

Suggested Plan For New Mexico State Parks

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References: Personal 20 year experience, fellow park users, brochures
Admittedly I do not have financial records or personnel records, but I do have 20+ years experience as an administrator at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, NY

Shortcomings:

Employees - Supervision, Volunteers
Infrastructure - showers, sewage, restrooms, Internet, electricity (30-50amp), Trash, site maintenance
Open new campgrounds
No rate increase for 20+ years
No concession stands - air conditioned refuges

Strengths:

Large sites, snowbirds, sense of community, prices appropriate for low income families (25% Sierra County - and state? - under poverty level), 14 days out of 20 rule assures no one occupies choice sites continually

It is Generally Accepted that prices need to go up! By how much??

Peak Seasons = Summer, Spring, fall - short stays
Campers primarily from New Mexico & some from neighboring states - weather hot and dry, northern sites - winter (skiers)

Off Season = late fall, winter, early spring - return visitors (snowbirds)

Current rates = \$14/night ; \$4/night w/ camping pass
Camping Passes: In state residents \$100/yr; Out of state residents \$225

rumored Rate Changes

Discontinue both in-state and out-of-state camping passes
Therefore - discontinue current ~~\$4~~ \$4/night rate
Increase current \$14/night fee to \$40/night

Effect - loss of snowbirds - winter income

Loss of business in surrounding towns

Parks no longer available to low income families

State Parks in competition with commercial parks

Users of State Parks are usually interested in the outdoors, nature, the simple life

Users of Commercial Parks are interested in Community, convenience, services (activity centers, security, entertainment)

To Determine Price Increase

1. List improvements need and estimated costs
2. Prioritize improvements and spread over a 5-10 year period
3. Determine effect campground business has on local community
4. Question campground users how various increases might impact their use of state Parks
5. Develop fiscal plan which allows ^{necessary} ~~immediate~~ improvements to be made without loss of income.
6. Provide for periodic rate increases as needed
7. Keep prices low enough so low income residents can use the parks. Let the city kids escape to the out-of doors

One person's suggestion

Without having a view of the state-wide figures I can only speak as one individual. However, an increase which my husband and I could handle is:

1. Keep the camping passes for regular park users

New Mexico Residents: increase to \$150

Out-of-State Residents: increase to \$275

2. Increase overnight rates

Pass holders: increase to \$8/night

Non-Pass holders: increase to \$20/night

* Boondockers: increase to \$14/night

These rates would not chase away most of your current off season campers, would keep the parks in range of the low income families, and provide money for the improvement of existing facilities.

Make another assessment in 3 years and adjust rates for addition of new facilities

* Boondockers are campers (both with a RV or with tents) who do not need electric or sewers, could use a nearby source of water and might use rest rooms, showers, dump station