

Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

US Forest Service- Eastern Region

Fee Proposal

National Forest, State: Shawnee National Forest, Illinois

Site Type: Campgrounds

FLREA Fee Type: Expanded Amenity

Type of proposal: Fee Increase

Site Description

Campground	Develop-ment Scale	Number of Sites	Season	Amenities
Pine Ridge	3	30	4/1 to 12/15	Pit toilets, access roads, water, security, grill, table, fire ring, trash dumpster, lantern stands, and access to adjacent developed beach and picnic area on Pound's Hollow Lake
Pharaoh	4	12	All year	Pit toilets, access roads, water, security, grill, table, fire ring, trash dumpster, lantern stands, and access to Garden of the Gods interpretive area
Camp Cadiz	3	15	4/1 to 12/15	Pit toilets, access roads, water, security, grill, table and fire ring.

Campground	Development Scale	Number of Sites	Season	Amenities
Johnson Creek	3	20	3/15 to 12/31	Pit toilets, access roads, water, security, grill, table, fire ring, trash cans, high-lines/hitching posts for horses, access to developed beach and picnic area and boat launch facilities
Pine Hills	3	13	3/15 to 12/15	Pit toilets, access roads, water, security, grill, table, fire ring, trash cans, lantern hooks

Proposed Action: Increase fees at five campgrounds

Current Fee:

Proposed Fee:

Pine Ridge, Pharaoh, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills - \$5/night

\$10/night

Johnson Creek - \$5/night/single,
\$9/night/double
\$12/night/triple

\$10/night/single
\$12/night/double
\$15/night/triple

Amount Increase: \$3.00-5.00 depending on site type (single, double, etc.)

Date of Last Increase: Pine Ridge, Pharaoh, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills campgrounds have not raised fees in 30 years. Johnson Creek Campground fees were raised 12 years ago, in 1996.

Reason for proposed fee increase:

Campground fees on the Shawnee National Forest have remained the same for a number of years and are less than half the average for facilities with comparable amenities in the area. The Forest is unable to continue basic services for campground management under the current fee structure.

If approved, the fee increase will be used for:

Operations/maintenance i.e. cleaning restrooms, mowing grass, maintaining water systems and trash removal.

If approved, the proposal will be implemented: January 1, 2009

Price Comparisons for Similar Facilities & Services:

- **Forest Service:** \$5.00/night operated by Shawnee National Forest
\$10.00/night concession - Shawnee NF
- **Local Private and Public Providers:**
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Rend Lake Recreation Area, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, USDA Land between the Lakes, Illinois Department of Natural Resources - average \$10.00/night
Private-sector campgrounds - \$12.00-15.00/night
Area average = \$11.75/night for similar amenity package

Public Participation

Method	Date(s)	Comments/Results
Posted notice at campgrounds inviting comments on the proposal	March 2007 and maintained periodically throughout the comment period of June 2008.	A minimum of 1,000 overnight campers would have viewed the posted notices during the season. Of these visitors, two calls were received at the Hidden Springs Ranger District with requests for more information.
News release and/or notice in local papers inviting comments on the proposal	October 2007 posted in the <i>Harrisburg Daily Register</i> . This paper, the <i>Southern Illinoisan</i> (Carbondale), the <i>Gazette-Democrat</i> (Anna/Jonesboro), the <i>Metropolis Planet</i> and the <i>Vienna Times</i> ran several articles	Newspaper articles resulted in 45+ calls/visits to the local district office for additional information. Fifteen submitted comments

Method	Date(s)	Comments/Results
	and editorials over the ensuing several months.	
Briefed local elected officials and Tribal leaders on the proposal.	Karen Kaniatobe of the Absentee Shawnee (7/08), Gallatin County Board, Saline County Board, Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Greenways and Trails Committee, Congressman Shimkus and the staffs of Senator Obama and Congressman Costello	Tribes expressed no opposition or concern. The two southern Illinois tourism boards voted not to sign a petition opposed to fees which included a statement that fees would harm tourism in the area. County Boards either did not respond to the Forests offer to make a presentation and/or supported a petition that opposed a broad range of fees, but did not directly oppose the camping fee proposal. Congressional input resulted in expressed understanding about the need to raise campground fees and did not support other aspects of the fee proposals i.e. trails, equestrian and day use fee. In a joint letter, the congressmen pointed out that other avenues/sources were available to increase the Forest's funding.
Met with affected stakeholder groups for input on the proposal	Southern Illinois Tourism, Southernmost Illinois	Tourism organizations understood the

Method	Date(s)	Comments/Results
	Tourism, River to River Trail Society, various equestrian groups and symposiums	Forest's need to raise campground fees; other organizations were generally opposed to fees.
Posted proposal on Forest Website	October 2007-June 2008	Posted extensive information on proposed fees, including the desire to raise campground rates. Also posted a Q&A document addressing public comments from 70 letters.
Other methods	Open-house meetings at Vienna, Marion and Murphysboro Illinois; interviews with local newspapers, television news programs and radio stations; interviews with several magazines	Information presented to inform public of proposal and to solicit comments. Over 150 letters received.

Analysis: The proposal to increase fees at developed campgrounds on the Shawnee National Forest was announced in conjunction with other fee increase proposals published in the *Federal Register* in October of 2007. Extensive public contact/outreach continued through June 30, 2008. The Forest received over 200 letters from the public responding to the entire fee increase proposal (included trail use, equestrian & day use fee proposal increase). Sixty of those respondents expressed full or conditional support of the entire proposal and most specifically supported the proposed increase in campground fees. Current low campground rates were cited several times in this group of letters. Considering that a minimum number of 1,000 campers used the Forest's campgrounds during the comment period, the comparatively low number of letters indicates general public acceptance of the need to raise camping fees, since so few letters expressed specific opposition to the campground fee increase. Petitions circulated throughout Southern Illinois focused primarily on trail use opportunities, trail fees, senior citizen passes, and potential tourism impacts.