

San Bernardino National Forest

Change in Recreation Fee Structure: Thomas Mountain Recreation Fee Area

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 Thomas Mountain area.

Description of the Recreation Area

The 2,020-acre Thomas Mountain standard amenity recreation fee area offers a distinctive, rural character, and remote open space, just miles from major urban centers. The nearby Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail marks the passage of early Spanish explorers through Bautista Canyon. This area is sparsely populated, with most of the population located in the adjacent communities of Hemet, San Jacinto and the Anza Valley. Most of the visitation focuses on hiking, biking, hunting and driving for pleasure. A designated OHV route system is nearby.

Thomas Mountain Recreation Fee Proposal

The San Bernardino National Forest is proposing to:

- Eliminate the Thomas Mountain SAF area designation, see enclosed map; and
- Eliminate the recreation fees at Thomas Mountain Camping Area and Toolbox Springs Camping Area.

Fee Collection and Compliance

If this proposal is adopted the recreation fees would be eliminated for the 2,020 acre Thomas Mountain SAF area.

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

There are no planned accomplishments from recreation fee expenditures; this proposal eliminates all recreation fees.

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:

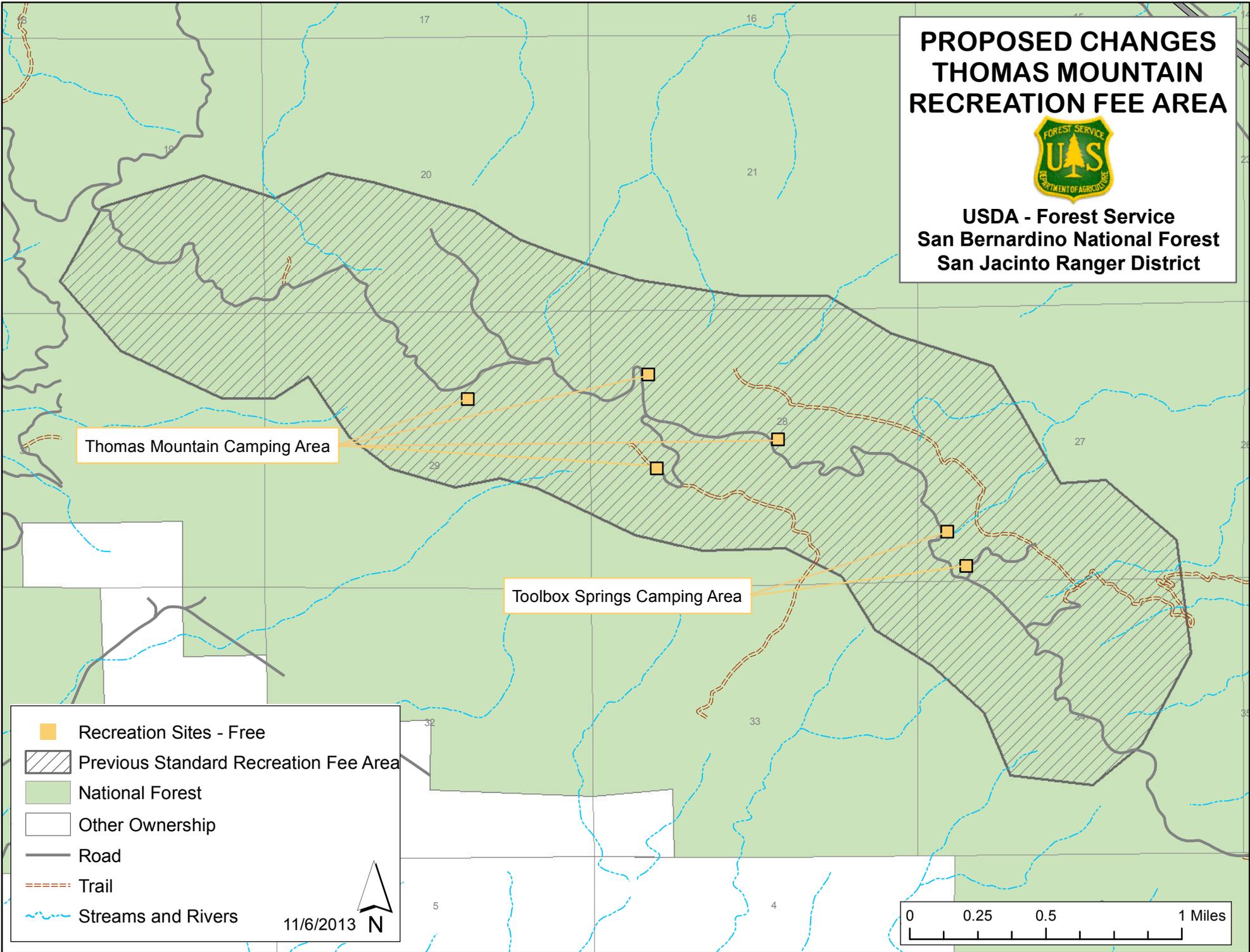
- Post information on the proposed changes at affected SAF sites and areas and SRP locations;
- Send a press release for publication to local newspapers, including the *Idyllwild Town Crier*;
- Post information on the proposal on the San Bernardino National Forest's website;
- Brief local and federal elected officials; and
- Present the proposal to the R-RAC.

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PROPOSED CHANGES THOMAS MOUNTAIN RECREATION FEE AREA



USDA - Forest Service
San Bernardino National Forest
San Jacinto Ranger District



Thomas Mountain Camping Area

Toolbox Springs Camping Area

-  Recreation Sites - Free
-  Previous Standard Recreation Fee Area
-  National Forest
-  Other Ownership
-  Road
-  Trail
-  Streams and Rivers

11/6/2013



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