



## NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS

"To ensure continued enjoyment of forest homes"

### 2009 Economic Impact Survey – Open Comments Summary

Economic Impact Survey results evolve into six major categories. One common thread weaves them tightly together—"cabin users' passionate plea to save the rec res program, an integral segment of forest history. Note: Quoted items are respondent's statements.

**FAMILY HERITAGE**—Comments focus on personal importance and value, learning experiences, traditions, legacies, emotional involvement, rejuvenation, sharing with others, intergenerational family connectedness and are characterized by:

*"Our cabin has been in the family since the 1930s...seen family birthdays, wakes and weddings...been a scout camp, an archeology classroom, an art studio and a base camp for hikers...such a peaceful place in stressful times."*

*"We see...cabin as a valuable and historic piece of American history that could easily disappear from the landscape if we don't fight to keep them affordable"*

*"Our cabin is a family heirloom...and I am excited it will be passed on to my children who have been going since birth...blessed by the opportunity to have the cabin in our family"*

*"It warms my heart to think my future grandkids will walk the same trails and care for the same landscape as I am now. PLEASE allow us to keep it without financial hardship"*

*"MY CABIN IS MY FAVORIATE PLACE IN THE WORLD"*

**FOREST STEWARDSHIP**—Cabin users as stewards are dedicated to teaching others the value of nature and to care for our forest by volunteering and working with Forest Service to maintain trails and a quality environment, removing litter, caring for/about wildlife, healthy forests, historic, informational and cultural resources, provide fire safety control. They cherish their cabins and the forest as a whole.

*"feel cabin users are a real asset and definitely help FS manage our beautiful forests"*

*"permit holders, first, second, third and fourth generations have been stewards of the land"*

*"take better care of our area than FS does of theirs"*

*"As stewards they plant the seed for future generations to support the rec res program and, in turn, pass on the tradition"*

**FINANCIAL CONCERNS**—Comments focus on concerns about being able to retain cabin use—fixed incomes, declining values of retirement income, escalating permit fees and maintenance costs, being unable to pass the cabin on to family, burdensome fees and taxes.

*"We have had our cabin for over 100 years...into the fifth generation, becoming too expensive....not wealthy, kept for sentimental reasons, but this is too much"*

*"It will soon be more cost effective to rent a hotel, motel, condo or lodge than to own a cabin"*

*"Why is it during plummeting real estate values....cabin fees go up?"*

**CUFFA/APPRAISALS**—Flawed legislation, FS implementation and faulty appraisal processes require correction and proper application. Viability of rec res program is threatened by CUFFA.

*"fee'd out"*

*"Appraisals done in a totally different economic time"*

*"Inflated recreational real estate prices used for appraisals; not the situation now"*



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*"unfair to value appraisals done at the height of real estate craze" Note: Recreational properties experiencing bankruptcy—Tamarack in Idaho; beach condos in Washington State*

*"A fair appraisal would consider use restrictions; need fair appraisals with adjustments" Note: Ex. Not able to use all year, access, remoteness, availability of water, power, etc."*

*"CUFFA most unfair legislation for common citizens using National Forest land"*

*"When CUFFA was written, fees were to be kept reasonable for average working family"*

*"FS wrongly implemented CUFFA, fees inherently unfair and burdensome"*

***"CUFFA NEEDS FIXING"***

**FOREST SERVICE RESTRICTIONS/INCONSISTENCIES**—Numerous instances of FS personnel inconsistencies in application of FS regulations cited. Repair and maintenance requests delayed and not approved in a timely fashion. Changes in FS Forest plans affect cabin users' access and use. Cabin users are held to strict regulations; campers, other forest users are not. Inconsistencies and arbitrary changes in Special Use permit language are noted.

*"Holding a special use permit shouldn't be this hard"*

*"Special Use permit more harshly worded than before"*

*"heavy restrictions on usage and repair, including available time in which to make these changes due to access"*

**SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**—Cabin users provided several feasible options to resolve permit fee/appraisal issues.

*"True comparable lots unavailable; restrictions must be considered"*

*"Replace appraisal process with fees based on actual cost to FS to administer the rec res program"*

*"Replace permit fee with an excise tax—a tax on an activity—in this case a tax on an exercise of federal privilege (recreation residency). Excise tax allows cabin users to know what the program costs the FS nationwide. FS would recoup costs."*

*"Pay what property taxes would be if the lot were private land."*

*"Take legal action against FS implementation of CUFFA"*

*"Appraisals must consider use and time restrictions and adjust for those restrictions"*

*"Investigate possible purchase of lot"*

*"Work for fee retention in FS Ranger Districts"*

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Economic Impact Survey results strongly reinforce the citizens' desire to continue an affordable rec res program so that "ordinary Americans...have the opportunity to experience our national forests through recreation residences." These results say loudly and clearly

**I AM THE CABIN PROGRAM!!!!**

To accomplish this goal, consideration of and resolution to the issues involved must come from Congressional leaders, cabin users and the Forest Service. Continued involvement and support determines the future of your cabin.