



Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act
Second Triennial Report to Congress
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Bureau of Land Management
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Cover Photograph: Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area, Bureau of Land Management

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Executive Summary

The Recreation Fee Program, authorized in 2004 by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), enables land management agencies to retain and spend recreation fees where they are collected. This enhances the facilities, services, and visitor experiences at those sites, in addition to reducing deferred maintenance backlogs. Agencies' REA revenues help provide quality recreation opportunities for millions of visitors — from visiting a remote cabin in an Alaskan wildlife refuge to climbing a national forest fire lookout to learning about the nation's cultural history in a national park. Whether finding technical challenges via off-highway vehicle trails managed by the Bureau of Land Management or boating on the Bureau of Reclamation's New Melones Lake, recreation fee revenues provide important services and recreation opportunities for the public. Recreation fee revenues also allow managers to plan for long-term facility improvement projects. REA revenues enable the government to leverage partnership dollars and facilitate volunteer work resulting in on-the-ground benefits.

The National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (FS), have made tremendous progress in implementing this program and are continually improving it based on their experience. The REA Program replaced and built upon the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo), which began in 1996. REA enabled improvements to visitor services and facilities on Federal lands across the nation, authorized a new national interagency recreation pass (The "America the Beautiful — the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass"), and established a robust process to engage the public directly in the Recreation Fee Program.

Recreation fees are indispensable in supporting and enhancing visitor experiences at popular sites across the country. However, there are, and will continue to be, extensive opportunities for visitors to recreate on Federal lands without paying REA fees. Of 391 NPS sites nationwide, 196 charge fees under REA. Out of approximately 450 FWS refuges that are open to the public, 35 charge entrance fees. Only one of the 42 recreation areas that Reclamation directly manages currently participates in REA. In addition, approximately 99.5 percent of lands managed by BLM and 98 percent of lands managed by the FS can be accessed by the public at no charge.

Section 9 of REA calls for the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to submit reports on the Recreation Fee Program to Congress on a triennial basis. The first Triennial Report was submitted on May 1, 2006, and provided information on activities that the Departments were undertaking to transition from the Fee Demo Program to REA. These activities included inventorying sites to ensure that the fees charged were consistent with the requirements under REA for charging fees; establishing public participation processes consistent with REA; and establishing the new Interagency Pass. REA has now been fully implemented, and the agencies are engaged in improving implementation.

The second Triennial Report discusses progress to date and ongoing activities. In accordance with Section 9 of REA, this report:

- Provides examples of past projects accomplished using REA fees;
- Provides examples of planned projects and programs to be accomplished with REA fees;
- Highlights the status of the REA program implementation, including budgetary data; and
- Makes recommendations for changes in the overall fee system.

Following an overview of the REA Program in Section 1, Section 2 of this report contains agency examples of the diversity and effectiveness of recreation fee projects. This section details examples of each agency's recent accomplishments, as well as examples of planned projects using REA revenues. Projects accomplished with recreation fee revenues range from visitor services to facility management to law enforcement, and are accomplished where the fees are collected.

Section 3 contains information on the status of Recreation Fee Program administration and operations. Since the first Triennial Report, the Departments have made substantial visitor service improvements, including establishing Recreation.gov, a web-based national reservation system, launching the Interagency Pass, initiating new public participation processes, and instituting improvements in accountability and consistency.

Notable achievements include:

- *National recreation reservation system.* Advanced reservations are now available through Recreation.gov for more than 2,500 locations including campgrounds, day use areas, cabins, and tour facilities. Since its launch in February 2007, Recreation.gov has received almost 15 million site visits and processed over 2.8 million reservations. Agencies collected \$75.3 million in revenue in 2008 through the reservation system.
- *Interagency pass sales.* Sales of the Interagency Pass began in January 2007. Passes, decals, and brochures are now available at over 1,500 field sites, through the internet, and through select third-party vendors. Standardized guidance, training, and availability of pass inventory through a central vendor have enhanced consistency of implementation. As of September 2008, approximately 2.5 million passes have been shipped to agencies' field sites. In 2008, approximately 760,000 passes had been sold, generating nearly \$29 million: \$260,000 by BLM, \$290,000 by FWS, \$24.7 million by NPS, \$820 by Reclamation, \$1.7 million by FS, and \$1.9 million via central sales.
- *Photograph contest.* The *Share the Experience Public Lands Photo Contest* was established in 2006, and in its first three years has received approximately 36,000 entries. The contest provides a means for visitors to share photographs they have taken, while increasing their awareness of Federal lands. The winning photograph becomes the image on the following year's Annual Pass.
- *Public involvement.* The agencies have refined and increased opportunities for public involvement when setting or changing fees. BLM and the FS established Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) that cover all but three states. Since 2006, BLM has sought RRAC review of 49 recreation fee changes, and FS has sought RRAC review of 893 recreation fee changes.
- *Accountability.* The agencies are also taking additional steps to increase accountability in fee collection activities and expenditure of recreation revenue. For example, NPS is procuring a new centralized point-of-sale cash register system for all fee-collecting National Parks.
- *The Bureau of Reclamation.* Reclamation is the only REA agency that was not part of the Fee Demo program. Of 42 developed recreation areas directly managed by Reclamation, six meet the criteria established in REA for fee sites. Of these six, California's New Melones Lake was selected to participate in REA. It has been operating as a REA site since FY 2008.

Section 3 also contains budget and visitation information. Highlights include:

- *Revenues.* REA revenue collection increased over the three-year period covered in this report, from \$209.5 million in FY 2006, to \$245.5 million in FY 2007, to \$253.2 million in FY 2008. Of the \$253.2 million in FY 2008, NPS collected \$171.9 million, FWS collected \$4.7 million, BLM collected \$15.0 million, Reclamation collected \$0.2 million, and FS collected \$61.6 million.
- *Costs of Collection.* The average cost of collecting fee revenues, across the agencies, was 14.5 percent of gross fee revenue in FY 2008. In FY 2003, the aggregate cost of collection was 20.7 percent. All four agencies have seen overall decreases in the cost of collection over the last five years. The cost of collection in FY 2008 was 17.2 percent for NPS, 15.0 percent for FWS, 2.8 percent for BLM, and 9.4 percent for the FS.¹
- *Obligations.* Annual obligations as a percentage of total revenue have increased from approximately 33 percent in FY 2000 to 46 percent in FY 2008. The total unobligated balance in FY 2008 was \$307.7 million: \$266.7 million for NPS; \$5.3 million for FWS; \$10.1 million for BLM; and \$25.6 million for the FS.
- *Visitation.* People made more than half a billion visits to Federal recreational lands in 2008: 274.3 million visits for NPS, 41.3 million for FWS, 56.8 million for BLM, and 661,481 for Reclamation (for a DOI-wide total of 373.0); and the FS estimates that there were approximately 179 million National Forest visits in 2007, the last year for which data is available. Over a five-year period, visitation to DOI-managed lands has increased (it was 358.0 million in 2003); while annual visitation from 2007 to 2008 has decreased slightly, from 373.5 million visits to 373.0 million visits.

Improvement of the Recreation Fee Program

The agencies are pursuing the following changes to the Recreation Fee Program:

- The agencies are exploring options that may allow Senior and Access Pass sales/issuance through the mail or internet, pending resolution of privacy and program integrity issues. Options are also being explored to provide decals to Senior and Access Pass holders that have open-topped vehicles, such as motorcycles and jeeps.
- NPS will be implementing a servicewide point-of-sale system that will standardize collection, accounting, reporting, and management of NPS recreation fee revenues. This system will improve the visitor experience by reducing wait times at many park entrance stations. NPS also intends to improve vacation planning for visitors by redesigning the NPS.gov site to make information easier to find and fee rates more apparent.
- NPS is also exploring options to allow for more convenient fee payment options and fee payments online.
- Improvements are planned for Recreation.gov, including online permitting, drawings, and reservations for special park uses.

¹ BLM's cost of collection is substantially lower than that of the other agencies because the vast majority of fees are collected using fee collection equipment that does not require personnel to be present.

- NPS will develop options to significantly reduce the unobligated balance of recreation fee revenues. For example, the agency has implemented a Recreation Fee Comprehensive Plan, which documents projects for five years. Each fee-collecting National Park completes an annual update of their plan, which includes a timeline for completing approved projects. Using this management tool, NPS reviews projects for compliance with REA, and consistency with the expenditure criteria, particularly the direct visitor connection. The plans continue to enhance NPS's accountability, as well as provide a mechanism for reporting and documenting performance accomplishments.
- FS has committed to reviewing its High Impact Recreation Areas (HIRAs) and presenting them to the RRACs. In 2007-2008, the FS undertook a national review of HIRAs, and will present the findings to the RRACs. Based on input from the RRACs, changes to some of these areas may be made.
- With increased demand for more recreation areas and fee sites, BLM has identified a need for more training. Through the National Training Center, distant learning courses are under development to address overall Recreation Fee Program management.

Section 1: Introduction

Every year, over 400 million Americans and visitors from around the world visit America's national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and BLM-managed public lands to hike, ride, fish, camp and otherwise enjoy the abundant recreation opportunities offered on our Federal lands. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), enacted in 2004, authorizes the Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation),² as well as the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (FS), to charge recreation fees on some of those lands.³ The vast majority of Federal lands are free to the public. Approximately 99.5 percent of BLM lands and 98 percent of FS lands (65 percent of FS developed sites) remain available to the public free of charge. At NPS sites across the nation, 147 of 391 sites charge entrance fees under REA. FWS charges entrance fees at 35 of about 450 refuges that are open to the public.

REA's major benefits include facilitating a more seamless and consistent interagency fee program; allowing recreation areas to use revenues to improve services and facilities for visitors; providing a single Federal recreation pass valid for all REA agencies nationwide; and enhancing public engagement in the fee program. Recreation fee revenues also have a positive impact on non-Federal sources of funding by providing the revenues necessary for cooperative agreements and facilitating volunteer work that results in on-the-ground benefits. This report summarizes the agencies' achievements, challenges, and opportunities under the Recreation Fee Program. The agencies continue to fine tune the program based on their experiences and lessons learned.

Since 1996 when Congress established the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo), over \$2 billion has been collected by the participating agencies. These dollars have translated into tangible improvements in visitor services and infrastructure. Improvements include visitor center rehabilitation, restroom upgrades, road and trail repairs, campground improvements, historic structure enhancements, education and visitor interpretative programs, accessibility improvements, and technology upgrades to improve customer services and implement state of the art reservation and trip planning services for visitors. Since the Recreation Fee Program was initiated, over 10,000 projects have improved on-the-ground facilities, conserved natural resources, enhanced recreation, expanded educational opportunities, and preserved America's heritage. Many of these improvements would not have been completed or would have been delayed without the revenue provided from recreation fees.

Authority to retain and spend recreation fee revenues is critical to maintain and manage Federal lands and effectively address deferred maintenance at national parks, national forests, and other Federal lands. Recreation fees are a reliable and ready source of funding that allows the agencies to respond quickly, as well as plan long-term projects. Many visitors who return to a familiar recreation site are able to see improvements in the places that are special to them.

Section 9 of REA calls for the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to submit reports to Congress on a triennial basis. The first Triennial Report, submitted in May 2006, focused on the transition from Fee Demo to REA, development of internal policies and guidelines, activities of BLM and FS to establish Recreation Resource Advisory Committees, and the implementation of

² Reclamation has a limited involvement in the REA Program compared to the other participating agencies; this limited role will be reflected in this Report.

³ REA was enacted as part of the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Bill (P.L. 108-447). REA will sunset ten years after the date of enactment, in 2014. REA replaced the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, which was enacted in section 315 of the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations of 1996 and was subsequently extended through 2004.

the new Interagency Pass.⁴ In the past three years, the agencies have completed implementation and are enhancing management of the Recreation Fee Program.

The second Triennial Report provides information about ongoing programs such as the Interagency Pass program, the activities of Recreation Resource Advisory Committees, and continuing efforts to ensure accountability. In accordance with section 9 of REA, this report:

- Provides examples of past projects accomplished using REA fees;
- Provides examples of planned projects and programs to be accomplished with REA fees;
- Highlights the status of the REA Program implementation, including budgetary data; and
- Makes recommendations for changes in the overall fee system.

⁴ The first Triennial Report can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/passespermits/docs/accomps/wo-rpt-congress/fy05-report-to-congress.pdf>.

Section 2: Sample Accomplishments and Plans

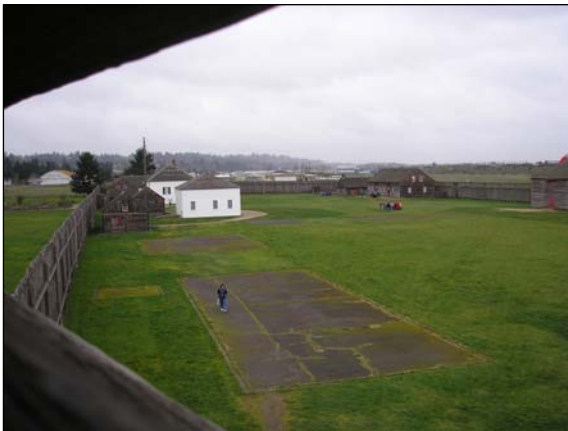
Section 9 of REA calls for the report to Congress to address “*examples of projects that were funded using such [REA] fees and future projects and programs for funding with fees...*” This section of the report highlights recent accomplishments, as well as future projected accomplishments for each agency.

National Park Service—Sample Accomplishments and Plans

The National Park Service consists of 391 units encompassing more than 84.4 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. Currently, there are 196 NPS sites that charge fees under REA. The sites include national parks, national monuments, national memorials, national lakeshores, national seashores, national historic sites, national battlefields, and national recreation areas.

Example #1: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Vancouver, Washington (Facility Maintenance and Visitor Services)

At NPS’s Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (NHS), the park constructed an accessible trail to all historic reconstructions within the fort walls. Previously, there was no trail or accessible walkway to connect the historic buildings and structures. The new accessible trail allows mobility-challenged individuals to reach each structure and enjoy the visitor services at the site.



Fort Vancouver before and after trail completion

Example #2: Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana (Interpretation and Visitor Services)

NPS replaced and updated all of the museum exhibits at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial to better protect the artifacts and improve the interpretive message to the visitors. The new displays replaced outdated exhibits installed in the 1960s. These exhibit upgrades were completed in time for the Lincoln Bicentennial which was celebrated in March of 2009. Using a combination of text, graphics,

and artifacts, the museum documents Lincoln's life in Indiana and how he was influenced during his childhood years.



Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial: outdated exhibits before (left); new exhibits after (right)

Example #3: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii (Visitor Services)

An erupting volcano is an attraction that draws thousands of visitors; seeing glowing red lava at night is a particularly captivating sight which attracts crowds. At Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, improvements were necessary to protect visitors from this striking yet dangerous spectacle. Recreation fee dollars at the site were used to provide park guides who deliver interpretive programs, as well as safety precautions at locations such as the one shown in the photo at right.



Hawaii Volcanoes Park guides protect visitors from lava flowing across the Chain of Craters Road

Example #4: Manassas National Battlefield Park, Manassas, Virginia (Facility Maintenance)

The Stone Bridge Boardwalk in Manassas National Battlefield Park was used by Union troops who retreated to Washington, D.C., after being defeated by Confederate forces in both Battles of Manassas. A 1970s-vintage boardwalk had become a safety hazard as the original locust and treated lumber had deteriorated, requiring frequent repairs to allow visitor access.



Manassas National Battlefield Park: Old bridge (left); new bridge made with recycled materials (right)

The new boardwalk (above right) incorporates more substantial underpinnings that are appropriate for the site's wetland environment. The new bridge uses recycled plastic lumber on the boardwalk surface to improve the structure's life expectancy. The bridge's bumpers are also recycled plastic lumber. Bumpers help visually-impaired visitors to more easily use the bridge, and ensure safe operation of wheelchairs along the length of the elevated structure.

Example #5: Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Carlsbad, New Mexico (Facility Maintenance)

The new visitor center at Carlsbad Caverns National Park provides a more energy efficient and upgraded facility for visitors entering the cave. Gone are leaky water and sewer lines and exorbitant heating and cooling bills. New exhibit space is now available to showcase the park's extensive collection of caverns-related art dating from the 1920s, including 25 original Ansel Adams photographs never before on public display and a live video feed from Carlsbad's Bat Cave, home to 400,000 bats.



Carlsbad Caverns National Park: Cave entrance before (left) and after (right)

Future NPS Plans

REA revenues are used to repair, maintain, and enhance facilities used by visitors including restrooms, visitor centers, and transportation systems; to develop, install, and repair interpretive exhibits; to provide visitor services and signs; to restore habitat related to wildlife observation or photography; and to provide visitor reservation services. NPS has a robust process to prioritize projects that address deferred maintenance. Particular focus is on facilities in poor condition that have a direct visitor connection or that otherwise impact the visitor experience.

For example, Figure 1 highlights FY 2009 planned expenditures of recreation fee revenues at Rocky Mountain National Park. The distribution and types of expenditures at this park typify the experience of many large national parks. An agency-wide summary for future fee expenditure plans (FY 2009–2013) by obligation category follows in Table 1.

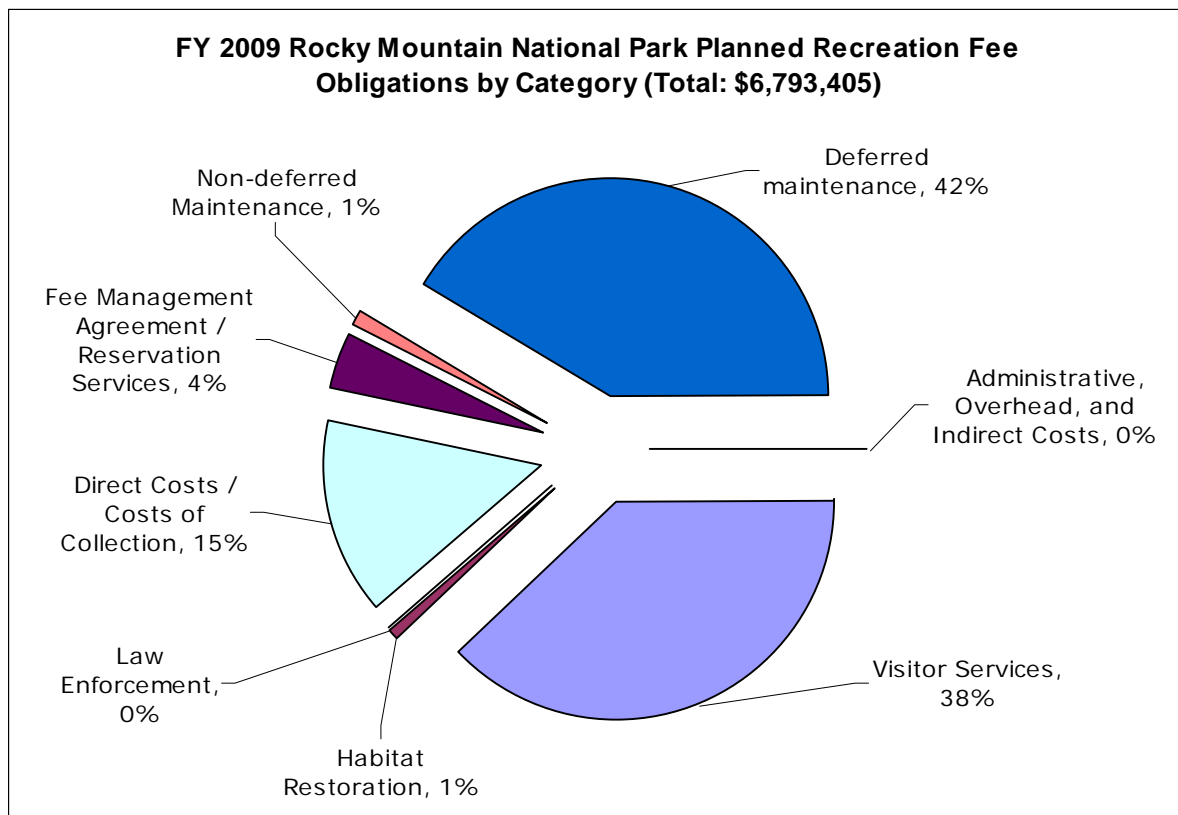


Figure 1. FY 2009 Rocky Mountain National Park Planned Recreation Fee Obligations

Table 1. Projected National Park Service Fee Revenue Spending (\$ millions) by Category, FY 2009 – 2013

Category	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total Projected Spending
Visitor Services	\$35.0	\$35.0	\$40.0	\$44.0	\$46.0	\$200.0
Habitat Restoration	\$14.0	\$14.0	\$14.0	\$14.0	\$14.0	\$70.0
Law Enforcement	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$7.5
Direct Costs / COC	\$35.1	\$36.8	\$37.0	\$38.0	\$39.0	\$185.9
FMA / Reservation Services	\$4.0	\$4.0	\$5.0	\$5.5	\$7.0	\$25.5
Deferred Maintenance	\$85.0	\$85.0	\$85.0	\$85.0	\$85.0	\$425.0
Non-deferred Maintenance ¹	\$14.5	\$14.5	\$14.5	\$14.5	\$14.5	\$72.5
Administrative, Overhead and Indirect Costs	\$9.5	\$9.5	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$49.0
Totals²	\$198.6	\$200.3	\$207.0	\$212.5	\$217.0	\$1,035.4
COC – Cost of Collection; FMA – Fee Management Agreement						
¹ Includes annual Repairs and Maintenance and Capital Improvements						
² Totals include spending of unobligated balances.						

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Sample Accomplishments and Plans

The Fish and Wildlife Service manages a system of 549 national wildlife refuges which now comprises 96 million acres of land and more than 78,000 square miles of waters. It also manages 69 national fish hatcheries (21,894 acres) and various administrative sites (856 acres). These areas are located in all 50 states and some island territories. FWS manages them principally to conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats, but these sites also provide opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, if compatible with the sites' purposes and overall mission. Wildlife-dependent recreation includes activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation, and environmental education.

Example #1: Savannah Coastal National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Georgia (Visitor Services and Facility Maintenance)



YCC workers improving a walkway

The Savannah Coastal NWR Complex combined recreation fees with Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) labor to improve accessibility at two of its refuges: Savannah and Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs). A YCC crew laid bricks for the accessible parking area and also along an interpretive walk. The young crew made the first accessible interpretive walk at Harris Neck NWR and learned about the art of bricklaying during this project.

Example #2: Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Washington (Visitor Services)

Recreation fee revenues provided crucial support to the environmental education program at Nisqually NWR, outside Olympia, Washington. The Friends of Nisqually matched \$3,000 in recreation fee revenues to support an Americorps environmental education intern. This program serves a diverse student audience in a growing urban community. Current estimates predict that this effort could reach approximately 4,000 students and teachers per year at this refuge. In addition, Nisqually NWR used \$2,200 in fee funds to purchase recycling containers and to implement a recycling program for the visiting public, estimated at 150,000 people annually.



Students as scientists examining a red-flowering currant flower cluster

Example #3: Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia (Facility Maintenance)



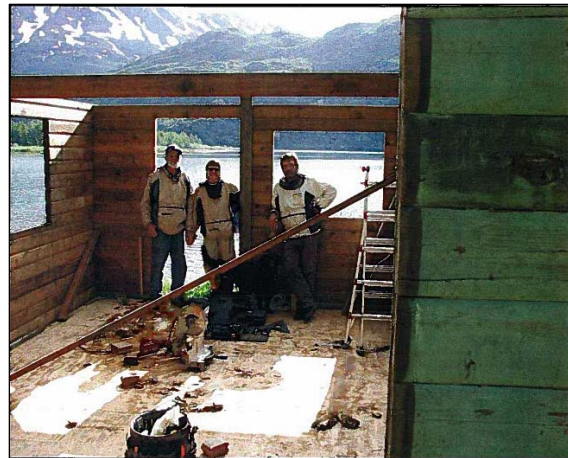
Refurbished boat ramp features solar lighting

This area was used previously as a privately owned boat ramp and was purchased in 2001 by FWS as part of a larger land acquisition project. The boat ramp area remained closed to the general public for boat launching purposes until the NWR could complete new construction, upgrades, repairs, and safety items. The end result, shown here, is a fee-for-use ramp with parking open 358 days per year. The ramp was opened to the public in FY 2008. The NWR improved the ramp area by upgrading the entrance road to a two-lane gravel road; enlarging the parking area to accommodate 75 vehicles; and installing solar lighting, accessible restrooms, information kiosk, fee station, commercial dock and offloading area, two 16-

foot wide ramps, courtesy pier, and floating dock. Though deferred maintenance and refuge roads appropriated funds helped pay for the renovations, the incoming fees will offset the expense of operating and maintaining this facility.

Example #4: Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska (Facility Maintenance)

Recreation Fee revenues were used at the Kodiak NWR for volunteers and staff to replace and refurbish two old cabins that are popular with hunters, photographers, and others who enjoy being surrounded by beautiful and remote surroundings. The Uganik Lake cabin was replaced with a new 13-foot by 20-foot recycled cedar cabin, and the interior of the Little River Lake cabin was refurbished by volunteers and staff with new paneling, paint, a window, and a stove. Overall, volunteers contributed approximately 2,000 hours to cabin maintenance and construction projects on the refuge in FY 2008.



Kodiak NWR staff and volunteers constructing the Uganik Lake Cabin

Future FWS Plans

The following pie charts (Figure 2) depict examples of future expenditures planned at two FWS sites (Aransas NWR in Texas; and Bombay Hook NWR in Delaware). A FWS bureau summary of future expenditures (FY 2009 – 2013) by obligation category follows the pie charts (Table 2).

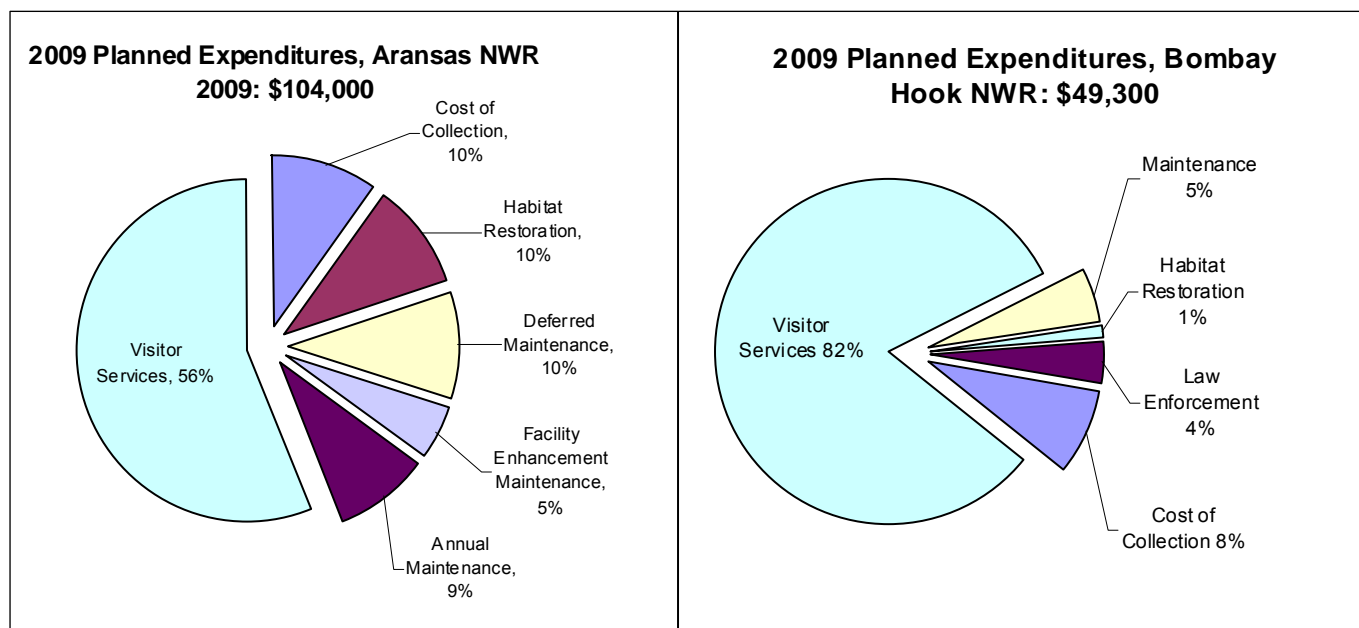


Figure 2. FY 2009 Aransas and Bombay Hook NWRs (FWS) Expenditures

Table 2. U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Projected Spending (\$ millions) Summary by Category, FY 2009 – FY 2013¹

Category	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total Projected Spending
Visitor Services	\$1.8	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.8	\$12.1
Habitat Restoration	\$0.1	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$1.4
Law Enforcement	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$1.5
Direct Costs / COC	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$3.5
FMA / Reservation Services	\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1	<\$0.1	\$0.1
Deferred Maintenance	\$1.0	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$5.4
Non-deferred Maintenance ²	\$0.3	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$2.8
Administrative, Overhead and Indirect Costs	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$0.4	\$0.4	\$0.4	\$1.7
Totals	\$4.5	\$5.9	\$5.9	\$5.9	\$6.3	\$28.4

COC – Cost of Collection; FMA – Fee Management Agreement
¹ Values do not add-up in some cases due to rounding.
² Includes annual Repairs and Maintenance and Capital Improvements.

Bureau of Land Management—Sample Accomplishments and Plans

BLM manages 256 million acres of Federal lands and close to 3,600 recreation sites on landscapes that range from rainforests to deserts to the Arctic. Most recreational opportunities on BLM lands are dispersed and free of charge. Current accomplishments stemming from REA revenue include the following examples:



BLM's Meadowood facility, home to a therapeutic riding program

Example #1: Meadowood Recreation Area Equestrian Facility, Fairfax County, Virginia (Facility Enhancement, Visitor Services)

BLM's Meadowood Recreation Area consists of approximately 800 acres in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. A 46-stall horse stable with indoor riding arena, outdoor riding ring, horse pastures, and access to miles of trails at Meadowood provides public horse boarding in this highly urbanized area, as well as stabling and facilities for the Simple Changes Therapeutic Riding Center Program. Recreation fees collected at the stables are generated from horse boarding, stall rental, and Special

Recreation Permits (SRPs) issued to the therapeutic riding program and horse trainers who conduct lessons at the facility. Recreation fee revenues collected from horse boarding are used to provide for operation of the horse boarding stables. Horse boarding fees are also used for horse boarding contract oversight and maintenance and repair of facilities. In December 2008, the Southeast RRAC approved a proposal to increase fees for horse boarding, with the horse boarding fee increasing from \$625 to \$700 per month per animal. The fee increase was needed to cover the increased cost of the barn manager's activities associated with managing a full-board barn.

Example #2: Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area, Arizona (Facility Maintenance)

Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area is an extensive sand dunes system which provides great adventures for off-highway vehicle enthusiasts. Recreation fee revenues are used at this site to maintain and enhance the site's facilities, which include 13 developed campsites with picnic tables, grills, garbage cans, and fire rings. Facilities at this site also include hotpools, restrooms, information kiosks, a picnic area, a watchable wildlife area, a self-service pay station, and two parking areas. Facility enhancement work included replacing boundary fences, maintaining restrooms and



Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area Fee Station

campsites, and moving the fee station location.

Recreation fee revenues were also used to fund a host at the site and upgrade and maintain the host's campsite. This has improved recruiting and retaining quality hosts. The host is on the site during the heavy use season, conducting day-to-day maintenance of the facilities and providing visitor information and assistance. Using site hosts has resulted in a decrease in vandalism and visitor conflicts, and has encouraged a shift in visitation to more family-oriented use.

Example #3: Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area, Oregon (Visitor Services)

BLM's Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (YHONA) is located near Newport, Oregon, and is a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System. Recreation fee revenues have been used at this site to hire interpretive specialists to provide environmental education to the visiting public. Recreation fees allow Yaquina Head managers to provide trained interpreters at various locations to greet the public, lead tours, and provide environmental education programs while protecting the area for future generations. Without the Recreation Fee Program, BLM at Yaquina Head would not have this capability and would be limited to keeping the site open and monitoring key areas for visitor and resource protection, leaving few resources for direct contact with the visiting public.



Students exploring Yaquina Head tidepools

Recreation fee revenues also assist in facility maintenance at the site for facilities such as an historic lighthouse. Because of recreation fee revenue, the lighthouse is in excellent condition despite its visitor traffic: over 90,000 visitors tour the structure each year.

Example #4: Gunnison Gorge Wilderness, Colorado (Visitor Services)

The 17,700-acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area, in southwest Colorado is a premier wilderness area. Fees for wilderness permits were established in 1997 at four developed recreation sites (trailheads) on the west rim of the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area. Since that time, recreation fees have supported a wide variety of maintenance and visitor services at the sites. Examples of these fee-supported management activities include funding new restrooms, a visitor services/fee collector position, and numerous volunteer river cleanup trips. Recreation fee revenues have also helped BLM fund the replacement of a high-maintenance, backcountry toilet that had been a source of visitor dissatisfaction. The visitor services position increases BLM presence on the ground and allows BLM to provide enhanced visitor services and education, improved maintenance of facilities, resource protection, and increased use compliance with the permit system and wilderness regulations. The river



New vault toilet for public use at Gunnison Gorge

cleanup efforts have had broad-based participation that has included volunteers, local tourism groups, and county commissioners. Participants received hands-on training about the National Conservation Area, wilderness management regulations, Leave No Trace, and other stewardship ethics. Fees have also funded the addition of an accessibility ramp made out of TREX recycled materials.

Example #5: James Kipp Recreation Area, Montana

The James Kipp Recreation Area at the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Montana is located at the terminus of the 149-mile Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. This 210-acre BLM site is surrounded by lands managed by FWS. BLM has a long-term lease to manage the recreation area, which is located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-managed land. Recreation fees for this site help support its many facilities for visitors, including 34 accessible campsites, three tent camping areas, a camping area set aside for floaters, potable water, vault toilets, a boat ramp, and an RV dump station. Fees also assist in funding the site's campground host, who is available at the site for over seven months of the year.



BLM Recreation fee area signage

Future BLM Plans

A summary for future expenditure plans for all BLM sites by obligation category is not available at this time, as BLM typically only projects expenditure plans one year in advance. BLM sites will typically use recreation fee revenues for the annual operating costs of keeping the facilities maintained and clean, as well as for interpretive and environmental education programs and other visitor services. Some sites will also use recreation fee revenues to offset expenses such as facility hosts, which can be essential to keeping sites running smoothly. Figure 3 (pie charts, below) displays typical expenditure breakdowns at two BLM REA sites.

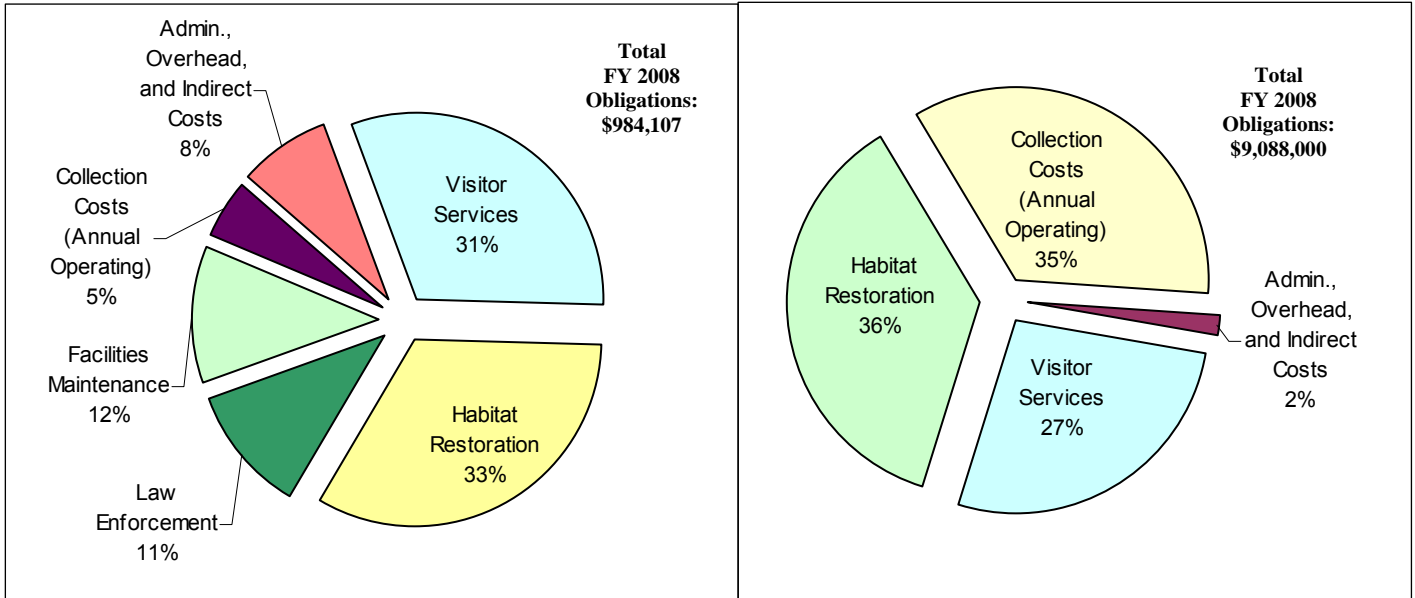


Figure 3. FY 2008 Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (left) and Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area (right) (BLM) Obligations by Category

Figure 4 displays projected FY 2009 expenditures across BLM REA sites.

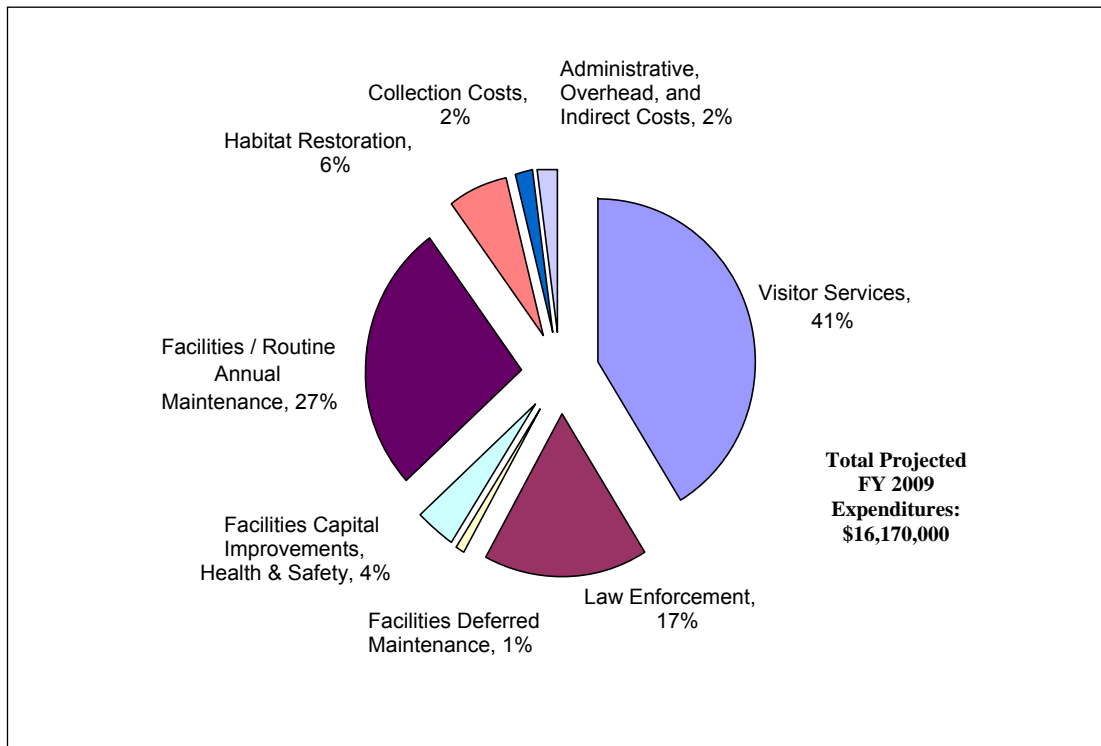


Figure 4. FY 2009 Bureau of Land Management Projected Recreation Fee Expenditures

Forest Service—Sample Accomplishments and Plans

The Forest Service's large and ecologically diverse land base makes the agency a leading provider of outdoor recreation. The FS manages 193 million acres in 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands across the United States and Puerto Rico. Approximately 98 percent of that acreage can be accessed free of charge. A fee is charged at approximately 20 percent of the developed recreation sites that the FS manages. REA has enabled the FS to make significant improvements in the facilities and services used by visitors at these developed recreation sites. Some recent examples of these improvements are described below.

Example #1 Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana (Facility Maintenance)

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest has 27 rental cabins that have been made available through the Recreation Fee Program. Rental cabin fee collections augmented the support for the Forest's cabin restoration crew, which completed work on several cabins, stabilizing important historic structures and reducing deferred maintenance. This work not only makes these cabins more enjoyable for current renters, it ensures that future generations will be able to enjoy these historic structures. For example, the Hogan Cabin restoration (Wisdom Ranger District) included the following:

- Replacement of a cedar shingle roof
- Replacement of the porch
- Application of fresh oil on the exterior walls
- Replacement of damaged chinking
- Installation of wall protection for the wood stove and stove pipe
- Application of fresh paint on the door and interior trim
- Re-glazing of windows



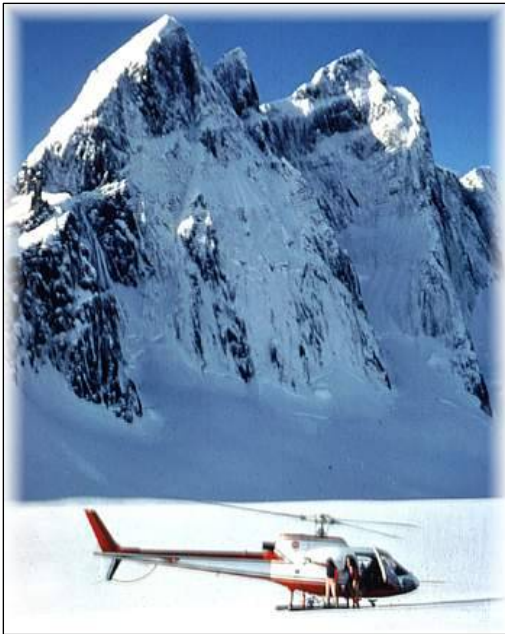
Cabin restoration underway (left) and completed (right)

Example #2: Tongass National Forest, Alaska (Visitor Services, Facility Maintenance and Enhancement)

The most prominent part of the Recreation Fee Program on the Tongass National Forest is recreational use through approximately 275 outfitters and guides under special recreation permits issued under REA. The Forest works closely with these permit holders to ensure they are able to provide their clients with a world-class outdoor experience. A Recreation Fee Board of FS staff was

created to work with the outfitter/guide community in identifying priorities for REA projects. Some projects that have been completed include:

- Environmental analysis of helicopter landings on the Juneau Icefield, one of the most popular side trips for cruises worldwide;
- Training presentation to guides which led to improved accommodation of visitors viewing birds on the Stikine River, part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network; and
- Database for tracking outfitter-guide use which enables the FS to prioritize maintenance for areas visited through outfitters and guides, such as the popular shelter below.



Helicopters on Juneau Icefield; shelter popular with outfitter and guide-led groups



Students at the San Gabriel Education Center learn about nature.

Example #3: Angeles National Forest, California (Visitor Services)

The Angeles National Forest is one of four national forests serving the population of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. Recreation fee revenue allows the FS to provide ranger-led environmental education programs designed to meet California State Curriculum Guidelines. These programs offer a broad range of learning opportunities to regional educators, scouts, and civic groups at two locations on the Angeles National Forest: the San Gabriel Canyon and Mt. Baldy Environmental Education Centers. Together these two programs hosted over 16,000 students and teachers in 2007 and 18,000

students in 2008. Programs offered by the Centers include: Geology, Gold Rush History, A River Runs Through It, Land of the Tongva, and Wildland Fire Studies. The recreation fee revenues used to

support these programs are leveraged through the participation of non-profits, conservancy groups, and volunteer organizations such as: the Angeles Volunteer Association, San Bernardino National Forest Association, Fisheries Resource Volunteers, San Gabriel Mountains Interpretive Association, BackCountry Riders, Volunteers of The Angeles, and the San Gabriel Heritage Association. These cooperators provide labor and funds for purchase of supplies and materials.

Example #4: Coconino National Forest, Arizona (Visitor Services, Maintenance)

The Coconino National Forest is home to one of the most well-loved sites in the National Forest System: the Red Rock Recreation Area, near Sedona, Arizona. The area is a year-round attraction, receiving approximately four million visitors per year.

Recreation fee revenue helped provide the funds necessary to complete a new visitor center at this popular site. Although the FS opened a new Red Rock District Visitor Contact Office in May 2008, it contained no interpretive displays. Recreation fee revenue contributed to geological, cultural, wildlife, survival, and Leave No Trace displays. Recreation fee revenues also helped fund the interpretive animal tracks sandblasted into the visitor center walkway.



New interpretive displays in a Coconino NF visitor center

Example #5: Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon (Visitor Services)

In addition to managing recreation areas and services for individual families, the FS also issues special recreation permits under REA for one-time or recurring events that become a tradition for visitors. In FY 2008, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest hosted a number of events, such as the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race, and other local snowmobile club events that benefited local tourism in Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties. The Forest provided staff at five sites to provide rider information for the week-long Cycle Oregon event.



Cyclists at recreation event in the Wallowa-Whitman NF; cyclist information station

Future FS Plans

The staff of each national forest and national grassland examines its own unique setting, outdoor recreation program, and visitors when planning use of recreation fee revenues to improve and enhance recreation opportunities. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate how two National Forests spent recreation fee revenues in FY 2008. The forests' plans for spending fee revenue in FY 2009 are described below.

Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest has a relatively small recreation fee program, collecting less than \$200,000 over the last three fiscal years. In FY 2008, the Forest spent approximately \$62,000 on recreation projects. In FY 2009, the Forest has several goals for the use of recreation fee revenues, including deferred maintenance work focused on the Hapgood Pond Recreation Area. The Forest will also continue leveraging recreation funds for interpretive services, especially for educational activities.

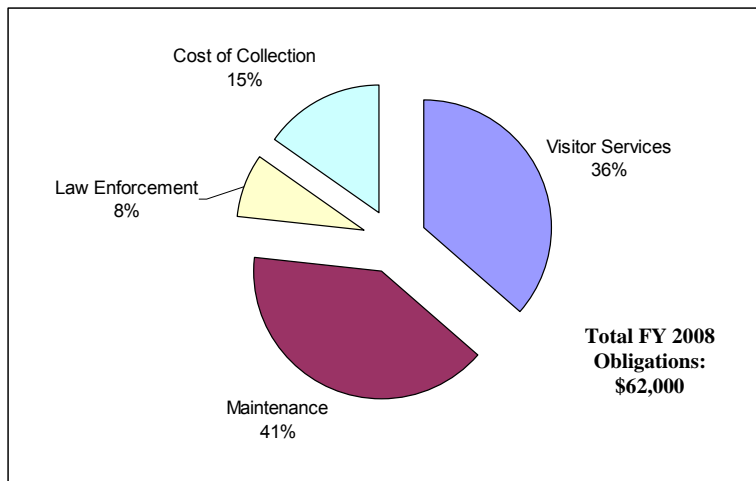


Figure 5. FY 2008 Green Mountain National Forest Obligations by Category

The Croatan, Nantahala, Pisgah, and Uwharrie National Forests are managed as a single unit called the National Forests of North Carolina. During the period covered by this report, these Forests collected approximately \$5.2 million in recreation fees. In FY 2008, approximately \$1.6 million was spent on REA projects. For FY 2009, the Forests have numerous projects planned, including: refurbishing campsites, removing hazardous trees, repairs to horse stalls and an observation deck, trail maintenance, and continued interpretive programs at sites like the Cradle of Forestry in America.

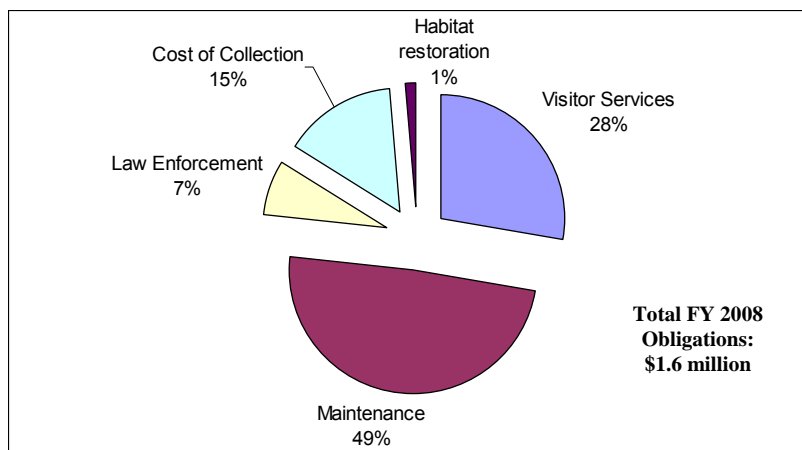


Figure 6. FY 2008 National Forests of North Carolina Obligations by Category



Boating at New Melones Lake

Bureau of Reclamation—Sample Accomplishments and Plans

Reclamation was not a participating agency in the 1996 Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, but was included as a participating agency in REA. Since 2004, Reclamation has established agency policy, collected baseline information, and developed an implementation strategy.

New Melones Lake, California

Reclamation only has one recreation area that has been officially designated as an REA area, New Melones Lake, California. Reclamation began collecting REA fees at New Melones in FY 2008. New Melones Lake is the fifth largest reservoir in the State of California and is located approximately 125 miles east of San Francisco and a one hour drive from Yosemite National Park. From 2004 through 2008, the number of visitors recreating at New Melones has averaged

741,452 annually. Visitors enjoy the various water-based recreational opportunities located at the park including boating, fishing, and water-skiing. Facilities include day use areas; boat launch ramps; more than 300 campsites; hiking, biking, and equestrian trails; a visitor center and museum; and a marina that offers boat rentals, camping supplies, and snacks.

REA revenues collected in FY 2008 have been used to purchase an automated fee station; install a satellite dish for internet use at the main fee collection stations; and purchase cash registers, information signs, and a fee station alarm monitoring device.

Future Reclamation Plans

Reclamation has prepared an REA implementation plan for New Melones recreation area that outlines the strategy for using REA revenues for the immediate future. The plan anticipates that Reclamation will use REA revenues at New Melones recreation area to:

- Provide interpretive services, visitor information, visitor services, and signage.
- Repair, maintain, and enhance facilities related directly to visitor enjoyment, access, and health and safety.
- Initiate habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography.
- Enhance law enforcement at the area.

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Section 3: Status of REA

Introduction

Since the passage of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act in December of 2004, implementation progress has been made on a variety of issues by all participating agencies. Sites have been inventoried to ensure compliance with the law, and public participation processes have been implemented by all agencies. Progress in public participation includes establishment of an extensive program by BLM and the FS known as Recreation/Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs). A new consistent Interagency Pass program has also been implemented. Passes, decals, and brochures are now available at over 1,500 field sites, the internet, and through select retail partners. A new Federal Lands Photo contest has been implemented, co-sponsored by a corporate sponsor, the National Park Foundation, and NPS on behalf of all the public land management agencies. In addition, the consolidated Recreation.gov website provides trip planning, recreation information, and reservation services for facilities at five agencies. Nearly 10,000 fee projects have been initiated to upgrade visitor facilities, services, and programs.

The Departments have a shared responsibility to ensure that Federal lands continue to play a central role in providing recreational opportunities for the American people. Fulfilling this mission requires maintaining visitor facilities and services, preserving natural and historic resources, and enhancing visitor opportunities with an adequate and steady source of funding. The goal of the REA Program is to collect and retain reasonable fees that can be used to enhance and improve visitor facilities, services, and experiences. The Recreation Fee Program has contributed significantly towards the accomplishment of the Departments' mission to serve as effective stewards of the public lands.

Visitors consistently comment, and surveys confirm, that they are willing to pay reasonable recreation fees if they know the money will be used to improve the site they are visiting. Unlike fees collected under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA) the REA Program provides that 80-100 percent of the fee revenue generated remains at the site where it was collected for maintenance and improvements.⁵ Consistently, interagency surveys show that high percentages (80-90 percent) of visitors are satisfied with the fee paid for the services provided. Surveys and public contacts suggest that visitors appreciate the significant improvements made to these sites from fee revenues and that visitors are more supportive of fees when the fees are reinvested into the sites and facilities they use.

Under REA, the public also has a voice at the decision making table when fees are proposed. REA strengthened the public participation and civic engagement requirements for all agencies in the establishment of new fees, modifying fees, and designating new fee areas.

- REA established RRACs for BLM and FS. RRACs are composed of a diverse group of stakeholders who represent a wide range of interests, including recreation, environmental, tourism, and tribal and local government interests. As partners in the process, RRACs examine each agency fee proposal thoroughly, offering input, and helping to ensure that the agencies carefully consider public concerns, issues, and questions when developing proposals.

⁵ REA directs that no less than 80 percent of fee revenues collected at a unit or area be used at that unit or area. REA authorizes agencies to reduce this amount to 60 percent under certain circumstances, but this has not been exercised.

- NPS, FWS, and Reclamation developed extensive public involvement and civic engagement processes as mandated by REA. Each agency has specific requirements for conducting outreach to the public, key constituency groups, local government and civic organizations, and congressional representatives. Information obtained from outreach is used to help inform the decision making process.

Participating agencies make efforts to ensure that fees do not become a barrier for potential visitors, for example by providing fee waivers for educational groups. Annual interagency and area specific passes offer frequent visitors an economical way to visit Federal lands. Lifetime passes are available to seniors and to U.S. citizens who are permanent residents with permanent disabilities. These passes also provide the additional benefit of discounted camping.

The REA Program represents a significant step towards providing a consistent recreation fee experience for visitors across Federal agencies. The interagency “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass,” established in January 2007, allows a visitor to access sites managed by five separate agencies using a single pass. Since the introduction of the Interagency Pass Program, over one million passes have been issued to the public affording millions of visitors an economical way to see and experience America’s public lands. For example, a sightseer in Utah and Nevada can view the majestic rock formations of Bryce and Zion National Parks, explore Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area on the Ashley National Forest and hike through BLM-managed Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area using a single pass.

National Recreation Reservation Service

The REA Program has also been used to help meet visitors’ demand for “one-stop-shopping” as they set out to explore and experience America’s public lands. In February 2007, the E-Government initiative, Recreation One-Stop, which includes the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS), launched its Recreation.gov website. The site offers the public the convenience of making reservations for more than 2,500 locations, day use areas, cabins, and tour information facilities directly through the site or toll-free number. Recreation.gov also provides visitors with instant, one-stop access to maps, recreation activities, and other useful Federal lands information.

Since its launch, Recreation.gov has received almost 15 million site visits and over 2.8 million reservations. Three-quarters of Recreation.gov users place their reservations online, while the rest use the call center (toll-free number) option. Approximately 98 percent of reservations made on Recreation.gov are for camping, but there are also opportunities to purchase permits and tour tickets as well. The agencies are working to expand the offerings on Recreation.gov to ensure the most convenience possible for visitors. The website saw a 30 percent increase in traffic between 2007 and 2008; hence, the public is clearly becoming aware of the site and many people are making it an integral step in their travel planning process. Agencies collected \$66.5 million in revenue in 2007 and \$75.3 million in 2008 through the NRRS. Contractor and administrative costs for NRRS, which totaled approximately \$2.9 million in 2007 and \$3.5 million in 2008, are shared among the participating agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers participates in the NRRS and bears a portion of the costs, but is not an REA agency and therefore collects fees under a separate authority.

Status of the Bureau of Reclamation’s REA Program

Reclamation’s congressionally directed mission of obtaining partners to manage the recreation resources on its lands and waterbodies is significantly different than the missions of the other REA participating agencies. Reclamation has delegated to its five regional directors the authority to make the final decision as to whether or not a qualified area/site would participate in the REA Program.

Reclamation's primary recreation goal is to find partners to manage all recreation sites located on Reclamation lands and waterbodies. Reclamation often seeks these "managing partners" from non-Federal (such as State or local governments) as well as Federal entities. Of the 289 developed recreation areas at Reclamation projects, the agency has entered into agreements with managing partners for all but 33 areas, and shares management with a managing partner at nine other areas.

Most of the remaining 33 recreation areas are in remote locations that either have a short recreation season and/or low annual visitation. After an internal evaluation of the 33 developed recreation areas directly managed by Reclamation alone, it was determined that only six areas met the criteria to qualify them as REA areas. Of those six areas, New Melones was the only Reclamation recreation area selected to participate in the REA Program. The agency has determined that it would not be effective to implement REA at the other five areas, due to either their remoteness or cost effectiveness realities. The law does not require Reclamation to include eligible facilities in the program. The administrative costs of managing these remote areas would likely exceed the 15 percent limitation requirements established by REA. In the future, if Reclamation determines that the benefits of adding additional sites exceed the costs, consideration will be given to adding additional sites.

In addition and as a result of this internal evaluation, it was determined that Reclamation's participation at REA areas located on Reclamation lands and waterbodies would be as follows:

- Other Federal Agencies: Participation in REA by other Federal agencies at 84 of the 289 developed recreation areas will be determined by that managing agency. For example, participation at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area would be determined by NPS
- Non-Federal Governmental Entities: Reclamation's 66 non-Federal government partners who manage 159 of the 289 developed recreation areas will not participate in REA.
- Reclamation: Participation in REA for areas that meet the criteria, and are directly managed by Reclamation, will be determined by the appropriate regional office.

REA Statistics

This section of the report provides data on revenues, cost of collection, obligations, and visitation. These four categories provide a useful analytic breakdown of each agency's implementation of the program. More detailed data can be found in Appendix A.

Revenue

The following figures summarize REA revenues collected by the participating agencies (also in Table A-2 of Appendix A).⁶

- REA revenues for all agencies in FY 2006 were \$209.5 million; in FY 2007 they were \$245.5 million; and in FY 2008 they were \$253.2 million. Of the \$253.2 in REA revenue for FY 2008, NPS collected \$171.9 million, FWS collected \$4.7 million, BLM collected \$15.0 million, and FS collected \$61.6 million.

⁶ Revenue figures cited in this section fall into two general categories, which are shown in tabular format in Table A-2. The first is "REA revenue" which comprises revenue collected under the REA authority. The second is "gross revenue" (or "total revenue") which includes REA revenue as well as revenue collected under other authorities. As this report focuses on the REA, "REA revenue" is used more often. However, in some cases "gross revenue" is more appropriate, as with calculations of cost of collection. Table A-2 includes revenues from deed-restricted parks, sales of the National Parks Pass, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, Transportation fee, and fees collected under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, as well as REA revenues.

- REA revenues for NPS increased from \$136.5 million in FY 2006 to \$165.6 million in FY 2007 to \$171.9 million in FY 2008.
- REA revenues for FWS increased steadily over the past three years from \$4.3 million in FY 2006 to \$4.4 million in FY 2007 to \$4.7 million in FY 2008.
- REA revenues for BLM have varied slightly over the last three years, from \$15.4 million in FY 2006 to \$14.6 million in FY07 to \$15.0 million in FY 2008.
- REA revenues for FS increased from \$50.2 million in FY 2005 to \$61.6 million in FY 2008.
- REA revenues for Reclamation in FY 2008, the first year that Reclamation collected fees under REA, were \$209,611.

Cost of Collection

In FY 2008, the cost of collection across the REA Program was 14.5 percent of gross fee revenues (including revenues from the Interagency Pass and NPS transportation fees). The cost of collection has been falling since FY 2003, when costs represented 20.7 percent of gross fee revenues (including some non-REA revenues such as revenues from NPS deed-restricted parks, National Parks Pass, and transportation fees). Cost of collection is calculated against gross fee (or “total”) revenue, because in some cases, the cost for collecting REA revenues and some non-REA revenues overlap, making it infeasible to separate costs.⁷ REA revenue and gross revenue are identified separately in Table A-2.

- In FY 2008, the average cost of collection for NPS was \$32.0 million or 17.2 percent of gross fee revenues, down from \$32.8 million or 18.1 percent of gross fee revenues in FY 2007. Costs of collection have varied between about 17 and 21 percent of fee revenues since FY 2004. Many small parks in the program have historically had higher collection costs as a percent of the gross revenue they collect. The locations where collection costs represent a large portion of gross revenue typically collect very small amounts of revenue, or have higher costs due to more complex site logistics and collection requirements (e.g., staffed entrance fee stations). The average cost of collection as a percentage of total fee revenue decreased in 2008 due to revenue increases, continued technology improvements, and better tracking and accountability processes. NPS policy is to keep cost of collection below 20 percent.
- In FY 2006, the cost of collection for FWS was \$558,000 or 13.0 percent of gross fee revenues. In FY 2007, the cost of collection was \$595,000 or 13.5 percent. In FY 2008, the cost of collection was \$700,000 or 15.0 percent of gross fee revenues. This fluctuation is consistent with past years. FWS policy is to keep cost of collection below 20 percent.
- In FY 2006, the cost of collection for BLM was \$1.3 million, or 8.3 percent of total recreation fee revenues. In FY 2007, the cost of collection decreased to \$439,000, or 3.0 percent of total fee revenues. In FY 2008, the cost of collection was \$415,000, or 2.8 percent of total fee revenues. Until FY 2007, BLM’s cost of collection included substantial costs associated with installation of fee collection equipment. Cost of collection has declined substantially due to the completion of a large-scale deployment of fee collection equipment in FY 2007, as well as establishment of an improved cost tracking system.
- The cost of collection for the FS was \$4.9 million, or 9.2 percent of total recreation fee revenues in FY 2006, \$5.1 million or 8.4 percent of total fee revenues in FY 2007, and \$5.8 million or 9.4 percent of total fee revenues in FY 2008. FS policy is to keep cost of collection below 15 percent.

⁷ For example, under P.L. 105-391, enacted in 1998, Congress authorized parks to collect a transportation fee and retain the revenue to fund transportation systems. Subsequently, a number of parks established transportation fees. In some cases, parks set aside a part of the entrance fee as a transportation fee.

- The total cost of collection for Reclamation was \$94,906 in FY 2008. Further details on Reclamation costs and revenues are provided in Table A-9. Reclamation policy is to keep cost of collection below 15 percent.

Obligation of Revenue

Annual obligations as a percentage of total recreation fee revenues available have increased from approximately 33 percent in FY 2000 to 46 percent in FY 2008. Over this period, both revenues and obligations have substantially increased in absolute terms.

- NPS obligated \$179.3 million to projects in FY 2008. This represents about 104 percent of annual REA revenue. Unobligated balances have declined from \$296.7 million in FY 2006 to \$266.7 million in FY 2008.
- FWS obligations are about equal to revenues. In FY 2006, FWS obligated \$4.2 million; in FY 2007, obligations were \$4.0; and in FY 2008, they were \$4.0 million. Unobligated balances increased from \$4.2 million in FY 2006 to \$5.3 million in FY 2008. FWS updated its Recreation Fee Program Guidance in September 2008 and included direction to increase obligations. FWS expects the new Guidance will result in an increase in obligations beginning in FY 2009.
- BLM obligations were greater than annual REA revenues in FY 2008, approximately equal to annual REA revenues in FY 2007, and somewhat less than annual revenues in FY 2006. Unobligated balances have remained between \$10 and \$11 million over the FY 2007-2008 period.
- FS obligations increased from about \$50 million in FY 2006 to about \$67 million in FY 2008. Unobligated balances declined from \$30.1 million in FY 2006 to \$25.6 million in FY 2008.
- In FY 2008, Reclamation's REA site, New Melones Lake, obligated \$94,906 of the \$209,611 in revenue collected.
- In accordance with REA and Departmental and bureau policies, REA revenue is not used to fund biological monitoring of listed or candidate Endangered Species Act species or for employee bonuses.

Visitation

Total visitation for the Department of the Interior agencies dropped in 2006 to 365 million from 395 million in 2005.⁸ Visitation has essentially remained constant at just under 375 million during 2007 and 2008. Additional visitation data for the Department of the Interior agencies for the period 2003 - 2008 can be found in Appendix A, Table A-1. A discussion of visitation statistics for each REA agency follows.

National Park Service

Annual visitation for NPS increased 1.1 percent in the past two fiscal years, from 271.4 million visits in 2006 to 274.3 million visits in 2008. Recent fluctuations in visitation can be attributed to a variety of factors including: higher gasoline prices, downturns in the economy, new recreational pursuits of visitors, natural disasters (such as eruptions at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park that caused park

⁸ Visitation data are collected by FY for BLM and FWS and by calendar year for NPS and Reclamation.

closures), airline bankruptcy (lower visitation at Hawaii Parks), and increased international travel as a result of the value of the Euro. Table 3 shows the changes in visitation for the top ten revenue-producing NPS sites.

Table 3. Change in Visitation at Top Ten NPS Sites, by Fee Revenue Collected, 2006 – 2008¹

NPS Unit	2006 Visitation	2008 Visitation	2006 Revenue	2008 Revenue	Percent Change in Visitation
Grand Canyon NP	4,268,834	4,488,809	21,967,289	24,954,013	↑ 5.2%
Yosemite NP	3,256,270	3,486,439	14,804,269	17,009,692	↑ 7.1%
Zion NP	2,553,245	2,696,097	6,828,298	9,267,810	↑ 5.6%
Yellowstone NP	2,863,333	3,123,058	7,763,515	8,351,622	↑ 9.1%
Rocky Mountain NP	2,788,337	2,738,022	7,554,887	7,721,871	↓ 1.8%
Shenandoah NP	1,040,636	1,057,770	4,289,167	4,663,436	↑ 1.6%
Glacier NP	1,935,394	2,031,440	3,816,646	4,373,994	↑ 5.0%
Lake Mead NRA	7,854,954	7,451,481	4,060,436	3,949,506	↓ 5.1%
Hawai'i Volcanoes NP	1,781,983	1,317,444	3,940,731	3,942,349	↓ 26.1%
Haleakalā NP	1,471,238	1,347,581	3,299,343	2,663,359	↓ 8.4%

¹ Visitation numbers are calendar year and revenue numbers are fiscal year.

Of the top ten highest revenue-collecting NPS sites in the FY 2006 - FY 2008 revenue period, six experienced an increase in visitation and four experienced a decrease in visitation. It is possible that passes purchased in one location and used at others (such as Yosemite National Park) may have contributed to reduced revenues at some parks.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Visitation at NWRs increased over the past three years from 38.4 million in FY 2006 to 40.3 million in FY 2007 to 41.3 million in FY 2008.

Bureau of Land Management

Visitation at BLM has varied slightly over the past three years, from 55.4 million in FY 2006 to 57.7 million in FY 2007 to 56.8 million in FY 2008.

Bureau of Reclamation

Visitation at Reclamation's New Melones Lake has varied in the last three years, from 791,282 in 2006 to 872,261 in 2007 and 661,481 in 2008.

Forest Service

Using data from the FS National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey, the FS estimates that there were approximately 179 million National Forest visits in FY 2007. At first glance, the FS visitation estimates may appear significantly different than the 205 million visits estimated for FY 2005 provided in the First Triennial Report, but it is inappropriate to make assumptions about visitation trends with only two figures. NVUM was a new approach to estimating visitation on National Forest lands, and the FY 2005 estimate was based on the first round of utilizing the new survey methodology.

Two key factors contribute to the differences between the two estimates. The first key factor relates to significant improvements that occurred between the first and second rounds in the accuracy and consistency of definitions. Simply going through the NVUM process for the first time enabled forest staff to increase their understanding and to improve collection the second time. The second key factor is that the scope and range of locations and times for selected data collection were modified in round two, to better ensure that all types of recreation visitation across the forest throughout the sample year were represented. These improvements have greatly enhanced the validity of all aspects of the NVUM results. It is possible that the changes account for a large portion of the differences in results between the two rounds of data. Because NVUM has only two data sets for some FS units, trends in visitation cannot yet be determined.

Public Participation/Outreach

Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service

REA requires the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) in each State or region.⁹ RRACs provide local communities with the opportunity to make recommendations on certain types of proposed recreation fee changes. Specifically, RRACs can make recommendations on implementing, eliminating, or changing standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation permit fees.

REA allows the agencies to either use existing Federal Advisory Committees, such as BLM Resource Advisory Councils (BLM RACs), or to establish new committees as appropriate. After holding 11 listening sessions in locations across the country in 2005, the FS and BLM elected to use a mix of new RRACs and existing BLM RACs. More information about RRACs is available in Appendix B.

Since 2006, BLM has sought RRAC review of 49 fee changes. Table 4 describes these proposals and the type of change being recommended.

Table 4. RRAC Recommendations for Bureau of Land Management Fee Changes

Site Type	Type of Fee Change		
	New Fee	Fee Increase	Total Fee Changes
Standard (Day use such as picnic areas, interpretive sites, and developed trailheads)	2	9	11
Expanded (Primarily Campgrounds)	8	21	29
Special Recreation Permits (Specialized Areas, such as Off-Highway Vehicle, River, or Long-Term Visitor Areas)	3	6	9
Total Proposals	13	36	49

Since 2006, the FS has shared approximately 900 fee proposals with the RRACs. Table 5 describes these proposals recommended by RRACs.

⁹ RRACs are required unless, in consultation with the governor of a State, it is determined insufficient interest exists to establish an RRAC in that state. Three states are currently exempted from REA-RRAC requirements: Alaska, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Table 5. RRAC Recommendations for Forest Service Fee Changes

Site Type	Type of Fee Change			
	New Fee	Fee Increase	Fee Decrease	Total Fee Changes
Standard (Day use: such as picnic areas, interpretive sites, boat launches, developed trailheads)	6	214	1	221
Expanded (Campgrounds)	59	435	3	497
Expanded (Cabins)	51	73	1	125
Expanded (Other: such as group sites, dump stations, highly developed boat launches)	12	9	0	21
Special Recreation Permits (Specialized trails, climbing areas, river use)	4	25	0	29
Total Proposals Shared	132	756	5	893

In addition to RRAC review and recommendations, both the FS and BLM provide for extensive public involvement for fee proposals, such as posting signs at affected areas, publishing media articles and press releases, posting information online, meeting with local government officials, and public meetings.

One example of BLM's public outreach efforts on REA sites involves the innovative public partnership structure with the Pueblo de Cochiti of New Mexico. The two organizations have created a unique Inter-Governmental Cooperative Management Agreement that has resulted in the designation of Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, which is an REA site. Since then, BLM and the Pueblo have worked together to protect and promote the preservation of the Tent Rocks Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Some examples of resource management projects accomplished with and leveraged through this partnership include development of a National Recreation Trail and the enhancement of visitor services such as parking and picnic facilities. This innovative partnership is critical to providing a higher level of service and involving the Pueblo government and the public in the development and coordination of resource management.

National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NPS. Director's Order DO 75A, contains policies and standards, definitions, roles and responsibilities, etc., for all public involvement efforts at NPS. The NPS guidelines describe in detail how public involvement should be carried out, and emphasize that each park superintendent should align the public input process to include pertinent stakeholders, the state of the economy, and tourism trends. The intention of the fee guidelines is to:

- Assist the parks on compliance with legal public participation requirements to change existing fees, add new fees, or establish new fee areas;
- Notify the public about fee rates and how recreation fee revenues are used; and
- Help parks strategize and leverage funding and staffing in carrying out these requirements.

The guidelines detail the steps that the superintendents must accomplish for any site changing an existing fee, adding a new fee, or establishing a new fee area. Parks establishing a new fee area must

also publish a Notice in the Federal Register. See Appendix C, or <http://www.nps.gov/civic/policy/>, for more details.

FWS. Similar to NPS, FWS also involves the public in the fee proposal process. FWS Recreation Fee Program Guidance includes the following procedures:

1. The Project Leader contacts the Regional Fee Coordinator and Refuge Supervisor to discuss the proposal.
2. The Project Leader informs the public of the proposal.
 - a. A notice describing the proposal is published in a local newspaper.
 - b. The site holds public meetings/open houses, focus groups, makes newsletters, website postings, etc., to share information about the proposal. Generally, the information provided includes:
 - A site description
 - Estimated costs (start-up, operating, maintenance)
 - Projected income
 - A market study of similar nearby services so as not to compete with local businesses
 - c. As part of public outreach, sites gather and review comments concerning proposed changes to the fee program and adjust the proposal if necessary.

Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation will continue to conduct extensive REA public involvement activities, as is required of all REA participating agencies. The agency uses a variety of media to engage the public including, but not limited to, Federal Register Notices, press releases, flyers, and websites. Reclamation will also use interagency working groups and open house meetings to involve the general public and other concerned parties.

In addition, the agency has established a detailed internal process on how a new REA area will be established and how Reclamation will involve the public throughout this REA designation process. This internal process can be found in the Reclamation Manual for the Recreation Enhancement Act, Directives and Standards, *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Program Management*, LND 01-02.

Interagency Pass Program

Overview of the Interagency Pass Program

REA established the America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Interagency Pass) to replace the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, Golden Access Passports, and the National Parks Pass. An extensive two-year planning effort was undertaken to: design and fabricate passes, set up fulfillment operations, and develop standard operating procedures for the range of pass products. The Annual, Senior, Access, and Volunteer Passes were made available to approximately 1,500 recreation sites. The Interagency Pass Program was successfully launched on January 1, 2007.

The new Interagency Pass Program was built upon lessons learned from the National Parks Pass Program and the Golden Eagle Passport Program. The primary objectives for the Interagency Pass Program are: (1) make passes more convenient to purchase and use; (2) incorporate technologies to allow for improved data collection and to prevent misuse; (3) provide a durable, collectible, high-quality product that promotes identity and support of Federal recreation lands; and (4) provide opportunities for partnership and education about recreation opportunities on Federal recreation lands.

One of the primary benefits of the new Interagency Pass Program is that it creates a single recreation pass for multiple land management agencies. Visitors traveling to different REA sites no longer have to worry about their pass not being accepted. The new program also is easier and more cost-effective for the Departments to manage. The program is administered by one agency, NPS, on behalf of all the other agencies. The Interagency Pass Program utilizes the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to provide fulfillment operations.

The Departments have developed uniform standard operating procedures (SOPs) for selling and honoring the passes in a consistent way, thereby reducing public confusion. The SOPs address identification requirements, proof of disability, pass validation, and procedures for utilizing third-party vendors to sell passes. National trainings and guidance have been provided to field staff to ensure consistency and good customer service.

To determine the price of the pass, Department of the Interior and NPS contracted with the University of Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center to conduct a study utilizing focus groups, a telephone survey, and data from State parks and Parks Canada. In setting the price of the pass, the agencies considered factors such as visitor services and achieving parity with other passes.

Annual Passes are available at all REA sites where an entrance fee or standard amenity fee is charged. Annual Passes are also sold at Federal field sites, through the Internet, and at over 20 additional third-party vendors including REI, Sierra Trading, and Southern RV. Passes are also sold through cooperating associations, friends groups, and foundations. Senior, Access, and Volunteer Passes can only be obtained in person at a Federal pass issuing location, due to documentation and identification requirements.

Types of Passes

Annual Pass: \$80.00 per year

This pass is available to anyone. It is valid for 12 months from the time of purchase and covers entrance and standard amenity fees.

Senior Pass: \$10.00 lifetime pass

This lifetime pass is available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents 62 years and older (replaced the Golden Age Passport). This pass covers entrance and standard amenity fees and provides some discounts on expanded amenity fees.

Access Pass: Free lifetime pass

This free, lifetime pass is available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents, regardless of age, who certify that they have a permanent disability by showing appropriate documentation or by signing a Statement of Disability. The Access Pass covers entrance and standard amenity fees and provides some discounts on expanded amenity fees.

Volunteer Pass: Free Annual Pass (value \$80.00/year)

This pass is issued free of charge to volunteers who log 500 hours of volunteer time. Volunteers' hours will be tracked online using a system being designed and managed by the participating agencies. The Volunteer Pass is valid for 12 months from the time of issue and covers entrance and standard amenity fees.

Collateral Materials – Free with each pass

Decal - Issued to Annual and Volunteer pass holders with open-top vehicles.

Hangtag - Issued to all pass holders utilizing un-staffed Federal recreation areas.

Brochure - Issued to all Annual Pass holders.

A comprehensive “Pass Issuance List” was developed in May 2008 that identifies the sites where the various passes may be obtained. Although most visitors simply obtain a pass when they arrive at a site where the pass is needed, this list gives visitors information they need to obtain a pass ahead of time. The list is available on agency websites (such as <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/PassIssuanceList.pdf>) and at many field locations.

Administration of Pass Program

NPS, on behalf of the other participating agencies, administers the Interagency Pass Program working in partnership with the USGS and the Government Printing Office (GPO).

USGS manages all pass products including inventory management; storage and tracking; shipping to field sites; processing consumer orders; monthly reporting; and call center operation. Through the end of FY 2008, approximately 2.5 million Interagency Passes have been shipped by USGS. NPS, through GPO, contracts with four commercial vendors to produce the passes, hangtags, decals, and brochures.



Figure 7. Winning Photo, Share the Experience Photo Contest, 2009

Interagency Pass Program Photo Contest

One of the most successful and exciting aspects of the Interagency Pass Program is the “Share the Experience” Photo Contest (Figure 7). The contest is managed by the National Park Foundation on behalf of the agencies. The winning image is used for the Annual and Volunteer Passes and accompanying decal each year. In the first three years of the contest over 36,000 photographs of the nation’s Federal lands have been submitted.

Interagency Pass Program Costs and Revenues

NPS provided startup funding for the Interagency Passes (\$2.4 million). The agencies have agreed to reimburse NPS when sufficient revenues have accumulated to cover both annual costs of the program and loan repayment. Revenue collected centrally by USGS (e.g., via internet or third party) is used to fund the administrative costs of the program and to reimburse NPS for the startup funding provided. Once these costs are covered, revenues from USGS sales will be split equally among the five participating agencies. This policy will be in place for at least the first five years of the program. Beyond five years, the agencies plan to institute a new central revenue distribution formula when all the agencies are able to collect pass usage statistics. Annual costs associated with administering the Interagency Pass Program have been approximately \$1.6 – \$1.8 million. This compares with total annual Interagency Pass revenue of approximately \$29 million.

One hundred percent of revenue from Interagency Pass sales at REA sites remains available to the agencies. Generally at least 80 percent (or 60 percent as specified in REA) of pass revenues are

retained and expended at the unit where they are purchased. From start of the program through September 31, 2008, approximately 2.5 million passes were shipped to interagency field sites.

- In 2007, approximately 720,000 passes were sold, generating about \$25 million in revenue.
- In 2008, approximately 760,000 passes were sold, generating nearly \$29 million in revenue; \$260,000 by BLM, \$290,000 by FWS, \$24.7 million by NPS, \$820 by Reclamation, \$1.7 million by FS, and \$1.9 million via central sales.

Accountability

National Park Service

NPS has implemented Comprehensive Plans as a management tool for the Recreation Fee Program, which has enabled individual parks to articulate their strategic use of fee revenues. Recreation Fee Comprehensive Plans (RFCPs):

- Provide data for management decisions;
- Ensure that expenditures are properly planned and in compliance with the law and NPS policy; and
- Allow NPS to track and report accomplishments.

In the FY 2007 appropriations language, the RFCP became the cornerstone of the fee expenditure approval process. Each park completes an annual update of its RFCP, in which an obligation strategy is identified to complete approved projects. The RFCP is also the instrument parks use to submit new projects for approval. The RFCP identifies the use of fee revenues in a 5-Year Plan. The regions review and approve the RFCP prior to review and approval by Washington Office project management staff. Projects are reviewed for compliance with REA and to ensure that they are consistent with the expenditure criteria, particularly the “direct visitor connection.” The RFCP also identifies how a park and region intend to contribute towards servicewide performance goals. These plans assist the parks by removing the obstacles created by poor project planning and sequencing. The plans allow regions to assist in funding decisions, to identify execution barriers, to identify a park’s project status and reporting, and to provide oversight to ensure revenues are managed in an accountable and “business-like” manner. The Comprehensive Plans continue to enhance NPS’s credibility and accountability and provide a mechanism for report planning and documenting performance measures.

The annual Recreation Fee Servicewide Comprehensive Call is used by NPS Washington Office to ensure that expenditures are properly planned and in compliance with the law and NPS policy. The guidance contains information about authorized expenditure types and proper procedures for entering projects in the Project Management Information System. The guidance also identifies targets for deferred maintenance and cost of collection.

Audits

NPS provides guidance to sites for program reviews and audits in the Reference Manual-22: Recreation Fee Guideline. These audits include fee compliance or “road audits;” honor system; cash register or point-of-sale system; unannounced internal reviews; and change (imprest) funds. The guidelines include frequency and level of responsibility. The Accounting Operations Center (AOC) for NPS also conducts internal control reviews at parks. The team uses the Internal Control

Questionnaire which is available on the AOC website for parks to review. The Fee Program section of this questionnaire provides a framework for parks to review and evaluate their fee operations at any time. In 2008 offsite and onsite reviews were completed for 25 parks by Washington Office and regional staff.

Onsite reviews included topics such as employee safety, lighting, and security systems; adherence to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Department of the Treasury cash management regulations; compliance with REA for expenditures; security of funds; reconciliation of all government assets, cash, and passes; and accurate website information for the public. Offsite reviews encompass detailed analysis of compliance with OMB and Treasury cash management guidelines; correct use of revenue according to REA and guidelines for cost of collection and related projects; and correct use of primary work elements for both revenue and expenditures to insure accountability and accurate website information for the public.

Point-of-sale (Cash Register) System (POSS)

NPS is in the process of procuring a servicewide point-of-sale (cash register) system for all fee collection parks. This system will provide standardized ways to collect, deposit, and reconcile funds. It will allow centralized reporting of detailed transaction information as well as provide summary reports that will aid in analysis and improved accountability of funds. The point-of-sale system will streamline wait times for paying customers by providing quicker transaction times and allow for more expedient and modern payment options such as credit card and pre-authorized debit. The system includes an improved serialized inventory system for management of passes and accountable property. The POSS will have the capability to collect statistical and demographic visitor information, which will assist managers in better park management.

The POSS Request for Proposals was issued in August 2008. Bids have been received and reviewed by a source selection team. Contract award is tentatively planned for spring of 2009 and phase 1 of implementation is planned for the following winter. The plan is to have the servicewide system in place for all fee collection parks by 2011 barring any unforeseen complications.

Having one contract will streamline duplicative contracting efforts and will likely provide cost savings due to economies of scale (larger purchase, more cost savings). It will also be easier to train fee collection staff on one consistent operating system. Having one system will better ensure that all transactions and personal information meet security standards and requirements.

U.S Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS updated its Recreation Fee Program Guidance in September 2008. This contains detailed collection and accounting procedures on monitoring and reconciling accounts, and creating business plans. For example, the guidance on business plans states: "Recreation Fee sites that collect \$5,000 annually or more must develop and follow a business plan. Business plans include five-year plans for collections and expenditures, but may include other information, Best Practices, etc. that the site finds useful." The Guidance includes a suggested format that sites may also use for annual reporting.

Recently, the FWS Finance Center implemented electronic collection transmittals for all collections, including recreation fees. This is done through the Pay.gov system. In addition, FWS Division of Financial Management (DFM) has added the Recreation Fee Collection Process to its OMB A-123 review of internal controls over financial reporting. This review focuses on appropriate internal controls, while taking into consideration the cost-effectiveness of control procedures. DFM has also

updated and expanded coverage of fee collections by field stations in its Financial Process Questionnaire that it sends to 25 percent of Service field stations each year.

Bureau of Land Management

In 2006, BLM issued guidance on recreation fee collection procedures. This directive prescribed the procedures for recreation fee collections for recreation sites. The guidance included such items as: recreation fee collections; recreation collections affidavit; collection officer designation memorandum; notice to customers making payment by check; and notice to customers presenting checks. In 2007, BLM updated its Recreation Fees and Permit Manual outlining procedures for accountability.

To ensure proper oversight, audits/evaluations are conducted on an annual basis. The focus of these audits/evaluations is to review how State and Field Offices are complying with guidance and implementing the fee program, and to ensure fair return to the government from entities conducting business on public lands. The purpose of the audits/evaluations is to identify both internal and external program deficiencies and to discover ways to improve the Recreation Fee Program. These audits/evaluations also examine fiscal processing compliance and financial controls.

Forest Service

The FS issued Interim Guidelines for Implementation of REA in April 2005. The agency has developed numerous tools, including national signage guidance, as well as fee analysis tools and templates to assist in the preparation of fee proposals for presentation to the public and to RRACs. These tools ensure that information provided to the public will be easy to understand and consistent from site to site. To provide regular financial oversight, REA revenue and expenditure data are collected from national forests and national grasslands annually. These data are reviewed for accountability purposes and used in the preparation of this report. Some forests are even using it online to inform the public of fee projects.

The FS is finalizing directives for implementation of REA. The agency expects to issue most of the directives and publish the remainder for public comment in 2009.

In addition to local feedback from comment cards and public meetings, the FS also seeks feedback on visitor satisfaction through NVUM. In 2007, NVUM estimated that for 83 percent of visits to sites where fees were charged, the visitor was satisfied with the value received for the fee paid.

Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation has taken the following steps to implement REA:

- Established Reclamation Manual Directive and Standard, *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act Program Management*, LND 01-02, that outlines, among other things, Reclamation's (1) procedures for ordering, selling, and acceptance of recreation passes at REA areas (2) process for designating new REA sites; (3) process for increasing fees at existing REA sites; and (4) process for collecting, accounting for, and distribution of REA fees and revenues.
- Invested a limited amount of non-Recreation fee revenues on capital improvements such as fee collection stations and on materials and supplies necessary to implement fee collection activities (e.g., a safe that would allow Reclamation to properly secure accountable property such as REA passes and decals).

- Requested and obtained OMB approval to administer a survey to the general public that would allow Reclamation to obtain valuable data to meet its Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) performance measure for fiscal year 2009 (i.e., collect data related to the “percent of customers satisfied with the value for fee paid”).

Reclamation plans to use any revenues received from third party sales of REA pass to (1) improve recreation areas directly managed by Reclamation so that they may meet REA criteria for future participation; and (2) further Reclamation’s recreation mission goal by improving recreation areas to make them more attractive for management by potential partners. By pursuing these two courses of action, participation in REA will become an integral part of Reclamation’s approach to recreation management on its lands and waterbodies.

Structure of the Program

Changes in number of sites since last report

National Park Service

Currently, there are 196 NPS sites out of 391 sites that charge fees under REA. The following five parks ceased collecting fees from 2006 to 2008, primarily due to difficult logistics associated with collecting fees: Big Hole National Battlefield, Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, Women’s Rights National Historical Park, Fort Larned National Historic Site, and Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. A decision was made to waive bicyclist fees at Assateague National Seashore and to align fee structure with Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge in FY 2007. This reduced confusion for visitors, since the sites are located adjacent to each other and there is a reciprocal pass arrangement at both parks. In 2007, Cape Cod National Seashore ceased collecting a per person fee due to concern for visitor and employee safety. The alignment of the road forced pedestrians to be on the wrong side of the street which created an unsafe situation.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS manages 549 refuges, of which about 450 are open to the public. Of these, only 35 charge entrance fees. In addition to refuges, FWS has over 200 waterfowl production areas, 69 national fish hatcheries, and 95 coordination areas and administrative sites. Over 96 percent of FWS sites that are open to the public have free entry.

Over the past several years, FWS has consolidated many of its National Wildlife Refuges into National Wildlife Refuge Complexes for management purposes. This included a number of fee sites. Thus, while the FWS fee program has expanded, bringing in two new fee sites, the overall number of reporting sites has decreased from about 180 sites to 158 due to the consolidation into Complexes.

Currently about a dozen non-refuge sites as well as non-fee refuges now sell Interagency Passes due to public demand. These include National Fish Hatcheries, Wetland Management Districts, and Ecological Services Field Offices. Many of these sites are near U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has opted to honor the Interagency Senior and Access Passes, but because it is not an REA agency, it cannot issue them.

Bureau of Land Management

The vast majority of recreation on the 256 million acres of BLM-managed land is dispersed and does not involve any fee. BLM manages close to 3,600 recreation sites, of which approximately 300 (less than ten percent) require fees. The remainder are free. There have been 36 fee increases on BLM REA sites and 13 new fee sites added since the first Triennial Report to Congress. These changes were all reviewed and approved by the appropriate RRAC.

Forest Service

The FS manages about 17,500 developed recreation sites, of which approximately 4,185 (24 percent) require fees under REA. Approximately 2,000 (11 percent) require other types of fees, and 11,000 (65 percent) are free. The number of FS sites in the Recreation Fee Program has remained relatively stable between FY 2006 and FY 2008. Of the 4,185 sites included in the Recreation Fee Program, most are campgrounds. From FY 2006 to FY 2008, 105 fee sites have been added through the RRAC process, and five have been removed from the Recreation Fee Program and are now free to the public.

The FS recently undertook a process called Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA), which identifies actions proposed for the short-term and sets the stage for long-term planning for recreation sites. Forests that have completed the RFA process develop a five year proposed Program of Work that will help the Forest meet the needs of the public. One management option identified by RFA is the use of fees or changing fees. As Forests begin working toward their five year Programs of Work, some fee proposals may be developed and presented to the public and RRACs.

Bureau of Reclamation

Reclamation has designated one REA area since the First Triennial Report to Congress, New Melones Lake.

Pricing structure

National Park Service

As a result of a fee study conducted by McKinsey and Company in 2001, NPS instituted a servicewide entrance fee pricing structure in 2006. This was done to simplify and standardize entrance fees across parks of similar types. Parks were grouped into categories according to legislative designation and other factors; and fee rates were consistently set based on those categories. Group 1 includes National Historic Sites, National Military Parks, National Battlefield Parks, National Memorials/Shrines, National Preserves, and Parkways. Group 2 includes National Seashores, National Recreation Areas, National Monuments, National Lakeshores, and National Historic Parks. Groups 3 and 4 include National Parks. Civic engagement has been a critical part of implementation. All parks are required to adhere to a public participation guideline that requires public involvement activities and congressional consultation.

Group 1: \$5 per person/\$10 per vehicle/\$20 Annual Pass/\$5 motorcycle

Group 2: \$7 per person/\$15 per vehicle/\$30 Annual Pass/\$10 motorcycle

Group 3: \$10 per person/\$20 per vehicle/\$40 Annual Pass/\$15 motorcycle

Group 4: \$12 per person/\$25 per vehicle/\$50 Annual Pass/\$20 motorcycle

Implementation of the new pricing structure began in 2006 and 2007. In 2006 twenty-three NPS units completed civic engagement and implemented the pricing structure. In 2007 eleven units implemented the new pricing structure.

In 2008, the Director of NPS put a moratorium on fee increases with the exception of those with unique or compelling reasons. Assateague Island National Seashore was the only park in 2008 that increased the entrance fee, in order to align with the neighboring Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Five parks requested increases for expanded amenity fees, mostly for campgrounds, in order to keep the rates comparable to local conditions and because of new contract costs of the National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS). Those parks were Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Site, Arches National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Padre Islands National Seashore, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS requires that sites do a market analysis before starting a new fee activity or adjusting fees. This ensures that FWS fees stay within the same fee range as similar State or private fee activities. Since the majority of FWS fee activities are hunts, and since some hunts (deer, for example) vary greatly in price across the country (within State/private sector), FWS looks for price consistency within regions rather than nationwide. Entrance fees, however, are becoming more consistent. Daily fees are typically \$5 per vehicle, and refuge-specific Annual Passes are \$15. That is the same price as a Federal Duck Stamp, which also gives the holder entrance to a refuge.

Bureau of Land Management

After the passage of REA, BLM issued guidance on fee structures. The Guidance requires that fees be established according to the amenities that are offered to the public. The level of amenities was categorized from low, moderate, and high. The Guidance recommends the establishment of prices ranging from \$5 to \$30.

Forest Service

The FS does not have a nationwide pricing structure. Rates are based on local market conditions; however, several tools have been developed for use nationally to assist forests in analyzing pricing factors such as facilities available, operation and maintenance costs, condition of the site, uniqueness of the setting, and other local recreation providers. These tools are often used in fee proposals for presentation to RRACs. Nationally, the average day use fee in a national forest is approximately \$6, and the average overnight fee is approximately \$9.

Ongoing Activities to Improve REA Management

The Departments are continually striving to make the REA Program the best and most efficient vehicle for providing high-quality Federal recreation facilities and services to the American public. The Departments meet regularly to review the status of the program and discuss possible program improvements. Some examples of recommended changes to the overall fee system that are currently under consideration by the Departments include:

- Improvements to Recreation.gov, including expanding the site to include online permitting, lotteries and reservations for special park uses.
- Allowing Senior and Access Pass sales/issuance through the mail or internet.
- Providing decals to Senior and Access pass holders that have open-topped vehicles.
- Providing additional information about where passes are accepted, updating publications, and enhancing marketing in order to provide the public with more options for purchasing passes.
- NPS is implementing a number of improvements that include:

- A servicewide point-of-sale system that will create a standardized system for effective, efficient collection, accounting, reporting and management of NPS fee revenues. This system will improve the visitor experience by reducing wait times at many park entrance stations. NPS is also working to provide enhanced guidance and increased training opportunities for front line employees as well as park managers.
- Redesigning the NPS.gov site to make information easier to find and fee rates more apparent.
- NPS is exploring options to allow for more convenient fee payment options and fee payments online.
- The FS has committed to reviewing its High Impact Recreation Areas (HIRAs) and presenting them to the RRACs. In 2007-2008, the FS undertook a national review, and will present the findings to RRACs about recreation fee areas. Changes to some of these areas may be made in consultation with RRACs and the public.
- BLM has identified a need for more training. Through the National Training Center, distance learning courses are under development addressing the overall Recreation Fee Program management, data collection, and commercial use.

REA agencies recognize a need to improve internal planning and internal and external communication with regard to projects that require sites to accumulate fee dollars from year to year. Further, the agencies hope to see an increase in obligations during FY 2009 and beyond:

- To reduce the unobligated balance of recreation fees, NPS has implemented a system for each park that collects fees to use the Recreation Fee Comprehensive Plan which documents projects for five years. Each fee collecting park completes an annual update of their plan which includes a timeline for completing approved projects. Using this management tool, projects are reviewed for compliance with REA and consistency with the expenditure criteria particularly the direct visitor connection. The plans continue to enhance NPS's accountability, as well as provide a mechanism for reporting and documenting performance accomplishments.
- To encourage use of unobligated funds, FWS has set an annual target obligation rate of 50 percent for the recreation fee account. This requirement is now contained in the FWS Guidance for the Recreation Fee Program.¹⁰

¹⁰ The FWS guidance advises sites to look at their available balances, and if they are more than 50 percent of a site's annual collections, to allocate funds to projects such as visitor services or maintenance. Accumulating two or more years of funding to pay for one big project is permitted, provided that the project is planned for and listed in a business plan.

Section 4: Conclusion

The Recreation Fee Program enables land management agencies to retain and spend recreation fees where they are collected. This enhances recreation opportunities for millions of visitors nationwide. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act enabled improvements to visitor services and facilities on Federal lands across the nation, authorized a new national interagency recreation pass, and established a robust process to engage the public directly in the Recreation Fee Program. While recreation fees support and enhance visitor experiences at popular sites across the country, there are also extensive opportunities for visitors to recreate on Federal lands without paying REA fees.

This second Triennial Report has presented an overview of the Recreation Fee Program from FY 2006 to FY 2008 for the five REA-participating agencies. It has updated program information and provides examples of how recreation fee revenues are being used to enhance the experience of visitors who pay these fees.

In addition to the Report itself, several Appendices have been included. Appendix A provides detailed Statistics and Budgetary data. Tables in this Appendix provide visitation data, as well as detailed revenue and obligation data. Appendix B provides detailed information on the RRAC program for the FS and BLM, including information about the committees themselves, as well as the public involvement and RRAC recommendation process. Appendix C includes the Public Participation and Notification Guidelines used by NPS for the Recreation Fee Program.



Ranger guides birders at Midway Atoll NWR (FWS)

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Appendix A: Statistics and Budgetary Data

Table A-1. Department of the Interior Visitation to REA and Non-REA sites (visits in millions), 2003 – 2008¹

Agency ²	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
National Park Service						
REA sites	229.9	220.4	210.5	204.4	207.3	204.9
All other sites	35.5	56.0	90.3	67.0	68.2	69.4
Agency total	265.4	276.4	300.8	271.4	275.5	274.3
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service						
REA sites	18.4	18.7	18.1	23.6	24.8	25.4
All other sites	21.2	21.2	19.9	14.8	15.5	15.9
Agency total	39.6	39.9	38.0	38.4	40.3	41.3
Bureau of Land Management						
REA sites	10.2	9.7	9.8	10.0	8.9	8.6
All other sites	42.7	44.3	46.3	45.4	48.8	48.2
Agency total ³	52.9	54.0	56.1	55.4	57.7	56.8
Bureau of Reclamation						
REA sites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.7
All other sites ⁴	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agency total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.7
DOI Totals						
REA sites	273.4	265.6	249.7	238.0	241.0	239.5
Non-REA sites	84.6	104.7	145.2	127.2	132.5	133.5
DOI total	358.0	370.3	394.9	365.2	373.5	373.0
¹ Values in this table may not compute due to rounding. ² Visitation data are collected by FY for BLM and FWS and by calendar year for NPS and Reclamation. ³ Visitation for BLM's REA and other sites for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005 has been adjusted based on revisions to visitation statistics. Total visitation for these years is unchanged. ⁴ Reclamation does not annually collect agency-wide data on visitation at recreation areas.						

Table A-2. REA/Fee Demo Revenues and Related Revenues (\$ millions), FY 2000 – FY 2008¹

	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
National Park Service									
Fee demo/REA Revenue	\$133.6	\$126.2	\$125.7	\$123.5	\$128.6	\$128.2	\$135.1	\$164.1	\$171.3
Deed restricted/REA Revenue ²	\$1.5	\$1.4	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$1.2	\$1.4	\$1.5	\$0.6
Non-fee demo/non-REA									
National park pass	\$10.1	\$14.2	\$15.3	\$16.8	\$20.3	\$18.6	\$22.2	\$3.2	\$0.0 ³
Yellowstone, Grand Teton ⁴	N/A	N/A	\$1.0	\$1.0	\$1.0	\$1.1	\$0.2	\$0.4	\$0.5
Transportation Revenue	\$2.0	\$4.9	\$5.0	\$5.7	\$6.6	\$11.0	\$7.0	\$11.6	\$13.9
NPS subtotal	\$147.2	\$146.7	\$148.4	\$148.3	\$157.8	\$160.1	\$165.9	\$180.8	\$186.3
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service									
Fee demo/REA Revenue	\$3.4	\$3.7	\$3.6	\$3.8	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$4.7
Non-fee demo/non-REA	\$0.5	\$0.3	\$0.2	\$0.2	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0
FWS subtotal	\$3.9	\$4.0	\$3.8	\$4.0	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$4.7
Bureau of Land Management									
Fee demo/REA revenue ⁵	\$7.0	\$7.6	\$8.7	\$10.3	\$13.3	\$13.3	\$15.4	\$14.6	\$15.0
Non-fee demo/non-REA ⁶	\$1.4	\$1.2	\$0.9	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$1.2	\$0.9
BLM subtotal	\$8.4	\$8.8	\$9.6	\$10.4	\$13.5	\$13.4	\$15.6	\$15.8	\$15.9
Bureau of Reclamation									
Fee demo/REA Revenue ⁷	Not Applicable								\$0.2
Forest Service									
Fee demo/REA Revenue	\$31.8	\$35.3	\$37.7	\$39.3	\$46.8	\$50.2	\$53.4	\$61.0	\$61.6
Non-fee demo/non-REA ⁸	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.5	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0
Forest Service subtotal	\$35.8	\$39.6	\$42.2	\$39.3	\$46.8	\$50.2	\$53.4	\$61.0	\$61.6
Total, All Agencies									
Fee demo/REA Revenue	\$175.8	\$172.8	\$175.7	\$176.9	\$192.6	\$196.0	\$209.5	\$245.5	\$253.2
Non-fee demo/non-REA	\$19.4	\$26.3	\$28.3	\$25.1	\$29.4	\$32.0	\$29.5	\$16.4	\$15.4
Total Revenue	\$195.2	\$199.0	\$204.0	\$201.9	\$222.0	\$227.9	\$239.2	\$261.3	\$268.6
¹ Values in this table may not compute due to rounding. ² Deed-restricted revenue is included in REA Revenue beginning in FY 2006. ³ The National Park Pass was not sold in FY 2008, as it had been replaced by the REA Annual Pass. See Section 3 of this report for more information on the Interagency Pass Program under REA. ⁴ Data prior to 2002 is included with National Park Pass revenue. ⁵ The total net revenue recorded in the BLM Collections and Billings System in the recreation commodities associated specifically with recreation permits and lease fees. ⁶ Additional net revenues recorded in the BLM Collections and Billings System from miscellaneous sources, including administrative fees, trespass, late fees, publication sales, Cost Recovery, Interagency Passes, and permit sales that were not correctly categorized. ⁷ Non-REA revenue is not provided because Reclamation does not collect agency-wide data specifically on recreation fee revenues. Due to the various authorities and revenue disposition requirements associated with Reclamation projects, there is not one specific account into which all recreation revenues are placed. ⁸ Non-fee demo/Non-REA revenue includes revenue collected under the Emergency Wetland Resources Act and the LWCFR. Revenue reported here was collected under these authorities and at sites that were not included in the fee demo program.									

Table A-3. REA Revenues and Cost of Fee Collection - Fee Demo and REA (\$ millions), FY 2003 – FY 2008¹

Agency/Receipt Category	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
National Park Service						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$123.5	\$128.6	\$128.2	\$135.1	\$164.1	\$171.3
Deed-restricted ²	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$1.2	\$1.4	\$1.5	\$0.6
National Park Pass Revenue	\$16.8	\$20.3	\$18.6	\$22.2	\$3.2	\$0.0
Yellowstone and Grand Teton	\$1.0	\$1.0	\$1.1	\$0.2	\$0.4	\$0.5
Transportation Revenue	\$5.7	\$6.6	\$11.0	\$7.0	\$11.6	\$13.9
Total Revenue	\$148.3	\$157.8	\$160.1	\$165.9	\$180.8	\$186.3
Cost of Fee Collection	\$34.6	\$33.8	\$32.9	\$33.9	\$32.8	\$32.0
As Percent of total revenue	23.3%	21.4%	20.5%	20.5%	18.1%	17.2%
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$3.8	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$4.7
Cost of Fee Collection	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.7
As Percent of Fee Revenue	15.8%	15.4%	14.0%	13.0%	13.5%	15.0%
Bureau of Land Management						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$10.3	\$13.3	\$13.3	\$15.4	\$14.6	\$15.0
Cost of Fee Collection	\$1.1	\$2.1	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$0.4	\$0.4
As Percent of Fee Revenue ³	10.8%	15.8%	9.8%	8.3%	3.0%	2.8%
Bureau of Reclamation						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.2
Cost of Fee Collection	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.1
As Percent of Fee Revenue	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	45%
Forest Service						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$39.3	\$46.8	\$50.2	\$53.4	\$61.0	\$61.6
Cost of Fee Collection	\$5.3	\$6.5	\$7.9	\$4.9	\$5.1	\$5.8
As Percent of Fee Revenue ⁴	13.6%	14.0%	15.6%	9.2%	8.4%	9.4%
Total, All Agencies						
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$176.9	\$192.6	\$196.0	\$209.5	\$245.5	\$253.2
Fee Demo/REA Revenue, plus Additional Revenue Sources for NPS ⁵	\$201.6	\$221.7	\$227.7	\$238.9	\$260.7	\$267.4
Cost of Fee Collection ⁶	\$41.6	\$43.0	\$42.6	\$40.6	\$38.9	\$38.9
Operating Cost of fee collection as a percent of Fee Demo/REA Revenue, plus Additional Revenue Sources for NPS ⁵	20.7%	19.8%	18.7%	17.0%	14.9%	14.5%
¹ Values in this table may not compute due to rounding.						
² Deed-restricted revenue is counted as REA Revenue as of FY 2006.						
³ BLM's cost of collection is substantially lower than that of other agencies because the vast majority of fees are collected using fee collection equipment that does not require personnel to be present. Installation of fee collection equipment was a large proportion of BLM's cost of collection until FY 2007, when BLM completed large-scale deployment of fee collection equipment.						
⁴ The change in costs of collection between FY 2006 and FY 2006 is due to a change how the FS categorized costs associated with the NRRS reservation service. In FY 2005, costs for the reservation service were categorized as costs of collection, but in subsequent years, costs associated with NRRS were categorized under "Fee Management Agreement."						
⁵ Includes Deed-Restricted, National Park Pass, Yellowstone NP and Grand Teton NP, and Transportation Revenue.						
⁶ Costs of fee collection do not include costs associated with fee management agreements, or administrative and overhead costs.						

Table A-4. Fee Demo/REA Revenues and Obligations (\$ millions), FY 2000 – FY 2008¹

Agency	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
National Park Service									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue ²	\$133.6	\$126.2	\$125.7	\$123.5	\$128.6	\$128.2	\$158.7	\$168.8	\$172.0
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	\$187.5	\$232.0	\$243.7	\$269.7	\$251.5	\$240.7	\$284.6	\$298.1	\$274.0
Funds Obligated	\$91.5	\$116.4	\$101.9	\$142.3	\$141.1	\$125.2	\$146.6	\$194.9	\$179.3
Unobligated Balance	\$229.6	\$241.7	\$267.5	\$250.9	\$239.1	\$243.6	\$296.7	\$272.0	\$266.7
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$3.4	\$3.7	\$3.6	\$3.8	\$3.9	\$4.3	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$4.7
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	\$2.8	\$3.4	\$3.6	\$3.9	\$4.0	\$3.7	\$4.1	\$4.3	\$4.7
Funds Obligated	\$3.0	\$3.6	\$3.4	\$3.7	\$4.3	\$4.4	\$4.2	\$4.0	\$4.0
Unobligated Balance	\$3.3	\$3.5	\$3.8	\$4.0	\$3.5	\$3.6	\$4.2	\$4.7	\$5.3
Bureau of Land Management									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$7.0	\$7.6	\$8.7	\$10.2	\$13.3	\$13.3	\$15.4	\$14.6	\$15.0
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	\$3.3	\$4.7	\$5.6	\$5.3	\$0.2	\$7.6	\$8.4	\$10.7	\$10.9
Funds Obligated	\$5.8	\$6.9	\$9.0	\$8.9	\$12.6	\$12.7	\$13.3	\$14.5	\$15.8
Unobligated Balance	\$4.4	\$5.4	\$5.2	\$6.5	\$0.8	\$8.2	\$10.5	\$10.7	\$10.1
Bureau of Reclamation									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.2
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Funds Obligated	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.1
Unobligated Balance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.1
Forest Service									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$31.8	\$35.3	\$37.7	\$39.3	\$46.8	\$50.2	\$53.4	\$61.0	\$61.6
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	\$14.6	\$20.9	\$26.9	\$22.0	\$25.4	\$35.7	\$26.7	\$30.1	\$30.8
Funds Obligated	\$25.6	\$29.3	\$45.3	\$35.1	\$44.0	\$45.6	\$50.1	\$60.4	\$66.8
Unobligated Balance	\$20.8	\$26.9	\$19.3	\$26.2	\$28.2	\$40.3	\$30.1	\$30.8	\$25.6
Total, All Agencies									
Fee Demo/REA Revenue	\$175.8	\$172.8	\$175.7	\$176.9	\$192.5	\$195.9	\$231.8	\$248.8	\$253.2
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries	\$208.3	\$261.0	\$279.8	\$300.9	\$281.1	\$287.8	\$323.8	\$343.2	\$320.4
Total Funds Available	\$384.6	\$433.6	\$455.4	\$477.8	\$473.4	\$483.8	\$555.4	\$591.7	\$573.3
Funds Obligated	\$125.9	\$156.2	\$159.7	\$190.1	\$202.0	\$187.9	\$214.2	\$273.8	\$265.8
Funds Obligated as Percentage of Total Funds Available	33%	36%	35%	40%	43%	38%	39%	46%	46%
Unobligated Balance	\$258.1	\$277.5	\$295.8	\$287.6	\$271.6	\$295.8	\$341.4	\$318.2	\$307.7

¹ Values in this table may not compute due to rounding.

² Unlike in Tables A-2 and A-3, for the purposes of calculating obligations, NPS Fee Demo/REA revenue for FY 2006 and FY 2007 includes revenues associated with the National Park Pass.

Table A-5. National Park Service Obligations of REA Revenues (\$ thousands), FY 2006 – FY 2008

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward and Recoveries ¹	\$284,587	\$298,072	\$273,990
Total Fees Collected	\$158,691	\$168,841	\$171,994
Total Funds Available	\$443,278	\$466,913	\$445,984
Obligations by Project Type			
Facilities Routine/Annual Maintenance	\$65	\$1,538	\$2,056
Facilities Capital Improvement ²	\$4,500	\$13,654	\$13,365
Facilities Deferred Maintenance	\$72,500	\$101,828	\$87,409
Interpretation and Visitor Services	\$17,500	\$26,069	\$21,881
Resource Protection	N/A	N/A	N/A
Habitat Restoration	\$8,912	\$12,000	\$12,100
Health and Safety Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Collection Costs	\$33,931	\$32,770	\$32,045
Law Enforcement (for public use and recreation)	\$500	\$500	\$525
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services ²	\$1,639	\$1,645	\$3,200
Administrative, Overhead, and Indirect Costs ²	\$2,387	\$2,900	\$4,565
Pass Administration and Overhead	\$4,683	\$2,030	\$2,138
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Obligations	\$146,617	\$194,934	\$179,284
End of Year Unobligated Balance	\$296,661	\$271,979	\$266,700
Total Expenditures (Outlays)	\$148,511	\$150,030	\$183,656
¹ This information represents accounting changes in accordance with REA that combined Recreation Fee, National Park Pass, Interagency Pass, and Deed Restricted revenues when reporting obligations and unobligated balances for the Recreation Fee Program. Although these changes did not become effective until the end of calendar year 2006, or the second quarter of FY 2007, this table includes National Park Pass information in 2006. This table does not include other programs administered under the Recreation Fee Permanent account such as the Transportation Systems Fund, Education Expenses for the Children of Yellowstone NP Employees, and the Payment of Tax Losses on Land Acquired at Grand Teton NP.			
² Includes obligations associated with the National Recreation Reservation Service.			

Table A-6. Bureau of Land Management Obligations of REA Revenues (\$ thousands), FY 2006 – FY 2008¹

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total Fee Revenue Collected	\$15,404	\$14,550	\$14,954
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward	\$8,443	\$10,652	\$10,939
Total Funds Available	\$23,847	\$25,202	\$25,893
Projects Accomplished			
Visitor Services	\$4,126	\$4,939	\$6,445
Habitat Restoration	\$464	\$57	\$979
Law Enforcement	\$2,660	\$3,171	\$2,712
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services	\$1,547	\$991	\$17
Facilities Deferred Maintenance	\$561	\$135	\$186
Facilities Capital Improvements	\$423	\$3,249	\$603
Facilities Routine/Annual Maintenance	\$2,280	\$1,750	\$4,159
Subtotal Facilities Maintenance	\$3,264	\$5,134	\$4,948
Collection Costs (Annual Operating)	\$1,278	\$439	\$415
Other	NA	NA	\$283
Total Obligations ²	\$13,339	\$14,520	\$15,799
End of Year Cumulative Unobligated Balance	\$10,508	\$10,682	\$10,094
Total Expenditures/Outlays ³	\$12,933	\$14,030	\$15,478
¹ Year-to-year variation in obligation totals reflects initiation and completion of large-scale projects at some of BLM's largest collection sites. ² Reflects obligations of fee revenue as reported by BLM field offices for each year, regardless of the year the revenues were collected. These numbers may vary from those reported by the U.S. Department of the Treasury because of incomplete estimates by field staff, or because some sites reported deposits that were not credited in time for U.S. Treasury budget reports. ³ Expenditures may differ from obligations due to timing issues with reporting.			

Table A-7. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Obligations of REA Revenues (\$ thousands), FY 2006 – FY 2008

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total Fee Revenue Collected	\$4,279	\$4,410	\$4,660
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward	\$4,093	\$4,318	\$4,655
Total Funds Available	\$8,372	\$8,728	\$9,315
Projects Accomplished			
Visitor Services	\$1,553	\$1,632	\$1,427
Habitat Restoration	\$140	\$91	\$83
Law Enforcement	\$417	\$260	\$300
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services ¹	\$8	\$8	\$7
Facilities Deferred Maintenance	\$440	\$520	\$252
Facilities Capital Improvements	\$376	\$156	\$333
Facilities Routine/Annual Maintenance	\$281	\$387	\$626
Subtotal Facilities Maintenance	\$1,097	\$1,063	\$1,211
Collection Costs (Annual Operating)	\$558	\$595	\$700
Other ²	\$397	\$389	\$325
Total Obligations	\$4,171	\$4,038	\$4,053
End of Year Cumulative Unobligated Balance	\$4,202	\$4,690	\$5,262
Total Expenditures/Outlays ³	\$3,711	\$3,715	\$4,070
¹ FWS currently has few FMA sites, though this number may increase in the future. One FWS site has expressed a desire to join NRRS. ² As of 2008, the "Other" category is Administrative, Overhead, and Indirect expenses. ³ Expenditures may differ from obligations due to timing issues with reporting.			

Table A-8. Forest Service Obligations of REA Revenues (\$ thousands), FY 2006 – FY 2008

	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total Fee Revenue Collected	\$53,444	\$61,042	\$61,619
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward ¹	\$26,680	\$30,118	\$30,808
Total Funds Available	\$80,124	\$91,160	\$92,427
Projects Accomplished			
Visitor Services	\$12,513	\$14,264	\$13,817
Habitat Restoration	\$528	\$479	\$399
Law Enforcement	\$2,460	\$2,392	\$2,453
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services	\$7,790	\$8,914	\$11,208
Facilities Maintenance	\$22,088	\$23,945	\$23,350
Collection Costs (Annual Operating)	\$4,922	\$5,077	\$5,795
Administrative, Overhead, and Indirect Costs ²	\$756	\$2,537	\$3,123
Total Obligations ³	\$50,054	\$60,392	\$66,803
End of Year Cumulative Unobligated Balance	\$30,070	\$30,768	\$25,624
Total Expenditures/Outlays ⁴	\$50,430	\$57,644	\$63,849
¹ Unobligated balances brought forward do not include \$94 million non-REA revenue which is reflected in the SF-133 Report to Treasury. This non-REA revenue is slated specifically for deferred maintenance. ² FY 2007 and 2008 totals for this category include cost pools, in addition to RRAC expenses and other administrative expenses. ³ Total obligations as reported on the SF-133 Report to the U.S. Department of the Treasury differ from the sum of Projects Accomplished (the sum of the REA expenditure categories) due to rounding and differences in report timing. There is a time delay between obligation of funds and actual outlays because of the complexities of large projects. In addition, in FY 2008, pre-REA funds under the recreation fee Treasury symbol were also obligated for large deferred maintenance projects. ⁴ Total Expenditures/Outlays on the SF-133 Report to the U.S. Department of the Treasury include non-REA deferred maintenance expenditures, in addition to rounding, and reflect differences in report timing which do not reflect in Projects Accomplished figures above.			

Table A-9. Bureau of Reclamation Actual and Anticipated Costs and Revenues, FY 2008 – FY 2012

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Implementation One-Time Costs	\$49,568 ¹	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Recurring Cost of Collections	\$34,978	\$224,100	\$199,769	\$240,062	\$248,464
Administrative Costs	\$10,360	\$10,670	\$11,044	\$11,430	\$11,830
Total Costs	\$94,906	\$234,770	\$210,812	\$251,492	\$260,294
Anticipated REA Revenue (Actual for 2008)	\$209,611	\$576,000	\$630,000	\$901,000	\$901,000
Net Revenue	\$114,705	\$341,230	\$419,188	\$649,508	\$640,706
Percent of Revenues Spent on Collection (plus Implementation One-Time Costs for 2008)	45%	41 %	33 %	28%	29%
¹ One-time costs do not include the expenditure of non-recreation fee revenues in the amount of \$46,959 that was made available by Reclamation to assist New Melones Lake in its REA implementation program.					

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Appendix B: Recreation Resource Advisory Committees

History

REA requires the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish Recreation Resource Advisory Committees (RRACs) in each State or region.¹¹ RRACs provide local communities with the opportunity to make recommendations on certain types of proposed recreation fee changes. Specifically, RRACs can make recommendations on implementing, eliminating, or changing standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation permit fees.

REA allows the agencies to use existing Advisory Councils, such as BLM Resource Advisory Councils (BLM RACs), or to establish new committees as appropriate. After holding 11 listening sessions in locations across the country in 2005, the FS and BLM elected to use a mix of new and existing RRACs. In addition, upon Governor request, the two Departments exempted three states from the REA-RRAC requirement. See map and table below for a depiction of the mix of RRACs. (A State-by-State description is also included later in this report.)



Figure B-1. Advisory Committees Serving as RRACs

¹¹ RRACs are required unless, in consultation with the governor of a State, it is determined insufficient interest exists to establish an RRAC in that State. Three States are currently exempted from REA-RRAC requirement: Alaska, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Table B-1. State-by-State Description of RRACs

State	RRAC Name	Agency Lead	State	RRAC Name	Agency Lead
Alabama	Southern Region	FS	Nebraska	No RRAC; Governor's request	
Alaska	No RRAC; Governor's request		Nevada	RRAC subcommittee comprised of members of three Nevada RACs	BLM
Arizona	Arizona RAC	BLM	New Hampshire	Eastern Region	FS
Arkansas	Southern Region	FS	New Jersey	No FS or BLM lands	
California	Pacific Southwest Region	FS	New Mexico	New Mexico	BLM
Colorado	Colorado	FS	New York	Eastern Region	FS
Connecticut	No FS or BLM lands		North Carolina	Southern Region	FS
Delaware	No FS or BLM lands		North Dakota	Dakotas	BLM
Florida	Southern Region	FS	Ohio	Eastern Region	FS
Georgia	Southern Region	FS	Oklahoma	New Mexico (for FS grasslands) Southern Region (for portion of Ouachita National Forest)	BLM FS
Hawaii	No FS or BLM lands		Oregon	Pacific Northwest Region	FS
Idaho	Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls	BLM	Pennsylvania	Eastern Region	FS
Illinois	Eastern Region	FS	Puerto Rico	Southern Region	FS
Indiana	Eastern Region	FS	Rhode Island	Eastern Region	FS
Iowa	No FS or BLM lands.		South Carolina	Southern Region	FS
Kansas	Colorado	FS	South Dakota	Dakotas (for BLM & Dakota Prairie National Grasslands) Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (for Black Hills National Forest)	BLM FS
Kentucky	Southern Region	FS	Tennessee	Southern Region	FS
Louisiana	Southern Region	FS	Texas	New Mexico (for FS grasslands) Southern Region (for NFs of Texas)	BLM FS
Maine	Eastern Region	FS	Vermont	Eastern Region	FS
Maryland	No FS or BLM lands		Virginia	Southern Region	FS
Massachusetts	No FS or BLM lands		Utah	Utah	BLM
Michigan	Eastern Region	FS	Washington	Pacific Northwest Region	FS
Minnesota	Eastern Region	FS	West Virginia	Eastern Region	FS
Mississippi	Southern Region	FS	Wisconsin	Eastern Region	FS
Missouri	Eastern Region	FS	Wyoming	No RRAC; Governor's request	
Montana	Central Montana Eastern Montana Western Montana Dakotas	BLM			

The FS and BLM signed an Interagency Agreement in September 2006, which outlines how the agencies are to work cooperatively to involve BLM RACs and FS-established RRACs for this fee review process.

RRAC Membership

FS-established RRACs are comprised of 11 members:

- Five members represent recreation users;
- Three members represent outfitter-guides and environmental groups; and
- Three members represent state tourism, affected Indian tribes, and local government interests.

Existing BLM RACs that perform the function of a RRAC retain their membership mix under their current legislative authority and charters.

BLM RACs are comprised of 15 members:

- Five members represent commercial uses and users such as livestock grazing, timber, mining, oil and gas, realty and rights-of-way, off-highway vehicle groups, and guides and outfitters;
- Five members represent environmental organizations, historic and cultural interests, wildlife organizations, wild horses and burros, and dispersed recreation; and
- Five members represent elected officials, Tribes, State or other governmental agencies, academic institutions, and the public-at-large.

Member Outreach and Appointments

The FS and BLM follow both REA and the Federal Advisory Committee Act when soliciting member nominations. Nominations are open to any member of the public and all nominations are considered equally based on evaluation criteria.

Outreach efforts to solicit members to the new FS-established Recreation RACs occurred both nationally and locally in 2006. National efforts included announcements through the national Forest Service website, a Federal Register notice, and through contacts with national organizations.

Locally, each region/State conducted extensive outreach within appropriate timeframes and within the geographic boundaries of each RRAC to recruit committee members and involve the public on the implementation of REA.

Most experienced some difficulty with obtaining nominations for some of the interests that required representation on the RRACs; however, all members were appointed to the three regional RRACs in February 2007, and to the two State RRACs July 2007. As initial membership was for either two- or three-year terms as required by REA, efforts to recruit members for those positions with a two-year term began in 2008.

Features of RRAC Input

- The agencies' work with the RRACs has been highly successful. RRACs provide a critical public perspective to the FS and BLM Recreation Fee Programs; they give the public a formal voice; and they provide constructive local input to the decision-making process.
- The significance of RRACs extends beyond analysis of specific fee proposal and recommendations. RRACs bring a broad understanding of local economic, social, and environmental concerns to fee proposal considerations and engage the agencies in valuable discussions on the role of Federal lands and the benefits and challenges in providing outdoor recreation opportunities in their communities. RRAC members also represent a wide spectrum of communities and values.
- The RRAC review process ensures agencies advance sound fee proposals. Most proposals have received positive recommendations after comprehensive RRAC review; however, the agencies also have reconsidered numerous proposals based on RRAC input. In some cases, the agencies incorporated RRAC suggestions regarding fee rates; in others the agencies enhanced the opportunities for public input based on RRAC recommendations.

RRAC Meetings

BLM RACs meet from one to four times per year. FS RRACs meet on an “as needed” basis, averaging about two times per year. It is expected that as the backlog of fee proposals diminishes, the frequency of meetings on recreation fee proposals will also decrease.

- Meeting dates, times, and places are set to ensure the largest participation possible by RRAC members.
- Members of the public are able to address RRACs directly through the public comment portion of the meeting, through writing letters or e-mails, or via teleconference if a meeting is held in that forum. All correspondence addressed to RRACs is shared with all RRAC members.
- Meetings are announced in at least three ways: through local media, through a notice in the Federal Register, and on RRAC websites.
- Meeting minutes are posted on RRAC websites according to each committee’s by-laws or operating procedures. This is often within one month of the meeting.
- The public is welcome to attend RRAC field visits to Federal recreation sites.

Documenting “General Public Support”

REA requires that “general public support” for a fee proposal be documented prior to submitting a fee proposal to a RRAC. The agencies provide for appropriate public outreach and participation efforts commensurate with each proposal and document the results. The RRAC assesses the benefits to the public and adequacy of the agency’s public participation efforts, and provides a recommendation based on that assessment.

RRAC Highlights

The agencies have been receptive and responsive to RRAC advice as it relates to fee policies. Some examples include:

Costs versus Fees: All of the RRACs have had in-depth discussions on the costs to operate and maintain fee sites and the responsibility of those who use the sites to help pay for them. In many cases, these discussions have resulted in the agencies providing more information on all the factors that go into assessing costs; in others, the agencies have worked with RRACs to ensure better consistency of fee rates.

Improving Fee Proposals: By asking for more or different information, the RRACs have influenced how the agencies develop their fee proposals. Several RRACs have requested the agency not implement incremental fee increases, in favor of one fee change that lasts for many years. Other RRACs have asked for unit-wide fee proposals rather than individual proposals that only affect one site. Some proposals have not received recommendations from RRACs and have been returned to the agencies to improve public participation, to propose a change, or to offer a different perspective in the fee proposal. These fee proposals may be brought back to RRACs at a later date once improvements have been made or changes or subsequent public input has been obtained.

Advice on Future Proposals: In some cases RRACs have reviewed and provided advice on preliminary or conceptual fee proposals. These discussions helped the units build better proposals and improve public engagement.

Viewing Recreation Sites: Several RRACs have been able to view the amenities and facilities included in fee proposals, which has enriched discussions and has helped RRAC members better understand the purpose of recreation fees, issues associated with them, and challenges that land managers face.

Statements of RRAC Members

Dennis Oliphant, Chair of the Pacific Northwest RRAC: “It has been a rewarding and valuable experience to be part of the Region 6 Recreation RAC. I took the appointment seriously and when my colleagues on the committee voted me in as chair I made a commitment to see that our group did the best job possible with the responsibility entrusted in us. All in all, I feel we have looked closely at all the proposals brought to us and made our recommendations using good data, solid facts and in good faith. It has been a pleasure being part of the public process.”

Dana Johnson, Chair of the Eastern RRAC: “I believe the RRAC committee brings a very important step to the fee assessment process. Having such a diverse group of individuals from many regions allows the forests to get information pertinent to all users. It also provides a buffer for the National Forest Service as a Federal Agency. The fee changes are not just Federal mandates, but rather well thought out changes with justifiable reasons brought to the forefront by citizens who recreate in the forest.”

Brett Paben, Chair of the Southern RRAC: “The advisory committees provide another level of public participation and scrutiny that would otherwise be missing from the Forest Service's recreation fee decisions. The fact that the advisory committees are comprised of members representing a broad range of interests also ensures the Forest Service is provided with a diversity of perspectives regarding public lands recreation and fees prior to implementing recreation fees.”

Riley Cutler, Utah Office of Economic Development: “I have been very pleased with how the BLM and Forest Service were willing to work with the RAC to form the Recreation RAC. I found their change requests easy to read and understand. [The clarity of the requests enabled the RRAC] to efficiently do our job of approving or suggesting changes to the proposals. This is a good use of the RAC.”

Fee Proposals Submitted to RRACs

Forest Service – Since 2006, the FS has shared about 900 proposals with RRACs. The following table is a brief description of those proposals that have received recommendations to implement the fee proposal.

Table B-2. Forest Service Fee Changes, FY 2006-2008¹

Site Type	Sites with New Fees		Sites with Fee Increases		Sites with Fee Decreases		Total Sites with Fee Changes	
	RRAC Recommendations	States without RRACs	RRAC Recommendations	States without RRACs	RRAC Recommendations	States without RRACs	RRAC Recommendations	States without RRACs
Standard (Day Use: such as picnic areas, interpretive sites, boat launches, developed trailheads)	6	8	214	0	1	0	221	8
Expanded (Campgrounds and group campgrounds)	59	1	435	21	3	0	497	22
Expanded (Cabins)	51	1	73	0	1	0	125	1
Expanded (Other: such as group sites, dump stations, highly developed boat launches)	12	1	9	0	0	0	21	1
Special Recreation Permits (Specialized trails, climbing areas, river use)	4	1	25	0	0	0	29	1
Subtotal of Sites with Fee Changes	132	12	756	21	5	0	893	33
Total Sites with Fee Changes (both RRAC Recommendations and States without RRACs)	144		777		5		926	
¹ This table differs from Table 5 In the Triennial Report because it also includes proposals in non-RRAC states.								

Bureau of Land Management – Since 2006, BLM has shared 49 fee proposals with RRACs in the following categories:

Table B-3. Bureau of Land Management Fee Changes, FY 2006-2008

Site Type	Type of Fee Change		
	New Fee	Fee Increase	Total Fee Changes
Standard (Day use such as picnic areas, interpretive sites, and developed trailheads)	2	9	11
Expanded (Primarily Campgrounds)	8	21	29
Special Recreation Permits (Specialized Areas, such as Off-Highway Vehicle, River, or Long-Term Visitor Areas)	3	6	9
Total Proposals	13	36	49

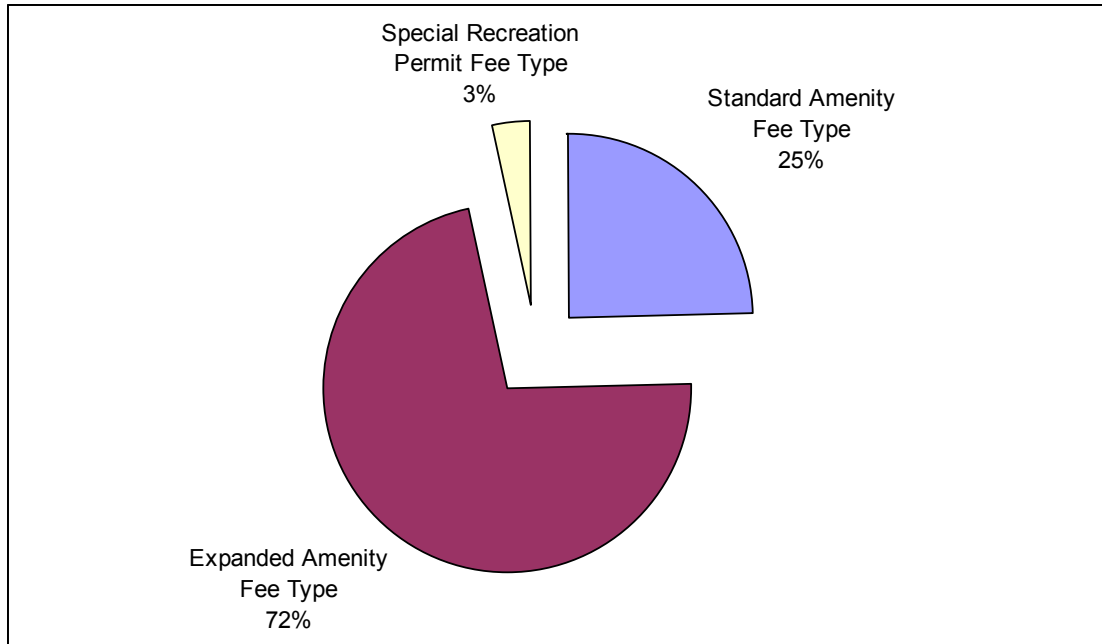


Figure B-2. Fee Changes for Forest Service Sites or Opportunities by Fee Type

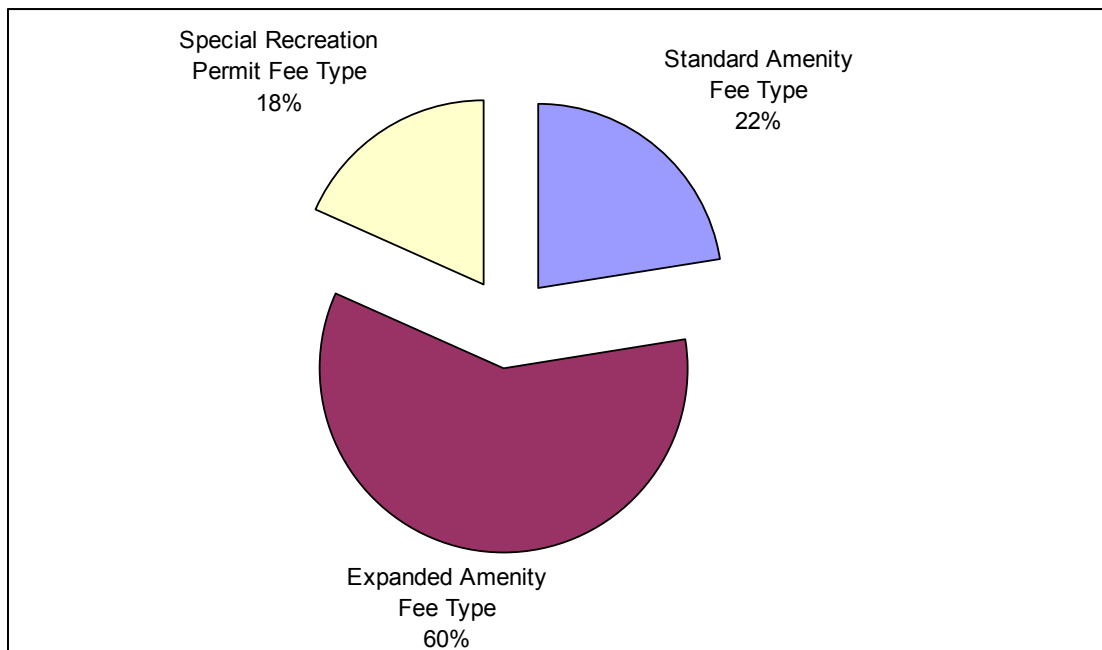


Figure B-3. Fee Changes for Bureau of Land Management Sites or Opportunities by Fee Type

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Appendix C: National Park Service Fee Program Public Participation and Notification Guidelines

Background. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (REA) requires that the public be provided with opportunities to participate in the development of or change to a recreation fee established under the Act. This includes providing advance notice of fee changes to the public and developing public participation and notification guidelines. REA's public participation requirements for the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are different than those for Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Forest Service. The latter three agencies are required to establish Recreation Resource Advisory Committees, whereas the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service are not.

DO 75A: Civic Engagement and Public Involvement says, "*The Service recognizes that the present and future welfare of the national park system depends in large measure on the public's support of the way the Service manages the parks. The public will have a greater appreciation of, and support for, our management if they recognize that we seek, and are receptive to, their involvement in the important decisions that are made.*"

To engage the public about fees, the first policy is to plan in advance and be clear at what stages, and how, we will invite the public to participate in our decision-making processes. All applicable DO 75A policies and standards, such as leveraging resources and working cooperatively to accomplish legal requirements, can be found on the web at <http://www.nps.gov/civic/policy/policy6.html>.

Intention of the fee guidelines. These guidelines are intended to:

- 1) Assist the parks on compliance with legal public participation requirements to change existing fees, add new fees, or establish new fee areas.
- 2) Notify the public about fee rates and how recreation fee revenues are used.
- 3) Help parks strategize and leverage funding and staffing in carrying out these requirements (see policy #9 in DO 75A).

Applicability and Definitions. **These guidelines apply to the following actions: CHANGING AN EXISTING FEE, ADDING A NEW FEE, or ESTABLISHING A NEW FEE AREA**

- **Changing an existing fee:** A park that currently charges an entrance or expanded amenity fee using REA authority and raises their fees is *changing an existing fee*. This includes any change resulting in a financial impact to the visitor such as changing from a per vehicle rate to a per person rate or changing length of stay.
- **Adding a new fee:** A park that currently charges an entrance or expanded amenity fee using REA authority that adds a new fee to their current fees is *adding a new fee*. Some examples are adding an Annual Pass, a multi-entity pass, or a special rate for motorcycles etc.
- **Establishing a new fee area:** A park that has never charged an entrance or an expanded amenity fee using REA and decides to begin charging is *establishing a new fee area*.

Requirements. Any site changing an existing fee, adding a new fee, or establishing a new fee area must accomplish the following five steps.

Responsibilities. The superintendent must:

1. Engage the public **before** a request for approval is submitted to the Regional Director (RD).
2. Submit a request for approval to the RD.
3. After rates are approved at all levels (RD, Washington Office, Department of the Interior) notify the public and commercial tour operators of the new or changed fees.
4. Notify the public on how fee revenues are used at the site.
5. Report annually to the RD on how they have informed the public about the use of fee revenues.

NOTE: Parks *establishing a new fee area* must also publish a Notice in the Federal Register (FR) in addition to the steps below.

Detailed Instructions.

Step 1. Public participation/civic engagement:

Approximately 18 months prior to changing an existing fee, adding a new fee, or establishing a new fee area the park **must** plan to engage the public about proposed changes. Public participation **must** occur **prior** to submitting a request for approval to the RD. Before submitting a request:

- The fees should be proposed to the public.
- Input from the public should be considered when the request for approval is submitted. The park may decide to submit the rate as planned or alter it due to public input.

Even after approval, a superintendent may decide to delay implementation of a fee if an event has occurred that makes delayed implementation more suitable.

Methods for engaging the public are not “one size fits all.” Each superintendent is responsible for knowing the park’s stakeholders and how changes in fees will affect local businesses, tourism, economics, etc. The superintendent may choose from a variety of options to solicit public opinion and test how the changes will be received. For further information on how to plan for and implement any of the following methods, contact regional staff in program areas such as Planning, Interpretation, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA), Concessions, or Fees that may have experience in public meetings and/input. See Appendix B of DO 75A for more excellent resources and tools.

All superintendents proposing a change in fees, adding a new fee, or establishing a new few area **must** notify and obtain input from 1) their Congressional delegation, 2) nearby Federal, State, and County officials, 3) local Chamber of Commerce (or equivalent), and 4) Commercial tour operators. **In addition to these required activities**, the park must engage in a **minimum** of one of the following activities:

- Public meeting/open house
- Focus groups (include general public, stakeholders, local business representatives, etc.)
- Soliciting opinions about proposed changes through local media
- Surveys/Comment cards
- Radio “call in” programs soliciting public opinion
- Charrettes (Community Toolbox -- Consensus Building)
- Workshops
- Interpretive Walks
- Solicit opinions via the Internet (Community Toolbox -- Consensus Building)

For Parks Establishing a New Fee Area. When a superintendent is considering establishing their park as a new fee area they should contact the Regional Fee Program manager. This should occur as soon as possible but recommended at least 18 months before the targeted date of implementation. At the same time, the park should plan for public participation and engage the public about the proposal. The Regional Fee Program Manager will work with the Washington Office to post the notice in the Federal Register at **least six months prior to establishing a new fee area.**

To establish new fee areas, public participation opportunities must include the following:

1. Sharing plans developed by the site for the establishment of a new fee area.
2. Presenting financial analysis including projected development, operating, and maintenance costs and projected income of the new fee area.
3. Showing the analysis of existing private and public facilities or services in the vicinity of the new fee area that may compete with it.
4. Describing how the site will inform the public on how the revenue from the fees collected will be used at the area.

Step 2. Requesting approval for implementing a change in fees:

Once a park has engaged the public and received input they should submit the fee changes in the annual Recreation Fee Rate Change Request (annual call for changing an existing fee, adding a new fee, or establishing a new fee area). The parks should submit the fees to the RD for approval. Once approved, the RD will forward the packet to the Washington Office by the appropriate deadline for approval by the Director and DOI Assistant Secretaries for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and Policy, Management, and Budget. Once the RD has received notice of those approvals the park may implement the fees according to the approved date.

Step 3. Notification of current fees:

Once a superintendent has received notice from the RD that the Director and DOI have approved the proposed fee rates, the public must be notified of the changes to be implemented. This must be done by publishing any changes in local newspapers and publications located near their sites. All press releases must be closely coordinated with Regional and Washington Office Public Affairs offices.

Commercial tour operators must be given **one year notice** of any fee rate changes that affect them. Superintendents should be mindful of the implementation date to allow for proper notification.

Superintendents must post clear notice of the current fee rates for their area as well as in publications distributed at the site.

Step 4. Notification of how fee revenues are used:

Superintendents must provide information to the public about how fee revenues are used at the site. These should be posted using at least one of the following:

- Press release in local newspapers and publications
- Park newspaper article
- Park website (www.nps.gov)
- Interpretive display
- Signs posted at projects funded by fee revenue

Standardized templates for signs and website design may be issued at a later date.

Step 5. Reporting on methods used to inform public of use of fee revenues:

By January 15 of each year, superintendents must submit to the RD the methods they used to inform the public of how fee revenues were used at their park.