

Recreation Fee Program Appropriations Language

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) was passed on December 8, 2004, as part of the Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY 2005 (P.L. 108-447). The Recreation Fee Program, created by the REA, replaced the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. All but one of the 113 Fish and Wildlife Service sites that participated in the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program have transitioned into the new program and continue to collect entrance fees and other receipts. Others that previously collected fees under different authorities have also now joined the Recreation Fee Program. Some sites participate only through pass sales. All receipts are deposited into a recreation fee account of which at least 80 percent is returned to the collecting site.

The recreation fee program demonstrates the feasibility of use generated cost recovery for operation and maintenance of recreation areas, visitor services improvements, and habitat enhancement projects on federal lands. Fees are used primarily at the site to improve visitor access, enhance public safety and security, address backlogged maintenance needs, enhance resource protection, and cover the costs of collection. The REA authorizes this program through 2014.

Authorizing Statutes

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814). The REA provides the authority to establish, modify, charge and collect recreation fees at federal recreation land and waters over 10 years. The Act seeks to improve recreational facilities and visitor opportunities on Federal recreational lands by reinvesting receipts from fair and consistent recreational fees and passes, and for other purposes.

		2006 Actual	2007 CR	2008			Change From 2007 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Recreation Fee Program	(\$000)	4,279	4,750		-	4,750	-
Estimated User-Pay/ Cost Share	(\$000)	[397]	[390]			[393]	
Impact of the CR			-			-	-
Total, Recreation Fee Program	(\$000)	4,279	4,750		-	4,750	-
	<i>FTE</i>	32	32		-	32	-

Program Overview

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) authorized the Recreation Fee Program that allows the collection of entrance and expanded amenity fees. REA authorized the program for 10 years through FY 2014. At least 80 percent of the collections return to the specific site of collection to offset program costs and enhance visitor facilities and programs. The Service has 157 wildlife refuges enrolled in the program with an additional 32 sites selling passes only. The Service expects to collect approximately \$4.75 million in 2007.

The Federal Duck Stamp program was not changed by the REA, and will continue to provide current stamp holders with free entry to Service entrance fee sites.

The Service is one of five agencies, including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation, participating in the Recreation Fee Program. The Service continues to cooperate with these agencies to update and reissue program implementation guidance to ensure compatibility and consistency across the program.

The Recreation Fee Program directly supports the DOI Recreation Goal to provide for a quality recreation experience, including access, and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources. Each agency also has a goal concerning costs associated with fee collections. The Service's goal is to limit collection costs to less than 20 percent of total collections.

2008 Program Performance

In 2008, the five recreation fee federal agencies will assess the new pass program and will also explore the potential use of an outside contractor to run the program. Sites will continue implementing pass use tracking methods in order to determine the most equitable way to share internet pass sales and third-party pass sales revenues.

In early 2007, the agencies rolled out the America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. This is the interagency family of passes that replaces the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passports. It is authorized in the REA, which also discontinues the National Park Pass. The new Interagency Annual Pass went on sale January 1, 2007, for \$80 and provides free entry to all federally-managed fee sites.

The new Interagency Senior Pass is also available as a lifetime pass for those 62 and older for \$10, (same price as the former Golden Age Passport). In addition, there is a version of the new Interagency Access Pass that is free to those with permanent disabilities (and proper documentation), similar to the former Golden Access Passport. Also new in 2007 is the Interagency Volunteer Pass, which is free to those who volunteer 500 hours or more.

Apart from the new pass roll-out, the Service implemented business plans as part of the annual reporting requirements. It also plans to develop policy and training in order to improve and sustain program consistency and quality.

During 2006, the Service continued working with the Recreation Fee Guidance Implementation Team to advance implementation of the program. In conjunction with the other Federal agencies involved in the program, the Service revised and issued program guidance, including its own Interim Guidance. The new guidance was based on the 1996 guidance developed for the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program as well as the interagency Secretarial Guidelines.

The Service developed a list of recreation fee sites to include national wildlife refuges enrolled in fee collection programs preceding the recreation fee program. National wildlife refuges that were collecting fees under other authorities were enrolled in the recreation fee program. The Implementation Team developed a business plan template for the sites enrolled in the program.

The Service also completed the financial transition from the Recreation Fee Demonstration program to the current program. This required reconciling and closing accounts used for the demonstration program or under other authorities.

Specific examples of 2006 accomplishments using recreation fees include the following:

Big Oaks NWR (IN): A portion of the recreation fee revenues at the wildlife refuge were used to sponsor and host a series of special events including a tree-climbing event for women, an outreach program at the Cincinnati Zoo, Take a Kid Fishing Day, and several youth hunts.

Modoc NWR (CA): Revenues were used to enhance the quality of the recreation opportunities by improving the foraging habitat for waterfowl and sandhill cranes. The wildlife refuge planted 180 acres in cereal grains. The wildlife refuge also purchased boundary signs and reprinted refuge brochures with its fee money.

Prime Hook NWR (DE): Recreation fee revenue was applied to partnership efforts to construct deer stands and waterfowl hunting blinds and to plan a wheelchair accessible fishing pier. The wildlife refuge also used fee money and partnerships to sponsor special events such as the Horseshoe Crab/Shorebird Festival celebrating International Migratory Bird Day, and the Waterfowl Festival which is held during National Wildlife Refuge Week. The Refuge also posted new interpretive signs on its walking trails.

National Elk Refuge (WY): The wildlife refuge used part of its recreation fee money to purchase safety vests (hunter orange) for staff and an electronic defibrillator for its Law Enforcement vehicle. Fee monies also pay postage for hunter permits and supplies for the hunt drawings. Pass sales were also used for computer software to create signs to explain the use of fee dollars. Fees were used for painting and staining the viewing deck at the Visitor Center and for an audio system for use at special events such as the Boy Scout antler auction, hunt drawings, and other activities.

The Recreation Fee program is not associated with one particular goal; however, revenues collected through the program are used for visitor services and maintenance needs, including resource protection, and costs of collection on participating refuges. Therefore, the Recreation Fee Program directly supports the DOI Recreation Goal to provide for a quality recreation experience, including access, and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI-managed and partnered lands and waters.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	2006	2007	2008
	(in thousands of dollars)		
Recreation Fee Revenues	4,279	4,750	4,750
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward & Recoveries	<u>4,094</u>	<u>4,452</u>	<u>4,472</u>
Total Funds Available	8,373	9,202	9,222
Obligations by Type of Project			
Facilities Routine/Annual Maintenance	281	400	350
Facilities Capital Improvements	376	300	400
Facilities Deferred Maintenance	<u>440</u>	<u>330</u>	<u>500</u>
Subtotal, asset repairs and maintenance	1,098	1,030	1,250
Visitor Services	1,553	2,060	1,987
Habitat Restoration (directly related to wildlife dependent recreation)	140	200	200
Direct Operation Costs	558	665	675
Law Enforcement (for public use and recreation)	417	375	450
Fee Management Agreement and Reservation Services	8	10	12
Administration, Overhead and Indirect Costs	<u>397</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>393</u>
Total Obligations	4,171	4,730	4,967

Program Performance Overview

Measure	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Plan	2006 Actual	2007 Plan	2007 Change from 2006	2008 Request	2008 Change from 2007
20.6 % of Rec Fee receipts spent on collections (RIM 1078) (Refuges)		15%	20%	20%	20%	0	20%	0

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
RECREATION FEE PROGRAM**

Identification code 14-5252-0-2-303	2006 Actual	2007 Estimate	2008 Estimate
<u>Receipts:</u>			
02.20 Recreation Enhancement Fee Program	4	5	5
<u>Appropriations:</u>			
05.00 Recreation Enhancement Fee Program	-4	-5	-5
07.99 Balance, end of year	0	0	0

Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)

Identification code 14-5252-0-2-303	2006 Actual	2007 Estimate	2008 Estimate
<u>Obligations by Program Activity</u>			
00.01 Direct Program Activity	4	5	5
10.00 Total obligations	4	5	5
<u>Budgetary Resources Available for Obligation</u>			
21.40 Unobligated balance carried forward, start of year	4	4	4
22.00 New budget authority (gross)	4	5	5
23.90 Total budgetary resources available for obligation	8	9	9
23.95 Total new obligations (-)	-4	-5	-5
24.40 Unobligated balance carried forward, end of year	4	4	4
<u>New Budget Authority (gross), Detail</u>			
Mandatory:			
60.20 Appropriation (special fund, indefinite)	4	5	5
70.00 Total new budget authority (gross)	4	5	5
<u>Change in Unpaid Obligations</u>			
72.40 Obligated balance, start of year	1	1	1
173.10 Total new obligations	4	5	5
73.20 Total outlays, gross (-)	-4	-5	-5
74.40 Obligated balance, end of year	1	1	1

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Object classification (in millions of dollars)

Identification code 14-5252-0-2-303	2006 Actual	2007 Estimate	2008 Estimate
86.97 Outlays from new mandatory authority	3	4	4
86.98 Outlays from mandatory balances	1	1	1
87.00 Total outlays (gross)	4	5	5
<u>Net Budget Authority and Outlays</u>			
89.00 Budget authority	4	5	5
90.00 Outlays	4	5	5
95.02 Unpaid obligations end of year	1	0	0
<u>Direct Obligations</u>			
11.9 Total personnel compensation	2	2	2
25.2 Other services	1	2	2
99.95 Below reporting threshold	1	1	1
99.99 Total new obligations	4	5	5
Personnel Summary			
<u>Direct:</u>			
Total compensable workyears:			
1001 Full-time equivalent employment	32	32	32