STANDARD AMENITY RECREATION FEE AREA
REVIEW
February 25, 2011

BACKGROUND
The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) (16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)) enumerates nine requirements for charging a standard amenity recreation fee for use of an area. The term “HIRA” is used by the Forest Service to denote an area that meets four additional requirements for charging a standard amenity recreation fee. The use of the term “HIRA” has sometimes caused confusion. Calling these areas “HIRAs” can create the impression that the agency has created a new type of fee, even though these areas meet all the requirements for charging a standard amenity recreation fee. To ensure the term HIRA does not cause future confusion, the Forest Service will begin phasing out the use of this term and will simply refer to these areas as “standard amenity recreation fee areas.”

There are 96 standard amenity recreation fee areas in the National Forest System, all of which were recreation fee areas under statutes that predated REA. REA does not require review by Recreation RACs for existing fees. Nevertheless, in the Interim Implementation Guidelines and in Congressional hearings, the Forest Service has committed to seeking Recreation RAC input on recreation fees charged for the use of standard amenity recreation fee areas. In 2007-2008, the agency did an inventory of all standard amenity recreation fee areas at the national level to address concerns raised by the public and Congress and to develop a better process regarding submission of fees charged for standard amenity recreation fee areas to Recreation RACs. No report from that inventory was finalized; however, information from the national inventory will be provided in order to reduce the workload required for this review. The goal of this review is to ensure REA, specifically standard amenity recreation fees are properly implemented in response to public feedback and recent court cases.

The national review acknowledges that dialogue and action to change standard amenity recreation fee areas has already begun in some regions. This effort seeks to continue these efforts nationwide.

REVIEW STEPS
Steps in the process and dates for completing them are listed below. Detailed guidance and tools for the review are included in the REA Toolbox http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/rhwr/recfee/

1. Regions will review standard amenity recreation fee areas in their region and provide any proposed changes and fee management plan(s), if applicable, to the WO by May 18, 2011.
2. The WO will review any proposed changes and fee management plan and provide feedback by June 29, 2011.

3. Regions will address input from the WO and prepare a notice of any proposed changes for public input by August 10, 2011.

4. Regions will release a notice of any proposed changes for public comment and schedule any proposed changes for review by the appropriate Recreation RAC.

Regional oversight in this process as well as coordination with the Washington Office is essential to ensure consistency of review.

Contact your regional recreation fee coordinator or Katie Donahue at (202) 205-1169 if you have any questions. Please make every effort to take full advantage of this opportunity to improve the implementation of recreation fee authority.