



Prescott National Forest 2008 Forestwide Fee Proposal





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Background

The 2004 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) permits the Forest Service and other federal land management agencies to continue investing in America's recreation future by collecting user revenue at campgrounds, day use sites and other recreation areas that meet certain criteria. REA provides specific requirements related to implementing new fees and changing existing fees, including working with Recreation Resource Advisory Committees.

The Prescott National Forest began charging users at recreation sites in 1998 under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Authority. Since then, fees have remained the same at all of the original fee sites. Several sites were dropped from the fee program because they did not meet the requirements under REA. Two new sites have been added to the Prescott fee program since REA was passed: Alto Pit OHV Campground and Groom Creek School House Cabin Rental.

The Prescott is engaging in a forestwide proposal to determine the need for fee changes at existing recreation sites. The proposal covers fee changes at most existing fee sites, including fee increases and discontinuation of fees, over the next five years. This timeframe allows visitors an expectation of recreation site prices for a specified period. This proposal does not include fees at new sites (for example, a new group campground at Lynx Lake) or fees for cabin rentals. New fees and cabin rental fees will be addressed when appropriate in separate proposals.

Description of the Prescott National Forest

At 1.25 million acres, the Prescott encompasses desert grasslands, chaparral, canyon hardwoods, pinion-juniper woodlands, and ponderosa pine forests (See Attachment 1, forest map). Rising from the Sonoran Desert, the mountains of the Prescott National Forest provide climatic relief "cool zones" during the summer. In the winter, lower elevations provide "warm zones," making the Prescott ideal for year-round recreation.

Most of the Prescott is undeveloped and offers dispersed recreation opportunities from wilderness hiking to OHV-riding to fishing at one of the forest's small lakes. Recreation sites such as campgrounds, trailheads, picnic areas, and fishing sites are concentrated in the Prescott Basin and on Mingus Mountain and account for 2% of the forest's land base. In contrast to dispersed recreation opportunities, the Prescott's recreation sites offer structured recreation opportunities where visitors can gather with friends and family in an outdoor setting. Many recreation sites also facilitate access to dispersed recreation areas, providing benefits to a variety of forest visitors. Recreation sites are generally found at higher elevations in a forested setting and are busiest from May to October.



Proposed Fees

The Prescott National Forest proposes to increase fees at campgrounds and day use sites across the forest. Fee changes would begin in 2009 and no new fee proposals would be considered for these sites until 2014. The forest is also proposing to discontinue fee collection at two sites. Table 1 shows the proposed fees and amenities at day use sites. Table 2 shows the proposed fees and amenities at group and overnight sites.

Additional components of the fee proposal

- Camping fees would also include access to day use sites across the forest. Currently, campground users have to pay an additional fee to access day use only sites.
- Group sites would have 2 fee ranges: 1-50 people and 51-100 people.
- Annual passes would remain the current price of \$40; however second vehicle annual passes in the same family would increase from \$5 to \$10.
- An extra vehicle charge of \$5 would apply to single (up to 1 vehicle, 5 people) and double (2 vehicles, 10 people) campsites. RVs towing a car count as one vehicle.
- Wednesdays would remain a free day at day use sites.



Table 1. Proposed Fees for Day Use (Standard Amenity) Sites.

Site Name	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Fee Station	Picnic Table*	Toilets*	Security Services*	Designated parking*	Interp Sign*	Garbage*	Grill/Fire Ring	Water
Alto Pit OHV Day Use	\$3	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Cayuse Equestrian Trailhead	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Granite Basin Boat Launch	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Groom Creek Picnic Site	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Hayfield Draw OHV Day Use	\$3	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Lynx Crk Ruin	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Lynx Lake North Shore	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Metate Trailhead	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Mingus Lake	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Mingus Picnic	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Playa	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ranch trailhead (62)	\$2	\$0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
South Lakeshore Picnic	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Thumb Butte	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wekuvde	\$2	\$5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*All required for standard amenity sites.

Prescott National Forest



Table 2. Proposed Fees for Group/Overnight (Expanded Amenity) Sites.

Site Name	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Tent/Trailer space*	Water*	Fee Station*	Grill/Fire Ring*	Access Roads*	Picnic Table*	Garbage*	Toilets*	Reasonable Visitor Protection*	Designated parking	Ramada/Shelter	Electricity
Alto Pit OHV Campground	\$10/\$20	\$14/\$28	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Granite Group Campground	\$25-\$100	\$75-\$150	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Groom Creek Horse Camp	\$10	\$18	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Hazlett Hollow Campground	\$6	\$10	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Hilltop Campground	\$10	\$18	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Lower Wolf Creek Campground	\$6	\$10	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Lynx Lake Campground	\$10/\$20	\$18/\$36	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Mingus Mtn Campground	\$6	\$10 \$14 electric	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Playground Campground	\$25-\$100	\$75-\$150	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Potato Patch Campground	\$10/\$20 \$15 electric	\$14/\$28 \$18 electric	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Powell Springs Campground	\$6	\$0	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Thumb Butte Group Picnic	\$25-\$100	\$85-\$175	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Turney Gulch Group Campground	\$25-\$100	\$75-\$150	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Upper Wolf Creek Group Campground	\$25-\$100	\$75-\$150	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
White Spar Campground	\$10	\$14	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Yavapai Campground	\$10/\$20	\$18/\$36	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N

*At least 5 required for expanded amenity sites.



Standard amenity sites

- **Alto Pit OHV Day Use** - Located about 7 miles northwest of Prescott with approximately 9 miles of motorized trails and 2 cross-country areas available. One cross-country area has been designated for children's use. The day-use has picnic tables, a vault toilet, a group ramada and an unloading area. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Cayuse Equestrian Trailhead** – Located about 8 miles northwest of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, hitching posts and access to trails. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Granite Basin Boat Launch** – Located about 9 miles northwest of Prescott adjacent to Granite Basin Lake. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, access to trails and fishing, and a boat launch.
- **Groom Creek Picnic Site** – Located about 5 miles south of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, and access to trails.
- **Hayfield Draw OHV Day Use** - Located approximately 6 miles west of Interstate 17 along State Route 260 in the Verde Valley. Hayfield Draw has approximately 80 acres of motorized trails and cross-country areas available. Facilities for the area include vault toilets, ramadas with picnic tables and grills, surfaced parking area, informational signing, and loading/unloading ramps for off-highway vehicles. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Lynx Creek Ruin** - Located about 7 miles south of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, and access to trails. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Lynx Lake North Shore** – Located about 8.5 miles southeast of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a flush toilet, and access to trails and fishing. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Metate Trailhead** - Located about 9 miles northwest of Prescott near Granite Basin Lake. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet and access to Granite Mountain Wilderness trails.
- **Mingus Lake** – Located about 30 miles northeast of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, and access to trails and fishing.
- **Mingus Picnic** - about 30 miles northeast of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, access to trails and fishing. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Playa** - Located about 9 miles northwest of Prescott adjacent to Granite Basin Lake. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet and access to trails and fishing. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Ranch Trailhead (Trail 62)** – Located about 6 miles south of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet, and access to trails. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. Fees would be discontinued at this site.
- **South Lakeshore Picnic** - Located about 9 miles southeast of Prescott. The day use area has picnic tables, two vault toilets, access to trails and fishing, and a boat launch. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.



- **Thumb Butte** - Located about 3 miles west of Prescott. Paved parking, rest rooms, picnic tables, grills and drinking water available seasonally. Several hiking trails start from here. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Wekuvde** - Located about 9 miles northwest of Prescott adjacent to Granite Basin Lake. The day use area has picnic tables, a vault toilet and access to trails and fishing. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.

Expanded amenity sites

- **Alto Pit Campground** - Located about 7 miles northwest of Prescott, the campground has 10 single campsites and 1 double site with tables and grills and 2 vault toilets. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Granite Group Camp** - Located about 8.5 miles northwest of Prescott. This campground offers views of the rugged Granite Mountain Wilderness and access to Granite Basin Lake. This campground accommodates groups up to 100 people. Facilities include parking, grills and vault toilets.
- **Groom Creek Horse Camp** – Located about 6.5 miles south of Prescott. This equestrian campground was specifically designed for campers and day users who have horses with them. Both a volunteer host and a volunteer custodian are on duty to assist visitors to the site. The campground is suitable for RVs and Trailers. Facilities include 36 camping units with corrals with fire rings, picnic tables and horse tethers, 2 group areas, vault toilets and drinking water.
- **Hazlett Hollow Campground** – Located on the southern end of the Bradshaw Mountains in the Horsethief Basin Area at an elevation of just under 6,000 feet. Most of the walls and walks throughout the campground were built of stone during the 1930s by the Civil Conservation Corp (CCC). Facilities include 15 camping sites with shelters with fire rings and picnic tables, vault toilets and drinking water.
- **Hilltop Campground** – Located about 9 miles southeast of Prescott. This campground is located at an elevation of 5,500 feet in the ponderosa pine type about 0.5 miles directly south of Lynx Lake. The campsites provided are generally large enough to accommodate most recreational vehicles under 40 feet in length. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. Facilities include 38 camping sites with fire rings, grills and picnic tables, vault toilets and drinking water.
- **Lower Wolf Creek** – Located about 10 miles south of Prescott. Arizona walnut and live-oaks are interspersed among the ponderosa pines in this boulder strewn campground. Facilities include A host is available to provide information and assist visitors.
- **Lynx Lake Campground** - Located about 9 miles southeast of Prescott. This campground is located at an elevation of 5,500 feet in the ponderosa pine type along the western shore of Lynx Lake. The campsites provided are generally large enough to accommodate most recreational vehicles under 40 feet in length. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. Facilities



include 36 camping sites with fire rings, grills and picnic tables, flush and vault toilets, and drinking water.

- **Mingus Mountain Campground** – Located about 30 miles northeast of Prescott. Nestled in the pines at an elevation of about 7,500 feet and atop Mingus Mountain, this campground offers the visitor a scenic vista and relatively cool summertime temperatures. On a clear day the scenic overlook, located near the camping facilities, offers a spectacular view of the Verde Valley. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. There are 2 camping loops in this Recreation Area. The tent camping area has 6 sites with tables, fire rings, and a vault toilet. The newly built Loop E has 19 sites each with tables, fire rings, electrical hookups, vault toilets and drinking water (currently under construction).
- **Playground Campground** - Located about 30 miles northeast of Prescott. This campground is set in the cool pines on Mingus Mountain and near Mingus Lake. The campground accommodates groups up to 100 people. Facilities include parking, fire rings, grills, and a vault toilet.
- **Potato Patch Campground** – Located about 25 miles northeast of Prescott atop Mingus Mountain at 7,000 feet in ponderosa pines. This family campground offers cool summertime temperatures and fairly easy access via a paved and winding mountain road. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. Potato Patch Campground consists of two loops. Loop A has 28 campsites including one multiple family unit, fire rings, grills, picnic tables, vault toilets and drinking water. Loop B has 12 units designed to accommodate up to 40 foot long Recreational Vehicles each with electric hook-ups and picnic tables, vault toilets and drinking water.
- **Powell Springs Campground** – Located east of I-17, this campground offers a semi-primitive camping experience. There are tables and fire rings but no drinking water or garbage collection. Fees will be discontinued at this site.
- **Thumb Butte Group Picnic** - Located about 3 miles west of Prescott. The group area accommodates up to 100 people and has a large ramada, grills, flush toilets and drinking water. Several hiking trails start from here.
- **Turney Gulch Group Campground** – Located at the southern end of the Bradshaw Mountains in the Horsethief Basin Area at an elevation of just under 6,000 feet. Facilities include an historic group ramada, parking, fire rings, grills, and a vault toilet.
- **Upper Wolf Creek Group Campground** - Located about 10 miles south of Prescott. This boulder strewn site at an elevation of 6,000 feet is located in the ponderosa pine type and away from other developed recreation sites. This campground accommodates groups up to 100 people. Facilities include parking, fire rings, grills, and a vault toilet.
- **White Spar Campground** – Located 3 miles south of Prescott. This 60 unit campground is located in the ponderosa pines at an elevation of 5,700 feet along Highway 89. Eleven sites remain open year round. The campsites are generally large enough to accommodate most recreational vehicles (not exceeding 40 feet in length), and the paved road system to and throughout the campground makes for easy access to each camping site. A host is available to



provide information and assist visitors. Facilities include 60 camping sites with fire rings, grills and picnic tables, vault toilets and drinking water.

- **Yavapai Campground** – Located about 8.5 miles northwest of Prescott. This campground offers views of the rugged Granite Mountain Wilderness and access to Granite Basin Lake. The campsites are generally large enough to accommodate most recreational vehicles (not exceeding 40 feet in length), and the paved road system to and throughout the campground makes for easy access to each camping site. A host is available to provide information and assist visitors. Facilities include 25 camping sites with fire rings, grills and picnic tables, composting toilets and drinking water.

Fee Analysis

This section lays out the rationale for the proposed fee structure on the Prescott National Forest. The analysis considered the outdoor recreation market, the facilities, services and prices of other outdoor recreation providers' sites in central Arizona, and financial information for the Prescott's recreation sites. The proposed fees were determined in accordance with current policies and direction that include the Forest Service Handbook,¹ Office of Management and Budget direction,² and Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) legislation.³

Visitor Demographics

The Prescott participated in the Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring surveys in 2003⁴; however, the forest was closed for two months due to heavy fire activity so visitor use numbers are low. These surveys are part of a nationwide process to understand visitor use on national forests.

The Prescott National Forest has approximately 750,000 visitors annually. In Arizona, the Tonto National Forest has the most visitors at nearly 6,000,000 while the Kaibab has the fewest at just over 500,000.

Table 3 shows the percent of visitors who visit various developed sites on the Prescott. On average, visitors spend 1½ hours at developed day use sites such as picnic areas, boat launches and fishing sites and 34 hours at developed overnight sites such as family and group campgrounds.

¹ Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2331.22.

² Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-25.

³ Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), title VIII, Div J. of P.L. 108-447.

⁴ Results from the 2007 survey are not available yet.



Table 3. Facility visits.

Type of Facility	Percent of Visitors who Visit
Campground	6.3
Trails	38.0
Picnic area	10.4
Boat launch	1.8
OHV area	1.4
Developed fishing site	4.5

The Market

The US Census Bureau groups multiple counties into Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA)⁵ when adjacent communities are demographically similar. For example, Maricopa and Pinal Counties are both in the Phoenix MSA, meaning the populations are more or less the same. Although Yavapai County is adjacent to Maricopa County, these two counties are demographically different.

There are two distinct markets for outdoor recreation on the Prescott National Forest. The first market is made up of visitors from the Phoenix MSA. With a population of over 3 million, the Phoenix MSA is largely urban and brings overnight visitors to the Prescott. The second market is made of residents of Yavapai County who are considered Prescott NF locals.

In general, most day users are locals who live in Yavapai County communities and use recreation sites to access opportunities such as picnicking, family reunions, fishing, boating, OHV riding and hiking. Users of the Hayfield Draw and Alto Pit OHV areas are a mix of local and Phoenix (and beyond) visitors. Overnight visitors tend to be from the Phoenix MSA and use the Prescott’s campgrounds to escape the heat, relax and access recreation opportunities such as fishing, hiking, horseback riding and OHV riding.

Comparable Sites

The Tonto, Coconino and Kaibab National Forests, Grand Canyon National Park and Arizona State Park sites were used to compare prices for campground (Appendix A) and day use sites. In general, current recreation fees on the Prescott are often lower than similar sites. For example, day use fees range from \$5-\$7 on the Coconino National Forest and from \$5-\$8 at Arizona State Park facilities. Camping fees are generally \$10-\$20 for campgrounds with water and vault toilets, with higher end amenities such as RV hookups and dump stations having additional fees. Several campgrounds on the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests charge a 2nd vehicle fee of

⁵ http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_metro.htm



half the campsite fee. The Tonto National Forest has a standard fee structure of \$6 per vehicle per day for all day use and overnight sites.

Several other national forests in Arizona also have annual passes. The Tonto National Forest has a \$95 annual pass that includes day use and camping at less-developed campgrounds. The Red Rock Ranger District (Sedona) of the Coconino National Forest has two annual passes. The Grand Annual Pass is \$40 and includes several concessionaire-managed sites near Sedona while the Annual Pass is \$20 and includes only Forest Service-managed day use sites.

Attachment 2 contains pricing sheets for individual campgrounds included in the fee proposal.

Financial Analysis

Table 4 shows the Prescott’s operations and maintenance costs, revenue, and deferred maintenance costs for sites included in the fee proposal. Attachments 3, 4 and 5 contain financial information for individual sites.

Table 4. Prescott NF 2007 Financial Information.

	Revenue	Annual Operations and Maintenance Costs	Total Deferred Maintenance Costs
Actual 2007	\$ 311,127	\$ 396,903	\$317,160
Predicted 2014	\$ 563,404	\$ 516,870	\$ 150,000 ⁶

In 2007, revenue from recreation sites on the Prescott was \$311,127. Annual operations and maintenance (O&M) of the Prescott’s recreation sites cost approximately \$396,903 in 2007. Annual O&M includes cleaning and maintaining recreation sites, repairing or replacing features such as picnic tables or fire rings, providing visitor services such as on-site hosts and interpretive services, and collecting revenue.

With an assumed 4.5% annual inflation rate⁷, O&M costs are expected to rise to approximately \$516,870 over the next five years. By 2014, revenue from recreation fee sites will be approximately 109% of annual O&M costs. However, deferred maintenance costs are in addition to annual operations and maintenance. Deferred maintenance is maintenance that was not performed when it should have been and was therefore delayed for a future period. It includes tasks such as replacing features such as a toilets and picnic tables, and repairing facilities such as a water system or dump station.

⁶ Assuming \$30,000-\$35,000 annual expenditure on deferred maintenance.

⁷ <http://www.bls.gov/data/>



As Table 4 shows, the Prescott has not been able to rely on user-generated revenue for deferred maintenance tasks. The proposed fee increase will allow the forest to dedicate funds annually to reduce deferred maintenance. The forest's 2008 Recreation Facility Analysis 5-year Program of Work shows approximately \$20,000 annual commitment to deferred maintenance. The proposed fee increases will give the forest flexibility to spend an additional \$10,000-\$15,000 annually on deferred maintenance. This forest will be able to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog in a shorter amount of time and continue to make investments into priority recreation sites.

Effects of Proposed Fee Increases

Benefits to Users

User revenue allows the Prescott to leverage partnerships and volunteers to improve visitors' experiences at recreation sites. Currently, recreation fees are collected at forest recreation sites with a higher level of amenities such as picnic tables, toilets, garbage collection, fire rings, interpretive displays, and campsites. These sites provide safety, comfort and convenience to a broad spectrum of visitors. Recreation facilities also protect resources and help mitigate impacts from a large number of visitors.

The proposed fee increases will help the forest maintain the current services and benefits provided and enhance visitors' experiences through continued improvements and site protection. In recent years, recreation field presence on the Prescott has been minimal. User generated revenue would support an increase in field presence to ensure operations and maintenance tasks meet and exceed visitor expectations and provide additional safety and visitor information contacts. Increased revenue would also support additional law enforcement presence and enhance visitor security.

User-generated revenue would support priority projects on the Prescott such as:

- Additional law enforcement presence and security patrols
- Relocating the host site at Hayfield Draw OHV Area
- Relocating the fee station at Yavapai Campground
- New water system at Mingus Mountain Campground
- Thumb Butte recreation brochure
- Holding tank for hosts at Groom Creek Horse Camp and Lower Wolf Creek Campground
- Groom Creek Horse Camp recreation brochure
- Restore group site and add ramada at Groom Creek Horse Camp
- Campsite renovations at Yavapai Campground
- Additional interpretive signing at Granite Basin sites
- Privacy screens around restrooms at Lynx Lake Southshore
- Improve wildlife viewing station at Lynx Lake Northshore
- New site furniture at Playground Group Campground



Consequences of not Raising Fees

Since 1998, costs have risen by 34.78%⁸ in the United States. Since fees at recreation sites have not changed, the Prescott has nearly 35% less buying power with user-generated revenue in today's economy. As costs continue to rise over the next five years, the Prescott needs to continue to provide quality recreation opportunities while considering the impact of fees to recreation site visitors.

User revenue collected as a result of the proposed fee changes would support those recreation sites that have a higher individual or group benefit. The proposed fee increases will help the forest maintain the current services and benefits provided and enhance visitors' experiences through continued improvements and site protection. Projects would be prioritized based on public input and needs identified by forest staff such as deferred maintenance, critical health and safety and resource protection. While some funding for these projects may be acquired through grants or annual appropriations, projects would be delayed and the Prescott would have less money available for matching funds.

Without the fee increases, the forest may not be able to meet visitor demand and some sites will likely not provide the benefits that visitors have come to expect. The Prescott would consider operating recreation sites under a concessionaire. Concessionaires do not operate under the Recreation Enhancement Act and any fee increases or changes to recreation site operations would occur outside the scope of REA requirements.

Some annual operations and maintenance tasks would likely not be completed as scheduled creating additional deferred maintenance. Funding for existing deferred maintenance tasks may be acquired through grants or capital improvement dollars, but these funding sources would likely take additional time and staff resources to secure, allowing facilities to further deteriorate and delaying needed improvements. User-generated revenue could be used immediately and would help ensure that visitors continue to receive expected benefits from recreation sites.

The Prescott National Forest anticipates the following impacts if the proposed fee changes are not implemented:

- Reduction in services at standard amenity and expanded amenity sites. Garbage collection and restroom maintenance would be reduced and visitors would expect sites to be less clean.
- Reduction in visitor security/law enforcement patrols. As the cost of personnel and travel increases, the Prescott would be forced to reduce staff time spent on these duties. A reduction in these patrols has the potential to compromise visitor safety.
- Reduction in volunteer host site services. While the volunteer hosts are not paid, they are reimbursed for expenses incurred as part of their duties (e.g. fuel, minor equipment needs). Visitors would expect fewer sites with hosts.

⁸ <http://inflationdata.com/Inflation>



- Reduction in interpretive services such as signs and brochures. As the cost to develop, manufacture and install signs and produce brochures increases, the Prescott would not be able to develop new or reproduce existing interpretive materials. Visitors would expect minimal information about the natural and cultural history of recreation sites.
- Reduction in maintenance activities at fee sites. As the price of labor, fuel and materials increases, the Prescott would not be able to maintain facilities as often or as quickly as needed. Existing recreation facilities represent a substantial public investment and visitors would expect a deterioration of these facilities' appearance and functionality.
- Minimal recreation site enhancement and improvement. As the cost of completing construction projects continues to increase, the Prescott would be less able to reinvest user-generated revenue into fee site sites for improvements. Visitors would expect few additional improvements to recreation sites,

Effects to Users

Population growth is the major driver for increased visitation on the Prescott and the population in the forest's market zone is expected to increase by 35% by 2020⁹. However, cost of living increases and higher gas prices will likely result in a decrease in visitation from the Phoenix area and some visitors may not be able to travel to reach recreation sites on the Prescott. While other factors such as gas prices, lack of free time and family commitments likely have a greater effect on visitors' abilities to come to the Prescott, increased fees may also contribute to this.

Some visitors may not be able to afford increased fees at recreation sites. Visitors most likely to be impacted include families and individuals who have limited extra income for recreation. The Prescott will continue to offer free days every Wednesday at all standard amenity sites. Seniors (age 62 and over) and people with disabilities are eligible for a low cost or free America the Beautiful interagency recreation pass which gives them free access to standard amenity sites and half-price access to expanded amenity campgrounds. The Prescott also hosts a variety of free days and offers vouchers to education and special population groups. The forest will continue to make every effort to minimize the impacts of fees to these user groups.

Recreation sites that collect user revenue make up just 2% of the 1.25 million acre Prescott National Forest. Collecting user-generated revenue at developed sites with higher amenities is an appropriate way to ensure visitors receive the services and benefits they expect from these sites. The Prescott will continue to manage 98% of the forest for free public use and enjoyment.

⁹ www.census.gov



Public Involvement

The public was invited to comment about the proposed changes to fees at recreation sites through a number of outreach efforts. Table 5 shows type of outreach, intended audience and dates. Table 6 shows the number and type of responses received by June 30, 2008. Appendix B contains a list of stakeholder, elected official and media contacts.

Table 5. Fee proposal public involvement.

Outreach	Audience	When
News release to media outlets	Communities and general public Prescott/Prescott Valley/Chino Valley – 75,000 residents Phoenix metro – 4+ million residents Camp Verde/Sedona – Flagstaff – 100,000 residents	May 2
Legal notice in newspaper of record (Prescott Courier)	Citizens of Prescott/Prescott Valley/Chino Valley - 75,000 residents	May 5
Posters at fee sites	Fee site users	May 3 – June 30
Flyers at forest offices	Forest visitors	May 2 – June 30
Forest website	Forest visitors	May 2- June 30
Letter to recreation interest groups and other stakeholders	Recreation interest groups - 80 groups contacted	May 1
Share fee proposal at public outreach events, forest plan meetings, etc.	Communities and general public	April – June
Congressional and elected official briefing	State and local officials - 12 officials contacted	May 1
Forest Plan revision stakeholders briefing	Community leaders and their constituents - 100 stakeholders contacted	May 5
On-site contact	Fee site visitors -210 visitors contacted	June 6-9
Personal Communication	Groom Creek Horse Camp stakeholders - 3 stakeholders contacted in addition to 17 site visitors	June



Table 6. Public Involvement Feedback.

Nature of Comment	Written/Phone	On-site	Number of Comments
Support proposed fee increase	6	137	143
Understand need for fees but proposed fee increases too high	21	48	69
Against any fee increase	16	4	20
Against day use fee increase	15	5	20
Against overnight fee increase	8	9	17
Against 2 nd vehicle fee at campgrounds	5		5
More amenities/ services with increased fees	4		4
Against any fees on federal land	7	5	12
Against fees for hiking or other activity	3		3
Have Senior Pass- doesn't affect	1	2	3
Other	8		8
Total # responses	94	210	304

All comments received by phone, email, or in writing were collected and analyzed. In the past, public involvement efforts for recreation fee proposals have asked for comments from anyone who has an interest and have not specifically focused on fee site visitors. In general, people who “volunteer” to comment have concerns about the proposal and this holds true for the Prescott: 81% of volunteer respondents expressed a concern about the fee proposal. However, visitors to recreation fee sites were also contacted and had a very different perspective about the proposed fee increases: 65% supported the fee proposal and another 22% understand the need for fees even if they thought the proposed fees were too high.

Overall, almost half (47%) of the people who commented, and particularly on-site visitors, support the proposed fee increases. Those who support the proposed fee increases cited the following reasons:

- Proposed increase is ok as long as people see that they’re getting more for paying fees.



- Prices have gone up for everything so it seems reasonable that day use/camping fees would also go up.
- The fee is worth it to be able to spend time in such a beautiful setting.
- Can't believe the fee is so low.
- Understand the need for fees to help support campgrounds.

Approximately 24% of the people who commented understood the need for fees, but felt like the proposed increases were too high, or wanted additional amenities with increased fees. Some people suggested a fee they felt was more reasonable. The following reasons were cited:

- Proposed increases are too much at once.
- Prices have gone up for everything and spending time outdoors should remain inexpensive.
- A \$5 day use fee is not worth the time spent at the site.
- Won't be able to afford increase.
- Residents should get a discount.
- Want more amenities such as hook-ups and showers.

Approximately 10.5% of the people who commented were opposed to any fee increase or opposed to fees on federal lands at all. The following reasons were cited:

- Tax dollars should support federal recreation.
- Don't want amenities or facilities on national forest lands.
- Already pay for hunting and fishing licenses.

Some people who commented were specifically opposed to day use (6.5%) or overnight (5.5%) fee increases. They cited reasons similar to those mentioned above for their opposition to fee increases. Some people also said they would be more likely to purchase an annual forest pass if day use fees were increased. With the proposed day use fee increase to \$5, the annual pass will become more cost effective to visitors.

Several people mentioned that they have an Interagency Senior Pass (formerly Golden Age) and would not be affected by proposed fee increases. Some people were not aware of the Interagency Senior Pass and were told its benefits. Holders of the Interagency Senior Pass will continue to receive free use of standard amenity sites and a 50% discount at expanded amenity family campgrounds.

Changes to the original fee proposal as a result of public input include:

- Eliminated additional \$5 fee for electricity and changed to a flat fee at Potato Patch and Mingus Mountain campgrounds. This change was made to simplify the fee structure and respond to concern that the proposed fee increase was too high.
- Increased camping fee to \$18 at Groom Creek Horse Camp. This change was made because this site is comparable with other \$18 fee sites. The original pricing sheet (Attachment 2) did not include the reservation system available for this campground. Comments received from site users were also very favorable for a higher fee.



Appendix A: Comparable Sites

Site	AMENITIES AND ATTRACTIONS																		FEES									
	Drinking Water	Limited Drinking Water	Vault Toilets	Flush Toilets	Dump Station	Garbage	Fishing	Access to Grand Canyon	Swimming	Wildlife Viewing	Lava flows	Rock Climbing	In Sedona	Wind Surfing	Equestrian	Mtn Biking	Indian Ruins	Grp Day Use	Shower Fee Extra	\$ Single Site	\$ 2 nd Vehicle	\$ Double Site	\$ Add'l Vehicle	\$ Dump Station	\$ Electricity	\$ Showers		
Kaibab National Forest																												
Demotte	•		•			•	•														\$16	\$8						
Jacob Lake	•		•	•		•	•														\$12	\$6						
Jacob Lake Group	•		•	•		•	•														\$60-100							
Ten-X	•		•			•	•														\$10							
Ten-x Group	•		•			•	•														\$75-200							
Cataract		•	•			•															\$10	\$5						
Dogtown Lake	•		•		•	•	•														\$12	\$6	\$17	\$8.50	\$7			
Dogtown Group	•		•		•	•	•														\$150				\$7			
Kaibab Lake	•		•		•	•	•														\$15	\$7.50	\$25	\$12.50	\$7			
Kaibab Lake Group	•		•		•	•	•														\$105-235				\$7			
Whitehorse Lake	•		•		•	•	•														\$15	\$7.50	\$25	\$6	\$7			
Whitehorse Group	•		•		•	•	•														\$125				\$7			



Site	AMENITIES AND ATTRACTIONS																			FEES								
	Drinking Water	Limited Drinking Water	Vault Toilets	Flush Toilets	Dump Station	Garbage	Fishing	Access to Grand Canyon	Swimming	Wildlife Viewing	Lava flows	Rock Climbing	In Sedona	Wind Surfing	Equestrian	Mtn Biking	Indian Ruins	Grp Day Use	Shower Fee Extra	\$ Single Site	\$ 2 nd Vehicle	\$ Double Site	\$ Add'l Vehicle	\$ Dump Station	\$ Electricity	\$ Showers		
TONTO NATIONAL FOREST																												
Varies																				\$6/vehicle								
ARIZONA STATE PARKS																												
Non – Electric Campsites																				\$10-16								
Electric Campsites																				\$19-30				\$10-15				
Group Day Use/Overnight																				\$25/min								
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK																												
Mather Campground	•			•	•	•		•												•	\$18							
North Rim Campground	•		•		•	•		•												•	\$25 prem							



Appendix B: Stakeholder and Media Contacts

User/Interest Groups

Arizona State Rifle & Pistol Association
Arizona OHV Association
Southwest 4x4 Trails
Grand Canyon Hikers
Arizona State Horsemen Association
Southern Arizona Mountain Biking Assoc.
Arizona Wilderness Coalition
Arizona Trail Riders
Yavapai Trails Association
Arizona Federation of Fly Fishing
Apache Motorcycles Inc.
Horsethief Basin Cabins
American Motorcyclist
Iron Springs Club
Arizona Trail Association
Arizona 4 Wheel Drive Association
Arizona Hang Glider Association
Arizona Deer Association
Arizona ATV Riders
Arizona Bowhunters Assoc.
Northern Arizona Flycasters
Prescott College
Prescott YMCA
Back Country Horsemen
Prescott Saddle Club
Great Western Trail Association
Prescott Open Trails
Prescott Road User's Group
Yavapai Trails Association
Horse Trails Coalition
Verde Valley 4 Wheelers
Cottonwood Motor Sports
Prescott Saddle Club
Sedona Outfitter Guides Association
Prescott Sportsmen Club
Prescott Hiking Club

Chambers of Commerce

Prescott Chamber
Chino Chamber
Clarkdale Chamber
Cottonwood Chamber

Native American Tribes

Intertribal Council of Arizona
Yavapai-Apache Nation

Other Interested Organizations

Arizona Wilderness Coalition
Prescott Audubon Society
Yavapai Group Sierra Club
Arizona Wildlife Federation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter
Southwest Forest Products
Friends of Arizona Rivers
Arizona Wildlife Services
Ducks Unlimited
Western Gamebird Alliance
Wilderness Society
Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership
Grand Canyon Trust
Prescott Audubon Society
Historic Trails Committee
Highland Center for Natural History
W.V. Concerned Citizens
Prescott National Forest Friends
Nature Conservancy - Verde River Program

Government Agencies

Montezuma Castle & Tuzigoot National Monuments
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Arizona Department of Transportation
Arizona State Parks
Arizona Tourism Department
National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management
BLM – Arizona RAC

Elected Officials and other government entities

Senator McCain
Representative Rick Renzi
Renzi - Congressional Liaison
Renzi - Congressional Liaison
Senator Kyl
State Senator Ken Bennett
State Representative Lucy Mason
State Representative Tom O'Halleran
Press Officer Governor Napolitano
Yavapai County
City of Prescott
Mayor of Prescott Valley



Media

Prescott Courier
Prescott Valley Tribune
Read It Here
Big Bug Canyon News
Prescott E News
Prescott radio stations
KAZK TV Prescott
Arizona Daily Sun
Red Rock News
Verde Independent
Verde Valley News
Verde Bugle
Verde Valley radio stations
Arizona Republic
Arizona Outdoor Journal
Associated Press-Arizona
East Valley Tribune
Phoenix area radio stations
Arizona News Radio Network
Westwood One Radio
Phoenix area TV stations