

July 2016



**Bureau of Land Management
Eugene District Office**

DRAFT-Whittaker Creek Recreation Site Business Plan



**Bureau of Land Management
Eugene District Office
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Business Plan for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site – OR-18

Approval Process

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook) guidance for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site (WCRS).

The Business Plan provides a regional comparative market study of fees charged for other similar recreation facilities. The BLM will implement the following fee schedule after approval by the BLM Deputy State Director, consultation with the BLM Resource Advisory Council, and proper public notification.

Fee Schedule and Definitions

The fee schedule comparison outlines the existing and proposed changes for expanded and standard amenity recreation fees at Whittaker Creek Recreation Site.

Expanded Amenity	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
Basic Campsite	\$10	\$15 (2017)
		\$20 (2019)
Extra Vehicle	\$5	\$5
Firewood (half cart)	NEW	\$5
Firewood (full cart)		\$10

Definitions of Expanded Amenities taken from H-2930-1 BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (public) for area covered under this business plan:

- **Standard Amenities** fees cover outdoor recreation sites and services for a well-defined area or developed day-use recreation site that has all of the following amenities: (1) parking, (2) permanent toilet facility, (3) permanent trash receptacle, (4) interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, (5) picnic tables, (6) security services, (7) convenient and effective fee collection (8) identification and informational signs (p. 2-11 to 2-12).
- **Amenities** fees cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least five of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) devices for containing a campfire; and use of reservation services (p. 2-13 to 2-14).

Contact Person for Business Plan

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Signatures for Approving Business Plan

Recommended By:

Jeff McCusker, Salem District Supervisory Recreation Planner

Date

Approved By:

David Howell, Acting Eugene District Manager

Date

Concurrence By:

Acting, Oregon Deputy State Director for Resources

Date

Fee Site Description – OR18

Whittaker Creek Recreation Site is a developed camping and day-use recreation facility located in Lane County about 30 miles west of Eugene off Highway 105 on the banks of the Siuslaw River in the forested foothills of the Coast Range. Whittaker Creek is within Oregon's 4th Congressional District, represented by Representative Peter Defazio. The site is on BLM-managed Oregon and California Grant Lands (O&C Lands) and was developed, maintained and operated over the past 44 years using O&C funding and user fees.

Whittaker Creek Recreation Site (WCRS) features a 28-site campground and day-use area. Campground amenities include vault toilets, gazebo, potable water, picnic areas, Old Growth Ridge National Recreation Trail (2.5 miles), boat ramp, foot bridge, play equipment, horseshoe pits, and seasonal swimming area. Whittaker Creek Watchable Wildlife Site is also within this recreation site. In the fall, winter, and spring, buses of middle school students visit the site to learn about spawning salmon and trout and to assist with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's breeding program. ODFW operates a fish trap at the site. WCRS is situated in excellent proximity to a large, regional population. Numerous other outdoor recreation opportunities exist within a 30-mile radius. River-based recreation opportunities serve as a draw for visitors wishing to fish and engage in water play.

The Siuslaw Resource Area recreation staff, which includes one full-time recreation planner, a full-time maintenance supervisor, and a mix of temporary and seasonal recreation technicians and volunteers, manages the recreation area as one of the sites within the Siuslaw Resource Area or fee project OR18. The fee project area consists of Clay Creek and Whittaker Creek Recreation Areas.

Season

The site is open to allow for vehicle traffic from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. during the camping season of approximately Memorial Day through Labor Day. The main road that leads to the campground is open year-round to vehicular traffic, and provides access to other areas, such as National Historic Old Growth Trail, the trailhead of which is located within the campground. It is often used during the day by fishermen and hunters during the fall and winter, and the restrooms stay open to accommodate that use.

Visitors

WCRS received approximately 6,000 visitors in 2015, with the majority of visits occurring from May through September. Visitation rates vary from year to year, based on a number of factors, including existing economic conditions.

Visitor satisfaction ratings from the 2010 Customer Satisfaction Survey were favorable. Of 106 respondents, 85 percent were satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities. The remaining survey respondents responded at average (11 percent), and poor (4 percent). Day-use visitation is not significant at WCRS at this time.

The public visiting this site continues to come back for many reasons. Past input from visitors includes recognition of the quality of campsites, natural environment and setting of the park, and proximity to the coast and a major highway. Visitors show appreciation of the creek and swimming area, with the grassy play and lounging area. BLM's Clay Creek campground, about 14 miles away from Whittaker Creek, features a sandy beach area, which visitors note is an appreciated contrast.

Comments received as a result of a 2010 survey states that repeat visitation occurs because sites are clean, and well-maintained. Staff quality and service orientation received high marks. In order to continue a steady user base of repeat customers, we must maintain existing facilities and amenities at the present level, while keeping costs within predicted budgets. Further, we must continue to ensure the protection of natural resources of this site while providing safe, high quality recreational and educational opportunities for visitors.

School groups and educational organizations can arrange free vehicle access at any time of the year for educational activities by contacting the BLM and providing a curriculum of their planned educational activities (see Conditions for Recreation Use Fee Waivers). Other recreational events must be held under a special recreation use permit issued by the Eugene District Office.

Fee Collection and Enforcement

WCRS fees are enforceable through the presence of the onsite host that patrols the site. Campers post the envelope stub, receipt, on the vehicle window, which is easily accessible for record keeping and compliance. If problems arise, the host is in contact with Eugene District Law Enforcement and other Eugene BLM district personnel through radio communication. Lane County Officers patrol the road and are available to assist.

WCRS currently charges no fees to day-use visitors. If visitation of this user group increases, standard amenity fees would be easily implemented and enforceable by utilizing self-service pay stations.

Conditions for Recreation Use Permit Fee Waivers

Section 803(d) of the REA provides that standard amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for (shortened list): use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal, or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others. Waivers of fees both for purposes of traditional cultural importance and education may be obtained in writing by contacting the Northwest Oregon District Office.

Fee Discounts

Section 805 of the REA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the "America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass,"

which provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees and holders of the Interagency Senior and Access Passes half-off some expanded amenity fees. The national interagency pass replaces the popular Golden Passports, which provide for free standard amenity day-use, and half-off some expanded amenity fees, in the case of Golden Age and Access Passports. No discount is allowed for group use sites, shelters, yurts or cabins. The BLM would honor existing Golden Passports until they expire or exchanged for interagency passes. It is not expected that this pass would make a substantial impact on fee revenue in the near future.

Operations and Maintenance Costs

Operations and maintenance costs at WCRS are approximately \$40,000 annually, which includes staff salary, vehicles, supplies, fee collection, and maintenance of self-service fee stations. Approximately 90 percent of the fee receipts go directly for physical site maintenance and improvements with nearly 10 percent towards fee collection costs.

Normal site annual operation and maintenance funding will continue to come primarily from base budget sources and supplemented with fee receipts. These base funding dollars have decreased over the past seven years due to inflation and flat or at times decreasing budgets.

The BLM utilizes several alternative funding sources to maintain the site, including special approved programs such as recreation pipeline funding and payments to counties for site maintenance projects and improvements. Both depend on periodic renewal and may not be future sources of funding. Staff has also made extensive use of volunteers, service programs, and organizations such as the county corrections programs, Student Conservation Association, Americorp, Northwest Youth Corp, local scout groups, county environmental youth programs, and other community service programs, to conduct maintenance and construction projects. These programs allow the BLM to complete numerous needed projects that would otherwise not likely be completed. Volunteers and special programs make efficient use of limited funding and staff resources, but require additional levels of staff supervision.

Recreational facilities at WCRS represent well over \$850,000 in capitalized infrastructure investment over the last 40 years. In addition, alternative program funds, including recreation pipeline funding, have been invested in improving and maintaining the facilities and infrastructure at WCRS over the last 16 years. With continual decreases in annual recreation budgets, the fee collection program is necessary to continue operations, maintain, and enhance the site's high quality recreational opportunities for the public.

Recent work at WCRS included many campground site repairs (stairs to tent sites, fences along creek), as well as installation of propane generator to power water system, Old Growth Trail repair, new information kiosk, installation of an ADA trail in back loop of campground, replacement of I.D. signs, install of two concrete vault restrooms, major upgrade of gazebo, and installation of trail registers. Recent upgraded infrastructure to stay competitive includes installation of easily readable directional signs.

Projected Development Costs

The Whittaker Creek Recreation Area, including the Old Growth trail system, are already developed recreation sites. No foreseeable development is planned.

Projected Fee Revenue

Fees collected in 2015 totaled approximately \$13,000. Anticipated revenue from 2017 fee increases could result in approximately \$16,000 in fees annually, based on recent fee receipt trends and operating season.

Proposed Use of Additional Fee Revenue

WCRS's infrastructure and facilities are nearly 40 years old. Unfortunately, much of the proper scheduled maintenance for these aging facilities has been deferred due to lack of adequate funding. A majority of work at the site has included fixes when needed for immediate safety or overall park appearance. Customer service has driven many of the past projects at WCRS.

Additional fee revenue would be used to:

- Supplement the continued current level of annual maintenance needed.
- Improve site accessibility, trails, interpretation, and signing.
- Make facilities appealing and enjoyable to use.
- Reduce a backlog of critical deferred maintenance to site infrastructure such as trails, roads, footbridges, and buildings.

Whittaker Creek Day Use Gazebo Upgraded in 2010



Financial Analysis of Existing Private and Public Facilities

The BLM charges expanded amenity fees for camping at Whittaker Creek. Current fees have not changed in over 20 years. A comparative analysis conducted in 2016 reviewed user fees at similar state, regional, and local park facilities. This analysis (Table 1) concluded that fees for campsites are currently on the low end of the spectrum compared to nearby recreation areas offering the same or comparable amenities. Fees would increase in 2017 based on this analysis, pending committee consultation and Deputy State Director for Resources approval.

The BLM conducted a comparative market study of similar public facilities in the region (Table 1). State, federal, and local parks were surveyed near the Willamette Valley urban areas, and coast range within 60 miles of WCRS. Proposed fees are based on what the public sector currently charges for similar visitor facilities, number of campsites, access, and service. In summary, all campgrounds charge fees. RV parks are available but do not provide the same amenities offered at WCRS and were not included in the fee comparisons charts. Additionally, some parks may charge a day-use fee if visiting other areas of the park.

The proposed fees were determined through the analysis of comparable sites and their current fee rates. The aforementioned proposed fee table shows the results of averaging for each type of site and amenity.

Basic Campsite fees were determined from averaging the fees from comparable campgrounds. The range for tent sites is \$12 to \$26 per basic campsite, the average fee for these sites after

being rounded to the nearest whole dollar is \$20 per night. The quality and extent of Sharp's Creek's facilities are comparable to other parks in the region. However, due to this large increase in fees due to the large amount of time between increases, a phased approach will be used. The phased approach will increase fees to \$15 in 2017 and then \$20 in 2019.

Firewood: Providing firewood is an important part of resource protection for campgrounds and the area surrounding campgrounds. Having local sourced firewood for campers reduces the amount of invasive weeds that are introduced to the area. Campers are also less likely to cut down trees, remove small woody undergrowth and to collect fallen wood that is important to the ecology of a natural area. The price for firewood was determined from years of firewood vending; the price has to be at a low enough rates for campers to be willing to purchase, but high enough for local residents to not want to purchase for their own wood stoves. The fee is \$5 for a half cart and \$10 for a full cart. Each cart holds roughly 2 cubic feet of firewood.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

The BLM will continue partnerships with Lane County youth, Salmon Watch, Outdoor Adventure organizations (REI), scouts, and individuals. Accomplished work such as firewood preparation, trail, and site maintenance projects completed throughout the year would continue. A priority will be to increase the number of partnerships and agreements associated with the Coast Recreation Zone as a whole.

BLM is a Partner with Willamette National Forest, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Lane County, Corps of Engineers, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks for information sharing relative to the regions recreation areas. A partnership with the Oregon Country Fair was forged in the spring of 2011.

The BLM will continue partnerships with Lane County, local schools, and the senior center. Accomplished work such as firewood preparation, trail maintenance, recycling, and other service projects completed throughout the year will continue, as agreed upon by both parties. A priority will be to increase the number of partnerships and agreements associated with the Eugene District Recreation Program as a whole.

Public Communication and Marketing Plan

1. Public notice of the proposed fee changes will be posted onsite until implemented.
2. News releases will appear in local newspapers informing the public of fee changes the Salem District BLM is planning.
3. Both the public notice and news release will contain contact information for public comments on the proposed fee changes.
4. Website information will to inform the public of the proposed fee changes.
5. Fee signs and paper materials will reflect proposed fee change.

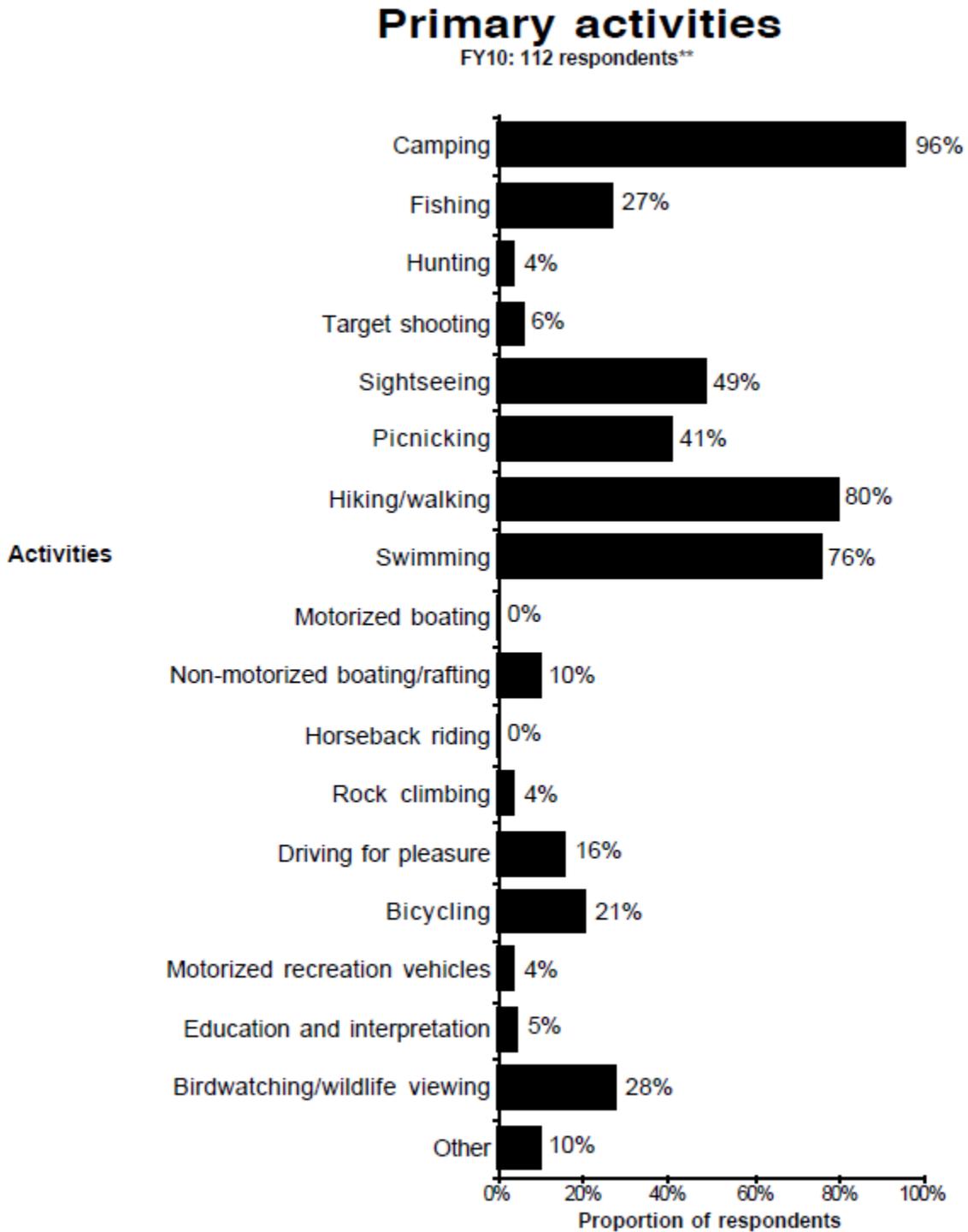
The BLM monitors visitor use to detect changes in site utilization and document written and oral communication from the public. Business plan review occurs on a biennial schedule from the date of the last signature. Future adjustments to the WCRS fee schedule will reflect public comment and program implementation needs.

Ways to Inform Public of Fee Expenditures

Fee expenditure information is collected on an annual basis and presented in the Federal Statistics document available online. More specifically, each area will post fee expenditure information on site to inform the public where and on what services, maintenance, operations their fees are spent.

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Figure 1 – Primary Activities from 2010 Visitor Survey



** Percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could choose more than one activity.

Table 1: Analysis of Existing Campgrounds

Each site has at least 5 of the following amenities: developed campgrounds with at least five of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) devices for containing a campfire. Additional amenities are shown in Table 1.

*Partial Hookup is water and electric. *Full hookup is water, electric and sewer. *Basic is no hookups

Recreation Site	Fee													
Alsea Falls (BLM)	Proposed Fees													
	Individual tent site \$15													
	Basic site \$20													
	Double site \$40	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					
	Day-use \$5													
Group campsite \$50 (up to 20 people; \$2.50 each additional person)														
Clay Creek (BLM)	Proposed Fees													
	Basic site \$20													
	Group day-use shelter \$75 (up to 50 people; \$1.50 each additional person)	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	
	Extra vehicle \$5													
Sharps Creek (BLM)	Proposed Fees													
	Basic site \$20	✓	✓		✓	✓								
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓					
Whittaker Creek (BLM)	Proposed Fees													
	Basic site \$20	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓			
	Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓			
Loon Lake (BLM)	Basic site \$18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
River Bend (Linn County)	Basic site \$24													
	Partial hookup \$30													
	Cabin \$65													
	Extra vehicle \$7	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Group shelter \$125				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Group gazebo \$175				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Recreation Site	Fee															
Whitcomb Creek (Linn County)	Basic site \$22															
	Extra vehicle \$7	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					
	Group campsite \$200	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					
Salmonberry (Benton County)	Electric site \$25															
	Basic site \$20	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓	
	Yurt (electric) \$40	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓					
	Cabin (electric) \$50	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓					
	Extra vehicle \$5															
Richardson (Lane County)	Electric campsite \$25															
	Premier electric \$28				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Extra vehicle \$4				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Day-use \$4				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Group shelter \$150				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Cascadia (State Parks)	Tent site \$17															
	Extra vehicle \$7															
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		
	Picnic area \$50	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		
	Group campsite \$71 (\$3 each over 25 people)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		
Detroit Lake (State Parks)	Partial hookup \$28															
	Electric only \$26															
	Tent site \$19	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓
	Extra vehicle \$7	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓
	Day-use \$5															
Silver Falls (State Parks)	Horse campsite \$19/\$58															
	Electric only site \$26															
	Tent site \$19															
	Extra vehicle \$7															
	Cabin \$40/\$50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
	Day-use \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
	Group shelter \$50/\$100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
	Group campsite \$71 (\$3 each over 25 people)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
	Group RV \$101 (\$10 per after 10)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Blackberry (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$22															
	Day-use \$6	✓	✓		✓	✓										
	Extra vehicle \$6	✓	✓		✓	✓										

Recreation Site	Fee															
Mary's Peak (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$10 Extra vehicle \$10	✓	✓													
Alder Dune (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$22 Extra vehicle \$6	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓								
Rock Creek (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$24 Extra vehicle \$6 Day-use \$6	✓	✓		✓											
Tillicum (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$24 Electric \$30 Extra vehicle \$6 Day-use \$6	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓								
Cape Perpetua (USFS Siuslaw)	Basic \$24 Extra vehicle \$6 Day-use \$6 Group campsite \$125 (Max 50)	✓	✓											✓		
Schwarz Park (Corps of Engineers)	Basic \$18 Extra Vehicle \$6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					
Cavitt Creek Falls Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5				✓	✓										
Millpond Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5 Day-use shelter \$130	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓				✓		
Susan Creek Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)	Basic \$20 Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
Rock Creek Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓										✓		
Tye Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5 Day-use shelter \$55				✓	✓								✓		