

From: [John Sterner](#)
To: [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] New Mexico State Park Fee Issue
Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 8:34:47 AM

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To: New Mexico State Park Fee Study Commission

From: John and Audri Sterner

RE: Proposed fee study presentation held at Elephant Butte Lake State Park on February 22, 2024

We attended the community presentation of the fee study along with an overflowing full house of other State Park officials, local residents and campers. There were many turned away because of not enough parking or standing room space in the meeting room. The room was packed. The presenters gave a thorough description of a proposed rate increase for all State Park use fees that are projected to take effect July 1, 2024.

Being snow birds, frequent users of the state parks for the past 13 winters, we are very disappointed with the amount of increase being proposed. So much so that we are probably not going to plan our future winter travel plans to New Mexico. After discussing this with our winter friends and neighbors, other snow birds, we all agree that we will need to find different accommodations and locations for our winter months. The proposed amount of increase is beyond what many elderly and retired people on fixed incomes are able or willing to pay. This will have a negative impact on winter state park occupancy numbers. From state resident and non-resident campers. Has the study included a projection of lost revenue from loss of snow bird occupancy?

We were a bit put off by the meeting presenter and his negative comment referring to the many park users that 'live' in the parks. Moving between parks although following park rules regarding 14 day maximum stay. A condescending remark heard loud and clear. This kind of message does not promote favorable tourism.

There will be a negative impact to local economies as well. Consider the loss of revenue to the local areas for goods and services supported by snow birds.

We understand there is a need to adjust the fees moving forward but please do not price us all out of the park. We would agree to an increase of non-resident annual pass to \$250 and a daily camping fee of \$6.

There is one other item of concern in the presented material. Emphasis was made to include charges for every vehicle entering the park. Does that imply towed vehicles would incur an additional fee?

Regards,
John and Audri Sterner