

Sierra National Forest

Recreation Fee Program Accomplishment Highlights 2021

Wilderness Permits Now Online

During 2021, the forest made the leap to Recreation.gov website with wilderness permits. Prior to March 2021, the wilderness permit program had been a mail and walk-in process. The permits are for those camping overnight in Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, and Kaiser Wildernesses.

As the predominant source of our recreation fee funding, having the system electronic based has enabled the forest to be more efficient in having permits reserved, canceled, and then reserved again by another party. This new system gives the public a better opportunity to get the permit they want and is a more effective tool for the visitor information services staff to manage. The new ability to pull reports has enabled the Sierra to better manage wilderness resources and share information with our neighboring National Parks and Forests, as well as social scientists that have partnered with us to help manage the recreational use across agency boundaries.

Total wilderness permits issued in 2021: 3,681



Devil's Bathtub, John Muir Wilderness. Photo taken by Tim Crosby, Wilderness Ranger

Recreation Fee Dollars

Recreation fee dollars are an investment in outdoor recreation. They support and enhance:

- Public safety
- Recreation site maintenance and improvements
- Educational experiences
- Informational wayside exhibits
- Youth programs and partnerships
- Interpretive programs

Current and future generations benefit as 80-95% of the funds are reinvested in the facilities and services that visitors enjoy, use, and value.

Creek Fire and Bullfrog Fire BAER

In the fall of 2020, the Creek Fire dominated the landscape of the Sierra National Forest burning just under 400,000 acres. Concurrently that fall, at the start of 2021, the Bullfrog Fire burned in the Dinkey Lakes Wilderness. Due to the late season fires, 2021 work was focused on utilizing the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) funds to prevent trail lost and remove the ubiquitous hazard trees. The new BAER Pilot funds provided the means to restore lost infrastructure, like wilderness trail signs and trailhead bulletin boards.

Due to the use of two BAER funds, recreation fee collection funding spent in 2021 does not reflect the wilderness trails bucked out, hazards removed at trailheads, or wilderness signs replaced for the benefit of both recreationalists and special use permit holders.

- Miles hiked: 1,990
- Water Bars Cleaned: 577
- Drain Dips Constructed: 458
- Rock Removal: 34,820 ft
- Tread Repair: 46,450 ft
- Trees Cut: 1,746
- Drain Dips Cleaned: 32
- User Trail Rehab: 2,730 ft
- Hours Worked: 3,907



Nellie Lake Trail post Creek Fire, summer 2021. Photo by Tim Crosby, Forest Service Wilderness Ranger



Wilderness Ranger making chips fly with the cross-cut, Photo credit: Tim Crosby, Forest Service Wilderness Ranger



Creek Fire damage from the Devil's Bathtub trail to Graveyard Meadow, Ansel Adams Wilderness, November 2020.

Other Accomplishments

Visitor Information Services Numbers:

- Phone Calls: 17,747
- Wilderness Permits Issued: 3,681
- Fuel Wood Permits: 3
- Campfire Permits: 159
- Visitors: 2,647

Outfitter Guide Special Uses Permit Administration:

- Seven active non-wilderness Outfitter/Guide permits
- One no-use requested non-wilderness permit
- Eight active wilderness outfitter/guide permits
- Six inactive/nonresponsive wilderness outfitter/guide permits



Pack stock is vital part of getting work done on the wilderness trails. forest has three pack strings.

Regional Map



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Grinnell Lake in John Muir Wilderness. Photo taken by Tim Crosby, Forest Service Wilderness Ranger

Contacts

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Revenue & Expenditures

Revenue*	Forest	Region
Recreation Fees	\$77,034	\$8,921,596
Special Uses	\$51,489	\$977,102
Interagency Passes	\$520	\$102,752
Total	\$129,043	\$10,001,450
Expenditures	Forest	Region
Repair & Maintenance	\$61	\$3,499,145
Visitor Services	\$6,869	\$2,921,425
Law Enforcement	\$5,000	\$272,025
Habitat Restoration	\$10,000	\$231,339
Fee Agreements	\$0	\$1,208
Collections/Overhead	\$0	\$382,632
Total	\$21,930	\$7,307,774

*Carryover funds will be used for large projects and upcoming startup costs.