

# Talking Points

## Golden Passport 2003 Talking Points

### 1 The Project

- In mid-April, the Forest Service will broaden the benefits of the existing nationwide federal Golden Passports Program and will begin accepting them at most day-use recreation sites.
- The Golden Eagle Passport will cover entrance fees into federal recreation areas, use of high impact recreation areas and developed day-use recreation sites, which may include picnic sites, low development boat ramps, trailheads, visitor centers and parking. The Golden Eagle will **NOT** cover fees for camping, developed boat launches and swimming sites, or privately operated concession sites on any federal lands.
- The Golden Age and Access Passports will continue to provide a 50% discount at sites where they have been accepted previously, such as camping, developed boat launches and swimming sites, and for specialized interpretive services. Golden Age/Access Passports will now cover full entrance fees at Forest Service sites where only a discount was provided in the past. The Golden Passports are **NOT** valid for fees related to facility or equipment rental (cabins, lookouts, day/overnight group sites), special conservation programs, managed off highway vehicle areas, transportation systems, reservation services, or permits of any kind.
- This action is being taken under the authority of the law that created the Fee Demo Program, which provides agencies the ability to test various recreation fees.
- Local pass options of all types will still be available. The Golden Passports offer a new option for those who desire a recreation pass that applies to all federal lands nationwide.
- This program is distinct from the National Parks Pass, which is only honored at sites operated by the National Park Service. However, the National Parks Pass can be upgraded by purchasing a Golden Eagle Hologram for \$15.
- The Forest Service is not establishing new fee areas, and this is not an access pass to national forests. The passes can be used at existing day-use fee sites. The majority of national forest lands remain open without any fees.

### 2 Background

- Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passports were valid for entrance to national parks, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, and other congressionally designated areas.



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PASSPORTS**

## GOLDEN PASSPORTS

However, the Golden Eagle Passport was valid for entrance to only a few fee sites operated by the Forest Service. The Golden Age/Access Passports could only be used for a 50% discount at national forest fee sites.

- As national forests designated more fee sites under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program (“Fee Demo”) as authorized by Congress in 1996, visitors found they could not use their Passports consistently at all federal recreation fee sites.
- To address these concerns, the Forest Service has broadened the rules under which the Passports can be used to include most day-use recreation sites, such as those covered by local and regional passes (*cite any local passes here*).

### **3** Increases public benefit and favor, while minimizing confusion.

- The public requested a simpler, interagency fee program.
- Golden Passport cost remains the same, but value is increased for pass holders.
- The Golden Passport Program is a known product, and a logical place to begin moving toward consistency in interagency fee policy. Using and modifying products already in existence makes more sense than creating new products (saves money, time, resources, minimizes confusion).

### **4** Ensures fees go where people recreate.

- Site of sale receives 80% of the revenue, while 20% is redistributed based on specific criteria.
- Golden Passport fees help pay for the facilities/services the public uses most often and that cost the most to maintain.

### **5** Critical window of opportunity to impact the future of the Recreation Fee Program.

- These modifications are a positive step toward gaining public acceptance regarding the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program.



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