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The Cabin Fee Act of 2010

By Sharon Karr

Predictability, affordability and fairness remain the tenets of the Cabin Fee Act (CFA) of 2010. As summer wanes, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is scrutinizing the CFA. C2 has been fully engaged, meeting with our Representatives and attending the mark-up session of the House Natural Resources Committee on July 22. No opposition to H.R. 4888 occurred during mark-up and the legislation was unanimously passed out of committee! However the larger issue was looming: CBO scoring.

The CBO provides a documented opinion of the 'scoring', better understood as the projected revenue generation or

cost of proposed legislation. This 111th session of Congress is working under the 'revenue neutral' requirements of 'pay-as-you-go legislation', meaning the Cabin Fee Act cannot generate less revenue than CUFFA appraisals would have generated over the next ten years.

To state this in another way, the Cabin Fee Act must generate the same level of revenue as CUFFA fees would over a ten-year period. C2 and many cabin owners agree CUFFA revenue is a biased and flawed projection, made by the Forest Service of how many dollars the cabin program would generate and pay into the U.S. Treasury. C2 has successfully argued that Forest Service revenue projections are seriously flawed and the CBO reduced the Forest Service estimate by 25%. This brought the CFA closer to revenue neutrality but we still had to make some concessions, adding a tier, adjusting the percentage of the cabins that will fall into a tier, all to produce a couple million more in revenue than C2 originally hoped for, and brought forward strong support in the Senate.

Which fee tier a given cabin will fall into will not be known with certainty until all appraisals under CUFFA are completed and 'normalized', an adjustment for inflation during the high real estate market values, which is included in the CFA. This normalization will span the period from 2006, when the first appraisals were completed, through the completion of all appraisals. This will produce the rank order (from lowest to highest) of all 14,000 cabins, assigning each typical into a tier, place-

ing a percentage of cabins in each tier. C2 believes that the final fee determination for a given cabin will not occur until the end of 2012, at least. But with the resolution of the revenue issue, Senators Tester (D-MT) and Barrasso (R-WY), stepped up to sponsor the Cabin Fee Act in the Senate with bill S.3923.

The reality is the CFA is not a perfect solution. But it does ensure the viability of the Cabin Program well into the future by keeping permit fees affordable for most current cabin owners by maintaining a fee range from \$500 to \$4500, using nine tiers, incrementing each tier by \$500.

Approximately 20% of CUFFA permit fees will initially go up modestly, with an approximate \$100 to \$300 increase annually. The other 80% of CUFFA permit fees will decrease.

Let's personalize this CFA update: If my CUFFA fee is increasing under CFA by

\$250, should I support the CFA while the neighboring tract will get a \$2000 reduction in their fee? How can this be fair? By maintaining the entire Cabin Program and removing the CUFFA appraisal system, a predictable and affordable method of determining fees protects and retains the neighboring tract, and in essence protects my tract too. By maintaining the entire program, the revenue level is maintained and continues to flow into the U.S. Treasury, the taxpayer reaps a return on federal land, and we keep our cabins in the woods. This seems fair.

Even in Oregon the CUFFA appraisal process was ambiguous and difficult; the real estate bubble along with the economic downturn have resulted in wildly different appraisals.

Should an Oregon cabin owner in the Umatilla National Forest (NF) pay \$350 per year while another cabin owner in the Winema NF pays \$6,250 with only five months access, while another in Mt. Hood NF pays \$1,600 with year-round access? Should an appraisal conducted early in the cycle have a higher value than a later appraisal? Originally C2 watched the high appraisal results but soon realized a low appraisal isn't inherently a fair appraisal. The low end appraisals have as much variability as those at the high end. Most folks conclude that low fees equate to fair fees, however, there are many examples that refute this conclusion.

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If C2 is not successful in replacing CUFFA, we believe over 2000 cabins could be lost in the next 3 to 5 years

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Cabin Roads Update

by Burnham Chamberlain

This summer we did significant asphalt patching on Road 20, and a small amount on road 35 at the junction of 35A. Significant aggregate surface maintenance took place on 35A and 35B, with drivable drain dips installed on 35A to assist drainage off the road surface.

There also was some aggregate surface maintenance on Road 24/26 and Road 32/34. Roadside brushing of these last two road segments is expected to be completed before end of the field season...the contractor for that work is currently on task on NFSR1828 and some other higher elevation sites.

We also accomplished some surface work and constructed drivable drain dips on Rd 19 (Barlow Trail Road), on the west end access from LoLo Pass. Although there are no "rec" residences on that segment, many people access the trailhead to the closed section of Road 19.

Perhaps of interest to many of the folks who use Salmon River Road to access recreation sites there, we replaced a pair of undersized culverts that had failed last winter, and did aggregate surface maintenance on the really rough segment between the bridges.

At this time it seems unlikely that the work on Road 12, Still Creek, will start this year. I, and many here locally, are quite unhappy with this, but have no levers to pull making the contract process move as quickly as we desired. I am really sorry to have to report this.

Burnham Chamberlain is the
Zigzag District Road Manager

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over 2000 cabins will be lost in the next three to five years because of the lack of affordability due to high permit fees.

And remember, a high permit fee also removes the ability to sell your cabin. As cabins are lost and the recreation residence program shrinks, the likelihood the cabin program is continued will decrease.

The CFA is a broad brush stroke solution that moves us overall in the direction of fairness, while maintaining affordability of the annual fees and the marketability for those that must sell. We are all in this together if we want to guarantee the future viability of the Recreation Residence Program. Support for, and passage of the CFA will secure future affordability of the Recreation Residence Program.

Sharon Karr is Treasurer -
National Forest Homeowners, Cabin Coalition 2

How do You "Trust"

by Fran Lanagan

Cabin owners often think about putting their cabin into a Living Trust for estate planning or tax-related purposes. It is possible to do so after working with the Forest Service to make sure the trust meets requirements for permit issuance.

Each trust is complex and unique. The Forest Service must ensure that a valid trust was established, that the trustee had the power to enter into a permit that would bind the trust, and that the terms of the trust are consistent with the terms of the permit. To achieve this, the Forest Service must review a trust in its entirety before a permit can be issued to the trust. This process often takes several months, and almost certainly results in required trust clause revision before a permit can be issued with the trust as the permit holder. The process is further complicated because every state has different trust laws. Cabin owners should contact the Forest Service before getting too far along in the preparation of a trust to make the process as efficient as possible.

There are various required trust components, including but not limited to the following examples: the trust must

demonstrate that the cabin is transferred to the trust; the eventual distribution of the trust, as it pertains to the recreation residence, must be to a qualified holder (an individual or a husband and wife); the trustee must notify the Forest

Service upon revocation of the trust or upon a change in the trustee, and in case of conflict between the terms of the permit and the terms of the document, the permit terms shall control. Not only is each trust is unique, but every state has different trust laws, so the review process is complex and most often results in requirements for trust clause revision before a permit can be issued in the name of the trust.

A single asset trust is a good option for many cabin owners. It removes the requirement for the Forest Service to review the entire contents of the main trust. The single asset trust format often does not exceed two pages and involves only the recreation residence so the review timeline is shorter.

In summary, cabin owners should contact the Forest Service before preparing a trust document that involves their cabin, should be prepared for a several month-long process, and should consider meeting their needs through a single asset trust.

Fran Lanagan is Mt Hood
Special Permit Administrator

MHFHA newsletter is published twice a year.

We are always looking for people to write articles of interest for this newsletter. If you are interested in contributing, contact Daryl Phillippi at darl_p@juno.com.

Comments may be made to any newsletter article by emailing info@mhfa.com

Dumpstoppers Are Active on the Mountain

by Carolyn Raz

I used to get discouraged quite often when walking the roads and trails around our cabin whenever I came across trash along the way. Even when I carried a small bag and a pick-up stick to collect the trash, I often found heaps, or dumps that were simply too much to carry out. I still carry a bag but fortunately we now have a non-profit agency to call upon for the big problems like abandoned TVs, mattresses, old computers, construction scrap, etc. They are **DUMPSTOPPERS at 503-650-3333**.

Perhaps you've seen the Dumpstoppers signs in the Forest encouraging people to call for pick up at illegal dump sites. Dumpstoppers is operated by volunteers who have received a grant for eliminating illegal dump sites in the National Forest. They do need the exact location to be able to find the trash. I have found it helpful to carry a

roll of marker ribbon on my walks so I can tie a ribbon around a prominent tree or limb along the road for them to find the dump site. Even then, they always ask for a phone number so they can call in case they could not find it ... they are VERY conscientious!

However, they do not pick up general litter. That's where the rest of us come in. We can help keep our forest as pristine as possible if we stoop a little and pick up that candy wrapper or beer can on our next walk. After all ... if taking a walk makes you feel good, removing the trash makes you feel even better!

Carolyn Raz is Secretary for MHFHA

Editors note: I have added Dumpstoppers phone number to our contact list on the website.

Crime Reports Continue to Decline

Clackamas County Sheriffs' office gathers information concerning crimes against our cabins and shares this data with us when requested. Crime statistics are often used to measure the safety of an area. These crime reports include property and personal crimes and divide them into the following crime categories: Robbery, burglary, theft and criminal mischief. The latest report included (4) burglaries and one criminal mischief. The really good news is that there were no reported person to person crimes.

It appears that each case of burglary allowed the criminals to exit through a door. This would be more preventable with the installation of double keyed dead bolts on all doors. This type of lock requires a key to open the door from the inside the same as you do from the outside.

Our reporting period for the 12 months ending August 10, 2010 had only 5 reports. Last year for an 8 month

period we had 7 reports. In 2007 there were 27 reports. All indications are that we are becoming more aware of what needs to be done to make our cabins more secure.

We are hoping that these statistics are not a reflection of people not reporting the crimes on the belief that law enforcement cannot resolve the issue. For instance, a theft where the likelihood of getting property back or resulting in the arrest of the offender is unlikely. Gathering all the data determines how much of a problem exists and how limited law enforcement sources should be focused.

This news is of little consequence to those having had crimes committed on their property. Never-the-less it is good news for an area perceived as being at high risk due to the lack of occupancy for a major portion of the year.

Please do not get complacent.

Cabin sales statistics

In 2010 to Sept 1: 4 Cabins Sold	Average Sale Price; \$113,625.	Average Days on the Market: 262 days
In 2009: 12 FS Cabins Sold.	Average Sale Price: \$150,600.	Average Days on the Market: 126 days
Cabins Currently For Sale: 15.	Average List Price: \$162,959.	

The Current Market is extremely slow due primarily to the economy. There still appears to some resistance due to the uncertainty of the new lease fees and the new septic rules seem to be the reason for the lower prices.

"As Realtors we still believe the FS cabins offer excellent locations and affordability for the client wishing a vacation getaway".

Information supplied by David Lythgoe, Principal Broker, Merit Properties, Inc.

32 Hours, 50 Minutes The amount of on-screen media - including television, video and video games - that American children between the ages of 2 and 5 years consume each week. According to the Nielson Company

Dutch-Oven Cheesy Beer Biscuits on Stillcreek

(Adapted for the Mt. Hood Forest Homeowners Association.)

by Scott MacCaskill

When occupying my favorite “parcel” on earth, I love to entertain guests and I’m always the designated “Cabin Chef.” I make everything from Bourbon Braised Australian Lamb Shanks with Soft Creamy Parmesan Polenta, Mesquite Smoked Copper River Salmon with Wild Huckleberry Sauce, to Prime Rib-Eye Steak au Poivre with Pommes Frites.

My guests love it all, but they truly salivate over the simplest recipe I prepare; Dutch-Oven Cheesy Beer Biscuits. Warm, fluffy, gooey, and golden brown, these flavorful - delightfully delicious biscuits would make Wolfgang Puck drool with envy. Serve warm and steamy and your cabin guests will remember them (and you) forever!

Here are the basics:

12" Cast Iron Dutch-Oven with Legs (*I prefer the Lodge® brand available at most Sporting Good Stores*)

16 to 20 Charcoal Briquettes (*My choice is Kingsford Match Light - easy and convenient*)

1 carton 19 oz. Dassant Classic Beer Bread Mix (*Disclaimer: I own the Dassant Brand so quite naturally I believe it's the best*)

12 oz. Premium Beer (*Home-Brewed, Northwest Micro-Brew, or even Budweiser - your choice is the best choice*)

3/4 cup Shredded Cheese (*I use a combination of Gruyere, Mozzarella, and Cheddar*)

2 tablespoons Fresh Chopped Herbs (*Whatever your favorites are; basil, thyme, rosemary*)

1 tablespoon Black Pepper

1/4 cup Olive Oil (*more for drizzling*)

Mix Directions: In a medium size bowl, blend mix, cheese, herbs, and pepper together. Pour liquid into mix. Quickly and firmly fold together for 20 to 30 seconds. Batter will be lumpy and sticky - don't over mix.

Dutch-Oven Directions: Outdoors: locate a flat, clear, safe space to position your Dutch-Oven.

Lay down heavy-duty aluminum foil for easy cleanup and stack charcoal, creating a pyramid shape.

Light your charcoal and cover with heavy-duty aluminum foil to retain the heat and contain the flames.

Wait until charcoal is just beginning to glow.

Separate the charcoal, spreading 6 to 8 around the button and 10 to 12 on the surface of the Dutch-Oven.

Wait several minutes for the Dutch-Oven interior to warm up, and then add the olive oil.

When the olive oil is hot, drop heaping tablespoons of batter in the oven, drizzle with more olive oil, and bake for 14 to 16 minutes, or until golden brown.

Alternative Mixes: You could substitute and use any all-purpose baking mix, like Bisquick, Krusteaz, Bob's Red Mill, Arrowhead, or your favorite from-scratch recipe. You would only need to adjust the ingredients to best fit the recipe.

Additional Information: Beginners Guide to Dutch Oven Cooking www.scoutingthenet.com/Cooking/BeginnersDutchOvenCookbook

Scott MacCaskill is V. Pres of
MHFHA and owner of
Dassant Gourmet Mixes

Notes from the Treasurer:



This past year cabin owners have maintained their interest in supporting this organization. While 57% of cabins are “dues paying members,” we also had 13% of cabins contributing additional support to maintain the efforts of C2 (Cabin Coalition 2).

Please take a moment and look at your address label on the accompanying card. Be sure your address is correct but also look at the right side of the top line. You will see a two digit number. If this is “10 or 11” you do not need to send in a membership contribution this year. Anything else means you are not current for this year. If it is “XX” this means we have not heard from you in a very long time but we sure would like to.

Email addresses ... They become more important in our everyday existence. PLEASE ... PLEASE - Keep us updated when you make a change. This is our way of passing important information along in a timely manner. It beats the heck out of snail mail for getting the word out. Your email address is NEVER shared with any other organization, not even the Forest Service or the water districts. When they would like to take advantage of our email list, we do the mailing for them and always insert the addresses as a “blind carbon copy.” Our list goes beyond just the primary permittee as listed on the permit. Therefore we get the word out to many more cabin users.

Have You Recently Moved or Changed Your E-mail Address?

Please don't forget to keep us informed of any changes. You can email us at info@mhfha.com or send a note to: MHFHA ... PO Box 82351... Portland, OR 97202