

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

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Name of Proposed Fee Site: **Mesa Lakes Cabins**

May 8, 2008

Project Contact Person & Phone: Connie Clementson, District Ranger, 970-242-8211

Forest: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison County: Mesa
District: Grand Valley Congressional District: 3
Site Type: Cabin Number of Cabins: 2

Cabin A Capacity = 6

Cabin B Capacity = 3



Seasons of Use:

Cabin A and B

Summer – June 1 to August 15 = 76 days

Fall – August 15 to Oct 4 = 49 days

Proposed Action:

New Expanded Amenity Fee

Proposed Fee: Cabin A = \$180

Cabin B = \$120

Summary of **benefits** the public receives or will receive:

- Rustic relaxation in remote areas of the National Forest
- Easy access to local recreation opportunities
- A beautiful forested setting to enjoy
- Camping without the rain, bugs or work of setting up camp
- Sleeping “back in time” in an historical cabin in the woods

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

- X Drinking Water
 - X Benches
 - X Boat Ramp (hand carry)
 - X Shower
 - X Paved Access Road
 - X Information Signs
 - X Electricity
- X Other: (list)
 - Pots, pans, utensils
 - Chairs, tables
 - Fireplace (Cabin A only)
 - Mattress on bed frames

Setting & General Description (include natural resources/features, visual values, reasons people want to visit this site, amenities, and photo.)

The Mesa Lakes cabins sit within aspen and spruce/fir forest at an elevation of 9,500 on the north side of the Grand Mesa National Forest.

The original Mesa Lakes cabins were constructed in the 1930's and were used as a Ranger Station. The cabins are located off Colorado State Highway 65, about a 45 minute drive from the Grand Junction area of western Colorado. A garage and bunkhouse/storage building are also at the site.

The two cabins will be available for public rental from June 1 through October 4 with Cabin A being available both weekdays and weekends, and Cabin B available for weekend (Friday through Sunday) rentals only. The Forest Service will continue to use Cabin B for seasonal work crews during the summer and fall seasons Monday through Thursday. The cabins will not be rented during the winter season due to the need to winterize the water system.

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience an overnight stay in a traditional Forest Service Ranger Station. The semi-rustic cabins each have a refrigerator, indoor plumbing including a shower and flush toilet, and a propane cooking stove. Electricity is available and provides the lighting and heat. Cabin A has a larger fireplace to enjoy. A large grass yard fronts the two cabins perfect for family gatherings and weddings!

The Mesa Lakes cabins can be accessed by passenger vehicle during the summer and fall seasons, with paved and gated access. There is parking for approximately 10 vehicles within the compound.

Opportunities in the Summer: From June 1 to August 15, family reunions, weddings and other group events. The area is also linked to a popular mountain bike trail, Westbench trail and adjoins the Mesa Lakes Recreation area which has 7 lakes within walking distance and includes a hand carry boat launch for canoes and non-motorized boating.

Opportunities in the Fall: From mid-August through early October, people will enjoy the fall colors with the extensive aspen stands surrounding the area. It is a beautiful backdrop for weddings, family gatherings and those that enjoy crisp fall weather for mountain biking, hiking and fishing.

All visitors should expect semi-rustic cabin accommodations.

NHPR Eligibility: Yes

Archeologist's signature: Sally Crum

Comments: Any alterations to outside appearance – windows, doors, steps, etc. will be subject to SHPO clearance.

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

See Attachment A: Revenue/Cost projection spreadsheet.

Currently, there are no significant revenues associated with this facility. It typically serves as an administrative site and housing for seasonal employees during the summer months. Projected revenues are conservative (ie., 5 nights for the first year) since the GMUG is new to the cabin rental program and it is anticipated that the public will need a few years to realize that this opportunity is available to them. Revenues were based on the form (cabin price form) provided by the region.

3. COST OF BACKLOG WORK NEEDS

Roads/Parking Areas:	\$ 2,500
Building/Facilities:	
Cabin A	\$ 32,793
Cabin B	\$ 52,804
Total:	\$ 88,097

4. FEE COLLECTION METHOD AND ESTIMATED FEE COLLECTION COSTS

Collection Method: NRRS Reservations (Required)

Costs: \$0, there are no costs to the Forest for reservations under NRRS

5. FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS

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

Facility type(s): Cabin

Number of facilities compared: Within 200 miles

Proximity to project area: With in the Colorado / western slope area

Price range: \$90 to \$225 per night

Selected fee and method: Fee Estimate form (provided by the regional office) and comparison with other rentals on NFS lands.

Comments:

A Fair Market Value comparison of cabin rentals was conducted on a regional basis since the GMUG is new to the cabin rental program and the only government agency that offers rental cabins within the market segment (within 50 miles of the NF) is the USFS. Based on regional comparisons, cabins with little or no amenities (ie., no drinking water) rent at an average of \$50/night. Cabins with significant amenities (ie., power) rent for as much as \$150/night.

In the private sector, there are three lodges that are operated near the Grand Mesa National Forest. A specific price comparison was completed to ensure that the proposed rates were at or above those managed privately so as not to create 'direct competition'.

The purpose of the cabins proposed here are to focus on those services that currently are not typically being provided on the Mesa, including small family reunions, weddings, etc.

On the Grand Mesa, the lodges provide typically more amenities (food services, hot tubs, etc) and services than do the FS proposed cabin rentals. Forest Service cabin rentals tend to be more 'rustic' in nature, more remote and offer limited (if any) amenities and services. Therefore, the nightly fee was based on not only those rentals on the Grand Mesa (which were higher than the regional FS comparables) but considered a regional review of comparable rentals as listed in the NRRS and Forest web sites.

See Attachments C-1 and C-2 and Attachment D for additional information.

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

1. Replace roof.
2. Refinish floors
3. Update kitchens
4. Update furniture
5. Replace mattresses

7. CUSTOMER/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MECHANISM TYPES

- X Site Monitoring
- X Comment Log/Cabin Guest Book
- X Newspaper Articles
- X Website Listing
- X E-mails
- X Personal Contacts

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

See Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

Prior to implementing proposal, the following tasks have been / will be completed to get determine public support for this proposal --

1. The direction provided requires a six month notification in the Federal Register to notify the public of our intent to make these facilities available for rent. No comments have been received to date.
2. The Medicine Bow Routt NF was contacted in December 2007 regarding 'public reaction' to placing their administrative buildings and guard stations into a 'public cabin rental program'. John Baumchen (Rec Staff) indicated they had excellent public reaction and support for the program. In fact, within three years of initiating the program, their cabins are booked one year in advance typically.
3. At quarterly briefing meetings (November 2007 and March 2008) with the Mesa County Commissioners, the District Ranger received a supportive reaction to this proposal.
4. At recent (November 2007) meeting with Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) managers responded with great support and wanted to see the cabins remain open during all hunting seasons (it was explained, however that our cabins were not able to keep open due to the water systems).
5. The owner of the Mesa Lakes Lodge was contacted (several times during the past five years). Mr. Harvey indicated that summer bookings/occupancy was not of concern (they are usually 'booked'), he was not as concerned as if we were considering winter rental of the Mesa Lakes Cabins. In fact, the owner indicated that he might book them too in conjunction with food services if he were to book a wedding, etc. His position was, 'just don't compete with me'. This will be closely monitored.

With this program being new to the GMUG, districts anticipate a 'slow reaction' by the public understanding these facilities will now be available to them for renting. However, it is anticipated that once 'it catches on' that extensive public support will be realized.

9. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS & SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- Attachment A: Revenue/Cost projection spreadsheet
- Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement
- Attachments C-1: Cabin Price Form – Mesa Lakes Cabin A
- 2: Cabin Price Form – Mesa Lakes Cabin B
- Attachment D: Cabin Rental Comparison

10. PROJECT SUBMITTAL & CERTIFICATION

Project Submittal:

This recreation site is already, or being submitted for inclusion as, a fee site under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). This proposal has been reviewed by representatives on the unit. I understand that any reservations must be made through the NRRS system. I also fully understand and agree to comply with the accounting and reporting requirements necessary to participate in the fee program.

/s/ Corey Wong

for Charles Richmond

May 8, 2008

Forest Supervisor/ BLM Field Manager

Date

Project Certification:

This recreation site is already, or is now forwarded as, a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is forwarded to the RRAC for their review under REA.

/s/ Paul E. Cruz

Recreation Fee Board Chair

May 12, 2008

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 a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is ___ / is not ___ accepted by the Secretary under REA.

Regional Forester/BLM State Director

Date