RECREATION RESIDENCE NATIONAL FEE RETENTION ACTION PLAN

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM

WASHINGTON OFFICE LANDS, MINERALS & GEOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Cabin being built in Region 6, Umpqua National Forest 1922
(File:South Umpqua Ranger Station Cabin, Umpqua Forest, Oregon, 1922. - NARA - 299210.jpg - Wikimedia Commons)

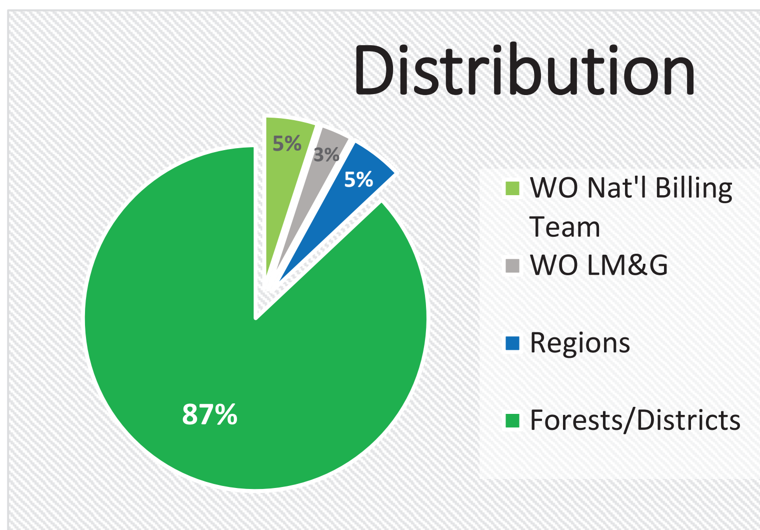
Recreation Residence in Region 1, Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest, Pintler Ranger District, Echo Lake Tract 2024

Contents

Introduction: This Plan outlines the Forest Service strategy for how to invest the annual land use fees collected from recreation residence special use permits through fee retention. This Plan is a comprehensive document for a wide range of Forest Service (FS) stakeholders that is a working document to ensure the agency implements fee retention in an accountable, equitable and strategic fashion. This Plan is intended to guide agency administrators and authorized officers in their decision-making processes as well as highlight those items to anticipate for accomplishment reporting to ensure accountability and transparency to meet leader's intent.

Background: Over $34M in rent will be collected in 2025 from the more than 13,000 recreation residences (privately owned cabins and related improvements) permitted on 114 national forests. The Cabin Fee Act of 2014 (CFA), 16 USC 6214 (j)(1) authorizes the FS to retain annual land use fees and transfer fees (fees) associated with recreation residences starting December 19, 2024, *without* further appropriation. Each year, the agency will retain the funds that are deposited into the National Forest Fund of the US Treasury starting with calendar year 2025. A new collection and distribution process for the anticipated $35M collected annually has been established. The National Forest Homeowners (NFH) are an organized group of recreation residence cabin owners who worked with Congress to pass the CFA and programmatically represent the interests of a large number of Forest Service recreation residence permit holders. For more, see Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

Use of Funds: The Act provides discretion to the FS and states the fees ***"shall be used to administer the recreational residence program and other recreation programs carried out on National Forest System land."*** The Deputy Chief's Office has outlined that: Washington Office (WO) Lands, Minerals & Geology staff will manage 3% of available fees collected for targeted investments, WO National Billing Team will be funded to perform recreation special use billing that would otherwise be the responsibility of the field (5%). Budget authority for the remaining balance (92%) will be provided to the Regions with the expectation that the Region will retain 5% and invest the remaining 87% to the Forests/Ranger Districts. Those proportions are reasonably in alignment with what NFH suggested to the agency (6/2022) and in letters to each Regional Forester (9/2024). Most FS responses from the field survey support the outlined distribution model and emphasized the need for WO funds to benefit the field (9/2023). *See Attachment A: Budget Authority* for details.



The WO National Billing Team (NBT) validated National Forest fiscal identifiers (proclaimed unit codes). The NBT also updated recreation residence billing information for use codes 123 and 124 in the Special Uses Database System (SUDS) so that the appropriate fees are retained and deposited as planned. Every level of the agency will be accountable to the interests of those permit holders paying fees and intent of the Act when determining how the funds are used. To the maximum extent possible, while ensuring equity and accountability, the goal is to invest locally where the fees were generated. These are "no-year" funds meaning we do not *have* to spend the balance down to zero every year as the funds may accumulate so we can be strategic about specific investments. Funds may be used for a range of agency expenses, starting with special use permit administrator salary, and then once fully staffed/funded to capacity - contracts, grants, agreements, or supplies that directly support the program. Funds are permanent, not appropriated funds. Each level of the organization should anticipate reporting accomplishments and expenditures so that the agency can learn and improve on overall service and delivery. See *Attachment G* for questions that each FS unit should anticipate answering in a reply due for FY2025.

Budget Authority: Each Regional Forester's office will further distribute 87% of the total fees to the respective Forest/Ranger Districts, and each Forest is expected to invest funds back to the Ranger Districts. Regional input was clear that the preference is to allow some regional discretion on the distribution so that Regions may be strategic about funding staff and projects, such as where it makes sense to recognize efficiencies and economies of scale. The mechanics and responsibility to distribute funds to the field resides at the regional level. There are many examples where zoning/sharing a full-time employee dedicated to special use permit administration would lead to increased efficiencies and streamline operations. Where reasonable, **avoid collateral duties for special use permit administration** (recommendation from the OIG in 2011) and establish a program of work that enables the administrator to focus on special uses work. To accomplish that, in many cases, Ranger Districts or Supervisor's Offices may find it most effective to **share/zone staff to meet strategic objectives** and meet expectations from this Plan and Regions have discretion/responsibility to facilitate strategic zoning to meet expectations in this Plan. *See Attachment A: Budget Authority*

As an agency, we must continue to improve the management of our program of work within our approved budget authority. Having effective internal controls in place is necessary at all levels of the agency to ensure programs and activities are managed effectively to achieve desired outcomes while avoiding overspending. FS units are expected to utilize WorkPlan to establish a preliminary and/or final program of work.

The deposits are made under a variety of cooperative instruments that specify the mutual benefits of the work. Obligations shall not exceed the amount available to each unit in the fiscal year in which the funds were collected. If a unit's budget authority increases due to priority need, a request should be sent to the NBT. NBT will provide guidance on the next steps.

Priorities: The CFA states that fees are to be used to "**administer the recreational residence program** and other recreation programs on National Forest System lands." The funds may be used to facilitate oversight and management of recreation residences or the broader recreation program, with special use administration and management of the recreation residence program being the priority. The following is an agency tiered prioritization outlining leader's intent for the most strategic investments in the field:

1. Fund, hire or place and train **staff to administer recreation residence special use permits** as well as program managers for the recreation residence program. Put "**boots on the ground**" as intended by the CFA, which is why the law was passed to include fee retention authority. Where feasible, provide a range of career paths and grade scales (e.g., *Attachment B*). Survey feedback was overwhelmingly in favor of deferring to the regions/forests/districts to develop customized staffing plans as opposed to having a national team review and provide recommendations.

    a. Note: Long-term, once hiring freezes are lifted, we *may* consider a future group vacancy announcement that lumps the agency's collective needs into a single event. This could include hiring staff at numerous grades and series with location negotiable and then subject to specific field needs. Allow the certificate to remain open for as long as possible so that other special use positions may be hired later using the open continuous roster of already approved applicants.

EXPECTATIONS/DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. In determining where and how many special use administrators to staff within your respective level of the organization - the **intent** is that each unit with recreation residences (rec res) has position(s) filled so rec res **permits are authorized** in a timely manner and will **not linger or accumulate creating backlog** the following field season. Every unit should have a permit administrator or be actively prioritizing filling that position since they will have funding for that work and will be asked to report out with contacts of administrators by unit funded. See the Dashboard application for those expired uses by unit. Be staffed to swiftly **complete transfers and collect transfer fees** so that new permits are issued from the SUDS to the new cabin owners (FSH 2709.11, sec. 33.2). Be organized to **respond to requests from permit holders** for hazard tree removal, treating slash piles, rebuild assessments, exterior structural maintenance/improvements (when needed). Update maps attached to permits and GIS data to coordinate with emergency services and integrate with an on-line map viewer. Be prepared to help if contacted by the National Billing Team to address fee inquires in a timely manner. Units with recreation residence will have a permit administrator responsible for coordinating accomplishment reporting and meeting these expectations. Coordinate needed heritage determinations and documentation and integrate rec res interests with project implementation on National Forest System lands within the wildfire crisis strategy outside of the permitted tract. As a short-term solution, units may use ACES contractors (or similar programs if available) to mentor or train and perform recreation or recreation residence permit administration where needed. However, ACES should not be used as a long-term solution. **Once satisfied, *then* proceed to priority 2**.

2. Conduct activities that benefit the management of the recreation residence tract or recreation program (see ***Attachment H*** for Menu of Tiered ideas). Investments should be on the managing unit, preferably near those recreation residence tracts and communities where the fees are generated. Any level of the organization may fund specific projects, positions or activities, meaning that for a position or task that has benefits greater than a single unit, the Region or WO should also look to contribute and maximize efficiency and utility of the Forest/District investment. Permit holders and FS staff must see meaningful improvements that demonstrate the agency is appropriately investing in those areas where the funds are generated as intended by the CFA.

Region/Forest/District Retained (92%): Funding/hiring and training staff to directly support administering the recreation residence program is the top priority. Forest Supervisors and District Rangers should determine the sufficient staff necessary to administer the recreation residence program and prioritize funding those positions - see Expectations above. Staff hired/funded should focus on special use administration so that they become proficient as opposed to working in a variety of program areas with multiple collateral duties. Other staff specialists may be funded where needed to meet strategic goals. For summaries of recreation residences by region, forest and district, see: pages 9-17 or spreadsheet showing fees.

Funds will go from the WO to the ROs, and it will be the **Region's responsibility to distribute 87% to the field or otherwise zone positions to directly benefit the field**. It is acknowledged that that fees collected do not directly align with workload associated with administering the recreation residence program because the fees range from $793 - $6,890/year depending on the lot value and respective fee tier assignment in the CFA. FS administrative workload is based on number of authorizations and not just fees generated and each permit holder, regardless of fees paid, should have a FS permit administrator with customer service standards. Regions/forests have a responsibility to be judicious about investments and this is why they have ultimate responsibility to meet organizational expectations. Hiring new or funding existing regional staff, such as a regional recreation residence program manager, recreation residence focused heritage (Architectural Historian), landscape architect, engineering staff member, or other supporting staff remains a top priority at this level and at the discretion of the Regional Forester. For example, Region 6 RO hired a GS-13 detailer in May 2024, to facilitate implementation of fee retention. Architectural historians could complete any needed evaluations, develop Programmatic Agreements, and provide consistent direction in Section 106 review.

There is high demand for training, on all things special uses, but particularly on administering the recreation residence program as identified as a top need in feedback from the field (9/2023). Providing training from the regional level and support to the field units is also an important consideration in the use of these funds. See the Tiers above for additional funding ideas (after permit administration staffing is sufficient) and seek to recognize efficiencies with bulk purchase orders or other efforts that support multiple units (e.g., execute heritage related contracts covering multiple units, or order signs for multiple units).

WO Funds Retained by Lands, Minerals & Geology **(3%)**: Staff at any level, but particularly the WO, will proceed to provide program oversight and guidance to improve customer service, consistency, and operations. Overall fees retained by the WO include a total of 8%, of which 3% is described in this section and the other 5% is dedicated to the National Billing Team (page 8). Feedback from the field indicated a great deal of interest in training, including the development and expansion of internal communications for practitioners. In response to feedback and in anticipation of implementing this Plan, the WO developed 1) Training SharePoint site with >100 courses, 2) Recreation Residence fundamentals videos; and 3) national SharePoint page dedicated to recreation residences with a wide range of resources, including updates to this Plan. To continue to prepare and ensure the FS is successful, by the end of CY2025, **WO LM&G is committed to delivering the following.**

WO LMG Deliverables for CY2025:

1) Operation & Maintenance Plan templates that may be attached to the special use permit (and developed in coordination with permit holders)
2) Customized NEPA template letters to the file to address expired or expiring permits for recreation residence tracts (36 CFR 220.d(d)(11)) – **done** 4/2025, see template for renewals & template for re-issuances
3) Playbook for renewal process (Enterprise leading – drafted March 2025).
4)Update external/public webpage: USDA Forest Service - Caring for the land and serving people, mimic Sante Fe site
5) Development of AgLearn virtual course focused on recreation residences administration
6) NBT/SUDS experts to updating training materials on how to issue a transfer in SUDS and correctly code and post to the Recreation Residence SharePoint site. Jill Allgood with NBT is working on as of 5/2025.
7) New Permit Holder Guide (coordinate with NFH), including instructions on filling out the transfer & revocation forms. Drafted 5/2025

8) Initiate development of public map viewer showing recreation residences general locations, in lieu lots, and tract information. Use this to help with renewals where applicable and integrate with local emergency services.
9) Attend annual NFH conference, present/represent for the national program and address questions from permit holders. Planned for May 2-3, 2025, in Pasadena, CA - Done.
10) Coordinate clean-up of SUDS data (correct lot #, tract, state) and specifically contacts to fast-track renewals and NextGen efforts (Enterprise, SUDS Coordinators, Johntel leading)
11) Continue to meet with NFH on approximately a monthly basis.
12) Update Frequently Asked Questions & Answers to help implement this Plan.
13) Pilot projects may be funded to ensure there are key accomplishments to report.

Further efforts may include updating national policy, exterior modification processes, what to do after a natural disaster (fire, hurricane, tree falling on cabin), and Trust documentation. Survey results from 9/2023 emphasized the expectation that these funds support the field, reference *Attachment C*.

A. Establish an awards program that routinely recognizes accomplishments consistent with the priorities and objectives from this Plan. WO to facilitate an award nomination process, include field subject matter experts to participate, and use WO retained funds to provide awards as well as hard copy certificates of merit to deserving staff with outstanding performance. Feedback received from the internal survey indicated interest in an awards program and recognized lack of recognition. Awards could go to anyone at any level of the organization and recipients will be invited to attend the NFH annual convention to share the accomplishments. See *Attachment C* where $30k/year is budgeted and endeavor to recognize a diverse group of top performers across the country using draft criteria in *Attachment E*. That equates to roughly 2-5 award recipients per region.
B. Annually purchase hard copy Code of Federal Regulation books (Title 36 Parts 200 to 299) for special uses staff across the entire country – place 1 large order and distribute to field recreation residence administrators. Encourage the use of the on-line CFRs, but offer hard copy to ensure regulations are used. See *Attachment C* where $10k is budgeted. This is particularly important to recreation residence permit administrators due to the updates specifically applicable, such as: updated categorical exclusions in 36 CFR 220.6(d)(11), impaired access updates required by CFA, updates removing superseded language that CFA eliminated (appraisals).
C. Develop additional AgLearn virtual education materials through the Partnership Agreement with Alabama A & M. If travel restrictions lift, offer in-person training and fund the travel and facility costs.

Future ideas (not planned or funded, but placeholders for **≥ 2026**)

D. Fund Information Technology endeavors, such as for e-permitting, likely in a 1-time investment to generate systems, products, or processes that are increasingly user accessible and improve customer experiences. This may include developing an electronic system that streamlines the permit transfer process.
E. Facilitate reviews of Trusts by establishing a streamlined process to directly support the field.
F. Fund specific resources (staff) that are developed and shared across regional boundaries. The field would need to identify specific needs and share responsibility for the program of work.

G. Hire agency historian who can assist the regions in evaluations, provide consistent Section 106 review templates and process, programmatic agreement development and provide additional review for recreation improvement projects.
H. Facilitate upward and downward reporting and tracking to ensure funds are being distributed as recommended. Pursue a Dashboard application.
I. Develop a Teams channel, for the field to interact, with oversight from RO & WO subject matter experts.
J. Fund/hire National Program Manager and/or financial support staff (similar to FLREA) to focus entirely on recreation residences. Washington Office organization chart would have to be approved.
K. Develop guide for what to do after a cabin is destroyed or partially destroyed by fire, hurricane, flood.

National Billing Team – Washington Office (5%): Salary for up to 15 employees on the National Billing Team (NBT), who are responsible for the annual bills and follow-up dunnings for the field when debt is unpaid. The NBT also calculates and publishes the annual land use and transfer fee updates per CFA. The NBT also coordinates fee credits and non-use adjustments for applicable recreation residences when access is restricted in specific instances. Ensure and advise the field on correct use of job codes, including helping with validating proclaimed units.

This funding will enable the NBT to sustain services and proceed to take on additional recreation special use billing, alleviating the field from billing responsibilities. See glide path for streamlining this focused work, which was developed to increase revenue for the agency and streamline billing and debt collection. This investment approach frees up funds (NFSE) and other recreation retained funds for the field that would otherwise be needed to pay NBT salary. By relieving the field of billing and dunning responsibilities for special uses, it is estimated that field administrators will gain 25% more capacity allowing improved focus on permit administration/Expectations (page 5). This strategic investment gives the recreation and special uses programs more buying power, and allows the NBT to continue to improve on agency fiscal responsibilities in collecting fees, improved compliance, and mitigate negative audit findings.

Timing for 2025 bills: Calendar year 2025 recreation residence bills were delayed so that the fees collected are retained to the maximum extent practicable. The WO communicated an early heads-up at the NFH conference in April of 2024, and NFH communicated that message to permit holders. The National Billing Team has worked with the budget staff, the Chief Financial Officer and All Service Receipts staff to create fund accounts. These accounts are in place by the NBT who rolled over the bills for CY25 billing. Bills have been adjusted accordingly and the developers will modify the standard D4 job codes (once job codes are in FMMI) to those fee retention codes, as well as a revised due date of February 1, 2025. All recreation residence bills will be created and prepared by the NBT will be sent to permit holders between December 20, 2024 and January 1, 2025. **CY2026 annual billing will return to normal timing** with bills sent around early December. Funds that are pulled for sequestration (5.7%) will be returned to the Forest where they were collected approximately 18 months later.

Receipt and Distribution of Funds: Washington Office Strategic Planning & Budget Accountability (SPBA) and Albuquerque Service Center staff familiar with the All Service Receipts (ASR) have contributed to the development of this Plan. Currently, all funds go to the National Forest Fund and then payments to states are calculated and funds are distributed. Though the recreation residence funds still need to be accounted for in the payments for states and counties, ASR staff have advised that fees retained will NOT be used to make any payments, as there is nothing in the CFA requiring such a payment and any adjustments would be required at the Department level. No overhead assessment or information technology (IT) tap will occur at the WO. For a detailed summary of recreation residences receipts by region, forest and district, see: spreadsheet showing fees. WO budget staff have developed new perm and trust expenditure accounts/shorthand codes so the fees are available to spend as soon as April in Calendar Year (CY) 2025; for reference see shorthand codes: Accounting Structure Guide.pdf (sharepoint.com) 2025. The shorthand codes are designed to identify both managing unit and the proclaimed unit so that the fees are tied to both the unit that administers the permits and the proclaimed unit necessary for ASR calculations. Special Fund Expenditure account: Recreation Residence Program, OMB Account # 005-96-5644, Treasury # 012-5644; Special Fund Receipt account: Cabin User and Transfer Fees, Recreation Residence Program, OMB Account # 005-00-564410, Treasury # 012-5644001.

Obligations shall not exceed the amount available to each unit in the fiscal year in which the funds were collected. If a unit's budget authority increases due to priority needs, a request should be sent to the NBT. NBT will provide guidance on the next steps.

Unauthorized Use of Funds: By spending retained recreation residence fees on the investments that are outlined in this Plan, the FS avoids potential violations of appropriations law, including the purpose of the statute (Cabin Fee Act of 2014 (CFA), 16 USC 6214 (j)(1)) and the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 1341 *et seq*.). Fees retained shall be primarily used to fund special use permit administrator staff salary. Prioritize funding and staffing/filling positions, workforce planning efforts and training special use permit administration staff. Do not use recreation residence fees retained if not working on special use permit administration or recreation. Do not spend funds on other items until fully staffed to administer the program (see Expectations on page 5). All charges must be documented and reported annually, partially in anticipation of an anticipated audit. Reporting will also ensure funds are spent judiciously and will be used to inform updates to this Plan to recognize best management practices and ensure WO funds are invested most strategically in outyears. It is not appropriate to charge fee retention dollars on general overhead or IT.

> ***"shall be used to administer the recreational residence program and other recreation programs carried out on National Forest System land."***
>
> -Cabin Fee Act on use of fees

All employees have a public trust responsibility to ensure the legal use of funds (FSM 6500-2022-1, section 6510.4). This includes ensuring funds are spent in accordance with law and not on any unauthorized purposes; see FSM amendment 6500-2022-1, section 6510.32, which specifies that employees must charge and report work using the appropriate program funding. Transparency is paramount and to ensure accountability, units shall expect an annual reply due to report how funds were spent, see *Attachment G*.

Transfer Fees: Along with the annual land use fees, the Forest Service will also retain the transfer fees collected when a new permit is issued due to a change of ownership. The Calendar Year 2025 transfer fee amount is $1,464 and like the annual land use fees, is adjusted annually with an inflation index. This accounts for approximately $400k/year across the agency with 100% going back to the Forest performing the work and will have its own shorthand code different from the annual land use fee job codes. In cases where a Ranger District is lacking staff or expertise to complete transfers in a timely manner, the respective Forest or Region should be engaged and take action to assist. Anticipate a non-discretionary sequestration tax of 5.7%, returned >18 months after collection.

Communication: Numerous staff areas have interest in this roll-out and are engaged. Lands Special Uses, Recreation, ASC, and Strategic Planning & Budget Accountability (SPBA) are the principal staff areas, but this will also affect Engineering, Heritage, Human Resources, PPS, and others. The following are key benchmarks related to **future planned communication**.

A. FY25 – NBT/SUDS experts to update training materials on how to issue a transfer in SUDS and correctly code so fees are retained locally.

B. National Lands Special Uses Program Manager has provided and will continue to provide monthly updates on the national Recreation and Lands Special uses conference calls that include each region and the WO.

C. WO LM&G updating Lands and Recreation Directors on the monthly calls.

D. WO LM&G to facilitate and fund, training that is focused on helping new permit administrators thereby improving consistency, retention of skilled staff and improved job satisfaction. Require students to go through the stock training materials so that we make the most of the training. Location, date, and SME presenters TBD. $100k is budgeted in *Attachment C* and will likely not occur in FY26 due to overarching agency budget and travel restrictions.

See Attachment E: Timeline & Past Coordination Efforts
See Attachment F: Agency administrators anticipate answering

Documentation: The following are means to document this Plan and memorialize communications.

A. Update national special use policy in FSH 2709.11, section 33 to briefly summarize key points from this Plan.

B. Add language in the annual budget guidance to summarize key information from this Plan and specifically reiterate program intent and cite the Cabin Fee Act itself. Recreation Residence are included in the FY25 Draft Status of Perms and Trusts Permanent Appropriations (11/03/2023).

C. National budget policy in FSH 6509.11g, section 63 has been drafted and also references back to follow this Plan and outline basic leader's intent to align with the Cabin Fee Act.

National Policy References: For existing directives on recreation residences, see: FSM 2347.1; FSM 2721.23; FSM 2716.1-.11; FSH 2709.11, sec. 33; FSH 2709.14, sec. 23. WO SharePoint Site and the most current draft of this Plan: Special Uses - Recreation Residence (sharepoint.com)

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Special Uses & Plan lead: Brandon Smith, National Lands Special Uses Program Manager, Lands, Minerals & Geology Management: (406) 491-1605, brandon.c.smith@usda.gov, (contact direct with suggested edits, ideas, comments, questions to this Plan)

National Billing Team and all things accounting and finances: Joe Holzinger, joseph.holzinger@usda.gov; Johntel Barraclough, Johntel.Barraclough@usda.gov, WO Lands, Minerals & Geology Management Staff Recreation Assistant Director in Washington Office, Ben Johnson, benjamin.c.johnson@usda.gov

Attachment A: 2025 Budget Authority

FS Unit	# Rec Res*	CY2025**
R1	847	$2,417,189
R2	1,191	$2,285,431
R3	620	$1,336,560
R4	1,360	$3,288,738
R5	5,482	$10,717,409
R6	2,597	$6,170,031
R8	351	$913,384
R9	707	$2,187,002
Nat'l Billing Team	13,115	$1,698,478
WO - 3% (*Attachment C*)		$1,019,088
^Sequestration – 5.7%		$1,812,339
		$33,845,649

Adjust annually to account for the number of recreation residence permits actually issued/billed (use the real data and not estimates). For example, if a cabin is destroyed in a fire and not rebuilt, the budget authority to that Region will be adjusted accordingly. For source data and calculations from SUDS, see LINK. No overhead is being assessed at the WO level.

*From Special Uses Database System (SUDS) (4/2025) and accounts for recreation residences in issued status.

**Budget authority and funds to each unit as of 4/02/2025, see: LINK.

^Sequestration is mandatory as anticipated by our Office of the General Counsel and WO SPBA staff. This cut is not discretionary and is not accounted for as a % cut of the whole; thus, it is considered off the top before any budget authority and distributions are made; OBPA is engaged. Approximately 18 months after being originally collected, sequestration funds will be returned to the program and used as intended by the CFA and priorities informed by this Plan, further coordination with the field and stakeholders will occur. Those returned fees should be used to meet Priority #1 of special use permit administration staffing – WO LM&G consider doing this by funding special use trainees in each region starting FY2026.

For reference, the distribution of recreation residences by state, see: Rec Res by State7.2024.xlsx

Attachment B: Special Use Staffing Suggestions/Approved Position Descriptions

Grade Scale	Job Series	Title	Mast Record ^	Notes
5	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6282	Trainee
6	1101	Resource Asst	FS3967	non-supervisory
7	1101	Resource Asst	FS3113	non-supervisory
9	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6279	non-supervisory
9	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6280	supervisory
11	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6283	non-supervisory
11	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6284	supervisory
11	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6352	non-supervisory + minerals
12	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6285	non-supervisory + minerals
12	1101	Resource Specialist	FS6286	supervisory + minerals

^go to ConnectHR and under My Links, see Position Description Search for details.

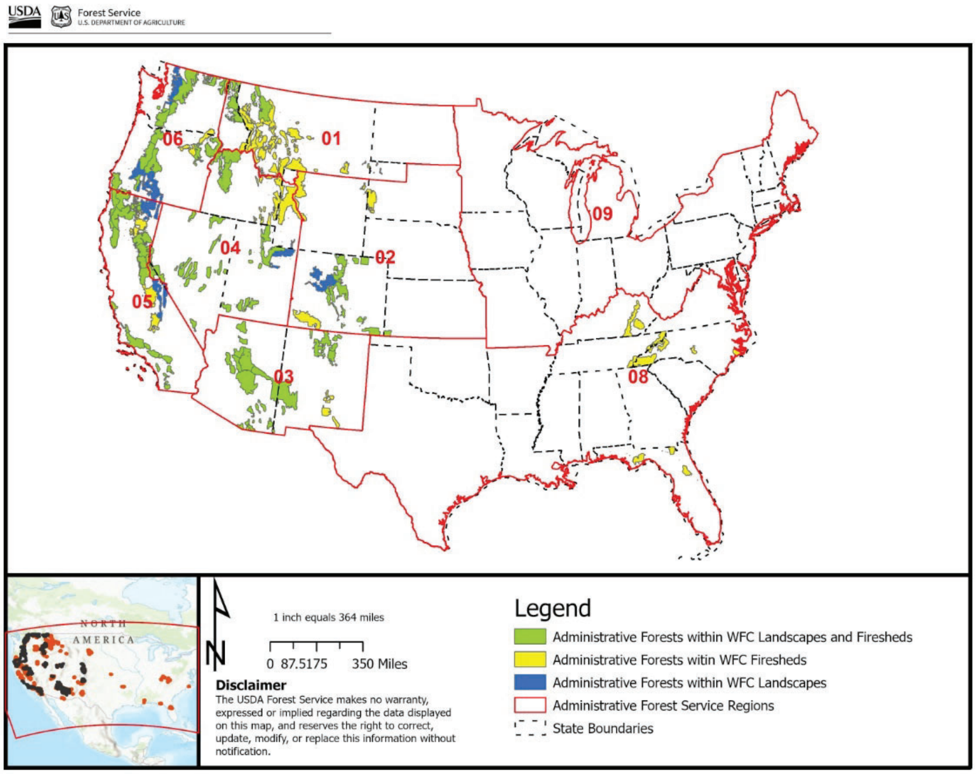
Note: There are other job series that provide sufficient position descriptions and grade scale for administering recreation residences, these are simply the most common examples.

Attachment C: WO Use of 3%

WO 3% Investments		Reference
Pilot Projects/Targeted Investments* in field to showcase investments: Emergency mitigation (FS roads/bridges) accessing cabins after fire or hurricane or flood, FS Recreation Facility/Improvements, Employee Housing, Heritage, Targeted Fuels Treatment - Wildfire Crisis x Rec Res Tracts, etc.	814,088	*Attachments D & H*
National Billing Team supplies & travel to provide field assistance/training	$50,000	page 5
Awards for Field - performance based	$30,000	*Attachment E*
Hard copy CFRs for field	$10,000	Item B, page 5
Training/Travel (in-person) + virtual (add Rec Res AgLearn courses)	$100,000	Item F, page 7
WO LM&G Travel (2-3 people to Pasadena, CA, May 2025, NFH Conference & Present). Also, NBT attendance at leadership Training - Session #2 January 13-17, 2025, in San Diego, CA.	$15,000	Item 9, page 7 & Item G, page 10
Total	$1,019,088	

*Any pilot projects shall require upward report with photos, a short description and will be integreated into a public map viewer/story board similar to GAOA, Communications site viewer, LWCF, and Wildfire Crisis Strategy applications.

Attachment D: Priority Landscapes



Map by Robert Ahl, PhD | WO Lands, Minerals, and Geology | Automated Lands Program | 05/07/2024

Special Use Permit Administrators should coordinate with Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS) staff to encourage priority application on those areas that are within BOTH priority WCS areas that also include recreation residences. For example, see: LINK. To help further prioritize, consider where there are power lines, Tribal lands or other valuable resources that additionally fall within these priority areas for fuels treatment. To help, a detailed report has been prepared, see: Mapping Assessment of Administrative National Forests Containing Recreation Residences and their Intersection with Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscapes and Firesheds (20 pages).

Fuels treatments in these priority areas should be funded using **other funds** than fees retained, but permit administrators and line officers should advocate, plan and execute priority treatment in these areas adjacent to recreation residences.

A key interest voiced by NFH and permit holders is to treat fuels adjacent to recreation residence tracts and general forested areas within the tract i.e. areas not authorized under a permit, to improve defensible space.

Attachment E: WO Awards, Draft Criteria

Draft nomination categories:

1. Exemplary Customer Service. FS Strategic Goal: Excel as High performing agency; Delivering benefits to the public.

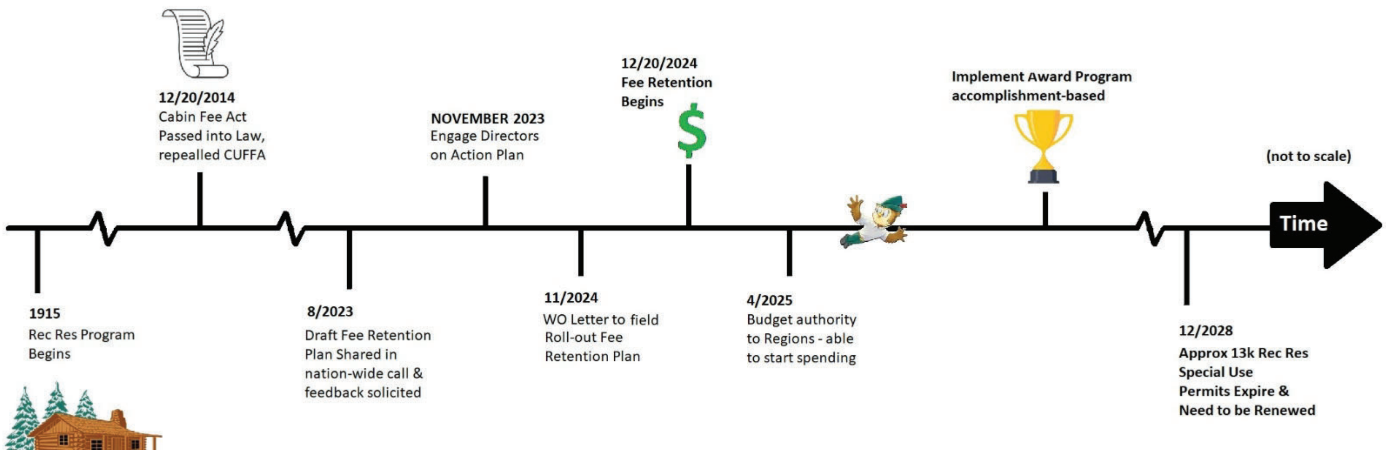
2. Advancing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy – fuel reductions near tracts, including collaboration with permit holder. This may include allowing non-FS partners to be nominated for non-monetary award recognition.

3. Extra effort in training, mentoring, coaching. USDA Strategic Goal 6: “Attract, inspire and retain an engaged and motivated workforce that’s proud to represent USDA” FS Strategic Goals: Apply knowledge globally; Sustain our Nation’s Forests and Grasslands working Environment. USDA Strategic goal 6: attract, inspire, and retain engaged and motivated workforce that’s proud to represent USDA.

4. Innovation – such as creating new templates, tools, updating websites. FS Strategic Goal: Excel as High performing agency; Delivering benefits to the public

PROCESS: Anticipate a call letter from the WO for nominations, which may be in a single reply due including accomplishment reporting (*Attachemnt G*). Criteria subject to change and will reflect agency, Department and administrative priorities. Organize a 5-person panel (ensure R5 & 6 are represented): line officer (Ranger or Forest Supervisor), Permit administrator (Forest or District), RO Director, WO RHVR, and WO National Lands Specail Uses program Manager to facilitate/lead. Communicate successful recipients to highlight work that is most desirable to meet leader’s intent and the CFA. Send the call letter for award nominations near the end of FY25s.

Attachment F: Timeline & Coordination Efforts



Past coordination efforts that **have informed the development** of this Plan:

A. National Lands Special Uses Program Manager (Brandon) & Director Elrand Denson, traveled to Pasadena, CA and spoke and presented at the annual NFH conference and meet with R5 staff. $10k was budgeted in *Attachment C*. (5/2-3/2025)
B. WO staff met with NFH and they provided a 1-page position paper with suggested priorities. (4/4/2025)
C. Regions were provided budget authority for rec res fees – Regions now able to spend and allocate to Forests. (4/2/2025)
D. Region 6 hosted re-occurring call with field staff, including Q & A; Brandon Smith represented the WO, 33 Forest Service folks in attendance. (1/16/2025)
E. Transfer fee job codes by unit were posted on SharePoint and emailed to Special Uses PDL for distribution. (1/6/2025)
F. National Lands Special Uses Program Manager (Brandon Smith) hosted Teams call rolling out this Plan to the field with almost 300 attendees. WO Directors of LM&G and RHVR gave introductions, recorded session (1hour 22 mins) and PowerPoint. (12/17/2024) and posted follow-up FAQs.
G. WO Deputy Chief's Office letter to the Regional Foresters and WO staff (National Leadership Team) summarizing the Plan and formally rolling out, summarizing and endorsing the Plan. Leader's intent includes expectations for administrative compliance to set the stage for use of the funds that compliments this Plan. (11/25/2024)
H. Open House Training with over 200 participants, demonstrated where to find recreation residence resources, including this draft Plan and supporting documents. (11/14/2024)
I. Region 4 & WO call and presentation on retention planning efforts, 2 hours and over 40 attendees. (10/23/24)
J. Deputy Chief Office leader's intent (9/19/24)
K. In SUDS, NBT input job codes and associated override codes for the CY2025 billing (8/2024)
L. WO LM&G coordination with SPBA (7/31/2024)

M. NFH sent letters to each Regional Forester expressing interest in Planning efforts, example: 2024.08.16 NFH Letter Regional Foresters R5sample.docx (sharepoint.com)

N. Bradon presented at monthly Regional Lands Director call (11/14/2023, 7/09/2024, 10/08/2024)

O. Bradon presented Plan to WO Lands group (5/14/2024)

P. WO LM&G presented at NFH Virtual conference (4/25 - 26/2024)

Q. Communicated with permit holders and NFH, including timing of when to expect CY25 bill. WO NBT drafted and shared a sample letter that *may* be sent to the holders. Be opportunistic to strategically communicate with permit holders (during time of inspections, renewals, etc.). (4/2024)

R. WO LM&G joined Enterprise and NBT to present & record training on recreation residence fundamentals and offer Questions & Answers, over 260 attendees (4/24/2024)

S. WO LM&G to facilitate a reoccurring call with the regions and other WO Staff areas to provide real-time updates and coordination (on-going during monthly program manager calls). Focused calls on recreation residences & this plan (11/06/2023, 1/08/2024, 5/16/2024, 10/01/2024)

T. WO LM&G updated the national WO SharePoint Recreation Residence site to facilitate open communications for the Plan and share resources and continues to maintain: Special Uses - Recreation Residence (sharepoint.com). Additional internal national special use sites where also updated to support field staff needs, streamline actives, and prepare for expanded staffing/training needs: Training Library, Laws, Policy & Regulation. (1/2024)

U. Brandon presented the draft Plan to the Regional Recreation Directors on the monthly call (11/15/2023)

V. Brandon presented Plan to WO and Regional Heritage staff (11/16/2023)

W. Brandon presented information in this Plan to the field – included survey poll and solicit input that was USED TO UPDATE and IMPROVE the Plan (8/29/2023)

X. Brandon hosted Teams call with RO Program Managers and Enterprise – shared draft Plan and began soliciting feedback/edits (7/17/2023)

Y. WO LM&G presented at NFH conference and discussed planning efforts (5/06/2023)

Z. WO Lands, Minerals & Geology Management (LM&G) staff, included, but not limited to Brandon Smith, discuss with the NFH, quarterly/monthly since (≥2023)

Attachment G: Agency administrators anticipate answering

LINK to Excel Spreadsheet for preview of anticipated reply due metrics.

This reply due will be facilitated through a single, shared file for field input in a user-friendly manner.

Attachment H: Menu of Ideas for how to invest

The following are options encouraged by this Plan and cross-reference with WO 3% investments in *Attachment A* and reporting metrics for how funds are spent in *Attachment G*. Invest in these items ONLY after permit administration expectations have been achieved. Note that Tiers are **suggested priorities,** and the field has discretion on where best to invest within the tiers to maximize the return. Selection of items below, particularly for the first year of retention, will be influenced locally by what is "shelf ready" to implement with environmental or other analysis completed (where applicable), opportunities and resources align to recognize the maximum return on investment.

Tier 1 – Reducing Wildfire threats

a. Coordinate **staff efforts** to plan, organize and prioritize vegetation management, to promote defensible space on NFS lands nearby the permitted recreation residence tracts and on vacant lots within a tract. Target areas that fall within priority landscapes, such as within the WCS priority areas and High Risk Firesheds that also intersect administrative Forests that are known to contain recreation residences. See *Attachment D*, or for full-details, see: *Mapping Assessment of Administrative National Forests Containing Recreation Residences and their Intersection with Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscapes and Firesheds* (20 pages in length). NFS lands adjacent to Tribal lands, utility lines and other priority infrastructure/landscapes may be further considered if needed to help prioritize treatment areas to maximize the effectiveness of the treatment.

   The WCS efforts are the most well-funded programs in the agency history with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law & Inflation Reduction Act funds and **retention funds should not be needed or used**. This may be adjusted in future years when those specialized funds are unavailable.

Tier 2

a. Provide post emergency assessment and cleanup, absent other federal funding, in the area around recreation residence tracts impacted by wildfires, floods, hurricanes. An example may include replacing a FS owned bridge or road accessing recreation residence tracts.
b. Invest extra funds to map the location of recreation residences to improve access to emergency services (911) and integrate with the updates to SUDS NextGen. Start by getting inventory of what data we have and develop protocols. Enterprise has experience and a standardized approach to mapping. Mapping to include those water sources in locations where needed to support firefighting activities. Integrate with counties once data is collected to ensure there is a tie to local government emergency services.

c. Maintain FS owned roads/bridges providing access to recreation residence tracts and recreation sites.
d. Complete determination of eligibility reports for cabins and tracts which are unevaluated or that have turned 50 years old from the time of the original evaluation. Contract NHPA Section 106 heritage surveys, such as by or for an architectural historian through an IDIQ contract, to determine and document eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places to streamline future requests to modify the exterior of cabins. Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 9 have recently hired historians that can facilitate this work.

e. Establish scanning services to digitize hard copy recreation residence permit files and completed determinations of eligibility, upload files into SUDS and Heritage Database.
f. Secure/improve FS employee housing to reduce the cost of quarters for permanent and seasonal employees. This may include purchasing new facilities for employees to stay or upgrading/maintaining existing federal government buildings that house recreation or special use staff.
g. Parking/camping pads with water, power and sewer connections could be developed to allow FS employees short term, temporary access to park a camper for an additional option with staff on detail, temporary promotions, or seasonal work. Locate these on or near FS administrative sites.
h. Improve trails and trail heads, including parking areas, and recreating opportunities in the same county as where the fees are generated. Note: there are approximately 188 counties that host recreation residences.
i. Improve and develop interpretive services and resources to improve the visitor experience. This may be focused in areas that would advance administration objectives in a focused manner. Opportunities for interpretive kiosks or wayside exhibits which highlight the history of the recreation residence program and agency recreation planning on the forests.
j. Maintain/develop/improve FS water/sewer or other related systems serving FS owned and operated recreation improvements.
k. Add renewable energy on FS recreation sites or FS administrative sites hosting recreation and/or special uses staff. E.g.: purchase and install solar panels on FS recreation facilities that require power to save utility fees and advance the administration and Department's commitment to addressing climate change.
l. Install/maintain public boat launches/docks, ideally boat launches where the recreating public and the recreation resident permit holders alike would benefit.
m. Invest in the Forest Service recreation cabin rental program for public use– maintain existing cabins, develop new ones and expand services. Particularly focus on investing in those areas that compliment Executive Orders.
n. Complete noxious weed treatments around recreation residence tracts (not on the permitted lots themselves which holders are responsible), including roads and recreation features on the same administrative unit that are the responsibility of the FS.
o. Health and safety items, such as testing public water systems connected to our recreation sites or adding garbage services to our existing public campgrounds that are not covered under FLREA.
p. Purchase/replace/maintain FS signage
q. Perform FS recreation campground maintenance/operation/expansion that are not covered under FLREA.
r. Pay for restroom maintenance and operation (pumping) of public toilets at our recreation sites.
s. Procure materials and supplies for recreation residence permit administrators and recreation staff.

Tier 3

a. Develop Programmatic Agreement documents, regarding the section 106 process, to assist in streamlining the compliance/administrative processes (R1 & 10 examples: Montana, Idaho Panhandle, Alaska).
b. Collaborate and develop a plan with tribal partners to better ensure access, improvements, and protection of traditionally important areas in or near developed recreation sites, trailheads, or other areas.

c. Complete Section 110 survey of areas and resources that the agency or tribal partners value as important. Develop Historic Property Management Plans to guide future planning activities in an area.

Decisions relating to selecting projects and the distribution of funds is at the discretion of the FS. The FS values our permit holders and the NFH; however, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) prohibits the FS from treating our permit holders and partners in any special manner not afforded to a member of the general public or other external cooperator. Permit holders have an important voice and shall be heard and coordinated with, but shall be treated in the same manner as the general public and other external cooperators as to avoid any violations of the FACA. To ensure transparency of how funds are spent, the WO will collect data from the field, run national reports of funds spend, and capture SUDS information for external publication.

Attachment I: Budget & Financial Roles & Responsibilities

Introduction: As part of the National Fee Retention Plan, this Attachment is intended to help integrate budget into the overall recreation residence fee retention program. Funds come in 2 different categories: Transfer fees and annual land use fees. Transfer fees are assessed as needed when a new special use permit is issued due to the change in ownership to a cabin, resulting in a new permit being issued. Transfer fees are sequestered with the fees going entirely to the Forest with its own job code; WO and ROs do not get any of that money, which totals about $400k/year. Annual land use fees are assessed each year with those fees being sequestered and with 8% for the WO. 114 Forests have rec res totaling $35M/year.

- **Kathy Cahill**, Branch Chief Budget Execution, kathleen.d.cahill@usda.gov – retired/DRP 4/25

    Role: worked with Johntel Barraclough to estimate fees we'd collect in 2025 in transfers and land use to for review and approval by OMB for apportionment documentation.
    - The 2025 apportionment values for the transfer fee BLI were calculated by averaging the 2021, 2022, and 2023 transfer fee receipts.
    - The 2025 apportionment values for the annual fee BLI matched the 2023 annual fee receipts.

- **Sally Common**, Program Specialist in Budget, Sally.Common@usda.gov

    Role: Supports WO Lands, Minerals & Geology starting 12/2024 and **retiring 3/2025** (JaChea Westbrook was prior contact and was engaged in development of the national Plan and she will fill in behind Sally). Sally/JaChea supervises Rene & Jeffrey.

- **JaChea Westbrook**, Senior Budget Analyst, jachea.westbrook@usda.gov

    Role: Supports WO Lands, Minerals & Geology starting 3/2025 behind Sally.

- **Renee Blue**, Budget Analyst, **Lead contact supporting WO Lands (Rec Res)** renee.blue@usda.gov

    Role: Primary point of contact on all things budget related in the WO. Track and pull reports to track spending, such as for Accomplishment Reporting/Reply Due (see columns Y-AC): LINK.

    Action items **completed** as of 4/2025 -

    1) Set up execution shorthand code for WO Lands 8%. Pull those funds out proportionate to each land use fee (RRUF BLI, only), similar to how the sequestration 5.7% was accounted for. Coordinate with Nathan Wells and Randy Gonzalez
    2) Draft and manage a single WorkPlan for the WO (1324) to cover salary for National Billing Team members coordinate with Nick Szuch, Acting NBT Supervisor. Also see page 8 of the Plan for details on the NBT.
    3) In the WO WorkPlan, also account for the funds held for the WO Lands group to invest, coordinate with Brandon, see Attachment C of the Plan for details.

- **Jeffrey Richards**, Budget Analyst, supporting WO Recreation (as of 12/2024)

    Role: Counterpart to Renee and supportive resource

- **Melissa (Missy) Brown**, Branch Chief SPBA, melissa.brown@usda.gov

    Role: Supervisor/back-up to Randy Gonzalez

- **Randy Gonzalez**, Budget Analyst, rafael.gonzalez@usda.gov – retired/DRP 4/25

  Role: pull reports showing what dollars need to be assigned budget authority to the field and moves funds collected from land use and ensures they are distributed to the right Region in the right amount each month. Insert details about who Randy should share those reports with an who does what with that info. Randy will move money from the WO to each Regional Holding account for their further distribution.

  Note: the 5.7% of sequestration and WO 8% are pulled out proportionately before funds are distributed to the Regions, but we keep track of exactly where the funds came from by proclaimed unit for All Sales Receipts reporting/payments. For that reason, no adjustments will be made to move money.

- **Nathan Wells**, Assistant Director, Chief Financial Office (CFO): nathan.wells@usda.gov
  Role: Primary Contact for Accounting systems/CFO - create/update shorthand codes upon request and ensure they're uploaded in the FMMI system

- **Jeff Matthews**, Perms & Trust Fund Manager, jeff.matthews@usda.gov

- **Vanessa DeJean Gardner**, WO Rec Fee Program Specialist, vanessa.dejeangardner@usda.gov
  Role: Program support, Jeff and Vanessa have experience with FLREA, which has a lot of similarities to recreation residence fee retention, particularly on the mechanics and reporting and they are a helpful resource. Brandon Smith will work with Vanessa on accomplishment reporting for recreation residence to mimic tools and resources for FLREA.

- Kalee Ly-Thao, Budget Coordinator, kalee.ly-thao@usda.gov

- Felicia Moore, Budget Analyst, felicia.moore@usda.gov

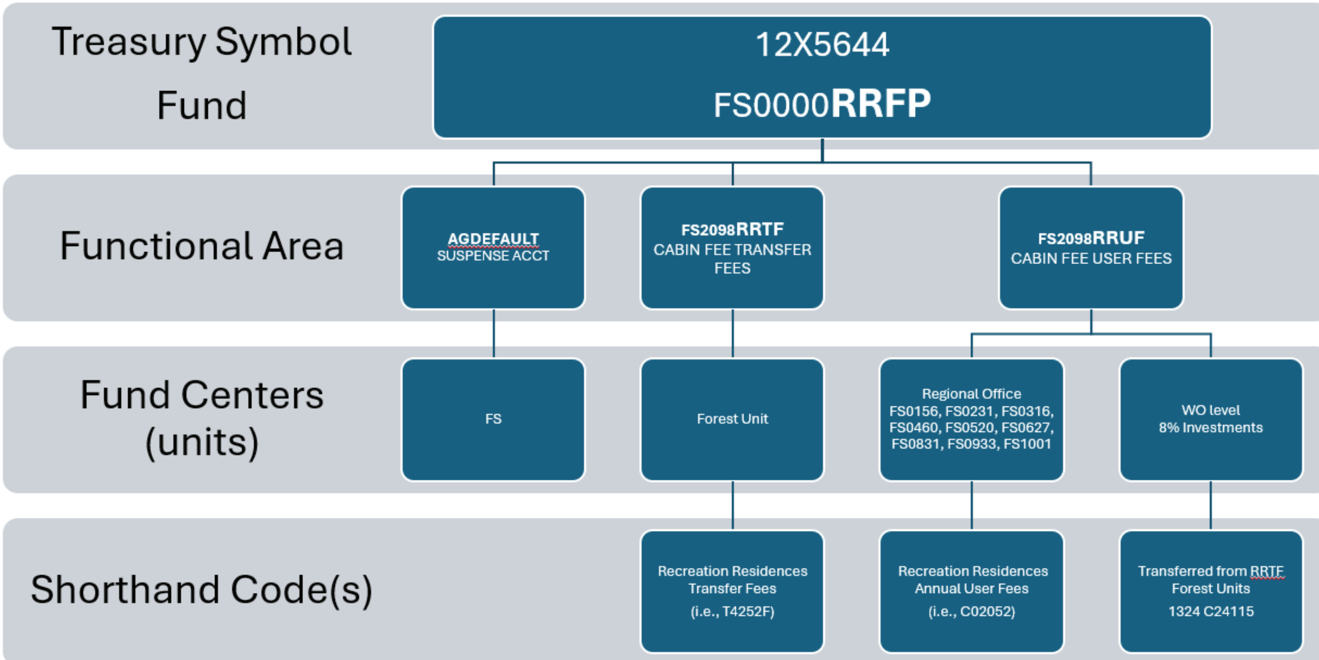
- **Beverly Summers**, beverly.summers@usda.gov
  Role: lead contact for updating budget policy in 6509.11g

- **Michael Ray**, Financial Analyst for All Services Receipts, michael.ray@usda.gov
  Role: Primary contact for ASR. Co-developer of shorthand codes (for tracking)

- **Michael Morton**, Financial Analyst for All Services Receipts, michael.morton@usda.gov
  Role: Another ASR contact with Mike Ray.

Budget Related resources:

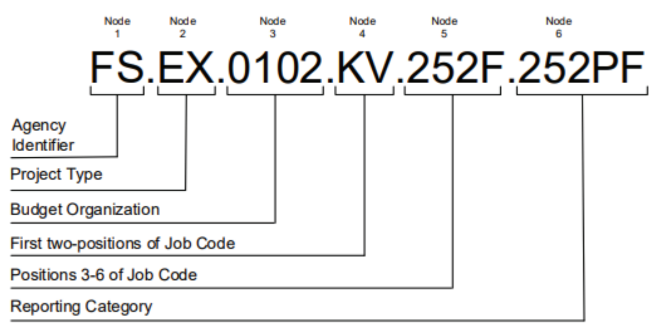
Land Use Fee Shorthand codes: LINK
Transfer Fee Job Codes: LINK
Accomplishment Reporting/Reply Due (see columns Y-AC): LINK
WO Letter to field rolling out the Retention Plan (11/2024: 1930 routing file code for budget): LINK
FAQs on recreation residence fee retention: LINK



PNF = Proclaimed National Forest

https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-rec-suts/SitePages/Recreation%20Residence.aspx

The following figure depicts an example of Forest Service WBS Element/Funded Progra breakdown:



***Each node of the WBS Element/Funded Program is separated by a "." character.**

Regional Office Short hand codes – allowing to directly spend from the functional area. Created by Nathan Wells 4/29/2025.

Shorthand Code	Budget Period	Description	Fund	Cost Center	Functional Area	WBS
0156RRUF5625	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0156	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0156.RR.UF56
0231RRUF3125	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0231	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0231.RR.UF31
0316RRUF1625	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0316	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0316.RR.UF16
0460RRUF6025	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0460	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0460.RR.UF60
0520RRUF2025	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0520	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0520.RR.UF20
0627RRUF2725	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0627	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0627.RR.UF27
0831RRUF3125	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0831	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0831.RR.UF31
0933RRUF3325	25XX	CABIN FEE RO EXPENSES	FS0000RRFP	FS0933	FS2098RRUF	FS.EX.0933.RR.UF33

WO Shorthand Code Structure

Shorthand Code Description	Shorthand Code	Business Area	Fund	Functional Area	Cost Center	WBS Element	Budget Period	Agency	Description	Treasury Symbol
CABIN FEE USER FEES	1324C0132425	FS00	FS0000RRFP	FS2098RRUF	FS1324	FS.EX.1324.C0.1324	25XX	11	FOREST SERVICE	12X5644