

## Groom Creek School House

### A Proposal for a Rental Fee Under the Forest Service Arizona Cabin Rental “Rooms With a View” Program

**Proposal: make the Groom Creek Schoolhouse available for day use rental to public groups through the Arizona Cabin Rental program; the proposed fee for facility use is \$150 per day**

Description of Facility: a historic school house building and surrounding picnic area on the Prescott National Forest. The 1400 sq. ft. School House dates from the mid-1940's and consists of two assembly rooms and a food preparation area. A new vault toilet adjacent to the School House provides sanitary facilities. The picnic area consists of concrete tables, a fire ring, amphitheater seating for 70 people and outdoor electrical receptacles and lighting. The School House building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been recently renovated to preserve many characteristics of the original School House.

Capacity: the combined school house building and picnic facility will accommodate a group of 100 people, maximum. The building will be posted for a maximum assembly of 60 people.

Amenities: electrical outlets and lighting inside and outside, wood heating stove, picnic tables, fire ring, amphitheater seating, toilet, wastewater disposal in food prep area. There is no water currently provided.

Attractions: rustic setting in ponderosa pine forest readily accessible via paved roads; 20 minute drive from Prescott, less than a 2 hour drive from population centers of Phoenix and Flagstaff. The historic nature and restoration of an actual school house is an attraction in itself.

Management: the facility will be available year long, with most use anticipated in April through November. The facility will be managed under a work agreement with Recreation Solutions, a Forest Service enterprise team to be responsible for day to day cleaning and maintenance, as well as providing customer service and marketing. The facility will be reserved through the national recreation reservation system.

Marketing: facility rental will be targeted at community, family, church and business groups seeking a rustic, secluded gathering place in a forest setting. Anticipated use includes business and community meetings, receptions, picnics and day retreats, Marketing strategies will include those already in use for other rentals in the Program: information posted at Web sites (reservation service, Recreation Solutions, Forest and Regional Office Web pages); informational handouts at Forest Service and Chamber of Commerce locations; and articles in local, state and national publications.

Proposed Fee: the proposed fee for the facility is \$150 per day. This is primarily based on comparisons with rates charged by organizational camps in the Prescott area for renting meeting facilities that are somewhat similar to that offered at Groom Creek School House.

Public involvement: a flyer is posted at the School House with information on the proposed rental availability and the proposed rental rate (see attached). A newspaper article in the Prescott Courier did a good job of presenting the School House as an innovative recreational opportunity (attached). One e-mail was received from a Prescott resident who expressed a positive interest that the School House be adapted and made available for public use (attached). A Federal Register notice has been drafted and will be published for this proposed fee site.

Justification for fee: The rental is set based on the following:

1. The proposed fee is in line with the value provided and in line with fees for similar meeting and picnic facilities provided by the public sector in the Prescott area.
2. Fee collections need to be sufficient to fund ongoing operation and maintenance costs for the School House, which include:
  - operation of on-site septic tank and leach field waste water disposal system
  - cleaning and trash removal after visitor use
  - replacement of furniture due to wear and tear
  - landscape maintenance
  - rodent and pest control
  - out-year expenses for roof repairs and painting
3. Funds are desired for improvements that will enhance the rental use and continue to preserve the historic nature of the building. Anticipated improvements include:
  - development of an on-site water system (hauled water system, estimated cost \$8,000)
  - improvements for building and site accessibility (\$4,000)
  - improvements to site drainage and the parking area (\$10,000)

Business Plan: reference is made to the "Room With A View" Cabin Rental Project Plan for Arizona Forests, last updated December, 2003. The Executive Summary succinctly states on page 2 that, "Fees are based on market demand, number of occupants, amenities, and management costs." The proposed fee meets the objectives and goals stated throughout the Business Plan.

Financial details: projected annual revenue and expenses are estimated as follows:

Revenue		
Fee collections (60 days per year @ \$150/day)		\$9,000
	Total revenue	\$9,000
Expenses		
Recreation Solution management (75% of collections)		\$6,750
Annual maintenance not covered by Recreation Solutions management		\$1,000
Administrative oversight (1 day per year @ \$250/day)	\$ 250	
	Total expenses	<\$8,000>
Net available annually to accrue for cyclical maintenance and improvements		\$1,000