

NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument
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Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

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Recreation Improvements Enhance Sequoia Visitors

The Sequoia National Forest has an approved 5-year program of work for improving and upgrading the numerous recreation facilities as a result of a nation-wide effort called, Recreation Facility Analysis. The goal was to identify a recreation program with higher quality, more efficiently managed recreation sites. The public facilities are to reflect visitor desires, expectations, and use. Many of the developed recreation sites in the Sequoia National Forest were built 30 to 50 years ago. Today, visitor preferences and demographics have changed. Some sites no longer serve projected recreation demand, and many facilities are in poor shape and do not meet visitors' expectations.

In the fall of 2005, the Sequoia National Forest began the national process to identify a sustainable system of developed recreation facilities that fit today's visitors. The original process was called the Recreation Sites Facility Master Planning. The initial document developed was reviewed by the public from January - April 15, 2007.

This was a national program and process that received much public involvement. The Washington Office reviewed the process and changed the name to better reflect the analysis occurring on each forest. The planning exercise was renamed to Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA). The final document can be found on our website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/recreation-facility-analysis/index.html>

Upon completion of the Sequoia's Facility Master Plan, we competed successfully for national dollars for many recreation improvements throughout the forest. In 2009, we succeeded in an allocation of 1.2 million dollars for Recreation Site Improvement Funds. The numerous projects were designed and contracted by the forest engineering staff. Currently all water systems have been completed, many have been upgraded and designed for accessibility. Nine new toilet installations are in progress, and many new picnic table placements are ongoing.

Some of your favorite places in the Giant Sequoia National Monument have improvements:

- Belknap Campground - water system rehabilitation and toilet repair,
- Trail of 100 Giants Interpretive Trail - water system and toilet repair,
- Eshom Campground - replacement of two toilets.

The popular Camp 3 campsite, on the Kern River Ranger District, along Lake Isabella, had a water system rehabilitation and six toilets replaced.

Our long and hard planning efforts paid off. Through our collaborative process, we upgraded 30-50 year old facilities with your input, expectations, and recreational use patterns. Plan a day with the family, get out and enjoy your national forests!

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