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News Release

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February 24th, 2015



Ashley National Forest Proposes Increased Fee for Christmas Tree Permits

Vernal, Utah: The Ashley National Forest is interested in hearing your comments on a proposal to increase Christmas tree permits from \$10.00 to \$15.00 per tag.

Each year the Ashley National Forest sells approximately 2,500 Christmas tree permits to the public. The majority of the revenue collected for these permits remains on the Forest for the continued operation of the Christmas tree program, including visitor services, maps, and law enforcement.

Ashley National Forest Supervisor John Erickson stated, "We are happy to continue to provide families an opportunity to get out into the woods and cut their own Christmas tree. The last fee increase was 15 years ago; it is now time to look again at raising the fee to keep up with the increased costs of doing business. We look forward to continuing to offer this traditional recreational opportunity on the Ashley National Forest."

Comments are being accepted on this fee proposal until May 30, 2015. Please send your comments to Lesley Tullis, Environmental Coordinator, 355 North Vernal Avenue, Vernal, Utah 84078 (email: comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us; please put "Christmas trees" in the subject line).

All fee proposals will be presented before a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC). This is a citizen's advisory committee whose members represent a broad array of recreation interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable fee changes. The public is welcome to attend and comment at all advisory committee meetings. The Utah RRAC meeting is expected to be held the fall of 2015. The exact meeting time, location and agenda will be announced on the Ashley National Forest website and through the local media. This fee proposal will also have extensive reviews by both the Forest Service Regional and Washington Offices.

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

For more information, questions, or comments on this fee proposal, please visit the Ashley National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/ashley> or contact Louis Haynes at 435-789-1181.