

Busses to Start Running at the Bells June 15

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NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Forest Service
White River National Forest

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GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. – May 21, 2012 – The 35th year of bus operations at the Maroon Bells gets underway Saturday June 15 at 9:00 AM. The Maroon Bells bus, offered through RFTA, is the longest running bus system to any National Forest attraction in the country. During the summer months, the bus provides guided tours up the Maroon Valley for the majority of the over 200,000 annual visitors to the Maroon Bells area. Busses to the scenic Maroon Bells will depart Aspen Highlands every 20 minutes from 9:00 AM until 2 PM and every 30 minutes until 4:30 PM. Private vehicle access is allowed between 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM.

No changes in the amount of fees are proposed for either the bus or private vehicles. A \$10 day use car pass will still get visitors into any of the three developed sites (East Maroon, West Maroon or Maroon Lake). Campers in the Silver Bar, Bell and Queen Campgrounds will continue to pay an additional fee to camp overnight but will be eligible for a 50% reduction in the price of the day use fee. Ninety percent of the fees collected go back toward the operations and maintenance of Maroon Valley.

Visitors will be asked this year which sites they intend to visit. This is only a slight change in operations where visitors were simply charged a \$10 fee regardless of where they were going in the Maroon Valley. A proposed change for this year is that persons using only the designated 15 minute parking at the Stein Meadow Overlook on the north end of Stein's Meadow will not be required to pay a fee. The Forest Service is accepting comment on this proposed change. Improvement projects on tap for this summer include a tree planting at Silver Bell Campground,

reprinting of the Maroon Recreation Area brochure, updates to signing and continuing facility improvements in the campgrounds.

Those wishing to comment on the Stein Meadow Overlook fee change, obtain further information or actively participate in helping the Forest Service manage and sustain this remarkable area should contact Martha Moran at (970)-963-2266.