

To the Editor:

Bob Silbernagel was absolutely right in his February 27 column when he said that the Recreation Resource Advisory Committees need to go, but along with them should go the entire law that established them, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, and most of the fees being levied under its authority. Like Fee Demo before it, the FLREA has done nothing but mischief to the way our public lands are managed. Colorado Counties Inc just called for its repeal, and Colorado's congressional delegation should heed that call.

I can clarify some of the uncertainties expressed in Silbernagel's column.

The Ohio congressman who claims credit for both Fee Demo and FLREA was Ralph Regula, who represented the Canton, Ohio area until he retired at the end of the last session of Congress. His former district does not contain a single acre of federally managed public land.

As to how much authority the RecRAC has, the law says they are to submit recommendations to either the Secretary of Interior (BLM) or Secretary of Agriculture (Forest Service). If the Secretary rejects the recommendation, he or she must issue a notice that identifies the reasons for rejecting the recommendation to the appropriate congressional oversight committee at least 30 days before acting against the recommendation. That's not politically palatable, so in real life, what the RecRAC recommends is what happens.

Silbernagel also accused the Colorado RecRAC of "dithering" in regards to the proposed BLM fee increases near Grand Junction, but the BLM has never put those on the RecRAC's agenda, so it is they who have dithered, not the committee.

The FLREA must be repealed, and the Western Slope No-Fee Coalition continues to work toward that goal. Lots of information on this topic can be found at www.WesternSlopeNoFee.org.

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