

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

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Name of Proposed Fee Site: **Matterhorn Cabin** Date **03/26/12**

Project Contact Person & Phone: Kathy Peckham, Recreation Staff 970-327-4261

Forest: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison County: San Miguel
 District: Norwood Congressional District: 3
 Site Type: Cabin
 Capacity: 12 people Number of Cabins: 1



Seasons of Use:

	Typical dates	Rental Days Available	Proposed Rental Fee Per Night
Prime Season: Includes ski season, holidays & festivals	Ski Season (Late Nov – April), Thanksgiving, Christmas, Martin Luther King, President’s Day, Telluride Bluegrass Festival, July Fourth, Labor Day	150 days	\$300
Other	Remaining Non-Prime days	215 days	\$240
Total		365days	

Proposed Action: New Fee Proposed Fee: See table above

Summary of benefits the public receives or will receive:

- Onsite trailhead with 8 kilometers of free groomed cross-country ski trails
- Onsite horse pasture
- Walking distance to adjacent National Forest lands for hunting
- Walking distance to backcountry ski terrain on Yellow Mountain, to the east of the cabin.
- Walking distance to Galloping Goose Trail for mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding.
- Within 3 miles of Priest Lake and Trout Lake for fishing and boating
- Within 3 miles of Lizard Head Pass for snowmobiling. Barlow Creek (10 miles) on the neighboring San Juan National Forest offers extensive and challenging snowmobile terrain.
- Within 5 miles of Lizard Head Trail and Cross Mountain Trail for access into the Lizard Head Wilderness.
- Within 3 miles of rock climbing at Cracked Canyon and ice climbing at Ames Falls.
- Close proximity (10-15 miles) to challenging jeeping and OHV riding on Ophir, Black Bear, and Imogene Pass roads.
- Close proximity (10 miles) to the Telluride Ski Area for world class skiing and snowboarding
- Close proximity (15 miles) to the Town of Telluride for festivals and events

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

1. Designated developed parking
2. Permanent toilet facility: Flush Vault
3. Permanent trash receptacle
4. Interpretive sign, exhibit or kiosk
5. Picnic table
6. Security services
7. Telephone (local calls)

Other Facilities/Amenities Provided:

- Drinking Water
- Benches
- Washer/dryer
- Cleaning service
- Two separate bathrooms with total of 4 showers & 4 flush toilets
- 2WD access road off of paved Highway 145
- Electricity
- Propane forced air heat furnace
- Full kitchen (2 ovens/ranges, 2 microwaves, 2 refrigerators, 1 freezer, 1 dishwasher)
- Phone (landline – local calls only)
- 1 Queen, 1 double, 8 twins
- Bedroom closets with 2-drawer dressers (5)
- Desks in each bedroom (5)

- Woodstove w/furnished firewood
- Dinner table and chairs
- Pots, pans, cooking utensils, dinnerware, cutlery
- Household supplies (broom, mop, vacuum, garbage bags, paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning solutions, dish towels, etc.)
- Picnic table and fire ring
- Snow shoveling of cabin walkways
- Snow plowing of the parking area
- 15-acre horse pasture and trough

Setting & General Description

The Matterhorn Cabin is a two-story, 1800-square foot facility located on a Forest administrative site about 15 miles south of Telluride, Colorado. This 5-bedroom facility was constructed in 1990 so it has many of the comforts of home while also offering a wide variety of National Forest recreation opportunities within either walking distance or a short drive.

This facility is ideally suited to accommodate large groups of up to 12 people and will be available for rent year around. It can be accessed directly from paved State Highway 145 by passenger vehicle via a short graveled driveway. There is currently parking for 15- 18 vehicles within the parking lot that will be shared during the winter months by cabin customers and nordic skiers using the adjacent Priest Lake Cross-Country Trail System.

Recreation Opportunities in the Summer/Fall: From mid-June through October the facility offers an ideal venue for outdoor enthusiasts interested in such activities as hunting, mountain and road biking, hiking and backpacking, jeeping and OHV riding, rock and ice climbing, and horseback riding.

- The Galloping Goose Trail, a popular 15-mile mountain bike trail, is within walking distance of the Matterhorn Cabin and links to a larger bike trail network near the Town of Telluride. Over 65 additional miles of single track bike trails can be found within a 15-mile radius of the Town of Telluride.
- Priest Lake (1-mile) offers bank fishing while nearby Trout Lake (2 miles) offers both fishing and boating. Alta Lakes (10 miles), comprised of three scenic alpine lakes to the northeast of the cabin, offer additional opportunities for fishing and canoeing.
- Ophir, Black Bear, and Imogene Pass Roads (10-15 miles) offer some of the most challenging technical driving/riding opportunities for jeeps, ATV's, and motorcycles in the State. They are part of a larger 75-mile complex of high alpine OHV routes between Telluride and Ouray.
- The Lizard Head and Cross Mountain trails (5 mile drive) provide access into the Lizard Head Wilderness for hiking, horseback riding, and backpacking. Peak climbers can access three 14,000-foot peaks in this wilderness area: Mount Wilson, El Diente, and Wilson Peak.

- Telluride and the Town of Mountain Village (10-15 miles) host festivals every weekend during the summer months. The Telluride Jazz Festival, Telluride Bluegrass Festival, Mushroom Festival, Mountain Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival, and Blues & Brews Festival are among the most popular events.

Recreation Opportunities in the Winter/Spring: From approximately late November through early April, cabin customers will have access to the following winter recreation activities:

- The Matterhorn Cabin is ideally located across the parking lot from the Priest Lake Cross-Country Trail System which is comprised of 8 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails. The Telluride Nordic Association grooms these trails for classic and skate skiing, offering them free to the public. An additional 5 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails are located just two miles south of the cabin near Trout Lake.
- Snowmobilers can ride in the large alpine meadows on Lizard Head Pass (3 miles) or drive south to the Barlow Creek area (15 miles) for more extensive and challenging terrain. Two snowmobile tour companies also offer guided tours in the area.
- Cabin renters can depart on foot and ski directly up the west side of Yellow Mountain to find challenging backcountry terrain. Other popular areas for backcountry skiing/snowboarding can be found south of the town of Ophir (6 miles) in Waterfall Canyon. Telluride Helitrax, one of just two heli-skiing companies in the State, offers guided heli-ski trips in the surrounding back country.
- The Telluride Ski Area (10 miles) is a world class destination winter resort offering over 3500 acres of beginner to extreme terrain for skiers and snowboarders alike. The resort offers the full complement of skier services such as lessons, rentals, and on-mountain dining.
- Several tour companies offer guided rock and ice climbing trips at Cracked Canyon (2 miles) and at Ames Falls (3 miles).

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

See Attachment A – Matterhorn Revenues and Expenditures Worksheet for project revenues and annual operating and maintenance costs.

Fee Collection Method: National Recreation Reservation System reservations are required. There are no costs to the Forest Service for reservations under NRRS.

3. Cost of Backlog Work Needs:

In 2011, the Matterhorn Cabin's water system was upgraded and the parking lot was enlarged. There is a need for further enlargement of the parking lot but there are essentially no other critical backlog work projects that need to be completed before the cabin can be rented.

5. FEE DETERMINATION PROCESS - Fair Market Value Comparison

Facility type(s) Compared: Cabins with a capacity for 12 or more people per night in southwest Colorado that offer similar amenities and access to a wide diversity of outdoor recreation activities on public lands.

Number of facilities compared: 3 Facilities Compared: Addie S Hut, High Camp Hut, and Opus Hut

Proximity to project area: All rental cabins in this comparison are within a 2-hour drive of the Matterhorn Cabin.

Price Comparison Analysis and Proposed Rates:

The Matterhorn Cabin is unique among Forest Service cabin rentals in Colorado because of its large sleeping capacity and its amenities. With its 5 bedrooms, two bathrooms with flush toilets and showers, and large kitchen with modern appliances, the facility offers a higher end experience than the typical remote "cabin in the woods".

A search of the NRRS website found no other cabin rentals with comparable capacities and/or amenities within Colorado. Consequently, a Fair Market Value comparison of similar private sector rentals within the region was conducted. This analysis included cabin rentals that: 1) had sleeping capacity for 12 or more people; 2) offered at least a moderate level of amenities such as saunas or showers, electricity, ovens, and decks with barbeque grills; and 3) were located within close proximity to a wide variety of winter and summer outdoor recreation opportunities. The results of this comparison are summarized in Table 1 and shown in more detail in Attachment D – Price Comparisons.

Table 1. Comparison of Average Fees (Per Night) for Three Cabin Rentals* in southwest Colorado vs. Proposed Fees for the Matterhorn Cabin

<i>Fee Type</i>	<i>Average Fee Per Night</i>	<i>Fee Range (Per Night)</i>	<i>Proposed Matterhorn Cabin Fee (Per Night)</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Prime Season	\$365	\$360 - \$374	\$300	"Prime" rates are typically charged for ski season, holidays, and festivals
Other	\$240	\$240	\$240	"Other" rates are discounted rates charged during nonprime periods.

*Comparison looked at the High Camp Hut, Addie S Hut, and Opus Hut

The proposed prime season fee of \$300 per night for the Matterhorn Cabin reflects the average rate that is currently being charged for similar cabin rentals in the area. This fee is not only competitive with other offerings but is necessary given the relatively high winter operating costs of the Matterhorn Cabin.

The proposed “Other” discounted fee of \$240 per night for the Matterhorn Cabin is consistent with the other several other cabin offerings and would provide customers with a lower priced rental option. Reducing the price during lower-use periods (e.g. most of the non-ski season) makes the cabin available to a wider spectrum of the public.

Variable and Competitive Pricing

During the 2010 public scoping effort for the Matterhorn Cabin proposal, the owner of the High Camp Hut suggested that the Forest Service consider a variable fee structure that would provide discounted cabin fees for low use periods. She also commented that the Forest Service should not offer cabin fees that are so low that they might compete unfairly with fees being charged by similar private sector cabins. Consequently, we are proposing fees that are both variable (\$300/night for prime season and \$240/night for the rest of the year) and competitive with similar offerings in the area.

High Winter Operating Costs

The Matterhorn Cabin is expected to be very popular as a winter rental because of its close proximity to so many winter recreation opportunities. The proposed prime season fee of \$300/night during the ski season reflects the high operating costs associated with winter operation of the cabin. The highest costs are associated with heating the facility, plowing the parking area, and dealing with the special challenges that come with cold temperatures and heavy snow loads. For example, past experience with winter crews staying at the cabin have shown that propane costs can average \$300-\$400 per month. As rental occupancies rise, this cost will only increase. Snow plowing currently costs about \$60/day. During a heavy snow year it would not be unusual to have to plow 5-7 times per month during the 4.5 month ski season.

Throughout the winter an onsite volunteer will shovel snow from around the ground floor windows to keep the snow from building up and breaking them. Power surges periodically knock out power to the cabin and can disable the furnace, resulting in frozen water pipes. These costs are manageable but will require adequate revenues and demand constant oversight by the Forest Service.

6. PLANNED USE OF FEES RETURNED TO SITE (list top priorities other than daily O&M)

Capital Improvements/Deferred Maintenance	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Purchase cookware, dinnerware, dish towels, etc.	\$450				\$450
Expand parking area (phase 1 and 2)		\$2,000	\$2,000		
Stain exterior siding and decks		\$500			\$500
Paint interior			\$600		
Construct RV full hookup site for volunteer			\$4,500		
Construct wheelchair-accessible ramp			\$2,000		
Purchase Queen Beds (2)				\$1,500	
Install energy-efficient blinds				\$2,000	
Replace linoleum in kitchen and bathrooms				\$2,200	
Replace carpet				\$2,400	
Purchase gas bbq grill				\$400	
Install cabin driveway entrance gate				\$500	
Replace windows				\$2,500	\$6,500
Appliance replacements					\$1,200
Furniture replacement/upgrade					\$3,000
Reconstruct horse facilities					\$2,500
Total	\$450	\$2,500	\$9,100	\$11,500	\$11,650

7. CUSTOMER/PUBLIC FEEDBACK MECHANISM

- Signing at the Matterhorn Cabin
- Front desk display at Norwood Ranger District
- Newspaper Articles in local newspapers
- Listing on Forest Website
- Presentations at County Commissioner meetings, snowmobile club, trail, OHV club meetings
- Scoping letters to interested parties such as outfitter-guide, ski hut owners, etc.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RESULTS

See Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement for details.

9. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Revenue/Expenditures projection worksheet
- Attachment B: Summary of Public Involvement
- Attachments C: Cabin Price Form

10. PROJECT SUBMITTAL & CERTIFICATION

Project Submittal:

This recreation site is being submitted for inclusion as a fee site under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). This proposal has been reviewed by representatives on the unit. I understand that any reservations must be made through the NRRS system. I also fully understand and agree to comply with the accounting and reporting requirements necessary to participate in the fee program.

SHERRY HAZELHURST
Acting Forest Supervisor

Date

Project Certification:

This recreation site is now forwarded as a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is forwarded to the RRAC for their review under REA.

JANE LECHE
Recreation Fee Board Chair

Date

RRAC Project Recommendation:

This site and proposed fee schedule is ____ / is not ____ recommended as a fee site.
This recreation site is already a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is ____ / is not ____ recommended to the Secretary for acceptance under REA.

Colorado Recreation RAC Chair

Date

Project Acceptance:

This site and proposed fee schedule is ____ / is not ____ accepted as, a fee site.
This recreation site is already a fee site and the proposed fee schedule is ____ / is not ____ accepted by the Secretary under REA.

Maribeth Gustafson
Deputy Regional Forester

Date