

Umpqua National Forest 2010 Recreation Fee Proposals

Executive Summary

Forest Setting

The Umpqua National Forest is located in southwestern Oregon, east of Roseburg. The 984,602 acre forest is located on the westside of the Cascade Mountains. Explosive geologic events have shaped the distinctive landscape, providing spectacular scenery as well as an abundance of natural and cultural resources. The Umpqua is a diverse place of thundering waters, including high mountain lakes, white-water rivers, and many waterfalls. There are four Ranger Districts, Cottage Grove, Diamond Lake, North Umpqua and Tiller.

The niche statement for the Umpqua is: Destination Waters – Where Friends and Family Meet. From thundering waterfalls to still mountain lakes, water is the essence of the Umpqua National Forest. These regionally distinctive features provide generations of visitors natural settings for recreation, and connect visitors with other significant features and destinations.

The forest settings for the Umpqua National Forest are the Rogue-Umpqua National Scenic Byway, Cascades Dispersed, Diamond and Lemolo Lakes, Wilderness, and Winter Recreation.

The Rogue-Umpqua National Scenic Byway is 172 miles of diverse river and mountain landscapes where visitors can view waterfalls, drive along the North Umpqua Wild and Scenic River, experience white water boating or world class fishing, and have overnight stays at highly developed campgrounds and resorts.

Cascades dispersed recreation is much of the forest with high elevation, well-roaded yet remote, natural-appearing settings with activities that include hunting, wildlife viewing, mining, scenic driving, photography, off-highway vehicle use, hiking and huckleberry picking. The road system along rivers is dotted with campsites and trails.

Diamond Lake and Lemolo Lake are favorite destinations for generations of families. These highly developed recreation complexes provide water-related activities including boating, fishing and water play. The highly developed campgrounds and resorts encourage multi-day stays.

There are three wilderness areas on the Umpqua offering solitude, remoteness, and hiking trails. The winter setting offers miles of cross-country skiing and snowmobile trails.

Background

The last time the Umpqua National Forest raised fees was in 2005 and the fees were raised one or two dollars per campsite. The increase in fees for group sites ranged from \$2 to \$22, dependent on the site. The Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA) for the Forest was completed in 2006 and was one of the first completed in the Region. The recommendations were to shorten seasons at the campgrounds or to begin charging fees at sites that were non-fee sites. Since the campground rates were raised in 2005, there was not a recommendation to increase fees at that time.

In 2008, the Forest began a financial analysis to look at the costs and revenues at all the fee sites on the Forest and also look at the sites that had the amenities or the potential to have the amenities to begin charging fees. The Forest also began market analysis to determine how the fees the Umpqua charged compared to neighboring Forests, Crater Lake National Park, BLM and County Parks. The analysis showed the Forest should increase its fees for the campsites and recreational rentals, but the Forest leadership decided to postpone the proposal due to the poor economy and high unemployment in the local area. In 2009, the analysis was reviewed and updated. The Forest decided to move forward with the proposal at this time. One concern the Forest has is a large amount of the campground operation costs are financed through the Secure Rural Schools Program (Payments to Counties - Title II program (PAYCO) and this program is ending in 2012. Another concern is the deferred maintenance costs are not decreasing except for one project at Diamond Lake that is being funded through appropriated funds (Recreation Strategy Initiative dollars).

Costs (from October 2009 Facility Condition Index)

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|--|--|
| Annual FS Operations and Maintenance Costs to administer to standard (100% rec fee sites): | \$807,764 (\$413,089 operations, \$394,675 maintenance) |
| (70% is National target): | \$565,435 |
| Deferred Maintenance for rec fee sites: | \$1,241,340 |

Revenue

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| PAYCO Grants for Garbage and Restroom Cleaning (Program ends in 2012): | \$210,000 |
| Appropriated funds: | \$165,000 |
| Hydropower funds for Poole Ck, East Lemolo, Inlet, Bunker Hill and Toketee Lake CGs: | \$130,000 |
| Current Rec Fee Revenue: | \$506,000 |
| Expected Rec Fee Revenue: | \$729,000 (\$223,000 increase) |
| Total Expected Revenue (Approp., Hydro, Rec Fee): | \$1,024,000 |

Public Notice

During 2008 and 2009, notices were posted at new sites where fees were proposed to be charged and sites where fees were proposed to be raised. One exception to this was Tiller Ranger District recreation rentals. Although these sites were supposed to be posted, it could not be confirmed that they were. The sites will be posted in 2010 to determine if there is any additional public input concerning these sites.

On June 30, 2009, a Federal Register Notice was published concerning the Forest's proposal to charge fees at six new sites: Ash Flat and Three C Rock Campgrounds and the South Umpqua Falls Day Use Area on the Tiller Ranger District; Rujada Group Picnic Site and East Brice Creek-Champion Creek Trailhead on the Cottage Grove Ranger District; and Thielsen View Boat Launch on the Diamond Lake Ranger District.

On November 20, 2009, a news release was distributed to media outlets, the Forest's mailing list of interested parties and retirees, County, State and Federal officials' mailing list, and posted on the Forest's web site. A table describing the specific proposal for all of the Forest's sites was enclosed with the news release. Comments could be made by phone, letter, or email.

An article or the news release was published in the following newspapers: *Roseburg News-Review*, *Myrtle Creek Douglas County Mail*, *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, and *Florence Siuslaw News*. KEZI-TV, Eugene, OR ran a piece on the proposal and posted it to their web site. KPIC-TV, Roseburg OR included information on the proposal in their community news segment. Bob Larson with BCI radios in Roseburg also ran a piece on the proposal. There may have been other media who also reported on the proposal.

A meeting is planned with the Roseburg Chapter of Oregon Equestrian Trails Group in January, 2010 to discuss the proposal. They were provided information concerning the proposal, but have not provided any comments at this time.

Public Comments

The three campgrounds at Diamond Lake received the most public comments as a result of notices being posted at the campgrounds.

In 2008, all comments were verbal from users on site. Most of the people questioned the range of fees listed. They wanted to know exactly what the new fee would be. Our response was that it had not been determined. Most people expressed that they understood the reasons why the Forest Service would be increasing fees.

In 2009, 3 letters were received concerning Broken Arrow Campground. One was from Eugene, OR, one from La Pine, OR and one from Yuma, AZ. The range for this campground was shown as \$18-\$24, and going from \$11 (current fee) was too much of an increase at one time. Based on

these comments and others, the District thought a phase-in of the fee increase would resolve these concerns.

Several people that visited the Visitor Center at Diamond Lake commented on the fee increase. Much of the interest was in how much the increase would be and what projects the Forest Service hoped to accomplish with additional fees.

Cottage Grove Ranger District received 8 written comments at Rujada Campground over the course of the summer 2009. All said the current fee of \$8.00 was “just right” when given the choice of “too low, too high, or just right.” One commenter stated the proposed fee of \$12 to \$18 was too high. No other written comments were received. Based on these comments and other verbal comments received, the district proposed a fee on the low end of the range of fees from the pricing analysis form.

Tiller Ranger District received only one comment from their notices posted at the campgrounds or at the South Umpqua Falls Day Use Area. The commenter recommended that fees be raised only to the minimum necessary, otherwise people would be forced to camp in dispersed (non-fee) areas.

The Forest received one email response from the Federal Register Notice concerning the proposed new fees at 6 sites on the Forest. The President of the Western Slope No Fee Coalition responded that they were opposed to new fees at these sites.

After the news release was published, the Forest received 6 emails and 7 phone calls concerning the proposal. Two comments were in favor of the increase provided it was reasonable and went back to the campgrounds. One commenter stated a minimal increase was appropriate, but it would be better if the Forest Service waited a year for the economy to improve. Five people were opposed to the increase in fees in general. Four were opposed to the proposal and their comments were specific to the three campgrounds at Diamond Lake. One person was opposed to the proposal with comments specific to Tiller Ranger District campgrounds. There were no comments concerning the proposed increase in fees specific to the recreation rentals.

The Forest Service counts the number of people who camp at Diamond Lake Campground. In 2009, 48,960 people used the campground. This averages to approximately 3 people per campsite. If you apply the same average to Thielsen and Broken Arrow Campgrounds, approximately 73,000 people camped at the three campgrounds in 2009.

At Cottage Grove RD, using 3 people per campsite, approximately 1750 people camped at Rujada, 1446 people at Cedar Creek, and 1047 at Lund in 2009.

At Tiller Ranger District, using 3 people per campsite, approximately 5643 people camped at the district’s campgrounds in 2009.

Fee Proposals

New Fee Sites

The Umpqua is proposing to charge fees at six new sites beginning in May 2010: East Brice – Champion Creek Trailhead and Rujada Group Picnic Area on Cottage Grove Ranger District (RD), Thielsen Boat Ramp, Diamond Lake RD, and Ash Flat Campground, 3-C Rock Campground, and South Umpqua Falls Day-Use Area on the Tiller RD.

A \$5 fee through the Northwest Forest Pass is proposed for East Brice Creek – Champion Trailhead, Thielsen Boat Ramp, and South Umpqua Falls Day-Use Area. All have the standard amenities on site. Fees from East Brice Creek-Champion Creek trailhead can be used to match state grants for trail maintenance on the Noonday Trail. Requiring a Northwest Forest Pass at Thielsen Boat Ramp will make it the same as the other boat ramps on Diamond Lake. Fees from the South Umpqua Falls Day Use Area will be used to provide a greater Forest Service presence at the site, allowing for the restroom to be cleaned on a more regular basis.

At Rujada Group Picnic Area, a \$25 fee is proposed for one group site, and a \$50 fee is proposed if both group sites are occupied. The amenities are in place to charge a fee. These fees will provide for a higher level of operations and maintenance at the site.

At Ash Flat and 3-C Rock Campgrounds, a \$10 fee is proposed with an extra vehicle fee of \$5. All amenities are in place to charge a fee except for installation of fee tubes. A new vault toilet has been purchased for Ash Flat campground and will be installed this spring. Fees from these sites will be used to provide garbage service and maintenance at the sites.

Increased Fees at Campgrounds

The Umpqua is proposing to increase fees from \$2 to \$11 at the 36 fee campgrounds on the Forest. The fee increases at most of the campgrounds are \$3 to \$4. Based on public comments, the Forest is proposing to phase in larger fee increases. The additional increase is proposed to occur in two years provided the economy improves and the Forest will have the opportunity to re-analyze the costs and revenues to ensure it is warranted. Fees for extra vehicles are proposed to be \$5 and standardized across the Forest. Currently the fees for extra vehicles are \$3, \$4 and \$6 dependent on location.

At Cottage Grove, the proposed fee at the three campgrounds was determined by the amenities at each site. Based on the public comments received, the District wanted the campground fees to be on the low end of the scale that the pricing form indicated should be charged. For Tiller, North Umpqua, Diamond Lake Ranger Districts, the fees that could be charged was also based on the amenities available at the campground. If a campground had no water or a hand pump for

water and a vault toilet, the proposed fee is \$10. If the campground has water lines, faucets and flush toilets, the fee is proposed to be \$15. If the campground has waterlines, faucets, flush toilets and showers, the fee is proposed to be \$20. There was one exception, Canton Creek Campground has waterlines, faucets, and flush toilets, but the district did not think recreationists would stay at this campground if the fee was \$15 so \$10 is proposed. At campgrounds where larger fee increases are proposed, a phase-in of the fees is proposed. For example at Diamond Lake Campground, the current fee is \$12 for a single family site. The fee proposed in 2010 is \$16 and in 2012 the fee is proposed to be increased to \$20. The proposed increase in fees for large group sites would range from \$12 to \$68 and would be phased in as described above.

Increased Fees at Recreation Rentals

At Musick Guard Station, the fee is proposed to increase from \$40 to \$50. At Fairview Lookout, the fee is proposed to increase from \$40 to \$50 in 2010 and then increase to \$65 in 2012. This lookout has a great view of the Cascade peaks from Mt. Hood to Mt. McLaughlin, and \$65 is comparable to other lookouts with excellent views. The recreation rentals at Tiller RD (Acker Rock Lookout, Butler Butte Cabin, Pickett Butte Lookout, Whisky Camp Guard Station) are proposed to increase from \$40 to \$50 in 2011. The Forest wants to make additional repairs to some of the sites and ensure the sites are posted with the proposed increase to determine if there are any public comments concerning the proposal.

See the attached table for specific proposals by individual sites.

| <u>Site</u> | Camping Fee | | Extra Vehicle Fee | | Allowable Fee Range ² |
|---|---------------|---|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | Existing Fees | Proposed New Fees (Phase 1 & 2 ¹) | Existing | Proposed New | |
| <u>Cottage Grove Ranger District</u> | | | | | |
| Cedar Creek | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 -- 14 |
| Lund Park | \$6 | \$8 | \$3 | \$5 | \$5 – 12 |
| Rujada | \$8 | \$12 | \$3 | \$5 | \$12 --18 |
| Fairview Lookout | \$40 | \$50 & \$65 ¹ | ----- | ----- | \$40 – 65 |
| Musick Guard Station | \$40 | \$50 | ----- | ----- | \$40 – 65 |
| Rujada Picnic Area (for one site) (for two sites) | ----- | \$25 \$50 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| East Brice Creek / Champion Creek Trailhead | ----- | \$5 ³ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| <u>Diamond Lake Ranger District</u> | | | | | |
| <i>Diamond Lake</i> | | | | | |
| Single Family Site | \$12 | \$16 & \$20 ¹ | \$6 | \$5 | \$20 + |
| Multiple Family Site | \$18 | \$21& \$25 ¹ | \$6 | \$5 | \$20 + |

| <u>Site</u> | Camping Fee | | Extra Vehicle Fee | | Allowable Fee Range ² |
|--|---------------|---|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | Existing Fees | Proposed New Fees (Phase 1 & 2 ¹) | Existing | Proposed New | |
| Lakeshore Multiple Site | \$24 | \$27 & \$30 ¹ | \$6 | \$5 | \$20 + |
| <u>Broken Arrow</u> | | | | | |
| Single Family Site | \$11 | \$15 & \$20 ¹ | \$4 | \$5 | \$20 + |
| Multiple Family Site | \$14 | \$20 & \$25 ¹ | \$4 | \$5 | \$20 + |
| Group J Loop | \$132 | \$165 & \$200 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Group K Loop | \$60 | \$70 & \$85 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Group M Loop | \$78 | \$95 & \$115 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Group N Loop | \$54 | \$70 & \$85 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| <u>Thielsen View</u> | | | | | |
| Single Family Site | \$11 | \$15 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |
| Multiple Family Site | \$14 | \$20 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |
| <u>Poole Creek</u> | | | | | |
| Single Family Site | \$11 | \$15 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |
| Multiple Family Site | \$14 | \$20 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |
| Group Site | \$72 | \$85 & \$100 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| East Lemolo | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Bunker Hill | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Inlet | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Kelsay Valley Camp | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Kelsay Valley Horse Camp | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Clearwater Falls | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Toketee Lake | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Toketee Lake Group groups 30 or less groups 31 or more | \$18 | \$25 \$50 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| White Horse Falls | \$7 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Thielsen View Boat Ramp | ----- | \$5 ³ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| <u>North Umpqua Ranger District</u> | | | | | |
| Apple Creek | \$7 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 - 14 |
| Bogus Creek | \$11 | \$15 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |
| Boulder Flat | \$8 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Canton Creek | \$8 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Coolwater | \$6 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Eagle Rock | \$10 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Hemlock Lake | \$8 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Hemlock Meadow | \$8 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 - 14 |
| Horsehoe Bend | \$12 | \$15 | \$4 | \$5 | \$16 – 22 |

| <u>Site</u> | Camping Fee | | Extra Vehicle Fee | | Allowable Fee Range ² |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | Existing Fees | Proposed New Fees (Phase 1 & 2 ¹) | Existing | Proposed New | |
| Horseshoe Bend Group | \$85 | \$100 & \$120 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Island | \$8 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Lake in the Woods | \$10 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Steamboat Falls | \$7 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Steamboat Ball Field | \$55 | \$65 & \$75 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| White Creek | \$6 | \$10 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Wolf Creek | \$10 | \$15 | \$4 | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Wolf Creek Group | \$95 | \$110 & \$120 ¹ | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| <u>Tiller Ranger District</u> | | | | | |
| Boulder Creek | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Camp Comfort | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Cover | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Devil's Flat | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Dumont | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Threehorn | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| South Umpqua Falls | \$6 | \$10 | \$3 | \$5 | \$8-14 |
| Acker Rock Lookout | \$40 | \$50 ⁴ | ----- | ----- | \$40 – 65 |
| Butler Butte Cabin | \$40 | \$50 ⁴ | ----- | ----- | \$40 - 65 |
| Pickett Butte Lookout | \$40 | \$50 ⁴ | ----- | ----- | \$40 – 65 |
| Whisky Camp Guard Station | \$40 | \$50 ⁴ | ----- | ----- | \$40 - 65 |
| Ash Flat | ----- | \$10 | ----- | \$5 | \$8 – 14 |
| Three C Rock | ----- | \$10 | ----- | \$5 | \$8 - 14 |
| South Umpqua Falls Day Use | ----- | \$5 ³ | ----- | ----- | ----- |

¹ The increase in fees would be phased in. Phase 2 would occur in two or more years.

² Range of fees that could be charged based on the amenities at the site.

³ New site for the Northwest Forest Pass permit system

⁴ Begin charging increased fees in 2011 after improvements to facilities are completed.