

Rogue Users Meeting Notes*

November 6, 2007

Grants Pass Interagency Office

Agency Representatives:

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Chris Dent, River Manager; Abbie Jossie, Grants Pass Resource Area Field Manager; Louise Richards, Commercial Permit Administrator; Dave Ballenger, Todd Calvert, Sara Petter, and John Miller, Park Rangers; Becky Brown, Interpretive Specialist.

United States Forest Service (FS) – Nancy Schwieger, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist and John Borton, Forest Recreation Program Manager; Region 6, Rogue River – Siskiyou National Forest.

Participants were asked to sign in at the door and provide BLM with their name and address. The following handouts were available:

- ✱ Agenda
- ✱ 2007 Rogue River Wild Section Compliance Issues
- ✱ BLM Cost Breakdown – FY 2007
- ✱ BLM Accomplishments – FY 2007
- ✱ Rogue River Bear Observation Summary
- ✱ 2007 Wild Rogue River Use Report

Chris opened the meeting with the required Fire Evacuation procedures and introductions were made all around. Fees were covered, current and future collections. Overall fees collections increased as use on the river has increased. Chris explained also that an increase in collections was due to Law Enforcement and Maintenance not using all allocated fees. BLM tries to staff a Law Enforcement Officer (LEO), dedicated to the Rogue River, at Rand for a good portion of the summer, but this year a LEO was only staffed for 10 days. No LEO was available from the other BLM districts for the temporary assignment on the river. Chris stated also that the Rand Visitor Center lead was paid through operational funds and not Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) fees. In 2008 that position will once again be funded by REA. Labor costs were up partly because of the necessary increased staffing for the lottery. Chris said a copy of this power point is available on request.

Nancy shared what information she had for the FS expenditures. The Chetco River was included in the collection data for this year. It could not be broken out by the meeting. Nancy is only two months into this position so there is some information that may have been missed. She also stated that only 80% of the FS fees come back to the “forest” and that REA allows the Districts to determine which of the fee collection sites receive the funding. There was no carry over monies to 2008.

It was brought up by an individual that he recollected from last years meeting that the FS had over \$120,000 carry over from 2006 and asked where that carry over money went. Nancy did not

* Notes compiled by Louise and Sara, write up by Louise on 11/7/2007

have that information, only that there was no carry over this year. Nancy did state that the FS has set up an account for the Rogue River to better track spending, but reiterated that the Districts have the option to fund any of the fee collection sites with the monies collected, depending upon the districts priorities and site needs.

A concern was raised from the participants that the FS and BLM are clouding the reporting of funding. The agencies need to do a better job of separating out the wild river from other collection areas. A question was raised why the amount of expenditures from 2006 to 2007 doubled. The increased cost was for the new parking lot and the repair of broken pipes at Foster Bar.

Chris covered actual use. Non commercial boaters were at a little over 7,000 and commercial clients were at 6,000.

Chris addressed Compliance Contacts. The BLM had an excellent staff this summer and more compliance trips were run than previously. Information was gathered and well documented. Twelve percent of the commercial groups were contacted and fifteen percent of the non commercial groups were contacted. A commercial permit that was revoked last year will be re-issued through a prospectus process, available to everyone. It was asked at the meeting that the agencies add to the permits a penalty for feeding bears (it was an issue this year).

Two LEO trips were taken. Nancy stated that the FS will be getting a new LEO next week.

Discussion on Group / Rabbit Boating was introduced by Chris. In 2007 BLM tried to make it uncomplicated for the LEOs at Grave Creek to check a float party and placed on the permit a requirement for the private parties to launch together. However that didn't carry over to the commercial side and so there was an iniquity. We realize now that iniquity and need to resolve it. Chris went over some potential alternatives:

- ✿ No Stipulations
- ✿ Together for Launch
- ✿ Together for Entire Trip
- ✿ 50% Stipulation (a group can be split, however 50% or more need to be down river)
- ✿ ?????

Discussion:

- ❖ 50% is appealing; it would stop the rabbit boaters.
- ❖ Keeping everyone together for entire trip would be hard on those who may want to hike, fish, explore etc. while the rest of the group want to push on.
- ❖ There would need to be a definition for "together"
- ❖ How do hikers fit into this mix
- ❖ Give a copy of the permit to those in the float group that are launching later

A spin off to camp sites resulted from the discussion on the alternatives. It came from the participants that the reason for the rabbit boats is to secure a good camp site, usually with a toilet. If that is the problem perhaps the toilets should be removed. It was then asked, why does the Rogue still have toilets anyway? In answer to the question Abbie stated that the public has made it clear to the BLM that they don't want the toilets out. Abbie went on to say that eventually there will be no toilets because we are finding fewer new sites to dig holes and replace them. She asked that if anyone would really like to see all the toilets removed to address it in a letter to her. It was suggested that the BLM conduct a survey to see if we should remove toilets.

Other ideas on the campsite issue which surfaced was a suggestion that the agencies educate the public more, and to have available to the public a brochure or other method showing the number of people that can stay at each camp site. Another idea was to assign the largest camp sites only.

Chris closed the discussion on Rabbit Boating stating again that this discussion was just to gather information and idea. No decisions will be made at this time other than the promise to eliminate the inequity of the noncommercial boater having to launch together.

Chris brought up the no-show list at Rand stating that we are recognizing there are some existing differences between non-commercial and commercial requirements and will be looking at parity. BLM will also be looking at the confirmation and cancellation policies. The system as it stands heavily favors the local boater. Extending out the cancellation and confirmation dates could lead to a more equitable chance of getting on the river by those living farther away.

Because of a concern by an individual Chris promised to inquire as to the acceptability of seeing pumpkins on the Rogue in October. The placing of small pumpkins has become an annual event but there are those who wish to see the placing of pumpkins discontinue. The response to Chris from the participants was "they are cool". No one in the room wished to see the pumpkins go. Seeing the pumpkins on the Rogue was acceptable with all.

A question was raised on the "Flex" option for the commercial groups. It was asked why they are allowed to pick up a space if it is over the 120 per day allocation. Chris stated that that option for the commercial groups was given at the time the permits were sanctioned and that it is posted in the Federal Register. It was asked if such an option can be given to non-commercial parties. Chris said we would look into that issue.

A concern about the Recreation Section of the Rogue River and the Motorized Tour Boats was brought up. Chris asked the gentleman to get with him later as the meetings focus was the Wild Section of the Rogue River.

A question from the public came up concerning the paving of Bear Camp Road. John stated that the FS funding is low and doesn't have the money for paving. Nancy joined in that putting shuttles under a Special Use Permit, as they should be, would help to pay for road improvements.

Chris closed the meeting.