

# Forest Service News

## Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

1839 S. Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257



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For Immediate Release

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### **PUBLIC WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS RECREATION PASS SYSTEM**

PORTERVILLE, CA - The Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument has scheduled five workshops to discuss a proposal to implement a recreation pass system for fee collection at the Lake Isabella high impact recreation area (HIRA) and to discuss changing the seasonal fee requirement to year round.

#### **WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Hume Lake District Ranger Office 35860 East Kings Canyon Road, Dunlap	Tuesday, March 4, 2008	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Forest Supervisors Office 1839 S. Newcomb, Porterville	Thursday, March 6, 2008	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
East Bakersfield Veterans Hall 2101 Ridge Road, Bakersfield	Monday, March 17, 2008	4:30 am - 7:30 pm
Kerr-McGee Center/ Fossil Falls Room 100 W. California Ave., Ridgecrest	Tuesday, March 18, 2008	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Lake Isabella Senior Center/Veteran's Hall, 6405 Lake Isabella Blvd, Lake Isabella	Friday, March 21, 2008	4:30 pm - 7:30pm

The pass system would replace the self-service collection tubes and visitor booths used to collect the daily fee at the HIRA. This pass would encompass only the sites within the existing HIRA - Auxiliary Dam, Old Isabella Road and South Fork Recreation Area at this time. The seasonal pass currently would be incorporated into this new pass system. The pass would be made available for purchase at Forest Service Offices, at participating vendors, and over the internet. The vendor sales program allows community businesses to benefit from and support the pass program by making fee compliance convenient for visitors. The pass system has been used successfully on several other National Forests.

The fee season for the Lake Isabella HIRA was questioned in the January meeting of the California Recreation Resources Advisory Committee (RRAC). This prompted the proposal to extend the fee season at the Lake Isabella HIRA to year round. Extending the fee season simplifies administration, makes the program easier for visitors to understand, and the added revenue would help pay for services provided to the visitor. Under the Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), the Forest Service is able to collect and retain 95% of the fees to improve services, collect trash, clean toilets and improve facilities.

During public workshops and outreach efforts in 2007 focusing on the developed recreation program and possible recreation fee increases, the public voiced concerns about the method of fee collection at the Lake Isabella HIRA and at other fee sites on the Sequoia National Forest. The current fee tube method is labor intensive and expensive to administer. It depends on the honor system for fee compliance on most days and this may lead to low fee compliance. A conspicuously displayed pass in a vehicle makes it easier for officials to check for fee compliance. The vendor sales program makes compliance more convenient for visitors.

Concurrently the Forest Service is proposing raising the fees at the Lake Isabella high impact recreation area for the 2008 recreation season. The proposal to increase fees was released to the news media and discussed in public workshops in the 2007. The table below helps to identify a timeline for the proposed fee increases, the extended fee season and the method of fee collection.

### PROPOSED CHANGES

<b>Item</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Daily fee for Lake Isabella HIRA	Fee Increase effective summer 2008	\$5 per vehicle/walk-ins	\$10 per vehicle
Dump Station	Fee Increase effective summer 2008	\$7 per use	\$10 per use
Seasonal Pass	Fee Increase effective summer 2008	\$35 per year	\$50 per year-may or may not include day use at Camp 9
Fee season	Extend fee season effective summer 2008	May 1 through Sept. 30	Year-round
Recreation Pass System	Method of fee collection effective May 2009	Daily fee paid on site at FEE tube or entrance booth, annual pass purchased at Forest Service Office	Purchase daily or annual pass from vendor, internet, or Forest Service Office

\*HIRA (high impact recreation area) is a clearly delineated, contiguous area with specific, tightly defined boundaries and clearly defined access points; that supports or sustains concentrated recreation use; and that provides opportunities for outdoor recreation that are directly associated with a natural or cultural feature, place, or activity (i.e., waterway, canyon, travel corridor, geographic attraction – the recreation attraction).

All fee change proposals will be presented before a citizen’s advisory committee, called the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee, or RRAC. Committee members represent a broad array of recreation interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable fee changes. Committee members will help ensure that the Forest Service addresses public issues and concerns about recreation fees. The public is welcome to attend and comment at all advisory committee meetings. This committee is expected to meet in June 2008 and review the Lake Isabella HIRA proposals.

For more information on the RRAC in California or the fee program: [www.fs.fed.us/r5/passes/rrac/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/passes/rrac/)

Questions or comments call Mary Cole, Forest Fee Coordinator at 559-784-1500 ext: 1133 or call Cindy Thill at the Kernville Office: 760-376-3781 ext 625. Written comments can be sent to 1839 S. Newcomb St., Porterville CA 93257. Please also visit the Sequoia website at: [www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/)