

KOHD Oregon ABC News

Recreation Fees



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New Fees Proposed at Deschutes National Forest Recreation Sites

BEND - The Deschutes National Forest proposes new recreation fees for several sites on the Crescent and Bend-Fort Rock Ranger Districts.

Recreation managers at the Deschutes National Forest are interested in hearing public comments on a proposal to charge \$5.00 for day use for the following sites on the Crescent Ranger District: Spring Boat Launch, Tranquil Cove Day Use, Simax Beach Day Use, Willamette Pass Trailhead, Crescent Lake Boat Launch, Windy Oldenberg Trailhead, Whitefish Creek Trailhead, Princess Creek Boat Launch, Sunset Cove Boat Launch and Trapper Creek Boat Launch. A \$70--\$100 overnight rental fee for the Fall River Guard Station on the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District is also proposed.

The Deschutes National Forest provides healthy, safe and well-maintained recreation opportunities that are important to local communities and visitors. The goals of proposed fee implementation are to:

- Focus resources on the most appropriate recreation facilities to meet changing public desires and demands.
- Maintain or enhance visitor satisfaction with the sites and services provided.
- Meet quality health and safety standards at all developed recreation sites.
- Be financially sustainable.
- Be environmentally sound.
- Maintain community sustainability.

Fees have not been charged at these sites in the past. The proposed fees will help to maintain these sites. The sites are not part of any concession program, where many other facilities are operated and maintained by a private company; they are the responsibility of the Forest Service to operate and maintain. The Fall River Guard Station has not been available as a rental to the public prior to this proposal. The station has recently been upgraded. Fees collected will help to maintain the facilities for the public to enjoy into the future.

"The recreation fee program has been a valuable tool for the Deschutes National Forest to meet visitor demands for various facilities and services," said Program Coordinator Les Moscoso. "Without charging these fees, the Deschutes National Forest would not be able to meet visitor expectations at many of the recreation sites."

The majority of funds collected at recreation fee sites (eighty to ninety-five percent) are retained locally for the Deschutes National Forest to operate, maintain and improve the facilities and programs at the recreation sites where they are collected.

All new fee proposals will be presented before a citizen's advisory committee, (Recreation Resource Advisory Committee, or RRAC). Committee members represent a broad array of recreation interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable fee changes. Committee members will help ensure that the Forest Service addresses public issues and concerns about recreation fees. The public is welcome to attend and comment at all advisory committee meetings. The next RRAC meeting is expected to be held in the fall of 2008. Call the Deschutes National Forest for the time, location and agenda.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which allows the Forest Service to keep ninety-five percent of fees collected at certain recreation sites and use these funds locally to operate, maintain and improve these sites.

For more information, questions or comments about any of these new fee proposals, please contact Les Moscoso at (541) 383-4712.