

**BOARD OF UTAH STATE PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
SOLDIER HOLLOW CONFERENCE ROOM  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

**December 9, 2010**

**Present:**

Karl Bentley, Chair	Marty Ott, Vice Chair	Joe Hull
Eli Anderson	Jaren Davis	Mary Tullius
Fred Hayes	Karen Krieger	Deena Loyola
Darin Bird	Mark Forbes	Derek O'Donnell
Mike Styler	Jamie Dalton	Leon Tate
Justina Parsons-Bernstein		

**By Telephone:**

Irene Hansen  
Ivan Djambov

**Visitors:**

Jeff Burgener	Helen Lee	Rick Walsh
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Chair Karl Bentley welcomed board members, staff, and Department of Natural Resources Director Mike Styler and Deputy Director Darin Bird.

Chair Bentley reviewed the agenda. He asked board members for approval of the board agenda as presented.

**MR. ELI ANDERSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MR. JAREN DAVIS SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Bentley asked board members for review and approval of the November 4, 2010, board meeting minutes.

**MR. ELI ANDERSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2010, BOARD MEETING AS PRESENTED. VICE-CHAIR MARTY OTT SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Director's Report**

Director Mary Tullius reported on Ranger Brody Young who was shot in the line of duty. It has been almost three weeks since the incident. Brody remains in critical condition in ICU in a Grand Junction hospital. He has had a good week and is sitting up. Everyone remains optimistic about a full recovery. A generous person in Grand Junction has donated a condominium for Brody's family to live in while he is in the hospital, which gives them some level of normalcy. Brody faces more operations in the future, but we hope for a full recovery.

Director Tullius then asked Karen Krieger to introduce Justina Parsons-Bernstein who is the new Heritage Resources Coordinator. Board members said they heard good things about her at the

previous meeting and welcomed her aboard. Mary then asked Jamie Dalton to introduce Derek O'Donnell who is the new planner in that section. Derek introduced himself and talked about his experience and education. Board members also welcomed him to State Parks.

Director Tullius passed out yellow ribbons to all board members, and reported on the national support for Brody. She has received well wishes from most of the state park directors. Chair Bentley asked Director Tullius to pass on the support of the State Parks Board. He said he'd like to visit Brody in the near future, when it is appropriate. He also inquired about donations and help for Brody's family. Director Tullius informed him of the fundraising efforts, and the delivery of a cash donation to the Young family, which will be used for holiday gifts.

Director Mary Tullius then reported on the legislative audit. She said they continue to meet with the auditors and expects a draft report in two to three weeks.

### **Fees Recommendations**

DNR Executive Director Mike Styler addressed the board and expressed his appreciation to them for the tough decisions they have to make regarding fees. He says the fee schedule is well thought out, has no pricing out of the market, and moves the Division to be more self-sufficient and more comparable to private business and entities. He understands this is a tough decision for the board. He commented the legislative audit is looking at prices, services, and efficiencies. He said he appreciates the leadership in State Parks and that there are good and hard workers in State Parks. He asked if Deputy Director Darin Bird had any additional comments, but he said he had nothing to add. Director Styler wished board members happy holidays, and thanked them for their wisdom, service and time.

Special Projects Manager Jim Harland has only 21 days of state employment remaining. He reported the theme of the fee process is flexibility and anticipating toward 2015. The fee schedule shows current rates, 2011, 2013 and 2015. However, we are recommending the board approve only the fees for 2011 and 2012.

Mr. Jim Harland reported meeting with leadership and receiving feedback from park managers. They disliked the boat trailer fee, which has been removed. They recommend an increase in the annual pass from \$75 to \$95. There are also minor changes made thanks to corrections from park managers. They are recommending a full camping fee for extra vehicles. They did away with annual boat pass idea. Green River Golf Course will increase nine holes by \$1, from \$10 to \$11. The team recommends eliminating the \$5 off coupon on annual passes for those with a fishing license; \$80 per night for cabins, which can be reduced for low use time. They are recommending a Veterans Pass, which Director Tullius will present later. The team recommends setting fees at an optimal level with flexibility for peak rates and slower seasons.

In their review, team members looked at the fees that make a difference and those are: camping, day-use, golf and boat mooring.

Vice Chair Marty Ott questioned the matter of the extra vehicle fee set up to the equivalent of the camping fee. Mr. Harland explained the extra vehicle fee is a deterrent to allowing extra vehicles in campgrounds where space is limited, and extra vehicles are only allowed if there is room.

Mr. Jaren Davis asked if this fee schedule is aggressive enough considering the current legislative attitude, issues of general fund and pressure to be self-sustaining. Mr. Harland said yes, it is significantly more aggressive than in previous years. Director Tullius said this is difficult because we must balance recreation opportunities while meeting the expectations of the Governor's Office and legislature with cost cutting and revenue producing measures. The fee schedule is part of a toolkit, which includes efficiencies. Mr. Jaren Davis said he sees good balance and we can in good faith face legislators.

Mr. Jim Harland reported there are higher fee increases at more popular high-use areas. Golf was reduced to a 4% increase to keep public golf affordable. Vice Chair Ott asked whether the fee

recommendations were based on current use visitation and if there is a possibility of visitation decreasing due to fee increases. Mr. Jim Harland reported yes, that could happen. However, the flexibility may help with promoting weekday use. Mr. Jamie Dalton said the flexibility gives headroom to change fees when demand is high and when sites are full. Chair Bentley said he spoke with Ms. Irene Hansen earlier and she supported the fee schedule as presented. Mr. Joe Hull said that allowing park managers to negotiate weekday and weekend rates, and with the board setting a maximum, this puts a great deal of pressure on park managers. Vice Chair Marty Ott said this type of program will require a high level of oversight to ensure goals are understood by park managers. He asked what is built in to this program to ensure success. Mr. Joe Hull said that by having a higher fee on Friday, Saturday and even Sunday, a park manager could work to extend a visitor's stay by offering a lower price on subsequent days. Deputy Director Fred Hayes reported that for about the last year and half, we have been looking more at the business side of operations. The focus has changed, and business plans now coincide with resource management plans. There is a new change of thought. Park managers are committed to a business approach and personal management contracts will reflect their responsibilities. Park managers are ready for this business approach. They analyze and know their customers. Director Tullius said that region managers must also approve the park managers' fee decisions. Mr. Eli Anderson discussed the benefits of state parks and recommended something similar to the Happenings Book, which offers discount coupons, two-for-one and bounce back promotions. Director Mary Tullius said much of this is already being done. We offer discounts on our website, we've had discounts on theater movie tickets, and other promotions. Mr. Jamie Dalton said Sand Hollow State Park had a bounce back promotion as part of their business plan; and the golf courses are doing a lot of this type of promotion. Deputy Director Karen Krieger reported that the Reservation Office can cross-promote and make customers aware of lower fees at various parks; they can accept promotion codes and assist with marketing efforts. Chair Bentley said that if Wasatch Mountain and Bear Lake were privatized, their fees would be at least doubled.

Chair Bentley then invited members of the public to comment. Mr. Rick Walsh introduced himself and Ms. Helen Lee as slip renters at Bear Lake State Park. Mr. Walsh is a member of the Bear Lake Yacht Club. He said he doesn't know much about the statewide park system, he does know the Bear Lake and Jordanelle structure. He referred to two letters he submitted to Ms. Wendy Griffith for presentation to the board. Mr. Walsh is concerned that while 75 to 80% an operations budget goes toward day-users, it's the boat slip renters are greatly impacted by the proposed fees. He has witnessed people with annual passes bringing in eight people, dropping them off within the park, then leaving the park and getting eight more people. He suggests placing the license plate number on the annual pass to help control abuse. He is concerned about a plan to fence an area for dry storage, which he believes is unsuitable for that use. He said the fencing should be used to secure the entire marina area. He said there are not enough employees to enforce the problems he's mentioned. He said he believes Jordanelle State Park has the same issues, but not as much at Great Salt Lake, and that maintenance issues are being a public safety issue. He believes slip renters would be open to greater fee increases if at least a portion of the fees went toward improvements to docks. Chair Bentley said he appreciated Mr. Walsh's comments and maintenance remains an issue for State Parks. Director Mary Tullius said there are significant maintenance needs at Bear Lake and Jordanelle state parks. The agency is working to build up a maintenance fund just for this issue, which would go into the construction budget. Deputy Director Fred Hayes said it is a large volume of funds needed for renovation of the docks and we need to use fees to create a budget for this. Mr. Joe Hull said we must go after general funds to enhance the fees collected. He referred to the situation regarding non-consumptive users and DWR. Vice Chair Marty Ott asked if there are provisions in the fee schedule for maintenance fees. Director Tullius replied they are not in the plan, but in a capital fund. Vice Chair Marty Ott said the legislature may see the efforts of State Park and let funds enhance general funds. Mr. Walsh asked if the legislature allows a separate fund for maintenance fees. Director Tullius explained that park fees go into a restricted fund. Two or three years ago the legislature said no to setting up a restricted account for this purpose and we set up an account internally. Mr. Jaren Davis said it is important to look at ways to stop abuse of the annual pass and perhaps require a driver's license to be shown. Chair Karl Bentley inquired about the Commercial Pass. Director Styler discussed the auditors dividing parks into three categories of historical, scenic and recreational. He said they understand historical parks require general fund money because they are state treasures the public is willing to support. Scenic parks, such as Dead Horse Point and Antelope Island and recreational parks must be more

self-sufficient. They are looking at off-park responsibilities such as trail grooming and law enforcement. In their research, auditors have found Utah State Park to be very efficient as compared to other states. They have found privatization in other states is not working and have a greater appreciation for the work done by State Parks. They are focusing on efficiency. Director Styler said they are looking at possible new categories of rangers, such as non-law enforcement rangers. Mr. Walsh asked if there is a consideration to charge a higher fee to out-of-state residents. Director Tullius said it has been considered but is difficult to enforce. However, the board can recommend we research this further.

Director Tullius then presented recommendations on the veterans with disability pass. It is the recommendation of staff that the board consider the first option, which is giving veterans with a 50% service connected disability 50% off the annual pass. Veterans who meet the criteria for a Special Fun Tag also have that as an option.

Director Tullius then discussed the changes on the administrative rule, which includes eliminating wording regarding duplicate passes; adding language regarding director and designees and the competitive bid process at Bear Lake and Jordanelle state parks. Chair Bentley asked to entertain a motion to accept the fee schedule as presented.

**MR. JAREN DAVIS MADE A MOTION THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE FEE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED. MR. JOE HULL SECONDED THE MOTION. CHAIR BENTLEY COMMENTED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH BOARD MEMBERS LOIS BULLOCH AND GLENN GREENHALGH, AND BOTH WERE IN FAVOR OF THE FEE SCHEDULE. THE BOARD VOTED AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 3, 2011, in Salt Lake City.

**MR. ELI ANDERSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE STATE PARKS BOARD CONVENE INTO A CLOSED SESSION TO START THE NEXT BOARD MEETING FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING REAL ESTATE AND CONTRACT STRATEGY AND LITIGATION ISSUES, PURSUANT TO THE CONTRACT EXEMPTION AT UTAH CODE ANNOTATED 52-4-5 (1A). MR. JAREN DAVIS SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**THE STATE PARKS BOARD MEETING ADJOURNED.**