

150 Apache Maid Cabin
Red Rock Ranger District, Coconino National Forest
Recreation Enhancement Act Fee Proposal

The Forest Service is proposing to include the Apache Maid Cabin in the “Rooms with a View” Arizona Cabin Rental Program. The proposed fee of \$75.00 would include 1 night’s rental at the cabin.

The Apache Maid Cabin is located 35 miles north-east of Sedona, 60 miles south of Flagstaff and 120 miles north of Phoenix, only 12 miles from the I-17 freeway, and has recreation base of well over 3 million people less than a two hours away. The Sedona area, the closest nearby city, is one Arizona’s most popular tourism destinations. The Apache Maid Cabin and historically served as a cabin for cattle ranchers- including Charles Babbitt, a Ranger Station, and living quarters for Forest Service fire lookouts.

The Apache Maid Cabin has been rehabilitated to accommodate overnight visitors in a manner that has maintained its rustic character. The cabin has two bedrooms and a kitchen, an exterior vault toilet, a propane stove, and propane lighting. Prior to becoming a rental, the cabin will be furnished with a kitchen table, chairs, furniture, beds and picnic table and an outdoor grill. The cabin will be able to accommodate 2-6 visitors.

Due to winter weather and limited winter road access, the Apache Maid Cabin would be open for occupation from April 1st to October 31th.

History of the Area¹

Apache Maid cabin was originally constructed in 1908 by Charles J. Babbitt and Biscuit Bill Dickinson. The cabin was initially a log structure built on a typical dogtrot floor plan with two rooms separated by a roofed breezeway. The cabin in its early days had no windows, a shake-shingle roof and only one small door for each of the rooms. All timbers were hand-hewn and the floor had two-inch wooden lath floorboards.

Apache Maid cabin was well situated for Babbitt and Dickinson as both were members of local stock-raising families. The Dickinsons of Sedona, Arizona and the Babbitts of Flagstaff, Arizona both grazed their cattle in the summer on Coconino National Forest lands near the cabin. The area was very conducive for summer cattle grazing with the cool ponderosa pine forests and large mountain meadow grasslands.

In 1909, Babbitt and his new partner Ed Thurston (Dickinson had left the partnership) built a corral and dug a well on the property and constructed a few other minor improvements to the cabin and surrounding area.

¹ The following section is synthesized from an unpublished report of the cabin by John Hohmann and William Perreault (1979) and from an article titled ‘The Apache Maid Cabin’ by Hohmann and Perrault in the Heritage Foundation of Arizona journal, dated December 1982.

Babbitt and Thurston purchased S.S. Acker's T Bar Ranch around 1911-1912 and moved their cattle operation from Apache Maid to the T. Bar ranch and set up headquarters. Thurston had discussed selling the cabin and improvements to the Forest Service, and Ranger James Bailey was very interested in using the cabin as housing for the Apache Maid lookout. The cabin and site would have worked well for that purpose as transportation means were limited in that part of the forest and the few roads that existed were in generally poor shape. The Forest Service acquired the cabin and site from Babbitt and Thurston in 1912.

After the purchase it seems that the cabin was known for a while as the Woodlands ranger station. This name probably came from when Babbitt and Dickinson had built the place, as early accounts identify the site as Woodlands. However, by 1913, maps of the time identify the cabin as the Apache Maid ranger station and that name has been associated with it ever since.

Not much change occurred between the years of 1912 and 1917, but as the cabin became more of a secondary administrative site for the Beaver Creek ranger station, upgrades began in 1917. The log walls were chinked with lime and ceilings installed, windows were fitted in both rooms, and the breezeway was screened in. Openings were cut into the loft above the rooms from the outside and interior trap-doors cut in the ceiling from the inside to allow access for storage. Finally, tables and shelves were placed in the cabin for work and living spaces and a privy was constructed about a year later.

The cabin continued to serve as a seasonal, secondary administrative site until 1932 when a second round of upgrades was completed. The breezeway was enclosed, inside walls were covered with interior lathing and painted, and a corrugated roof replaced the old shake-shingles. These modifications contributed to a more airtight structure and allowed year round use of the station.

By the end of WW II, the cabin's use as an administrative site was waning as the Forest Service had implemented a policy of using only one administrative site for each district. And, along with the modern use of the automobile, transportation and communications was much better in the remote area. However, the cabin continued to be used as temporary summer housing for fire personnel and lookout employees at the Apache Maid lookout tower.

Seasonal use of the site continued into the 1970s when a few more modern features were installed. A propane tank was connected which allowed for a gas refrigerator, lights, and a stove to be installed in the cabin.

Between 1978 and 1979 a history of the cabin was completed by John W. Hohman and William J. Perreault for an anthropology course at Northern Arizona University. This short history of the Apache Maid cabin is based on that report. At the time of their report the cabin consisted of three rooms: a kitchen, multi-use room and a bunkhouse. It is not clear when seasonal occupation ended at the cabin.

Given the cabin's historical significance and restorable condition, the site was identified as a candidate for the Rooms with a View program in 2004. From 2005 through 2007 the cabin was restored and rehabilitated, including lead paint abatement, interior painting, exterior staining, upgrades to propane lights/heating/stove, sealing the foundation, providing two exterior decks, replacing damaged hardware, construction of a wood framed outhouse, and construction and installation of several screen doors and shutters.

Description of Project

The Apache Maid Cabin is located in the Ponderosa Pine forest below the Mogollon Rim, approximately 35 miles north east of Sedona, 60 miles South of Flagstaff, and 120 miles North of Phoenix. The cabin consists two bedrooms and a kitchen, an exterior vault toilet, a propane stove, propane lighting.

No water is available at this location at this time. The cabin does have a outhouse with a vault toilet, gas lighting, heating, a gas stove, and an outdoor fire-pit area. Four bunkbeds and two double-sized beds will be provided to accommodate 2-6 visitors. Prior to becoming a rental, the cabin will be furnished with a kitchen table, chairs, furniture, beds and picnic table and an outdoor grill.

There is room for two RV's at the site with a maximum site occupancy of 10 people.

Apache Maid Cabin

- 520 sq ft of indoor space, 6 person capacity
- Beds for 6 people
- Propane stove and heat
- Pots and pans, dishes, and flatware
- Dining table and 6 chairs
- Gas lamp lighting
- Picnic table and outdoor chairs
- Propane grill
- *Parking for two RV's at the site with a maximum site occupancy of 10 people*
- Outhouse with Vault Toilet
- Outdoor fire pit

Numerous attractions are also available at or near the Apache Maid Cabin. These include:

- Within 1 hour of Sedona, Camp Verde, and Flagstaff.
- Cool temperatures and shading pines.
- Attractions within 1 hour's drive including: the Red Rock country of Sedona, Slide Rock State Park, Montezuma's Castle National Monument, Montezuma's Well National Monument.
- Excellent area for hiking, biking, and jeep/OHV use.
- Less than 1 mile from the Wet Beaver Wilderness area.

Financial Analysis

Proposed Fee Rates

- Apache Maid Cabin - Collect \$75.00 per night for the use of the cabin
- All fees will be collected through the National Reservation System
- Projected Revenues for the Apache Maid Cabin (a total of 210 days are available as rental days):
 - 150 days (or 70% occupancy) @ \$75/day = \$11,250
 - Less the 5% fund = \$10,688

The facilities will be open April 1st through October 31th, and closed from November 1st through May 31st due to cold/wet conditions. Given the location of the cabin near Sedona and Flagstaff, it is estimated occupancy will average about 70% (or 150 days/year). This estimate of occupancy and expected revenue are consistent with the nearby Fernow cabin which has rates of \$75-\$125/night (depending on the time of year). The occupancy numbers used are considered realistic occupancy numbers for the facilities. These numbers are based on past performance of facilities in the region and other similar facilities across the country. Furthermore, estimations of occupancy are based on demand factors affecting Forest Service recreation lodging facilities (Region 3 Cabin Feasibility Study).

Operations and maintenance of the Apache Maid Cabin are performed by the Red Rock District staff. Projected maintenance is \$2,500 per year. This includes operations and maintenance, cleaning, inspections, and propane. These figures were ascertained using the Forest Service corporate data system for infrastructure known as Infra (Region 3 Cabin Feasibility Study).

Looking at the overnight use of the Apache Maid Cabin, the expected revenue, minus the projected maintenance is approximately \$8,188. The additional revenues generated will be allocated by the Arizona Cabin Rental Board to provide O&M for existing cabin rentals or to provide seed money to bring other historic buildings into the cabin rental program.

Business Plan

There is an existing “Rooms with a View” Arizona Cabin Rental Project Plan for Arizona Forests, last updated December 2003. The Executive Summary succinctly states on page 2 that “Fees are based on market demand, number of occupants, amenities, and management costs.” The proposed fee meets the objectives and goals stated throughout the Business Plan.

Analysis of Existing Private and Public Facilities or Services

Research shows that the Apache Maid Cabin will provide an experience unique within the state of Arizona. Only six other Forest Service facilities (Kendrick, Fernow, Caldwell, Spring Valley, Crescent Moon and Sycamore Cabins) are available for overnight rental in the forests north of Phoenix. Of these cabins, arguably none are as rustic as the Apache-Maid cabin. Amenities here are limited, but the experience staying in this quaint and historically significant cabin, coupled with the quiet and beautiful setting, makes this experience quite unique. The experience significantly deviates from the costlier rentals in the Munds Park, Flagstaff and Sedona area that feature amenities such as electricity and running water.

Relationship to Private or Concessionaire Developments

Canyon Wren Cabins, located along Oak Creek Canyon (~20 miles away) from the Apache Maid Cabin, offer fully furnished cabins with whirlpool tubs in Oak Creek Canyon. The cabins are designed to accommodate 2-4 people for \$175/night.

The ‘Chalet Cabin in the Pines of Munds Park’, is located in the community of Munds Park, approximately 25 miles north of the Apache Maid Cabin. This cabin is fully furnished, has modern utilities, and is representative of many cabin rentals in the Munds Park area. The cabin has internet service and satellite television. Summer rates are \$119/night, with a minimum 2 night stay, and can accommodate 6-10 people.

Approximately 45 miles north of the Apache Maid Cabin, the ‘Ponderosa Perfect Cabin for Small Groups’ is a small two bedroom + loft cabin available in Flagstaff, and is typical of many privately owned cabin rentals in the Flagstaff area. The cabin has typical modern amenities such as television, washer/dryer, etc. The cabin sleeps 5-10 and costs \$195/night.

Relationship to Other Public Developments (local)

The Prescott, Coconino, Kaibab and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests offers overnight rentals for the several cabin (Kendrick, Fernow, Caldwell, Spring Valley, Crescent Moon and Sycamore Cabins). The cabins accommodate different size groups ranging from five to ten people. The fees range from \$75.00/ night to \$200.00 night.

Proximity to Urban Population

The greater Phoenix area (population 3 million) is approximately 90 miles away from the Apache Maid Cabin and is about a 2 hour drive.

Tucson (population 1 million) is approximately 200 miles away and is about a 4 hour drive. Flagstaff (population 75,000) is located 45 miles north and is about an hour drive. Sedona has the closest urban population, 12,000 people, but also pays host to over 2 million annual visitors a year.

Justification for Fee

The Apache Maid expanded amenity fee is in line with the value provided and in line with fees for similar facilities (Kendrick, Fernow, Spring Valley, Caldwell and Sycamore Cabins). The \$75 nightly fee is most closely aligned with Fernow Cabin, which is the closest cabin to the Apache Maid in regards to location, maintenance, and amenities.

These fees are the only source of funds for annual operation & maintenance. These include:

- Maintenance of the Apache Maid Cabin and toilet.
- Maintaining road access and gates to the property.
- Covering the costs of propane.
- Rodent and pest control.
- Hazard tree inspection and removal.

Funds are desired for improvements that will enhance the rental use and continue to preserve the historic nature of the facilities. Surplus funds can be used to purchase, replace, or maintain items such as:

- Furniture, dishes, and beds
- Gas or charcoal BBQ grill
- Roof, walls, and foundations materials

Description of How the Cabin Rental Board will inform the public about expenditures

The public will be kept informed of how their fees are at work in the area by placing individual signs in each of the facilities (i.e., “Your Fees at Work”.)

Information will also be posted on the Coconino N.F. web site and will be forwarded to the Region for inclusion in the Regional Annual Fee Program Report.

Notification of Proposed Fee Increase to the Public

Date(s) of PI Activity	Type of Public Involvement	Audiences Reached	Feedback Received (Yes/No)	Synopsis of Feedback	Amount of Time & circulation
Dec. 28, 2008	Red Rock News	General Public	No	None	1 Week 1000+ people
July 13, 2007	Federal Register Notice	General Public	No	None	1 day
Feb. 4, 2008	Notice posted on Coconino Forest Website	General Public	No	None	5 months
April 10, 2008	Notice posted at entrance gate of Apache Maid	Campers in area; vehicle traffic	No	None	3 months, 50-100 people
April 10, 2008	Notice posted quarter mile east of the AM access road on FR229	Campers in area; vehicle traffic	No	None	3 months, 50-100 people

June 10, 2008	News Release	AZ newspapers	No	None	
June 10, 2008	News release featured on www.isedona.com community based webpage	General Public	No	None	1 week Est.200+ people
June 10, 2008	Sedona Arizona Cabin homepage: http://www.south-of-flagstaff-arizona.com/sedona-arizona-cabin.html	General Public	No	None	Still running. Est. 100+
June 21, 2008	Arizona Daily Sun	General Public	Yes	None	Sat. Ad 50,000 circulation

Summary of Public Input

The Forest Service posted the Apache Maid Cabin Rental proposal on the Federal Register and also issued two news releases. Additionally, a quarter-page advertisement was placed in the Arizona Daily Sun newspaper and had a circulation of over 50,000. The Forest Service news release has been posted on the Coconino National Forest webpage since February 4th of 2008.

As of this date, no comments either supporting or against the proposed cabin rental have been received by the Forest Service.