

From: [Michael Thomas](#)
To: [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Proposed Changes to State Parks Fees
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 12:43:27 PM

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Sirs,

I have carefully read the proposed recommendations that emerged from the recent Fee Study. I understand the reasoning that resulted in these recommendations and for the most part agree with the recommendations and support their implementation. I do, however, take exception to one of the recommendations, that suggesting the elimination of annual passes. I have, for many years, purchased Annual Passes not heeding whether or not this saved me money. I generally camp in State Parks several times a year probably amounting to an average of 10 days. I have considered my purchase of the pass to be a way of supporting the state park system in a perhaps odd sense of patriotism for my native state.

In recent years, however, I have noted that some people are abusing annual passes. As a life-long New Mexican it is with dismay that I have met fellow campers, mainly people from out of state, who purchase an annual pass in order to practically take residence in state parks, moving from one to another at 14 intervals. I have even read articles in RV camping periodicals touting the New Mexico Annual Pass as a great bargain for snowbirds, who apparently who want to freeload on the taxpayers of New Mexico. I have to note that many of these people hale from states, like Texas, that have little or no state park system in place. I resent this. I would not want to exclude tourists from out of state from our state parks but I think it would make sense to establish a **much** higher fee for annual passes for non-residents.

I love the annual pass; I will continue to buy one every year until I die regardless of whether I am able to use it. I understand the need to address the abuse of the system, but I hope that the state park system of New Mexico continues to offer Annual Passes to New Mexicans, particularly Seniors and Veterans, at a fee comparable to the present fee. Please continue to offer Annual Passes at reasonable prices to New Mexicans. And my suggestion would be to continue to offer passes to non-residents but with a **very** hefty increase in the price. I also suggest a study into means of addressing the abuse of the parks by those using them as residences for months at a time in 14-day intervals.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

Sincerely,
Michael Thomas

Michael Thomas Ph.D.

Principal Lecturer Emeritus
Honors College - University of New Mexico
505-277-4211 (UNM) 505-573-1656 (Mobile)
Home: 1420 Bryn Mawr NE Albuquerque, NM 87106

"You always got to be prepared, but you never know for what."

Bob Dylan: "Sugar Baby" from Love and Theft Sept. 11, 2001