

Maggie Whitehead
Las Cruces, NM 88001

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Re: Proposed fee changes for state parks

To Whom it May Concern,

I write, as a long-time resident of New Mexico, and regular state park user/ACP holder, to offer comments on the proposed fee changes. I am currently the camp host at Percha Dam, and have been before due to urgent need, while working full time. I have done this because I wanted to give back. When I retire I hope to do more. I am profoundly grateful for the NMSP system. I understand the need for raising fees. The current model is not sustainable.

I do not agree with some of the proposed changes, in particular the elimination of the annual camping pass. **I would be happy to pay double or triple the \$180 I am paying now for the ACP**, for the same usage, i.e. about six months of the year. The study notes **New Mexico is unusual, but not unique, in providing annual passes**, and I don't think elimination is necessary to solve the problems associated with them, some of which sound specific to certain parks. **Maybe some restrictions could be put in place *as and where needed.***

1. Could the issue of **multiple reservations be addressed through the reservation system?**
2. Could the **de facto "reservation" of leaving equipment at a site be addressed by rules/citation?** Isn't the reserving/parking/not using already prohibited, i.e. "lack of occupancy for 24 hours?" This **sounds like an issue for certain parks** on certain dates. **Could the ACP not include holidays?**
3. "Regulars" constantly taking "desirable" sites again sounds like certain parks. Again maybe raise the ACP cost significantly; limit total number of nights per year, tracked through the reservation system; and **restrict use of the ACP to developed/primitive sites, and/or certain water/electric sites.**
4. A general **alternative might be the National Parks' model, an annual pass with half-price fees** to holders. I prefer the former options. I think they are better for the parks and pass holders. Over 10 years I have seen **very few "occasional" campers using developed/primitive sites in the winter** in many of the parks. Eliminating the ACP would likely result in most or all of them **sitting empty all winter, generating NO fees.**

I spend a lot of time in state parks. **I also visit BLM lands and other resources, all of them free or nearly so.** The pass is a good deal, but I buy it because I love the parks. At \$20/night for a developed site, I won't be able to make sense out of using them much. I don't like **private RV parks, but for comparison, at the proposed rates**, while some would still be much pricier, **some in Southern NM, including hookups and Wi-Fi, at a monthly rate, would be comparable or less than a developed state park site.** Without an official study, I can say that is not true of Arizona or other states used for comparison in the proposal. The original study talks about **raising nonresident rates. Doesn't that make more sense?**

I am deeply grateful for the NMSP system. For all my wandering, New Mexico is home to me, more than

my birthplace or anywhere else. My access to the beauty of its state parks is an enormous part of that. I think we can fix things without removing the wonderful option of the longstanding annual camping pass.

Thank you,

Maggie Whitehead