Dear Public Land Advocates,

Here is more information on the outrageous proposal by the USFS to eliminate campground discounts previously available to seniors and the disabled because the concessionaires have complained that they can no longer make a profit due to the increase in the senior population! We have here a GREAT OPPORTUNITY to make a difference on this issue and on other Public Land fees as well! If you haven't already sent a comment, please do so by the Feb 1 deadline. If you have sent a comment, there are additional contacts below for you to send another.
Please forward this to interested friends, especially seniors and disabled.

Thanks!
Lanie

SUMMARY OF FACTS

€ The 50% discount, until now available to seniors and disabled persons who hold a Golden Age (Senior) Pass or a Golden Access Pass, will be reduced to 10% at all campgrounds operated by private concessioners. (These campgrounds constitute 50% of National Forest camping capacity and 82% of reservable campsites.)

€ Day-use sites, managed by concessionaires, were formerly free for Senior and Access pass holders; instead, the new policy entitles them to only a 10% discount. Holders of the (ANNUAL) America the Beautiful Pass will still be entitled to free entry.

€ (NEW) Excellent article by Kitty Benzar of Western Slope No-Fee Coalition provides a clear explanation of the situation: "Don't Squeeze The Geezers In The Great Outdoors"
   <http://www.hcn.org/articles/dont-squeeze-the-geezers>

COMMENT POINTS

€ Sales of Golden Age and Golden Access passes currently account for more than 78% of all pass sales. The new policy would almost certainly be counter-productive because those who used to use concessionaire campgrounds will probably no longer be able to afford to do so, thus reducing revenue instead of increasing it.

€ (NEW) This proposal could set a disastrous precedent: if it is the concessionaires who dictate policy to the Forest Service rather than Congress or the Public (who are supposed to own Public Lands), there would be a huge increase in the privatization & commercialization of our Public...
Lands, thus destroying the unique character of our treasured natural places!

CONTACTS

€ You can send a comment at the end of a great article in the online AARP Bulletin, "Forest Service Proposes Big Fee Increases For Senior Campers." AARP is of course a wonderful source for millions of seniors. Please include in your comment a request that they print this article in their paper magazine.

<http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourworld/gettingaround/articles/forest_service_proposes_big_fee_increases_for_older_campers.html>

€ We should all contact our federal legislators to inform them of our outrage and to let them know we count on them to act against the Forest Service proposal and also to remind them that we vote!

   legislators in your state
      http://www.senate.gov
      http://www.house.gov

€ Forest Service contacts

   direct email -
      US Forest Service Chief Tim Tidwell <ttidwell@fs.fed.us>
      USFS Assistant Director Art Jeffers <ajeffers@fs.fed.us>
      USFS Director of Recreation Jim Bedwell <jbedwell@fs.fed.us>

online - http://www.regulations.gov
   go to this website
   select document type (notices)
   check box (open for comment/submission)
   type keyword (E9-28744)
   click SEARCH
      you should get "1 result" - proposed directives for Forest Service Concession Campground special use permits
   type your comment in the box

Thanks again for anything you can do!