

March 16, 2024

EMNRD – State Parks Division
1220 S. St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Proposal Committee:

Herein find comments and concerns regarding changes as proposed by the New Mexico State Park:

I support increasing New Mexico State Park admission fees for day and camping site usage.

If a fee increase as proposed, or otherwise, becomes effective, I would expect to find all New Mexico State Parks to be complaint in maintaining their facilities without continuing stoppage in water supply and deficiencies in maintaining facility as is now found commonly within the units. This past year I encountered long term water, bathroom and shower issues at 2 of the 3 NM State Parks visited.

Along with an enhanced fees, I propose addition of enforcement staff to address Park rule violations such as pet control non-compliance, noise, illegal fires, and any issue that tends to disrupt participant enjoyment.

I would be very disappointed if the annual pass was eliminated or changed from its present issuance. You have stated, in a television news report, the annual pass usage group makes up the bulk of site usage, but because of its pricing structures, has become a vehicle for discounted pricing. By what conveyance have management person come to propose discountenance of its most popular program in your arsenal? This isn't competent thought, its blindly taking the lead of other states you mentioned who have led the way to the rational of – LETS DISCONTINUE IT BECAUSE IT'S USED TOO MUCH. I heard this same justification in closure of a New Mexico rest area facility, a ridiculous bureaucratic leaning decision that is rift in incompetence. Management should instead lead the way through forward leaning individualist thinking that accommodates rather than disenfranchises their most supportive group. Taking away the most widely used privilege from your users should be replaced by a more sensible solution. Increase the fee to an appropriate compensation amount. In addition to an increase in the annual pass fee, limit these users to a 7 day stay. This would be a win-win situation.

Along those same lines, I would like to see a change in the Reservation Only policy. It doesn't make sense that on a late winter day, when I was the only intended user of any park site at Heron Lake, that I had to make a reservation, does it? This resulted in a ridiculous situation of having to drive back from a remote site selection to the Welcome Center so I could access the internet to make one reservation in an empty State Park! I feel a 50/50 split, 50% reservation and 50% first come, first serve, would be more accommodating to me or any other personal constituent of your user public. If you persist in requiring a reservation for all camping sites, make that stipulation only during peak demand. I feel the reservation only directive is coming from the top management. I have spoken with many field personnel all of whom supported at least some first come sites.

Lastly, I heard through good authority money is not an issue within the NM State Parks. A review of all park assets should be considered such as collection from dock rentals should be made known with more revenue request. Before an increase is indeed warranted then the need revenue request should move forward but prefixed with the stipulation that maintenance enhancement will vastly improve. If the proposed fee increases are approved and park maintenance delays remain unimproved, as was recently encountered, then management should be held justifiably accountable.

I must include One Big Shout Out to NM State Parks division management. This is in praise of refreshment in maintenance and management of City of Rocks Park which I visited last year. It was beautifully maintained and provided a combination of reservation and first come usage sites. Senior Management personnel should project this park as the example of where you seek to take enhanced management decisions and model it in your decisions.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Gates". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Gerald Gates

P. O. Box 886

Peralta, NM 87042

(505) 553 5951