



## **Green Mountain fee hike delayed**

Without additional fees, Forest Service officers are concerned about their ability to maintain the popular recreation area

By Bob Berwyn

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SUMMIT COUNTY — The U.S. Forest Service is delaying plans to raise fees at campgrounds around Green Mountain Reservoir once again.

The fees at Green Mountain Reservoir are charged under the agency's sometimes controversial recreation fee program. To get approval for the increase, the Forest Service needed the go-ahead from a regional advisory committee established to review fees at recreation areas like Green Mountain and Vail Pass.

The Forest Service initially wanted to raise the Green Mountain fees last year, but was delayed by the requirement to have the recreation committee's review.

The committee met in February, but didn't review the Green Mountain proposal at that meeting, according to Ken Waugh, recreation staff officer for the Dillon District.

For one thing, the committee wasn't sure of how it was supposed to do a formal review of the proposal. The group is also dealing with issues of "general public support," Waugh said.

Apparently, the federal legislation authorizing recreation fees requires the Forest Service to show it has public support for its fee sites. But the regional advisory group was still struggling with how to interpret that requirement when it met in February.

Waugh said he tried to document local support by including copies of Summit Daily News articles, as well as records of comments the agency received as it held public meetings to discuss the Green Mountain fees.

"We were really hoping this would go through. We're struggling with staffing," Waugh said.

But now Waugh is not sure if he'll be able to increase the fees this summer. The advisory group may meet again in May. If the increase is approved, the Forest Service may up the cost of camping at Green Mountain sometime mid-season.

Waugh said mid-summer timing is not ideal from a customer service standpoint, but it might be financially necessary given the agency has already hired new staff for the campgrounds based on a budget that included the increased fees.

The Forest Service won't cut back on the staffing, at least initially, but may have to make some

seasonal adjustments down the road.

Either way, the Forest Service will continue making some improvements at Green Mountain, including new toilets and tree-planting.

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**More information**

Visit the regional Forest Service website to learn more about the recreation advisory committee:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r2/recreation/rrac/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/recreation/rrac/index.shtml)