



## Fees no longer collected for Mt. Lemmon parking, hiking

By Tony Davis, Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Tuesday, February 21, 2012 7:34 pm

The U.S. Forest Service has stopped collecting hiking and parking fees at its station at the base of Mount Lemmon.

It also has stopped citing people who park and hike in non-developed campground areas who formerly had to pay the fees.

The service's actions stem from a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling Feb. 9 that the Coronado National Forest's system of collecting fees for Mount Lemmon violates federal law. That ruling sent the case back to a lower federal court for further consideration.

Fees are no longer being charged at parking areas except for those at developed campgrounds or other developed areas. The fee station at Mount Lemmon's base is no longer being staffed, while the service reviews the fee program.

Signs at parking lots advising people they need to pay \$5 daily or \$20 annual fees will be taken down soon, Coronado National Forest Supervisor Jim Upchurch said Tuesday.

"We're just evaluating where the fees would be appropriate, determining which sites would be appropriate for fees . . . based on our understanding of the law," he said.

Until now, the Forest Service had collected fees from all drivers who parked their vehicles in a mile-wide swath along the 28-mile-long Catalina Highway.

The lawsuit against the fees was brought by four Tucson-area residents who were hoping not only to overturn the Mount Lemmon fees but to set a national precedent for other national forests.

Upchurch, however, said Forest Service staff is currently only reviewing its fee system for Mount Lemmon — not for Sabino or Madera canyons where the fees are also charged in the Tucson area.

Read more of this story Wednesday in the Arizona Daily Star and on StarNet.