

**COLORADO RECREATION RESOURCE ADVISORY
FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT
NEW FEE OR FEE CHANGE
PROPOSAL FORM**

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Name of Project Area/Site: GMUG National Forest Christmas Tree Fee Increase

Project Contact Person: Connie Clementson

Position Title & Phone #: District Ranger, 970-242-8211

Forest: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

County: Mesa, Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache, Hinsdale

Ranger District: Forest-wide: Gunnison, Grand Valley, Paonia, Norwood, Ouray

Congressional District: 3

BLM Field Office: N/A

Site Type: Forest-wide Christmas Tree Permit Program

Capacity: N/A

Season of Use: November to December 24 annually

Fee Type: Standard Amenity___ Expanded Amenity___ Special Rec. Permit X___

Proposed Action: New fee___ Change of fee XX

Existing Fee: \$ 8.00

Proposed Fee: \$ 10.00

Date of last fee increase: prior to 1995

This fee increase will provide a consistent fee schedule for the 3 western Colorado National Forests (GMUG, White River and San Juan).

Summary of benefits the public receives or will receive:

- increased uniformed personnel staffing areas where permits and information may be obtained
- extended hours of operation for visitor information sites administering the permits
- increased field presence of uniformed employees to provide for visitor safety and compliance
- improved informational signing,
- increased interpretive services such as visitor displays and educational publications.

Facilities/Amenities Checklist (check all that apply, list each site separately):

Site Name:

1. ___ Designated developed parking
2. ___ Permanent toilet facility: ___ Flush ___ Vault
3. ___ Permanent trash receptacle
4. ___ Interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk
5. ___ Picnic tables
6. ___ Security services

Other Amenities: ___ Garbage Removal, ___ Paved Access Road, ___ Drinking Water, ___ Information/Directional signs, ___ Shower/Bath House, ___ Tent Pads, ___ Electricity, ___ RV Hookups, ___ Fire Rings/Grills, ___ Other

Photo(s): N/A

Map: The Christmas tree program includes many areas of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests. Area maps for approved cutting are handed out each season when customer purchases Christmas tree permit. Reference the 3 National Forest maps.

Setting & General Description (include description of the site, natural resources/features, scenic values, recreational attractions, amenities, current/projected visitation, etc.):

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) are located in western Colorado with approximately 3.1 million acres of National Forest System land within the National Forest boundary. The Forest's five Ranger District offices are located in Gunnison, Norwood, Montrose, Paonia and Grand Junction. The Forest encompasses several counties, including Mesa, San Miguel, Hinsdale, Delta, Ouray, Montrose and Gunnison.

The cutting of Christmas trees by families and individuals has been a popular tradition throughout the GMUG for decades. Families from large communities such as Grand Junction to small communities like Norwood select their annual Christmas tree from the GMUG National Forest. In addition, many families from the front range and eastern Utah come to our National Forest for their fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Currently, the majority of the GMUG NF is open to cutting Christmas trees; with notable exceptions being within developed recreation and administrative sites, in close proximity to highways, in timber sale areas, Wilderness Areas, and Administrative sites. We offer a variety of tree species to choose from on the GMUG NF.

The GMUG will utilize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authority to retain a portion of the fees on the Forest to provide enhanced customer service and forest management relating to this program.

NRHP Eligibility (Cabins/Structures): N/A

2. CURRENT AND PROJECTED REVENUES and ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE COSTS

GMUG Christmas Tree Fee Increase					
Annual Fee Revenue	FY 2006 Final Total	FY 2007 Final Total	FY 2008 Final Total	*FY 2009 Projected	*FY 2010 Projected
Site or Pass Type					
Christmas Tree Permit Total Annual Revenue	\$11,920	\$12,536	\$13,440	\$17,650	\$18,000
Permits Sold	1490 permit	1567 permit	1680 permit	1765 permit	1800 permit

*projected 2009 & 2010 @ \$10.00/tree

Annual Fee Expenditures	FY 2006 Final Total	FY 2007 Final Total	FY 2008 Projected	FY 2009 Projected	FY 2010 Projected
Operations/Visitor Services:					
Personnel		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,700	\$1,700
Vehicles		\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,300	\$1,300
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies		\$1,000	\$250	\$1,920	\$250
Miscellaneous - Interpretive		\$750	\$1,500	\$1,040	\$2,000
Subtotal	\$0	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$5,960	\$5,250
Collections:					
Personnel					
Vehicles					
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies					
Misc.					
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital Improvements:					
Personnel					
Vehicles					
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies					
Misc.					
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Safety/Security/Law Enforcement:					
Personnel		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,700	\$1,700
Vehicles		\$758	\$800	\$750	\$1,000
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies					
Misc.					
Subtotal	\$0	\$2,258	\$2,300	\$2,450	\$2,700

Annual Maintenance					
Personnel		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,200	\$2,200
Vehicles		\$800	\$800	\$750	\$1,000
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies					
Misc.			\$469		\$850
Subtotal	\$0	\$2,800	\$3,269	\$2,950	\$4,050
Deferred Maintenance					
Personnel					
Vehicles					
Equipment					
Materials & Supplies					
Misc.					
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$9,408	\$9,919	\$11,360	\$12,000

NFF to Treasury (\$2.00 per tree)	\$3,134	\$3,360	\$3,530	\$3,600
REA revenues	\$9,402	\$10,080	\$14,120	\$14,400

3. COST OF BACKLOG WORK NEEDS:

Roads/Parking Areas: \$
 Building/Facilities: \$
 Water/Waste water Systems: \$
 Associated Trails: \$
 Signs: \$
 Other (list): \$
Total: \$

4. FEE COLLECTION METHOD AND ESTIMATED FEE COLLECTION COSTS

Method: Christmas tree permits are sold at each district office. In addition, private vendors sell permits that are purchased (under agreement with the FS) to provide convenient customer access during FS non-business hours.

Costs: USFS Front office personnel sell permits.

5. FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS SUMMARY

Fair Market Value Comparison (compare similar fees at other FS, state, federal, or private recreation sites in the area with similar facilities & services):

Facility type(s): Permit

Number of facilities compared: Checked with local BLM offices and other NF offices to compare their fees. We also compared sale prices with local commercial tree lots.

Proximity to project area: 1 mile to up to 500 miles away

Price range: \$8.00 to \$10.00 for federal permits
\$20/foot typical for commercial tree lots

6. PLANNED USE OF FEES RETURNED TO SITE (list by priority; include daily O&M if appropriate; add to list if appropriate)

1. Increase in uniformed USFS personnel presence in field during tree cutting days and hours for visitor safety, information and compliance.
2. Extend hours of operation for visitor information sites administering the permits.
3. Develop and distribute complete Christmas tree customer information packages.
4. Update and improve interpretive services using visitor displays and education publications.
5. Improve signs.

7. CUSTOMER/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MECHANISM TYPES

See Attachment A: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

- Site Monitoring
- Customer Survey Card
- Comment Log / Cabin Guest Book
- Newspaper Articles
- Website Listing
- E-mails
- Direct Mail
- Personal Contacts
- On-site Posting
- Other (list): surveys or questionnaire during selling of permits

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

See Attachment A: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

9. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

List and reference additional information (documents) that can be provided upon request to document this project proposal and the public response.

Comment letters

Press releases

Newspaper articles

Business Plan

Interpretive and Marketing Plan

Communication Plan

10. PROJECT SUBMITTAL & CERTIFICATION

Project Submittal:

The GMUG NF Christmas Tree Fee Program is already included as a fee site under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). This proposal is to increase the fee for the program. The proposal has been reviewed by representatives on the unit. I fully understand and agree to comply with the accounting and reporting requirements necessary to participate in the fee program.

/s/Lee Ann Loupe
for Charles R. Richmond
Forest Supervisor
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests

1/26/2009
Date

Project Certification:

This recreation site is already an approved fee site and the proposed fee schedule is forwarded to the RRAC for their review under REA.

Recreation Fee Board Chair

Date

BLM Washington Office Review ___Y ___N

RRAC Project Recommendation:

This site and proposed fee schedule is ___ / is not ___ recommended as a fee site.
This recreation site is already a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is ___ / is not ___ recommended to the Secretary for acceptance under REA.

Colorado Recreation RAC Chair

Date

Project Acceptance:

This site and proposed fee schedule is ___ / is not ___ accepted as, a fee site.
This recreation site is already an approved fee program and the proposed fee schedule is ___ / is not ___ accepted by the Secretary under REA.

Regional Forester/BLM State Director

Date