

# Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Change in Recreation Fee Structure at Mirror Lake Scenic Byway

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## Background

In June 2011, the Forest Service conducted a national review of the 97 standard amenity recreation fee (SAF) areas on National Forest System lands. As a result of the review, the Forest Service plans to remove the fee area designation for 73 of these SAF areas and reduce the size for the remaining 24 areas.

Prior to the passage of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway was managed under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo) since 1996. Within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the national review resulted in a proposal to eliminate the fee area designation for the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway.

## Description of the Recreation Area

The Mirror Lake SAF area encompasses the popular Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, located along State Highway 150 between Kamas, Utah and Evanston, Wyoming and offers a wide array of recreational opportunities. Winding 42 miles through the Uinta Mountains, the Byway traverses Utah's most valuable high altitude terrain, home to more than 400 lakes, and headwaters to four major rivers. The Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources classifies the roadside lakes as the second heaviest used fisheries in the State. The area receives significant summer and winter recreation use including hiking, horseback riding, All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) riding, mountain biking, backpacking, sightseeing, snowmobiling, cross-county skiing, and viewing many interpretive sites. The recreation area provides year-round recreational opportunities to the Wasatch Front with a population base of two million people. Nearly one million visitors come to the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway every year.

## Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Fee Proposal

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is proposing to:

- Eliminate the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway area (see Appendix A).
- Retain 18 SAF sites (see Table 1).
- Retain seven expanded amenity recreation fee (EAF) sites (see Table 2).
- Establish special recreation permit (SRP) fees for four summer Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) locations (see OHV SRP plan and map in Appendix D)
- Establish special recreation permit (SRP) fees for three winter groomed trail locations (see SRP plan and map in Appendix E).

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- Visitors staying in one of the 23 developed campgrounds (see Appendix C) would not be required to pay the SAF fee unless recreating in one of the fee sites listed in Table 1 and 2.
- Eliminate recreation fees at five sites (Upper Setting Trailhead, Norway Flats Trailhead, Taylor Fork ATV Access, East Portal of Duchesne River Trailhead, and Bourbon Lake Trailhead). Ten sites have always been free (Duchene Tunnel Overlook, Slate Gorge Overlook, Provo River Overlook, Provo River Falls Overlook, Bald Mountain Overlook, Hayden Peak Overlook, Hayden Fork Overlook, Kletting Peak Overlook, Wilderness Overlook, and Moffit Basin Wildlife Viewing Area).

**Table 1. SAF Sites and Areas**

Name	Parking	Toilet	Trash Receptacle	Interpretive Sign	Picnic Tables	Security Services
Beaver Creek Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shingle Creek Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Upper Provo River Bridge Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Crystal Lake Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Trial Lake Fishing Site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bald Mountain Picnic Area and Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fehr Lake Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Moosehorn Fishing Site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mirror Lake Fishing Site/Self-Serve Fee Station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mirror Lake Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pass Lake Fishing Site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pass Lake/Lofty Lake Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Butterfly Lake Fishing Site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Highline Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ruth Lake Trailhead/Rock Climbing Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Christmas Meadows Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
East Fork of the Bear Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
North Slope Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

**Table 2. EAF Sites (Passes Accepted)**

Name	Tent or Trailer Spaces	Picnic Tables	Drinking Water	Access Roads	Fee Collection by FS	Security	Trash Container	Toilets	Campfire Devices
Yellow Pine Camps	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Pine Valley Camps	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Horsemen Camps	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Soapstone RV Dump Station	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Name	Tent or Trailer Spaces	Picnic Tables	Drinking Water	Access Roads	Fee Collection by FS	Security	Trash Container	Toilets	Campfire Devices
Duchesne Tunnel Camps	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Lost Creek Water Station	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Lily Lake RV Dump Station	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N

### Special Recreation Permits

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is proposing to establish two SRPs for the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, one for OHV permits in four locations and another for a winter SRP at three groomed trails.

#### OHV Trails:

The Forest is proposing to establish an OHV SRP at four locations along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway. The recreation fee will be collected for a SRP at the sites listed below during the summer operating season when specific services (patrolling and maintenance) take place (see SRP plan and map in Appendix D). These locations include:

- Spring Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System has trailer sites, tent sites, campfire rings, picnic tables, fee collections, and security.
- Murdock Basin/Broadhead Meadows Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System has trailer sites, tent sites, toilet, picnic tables, parking, fee collections, and security.
- Whitney Reservoir Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System has trailer sites, tent sites, toilets, trash containers, picnic tables, parking, fee collections, and security.
- North Slope Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System has trailer sites, tent sites, toilets, trash containers, picnic tables, parking, fee collection, and security.

#### Winter Groomed Trails:

The Forest is also proposing to establish a SRP at three winter groomed trail locations along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway. The recreation fee will be collected for a SRP at the sites listed below during the winter operating season when the specific services (grooming, patrolling, and maintenance) take place (see SRP plan and map in Appendix E). These locations include:

- Beaver Creek Ski Trail SRP Location:
  - Yellow Pine Trailhead (Beaver Creek Ski Trail Winter Trailhead) is a groomed ski trail with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.
  - Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail Access is a groomed ski trail with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.
  - Beaver Creek Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trailhead) is a groomed ski trail with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.

- Shingle Creek Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trailhead) is a groomed ski trail with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.
- Pine Valley Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek groomed skate track) is a groomed ski trail with parking, fee collection, and security.
- North Fork Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek Ski Trail, Skate Track Winter Trailhead & groomed snowmobile trailhead) is groomed ski and snowmobile trails with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.
- Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead SRP Location (Snowmobile and Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail System - 89 mile groomed Snowmobile and X-country ski trail system) is groomed ski and snowmobile trails with parking, fee collection, interpretation, security and a toilet.
- North Slope Winter Trailhead SRP Location – (89 mile groomed Snowmobile and 19 miles of X-country ski trail system trailhead) is groomed ski and snowmobile trails with parking, fee collection, security and a toilet.

## Fee Collection and Compliance

With this proposal, approximately 90 percent of the fee area would no longer require a fee. Recreation passes and on-site collections will continue to be the fee payment mechanism. Accepted recreation passes are the Mirror Lake Recreation Pass (\$6.00 for 1 to 3 day pass, \$12.00 for a 7 day pass, and \$45.00 for an annual pass) or the Interagency—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands passes (Annual – \$80, Senior – \$10, Access, Military, and Volunteer – free). No change is being proposed to the recreation fees charged at the recreation fee sites listed in Tables 1 and 2 or for OHV and winter SRPs.

Five fee payment methods are in place:

- Nine self-serve fee stations placed in key locations along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (cash or personal check);
- Two staffed visitor information stations are located at both ends of State Road 150 (Mirror Lake Scenic Byway). National and local recreation passes may be purchased using cash or personal check;
- National and local recreation passes may be purchased at local Forest Service Offices, using cash, personal check, or credit card;
- Five local vendors sell the Mirror Lake Recreation Pass and accept cash, check, or credit card; and
- Interagency and American Fork Canyon Recreation Area Passes are accepted.

The Forest Service enforces and would continue to enforce recreation fees and issue notices of required fees in the recreation sites and areas identified in Tables 1 and 2. Compliance is verified and would continue to be verified by observing recreation passes displayed on vehicles parked within these recreation sites and areas.

## Anticipated Financial Impacts of the Change

Using estimated use of each SAF sites, EAF sites, and SRP locations described in this proposal, the Forest anticipates a significant decrease in revenue.

## Planned Accomplishments

Recreation fee revenue would continue to help fund these planned projects:

- Develop new interpretive panels at fee sites.
- Install additional bulletins boards.
- Purchase and install accessible fire rings.
- Convert to bear-proof garbage dumpsters.
- Replace bathroom doors.
- Redesign and replace the Mirror Lake boardwalk.
- Providing funding to partners for interpretive programs.
- Groom Cross-Country Ski & Snowmobile trails along the corridor in partnership with the State of Utah.
- Maintenance of 30 restrooms.
- Ongoing trail maintenance and hazard tree removal.
- Replace 65 picnic tables with “snow load rated” tables.

## Public Involvement

### Accomplished

The Forest Service sought public comment on the proposed changes to the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway SAF area and plans to submit the proposal at the Utah Bureau of Land Management Recreation Resource Advisory Committee in June 2014. In the interim, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is issuing notices of required fees and enforcing recreation fees only within the recreation sites and areas listed in Tables 1 and 2 and at the SRP locations.

The following public participation tasks have been completed:

- Published a press release regarding the proposal in daily and weekly newspapers.
- Posted information on proposal on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest website.
- Posted flyers and handed out comment cards at visitor information station, Forest Service offices, and local vendors.
- Posted information and maps of proposal at recreation fee sites.
- Briefed local and federal elected officials.
- Spoke to local organized user groups.
- Contacted local OHV users groups.

**Public notice and press coverage:**

- Salt Lake Tribune – Salt Lake based media outlet that serves a population of approximately one million people in Salt Lake valley. A large portion of Forest users come from the Salt Lake valley. Newspaper is published both hard copy and online. Articles were published on May 28, June 27, and July 1, 2013.
- Provo Daily Herald – Primary newspaper for Utah Valley that serves approximately one million people. A large portion of Forest users come from Utah Valley. Newspaper is published both hard copy and online. Article was published s on July 16, 2013.
- KCPW Radio – Radio station covering Summit and Wasatch counties. A large portion of users visiting the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway come from these two counties. Forest Public Affairs Officer participated in a one hour call-in program to discuss fee proposals in Park City on July 1, 2013.
- Park Record – newspaper covering Wasatch and Summit counties. A large portion of users visiting the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway come from these two counties. Article was published on August 8, 2013.

**Elected Officials and Partner Briefings**

*Elected Officials:*

- On March 6, 2013 Senator Barrasso, Rep. Enzi, and Rep. Cynthia Lummis Offices were briefed in Wyoming with no comments from these parties.
- In 2012 and May 21, 2013, Congressman Jason Chaffetz, Senator Orrin Hatch, and Senator Mike Lee Offices in Utah were briefed with no comments.
- Wyoming Uinta County Commissioners, Craig Welling, Leonard Hysell, and Robert Stoddard, were briefed on March 19, 2013 and had no comments.
- On June 12, 2013, the Wasatch County Public Lands Committee was briefed on the proposal, which has Steve Farrell County Council, as well as several other county employees, as well as Utah State Parks employees on both the American Fork and Mirror Lake areas. They had no comments.
- In May 2013, District Ranger visited with the Summit County Councilman, Dave Ure. He was aware, as he had been visited with by Bobbi Williams with the Friends of the Western Uintas. He thought the Forest Service was headed in the right direction with the proposal. District Ranger visited County Commissioners at their meeting in October 2013. There were no negative comments from the commissioners.

*Partners:*

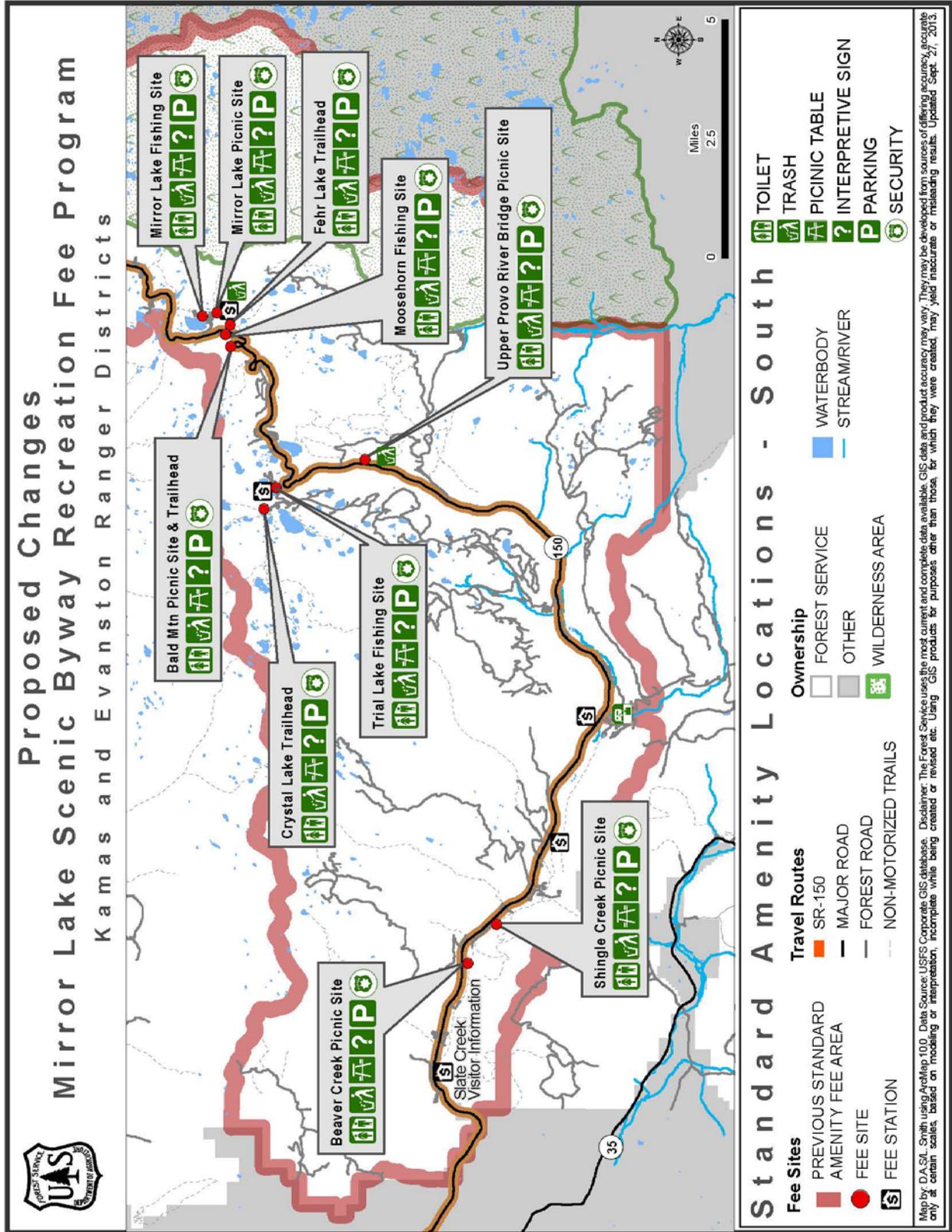
- The Friends of the Western Uintas on May 22, 2013. In attendance were Bobbie Williams, Lynn Williams, Gene Atkinson and Craig VanTassell (all members of the group). The group sent out an email letter to their members after the meeting briefing them on the proposal and how to comment. They are supportive of the proposal; they are probably the largest supporters of the 1-day pass returning.

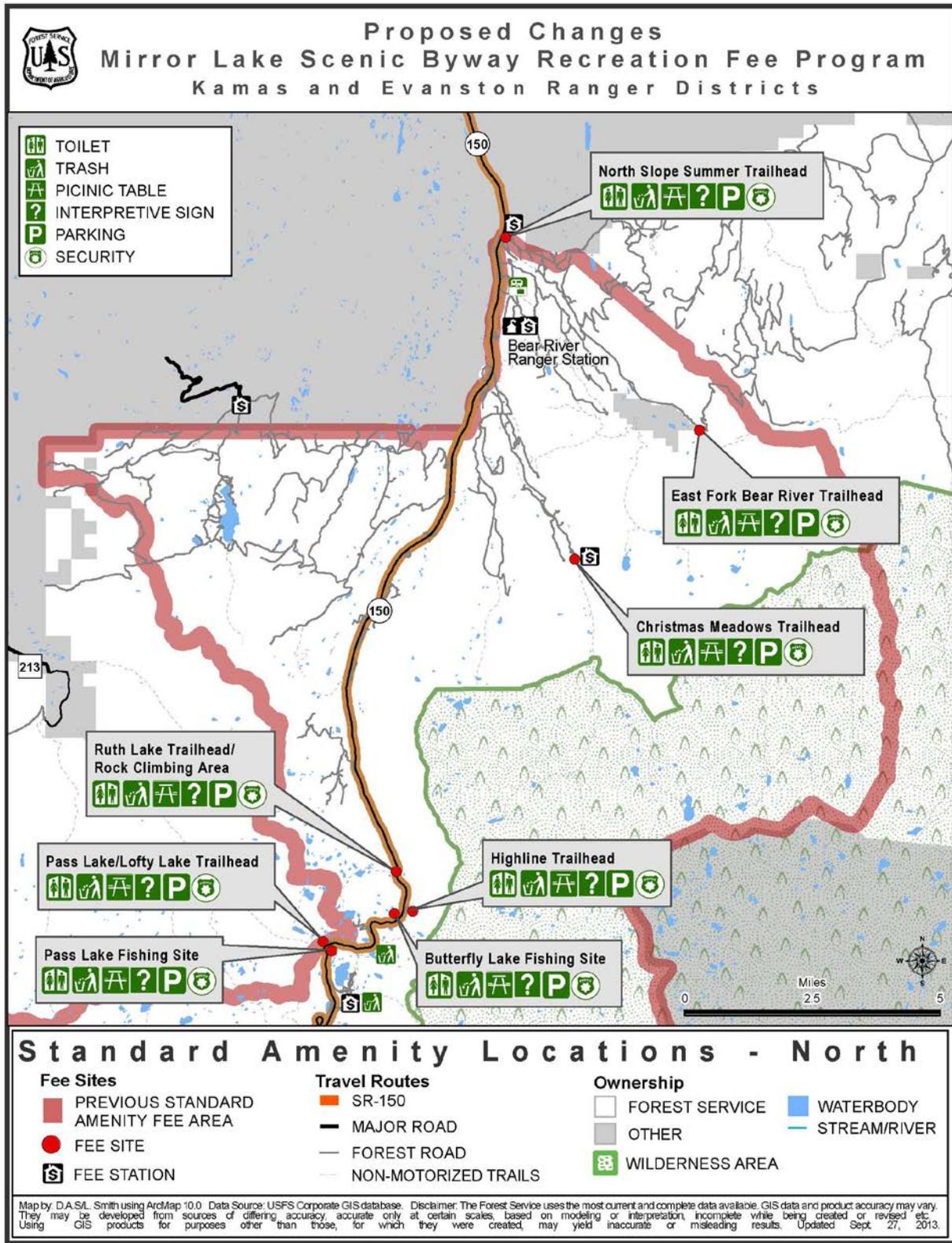
### **Summary of Comments Received:**

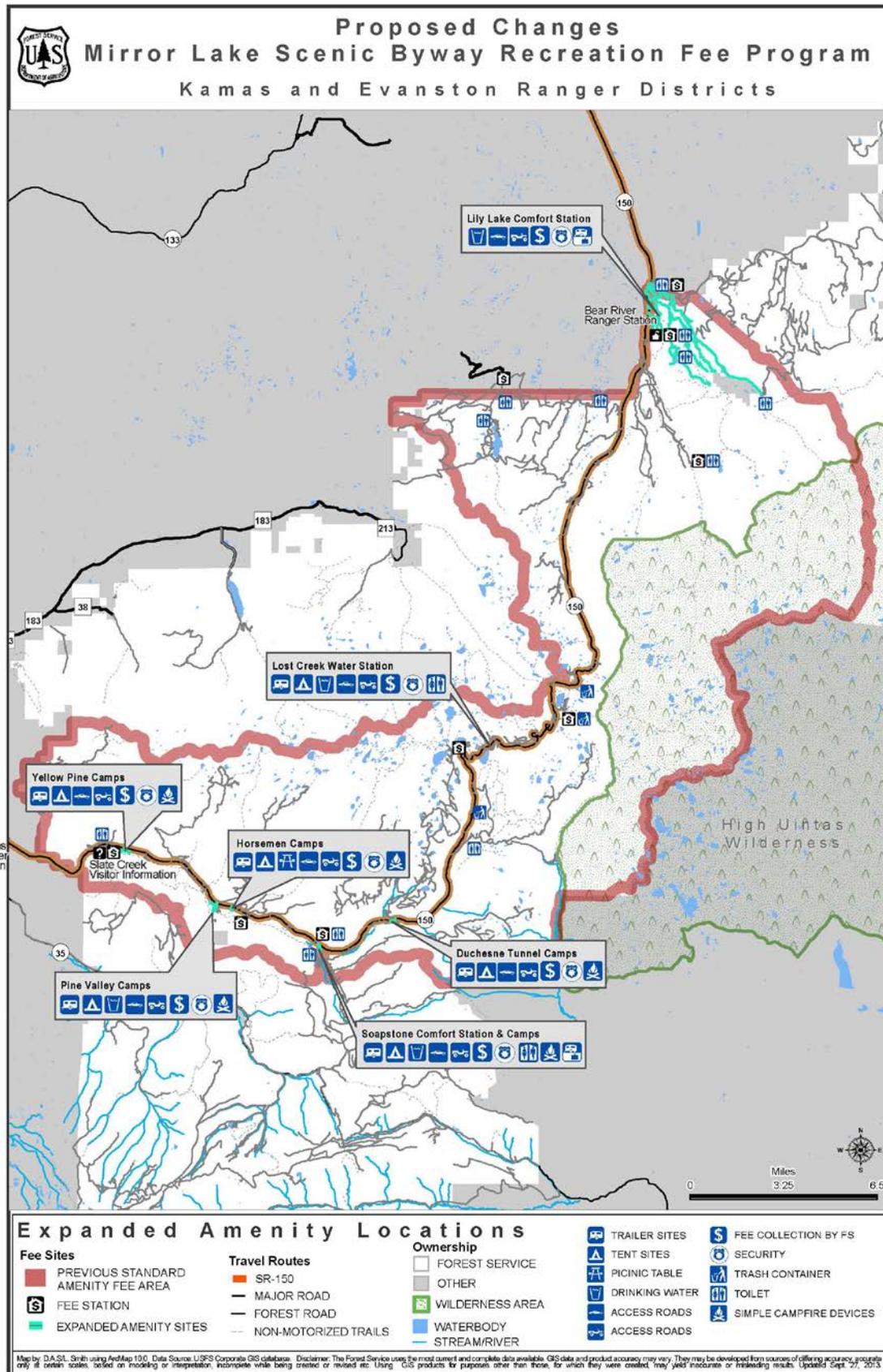
The Forest Service received 41 comments from the public including 18 comments in support of the recreation fees, nine comments against any recreation fees, three questions about the proposal, and ten comments asking the Forest Service to bring back the one day pass. Actual comments received are enclosed in Appendix E.

Comments regarding the change in fee structure to include a one day pass were considered for possible inclusion in this proposal. The Forest considered the inclusion of a one day pass but did not include this option in this proposal and will continue to analyze recreation pass options.

Appendix A:

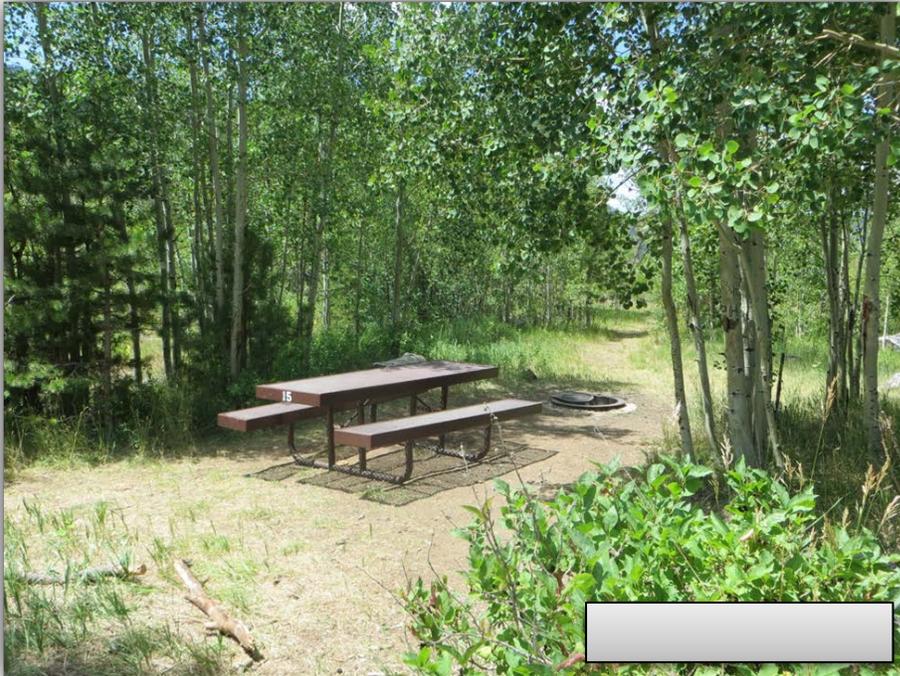






**Appendix B:**

**Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Example Photos**



## Appendix C:

### **Concessionaire Operated Sites:**

- Shingle Creek Campground
- Ponderosa Group Campground
- Pine Valley Group Campground
- Yellow Pine Campground
- Lower Provo River Campground
- Soapstone Campground
- Washington Lake Campground
- Shady Del Campground
- Trail Lake Campground
- Cobblerest Campground
- Lilly Lake Campground
- Lost Creek Campground
- Butterfly Campground
- Moosehorn Campground
- Sulphur Campground
- Mirror Lake Campground
- Beaver View Campground & Picnic
- Hayden Fork Campground
- Bear River Campground
- Stillwater Campground
- Wolverine Campground
- East Fork Campground
- Christmas Meadows Campground

## Appendix D:

# **Special Recreation Permit Plan for Off –Highway-Vehicle Trails in the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Corridor in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest**

## **I. Background**

In June 2011, the Forest Service conducted a national review of the 97 standard amenity recreation fee areas on National Forest System lands. As a result of the review, the Forest Service plans to remove the fee area designation for 73 standard amenity recreation fee areas, and reduce the boundaries for the remaining 24 standard amenity recreation fee areas across the nation.

Within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the national review resulted in a plan to eliminate the standard amenity recreation fee area (SAF Area) designation and substantially reduce the boundary of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Fee Area. Within the eliminated SAF Area, there are four summer patrolled OHV trail systems that require special management and services to ensure natural resource protection and provide for visitor health and safety.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authorizes a special recreation permit fee in connection with the issuance of a permit for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use. Special recreation permits are issued as a means to allocate capacity and/or disperse use, protect natural and cultural resources, provide for health and safety of visitors, and help cover the higher costs for providing specialized services (REA Forest Service Handbook).

The four summer patrolled OHV trail system sites that are proposed on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest – Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, are Spring Canyon, Murdock Basin/Broadhead Meadows, Whitney Reservoir, and the North Slope OHV Trail Systems. These proposed OHV Trail SRPs were previously within the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Corridor SAF Area.

Recreation fees have been charged since 1997 through recreation passes: the Mirror Lake Local Passes Pass (\$6.00 for 1 to 3 day pass, \$12.00 for a 7 day pass, and \$45.00 for an annual pass) or the Interagency Passes (Annual – \$80.00, Senior – \$10.00, Access, Military, and Volunteer – free). The special recreation permit will be the presence of a recreation pass, there will be no change to the fee schedule.

The objective of this plan is to display the specialized services and management required to protect natural and cultural resources and provide for public health and safety.

## II. Special Recreation Permit Locations

(In order from Kamas, Utah to Evanston, Wyoming)

**Spring Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System:** Accessed off State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway. The first access point is nearest to the community of Kamas, Utah, at mile marker 17.8, north of the Duchesne Tunnel Camps. The second access point is at mile marker 25, south of Washington Lake Campground and Group Campground and Trial Lake Campground. This is an extensive and very popular OHV trail system that accesses numerous high-clearance roads and smaller scenic, stocked lakes, popular with fishermen (see map in Appendix D).

**Murdock Basin/Broadhead Meadows Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System:** Accessed south of State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Kamas, Utah. The first access point is at mile marker 21.5, just east of the Cobblerest Campground entrance. The second access point is at mile marker 24.3, directly north and east of the entrance to the Provo River Falls Overlook. This is a large and very popular OHV trail system that accesses several high-elevation stocked lakes, popular with back-country fishermen who are looking for an off-the-beaten- path fishing experience. This trail system also accesses an increasingly popular wilderness trailhead (non-motorized), waterfall, and wildlife management area called the East Portal of the Duchesne River. This historic site is the location of the entrance of the Duchesne Tunnel, which diverts water through the mountain to the Provo River, which flows alongside Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (see map in Appendix D).

**North Slope Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System:** Accessed east of State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Evanston, Wyoming. The first access point is at mile marker 45.9 at the Christmas Meadows Road turnoff. The second access point is at mile marker 48.6 at the North Slope Road. This is a very extensive and popular OHV trail system, which includes the Wolverine ATV Trail. This site not only provides an OHV trail system, but also several access points to the non-motorized High Uintas Wilderness. Visitors generally utilize the trail systems exclusively for the day or access the site for extended camping trips as well as to hike into the High Uintas Wilderness from one of the trailheads (see map in Appendix D).

**Whitney Reservoir Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System:** Accessed west of State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Evanston, Wyoming. The first access point is at mile marker 43.3, at the entrance to the Gold Hill Road, directly north of the Hayden Fork Campground. The second access point is at mile marker 43.9, at the entrance to the Whitney Road, directly south of Stillwater Campground. This extensive and very popular OHV trail system attracts visitors who want to access OHV trail riding for day use and while camping, they also access the Whitney Reservoir Lake for fishing, canoeing, and other water related activities. A designated free parking area is located at Whitney Reservoir for those visiting the area just to fish, canoe, or for other water related activities (see map in Appendix D)

The primary recreation use in this area is motorized/OHV use.

### III. Program Description

The Uinta's moderate weather and clean air brings with it associated social and visitor impacts. These OHV trail systems requiring an SRP designation receive intense visitation on spring and summer days after the snow has melted, after new rainfall, and after roads and trails have dried out, and during Utah's busy fall hunting seasons. There is a need to manage this intense use to provide for the health and safety of visitors, protect natural resources, and to help cover the costs for providing maintenance of these motorized trail systems.

Due to the heavy, concentrated OHV use these sites receive, extra emphasis has been placed on resource protection. Over 95 percent of visitors to these sites bring an OHV with them during their visit, in the form of an ATV, 4x4 high clearance vehicle, dirt bike, or UTV. As more visitors discover the OHV trail systems, the Forest Service has encountered dispersed camping sites being pushed further back into the tree line and into meadows in violation of the 150 feet travel management guideline, new illegal user-created roads, and dispersed sites being created. These areas are so large that it is increasingly difficult for Federal, State, and County Law Enforcement to respond in a timely manner to incidents in these sites. As part of their regular duties, Forest Protection Officers will be assigned to patrols of the OHV trail system sites, to help enforce and educate visitors about travel management guidelines and the Code of Federal Regulations.

An effort will be made by all Forest Service personnel to communicate with visitors who are not utilizing OHVs in these four SRP sites to inform them that they are not required to display a recreation pass on their vehicles.

#### *Special Management Actions and Services –*

To address the special management need, it is necessary to allocate resources for special patrols and more presence in these sites by Forest Service employees and volunteers, integrate management, and coordinate with multiple state and county agencies (including pre-season preparation, regular patrolling throughout the season, and ongoing monitoring and education), and continue to provide and maintain summer sanitation facilities.

The following specialized management actions and services for OHV trail systems requiring SRP designation include:

- 1) **Resource Protection** – Each of these OHV trail systems receives high visitation during the short summer field season in the High Uintas. In these sites, it is not uncommon to encounter user-created roads and trails, and existing trails that have been damaged due to wet, muddy conditions. The damage caused in these sites is repaired by utilizing road and trail crew labor, equipment, and supplies.
- 2) **Sanitation** – During periods when snow is not present these SRP OHV sites receive intense and concentrated visitation. The associated human waste and trash become a serious problem presenting natural resource and public health and safety concerns. The forest provides garbage bags at the visitor information stations, as well as staffing to maintain the restrooms a minimum

of once per week and more frequently during busy holiday weekends. Staff is also assigned to remove non-flammable trash and waste from campfire pits during the field season.

- 3) **Public Safety and Security** – During periods when snow is not present, these SRP sites receive large numbers of visitors in a concentrated area of the National Forest. This presents additional public safety, security, and natural resource concerns. The Forest provides staffing in the form of law enforcement, volunteers, and seasonal employees to patrol and inform and educate visitors.
- 4) **Providing Specialized Services** – The costs of providing OHV trail systems are expenses that are not fully covered by appropriated funding; these services are funded in part by the Recreation Fee Program and in partnership with the States of Utah and Wyoming through grant programs. The associated costs of providing OHV trail systems includes OHV repair, regular maintenance, and fuel, forest staff time to perform visitor education, and patrolling on-trail, and at the visitor information stations to give visitors current trail information, provide maps, educate about OHV safety, Leave No Trace, and OHV travel management.

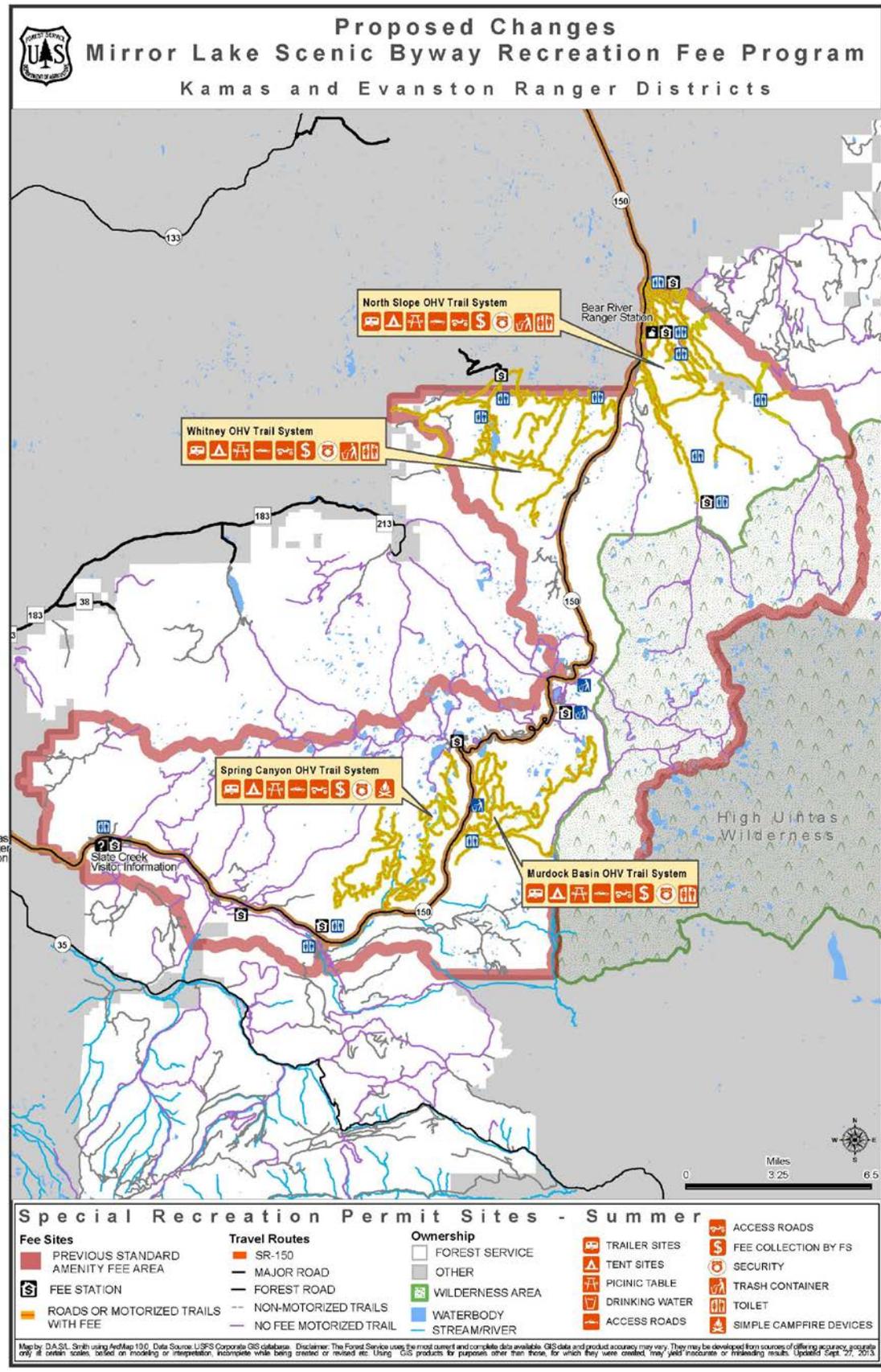
#### **IV. Public Benefit/Use of Fee Revenue:**

In addition to the operations and maintenance of the permanent facilities located within the OHV trail system SRP sites, recreation fee revenue is used for the following:

- Provide special patrols by Forest Service employees;
- Provide staffing and equipment to groom four OHV trail systems;
- OHV equipment repair, regular maintenance, and fuel;
- Provide staffing of visitor information booth to direct visitors to trail systems;
- Volunteer patrols;
- Coordination with state and local agencies, including convening an annual pre-season meeting with the Utah Division of Natural Resources and Division of Wildlife Resources and Summit County Sheriff's Office to coordinate and prepare integrated management of these OHV trail system SRP sites;
- Post event clean-up and removal of trash and human waste;
- Vault pumping of human waste as needed; and
- Provide staffing and supplies to maintain nine vault restrooms.

#### **V. Partners and Cooperators**

- Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation
- Division of Wildlife Resources
- Summit County Sheriff's Department
- US Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigation



**Appendix E:**

**Special Recreation Permit Plan for Groomed Over-Snow Vehicle and Cross-Country Ski Trails in the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Corridor in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest**

**I. Background**

In June 2011, the Forest Service conducted a national review of the 97 standard amenity recreation fee areas on National Forest System lands. As a result of the review, the Forest Service plans to remove the fee area designation for 73 standard amenity recreation fee areas, and reduce the boundaries for the remaining 24 standard amenity recreation fee areas across the nation.

Within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the national review resulted in a plan to eliminate the standard amenity recreation fee area (SAF Area) designation and substantially reduce the boundary of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Fee Area. Within the eliminated SAF Area, there are three Groomed Snowmobile & Cross Country Ski Trails/Sites that require special management and services to ensure natural resource protection and provide for visitor health and safety.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authorizes a special recreation permit fee in connection with the issuance of a permit for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and waters, such as group activities, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicle use. Special recreation permits are issued as a means to allocate capacity and/or disperse use, protect natural and cultural resources, provide for health and safety of visitors, and help cover the higher costs for providing specialized services (REA Forest Service Interim Implementation Guidelines, April 25, 2005).

The three Groomed Snowmobile and Cross Country Ski SRP Trails/Sites are proposed on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest – Mirror Lake Scenic Byway are the Beaver Creek/Pine Valley Groomed Cross Country Ski Trail, Soapstone Basin/Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (South Access) Groomed Snowmobile Trail and North Slope/Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (North Access) Groomed Snowmobile & Cross Country Ski Trail. These proposed groomed trail SRPs were previously within the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Corridor SAF Area.

Recreation fees have been charged since 1997 through recreation passes: the Mirror Lake Local Passes (\$6.00 for 1 to 3 day pass, \$12.00 for a 7 day pass, and \$45.00 for an annual pass) or the Interagency Passes (Annual-\$80.00, Senior-\$10.00, Access, Military, and Volunteer-free). The special recreation permit will be the presence of a recreation pass, here will be no change to the fee schedule.

The objective of this plan is to display the specialized services and management required to protect natural and cultural resources and provide for public health and safety.

**II. Special Recreation Permit Locations**

**Beaver Creek/Pine Valley Groomed Cross Country Ski Trail:** Located along State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Kamas, Utah, east to the North Fork Trailhead access

point on SR 150. There are several access points along the length of the trail, including Yellow Pine Trailhead, Beaver Creek Trailhead, Beaver Creek Picnic Area, Shingle Creek Picnic Area, Pine Valley Camp Sites, and the North Fork Winter Trailhead (see map in Appendix E).

**Soapstone Basin Trailhead/Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (heading Northeast) Groomed Snowmobile and Cross Country Ski Trail System:** Located along State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Kamas, Utah, groomed trail heads south towards State Road 35 and to Strawberry Reservoir; it heads North towards the Forest Service maintained Mirror Lake Winter Warming Hut from the Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead at Mile Marker 14. There are two access points along the Southern portion of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, the first is at the North Fork Winter Trailhead, and the second is at the Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead (see map in Appendix E).

**North Slope Trailhead/Mirror Lake Scenic Byway (heading South) Groomed Snowmobile and Cross Country Ski Trail System:** Located along State Road 150, the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, nearest to the community of Evanston, Wyoming, groomed trail heads south from the North Slope Winter Trailhead to the Mirror Lake Winter Warming Hut, at the Whitney Reservoir Turnoff heads west towards Whitney Reservoir to the Forest Service maintained Whitney Reservoir Winter Warming Hut and from the North Slope Winter Trailhead heads Northeast to Deadhorse Trailhead

The groomed cross country ski trail starts at the North Slope Winter Trailhead and heads Southeast to the East Fork of the Bear River trailhead and loops back around towards the North Slope Trailhead, while it follow the East Fork of the Bear River, it also has a variety of small offshoot trails along the way that are also groomed.

The North Slope Winter Trailhead is the only access point for both the groomed cross country and snowmobile trail systems (see map in Appendix E).

### **III. Program Description**

These groomed trail systems requiring an SRP, receive intense visitation on winter days when snow is present and after the trail has been freshly groomed. Utah’s famous snowfall brings with it associated social and visitor impacts. There is a need to manage this intense use to provide for the health and safety of visitors, protect natural resources, and to help cover the costs for providing these specialized services.

#### ***Special Management Actions and Services –***

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest works together with local agencies to plan ahead for snowfall events. The Forest, Utah Department of Transportation, and Utah Division of Natural Resources take part in these efforts. The following specialized management actions and services for snow play areas requiring SRP designation include:

- 1) **Traffic Congestion** – Each of these groomed ski and snowmobile trails and access points are located along a major state highway, and traffic congestion is a significant public safety issue. Providing for the safety of pedestrians, highway travelers, and maintaining emergency vehicle access requires advance coordination and planning. In order to ease congestion along the

highway and in parking areas that would normally be covered by snow, the Forest has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Utah Department of Transportation to plow large parking areas as well as clearing snow in the shoulders along the two-lane highway to allow visitors to park without blocking either lane. In addition the Forest Service utilizes a snowcat to plow the large parking area at the North Slope Winter Trailhead. This not only gives visitors safe, designated areas to park in, but allows the large plows space to turn around while plowing the highway, and allows emergency vehicles the access they need in case of an incident.

- 2) **Sanitation** – During periods when snow is present the SRP areas receive intense and concentrated visitation. The associated human waste and trash become a serious problem presenting natural resource and public health and safety concerns. The forest provides garbage bags at the visitor information booth, as well as staffing on site to dig out the restrooms after every snowfall event and to maintain the restrooms a minimum of once per week.
- 3) **Public Safety and Security** – During periods when snow is present the SRP areas receive large numbers of visitors in a concentrated area of the National Forest. This presents additional public safety, security, and natural resource concerns. The Forest provides winter staffing in the form of law enforcement, volunteers, seasonal employees, and Forest Service & Division of Natural Resources staff that performs trail grooming duties.
- 4) **Providing Specialized Services** – The costs of providing cross-country ski and snowmobile trails are expenses that are not covered by appropriated funding; these services are provided by the Recreation Fee Program. The associated costs of providing cross-country ski and snowmobile trails include snowmobile and grooming implement repair and regular maintenance, snowmobile fuel, forest staff time to perform grooming, and providing staffing on-trail and at the visitor information booth to give visitors current trail information, educate about avalanche safety, and winter travel management.

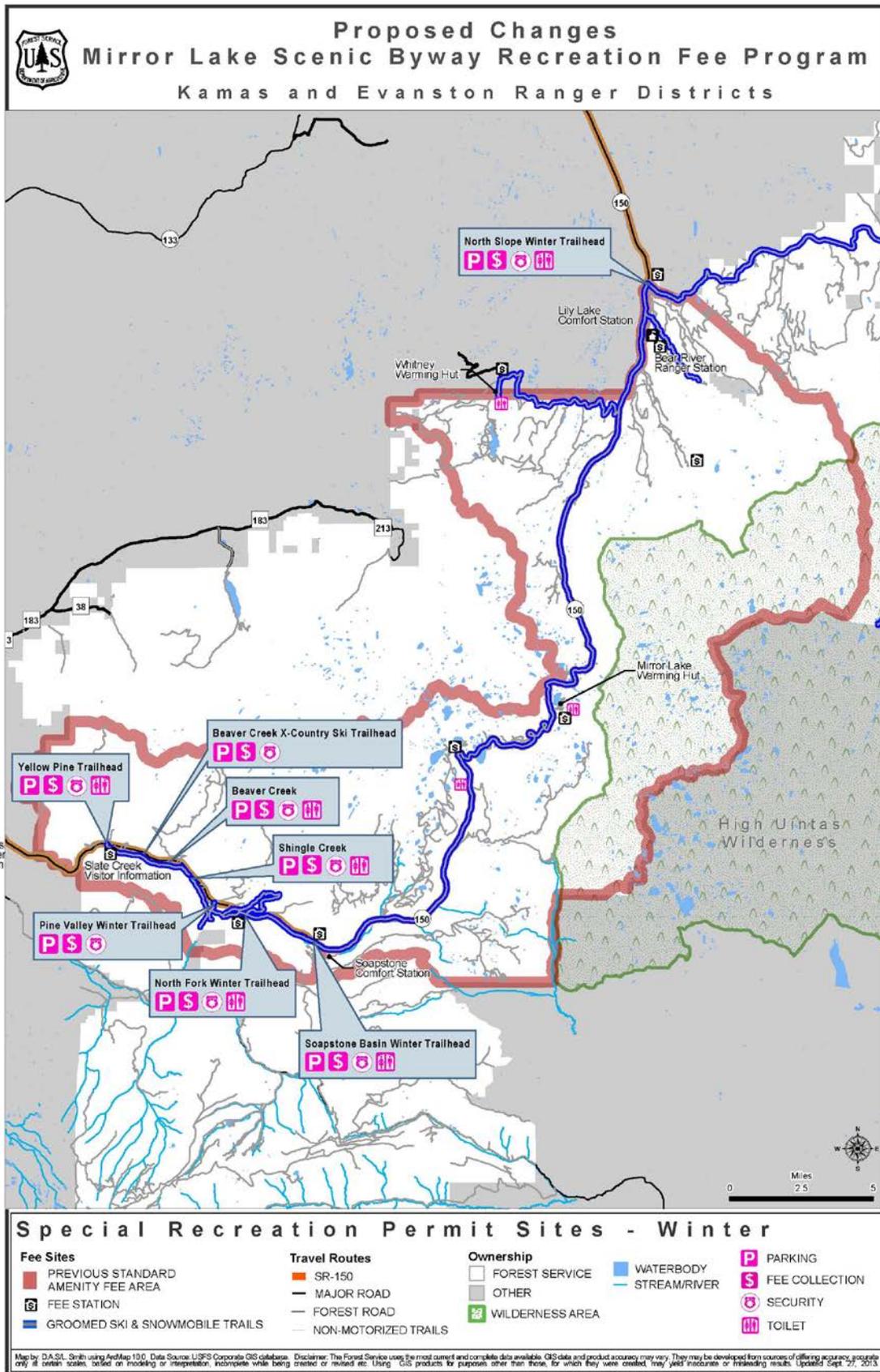
#### IV. Public Benefit/Use of Fee Revenue:

In addition to the operations and maintenance of the permanent facilities located within the snow plan SRP areas, recreation fee revenue is used for the following:

- Provide special patrols by Forest Service employees;
- Provide staffing and equipment to groom three winter trail systems;
- Snowmobile and grooming equipment repair, regular maintenance and fuel;
- Provide staffing of visitor information booth to direct visitors to trail systems and help alleviate traffic congestion;
- Volunteer patrols;
- Coordinate efforts with state and local agencies to provide integrated management of these winter SRP areas.;
- Provide additional funding for the Forest Service staff of the Utah Avalanche Center to monitor and educate about avalanche monitoring, awareness, and safety;
- Post event clean-up and removal of trash and human waste;
- Vault pumping of human waste as needed; and
- Provide staffing to maintain four vault restrooms.

## **V. Partners and Cooperators**

- Utah Department of Transportation
- Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation
- Summit County Sheriff's Department
- Utah Avalanche Center



## Appendix F:

### **Comments Received for Mirror Lake Scenic Byway**

The Forest received 41 comments from citizens. The following are those comments with some questions being answered by district staff:

#### *Comment 1:*

Dear Kamas Ranger District,

The Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (SLCA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Fee Program Fee Re-Structure Proposal. The Salt Lake Climbers Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 2002 with the mission to preserve access, encourage environmental stewardship, and educate climbers at rock climbing areas in the Wasatch. We are a membership-based organization and offer a joint membership with the national climbing advocacy group, the Access Fund, and represent climbers both locally and nationally. These comments are submitted jointly by the SLCA and Access Fund (AF).

Along the Mirror Lake Scenic by-way, there are over twenty rock climbing sites as can be found in the "Uinta Rock" climbing guidebook by Nate Smith and Paul Tusting. This is a world class rock climbing destination and used frequently by climbers in Salt Lake, Park City, and the surrounding towns. Many SLCA and Access Fund members have climbed in these areas and will continue to do so in the future.

On behalf of its membership, the SLCA and AF would like to bring to light the following concerns regarding the Fee Re-Structure Proposal:

- The SLCA supports recreation fees when there is a direct correlation between the fee and improvements to trails and amenities in and around the climbing resource.
- The USFS should consider reinstating a \$3 day pass option. This option would appeal to our user group as many climbers using the Uinta rock climbing resource and stay for only one day.
- The SLCA suggests a clear and easy payment structure to limit the amount of driving to fee station sites and confusion about what climbing areas are fee based and which are not. To this end, the SLCA suggests that the USFS and SLCA meet to discuss the locating of fee stations and how those locations relate to climbers' use of the Mirror Lake Scenic by-way climbing resource.

Thank you again for considering this input from the SLCA and please contact me with any further questions or concerns. We look forward to partnering to protect and enhance the places we enjoy recreating in the Uintas.

The SLCA has seen the direct use of USFS funds with the inclusion of Ruth Lake and Stone Garden into Forest System Trails and supports a fee for these areas among others such as Cliff Lake.

Sincerely,

Salt Lake Climbers Alliance

*Comment 2:*

Dear Ms Daniel,

I have been instructed by Jeff Schramm to direct comments on the substance of the Mirror Lake fee change proposals to you. On July 16, 2013 I sent Mr Schramm an email asking for some information clarifying the material published on the website about this proposal. I have not received the requested clarification; therefore I have insufficient information on which to base a comment. Please accept my July 16 message, pasted below, as my official comment, enter it into the record, and list me as an Interested Party for future communications.

Thank you.

<begin pasted quote>

I read with interest the recent articles in the SLC press about the changes being proposed for the Mirror Lake HIRA and I have reviewed the materials posted at your website. I would like to submit a substantive and informed comment prior to the July 31 deadline, however there is insufficient information on which to base it. Can you please provide clarification regarding the following questions raised by your published information?

1. The following sites were formerly listed as within the HIRA but are not mentioned in the current proposal. Can you confirm that there are no longer fees at these sites?
  - Bald Mountain Overlook
  - Duchesne Tunnel Overlook
  - Hayden Peak Overlook
  - Provo River Falls Overlook
  - Provo River Overlook
  - Slate Gorge Overlook
  - Wilderness Overlook
  - Hayden Fork Overlook
  - Kletting Peak Overlook
2. Several sites are proposed to be shifted from the SAF category to either EAF or SRP, but site-specific and interagency passes will still be accepted for them. Under what provision of FLREA are passes authorized for EAF or SRP fees?
3. The map shows nine EAF "camps" (Duchesne Tunnel, Horsemen, Yellow Pine, Pine Valley, Soapstone Comfort Station, Spring Canyon, Murdock Basin/Broadhead Meadows, Whitney Reservoir, and North Slope). These appear to be something different than "campgrounds," which from the website seem to be all under concessionaire management. Are these dispersed camping areas? What amenities are present in order to qualify them to charge an EAF fee, and where are these amenities located?
4. Is the Lily Lake Comfort Station listed as an EAF site the same place as what was previously listed as the Lily Lake Dump Station?

5. What is the difference between the Shingle Creek Picnic Site and Beaver Creek Picnic Site (both listed as SAF sites) and the Shingle Creek Picnic Area and Beaver Creek Picnic Area (both listed as SRP sites)?
6. What is the difference between the Pine Valley Camp EAF site and the Pine Valley Camp SRP site?
7. What is the function of the EAF site called Lost Creek Water Station? What is its relationship to the Lost Creek Campground (concessionaire)?
8. Two of the SRP sites listed are Yellow Pine Trailhead and Beaver Creek Corrals. What is the "specialized recreation use" for which a permit would be required there?
9. A site called North Fork Trailhead was previously listed as part of the HIRA. The new proposal shows a SRP site called the North Fork Winter Trailhead. Are these the same place? If so, is a fee to be charged there only in the winter?
10. Nine of the proposed SAF sites are described as Trailheads. What accommodation will be made (as required by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in Adams v USFS) for free parking at or near those sites for those who use them only to gain backcountry access, without using the facilities and services?
11. Are you planning to publish a chart, similar to what the American Fork Canyon HIRA did, showing what amenities are present at each fee site?

Western Slope No-Fee Coalition

*Comment 3:*

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I usually go through the Mirror Lake area every year several times a year. I am not sure if you work in conjunction with the state of Utah DNR; however, it might be beneficial to ask them for assistance with the camping and other amenities offered to the public. Instead of eliminating fees desperately needed for this area. Offer incentives for families and individuals who use this area for their leisure. The DNR does a program with dedicated hunters offering them a chance to work for the DNR for a specified number of hours to assist in the management of the DNRs assets.

I think it would benefit the areas if the people who use this area were permitted to go out and help the camp hosts or rangers by giving time. Possibly to offset the current fee or work a number of hours to completely replace the fee. This may be challenging but it would provide the current workers with extra hands to get jobs done. This area is limited with respect to the number of days we have access to maintain it. Most of the tasks are laborious and usually take little skill such as marking trails in the Cubberant lake area where boy scouts camp and cleaning up debris from around the lakes.

You could allow people who are familiar with the areas to act as guides for work crews or do splits with forest service employees. Any person who will be working with children will need to be appropriately screened, or fill a position which currently has a screening process, School teachers, police, scout leaders and the like.

Thank you for taking the time to read this suggestion. I hope it helps in the area and hope it may become a national best practice giving the people who use the areas a feeling of ownership and responsibility to care for the areas.

Respectfully,

Fugal

*Comment 4:*

Dear District,

I believe these fees are obnoxious and unnecessary. The fees are elitist and unfair as they intentionally keep those tax payers who don't have frivolous spending money from recreating on certain tax payer funded lands. It is particularly annoying and frustrating when Forest Service fees around the country merely serve the purpose of perpetuating the staffing for such programs, without any benefit reaped by tax payers and land users.

Clark

*Comment 5:*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Wasatch County resident with a Kamas mailing address and I would like to share my thoughts on the Mirror Lake Area and its fee structure. I like to enjoy the Highline Trail, TUNA Yurt, and many other forest service's several times each year. I have no affiliation with the forest or any other interest group and felt compelled to give my comments after hearing an interview on Park City's KPCW station.

I am more than happy to pay \$10/Day for use of my national forests the same as Jordanelle State Park Charges \$10 a day for a far less dramatic product. Locals can, and should, support their forest, and economic engine, by purchasing the affordable annual pass. The amount of fuel that is consumed for many forest patrons to arrive at the Mirror Lake area is sickening. An increased fee structure would encourage ride sharing and reduce pollution through less fuel combustion.

Lowering fees would impact my own experience as the forest will be more crowded and parking further an issue.

Please do NOT reduce any fees and consider increasing all forest use fees. We are a society who can afford \$102 a day to ski and \$50,000 SUV's but we won't pay a few dollars to protect our national treasures. Arguing over three dollars is juvenile and lacks big picture understanding. Has anyone really stayed home due to the extra three dollars? Can someone really look a ranger in the eye and tell her that they did not get their \$6 worth of enjoyment out of the forest in a single day? Bring a friend, or two, and then split the cost per vehicle among yourselves. I frequently pay a \$6 "convince charge" for simply placing an order for rodeo or concert tickets online. Think of it as a donation to the future not as a charge for exactly what you use that particular day.

Please put a gate across the road like the national parks do. Charge all vehicles regardless of reservations at interior recreation areas or their intentions to simply drive through just like Arches and Zion. If the Jordanelle can charge \$10, so should you. My experience would be most enhanced by more forest patrons with deliberate intentions to experience the forest than those who just want to come up and drive 300 miles roundtrip from SLC to Evanston in their SUV.

Simple as this. Keep taxes low yet instate fees for those who are actually utilizing and impacting a specific resource. The fees must be set at a level that supports and sustains the offering. Where is the forest's COLA or CPI increase? We all know that the Forest's costs rise just as ours do.

The government is not obligated to subsidize my recreation needs 100%. I think we all need to not pout about chipping in when we are the actual consumers of this particular offering.

Many thanks,

Kisow

*Comment 6:*

To Whom This May Concern:

Please consider re-instituting the \$3.00 daily fee. When I visit the area, it's typically for a one day visit, not for three days. Please at least give us the option to choose.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thatcher

*Comment 7:*

The new plan sounds good and an improvement- go for it.

Maybe make it easier for me to use my interagency pass as my payment. Like leave a copy of the pass in the windshield????

Art

*Comment 8:*

I suggest that you add a \$2 or \$3 dollar fee for daily use. I often would like to have a picnic or take a short hike with my family in the fee area, but \$6 is too much for a single visit. We generally avoid the area since we don't camp for full weekends.

Also, I hope the fee program doesn't expand to other areas. I believe the free public spaces serve an important role in our community, by removing barriers to low income people.

Sincerely,

Miner

*Comment 9:*

I would like to see ALL of the "Recreation Fee Area" removed. As the fees is a burden on the forest visitor.

Thank you,

Bulkeley

*Comment 10:*

I support the intent to lift fees from use of the forest where no recreation development has been done. However, the proposal creates significant confusion and risk concerning how fees will be applied to the different designated sites.

This I support:

- One fee to cover all of the designated sites, regardless of their type designation.
- All sites to be covered by the various annual recreation passes provided by federal land managers.

This I do NOT support:

- Separate fees for sites with different type designations.
- Any exclusion from annual passes provided by federal land managers.
- Use of this change to raise additional funds by administrative fiat in the future.

The proposal states that the change "Continues to honor all passes that are currently accepted" and "Does not include new recreation fees." I take that to mean that the proposal is consistent with the things I support.

Since many of the sites that were once covered by the old "use fee" will become something other than standard amenity sites, will they be excluded from annual passes? Even the Minor Lake Scenic Recreation Fee Area itself was once excluded from the annual pass because the fee required to 'enter' the area was called a 'use fee' not an 'entrance fee". (This is how it was explained to me.) If a forest manager can circumvent the annual pass just by changing the label applied to a site how are we to know that won't happen here in the future? The list of site designations under the proposal does nothing to give clarity to or confidence in the fee structure. The list of site designations even lists picnic sites as: Standard Amenity Fee Site, as Potential Special Recreation Permit Sites, and even as Standard Amenity Fee Site/Potential Special Recreation Permit Site. Trailheads are listed as: Standard Amenity Site, Potential Special Recreation Permit Site, and Potential Expanded Amenity Fee Site. Comfort Stations are either a Potential Expanded Amenity Fee Site or a Recreation Site. A recreation site could even be a Fee Station (lots of fun there!). Confusing!

The proposal needs to be more clear about fees and how they will be applied. now and in the future. The current one-fee-for-all-sites policy needs to be clarified and solidified for future generations. My concern is that the Expanded Amenity Sites and the Special Recreation Permit Sites will eventually require additional fees because of their definition- even though the proposal is not intended to include new fees. One fee for all areas is the current practice and it should be guaranteed into the future. It will be tempting for some land manager in the future to impose new fees and the justification will include the designations of expanded and special. I've seen similar things it done in the past and it needs to be prevented right up front.

Thanks,

Maughan

P.S. I have been an annual pass holder for many years and am currently a Senior Pass holder.

**Answer:**

Mr. Maughan,

Thank you for your feedback regarding the Mirror Lake proposal.

I wanted to write back and see if I could answer some of the questions and concerns that you raised in your email.

- One fee to cover all of the designated sites, regardless of their type designation. As a forest, we want to keep this program as simple and easy to understand as possible, so it will continue to operate this way. As a visitor, you and I will continue to pay for one pass and have access to each site type, as long as the pass isn't expired. This was one of the major issues we as district personnel wanted clarified from Washington, DC before we moved forward with the proposal. This will not change.
- All sites to be covered by the various annual recreation passes provided by federal land managers. Sorry to repeat. In trying to keep the program simple, the question was asked by the Districts from the very beginning "would we have discretion at the local/district level whether or not we would be able to honor the Nationwide passes (America the Beautiful & Golden Lifetime Passports) in the manner that we wanted at American Fork & Mirror Lake?" Pleasant Grove & Heber-Kamas Districts were told from Washington, DC that it was at our discretion. The districts were very firm in the decision that we wanted to continue to honor the Nationwide passes for all site types (Standard, Expanded and Special Recreation Permit sites) even though the text on the back of the Nationwide passes reads "NOT COVERED: Camping, tours, special recreation permit fees, etc." The Districts do not want that to change. These passes will continue to cover the recreation use fees in their entirety for Nationwide Pass Holders.

I do remember what you're referring to about the "entrance fee vs. the use fee." When the legislation was first introduced the only "discount" card that was authorized was the National Parks Card, and it only covered entrance fees to National Parks, there was a sticker that a visitor could buy called the Golden Eagle sticker for an additional fee which would then include the National Forests, BLM & Fish & Wildlife Land, and a lot of people did end up purchasing those so they would be covered everywhere, but it definitely made for a lot of confusion from visitors. When the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act was introduced in 2008, it merged all the various passes into one program called the America the Beautiful Pass, and made it so that one pass covered all National Park, Forest Service, BLM and Fish and Wildlife Lands, but still retained the ability to keep 80% of the revenue from each pass sold at the district level to be used for interpretive projects on the district.

The intention is to keep these passes valid for each of the site types, I do understand your concern, if it ever becomes an issue (which we're not anticipating that it will) the District preference, and what we will continue to push for, is that the Nationwide Passes continue to be honored for the full price of the Recreation Use Passes at both American Fork & Mirror Lake.

I was a little confused by the "recreation site being a fee station" comment. There are currently nine fee tube sites along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway, and they were placed in certain locations because the recreational use was concentrated nearby, so in 1997 it made sense to place them there so it would be convenient for the public. Some of them happen to be located at the recreation site itself for visitor convenience. If it was a standalone fee tube and nothing else around it like at the visitor information station on the Kamas side (mile marker 6), or the Trial Lake/Washington Lake site, or the Bear River Ranger Station site, those are considered admin sites, and visitors do not need to display a pass at those sites, that is in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Legislation. I don't anticipate that ever changing. I hope that clarifies your concern a little bit. Let me know if it doesn't.

What we're hoping to have in place, once we receive permission to implement the proposal, is to have every site posted where a recreation pass is required to be displayed. We just have to wait for the final recommendations from the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee and the Forest Service Intermountain Regional Forester before moving forward with purchasing signage.

I do understand your concern though. At the District & Forest level we will continue to push for the current practice of honoring the Nationwide Passes for the full price of the recreation use fees.

Let me know if you have any other questions, I hope this helps, sorry to be so longwinded.

Virginia "Gina" Daniel

Recreation Fee Coordinator, Special Uses & Dev Rec

**Comment:**

Virginia,

I thank you for your response to my comments. I appreciate the completeness of your response and I am pleased to know that the intent of the proposal is to preserve the one-fee-for-all concept in current use. There remains, of course, the risk that at some point in time it will change as intentions change.

In regards to, "I was a little confused by the "recreation site being a fee station" comment." The legend on the map at: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5421336.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5421336.pdf), lists under Recreation Sites, FEE STATION. I too am a little confused by it.

Thanks again for your response,

Maughan

*Comment 11:*

I've been paying the fee ever since it was instituted. Keep it up. We need to keep some money in this forest to keep up the facilities. Maybe you could fix the bridge on Shingle Creek this year.

*Comment 12:*

Sir:

I am writing to recommend a \$2.00 per vehicle fee be charged for Mirror Lake Highway entry. It would help offset maintenance costs and work toward minimizing vandalism by requiring all vehicles stop before proceeding.

I recommend runners, walkers and bicyclists be allowed free access.

Thank you!

*Comment 13:*

I would like to see day only passes for the Mirror Lake area. Because the area is close to our metropolitan area, we use it for day hikes. A fee per vehicle of \$2 or \$3 or even a \$1 fee per person in the vehicle would be fairer.

Thank you

Drennan

*Comment 14:*

Although I wished the federal government would give more to parks, I happily pay to use AF canyon and the Mirror Lake highway every year. I backpack and fish in the Uintahs every single year. Please keep ALL fees. It's the price I'll pay to keep those areas pristine, conditioned, and not overrun.

I also am extremely disappointed in the continued use of motor bikes in the AF canyon area. Beautiful single track destroyed, rutted, and pulverized into powdery dust. Certain areas are fine like the dirt roads but my wilderness experience has been minimized by loud dusty motorbikes on too many occasions. Get them off the trails!!

Happy (when I don't get pushed off the trail by motor bikes) season pass holder,

Beckstead

*Comment 15:*

My comment would be that if a campground site is paid for at 18.00-25.00 per night the 6.00 dollar fee should be included so the camper is not paying twice to enjoy the mirror lake hwy. I read through the proposal twice and was still confused, maybe it says that.. ..

Second email:

I see that American Fork has done my comment» this needs to be done at mirror lake Hwy also

"(Visitors paying at concessionaire operated campgrounds will no longer pay the Standard Amenity Fee.)"

*Comment 16:*

As a resident here in summit county, I hope you can help get back the one day passes, as my great grandchildren are only here for part of a day and they like to go fishing. Also could we work on keeping the funds that are generated over here, kept over here? I have lived her over 30 yrs and the prices just keep going up . Please help.

Thank You

Johnston

**Comment 17:**

I am 100% disabled I love going to the mountains. I lived here (in the mountains) all my life. I'm on a limited income. I know that the fees are needed, but to me after paying for gas, food and other supplies to go camping or fishing or even both then you get where you are going there is another 10 to 20 dollars more. With the Golden Access card at lease the fee was at 1/2 price which helped with cost. I'm not saying I not want to do my part, it is hard. Our trips to the mountains are very limited now. Please keep the fees at 50% off for the Disabled and THE SENIOR CITIZENS.

THANK YOU

Larsen

**Answer:**

I read through your message this afternoon, and wanted to address a concern that you had in your comments and to make sure you didn't have any additional questions or need any clarification about any of the proposal for the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Program.

You mentioned Golden Access Pass and the 50% discount. The 50% discount is applicable to the single family sites in the concessionaire operated campgrounds, as an access pass holder you are still (and while there are concessionaires present in the campgrounds) entitled to that benefit. The concessionaires tried to reduce that discount to 10% this past year and weren't successful.

However as a Lifetime Access or Senior Pass Holder all you have to do is display your card and you (and the occupants of your vehicle) do not need to purchase a local Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Pass.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns and we hope to see you up here this summer!

Thanks,

Virginia "Gina" Daniel

Recreation Fee Coordinator, Special Uses & Dev Rec

**Comment:**

Thank you for answering! And now I am sorry to bother you again, But I am confused about the fees in the Strawberry Area. Is my card still good out there? I mostly fish off the bank around the lake. In most places it states it don't honor the Access Card. Please let me know.

THANKS

Larsen

**Answer:**

Hi Jesse,

I just want to make sure I'm understanding your question, it sounds like you are using concessionaire operated day use sites at strawberry to fish. Is that correct?

If that is right, you are correct, the America the Beautiful & Golden Lifetime Passports do not cover or give a discount off day use fees at concessionaire operated sites. According to the terms of their permit the concessionaire is only required to offer the 50% discount on single family campground sites to lifetime passport holders (senior & access passes).

On the back of the America the Beautiful Annual, Senior & Access Passports the text reads "May entitle holder to 50% discount on certain fees," and also "May not cover concession facilities or activities." The 50% discount they refer to would be applicable to the single family site fee.

A lot of the day use sites in the strawberry area are under concessionaire operation. The concessionaire, American Land & Leisure, cleans the sites and maintains the restrooms. At the Forest Service operated sites there isn't a fee. The Heber side of the Heber-Kamas Ranger District does not have a fee program authorized like Mirror Lake, American Fork & Flaming Gorge, so the fees at the sites I think you're referring to are concessionaire day use fees and again would not be covered or discounted by being an America the Beautiful Passport holder.

I hope that answered you question, feel free to email me or call me if it didn't. Sometimes this information can be confusing, and I apologize if I didn't make it any clearer. :)

Thanks so much for your question!

Virginia "Gina" Daniel

Recreation Fee Coordinator, Special Uses & Dev Rec

*Comment 18:*

To Whom It May Concern,

I frequent the Mirror Lake Highway year round for recreation.

I have been looking through the information regarding the new proposed recreation fee structure. I must say that it is somewhat unclear what it means. What I can gather is that a parked car within the current recreation area will no longer need a pass unless it is at one of these designated sites. I assume the "expanded" amenity sites will require a higher fee than the "standard" sites.

One thing I am concerned about is the skiing "permits." To me, distinguishing a permit from an area fee seems to imply that you must apply for the permit and perhaps that there are a limited number of them allowed per day, but I may be incorrect in this assumption. I approve of limiting the number of snowmobile permits, and perhaps it could be a good way to distribute information to snowmobilers (what to take with you Avalanche awareness, etc. who seem to make some silly mistakes up there. It is surprising that this might also be necessary for the groomed ski trails, so I think I must be mis-interpreting how this is going to work.

A question: it says that "America the Beautiful & Golden Lifetime" passports will continue to be honored. What about the Interagency Annual Pass? And will that count as a "permit" as well?

My overall feedback is that the proposal designates three types of fees but doesn't explain what the difference is between the three. That further information would be helpful.

Thank you.

Campbell

*Comment 19:*

Hello,

I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to eliminating the current \$6 usage fee for the Mirror Lake Highway campgrounds or trail access. Rather than not charging a fee, I would prefer to see the money used to maintain campgrounds, rest areas, and trailheads. We recently hiked the Shingle Creek trail and found two bridges that are unsafe and basically unusable. This left us with one of three choices, turn around very early in the hike, ford the stream which is dangerous in late spring, or try to use the bridges. Like most people we choose the later but I really wish I could have taken some pictures. I think you would send a crew immediately to fix these bridges before someone gets hurt. Our dog refused to use the bridges and attempted to ford the stream only to be washed downstream quite a ways before we could rescue her.

Rather than having people ford the stream so they can hike into the high country, I suggest that you use the fee to repair bridges, maintain trails, and continue your winter grooming program of ski trails.

Thank you in advance for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Pimentel

*Comment 20:*

Hello,

I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to eliminating the current \$6 usage fee for the Mirror Lake Highway campgrounds or trail access. Rather than not charging a fee, I would prefer to see the money used to maintain campgrounds, rest areas, and trailheads. I recently hiked the Shingle Creek trail and found two bridges that are unsafe and basically unusable. Rather than having people ford the stream so they can hike into the high country, I suggest that you use the fee to repair bridges, maintain trails, and continue your winter grooming program of ski trails.

Thank you in advance for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Pimentel

**Comment 21:**

What would the "Special Recreation Fees" be?? If it would be a modest addition to the daily/weekly pass fees, That would be fine. How else can you continue to provide restroom/outhouse services? Last winter the Beaver Creek Ski Trail rarely had TP. That is really necessary to keep the public from leaving restrooms and forest a mess, which is already a problem/ Please, make it enough to supply winter and summer trail maintenance which is reasonable, hygienic and with safe stream crossings. We all need to support the National Parks and Forests and give them more respect, as well as respect the Forest Service. Thank you for asking for input.

Sincerely,

Lawler, Oakley Utah

**Answer:**

Hi There,

Thanks for submitting comments for the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway proposal.

From what I'm reading in your comments, I believe you're asking if the Forest Service is proposing a fee increase to the current fee schedule, and the answer to that is no, we are proposing to keep the same fee schedule. It would remain:

1-3 day pass= \$6.00

7 day pass= \$12.00

Annual= \$45.00

You would only have to pay the fee once for access to the list of standard amenity, expanded amenity and special recreation permit sites, as has been the case in the past.

We would also continue to honor the America the Beautiful Passports as well as the Golden Lifetime Passports and the American Fork/ Alpine Loop Passes for the full price of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Passes.

I appreciate your support, comments and questions. If you have any other questions, please let me know.

Thank you!

Virginia "Gina" Daniel

Recreation Fee Coordinator, Special Uses & Dev Rec

**Comment:**

Fees are quite reasonable and low. I greatly appreciate the services provided by the Forest Service for such a fee.

Thank you, Lawler, Oakley, Utah

*Comment 23:*

I use the trails there frequently as I live just down the road and am more than happy to continue to pay the fees to ensure the continued existence and upkeep of the trails. Please do not do away with the fee program on mirror lake scenic byway!

*Comment 24:*

Bravo!

I am very pleased after reading an article about proposed reduction and elimination of user fees on the Mirror Lake Highway. This fee has been a thorn in the side since it was instituted.

Bell

*Comment 25:*

Let people buy a one day pass if only spending one day instead of a three day pass for a one day stay.

*Comment 26:*

From what I am reading about your proposed changes, this will make the current situation worse and more burdensome for the recreational user. I currently have a Senior National Parks and Recreational Lands Pass which is a lifetime pass.

Will this pass be good for all proposed fees in the changed regulation as it was for the former Mirror Lake Highway blanket entrance fee? Suppose someone camps at Pine Valley and wants to fish at Butterfly Lake, will they pay two fees for this? Based on what I am reading I feel you are better off not making the change and I would appreciate an answer on my question on the Senior Pass.

*Comment 27:*

We love Mirror Lake Byway. I think it is a bargain to pay the fee at the entrance and then access so many possible sites.

You should continue collecting at the entrance so you have the funds to keep doing the great job you do. Anyone who feels they shouldn't have to pay should try getting a better bargain anywhere else.

*Comment 28:*

I have not found the fees for entering the Mirror Lake Hwy area to be excessive or inapplicable. In recent years I have rarely used a developed site other than trailhead parking for traveling into the backcountry and I still feel like the fees are appropriate. Now I say that assuming the fees are used for protection, rehabilitation, restoration of use areas. If the fees are being used solely for the benefit of a single group of users, i.e. snowmobilers in the winter ... then I'm certain I would feel differently and be resentful of the charge of the fee. Please consider the fact that a use fee even for those not using the developed site .... but the roadside parking/camping areas, at will camping areas .... is appropriate. I feel like a fee structure might possibly keep out those wanting to travel to the Uintas and use the resource carelessly creating trash, harming wildlife, and destroying forested areas. I am mostly in favor of keeping the general use fee in hopes that the resource would be more protected for future generations .... assuming the fees are used for such purpose. Thanks for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,

Wise-Steffen

*Comment 29:*

Dear v. Daniel:

As president and founder of the Friends of the Western Uintas, we want to let you know we like the changes that have been made in the mirror lake scenic byway fee program proposal however, we want the \$3.00 one day pass back in force that had been changed in 2008 to a \$6.00 three day pass. When you changed from the \$3.00 one day pass to the \$6.00 three day pass it affected the economy of our community.

We would like to see the fees as follows:

\$ 3.00 one day pass

\$ 6.00 three day pass

\$12.00 weekly pass

\$45.00 annual pass

\$10.00 lifetime senior pass

In addition we would like to have an annual report of the fee programs income and expenses published in the local park record and summit news.

We would also like to be informed prior to any changes that are made to the proposal or program in the future.

Sincerely

Williams

**Comment 30:**

Hello,

I am the Director of the local climbing advocacy non-profit, the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance, and I would like to post information to our community regarding the proposed fee re-structure along Mirror Lake. I wanted to inquire a bit further into the proposal and how it relates to our climber user group so I get the information out correctly.

Could you please field two questions that I know our user group would want to know? Would the fee restructure mean that the \$6 fee to park at sites such as Trail Lake, Moosehorn, Ruth Lake, Stone

Garden, ect would potentially go away? Would this fee restructure apply to the entire length of the Mirror Lake extending into Evanston?

Thank you and I look forward to helping get comments submitted to you.

Salt Lake Climbers Alliance

**Answer:**

Gina called and talked to her answered her questions and clarified the category types. They will be submitting another comment soon.

**Comment 31:**

Your proposed new fee plan for the Mirror Lake Highway Area where you are eliminating the blanket use fee and substituting individual fees for so called standard and enhanced amenity areas is a rip off and will adversely impact retired persons such as myself on a fixed income who use these areas frequently during the summer.

You propose to start charging for dispersed camping areas which are now free such as the Pine Valley area and the camping area at Duchesne Tunnel where you provide no services. I feel it is also unfair to charge individual fees for the most desirable trails and recreation areas. While the previous blanket fee was manageable, the new plan would in effect, "nickel and dime" the public users to an unfair extent. I have recently obtained a Senior Golden Age recreation pass, which currently covers all fees in your area. Under the new plan, I understand that I will have to pay extra to use the areas in question. I would suggest that your agency do what others have had to do and cut back rather than keep raising fees for the public, who after all, are the owners of this land.

Burns

**Comment:**

I'm not sure I'm liking the change. We are avid hikers and campers. It appears that the areas we like will now have fees attached. If we hike several trails over a week, it looks like we'd have to pay for each trail. That's CRAZY. I'd like to know the actual \$\$\$ of the fee. If we fish at Butterfly, then hike the next day at Crystal Lake, and camp at the Pine Valley dispersed area, what would we be looking at? Currently we have a lifetime senior pass. Will this cover it?

Please respond to my email. I'd really like to know more about this. Expanded fee area? What exactly will that entail? A daily fee? Will the senior passes cover it? You can call me at XXXXXX or reply to my email.

**Answer:**

Retuned call and answered questions, he and his wife are more comfortable about the proposal now.

*Comment 32:*

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the new fee structure for the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway. The one page summary regarding the changes, as well as the other available online USFS information, is not totally clear, but the concept to drop some of the fees is the right direction. It would appear that many of the popular hiking and fishing areas would still require a fee. Identifying which areas where fees are or are not charged can be confusing. Part of the efforts of the proposed changes should include easy to understand fee and no fee areas, which would be located in an easy to access area before you enter the canyon.

From my perspective, the biggest change in the fees would be to offer a one 1 day fee, along with multi-day fees. Currently, fees are paid for three days at a time, which seems, at least to me, to be excessive. I like to hike and fish, but I only do it one day at a time, and rarely on consecutive days. As an example, Fehr Lake, and Bonnie Lake, starting at Mirror Lake parking area, would be a one day hike. I would suggest such day hikes should not be charged a fee. If a fee is assessed for one day hikes, the fee should be for a single day (and not the current 3 day period); with the one day vehicle fee limited to no more than \$2.00 (\$ 1.00 would be preferable.) It just does not seem right that a three day use fee is charged when the use (be it hiking or fishing) is for only one day. One day fees should be implemented, along with multi-day use fees.

Thanks you for the opportunity to comment and for listening.

Fullmer

*Comment 33:*

I am strongly against any fee reductions. At a time when budgets keep getting slashed it is ludicrous to reduce fees.

Everyone who visits these beautiful areas should be proud to pay for their upkeep and future sustainability.

*Comment 34:*

Hello ....

My feedback on this dropping the "demonstration" Recreation Fee that has lasted 10 yrs. is, as a local, that this is long overdue, I support this. We should not be charged to drive through our National Forest on a state highway, which was always wrong.

I will take this further and suggest that we should not be charged, as suggested in the plan to park and use a trailhead!!

Again, this is charging for access to land we already own as citizens.

Thank you.

Ingraham

*Comment 35:*

Here's a few comments about the fee area change proposal:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/uwcnf/home/?cid=stelprdb5420667>

It looks like most of the areas you can park will still have fees . Don't just eliminate the area and add fees at every spot.

- Definitely no fees for trailheads. That deters volunteer work for maintaining trail s.
- Charge only for camping and keep those prices down
- Maybe even make some campgrounds free that are away from the main road and not used much.
- Reduce the number of outside companies doing the work. They tend to drive up costs and cause other problems. (I had one say my pass did not work at a trailhead.)
- Have a fee for the winter groomed trails. Stop grooming if there's not enough use.

Thanks for you work.

Hood

*Comment 36:*

I support the removal of fees from merely entering the Mirror Lake Highway.

Thanks

DeLong

*Comment 37:*

After reviewing your proposal it appears as though your aim is to continue skirting the law. The National Recreation Enhancement Act does not give you the authority to charge a fee for merely parking a car. You have been doing this illegally for years and under the new proposal it looks as though you will continue to do so by charging fees at the trail heads. As far as I can see. nothing has changed. you are just calling it something different.

If I park my car at any of the following trailheads or any other trailhead I should not have to pay a fee.

- Crystal Lake
- Bald Mountain
- Fehr Lake
- Pass Lake/Lofty Lake
- Highline
- Ruth Lake
- Christmas Meadows
- East Fork of the Bear River
- North Slope
- Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead
- North Slope Winter Trailhead

For instance, in the winter I regularly park at the Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead. I am a backcountry skier and do not need any winter grooming and to me it is a minus not a plus. It is galling to have to pay for something that I don't need, don't want, and negatively impacts me. All I am doing is parking my car.

Likewise in the summer, I am only parking my car to go hiking and resent paying a fee. For instance, I have used the trail to Bald Mountain frequently and have never once seen anyone use the picnic tables and really don't see it costing much money to maintain one. What do you do, wipe them off after it rains?

When I saw the headlines that trumpeted fee elimination I was over joyed as I have resented paying them for a long time, but after reading your proposal I feel very let down and think you are just trying to dupe the public and that it will be worse than before. You don't say specifically in the proposal whether you will continue accepting the "America the Beautiful" pass. Will you? If you don't then your proposal is worse than what is in place now.

Sincerely yours.

Zachary

*Comment 38:*

I am writing to comment on the proposed change in Fees for Mirror Lake ... I have lived in Kamas since 1991 and hike, bike, ski and snowshoe on many of the trails on Hwy 150 and happily pay for the annual pass - to recognize the cost it takes to keep the trails cleaned and maintained.

I am so discouraged this spring and particularly this weekend, to see so many people who have NO IDEA what the concept of "LEAVE NO TRACE" means in their use of the land and respect for others and wild life. Not to mention the camping in designated areas for NO camping. So, I DO NOT agree or support removing the fee as I believe, #1 -it hopefully provides some support for the forest service personnel to attempt to educate people on use of the National Forest, and #2 - might help people think more about "use" of areas that are not theirs - show some respect. The ONLY way you seem to have impact on people, is to hit their wallet - then they might take more notice. I hope the fee remains and the funds are utilized to continue to support the areas as best as possible. Maybe we should be imposing steeper fines for misuse - much like the campaign years ago to stop littering ....

Thank you.

Roalstad

*Comment 39:*

Dear Sirs,

I'm a member of Bobbie Williams group, Friends of the Uintas.

We like the changes made with the fee structuring ... mostly. We do believe there is a lot of lost revenue by not having a simple 1 day \$3.00 pass.

We hope you consider and implement this when you do the restructuring of fees.

Thanks for all the good work you do.

Wahl

*Comment 40:*

Is the FS trying to increase or decrease revenue with this proposal, and, as a result, increase or decrease services and needed maintenance? If, as a result, the FS anticipates a decrease in revenue, and a resulting decrease in services, then this is a bad idea. There is a crying need for improvements to the camping, hiking, fishing and backcountry trail systems in the national forest. The focus should be on improving these facilities, which will require more revenues, not less money. Moreover, there are a lot of campers who do not stay in designated campgrounds, and who use resources. How will these folks pay for these uses, and won't this proposal encourage even more of these non-designated, environmentally harmful uses? Finally, what is the motivation for this change? The use fees are not that high. Who's complaining? Bottom line for me is any proposal that increases revenues for use and puts the money back into the national forest is a good public program, and one that does the opposite should not be implemented.

Leta

Christmas Meadows Summer Home Area

*Comment 41:*

I live in Park City and love to occasionally drive to Mirror Lake during the summer and autumn months. Because it is so beautiful, well kept, and well patrolled, I am honored to pay for the privilege. In fact, I question the wisdom of doing away with the fee. However, I will continue to take my day-only drives along the area.

Whitaker