

Begich, Boggs Visitor Center Recreation Fee Program Implementation Briefing Paper – February 2008

Overview

The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center has been seeking public input on the changes proposed to its Recreation Fee Program, as outlined in its Amended Business and Communications Plan, since November of 2007. These changes have been recommended due to declining budgets which have caused us to explore options to leverage and enhance our visitor center services while increasing our ability to recover costs for operations and deferred maintenance. The visitor center has received response from the general public as well as tour guide operators at public meetings, through emails and by telephone.

Findings

The majority of people who responded recommended that any change made to the existing movie fee should not occur until the summer of 2009. We concur with this recommendation. By postponing the change to this part of the Recreation Fee Program the tour guide operators will be able to market and advertise the new rate in a timely fashion for the 2009 visitor season. This delayed fee change will also assist the general public in its ability to plan ahead. Most people recommended that when the change occurs we begin with a \$3 fee and increase it to no more than \$5 per adult over time. Most respondents were very understanding of our need to work towards self-sufficiency and applauded our efforts.

Future of the Fee Program

For the summer of 2008 we will maintain our existing fee for the movie at \$1 for adults only. Beginning with the summer of 2009 we will change from a fee for the movie only, to a fee for the movie and the exhibits. This Standard Amenity Fee will be \$3 per adult in 2009, \$4 per adult in 2010 and \$5 per adult in 2011. The slow escalation of this fee will allow tour guide operators and the general public to adjust their marketing and/or trip planning as the fee changes. It will also allow us to earn additional proceeds to enhance the amenities and special events we offer the public. Season Passes will be sold to individuals, two adults or family groups. The cost of each Season Pass is detailed in the attached Implementation Schedule. In all cases children 15 and under will be admitted to the movie and exhibits free of charge, as will those who own an America the Beautiful Pass, Senior Pass, Access Pass, Golden Age Pass or Golden Access Pass. Beginning with 2009 permitted tour guide companies will have the ability to receive a 10% discount in the Standard Amenity Fee for their guests if they pay in advance. This option will require each company to contact the Visitor Center Director to work out the details. Otherwise they or their guests will be charged the same amount as the general public. We will continue to be Fee Free in the off-season.

Benefits of Amended Fee Program

The additional funds that the visitor center is able to earn will assist us in meeting the following goals over time:

- re-open the visitor center on weekends and special events during the off-season
- reinstate the annual "*Nature Spooktacular*"
- enhance our conservation education and interpretive program offerings
- offer new exhibits and special events
- create a much needed new film
- assist with operation and maintenance costs of the facility
- advertise and market the visitor center and its services
- update and improve our web page

Fee Program Implementation Schedule

Summer 2008

- **Use Fee** - No change to existing movie fee – Rate will remain **\$1 per adult** for the **movie only** “Voices From the Ice” from Memorial Day Weekend through September 2008 (Senior Pass, Access Pass, America the Beautiful Pass, Golden Age and Access Passes will be honored) Visitors will be allowed to pay more if they feel moved to do so.
- **Season Passes** will be **pre-sold** at a reduced rate for **2009** for **\$5 per individual; \$10 for 2 adults; or \$15 for a family** (good for multiple visits in 2009 summer season)
- **Facility Use Fee Schedule** will be implemented as detailed in the Business Plan
- **Donations** to the Interpretation and Education Program at the visitor center will be continued; in addition the public will be allowed to donate funds to the I&E program through the Alaska Geographic Bookstore
- **Forest Service Interpreter Presentations and Guided Hikes** will continue to be offered – A **donation** will be recommended **per adult** for **hikes** that are **2 hours in duration** (Such as “Ice Worm Safari” hike on Byron Glacier Trail and “Portage Pass Discovery” hike on Portage Pass Trail)

Summer 2009

- **Standard Amenity Fee** - Rate will change to **\$3 per adult** for the **movie and the exhibits** (Senior Pass, Access Pass, America the Beautiful Pass, Golden Age and Access Passes will be honored)
- **Season Passes** will be offered for **\$7.50 per individual; \$15 for 2 adults; or \$30 for a family** (good for multiple visits per summer season)
- **Free Days** will be implemented once per month during this period (June 7, July 5, August 9 and Sept. 27)
- **Facility Use Fee Schedule** will be amended as needed
- **Donations** will continue (Donation Box, Penny Press Machine, Alaska Geographic Bookstore)
- **Outdoor Adventure Booking Service** will be provided the public to book outdoor adventures with permitted guides (An 8% service fee will be charged)
- **Forest Service Interpreter Presentations and Guided Hikes** will continue to be offered – A **\$5 fee** will be charged **per adult** for hikes that are **2 hours in duration** (Such as “Ice Worm Safari” hike on Byron Glacier Trail and “Portage Pass Discovery” hike on Portage Pass Trail)

Summer 2010

- **Standard Amenity Fee** - Rate will change to **\$4 per adult** for the **movie and the exhibits** (Senior Pass, Access Pass, America the Beautiful Pass, Golden Age and Access Passes will be honored)
- **Season Passes** will be offered for **\$10 per individual; \$20 for 2 adults; or \$40 for a family** (good for multiple visits per summer season)
- **Free Days** will be implemented once per month during this period (June 6, July 4, August 8 and Sept. 26)
- **Facility Use Fee Schedule** will be amended as needed
- **Donations** will continue (Donation Box, Penny Press Machine, Alaska Geographic Bookstore)
- **Outdoor Adventure Booking Service** will be provided the public to book outdoor adventures with permitted guides (An 8% service fee will be charged)
- **Forest Service Interpreter Presentations and Guided Hikes** will continue to be offered – A **\$5 fee** will be charged **per adult** for hikes that are **2 hours in duration** (Such as “Ice Worm Safari” hike on Byron Glacier Trail and “Portage Pass Discovery” hike on Portage Pass Trail)

Summer 2011

- **Standard Amenity Fee** - Rate will change to **\$5 per adult** for the **movie and the exhibits** (Senior Pass, Access Pass, America the Beautiful Pass, Golden Age and Access Passes will be honored)
- **Season Passes** will be offered for **\$12.50 per individual; \$25 for 2 adults; or \$40 for a family** (good for multiple visits per summer season)
- **Free Days** will be implemented once per month during this period (June 5, July 3, August 7 and Sept. 26)
- **Facility Use Fee Schedule** will be implemented as outlined in the Amended Business and Communications Plan 2007
- **Donations** will continue (Donation Box, Penny Press Machine, Alaska Geographic Bookstore)
- **Outdoor Adventure Booking Service** will be provided the public to book outdoor adventures with permitted guides (An 8% service fee will be charged)
- **Forest Service Interpreter Presentations and Guided Hikes** will continue to be offered – A **\$5 fee** will be charged **per adult** for hikes that are **2 hours in duration** (Such as “Ice Worm Safari” hike on Byron Glacier Trail and “Portage Pass Discovery” hike on Portage Pass Trail)