

Federal Lands Recreation Fee Program

Appropriations Language

Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) on December 8, 2004, as part of the Omnibus Appropriations bill for 2005. Approximately 200 Fish and Wildlife Service sites collect entrance fees and other receipts. Collection sites deposit all receipts into a Recreation Fee Account.

The Federal Lands Recreation Fee Program (Recreation Fee Program) demonstrates the feasibility of user generated cost recovery for the operation and maintenance of recreation areas, visitor services improvements, and habitat enhancement projects on Federal lands. Refuges use fees primarily to improve visitor access; to enhance public safety and security; to address backlogged maintenance needs; to enhance resource protection; and to cover the costs of collection. The FLREA authorizes the Recreation Fee Program through December 8, 2014.

Authorizing Statutes

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814). The FLREA provides the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreation land and waters over 10 years. The Act seeks to improve recreational facilities and visitor opportunities and services on Federal recreational lands by reinvesting receipts from fair and consistent recreational fees and pass sales.

		2010 Actual	2011 Estimate	2012				Change from 2011 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	Admin- istrative Cost Savings (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Recreation Fee Enhancement	(\$000)	4,842	4,800	0	0	0	4,800	0
Estimated User-Pay Cost Share	(\$000)	[380]	[357]	0	0	[0]	[340]	[0]
Total, Federal Lands Recreation Fee Program	(\$000)	4,842	4,800	0	0	0	4,800	0
	FTE	29	29	0	0	0	29	0

Program Overview

The FLREA authorized the Recreation Fee Program (Program) that allows the collection of entrance and expanded amenity fees on Federal lands and waters. The FLREA authorized the program for 10 years, through FY 2014. The Fish and Wildlife Service returns at least 80 percent of the collections to the specific refuge site of collection, to offset program costs and to enhance visitor facilities and programs. The Service has over 150 refuges enrolled in the program. An additional 50 hatchery, ecological services, or other refuge sites sell passes only. The program expects to collect approximately \$4,800,000 in FY 2011 and in FY 2012 under FLREA authority.

The FLREA did not change the Federal Duck Stamp program, which will continue to provide current stamp holders with free entry to Service entrance fee sites.

In FY 2010, entrance fees at 35 different field sites brought refuges almost \$3.0 million in collections. The Service used revenues for hiring temporary park rangers and volunteer coordinators, paying law enforcement overtime, and supporting visitor services interns. These extra employees increase safety,

interpretive programs, and educational activities for the public. Other direct benefits include providing educational supplies such as spotting scopes and binoculars for visitor use, information brochures and maps, updated refuge signs, routine maintenance of trails and roads, and the “greening” of visitor facilities.

At Chincoteague NWR, Virginia, with over 1.36 million visitors in FY 2010, fee dollars were used to increase and improve law enforcement presence and resource protection during peak visitation, in the summer months. Chincoteague NWR partners with the National Park Service, which manages the Assateague Island National Seashore beaches that the public can access via the Refuge. Fee dollars enhance beach recreational activities and in FY 2010 provided for the repair of the Refuge’s Environmental Education Gazebo damaged from a storm. The Refuge uses the gazebo to provide environmental education programs for school groups.



A storm damaged Environmental Education Gazebo repaired by the Refuge with fee dollars.

The Service is one of five bureaus, including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation, participating in the Recreation Fee Program. The Service continues to cooperate with these bureaus to update and reissue program implementation guidance to ensure compatibility and consistency across the Recreation Fee Program. Without the receipts collected for hunting permits at more than 80 Refuges across the United States, many Refuges would not be able to administer and improve their popular hunt programs. Fee dollars helped support hunt program administration; habitat restoration; routine maintenance and enhancements for hunting facilities; the hiring of temporary check station operators and park rangers; gate and road repairs; the printing of hunt brochures; creating or expanding youth hunts; and supporting hunting and fishing special events.

In FY 2010, White River NWR in Arkansas collected over \$82,000 from hunt permits for a wide variety of hunting opportunities. The Refuge offers hunts throughout the year for deer, waterfowl, turkey, small game, as well as furbearer trapping. In partnership with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation, the Refuge offers a special hunt for permanent mobility impaired individuals. Five lucky hunters are randomly chosen to stay for three days and two nights at the Cook’s Lake Lodge. Each morning the hunters select either special hydraulic lift stands or ground blinds from where they will to hunt for the day. Past participants have described the experience as the “Hunt of a Lifetime”.



"Hunt of a Lifetime", mobility impaired hunters at Cook's Lake Lodge on White River NWR.

The Service also collects over \$300,000 in receipts nationwide from boat ramp fees and fishing permits. With 7.1 million fishing visits and 2.6 million boat launch visits at refuges in FY 2010, refuges continue to reach out to a broad spectrum of recreation enthusiasts.

Crab Orchard NWR in Illinois hosts an estimated 1.2 million visitors annually, and its recreation programs contribute \$25.0 million to the local tourism economy. Public use opportunities at the Refuge include an auto tour route, hiking trails, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, environmental interpretation, boating, swimming, camping, and picnicking. In FY 2010, fees collected at the Refuge allowed for the hiring of three students as part of the Student Temporary Employment Program. These seasonal Park Rangers assisted with providing educational programs, organizing special events, collecting entrance fees, and providing information at the visitor center. These fees also allowed for the renovation of 38 campsites including upgraded electrical service, water, sewer, and site resurfacing.



Fee dollars allowed for the resurfacing and upgrading of 38 campsites at Crab Orchard NWR.

2012 Program Performance

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (\$000)	2010 Actual	2011 Estimate	2012 Estimate
Recreation Fee Revenues	4,842	4,930	5,000
America the Beautiful pass	[347]	[350]	[352]
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward & Recoveries	5,956	5,853	4,785
Total Funds Available	10,798	10,783	9,785
Obligations by Type of Project			
Facilities Routine/Annual Maintenance	951	836	880
Facilities Capital Improvements	370	944	566
Facilities Deferred Maintenance	490	381	57
Subtotal, asset repairs and maintenance	1,811	2,161	1,503
Visitor Services	1,571	2,375	1,855
Habitat Restoration (directly related to wildlife dependent recreation)	221	247	477
Direct Operation Costs	690	516	602
Law Enforcement (for public use and recreation)	283	280	302
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services	9	9	9
Administration, Overhead and Indirect Costs	380	390	400
Total Obligations	4,965	5,978	5,148

Program Performance Summary

The Recreation Fee Program directly supports the DOI Recreation Goal to provide for a quality recreation experience, including access, and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources. Each collaborating bureau also has a goal concerning costs associated with fee collections. The Service's goal is to limit collection costs to less than 20 percent of total collections.

Use of Cost and Performance Information

The Service monitors the Recreation Fee Program's costs of collection to ensure they remain below 20% of total fees collected.

Standard Form 300			
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RECREATION FEE PROGRAM			
Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)	2010 Actual	2011 Estimate	2012 Estimate
Identification code 14-5252-0-303			
Receipts:			
0220 Recreation Fee Program	5	5	5
0500 Appropriation	-5	-5	-5
0799 Total Balance	0	0	0
Obligations by program activity:			
0001 Direct Program Activity	5	6	5
0900 Total obligations	5	6	5
Budgetary resources available for obligation:			
1000 Unobligated balance carried forward, start of year	6	6	5
1260 New budget authority (gross)	5	5	5
1930 Total budgetary resources available for obligation	11	11	10
0900 Total new obligations (-)	-5	-6	-5
1941 Unobligated balance carried forward, end of year	6	5	5
New budget authority (gross), detail:			
Permanent:			
1260 Appropriation (special fund)	5	5	5
4090 Total new budget authority (gross)	5	5	5
Change in obligated balances:			
3020 Obligated balance, start of year	2	3	2
3030 Total new obligations	5	6	5
3040 Total outlays, gross (-)	-4	-7	-6
3090 Obligated balance, end of year	3	2	1
Outlays, (gross) detail:			
4100 Outlays from new mandatory authority	4	4	4
4101 Outlays from mandatory balances	0	3	2
4110 Total outlays (gross)	4	7	6
Net budget authority and outlays:			
4160 Budget authority	5	5	5
4170 Outlays	4	7	6
Direct obligations:			
11.13 Total personnel compensation	1	1	1
12.52 Other services	2	2	2
12.54 Operation and maintenance of facilities	1	1	1
12.60 Supplies and materials	1	1	1
99.95 Below reporting threshold	0	1	0
99.99 Total new obligations	5	6	5
Personnel Summary			
Direct:			
Total compensable workyears:			
1001 Full-time equivalent employment	29	28	28

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