



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

## **Business Plan for BLM Vernal Recreation Fee Sites**



**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Utah  
Green River District  
Vernal Field Office  
July, 2018**

**Business Plan for  
BLM Vernal Recreation Fee Sites**

**RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS and APPROVALS**

Recommended by:

/s/ Rene' Arce 7/30/2018

Date

Outdoor Recreation Planner


Reviewed by:

 8/2/2018

Date

*Clint*  
Vernal Field Office Manager

Approved By:

 8/3/2018

Date

Green River District Office Manager

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 Recreation Sites in the Vernal Field Office.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	5
Background and Authorities.....	6
I. Introduction to the Field Office Recreation Fee Program.....	7
A. Administrative Unit.....	7
B. Outdoor Recreation Prospectus of the BLM Vernal Field Office.....	8
C. Vernal Field Office Recreation Program.....	8
D. Vernal Field Office Recreational Visitation.....	9
E. Visitation Trends.....	11
F. Anticipated Future Use Levels.....	11
G. Visitor Demographics.....	13
H. Applicable Resource Management Plan.....	15
I. Applicable BLM Directives.....	15
J. Partnerships.....	16
II. Description of Existing Fee Sites.....	16
A. Existing Fee Sites.....	16
B. Proposed New Fee Sites.....	16
C. Future Fee Sites (Not Constructed).....	17
D. Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Rates.....	18
III. Expenditures and Operating Costs.....	20
A. Expenditures and Operating Costs.....	20
B. Maintenance.....	21
C. Deferred Maintenance.....	21
IV. Revenues.....	21
A. America the Beautiful Interagency Passes.....	21
B. Revenues for the Past 5 years.....	21
C. Projected Expanded Amenity Fee Annual Revenues.....	22
D. Projected Standard Amenity Fee Annual Revenues.....	23
V. Priorities for Future Expenditures.....	24
A. Future Expenditures for On-Going Program Services.....	24
B. Staffing Requirements necessary to Implement Components Outlined in This Business Plan.....	24
C. Future Expenditures for Program Infrastructure.....	26
D. Determination of Recreation Fee Rates.....	27

E. Impacts from Implementing Recreation Fee Rates vs. Not Implementing Fee Proposal .....	28
F. Public Outreach.....	32
Appendix .....	34
A .....	34
B. Proposed new developed recreation sites.....	34
C. References.....	35

## **BLM Vernal Recreation Fee Sites**

### **WBS# LVRD UT32 0000: BLM Vernal Recreation Fee Sites**

#### **Executive Summary**

The *BLM Vernal Field Office Business Plan* was prepared in order to address the Vernal Field Office's (VFO) desire to develop and improve recreation facilities and services across the field office. The VFO seeks to provide recreational users with more developed overnight and day use site opportunities. With the concern of human health and safety, the program also seeks to provide users with facilities that are safe, routinely cleaned, and maintained.

Currently, the VFO has two recreation fee sites in operation: Indian Crossing and Bridge Hollow Campgrounds. Both are located in Browns Park in the northeastern corner of the field office within a few miles of one another, and adjacent to the Historic John Jarvie homestead. In an effort to accommodate current and anticipated recreation use as well as to provide more recreation opportunities across the field office and to build a robust, self-sustaining recreation fee site program, the VFO is recommending the following fee increases and new fees:

#### **Fee Increases:**

- Expanded Amenity Recreation Fee (at existing overnight fee sites)
  - Indian Crossing and Bridge Hollow Campgrounds – from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per night, Group from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per night.
- In addition the VFO seeks the permission to institute an automatic increase of \$5.00 per night for each Expanded Amenity Recreation Fee Site rate (both existing and future) to include single sites, group sites, yurt, and John Jarvie Bunkhouse if the Consumer Price Index increases by 20% from the date of approval of this Plan.

#### **New Fees:**

- Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees (at existing and future overnight fee sites)
  - Campgrounds: Pelican Lake, McCoy Flats, Cliff Ridge, Docs Beach, Individual: \$10.00 per night, Group: \$35.00 per night
  - John Jarvie Historic Site-Bunk House - \$60.00 per night
  - Split Mountain Yurt - \$50.00 per night
- Standard Amenity Recreation Fees (at developed day use sites and trailheads)\*
  - Existing Sites - McCoy Flats Trailhead, Pelican Lake Day Use/Boat Ramp, Dinosaur Trackway Trailhead, Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead
  - Proposed Sites – LaPoint Trailhead, Dino Boat Ramp (Put-In), Dino Boat Ramp (Take-Out)
    - No Minimum Use Fee: The Vernal Field Office proposes that users pay what they feel their recreation experience is worth to them specifically for the use of these developed recreation sites.

Giving each recreationist the ability to choose for themselves what value they place on their recreational experience would allow for each individual to place a monetary value based on a feeling rather than a regulated set fee which would likely lead to individuals feeling more of a connection to the experience as well as the area of public land they are recreating in. In addition this would allow for all demographic groups as well as user groups to contribute either what they can or what they feel they should in return for the use of BLM recreation facilities and sites.

\*See Table 9-11 for more information regarding each of the existing and proposed sites.

Each of the proposed expanded amenity fee sites will have the following expanded amenity facility requirements: vault toilets, picnic tables, fire rings, tent/trailer spaces, access roads, collection of fees by an employee, and reasonable visitor protection, (see table 11 for expanded amenity). Each of the proposed standard amenity fee sites will have the following standard amenity facility requirements: designated developed parking, toilets, trash receptacle, interpretive sign/exhibit/kiosk, picnic tables, and security services.

After careful consideration of the fee program, anticipated revenue estimates and expenditures outlined in the BLM Vernal Recreation Fee Sites Business Plan, the BLM VFO recommends increasing/instituting the fees listed above. These fees are necessary in order to provide safe and high quality experiences for recreational users, while also increasing recreation opportunities in the area. It is critical to maintain a positive fund balance in the recreation fee accounts, including that derived from recreation fee sites, so that the BLM can provide required services, quickly address threats to public health and safety, and allocate some revenue for future investments in recreation fee site infrastructure. In normal budget years, regular non-fee program appropriated funds are not available for seasonal employee labor, on-going purchasing, or project work until more than half of the fiscal year has elapsed. A positive fund balance, or working capital fund, is necessary for the recreation program to provide program services to recreation fee site users throughout the year.

The recreation fee site structure also seeks to consider the replacement costs of infrastructure, specifically for deferred maintenance. As the Vernal recreation fee sites age, and as the demand for them grows, the deferred maintenance needs increase. The newly proposed expanded and standard amenity sites in this Plan are in areas that are seeing increased dispersed camping pressure. Fees are necessary in order to prevent user conflict, resource damage due to over use of the area by dispersed camping, and to provide higher quality of visitor services.

Instituting these new fees, constructing new campgrounds, trailheads, and yurt camping opportunities serves the American family by providing them with safe, high quality and unique recreational opportunities on their public lands. Users will be provided with high quality campgrounds and trailheads that are clean, well-supplied and maintained, safe, and have direct access to premier hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, and off highway vehicle (OHV) use areas. Additionally, this plan promotes job creation because the act of increasing/requiring new fees allows the Vernal Field Office to hire employees to clean, supply, maintain, and make contact with the public utilizing these recreation fee sites. Also, the construction of the new campgrounds, day use sites, and yurt will provide both short term and long term job creation.

## Background and Authorities

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004 FLREA guidelines, BLM Manual 2930, and 2930-1 Handbook require that each fee program have a business plan which thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in the Act. Business plans are to assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, cost of administering fee programs, outline how fees will be used, and provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of the plans 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 Vernal Field Offices' official documentation in the event of an audit.

In the VFO, recreation fee revenues are deposited in the Vernal Recreation Fee Sites account (LVRDUT320000). These deposits currently include revenues from individual campsites. This Business Plan outlines these current, and potential future sources of revenue, (see tables 15a-c). Special Recreation Permits (SRP's) generate separate land use fees and are deposited in account (LVRDUT230000). The SRP business plan was completed in 2014.

The authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection for campgrounds and recreation sites are:

**The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 1976**, [Public Law 94-579], contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Sections 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the secretary of the interior to regulate through permits or other instruments of 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**, 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 issue special recreation permits (SRP) and charge a SRP fee in connection with the permit issuance, 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.

**Code of Federal Regulations**, Title 43, Part 2930 (43 CFR 2930), contains the regulations governing BLM's recreation permitting programs.

This business plan has also been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Manual 2930
- BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (2930-1 Handbook)
- BLM Utah Instruction Memorandum UT 2007-056: Fee Site Business Plan Development and Business Plan Outline
- BLM Utah Instruction Memorandum UT 2013-037: Utah Recreation Fee Program Toolbox

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services in order to serve diverse recreational opportunities while also maintaining sustainable conditions of public lands. The BLM's goals for delivering recreation opportunities on BLM-administered lands benefits the American people and their communities by:

- Improving access to appropriate recreation opportunities
- Ensuring a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources; and
- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.
- Serving the American Family by being good neighbors, supporting traditional land uses such as grazing, and providing access to hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities.

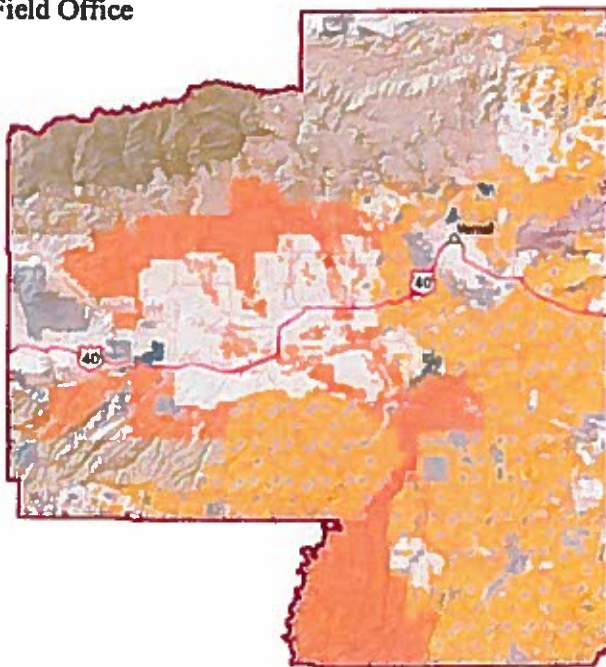
This Business Plan will assist the Vernal Field Office (VFO) in meeting these visitor service goals. This plan outlines all current fees generated at existing and proposed new fee sites as well as how these fees are presently spent and how they will be spent in the future, in order to enhance the experience of users at current and future recreation fee sites within the VFO.

## I. Introduction to the Field Office Recreation Fee Program

### A. Administrative Unit

The VFO is a component of the Green River District, and is the administrative unit responsible for the management of the BLM administered lands along both the Green and White rivers in northeastern Utah. There are over 5.5 million acres within the boundary of the VFO, of which 1.7 million acres (approximately 31 percent) are BLM-managed surface lands. The boundary of the VFO includes Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties. The entire field office is located within Utah's 1<sup>st</sup> congressional district.

Map 1 - Vernal Field Office



## B. Outdoor Recreation Prospectus of the BLM Vernal Field Office

The Vernal Office is situated within the Uinta Basin, part of the Colorado Plateau and Colorado River drainage. Within this geographic area, the unique landscape includes the steep vegetated canyons of the Book Cliffs, east-to-west oriented Uintah Mountain Range, arid lands throughout, and the Green and White River systems. These natural landscapes offer spectacular contrasts in landscape that are very scenic and more importantly desirable for outdoor recreationists. The wide range of landscapes provide almost unlimited recreation opportunities for outdoor recreation meaning that the potential for rapid growth of the recreation industry is high.

Outdoor recreation activities within the Field Office are widely known to local communities and are an important way of life to these communities. The major cities (Vernal, Duchesne, and Roosevelt) are fairly rural with relatively low populations when compared to cities within Salt Lake, and Utah Counties. Much of the current BLM outdoor recreation infrastructure, such as campgrounds, trailheads, day use sites, and river programs, have been developed to accommodate current use of these recreation areas. However, the VFO encompasses a substantially busy travel corridor. The intersection of US 191 and US 40 sees travelers going to and coming from several national destinations including but not limited to, Dinosaur National Monument, Yellowstone National Park, Jackson Wyoming, Denver Colorado, and potentially all of the Big 5 National Parks in Utah. Due to this busy travel corridor and given the unique and underutilized natural resources of the area, and more importantly the close proximity to the most populated counties in the State, the potential for and probability of an outdoor recreation expansion to the VFO is a valid and expected scenario. Due to the potential rapid increase of outdoor recreation within the VFO the proactive planning of future recreation infrastructure is crucial for the BLM's mission to provide access to renewable multiple uses on public lands.

The VFO will take a proactive approach towards enhancing access to traditional recreation opportunities, like hunting and fishing, while also providing diverse recreation opportunities by participating in and researching the latest recreation activities in order to implement these programs throughout the VFO. Relatively young and new recreation activities such as bike-packing, hut-camping, bushcrafting, eco-touring, UTV, OHV racing, and downhill mountain biking will be prioritized for future recreation development on BLM lands while working with interested user groups. These efforts will benefit the general public and community as a whole both economically and socially by providing diverse and sustainable recreation opportunities.

In addition to providing the appropriate infrastructure, it will be crucial for the BLM to provide the appropriate staffing in order to complete the required design, development, monitoring, and operation & maintenance of current and future developed recreation infrastructure outlined within this business plan. The success and environmental sustainability of all developed future recreation use within the BLM largely depends on these careful planning measures outlined within this business plan and should be viewed as a crucial component of this plan.

## C. Vernal Field Office Recreation Program

The VFO offers a great variety of recreational opportunities some of which include backpacking, boating (canoeing, kayaking, and rafting), camping, dirt biking, enjoying natural and cultural features, fishing, four wheel driving, hiking, horseback riding, hang gliding, hunting, mountain biking, operation of OHV's, rock climbing, and scenic driving. The BLM manages recreational use of public lands through three different basic units of recreation management: the Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), the Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA), and public lands not designated as recreation management areas (IM No. 2001-004). An SRMA is an area where recreation is emphasized. SRMAs are defined as areas that require a recreation investment, where more intensive recreation management is needed and where recreation is a principal management objective. The VFO manages seven such SRMAs including:

- Blue Mountain SRMA (42,729 acres) managed for OHV use, special recreational activities (e.g., hang-gliding, rock climbing), and competitive events.
- Browns Park (including the Upper Green River Corridor), SRMA (18,490 acres), offering a wide variety of land and water opportunities including the recreational activities on Upper Green River Corridor.
- Fantasy Canyon SRMA (69 acres) offering opportunities for self-guided touring and hiking.



- Nine Mile Canyon SRMA (44,168 acres) managed to protect its high-value cultural and scenic qualities.
- Pelican Lake SRMA (1,014 acres) offering water based recreational opportunities. Portions of the Pelican Lake SRMA overlap BOR withdrawn lands requiring further interagency coordination on all new recreation proposals occurring within this overlapping boundary.
- Red Mountain-Dry Fork SRMA (24,285 acres) providing opportunities of OHV and non-motorized trail activities.
- White River SRMA (2,831 acres) offering water based recreational opportunities.

An ERMA is an area that requires specific management consideration in order to address recreation use, demand or program investments. Within an ERMA, recreation is generally unstructured and dispersed, requires minimal recreation-related investments, and has minimal regulatory constraints. Detailed planning is not usually required of these areas. The VFO has approximately 1,566,414 acres that would be considered part of the ERMA.

Other major outdoor recreation attractions located within the VFO boundary but managed by the other agencies or private land owners include:

- Ashley National Forest (USFS)
- High Uinta’s Wilderness Area (USFS)
- Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (NRA)(USFS)
- Red Fleet, Starvation, and Steinaker State Parks (UT-DNR)
- Dinosaur Monument (NPS)
- Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery (FWS)
- Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge (FWS)
- Ouray National Wildlife Refuge (FWS)
- Utah Field House of Natural History State Park Museum (UT-DNR)
- Dry Fork Canyon McConkie Ranch Petroglyphs (Private)  
Section A of the Green River (USFS)

#### D. Vernal Field Office Recreational Visitation

The BLM maintains estimated visitor use data in the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS). According to the most recent RMIS data, recreational visitation to BLM lands managed by the VFO is moderate for the state of Utah, totaling over 428,896 visits during the 2017 fiscal year (FY 2017). Historically, visits recorded in RMIS have been recorded through a variety of methods including: general estimation, BLM traffic counters (TRAFx), county traffic counters. In 2013, the VFO recreation staff installed traffic counters at the majority of the developed recreation sites within the urban interface which are areas of public land adjacent to populated areas. The traffic counters were located at the primary entrances into the recreation sites or at other locations in order to minimize other non-recreational traffic. Visitation levels and primary activities are correlated with the recreation sites existing within SRMAs and ERMA in the following tables.

**Table 1: Blue Mountain SRMA recreation sites and visitation**

Blue Mountain SRMA		Visits	Visitor Days
Cliff Ridge Hang Glide Site	Specialized Sport Site	680	901
Dispersed-Blue	Dispersed Use	986	82
Primitive Campsites	Primitive Campsite	516	932
Musket Shot Spring Overlook	Other	79,578	2,029
<b>Total</b>		<b>81,760</b>	<b>3,944</b>

**Table 2: Browns Park (Upper Green River) SRMA recreation sites and visitation**

Browns Park SRMA	Visits	Visitor Days
------------------	--------	--------------

Primitive Campsites	Primitive Campsite	11,655	6,045
Bridge Hollow Campground	Campground	8,136	2,712
Indian Crossing Campground	Campground	5,735	1,912
Dispersed-Browns Park	Dispersed Use	124,996	41,665
Trailheads	Trailhead	899	285
John Jarvie Historic Site	Visitor Center	6,276	1,224
Swallow Canyon Camp/Boat Ramp	Boat Ramp	4,108	1,369
<b>Total</b>		<b>161,805</b>	<b>55,212</b>

**Table 3: Pelican Lake SRMA recreation site visits**

Pelican Lake SRMA		Visits	Visitor Days
Dispersed-Pelican Lake	Dispersed Use	22,374	15,214
Pelican Lake Rec Site	Campground	22,374	13,648
<b>Total</b>		<b>44,748</b>	<b>28,862</b>

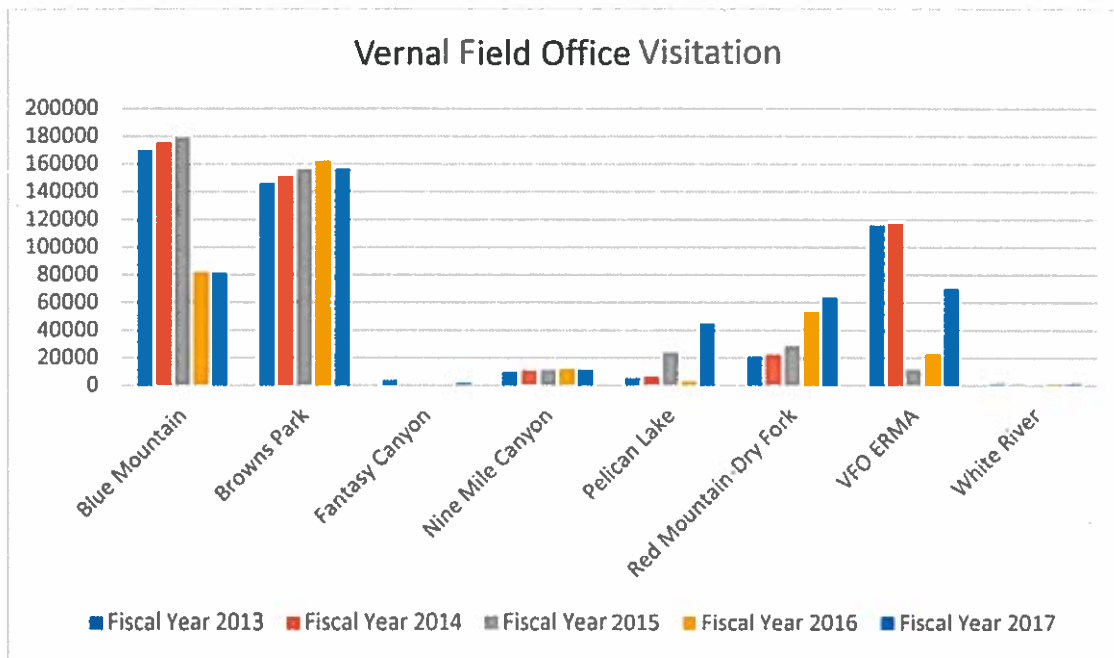
**Table 4: Red Mountain-Dry Fork SRMA recreation site visits**

Red Mountain-Dry Fork SRMA		Visits	Visitor Days
Dinosaur Trackway Trailhead	Trailhead	21,587	5,397
Jazz Chromolly TH (Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead)	Trailhead	8,141	2,223
Dispersed-Red Mountain-Dry Fork	Dispersed Use	5,358	1,072
Drive Thru Ages Geologic Tour	Other	11,326	991
Dry Fork Picnic Areas	Picnic Area	1,394	740
Trailheads	Trailhead	19,665	4,233
Moonshine Arch	Intensive Use Area	4,350	798
<b>Total</b>		<b>63,680</b>	<b>13,231</b>

**Table 5: Vernal Field Office ERMA recreation site visits**

Vernal Field Office ERMA		Visits	Visitor Days
Atchee Ridge Campsite	Primitive Campsite	2,763	3,200
Dispersed-Book Cliffs	Dispersed Use	70,011	77,071
Dispersed-Diamond Mountain	Dispersed Use	4,895	2,431
McCoy Flats	Trailhead	37,358	9,340
Pariette Wetlands Watch Wildlife	Other	908	182
Dispersed-White River	Dispersed Use	868	626
<b>Total</b>		<b>116,803</b>	<b>92,553</b>

**Figure 1: VFO recreation visitation over the past 5 years**



## E. Visitation Trends

### Current Use levels

The Blue Mountain SRMA currently receives the highest level of visitation within the Field Office primarily due to a BLM recreation site, Musket Shot Springs, which is a historic site identified in the diary of Father Escalante in 1776. Dominguez Escalante led a party of ten men through western Colorado and eastern Utah looking for a new route to the Spanish missions in California. This site not only serves to commemorate their journey, it also serves as the only highway rest area on Highway 40 between Vernal and the Colorado Border. Visitation numbers for this site come from traffic counters in the parking area. Although the majority of visitors initially stop at this site to use the restroom, visitors also read interpretive panels located at the site that provide interesting information pertaining to the history and natural ecology of the area. Musket Shot Springs aside, visitation to the Brown Park SRMA and the Upper Green River Corridor have consistently received the highest levels of recreation related visitation in the field office based on historic RMIS data. The fastest growing visitation is occurring within the ERMA at the relatively newly designated McCoy Flats trailhead. Starting in FY 2014, the recreation staff at the VFO placed traffic counters at all trailheads in order to develop a more accurate monitoring program to better track visitor use in the future. In addition, the future proposed Split Mountain Yurt and Cliff Ridge Campground would be situated within the Blue Mountain SRMA.

## F. Anticipated Future Use Levels

### Utah Travel and Tourism Overview

The University of Utah, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute completed an extensive socioeconomic study which summarized in detail, the state travel and tourism economy as well as demographics and public policy (2016). According to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute: the State of Utah had an 11.9% leisure and hospitality share of total private jobs in 2016 ranking 35th among all states. Utah has a diverse travel and tourism industry, which generates jobs and income for Utah residents and produces tax revenue for the state. Domestic and international visitors are drawn to Utah’s natural, cultural, and historical assets, 14 winter resorts, and five national parks, eight national monuments, two national recreation areas, one national historic site and 43 state parks. Throughout the year, Utah hosts several arts events, such as the Sundance Film Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Utah Festival Opera, and Utah Arts Festival, in addition to well-attended athletic events, meetings, conventions, conferences and tradeshows. Visitor spending and specific county information provided by this study is outlined below.

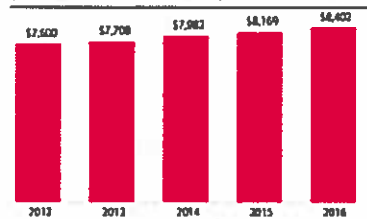
## Figure 2: Total Direct Visitor Spending

In 2016, tourists and travelers spent a record \$8.40 billion in Utah. Of that total spending, \$7.21 billion was by nonresident visitors who spent the majority of their dollars on traveling within the state (including gasoline purchases, car rentals, transportation fares and parking), lodging in paid accommodations and dining. Additional nonresident visitor purchases included retail items and groceries, as well as arts, entertainment and recreation-related activities.

The majority of Utah's domestic nonresident visitation came from western states like California, Colorado and Idaho. Utah's largest international markets were Canada, China, France and the U.K.

Utah's ski resorts reported a record number of skier days during the 2016-2017 ski seasons (4.6 million) and Utah's five national parks experienced a record 10.1 million visits in 2016—a 21 percent increase.

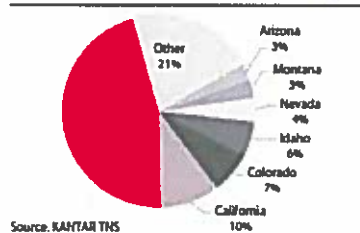
**Total Direct Visitor Spending**  
(5 millions of 2016 dollars)



Note: Includes resident, domestic nonresident and international visitors.

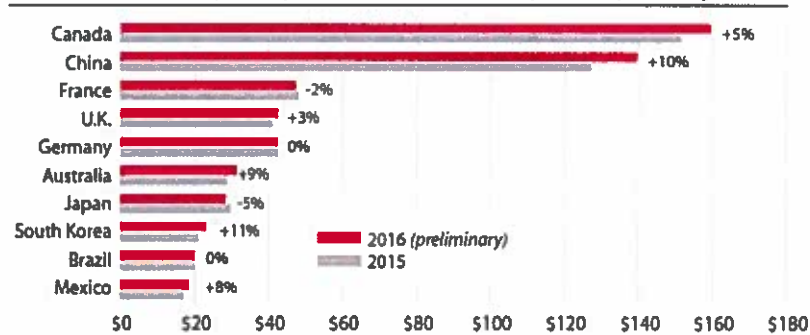
Source: U.S. Travel Association

**Share of Total Visitors by State, 2016**



Source: KANTAR TNS

**International Visitor Spending by Country** (\$ millions and year-over-year change shown)



Source: Tourism Economics

## County Tourism Information

### Daggett County

Daggett County, the youngest and least populated county in Utah had a 63.8% leisure and hospitality share of total private jobs in 2016 ranking 1st statewide. Daggett County shares its borders with Wyoming and Colorado and is best known for Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, which attracts outdoor enthusiasts from surrounding cities and states. The "A" Section of the Green River that flows out of Flaming Gorge Dam boasts blue ribbon trout fishing and is a popular daily river stretch for rafts, kayaks, and dories, boating and fishing on Flaming Gorge Reservoir are also common activities and the county, which includes tracts of the Ashley National Forest which hosts over 700 individual campsites and 27 group sites. Recently, Daggett County has been working with the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation, Utah State Parks, the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM to develop new recreation opportunities around the county.

### Duchesne County

Duchesne County, located in eastern Utah, had a 7.5% share of leisure and hospitality jobs in 2016 ranking 29th statewide. In 2012, Duchesne County experienced an economic boom in the oil and gas industry, which has slowed considerably since that time. This economic downturn is reflected in the decreases in its leisure and hospitality sector. Aside from Duchesne's economic hardships, on the weekends outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to its vast mountain stretches and hundreds of pristine high-altitude lakes. Starvation State Park and Big Sandwash Reservoir offer fishing and boating opportunities, while Nine Mile Canyon acts as an "outdoor museum" showcasing ancient Indian rock art and dwellings. Duchesne County is also home to King's Peak—Utah's highest mountain that tops out at 13,528 feet. Backpacking, horseback riding, cross-country

skiing, and wildlife-viewing are popular activities in Duchesne County’s High Uintas Wilderness Area located in the Ashley National Forest.

### Uintah County

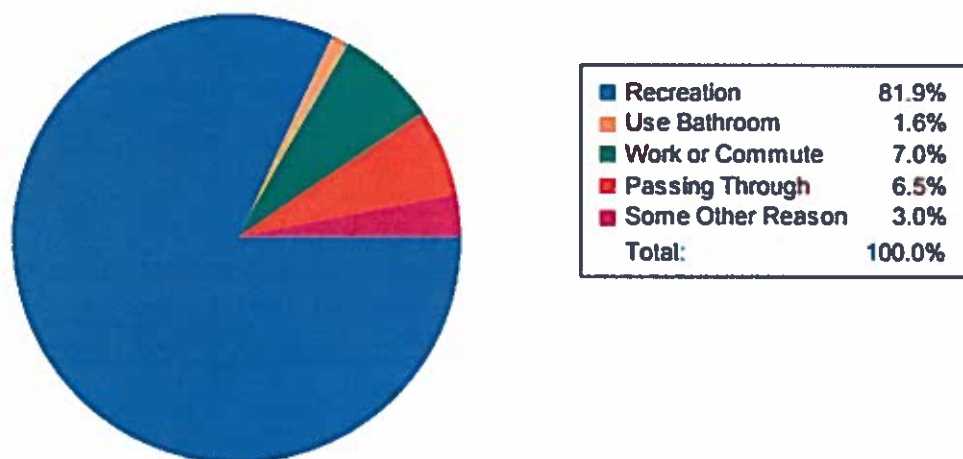
Uintah County, also commonly referred to as “Dinosaurland” had a 14.7% leisure and hospitality share of total private jobs in 2016, ranking 14th statewide. Like Duchesne County, Uintah has recently experienced an oil and gas industry bust, which partly explains the year-over-year decreases in travel-related sales tax revenue, taxable sales, and hotel occupancy. Uintah County is best known for the Dinosaur National Monument, which comprises a portion of the Green River and attracts paleontology and outdoor enthusiasts. The Western Heritage Museum, Utah Field House of Natural History State Park Museum, and Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum are all located in the county seat of Vernal. More recently, Uintah County has been working with the Utah State Parks, the US Forest Service, and the BLM to develop new trails and better promote existing trails in and around the county. In 2015 Vernal announced the grand opening of its new Uintah Conference Center, which can accommodate up to 1,600 guests.

Despite the current downturn of the oil and gas production industry, the travel/tourism, and outdoor recreation industry continues to grow within the area. Due to this increase in visitation and use throughout the area, it is important for the BLM to anticipate and plan for adequate outdoor recreation infrastructure in order to continue to provide the public with safe, and diverse recreation opportunities as well as to protect resources from the increase in use.<sup>1</sup>

### G. Visitor Demographics

The most reliable information on visitor demographics comes from data gathered for the National Visitation Use Monitoring (NVUM) study completed by the Ashley National Forest which focused on visitor use monitoring in 2012. The results shown below provide insight into the overall recreational visitation to the Uintah Basin. Several differences occur between the recreation opportunities available on the Forest and the more arid BLM managed lands, however, the BLM has not conducted visitor use surveys to gather similar statistical data specific to the VFO. NVUM survey remains our most accurate means of analyzing regionally specific data concerning the recreational visitation of the Uintah Basin.

**Figure 3: Annual Ashley National Forest recreation use estimate**



<sup>1</sup> University of Utah, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute 2016

**Table 6: Gender distribution of Ashley NF recreation visitors**

Gender	Male 61.2%	Female 38.8%
--------	------------	--------------

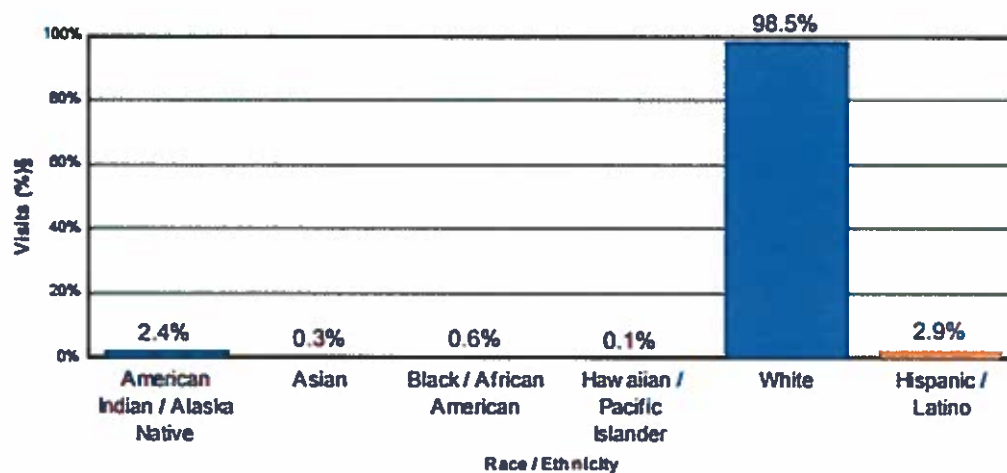
**Table 7: Age distribution of Ashley NF recreation visitors**

Age Class	National Forest Visits (%)‡
Under 16	24.9
16-19	2.8
20-29	16.5
30-39	15.5
40-49	11.1
50-59	12.9
60-69	13.0
70+	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 8: Race and Ethnicity distribution of Ashley NF recreation visitors**

Race †	Survey Respondents‡	National Forest Visits (%)§#
American Indian / Alaska Native	6	2.4
Asian	7	0.3
Black / African American	3	0.6
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	2	0.1
White	660	98.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>101.9</b>

Ethnicity†	Survey Respondents‡	National Forest Visits (%)§
Hispanic / Latino	23	2.9



## H. Applicable Resource Management Plan

The VFO recreation program is guided by the approved Vernal Resource Management Plan (RMP) which was signed in October 2008. Within the RMP decisions were made that outlined goals, and objectives concerning the VFO recreation fee program, these are:

**REC- 8** All developed recreation sites within VFO will be closed to the shooting of firearms, closed to grazing, and all forms of surface-disturbing activities not directly related to recreation development.

**REC-12** Maintain or expand infrastructure of all recreational sites, including but not limited to, cabins, restrooms, campsites, and trailhead development and ensure their safety for public use.

**REC-17** Permit construction of minimal recreation facilities in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, when compatible with goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

**SRMA-1** Blue Mountain (42,729 acres) will be managed as an SRMA. An integrated activity plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. Recreation activities will be identified in the plan; these activities will include but are not limited to hang-gliding (competitive and special events), rock climbing, historic interpretation, and OHV use on designated routes. (Sites located in this SRMA – Cliff Ridge Campground.)

**SRMA-3** Browns Park (18,490) will continue to be managed as an SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, the following uses will be emphasized: camping, comprehensive trail system for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHV use, Cultural and historic interpretation, facility development, fisheries, hunting, riparian, scenic vistas, special status species resource values, water based recreation, water quality, and wildlife viewing opportunities. Developed recreation sites located within this SRMA are Indian Crossing, Bridge Hollow, and Jarvie Ranch (Jarvie Ranch Bunk house).

**SRMA-6** Pelican Lake (1,014 acres) will continue to be managed as a SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, water-based activities such as boating and fishing will be emphasized. The area will be open to oil and gas leasing subject to major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations and closed to mineral materials sales. (Sites located in this SRMA – Pelican Lake Campground and Day Use Site.)

**SRMA-7** Red Mountain-Dry Fork (24,285 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide from maintenance and development of OHV or non-OHV trails, minimal facilities necessary for human health and safety, watershed values, relict vegetation communities, and crucial deer and elk winter habitat. An activity management plan for the SRMA will be developed to determine what areas are appropriate for day use only. (Sites located in this SRMA – Red Fleet Recreation Area, Docs Beach Campground.)

## I. Applicable BLM Directives

**Connecting with Communities BLM Recreation Strategy:** The connecting with Utah Communities strategy follows the framework and goals outlined in the BLM National Connecting with Communities strategy. The actions currently proposed in the strategy were identified by BLM-Utah Recreation and Visitor Services staff working in local communities across the state. Implementation of the strategy will be contingent on available budget and staffing, as well as conformance with all applicable laws, policies and BLM resource management plan decisions. The focus of this strategy is to work closely with locally based governments, private sector and business service providers as well as dedicated recreation user groups in order to plan and implement meaningful recreation projects. By doing this the VFO ensures that these efforts align with the BLM and Utah recreation strategy of Connecting with Communities.

**Getting America Back to Work:** Utah's outdoor recreation industry is a multi-billion dollar industry which provides a substantial portion of jobs within the state of Utah. By providing increased outdoor recreation infrastructure such as campsites, hut-camping, and river access sites, recreation opportunities increase which has a direct correlation to outdoor recreation industry jobs being created.

**Serving the American Family:** BLM supports this Department of the Interior priority by being good neighbors, supporting traditional land uses and access to hunting and fishing and other recreational opportunities.

## J. Partnerships

The VFO has worked diligently to, and has been fortunate enough to establish good working relationships with its local governments, federal agencies, dedicated recreation user groups, and Chamber of Commerce. Some of these groups and organizations include: United States Forest Service (USFS), National Parks Service (NPS), Dino Trails Committee, Backcountry Horsemen of America, Northern Utah Mountain Bikers Association, International Mountain Bikers Association, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Utah Riders All Terrain (URAT), Desert Brats OHV Club, Uintah County, Vernal City, Vernal Chamber of Commerce, Naples City, Uintah working group, and Trout Unlimited. In addition the VFO strives to uphold the national *Connecting with Communities* strategy in order to develop meaningful and beneficial recreation projects within the community.

## II. Description of Existing Fee Sites

### A. Existing Fee Sites

- **Indian Crossing Campground** is located in Daggett County and accessed via Red Creek Road, just west of its intersection with Browns Park Road. The site is 92 miles north of Vernal, Utah and 32 miles southeast of Dutch John, Utah. Red Creek Road provides access to a widely used put-in and take-out point along the Green River, and the John Jarvie Historic Site. Indian Crossing Campground has 21 campsites and 1 group site. Nine of the sites are located adjacent to the river. Eight of the sites have shade structures, while all have at least one table, fire-ring, and tent or trailer parking. Within the campground, four vault toilets are provided. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.
- **Bridge Hollow Campground** is located in Daggett County and accessed via Taylor Flat Bridge Road, just west of its intersection with Browns Park Road. This site is 92 miles north of Vernal, Utah and 32 miles southeast of Dutch John, Utah. Taylor Creek Bridge Road provides access to a widely used put-in and take-out point along the Green River, and the nearby John Jarvie Historic Site. Bridge Hollow Campground has 9 campsites and 1 group site. All of the sites have at least one fire-ring, picnic table, and tent or trailer parking. Within the campground, three vault toilets are provided. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.

### B. Proposed New Fee Sites

Sites listed below are currently constructed and operational. They are being proposed as fee sites.

- **Pelican Lake Campground and Day Use Site:** Located in Uintah County and accessed via Pelican Lake Road, 11 miles south of its intersection with Highway 40. The site is 35 miles southwest of Vernal, Utah. Pelican Lake road provides access to Pelican Lake, a nationally recognized blue ribbon Blue Gill and Large Mouth Bass fishery. Pelican Lake Campground is located adjacent to Pelican Lake, and includes 15 individual campsites each with their own tent and trailer space, picnic table, fire-rings, and a shade structure. Additionally, there are 2 group sites located along the south west shore of Pelican Lake with all the same amenities as the individual campsites and a maximum capacity of 75 people per group site. Also provided throughout the Campground and group sites are a total of four vault toilets, a trash receptacles, interpretive/information kiosk, and future water spigot. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.
- **The Pelican Lake Day Use Site/Boat Ramp** is located along the south shore of Pelican Lake Campground and provides 2 vault toilets, a trash receptacle, large gravel parking area for boat trailers & personal vehicles, shade structures with a large pavilion, interpretive/information kiosk picnic tables, future water spigot, 300ft fishing pier and concrete boat ramp. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM



operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.

- **McCoy Flats Trailhead:** Located in Uintah County and accessed via McCoy Flats road, 3 miles south of its intersection with Highway 40. The site is 9.5 miles west of Vernal, Utah. McCoy Flats road provides paved access to a system of mountain bike trails and roads frequently used by ATVs/UTVs and motorcycles. McCoy Flats trailhead provides a designated developed parking area, vault toilet, trash receptacle, picnic tables, and a large pavilion shade structure. Also provided are signs with a map and information on the developed and designated mountain biking trail system in the area. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.
- **Dinosaur Trackway Trailhead:** Located in Uintah County and accessed via Donkey Flats Road, 2.5 miles east of its intersection with Highway 191. This site is 14 miles north of Vernal, Utah. Donkey Flat Road provides paved access to systems of mountain Biking and hiking trails. The trailhead provides a designated developed parking area, vault toilet, trash receptacle, and an interpretive/information kiosk. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.
- **Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead:** Located in Uintah County and accessed via Donkey Flats Road, less than a mile east of its intersection with Highway 191. This site is 13 miles north of Vernal, Utah. Donkey Flat Road provides paved access to systems of mountain bike trails, including a future downhill flow mountain bike trail system (planning to construct trail system Spring 2019). The trailhead provides a designated developed parking area, vault toilet, trash receptacle, and interpretive/information kiosk. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.
- **John Jarvie Historic Ranch - Bunk House:** The John Jarvie Ranch is a historic homestead located along the shores of the Green River approximately 12 miles east of Dutch John UT. This BLM managed site offers the public a unique window into the 19<sup>th</sup> century life. The site which is rich in history to include well known outlaws, sees many visitors from all over the country some of which include, members of historic society clubs, school groups, and anglers fishing the Green River. The General Store is one of the historic buildings and has been replicated and is an important component of the popular tour provided by the BLM. Beneath the general store, there is a small one bedroom bunkhouse that has been available to BLM employees to use as a short-term field station. The great majority of the time the bunkhouse is vacant. The BLM VFO recommends making the John Jarvie Ranch bunkhouse available to the public to rent. Doing this would provide a unique way to add to the experience for some recreationists. Funds generated by this proposed fee would continue to help operation of this historic ranch. Amenities currently include a kitchen, refrigerator, bedroom with bunk beds, and bathroom with flush toilet and shower. The bunkhouse is heated so it would be available for reservation year round. 1-6 guests would be accommodated. This bunk-house has the look and feel of a modern apartment with all the amenities mentioned, but is set within a historic homestead. Routine safety inspections would performed by BLM engineering staff in order to endure safe livable conditions of the bunkhouse. Regular patrols by BLM law enforcement ranger, BLM recreation staff and BLM operations staff will be performed routinely in order to provide for public security.

### C. Future Fee Sites (Not Constructed)

Sites listed below are not currently constructed and will require the appropriate level of analysis through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before decisions to construct facilities can be made and recreation fees can be charged (see Table 9).

Sites that have been identified as a proposed fee site fall under one of the following criteria:

- Site is currently being used as an undesignated gathering area to access a recreation opportunity (trails, fishing, boat ramp etc.). Plans are in place to provide needed standard and/or expanded amenities suitable for the recreation activity.
- Site is currently experiencing pressure from dispersed camping and plans are in place to build appropriate campground facilities before instituting fee.
- Site is not experiencing pressure from dispersed camping, but is adjacent to a recreation site that sees regular visitation on another land management agency's land and would benefit from having a campground/yurt nearby.
- Site has been identified as a desirable location for a yurt, in order to provide a diverse experience for public land visitors.
- Site already exists and has been identified as a way to diversify recreational opportunities for public land visitors.

**Table 9: Future Fee Sites (Not Constructed)**

Site Name	Location	Site Type	Capacity
<b>Campground (Expanded Amenity)</b>			
Cliff Ridge	12T mE 649143.3 mN 4473326.8	Campground	20 campsites/2 group sites
Docs Beach	12T mE 620745.7, mN 4485589.2	Campground	20 campsites/1 group site
McCoy Flats	12T mE 619720.6, mN 4469905.6	Campground	20 campsites/2 group sites
<b>Yurt/Cabin (Expanded Amenity)</b>			
Split Mountain	12T mE 646722.2, mN 4472689.5	Hut camping	1-10 occupants
<b>Day Use Sites (Standard Amenity)</b>			
Dino Boat Ramp (Put-in)	12T mE 640948 mN 4468708	Boat ramp	15 vehicle/boat trailer parking
Dino Boat Ramp (Take-out)	12T mE 628959.5 mN 4463710.4	Boat ramp	15 vehicle/boat trailer parking
LaPoint Mountain Bike Trailhead	TBD - Near existing user created parking area	Trailhead	10 vehicle

#### D. Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Rates

The Vernal Field Office Recreation Fee program accounts are not sufficient to cover actual operation and maintenance costs of developed recreation sites. In order to build a more self-sustaining recreation fee program the following Expanded Amenity Fees for overnight use sites would be beneficial in order to develop a more self-sustaining recreation program. Standard Amenity Fees for recreation areas which provide significant opportunities for outdoor recreation and have substantial Federal investments, would also aid the VFO by providing funds that would be utilized for the operation and maintenance of these sites.

**Table 10: Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee Rates**

Expanded amenities include: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, the collection of fee by an employee or agent of the Federal Land Management agency, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet

facilities, and fire rings. The presence of the majority of these amenities (five out of the nine) is required in order to charge a recreation use fee at a developed recreation campground.

<b>PROPOSED EXPANDED AMENITY FEE RATES</b>				
<b>Name of Site</b>	<b>Current Individual Site Fee/Night</b>	<b>Proposed Individual Site Fee/Night</b>	<b>No. Individual Sites</b>	<b>No. Group Sites</b>
<b>Existing Fee Sites</b>				
Bridge Hollow Campground	\$5 Group Site: \$30	\$10 Group Site: \$35	9	1
Indian Crossing Campground	\$5 Group Site: \$30	\$10 Group Site: \$35	21	1
<b>Proposed Fee Sites</b>				
John Jarvie Historic Ranch – Bunk House	\$0	\$60	1	0
Pelican Lake Campground	\$0 Group Site: \$0	\$10 Group Site: \$35	15	2
<b>Proposed, Unconstructed Fee Sites</b>				
Cliff Ridge Campground	n/a	\$10 Group Site: \$35	20	2
Docs Beach Campground	n/a	\$10 Group Site: \$35	20	1
McCoy Flats Campground	n/a	\$10 Group Site: \$35	20	2
Split Mountain Yurt	n/a	\$50	1	0

**Table 11 Recreation Fee Site Expanded Amenities**

<b>Expanded Amenity Recreation Fee Criteria</b>	<b>Cliff Ridge C.G.</b>	<b>Docs Beach C.G.</b>	<b>McCoy Flats C.G.</b>	<b>Pelican Lake C.G. (Existing)</b>	<b>Split Mtn. Yurt</b>
Tent or Trailer Space	X	X	X	X	X
Picnic Tables	X	X	X	X	X
Drinking Water		X		X	
Access Roads	X	X	X	X	X
The collection of fee by and employee or agent of the Federal land management agency	X	X	X	X	X
Reasonable Visitor Protection	X	X	X	X	X

Refuse Containers	X	X	X	X	X
Toilet Facilities	X	X	X	X	X
Simple devices for containing a campfire	X	X	X	X	X

**Table 12: Proposed Standard Amenity Fee Rates**

Standard amenities include: Designated developed parking, permanent toilet facility, permanent trash receptacle, an interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, picnic tables and security services.

<b>PROPOSED STANDARD AMENITY FEE RATES</b>		
<b>Name of Site</b>	<b>Current Day Use Fee/Non-Commercial Vehicle</b>	<b>Proposed Individual Site Fee; Non-Commercial Vehicle</b>
<b>Proposed Fee Sites</b>		
Dinosaur Trackway Trailhead	\$0	Fee Required: No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
McCoy Flats Trailhead	\$0	Fee Required : No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
Pelican Lake Day Use Site/Boat Ramp	\$0	Fee Required : No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead	\$0	Fee Required : No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
<b>Proposed (Unconstructed Fee Sites)</b>		
Dino Boat Ramp (Put-In)	n/a	Fee Required: No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
Dino Boat Ramp (Take-Out )	n/a	Fee Required : No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)
LaPoint Trailhead	n/a	Fee Required : No Minimum Use Fee (Pay what you feel your experience is worth)

### III. Expenditures and Operating Costs

#### A. Expenditures and Operating Costs

The VFO utilizes multiple funding sources in order to perform all aspects of operation and maintenance of recreation fee sites. These include but are not limited to, recreation fees, appropriated funds, partnerships, grants, and internal special project funding. Historically recreation fees have not made up a significant amount of these expenditures.

**Table 13: Actual Expenditures of Campground Fees, by Year (LVRD UT320000 only)**

<b>Federal Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Staff Labor</b>	<b>Operations Costs</b>	<b>Total Annual Expenditures</b>	<b>Campground Fee Revenues</b>	<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>Carry Over</b>	<b>Fund Balance</b>
2017	\$0	\$45	\$45	\$4,634	\$4,589	\$8,777	\$13,366
2016	\$1,492	\$2,220	\$3,712	\$2,975	\$(737)	\$8,514	\$8,777
2015	\$0	\$0	\$0*	\$2,988	\$2,988	\$6,170	\$9,487
2014	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,234	\$4,234	\$1,936	\$6,171
2013	\$0	\$75	\$75	\$0	\$(75)	\$2,011	\$1,937

\*Source: Federal Business Management System, expenditures presented in this table represent only operation costs charged to UT320000 account meaning that in some instances appropriated funding was used to pay for the operation and maintenance of these sites.

In addition to revenues generated through fee sites, there are significant additional costs to the government associated with the administration, operation, and maintenance of the VFO recreation fee site program. These sites include Indian Crossing Campground, Bridge Hollow Campground, McCoy Flats Trailhead, Pelican Lake Campground, and John Jarvie Historic Ranch, and require managerial support, work by recreation planners, as well as office overhead and information services to the public. These costs are generally borne by the L1220 account (Recreation Management) or the L1660 account (Operations). In 2017 approximately \$124,700 was expended on campgrounds and day use site development from these appropriated funds. This means that the actual costs of operating and maintaining these developed recreation sites is significantly higher than the annual revenue generated through recreation fees as outlined in table 13.

## B. Maintenance

Maintenance refers to annual and/or recurring maintenance that needs to be accomplished on a regular schedule in order for the BLM to provide dependable, reliable and safe standard and expanded amenities within developed recreation sites. The ability to perform this annual and recurring maintenance is crucial to provide adequate and desired visitor experience to the public. Some of the challenges recreation programs face when planning and carrying out maintenance projects are limited personnel, availability of vehicles and equipment, limited funding, and visitor volume during high use seasons.

## C. Deferred Maintenance

Deferred maintenance typically refers to large scale projects that replace major recreation infrastructure such as buildings, toilets, camp furniture, and road repairs. Typically these projects are anticipated due to the level of wear and tear of existing infrastructure. These projects require significantly more funding than projects associated with regular maintenance. Projects are usually funded through a special BLM program as well appropriated funding. These funding sources combined with any number of other available funding are an important component of the developed recreation fee program. The VFO is working to reach a point where carry-over FLREA fee revenues can be used to accomplish these larger scale deferred maintenance projects.

# IV. Revenues

## A. America the Beautiful Interagency Passes

Interagency passes would be honored at all VFO developed recreation fee areas. These passes include annual pass \$80, volunteer pass (free), senior pass \$10, and access pass (free). These passes can be purchased at most staffed Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, USDA-Forest Service recreation fee areas or online. The sales of these federal access passes contribute to funds to support beneficial projects that enhance recreation infrastructure, research, and environmental education programs throughout the U.S. The use of these passes would likely reduce the projected future revenues presented in the following section of this Business Plan due to their use on VFO developed recreation sites by member of the public who have these passes.

## B. Revenues for the Past 5 years

Current revenues to the Vernal recreation fee site account come from fees paid by those receiving services at Indian Crossing and Bridge Hollow Campgrounds. Individual campsites at these locations are not reservable at this time. For individual

campsites, fees are paid at the site by each individual campsite holder. Table 16 below indicates that visitor nights are increasing each year, but revenues are not following that same trend.

Recreation fees are deposited into a separate account established exclusively for Vernal BLM recreation fee sites. Table 14 displays revenues collected into this account for the past four years.

**Table 14: Recreation Fee Revenues Deposited in the Vernal Recreation Fee Site Account (LVRD UT320000)**

Campground	Federal Fiscal Year	Campground Visitor Nights (from RMIS data)	Revenues
Bridge Hollow	2017	2,712	\$1,562
	2016	2,740	\$1,385
	2015	2,740	\$1,480
	2014	2,645	\$2,337
Indian Crossing	2017	5,677	\$3,071
	2016	1,912	\$1,590
	2015	1,896	\$1,535
	2014	1,789	\$2,225

Source: BLM Collections and Billings System database

### C. Projected Expanded Amenity Fee Annual Revenues

**Table 15a: Projected Revenues from Existing Sites with Proposed Fee Increases**

Projected revenues for existing recreation developed sites where a fee is being proposed within this plan, were calculated from 2017 site visits (based off RMIS data) multiplied by 3% to show anticipated yearly recreation visitation increase. For campgrounds, total visits were multiplied by 25% then multiplied by the proposed campground fee of \$10.00. Revenue listed would likely differ when considering group sites, and the use of federally recognized passes such as the America the Beautiful and golden age senior passes to access the site. The reason for a 1 in 4 estimate of camping fees paid by visitors when compared to the over-all annual visitor count is due to the fact that not every visit to the campground results in an overnight stay. Therefore an estimate of one in four visits to the campground would be more accurate than a 100% visit to fee paid ratio.

Projected Revenues from Increased Expanded Amenity Fees			
Expanded Amenity Fee Site	Federal Fiscal Year	25% of Campground Visitor Nights (2017)	Projected Revenues
Bridge Hollow	2021	2,793	\$3,217
	2020	2,822	\$2,853
	2019	2,822	\$3,048
	2018	2,724	\$5,348
Indian Crossing	2021	1,997	\$4,992
	2020	1,939	\$3,275
	2019	1,952	\$3,162
	2018	1,789	\$4,450

**Table 15b: Existing sites where fee is being proposed**

Projected revenues from existing campgrounds where the institution of an Expanded Amenity Fee is proposed within this Business Plan			
Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee Site	Federal Fiscal Year	25% of Campground Visitor Nights (2017)	Projected Revenues
Pelican Lake Campground	2018	1,153	\$11,530
	2017	1,119	\$0

## D. Projected Standard Amenity Fee Annual Revenues

### No Minimum Use Fee Model

The No minimum use fee model would apply to sites listed in Table 12. The best information available to justify using this method is from the BLM Hanksville Field Station’s institution of this method in 2015 for two of their campgrounds (Lonesome Beaver and McMillan Spring). Both fees are expanded amenity fee sites, and up until 2014 cost campers \$5 per night. In 2015, the fee structure was changed to a “Pay what you feel your experience is worth” (or no minimum fee required). Revenue at these campgrounds increased 133% the following year. The VFO is proposing to this no minimum use fee option as an alternative for charging a defined fee.

Projecting what the VFO’s revenue will be at these sites using the **No Minimum Use Fee** structure is difficult since the VFO cannot predict what users will be willing to pay, but based off of the Hanksville Field Station’s information, the VFO feels confident that users to the area will appreciate the option to choose what they pay – especially local user groups that have a strong sense of connection to these day use recreation sites. Hypothetically if a user paid between \$1 and \$5 per visit at McCoy flats the VFO would receive between \$9,620 and \$48,100. In addition users would have no limit as to what they are allowed to pay which could be in some instances could lead larger fees being paid by users which would benefit the VFO recreation program.

Projected revenues for existing and future recreation developed sites where a fee is being proposed within this Plan, were calculated from 2017 site visits (based on RMIS data), and multiplied by 3% to show for anticipated yearly recreation visitation increase. For day use sites 50% the total visits were multiplied by a hypothetical \$1-\$5 day use fee. Revenue listed will likely differ when considering additional federally recognized passes such as the America the Beautiful land access passes. The reason for a 50% of total visitation is to account for that fact that not every visitor traveling in to a day use site will result in a paid fee.

The VFO does not have RMIS data for the following sites:

- **LaPoint Trailhead:** This site is similar to the McCoy Flats Trailhead. In the future, the McCoy Flats and LaPoint trail systems are to be connected through the future designation and construction of mountain bike trails. The VFO feels they are similar enough in recreation opportunity and visitor numbers, that the McCoy Flats projected annual revenues can be reflected. **Projected 2018 Revenue: \$9,620-\$48,100**
- **Dino Boat Ramp (Put-In and Take-Out):** These sites are similar to the boat ramps along the Green River in Browns Park. They both would be likely to see the same visitation numbers, even though the boat ramps in Browns Park are remotely located, they see high visitation. The Dino boat ramps are located along highway 40 and are in close proximity to the cities of Jensen and Vernal so that means visitation would likely be higher. The VFO based the projected revenue for this site off of RMIS data for visits to Swallow Canyon Boat Ramp located in Browns Park (see table 2 above). **Projected 2018 Revenue: \$4,724-\$23,621**

**Table 15c: Existing sites where fee is being proposed**

<b>Projected Revenues from existing standard amenity sites where the institution of No Minimum Use Fee model is being proposed within this Business Plan</b>			
<b>Proposed Standard Amenity Fee Site</b>	<b>Federal Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Visits (divided by 2)</b>	<b>Projected Revenues**</b>
McCoy Flats Trailhead	2018	9,620	\$9,620-\$48,100
	2017	9,340	\$0
Pelican Lake Day Use Site	2018	19,299	\$19,299-\$96,495
	2017	18,679	\$0

Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead	2018	2,096	\$2,096-\$10,480
	2017	2,035	\$0
Dinosaur Trackways Trailhead	2018	5,559	\$5,559-\$55,590
	2017	5,397	\$0

## V. Priorities for Future Expenditures

It is expected that annual operation and maintenance expenditures will increase as prices rise and infrastructure ages. This is due to a combination of new infrastructure needs, maintaining existing infrastructure, and the effects of general inflation. For example, an additional campsite can cost up to \$10,000 per site to construct; a concrete cast single vault toilet costs \$25,000 in today's dollars. Even without future expansion of services, the costs of operation and maintenance will continue to increase. In order to effectively meet the dynamic demands of fee site operations, it is crucial to perform strategic planning and management of L1232 (recreation fees) revenues in order to best utilize the recreation fees within the field office.

### A. Future Expenditures for On-Going Program Services

Priority expenditures for the recreation fee site program include all aspects of maintaining current levels of service to users, while also planning for future costs. This includes maintaining a standard of cleanliness that would promote visitor health and safety.

Currently, a substantial amount of funds used to operate and maintain VFO's recreation sites are derived from appropriated funding. As mentioned above, moving forward, the goal for the VFO recreation fee site program is to fund the operation and maintenance of these sites with funds from the recreation fee site account. The level of service includes providing staff to answer questions from campers on the phone and in person, trash collection, replacing signs, annual weed abatement, landscape improvements, on-site patrols, fee collection, government vehicle costs, regular maintenance of campground and trailhead facilities including the toilets, fire grills, shade shelters, and roads.

Additional revenues derived from the increased and new fees will be used primarily for the maintenance of existing services to recreation fee site users and the provision of increased capacity. Maintenance includes the continual replacement or major repair of aging facilities, such as fire rings, picnic tables, site posts, toilet buildings, fences, parking barriers, and signs that deteriorate through heavy use and over time. Through a combination of the proposed fee increases, new fees, and the increased use of the existing/new facilities, program revenues are expected to increase to \$9,798 from existing fee sites, and to \$210,665 in 2018 from existing developed recreation sites where a fee is being proposed within this business plan (see table 17). This would be enough revenue to continue the maintenance and operations at the current level if appropriated funding were not available. If appropriated funding were to continue, this level of revenue would enable the VFO to institute some needed improvements (see Appendix A for a list of needed improvements).

To the degree available, and consistent with maintaining a positive fund balance, some fee revenues will be directed toward improving recreation fee site facilities and providing additional overnight and day use opportunities. This is dependent upon continuing appropriation of recreation funds to the VFO, as well as obtaining grant monies, both internal and external, for project development.

### B. Staffing Requirements necessary to Implement Components Outlined in This Business Plan

In order for the VFO to successfully implement the improvements and additional development outlined within this plan it will be crucial for the VFO to provide the adequate level of recreation staff. Taking into account each proposed recreation development, the following would be an accurate estimate of the level of staffing that the VFO would need to employ in order to perform routine operation and maintenance duties. These include but are not limited to collections, campground



inspections, visitor contact, toilet cleaning, construction of kiosks, installation of signs, and ongoing operation & maintenance associated with the VFO developed recreation program.

**Table 16: Recreation Staffing Requirements**

<b>Position</b>	<b>GS-Grade</b>	<b>Permanent or Seasonal</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Funding*</b>	<b>Existing/future</b>
Recreation Planner	GS-11	Permanent	Planning future recreation projects, resources NEPA, grant writing, external group work, SRP administration, travel management/implementation, lands with wilderness characteristics inventories, visual resources,	L1220, L1210, L1232	Existing
Recreation Planner	GS-11	Permanent	Planning future recreation projects, resources NEPA, grant writing, external group work, SRP administration, travel management/implementation, lands with wilderness characteristics inventories	L1220, L1210, L1232	Existing
Recreation Planner	GS-11	Permanent	Support of the oil and gas program: oil and gas lease sale, oil and gas NEPA, lands with wilderness characteristics inventory related to oil and gas, Application for Permit to Drill (APD), onsites for projects, work closely with Natural Recreation Specialists.	L9141	Future
Recreation Technician	GS-7	Permanent/career seasonal	Support recreation planners: day to day operations, purchasing materials, manage traffic counter program, aid with the SRP program, coordinate vault toilet pumping operations, manage the recreation sign program, maintain recreation vehicles, and equipment and ensure safety of said equipment, facilitate volunteer projects, manage the trail maintenance both non-motorized and motorized, collections.	L1220, L1210, L1232	Future
Park Ranger	GS-5	Seasonal	Directed by GS-7 recreation technician: day to day operation and maintenance of campgrounds and recreation fee sites, clean up dispersed recreation areas, clean vault toilets weekly, perform minor	L1232	Future

			construction projects, maintain the sign program. Aid in the facilitation of volunteer program, trail maintenance both motorized and non-motorized.		
Park Ranger	GS-5	Seasonal	Directed by GS-7 recreation technician: day to day operation and maintenance of campgrounds and recreation fee sites, clean up dispersed recreation areas, clean vault toilets weekly, perform minor construction projects, maintain the sign program. Aid in the facilitation of volunteer program, trail maintenance both motorized and non-motorized.	L1220	Future
Park Ranger (River Ranger)	GS-5/7	Seasonal	Work with the Forest Service under a service first agreement to provide river program support for sections A, B, and C of the Green River. Duties include maintenance of river campsites, river patrols, outfitter compliance checks, and logistics.	L1220 L1232	Current

\*These numbers refer to a BLM internal job code associated with a specific program as appropriated by congress. L1210 pertains to Wilderness management as part of National Conservation Lands, L1220 pertains to Recreation management, L1232 pertains to Recreation enhancement fee program, and 9141 pertains to oil and gas permitting.

### C. Future Expenditures for Program Infrastructure

Major expenditures on projects in support of the recreation fee site program include the construction of yurts and cabins at select locations, the improvement of campsites including updating fire rings and improving roads, installation of new toilets, the addition of large shade shelters at all group sites, the addition of individual shade shelters at selected individual sites, the planting of trees in campgrounds, the addition of screening to provide more privacy to campsites, adding amenities such as horse corrals to selected group sites, and improved interpretive and informational signing. By increasing the current recreation fees and adding new recreation fee sites to the fee structure, the VFO could engage in improvements to its infrastructure. Due to many of the recreation fee sites being constructed around 1990, there is an increasing need to spend money to refurbish these aging facilities.

### Revenues Necessary to Maintain Program Services and Maintenance Levels

Projected expenditures include only those necessary for continued program operations and minor improvements. The addition of the new recreation fee sites and increasing fees at the existing recreation fee sites, would not alone result in the near term accomplishment of the larger program infrastructure improvements described in the above paragraph. BLM would continue its long-term efforts to gradually improve recreational infrastructure at fee sites through a combination of regular appropriated funds, internal one-time program grants, and expenditure of user fees.

The increase in recreation fees being proposed for existing fee sites (Indian Crossing and Bridge Hollow, Pelican Lake Campgrounds from \$0/\$5.00 to \$10.00 and McCoy Flats Trailhead, and Pelican Lake day use area, Dinosaur Tracks Trailhead, and Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead from \$0 to \$5.00), would result in an estimated total of approximately \$210,665 of annual revenue (an increase of \$206,030 over 2017 revenue) to the VFO, Recreation Fee sites account by the

year 2019. The total annual expenditures to maintain the recreation fee site program are projected to be **\$143,405** in 2019. This means that the rate increase would potentially cover the majority of recreation fee site operation and maintenance expenses resulting in a self-sustaining developed recreation program. The rate increase would also enable the VFO to maintain the positive fund balance. A positive fund balance is a necessary component of operating a viable business; the VFO strives to operate its recreation fee site program using sound business practices. As different phases of new fee sites are constructed, revenues will continue to increase and the need for supplies and staff to maintain facilities will also increase.

#### D. Determination of Recreation Fee Rates

In order to make a determination of what a fair market Recreation Fee rates would constitute within the VFO the comparability method was employed. This is to ensure that proposed Recreation Fees are fair and equitable to both the user and BLM. Providing recreation opportunities outlined within this Business Plan would allow the public to enjoy unique camping and day use recreation opportunities below the average rate found within the area as presented in the table below. In addition the over-all benefit to the community can be expected to reflect in the social, economic, and commercial health of the community. Over all the VFO's proposed fees offer the user a fair cost for the amenities provided when compared to other similar recreation fees both public and commercial.

**Table 17: Fair Market Value in the Vernal Area**

<b>Campground Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Campground Fee(s)</b>	<b>Amenities Offered</b>
<b>Public Campgrounds</b>			
Pelican Lake Campground	Bureau of Land Management	\$10 per night per single site, \$35 per night for group site, \$5 day use fee at boat ramp (as proposed)	Tent/trailer sites, group site, fire rings, picnic tables, shade structures, pavilions, vault toilettes, concrete boat ramp with dock, fishing pier.
Indian Crossing Campground	Bureau of Land Management	\$10 per night per single site, \$35 per night for group site	Tent/trailer sites, group site, fire rings, picnic tables, shade structures, vault toilettes, Sewage dump station, gravel boat ramp with parking
Split Mountain Campground	National Park Service	\$20 entrance fee + \$18 per site per night for single site, \$40 per night for group site (maximum of 8 people for single, and 25 people for group)	Picnic table, fire pit, water, flush toilets, paved parking
East Park Campground	US Forest Service	\$12 per night for single site,	Gravel parking, picnic table, fire pit, vault toilet, boat ramp
Antelope Flat Campground	US Forest Service	\$18 per night per single site. \$105-120 per night for group sites + \$15 purchase of a Recreational use pass if accessing Flaming Gorge Reservoir, \$5 for day use pass for the use of boat ramp	Picnic shelter, tables, fire ring/grill, tent pads, flush toilets, drinking water, sewage dump station, and boat ramp
Dripping Springs Campground	US Forest Service	\$18 per night for single unit, \$36 per night for double unit, \$95-115 per night for group site	Picnic tables, shade structures, fire rings, flush toilets, drinking water
<b>Private Camping</b>			

Split Mountain KOA Tent and RV camping	Private	\$20 per night up to 6 people for tent camping, \$84 per night for RV site,	Electric hook-ups, pool, pavilion, Wi-Fi, cable TV, mini golf, bike rentals, kitchen
Split Mountain KOA Cabin Camping	Private	\$192 per cabin per night	2 bunk beds, 1 queen bed, 1 queen sleeper sofa, full bathroom with shower, kitchen, separate bedroom
Red Canyon Lodge	Private	\$159 per night per cabin	Bathroom, kitchenette, separate bedroom, living room, custom log furniture, wood stove
Grizzly Ridge Yurt	US Forest Service	\$50 per night up to 10 people in group	21' yurt, two double bunk beds, propane grill, wood stove, outhouse, cooking pots and utensils
Colton Guard Station (historic cabin)	US Forest Service	\$60 per night up to 12 people in group	Historic cabin, two sets of twin bunkbeds, pull out futon, wood stove, kitchen, propane stove, solar lights, RV parking

### E. Impacts from Implementing Recreation Fee Rates vs. Not Implementing Fee Proposal

In order to maintain a positive reputation as an enjoyable and safe recreation site to visit, the VFO sees value in establishing a No Minimum Use Fee use fee at McCoy Flats Trailhead, Pelican Lake Day Use Area, Red Fleet Downhill Flow Trailhead, Dino Boat Ramps, and Dinosaur Tracks Trailhead. The money will support keeping the vault toilets and other facilities clean and well supplied. The fee will also support the removal of noxious weeds and trail maintenance. All of these efforts will provide a quality visitor experience and in turn more visitors will be drawn to visit/revisit the sites which will then positively increase the economic impact on the local community.

Not instituting these new fees would leave the currently constructed sites to operate at status quo – that is, increasing use of vault toilets and insufficient cleaning/pumping due to lack of funding, as well as weeds growing rampantly each year without any means for removal.

#### Anticipated Results of Increasing Fees from \$5 to \$10 and Group sites from \$30 to \$35 at Existing Campgrounds

If campground fees are raised for both of these sites, the campgrounds could be upgraded, fences could be replaced when needed, new landscaping could provide shade to campers, new camp furniture could be installed (fire rings, picnic tables, parking barriers), roads could be re-graded/new gravel laid down, and weekly maintenance could be taken care of by a Park Ranger stationed closer to recreation sites. The Park Ranger would be tasked with driving through campgrounds daily to improve campsite fee compliance, landscaping (watering trees, weeding), cleaning/resupplying vault toilets, and cleaning campsites (fire rings, litter, and any damage that may need to be repaired). Signs could also be updated with the BLM's new sign model for consistency across the bureau, and a kiosk station could be added with area information.

If campground fees are raised for both of these sites, the user's experience would be safer and more enjoyable with trees for shade, clean bathrooms and campsites, as well as helpful 24 hour information from the newly installed information and interpretive signs. VFO would be providing services to users that are looking for an experience with more amenities, versus the current camping conditions in the area – mainly dispersed with no amenities. In addition the increase of fees would result in a more self-sustaining campground program, meaning that appropriated funding currently used to offset the insufficient recreation fee collections would be freed to use for other important components of the VFO's recreation program.

## **Anticipated Results of Adding Campgrounds**

Adding multiple new campgrounds to the fee program would add camping opportunities at several widely separated and diverse locations across the Vernal Field Office. These new campgrounds would be developed and added to the fee structure. The fees collected at the three new developed campgrounds included in this Business Plan would ensure that services could be offered at these and other locations. In addition, some revenues could be used to gradually improve campground infrastructure as part of routine upgrades. Providing organized camping opportunities would also lessen the impacts of unrestricted dispersed camping across the field office and specifically in high use urban interface areas. Providing organized camping would mean that new routes are not created, human waste is properly disposed of, and campfires would be contained in provided fire rings. Minimizing such impacts would in turn provide a more pleasant and environmentally sustainable camping experience.

## **Benefits to the Local Economy from Increasing Fees and Adding Campgrounds**

Daggett County's economy is heavily dependent upon tourism, and Uintah/Duchesne County are looking to diversify their economy with more recreation opportunities. Many tourists prefer to camp at public campgrounds and are looking for reasonably-priced fee sites. This is particularly true for group site campers, as many youth groups could not afford to stay at area motels.

Headwaters Economics produced an economic study for Grand County in October 2011 (*The Economic Value of Public Lands in Grand County, Utah*). That study found that at least 44% of the jobs in Grand County are directly in the recreation sector and thus are dependent upon tourism (including federal, state, and local government). The study found that "it is robust variety of outdoor activities, largely on public land" that drive the Grand County economy. The VFO has largely underutilized outdoor recreation potential with natural resources similar to the Grand County area, meaning that in the future the outdoor recreation industry and economy could potentially increase drastically within the VFO. The potential for growth and dependency of outdoor recreation and associated jobs could be foreseen when taking into consideration other similar areas that have experienced an increase in the outdoor recreation industry<sup>2</sup>.

## **Benefits to the Environment from Increasing Fees and Adding Campgrounds**

The campground fee enables the Vernal BLM to operate the camping and day use site program. This serves to reduce negative impacts to sites and to resources associated with higher levels of visitation in small areas. By providing campgrounds for visitors, the BLM is able to contain impacts to these small areas. Human waste generated by campers is contained and processed properly at approved facilities.

The need for camping facilities in the vicinity of the first three proposed new locations is particularly urgent (McCoy Flats, Cliff Ridge, and Docks Beach). At each of the three locations, a great deal of "dispersed camping and day use" is occurring in undeveloped areas without toilets, or proper fire containment. When the campsite condition becomes undesirable or is already occupied, campers create another nearby site, thus broadening the environmental impact. Visits to each of the locations shows increased environmental impacts from unrestrained camping/day use. The addition of the three developed camping facilities would mean vehicles would be limited to roads, human waste would be contained in toilets and disposed of at an approved sewage facility, trash would be removed by BLM Staff or commercial trash service, and fires would be contained within provided fire rings.

Each of the proposed campgrounds to be built would have the following expanded amenity requirements: toilets, picnic tables, fire rings, tent/trailer spaces, access roads, collection of fees by an employee, and reasonable visitor protection. It is beneficial for the BLM to look ahead of the normal recreation use and plan to accommodate future use in order to prevent resource damage and other social issues from occurring on public land, particularly within the urban interface.

## **Socioeconomic Impacts from Increasing Fees and Adding Campgrounds, including Impacts to Low-Income Populations**

---

<sup>2</sup> The economic Value of public lands in Grand County (2011)

The 2012 NVUM study (which studied all recreation visitors, not just campers) found that over 43% of visitors to Ashley National Forest are from the local area (Uintah and Daggett Counties), the other 57% are from the northern Utah and southwestern Wyoming areas, indicating that their travel to Vernal was economically discretionary. The NVUM study further asked visitors to report their household incomes by category. The following data was gathered:

**Table 18: Percent of Vernal BLM Visits by Household Income Categories**

Annual Household Income Categories		BLM Visits (%)
2006 Reported Income Values	2017 Values (inflation adjusted)	
Under \$25,000	Under \$30,000	10.6
\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$30,000 – \$59,998	33.3
\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$60,000 – \$89,998	32.1
\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$90,000 - \$119,998	12.9
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$120,000 - \$179,998	11.1
\$150,000 and over	\$180,000 and over	11.3

The newly proposed BLM campgrounds, boat ramps, trailhead, and yurt within close proximity to Vernal will offer a range of consistent, low-cost alternatives to staying in commercial lodging (where prices range from \$40 to \$250 a night depending on the local oil/gas extraction economy). This consistent, low cost alternative is particularly important at group sites, where groups can enjoy the amenities of the Vernal area at a very low cost. The fee comparability analysis in Table 17 shows that the BLM camping experience is still the most cost-effective alternative in the Vernal area; this is important when seeking to attract a more diverse visitor base to attractions offered by public lands.

As with the other fee campgrounds, the addition of the proposed new campgrounds, yurts, and cabins to the fee program would not negatively impact campers, because the fees would be kept relatively low at \$10 per site, \$50 for yurts, and \$60 for John Jarvie Bunk House (it should be noted that, unlike a private campground, the \$10 fee includes two vehicles, up to 10 people and pets). Furthermore, there is a 50% discount on camping fees afforded to seniors and those with disabilities who display an America the Beautiful Senior or Access pass. BLM also offers several fee-free days each year for visitors to standard amenity fee sites. Impacts to low-income populations are also not high, as low-income populations are not heavily represented in the BLM camper population. In addition the anticipated future use of Recreation.gov as a reservation one-stop service for visitors looking to stay within the VFO will increase overall accessibility, marketing, and visibility to all groups including under represented and diverse visitors.

**Anticipated Result of Not Changing the Fee and Not Adding the New Fee Sites to the Fee Program**

**Negative Impacts to Recreational Users**

The VFO campgrounds are reaching an age where replacement costs of infrastructure will be increasing. For instance, most of the site posts at individual campsites are beginning to decompose and are the original posts installed when the campground was built almost 25 years ago. A contract study that examined facilities in the BLM Facilities Asset Management System (FAMS) pointed out that the campground fees in the Vernal Field Office did not account for the full replacement costs of campground infrastructure. The study found the fee structure was based only on operational costs and did not include necessary replacement of facilities as they deteriorated. The requested fee increase and the fee for the four new campgrounds would be partially used to cover replacement costs of campground infrastructure. A failure to increase the campground fee would mean that aging infrastructure would not be replaced in a timely manner to maintain site quality and visitor safety; it would also mean that improvements, such as individual picnic table shade shelters, would not be added.

**Negative Impacts to Local Economy**

Not increasing the campground fee and not adding new campgrounds, yurts, and John Jarvie Bunk House would lead to the erosion of services, such as frequency of cleaning, at campgrounds, and impacts from overcrowding. This would eventually

impact the recreation sector of the Uintah/Daggett/Duchesne County economy, making people less likely to camp on Vernal BLM lands. Vacation dollars are entirely discretionary; people can spend their vacation dollars in many different locales. Should people be less likely to recreate in Vernal because of poor or unmaintained facilities or crowded conditions, the Uintah/Daggett/Duchesne County economies, which are in part dependent upon tourism, would likely suffer.

### **Negative Impacts to the Environment**

Vernal BLM campgrounds were established in the early 1990's and have been providing a dependable developed recreation site for people to camp while visiting the remote Browns Park area. VFO existing campgrounds see light to moderate use and have been consisted in providing accommodations in a remote area of the field office. Newly proposed campgrounds outlined within this plan are mainly located within the urban interface where, in many cases dispersed camping and heavy weekend use is causing negative impacts to the environment in the form of resource damage, soil compaction, fragmentation of vegetation and wildlife habitat, sanitary issues, and user conflict. If the proposed campgrounds are not constructed and implemented continued resource damage would likely occur.

### **Negative Socioeconomic Impacts, including those to Low-Income Populations**

Low-income populations may be deterred from staying at the new campgrounds and yurt, and Bunk House, but the majority of the Vernal Field Office is open to dispersed camping with no fee. Proposed campgrounds may in fact increase the opportunity for low-income populations to travel and stay in Vernal for multiple nights, with the affordable fees being proposed, when compared to commercial lodging in the area.

### **Nonmarket Values and Benefits**

The term nonmarket values refers to the benefits individuals attribute to experiences of the environment or uses of natural and cultural resources that do not involve market transactions and therefore lack prices. Examples include the benefits received from wildlife viewing, hiking in a wilderness, camping in a semi-wild setting with friends and family, or hunting for recreation. Nevertheless, such values are important to consider because they help tell the entire economic story. Estimates of nonmarket values supplement estimates of income generated from commodity uses to provide a more complete picture of the economic implications of proposed resource management decisions. In short, outdoor recreationists that spend their leisure time in the outdoors doing activities are directly benefitting on many levels including physical and mental health as well as financially. Values and benefits that recreationists are experiencing are as widely diverse as the individuals themselves which makes them difficult to quantify; however, it is apparent that these benefits are of value to the individual as well as the community as a whole.

### **Managing for Positive Campground Program Results**

The goal of the campground program in the Vernal Field Office is to meet current, and more importantly potential future demand for developed campgrounds within and around the VFO. In order to meet increasing demand and to avoid or minimize negative environmental impacts the VFO intends to invest time and funding in order to construct additional campgrounds within the urban interface. In addition to these heavily used areas, the VFO also intends to expand specialty recreation experiences such as cabin and yurts or hut-style camping which is shown to be increasingly popular across all generations of recreationists. By doing this the VFO not only prevents negative social and environmental issues but also provides the local community with more business opportunities by attracting, and being able to accommodate more people within BLM campgrounds.

The campers benefit by:

- (1) having a low-cost campsite or group campsite available for their use
- (2) improved public lands facilities (i.e. clean toilets)
- (3) outstanding camping-based recreation opportunities
- (4) a focused opportunity to enhance outdoor skills, build group and family relationships, and introduce youth to the world of nature
- (5) venues at which to enjoy their public lands

The local community benefits by:

- 1) the development of business opportunities in the outdoor recreation sector (i.e. river running companies, guide services)
- 2) the development of business opportunities in the general retail sector (i.e. grocery stores, gear stores)
- 3) the development of business opportunities in the hospitality sector (i.e. restaurants)
- 4) the provision of jobs for its citizens and tax revenues for local government
- 5) improved services and quality of life through facility development and resource protection

The BLM benefits by:

- 1) meeting its land management goals, including protection of cultural and natural resources
- 2) partnering with campers, volunteers and community groups as stewards of the public lands
- 3) providing for a more stable (and hence knowledgeable) BLM work force
- 4) lowering costs by developing improved business management systems
- 5) obtaining revenues to use for program management and facilities enhancement

The positive results summarized above allow visitors to recreate on BLM lands in a responsible manner. The achievement of positive campground program results requires adequate funding to provide necessary services. Presently, in addition to funds provided through the BLM budget process, the Vernal Field Office collects fees due to the government from individual and group site campers to maintain and enhance visitor services. However, these fees are not sufficient to cover costs, which have continued to increase. Continuing actions include the publication of supplemental rules, field patrols, maintenance and campground host services, as well as provision of toilets and other hardened facilities.

To protect campers, the public, and the public lands, continual efforts are undertaken to ensure that campground fees are paid by all. Those who do not pay the requisite fee are imposing on the honest people who do pay. Campground hosts, recreation personnel and law enforcement personnel check campground fee permits of all users to ensure compliance with the payment requirements.

#### F. Public Outreach

As part of the proposal to increase the recreation site fees at VFO's existing fee sites, institute a fee at existing developed recreation sites where a fee has not been required as well as to construct new campgrounds, hut-camping and trailhead opportunities, the VFO will conduct the following public outreach efforts in order to notify the public of its opportunity to review and provide comments:

- Post the Draft Business Plan to BLM Utah websites
- Issue a News Release to statewide print and broadcast media

Prior to charging fees at any new developed recreation site the following outreach will occur:

- Publishing of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register at least six months in advance of implementing new fees
  - Publishing news stories about the Federal Register Notice of Intent
  - Posting Federal Register notice near each future developed recreation site respectively.
  - Any and all public scoping and reviews associated with NEPA for any future proposed constructed recreation fee site

In addition the VFO will present the recreation site fee increase as well as new fee institution at developed recreation sites outlined in this business plan, to the BLM Utah Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RAC) for its formal review. The RAC is a 15-member advisory panel which provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues for 22.9 million acres of public lands in Utah. The FLREA mandates that the appropriate Recreation RAC reviews all BLM recreation fee proposals prior to approval. Comments from both the public at large and the BLM Utah RAC will be considered prior to approval of the increase of the campground fees as well as new fee institution of



existing developed recreation sites. The public be informed of how fee dollars are spent and will be spent in the future by posting information on the BLM website.

### **Results of Public Outreach Efforts**

The VFO public outreach period for the draft business plan began April 12, 2018 and ended May 11, 2018. From the comment period the VFO received a total of 14 comments, the comments received are as follows:

1-Comment suggesting we only charge a fee to out-of-state users.

1-Comment regarding boater access funding at Pelican Lake.

1-Comment with general concerns about expanded amenities.

2-Comments in full support of fees as proposes.

3-Comments opposed to any new, or increase in fees.

6-Comments in favor of expanded amenity fees as proposed but opposed to any required day use fees at day use sites such as trailheads and boat ramps.

The majority of the comments were in favor of charging expanded amenity fees at campgrounds and against charging a set/required standard amenity fee at trailheads and day use sites. As a direct response to public comments the VFO modified the proposed business plan to remove the option to charge a required fee of \$5/day, \$8/week, and \$20/year which was the fee structure proposed in the initial draft business plan.

The VFO removed the initially proposed fee structure and instead proposed to the RAC a no minimum use fee or *pay what you feel your experience is worth* as described in the summary section of this business plan.

### **Outcome of Recreation Resource Advisory Committee Recommendation**

The BLM VFO presented this draft business plan to the RAC on May 22, 2018. As a result of the presentation of this business plan to the RAC a recommendation was made to the BLM Utah State Director to implement this business plan as proposed with the exception of an automatic fee increase when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases by 20% from the day this business plan is signed into effect. Any proposal to automatically increase fees as a result of the CPI increasing by 20% is no longer a component of this business plan as recommended by the Recreation RAC.

## Appendix

### A. Specific Site Related Future Expenditures for existing campgrounds:

**Year Plan (Total = \$1,002,600)**

#### **Overnight Recreation Sites that Require Improvements in the Vernal Field Office (capital improvement only; no maintenance costs are included)**

1. Improved infrastructure at the Indian Crossing, Bridge Hollow, and Pelican Lake campgrounds operated by Vernal BLM: (\$722,600 for materials; estimated labor costs = \$280,000:

Total cost: ( **\$1,002,600**)

- a. Replacing wooden surround toilets with concrete-cast either single or double vault toilets at all campgrounds (3 toilets at \$22,000 or \$32,000 each = \$66,000 or \$96,000)
- b. Replacement of all old-style fire rings with accessible fire rings (32 at \$350 apiece = \$11,200)
- c. Replacement of site posts at each campsite (32 posts at \$20 apiece = \$640)
- d. Replacement of older bulletin boards at various campgrounds (5 bulletin boards x \$3,000 apiece = \$15,000)
- e. Replacement of picnic tables at sites with older-style and weathered tables (32 sites x \$1100 = \$35,200)
- f. Improvement of landscaping and provision of shade trees at Indian Crossing, and Pelican Lake campground (2 campgrounds x \$25,000 apiece = \$50,000)
- g. Improvement of road surface (additional gravel) at various campgrounds (3 campgrounds x \$30,000 = \$90,000)
- h. Replacement of parking barriers at Indian Crossing and Bridge Hollow campgrounds (40 barriers x \$130 = \$5200)
- i. Construction of 12x12 shade shelters at Indian Crossing, and Bridge Hollow campgrounds at ( 28 sites x \$12,000 = \$336,000)
- j. Construction of 24x10 group site shade structures 3 group sites x 28,000 = \$84,000)

### B. Proposed new developed recreation sites

**Proposed expenditures for future campgrounds, yurt, and Jarvie Bunk House, and Dino Boat Ramps (Total = \$1,030,000 in today's dollars?)**

1. New campground/yurt/day use site construction to provide additional opportunities for camping: (**\$1,030,000**) for materials and labor.
  - a. Construction of the following campgrounds: McCoy Flats, Cliff Ridge, Docks Beach, (3 campgrounds x \$250,000 = (\$750,000)
  - b. Construction of the Split Mountain Yurt: (1 yurt @ \$40,000= \$40,000)
  - c. Construction of new LaPoint Trailhead (1 trailhead x \$80,000 = \$80,000)
  - d. Construction of new Dino Boat put in and take out (2 x \$80,000 = \$160,000)

It is to be noted that all the above sites will require maintenance services on at least a biweekly basis. With the addition of new campgrounds, it would be necessary to hire additional maintenance workers, at a salary of approximately \$45,000 per worker per year. Additional worker costs are not included in the Business Plan and would be hired as needed in correlation to the demand on the VFO fee site program.

### C. References

Ashley National Forest – National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey 2012

Connecting with Communities BLM/Utah Recreation Strategy

Headwaters Economics (2011, updated in 2015) <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/local-studies/economic-grand-county/>

<http://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/County-Tourism-Profiles-2016.pdf>

Jeffs, Myron. “Results of the Recreation Fee Trial Period, Presented to the Utah Recreation Resource Advisory Committee: Recreation Use Permits in the Richfield Field Office”. May 5, 2016. Contact Myron Jeffs for a copy at [MJeffs@blm.gov](mailto:MJeffs@blm.gov)

Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan (Oct. 2008).