

Sycamore Cabin

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

Proposal: Increase the basic nightly rental fee at Sycamore Cabin from \$100 per night to \$125 per night (excluding \$9 reservation fee). If renters bring an RV to the site, the proposed fee is \$150 per night (see Capacity below).

Cabin description: a historic Prescott National Forest Ranger's house dating from 1936, 2 BR, 1 Bath, kitchen/dining area, living room, year-round availability and access in an area of mild climate, located on the grounds of the old Sycamore Ranger Station. The Cabin is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Capacity: the base rate covers up to 8 people in the cabin. Up to 10 people total can stay at the site if renters bring an RV. An extra \$25 per night fee will be charged for an RV at the site

Amenities: electricity, water, full bath, central air conditioning and heating, wood heating stove, full furnishings (no bedding or towels), electric range/oven, refrigerator, basic cookware and dinnerware, fenced yard, RV hookup (water, electric and sewer).

Attractions: adjacent to the Arizona Trail (for off-road vehicle use); Sycamore Creek runs through the grounds; wildlife watching; remote, yet readily accessible (20 minutes) from I-17; less than a 2 hour drive from major population centers of Phoenix, Flagstaff and Prescott.

Rental history and management: Sycamore Cabin was a charter property in the Arizona Cabin Rental "Rooms with a View" program. It has been in the rental program for 6 years. It is reserved through the National Recreation Reservation Service. It is currently managed under a work agreement with Recreation Solutions, a Forest Service enterprise team responsible for day to day cleaning and maintenance, as well as providing customer service and marketing. Utilization over the last year was 154 nights, an occupancy rate of over 40%. Occupancy over the last four years shows a steady upward trend.

Public involvement: a flyer is posted at the Cabin with information on the rate increase (see attached). No comments have been received at this time.

Justification for increased fee: The base rental fee is proposed to increase from \$100 to \$125 per night for the following reasons:

1. The proposed fee is more in line with the value. The visitor register contains recorded comments from renters that they are willing to pay more for the use of the Cabin.
2. The proposed fee is more reasonably aligned with what few comparisons can be extrapolated from similar recreational opportunities, taking into account that the Cabin has all utilities and accommodates larger than normal groups (a maximum of 10). There are no known directly comparable rental opportunities within a 40 mile radius. Within the Arizona Cabin Rental Program, other cabins rent from \$50 per night to \$200 per night.
3. Occupancy rates demonstrate an increasing demand for this opportunity. The proposed fee will keep pace with the demand.

4. Increased collections can be used for improvements at the Cabin which will add value. Proposed improvements over the next 5 years include:
 - repainting the exterior of the Cabin (estimated cost, \$2,000)
 - adding directional road signs (\$500)
 - remodeling the bathroom (\$800)
 - renovating the historic barn adjacent to the Cabin (\$4,000)*
 - reconstructing the corrals (\$2,000*

* these two improvements are in response to visitor requests, mainly from horse riding groups, for stock handling facilities at this site.

5. Increased collections will keep pace with rising operation and maintenance costs that are reflective of cost increases throughout the general construction industry over the last two years. The larger operation and maintenance items for Sycamore Cabin include:
 - on-site water system, including monthly water sampling and testing
 - on-site septic tank and leach field waste water disposal system
 - cabin cleaning after visitor use
 - replacement of appliances and furniture due to wear and tear
 - landscape maintenance
 - rodent and pest control

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 increase follows this principle to meet the objectives and goals stated throughout the Business Plan.