

# Recreation Fees: Past

- Fee Setting
  - Types and needs for fees are unique to each agency
  - Setting fees
    - Are rules being followed?
    - Resource Advisory Committee (RACs) not working everywhere
      - Too slow (bottleneck)?
      - Approving nearly every fee
  - Public participation for fee approvals not working – not consistent across agencies

# Recreation Fees: Past

- Fee Setting
  - New fees being added via concessions?
    - Concession fees do not have the same level of accountability (don't have to go through RACs)
    - Allowed to get around the items that FLREA says cannot be charged for?

# Recreation Fees: Past

- Transparency: Reporting
  - Fee Demo required reporting for every project:
    - How much came in
    - How spent
    - Overhead costs included in project
  - FLREA does not require these things
    - NPS still records internally
    - Belief that other agencies may not follow stringent reporting procedures

# Recreation Fees: Past

- Transparency: Reporting
  - Reporting – NPS and Forest Service have mechanisms for reporting funds collected and where/how funds are expended
    - Publicly-available expenditure information: triennial report to Congress is required
    - NPS practice is formalized;
      - Tracked Service-wide
      - Regional staff checks
      - Information is available to everyone in NPS (“competition between Parks”)
  - USFS accounting system is very different from NPS
    - May foster inconsistency in reporting method and frequency across the USFS

# Recreation Fees: Past

- Transparency: Reporting
  - Internal AND external accountability are very important – the public needs to see how fees are being used. Mechanism is needed for improved transparency to the public
  - Users need to see how their fees are being used to directly support the activities they are participating in

# Recreation Fees: Past

- **Technology and Program Management**
  - How are land managers incorporating technology in fee collection, administrating fee programs, etc.
  - How integrate technology with visitors' valuing having a ranger on the ground?
  - Should technology be used at all because people are going to these places to get away from technology?
  - What about issues with technology access at remote locations?
  - What would be reason for including technology?

# Recreation Fees: Past

- America the Beautiful Pass
  - Confusing for the public – doesn't apply at Corps sites
  - Corps non-participation is part of uniformity issue across all public land management agencies
- Golden Age/Senior Passes
  - Huge financial impact – general fees need to be raised to subsidize this pass

# Recreation Fees: Future

- Corps
  - Allow fees to remain with unit
  - Option for retaining fees: unit would keep fees over a certain dollar threshold (similar to 1998 – 2002 practice)
  - If fees were kept at unit, would the Corps need to propose offset for funds no longer going to Treasury?

# Recreation Fees: Future

- Fee setting
  - Fees/need for fees are unique to each agency – need to define or have flexibility to accommodate
  - Public participation requirements for setting fees need to be consistent across the Agencies
- Need clear definition of HOW funds can be used.
  - Definitions are there now – but more clarity is needed
  - Educate field on program requirements

# Recreation Fees: Future

- Technology
  - Make fees part of trip planning
  - How should authority address technology – enhancement or obligation?

# Recreation Fees: Budget Challenges and Fees

- Loss of funding = loss of sites
- Knowing the Market/Public Engagement
  - Mandate to “know the market” and use funds only on things that the market can support
- Develop cost/benefit analysis to prioritize where funding goes (Corps asset management program/process)
- Use of fees: O&M needs to be a potential use – why build new if cannot maintain what is already on the ground?
- What about O&M funds for use at the Agency/corporate level?

# Recreation Fees: Budget Challenges and Fees

- Fees: supplement or offset?
  - Need to also have a mechanism to NOT cut budgets – fees should not be viewed as offset
  - Fees are going to become more important as budgets are reduced – need to show public how their support is being deployed locally
  - Should there be audits/consequences for situations where fees are offsetting operating dollars?

# Recreation Fees: Budget Challenges and Fees

- Fees: supplement or offset?
  - Other issues
    - Recreation is not the only mission, and it's often the lowest priority mission. Emergency funding requirements elsewhere can reduce recreation funds available
    - Corps locks/dams – primary purpose is for commercial traffic, but these actually end up being used more for recreation in some areas, resulting in unfunded maintenance issues

# Recreation Fees: Fee Program without Barriers

- Fee-free days
- Options for additional revenues at unit
  - Seek out partnership/cost sharing opportunities
  - Corporate partnerships/sponsorships
  - Matching funds w/rec fee dollars
  - Citation fees/recourse for vandalism or other illegal activities