



Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands

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Requesting Public Comments on Proposed Recreation Fees and Management

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Albuquerque, NM – June 24, 2021 - The Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands is looking for public input on proposed changes to the management of the developed recreation program. These changes will impact campgrounds and day-use sites on the Carson, Gila, Lincoln, and Santa Fe National Forests, and the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands. Different management options are being considered, including adding new recreation fees, increasing recreation fees, offering an annual day-use recreation site pass, eliminating, or repurposing some developed recreation sites, and collaborating on some recreation site operations with volunteers.

“With over 1.8 million visitors to the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands each year, we are looking for input from our forest users, from locals to visitors, on ways to sustainably manage our increasing use and provide high quality recreation opportunities,” said Jessica Dunn, Recreation Program Manager for the Cibola National Forest. “Developed recreation site fees will help us maintain and enhance our developed recreation sites as the funds stay at the forest level and are reinvested in the sites for the visitor’s benefit.”

National forests and grasslands operate and maintain a variety of campgrounds and day-use areas. Some of these recreation sites offer limited amenities and visitor services but are free of charge. Other sites charge a recreation fees, in exchange, these recreation areas offer visitor services and amenities such as restroom facilities, trash collection, visitor security and interpretive services. Developed recreation sites offer visitor convenience, are often gateways to recreation opportunities, and can play an important role in tourism-based economic growth for local communities. It has become increasingly expensive to maintain and improve recreation sites due to aging facilities, increases in visitation, and limited resources. The recreation fees charged at Forest Service managed sites contribute to the stewardship and improvement of these special places. Since 2004, under the authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 95% of the revenue from recreation fees and passes remains on the forests. This funding is used to operate, maintain, and improve facilities. However, the resources needed to address the maintenance backlog, keep up with increased visitor use, and improve recreation sites still exceed the revenues generated from recreation fees and congressionally appropriated dollars.

The public is invited to comment on the proposed changes until September 30, 2021. Public meetings on this will be scheduled. For meeting dates and locations, or to submit a comment online, visit www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r3/SusRec. Comments may also be submitted through comment cards at local USDA Forest Service offices, by mail to the Southwestern Regional Office, Attention: Recreation Fees, 333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102, or by email to SM.FS.R3FeeProComm@usda.gov.

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