



Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) Summary

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act was passed in the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL 108-447) signed into law by President Bush on December 8, 2004. The 10-year Act authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish, modify, charge and collect recreation fees at Federal recreation lands and waters as provided for in the Act.

Recreation Fees are not new to the Forest Service nor the BLM. Since the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act was passed in 1964, the Forest Service has had the authority to charge recreation fees for activities such as camping in developed campgrounds. Through the Granger-Thye authority, the Forest Service has provided the public with opportunities to rent administrative sites such as cabins or lookouts for a fee.

The agencies authorized to charge fees under REA are:

- National Park Service;
- Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Bureau of Reclamation;
- Bureau of Land Management; and
- Forest Service.

REA benefits visitors to Federal public lands by:

- Reinvesting a majority of fees back to the site of collection;
- Providing an interagency pass program that reduces confusion;
- 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.

REA identifies three fee categories for the Forest Service and BLM:

- **Standard Amenity Fees**, which can include National Conservation Areas, National Volcanic Monuments, destination visitor or interpretive centers, and areas with specific characteristics and amenities such as toilets, parking, trash receptacles, picnic tables, interpretation, and security.
- **Expanded Amenity Fees**, which may include developed campgrounds with specific amenities, highly developed boat launches, rentals, enhanced interpretive programs, transportation and reservation services.

- Special Recreation Permit Fees, which replaces similar authority under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

REA also allows the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to charge entrance fees.

Many recreation activities and sites are free. No fee exists for:

- General access;
- Traveling through areas where no facilities or services are used;
- Access to overlooks or scenic pullouts;
- Undesignated parking areas without facilities;
- Solely for parking;
- Picnicking along roads or trails; and
- People under the age of 16 (this applies to Standard Amenity Fees only).

REA identifies public involvement procedures through the use of:

- Recreation Resource Advisory Committees;
- Prior notice through the Federal Register, local media, and on-site signing; and
- Communicating with the visiting public on how fee revenues are being spent to improve visitor facilities and services.

A new multi-agency National Recreation Pass, called “America the Beautiful—National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass”, has been developed:

- REA establishes the development and implementation of a national interagency pass.
- The Interagency pass will be valid at recreation sites/areas where Entrance Fees and Standard Amenity Recreation Fees are required.
- Existing benefits for valid National Park, Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access passes will be maintained until passes expire. These passes will continue to be sold until the interagency pass becomes available.
- Sales of site specific and regional passes such as the Adventure Pass and Northwest Forest Pass will continue as authorized under REA.

REA rescinds all or portions of the:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF)
- Recreational Fee Demonstration Program
- Permits for Admissions to Refuge Units
- National Parks Pass, Golden Eagle Passport, Golden Age Passport, and Golden Access Passport

