



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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Hoosier National Forest Looks at Fee Changes German Ridge and Saddle Lake Campgrounds Under Consideration

Bedford, IN – (June 7, 2016) Hoosier National Forest staff are interested in hearing your comments on proposals to increase fees at one campground and begin charging at another campground.

German Ridge Campground is a 20-site campground within the historic German Ridge Recreation Area. Currently the fee to camp at this site is \$4.00. The Forest is proposing raising the fee to \$8.00. The campground needs repairs because of age and use. The current fee of \$4.00 has been in place for over 20 years.

The Hoosier has implemented several improvements to German Ridge Campground over the years. A new double vault toilet building was installed in 2009 to replace two wooden pit toilets. A gravity feed water tank, water lines and 9 water spigots were installed in 2006 to provide water for horses. Two of the nine spigots are frost free, providing water year-round. Use has increased over the years and the cost for hauling water to the campground has increased as well.

Saddle Lake Campground is a 13-site aging campground needing repairs just above Saddle Lake. Currently there is no fee to camp in this area but the Forest is proposing a \$5.00 camping fee. The current disrepair results from use, age, vandalism and theft of items such as grates on the grills, and the cover for the vault toilet tank.

The Forest has implemented improvements to this campground over the years as well. A new restroom was installed in Saddle Lake in 2003 to replace an aged wood vault toilet.

Both campgrounds are maintained year-round by Forest Service employees and volunteers. As the cost of maintenance increases and recreation budgets decline, Forest staff would use the fees to improve the campsites at both locations.

At German Ridge Campground, the proposed fee increase would be used to improve the services and facilities. Some of these improvements include: continuing to provide water for horses, rehabbing tent pads and campsite spurs, replacing aging picnic tables, grills, and hitching posts; cleaning out the ditches on the main road, and providing more Forest Service personnel presence. In addition, a project is planned to create two pull-through campsites for larger horse trailers.

At Saddle Lake, plans include rehabbing tent pads and campsite spurs, replacing aging picnic tables and stolen grill tops, cleaning out the ditches on the main road, and providing more Forest Service personnel presence.

Ninety five percent of the revenue collected at recreation fee sites remains on the Forest to operate, maintain and improve the facilities.

At this time, comments are being accepted on the fee increase at German Ridge Campground and implementing a fee at Saddle Lake Campground. Please send your comments to Mike Chaveas, Hoosier National Forest, 811 Constitution Avenue, Bedford, IN 47421. Comments will be taken until December 31, 2016.

All new fee proposals will be presented before a citizen's advisory committee; the Forest Service Region 9 Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC). 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. The exact meeting time, location and agenda will be announced and the public is welcome to attend. These fee proposals will also have extensive reviews by both the Forest Service Regional and Washington Offices.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act which allows the Forest Service to retain funds collected at certain recreation sites and use these funds locally to operate, maintain and improve these sites. Before the Forest Service received the authority to retain funds locally, all fees collected by the Forest Service went to the national treasury.

For more information on the campgrounds or the Hoosier National Forest, visit the Hoosier National Forest website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier> or contact Nancy Myers at (812) 547-9241.

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About German Ridge Campground. It is a popular campground for equestrians and other campers from southern Indiana and Kentucky, as well as other states during deer season. There are two trailheads for the 25-mile German Ridge multiple use trail located in the campground. The campground is open year round with primary use on weekends. Use is heavy on holiday weekends and during hunting season. The nearby German Ridge Lake and picnic area provides a lake for fishing and a swimming beach.

About Saddle Lake. It is a well-used by local visitors as well as the occasional visitor from outside the region. The nearby Saddle Lake boat ramp provides access to the 41-acre lake

for fishing, and the 2.2 mile shady hiking trail encircles the lake and provides a nice respite from the heat of summer. The Saddle Lake Recreation Area is open year-round and is used primarily on the weekends, with heavy use on the major summer holidays.

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The U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a mission of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Forest Service's Eastern Region includes twenty states in the Midwest and East, stretching from Maine, to Maryland, to Missouri, to Minnesota. There are 17 national forests and one national tallgrass prairie in the Eastern Region. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/R9.

The U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/.

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