

## Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

**Date:** June 12, 2012  
**Location:** Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Colorado Springs, CO  
**Note taker:** Jane Leche, USFS

### Agenda Item #1: Welcome, Introductions, Roll Call, RRAC/REA Overview, Travel Logistics, Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair

#### INTRODUCTIONS:

- **Rick Cooksey** – USFS; newly appointed Designated Federal Officer (DFO); currently Deputy Forest Supervisor – Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland; on the RRAC – recreation is a treasured asset on NFs; one way to connect with most Americans; fees are a tool to accomplish recreation program; best places to apply the tool.
- **Steve Pittel** – (outfitter/guide, motorized); 2<sup>nd</sup> term on the RRAC; 29 years with NOVA Guides; Vail Pass Task Force Board member (one of the first fee use areas in the state of Colorado) and where his interest came to be on the RRAC; can do some good things with paying attention to what’s going on; is on “top of the fence in terms of fees” and likes to hear everything that goes on and then makes his decisions.
- **Don Riggle** – (summer motorized); represents non-profit group “Trails Preservation Alliance”; spends ½ his time in Colorado Springs and ½ Frisco, CO; 40 years working in this area with the USFS and BLM; new on RRAC – motorized has to pay for so much to enjoy public access to public property, needs to be spread to include everyone; free access is not going to survive given this economy.
- **Robyn Morrison** (winter non-motorized): On the RRAC from the beginning [2<sup>nd</sup> term]; from Paonia, Colorado; member of the Grand Mesa Nordic Council for cross-country skiing; joined the RRAC because of the value of public lands for their recreation values; grew up in a working class family in WY and being able to recreate on public lands made her family feel like they had “a great amount of wealth”.
- **Ian Steyn** – (state tourism); Co State Tourism Board member representing outdoor recreation, chairs the Agri-tourism committee; owns the Outdoor Experience at Yogi Bear’s Jellystone Park in Larkspur, CO; joined RRAC for some of the same reasons, particularly for the opportunity to collaborate; it is all about the outdoors – what Colorado is all about; opportunity for us to collaborate as we have to do more with a lot less; uses his program at Jellystone Park to spread the word about the great outdoors.
- **Jane Leche** – USFS: Public Affairs Specialist with Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources in the Regional Office; [acting] CO RRAC coordinator behind Pam DeVore [retired]; believes in the fee program and the RRAC and hopes to continue in this job; recreation is a way people connect with their public lands and it’s all about the experience; fees are one way we invest in important areas, places and activities and important things like the cabin rental program and lookouts, etc.
- **Rob White** (summer non-motorized): manages the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (most rafted river in the United States if not the world); (personally) involved in

mountain biking, white water rafting, hiking, leads 3 national outings trips for the Sierra Club; asked to be on RRAC for his unique perspective that he has both professionally and personally.

- **Leslie Miller** – (outfitter/guides, non-motorized): owns Copper Mtn. stables; on the RRAC because it is very important for future forests that people have the opportunity to use them; not preservation but conservation – recreation is part of conservation, part of our job to make sure people have the opportunity to use our lands to make wise decisions in the future.
- **Janelle Kukuk** (winter motorized): 2<sup>nd</sup> term on the RRAC; past President of the Colorado Snowmobile Association; Land Use Administrator for CSA from Creede, CO; only neighbor is the Forest Service where they live; Mineral County is 96% public land, different relationship with the Forest Service than others because they are neighbors, relatives, bosses, and friends; sees USFS struggle just to get things done on a daily basis, motorized community pays for recreation and collaborates with the USFS to work on motorized issues – even putting up toilets and helping to clean them; became apparent there could be more done to help cover those costs; recreation opportunities should be available to everyone to enjoy; position on the RRAC has helped her “realize some of that dream”.
- **Debra Gregory-Mitchener** (hunting/fishing): owns Melody Lodge Cabins on Green Mountain Reservoir [in Heeney, CO]; on the RRAC because she lives on the reservoir and sees the benefits of fees at GMR; heavily used area and USFS are their neighbors, sees them struggle; GMR used to be free, realizes it can't be free anymore due to too much use; looks forward to fees getting passed.

**DFO calls the meeting to order at approximately 9:20am.**

**Roll call; process and procedure discussion.**

**RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT AND RRAC OVERVIEW:** Presented by Julie Cox, USFS; national Recreation RAC Coordinator since REA was passed (when the whole RRAC process came into being) **(PPT #1)**

Her presentation is truly a refresher of key things that are important about the RRAC process.

Key components of REA: REA December, 2004; authority to collect and retain fees (retention of fees being the most important), fee dollars go back to the sites where the fees are collected; established criteria for where fees could be collected and identifies how agencies can spend those dollars; requires agencies to do public outreach and established RRACS; created the national interagency pass; identifies where fees can be collected and the fee type: Standard Amenity Fees (SAF), Expanded Amenity Fees (EAF), Special Recreation Permits (SRP); “amenities” is key to how we can or cannot have fees.

**SAFs:** has the required significant recreational opportunities; substantial federal investment; efficient fee collections, the 6 required amenities (parking, toilets, trash, picnic tables, interpretive signs and security)

**EAFs:** Developed campgrounds [not concessionaire run], highly developed boat launches/swimming areas, cabin rentals, day-use/overnight group sites, hookups, dump stations, recreation reservation service, transportation services, enhanced interpretive programs (optional for visitors), etc.

**SRPs:** for specialized recreation uses; places where special measures are required to protect natural or cultural resources; typically climbing or river permits, OHV riding permits, etc. – where extra measures might be needed.

Forest Service and BLM cannot charge *entrance* fees. Entrance fees are a category under REA but only the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service can charge them. REA covers 5 federal agencies: USFS, BLM, NPS, BOR, USFWS)

Prohibitions under REA: cannot charge for people under 16 years old; SAFs – cannot charge for parking solely along roads and trails, overlooks or scenic pullouts, or pass through travel.

**Public outreach:** large component of REA; agencies must provide local opportunities for public involvement to provide comments; usually includes notice in local newspapers, on-site signing, posted on websites, working with federal and county legislators and involving local constituencies. Main thing: try to insure the public involvement matches whatever the fee proposal is; some proposals are more involved than others.

New fees require a notice in the Federal Register at least 6 months before *implementation* (not necessarily before the RRAC meeting) and 3 or 4 months to the RRAC before the meeting.

(Slide of USA map: depicts locations of Forest Service RRACs); BLM uses RRACS already in place and follows those rules; USFS has to follow rules in REA; few states don't have RRACs due to Governor's preference; some states have multiple RRACS; and some RRACs cover multiple states.

RRAC duties: may make recommendations to both Secretaries of Ag and Interior; for establishing or eliminating fees; implementing fee level changes; expanding or eliminating the recreation fee program; in 2005 USFS made the decision that any kind of fee change will go before the RRACs [where applicable] even though not in REA.

RRACs do not make recommendations concerning sites operated by contractors, concessionaires, permitted commercial operations, outfitters/guides services, bicycle races, etc.; these are managed through the special use permit process under other authorities.

How recommendations [by the RRAC] are made: recommendations can only be made if there is a majority vote in each of the 3 categories [that makes up the RRAC] – general recreation, outfitting and guiding/hunting and fishing, environmental, and “governments” (state, local, tribal) (**a majority in each category has to be reached before a recommendation can move forward**) and also, documented general public support – RRACs can make their own determination – USFS brings public documentation to the RRAC on what we said and what we heard [from the public]; RRAC then determines if we did a good enough job, is this the right thing to do, etc.; in general, through visitor use monitoring process, most people are satisfied with the experiences they have on public lands whether or not they have a fee associated with it; did the USFS do their due diligence with the public involvement effort – RRAC makes the determination.

Difference between a “recommendation” and “advice” or suggestion is clear in REA - there is a proposal at hand and an actual vote is needed (actual vote is a “may” – don't have to vote); suggestions or advice - the RRAC is an “advisory committee and can provide all kinds of advice”; agencies can make the determination of on that advice.

**Questions for Julie?** None.

**DFO:** [For voting purposes...] We are “light” in one category (state tourism, tribal, local government) to make a formal recommendation; REA says we cannot make a recommendation without the majority in each category, we will reach out to absent members (such as Mike Blanton, Kessley LaRose) get them on a call, confirm, give them opportunity to weigh in - if successful then we can move forward with the recommendations; if not, [recommendations passed today] these are only suggestions or advice.

General consensus with the group was to do whatever they could to get the old proposals through and involve key members missing on a call.

DFO decision: Proceed, make contact with Blanton/LaRose, solicit their input, vote on each of the proposals, register everyone's vote, and move forward with the set of recommendations with each of the proposals.

## Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

Nominations:

**Rob:** suggested the Chair be a “senior member” who is familiar with RRAC process/procedures  
Janelle volunteered.

**MOTION:** To elect Janelle Kukuk as Chair for the CO RRAC (Leslie); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Robyn)

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; Janelle Kukuk is the new Chair.

Ian: continue for Vice Chair (to act as Chair in Janelle’s absence).

Robyn volunteered.

**MOTION:** To elect Robyn Morrison as Vice-Chair for the CO RRAC (Robyn); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Don)

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; Robyn Morrison is the Vice-Chair

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BREAK  
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## Agenda Item #2: Public Comment Period

Dave Scherer – Western Slope No Fee Coalition (WSNFC): attends all meetings and will continue to; provides another perspective and additional information to help guide decisions; when Congress wants to know what is going on in the fee world they call Kitty [Benzar], go to her if you have questions or want a different perspective; “thank you”

Kitty Benzar - WSNFC: only thing she has to say relates to Squaw MT L.O.; she has a business background; could debate the philosophy of why the USFS does business plans and not management plans; the plan over mixed (?) by years to lose \$33,000 of “tax payer money”. (provides a **handout** on Squaw MT calculations)

## Agenda Item #3: Proposals Discussion and Presentations

### 1. BUCKEYE CAMPGROUND, Manti-LaSal NF (Utah): Presented by Ann King (PPT#2)

**Request: New fee**

**Background:** The M-LS NF is in Utah but this one campground is in Colorado located in Montrose County. Intermountain Region proposal to the CO RRAC since campground is in Colorado.

Manti-LaSal NF - niche statement: Ancient lands, Modern Get Away; incredible amount of archaeology; scenic byways, or “scenic backways” due to gravel roads, gives easy access and nice connectivity to all the different campgrounds, more like dispersed camping.

Forest is a series of islands; big pieces are in central Utah; 2 special and unique places – the LaSal mountains which are a backdrop to arches NP and the piece that holds the Buckeye CG; other unique place is closer to the 4 corners area; Buckeye CG is the only campground in CO on the M-LS NF.

**Proposed fee:** \$10/night per site at Pioneer CG; \$50/night group fee at Buckeye – 50 sites

**Amenities:** In general - multiple roads are “user created”, a lot of damage to the wetlands and wildlife areas; major improvements in that area is the delineation and improvements of the roads; also constructed barriers to help restore wetlands and wildlife areas; now has parking and gravel pads, picnic tables; toilets - was 3, now 10;

no garbage pick-up, pack-in pack-out; no water - most users bring their own in RVs which helps alleviate the need for expensive water systems.

Pioneer Campground – (Note: some power point pictures are old) - late opening season due to snow; from a couple of years ago; picture of old boat ramp – improvements have been made since the photos were taken. Campground is now open a month and half early due to warmer weather; OHV riding, hunting, fishing, small boats.

**Public involvement:** started in 2009 – new Federal Register Notice (FRN) in 2010; contacted county commissioners, appropriate senator and representative in Utah, Sen. Mark Udall, Congressman Scott Tipton, postings in the campground; two public meetings with people in Paradox, CO; conversations with WSNFC.

**Concern:** Paradox citizens were concerned of losing their traditional use which they created; substantial damage resulted; tried to involve them in the design of the campgrounds; due to their input the decision was *for* the one at the northern end of reservoir which has 30 sites; there is still the option to go fee or no-fee on 19 single sites and 3 double sites; free sites were left more rustic with fire rings, not the same amenities; there is also a picnic area that is free.

### **Discussion:**

**Steve:** Was there a fee before? **AK:** No. This is a new fee.

**Rob:** Trash service? **AK:** No.; How many people per site? **AK:** Technically 7, can possibly accommodate more; Other fee campgrounds? **AK:** Yes. Fee is around \$10 depending on where you are; What do you expect use the fee for? **AK:** helps pay for salary and the services they provide, upgrades to kiosks, general maintenance of campground.

**Leslie:** Looks beautiful! Is there someone who collects the fees and cleans toilets? **AK:** Yes – campground host and fee tube; Is there a trash problem? **AK:** Pack in-pack out policy is forest-wide- people are pretty good [about packing out their own trash], host helps educate; Boat ramp: do you allow boats with motors? **AK:** Yes, depends on the size of motor, it's a really quiet place, good for small motors; You don't charge for the boat ramp? **AK:** No. It's part of the amenities of the campground; agrees it's a good value.

**Robyn:** Do you have experience elsewhere on the forest where you don't charge fees? **AK:** Yes, started with a place called Huntington Canyon, mostly a sanitary issue, major reconstruction, agreed to have some of the campsites free, usually put in a fire ring and nothing else; had pretty good luck, went with what the commissioners in the county wanted; popular sites on that route are on the reservation system, if nobody camps at Pioneer CG then they will have 30 empty slots, see what happens.

**Ian:** Financial consequences (following up with Rob) – doesn't understand if this was approved **AK:** increased revenue by \$14,000; had this campground before, not good in past state, all kinds of law enforcement problems, still doesn't cover salary, replacement value, shuffling funds from other fee areas, patching together funds, but \$14,000 won't take care of it all.

**Rob:** Based on statistics if you have a free area with a fee area, some resistance, people will move to the free area, would expect less occupancy; **AK:** original proposal was to have fee around entire lake but responded to public, this decision was a way to make this happen.

**Leslie:** these areas are no fee because they don't meet all the amenities criteria.

**Janelle:** Where is the nearest dump site for RVs - proximity to CG? **AK:** Not sure – maybe Paradox? This site has been used for at least 40 years or so - people have been bringing their RVs for years, figure it out; Any trouble with people illegally dumping? **AK:** No.

**DFO calls for recommendation of the Buckeye Campground.** (Each member will be asked to recommend or not; makes one last call for additional questions to approve one way or the other.) A sheet has been prepared to register each member's vote. Simply do a roll call to make recommendation.

**MOTION:** Pass the proposal for Buckeye Campground as it stands (Leslie): 2<sup>nd</sup> (Janelle); no discussion

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; RRAC recommends Buckeye CG for a new fee

**2. SQUAW MOUNTAIN FIRE LOOKOUT**, Arapaho-Roosevelt NF: Presented by Nicole Malandri, Clear Creek Ranger District (CCRD) (PPT #3)

**Request:** New fee

**Background:** Squaw peak is an active communication site – on the north side there are communications aeri-als Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps – designated state historic site – forest fire lookout – early 1970’s roof was blown off the building.

**Amenities:** sleeps 4 people, has a lower and upper cab, electricity, electric stove, refrigerator, toilet (retrofitted old stone pit toilet), an incinerating unit to be installed, 4-wheel drive challenging road; some unique features – views of Mt. Evans and surrounding area, and Denver skyline; there is no water or trash services; regular maintenance and cleaning – asking to visitors keep facilities clean, old logs are kept, interpretive information is available to help educate visitors on USFS history, use of fire lookouts, etc.; all the kitchen utensils, etc. will be provided.

**Recreation opportunities:** Visit Mt. Evans - popular tourist destination, wildlife viewing, numerous trails; open year round/kept open in winter – snowshoeing, cross country skiing, ski-park nearby.

**Fee:** \$80/night; year round

**Fee Comparison** (see ppt Fee Comparison chart): to determine the \$80 fee - Spruce Mt. Lookout on the Medicine Bow-Routt, only other lookout in Colorado for rent is Jersey Jim; Pacific NW Region has several but Spruce Mtn. is the only other one in Rocky Mountain Region; 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Huts in Colorado; Gold Butte is near Portland, OR, charge \$65/night comparable proximity to major metro area; 10<sup>th</sup> Mtn. in high demand, may have to share hut with other visitors, fees are about \$30/person – thinks this is the standard fee for all the huts.

**Revenue Projection** (see ppt for chart): not expecting huge rush for first year – hard to project given proximity to Denver metro, gradual increase in number of nights rented; fees will be used in near future – bonus kitchen items such as microwave or coffee maker, will make sure everything is fully stocked – installing screen doors for upper and lower; the roof is a maintenance item - repair not replace (without fees may not accomplish); install a lightning protection system – experience thunderstorms up there, needs re-certification/every 5 years, last done in 2011.

**Public Participation:** Biggest support was the Forest Fire Lookout Association (UT and CO chapter) - helped with repairs, replacements, etc.; helped with vandalism- broken door/broken window- great help.

Local county commissioners: excited about the opportunity, see as a unique draw to Clear Creek County; display in Mt Evans Visitor Center (district office) soliciting public input (busy weekends see 300-400 visitors coming through); information on CCRD website – prompts a lot of calls, emails asking when will LO be open/available, etc.; presentation to the Devil’s Gate History Club in Georgetown - strong support strong interest; after the meeting article in Clear Creek County Courant; online article/support from National Trust for Historic Preservation.

**Discussion:**

**Janelle:** mentioned Jersey Jim LO, stayed there once, exciting experience, grew up near it, comparison of Squaw Mtn. to Jersey Jim in terms of fees amenities, etc.; **NM:** thinks JJLO is similar to Spruce Mtn. LO; costs about \$40/night vault toilet, propane appliances, and wood stove for heating, it is in strong demand, reserved 2 years advance.

**Rob:** Reservation only? **NM:** Contract with NRRS \$9/reservation fee; Has no doubt this will be popular but has concerns about funding a GS-11. **NM:** GS-11 Plays a role in program and rental, probably over estimated days for maintenance, administrative overhead costs, that person will have a role; Still thinks the projection is a little high for the GS-11.

Compares with Yellowstone NP fee who tries to keep it low and more affordable– \$80 is reasonable but suggests lowering the fee to \$60 - \$75.

**Don:** thinks the fee is too cheap. Compares to 10<sup>th</sup> Mtn. Huts – has a lot of amenities that will create a maintenance issue. Thinks \$100 is reasonable.

**Robyn:** Honor system? Won't be a fee for cleaning it - does that work? **NM:** It works at LOs in Oregon – we are geared up for certain clientele (hike in); for the most part people are very respectful.

**Robyn:** not supposed to be a money making proposition, where is your break even?

**Janelle:** expenditures paid by appropriated (salaries) within \$500 to breaking even; lessen expenditures to salary, could you lower the fee? **NM:** have to reevaluate - unknown is security may have over-estimated a little high, one person could do security and maintenance, anticipate 2 trips every two weeks or on-call basis.

**Robyn:** How far is it to ski in in the winter? Snowmobile access available? **NM:** about a 2 mile snowshoe/x-c in. Snowmobile: work out with Colorado Dept. of Transportation, they plow out a spot along Hwy. 103 for parking, would have to expand to get trucks and trailers in there, also maintenance of comm. site by snow cat.

**Janelle:** Any problems or prohibitions with snowmobiles in the area? **NM:** No.

**Robyn:** Compares water issues to 10<sup>th</sup> Mtn. huts, not sure about San Juan Huts. Concerned about water issue.

**NM:** Visitors will hike-in their own water; use snow, boil it (like Hut system); has used the Huts systems, thinks the fee falls right in with the huts system. Thinks it's a fair price.

**Steve:** National historic site concerns? **NM:** It is a *state* historic site. Concern: a lot of people on a state historic site. Day use before a fee? **NM:** Hasn't been open to the public [for use] yet. People do hike up there, 4 person restriction, doesn't want big group.

**Steve:** Still concerned about people using an historic site. **NM:** Reiterates hoping to attract the right clientele, more people staying up there will deter vandalism.

**Janelle:** Motorized access in summer - or hike in only? **NM:** Hike in only. Visitors will park at the gate and hike up 1 mile; will see what kind of use it will get and then maybe re-evaluate and reconsider.

**Rob:** What is the WSNFC position? **NM:** Refers to spreadsheet just handed out by Kitty Benzar regarding not breaking even. We should be able to break even and reinvest money back into facility, may have to use appropriated dollars for admin. overhead to help cover costs.

**Robyn:** Are there any plans, because it's an historic site, to have a "public interpretive day?" **NM:** Thought about it with FFLA as an interpretive site but parking and access from the gate is an issue and traffic control is a concern if there are too many people.

**Robyn:** Can other hikers visit while it is being rented? **NM:** Yes. Information signs will say please be respectful of renters when LO was in use.

**Janelle:** [Regarding] public comments: Have you received any comments on high amenities (i.e. microwave, coffee pot) are attractive to justify a higher fee or is there a desire for a more rustic experience? **NM:** Not really – [comments have mostly been] "People just want to rent it." ; experience hasn't been more defined; **NM:** This is not really a place for solitude; more about the experience of staying in a forest fire lookout, enjoy the views; Thinks \$80 is fair but agrees with Robyn's concern about a lot of water to haul in - hauling water and food is a lot; **NM:** We thought about hauling water up there, 5 gallon jugs but may become an issue. We may store some up there for emergency purposes.

No more comments or questions.

#### **DFO: Make a motion to consider a recommendation?**

**MOTION:** To consider the proposal for a new fee at Squaw Mountain Lookout for recommendation (Don); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Steve)

**VOTE:** Unanimous (Rob wanted to amend and re-examine the fee; short discussion – out of order in the voting phase)

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; RRAC recommends new fee for Squaw Mountain Lookout

A lot of discussion about lowering the fee later – out of order, motion already passed. Could offer an amendment. None.

Point of order (DFO): Break for lunch or start area review section of the agenda?

**Janelle:** suggests keep going.

**DFO:** Anyone else? Consensus was to keep working.

### **3. AREA REVIEW (PPT #4):** Presented by Julie Cox, USFS

**Intro:** Talked about Areas in the USFS for a long time, the Forest Service is constantly looking at Areas and has taken a lot of heat around the REA program; we are taking a look at the issue, what we can do to improve it; not only for the concerns we're hearing but also for visitors and for management; recreation fees are part of a whole system of funding the recreation program (i.e. appropriations, partnerships, volunteers, and the opportunity to reinvest in the sites they enjoy); trying to find that balance – what works what doesn't work, so USFS has taken a look at these Areas and are making adjustments.

**History of Areas:** Areas originated under the Recreation Fee Demonstration authority (1996) – law allowed agencies to test charging fees; specific projects but not a lot of direction; some places experiencing a lot of impacts [use] used this “Area” concept. When REA came around we looked at which fees across the country and which fees still worked under the new law. Outcome: we dropped a lot of fees and fee sites because they no longer met the amenity definitions; looked at bigger Areas - CO had some, CA had a lot – mostly all of a national forest – broke them up into smaller areas.

REA – uses the term “Area”, has criteria for what we charge in an Area; USFS built extra guidelines (2005) to identify how the new law would be implemented; we are a big agency, spread out across the nation – a lot of authorities; we tightened our guidelines for less opportunity for random interpretation; has to have certain expenditures, tightened boundaries, characteristics – needs to something people can see or understand that has value.

Old terminology (originated in RFD) High Impact Recreation Areas (HIRA) – High impact was key; a lot of people were coming, a lot of impacts were occurring and something needed to be done; however, [the term HIRA] gave the impression we had created something so we are moving away from that terminology – REA does not use the terminology and we need to use what's in the law.

Why did we go there? Why do we have fee areas? Easy to understand, enables to provide the best service we can to visitors; allows management/collection efficiencies; expenditures go directly back to the fee site, enables us to make the right kind of management like trash pickup and graffiti mitigation, etc., reduces costs and development impacts by spreading facilities over a larger area and avoids proliferation of amenities; some places “pack it in – pack it out“ can be more appropriate in some places, “trash cans can attract trash” which could result in overflow; recognizes heavy recreation use doesn't always correspond to development. Main concerns: some large Areas can conflict with prohibitions in REA; some feel like Welcome Stations are collecting “entrance fees” which are prohibited under REA; very real concerns – however they can collect where it is more efficient and convenient to visitors.

Benefits of Areas: helps with maintenance, enables “invisible” services like graffiti [mitigation], security and safety (a lot of things that aren't readily visible), etc.

Based on concerns: why took so long? We are a big agency. We hadn't taken a hard look, we didn't ask for specifics, we used our database called “INFRA” and took a look at them; how do these look across the country? Similar or not? In 2011, did an area review - conversations between the national office and the national forests. Asked a lot of tough questions - are there really a lot of impacts? Are the required amenities in a place near to each other? Needed to have all amenities in a place that were available to visitors. Result – a lot of these places didn't need to be Areas - could remain as standalone sites, or didn't need this campground as an Area – charge an expanded amenity fee instead, or charge a SRP for a specific activity area (like OHV riding). Areas across the country were cut down from 97 to 33 – some will have stand-alone sites or have sites within them removed. Over 2/3 are tightening boundaries for the remaining areas, dropping fees and/or changing to a

different fee type. Need to go before RRACs – just having the review didn’t make it “done”. Those that remain are being made smaller. Doing the right thing on the ground, provide the right facilities and services that people expect and to keep these as places that people still want to come to - don’t want them to start going backwards.

**Questions for Julie?** None.

**DFO:** Basic information for the next piece of the conversation - Mt. Evans

On the agenda, to be transparent about the status of the case regarding Mt. Evans and how it will be implemented. Cautioned the group that Mt. Evans is still in live litigation and not all the details will be revealed. This is just an update. The RRAC can choose to move forward in keeping with area review or make recommendations of non-support – USFS will still work within the framework of the litigation. A recommendation from the RRAC will inform the USFS Regional Forester and Chief of their position about the situation at Mt. Evans.

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BREAK

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**Leslie:** Clarification [in bylaws] for RRAC to call on a member of the public during presentation/discussions; do we need to have a motion?

**DFO:** reaffirms

**Leslie:** moves to have public clarification up to 5 minutes on the matter at hand, Rob: 2nd

**Rob:** Questions the use of Roberts rules of order? Yes, decided at the first meeting.

**Janelle:** Clarifies.

**DFO:** Concludes the RRAC made the decision to operate under Roberts Rules of Orders. Minutes will be put on the website and will be sent out to RRAC members.

#### **4. MT. EVANS, Arapaho-Roosevelt NF:** Presented by Paul Cruz, Forest Recreation Program Manager

**Request:** RRAC support for changes at Mt. Evans.

Paul first recognizes Nicole Malandri as Mt. Evans Manager on the ground but he is doing this presentation today because it has caught national attention and to reinforce consistency for fee areas on the forest. Paul is the designated “point person” for fee areas on the ARNF and will be presenting Mt. Evans today and has history with it.

**BACKGROUND:** This is an update on Mt. Evans since 2004 REA was passed. The fee at Mt. Evans was initiated under the Recreation Fee Demonstration (RFD) authority prior to REA; established start-up costs and logistics - in July of 1997; had latitude; Mt. Evans became an entrance fee in the beginning; attributes are like a national park – has a single point of entrance, road that connected several different developed sites, culminates in an apex type of experience - gets a lot of visitor use; fit as an entrance fee in RFD days, constructed a fee booth, changed to a standard amenity fee in REA; implementing some gaps in some of the amenities that were provided.

Taking from REA forward: Mt. Evans had a fee for one area; paved state highway – highest paved road in North America; state highway, a state scenic byway, and is close to Denver metro area so there is a lot of use. Managing Mt. Evans fee area as a corridor, large area that covered several thousand acres that included 3 key developed sites that are still there today: Mt. Goliath (botanical site with the Dos Chappell, visitor center); Summit Lake, which is owned by Denver Mountain Parks part of the City and County of Denver but overtime it became difficult for them to manage due to the distance between their other parks so they entered into an agreement with the Forest Service to manage it for them; the fee applies to Summit Lake and helps recoup our costs; and the Mt. Evans Summit - pinnacle is the “most easily attained 14’ers”.

Since REA came into being, the district maintains good data. Statistics: almost 170,000 visitors to Mt. Evans in 2011; #1 thing to see and do for people who visit the Denver metro area/Front Range; issued 62,625 passes;

collected about \$400,000 in revenue; heavily visited site, 3 developed sites that have all the 6 amenities (designated parking, picnic tables, restrooms, trash, security services and a lot of interpretation) - onsite interpreters, signs, viewing scopes and Dos Chappell Visitor Center has brochures and a bristlecone pine exhibit which attracts a lot of people and providing messages to the public.

Over time have made some changes in implementation; feedback from the public - modified some things, added some amenities over time; some bike racks, and other amenities; just opened for the 2012 season on Memorial Day and is typically open Memorial Day to Labor Day depending on the weather.

Changes that were made nationally based on the area review – shrunk large area to the 3 amenity sites in keeping with area review recommendations. This year they have “staffed up” and modified their signage to focus on shrinking down to the developed sites; (**Copy of a map** with the 3 amenity sites were passed around.) Fee area went from 2,300 acres to less than 50 acres - for the area that the fee applies to so there is a lot of the road corridor that is now not in the “technical” areas of the former high impact recreation area. There are now 3 fee sites at Mt. Evans.

Compliance and enforcement component will now just focus on the activities in the 3 sites. Has a law enforcement component. Fees are motor vehicle based. The bicycle fee has been eliminated - after looking at the data it was a nominal fee anyway. After looking at user types - most of the use is motorized. The fee for bicyclists was \$3/person.

An “Iron ranger” is in place for 24/7 fee collection during the “open” months. Now, based on feedback, it was determined that there is no value in paying a fee during after-hours for no services. Decided to not to apply fee beyond the 8:00 am - 6:30 pm window.

There will still be a “Welcome Station” at the base of Mt. Evans with several lanes and a smaller booth within an island to accommodate overflow when necessary and lanes for traffic to go past. Traffic can back up to the intersection of Highway 5 and Highway 103 which causes some safety and congestion issues. Impacts affect a campground on the east side and a private lodge so there are several lanes and they staff the extra booth to accommodate traffic. There are some people that don’t want to visit any of the developed sites – statistically a low number. Most people want to visit the 3 popular sites. There is the opportunity for folks who just want to drive up the road (state highway), pull over at an undeveloped site and sight see or picnic, and never visit any of the 3 sites. Working with traffic engineers to mitigate any safety issues. The intent is to provide means of bypassing the welcome station for those who clearly intend not to use any of the developed sites.

They are changing some of the information on the website and signs to make the implementation of this modification clearer to the public.

Keeping with the area review; continuing to fall in step with what is going on nationally.

## **Discussion:**

**Janelle:** What are the other recreations areas in Colorado [covered in the area review besides Mt. Evans]? **PC:** Mt. Evans and Arapaho National Recreation Area on the ARNF and Maroon Valley and Green Mountain Reservoir on the White River NF.

**Rob:** How will you collect fees? **PC:** [Mostly at the] Welcome station for efficiency and to provide information with communication - information being the key focus and then looking into setting up smaller fee collection sites at the 3 amenity areas.

**Debra:** Will one fee get into all 3 sites? **PC:** Yes.

**Rob:** What is the fee? **PC:** \$10/per vehicle; \$3/motorcycle; \$25/15 passenger vans, \$40 for a bus; \$25/Mt. Evans [annual] pass; \$80/Interagency pass; Senior and Access passes.

There was some question on whether the RRAC will be voting on Mt. Evans or just getting information.

**DFO:** The RRAC has the ability to make a recommendation to support fee changes on Mt. Evans. If they choose not to recommend, the USFS will still go ahead with negotiations and will implement based on the outcome of those negotiations.

Still some confusion on who the negotiations are with.

Clarification: the changes are already starting to be implemented.

**PC:** Touched on active litigation but warned that his comments are limited and more general. A lawsuit was filed in Dec. 2011 (in the midst of the national Area Review effort); Mt. Evans has had past lawsuits with varying decisions that did not affect operations; current litigation is still underway; have been positive discussions with the plaintiffs.

**DFO:** Clarifies nature of the complaint and the modifications that have been made due to it and the Area Review. There is no longer a fee to just drive through the area.

Calls for a recommendation.

**Leslie:** not ready to make a recommendation. Needs clarification: is the committee being asked to recommend that the new fees to be charged fit within the guidelines that they are to work within...?

**PC:** Fees are not changing – except for the bicycle fee which they decided to eliminate on their own. Status quo, never charged a fee for people driving through. Message conveyed through signage and welcome station staff. What was eliminated was the space/area between the 3 developed sites – area has been reduced.

(Still some confusion as to what the Forest is asking of the RRAC.)

**PC:** where they are with implementation based on the area and understanding that there is an external force that they are working through so other players involved in the status update. Can clarify – if you're aware we've made a change where they changed the fee area from one to three fee areas, eliminated the bicycle fee - modification to operations.

**Steve:** Mountain closes at 6:30? **PC** –no, gate stays open. Staff is gone and no services

**Janelle:** by paying the fee – clarification to just the 3 fee areas? **PC:** paid \$10 just to cross the gate - visitors had access to everything

**Rob:** Headed in the right direction, supports having 3 fee collection sites instead of the welcome station– welcome station will still cause confusion.

**PC:** understands, put the communication burden on where the fee applies –clearly identify where the fee applies. Welcome Station would still apply.

**Debra:** What if someone just wants to drive up (no fee) but then decides to stop? **PC:** Technically challenging to have a fee station at each site. Looking at fee tube possibility to collect the fee.

Clarification on changing the areas and not the fee, why the RRAC is being asked to make a recommendation...it's within the group's authority to make a statement of some kind to support the changes.

**Don:** will the RRAC's recommendation be submitted as evidence to the judge?

**PC:** question of timing – agreement is in the works – we could submit it. We could introduce it as part of the record. (He's not a litigation specialist so he can't say for sure.)

**Leslie:** This committee needs to know what is going on after this is over.

**PC:** Would be happy to come back to the group.

**Ian:** Feels it seems appropriate for the RRAC to take a position on this while in negotiations.

**Janelle:** Suggests tabling pending more information; no position; supporting as has been presented; our own position?

**Rob:** do we as a committee support what the USFS has occurred so far - proposed from one area to the 3 sites?

**Leslie:** what do you get for your \$10 at the 3 sites?

**PC:** the 6 amenities required to be at those sites according to REA: parking, restrooms, trash, picnic tables, interpretation, security-services (lightning detectors, lightning interpretation, public safety, talk about the weather, wildlife interactions (mountain goats, marmots), etc.)

**Leslie:** Camping? Park an RV? **PC:** Day use area only. Camping is an Expanded Amenity Fee, this one is Standard.

**MOTION:** To support the changes and the direction they are headed at Mt. Evans as Paul presented (Rob); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Debra)

## Discussion:

**Janelle:** Asks public for any input.

**Kitty:** Issue of HIRA subsection (d) of REA – no fees for scenic overlooks or through travel, roadside parking or trailside picnicking, or solely for parking. Issue has been providing the 6 amenities that are [far apart]; authorizes a fee for a huge area – people just traveling through and who are not using any of the amenities. SAF authority (except limited in subsection (d)) includes a stand-alone authority for destination visitor or interpretive center. Three lawsuits on the agency area review; Feb. 9, 2012 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit – completed subsection (d) trumps requirement for amenities- no matter what the area looks like can't charge for scenic overlooks, solely for parking, roadside parking; agency review and 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit happened close together; is it agency review that is driving things or litigation? At same time of 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, Mt. Evans still pending, looked at Mt. Lemmon in AZ, look at Mt. Evans again. Settlement talks began. Everyone is bound by litigation... Her understanding is the authority for the viewing platform at the top and Dos Chappell VC will not be under the 6 amenities, but under the interpretive authority. 3<sup>rd</sup> Denver Mountain Parks under agreement with the USFS 6 amenities are irrelevant. Just under interpretive section.

**Leslie:** doesn't necessarily agree it's a HIRA – not ready to vote. Table the whole thing and go to lunch and discuss afterwards?

**DFO:** can choose to offer the motion; offer no recommendation; negotiations and talks will continue and settlement actions will take place no matter what. Input will just be that – settlement talks will continue with or without RRAC recommendation.

**Rob:** Reiterates his motion to support the FS including the negotiation process

**Ian:** Clarifies the original motion

**Janelle:** Clarifies current motion and includes continued negotiations. Asks for roll call to vote.

**DFO:** Do have an opportunity to amend.

Clarification that they are supporting the Forest Service efforts.

**VOTE:** Yeas: 6, Nays: 2 (majority)

**DFO:** entertain any amendments around...

**Robyn:** whatever a judge decides will likely usurp any recommendation that they make – can't make a recommendation until judgment

**Steve:** agrees

**Don:** will USFS submit the support of the group to the judge – which is OK?

**Leslie:** we support the negotiations - negotiating is always support

**Rob:** we support the process the FS is currently going through; input is still

**Steve:** it's a one sided argument- doesn't know what they're opposing so it makes it difficult

**Robyn:** questions what PC presented reflects what comes out of negotiations so far?

**PC:** Negotiations meet the objectives of both parties; his presentation is in line with. Could aid in the completion of the agreement. Joint discussions – come to some terms. We're heading down a path that seems to be favorable - submit RRACs support to both plaintiff and USFS counsel on both sides that there's movement in a single direction.

**OUTCOME:** Vote is 6-2 motion passes. Majority vote; motion carries in favor of the motion to support the changes and the direction they are headed at Mt. Evans as presented by Rob

\* \* \*

LUNCH BREAK

\* \* \*

Reconvened: 2:20pm

Point of Order: Question about finishing up tonight. The committee agrees to finish up today and not go 2 days.

**5. GREEN MOUNTAIN RESERVOIR, White River NF:** Presented by Ken Waugh, District Recreation Staff Officer/ GMR manager - Dillon Ranger District (DRD) (**PPT #5**)

Ken Waugh is introduced by Peech Keller Acting District Ranger at Dillon (ppt **handout**) to present the proposed new fee structure at the GMR.

**Background:** GMR is in Summit County; is 15 miles north of Silverthorne, 15 miles south of Kremmling, about a 2 hr. drive from Denver; 7 developed recreation sites in the proposal, not listed are 3 trailheads that they are discontinuing the fee.

**Amenities:** picnic tables except at Willows CG, applied for a grant to get tables there; fire pits/grills; parking spurs or areas; CXT vault toilets (odor free/universally accessible); reservoir/river shoreline; some have shade trees; has made several improvements/capital investments 2004-2011 (see Green MT Fee Schedule Change **handout**)

2004 - \$240,000 invested in 6 new CXT toilets; 2007 – \$55,000 grant for new toilets at Cow Creek South and Cataract Lake Trailhead; 2008 - \$50,000 picnic tables, fire rings, re-established campsites at Prairie Point CG in response to feedback; 2009 - aquatic nuisance (zebra mussel) inspection program for boating, \$80,000-100,000 annually to fund inspections done by contractor at Heeney Marina; \$20,000 for vehicle barriers to inhibit boating access from the shoreline; 2010 – environmental analysis/decision for improvements at Cow Creek South Campground – included 13 new campsites, boat ramp, improvements to the highway entrance from Hwy. 9 all were funded by ARRA for \$1.6 million – except boat ramp (\$10,000 for new design of boat ramp). Grant: \$105,000 to make improvements at campgrounds picnic tables, toilet replacement at Elliott Creek and fee stations with new 3-panel kiosks; \$80,000 to replace toilets at Prairie Point CG and to supplement operations costs for last year.

Photos and descriptions (see ppt):

1. Prairie Pt. – 2 loops, narrowest part of reservoir, busy weekend, toilets, view
2. Cow Creek South – new entrance for safety; no designated parking; **Rob:** No designated tent pad? Resource damage? **KW:** pretty flat; vegetation comes back every year – very resilient; considered parking spurs but seems to work at this site; tent trailer camping very common; campsite with universal accessibility
3. Cow Creek North: Heavy use on weekends; boat ramps; boats moored by campsites; aquatic nuisance inspections are done at the boat ramp and then people drive their boat over to campsite
4. Willows CG: .5 mile shoreline; 15 sites; no picnic tables yet; wide spot in the road, no campsites yet, just fire rings
5. Elliott Creek: nearest to the dam; CCC camp during the 30's; more forested, no real beach or shoreline, picnic tables
6. Cataract Creek: 2 mile drive up road; pull through site, more forested
7. McDonald Flats: boat ramp; common parking area with campsites adjacent

**Recreation Opportunities:**

Water based: fishing, water skiing, jet ski riding, sailing, sailboarding, swimming/wading (pretty cold); hiking on nearby trails, family outings, reunions, group camping. (see ppt)

**Proposed fee schedule change:**

\$13/night/site up to 2 vehicles; \$5 per vehicle (over 2); season pass- \$65 – changed from charging by vehicle to charging by site; availability May-September. Currently people pay \$5 per vehicle due to nature of camping outside developed sites, now charging by the site makes much more sense. Discontinuing fees at trailheads.

**Fee Comparisons:** (see ppt)

GMR offers water skiing; Dillon Res - \$17-19/night; Arapaho NRA NF Campgrounds near Grand Lake/Granby, \$16/night; Canyon Lakes RD Campgrounds near Ft. Collins/Red Feather Lakes, \$18/night, Blue River CG, \$14/night.

**Revenue Projection:** (see ppt) 2009 - \$71,737; 2010 – \$81,300; 2011 – \$71,110; 2012 - \$74,000; 2013 - \$110,000

**How will fees be used?** (see ppt) General maintenance and operations; education/interpretation; law enforcement; 2013 – site markers installation, seedling planting; will install a few picnic tables each year if no grant; signage to at parking for day use.

**Public Participation** (see ppt): extensive public involvement, 6 years; elicited feedback from visitors, created email list of about 300 people who wanted to be involved in the process; brochure to every visitor, asked for comments; 2006 - Recreation Management Plan, identified issues and management actions – proposed fee change to fund management actions; local newspaper ran numerous articles over the years; 2008 - first proposal to the RRAC, no recommendation, did not generate general public support; 2008-09 GMR focus group was formed to address issues (locals, local gov'ts, WSNFC); 2012 - GMR focus group final concurrence – still trying to maintain low cost recreation opportunities due to economy.

**Rob:** Staffing? **KW:** Staffing for 2012 typically 4 people, this year 2 seasonals, 2 volunteers – USFS provides housing; through mid-September; next year – 2 volunteer host couples. Self-service in terms of fees? **KW:** Yes unless visitor has a pass that they hang on their mirror. Costly to provide water and propane to hosts.

**Robyn:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Boat ramp? **KW:** At Heeney Marina.

**RRAC members:** are OK with focus group; acknowledged the good work done by Ken [Waugh] and Jan [Cutts]; first request was to double fees with no amenities which locals were not in favor of – point was not to increase the fees until amenities went in – since then new picnic tables, toilets, etc. have been put in and people are OK with it.

**Rob:** Demand? **KW:** GMR is full on weekends, slower during the week; fees seem reasonable, especially with a season pass that includes camping.

**Janelle:** Public outreach question regarding clarification on a gentleman who voiced opposition and if there were any others. **KW:** Some people will oppose fees regardless; people are saying it is nice to have a low cost; Question on how sustainable can GMR be for how much longer? **KW:** Have been “borrowing”, used a \$30,000 grant for the campgrounds, and supplementing with appropriated \$\$ at the detriment of other programs; we’re at the end; we can go with concessionaire management if need be instead of closing; could raise fees to \$17-19/night to make a profit to cover all their costs;

**Debra:** They offered it to concessionaire before but was turned down as a poor opportunity for them because of the remoteness and expenses.

#### **DFO: Ready to move forward?**

Any public comment?

**Kitty:** (Was involved in the process for GMR); process had been painful; good outcome; Jan and Ken had model that should be emulated – found good consensus, it can be done; “pass this”

**MOTION:** To pass the Green Mountain Reservoir proposal as is (as an area and not individual sites) (Leslie); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Debra)

**Discussion?** None.

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; Green Mountain Reservoir proposal passes as is (still needs a majority vote in the “Governments” categories).

**Agenda Item #4: Comments on Historic Cabins** - Presentation by Kitty Benzar, WSNFC (**Handouts**)  
Works with all forests and regions - noticing a trend – there is authority in the law to charge a rental fee for cabins and lookouts; makes the case that it is not the *only* solution or always the appropriate solution for every historic structure; there are historic structures that have higher and better use/value to the public and can be visited at any time; the public should be given a range of possible management options and asked for ideas for

these cabins not just input “up or down” about whether cabins should go into the cabin rental program or not (“Motel 6” model – appropriate for some structures, not so much for others); could be enjoyed by a lot of people and not just someone for the night - tenant or family; adventure of discovery if they stumble upon one of these buildings; interpretation – history of the building, life back then - may instill a feeling of appreciation for public lands heritage; creates a sense of responsibility for stewardship - some may feel intruding if they want to peek in the windows and see the cabin if someone is staying there; opportunities for volunteers to help with maintenance and upkeep, monitoring for vandalism - being eyes and ears of the USFS to keep it OK; other models that other forests around the country. Request: There are other ways to approach these cabins; ask the agencies to consider a range of options not just to rent or not, ask the public for other ideas, and come up with the “highest and best use” for a particular property on an individual basis instead of just jumping to the rental system. (Triggered by a proposal that will be presented in the fall and not something being presented today).

### Questions for Kitty?

**Don:** Don’t you think the USFS looked into this before they decided to put it into a “commercial range”? Expect the USFS to run it through you? **KB:** has not seen any evidence; has a lot of sources, reads the Federal Register every day, tends to hear about these things; examples of other forests and Fish and Wildlife that have had successes with other models, not advocating anyone in particular; just don’t jump right to the cabin rental; would like to see other options explored.

**Debra:** Agrees; have a combination of rental and leaving it open for a weekend.

**KB:** “rush to rental” mentality; challenges the agency to use a little more imagination when planning for cabins

\* \* \*  
BREAK  
\* \* \*

### (Agenda Item #3 - Cont’d):

#### **6. LONE CONE AND MATTERHORN CABINS, Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison (GMUG) NFs:** Presented by Kathy Peckham, Norwood RD (**PPT#6**)

Segues from Kitty’s presentation: the GMUG has been trying to think of creative ideas for these two cabins after mud season/early May – trying out using a cabin (under a fee waiver) for youth conservation programs such as a Navajo youth program (stay at Matterhorn and do trail work, attend outdoor activities, conduct stream surveys, etc. in the Telluride area); meets the needs of public and USFS focus on youth education and cultural diversity; trying to do something creative during low visitation/demand period; still need the revenue source for maintaining the cabins.

**Background:** Located in SW Colorado, about an hour’s drive from Telluride; Lone Cone Cabin was built in the 1930’s by the Civilian Conservation Corps but is not historic by archaeologist’s standards due to modifications; has a rustic feel and is 50 years old; sleeps 6, electricity, full kitchen, shower/flush toilet in summer/outhouse and no water in winter; pack in pack out trash; new wood stoves/firewood; new outhouse (had facilities funds to do that)

**Recreation Opportunities:** has Lone Cone trail into Lizard Head Wilderness; probably most popular use time will be during the fall/hunting season; local snowmobile club grooms about 40 miles of trail, 8 mile snowmobile ride to cabin from trailhead; lots of OHV travel and activities available

**Fee Proposal:** will charge \$120/night year round except mud season (mid-April to mid-May)

**Fee Comparison:** 5 cabin rentals on GMUG – Silesca Cabin, Black Bear Cabin (on Grand Mesa); Ponderosa Cabin (located on the Uncompahgre Plateau) – over 50 years old; have rustic feel, similar amenities to LCC (except Ponderosa doesn’t have electricity); sleeps 6-8; seemed reasonable to set fee at \$120 in line with all the others.

**Revenue Projection:** (see revenue projection slide) in 5 years shooting for 20% occupancy.

**Fees will be used:** (see How Fees Will Be Used slide); new hide-a-bed (increase capacity) and other amenities; improvements to horse facilities (hunters)

**Public Participation:** done twice – 2009 into 2010, and then repeated this spring; news release, legal notice, posting at the RD office, county commissioners presentation, scoping letters, website, local snowmobile and other clubs, federal register, congressional staff briefings, local media

Comments: (See comments slide); West End Sledders Snowmobile Club: supportive wanted to help with remodel; congressional staffs were unaware but very supportive and rates were reasonable; same with San Miguel County Commissioners.

## **Discussion:**

**Robyn:** what was it originally? **KP:** The ranger's cabin on the old Lone Cone RD in the 1940's and 50's.

**Robyn:** What has been typical use? **KP:** Seasonal bunkhouse; cabin is located 25 miles from the Norwood district office, no cell service, hard to get seasonals to want to go there now;

– less and less consistent use. Heavily used as a bunkhouse in the '80s and '90s; doesn't have the terrain that cross-country skiers want – too flat; too far for a casual Nordic experience - will be more of a snowmobile adventure.

**Robyn:** Is there a marked trail for cross country skiers? And groomed? **KP:** marked trail for snowmobiles with orange markers.

**Leslie:** Horse trails in the summertime? **KP:** Lone Cone trail nearby is horse or foot only - hunters on horseback or local day rides from local landowners; other trails go into the Wilderness.

Budget seems very balanced.

## **MATTERHORN CABIN:**

**Background:** existing bunkhouse; not historic – built in the 1990's; modular in 2 halves; ideally located 15 miles south of Telluride; recreation program is centered around Telluride; use for cabin centers around Telluride activities; district office is 50 miles away so will use for administrative purposes occasionally; need the revenue to maintain it; can drive to it from Hwy.145; outside of town and across the highway from small community of San Bernardo; on a 20-acre compound, completely surrounded by national forest land

In 2000 – NRD constructed a new bunkhouse in Norwood and trail crews use it more now; trail crews are dwindling. Wonderful facility – needs to get used.

**Amenities** (see amenities slide): sleeps 12, 5 bedrooms, flush toilets, showers, 2 separate bathrooms, electricity, furnace, woodstove/firewood; full kitchen (2 of everything), telephone for local calls, washer/dryer; snow plowing, trash removal and cleaning service provided by USFS; horse facilities, on site volunteer available; first 2 seasons will be more like a youth hostel – on-site host would have one room and then rent out the rest of the house; one rental as a package is easier with the reservation service; high and low fee rate – charge lower rate if host is living there; will be very clear; by year 3 hope to install RV hookup where the host could live in their own RV at the cabin; then charge the higher fee rate; costs during winter are high, propane costs \$300-400/month, lots of shoveling on a bad winter, plowing every third day.

**Recreation Opportunities:** lots of opportunities right outside the door; hiking trails, jeeping, OHV- high country jeep experience; 18 mile bike trail from Lizard Head Pass down to Telluride, cross country skiing

**Fee:** Proposing 2 rates – high and low; \$300/night ski season, holidays, festivals; \$240/night remainder of the year; Telluride has many festivals with the higher fee for the larger festivals.

**Fee comparison** (see Fee Comparison chart slide): Couldn't find anything comparable on recreation.gov so looked at private sector; found Addie S. Hut – 50 miles south of Ouray, High Camp Hut, and Opus Hut on Ophir Pass road – all had large capacity (12-16); modern facilities; water is provided year round (not typical of winter huts), shower/sauna year round; situated in a great location; access and extras set them apart; Matterhorn has a lot of extras like trash service, on site hosts, etc. - even 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Huts has a standard fee of \$30/person/night with no water - quite a bit lower than the private sector. Why not charge more? USFS is not

private sector – at \$300 we can still cover costs – even for repairs and improvements; will be affordable to a broader segment of the public; already scoped in 2009 with the \$300/fee put into the Federal Register; didn't want to change fee and possibly have to go another 6 months in FR; to go with \$300 as the higher fee seemed appropriate.

**Revenue Projection:** not going to charge \$300/night in 2012 and 2013 due to the onsite host situation occupying one of the bedrooms, 2014 start charging the \$300 during the ski season; plans to expand parking area (shared with Nordic ski trail system – 2 year project); make handicapped accessible; 2014 replace carpet, windows, and linoleum.

**Public Participation:** Almost the same as Lone Cone; San Miguel Co Commissioners thought \$300 fee was reasonable - may be low for Telluride area but left it up to the USFS if they could be successful with the fees proposed – supportive, wrote a letter of support; High Camp Hut owner concerned the \$300 fee may compete with their rates - recommended the variable rate structure; also advised them to be “more business like”, encouraged the district to run it more like a business so they are.

Telluride Nordic Assoc. was concerned about parking area capacity for cabin renters and Nordic skiers so parking area was expanded last fall, plans to keep expanding in the out years; congressional staff was excited about it.

### **Discussion:**

**Debra:** Are there sheets towels? Blankets? **KP:** only sheet covers cleaned after each use.

How does it compare with the other cabins? **KP:** other cabins do not have linens due to sanitation issue.

Public comment? None

**MOTION:** To recommend the proposed new fees for Lone Cone and Matterhorn Cabins (Rob); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Don)  
No discussion.

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**OUTCOME:** Motion carries; new fees are recommended for Lone Cone and Matterhorn Cabins

### **Agenda Item #5: Final public comment period.**

No comments.

### **Agenda Item #6: Set date and time of next meeting.**

Tentatively: October 30 and/or 31, 2012 in Glenwood Springs (depending on the number of proposals.) So far there are only two that will be ready to present; possibly a 3<sup>rd</sup> for GMUG Christmas Trees.

There is an issue of the not enough votes in the Tourism, Tribal, and Local Government category.  
Jane/Rick to visit Mike Blanton; contact Kessley LaRose.

### **Meeting Evaluation (flip chart notes):**

- Hold face-to-face meetings when reviewing/discussing proposals
- Video Teleconferencing (VTC) could work – concern about technical glitches
- VTC and Face-to-face combination could work – RRAC members would like this option offered
- For face-to-face meetings: suggest starting at 8 am; bring in lunch and work through; adjourn around 5pm or work into the evening (take into consideration presenter's time and travel)
- Hold meetings where largest concentration of proposals take place

- Not go through packet (?)
- Proposals were clear, concise, and precedent setting for future
- Liked having “cliff notes” in power point presentations
- Liked the passion that people have
- Keep [proposal] packets clear and concise and have them to RRAC members early
- Presentations were well done: Good examples, photos, etc. Good to see what “it was like”
- Photos in presentations helped stimulate thoughts/conversations
- Cost for meetings: agenda items
- More instructions for presenters. Suggestion: 30 minutes per proposal - 10 minute presentation; 20 minutes questions and answers
- Public comment: Would help travel situation for members of the public who have to travel far to attend a RRAC meeting to have the conference call or VTC option
- [Be aware of] time and money when planning meetings
- Put power points on CO RRAC website
- Field trips are good
- Hold meetings on weekends to accommodate those who work during the week
- Hold meetings where “typical visitor” is from.

Thanks to Janelle for taking the Chair position; [and Robyn as Vice-Chair]

**MOTION:** Adjourn the meeting (Ian); 2<sup>nd</sup> (Rob)

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**Meeting adjourned at: 4:25pm**

/s/ Richard A. Cooksey  
Designated Federal Officer

July 12, 2012  
Date