

## Executive Summary Ochoco National Forest Recreation Fee Increase Proposal

The Ochoco National Forest is located on the High Desert of Central Oregon. Lookout Mountain Ranger District is situated in Prineville in Crook County.

Lookout Mountain District began collecting fees at three campgrounds and one rental cabin, Cold Springs Guard Station, under the previous fee demo program. An additional three campgrounds are run under a concessionaire permit. The fees collected at our campgrounds and rental cabin are essential to the financial stability of the developed recreation program.

Cold Springs Guard Station went into the rental program in 1996. The nightly rental fee was and currently is \$50.00. Ochoco National Forest proposes to raise the fee to \$75.00. The additional revenue will enable us to maintain the guard station to health and safety standards and to provide a better service to our visitors.

Cold Springs Guard Station is a historic building that was constructed in the late teens. It served a special role as a switchboard station connecting phone calls between Prineville and Paulina, as well as various fire lookouts and guard stations. The original building burned down and was reconstructed in 1934. Additional funds are needed to maintain and preserve this historic facility and to provide visitors a high quality recreation experience.

Cold Springs Guard Station rests in a serene corner of the dry meadow ecology near Big Summit Prairie. Old growth ponderosa pines and sagebrush meadows are unique to the setting. The diverse habitat supports a variety of watchable wildlife including antelope, deer, elk, geese, and sandhill cranes. In late spring and early summer the prairie and surrounding forest is resplendent with wildflowers. Hiking, mountain biking, and fishing can be enjoyed in the vicinity.

Cold Springs is equipped with two bathrooms (one with shower, one with tub), kitchen, living room, and three bedrooms. Lights, cook stove, heat, and hot water are all propane operated. It also has solar lights and solar fridge. Drinking water is available in the building. Propane, basic kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies, beds and some furniture are provided. The cabin will sleep 6-8 people.

Cold Springs Guard Station is extremely popular and is among the national top ten for most rented-out cabins. The annual occupancy rate is 90%. In order to ensure that health and safety standards are being met, more Forest Service presence is needed in between visitors to clean and fix any problems. The current revenue from Cold Springs is \$6,250. The expected revenue after the fee increase is \$9,375. The additional \$3,125 will be used to better ensure that health and safety standards are being met, to better maintain and preserve the historic guard station, and to provide a higher quality recreation experience. Some planned accomplishments include:

- Painting the interior walls and floors and exterior structures, as needed
- Treating the deck and better securing the deck planks and railings
- Replacing the old plumbing under the cabin
- Replacing the yard fence
- Regular cleaning, and checking the rental cabin after change in visitors
- Promptly responding to and fixing problems during operating season

Ochoco National Forest is a unique and remote place where visitors come for self-discovery and to find their 'own special place.' Cold Springs Guard Station provides that experience to visitors and allows visitors to learn about the history of the area while recreating and enjoying the natural surrounding.