

Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Fee Program

History and Proposed Changes

Proposed Implementation – 2013-14

April 19, 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2011 the Forest Service reviewed management operations of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Fee Area (MLRFA) to ensure the existing program meets Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) requirements. Prior to the passage of REA, this area was managed under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo) since 1996.

The original geographic boundaries set under Fee Demo continued when REA passed Congress. The Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Corridor is located along State Highway 150 between Kamas, Utah and Evanston, Wyoming and offers a wide array of recreational opportunities. The area receives significant summer and winter recreation use. The Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources classifies the roadside lakes as the second heaviest used fisheries in the State.

Under REA, 95 percent of the revenue generated is retained for use in the MLRFA. Funds collected are critical to support the operation, maintenance, and enhancement of recreation facilities, visitor services, and the protection and rehabilitation of natural resources.

In summary, this proposal changes the fee system from collection of use fees for a geographical area to one that collects fees at individual Standard Amenity and Expanded Amenity sites as well as adding eight specialized activities under the Special Recreation Permit (i.e. groomed winter trail systems). There will continue to be information stations (staffed during high use periods) at highway entrances to the general area in order to provide recreation information as well as self-serve fee stations. The Forest will continue to honor the Interagency and American Fork/Alpine Loop Passes for the full price of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Recreation Fees as long as the dates are valid. The fee will remain \$6.00 for 1 to 3 days, \$12.00 for 7 days, and \$45.00 for a full calendar year.

Currently, there are 18 individual sites within the current MLRFA boundary that have all six required standard amenities present, as determined through REA. The Forest is proposing to add 11 Expanded Amenity Fee Sites to the fee system, with the fee remaining the same as the above identified price list. Visitors will only need to pay a fee at one location, which will be valid at each additional site they visit. Visitors paying at concessionaire operated campgrounds will pay a fee at Standard Amenity, Expanded Amenity, and Special Recreation Permit sites outside their existing campground, where a fee is required. These visitors will only pay this fee once, which will be valid at each additional site they visit.

2. STANDARD AMENITY FEE SITES

2.1 The following standard amenity fee sites provide significant recreation opportunities to the visiting public have substantial federal investments in the form of amenities on site as well as in the cost for maintenance and upkeep of these areas, and each site contains all six of the required amenities listed under REA.

Table 2.1 Sites that meet the Standard Amenity Fee Criteria

	Name (In order by location along Mirror Lake Scenic Byway)	Mile Marker	Amenities					
			Parking	Restrooms	Trash	Interpretive Panels	Tables	Security
1	Beaver Creek Picnic Area	8.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Shingle Creek Picnic Area	9.5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Upper Provo River Bridge Picnic Area (current dumpster location)	23.4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	Crystal Lake Trailhead (access to Lakes Country)	25.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5	Trial Lake Fishing Site	25.7	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6	Bald Mountain Picnic Area and Trailhead	29.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	Fehr Lake Trailhead	30.5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Moosehorn Fishing Site	30.6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
9	Mirror Lake Fishing Site/Self-Serve Fee Station (current dumpster location)	31.3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
10	Mirror Lake Picnic Area	31.3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11	Pass Lake Fishing Site	32	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
12	Pass Lake/Lofty Lake Trailhead	32.1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
13	Butterfly Lake Fishing Site	34.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
14	Highline Trailhead	34.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
15	Ruth Lake Trailhead/Rock Climbing Area	35	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
16	Christmas Meadows Trailhead (Summer)	45.9	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17	East Fork of the Bear Trailhead (Summer)	48.2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
18	North Slope Trailhead (Summer)	48.6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

3. EXPANDED AMENITY FEE SITES

3.1 Each of the sites in table 3.1 contain the majority of the required amenities to be identified as an Expanded Amenity Site or provide an Expanded Amenity service, such as an “RV Dump Station,” provided for the public’s use.

Table 3.1: List of potential Expanded Amenity Fee sites

	Name (In order by location along Mirror Lake Scenic Byway)	Mile Marker	Amenities Present	Amenities								
				Tent/Trailer Space	Picnic Tables	Drinking Water	Access Roads	Collection of the fee by USFS	Visitor Protection	Refuse Containers	Toilet Facilities	Simple Devices for Campfire
1	Yellow Pine Camp	6.6	5/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
2	Pine Valley Camp	10.7	6/9	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
3	Horsemen Camp	11.2	6/9	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
4	Soapstone Comfort Station (RV Dump Station)	14.7	7/9	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
5	Duchesne Tunnel Camp	18.1	5/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
6	Spring Canyon OHV/4x4 Camp	18.1 and 25	4/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
7	Murdock Basin/Broadhead Meadows Camp	21.6 and 24.3	5/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
8	Lost Creek Water Station	26.7	6/9	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
9	Whitney Reservoir Camp	43.9	6/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
10	Lily Lake Comfort Station (RV Dump Station)	47.6	4/9	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11	North Slope Camp – (Lily/Wolverine/Christmas Meadows/North Fork/North Slope Road/East Fork of the Bear)	48.6	7/9	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

4. SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT SITES SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT SITES

4.1 To address the concerns defined in the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway – SR150, Corridor Management Plan, 1995c, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is proposing to create eight Special Recreation Permit Sites along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway.

The Special Recreation Permit Fees will only be collected at the sites listed in Table 4.1 in the Winter Operating Season when the specific services (grooming, patrolling, and maintenance) take place.

Table 4.1: List of potential Special Recreation Permit sites

Name (In order by location along Mirror Lake Scenic Byway)			Mile Marker	Special Recreation Permit Site Reasoning
WINTER SOCIAL RECREATION PERMIT SITES (PER VEHICLE)				
1	Yellow Pine Trailhead (Beaver Creek Ski Trail Winter Access)	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski Trail 	
2	Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail Access	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski Trail 	
3	Beaver Creek Picnic Area (Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail Access)	8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski Trail 	
4	Shingle Creek (Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail Access)	10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski Trail 	
5	Pine Valley Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek groomed skate track)	10.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski Trail 	
6	North Fork Winter Trailhead (Beaver Creek Ski Trail , Skate Track Winter Access & groomed snowmobile trail access)	11.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski and Snowmobile Trails 	
7	Soapstone Basin Winter Trailhead (Snowmobile and Beaver Creek X-Country Ski Trail System - 89 mile groomed Snowmobile and X-country ski trail system)	14.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski and Snowmobile Trails • Protect cultural and natural resources 	
8	North Slope Winter Trailhead – (89 mile groomed Snowmobile and 19 miles of X-country ski trail system access)	47.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Specialized Service – Groomed Ski and Snowmobile Trails • Protect cultural and natural resources 	

5. COLLECTIONS

5.1 *Current Methods*

There are three methods currently in use for collection of Recreation Fee revenue, including:

- Nine self-serve fee stations placed in key locations along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway.
 - One collection officer in the Kamas Workstation office processes five self-serve fee stations, a minimum of one time per week.
 - One collection officer in the Evanston office processes four self-serve fee stations, a minimum of one time per week.
- Two visitor information stations at either end of State Road 150 (Mirror Lake Scenic Byway), staffed by USFS employees seven days per week during the summer operating season and three days per week during the winter operating season at the Kamas location, while the Bear River Ranger Station is closed to vehicular access because State Road 150 is closed during the winter, each station is located off of State Road 150.
- Utilize five area wholesalers who purchase Mirror Lake Scenic Byway passes at a discounted rate and sell them at their place of business.

Since the inception of the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway Fee Program in 1997, each of these methods have helped to make purchasing the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway passes convenient for the visiting public; the Heber-Kamas and Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District offices could only accept cash, personal checks or money orders, and only recently began to accept credit cards, however business hours are still limited. The local business wholesalers are able to utilize other payment methods and at the same time offer extended business hours, this helps to increase the convenience for the visiting public to purchase a Mirror Lake Scenic Byway pass. At this time, both visitor information stations are still limited to accepting cash, personal check or money orders for purchases.

5.2 *What has changed*

In order to meet the need of convenience of collection for the public, the Forest is looking into a variety of methods along the Mirror Lake Scenic Byway: (1) additional self-serve fee stations at key locations and (2) self-serve vending machines at several of the Expanded Amenity Fee sites. It will be determined if the nine sites that are currently in place are adequate to meet the needs of the visiting public.

6. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

- Eliminate the fee area and create stand-alone sites (see map).
- 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. Continue to utilize five area wholesalers to keep “use fee” payment as convenient as possible for the visiting public.
- Continue to operate 18 existing Standard Amenity Sites that currently meet the criteria outlined in REA.
- Add 11 Expanded Amenity Fee Sites.
- Create eight seasonal Special Recreation Permit Sites for winter trail use.
- Visitors paying at concessionaire operated campgrounds will pay a fee at standard amenity, expanded amenity, or special recreation permit sites outside their existing concessionaire operated campground, where a fee is required. These visitors will only pay this fee once, which will be valid at each additional site they visit.
- All other visitors will only need to pay the Mirror Lake Recreation Use fee at one location, which will be valid at each additional site they visit.
- Continue to operate two visitor information stations and nine self-serve fee stations will continue to offer convenient ways to pay the recreation fee.
- Continue to utilize five area wholesalers to keep “use fee” payment as convenient as possible for the visiting public.

During this implementation and review period, payment of the recreation fees will not be is not being enforced.