NM State Parks Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed fee structure changes. My comments are generally from the perspective of a retired New Mexican on a fixed annuity with occasional cost of living adjustments that never seem to keep up with inflation, especially over the last few years.

There is no question that an increase in revenue is sorely needed to keep up with the costs of managing our State Parks. It is readily apparent that much of the critical infrastructure is in need of maintenance and/or upgrading, as well as other costs necessary to manage a quality program. I believe many users would gladly accept and pay an increased amount to attain these goals and keep our Parks open into the future.

The proposal, which I trust is open to appropriate adjustments, seems to be, for the most part a 100% increase over the current fee structure, if not more in some instances, not including fees charged by the mandatory reservation system contractor. These may well be reasonable fees, notwithstanding public perception and resistance to having to pay more and more,,,, Each of us has to look at our expenses in the broader context and determine if this works for us. I find I have needed to reduce my "consumption" of many goods and services, if not eliminate them from my desired lifestyle, or choose less expensive alternatives. The same holds true of my use and visitation to New Mexico's State Parks.

In keeping with adequately funding and maintaining a quality program, I share the following concerns. I am concerned that the proposed increases will not bring about the anticipated increase in revenue you are projecting, as a result of potential visitors opting out because of the cost and either not visiting or choosing other venues such as those available on USFS, BLM or other federal facilities at a lower cost, or even no cost such as dispersed camping. The fact that senior visitors to the federal landscape can take advantage of the 'America the Beautiful' Senior Pass and use these facilities at a reduced cost (usually 50%) may cause a significant drawdown in visitor use days to the State Parks. I strongly urge your consideration of a reduced Senior rate as part of the new fee structure. I clearly know what I need to do to stay within the constraints of a limited income that is becoming less flexible as costs increase, including reducing the length of stay or going to a less expensive venue.

I suspect that the analysis has adequately addressed and considered the potential drawdown in visitor use and its effects on the expected budget increase, to meet the Parks needs, by comparing an array of proposed fee increments to potential

reductions in anticipated visitor use. Only one viable option seems to have been proposed, though I may have missed a comparison of alternatives, in the information provided in this proposal. Are there other options/alternatives/considerations on the table, or were they considered and eliminated through your analysis prior to this proposal? I did find it curious that a comparison was made to other venues such as KOA campgrounds that have little to nothing in common with the State Parks and what they offer, except perhaps as a place to set up a RV and do other things outside the Park which I know happens.

I am looking forward to continuing to enjoy our State Parks in the future and am certainly willing to pay more to meet at least the basic needs and improvements. To what extent is, as I indicated in my opening comments, living on a limited income, going to be predicated on the affordability of the new fee structure.

I appreciate your hard work and wish you the best in reaching a viable and equitable budget and program

Chuck Hagerdon
Grants, New Mexico