

**COLORADO RECREATION RESOURCE ADVISORY  
FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT  
NEW FEE OR FEE CHANGE  
PROPOSAL FORM**

**1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Name of Project Area/Site: FITTON GUARD STATION.

Project Contact Person: Gilbert Becenti

Position Title Recreation Specialist Phone #: 719-657-3321 X 6019

Forest: Rio Grande NF County: Rio Grande

Ranger District: Divide Congressional District: 3rd

BLM Field Office\_\_

Site Type (Cabin, Campground, Area, etc): Cabin

Capacity: 4 Season of Use: Year-Round

Fee Type: Standard Amenity\_\_ Expanded Amenity X Special Rec. Permit\_\_

Proposed Action: New fee X Change of fee\_\_

Existing Fee: \$

Proposed Fee: \$ 50.00

Date of last fee increase: \_

Summary of **benefits** the public receives or will receive:

- Nostalgia of staying in a rustic cabin.
- Escaping physical and social pressures.
- Improved health maintenance.
- Greater respect for cultural heritage.
- A secluded site for family and friends to gather.
- Positive contribution to local economy.
- Improve maintenance of physical facilities.

Facilities/Amenities Checklist (check all that apply, list each site separately):

Site Name: Fitton Guard Station

1. X Designated developed parking
2. X Permanent toilet facility: \_\_ \_\_ Flush X Vault
3. \_\_ Permanent trash receptacle
4. \_\_ Interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk
5. X Picnic tables
6. X Security services

Other Amenities: \_\_ Garbage Removal, \_\_ Paved Access Road, \_\_ Drinking Water, \_\_ Information/Directional signs, \_\_ Shower/Bath House, \_\_ Tent Pads, \_\_ Electricity, \_\_ RV Hookups, X Fire Rings/Grills, X Other: Firewood provided, Wood fired cook stove

Photo(s):



Map (HIRA's show boundaries and ID amenities):

Setting & General Description (include description of the site, natural resources/features, scenic values, recreational attractions, amenities, current/projected visitation, etc.):

**Fitton Guard Station** is an historical facility that once served the District Rangers of earlier times as a remote headquarters. Forest Rangers would use the station to live and work for weeks at a time during the summer and fall months. These rangers got around on horseback so the facility had a small barn, some corrals, and a small rustic cabin to stay in. Located at the head of Burro Creek, the guard station provides a remote setting away from the hustle and bustle of town. The surrounding public lands are a wide open opportunity for visitors to enjoy all varieties of Colorado outdoor recreation. During the summer and fall months, a gravel road takes you within ¼ mile of the cabin. During the winter months this same road is a groomed snowmobile trail. An ATV trail goes right to the cabin and is called the Burro Creek Trail.

Attractions of the facility include access to motorized trails, hiking trails, mountain biking trails, fishing in lower Burro Creek, winter cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing. Bennett Peak at 13,200 feet can be climbed from the vicinity. The cabin is rustic but cozy. Water can be obtained from the creek but must be filtered or boiled. There is an outdoor vault toilet (outhouse). There is no electricity. An old time wood cook stove provides both heat for the cabin and cooking surfaces. The corrals and nearby grazing meadow make the area horse friendly.

NRHP Eligibility (Cabins/Structures): YES Archeologist's concurrence: X Y \_\_\_N  
Comments: **Fitton Guard Station (5RN314) is officially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).** State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) consultation is needed prior to any alterations, removals, changes in landscaping, or any other action affecting the integrity of any feature of the site (dwelling and barn) will also need SHPO consultation. Replacement of any element (such as roofs, windows, or porches) would generally have to be in-kind unless specifically approved by the SHPO.

## 2. CURRENT AND PROJECTED REVENUES and ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE COSTS

Currently, there are no revenues associated with this facility.

See Attachment A: Revenue/Cost projection spreadsheet.

## 3. COST OF BACKLOG WORK NEEDS:

Roads/Parking Areas:	\$_
Building/Facilities:	\$ <u>30,500</u> (toilet replacement and roof work)
Water/Waste water Systems:	\$_
Associated Trails:	\$_
Signs:	\$ <u>100</u> (Directional Signing)
Other (list):	\$_
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ <u>30,600</u></b>

## 4. FEE COLLECTION METHOD AND ESTIMATED FEE COLLECTION COSTS

**Method: NRRS Reservations (Required)**

**Costs: \$0, there are no costs to the Forest for reservations under NRRS**

Note: No collection costs are incurred for sites under the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS).

## 5. FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS SUMMARY

Fair Market Value Comparison (compare similar fees at other FS, state, federal, or private recreation sites in the area with similar facilities & services):

**Facility type(s):** Cabins, Motel, Ranch

**Number of facilities compared:** 13

**Proximity to project area:** within 200 miles

**Price range:** \$55 - \$450

**Selected fee and method:** \$50.00 nightly

Based on a Fair Market Value comparison of government and privately owned cabin rental operations, the Rio Grande National Forest proposes the following rates for its 8 new cabin rental opportunities and 3 existing cabin rentals (Brewery, Carnero, Ellwood)

<b>Operator</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amenities</b>	<b>Proposed Nightly Fee</b>
Brewery Creek Guard Station	vic. Bonanza, CO	Rustic, Propane Appliances/Hand Pumped Water	\$50 (Proposed) \$35 (Current)
Carnero Guard Station	vic. Carnero Pass	Rustic, Propane Appliances/Hand Pumped Water	\$50 (Proposed) \$35 (Current)
Ellwood Cabin	vic. Summitville, CO	Rustic, Propane Lights/Wood Stove/No Water	\$50 (Proposed) \$20 (Current)
Upper Crossing Guard Station	vic. Saguache, CO	Standard Municipal	\$75
Stone Cellar Guard Station	vic. Saguache Park	Rustic, Propane Appliances/Hand Pumped Water	\$50
Saguache Bunkhouse	Saguache, CO	Standard Municipal	\$50
Alder Creek Guard Station	South Fork, CO	Standard Municipal	\$50
Fitton Cabin	vic. Bennett Peak	Rustic, Wood Stove	\$50
River Springs Guard Station	vic. Antonito, CO	Standard Municipal	\$75
Platoro Cabin #1	Platoro, CO	Standard Municipal	\$75
Platoro Cabin #2	Platoro, CO	Standard Municipal	\$75

Special economic considerations were made in developing this price structure relative to fair market value, impacts to private operators (competition, capacity, demand, and market segmentation) and impact to local Forest visitors, especially as it relates to the depressed economy of the San Luis Valley. Although the market could easily bear higher rental rates, proposed rental prices have intentionally been set within reason for Valley residents.

**Comments:** A Fair Market Value comparison of numerous cabin rental operators was conducted in order to determine appropriate fees for current and proposed rental cabins on the Rio Grande National Forest. The only government agency that offers rental cabins within our market segment area (within 200 miles of the Forest) is the U.S. Forest

Service. Cabins with little or no amenities (i.e. no drinking water) rent at an average of \$50/night. Cabins with significant amenities (i.e. electricity) rent for as much as \$150/night. In the private sector, there are relatively few cabin rental operators located in the San Luis Valley; the exception being South Fork. Private rental cabins differ

significantly from Forest Service cabins in several ways, most notably that they tend to be resort-like with a number of cabins located within that private property and are almost all located along major highways and offer most standard amenities to highway travelers and vacationers. By comparison, USFS Guard Stations tend to be individual cabins located in remote areas of the National Forest well away from many standard services. The following private businesses offer cabin rentals within the market segment area:

6. PLANNED USE OF FEES RETURNED TO SITE (list by priority; include daily O&M if appropriate; add to list if appropriate)

1. New water well or chlorinator.
2. Restore foundation and replace logs in cabin
3. Interior furnishing upgrades.

7. CUSTOMER/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MECHANISM TYPES

- Site Monitoring
- Customer Survey Card
- Comment Log / Cabin Guest Book
- Newspaper Articles
- Website Listing
- E-mails
- Direct Mail
- Personal Contacts
- On-site Posting
- Other (list): County Commissioner Mtgs, Congressional Briefings, Fed. Register

See Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

See Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

9. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

List and reference additional information (documents) that can be provided upon request to document this project proposal and the public response.

INFRA Deferred Maintenance  
News Releases  
Recreation Facility Analysis  
Federal Register Notice  
Public Comments  
Fair Market Value Study  
Archaeologist's Report

