



USDA Forest Service – Southern Region  
**Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests**  
 GEORGIA



January 2004

**Issue:** Recreation Fee Demonstration Project

**Background:**

The Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests was given the authority to begin collecting fees under the Recreation Fee Demonstration program in April of 1998. Fees are charged at most developed recreation areas, Off-Road Vehicle Designated Trail Systems, Visitor Information Centers, day-use trailheads, shooting ranges, and boat ramps. Posters at each site detail for visitors what the fees are being used for at that site.

**Fee schedule:**

Campgrounds	\$5 to \$18, with \$10 average cost per night
ORV/ATV Trailheads	\$5 Per Vehicle Per Day
Visitor Center	\$3 Parking/Day Use, \$1/person/bus over 15
Trailheads	\$2 Parking/Day Use
Shooting Ranges	\$3 Parking/Day Use
Boat Ramps	\$3 Parking/Day Use and \$2 Parking

There are many recreation opportunities that are free on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. In addition, visitors who use the national forest frequently can save money by purchasing an annual pass. The pass is offered as follows:

Forest Annual Pass	\$25
Volunteer Pass	FREE earned by contributing 20 hours

Collections through the recreation fee demonstration project have added significant funds to address the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest’s recreation needs. With an estimated 10 million visitors coming to the national forest each year, the demand for adequate facilities is growing. Following are the revenues that have been collected through the recreation fee demonstration project for the past six years:

<b>FY 1998 revenue:</b>	<b>\$429,700</b>
<b>FY 1999 revenue:</b>	<b>\$749,100</b>
<b>FY 2000 revenue:</b>	<b>\$770,000</b>
<b>FY 2001 revenue:</b>	<b>\$922,400</b>
<b>FY 2002 revenue:</b>	<b>\$972,773</b>
<b>FY 2003 revenue:</b>	<b>\$935,000</b>



*Rabun Beach Recreation Area before rehabilitation work funded by "Fee demo" money.*

These funds have been used to perform needed maintenance in developed recreation areas, rebuild trails, replace aging water systems, etc. One area on the Chattahoochee National Forest in Rabun County that demonstrates the types of things that are being done with the fees collected is the Rabun Beach Recreation Area. Thanks to the funds collected through the Recreation Fee Demonstration Project, picnickers can now sit down at new picnic tables and cook their food on brand new grills at Rabun Beach. Visitors can walk along well-defined pathways with new gravel and edging that

make the paths easier and safer to navigate. Swimmers enjoy the new swim platform at the beach and lay back and soak up some rays on the new sand placed on the beach area. Visitors using the Rabun Beach bathhouse appreciate the new plumbing fixtures and paint that have given a new appearance to the facility. Those accomplishments that visitors might not notice include planting native vegetation, adding wooden planters around the bathhouse, installing new rail fencing along stairs, shoring up the seawall and repairing the stairs. These types of improvements, repairs, and maintenance work are being done throughout National Forest recreation areas in Georgia as a direct result of recreation fee demonstration funds.



*Rabun Beach Recreation Area after "Fee demo" rehab.*

**For additional information on this issue, contact:** Larry Lockett at (770) 297-3033