

Bitterroot National Forest

Summary of 5 Year Proposed Program of Work

Our Perceived Niche:

In order to focus the recreation program we asked what is unique about the Bitterroot Forest. The niche we propose is: **“Our wild back yard”** – Scenic mountains, rugged canyons, wild rivers, Wilderness and wildlife are all just outside your backyard on the Bitterroot National Forest.

Inventory of Developed Recreation Sites

We currently manage 80 Developed Recreation Sites. They are summarized into the following categories:

- 26 Campground
- 8 Existing Cabin/Lookout Rentals
- 3 Potential New Cabin/Lookout Rentals
- 24 Developed Trailheads
- 3 Picnic sites
- 6 Boating, Swimming, Fishing Sites
- 4 Group Campground/ picnic sites
- 6 Interpretative/admin sites (Darby Visitor Center)
- 1 HIRA – High Impact Recreation Area, 200 day use parking spaces (individual sites included above)

Summary of the Proposed Program of Work

After analysis of each of our Developed Recreation Sites, we have recommended the following actions over the next 5 years:

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| • No changes proposed | 7 sites |
| • Change in Season of Operation | 33 sites |
| • New Site Fees (3 cabin rentals, 3 existing campgrounds) | 6 sites |
| • Increase Existing Fees (8 cabin rentals, 13 campgrounds, group sites, HIRA (5 sites)) | 26 sites |
| • Increase or Improve Service (existing CIP program or proposed) | 12 sites |
| • Remove Facilities/ Operate as Dispersed Site | 16 sites |
| • Encourage Alternate Work Force | 10 sites |

This Program of work is meant to be a dynamic strategic plan for the next 5 years, able to be adjusted as conditions change. For more information please contact your local Ranger District Office or visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot.

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Detail of 5 Year Proposed Program of Work

A. Review Recreation Fees

→ Fee changes are proposed on 32 of the 64 sites managed as developed sites but would be phased in over time. Of the 32 sites,

- 26 fee increases are proposed (13 campgrounds, 8 cabins and 5 sites at Lake Como High Impact Recreation Area).
- New fees are proposed at 6 sites:
 - Campgrounds: Blodgett, Sam Billings and Crazy Creek Horse
 - Cabin Rentals: Lost Horse, Magruder Office, and Boulder Lookout

B. Reduce Cost/ Development Scale

- We also propose to reduce the costs of operating and maintaining 33 developed recreation sites.
- 16 sites would continue to be open to the public; however improvements will be focused on resource protection only. Facilities for “user convenience” such as fire rings, tables and signs would be removed as they deteriorate

Sites in this grouping include:

- **Stevensville Ranger District:** Burnt Fork Trailhead
- **Darby Ranger District:** Bear Creek Saddle, and Centennial Grove Trailhead
- **Sula Ranger District:** Jennings Campground
- **West Fork Ranger District:** Beaver Point, Cayuse Creek Trailhead, Deep Creek Campground, Indian Creek Campground, Kim Creek Saddle Trailhead, Magruder Crossing Campground, Main Blue Joint Trailhead, Observation Point Campground, Pete Creek picnic area, Raven Creek, Watchtower Creek Trailhead, and Paradise Flat/White Cap Trailhead

C. Encourage Contributed or Alternative Workforce Support

→ Explore options for an alternative workforce or volunteers, who would be able to contribute to the maintenance and operations of a developed recreation facility. Possible sites identified include:

- Gold Creek Campground, Willoughby 40 (working on agreement), Coyote Coulee Trailhead (agreement in place), Darby Visitor Center (agreement in place), Crazy Creek Horse Campground, Crazy Creek Trailhead, Martin Creek Campground, Alta Campground, Little West Fork Trailhead, and Slate Creek Campground

D. Invest in High Priority Improvements

Current approved and proposed improvements for recreation program include:

- 2007 – Sam Billings, Rombo, Alta and Fales Flat campgrounds accessibility
- 2008 – Baker Lake, Trapper peak, Chaffin Creek, Jew Mountain, Lower West Fork boat launch Trailheads
- 2009 - reconstruction Schumaker Campground, Twin Lake Trailhead, Lost Horse Cabin
- 2010 – Magruder Corridor sites – evaluation to be completed

Through this process additional improvements are proposed in the next 5 years. These sites will be evaluated along with our deferred maintenance needs for future funding, and include:

- Lake Como/Rock Cr group site, Lake Como Boat Launch, Lake Como Campground (RV), Lake Como Picnic Area

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