

From: [Darrell L. Dinwiddie](#)
To: [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] New Mexico State Parks Fees Study
Date: Monday, March 25, 2024 3:10:46 PM

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I am writing in regards to the recent Fees Study and associated proposed fee increases at New Mexico State Parks. Overall, I support the increase of fees at New Mexico State Parks and the investment in renovations, modernization, and creation of new State Park facilities. I understand that fees have not been increased for numerous years. However, I believe many of the proposed fee increases are too dramatic and will limit the use of these facilities by those who the facilities should foremost be for, the residents of the state of New Mexico.

The comparison of New Mexico State Parks to KOAs and neighboring facilities in other states is greatly flawed, as it doesn't take fully into account the amenities and overall level of upkeep of these "comparable" sites. KOAs often offer amenities not available at our state park facilities, including, but not limited to, pools, playgrounds, game rooms, meeting rooms, internet, cable/satellite television, laundry facilities. As stated, in the study a major emphasis for the increased fee is to update aging facilities. Unfortunately, it is inappropriate to raise the fee at facilities that are not to the level warranted for the given fees. It is more realistic to increase fees to be consistent with the level of the facilities. It may be appropriate to charge more at newly renovated locations or after new renovations are completed, but not before. Similarly the comparison to facilities in neighboring states is flawed for the above mentioned reasons to KOAs, often these facilities offer more than ours. A more appropriate comparison would be USFS sites and facilities. In particular the increase for camping spots and associated utilities seems to be dramatic and is more than 3-5 times the price currently being charged when all fees are considered.

Finally, it is unclear to me why money for these important projects and facilities for our beautiful state are not being provided by the state budget, particularly given the recent surplus of funding in our state. The proposed increase in fees is estimated to generate an additional \$5,418,954 funding per year for our state parks. The state just passed a \$10.2 billion dollar spending plan. How much of this was for state parks? The proposed increase of \$5.4 million represents less than 0.05% of the budget for the state. Were other revenue sources other than fee increases exhausted?

Overall, I feel the increase in pricing is too dramatic and not warranted given our current state of facilities. In addition, it will disproportionately impact New Mexico residents, who the parks should benefit the most.

Potential alternatives to consider:

Different price points for residents vs non-residents for camping rates, similar to proposed differences for day rates

Keeping annual passes for residents only (with some appropriate fee increase, e.g. \$50 for annual day pass, \$200-250 for annual camping)

Keeping the \$5/day fee for day use for residents, as I believe this helps limit vandalism and inappropriate use

I am happy to discuss further.

Best regards,

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