

January 26, 2005

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EMS TRANSMISSION
Instruction Memorandum No. 2005-
Expires:

To: All Washington Office and Field Officials

From: Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning

Subject: Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, H.R. 4818, Interim
Recreation Fee Guidelines for the Bureau of Land Management

Program Area: Recreation Fee Program Implementation

Background: The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) was signed into law by President Bush on December 8, 2004. Up to this point the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and the US. Forest Service has been operating under the provisions of the National Recreational Fee Demonstration Program which expired with the signing of the subject Act. During the past three years the BLM has anticipated this day and have gradually been shifting their recreation fee policy and consequently recreation sites to be in alignment with the provisions in this bill. The attached Recreation Fee Guidelines for the Bureau of Land Management represent another step closer to being in conformance with the new Act. The interim policy guidance is now ready to be implemented. The document attached in by no means a comprehensive guide to implementing the provisions of the Act. The BLM will work with the other affected agencies and request field individuals to participate on committees to address the more difficult sections of the Act. As the interagency committees work on the various aspects of interpreting the Act additional regulations and policy will be released to you for implementation.

Policy/Action: It is incumbent of each Field Officer with a recreation fee program to make it a priority to personally engage your program to align with the attached interim policy.

The goal of the Recreation Fee Program is to retain fee revenues to supplement appropriations and other funding sources to repair, improve and maintain recreation sites and settings to quality standards (including elimination of recreation deferred maintenance) and to enhance the delivery of recreation services related directly to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety. In order to meet our goal and begin implementation of the provisions of the Act:

- 1) States must conduct an initial assessment of whether their recreation sites meet the criteria for standard or extended amenity fee sites.
- 2) Ensure that state recreation fee revenue expenditures are aligned with the guidance.

3) Begin plans to bring recreation site overhead and indirect spending in line with the requirement of not greater than an average of 15 percent of total recreation fee revenues.

4) A moratorium for new fee areas will be in effect immediately and remain in effect until notified.

5) Changes in fees need to be approved by the DOI. Send all requests for fee changes to the Director through the National Recreation Group, WO-250.

As we implement the provisions of the Act there will be a need to communicate any national changes in the program as they are developed. A national communication plan will be provided to assist states and field offices in communicating consistent key messages regarding the implementation of the Act.

Time Frame: States are expected to be in total conformance with the interim policy guidance by April 1, 2005, giving them time to bring their sites into conformance with the guidelines. Implementation of other provisions of the Act will be implemented with a time frame as the specific regulations or policy is developed.

Budget Impact: Little impact to the budget is expected to occur.

Manual/Handbook: The new policy contained in this IM and those to follow will replace the policy in Chapter 2 of the existing H-2930-1 Policy Handbook.

Coordination: The policy guidance has received extensive review by the US Forest Service, FWS, NPS, and a BLM bureau wide recreation fee team. In addition, the IM has been coordinated through AD, Renewable Resources and Planning; AD, Business and Fiscal Resources; the Budget Officer; and the Director, National Landscape Conservation System; and Directives.

Contact: If you have any questions concerning this IM, please contact Donald Charpio, Group Manager, National Recreation Group (202) 452-5168 or Lee V. Larson, Senior Outdoor Recreation Specialist (202) 452-5168.

Attachment: Recreation Fee Guidelines for the Bureau of Land Management