

# Park rules withdrawn?

Delayed. Postponed.

But not withdrawn when they were never approved and only implemented in rare instances by mistake.

The Wyoming Division of State Parks (and Historical Sites) had proposed some rule changes that raised the ire of those few Wyoming residents who enjoy camping, boating, fishing, water sports, etc., or just want a place to get away with friends and family on the weekend.

In spite of Wyoming being the ninth largest in area of the fifty states, it is woefully lacking in developed park areas and cannot begin to accommodate its own residents, let alone those from neighboring states, particularly Colorado.

To reduce the potential for gathering even further, the Parks folks proposed limiting access to camp sites to eight people. Perhaps considering their own personal

situations, with few having seven friends or family who would go camping with them, those drafting the onerous new rules may have thought it wouldn't affect anyone. Well, it did. Or would have if the rule had been properly adopted.

As so often happens in a bureaucracy, the onus is placed on those affected to object or litigate if they don't like rules, regulations, ordinances or laws imposed on them. In this case, it just took some verbal sparring for the Parks group to retreat and eat the rules for this season.

Interesting that they didn't make it better known that the proposed rules would not even be reconsidered for imposition this summer. To wait until Labor Day to make such an announcement seems a little belligerent. In late August, Parks announced that they couldn't meet their June 25 deadline for public meeting. Seems like he would have known that by June 26th. Oh well. It's just government.

# Cubin's earmarks

## What is an Earmark?

Earmarks are funds provided by the Congress for projects or programs where the congressional direction (in bill or report language) circumvents the merit-based or competitive allocation process, or specifies the location or recipient, or otherwise curtails the ability of the Executive Branch to properly manage funds. Congress includes earmarks in appropriation bills - the annual spending bills that Congress enacts to allocate discretionary spending - and also in authorization bills.

Earmarks, or "pork" projects, proliferated in recent years. There were more earmarks in 2005 than from 1991 to 1999 combined. However, the dramatic decrease in pork projects in 2007 is a result of the moratorium on earmarks, inserted in the legislation that funded the remaining nine appropriations bills for fiscal 2007.

Source: Heritage Foundation

Twenty years ago, President Ronald Reagan vetoed a highway bill because it had too much "pork" - too many earmarks attached to it. It had 100 earmarks. As you can see in the table below, in 2005, there were 13,997 earmarks attached to bills, many if not most of them, certain to pass or important for passage.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) said on January 24, 2007: "In 1988, during his final State of the Union Address, President Ronald Reagan discussed the growth of earmarks and asked for line-item veto authority for future Presidents. On that evening, President Reagan carried with him three pieces of legislation: an appropriations bill that was 1,053 pages long and weighed 14 pounds; a budget reconciliation bill that was 1,186 pages long and weighed 15 pounds; and a continuing resolution that was 1,057 pages long and weighed 14 pounds.

"In reference to the continuing resolution, President Reagan chided Congress stating, "Most of you in this Chamber didn't know what was in this catch-all bill and report." President Reagan then explained that millions of dollars for items such as cranberry research, blueberry research, the study of crawfish, and the commercialization of wild flowers were included in the continuing resolution "tucked away behind a little comma here and there."

Duke Cunningham took bribes in exchange for attaching earmarks to bills.

McCain continued: "In 1987, Ronald Reagan vetoed a highway bill because it had 157 earmarks. In the last Congress, a highway bill with 6,371 special projects costing the taxpayers \$24 billion dollars was enacted, despite my strong opposition. Those and other earmarks passed by Congress included \$50 million for an indoor rainforest, \$500,000 for a teapot museum; \$350,000 for an Inner Harmony Foundation and Wellness Center; and \$223 million for a "Bridge to Nowhere."

In 2007, President George W. Bush asked Congress to cut in half the number of earmarks and their total cost. Leadership in Congress asked that members publish their list of earmarks in the hope that would shame some of them into not wanting to attach frivolous or foolish pork projects to important and required appropriations. It didn't work.

Rep. Barbara Cubin was one of the few who complied with the request to make public her list of earmarks. Her every move is calculated so why did she do something that the vast majority of House members have refused to do? She may have believed that constituents will give her an "A" for effort, even though she knew going in that few of her earmarks would be approved.

Cubin's list of earmarks was published in the Casper Star-Tribune on July 11, 2007 and they total 41. If every member of the House and Senate submitted an equivalent number of earmarks, there would be 21,935 "pork" requests. If done on the basis of member's population represented, there would be 24,000.

Mrs. Cubin's total earmark "pork projects" total \$127.2 million. As written in the Herald previously, she is seeking a great deal of special money for F.E. Warren Air Force Base - a base she said would be closed if Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House. She also has earmarks to specifically benefit residents in these counties: Laramie and Natrona, of course - Carbon, Converse, Albany, Fremont, Sheridan, (several for all 23 counties), Teton, Big Horn, Campbell, Uinta, Sublette - and probably some missed here. One earmark is for \$4 million "for the extension of Sinclair Street in Gillette." Another is \$700,000 for "a wastewater/lagoon project in Hudson." Something for everyone. Votes are everywhere. Will the gambit work for her?

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