

# San Bernardino National Forest

## Change in Recreation Fee Structure: Big Bear North Recreation Fee Area

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### Background

In June 2011, the Forest Service conducted a national review of the 97 standard amenity recreation fee (SAF) areas on National Forest System lands. As a result of the review, the Forest Service plans to remove the fee area designation for 73 SAF areas, and reduce the size of the remaining 24 areas.

Within the San Bernardino National Forest, the national fee area review resulted in a proposal to eliminate the SAF area designation for seven areas (Arrowhead, Barton Flats, Big Bear North, Big Bear South, Black Mountain, Falls and Thomas Mountain), substantially reduce the size of the Lytle Creek SAF area, and change the type of recreation fee changed from SAF to special recreation permit (SRP) fee for four winter recreation locations (Barton Flats, Snow Valley, Aspen Glen, and Rim), and three recreational target shooting locations (Lightening Gulch, 1N09, Arrastre, and Big Pine Flat).

Based on direction regarding implementation of the national fee area review, in June 2012, the San Bernardino National Forest began issuing notices of required fees and enforcing recreation fees consistent with this proposal while preparing to submit it to the California Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (R-RAC). This proposal addresses the recreation fee changes for the Big Bear North area.

### Description of the Recreation Area

The Big Bear area, with the mix of urban development and surrounding public lands, is heavily used by both visitors and residents. Big Bear has a scenic, high-country landscape with abundant, year-round recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities. Millions of visitors from throughout southern California are drawn annually to this resort community known for its clean air, cool temperatures and mountain beauty. Big Bear Lake is the largest high elevation lake in southern California, with a surface area of approximately 10 square miles and a 23-mile shoreline. The area can be reached via California State Highways 18 and 38 (Rim of the World Scenic Byway).

This area is very heavily visited and a popular destination on weekends, holidays, and during the winter when snow is visible from the Los Angeles Basin. Quality visitor information, interpretation, environmental education and volunteer programs are offered at the Big Bear Discovery Center. Other popular activities include picnicking, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, snowshoeing, snowplay and cross-country skiing. Portions of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail are located within the area.

## Big Bear North Recreation Fee Proposal

The San Bernardino National Forest is proposing to:

- Eliminate the Big Bear SAF area designation, see enclosed map;
- Retain seven SAF sites (Table 1);
- Establish SRP fees for two recreational shooting locations (Arrastre and Big Pine Flat), see enclosed map;
- Eliminate recreation fees at 11 sites: Belleville Interpretive Site, Big Bear North Camps, Butler Peak Fire Lookout, Holcomb Valley Trailhead, Clark’s Ranch Trail Camps, Doble Trail Camp, Gold Fever Interpretive Trailhead, Little Bear Springs Trail Camp, and three Pacific Crest Trailheads; and
- Continue to accept local and national passes at the remaining recreation fee sites and areas.

**Table 1. Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Sites and Areas (Passes Accepted)**

Site Name	Parking	Toilet	Trash Receptacle	Interpretive Sign	Picnic Tables	Security Services
Cactus Flats OHV Staging Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cougar Crest Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gray's Peak Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Grout Bay Picnic Area	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Juniper Point Picnic	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Meadows Edge Picnic	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Woodland Trailhead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Fee Collection and Compliance

If the proposal is implemented the recreation fee area would be available to the public free of charge. No change is being proposed to the recreation fees charged at the recreation fee sites listed in Table 1, or to the recreation fees charged at the SRP locations. The fee payment mechanism would continue to be through recreation passes: the Adventure Pass (\$5 per day, \$30 annually, and \$5 for a second vehicle) or the America the Beautiful –the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes (Annual: \$80, Senior: \$10, and Access, Military, and Volunteer: free).

The Forest Service’s Adventure Pass is available at Forest Service offices, local vendors, and on line. The use of recreation passes as a fee payment mechanism would continue to enhance efficiencies in fee collection and compliance while providing the customer convenience visitors have come to expect. The Forest Service enforces and would continue to enforce recreation fees and issue notices of required fees at the recreation site identified in Table 1, and at the SRP locations, as reconfigured in the proposal for the R-RAC. Compliance is and would continue to be verified by observing recreation passes displayed on vehicles parked within the recreation sites and areas, and at the SRP locations.

## Anticipated Impacts of the Change

The financial impacts of the proposed changes are unknown at this time. Shifts in visitor use patterns may result from the proposed changes. Impacts on recreation facilities, sanitation, public health and safety, and resources are unknown and would be monitored.

## Planned Accomplishments

Recreation fee revenue would fund operation and maintenance activities including: trash and litter removal; toilet cleaning and pumping; graffiti removal; security patrols; maintenance of information and interpretive signs; and facility repairs. Fee revenue would also support facility enhancements such as bear-proof trash containers, picnic tables, and fire rings.

## Public Involvement

### Planned

The Forest Service is seeking public comment on the proposed changes and plans to submit the proposal to the R-RAC in the winter of 2014.

The Forest will:

- Post information on the proposed changes at the affected sites;
- Send press release for publication in local newspapers, including the *Big Bear Grizzly*;
- Post information on the proposal on the San Bernardino National Forest's website;
- Brief local and federal elected officials; and
- Present the proposal to the R-RAC.

R. 2W

R. 1W

R. 1E

R. 2E

# PROPOSED CHANGES BIG BEAR NORTH RECREATION FEE AREA



USDA - Forest Service  
San Bernardino National Forest  
Mountaintop Ranger District

T. 3N

T. 2N

T. 1N

Holcomb Valley TH

Big Bear North Camps

Little Bear Springs Trail Camp

Pacific Crest TH

Big Pine Flat Shooting SRP

Clark's Ranch Trail Camps

Butler Peak Fire Lookout

Gray's Peak Trailhead  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Grout Bay Picnic Area  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Cougar Crest Trailhead  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Meadows Edge Picnic Area  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Juniper Point Picnic  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Woodland Trailhead  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Belleville Interpretive Site

Gold Fever Interpretive TH

Doble Trail Camp

Cactus Flats OHV Staging Area  
T, S, G, R, I, P

Pacific Crest TH

Pacific Crest TH

Arrastre Recreational Shooting SRP



**Amenity Legend**  
R = Toilet Facility  
G = Trash Receptacle  
P = Developed Parking  
S = Security Services  
T = Picnic Table  
I = Interpretive Sign

- Recreation Sites - Fee
- Recreation Sites - Free
- Special Recreation Permit - Fee
- ▨ Previous Standard Amenity Recreation Fee Area
- National Forest
- Other Ownership
- Road
- ~ Streams and Rivers

