

Alto Pit OHV Campground
Bradshaw Ranger District, Prescott National Forest
Recreation Enhancement Act Fee Proposal

The Forest Service has added a small, 11 unit campground to its popular day use fee site, Alto Pit OHV Site and is proposing to charge a fee for this overnight camping. The site is heavily used by OHV enthusiasts, and Special Use permitted events. These include, Central Arizona Trails, a two day event featuring a low speed, technical motorcycle course and Mountain Bike Association of Arizona, a two day event featuring a Mountain Bike Race over selected trails in the area. These individuals and groups come from the Prescott Tri Cities area and the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas.

This area provides the elevation/climatic relief and pine forest, which is in high demand for residents of the desert urban areas of Phoenix and Tucson. The facility is open 365 days a year with the highest use during the summer months when temperatures in Phoenix are the highest. Drive time to Alto Pit is approximately 2 hours from Phoenix and 3.5 hours from Tucson.

Improvements to the site amenities have occurred over the last 10 years a result of a capital investment project funded through a grant from the Arizona State Parks and Forest recreation funds. The final portion of this project, the completion of the camp sites, occurred in September, 2006. Use and popularity of the area has steadily increased over the last few years and with the addition of the camping facilities we expect to see even greater use.

HISTORY OF SITE DEVELOPMENT

Development of the site began in 1996 when the Forest received a grant from AZ State Parks to Develop the OHV day use site. Construction included an access loop road and designated parking, unloading ramp, 1 toilet with dumpster pad, picnic sites and fee station.

Alto Pit was approved as a Day Use Fee Demonstration project in 2000 and began charging a fee of \$3.00 dollars per day.

In 2003 the Forest received a second grant from AZ State Parks to continue to improve the site. Work included: installation of culverts and surfacing of road, placement of rip rap along road to reduce erosion, erection of a ramada and accessible trail to the toilet, development of a brochure and information kiosk, creation of picnic and campsites, placement of 2 additional toilets. Work was not fully completed until Sept 2006 due to the state withdrawing the funds and later reinstating them.

With the passage of REA the site was re-evaluated and found to meet the 6 requirements of a day use facility in order to charge a fee under REA and a \$3.00 fee has continued to be collected.

Amenities meeting the requirements of REA include:

Security: A Host is provided at the site year round, compliance officers drive through the site daily, and extra patrols are on site longer on Holiday weekends. Law enforcement Officers pass through weekly and county sheriff go through periodically and available on request if we call.

Designated developed parking: Gravel surfaced parking area for 10 trailers defined by boulders

Restroom facilities: One accessible double unit vault toilet

Permanent Trash removal: a dumpster which is emptied weekly

Information Kiosk: In addition to a three panel fee station which includes a trail map, there is a Kiosk describing good OHV trail etiquette and a separate bulletin board to display information about upcoming events.

Picnic facilities: There are two individual picnic sites in addition to the group picnic area

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Overnight Camping Sites: The camping area consists of ten single family camping units and one double site. One site is a back-in and the remaining are pull-through sites for ease of use with a trailer. All sites have a barrier-free concrete table and a barrier-free fire ring. All but 2 sites are fully accessible (steeper terrain causes them not comply with ADA standards). The double site has two picnic tables, one central fire ring and an extra long pull-through to accommodate extra parking.

The gravel surfaced camping loop road has two barrier-free vault toilet buildings and one 2 yard dumpster which is emptied weekly. Within the campground loop is a group gathering area with barrier-free facilities including a concrete pad covered by a group 50' diameter Ramada with two group pedestal grills and 8 tables. A concrete trail connects the shelter area to a toilet. This central Ramada area has additional parking for 5 cars and is fenced to keep motorized vehicles out. A multi-panel fee information bulletin board and camping information bulletin board is located near the first camp unit.

Host Site: Located at the entrance to the facility, there is a back in spur with barrier free picnic table, fire ring and pedestal grill. There is an electric hookup, sewer hookup and holding tank. A utility building houses a water storage tank (for Host use only) as well as additional storage. The Host provides security for the day use and camping site.

Day Use Only Site – This area is located at the end of the camping loop and adjacent to an old gravel pit. Open OHV travel is allowed in the pit area and a 9 mile trail system connects to it. The facilities consist of a Pay Station/Bulletin Board, a drive through parking area for 10 vehicles with trailer; a barrier-free double vault toilet building, a wall area for loading and unloading OHV's, two accessible picnic sites and one two yard trash dumpster.

Potable water is not available in the Alto Pit Recreation Area.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Proposed Fee Rates

Day Use Parking Fees – Continue to collect \$3 per day for use of the day use area

Single Family Camping - \$10 per day

Double Camp unit - \$20 per day

Campground fee includes day use facilities at no extra charge.

All fees will be collected from the existing fee tubes by the District Compliance Officer.

Current Revenues collected at Day Use site based on 10/05-9/06 = \$7,080

Projected Revenues at campground = \$12,570

The facility will be open year round but with an estimated decrease in occupancy in the winter months depending on the weather. Projected revenues are based on higher occupancy for April – Oct season. It is estimated that the year round occupancy will average 30%.

Operations and maintenance of developed recreation sites on the Prescott National Forest is done in-house with recreation staff. O&M costs for the day use area this past year were \$18,117. This included cleaning all three toilets and emptying the dumpster in the campground as well as the day use area. The additional costs associated with cleaning the campsites, additional time to clean toilets and annual maintenance costs on the tables and fire rings is estimated at \$4583.

Looking at day use and campground, the expected revenue is \$19,650 and the projected costs \$22,700. If there are additional revenues generated they will be used to provide amenities such as a covered ATV repair/ work station or additional traffic control within the campground or be saved to cover cyclical or replacement costs of existing facilities.

Business Plan

There is an existing business plan for all developed recreation sites within a 6 mile radius of the City of Prescott, Arizona and this new campground would be included. The existing business plan will be updated in the near future based on a regional plan. The original plan was implemented in 1998 under the fee demonstration plan.

- Project will be managed as a Complex of developed recreation sites. As such, fee demo receipts will be spent on high priority work within the Complex, not necessarily returned dollar for dollar to the site where the money was collected.
- 80% of receipts will be used to improve health and safety, resource protection and rehabilitation, accessibility, user convenience and satisfaction, environmental education and interpretation, and law enforcement. Up to 15% of fees will be used for fee collection and compliance. 5% goes to Regional REA Fund.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES OR SERVICES, INCLUDING FEES CHARGED.

Research shows that Alto Pit will be providing an experience unique within the state of Arizona. To our knowledge, no other facility within Arizona provides camping at the same location as the trails but two in California were identified. The following analysis looks at similar types of camping opportunities in the Prescott area.

Relationship to Private or Concessionaire Developments (local)

Point of Rocks State Park, , approximately 6 miles north east of Alto Pit on State Highway 89, is concessionaire run. There are 96 RV sites, full hookups with electricity and water. The fee is \$22.00 per day, plus \$1.00 for Electricity.

Relationship to Other Public Developments (local)

The forest service maintains Yavapai Campground for year round public use. It is located approximately 3 miles northeast on Granite Basin road, there are 29 single family camping units and 2 composting Toilets. The Campground is shaded by Ponderosa Pine, AZ White Oak and Alligator Juniper. Yavapai has potable water, 2 three yard Trash Bins and a year round Camp Host. The Camping fee is \$10.00 per night.

Watson Lake, approximately 6 miles northeast on Highway 89, is a Prescott City Park campground. There are 15 single family camping units, no hookups, one combination Toilet/Shower Building. The Camping fee is \$10.00 per night for Prescott residents and \$15.00 per night for all other users.

Similar Facilities state wide

Alamo State Park offers 10 non –electric sites for \$12.00. Camp units are paved and there is free access to showers and dump station. There is no fee to ride on adjacent BLM land .

Similar Facilities in other states

Wildomar OHV area and Campground and Corral Canyon OHV and Campground on the Cleveland NF. Campsites at both facilities are \$10.00 and day use is \$5.00

Proximity to Urban Population Centers

The Phoenix area (population 3.25 million) is approximately 100 miles from Alto Pit and is about a 2 hour drive. Tucson (population 700,000) is 300 miles away and is about a 4-hour drive.

Justification for fee

The average price of similar facilities is in the \$10 to \$12 range. We had originally proposed a higher fee of \$15 but after comments from the RAC working group have decided to drop the fee to \$10.

If no fee or a reduced fee were charged – options would include: reduced services in reduced season of use or fewer patrols; use of funds from other fee sites or use of limited appropriated funds which will have impacts on other developed recreation sites; no additional traffic control in campground resulting in increased resource damage; no increased amenities such as maintenance station or improving the road for dust abatement.

DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE DISTRICT WILL INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT EXPENDITURES.

The public will be kept informed of how their fees are at work in the area by signage, both on the Fee Information Bulletin Boards and individual signs in areas where improvements are made using fees collected (i.e. “Your Fees at Work”.)

Information will also be posted on the Prescott NF web site and will be forwarded to the Region for inclusion in the Regional Annual Fee Program Report.

NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED FEE INCREASE TO PUBLIC

Date (s) of PI Activity	Type of Public Involvement Activity	Audience(s) Reached	Feedback Received? (Yes/No)	Synopsis of Feedback
Nov. 6, 2006	e-mail message of camping and proposed fee	AZOHVC (AZ OHV Coalition)	Yes	3 e-mail responses. 2 in favor of project. 1 felt fee too high.
Nov 22, 2006	Notice published in Federal Register	All Publics	No	
Dec. 20, 2006	Flyer posted at site on bulletin board	Day Use users of Alto Pit	Yes	1 e-mail response against fee sites in general
Dec. 22, 2006	News Release issued by Prescott NF	Statewide Publics	No	
Dec. 22, 2006	News release e-mailed	POTA (Prescott Open Trails Assoc.) (62 people)	No	
Jan. 1, 2007	News Release printed recreation monthly <i>Read It Here!</i>	Local publics	No	
March 17, 2007	AZOHVC via Jeff Gursh	OHV websites in Arizona Posted April 16, 2007	No	
April 6, 2007	Newspaper article with <i>Dailey Courier</i>	Local publics – OHV users 21,000 paid subscription	Yes	2 e-mail responses positive
April 4 2007	Prescott National Forest website posted all District Offices & Hayfield Draw OHV area	All PNF users	No	
April 4, 2007	Alto Pit campground fee flyers to OHV dealers Hales Motors, Sunburst Motors, Outdoor Motorsports, Star Island Motorsports and at Alto Pit	All PNF OHV users	No	

