

American Fork Canyon-Alpine Loop Recreation Fee Area Proposed Changes

Proposed Implementation – 2013/2014

April 19, 2013

Background

The American Fork Canyon-Alpine Loop Recreation Fee Area, Pleasant Grove Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, was implemented in 1997 during the Recreation Fee Demonstration phase of authority. The area includes narrow-walled scenic canyons that open up onto mountainous terrain, offering a wide variety, and concentration of recreational activities. Main transportation arteries in the area include the Alpine Loop Scenic Backway (State Route 92), State Route 144, and National Forest System Route 010 in Utah County, Utah. The Recreation Area provides year-round recreational opportunities to a population of approximately 500,000 people. Nearly one million visitors and 400,000 vehicles accessed the fee area in 2012.

Recreationists utilizing the area's facilities and settings pay a Standard Amenity Fee per carload of \$6.00 for a 1 to 3 day pass, \$12.00 for 7 days, or \$45.00 for an annual pass. These passes can also be used for Mirror Lake Highway Recreation Fee Area. Motorists simply driving through the canyon do not pay the recreation fee.

The American Fork Canyon-Alpine Loop Recreation Fee Area is a highly successful partnership among the Forest Service, the National Park Service, Utah Department of Transportation, and others. Approximately \$800,000 annually is generated for Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)-appropriate expenditures and is then used for maintenance and reconstruction projects within the canyon.

Collections: Two fee-payment methods are in place for the convenience of visitors.

- Nine self-serve fee stations placed in key locations along the American Fork/Alpine Loop Scenic Byway and at Cascade Springs.
- Two visitor information stations located on State Route 92 that are staffed by both Forest Service and National Park Service seasonal employees. Stations are open seven days a week from dusk to dawn and accept credit cards, cash, and checks. A Timpanogos Cave National Monument law enforcement officer transports the funds from the information stations. A remit clerk at Timpanogos Cave National Monument processes collections a minimum of twice a week.

Need to Change: Since its creation, the Recreation Area has largely been accepted and supported by the mostly local visitors, who appreciate the addition and condition of recreation facilities and services that are funded by the fee. Recent legal challenges to Forest Service use of area recreation fees under REA resulted in an agency review of fee areas (known as high impact recreation areas or HIRAS); this proposal is based on recommendations from that review.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The proposed changes to the American Fork Canyon-Alpine Loop Recreation Fee Area include:

- Decrease the size of the recreation fee area from 43,711 acres to 2,763 acres (see map).
- Limit the fee area to the recreation facilities and services that are concentrated along State Route 92 and State Route 144.
- Outside the recreation fee area, create stand-alone Expanded Amenity Fee sites at Cascade Springs, Silver Lake Flat, and Upper Falls Picnic Area (U.S. 189 Provo Canyon).
- Recreationists staying at concessionaire operated campgrounds or those visiting the Timpanogos Cave National Monument within the fee area will no longer pay the Standard Amenity Fee.
- Keep existing fee schedule: \$6.00 for 1 to 3 days, \$12.00 for 7 days, and \$45.00 for a full calendar year.

The Forest will continue to honor the Interagency and American Fork/Alpine Loop Passes for the full price of the American Fork Canyon/Alpine Loop Recreation Fee Area and Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Fees as long as the dates are valid.

The nine self-serve fee stations and two visitor information stations will continue to offer convenient ways to pay the recreation fee.

The following table is a mile by mile snapshot of the proposed fee area and the stand alone Expanded Amenity recreation fee sites.

	Name (In order by location along American Fork Canyon/Alpine Loop Scenic Backway)	Mile Marker	Amenities					
			Parking	Restrooms	Trash	Interpretive Panels	Tables	Security
	American Fork Information Station	0.1						
	Timpanogos Cave National Monument	1.8						
	Beginning of New Fee Area Boundary as shown on map	2.5						
	Possible Development of future Standard Amenities	2.6-3.2						
1	Saw Mill Picnic Area	3.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Little Mill Groomed-Cross Country Ski-Trail Parking Area (Winter)	3.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Grey Cliffs Picnic Area	4.1-4.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SR 92 & SR 144 Jct. 4.7								
4	Echo Picnic Area	.0-.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

5	Roadhouse Picnic Area	.2-3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6	Martin Picnic Area	.9-1.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	Mile Rock Picnic Area	1.2-1.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Tibble Fork Day Use Area & Summer/Winter Staging Area for OHV and Groomed Snowmobile Routes	2.2-2.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
9	Horse Transfer Station	3.0	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SR 92 & SR 144 Jct. 4.7								
10	Pine Hollow Trailhead/ Winter Staging Area (Parking for Groomed Snowmobile Trail)	6.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
11	Timpooneke Trailhead	8.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
12	Salamander Flat Designated Dispersed Camping Area	9.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
13	Summit Trailhead	10.6	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
14	Aspen Grove Day Use Area and Winter Staging Area for Groomed Snowmobile Routes	14.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Aspen Grove Information Station	14.7						
STAND ALONE SITES (MILES FROM AREA)								
15	Cascade Springs Day Use Area	7.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16	Silver Lake Flat Day Use Area	2.8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17	Upper Falls Picnic Area (Provo Canyon)	7.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Implementation

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF is conducting public review of the proposed fee change. Based on results of that public review, the Forest will present the proposed recreation fee change to the Utah Bureau of Land Management Recreation Resource Advisory Committee fall of 2013.

During this implementation and review period, payment of the American Fork Canyon-Alpine Loop Recreation Fee will not be enforced.