

Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

US Forest Service- Eastern Region

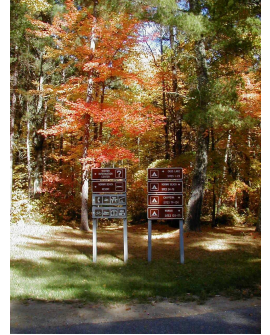
Fee Proposal

National Forest, State: Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota

Site Type: Campground

FLREA Fee Type: Expanded Amenity

Type of Proposal: fee increase for sites with electric hook-ups at 2 campgrounds: Chippewa Loop of Norway Beach Campground and Stony Point Campground.



Site Description:

1) Chippewa Loop of the Norway Beach CG:

This camping loop, one of four in the Norway Beach Recreation Area, is a single loop on the southern shore of Cass Lake. Interpretive trails, a sandy swimming beach, picnic shelter and a boat ramp are available. The Migizi Trail, a 19 mile paved biking trail, can be accessed from the Norway Beach Recreation Area. Firewood, recycling centers and an RV dump station are located at each loop. Several campsites are located on the lake shore. All 46 sites in the Chippewa Loop include electric hook-ups. The entire campground has four loops with 170 campsites total. The remaining loops do not have electric hook-ups; cost is \$23. Chippewa Loop is rated as a Development Level 5, while the others are Development Level 4.*

The Norway Beach Visitor Center is a gathering spot in the recreation area. This building is a monument to the talents and craftsmanship of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) enrollees. Displays in the Visitor Center depict Ojibwe heritage, CCC contributions, and the area's flora and fauna. Interpretive programs and special events are scheduled regularly throughout the summer. A variety of programs at the visitor center provide activities for the whole family. Wildflower hikes, loon calling, dandelion pancakes, guided bike rides, how to use a GPS, and Star Light Star Bright, are a sampling of the many programs offered several times a week. Theodore Roosevelt V, visited recently, sharing his message of conservation.

2)Stony Point Campground:

This 44 site campground is bordered on two sides by Leech Lake, the third largest lake in Minnesota. Two boat harbors serve the campground, along with a dump station, fish cleaning station, and a long sandy swimming beach. One walk-in site is located near the boat ramp. One of the most popular activities at Stony Point is fishing for Walleye and Musky. Stony Point Campground is rated as a Development Level 5.*



Proposed Action: implement fee increase

Current fee: \$23

Proposed fee: \$26 for sites with electricity (+\$3)

Date of last increase: 2008

Reason for proposed fee increase:

- The 5 Year Proposed Program of Work/Programmatic Actions contained in the Chippewa National Forest Recreation Facility Analysis provides the opportunity to increase the number of fee tiers, charging a higher fee for more amenities, such as showers, flush toilets, and electric hook-ups. A greater fee range offers more choice to the public as well as fees being more reflective of the camping amenities provided.
- Operation and Maintenance costs continue to increase. Utility, garbage fees, and vault and dump station pumping expenses increase annually. 2008 garbage collection actual cost was \$47,500, a \$5,500 increase over 2007. Utility and vault/pumping expenses were \$27,500 by August. The Forest anticipates additional increases in 2009 due to fuel costs.
- The Norway Beach Recreation Area is a highly developed, operations & maintenance-intensive facility. A sewer lift station failure in August 2008 required \$5,400 of immediate but temporary repair to keep the Wanaki and Chippewa camping loops open. A \$34,500 repair is required to make the camping loop facilities available for the 2009 season.
- Senior and Access pass holders comprise 50% or more of electric site occupancies. Use of these passes significantly reduces revenues from these sites.
- Loss of the Department of Labor, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) has increased operations and maintenance costs.

- The proposed requested fee increase will more closely align fees with local markets.

If approved, the fee increase will be used for continued operations and maintenance. Norway Beach Recreation area is the District's most developed camping area as well as the most costly to operate. The District plans to install an electric meter in the Chippewa Loop to monitor electric use to provide baseline data for the planning purposes.

If approved, the proposal will be implemented May 2009, when the campgrounds open.

Price Comparisons for Similar Facilities & Services

Forest Service:

- Allegheny NF (PA): Kiasutha, Red Bridge, and Willow Bay \$18-\$25
- Superior NF (MN): Fall Lake \$20
- Chequamegon-Nicolet NF (WI): Chippewa \$12-\$28

Private Providers:

Bowen Lodge: \$25 (electric hook-up only)

Marclay Point: \$37 (full hook-up)

Moonlight Bay: \$28 (full hook-up)

Other Public Providers:

Minnesota State Parks: \$22 - \$24

Army Corps of Engineers: Leech Lake Recreation Area: \$22-\$36

Grand Marais Municipal RV Park and Campground: \$29 - \$34 (electric and water)
off- peak/peak season

Public Participation:

Method	Date(s)	Comments/Results
Posted notice at recreation site inviting comments on the proposal	6/23/2008 - 8/23/2008	Posted during busy season, with full occupancy over July 4 th weekend and many other full- to near-full occupancy weekends.
News release and/or notice in local papers inviting comments on the proposal. Papers listed serve the communities of Brainerd, Duluth, Bemidji, Grand Rapids, Blackduck, Cass Lake, Deer River, Walker, and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.	6/23/2008: Brainerd Dispatch (circ. 13,500) Bemidji Pioneer (circ. 9,500) Cass Lake Times (circ. 1,200) Grand Rapids Herald Review (circ. 8,000) Blackduck Am. (circ. 1,000) De Bah Ji Mon (circ. Unavailable) Western Itasca Review (circ. 1,600) Duluth News Tribune (circ. 40,600) Walker Pilot-Independent (circ 2,700)	2 responses: One respondent refuses to camp in "grossly overpriced" campgrounds, and will disperse camp before paying this price, although, "Anyone that is willing to buy electric at the campground should be charged far more than a mere \$3 for its use." One respondent requests that fees be used to electrify more Norway Beach Sites and adds that electricity should be added to one or two sites for those with medical needs.
Briefed local elected officials and Tribal leaders on the proposal.	News Release mailed to: Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe: Robbie Howe, and Lyman Losh, and Rich Robinson Chambers of Commerce: Leech	Cass County Commissioner: "The tourist economy is struggling to stay alive, many resorts are offering incentives to encourage visitors - The Forest Service should join this effort and should not increase

	Lake, Cass Lake, Grand Rapids, and Bemidji County Commissioners of Beltrami, Cass, Hubbard, and Itasca Counties Congressional Contacts: The Honorable; Norm Coleman, Amy Klobuchar, Frank Moe, James Oberstar, Mary Olson, Collin Peterson, Tom Saxhaug and Rod Skoe.	campground fees at this time."
Met with affected stakeholder groups for input on the proposal	We are not aware of any organized groups using Stony Point and Chippewa Loop.	
Posted proposal on Forest Website	6/23/2008 to present.	The Chippewa National Forest website averages 550 hits per day.

Analysis:

Extensive public outreach and congressional notification generated one comment of opposition to the proposal from the public and one opposing comment from a Cass County Commissioner. One respondent was "not opposed", but would like the money used to add electric sites and to "keep up the good work at the park! We appreciate it!" No concerns were raised with campground hosts or USFS Compliance Checkers at Norway Beach Campground or Stony Point regarding the proposed fee increase. Front desk personnel at the Supervisor's Office, when quoting current camping fees, have not received any negative comments.

The Chippewa National Forest offers a range of camping opportunities. The Forest has many developed campgrounds; for a more primitive experience, there are over 345 dispersed recreation sites on the Forest. In addition, most of the Chippewa

National Forest is open for backcountry or dispersed camping. Access is typically by vehicle, foot, boat or canoe. Backcountry campsites are located along most lakes and rivers, offering an opportunity to explore the many canoe routes on the forest. There are no fees for primitive camping.

***Development Level 4 and 5 Campgrounds**

Level 4 - High level of development

These campgrounds are accessed via paved roads, and usually have paved roads and trails within the area. Camp units are regularly spaced, and can accommodate recreational vehicles. Larger campsites for multi-family groups are usually available. Shower houses and playground equipment may be present, as well as some interpretive programs. A fee is charged for use of these campgrounds.

Level 5 - Very high level of development

Beyond the facilities outlined in Level 4, these campgrounds may offer electricity, fish cleaning stations, flush toilets, hot showers, interpretive programs and other developed facilities.