

Recreation Fee Program

April 2003

There are thirteen projects in the fee demonstration program in the Northern Region. Recreation and user fees are used to improve recreation experiences for visitors.



Rendezvous Ski Area, Gallatin National Forest

Outfitter and Guides Project -

This region wide project is not a new fee. Existing outfitter fees are retained by the local unit to complete projects that benefit outfitted clients as well as the general recreation user. The public and outfitters participate in project selection. Projects include miles of trail maintenance, additional wilderness and river rangers, interpretive and educational materials and signs. Dust abatement, weed spraying and road grading as well as toilet and trailhead improvements have been completed.

Regionwide Developed Sites/ Lake Como Projects -

Over 200 local campgrounds and group use sites retain fees for operation, maintenance and improvement. Users are especially happy with increased garbage and sanitation services as well as hosts and improved facilities. The Lake Como project, Bitterroot NF, also provided funds to repair eroding shore line and remove hazard trees.

Recreation Lodging Projects -

Historic cabins and lookouts (122 in all) are available for rent to the public. The project not only provides a unique vacation experience but also has resulted in preservation of many historic structures.

Interpretive Centers -

The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Lewis and Clark NF, and Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, Gallatin NF, are key area attractions where demonstration fees continue to enhance interpretive programs and services.

Rendezvous and Lolo Pass Ski Trails -

Demonstration fees have provided Olympic quality groomed ski trails and a biathlon course at Rendezvous Ski Trails, Gallatin NF, and groomed trails and snowplowing at Lolo Pass, Clearwater NF.

Heritage Expeditions -

The Ninemile Wildlands Training Center, Lolo NF, provides public workshops on traditional horse handling, historic building restoration and minimum impact camping techniques. The Dakota Prairie Grasslands offered a unique opportunity to participate in a triceratops excavation.

Public Reaction -

Most customer comment cards in the Northern Region indicate positive support for continuation of the fee demo program because of improved facilities and services.

To eliminate the public concern of “nickel and diming”, Golden Passports will be accepted for entry at most day use fee sites this April.

2003 Accomplishments - *Your fees at work...*



- ✓ Improved services for visitors using the National Forests and Grasslands.
- ✓ Historic renovation of cabins and lookouts used for public rental
- ✓ Construction and maintenance of trails, trailheads, campground, and boating facilities
- ✓ Interpretive services and programs; extension of operating hours/season
- ✓ Wilderness ranger contacts
- ✓ Campground host presence
- ✓ Groomed winter trails and plowed parking lots
- ✓ Heritage expedition opportunities

New Projects for 2003 -

- The Crystal Park, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NE, will offer an opportunity to dig crystals and recreate along the Polaris-Wise River Scenic Byway.
- During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial the Clearwater NF plans a project for the Lolo Motorway. This 80 mile section of narrow road will offer an opportunity to follow the most primitive intact section of the Trail in the country.

Site Improvements -

On average, 85% of the revenue from fees is being returned to the recreation sites for staffing, maintenance and operation and improvements. The average cost of collection was 15%. See the table below.



Triceratops Dig, Dakota Prairie Grasslands



Gird Point Lookout, Bitterroot National Forest

2002 Revenues

Project	2002
Flathead Recreation Lodging	\$34,730
Region Recreation Lodging	\$269,468
Como Lake Developed Sites	\$37,931
Quake Lake Visitor Center	\$18,411
Regional Outfitter Guide	\$795,936
Regional Developed Sites	\$620,647
Lewis & Clark Interp Center	\$167,379
Rendezvous/Lolo Ski Trail	\$28,856
Heritage Expeditions	\$27,419
Golden Passports	\$64,551
Campground Safety Net	\$1,092
Total	\$2,066,419

The Northern Region includes National Forests and Grasslands in Montana, northern Idaho and North and South Dakota.

For more detailed information:

www.fs.fed.us/r1/recreation/programs

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