

Frequently Asked Questions

When will the fee increase take effect?

All fee increases will take effect January 1, 2008.

Why are you increasing fees now?

The Wayne NF has not increased its recreation fees in almost ten years (since 1998). Fees collected for trail permits primarily go back to trail construction and maintenance. Used with annual recreation appropriations and grants, fee dollars are used to help purchase equipment and contracts for trail construction and maintenance, improve trail maps, operate campgrounds, user education, and enhance patrols and security.

Will there be an annual increase?

No. However, the Wayne NF will continue to review its fees to determine if a fee increase is warranted.

How was the fee increase determined?

The Wayne NF based the level of fee increase on three important factors. These factors are not listed in any particular order.

- ❖ Current operation and maintenance cost;
- ❖ What the public is generally willing to support;
- ❖ What other providers are charging for similar recreation facilities and activities.

The Wayne's fee increase proposal was reviewed and recommended by the Eastern and Southern Region Recreation Advisory Committee (RRAC) and approved by the Regional Forester. The RRAC consists of a panel of 11 representatives from various interest groups, local governments, tourism agencies, and recreation users from the eastern and southern U.S.

Was there public support for the fee increase?

Public Participation Method

The Wayne completed a public sensing campaign beginning January 2006. It involved making phone contacts to various local elected officials and state and federal congressional delegations followed by e-mailing a proposal letter to approximately 30 different OHV clubs across Ohio. Additionally, over 8,500 postcards were sent to trails users nationwide to direct them to the Wayne's website where they could provide feedback through a web-based sensing form. News releases were sent to various local and statewide newspapers to publish. Finally,

power-point presentations were made to three different recreation/trail user groups about the fee increase proposal.

Public Participation Results

Of the responses received through the web-based format, 88% of respondents were in favor and 2% were not in favor, and 10% did not respond either way to fee increases for trails.

With respect to fee increases for campgrounds and day-use facilities, 82% were in favor, 9% were not in favor, and 9% had no responses.

Conclusion

There is general public support for the proposed fees. New fees were based on the level for which the public could support, as well as current operation and maintenance cost, and comparable fees charged by other providers for similar services/amenities.

How do the new fees compare with other similar providers in the region?

The Wayne's current recreation fees (campgrounds and trails) are one of the lowest in the region. The regional area includes private and public (state and federal) recreation facilities in Ohio and adjoining states.

For example, the Allegheny National Forest (Pennsylvania) currently sells their seasonal trail permit for \$35.00 and daily permit for \$10.00, while the Wayne NF sells its seasonal trail permit for \$25.00 and daily permit for \$5.00.

How much additional revenue does the Wayne NF expect to collect?

Annually, the Wayne NF's collects approximately \$300,000 in user fees from its recreation areas and trails. Assuming recreation visits and sales remain at current levels, revenues will essentially double (approximately \$600,000).

Realistically, we project a minor drop in visits and sales for the first couple of years as a result of higher fees. However, we expect a gradual increase back to 2006/2007 levels by the end of 2009.

How will the extra revenue be used?

The additional revenue will be used with annual appropriations, grants, and partnership contributions to:

- ❖ Develop and expand ATV, OHM, horse, and mountain bike trails;
- ❖ Upgrade campground infrastructure and amenities;
- ❖ Improve trail maps, brochures, and signs;
- ❖ Add restrooms at trailheads;

- ❖ Enhance security patrols on trails and campgrounds;
- ❖ Purchase heavy equipment to maintain trails.

Does the fee increase affect the type of trail permit currently offered?

The Wayne NF has replaced the 2-Day permit with a 3-Day trail permit that will be sold for \$24.00. The seasonal and daily trail permits will continue to be offered and will be sold for \$45.00 and \$12.00 respectively.