

March 7, 2024

EMNRD

New Mexico Parks Division
1220 S. St Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Fee Amendment Comments

Fellow New Mexicans,

The proposed fee structure and elimination of ACP's is not good for people of New Mexico. It does not embody the spirit of public lands and recreational facilities that are important to the campers and recreational enthusiasts of this State. I have been afforded the opportunity to camp and fish at various New Mexico State Park facilities as well as neighboring States. I have not experienced the proposed high camping fees in Arizona, Colorado nor Texas that your report seems to indicate is the norm. The generated example fees, you provided in the report, for a family of four, is for full hookups. The only full hookups that I have seen in the New Mexico State Parks is reserved for the camp hosts. Also, somewhat misleading to use the Lake Havasu area along the Parker strip, Dallas area and Gunnison Colorado as fee comparisons as they are likely the highest rates because of the high volumes of campers. Most budget minded individuals (especially Federal issued "America the Beautiful" pass holders) avoid these areas due to the high influx of people.

Although the NMAC has not been updated since 2008 revisions, this proposal should be paused as indicated by some Republican members of the New Mexico House of Representatives. There is a lot of information to unpack in order to digest the proposal and make an informed decision as to the ultimate direction of proposed changes. The pandemic caused a lot of disruption in the work place whereas anyone with a PC and internet connection could work from virtually anywhere in the country. This is not just peculiar to the State of New Mexico, but virtually everywhere in the United States, as "full timers" were not just retired folks anymore. Since everyone bought an RV and the industry exploded, to navigate through the process of reserving a campsite anywhere is challenging even for the experienced camper.

Seems to me that a FY2025 approved budget of \$10.21 BILLION could include more for recreation facilities, infrastructure and equitable pay for our dedicated State Park employees, however, you need the backing of the legislative body to changed the 25/75 enterprise fund statute. A different solution needs to be explored rather than simply doubling or in some cases tripling the fees in order to be functional and operational.

Ultimately, I do agree with some of the proposed changes and explanations, however, there are points of contention as follows:

- ❖ Fees need to increase but at a palatable level. Let "Out of State" campers carry the load or go down the road.
- ❖ No separate surcharge for electric hookup and water. Include it in the camping fee.
- ❖ Retain the ACP for New Mexico Resident Seniors and New Mexico Resident Disabled. No others.
- ❖ DO NOT charge to dump your RV. Nobody wants people dumping on the side of the road.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule change.

Regards,



Kenneth Douglas
805 Spotted Wolf Ave
Aztec, NM 87410