We conducted a national review of the 97 High Impact Recreation Areas (HIRAs) during the past 2 years. Between December 2011 and February 2012, the results of this review were transmitted to all the regions except Regions 8 and 10 as they contain no HIRAs.

On May 16, 2012, direction was provided by this office to the regions to guide implementation of the Recreation Area Review. That direction included:

- Non-enforcement of standard amenity recreation fees or issuance of notices of required fees for any portion of a large area that has been proposed for elimination from the recreation fee program.
- Alternatives on how to convert a standard amenity recreation fee for an area to another type of recreation fee, such as an expanded amenity recreation fee or special recreation permit fee, provided there is no change in the fee amount and the criteria for charging that type of fee under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) and the Forest Service’s Interim Implementation Guidelines on REA are met;
- Changes in enforcement strategy with the Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI) staff in the Washington Office that requested that you work with your local LEI and forest protection officers to implement this change in approach; and
- This direction will remain in effect until you have completed public participation and Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) review for affected standard amenity recreation fee areas. It was noted to follow requirements applicable to Recreation RAC recommendations for these areas.

This and additional information was also provided in your June 11, 2012, National Forest System/Regional Forester meeting with Jim Bedwell. Those that were unable to attend had their folders mailed. The need for your attention and consistency with national direction on REA was stressed at the meeting. In an effort to maintain consistency, recent litigation settlements have followed this direction and the approach of the HIRA review.

In order to continue the critical need for national consistency in the application of REA, we are requesting a summary of progress for each region in implementing the recreation area review recommendations and enforcement actions by November 15, 2012.
Please provide in your brief summary:

1. The status of implementation of the area (HIRA) review, including any public notification efforts planned or conducted to date.

2. The operational status of your Recreation RAC; and

3. The enforcement approach developed with LEI for fee sites that will be removed from the fee system.

Enclosed are guidance documents from the May 16, 2012, letter and an example of an implementation/public notification plan/template.

Direct your questions and responses to Nancy Stremple, Acting Recreation Fee Coordinator, nstremple@fs.fed.us or (202) 205-1169.

LESLIE A. C. WELDON
Deputy Chief, National Forest System

Enclosures

cc: Jim Bedwell, Peter L. Roehrs, Ken Karkula, Nancy Stremple, Julie A. Cox