Teton Waterways Recreation Advisory Committee

Thursday, December 01– 4:00-5:30pm

Commissioners Room – Teton County Courthouse

**Agenda- 12.01.22**

* Welcome (4:00-4:20)
  + Update on grant writing process and river access improvement designs
* Recreation fees and other funding sources (4:20-5:15)
  + Background on fees and management recommendations from charette’s and rec ordinance development. (Rob Marin)
  + What (infrastructure, personnel, programs?) are necessary to support recreation management?
  + What are potential fee structures, funding sources, workarounds to pay for these?
  + Action item: committee recommendation funding source to pursue
* Public Comment (5:20-5:30)
* Adjourn

**Minutes**

Committee members present: Brett High, Rob Marin, Joe McFarlane, Renee Hiebert, Amy Verbeten, Will Stubblefield, Kyle Ellison, Boots Allen.

Guest: Charlie Woodward.

* **Grant Update:**

Infrastructure improvement is one priority that has been recommended by the committee. Rob is working on a funding source and considering three grant applications. Currently working to make each grant application more specific to individual project needs identified by committee.

Grant applications: Waterways improvement Fund, Recreational Trails Program and RV fund (best suited for RV infrastructure at Big Eddy)

County has communicated with Fish and Game, and there is an issue with fee collection infrastructure on IDFG access points.

Joe M thinks that there is plenty of money coming from the Fed Govt right now. Be willing to take these projects on one at a time. Ex: Parking lot improvement first, then pay infrastructure can come later.

TU adopt a stream grant may be a good option but, there needs to be a specific need identified to write the grant.

* **Recreation Fees and other funding sources**
  + Background

The Charette and public survey gave indication that Parking Fee system was preferable to a boat/watercraft sticker program. The angling community specifically seems to be accustomed to fees for parking. The County does not have other funds; thus the fee system was identified as a possible funding source. County has allocated 15K of budget + vessel funds + sticker funds during summer 2022 for river ranger salaries.

The committee voices a minimum need of 25K/year to keep the river ranger program running.

The river ordinance says pay for parking will be implemented in 2024 along with enforcement of parking on count roads. This is the primary source of funding for river management identified at this time.

A current challenge is the ability to collect fees on properties owned by IDFG that were bought with Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson excise tax funds. Brett JH is pursuing workarounds with IDFG constituents.

* + What (infrastructure, personnel, programs?) are necessary to support recreation management?

Education Program – needs to be some sort of presence of personnel at the river access points.

How can the county create a budget to support the personnel at the river?

Voluntary fee programs not a reliable funding source.

Are there programs out there that fund programs that are not based on a fee program or government budget. Some examples may be Teton Backcountry alliance, “Friends of” groups, TVTAP.

River Management Society is named as a potential resource.

Kyle is advocating for a short-term approach, instead of getting bogged down in the long-term budget.

Committee voices need to consult regional IDFG, FS, BLM compliance and revenue from fees to get background information and a starting point for setting parking fee for the Teton River.

Charettes and surveys supported the idea that the community does not want river parking fee to be an impediment to recreation for different groups.

**Action steps identified in conversation**

(Identified need is to be build an education / ranger program)

1. Start assessing the cost of running an education program in the short term and over longer term.

2. Research what are other models for raising funds to support recreation management

3. What are the realistic sources of revenue that could be pursued

**Committee Recommendations**

The Teton Waterways Recreation Advisory Committee (TWRAC) recommends that Teton County, ID continues pursuing a parking fee system that can generate revenue to support river management personnel on the ground. This fee system was identified through significant public engagement in the river recreation survey and river recreation charette meetings prior to the adoption of the Teton County Waterways Recreation Ordinance # 2022-0509. Further, the TWRAC recommends continuing with grant applications that include budget line items to fund fee infrastructure (such as fee collection through QR codes, pay tubes or similar means). The TWRAC also recommends continued research by committee members and Teton County Staff to identify alternative funding sources that could support/supplement the fee system with the goal of reducing the cost of recreation for the general public.

**Next step for committee**

Continue building structure for river ambassador program

**Public Comment**

Charlie Woodward- river guide, river user, river educator

Hard infrastructure, this is getting taken care of

Soft infrastructure, these are what is needed next.