



# Locals gear-up for Forest Service “fee wavier” weekend for parks in Eugene region and stateside

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**Eugene, Oregon** – At a time when recession dollars don’t buy much, the offer to have some free R&R in the state’s natural surroundings is an over that Bill and June Shawn can’t refuse.

“We enjoy all the nature hikes that the [Eugene](#) area has to offer, but frankly we can’t afford even the \$5 entry fee that many of our parks now charge,” said Bill Shawn during a recent hike in an Eugene suburb near Lane Community College.

June Shawn concurs. “We have such beauty here but the down side is many of the parks along the coast and in other areas of Oregon now charge. This is a [deep recession](#) we’re in and we simply can’t justify spending anything outside our own needs for food, shelter and health insurance.”

Thus, the recent announcement by U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell that the Forest Service will offer two [fee waiver weekends](#) during the summer of 2010.

The first fee wavier weekend will be June 5-6. These fee waivers are offered in cooperation with other federal agencies under the [Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act](#) (REA).

“The Forest Service is working to ensure as many visitors as possible have the opportunity to experience the great outdoors and take advantage of the many recreational activities national forests have to offer,” said Tidwell in a recent news release. “By waving fees, everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy the wonder and rejuvenation of recreation on national forests.”

Steven Pawson of Eugene said such news from the [Forest Service](#) is a “nice perk for the working man,” but what about the rest of the summer season when “everything just seems too expensive to have fun?”

Pawson thinks people who are currently unemployed should have no fee access to local Eugene area parks and state and national parks. “We are the people and these are our protected lands. We pay enough in taxes so that – at the very least – those of us without means should have free access to what we call as Mother Nature.”



Bill and June Shawn enjoy a brisk hike with their dog "Jake" along a back road in a Eugene suburb.

Photo by Dave Masko

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