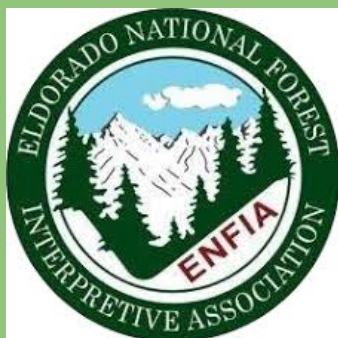




ENFIA Interpreter

August 11, 2026 Vol. 25

A Message from the President

By Stan Trevena

We are just a little past halfway through this year's season up at Carson Pass. As mentioned in the last newsletter, right before we opened the station, this was a very low snow season (lowest since 1991). This has cut both ways. We've had less snow on the ground at the start of the season, so people were out hiking much earlier than in past years. But on the downside, the bloom was not as spectacular as in recent years due to low runoff from the melting snow. On the plus side, visitor counts are way up. So what's up with ENFIA?

Power Up!

We've made a few changes this season to increase the efficiency of the solar power up at the station. We first installed a Starlink mini in place of the original Starlink dish. The mini uses a quarter of the power of the full

size dish. Just this past weekend we added two more solar panels to our array up on the roof. Starting in late July, we usually start to get occasional monsoonal flows that will cloud up and drop some rain over a few days. Usually, when this happens we cut back use of our stored power, and sometimes even bring a backup solar battery online to get through the low power. With these changes, we should eliminate or greatly lessen the impact that these storms make on our available power for the station.

The original Starlink dish was part of a grant from the California Alpine Club Foundation several years ago. We've been working with the Alpine County Historical Society on a few things over the past year. They were in need of reliable Internet service. ENFIA recently donated our original Starlink dish to them. It will allow them to increase services and operations like it did when we originally installed it at Carson Pass. We are looking forward to working with them more in the future. I highly

recommend a visit to this museum if you are in Markleeville.

Retail Associates

We have added two people to the retail team this year for ENFIA (servicing Carson Pass and four Forest Service locations). The retail team has brought in a wider selection of items this season. We've received many comments and compliments from visitors at the station on the change in inventory and availability of new forest related items. Retail sales are how ENFIA generates income to keep the Carson Pass Station open for the four months of the year between March and September. With multiple associates working on retail, they are able to divide up product lines and spread the work around. It's a big job that is the lifeblood of our operations. Several other ENFIA members assist these associates in picking up and delivering retail to our various locations throughout the forest. Thank you to the retail team.

Conservation and Sustainability

We have a new Conservation and Sustainability team this year. This was pulled together with existing ENFIA members by the person who proposed the idea to the Board. Their first charge was to shift the water that we sell at Carson Pass from plastic bottles to aluminum canned water. This change has been well received and we've had positive feedback from many of our visitors. This same group has formalized the recycling of aluminum cans at the station. Another project they've started is keeping

native flowers in the planters in front of the station and keeping them watered throughout the season. Last year those planters had gone fallow and there were only flowers growing in the last month of the season. These have all been very positive changes thanks to this new team.

Interpretive Program

This season ENFIA has a dedicated Interpretive Manager putting structure and planning behind the interpretive program. New activities are being added. We started out with a lecture at the Placerville Library with a very longtime ENFIA member, Frank Tortorich, on the History of the California Trail. Frank has several very good history books on this subject that we carry at our retail locations. Frank recently retired from ENFIA as a docent after decades of service to the organization. We recently had several Docents stationed at the trailhead at Carson Pass passing out maps, information and talking with hikers about the area. Our interpretive activities are all conducted by ENFIA members or others who volunteer to give talks or lead hikes. If you would like to get involved, send an email to the Interpretive Manager: mikeconroy@enfia.org.

US Forest Service

This year we had to get a new contract with the Forest Service to operate ENFIA. As President of ENFIA, I had to work directly with them to get through this lengthy and complex process. This contract had expired right before I came on as

President. They extended the old contract for several years, and then it became a priority.

As part of this new contract, some new requirements are being placed on us:

**** CPR Training for Docents.** We will be required to have a CPR certified docent on every interpretive hike that we offer. The Forest Service will be providing a trainer and ENFIA will pay for each docent being certified. An email will go out requesting people to sign up for this training.

**** Radio required on every interpretive hike.** The Forest Service will provide radios to ENFIA. A group of docents will need to be trained in the operation of these radios. They will be required on hikes for emergencies. More on this soon.

**** The Forest Service has installed an AED unit at the Station.** This is an automated, self guiding defibrillator. In an emergency, this device will walk an untrained person through using the device in a cardiac emergency.

**** We also have several docents that serve double duty as volunteers for the Forest Service doing trail maintenance and patrolling the back country trails.**

Volunteering with ENFIA

Every year we have done pretty well maintaining and attracting volunteers for ENFIA. However, by this time of the year it begins to become apparent that a number of those volunteers are not as active as we would like. Some are waiting to put in their time in the second half of the season, which is great. However, some just don't follow through on the days we require each season (this year set at 5 days). Right now, September is looking to be very short on coverage for Carson Pass. We will likely end up removing the minimum number of days required and opening these days up to anyone willing to step in and cover, no matter how many days they've already done this season.

This year has been a good year for people stepping up to do something beyond just working at the Station as a docent. This year we've had docents stepping forward and offering to lead a project, to get others to help, and making a difference. I am very hopeful that this is not an anomaly, but the start of a trend for our volunteers.

President's Term

I am quickly approaching the end of my second two year term as President of ENFIA. I came into this position with a lot of ideas for improving the operations and business of ENFIA. I spent my career in Technology, in the last half of my career as CIO in positions with the State of California in Education (K-12 through University). I was able to bring this experience to ENFIA. Over the past

four years, I've used this experience to move ENFIA into a business and operational structure that most businesses use. The first thing I did was collect up past year's data and move all of our systems into the Cloud (basically online). After four years I have accomplished all that I set out to do. ENFIA now runs as a business leveraging online services and systems.

It's now time for someone else to come in with their vision for ENFIA. I've laid a solid foundation to build on moving forward. I've had the benefit of having a great group of people on the Board of Directors and those who step up and offer their ideas on how to improve things. Four years was just right for me. Others might like two years. It will be up to the next President to decide how long they want to serve.

The online election for the ENFIA Board of Directors will be held prior to our Fall Business Meeting on October 24 (same Pollock Pines location as last year). At the start of 2027, the newly appointed board will decide between them on the individual positions they will assume (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and currently Member at Large).

What will I do? I made a request of the Board at the last meeting to create a new official position of Technology Manager. Seems only fair that I would move into that position to maintain what I've deployed over the past four years. It will be my goal to recruit and train docents that want to get involved with things like the ENFIA webpage

and other systems. We will begin an effort to create a newly redesigned webpage in the off-season to debut in the Spring. I am not leaving ENFIA. I've been hiking and visiting the area for about 30 years now, and I have every intention to continue as a docent as long as I can drive myself up there and go out on hikes.

My term wasn't too short, nor too long. It was just right for me to execute all of the things I thought would improve ENFIA. Who will step up to the challenge of being President now? I am leaving the position at the end of this year, so a new President is needed. Think about it.

Interpretive Hikes

By Mike Conroy

ENFIA's Interpretive Program is off to a great start with the Interpretive Program this season. Our program is expanding beyond the traditional hikes. Not only have we added a few new hikes and a few new hike leaders, we are starting to host "TED" like talks as well with topics pertaining to the forest. Our new mantra is "Hikes, Walks, and Talks"

In June ENFIA hosted an Interpretive Program Workshop with the Forest Service. The workshop was designed to teach docents what Interpretive Programs involve and how to create an interpretive event. Ten docents are now equipped to lead an Interpretive event.



Some new events being planned include

- Campfire talks with the Ranger
- Night Sky Photography Workshop
- Interpretive Tabling Events
- New “TED Talks”

A lot of our program’s growth is in a large part due to a great working relationship with the Forest Service.

So don’t be shy, come and join us as we continue to grow ENFIA’s Interpretive Program!!!

Restoring a Forest after a Wildfire

By Lester Lubetkin

In the early evening of August 14, 2021, the Caldor wildfire was first reported. This wildfire went on to burn 221,835 acres, destroy 1,005 structures and go on to be only the second known wildfire to cross the Sierra Nevada crest. Of the over 221,000 acres, 40% of the area burned at very high severity,

meaning that in these areas over 90% of the trees were killed. This amount of very high intensity wildfire is way outside of the natural range of variation for wildfires, although wildfires are becoming more and more devastating. But in addition, the size of the very high intensity burn areas is way beyond what is natural - some over 1,000 acres in size. Conifer trees typically can cast their seeds about 200 ft from the source tree, so when the high intensity burn areas exceed 400 ft in any direction, those areas are very limited in the ability to naturally reseed and grow new trees in the near future. So, how do you



Area of very high intensity burn where all of the trees have been killed.

restore a 221,000 acre wildfire area and return it to a thriving forest?

The first step starts even as the firefighters are working to suppress the wildfire. This is the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) phase, when scientists and technicians work to design and implement emergency treatments to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects

of a fire or to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources (for more about BAER, visit the February 2023 ENFIA Interpreter Newsletter).

At almost the same time, scientists and researchers are out studying the extent and effects of the wildfire, including long-term and short-term impacts. From this assessment, a Post-Fire Restoration Framework study was completed that identified the amount of damage to the Forest caused by the wildfire. The focus here was not on life and property, but rather on ways to restore and recover the forest, to identify various recovery opportunities and to propose potential treatments. This study not only looked at those areas of high tree mortality, but also looked at those areas where the Caldor wildfire actually improved the forest health by reducing surface fuels and ladder fuels and opening new areas for seedlings to thrive. There was also a study on the Caldor Fire's impacts to California spotted owls and their habitat.

From the Post-Fire Restoration study, along with other studies completed by a broad range of resource specialists, from Wildlife Biologists, Silviculturists, and Soil Scientists, to Botanists, Archaeologists, Hydrologists and many others, an interdisciplinary team starts the arduous task of identifying the proposed projects to restore the area of the Caldor Fire and to complete the environmental analysis that will form the basis for the decision of how to best restore the Forest. Many

of the proposed measures presented in the environmental analysis came from the Post-Fire Restoration study, but others came from the public, from resource specialists across the Forest and from the decision-makers themselves (the District Ranger and Forest Supervisor).

The Caldor Fire was fully contained in October 2021, and the interdisciplinary team (or ID Team) started meeting shortly after that. By May 2023, the Forest released a preliminary proposal for how they would restore the Caldor fire scar's ecosystem health and resilience while also reducing the risk of future catastrophic wildfires within the Caldor footprint, provide socioeconomic benefits to the impacted communities and reestablish recreation opportunities that were destroyed or diminished by the Caldor wildfire. The Eldorado Forest asked the public to share their ideas, identify issues they might have and to provide information about areas that would help the Forest to make a more well-informed decision. This started what is known as the NEPA process (the National Environmental Policy Act process for environmental analysis and documentation of decision-making). A lengthy process with multiple opportunities for the public to be involved, but which leads to better decisions with greater community support.

From this NEPA process, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was released in April 2025, which

outlined the actions the Forest intended to take to restore the Caldor fire scar and described the environmental effects of those efforts, both good and bad. And then the Forest issued two decisions - one describing the immediate measures to be taken (referred to as Phase 1) and a second decision identifying the process to select longer term restoration efforts, ranging from replanting forests, restoring impacted meadows, improving watershed conditions, helping to return recreation opportunities and stabilizing archaeological resources.

For those that have been in the Caldor wildfire scar, you have probably seen some of the work being done under Phase 1 - the cutting and piling of dead trees to make room for replanting of conifer seedlings. But that is not to say that the Forest hasn't been

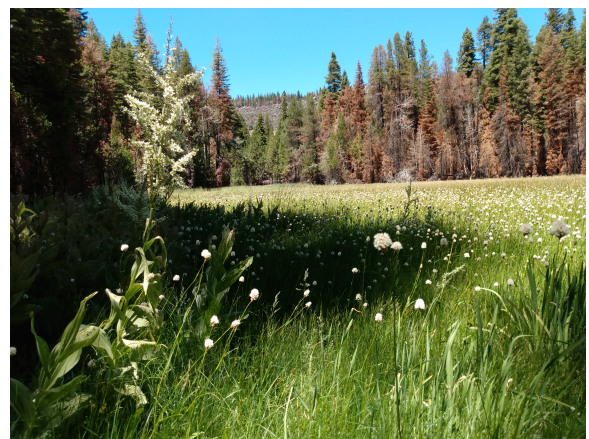


Cutting and piling of dead trees in preparation for burning piles and tree planting.

active in restoring the forest and improving forest conditions since the Caldor fire was contained. Hazardous trees along roads have been removed, key trails and campgrounds have been opened and hazardous trees cut down, areas have been treated to reduce

invasive weeds, and the creation of fuel breaks throughout portions of the Caldor footprint. This work has been done in partnership with many organizations and agencies, including the El Dorado Co. Resource Conservation District, Sierra Pacific Industries, the Sugar Pine Foundation, Great Basin Institute, American Rivers, American Forests and many others.

But restoring a “forest” is more than just getting trees to grow. Restoring the Caldor fire scar also means restoring damaged meadows and aspen stands, ensuring healthy riparian corridors, and recognizing that chaparral and brush fields are a part of a healthy landscape. We welcome the many successional steps or stages that the vegetation goes through, from the *early seral stage* with lots of grasses, shrubs and shade intolerant seedlings, though to the patchwork of plant communities (forests, brushfields, meadows, etc.) that so many wildlife species are dependent on.



The long-term restoration efforts, known as the Maximum Extent Strategy, includes identifying “subprojects”, such as identifying

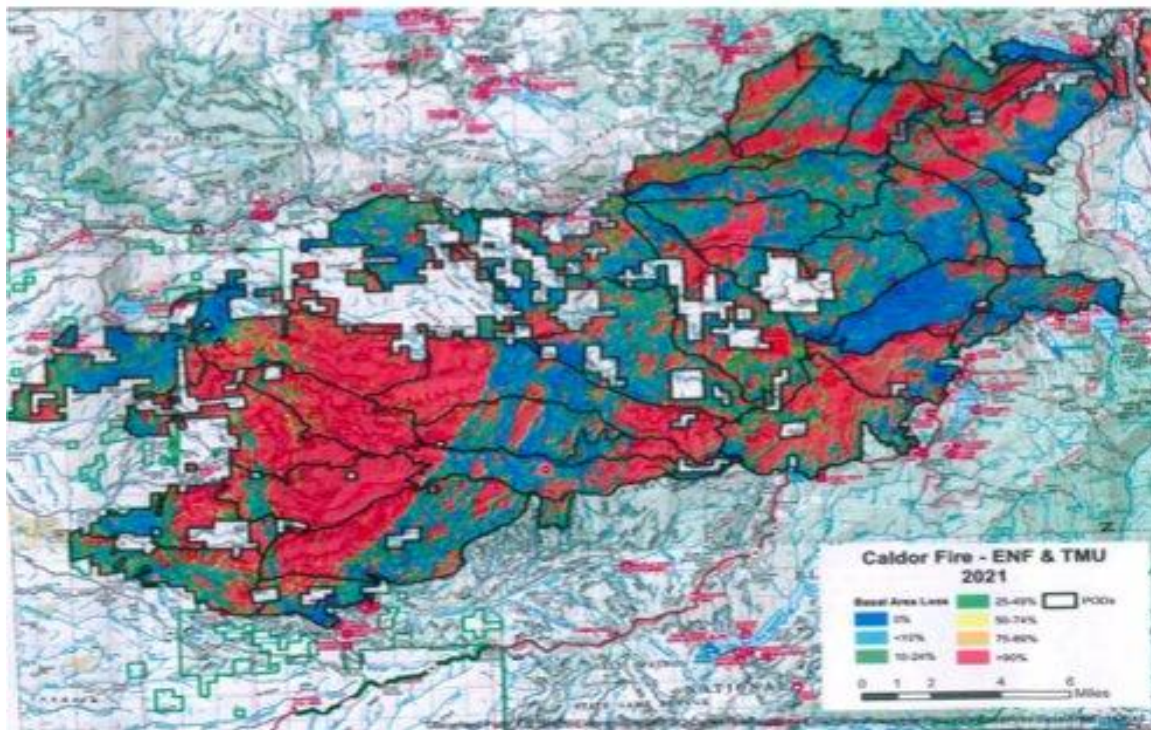
areas for reforestation (both planting new trees and helping natural regeneration to be successful), meadow restoration, forest fuel reduction and some green-tree thinning, aspen stand recovery, treating areas of invasive weeds, etc. Most of these projects will be identified by Forest staff although they will be working with organizations and individuals as well.

So, if you as an ENFIA member would like to help with restoring the Caldor fire scar, what are some of the ways you can get involved? Watch for tree-planting days and seedling watering days, often led by the Sugar Pine Foundation. Or share specific ideas with the Placerville District Ranger that you might have for areas that need to be recovered, such as meadows, trails or forest areas.

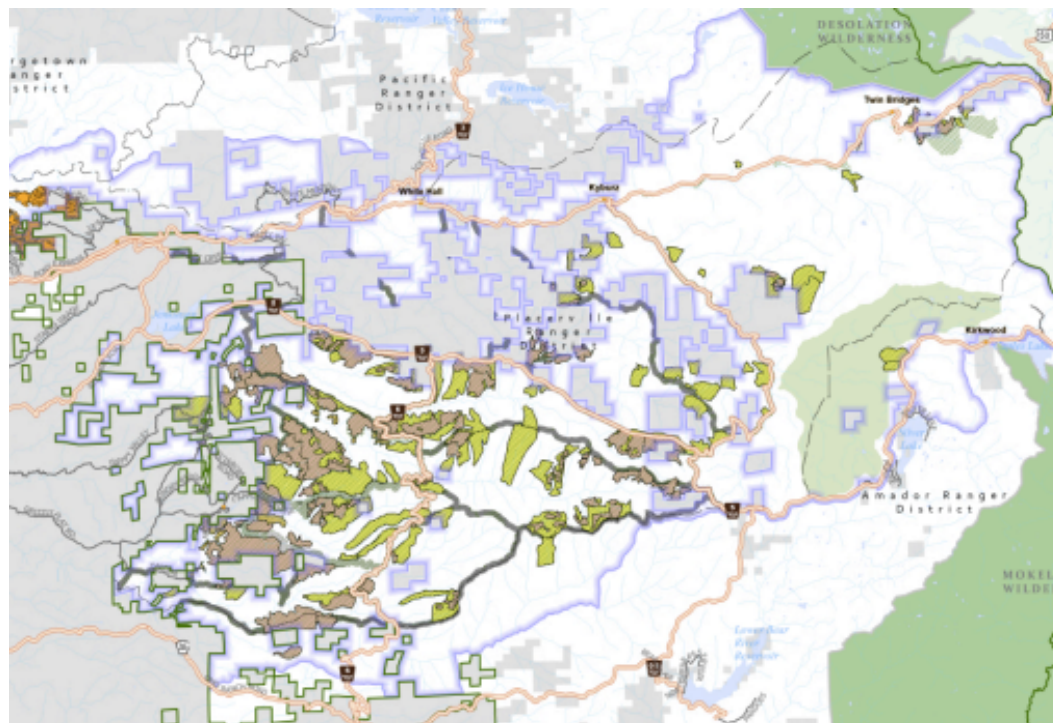
References:

Estes, Becky, 2023, Post-Fire Restoration Framework in Mixed Conifer Forests in the 2021 Caldor Fire, Eldorado National Forest and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

Caldor Fire Restoration Project, Eldorado National Forest website:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/eldorado/projects/63359>



Map showing the intensity of the Caldor wildfire. Red areas burned at extremely high intensity with nearly all trees killed. Blue areas had little loss of trees and green areas had about 1/4 of the trees killed.



Map showing some of the restoration projects planned for the Caldor Fire areas. Other projects not shown include meadow restoration, invasive weed treatments, campground and trail recovery, etc.

Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Eldorado National Forest
Proposed Changes to Recreation Fees on the Eldorado National Forest

Release Date: July 31, 2026

Contact Information: Don Morrill 530-957-0740 don.morrill@usda.gov

(Placerville, CA July 31, 2026) — The Eldorado National Forest is proposing new recreation fees and changes to existing recreation fees at various recreation sites on the forest including Wilderness overnight permits and Christmas tree permits. Also, the Eldorado National Forest, with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, will implement a fee increase for specialized recreation permits for overnight use in the Desolation Wilderness Area and the Carson Pass Special Management Area of the Mokelumne Wilderness Area.

Not all recreation sites in the forest require a fee. Including the sites in this proposal, over 40% of sites on the forest would still not require a recreation fee. The forest will continue to honor all nationally recognized fee-free days at day use sites across the forest.

The proposed fees by site are listed below:

Site Name	Site Type	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Airport Flat Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$0	Single Site Fee: \$26
Azalea Cove Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$0	Single Site Fee: \$26
Big Meadow Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$10 Double Site Fee:\$20	Single Site Fee: \$20 Double Site Fee: \$36
Camino Cove Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$0 Double Site Fee:\$0	Single Site Fee: \$26 Double Site Fee: \$46
Cole Creek Camping Area	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$0	Single Site Fee: \$26
Dru Barner Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$8 Single Use Fee: \$3	Single Site Fee: \$26 Single Use Fee:\$10

Hell Hole Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$10	Single Site Fee: \$20
Jones Fork Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$10	Single Site Fee: \$25
Lone Rock Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$0	Single Site Fee: \$26

Northwind Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$10	Single Site Fee: \$26
Strawberry Point Campground	Campground	Single Site Fee: \$10	Single Site Fee: \$26
Middle Meadow Campground	Group Campground	Night Fee:\$25 rate per group size 25 Night Fee:\$50 rate per group size 50	Night Fee:\$60 rate per group size 25 Night Fee:\$120 rate per group size 50
South Fork Group Campground	Group Campground	Night Fee:\$100 rate per group size 125	Night Fee:\$200 rate per group size 125
*Bunker Hill Lookout	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$0 rate per group size 6	Night Fee:\$100 rate per group size 6
*Harvey West Cabin	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$105 rate per group size 20	Night Fee:\$180 rate per group size 20
*Loon Lake Chalet	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$100 rate per group size 20	Night Fee:\$250 rate per group size 20
*Robbs Hut	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$65 rate per group size 6	Night Fee:\$100 rate per grp size 6
*Sly Guard Cabin	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$65 rate per group size 12	Night Fee:\$120 rate per group size 12
*Van Vlek Bunkhouse	Lookout or Cabin	Night Fee:\$75 rate per group size 6	Night Fee:\$125 rate per group size 6

Echo Summit Nordic Ski Area	Nordic	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Caples Creek Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Carson Pass	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$5 rate per	Day Fee: \$10 rate per

Trailhead		vehicle	vehicle
Flamingo Meadows Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Lake Margaret Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Meiss Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$5 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Shealor Lake Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
Thunder Mountain Trailhead	Trailhead	Day Fee: \$0 rate per vehicle	Day Fee: \$10 rate per vehicle
*Desolation Wilderness Pass/Permit	Permit	Permit Fee: \$5 per person Annual Pass \$20	Permit Fee year 1: \$10 per person Permit Fee year 5: \$15 per person Eliminate annual pass
*Mokellumne Wilderness Carson Pass Management Area Pass/Permit	Permit	Permit Fee: \$0 per person	Permit Fee year 1: \$10 per person Permit Fee year 5: \$15 per person
*Christmas Tree Permits	Permit	Permit Fee: \$10	Permit Fee: \$20

*Campgrounds and cabins are reservable through www.recreation.gov for an additional \$8 reservation fee, Wilderness permits for an additional \$6.00 and Christmas tree permits for an additional \$2.50.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) which allows the Forest Service to retain at least 80% of the money collected at recreation sites and use these funds locally to operate, maintain, and improve these sites. Revenue collected through recreation fees would help the forest improve infrastructure at recreation sites and fund additional recreation staff during the season of operation.

Projects that would be made possible with this additional funding include transitioning from propane lighting and replacing it with a newer system at Harvey West Cabin and re-paving the Meiss Trailhead parking lot. We also intend to develop a recreation site at the Potholes and add a vault toilet to the Bassi Falls trailhead area, both of which are high use areas.

Increasing the capacity of the Wilderness Ranger Program will also be possible. These projects will help to improve visitor facilities and services, preserve natural

and historic resources and facilitate recreation access across the forest.

Recreation fees help provide quality recreation opportunities that meet the modern expectations of visitors and creates a more financially sustainable recreation program for future generations.

The public is invited to comment on the proposed recreation fee changes. The comment period is set to end by close of business on Sept. 29, 2026. To ensure your comments are considered, please send your comments no later than the above date to Eldorado National Forest, Attention: Don Morrill, Forest Recreation Officer, 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667 or by email at don.morrill@usda.gov. Comments can also be provided online.

Oral comments must be provided in person at the Eldorado National Forest to Don Morrill during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.) or by calling 530-957-0740 and indicating you would like to provide comments on the proposed recreation fee changes. For more information, visit our website.

Once public involvement is complete, these recreation fee changes will be reviewed by a citizen’s advisory committee. Committee members represent a broad array of recreation interest groups to help ensure that the Forest Service is proposing reasonable and publicly acceptable recreation fees. The committee will submit their recommendation to the Regional Forester for a final decision.

Last updated July 31, 2026

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation’s forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

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