

From: [Barry Smith](#)
To: [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on proposed fee increases
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed increases in fees to use New Mexico State Parks.

First, I want to say that my family and I are frequent visitors to the state parks, and they are among the state's most valuable jewels. I recognize the need to adjust fees to keep up with increasing costs.

However, after reading the fee study, I have some concerns and suggestions that I believe must be addressed before the proposed fee increases are adopted.

— The study itself nowhere considers the cost side, which would seem to be a major flaw in any analysis of an increase in fees. Because it proposes to increase fees uniformly across all state parks, I wonder if costs are the same at all state parks for water, garbage collection, personnel wages, infrastructure, etc. regardless of the amenities offered or the level of use by the public.

— For this reason, I also question why there was no analysis or recommendation on varying fees based on these factors. The common thread in Tables 2 and 5 of the study is that all the comparison states have variable fees. Was this an option? Many visitor-oriented enterprises are trending toward “dynamic” pricing — higher when it's busy, lower when it's not. Most places have long charged far more for weekends than weekdays. Was this considered in the study?

— The campground I use most often is Cottonwood, at Navajo Lake State Park. If I understand correctly, the new fees would raise my RV site from \$14/night to \$40/night — an increase of 285 percent. That's excessive. (By the way, I don't give a damn what private campgrounds charge or how State Parks might affect their business. Neither should you.)

— My biggest objection is to an additional fee on the dump stations. I fear it will lead to people dumping their sewage alongside the roads or some other highly unsanitary spots. The use of the dump station is generally considered a part of the camping-site fee. It is not clear to me if the Utilities fee, which says “water, electric, sewer” in the recommendations under Developed Camping, would include the dump station at campgrounds like Cottonwood. Eliminating the dump-station fee would bring the proposed cost of a site at Cottonwood back down to more-reasonable level.

Thanks again for your attention,

Barry Smith,
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