

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
**RECREATIONAL FEE PROGRAM**  
**FY 08 PROGRAM SUMMARY**

**FOREST NAME: COCONINO**

**REGION: 03**

Bill Stafford

Phone: 928-567-4820

**DESCRIPTION (PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF SITES AND SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR FOREST'S PROGRAM – CAMPGROUNDS, CABINS, HIRAS, TOURS, VISITOR CENTERS, SPECIAL USES PERMITS, ETC.)**

**CAMPGROUNDS:** Small family campgrounds and group camping is provided on the Mogollon Rim Ranger District.

**HIRA:** The mission of the Red Rock Pass Program is to conserve, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources on 160,000 acres of the national forest in the red rock country. This includes 36 trailheads, 177 miles of trail, 2 picnic areas, 3 heritage sites and 3 gateway centers. The area receives over 4 million visitors per year.

**SPECIAL USE PERMITS:** The Recreation Special Use Project includes accepting applications, processing them; working with permittees on the development of operating plans; issuing and administering permits; inspecting and monitoring operations; issuing bills of collection; road and trail maintenance at guided locations; the preparation of road maintenance plans; completing the Recreation Special Use Program Assessment; preparing the proposed action for the NEPA Analysis for the Outfitter/Guide Program; and outfitter/guide training. This includes issuing and administering 30 outfitter/guide permits which serve over a quarter million customers plus 13 recreation event permits.

**FEE SCHEDULE (IF CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR)**

No change in fee schedule from the previous fiscal year.

**SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR (PLEASE PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES THAT ADDRESSES THE ENTIRE FOREST'S PROGRAM SUCH AS CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS, VISITOR SERVICES, ETC.)**

**MOGOLLON RIM CAMPGROUNDS AND GROUP CAMPGROUNDS**

Accommodations we offer in our REA program are 2 family campgrounds with a total of 45 sites and 3 group campgrounds with 5 group sites, services offered to forest visitors at these sites are vault toilets, water, solid waste removal, and onsite volunteer campground hosts 24/7 to ensure consistent quality customer service. Our volunteers are provided in addition to the services provided to campers, their campsite, propane, and black water dump

We were able to serve 15, 818 overnight visitors to the campgrounds in 143 days of operation.

Our area has no cell phone service so with Forest Service radios our campground hosts are the first line of communication for medical and law enforcement emergencies within the campgrounds as well as from emergencies from nearby dispersed areas.

Day use visitor contacts were made by FS employees and volunteers who supplied information on the area trails and other sites of interest

We continued with the basics of providing:

Maintained low cost camping opportunities

FPO patrols

Campgrounds clean, trash removed on regular basis and campground hosts stocked with essentials for customer service and cleaning supplies etc.

## **THE RED ROCK PASS HIGH IMPACT RECREATION AREA**

- **Indian Gardens Toilet**



The Indian Gardens Toilet was completed in FY2008 at the Oak Creek Canyon Visitor Center. This toilet was constructed by a Grant from Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality. The Grant was obtained by paying a grant writer with Red Rock Pass and Az. Game and Fish Dept. funds. In addition, when the project ran out of funds, another \$2,500 of Red Rock Pass Funds were used to complete it. The toilet will be available to the public, free of charge, and includes men's and women's flush toilets, a "state of the art" water treatment system, hand washing facilities, infant changing stations, "ADA" Access for those with disabilities, a new well and a new electrical system for the Visitor Contact Office. The toilet includes a traditional Oak Creek Canyon Architectural Design Theme.

**Yavapai Point Scenic View Fence**—Red Rock Pass Funds came to the rescue at the new Yavapai Point Parking Lot on newly re-constructed Highway 179 south of Sedona. Arizona Dept. of Transportation built the parking lot but they were not able to justify a fence. Visitors began to damage the soil and vegetation in the area so employees purchased fencing material and constructed over 700 ft. of fence to protect resources and direct visitors.

**Herkenham Trail Const.**—The Red Rock Pass funded the Youth Conservation Corps and provided materials, tools, supplies and supervision to construct the 2.0 mile long Herkenham Trail and the .5 mile link to the Ridge Trail. This is the final link in the 27 mile long “loop trail” which circles Sedona and it is part of the Red Rock Trails System. They constructed 60 “rock-wire-Tee Post” trail cairns to mark the trails, built tread, constructed grade dips and retaining walls including some heavy rock work. The Youth Conservation Corps took great pride in the accomplishment of this important goal. The Trail is named after the “Father of the Sedona Trail System”, Norm Herkenham.

**Youth Conservation Corps.**—The Youth Conservation Corps was made possible by the Red Rock Pass. Eight youth from the Verde Valley and Flagstaff participated in the six week long program. The group included two young women and six young men and their leader. They received weekly environmental education, constructed the Herkenham Trail and the Ridge Trail, performed area maintenance at the V Bar V Heritage Site, obliterated social trails and constructed many “rock-wire” cairns which mark trails in our heavily used high impact recreation area.

**Horses**—The Red Rock Pass made possible the return of the equestrian program to the Red Rock Pass Area. The Coconino NF Horse and Mule Herd were sent, for years, from Flagstaff, to Kingman and the Tonto National Forest for the fall, winter and early spring. This made no sense because adequate facilities existed at the old Beaver Creek Ranger Station and the Red Rock Country needed equestrian patrol and packing in support of the wilderness, trails and recreation program. This year we were able, with the help of Red Rock Pass Funds, to return the horses and mules to work on the Red Rock Ranger District. Oh and What a Joy it Was!

Due to the success of the program two additional mules, Chile and Willy were donated to the District. Those animals with the help of Will Hill, our “Wrangler”, the Wranglers Group from the Friends of the Forest and the Back Country Horsemen of Arizona were able to provide 642 hours of service to the District including recreation patrol, trash removal, law enforcement and packing. In FY08 they packed 22,505 pounds of material in support of the Chaves Trail, Horse Mesa and the Sycamore Canyon Trails projects in the Red Rock Pass Area.



**Packing Trash out of Sycamore Canyon**



**Packing Supplies in support of Trail Projects**

- **Interpretive Displays at the Red Rock Visitor Contact Office**

The new Red Rock District Visitor Contact Office was completed and opened in May of 2008 but there were no interpretive displays. Red Rock Pass Funds were used to help pay for the new displays, and pay the salary of the employees who planned, designed and operated the displays. The funds also paid for the interpretive plan which was developed for the new Visitor Contact Office. Displays include geologic, cultural, wildlife, survival and leave-no-trace displays as shown in the photos. Red Rock Pass funds helped pay for the many interpretive “animal tracks” sandblasted into the Visitor Contact Office walkway.





- Move to the New Red Rock Ranger Station**—It was an exciting year with the move to the new Red Rock Ranger Station. Although Red Rock Pass Funds did not purchase the new office, employees funded by the pass moved from temporary quarters at the old Beaver Creek Ranger Station and from the “South Gateway” Visitor Center” located in the Village of Oak Creek to the new Visitor Contact and Administrative Offices along Highway 179. The new office, which has been in the planning and construction stage since 1991 was finally a reality. Red Rock Pass funded employees also helped landscape the new Visitor Contact Office.



## **New Visitor Contact Office with Landscaping**

- **Chaves Trail**

The Historic Chaves Trail was finished in FY08. It is nine miles long and traverses the route of the oldest known trail into the Verde Valley. Records of this route go back to the first written records of the Spanish Explorers Espejo and Onate and followed the route used by Col. Francisco Chaves in 1864. It was also used as a “mail route” and a route for the Arizona and New Mexico Stage Company from 1876 to 1882. Settlers used the wagon road to settle the Verde Valley of Northern Arizona. Red Rock Pass Funds were used for Cultural Resource Clearances and construction of the trail. Much of the old wagon road is in pristine condition and provides visitors with an opportunity to enjoy history while riding, walking or mountain biking. It is a non-motorized trail. Interpretive signs were ordered to install at the trailheads. Over 100 rock/wire cairns were installed with specially designed “carsonite” markers to mark the route.



**The Chaves Wagon Road—View into the Verde Valley near the Village of Oak Creek**

- **Sycamore Canyon Trail Maintenance**



### **Sycamore Canyon Trail Work—Doggie Trail—3 miles**

The Red Rock Pass funded the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness project which included trail maintenance for three days by 25 employees and volunteers. Approximately 3 miles of heavy trail maintenance was performed during the project.

- **The Red Rock Pass Funded the Red Rock Wilderness Ranger who supervised the Volunteer Wilderness Information Specialist Program** to encourage compliance with wilderness regulations and reduce mechanized incursions into wilderness and increase patrol of areas of concentrated public use in the extremely heavily used wilderness areas in the Red Rock Area. The Red Rock Secret Mtn. Wilderness, Munds Mtn. Wilderness and the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness are among the most heavily used wilderness areas in the Forest Service Wilderness System. A unique partnership was continued with Northern Arizona University to perform wilderness campsite inventories to accomplish the Chief's Ten Year Wilderness Challenge. The Wilderness Ranger also helped teach the NAU Wilderness Class whose focus is to tackle “gnarly” wilderness problems such as motorized vehicles, mountain bikes and survival in wilderness. Two Wilderness Information Specialists and two recreation interns were funded by the Red Rock Pass. They accomplished 3,000 hours worth of work in wilderness, developed and dispersed sites most of which are located in the Red Rock Pass Area.
- **Trail Maintenance on 15 miles of trails** in the Red Rock Pass Area. This included supervision of our Friends of the Forest Trail Crew which provides a volunteer trail crew every Friday for at least four hours in the Red Rock Pass Area. This also includes trail maintenance performed by our employees in the Red Rock Pass Area.
- **National Public Lands Day, Sept. 27, 2008**—Red Rock Pass Fees provided support for approximately 50 volunteers during the National Public Lands Day Celebration at the Posse Grounds Park in Sedona, AZ. Volunteers landscaped and removed tumbleweeds at the Jim Thompson Trailhead. Other volunteers worked to clean up Slide Rock in Oak Creek Canyon. This was a wonderful joint effort by Arizona State Parks, the City of Sedona and the Red Rock Ranger District.
- **The Jim Thompson Trailhead was completed.** This is a “Hub” Trailhead and one of the most important trailheads in the Sedona Area. The project was funded with a \$157,000 grant from the Heritage Fund supplemented by National Forest Foundation Funds, Volunteer “in kind” contributions and Red Rock Pass Dollars which paid for some of the materials and labor.
- **V Bar V Days**—In celebration of Arizona Archaeology Month the Red Rock Pass supported V Bar V Days at the V Bar V Rock Art Site Saturday thru Sunday May 1-3, 2008. The site was

opened free of charge to visitors and participants. Primitive skills demonstrations in flint knapping, cordage and sandal making, agave roasting, pottery, basket and primitive fire making techniques, Apache Bird Dancers, Atl-Atl throwing, dutch oven cooking and other primitive skill displays were provided to approx. 300 participants and visitors. **The Yavapai-Apache Nation was able to rediscover the ancient, but lost, skill of Agave Roasting thru these efforts.**



#### **Agave Roasting—V Bar V Days**

- **Operation and Maintenance of Palatki Ruins, Red Cliff Rock Art, Honanki Ruin and V Bar V Rock Art Sites**—These World Class Pre-historic Rock Art and Ruins Sites are protected and interpretation. The Palatki Cliff Dwelling and the Red Cliff Rock Art Site had 27,762 visitors, the V Bar V Rock Art Site had 11,123 visitors and the Honanki Ruin had 39,022 visitors for a total of 77,907 visits.
- **The V Bar V Rock Art Site Parking Lot Fence Construction Project**—Red Rock Pass Funds were used to purchase fencing materials and to provide equipment and labor to construct a new fence at the V Bar V Parking Lot. The old fence had almost collapsed and needed replacement. The new “Cedar Split Rail” fence is over 860 ft. long and is a great addition to the facility.
- **Major Volunteer Support** was provided by Red Rock Pass Funds in the form of volunteer per diem, volunteer appreciation meals, awards, mileage, uniforms, supervision and technical support **the largest volunteer program in the National Forest System.** Most of the volunteer accomplishments for this program occurred on the Red Rock Pass Area. This made possible 44,546 hours of volunteer accomplishment, worth \$860,000 in contributed labor to the Red Rock Pass Area. Volunteers performed a giant array of duties included but not limited to equestrian, trash patrol, wilderness information specialists, receptionists, clerical, trail design and maintenance, removal of abandoned vehicles, patrol, construction of interpretive displays, cultural site protection and toilet cleaning.
- **401,266 visitor information contacts** made at the Gateway Centers located in the Village of Oak Creek, the Red Rock District Visitor Contact Office, Sedona Chamber of Commerce, Palatki, V Bar V, Honanki and Oak Creek Vista.
- **7,983 visitor contacts made in the field,** mostly along trails and at trailheads.
- **27,584 pounds of trash picked up.** This is not from dumpsters or trash cans. This is one piece of trash “at a time”.
- **95 Dump Sites Cleaned up.**

- **102 Social (non-system) trails closed.**
- **9 Abandoned vehicles removed.**
- **949 Leave-No-Trace Contacts made in the field.**
- **Water Quality Monitoring—Oak Creek.** Red Rock Pass Funds supported water quality monitoring of Oak Creek which is an Arizona State Designated “Unique Water”. Laboratory supplies were purchased for the Slide Rock State Park Lab to process water quality samples in support of the Friends of the Forest Water Quality Monitoring Group. Water samples are obtained and heavily used swimming areas from April through September. If the samples fail the “e-coli” tests, a re-test is taken and if the second test fails, the swim area is closed and the public is notified of the health hazard and signs are posted warning the public of the danger.
- **Law Enforcement Officer—Mike Loughton (LEO)** was funded with Rec. Fees. The LEO provided substantial benefits to residents and visitors alike by providing for public safety in the Red Rock High Impact Recreation Area. The LEO provides public safety for visitors and residents that no one else can provide. Mike completed his law enforcement officer training at the Federal Law Enforcement Academy in FY08 and his “Field Officer Training” and reported for duty in the Red Rock Country on July 7, 2008. In three short months in the Red Rock Pass Area he was able to make 450 field contacts, 20 traffic safety stops, cite 4 drivers for reckless driving, and make one “DWI” arrest and 2 State Warrant arrests for a total of 3 arrests. Mike also wrote 13 violation notices for Recreation Resource Damage, 8 transients were cited and their illegal camps removed and 5 drug possession cases were processed and resolved. Mike also resolved 5 alcohol violations, 2 burglary cases and 3 State Felony cases. He assisted other Law Enforcement Officers in the removal of 4,200 marijuana plants and the apprehension of suspects from a major plantation in the Woods Canyon Area. This is located in the Red Rock Country in the general vicinity of the new Red Rock Ranger District Office.
- **WILDLIFE EDUCATION TALKS TO THE PUBLIC—**The Wildlife Staff Officer provided public presentations on reptiles and amphibians of the Verde valley and poisonous critters of the Verde Valley on two occasions to people at Red Rock State Park. The Wildlife Biologist was funded by the Red Rock Pass to prepare instructions for the ordering and planting of native seed to re-habilitate sites damaged from excessive recreation use and also to re-habilitate illegally constructed trails.
- **COMPLETED SOME NEW SIGNING FOR THE RED ROCK PASS AREA.** We need to complete more during FY09. Several new signs were installed along the Upper Red Rock Loop Road and along Oak Creek.

#### **FEE PROGRAM OUTFITTER GUIDE AND SPECIAL USES ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 08**

- **OUTFITTER/GUIDE PERMIT ADMINISTRATION--**Outfitter/Guide Permit Administration including review of applications, processing of permits, permit preparation and general work related to office administration of 30 permits including priority use, long term annual and short term annual permits.
- **RECREATION SPECIAL USE PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY ANALYSIS--**Special use fee program funds paid for a Forest Service Enterprise Team, “Recreation Solutions”, to prepare a “Special Use Program Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis” for the Red Rock Ranger District. This document provides the direction for the proposed action for the NEPA Analysis to determine what allocations and activities will be advertised in an Outfitter Guide Prospectus for the Red Rock Ranger District. The final draft of

the “Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis” and the proposed action for NEPA will be completed in Dec. 2010.

- **OUTFITTER/GUIDE ROAD MAINTENANCE**—We targeted road maintenance efforts in FY08 on forest system roads used by outfitter/guides in the Sedona Area which got excessively muddy with small amounts of rainfall. These are a particular problem to O/G’s and forest visitors because they often have to be closed for safety reasons with as little as ½ inch precipitation. Gravel aggregate was applied to approximately two miles of Forest Road 525, 152C and 795 using spot treatments in muddy areas. Road implementation plans were completed by an Engineering Technician for approx. 100 miles of level 2 roads (high clearance) popular to outfitter/guides to improve drainage, reduce road width and reduce damage to soil and vegetation.
- **OUTFITTER/GUIDE FIELD INSPECTIONS**—Special Use Fees were used to patrol O/G permit roads and trails, to monitor use in the field and enforce the Code of Federal Regulations in permit areas and respond to requests from O/G’s for Forest Protection Officers and Law Enforcement Officers due to violations by the public and other outfitter/guides. A road use monitoring program was developed for sixteen roads where hundreds of samples were taken to determine total vehicle use per hour by both commercial and non-commercial vehicles. This information was used in the Red Rock Ranger District Recreation Special Use “Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis”.
- **Native seed purchased with Outfitter/Guide Fees**—\$2,500 of native seed was purchased to be planted by Outfitter/Guides on illegal, non-system, roads within the Red Rock Pass Area. The seed is scheduled to be planted in FY09.
- **OUTFITTER/GUIDE FIELD INSPECTOR HIRED**---We hired a GS-7 Forestry Technician, Jeff Gillmore, to provide permit inspection, compliance, recreation event permit administration, training for guides, road maintenance expertise and Forest Protection Officer response to Outfitter/Guide Complaints.

## PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT YEAR

### MOGOLLON CAMPGROUNDS

Continue with the basics:

- provide FPO patrols
- supply campground hosts with cleaning supplies etc.
- keep campgrounds clean, trash removed on regular basis.
- Plan to target rehabilitation of the group campgrounds/facilities that did not receive CIP funding: Repair, replace or decommission: picnic tables, small buildings and fire rings etc. that are in dis-repair.

### OUTFITTER/GUIDE SPECIAL USE PERMITS

- Complete the “Recreation Special Use Program Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis” and the proposed action for NEPA in preparation for a decision in FY11. Special Use Fee Program Funds are used in conjunction with Congressionally Funded Program Funds (Forest Account Funds) to accomplish this.
- We will try to complete an Outfitter Guide Training Session during FY09. Also, complete and distribute the O/G Training Video of the session.

- Complete more O/G road assessments and begin the work outlined in the assessments to reduce road width, improve drainage and reduce damage to soil and vegetation from backcountry roads popular with outfitter/guides.
- Continue road maintenance on roads used by Outfitter/Guides including the application of aggregate and grading.
- Provide Outfitter/Guides with training and seed damaged areas adjacent to permitted roads.

## **RED ROCK PASS HIGH IMPACT RECREATION AREA**

- Finish new signing for the Red Rock Pass Area in compliance with the new regulations. Install new signs ordered in FY08 for Palatki, Honanki and V Bar V.
- Obtain a grant or loan from the R3 Fee Board to prepare an application to the R.A.C. for a fee for tours at the Palatki Ruin and Red Cliff Rock Art Sites and the V Bar V Rock Art Site. An archaeologist, customer service specialist, public information officer and a recreation specialist will be needed to accomplish the task including public involvement.
- Hire a full time Volunteer Coordinator to provide support for the volunteer program which benefits Red Rock Pass Customers through volunteers for visitor information services, patrol, trail maintenance, heritage site interpretation, trash pick-up and many other services.
- Begin work on a new Recreation Guide for the Red Rock Country.
- Continue to expand the Wilderness Information Specialist Program and Recreation Intern program to include more WIS's who can patrol more areas of concentrated public use to reduce resource damage and protect wilderness values.
- Recondition reassurance markers, install new ones in confusing locations and generally improve the marking of the 77 miles of trail in the Red Rock Area. Visitors continue to get lost and cause damage to resources.
- Continue to provide high quality Gateway Centers thru staffing the Red Rock Ranger Station Visitor Contact Office seven days per week, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce Seven days per week and the Oak Creek Vista Gateway Center five days per week May thru Oct.
- Complete burn plans for the V Bar V and Palatki Heritage Sites and complete fuel hazard reduction burns.
- Continue patrol, law enforcement, trail maintenance and amenity maintenance in the area covered by the Red Rock Pass.
- Install Chaves Trail Interpretive Signs.
- Recruit and fill the Red Rock Wilderness Ranger Position which has been vacant since August of 2008.