

**From:** [Chris Wentz](#)  
**To:** [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments on Proposed NM State Park Fee Changes  
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Thank you for providing the public an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes to NM State Park fees. You are to be commended for basing the proposed changes on what I consider to be a fair, balanced and impartial study of existing NM park fees in comparison to similar fees in adjacent states.

In general, I strongly support the overwhelming majority of proposed fee changes. The recommended increase in most of these fees is long past due, especially considering the impact of inflation and other relevant factors over the past two decades. For way too long, NM State Parks has let the deferred maintenance costs for its facilities continue to mount--to the detriment of park infrastructure and visitors' experiences. The old adage "You can pay me now or pay me (more) later" is fitting and appropriate when it comes to the upkeep of vital facilities in our parks; moreover, it is critical that State Parks be provided the necessary revenue to effectively operate and protect its resources, as well as to ensure the safety of its visitors.

In particular, I wholeheartedly endorse: 1) elimination of day-use fees for NM residents; 2) implementation of a non-resident day-use fee; 3) eliminating Annual Passes; 4) upwardly adjusting camping and utility fees; and 5) instituting a nominal fee for launching kayaks, canoes and paddleboards on park lakes.

My only recommendation at this juncture is for State Parks to consider development and implementation of a "senior" discount on camping/RVs fees only. It is suggested that residents and non-residents 70 years and older be considered "seniors." A 10% discount would be appropriate in this case. Purveyors of most other recreational activities, such as fishing and alpine skiing, offer such senior discounts for obvious reasons; these include encouragement of seniors to continue participation in these outdoor pursuits and the fact that many seniors are on fixed or otherwise limited incomes. Indeed, the State of NM recently basically eliminated the tax on Social Security income for residents. State Parks should follow this example to better attract resident and non-resident seniors to their facilities. Such discounts help demonstrate that our beautiful state is a retirement haven in so many ways, thereby facilitating senior relocation here. Why shouldn't NM be a "geezer pleaser?" It'll definitely pay off in the long run.

My appreciation to all those hard-working State Parks employees who strive to make our outdoor recreational experiences the best they can be.

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