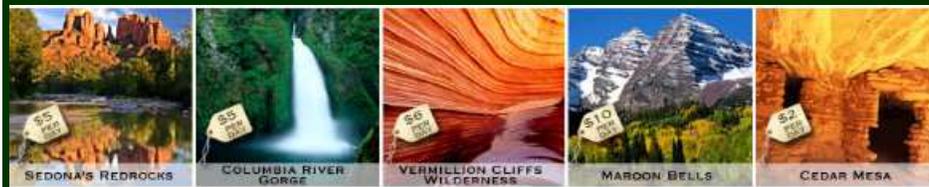


Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

WESTERN SLOPE NO-FEE COALITION



March 30, 2014

QUICK LINKS

[WSNFC Website](#)

[Donate](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Use this link to subscribe or edit your profile.

In This Issue

[FEDERAL JUDGE AUTHORIZES PRIVATIZATION OF ALL RECREATION ON NATIONAL FORESTS](#)

[House Hearing On Rec Fee Legislation April 4](#)

THE FEE-FREE PRESS



DEAR PUBLIC LANDS SUPPORTER
Kitty Benzar ,

In this issue, two crucial developments:

A federal judge has allowed the privatization of all recreation on our National Forests, and the US House is about to hold a hearing on draft legislation to replace the current recreation fee law.

Citizen action NOW is essential to preserve public access to our public lands.

PLEASE ACT NOW! DETAILS BELOW.

FEDERAL JUDGE ALLOWS PRIVATIZATION OF ALL RECREATION ON ALL NATIONAL FORESTS

Ruling says concessionaires are exempt from the requirements and restrictions in federal recreation fee law.

In a [ruling](#) handed down March 28, 2014, Judge Rudolph Contreras of the DC District Court wrote that Forest Service concessionaires are not subject to the restrictions on recreation fees that apply at agency-managed recreation sites.

The ruling essentially means that private companies operating under permit on National Forest land can require everyone to pay a fee for doing anything, anywhere within their permit area.

The ruling concludes a lawsuit filed by several individuals and a watchdog organization, challenging the Forest Service policy of allowing concessionaires to charge fees that the agency is not allowed to charge under the limitations in the [Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act](#).



When FLREA was enacted in 2004, its authors included specific requirements and restrictions on recreation fees, in response to public

concerns that the federal agencies cannot be trusted with fee authority. But they also included a clause allowing third parties to charge for goods or services "notwithstanding any other provision of law." The Forest Service interpreted that to mean that concessionaires don't have to abide by the

Concessionaire-managed trailhead on the Coconino National Forest

same legal requirements as the agency must. That interpretation is what was challenged in the lawsuit, and what the court has now upheld.

Under Judge Contreras's ruling:

The Forest Service can not charge a fee solely for parking.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service can not charge a fee for passing through federal land without using facilities and services.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service can not charge a fee for a scenic overlook.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service can not charge a fee for general access.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service can not charge a fee for camping at undeveloped sites with no amenities.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service can not charge a fee for picnicking along a road or trailside.

But a concessionaire can!

The Forest Service has already turned over half of all its campgrounds, including more than 80% of the most highly-developed ones, to private operation - typically at much higher rates than agency-managed campgrounds. But this decision is not limited to campgrounds. It will allow the Forest Service to stop providing any recreation at all. They can turn it all over: picnic areas, trailheads, scenic roads and overlooks - everything - to private companies to operate for profit.

If you have a federal recreation pass like the Senior or America the Beautiful Pass, this is likely to make it worthless on National Forests, because concessionaires don't have to honor those the same way the Forest Service does.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act was recently extended into next year to allow Congress time to enact new legislation to replace it. That legislation **must** include provisions that apply consistent rules and restrictions on all public lands, regardless of whether they are agency managed or operated under permit by private entities.

***Tell Congress you want concessionaires to play by the same rules as the federal agencies!
Please take action now. Information on what to do is below.***

HOUSE TO CONSIDER FEE LEGISLATION AT HEARING APRIL 4

The US House is holding a hearing this coming **Friday, April 4th, at 9 am Eastern** to consider [draft fee legislation](#) proposed by Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT). WSNFC President Kitty Benzar will be an invited witness at this hearing.

You can live-stream the hearing at the [House Natural Resources website](#), or watch the archived video later. It will be posted after the hearing concludes.

I'll be back in touch with a report when I return from Washington.



WSNFC President Kitty Benzar will testify at Friday's hearing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact Congress and tell them that new fee legislation must require private concessionaires on federal lands to play by the same rules as the agencies. Americans have a right to expect fair, consistent rules governing access to our public lands - regardless of whether they are publicly or privately managed.

Call - or better yet fax - your comments for maximum impact.

Tell Congress to enact legislation that allows fees only for use of developed facilities, and to apply all fee requirements at concessionaire-managed sites the same as at agency-managed ones.

Here is the contact information:

**Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives**
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2761
Fax: (202) 225-5929
Or use their [WEBFORM](#)

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate**

304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4971

Fax: (202) 224-6163

Sorry, they don't offer a webform

Very important: send a copy of your comments to both of your Senators and to your US Representative. To find their webforms, go to the [Senate website](#) and the [House website](#).

THIS MAY BE OUR LAST CHANCE TO KEEP OUR PUBLIC LANDS IN PUBLIC HANDS.

DO IT TODAY!

The Western Slope No-Fee Coalition is a broad-based organization consisting of diverse interests including hiking, biking, boating, equestrian and motorized enthusiasts, community groups, local and state elected officials, conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats, and just plain citizens.

Our goals are:

- To eliminate recreation fees for general access to public lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
- To eliminate backcountry fees and interpretive program fees in National Parks
- To require more accountability within the land management agencies
- To encourage Congress to adequately fund our public lands

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Kitty Bazar
Western Slope No Fee Coalition

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to richsrivierboat@yahoo.com by kitty@westernslopenofee.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Western Slope No Fee Coalition | P.O. Box 135 | Durango | CO | 81302