



News Release

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Plumas National Forest
P.O. Box 11500
Quincy, California 95971

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2009

Contacts: Michele Jimenez-Holtz (530)283-7744

Lee Anne Schramel Taylor (530)283-7850

News Release #09-15

Lakes Basin Camping Fees Proposed

Recreation managers for the Beckwourth Ranger District are proposing new camping fees at Gold Lake Campground, Gold Lake 4x4 Campground, Goose Lake Campground, and Haven Lake Campground. The fee would begin in July of 2009.

The Forest Service is proposing that campers pay \$8.00 to \$10.00 per night to camp at these four locations. The funds collected at each site will help pay for the operation and maintenance of these campgrounds. This includes cleaning and garbage service, as well as enhancement and improvement of the recreation facilities. The fees received will be used to benefit these four campgrounds. In an effort to work with the visitors to this area, the District posted information about the potential for fees in the campgrounds during 2006, 2007 and 2008 seasons. Campers have provided written and verbal input in this process.

The Forest Service acquired the land around Gold Lake in 1979. Camping has occurred in this area since the early 1900's. The Forest Service has maintained the site in a rustic condition and continued to allow camping in designated sites. Gold Lake Campground has 37 sites, Gold Lake 4x4 Campground has 16 sites (4WD or boat access only), Goose Lake Campground has 13 sites (with 4 walk-ins), and Haven Lake Campground has 4 sites.

The cost of maintaining these sites has increased and the appropriated recreation budget has decreased. The Forest is now spending over \$11,000 on portable toilets and garbage service. With reduced recreation budget, maintenance staff and law enforcement are becoming more difficult to provide.

Over time the Forest Service has added amenities whenever possible. There is a new Sweet Smelling Vault

-more-

toilet at Goose Lake and there are plans to install a new vault toilet at Gold Lake in spring 2009. Three wilderness toilets were built at the 4x4 campground a few years ago. Metal fire rings have been installed at all campsites and picnic tables have been installed at the 4x4 campground. These types of improvements would continue as money is generated from fees.

For more information or to provide feedback about this new fee proposal please contact Judy Schaber or Trish Harvey at (530) 836-2575. Feedback may also be mailed to: REA Proposal; Beckwourth Ranger District, P.O. Box 7, Blairsden, CA 96103. To be most useful, please submit by May 1, 2009. Feedback received from the public will be considered locally by the Plumas National Forest Supervisor and later forwarded to a citizen's advisory committee, called a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee. Committee members represent a broad array of recreation interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable fee changes.

-end-

Key points:

- 1) Campground fees are being proposed at some Lakes Basin sites.**
- 2) Feedback about the fee proposal are requested by May 1, 2009.**
- 3) For more information, contact Judy Schaber or Trish Harvey, (530) 832-2575.**

New Camping Fee Implementation Q & A

- **Under what authority is the implementation of camping fees permitted?**

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) was passed into law as part of the 2005 consolidated Appropriations Act on December 8, 2004. The REA authorizes the USDA Forest Service and four Departments of the Interior agencies to retain recreation fee revenues to supplement appropriations and other funding sources to repair, improve, operate, and maintain recreation sites and areas to quality standards and to enhance the delivery of recreation services.

- **Will the Forest Service initiate fees at other recreation areas? If so, where and when?**

There are no plans to charge new camping fees at other recreation sites this summer. However, in the future there may be a proposal to charge at other free campgrounds, to help pay for the cost of operation and maintenance.

- **What happens if I don't pay or don't have money to pay?**

If a person refuses to pay the fee they will politely be asked to leave. If the person refuses to leave, Forest Service law enforcement will be called in. If a person is 62 or older, or disabled, they may obtain a senior pass or access pass card and pay only half the fee (\$5.00 per night). If a person is using the fee sites and does not have any money they will be asked to go to one of the non-fee locations such as those along the Frazier Falls road. The ability for the visitor to pay has been taken into consideration when the \$10.00 per night fee was proposed.

- **What will the money be used for?**

The money will be used to pay for the salary of a recreation technician to clean the toilet facilities, pick up litter, clean out fire rings and clean picnic tables. This will also pay for the cost of pumping the toilets, renting portable toilets and solid waste disposal fees. Facility improvement projects will also be accomplished with these fees including: purchasing and installing new fire rings and new picnic tables; as well as installing additional vault toilets at the campgrounds. All the money the Forest receives will be used at these campgrounds.

- **I thought I was already paying for this with my tax dollars. Why can't the Forest Service operate this for free the way they used to?**

The appropriated Federal dollars the Forest Service receives for recreation is not enough to operate and maintain all our developed recreation facilities. Rather than close facilities, the Forest Service would rather charge a minimal fee to offset the cost of operating and maintaining. The general forest is open to the public without fees, however, sites with developed facilities require a fee to pay for all of maintenance associated with the site.