

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enacted on October 11, 2000 as part of the FY 2001 appropriations authority for the Forest Service, the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act of 2000 (CUFFA) directed Forest Service development and implementation of a more consistent procedure for determining cabin user fees. On April 3, 2006, the Forest Service published Final regulations for the implementation of CUFFA.

CUFFA provides a nationally consistent fee structure based on local market information, setting recreation residence permit fees at 5 percent of the appraised value of the lot, determined at least once every ten years. Congress' intent in setting the fee at 5 percent is to reflect both the terms and conditions of the permit and fair returns for privileged use of public land.

The Office of General Counsel has issued a legal opinion indicating that the Forest Service has no authority to defer the permit fee schedule required by CUFFA.

Based on new appraisals to date, nearly 60 percent of annual fees will be \$2,500 or less; 75 percent of fees will be \$4,000 or less. Approximately 5 percent will exceed \$10,000. Fees are paid to the Treasury; 25 percent of fees are, in turn, paid by the Treasury to the states for schools and roads.

The Washington Office Lands staff is coordinating responses to inquiries from Congress, Media, the National Forest Homeowners, employees, and other constituents about increasing fees.

The Forest Service will notify the holders of recreation residence permits of any revision to its policy. There are approximately 14,000 recreation residence authorizations. These permits are spread across some 94 national forests and occur in every region. The largest concentration of permits is in California (over 6,000) followed by Oregon, and Washington.