



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Richard Blume-Weaver
(618) 253-7114

RECREATION FEE PROPOSAL

Harrisburg, IL, August 26, 2008 - Shawnee National Forest Supervisor, Allen Nicholas, announced, based on several months of public comment, a final recreation fee proposal will be submitted for consideration. The proposal will be to only increase existing recreation fees in five developed Forest campgrounds. The current fee for Pine Ridge, Pharoah, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills campgrounds is \$5.00 per night and has not been increased in many years. The fifth campground, Johnson Creek, per night fee has been \$5.00 for a single site, \$9.00 for a double site and \$12.00 for a triple site since approximately 1996. The proposed fee is \$10.00 per night for a site at Pine Ridge, Pharoah, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills Campgrounds; and \$10.00 for a single, \$12.00 for a double and \$15.00 for a triple site per night at Johnson Creek. Increasing the price for overnight sites in these campgrounds would bring the fees more in alignment with the local market.

This final recreation fee proposal will be forwarded to the Regional Fee Board in Milwaukee, WI; and if approved, the proposal will be forwarded to the Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) for consideration on October 8, 2008. The RRAC's decision will be forwarded to the Regional Forester who will either accept or deny the recommendation.

The proposal to increase fees at these developed campgrounds was announced, along with other proposals, in the Federal Register in October, 2007. The Forest received 60 letters that were fully or conditionally supportive of the entire proposal. There were 93 letters and one

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petition containing several thousand signatures not supportive of fees. The overwhelming majority of these letters were concerned with the proposal for charging new fees either for day use facilities or for equestrian use of the designated trail system. Increasing existing fees at campgrounds did not emerge as a significant issue among the comments received.

Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas offered that the response to the initial proposal to increase fees was not entirely surprising. "I fully understand the concerns expressed and will strive to provide recreational and trail experiences within the funding levels we are provided."

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