City of Sedona, Arizona
RESOLUTION NO. 2002-32

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEDONA, URGING CONGRESS TO RE-EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE; TO PROVIDE FULL AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND ONLY AFTER ACCOMPLISHING FULL AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING OF THESE LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES, TO ELIMINATE THE RECREATIONAL FEE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, In 1996, after decades of declining federal funding of public land agencies, Congress authorized the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, which allows the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to charge visitors daily and yearly fees for recreation on publicly owned land under their management; and

WHEREAS, The original intent of the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program was to improve the public lands, public facilities, and visitor services, but instead, the program requires additional administration, collection and enforcement efforts beyond the true missions of the agencies, the net gain from which is often offset by further congressional budget cuts; and

WHEREAS, the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program undermines the longstanding goodwill between the Coconino National Forest and citizens and visitors to the greater Sedona area, has engendered strong and widespread public criticism and disrespect for the program and has limited access to public land by all citizens regardless of economic status; and

WHEREAS, Paying for non-specialized uses of public lands is contrary to the principle that public lands belong to the American people and should always be accessible, a principle that should remain in place; and

WHEREAS, Almost fifty percent of the land area within Sedona city limits is under the jurisdiction of the Coconino National Forest; and

WHEREAS, The purchase of a Red Rock Pass is used as evidence to demonstrate support for the program, but opposition to the program can only be evidenced by a “negative”, by not purchasing a pass, thus raising the legitimate concern that some citizens must refrain from visiting and enjoying public lands in the greater Sedona area in order to register their protest; and

WHEREAS, Tourism/recreation is the single most important industry to Sedona, and recreational fees by their very nature will have a negative impact on our local economy in direct proportion to the percentage of visitors who desire to register opposition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF SEDONA, ARIZONA AS FOLLOWS:
1. That the United States Congress is respectfully urged to re-evaluate the
importance of proper stewardship of public lands to the American people, to fully
fund the budgetary needs of our public land agencies such as the U.S. Forest
Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Fish and
Wildlife Service, ensuring adequate resources to fulfill their missions and
obligations to our nation’s citizens who support these agencies with their tax
dollars; and

2. That the Sedona City Council joins a growing list of states, counties and cities
that seek increased land management agency funding from Congress which would
eliminate the need for any reauthorization of the Recreational Fee Demonstration
Program; and

3. That, as an alternative to the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, and
toward fostering increased goodwill, we would urge federal agencies to continue
partnerships with local civic groups, recreational organizations and others, in an
attempt to address some of the pressing needs that exist on public lands due to
their recreational use and popularity; and

4. That the Sedona City Council hereby acknowledges the extraordinary efforts of
the Sedona Ranger District to properly manage increased usage of the Coconino
National Forest with declining federal funding and pledges to continue to
communicate, cooperate and collaborate with them in their efforts to protect, yet
keep accessible, our local natural resources and recreational areas.

5. That the City Clerk transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice
President of the United States, to the Speaker of the United States House of
Representative, and to each Senator and Representative from Arizona in the
Congress of the United States.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22 day of October, 2002, by the Mayor and Council
of the City of Sedona, Arizona.

Dick Ellis, Mayor

ATTEST: Patricia K. Sullivan, City Clerk