

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Summary

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Following is a summary of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), which was enacted December 8, 2004 (REA; PL 108-447, Section 804).

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act benefits visitors to Federal public lands by:

- Reinvesting a majority of fees back to the site of collection to enhance visitor services and reduce the backlog of maintenance needs for recreation facilities (including trail maintenance, toilet facilities, boat ramps, hunting blinds, interpretive signs and programs);
- Providing an interagency fee program that reduces confusion over differing fee programs and passes by reducing four national passes down to one;
- Providing more opportunities for public involvement in determining recreation fee sites and fees;
- Providing focused criteria and limits on areas and sites where recreation fees can be charged; and
- Providing more opportunities for cooperation with gateway communities through fee management agreements for visitor and recreation services, emergency medical services and law enforcement services.

Under REA, many recreation activities and sites will continue to be free. The Act includes additional provisions that build on experiences from the previous "Fee Demo program" and improve the fee program by clarifying the circumstances in which fees may be charged. The Act prohibits certain fees for:

- General access to national forests and grasslands and Bureau of Land Management areas;
- Horseback riding, walking through, driving through, or boating through areas where no facilities or services are used;
- Access to overlooks or scenic pullouts;
- Undesignated parking areas where no facilities are provided for
- Picnicking along roads or trails; and
- In addition individuals under 16 will not be charged an entrance or standard amenity fee.

REA applies to Federal recreation lands under the jurisdiction of the following land management agencies:

- [National Park Service](#);
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#);
- [Bureau of Land Management](#);
- [Bureau of Reclamation](#); and
- [U.S. Forest Service](#).

(Note: All agencies except the Bureau of Reclamation were previously authorized to have fee programs under the Recreation Fee Demonstration program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.)

REA authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish, modify, change and collect recreation fees at Federal recreation lands and waters as provided for in the Act. The Act will expire December 2004. Possible fees authorized by REA include:

- **Standard Amenity Fees** are typical day use fees. Sites or areas must have specific features and amenities in order to qualify as a fee site.

- **Expanded Amenity Fees** are fees that provide direct benefits to individuals or groups. They include things like developed campgrounds, cabin rentals, highly developed boat docks and swimming areas. They may also include services like hookups, dump stations, special tours and reservations services.
- **Special Recreation Permits** (SRPs) are for areas where natural and cultural resources need protection or where extra measures are required for the health and safety of visitors. Permits may be required for places like wilderness areas, shooting ranges and specialized trail systems.

The Act authorizes a new "America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass":

- The new interagency pass covers standard amenity recreation fees for all Federal recreation lands and waters where a fee is charged.
- Existing National Park passes, Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access passes will be grandfathered in under their existing benefits and will remain valid until expired.
- Site specific and regional passes such as the Adventure Pass for National Forests in Southern California will remain valid and will continue to be available under this Act.

REA provides for a high level of public involvement in determining new fee areas and fee schedules by:

- Implementing the use of Recreation Resource Advisory Committees for national forest and BLM sites and areas to give communities additional opportunities to provide input on recreation fees in terms of new fees, changes or the establishment of sites;
- Providing additional opportunities for public participation and prior notice prior to a new fee being established; and
- Communicating with the visiting public on how fee revenues are being spent to improve visitor facilities and services.