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**To:** [emnrd-parkscomments](#), [EMNRD](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fee Changes  
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To New Mexico State Parks Division,

I am a resident of New Mexico who enjoys the many State Parks that we have. I have frequented the parks for years and when I retired, increased the frequency of my visits. I have bought the senior annual pass every year since turning 65, five years ago. This has allowed me to enjoy our beautiful state without having to spend tons of money. I have a small travel trailer and spend many happy hours camping in various parks. I fish and hike and take advantage of these activities when I am staying there. As a senior it is important that I get outdoors, stay active and meet other people who have similar interests. The State Parks have made this possible on a limited income.

I don't deny that New Mexico has some of the lowest fees for camping and utilizing their parks. I have no problem with there being an increase in these fees. But I feel that the proposed increases are somewhat excessive. With the current increase in rates, it would be impossible for me to afford to camp very often.

I read your statistics on how many people you feel abuse the annual camping pass. One person living for "free" for a year, one for seven months, one for six months, and 5 for over three months, it doesn't seem likely these eight people are taking up all the camping sites that others might want. There are 32 State Parks where you can camp, and these people can only stay at any one park at a time. There does seem to be a need to track if they are reserving more than one space in the same park at the same time or reserving a space in two different parks on the same dates. (I would assume that they are doing this for someone they know or are related to). This is not the intent of having an annual pass. It is for us who use the parks often for ourselves.

I would not object to the daily camping fee increasing to \$20/night. I can't believe that I would use more than \$5/night of electricity or a few dollars a night in water. Are you going to charge everyone who camps \$10 a night for water in a campground where there is just a spigot to fill up a jug to use at a tent site? Or fill up their small trailer freshwater tank? How do you regulate who uses which water spigot? All the campsites I have used that have electricity also have a water source at that site. I really don't believe I use \$10 worth of water every day. I do agree a one-time fee per camping trip to dump is reasonable.

I am greatly disturbed at eliminating an annual pass. I wouldn't mind an increase to \$200 a year for a senior pass. But it would come with a discount of say, \$10 off a night or half price off the cost of the site per night. I really enjoy camping in our State Parks and will be very distraught at having to give up my camping trips. I have stayed at about 15 different parks over the years, utilizing 3 or 4 a year. When I am camping, I am fishing, or hiking every day I am there. I enjoy the fire rings and have a

campfire most evenings (when allowed). I enjoy meeting and talking with the other campers around me. It is so important to my mental wellbeing!

My friend has a small boat that we take to State Parks with lakes, for fishing. There are several we can get to and back in one day, so that is most of our fishing trips. Occasionally, he brings it to a campground where I am camping, to stay for two days. Charging \$5 to launch the boat seems reasonable, (and his boat is only 9 ft. 10 in.) It is registered with the state and meets all safety requirements.

You have decided to charge a \$5/day fee for being at the Rio Grande Nature Reserve. So many people go there almost daily to walk and ride their bikes from this parking lot. I feel there should be a pass that could be bought for those who use it frequently. \$5/day would add up fast!

I do like the parks that have pay stations where you can use a credit card to pay for any fees. Most people don't seem to have cash or check with them. And the hassle for rangers to collect the money must be time consuming and expensive.

There are many of your changes that do not affect me as I don't utilize those amenities. So, I can't address all the items that you are changing. I do know that the cost of maintaining our State Parks has increased a lot over the years and the fees have not increased for too long. But State Parks are for the benefit of our residents, so please don't overprice things to the point where we can't afford it. Especially those of us who are seniors and don't have the money to do expensive things. Our state parks are a vital part of my life!

I am asking that you reconsider some of your fee changes. I am voicing some of my concerns and ideas. Please hear my voice.

Sincerely,  
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