



WHITE RIVER RECREATION ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING FEDERAL LAND PERMITTEES IN THE UPPER WHITE RIVER VALLEY AND MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST SINCE 1929.

www.wrra.net

Overview of Fees Associated with Forest Service Cabin Ownership

Owning a cabin on Mount Baker/Snoqualmie Forest Service land means your fees are a bit different than if you owned the land on which your cabin was built. Described below are the required fees and some optional ones (which are strongly recommended by WRRRA), to support and maintain our extraordinary community. Failure to pay required fees puts you at risk of financial penalties and/or losing your cabin.

Required Fees

Permit Fee – Also called Special Uses Recreation Residence Permit fee is paid to the United States Forest Service, the Permit Fee allows you to maintain your permit with the Forest Service. The permit fee is due by January 1.

Leasehold Tax – The leasehold Excise Tax is paid to the State of Washington. The Department of Revenue website says that Leasehold Excise Tax is due when a private party leases publicly owned property (our Forest service land.) The Leasehold Excise tax is due by February 1st; the amount is calculated as a percentage (currently 12.84%) of the previous year's Permit Fee.

Pierce County Property Tax – Because we are leasing property from the Federal Government in Pierce County we pay property taxes to the county (at a different rate than land owners.) These taxes are due by the end of April and October in each calendar year (although you are welcome to pay the amount due for the full year in April). The taxed amount is calculated by the value of your structure (cabin) only. On the tax statement you receive from the government, you may note that we are assessed \$0 for Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Fire/EMS). Our cabins are outside the fire service area for Pierce County. It is for that reason you receive an annual notice to pay a fee to Pierce County Fire District #26 for the Fire/EMS you may need during the year. Once paid, your Fire/EMS services are provided by the Greenwater Fire District (see below, under optional fees).

Optional Fees

WRRRA Membership (WRRRA) – WRRRA sponsors events throughout the year to enable members to get to know one another, share ideas and tips, and receive important information you need to know as a cabin owner. WRRRA Board members and volunteers also lobby for changes in Forest Service rules and regulations (e.g. metal roofs). Finally, an important benefit are the regular emails sent (usually by the Board President) about emergency circumstances that may impact (e.g. Norse Peak Fire, Power Outages, Weather events, road closures, protecting your cabin from fire, etc.) For a small annual fee (\$40 in 2021, due in January/February) you become a member of an important community that helps protect our precious cabins; and you may gain lifetime friends, along the way.

National Forest Homeowners Association (NFH) – The NFH is our voice in Washington D.C. They keep members up to date on current laws and regulations, they provide access to their informative website, and offer an annual conference where NFH members meet cabin owners across the country while presenting timely topics that impact them. Perhaps most important, they lobby lawmakers in Washington D.C. on behalf of cabin owners. It's an extremely important organization, and gives us a "seat at the table" in D.C. Membership dues are currently \$50 per year (if you renew through WRRRA), and are collected along with the WRRRA annual dues.

Cabin Defense Fund – Our cabins are on Federal Land, while it's not often, there have been times when WRRRA has hired attorneys to work on behalf of cabin owners to protect our rights as cabin owners. The expense incurred can be significant, but collectively, through the Cabin Defense Fund we have the ability to address issues that could in the short or long run compromise our place in the Mt Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest. Normally, contributions are made to the Cabin Defense fund when WRRRA memberships are renewed. Others have generously remembered the Cabin Defense Fund in their wills. That fund cannot be accessed except for the purpose of defending our cabins.

Fire/Emergency Medical Services – Our cabins reside outside of any fire district (we are not charged for Fire/EMS in our Pierce County Property tax). The Greenwater Fire district chooses to support our cabin community, and the annual fee they request helps to offset the expenses incurred by that Fire District. The Fire Protection Contract Fee is due in April of each year.

Snow Plow Road Repair Fee – Our cabins reside on Forest Service Roads. The Forest Service is experiencing a significant budgetary shortfall, which delays or makes it impossible to regularly maintain our roads. Additionally no entity is required to plow our roads, since they are for the sole purpose of cabin access. Consequently, the WRRRA levies a small fee for those who would like to have their road plowed and maintained, as needed. If you pay the fee even your driveway will be plowed. As the road maintenance fund grows, the WRRRA is able to address issues that regularly arise on our cabin roads. Whether you pay the fee or not, your road is being maintained and plowed. WRRRA encourages everyone to contribute, since everyone benefits. Notification to pay the Snow Plow/Road Repair fee is sent in the early fall.