

# **Business Plan North Fruita Desert Campground**

BLM Grand Junction Field Office  
Grand Junction, Colorado

## Fee Site Area Description

The fee site is a 37-unit primitive campground located at the north end of Mesa County Road 18, north of Fruita, Colorado. The facility is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Junction Field Office and is located in the North Fruita Desert (NFD) Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The campground occupies about 40 acres in the heart of the mountain bike trail system. It primarily serves the mountain bike visitors, most of whom are tent campers. The facilities include individual camp sites, as well as two group sites, with fire rings and picnic tables. Each site has parking for two to four vehicles. Four vault pit toilets are located within walking distance of each cluster of campsites. Trail and campground maps are available from the information kiosks on site. No water or garbage services are available.

## Description of Customers Who Use the Area

Visitors tend to be young adults, typically between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age. Most visitors are vacationing, in the valley visiting NFD and other nearby bicycling opportunities. Their average stay is estimated at three nights. Most of the motorized and equestrian visitors are from the nearby communities and do not use the campground.

Visitation is seasonal. The early season begins in March and continues through June. In the hotter summer months, overnight use declines. Visitorship increases as the day-time temperatures drop in September. The late season continues into November most years.

## Establish the Objective for Use of Fee Receipts

The objective of charging a fee to camp at the North Fruita Desert Campground is to improve management of the campground. The funds from the fees will contribute to campground maintenance. The fees will also be used for public education and information, such as maps and information packets. Fee revenue will also provide for visitor safety and on-site management through support of a campground host.

List and Describe the Key Components of the Area /Site/Project

The NFD SRMA includes 72,000 acres and 250 miles of designated recreation routes. Much of the area is desert valley floor with washes and sharp ridge geomorphology. There are several water storage dams and erosion control/siltation structures for the purpose of controlling runoff into the Colorado River. The area experiences multiple uses, including cattle grazing and natural gas wells and their infrastructure. At the north end of the facility are the Book Cliffs, the longest, continuous geological feature in the world located in western Colorado and east-central Utah. The cliffs range from 700 to 1000 feet in height, and at the base of the cliffs is a band of rubble and scree that ranges from one-quarter mile to several miles in width. This band is populated by pinyon-juniper trees, grasses, and shrubs. It is not only the winter habitat for many of the species who live on the cliff-top mesas during the summer, but it is also the location of many of the bicycle trails and the campground.

Recreation Use By Major Component

The vast majority of the visitors and campers are mountain bikers.

Identify the Relevant Costs Expended or Needed to Operate the Fee Project

The relevant cost will be the periodic patrols and campsite cleanup, reprinting and distribution of maps and visitor information packets, pumping and cleaning of toilets, and fee collection. Vandalism repairs, maintenance from routine use, and depreciation of assets are continuing costs. If a host program can be successfully established, many of these duties will be performed by the campground host.

Receipts

No fees are charged at this time.

Fee Calculation Process

Based on traffic counter data and visitor services ranger counts, BLM estimates 1,500 occupied campsites in the 2007 season.

Cost Recovery:

The estimated cost to maintain the campground on an annual basis includes:

1. Maintaining information kiosks and visitor information signs	\$2,000
2. Pump outhouses	2,000
3. Clean camp sites	4,000
4. Support camp volunteer host	2,500
5. Repairs and maintenance of infrastructure	6,000
6. <u>Visitor services and patrols</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Estimated Total	<u>\$21,500</u>

Colorado State Parks has a developed campground located on the west end of the NFD SRMA. The facility includes showers and a lake front location. The user fee ranges from \$14 to \$22 per site per night. Tent camping is available at

a local commercial facility for \$29 per night, and RV sites are about \$38 per night, including all hook ups.

Conversations with campers by BLM staff indicate that they are willing to pay a reasonable camping fee.

Proposed Fees for the Site

Based on the above information, we are proposing a fee of \$10 per campsite per day as a reasonable and acceptable fee for use of the North Fruita Desert campground.