

Red Rock News (Sedona, AZ)

December 23, 2011

Red Rock Pass Transforms Under Pressure

by Christopher Fox Graham

The U.S. Forest Service announced Dec. 14 major changes to where a Red Rock Pass is required in the Coconino National Forest. The reduction is a result of public outreach efforts and the recommendation of the Bureau of Land Management's Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council.

Reducing the size of the Red Rock Pass fee area cleared one its final hurdles.

U.S. Forest Service Southwestern Regional Forester Corbin Newman announced Dec. 14 he approved changes reducing the area where a Red Rock Pass is required by more than 93 percent, from 160,000 acres down to 11,000 acres.

The changes could be in effect as early as February, according to Newman. He said the reduction is a result of public outreach efforts and the recommendation of the Bureau of Land Management's Arizona Recreation Resource Advisory Council, which decided the issue in August.

Parking a vehicle anywhere on the 160,000 acres of the Coconino National Forest land around the city of Sedona formerly required displaying a Red Rock Pass. The 160,000 acres included the Red Rock Secret Mountain, Munds Mountain and Sycamore Canyon wilderness areas. The recommended changes Newman approved reduces the requirement to two corridors along state highways and seven individual sites.

The decision complies with the Federal Lands Enhancement Act allowing Red Rock Pass revenue to be collected and used for the management and conservation of forest land in the Red Rock Ranger District area, Newman said.

The public can expect to see a significant reduction in

Comments

-1 [#7](#) Paula Cote 2012-01-05 11:34

Do any of you visit other high use areas? They are typically trashed out and unappealing. Given that many of us live near or on the border of forest, the pass revenue benefited our communities and our own experiences. The RR Pass helped keep bathrooms clean and the trails maintained. It paid for cleaning up the broken bottles left over from weekend parties as well as the feces and toilet paper at remote trailheads - been to Turkey Creek TH?. Instead of bitching, sign yourself up as a volunteer and start assisting with cleaning up your public lands.

[Quote](#)

+4 [#6](#) Kristin 2011-12-26 18:59

My quality of life and right to peaceful enjoyment of my home, neighborhood and forest is taken away by helicopters, biplanes, airplanes and jets. The US Forest Service has no business staffing any tourist office that promotes anything other than hiking in the woods. The amount of tourism being promoted here is unsustainable and is driving down property values. I lived in Incline Village, at the North end of Lake Tahoe and we had no air traffic there, it was always quiet. Why is Sedona being trampled? Every year it gets worse here, more traffic, more noise, more air pollution. As Paul Chevalier once said, "they are killing the goose that laid the golden egg."

[Quote](#)

+8 [#5](#) Flaco Comer 2011-12-26 08:05

Fed judge ruled the pass illegal - Yet the the FS still collected for months and months after the ruling.

Then, USFS in panic mode installes a nasty porta-let to keep the scam rolling...Mybe we need to occupy RR FS office?

[Quote](#)

+4 [#4](#) Jim Smith 2011-12-25 20:45

The fees that hikers pay are not used to collect trash. The fees are used to promote tourism. For example, the Forest Service helps staff the Chamber of Commerce building in Sedona. The wilderness experience in the Red Rocks is being destroyed. Instead of peace and serenity, a hiker is subjected to noise from biplanes and helicopters. Industrial tourism is taking over Sedona.

[Quote](#)

+7 [#3](#) Arthur Godfrey 2011-12-24 13:59

None of the trailheads (that's all they are) have security - Newman can 'approve' whatever he wants - the sites remain FREE until they post a roving security patrol in a green golf cart.

This scam has gone on long enough... The USFS owes the public 10 years of rebate.

[Quote](#)

-3 [#2](#) Visitor Firefighter 2011-12-23 20:13

I would still pay for the annual pass. It's a shame somebody felt compelled to make a point. Trash still needs to be collected and rangers do patrol these areas. Funds are needed for these functions. The challenger sounds like he was being penny wise but pound foolish.

[Quote](#)

+8 [#1](#) Kitty Bazar 2011-12-23 19:35

Federal law includes Prohibitions on fees for certain activities, including solely for parking and simple access to trails that pass through federal recreational lands. Judge Aspey's ruling said that even where amenities are provided, parking simply for access to trails must be free. Although the Coconino's change to a smaller fee area is welcome, it is still not sufficient.

A slightly less illegal fee program is not the same as a legal one.