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Virginia) - New fee of \$15/night/site & \$25/night/double site

Proposal 6: Warden Station Horse Camp (George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Virginia) - Increase fee to \$6/night/site

Mashburn made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome on both Proposals 5 and 6:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

The Committee subsequently chose terms for each member:

Alexander – 3	Paben – 3	Huskins - 3
Sommerville – 3	Morales - 2	Smith - 2
Stein – 2	Mashburn – 2	Wright -2
Terrell – 2		
Fox – 2		

The group reviewed the agenda and schedules for the next day and adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

The first meeting of the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) continued at 8:00 am on the above date in Atlanta, Georgia. All eleven members of the RRAC participated.

RRAC members in attendance: Gail Wright, Brett Paben, Jack Terrell, Bill Alexander, Ron Fox, Hilda Morales, Taylor Stein, Larry Mashburn, Billy Smith, Morgan Sommerville, and Betty Huskins.

USFS attendees included: Roberta Willis, Caroline Mitchell, Ann Christensen, Cheryl Chatham, Julie Cox, and Rick Lowe.

The group reviewed the edits and additions made the previous day to the bylaws. Motion was made to approve the bylaws as edited. The motion passed unanimously.

The group then continued the proposal review.

Proposals 7-9:

Proposal 7: Tellico River Campgrounds (Cherokee National Forest) - New fee of \$10/night/site & \$20/night/group site

Proposal 8: Cheoah Point Campground (National Forests in Florida) - Increase fee to \$20/night/site with electric hookups; \$15/night/site with no hookups

Proposal 9: Payne Lake Recreation Area (National Forests in Alabama)
- Increase fee to \$16/night/site with water & electric hookups; \$10/night/site with water hookups; \$6/night/site no hookups

Discussion Points

- *Price differential between \$20.00/site/night with electric and \$15.00/site/night with no hookups. Seems that going from \$8.00 to 15 is a bit high.*
- *For the great amenities at Cheoah, \$15.00 is not that high.*
- *These prices for campgrounds are a good deal. Along the Gulf Coast, you pay \$100.00 per night. Fees here are trivial when it comes to overnight camping.*

Terrell made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome on Proposals 7, 8, 9:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 10: Peter's Mill Run/Tasker's Gap OHV Trail System (George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Virginia) - New fee of \$5/operator/day & \$30 for optional annual pass

An additional summary sheet containing financial data was handed out to the committee.

Discussion Points

- *OHV Trails: Is \$5.00 enough for Peter's Mill Run?*
- *Private areas are different.*
- *40 miles of trail for \$5.00 is a good deal.*
- *Annual Operation/Maintenance is not covered with fees that will be generated. Annual maintenance costs seem very high.*
- *Recreational Trails Program (RTP) pays a lot of money for development. 100 % of this money comes from off-highway fuel. Everyone pays the tax for RTP.*
- *Is much of the RTP money unused? Problem is that it's a reimbursement grant. State rules are all different. Can get draws against that money. FS can apply for that money. Every state may not allow it to be used for maintenance.*

Alexander made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome on Proposal 10:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 11: Tellico OHV Area (National Forests in North Carolina) - Increase fee to \$10/operator/day & \$60 for optional annual pass

An additional summary sheet containing financial data was handed out to the committee.

Discussion Points

- *Committee liked the summary sheet*
- *Need to include county in background information.*
- *Fishermen complain when sediment runs downstream.*
- *Is the FS putting money into the Deferred Maintenance problems at this site? Focus is mitigating environmental impacts.*
- *Discussion about safety and number of emergency runs for injured users.*
- *Would like to have follow-up on proposals brought before the committee in future meetings.*

Huskins made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome on Proposal 11:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 12: Ocala OHV Trail System (National Forests in Florida) - New fee of \$10/operator/1-3 days; \$25/operator/7 consecutive days; and \$75 for optional annual pass.

An additional summary sheet containing financial data was handed out to the committee.

Discussion Points

- *Really like the financial analysis. Shows future financial analysis.*
- *Request for family rate on fees. Would like to see consideration for a family rate.*
- *Family pass seems to make some sense.*
- *Forest did a good job of making contacts with users.*
- *Consider children accompanied by parents get in half price or children under 16 won't be charged.*
- *Can we approve this and have the Forest to consider a family pass?*
- *Consider under age 16 free if accompanied by a parent.*
- *Consider a \$5 fee for those under the age of 16. Good compromise position.*
- *Need to monitor social aspects of the fees.*
- *Need to make fee structure fair, dependable, reasonable.*
- *Some users feel they are double and triple taxed. Paying for RTP program, being charged here also.*
- *How will the area be impacted? Economic impact and economic development.*
- *Fee will be contingent on family plan.*
- *Problems: Define parent/family; potential fee loss of \$100-200K per year; lack of precedent in Region; enforcement is a challenge – proof of age/parent.*
- *New Florida state law in 2008 – riders under 16 must be accompanied by an adult, not a parent.*
- *If you make the age 16, it corresponds with Florida law. State statute defines "adult."*

Proposal to include family option: children under 16, accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, will be charged \$5/operator on the daily fee only. This discount will be reevaluated in one year.

Terrell made a motion to recommend the proposal with the additional change. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

Proposal 13: Forks Mountain Bike Trail System (Francis Marion & Sumter National Forest; South Carolina) - Initiate a new \$3 fee per tow/haul vehicle for mountain bike riding at the recently constructed Forks Area Mountain Bike Trail System.

Discussion Points

- *Opposition to fees on mountain bike trail systems on National Forest land.*
- *How was the trail development project funded?*

- *Need to consider “fair play” for all users.*
- *Local groups maintain; shared responsibility if fees are recommended*
- *Works out to be pretty cheap. Good deal.*
- *Fees could be used for grant matches.*
- *Could enhance opportunity for getting “kids out in the woods.”*
- *In interface situations, if you charge, people will quit coming.*
- *Money is so minimal, why are even bother with a fee?*
- *More of a fairness issue. Even though it’s a small amount of money, every user group should be willing to pay something.*
- *If you have a meaningful cost, collect it, but if you do not have a meaningful cost, don’t need to charge.*
- *Need to set a minimum operation and expense level per site for what it costs the FS.*

At this point, the Forest Service withdrew the Forks Mountain Bike System fee proposal. The Forest will provide additional information and may bring the proposal forward at a future meeting.

Break for lunch.

Proposals 14-17 (National Forests in Florida):

- Big Scrub Campground - Change fee to \$12/night/site
- Fore Lake Campground - Increase fee to \$12/night/site
- Lake Dorr Campground - Increase fee to \$12/night/site
- Buck Lake Campground - Change fee to \$50/area/night

Sommerville made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

- Category 1: All approved*
- Category 2: All approved*
- Category 3: All approved*

Proposal 18: Flintlock Shooting Range (National Forests in North Carolina) - New fee of \$3/person/day & \$30 for optional annual pass

Discussion Points

- *Committee applauds this use.*
- *It’s difficult for people to have a place to go if there is not a public shooting range.*

Alexander made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

- Category 1: All approved*
- Category 2: All approved*
- Category 3: All approved*

Proposal 19: Blanchard Springs Caverns Wild Cave Tour (Ozark-St. Francis National Forests; Arkansas) – Increase fee to \$75/person/tour.

Stein made a motion to recommend the proposal. Motion was seconded.

Voting Outcome:

Category 1: All approved

Category 2: All approved

Category 3: All approved

There were no members of the public in attendance to conduct a Public Forum and no requests for a forum prior to the meeting.

Break. RRAC gathered for a group photo.

For future proposals, the committee requested:

- More detail on the data, including:
 - A detailed breakout of the source of funding for various components that are used to calculate facility replacement value, deferred maintenance backlog, annual operations and maintenance costs, etc.
 - If money from outside the USFS budget (such as state OHV funds, RTP grants, grants from other state and federal programs) has been (or will be) used for these categories?
 - Calculations on how the USFS was arriving at facility replacement values
- New data
 - Example: Current and potential market info (who are they, where do they come from, etc)
 - Example: Current number of visitors & predicted impact of fee change
 - Example: Maps of fee site for geographical context; include county location
 - Example: Development scale of the site for comparisons to other fee sites.

Next meeting date: September 25-27 (including optional field trip)

Location: Asheville, North Carolina

Meeting critique:

Facilities – Fine

Data/Information (pre-meeting and at meeting) – Pictures are a great asset.

Meeting Format – Fine

Pace – Fine

Other Suggestions – None

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

###

I certify that each member of the Southern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee has been given an opportunity to review and comment on the April 2007 meeting notes; and I officially approve the above notes.



Brett Paben
Southern Region RRAC Chairperson



DATE

Recreation
Resource
Advisory
Committee



Understanding the
Federal Lands Recreation
Enhancement Act

*Millions of people recreate
on federal public lands each year.*

*The Forest Service takes the responsibility
of managing these opportunities
very seriously.*



Biking

Downhill skiing

Camping

Rock Climbing

Picnicking

Boating

Hunting

Cabins

Hiking

Riding
Whitewater Rafting



DISCUSSION TOPICS

- ☞ Recreation Overview
- ☞ Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)
- ☞ Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
- ☞ Public Involvement and Your Role
- ☞ Advisory Committee Organization
- ☞ Charter, By-Laws, and Responsibilities



Recreation Overview



What do you want to do?

Auto Touring

Biking

Boating

Camping

Climbing

Historic/Cultural Sites

Educational Programs

Fishing

Hiking

Horseback Riding

Hunting

Lodging

Off-Highway Vehicle Access

Recreational Vehicles

Museum/Visitor Centers

Water Sports

Wildlife Viewing

Winter Sports



Recreation Overview



Did you know ...

	FS
Visits per year	205 Million
Acres Managed	192 Million
Campsites	122,000 (+ 11,000 picnic)
Miles of Trail	133,000

America's largest source of outdoor recreation opportunities.



Recreation Overview



Did you know . . .

- ...the Forest Service has 201 units:
 - 155 National Forests
 - 20 National Grasslands
 - 20 National Recreation Areas
 - 6 National Monuments



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



10-year authority for National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Forest Service (FS)

Permits these agencies to continue charging fees at developed recreation sites such as:

- **Campgrounds**
- **Rental cabins**
- **Day-use sites**



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



Kinds of Fees Authorized for the FS:

- **Standard Amenity Fees**
- **Expanded Amenity Fees**
- **Special Recreation Permits**



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



- **Standard Amenity Fees:**

Day-use fees where certain services and facilities must be in place at individual sites or areas.

Requirement are:

- Permanent Toilet
- Permanent Trash
- Picnic Table
- Parking
- Security
- Interpretive Sign



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



- **Expanded Amenity Fees:**

Fees for facilities or services that provide direct benefits to people. **Examples include:**

- Developed campgrounds
- Highly developed boat launches
- Cabin rentals
- Hook-ups
- Dump stations
- Transportation services
- Reservation services



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



- **Special Recreation Permits**

Where extra measures are needed for natural and cultural resource protection, the health and safety of visitors, to allocate capacity or disperse recreation use. **Examples include:**

- Wilderness Areas
- Shooting ranges
- Specialized trails



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



Fee Restrictions or Prohibitions for the FS:

- Entrance fees
- Standard amenity fees for people under 16
- Activities such as –
 - ♦ Parking along roads or trails with no facilities
 - ♦ Stopping at overlooks or scenic pullouts
 - ♦ Pass-through travel



Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)



- Continues to require a majority of revenue to be reinvested in fee sites
- Merges current nation-wide interagency passes into one pass called the “America the Beautiful Pass”
- Has public involvement criteria for new fees & fee changes
- Requires use of Advisory Committees to make recommendations on certain aspects of the fee program.



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)



The Recreation RAC is a FACA Committee

- The Secretary of Agriculture has appointed you to make recommendations on certain aspects of recreation fees.
- Recommendations will be forwarded to the Regional Forester.



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)



Why FACA?

- So that no one interest group has undue influence on a decision maker.
- FACA assures that if an interest group does have special access to the decision maker, they are a balanced group and all their work is done in the open with public access (FACA Committee)



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)



What must all FACA Committees have?

- Balanced representation
- Open meetings
- A charter that clearly outlines the committees work
- An ending date for their work
- A Designated Federal Official and a Chairperson



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)



Committee Members

- Serve 2 or 3 year terms but can be reappointed
- Serve without compensation
- Will be reimbursed for transportation, lodging and meals.



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)



Meetings

- Must be held at a reasonable time and place so the public can attend
- Must have a public comment period
- Must be published in the federal register (15 days prior to the meeting)
- Must have minutes taken and available for the public



Public Involvement and Your Role



A Recreation RAC will make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on:

- **Implementing or eliminating** standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation (special use) permit fee;
- **Expanding or limiting** the recreation fee program; and
- **Implementing** fee level changes.

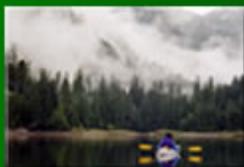


Public Involvement and Your Role



A RRAC may not make recommendations regarding:

- Sites operated by a concessionaire or contractor.
- Commercial and group special recreation permits (special use permits) such as outfitting and guiding or recreation events



Public Involvement and Your Role



Recreation RACs are part of a larger public involvement effort:

- FS must conduct public involvement when making recreation fee changes. These may include steps like newspaper articles and posting notices on-site.
- Identifying general public support is part of the recommendation process.



Public Involvement and Your Role



Committee Members will:

- Provide local and user group perspective, input, and collaboration
- Encourage accountability and oversight
- Represent local interest and concerns
- Be flexible in membership and location to accommodate different interests



Advisory Committee Organization



A Recreation RAC has 11 members in the following three categories:

Five persons who represent recreation users, as appropriate –

- Camping
- Hunting and Fishing
- Wildlife Viewing/Visiting Interpretive Sites
- Non-Motorized Recreation
- Motorized Recreation

Three persons who represent, as appropriate –

- Outfitter & Guides (1)
- Local Environmental Group
- Outfitter & Guides (2)

Three persons who are –

- State Tourism Official
- Local Government Official
- Indian Tribe Representative



Advisory Committee Organization



A Recreation RAC will **meet at least annually**, but may meet as often as needed to deal with citizen concerns about the recreation fee program in a timely manner.

Committee members will serve **two or three year terms** for the first term and three-year subsequent terms.

Members may apply for reappointment.



Advisory Committee Organization



A Recreation RAC **quorum** is **eight** members.

Recommendations must include a majority of members from each of the three member categories--**seven** members.

Decisions, such as electing a chairperson or adopting by-laws, require a majority of members--**six** members.



Thank You!

*We look forward to the advice
and assistance you provide on
Recreation Fees!*



**Federal Lands Recreation
Enhancement Act**