



Forest
Service

Washington
Office



1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

File Code: 2300
Route To:

Date: June 10, 2010

Subject: Fees Charged on National Forest System Lands

To: Regional Foresters

The current economic downturn has heightened public concern that fees are charged in an equitable and consistent fashion on National Forest System lands. These fees fall under a wide range of agency authorities and program areas. In times of economic distress, many people have turned to the National Forests and Grasslands for relatively low cost recreation and vacation options. Many private businesses and nonprofit organizations that operate under permit are challenged as well. It is therefore especially critical that proposals for new fees and changes in current fees for the public and permittees recognize the impact of the economy, and follow established law, regulations, and policy, as well as represent the public interest.

Therefore, I expect Regional Foresters to closely review and be responsible for approval of any proposals related to establishing and modifying fees charged by the Forest Service. Those reviews must occur prior to any public involvement or notification regarding proposals (for example, in the development of proposals under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act). Where potential changes include permit holders, clear communication and dialogue with them must occur well in advance of any fee changes. Furthermore, I expect to be notified in a timely manner when decisions are made to approve new or increased fees.

Many fee amounts are based on market value, are legislated, or are otherwise non-discretionary. For example, the fees associated with recreation residences are legislated through the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act of 2000 (CUFFA). However, where there is discretion within law or policy, I expect Regional Foresters and field line officers to work with affected stakeholders to mitigate potential adverse effects in light of the current economic climate.

Please direct any specific questions regarding fees to the appropriate National Director, so that they can help ensure consistent and appropriate application across the regions and the agency. Thank you for your cooperation.

/s/ Joel D. Holtrop
JOEL D. HOLTROP
Deputy Chief, National Forest System



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