

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
**RECREATIONAL FEE PROGRAM**  
**FY 06 PROGRAM SUMMARY**

**FOREST NAME: ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST**

**REGION: 5**

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**DESCRIPTION (PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF SITES AND SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR FOREST'S PROGRAM – CAMPGROUNDS, CABINS, HIRAS, TOURS, VISITOR CENTERS, SPECIAL USES PERMITS, ETC.)**

Desolation Wilderness Permit fees for overnight use, reservation fees for advance reservations, and day use fee charged at Pyramid Creek Trailhead (Pacific and Placerville Districts).

Day use fee at the Carson Pass, Meiss, Woods Lake trailhead parking areas on the Amador District.

Campgrounds on the Eldorado National Forest, Pacific District, include the Crystal Basin complex and Wrights Lake campgrounds. On the Georgetown District, the Hell Hole Complex, and Dru Barner Campground/equestrian staging area are included.

Recreation Rentals on the Pacific and Placerville Districts, including Harvey West Cabin, Robbs Hut, Loon Lake Chalet, and Van Vleck Bunkhouse.

Outfitter guide and recreation event permits on the Eldorado National Forest.

Golden Passports.

**FEE SCHEDULE (IF CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR)**

No change from last year for Desolation Wilderness, Carson Pass, and the Eldorado Campgrounds, Recreation Rentals, or Outfitter Guide Permits.

**SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR (PLEASE PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES THAT ADDRESSES THE ENTIRE FOREST'S PROGRAM SUCH AS CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS, VISITOR SERVICES, ETC.)**

In the Desolation Wilderness, jointly managed by the Eldorado National Forest and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), funding was provided for three seasonal wilderness rangers to provide increased public contacts, wilderness education, law enforcement, and trail maintenance. A portion of the REA funds were used to fund additional staff to provide wilderness information, handle reservations, and issue permits at the Pacific Ranger Station. The LTBMU and the Eldorado National Forest worked together to implement a wilderness monitoring program, with a professor from California State University Sacramento serving as an advisor, to assess if we are meeting the standards prescribed in the Desolation Wilderness Management Plan. This summer we conducted campsite condition inventories. A portion of the REA funds were used to provide trail maintenance and to service and maintain the Pyramid Creek Trailhead, including cleaning and pumping of toilets and trash collection. An updated wilderness map was created in GIS to be used on new trailhead signs. With the assistance of the Wilderness Volunteers non-profit organization ([www.wildernessvolunteers.org](http://www.wildernessvolunteers.org)), we completed a project to remove garbage and debris from the Wilderness at the China Flat Cabin and the surrounding area, including barbed wire, tools

and equipment, and other non-historic materials that would not deteriorate naturally. Ten volunteers participated in the week-long project. All of the garbage was packed out by pack stock. It took a packer and 5 mules four days to pack out all of the garbage. Funding was used to continue the Desolation Wilderness Volunteer and Education Program, a joint project with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Twenty-three volunteers contributed over 1400 hours, including training, patrolling the Wilderness, providing information to visitors through staffing the Wilderness trailheads and permit offices, and conducting campsite inventories. The volunteers made 1,500 visitor contacts. REA funds were used to fund a Wilderness Volunteer Coordinator to focus on formalizing the Desolation Wilderness Education Program, a joint project with LTBMU. Wilderness education booths and presentations were provided at different schools, fairs and businesses. Together with the LTBMU, we implemented several new and innovative programs that promote public involvement and wilderness stewardship, including “Visitor Appreciation Days” (staffed wilderness trailheads, set up educational displays, and handed out bottled water with a stewardship message), and the “Wilderness Stewardship Challenge”, where wilderness rangers gave Desolation Wilderness pins with an attached educational message to visitors who were “caught” practicing good wilderness behavior and leading by example. REA funds were also used toward two student interns at the Wilderness Permit Desk who helped process wilderness permits and provided information to wilderness visitors.



*China Flat Cabin Cleanup Project*



*China Flat Cabin – working with volunteers*



*Desolation Wilderness Volunteers at work:  
“Visitor Appreciation Days”*



*Desolation Wilderness Volunteers at work:  
Increased visitor contacts*

In the Carson Pass area, portal to the Mokelumne Wilderness, funds were used towards Wilderness Ranger patrols, restoration and management activities, and supervision and project oversight for volunteers assisting in the management of the Mokelumne Wilderness that included over 300 volunteer partnership person-days. We began inventorying campsites to meet the guidelines of the Mokelumne Wilderness Management Plan, and began a noxious weed inventory, which are elements of the Chief's Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. The funds helped support the oversight necessary to start a new nonprofit Mokelumne Wilderness Volunteers group to assist the clearing of trails, visitor education and support for the heavily visited portal area into the Mokelumne Wilderness, located at elevations above 8,000 feet, where heavy snow melt run-off and steep terrain require diligent erosion control and maintenance.

At the Wrights Lake and the Crystal Basin Campgrounds, a number of important services were provided. In addition to the routine operation & maintenance of the developed sites, interpretive programs were held weekly. We began the installation of bear-proof food storage lockers at Wrights Lake. The remainder will be installed in FY 2007.

On the Georgetown Ranger District, 1 bear proof garbage container was installed at Hell Hole Vista. The concrete pad was poured in the fall of 2005, but storms prevented the installation until May 2006. Routine operations and maintenance were provided at Dru Barber Campground. The District Staff constructed and installed 4 accessible picnic tables at Big Meadows Campground. The remaining 3 tables will be constructed and installed in fiscal year 2007. The environmental analysis was completed for the installation of 20 accessible fire rings and 11 picnic tables at Dru Barber Campground. The new fire rings and picnic tables were received November 2006. The District will install the fire rings and picnic tables in the spring of 2007. The District postponed the development of interpretive signs for Hell Hole Vista and Hell Hole Boat Ramp, because of a lack of staffing. The District plans to create the interpretive displays and install them in Fiscal Year 2007.

Recreation Rentals were added to REA in the middle of FY 06. A portion of the receipts was used to operate and maintain Robbs Hut, Van Vleck Bunkhouse, Loon Lake Chalet, and Harvey West Cabin. Painting was done at Loon Lake Chalet. Furnishings, window screens, and other upgrades were purchased for the Harvey West Cabin. At the Loon Lake Chalet, we installed new carpet, began heavy maintenance on the deck, and installed a new septic system. At the Van Vleck Bunkhouse, the solar electric pump for the well was completed. Coordinated the annual Robbs Hut workday, at which members of EDNSP, a volunteer organization, helped perform maintenance and painted the rental hut and lookout.

Outfitter Guide and Recreation Event permit receipts were used to help cover the cost of permit issuance and administration.

## **PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT YEAR**

In the Desolation Wilderness, continue partial funding of trail work, seasonal wilderness rangers, and trail/trailhead maintenance with REA funds. Continue the Desolation Wilderness Volunteer Program to expand field presence and provide more contact with Wilderness visitors. Continue to expand and formalize the Wilderness Education and Outreach Programs. The Desolation Wilderness Education Tour (participation in local events, education tables at outdoor stores, etc.), "Visitor Appreciation Days", and "Wilderness Stewardship Challenge" will continue. Continue to work cooperatively with the LTBMU to implement the Desolation Wilderness Monitoring program. Design and install new generation trailhead signs. Installation would occur in phases over the next several years..

In the Carson Pass area, continue to fund a wilderness ranger, provide trailhead maintenance, and support for the volunteer program. Continue trail and campsite inventory and maintenance, inappropriate campsite

removal and rehabilitation, trailhead visitor contact and education tables, and development of more interpretive materials.

At the Wrights Lake and the Crystal Basin Campgrounds, funds will continue to be used towards operation & maintenance of the developed sites and providing interpretive programs for the public in the summer months. At Wrights Lake Campground, we plan to complete installation of bear proof food lockers.

On the Georgetown Ranger District, we plan to construct and install the remaining 3 picnic tables that were purchased in FY 2005 in the Big Meadows Campground. We plan in to install the 20 fire rings and 11 accessible picnic tables at Dru Barner Campground that were planned in FY 2006. We plan to contract the fabrication interpretive signs for Hell Hole Vista (geology) and Hell Hole Boat Ramp (wildlife and fisheries). Some of the funds will be used for the operations and maintenance of Dru Barner Campground. Other funds collected from Georgetown Campgrounds will be saved for a future project in FY 2008.

Receipts from Recreation Rentals will continue to be used to operate and maintain these facilities. As sufficient funds are collected, several larger improvement projects are planned, including repair/replacement of roofing and decking at Loon Lake Chalet, ADA accessible sidewalks at Van Vleck Bunkhouse, and in the Fall of FY 07, new windows and siding at Van Vleck Bunkhouse. At the Harvey West Cabin, hazard tree removal and additional upgrades are planned. The Eldorado National Forest has several other potential recreation rentals that we plan to evaluate once the RRAC is in place.

Outfitter Guide and Recreation Event permit receipts will be used to help cover the cost of permit issuance and administration.