

**Business Plan for
BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
Campgrounds and Wolcott Day Use Site**

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Colorado
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Colorado River Valley Field Office
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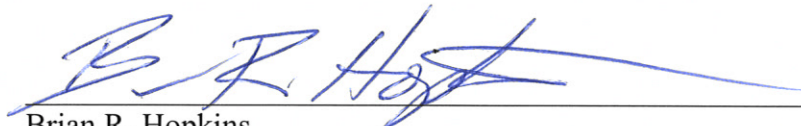
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REVIEWS and APPROVALS

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-447) and BLM recreation fee program policy. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the campground and day use site fee program in the Colorado River Valley Field Office.

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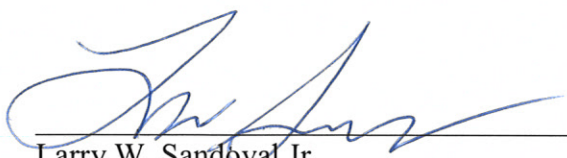


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Executive Summary

The Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes a new fee structure to meet current and anticipated future funding needs for managing campgrounds and high demand day use sites. Currently only two of its six campgrounds charge fees and no day use fees are charged. The current fee program revenues do not cover base maintenance costs for campgrounds or the Wolcott Day Use Site. Updating the fee structure will allow the CRVFO to proactively address current and future maintenance and capital improvement needs at its recreation sites. These maintenance and capital improvement needs vary from basic sanitation to developing facilities to handle high recreation use. With the increases to existing fees and implementing new fees, the CRVFO fees will remain less expensive than nearby private campgrounds and comparable to fees on nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation sites. The CRVFO has been very successful in getting appropriated dollars for capital improvements. In past years the CRVFO has been able to supplement user fees with appropriated funds to cover maintenance and some limited capital improvements. The BLM's fee collection authority allows for, and is intended to promote, recreation site users bearing a large portion of the costs associated with the sites they use. Undoubtedly appropriated funds will still be required for many large improvements, but the additional fee income would allow improvements to be implemented sooner and with a smaller burden on appropriated funds. Fees collected at these sites will stay within the CRVFO recreation program, providing direct benefits back to the users of the sites.

Introduction.

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004” (FLREA). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) originally began collecting fees for the recreational use of public lands under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976) – known as the “organic act.” The FLREA recognizes the BLM’s authority to collect an Expanded Recreation Amenity Fee for the recreational use of certain areas. FLREA allows collected Expanded Recreation Amenities Fees to be retained locally and outlines how revenues are to be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, visitor needs assessments, signs, habitat restoration, law enforcement related to public use and recreation, and direct operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program. Recreational use of campgrounds within the CRVFO is permitted through the Recreation Use Permit Program.

BLM guidelines require that each fee program have a business plan that thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in the Act. Business plans are to assist in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, cost of administering fee programs, and provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of the business plan is to serve as public notification of the objectives for use of recreation fee revenues and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives. This business plan is subject to public review and is the CRVFO’s official documentation in the event of an audit.

Background and Authorities.

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act 2004” (P.L.108-447). The authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection, are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 1976**, [Public Law 94-579], contains the BLM’s general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM’s authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004 as revised in 2014, repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced BLM’s authority to collect recreation fees in 2004. This current law authorizes BLM to collect recreation fees at sites that meet certain requirements, allows BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they were collected, and directs how BLM will manage and utilize these revenues. FLREA also established the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Pass Program.

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services to serve the diverse outdoor recreation demands of our visitors while helping them to maintain sustainable setting conditions needed to conserve public lands so the visitor’s desired recreation choices remain available. The BLM’s

goals for delivering recreation benefits from BLM-administered lands to the American people and their communities are:

- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities;
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources; and
- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.

This business plan will assist the CRVFO in meeting these visitor service goals. This plan covers the two previously authorized fee campgrounds operated by the CRVFO (Gypsum and Wolcott Campgrounds); other existing campgrounds (Catamount, Pinball, Upper and Lower Prince Creek, and Lyon's Gulch Campgrounds); group sites (Gypsum, Upper and Lower Prince Creek and Lyon's Gulch); and day use at the Wolcott Day Use Site (includes the boat ramp).

A. Colorado River Valley Field Office Campground Program

Administrative Unit.

The CRVFO manages approximately 567,000 surface acres of public lands in Eagle, Garfield, Mesa, Pitkin, and Routt counties in Colorado. The CRVFO is located in Colorado Congressional District 3 and includes the towns of Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, Aspen, Gypsum and Eagle in close proximity to BLM-managed lands.

Colorado River Valley Field Office Recreation Program and Visitation.

The CRVFO manages a diverse and extensive recreation and visitor services program. Recreational opportunities include: gold medal trout fishing, famed hunting, popular mountain biking, challenging rock climbing, and wide-ranging off-highway vehicle riding opportunities. These recreation resources are enjoyed by local residents, visitors from the Rocky Mountain region and people visiting the world-class tourist destinations of Vail and Aspen.

The White River National Forest, which is the most visited National Forest in the nation, borders much of the BLM-managed lands in the CRVFO and sees upwards of 13 million visitors each year. Visitation to the CRVFO is also high, totaling approximately 1 million visits in 2018. Visitation rates and visitor demands for a variety of recreation opportunities are outpacing the BLM and U.S. Forest Service ability to manage and maintain recreation sites and facilities.

Campground Program Results.

The goal of the campground program in the CRVFO is to meet demand for campground services as well as protect resources from visitor impacts. In order to maintain high quality facilities, the CRVFO is seeking to increase campground revenues. BLM campgrounds contribute to a business base for many local businesses, as the campgrounds and related public-land based recreation activities bring customers directly to the local community. Campers benefit by having:

- (1) a low-cost campsite or group campsite available for their use

- (2) improved recreation facilities (i.e. clean toilets)
- (3) outstanding facility-based recreation opportunities
- (4) a focused opportunity to enhance outdoor skills, build group and family relationships, and introduce youth to the natural world
- (5) recreation sites that support their enjoyment of surrounding BLM lands.

The local community benefits by:

- 1) support of business opportunities in the outdoor recreation sector (e.g. river running companies, guide services, mountain bike rental companies)
- 2) support of business opportunities in the general retail sector (e.g. grocery stores, outdoor gear stores)
- 3) support of business opportunities in the hospitality sector (e.g. restaurants)
- 4) support of local jobs and tax revenues for communities
- 5) improved recreation services and facilities
- 6) improved resource protection.

The BLM benefits by:

- 1) increased revenues for facility management and enhancement
- 2) improved protection of cultural and natural resources
- 3) ability to hire staff for maintenance and visitor services
- 4) lowering costs by developing improved business management systems (for example investing in double locking pipe safes to reduce collection costs)
- 5) better able to achieve recreation and visitor services management objectives and goals.

Applicable Plans.

Management in the CRVFO is guided by the 2015 Colorado River Valley Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP). Specific decisions were made concerning the campground program and can be found in the 2015 RMP under decision REC-MA-10. In summary, the decision decided what areas are closed to camping or restricted to designated sites to protect various resources. The closed areas include portions of: Fisher Creek (near Carbondale), Spring Creek (near Gypsum), Glenwood Canyon, Deep Creek (near Dotsero), Prince Creek (near Carbondale), the Eagle River corridor, Garfield Creek (near New Castle), Silt Mesa (near Silt), Thompson Creek (near Carbondale), Red Hill (near Carbondale), South Canyon (near Glenwood Springs) and portions of the Colorado River corridor. Camping is generally open on other BLM lands.

Description of the Current CRVFO Campground and Day Use Site Program with Proposed Changes.

Table 1. CRVFO Campgrounds and Recreation Sites with Proposed Changes.

Name	Location	No. of Ind. Sites	No. of Group Sites	Current Individual Site Fee	Proposed Changes
Gypsum Campground	Near Gypsum, CO	6	2	\$10.00 per site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20.00 per individual site ** • \$4.00 per person in group site with a \$40.00 minimum for 10 people
Wolcott Campground	Near Wolcott, Colorado	6	0	\$10.00 per site	\$20.00 per site
Catamount Campground	Colorado River Road MP 27	5	0	FREE	\$20.00 per site
Pinball Campground	Colorado River Road MP 19	1	0	FREE	\$20.00 per site with expansion to up to 4 individual sites
Lyon's Gulch Campground *	Colorado River Road MP 3.7	5	1	FREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20.00 per individual site • \$4.00 per person in group site with a \$40.00 minimum for 10 people
Prince Creek Campgrounds (Upper and Lower)	West of Carbondale, Colorado	10	2	FREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20.00 per individual site • \$4.00 per person in group site with a \$40.00 minimum for 10 people
Wolcott Day Use Site - currently 6 parking spaces, proposed to add approximately 24 more	Near Wolcott, Colorado			FREE	\$5.00 per vehicle per day

* Campground may be moved and expanded in the future.

** Individual sites can have up to 9 people, 2 vehicles and 2 tents per site.

Background of Campgrounds and Recreation Sites.

The campground fees for the Gypsum and Wolcott Campgrounds were originally implemented in October 2000 and have not increased since that time. The CRVFO has never charged fees for group site camping. In the nearly 20 years since the fees were established, costs for facility maintenance and patrols have consistently exceeded the total revenue collected from the sites. Under these conditions, the CRVFO cannot implement needed capital improvements without supplementing with appropriated funds. Needed capital improvements include installation of double locking pipe safes, replacement of two pit toilets, repair of eight pit toilets, gravelling of sites and roads, installation of tent pads, replacement of damaged picnic tables, replacement of rusted fire rings, and installation of new sites to accommodate increased use.

The Gypsum Campground. The Gypsum Campground is located along Interstate 70 and the Eagle River. In recent years, it has grown in popularity due to increased knowledge of the site. The campground contains six campsites with picnic tables and fire rings. The site also includes two restroom buildings, trash collection, and a day use picnic area. The BLM plans to convert the day use site into two campsites and a group site, making a future total of nine sites. Currently the fees are not covering the maintenance costs of the campground. Maintenance and improvement needs includes: gravel at campsites and on roadway, addition of two group sites, and replacement of aging pit toilets.

The Wolcott Recreation Site. The Wolcott Recreation Site is a very popular site in the CRVFO. It is primarily used for day use (river access, boat ramp, rock climbing, picnicking, and fishing) along the Eagle River. There is currently a camping fee for the campground and no day use fee for the boat ramp and day-use area. The day use site has one parking area with approximately six parking spaces and one boat ramp, and it is constantly congested. In the past several years the CRVFO has seen a large increase in day use, which has led to over-crowding and resource damage. Increased use has also imposed an unfunded strain on CRVFO maintenance staff and made it difficult for maintenance staff to keep up with basic sanitation at the facilities. Beginning in 2012, the BLM entered into a partnership with a permitted river guiding company to improve site conditions. Since then Timberline Tours has paid for trash collection service costs for most of the season to make the site more pleasant for their clients, which also helped the general recreating public. Their contribution has totaled approximately \$1200 per year. While this has been an effective short-term solution, it is not an equitable long-term solution.

Day-users park in the campground and along the entrance road that is shared with the campground. The CRVFO proposes the development of approximately 30 formal delineated parking spaces to accommodate the use. The current use numbers between May and September are an average of 71 vehicles per day based on traffic counter data, which doesn't include vehicles that parked along the adjacent Highway 6. The fee of \$5 per vehicle per day matches the parking fees at other similar river facilities managed by the adjacent BLM Kremmling Field Office and Eagle County. Funding from these fees would allow for increased staff visits and improved infrastructure to handle the use at the site.

The Pinball Campground. The Pinball Campground is a seldom used, one-site campground within the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area. The site includes a picnic table, metal fire ring, and a vault toilet. There is a large amount of parking, which allows for RVs to dry camp in the parking lot. The campground is underutilized because the boat ramp is 0.5 miles downstream. With the ability to collect fees, the CRVFO hopes to improve the campground area to include more campsites (up to 10 sites), relocate the boat ramp, and maintain the existing facilities. With expanded amenities, a nearby boat ramp, and separated parking, public use would likely increase.

Upper and Lower Prince Creek Campgrounds. The Upper and Lower Prince Creek Campgrounds was completed in 2018 and includes two small campgrounds within the Prince Creek corridor. These each have five individual sites and one group site for a total of 10 individual sites and two group sites. Charging fees will allow the CRVFO to provide maintenance and patrols in this area.

This area was popular with dispersed campers and is anticipated to be a very popular developed camping area requiring intensive maintenance.

The Lyon's Gulch Campground is a popular campground with five sites within the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area. The sites include picnic tables, metal fire rings, and a vault toilet. The Lyon's Gulch Recreation Site also includes a boat ramp and parking. In 2012, a mud slide impacted three camp sites. The situation now poses a public safety risk, so the CRVFO is currently evaluating an alternative location. The new campground location would include as many as 10 campsites, with one being a group site. The cost estimate for safer campsites, improved restroom, parking, and boat ramp, is projected to cost more than \$100,000. Under the current fee structure these costs would have to be covered through appropriated funds and Special Recreation Permit fees from commercial guiding (commercial river running, fishing guiding, etc.). A campground fee will allow for the users to contribute to the costs of maintenance and improvements.

The Catamount Campground is a popular campground with four sites within the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area. Many users camp at this location for either river trips or hunting trips. The campsites include picnic tables and metal fire rings. The site also includes a restroom, boat ramp, and parking. Historically, Catamount has been used for some camping and for launching boats to run the stretch of river downstream from the site. Eagle County purchased new river access upstream of the site. This has dramatically increased use as river runners and fishers use the site for both launching boats and for taking boats out from the stretch of river above Catamount. With campground user fees, the BLM could create a designated parking area separate from the campground and associated improvements.

B. Expenditures, Operating Costs and Fee Calculations.

The CRVFO maintains facilities/infrastructure that supports its campground operation. The largest annual expenses are labor costs for the bi-weekly (at a minimum) cleaning of each of the six campgrounds and their associated fire rings and toilets, and law enforcement patrols. Maintenance duties are performed by a seasonal workforce during the peak season and by permanent field office staff during off-peak times. Recreation staff are responsible for cleaning the campgrounds; maintaining the infrastructure in the campgrounds such as painting toilet buildings, repairing tables, replacing fire-rings; as well as completing campground collections. Landscaping work at the campgrounds is also performed by the recreation staff, including planting new trees and watering existing ones, controlling invasive weeds, and maintaining gravel in sites, walkways and roads. Garbage service is available at the two fee campgrounds. A local garbage disposal company has the contract for the campground dumpsters. Garbage service would be extended to other campgrounds if fees are approved and as conditions warrant. Toilet effluent is pumped as needed by another local contractor. The costs of cleaning and maintaining the campgrounds includes buying toilet paper, garbage bags, and cleaning supplies, as well as paying for garbage and sewage contracts.

The program also supports government vehicles and equipment used to support patrols, maintenance work, resource and visitor use monitoring, and law enforcement. Operating costs,

labor, and revenues are outlined in Tables 2 and 3 below. Table 2 and Graph 1 illustrate the current fee program and expenditures within existing fee sites and at current rates. Under the current fee structure the fee sites are not paying for themselves. The larger gap between revenues and expenditures can be seen in Table 3 and Graph 2 which includes the cost for maintaining all the other campgrounds and the Wolcott day use site. The fee revenues from our existing fee sites fall well short of covering CRVFO recreation program costs when these other non-fee sites are included in the analysis.

Table 2: Actual Basic Expenditures of Campground Fees in Current Fee Sites.

Fiscal Year	Staff Labor	Operations Costs	Total Annual Expenditures	Campground Fee Revenues	Net Gain/Loss
2008	\$4,782*	\$3,929*	\$8,711*	\$5,366	(\$3,345)
2009	\$4,930*	\$4,020*	\$8,950*	\$4,273	(\$4,677)
2010	\$5,082*	\$4,113*	\$9,195*	\$3,543	(\$5,652)
2011	\$5,239*	\$4,209*	\$9,448*	\$3,470	(\$5,978)
2012	\$5,402*	\$3,309*	\$8,711*	\$2,681	(\$6,030)
2013	\$5,569*	\$3,411*	\$8,980*	\$4,751	(\$4,229)
2014	\$5,741*	\$3,517*	\$9,258*	\$3,456	(\$5,802)
2015	\$5,918*	\$3,625*	\$9,543*	\$4,657	(\$4,886)
2016	\$6,102	\$3,738	\$9,840	\$4,717	(\$5,123)
2017	\$7,376	\$2,176	\$9,552	\$14,480**	\$4,928
2018	\$8,380	\$3,845	\$12,225	\$13,068**	\$843

**Estimated based on best available data.*

***The increased fee revenues are partially due to gradually increased usage but primarily to increased fee compliance at these sites. BLM law enforcement began checking individual fee envelopes and increased the number of citation in the campgrounds.*

Graph 1. Expenditures vs. Revenues at the Two Current Fee Sites.

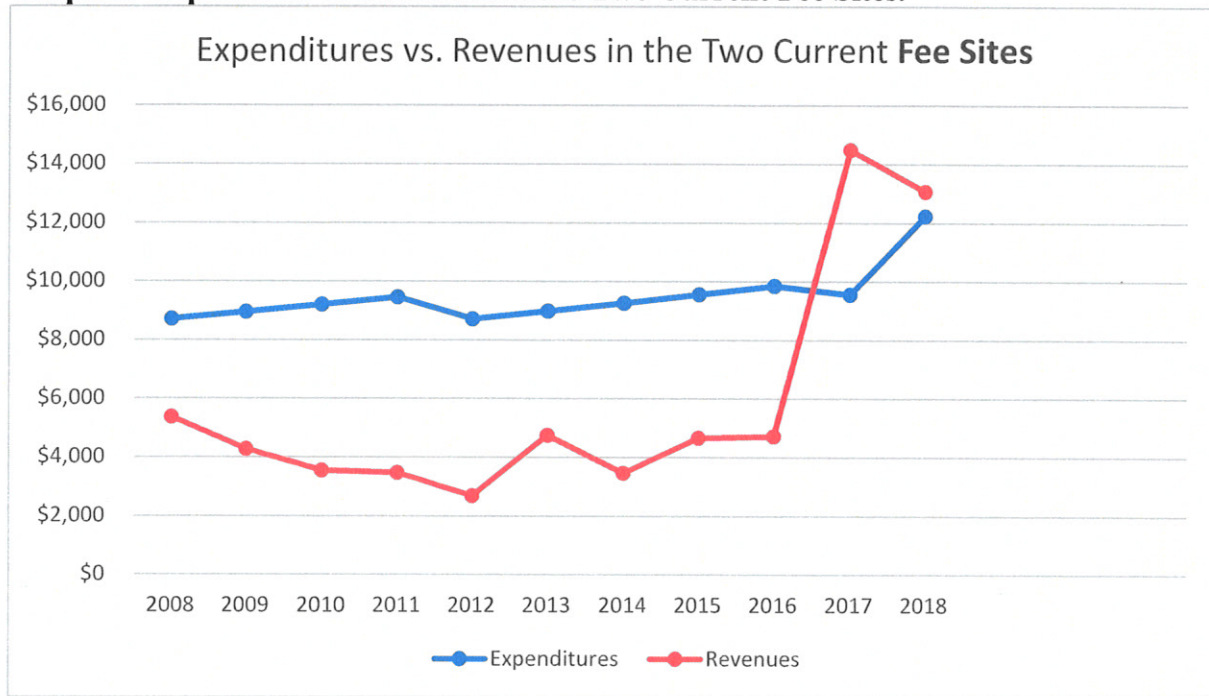


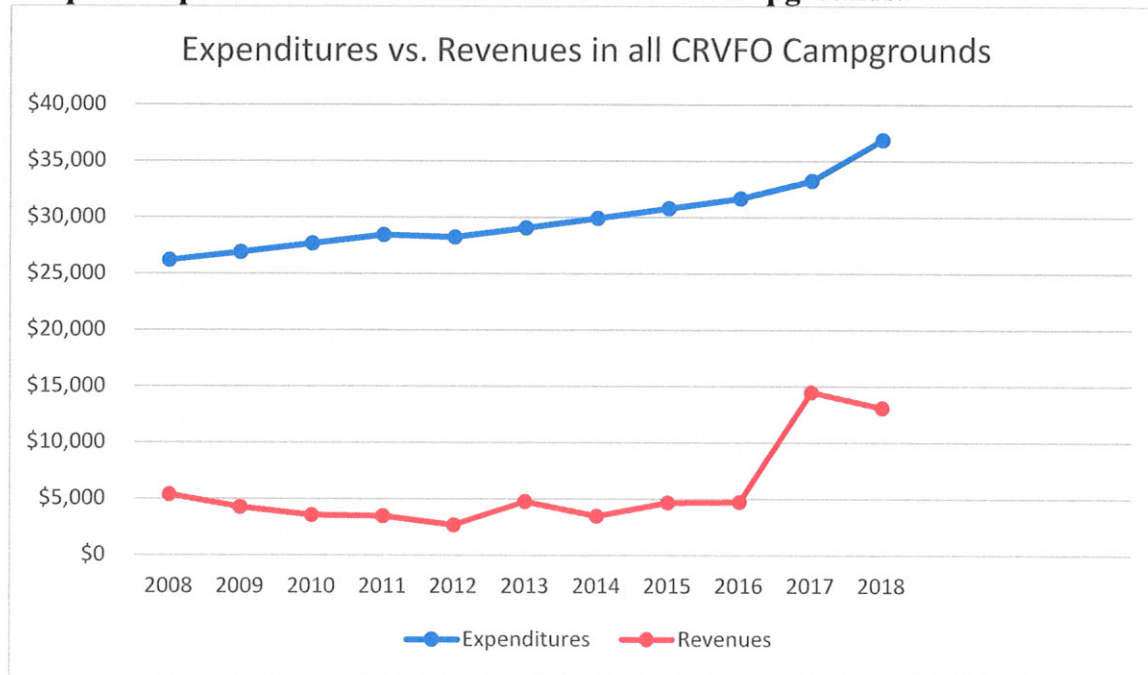
Table 3: Actual Basic Expenditures of Campground Fees in All CRVFO Campgrounds.

Fiscal Year	Staff Labor	Operations Costs	Total Annual Expenditures	Campground Fee Revenues	Net Gain/Loss
2008	\$20,656*	\$5,519*	\$26,175*	\$5,366	(\$20,809)
2009	\$21,295*	\$5,610*	\$26,905*	\$4,273	(\$22,632)
2010	\$21,954*	\$5,703*	\$27,657*	\$3,543	(\$24,114)
2011	\$22,633*	\$5,799*	\$28,432*	\$3,470	(\$24,962)
2012	\$23,333*	\$4,899*	\$28,232*	\$2,681	(\$25,551)
2013	\$24,055*	\$5,001*	\$29,056*	\$4,751	(\$24,305)
2014	\$24,799*	\$5,107*	\$29,906*	\$3,456	(\$26,450)
2015	\$25,566*	\$5,215*	\$30,781*	\$4,657	(\$26,124)
2016	\$26,356	\$5,328	\$31,684	\$4,717	(\$26,967)
2017	\$28,809	\$4,419	\$33,228	\$14,480	(\$18,748)
2018	\$31,319	\$5,558	\$36,878**	\$13,068	(\$23,809)

* Estimated based on best available data.

** These costs do not include the new Prince Creek campground completed late in 2018.

Graph 2. Expenditures vs. Revenues in All CRVFO Campgrounds.



Additional costs to the government of administering the campground program include managerial support, work by recreation planners and office overhead, including information services to the public. These costs are generally borne by the Recreation Resources Management Account (appropriated funds) or the Annual Operation & Maintenance Account (also appropriated funds) and are not reflected in the figures above as they are difficult to separate from other duties in managerial staff. The largest costs not reflected in these tables are capital improvements, which have traditionally been covered with appropriated funds. Table 4 provides an illustration of the scales of these costs. While labor and operations costs are in the thousands of dollars per year, capital improvements are in the tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars spread over the life of the facility. Replacement of a basic vault toilet alone can run upwards of \$45,000 with installation.

Table 4: Revenues and Expenditures with Capital Costs Under Current Fee Structure.

	Revenues	Operations Costs	Planned Capital Improvements	Total Costs	Net Gain / Loss	% covered by fee revenue
Per year average	\$5,860	\$29,903	\$40,000	\$69,903	(\$64,043)	~8%
Over ten years	\$58,600	\$299,030	\$400,000	\$699,030	(\$640,430)	~8%

Current BLM Campground Revenues.

Currently, campers at the four existing developed campgrounds where no fees are charged and users of the Wolcott Day Use site are being partially subsidized by those camping at the two campgrounds that charge fees.

Future Expenditures for On-going Program Services.

Priority expenditures for the campground program include all aspects of maintaining current levels of service to campers. This includes maintaining a standard of cleanliness that would promote visitor health and safety. The level of service includes on-site patrol and fee collection, government vehicle costs, regular maintenance of campground facilities including the toilets, fire grills, and campground roads and trails. Table 2 above illustrates that these basic costs can, in good years, be covered through the fees from the sites. However as Table 3 shows, the sites with no fees are heavily subsidized through appropriated money.

Future Expenditures for Program Infrastructure.

There are several critically needed unfunded capital improvements that are a priority for CRVFO campgrounds. These include new double vault restrooms at Catamount, Gypsum, and Wolcott, a second boat ramp at the popular Wolcott day use area to separate commercial and private boating use, an enlarged and improved parking area for Wolcott, improvement of a group camping area at the Gypsum Campground, and the construction of a new Lyon's Gulch campground away from the current boat ramp to separate uses and move overnight use away from a potential flooding hazard. Conservative cost estimates put these costs over \$400,000.

Costs of Operating the Campground Program.

Both appropriated funds and campground fee funds are used to cover the costs of operating the CRVFO's campground program. Prior to 2002, appropriated funds covered the entire cost of operating the program with far fewer facilities and staff. In 2002, campground fees became available to supplement appropriated funds. Table 3 shows that the total campground program, including non-fee sites, is still substantially supported by appropriated funds. The CRVFO receives approximately \$40,000 for its recreation maintenance budget. All of that money is absorbed by the cost of maintaining these sites. Any expenses beyond what that maintenance budget and the campground fee money can bear (usually approximately \$25,000 when you include capital improvements) comes from the Field Office recreation budget or limited deferred maintenance funding. Conversely Table 2 shows that within our fee sites operating costs are nearly, although not completely, covered through user fees. These operations costs do not include needed and planned capital improvements. As Table 4 shows, when factoring in the planned capital improvements and with fees remaining unchanged over the next 10 years, the percent of costs for the campground program covered through user fees drops to below 10%. Anticipated appropriated fund reductions in the CRVFO fiscal year 2019 and 2020 budgets for recreation management are expected to result in increased utilization of fee funds to cover program costs in 2019 and beyond.

If the campground program were to be supported by fee revenue alone (that is, without appropriated funding), the camping fee would be insufficient to cover expenditures of not only capital improvements but even of basic program costs. With no additional fee revenue and no appropriated funds, operation costs would be reduced to cover only basic cleaning and campground services in only the fee sites. Very limited or no capital improvements could occur under this scenario.

Planned Fee Adjustments Based on the Consumer Price Index.

None of the costs associated with the campground program are fixed. As inflation increases, the costs of labor, materials, contractors, and supplies all increase at a commensurate rate. It can be difficult to calculate these increases; however the BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) both use a Consumer Price Index (CPI) as an estimate in other programs. The BLM uses the Implicit Price Deflator Index from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis to calculate periodic fee adjustments in the Special Recreation Permit Program and CPW uses a targeted CPI from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the Denver-Metro area in calculating fees for their out of state hunting licenses.

To keep up with rising costs, the CRVFO proposes the following system to adjust fees in the future. BLM would implement the new fee structure as proposed and then the following year would begin using the Western U.S. CPI to make future fee adjustments. The monthly Western U.S. CPI is published at the following website: <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/regional-resources.htm>. The Western U.S. CPI targets the entire western U.S. outside of the large metro areas that have their own CPIs calculated separately. While this isn't a CPI for only Western Colorado, it does target the rural west and is the closest CPI that would represent the CRVFO region.

A yearly average of the Western U.S. CPI is published every January. BLM would begin utilizing the yearly average of the Western U.S. CPI the year after the fees are implemented. When the increase or decrease reached a one-dollar increment for per person fees and a two-dollar increment for campsite fees, the fees would be adjusted accordingly. For example, with a \$20.00 fee for individual campsites, a 10% increase in the Western U.S. CPI would lead to a two-dollar increase in fees to \$22.00. Typically, the Western U.S. CPI increases approximately 3% a year. Thus it would likely take 3-4 years to increase the fees by two dollars. For group sites, a 25% increase in the Western U.S. CPI would lead to a one-dollar increase. This would mean that if the Western U.S. CPI continued at 3% per year, groups sites would likely see a price increase from \$4 to \$5 per person per night in 6-7 years. This would create a more sustainable and consistent funding source that would increase assurances for users that the program could continue to provide regular maintenance and necessary capital improvements into the future. BLM would return to the BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council after each fee increase (approximately every 4-5 years) to update the RAC on successes and challenges in using the Western U.S. CPI.

Fair Market Value Fee Calculation Method.

The Fair Market Assessment approach is used to calculate the proposed fee changes. The Fair Market Assessment approach compares the fees charged at similar campgrounds in the area that are being administered by federal and state land management agencies. In addition, fees charged by several privately operated campgrounds are also included for comparison. Table 5 presents the individual site campground fee at various locations.

Table 5: A Comparison of 2018 Campground Fees in the Area.

Campground Name	Agency	Campground Fee(s)	Amenities Offered
Public Campgrounds			
Current BLM campground fees	CRVFO BLM	\$10 per fee site. No entrance or reservation fee. Most sites are free.	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, tent pads, patrols.
Redstone	White River National Forest	\$28 - \$34 per site	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, host services, water
Sweetwater Lake	White River National Forest	\$8 per site	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, patrols
Trappers Lake Campgrounds	White River National Forest	\$20 per site plus \$6 per site for each additional vehicle past one	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, host services, water
Fulford Cave	White River National Forest	\$8 per site	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays
Meadow Lake	White River National Forest	\$20 per site, \$5 day use fee	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays
Meadow Ridge	White River National Forest	\$20 per site, \$5 day use fee	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays
Difficult Group Site	White River National Forest	\$85 per night, up to 30 people	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, water
Bogan Flats Group Site	White River National Forest	\$135 per night, up to 50 people	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills, water
Pumphouse Campground	Kremmling BLM	\$10 per site	Toilets, picnic tables, fire grills
Day Use Areas			
Chapman Reservoir	White River National Forest	\$6 per vehicle	Developed parking, toilets, boat ramp
Pumphouse Day Use Area	Kremmling BLM	\$5 per vehicle	Developed parking, toilets, boat ramp
State Bridge Day Use Area	Kremmling BLM	\$5 per vehicle	Developed parking, toilets, boat ramp
Radium Day Use Area	Kremmling BLM	\$5 per vehicle	Developed parking, toilets, boat ramp
Privately Owned Campgrounds			
River Dance RV Park	private	\$39 for RV (2 people) \$25-\$45 for tent (2 people) \$5 each additional person	Flush toilets, showers, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, water, electricity
KOA Silt	private	\$71 for RV (4 people) \$35 for tent (4 people) \$5 each additional person	Flush toilets, showers, picnic tables, fire grills,

Campground Name	Agency	Campground Fee(s)	Amenities Offered
			parking bays, water, electricity
Ami's Acres	private	Tent sites \$28 per vehicle and two people, \$3 per each additional person	Flush toilets, showers, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, water, electricity
Glenwood Canyon Resort	private	\$65 per night, 3 night minimum (4 people) for tent \$83 per night, 3 night minimum (4 people) for RV	Flush toilets, showers, picnic tables, fire grills, parking bays, water, electricity, pool

¹ Does not include taxes or reservation fees.

The analysis of the value of the CRVFO BLM campground fee shows that the proposed \$20.00 rate for individual sites would be somewhere in the middle range of fees charged for camping at other nearby public campgrounds and substantially lower than private campgrounds. The proposed fee structure for parking is very similar to other federal and county recreational parking fees. The proposed fee structure for group camping is substantially lower than both other public and privately owned group campgrounds in the area. The proposed addition of a Western U.S. Consumer Price Index to help keep pace with rising costs in labor and supplies would help BLM CRVFO keep pace with future increases in labor, management and maintenance costs.

C. Public Outreach.

Pursuant to section 4 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, the CRVFO provided the public with opportunities to comment on proposed fee changes and the intended use of fees collected. The CRVFO conducted the following outreach efforts:

Completed:

- A public comment period on the draft business plan, announced by a news release, ran from December 11, 2018 to January 25, 2019.
- The public could view the draft business plan on the BLM CRVFO website.
- Public notices were posted at each recreation site during the 2019 use season.
- The CRVFO contacted local special recreation permit holders who might be affected.
- Local governments were contacted and both Eagle County and Pitkin County provided letters of support for the fee increases.

Before fee implementation the CRVFO will also:

- Publish a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* (est. Jan. 2020)
- Post the published *Federal Register* notice at each of the proposed fee sites when they open in the spring of 2020 (est. April-May 2020)

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act mandates that a Resource Advisory Council; approve all BLM recreation fee proposals. The BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council is a 15-member citizen advisory panel that provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues for public lands in northwest Colorado. The BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council approved the proposed fee structure on June 13, 2019.

D. Conclusion.

Overview

The CRVFO proposes a new campground fee structure to meet anticipated future needs. Currently only two existing campgrounds charge a minimal camping fee. The current fee program revenues do not cover the current base labor, management and maintenance costs for all campgrounds and the Wolcott Day Use Site. Updating the fee structure will allow the CRVFO to meet labor, management and maintenance costs and may also offset some capital improvement costs. Even with the new fee structure, the CRVFO campground fees will still be less than nearby private campgrounds and comparable to campgrounds on nearby U.S. Forest Service lands. Fees collected at these sites will stay within the CRVFO campground program, providing direct benefits back to the customers of the sites.

Anticipated Results of Adding New Fee Sites.

Benefits to Recreational Users. The fees collected would ensure that recreation facilities would be adequately maintained leading to improved recreation opportunities for visitors. In addition, some revenues could be used to gradually improve campground and day-use site infrastructure as part of routine upgrades or to expand visitor facilities.

Benefits to the Local Economy. As explained above, the local economy is heavily dependent upon tourism. Many tourists prefer to camp at public campgrounds near where they engage in other recreation activities. Visitors also rely on BLM campgrounds because of the high cost of hotel accommodations in the nearby resort communities.

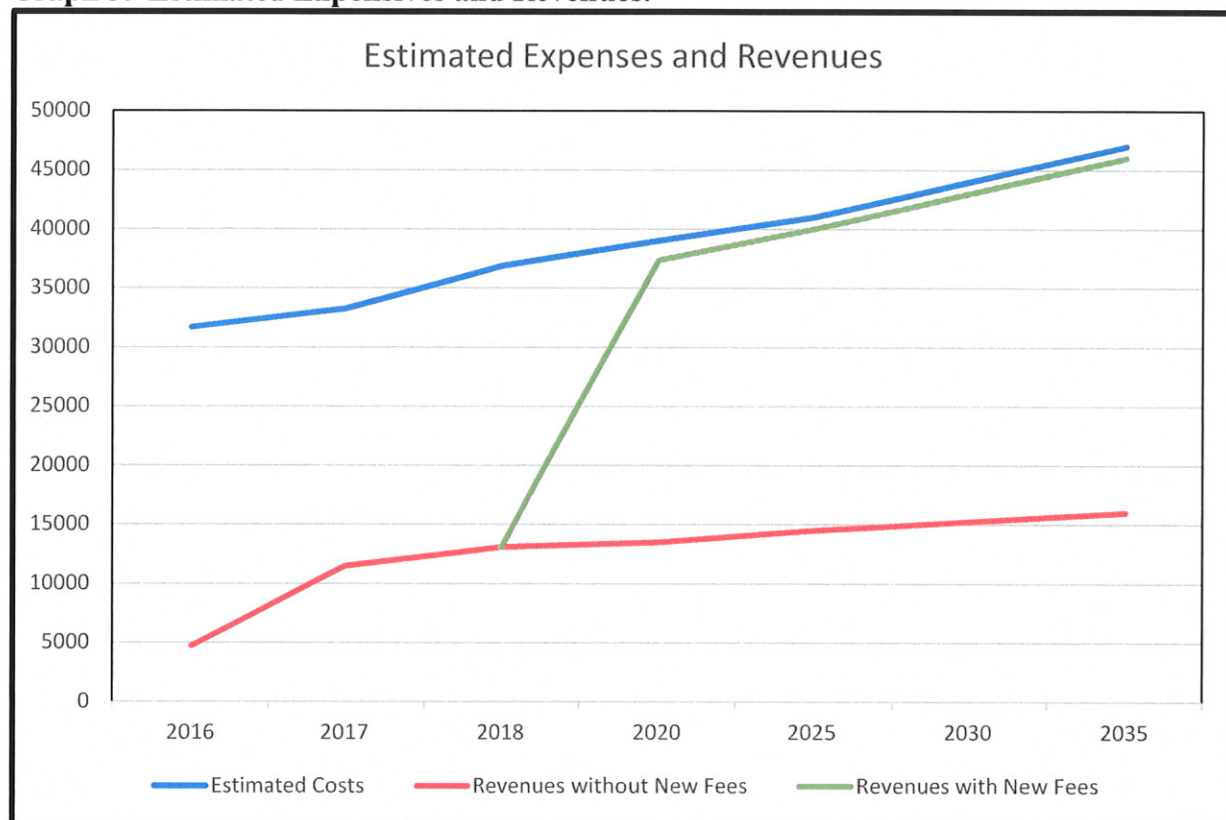
Benefits to the Environment. By providing campgrounds for visitors, the BLM is able to limit the extent of visitor impacts as well as protect natural and cultural resources. Human waste is contained and processed properly at restrooms. Garbage is collected and disposed of at a proper facility. Campfires are contained in metal rings, enhancing fire safety; ash is disposed of properly.

Socioeconomic Impacts, including Low-Income Populations. Specific socioeconomic data on BLM campgrounds is unknown. However it is known that visitors to BLM CRVFO campgrounds do contribute to local economies through their purchases for food, retail items, gas and other services.

Low-income populations will maintain access to local recreation opportunities if BLM maintains campgrounds that offer an alternative to high cost hotel accommodations in the nearby resort communities.

Funding Balance. Graph 3 shows an estimate of how the addition of fees at the six proposed recreation sites would impact revenues of the recreation program as compared to estimated costs. This assumes the CRVFO's 27.5% average occupancy rate is maintained. This excludes the estimated long term capital improvement costs, which would still largely be borne through appropriated funds, although a larger portion of special recreation permit fees could be used for site improvements. The graphs also don't include the estimated revenues from the proposed reserveable group sites. In other areas, reserveable sites of any kind have proven popular. If occupancy rates for the group sites were 35% with group sizes of 10 on average, an additional estimated \$8,000 in revenue per year would be expected. This additional funding could be applied toward site improvements over time. The new fees would be spent on continuing existing services as outlined in Section B. Also any fees beyond the basic

Graph 3. Estimated Expenses and Revenues.



Anticipated Result of Not Increasing Fees or Adding the New Fee Sites to the Fee Program.

Negative Impacts to Recreational Users. The BLM campgrounds are reaching an age where replacement costs of infrastructure will be increasing. For instance, several pit toilets are reaching the end of their service life and need to be replaced. The current fee structure is a long way from meeting the replacement cost of campground facilities. The proposed fee structure increase would be partially used to cover replacement costs of their infrastructure. A failure to add the campground fee would mean that aging infrastructure likely would not be replaced in a timely manner to maintain site quality.

Negative Impacts to Local Economy. Not implementing the proposed fee structure could lead to an erosion of visitor services, such as cleaning and maintenance of campgrounds. This would eventually impact the recreation sector of the local economy, and may result in people deciding that they are likely not visit BLM lands and the surrounding communities. Should people be less likely to recreate in the area because of poor or unmaintained facilities, the local economy may suffer.

Negative Impacts to the Environment. Failure to maintain the campground program would result in the reestablishment of many of the negative impacts to the environment that provided the impetus to the campground program. For example, should the BLM be unable to regularly service toilets along the river, people would be less likely to utilize toilets. Additionally, recreation maintenance staff conduct site cleanup and weed control; a fee decrease would mean that such work would be reduced and could lead to negative impacts to the environment.

Socioeconomic Impacts, including Low-Income Populations. Public camping provides a low cost lodging alternative for users visiting the area. Were fees to erode such that the group sites could not be maintained or serviced, the group site opportunity might have to be curtailed. Failure to offer these low-cost group sites to youth groups, scout groups and other such assemblages could have negative impacts on lower-income populations.

E. Colorado River Valley Field Office Recommendation.

After careful consideration of future recreation facility operating costs and the proposed fee structure designed to help meet those operating costs, the BLM CRVFO recommends:

- 1) increasing fees at the Gypsum and Wolcott Campgrounds,
- 2) collecting fees at other developed campgrounds, and
- 3) adding parking fees at Wolcott Day Use Site.

Fees would be charged as outlined in Tables 1 and 2 above with the addition of using the Western US CPI to calculate future increases. BLM would return to the BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council after each fee increase (approximately every 3-5 years) to update the BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council on successes and challenges in the program.

This proposal directly implements the BLM Colorado Recreation Strategy “Connecting with Communities” goals of:

- 1) identifying recreation areas/sites connected with gateway communities to prioritize funding, partnerships and management;
- 2) prioritizing recreation proposals that are mutually beneficial to public land resources and the surrounding community;
- 3) sustaining the distinctive desired recreational settings of the surrounding; and
- 4) setting an annual program of work that puts fiscal and human capital resources where they are most needed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Maps of Proposed Fee Area Boundaries
- Appendix 2: Photographs of Existing and Proposed Fee Sites
- Appendix 3: Fee Revenue Expenditure Sheet
- Appendix 4: Non-Fee Revenue Expenditure Sheet
- Appendix 5: BLM Northwest Resource Advisory Council Review Checklist
- Appendix 6: Public Involvement Form
- Appendix 7: Support Letters