

[http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2009/01/27/outdoors/us\\_forest\\_service\\_and\\_blm\\_getting\\_very\\_confusing](http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2009/01/27/outdoors/us_forest_service_and_blm_getting_very_confusing)

## **Idaho Statesman**

### **U.S. Forest Service and BLM getting very confusing**

Submitted by **Zimo** (Pete Zimowsky) on Tue, 01/27/2009 - 7:06am.

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing new fees and increased fees at campgrounds and other recreation areas in southern Idaho and a public meeting is scheduled Feb. 5 in Boise.

The meeting is from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Boise District BLM Office at 3948 S. Development Way. Wait a minute? The BLM office? I thought this was a Forest Service matter?

The Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) Subcommittee for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Boise and Twin Falls Districts is holding the meeting for the Forest Service. The advisory council is a citizens group that weighs in on recreation fees.

It's doubly confusing because a lot of the campgrounds affected are near Twin Falls and to have a public meeting in Boise on those campgrounds is a waste of time. Other campgrounds are in the Featherville area, which Boise residents will no doubt be interested in.

Here's the deal as far as I can figure it out. The U.S. Forest Service and BLM put together this committee back in the days when rec fees were rampant. The committee allocates where fees collected at the Payette River boat ramps go, like for new restrooms, paved parking and things. That's good because the public gets to comment on where fees should be spent.

The two agencies figured that since this committee was already in place, it would probably save time and money to use it for all types of proposed fees.

That's fine and dandy. But, I think lumping fee increase proposals all together from a boat ramp at Cascade Reservoir to a campground way the heck southeast of Twin Falls takes away from true local comments. Have the public meetings on Twin Falls area campgrounds in Twin Falls and Boise area campgrounds in Boise. Separate things out so they are not so confusing. One of the last meetings on fee increases at recreation sites near Boise was held last year in Twin Falls.

It might be better to keep things simple. If there are campground fee proposals in the Sawtooth National Forest have the U.S. Forest Service conduct public meetings in Boise, Ketchum and Twin Falls. If something's going on in the Payette National Forest, have public meetings in McCall and Boise. If the Boise National Forest is doing something, have meetings in Boise and Cascade. Also, have the public comment meetings in the evening so that people who work during the day can attend.

Anyway, if you are totally confused on this RRAC committee stuff, you're not alone. What counts are the proposals to raise fees. Here's a breakdown:

The U.S. Forest Service (not the BLM) is proposing nine new fee recreation sites in the Sawtooth National Forest and one in the Boise National Forest. The proposal also calls for increasing fees at six recreation sites in the Sawtooth National Forest.

#### **NEW FEE SITES**

The following areas are in the Fairfield Ranger District:

- Baumgartner Group-Use Campground (Kelley Creek): \$125 per night for groups up to 100 people.
- Willow Creek Transfer Camp: \$6 per night for single-family units.
- Bear Creek Transfer Camp: \$6 per night for single-family units.

- In the Cascade area of the Boise National Forest:

Campbell Creek boat launch on Lake Cascade: \$5 to launch a boat.

In the Mindoka area:

- Schipper Campground: \$5 per night for single-family units.
- Steer Basin Campground: \$5 per night for single-family units.
- Sublett Campground: \$5 per night for single-family units.
- Diamondfield Jack: \$8 per night for single-family units.

In the Sawtooth National Recreation Area:

- Redfish Lake Cabin: \$50 per night. (Available from Oct. 1 to April 30 each year. It is a work center in summer months.)
- Sawtooth Valley Work Center Cabin: \$65 per night. (Available from October 1 to April 30.)

INCREASES IN FEES

In the Fairfield Ranger District near Featherville (all prices are for single-family units):

- Abbott Campground: from \$2 to \$6 per night.
- Bird Creek Campground: from \$2 to \$6 per night.
- Chaparral Campground: from \$2 to \$6 per night.
- Willow Creek Campground: from \$2 to \$6 per night.
- Bowns Campground: from \$4 to \$6 per night.
- Canyon Campground: from \$2 to \$6 per night.

For additional information about the BLM Boise or Twin Falls District RACs or this meeting, contact MJ Byrne, Boise District RAC Coordinator at 208-384-3393, or Heather Tiel-Nelson, Twin Falls District RAC Coordinator at 208-736-2352.