



Tahoe National Forest

Recreation Fee Program Accomplishment Highlights 2021

Desolation Wilderness



Eagle Falls Trailhead to Desolation Wilderness

Despite the nearby Caldor wildfire, that ravaged tens of thousands of acres, most of the scenic lands inside Desolation Wilderness remained magically untouched and pristine and attracted thousands of hikers and campers each week throughout the summer and early fall. This special Wilderness area received the love and protection of firefighters, forest staff and volunteers. Volunteers donated thousands of hours of work that included: cutting downed trees that had fallen over popular trails after windstorms blasted through the Sierras; educating our visitors about the importance of caring for a Wilderness; maintaining trails and suppressing small wildfires; and most importantly, striving to preserve the natural environment inside Desolation Wilderness in 2021. It was a challenging year.

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.

Working Inside the Wilderness

- During these weeks of the neighboring Caldor Wildfire burning forest lands adjacent to the Desolation, our wilderness staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to monitor the large numbers of visitors, along with watching after them.
- Forest provided additional sanitation and refuse services at our most popular trailhead area.
- Resource conditions were aggressively monitored throughout the field season, both fire status monitoring, along with any resource impacts from more than 200,000 visitors, in 2021.
- Endless miles of trails inside the Desolation were brushed and cleared of fallen trees by our dedicated volunteers throughout the summer season.



Wilderness Ranger working to cut-out an old tree that had fallen across a popular trail.

Partnership with Great Basin Institute

The Desolation Wilderness received over 200,000 visitors last season, before the neighboring Caldor Wildfire occurred. The Forest responded to this heavy visitation with the support of Recreation Fee Funding, providing needed field staff, including wilderness volunteers, and critical sanitation and refuse services. Campsite and visitor monitoring programs continued, along with ethics monitoring, such as "Leave-No-Trace" to all of our Forest visitors. Wilderness preservation tasks in 2021, supported by the recreation fee funding, included; addressing unauthorized campfires inside Desolation, collecting litter, cutting downed trees, trail restoration work, while doing our heart-felt best to help our visitors enjoy their visit to the National Forest, helping to protect and preserve it for future generations. We are so grateful for the support of the Recreation Fee Program!

Other Accomplishments

- Maintained a high-quality Wilderness experience throughout the year.
- Supported thousands of hours of donated volunteer time in 2021 protecting and preserving the Desolation Wilderness.
- Provided COVID-19 awareness advisory messages and posters to our visitors inside the Desolation. Their safety was emphasized throughout the year.
- Worked with the public throughout the year to encourage more bear awareness actions on their part. Recommending all Desolation campers carry bear food canisters with them.
- Worked with partners such as Great Basin Institute to provide Wilderness support efforts during the season.
- Supported our safety awareness outreach to the public, such as wildfire awareness in the region along with virus precautions.

View of the Heart of the Desolation Wilderness... a Wilderness

Dependent Upon the Support of the Recreation Fee Program since 1997.



Regional Map



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



View of Mt. Tallac, a scenic part of the Desolation Wilderness overlooking Lake Tahoe.

Contacts

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Revenue & Expenditures

Revenue*	Forest	Region
Recreation Fees	\$2,357,306	\$8,921,596
Special Uses	\$64,640	\$977,102
Interagency Passes	\$4,060	\$102,752
Total	\$2,426,006	\$10,001,450
Expenditures	Forest	Region
Repair & Maintenance	\$900,832	\$3,499,145
Visitor Services	\$350,453	\$2,921,425
Law Enforcement	\$98,706	\$272,025
Habitat Restoration	\$0	\$231,339
Fee Agreements	\$0	\$1,208
Collections/Overhead	\$90,203	\$382,632
Total	\$1,440,194	\$7,307,774

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