

From: [Mike Francis](#)
To: [emnrd-parkscomments, EMNRD](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments to proposed fee increases
Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024 1:19:44 PM

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This correspondence is in response to your solicitation for comments concerning proposed fee changes for camping at New Mexico State Parks. My comments will be limited to the change in camping fees as I do not own a watercraft.

My wife and I have used the New Mexico State Park camping facilities for many years. We have recently purchased the senior annual camping pass. We are both senior citizens and live on social security and a fixed pension.

I average 20 nights per summer in New Mexico state campgrounds. My current costs for 20 nights of camping are \$180 or an average of \$9/night (\$100 for the senior camping pass plus 20 times \$4 for water and electricity). Under the proposed fee schedule change my cost would be \$640 (20 nights times \$30/night plus 4 dump fees). We would be forced to give up camping.

I would also point out that by elimination of the annual camping pass 17% of your increased revenue (\$2,048,000 + \$700,000) is lost (-\$457,000). The annual camping pass is a wonderful tool that allows families to get out and enjoy the New Mexico state park system.

In addition to senior citizens there are numerous young families with children that will have to consider giving up or at least curtailing camping at state parks if this new fee structure is implemented as proposed. It is also likely that the entire demographics of the parks will change. Because seniors and young families can no longer afford to camp, it will open up the sites to campers with large motor homes. These people don't care about costs, but they do run their AC units 24/7 and require 50 amp service. How much electricity does that consume?

One additional point, this new fee schedule puts the state park campgrounds in direct competition with private campgrounds. For about the same costs The private campgrounds offer far more amenities. To point out a few, No dump fees for guests, possible pool, supervised activities for kids, a club house, most have a small convenience store for supplies.

In light of the above, I would request that this proposal be re-thought as to how it will affect New Mexico citizens. Your published revenue increases will not occur if seniors and young families are forced to give up or somewhat curtail their camping activities. I understand the need for revenue to maintain the park system and I can support a modest increase in fees,

but the new fee schedule increases are not modest and will have unseen consequences. Elimination of the annual senior discount pass would be a real game changer for me. Please consider keeping this valuable tool. One suggestion might be a different fee schedule for out-of-state visitors. These people do not pay New Mexico taxes, we do.

Mike Francis