

Summer Homes Program

The program was first implemented on the Zigzag Ranger District about 1914. At that time the Forest Service felt that recreation use on National Forest lands could be encouraged by laying out a number of 1/4 to 1/2 acre lots and offering the public the opportunity to build small cabins on these lots. People who wished to build were issued a Special-Use Permit and charged an annual fee. This program continued until the early 1960's when concern began to develop that allowing individuals exclusive use of National Forest lands was not an appropriate use of public lands. As a result, a new policy was formulated which recognized that the existing Special-Use Permits could continue until there was a specific need to put that land to a better and higher use. Also from this time onward, no new permits for previously undeveloped lots were to be issued.

Today there are about 555 recreation cabins on the Zigzag District. The cabins are privately owned and about 50 cabins change hands each year, with a new Special-Use Permit being issued to the new owner. It is possible for you to purchase one of these cabins and have a Special-Use Permit issued to you.

Many of the cabins are sold through local realtors at Welches, Zigzag, and Rhododendron listed in the yellow pages of the Hoodland telephone directory. The Forest Service does not become involved in the actual sale of the cabins nor does the Forest Service maintain current listings of the cabins which are for sale. The Forest Service involvement in the sale of the cabins is to assure the sellers and buyers are aware of any maintenance and/or clean up requirements. Cabins generally sell for \$85,000 to \$275,000; the purchase price reflects the value of the improvements - the cabin, woodshed, etc., - and does not include the value of the land.

The Forest Service charges an annual use fee for the recreation residence special use permit. The fees presently in effect on the Zigzag Ranger District range from \$500 to \$700. Every few years the Forest Service hires a private appraiser to appraise the lots (this appraisal does not include any improvements on the lots). The more desirable a lot is, i.e., stream frontage and tree cover, the higher the value of the lot. The Forest Service charges 5% of the appraised value plus an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment as the annual use fee. In addition, Clackamas County assesses a property tax based on the value of the improvements on the lot. The latest appraisals were done in 1998, and resulted in a fee increase which was not enacted due to the passage of CUFFA (Cabin User Fee Fairness Act). New fees will be implemented in the future based on the CUFFA provisions. Information about CUFFA is found in another section on this website.

The Special-Use Permits for recreation residences on the Zigzag District have an expiration date of December 31, 2008. At that time the Forest Service will issue new permits for another 20 years provided there is no higher or better use for that particular land.

The Special-Use Permit has a number of requirements concerning how the cabin is maintained and what use the cabin can be put to. If you are considering the purchase of one of the Recreation Cabins, please explore the section of this website that pertains to cabin purchase. I also strongly encourage you to contact Fran Lanagan, Recreation Residence Permit Administrator at flanagan@fs.fed.us or by phone at 503-622-3191 ext 605 to learn about the Special-Use Permit in greater detail.

CHRISTY COVINGTON
Special Uses Program Manager