BLM

Final Business Plan for
Recreation Use Permits in the BLM Richfield Field Office

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Color Country District
Richfield Field Office
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NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Final Business Plan for
Recreation Use Permits in the BLM Richfield Field Office

RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS, and APPROVALS

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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 Recreation Use Permit program in the BLM Richfield Field Office.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) originally began collecting fees for the recreational use of public lands under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976) – known as the "organic act". More recently, the authority and rules for fee collection were changed or amended by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004. This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the FLREA. The FLREA recognizes the Bureau of Land Management's authority to collect recreation fees for use of certain areas. These fees are to be retained locally and FLREA outlines how revenues are to be used. At the BLM Richfield Field Office, the recreational use of campgrounds within the field office is managed through the Recreation Use Permit (RUP) program.

FLREA guidelines 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, 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.

BACKGROUND AND AUTHORITIES

The authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection for campgrounds, 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. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.

- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004,** repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced BLM's authority to collect recreation fees in 2004.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

- **43 Code of Federal Regulations 2931.2,** establishes a permit and fee system for (b) Recreation use permits for use of fee areas such as campgrounds. Further, CFR 2933.11 identifies sites where users are required to obtain a Recreation use permit as sites "where we provide or administer specialized facilities, equipment, or services related to outdoor recreation".

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

- BLM Recreation Fee Proposals Step-by-Step Review & Approval Process, March 22, 2007
- BLM Instruction Memorandum 2007-028: *Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act – Final Public Participation Policy for Certain Recreation Fee Adjustments and Proposed New Fee Sites/Areas*
- 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*
- BLM Recreation Permit Administration Handbook H-2930-1
- BLM 2930-Recreation Permits and Fees Manual Rel. 2-296

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services to serve the diverse visitor outdoor recreation demands while helping them to maintain sustainable setting conditions needed to conserve public lands so the visitor's desired recreation choices remain available. The BLM's goals for delivering recreation benefits from BLM-administered lands to the American people and their communities are:

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

This business plan will assist the BLM Richfield Field Office in meeting these visitor service goals. This plan covers all existing campgrounds operated by the Richfield Field Office (Starr Spring, McMillan Spring, and Lonesome Beaver).

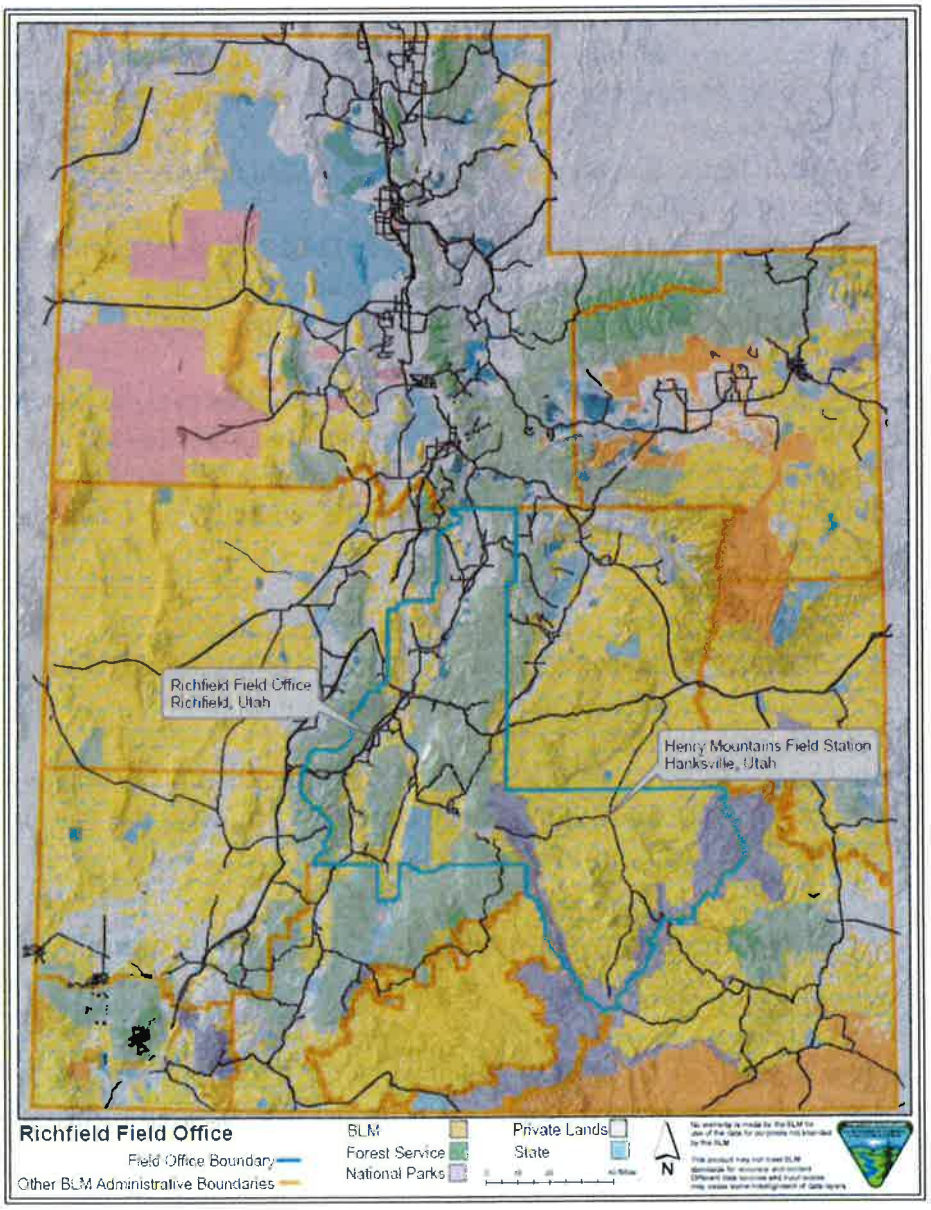
A. INTRODUCTION TO THE RICHFIELD FIELD OFFICE RECREATION FEE PROGRAM

Administrative Unit

The BLM Richfield Field Office (RFO) of the Color Country District is the administrative unit for the WBS# LVRD UT19000 account, to which fees collected accrue and from which RFO campground improvement expenditures are made. The Richfield Field Office manages approximately 2,128,000 acres of public lands in several Utah counties including Piute, Sevier, Sanpete, Wayne, and Garfield, and is located in Utah Congressional District 2.

Richfield Field Office Recreation Program and Visitation

The BLM Richfield Field Office, generally located in the center of the state of Utah, has a diverse and unique recreation program. The Henry Mountains are a point of reference, rising above the desert floor to over 11,000 feet. Below the peaks of the mountain lay miles of isolated rugged canyons. Further to the west, near Richfield and north, the area is reminiscent of the basin-and-range region with broad sage brush valleys. The Richfield Field Office is split into two uneven pieces by Capitol Reef National Park, with approximately two-thirds of its acreage lying east of the Park.



Under the same management, the Henry Mountains Field Station (HMFS), located in Hanksville, Utah, generally administers the portion of the Richfield Field Office located east of Capitol Reef National Park. The varied landscape provides for varied recreation opportunities while the proximity to national parks and being situated along the corridor of the internationally recognized "grand circle" results in increased numbers of visitation and area tourism. Most international tourism in the area does not recreate on BLM administered lands; however, it does put the area in the regional recreation destination spotlight. Popular activities include auto touring, wildlife viewing, ATV riding, backpacking, and dispersed camping.

Visitation to BLM lands in the Richfield Field Office is low to moderate. Table 1 displays how visitation over the past five years to BLM administered lands compares to that of Capitol Reef National Park, where a long administrative boundary is shared.

Table 1: Recreation Visits to Richfield Field Office and Capitol Reef National Park over a Five Year Period

Year	Visits to Richfield Field Office	Visits to Capitol Reef National Park
2009	305,532	617,208
2010	301,095	662,661
2011	334,930	668,834
2012	360,835	673,345
2013	365,185	663,670

Applicable Plans

Management in the BLM Richfield Field Office is guided by the Approved Richfield Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) which was signed on October 31, 2008. Specific decisions were made concerning the campground program. These are:

> **REC-1:** Where long-term damage by recreational usage is observed or anticipated, limit or control activities through special management tools such as designated campsites [and] permits...
>
> **REC-1:** Provide restrooms and other facilities adequate for anticipated uses at designated campgrounds, trailheads, and where recreational users concentrate.
>
> **REC-1:** Allow non-commercial dispersed camping without permit, throughout the RFO administered lands, unless directed by other management prescriptions.
>
> **REC 8:** Designate sites and areas appropriate for large group events and camping, including Starr Spring Campground [and] McMillan Spring Campground.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING FEE SITES

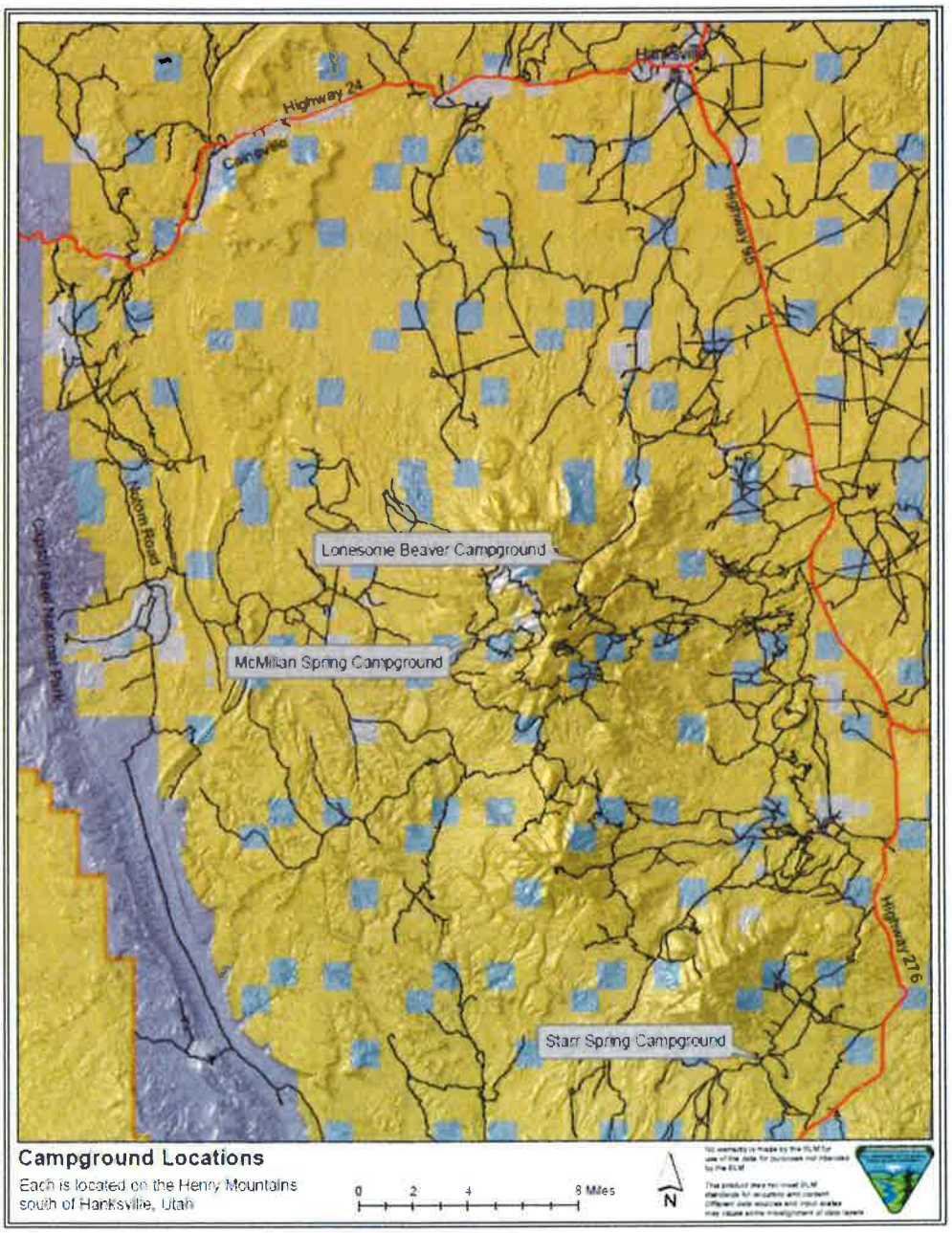
The Richfield Recreation Use Permit account receives revenue from three campgrounds. Revenues from this account are used to maintain the camping facilities. These sites fall under expanded amenities, Category 3, of the FLREA. In order to be included in this category, these developed campgrounds must meet certain amenity criteria.
Expanded amenities offered at each of the campgrounds include:

1) Tent or trailer spaces;
2) Picnic tables;
3) Drinking water;
4) Access Road;
5) Toilet facilities;
6) Fee collection;
7) Reasonable visitor protection; and
8) Campfire rings

These amenities meet the FLREA requirement to collect expanded amenity fees at each of the three campgrounds.

Water for Starr Spring Campground is obtained from a well system while water for McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver is obtained from nearby springs and plumbed into the campground. The water at each facility is tested regularly in compliance with State regulations.

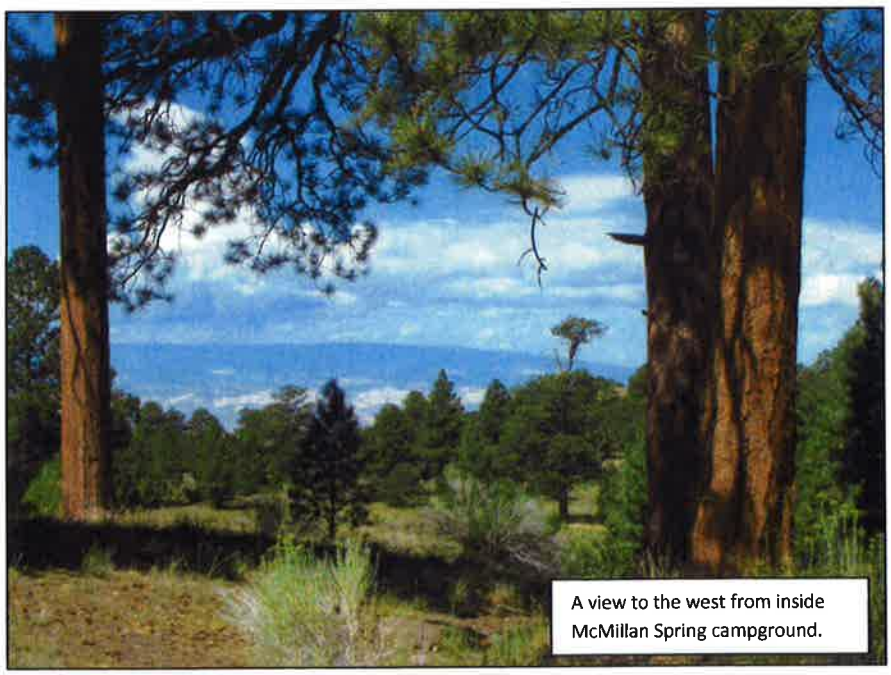
Each of the three campgrounds are first-come first-served, no reservations required. Individual site fees are $4.00 per site per night; the group site at Starr Spring is $12.00 per night. There are no other fees associated with using these sites.



A typical individual site at Starr Spring, situated in the oak trees.

Starr Spring Campground, although isolated, is fairly easily accessible. It is located only 7 miles west of Highway 276, at the end of a fairly well maintained gravel road. Of the three, this campground receives the highest visitor use, and generates the majority of the recreation use permit revenue.

McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver are much more difficult to access. A case may be made that they are perhaps two of the most remote and difficult to access of any BLM campgrounds in Utah. It takes approximately 2 hours from Hanksville, the nearest town, to reach McMillan Spring campground, most of the time spent on dirt roads. McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver campgrounds, which lie within the rugged mountain range, take a considerable amount of pre-planned effort to visit. They are not campgrounds that have high visitation or are frequently visited. The road conditions, rocky with frequent wash crossings, are unpredictable at best and impassable at worst. Tight switchbacks that wind along hillsides preclude campers with trailers of above average length. The environment is not conducive to passenger vehicles or anything without good tires and four wheel drive. These factors



A view to the west from inside McMillan Spring campground.

significantly limit visitation to these facilities. These same factors, however, are the very reasons those that visit the facilities enjoy doing so; difficult to access and opportunities for solitude.

Of all points on the mountain, visitors seem to know where "McMillan" or "Lonesome Beaver" are. Situated right along the main roads, they also serve many individuals who are just passing by. Commercial outfitters, particularly big game hunt guides regularly use the campgrounds while they are operating on the mountain.

Many visitors may not camp in these two campgrounds, but they do stop to get some fresh water and use the facilities. Observations indicate that several dispersed campsites exist and are frequented just outside the campgrounds (McMillan and Lonesome Beaver) boundaries, where visitors camp for free, but come in and use the facilities. Accessibility conditions, staffing levels and distance make it unrealistic for BLM staff to monitor the campgrounds more frequently than what is currently occurring. Using a campground host has been discussed. However, considering fairly low visitation and accessibility issues, it would be hard to find and/or justify hiring a campground host. The campgrounds are visited approximately every two weeks by maintenance personnel and every three weeks by fee collection and recreation staff.

The table below identifies the three campgrounds and offers facility and visitor information.

Table 2: Richfield Field Office Campgrounds

	Starr Spring Campground	McMillan Spring Campground	Lonesome Beaver Campground
Year Facility Built	1968	1963	1963
Primary Recreation Activities	Rock hounding, geology studies, auto touring	Hunting, ATV riding, wildlife viewing	ATV riding, wildlife viewing, hunting
Current Individual Site Fee	$4.00[1]	$4.00	$4.00
Number of Individual Sites	12	10	5
Number of Group Sites	1	0	0
Location	Approximately 50 miles south of Hanksville	Approximately 18 miles east of Notom	Approximately 23 miles south of Hanksville
Average Annual Visits FY 09-13	1,402	932	315
Average Annual RUPs Issued FY 09-13	217	52	49

1. The fee for the group site is $12.00

Significant infrastructure improvements have been made at each of the campgrounds recently. Each site has newer model concrete vault toilet facilities. Within the last two years, all fire rings and barbeque grills have been replaced. New campsite sign posts, entrance sign, and camping

information bulletin boards have been installed. Generally speaking, the campground infrastructure is in very good condition.

Because each of the three campgrounds is located within the Henry Mountains range, the use is seasonal. Winter weather conditions effectively close the campgrounds around early November each year. In the spring, Starr Spring becomes accessible the earliest, around mid-March, while the other two typically aren't accessible until late-April. BLM staff operates the water systems and perform facility maintenance commensurate with accessibility conditions.

C. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE RECREATION FEE RATES

Since the campgrounds were constructed in the 1960's, it is not clear if they were initially fee sites, or when fees began being collected. In the 1990's the fee was $3.00. The fee was raised in the mid 1990's from $3.00 to $4.00 per site per night. The fees have not been raised since. The BLM has identified three options to change the fee structure:

Option 1

- Starr Spring Campground: Increase the current $4.00 fee to $10.00 fee per campsite per night. The group site fee would increase from the current $12.00 per night to $20.00 per night. This would effectively more than double the revenue generated from this campground.
- McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver Campgrounds: Increase the current $4.00 fee to $5.00 per campsite per night.

Option 2

- Starr Spring Campground: Increase the current $4.00 fee to $10.00 fee per campsite per night. The group site fee would increase from the current $12.00 per night to $20.00 per night. This would effectively more than double the revenue generated from this campground.
- McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver Campgrounds: Maintain the current $4.00 fee per campsite per night.

Option 3 (BLM Preferred Alternative)

- Starr Spring Campground: Increase the current $4.00 fee to $10.00 fee per site per night. The group site fee would increase from the current $12.00 per night to $20.00 per night. This would effectively more than double the revenue generated from this campground.
- McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver Campgrounds: Change the current $4.00 fee to a 'no-minimum-fee required' system. Require visitors to pay a fee and ask them to pay the amount they feel their camping experience is worth based on the benefits and services provided.

Option 3 may be an unusual approach to fee collection, and may result in an increase or decrease in revenue generated at McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver Campgrounds. BLM staff at the Henry Mountains Field Station in Hanksville, Utah has wrestled with fee collection at these two campgrounds for several years. Both are difficult to access, have low visitation,

compliance rate in paying fees is low, and revenue generated from them is low ($459 from one and $334 from the other in FY 2013). However, they do serve a purpose by filling a need for water and toilet facilities in an otherwise undeveloped and remote area.

Option 3 also includes a 'trial period' for the fee structure change. The trial period would last for one full year from the time of implementation. At the end of the trial period, the Field Office Manager will decide whether to permanently implement the fee structure change or dismiss it. This decision will be made based on the following considerations:

1. **Revenue** During the trial period, has revenue increased or decreased compared to the previous five year average?
2. **Visitor Experience** Has customer feedback, if any received, been negative or positive regarding the fee system?
3. **Visits** Based on the registration information and RUPs sold, has visitor use increased or decreased at these campgrounds?
4. **Expenditures** Has there been any unforeseen facility expenses, or requirements of BLM staff time as a result of the new fee system?
5. **Fewer impacts** Are there decreases in camping activity immediately outside of the campgrounds by those hoping to avoid a fee?

If at any time after the trial period, whether year one or year ten, a downward trend in collected revenues is identified, customer feedback has been primarily negative, visits to the campgrounds have decreased, operating expenses have increased as a result of the fee system, and impacts immediately outside the campground have not decreased, then the permit fee at McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver campgrounds will increase to $5 per campsite per night.

Table 3: Fee Options

	Current Fee	Fee Option 1	Fee Option 2	Fee Option 3
Starr Spring (Single) (Group)	$4 $12	$10 $20	$10 $20	$10 $20
America the Beautiful, Senior, and Access Passes	$2, $6	$5, $10	$5, $10	$5, $10
McMillan Spring Lonesome Beaver	$4 $4	$5 $5	$4 $4	No minimum fee No minimum fee
America the Beautiful, Senior, and Access Passes	$2, $2	$2.50, $2.50	$2, $2	No minimum fee

At worst, the trial period of Option 3 could result in a short-term loss of revenue, although the revenue lost would not be significant, given the amount of annual revenue currently collected is a combined $793.00 (FY 2013) from McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver. Potential benefits may include:

- Impacts to dispersed campsites around the campgrounds may be minimized. As mentioned earlier, observations indicate that some campers may camp outside the

campground to avoid paying the fee, but still camp close enough to use the facilities. An Option 3 scenario would mean that it's still unlikely any revenue would be collected from the visitors, but at least they would be using the disturbed campground area the BLM has identified for camping, and minimize the use of areas around the campground.

- Visitor use may increase at the campgrounds and new camping opportunities may exist for those who were previously unable to pay the total required camping fee.
- Option 3 may generate further discussion and feedback from those using public lands. Feedback could prove greatly beneficial as we attempt to balance a need for increased revenue, minimize dispersed camping impacts, and provide a variety of responsible recreation opportunities.
- Revenue may increase. Those that pay to use BLM campgrounds throughout the State and perhaps across the country are accustomed to paying a fee. Generally, the public perception may be a $10.00, $12.00, or an even larger fee. By allowing the campground users to pay what they feel their experience was worth, some users may actually pay more than the Option 1 change, and make up the difference for those that may pay less.

Although it may seem unusual, for the reasons described above, Option 3 is recognized as a viable and realistic option; if only to trial the approach and review the outcome.

D. EXPENDITURES / OPERATING COSTS

The revenue generated from the campgrounds is currently much lower than the operating costs. The BLM Recreation Permit Administration Handbook is clear that "The intent of the fee program is not to maximize revenue, but rather to provide needed public services while protecting and enhancing public lands and recreation opportunities" (*Recreation Permit Administration Handbook, page 53*). "RUPs are issued to ensure that the people of the United States receive a fair and equitable return for the use of these facilities to *help* recover the cost[s]..." (*Recreation Permit Administration Handbook page 9*). This business plan accurately describes operating expenses and revenue, and identifies three options to *help* recover some of those operating costs.

One of the largest expenses for the campgrounds over the last three years has been the replacement of key infrastructure (toilets, fire rings, and barbeque grills). These expenses are infrequent investments that will not have significant recurring annual costs. The largest annual cost is the labor time spent by BLM personnel in monitoring and managing the campgrounds. A cleaning contract is also in place to keep the campgrounds clean.

A new (2012) vault toilet facility at McMillan Spring Campground

The BLM enters into a contract to have the facilities cleaned regularly. The sites are generally under contract for cleaning for seven months, from April 1st through October 31st each year. Starr Spring is visited weekly, while McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver are visited bi-weekly. A cleaning visit includes cleaning and deodorizing the toilets, picking up litter, cleaning out fire rings, cleaning out barbeque grills, washing off tables and benches, and cleaning water spigots. There are currently a total of 8 toilet vaults, 33 tables, 31 fire rings and, 31 barbeque grills. The vault toilets need to be pumped and recharged every two to three years resulting in a small expense. A local BLM Contracting Officer's Representative monitors the performance of the contractor, and performs annual facility maintenance as needed.

Also included in the operations cost in the following table are expenses from using equipment (skid steer, chainsaw, etc.) for routine maintenance purposes and water system testing and compliance. Other BLM staff that support the campgrounds are a BLM Law Enforcement Ranger who monitors for compliance and safety of visitors, one recreation staff member who oversees fee collection and recreation use monitoring, and administrative support processing the RUPs and fee monies.

Operations and one time facility costs have been funded from a variety of sources including campground revenue, special recreation permit revenue, grants, and deferred maintenance accounts.

Table 4: Actual Expenses

Federal Fiscal Year	Staff Labor	Operation Costs	One Time Facility Costs	Total Annual Expenditures
Starr Spring	$7,600	$3,839	...	$11,439
McMillan Spring	$5,800	$2,552	$1,500 Spring Box	$9,852
Lonesome Beaver	$5,800	$2,552	...	$8,352
2013 TOTAL	**$19,200**	**$8,943**		**$29,643**
Starr Spring	$6,100	$3,824	...	$9,924
McMillan Spring	$4,000	$2,542	$22,000 Vault Toilet	$28,542
Lonesome Beaver	$4,000	$2,542	$1,600 Fire Rings, Grills	$8,142
2012 TOTAL	**$14,100**	**$8,908**		**$45,508**
Starr Spring	$6,100	$3,807	$2,400 Fire Rings	$12,307
McMillan Spring	$4,000	$2,532	$2,000 Fire Rings	$8,532
Lonesome Beaver	$4,000	$2,532	...	$6,532
2011 TOTAL	**$14,100**	**$8,871**		**$27,371**
Starr Spring	$6,100	$3,461	...	$9,561
McMillan Spring	$4,000	$1,896	...	$5,896
Lonesome Beaver	$4,000	$1,896	$17,000 Vault Toilet	$22,896
2010 TOTAL	**$14,100**	**$7,253**		**$38,353**
Starr Spring	$4,600	$3,359	...	$7,959
McMillan Spring	$2,500	$1,794	...	$4,294
Lonesome Beaver	$2,500	$1,794	...	$4,294
2009 TOTAL	**$9,600**	**$6,947**		**$16,547**
Five Year Annual Average	**$14,220**	**$8,184**	...	**$31,704**

E. REVENUES FROM EXISTING FEE SITES

Campground fees are paid by those receiving services in BLM campgrounds. Individual campsites, and the group site at Starr Spring, are not reservable; fees are paid at the site by each individual campsite holder.

Table 5: Revenue / Expenses Comparison

Federal Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures (From Table 4)	Net Loss
Starr Spring	$1,596	$11,439	-$10,843
McMillan Spring	$459	$9,852	-$10,393
Lonesome Beaver	$334	$8,352	-$9,018
2013 TOTAL	**$2,391**	**$29,643**	**-$30,252**
Starr Spring	$1,719	$9,924	-$9,204
McMillan Spring	$395	$28,542	-$29,147
Lonesome Beaver	$317	$8,142	-$8,825
2012 TOTAL	**$2,431**	**$45,508**	**-$47,176**
Starr Spring	$1,562	$12,307	-$11,744
McMillan Spring	$352	$8,532	-$9,180
Lonesome Beaver	$218	$6,532	-$7,314
2011 TOTAL	**$2,132**	**$27,371**	**-$28,238**
Starr Spring	$1646	$9,561	-$8,915
McMillan Spring	$362	$5,896	-$6,534
Lonesome Beaver	$209	$22,896	-$23,687
2010 TOTAL	**$2,217**	**$38,353**	**-$39, 136**
Starr Spring	$1482	$7,959	-$6,477
McMillan Spring	$703	$4,294	-$3,591
Lonesome Beaver	$346	$4,294	-$3948
2009 TOTAL	**$2,531**	**$16,547**	**-$14,016**
Five Year Annual Average	**$2,340**	**$31,704**	**-$31,763**

Campground fees are deposited into a recreation fee account established for recreation permits in the RFO. Table 5 to the left shows the revenue generated from each campground and compares it to the operating expenses identified in Table 4.

All modifications to the fee rates are projected to increase revenue. The projected revenues are not expected to match or exceed the total expenditures, but certainly will reduce the difference between the two.

It is difficult to project what the RUP receipts would be under Option 3 if it were implemented. However, after the trial period, information would be available to fairly accurately predict what future revenue would be.

In order to accurately project what revenues would be under each option, it is necessary to determine how many nights the average visitor stays (some stay and pay for one night while others stay multiple nights). This helps determine how much revenue each RUP contains.

For Starr Spring, the five year average annual revenue has been $1,601; divide that by the five year average annual RUPs sold of 217. This indicates that the average revenue per RUP over the last five years has been $7.37. At $4 per night, this indicates that the average length of stay for paying visitors at Starr Spring is approximately 1.84 nights. Doing the same for McMillan; the average revenue per RUP has been $8.73 indicating an average length of stay for paying visitors

of 2.18 nights. The average revenue per RUP at Lonesome Beaver has been $5.81, with an average length of stay for paying visitors of 1.45 nights.

By implementing one of the fee options, and assuming the average length of stay remains the same, we can determine the estimated RUP content. See Table 6 below.

It is difficult to extrapolate these figures into Option 3 for McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver. It's believed slightly more RUPs would be sold under Option 3 at McMillan and Lonesome Beaver, but it's not clear whether each RUP would contain less or more than the five year average.

Table 6: RUP Content

Campground	RUP Content
Starr Spring	
Option 1	$18.40
Option 2	$18.40
Option 3	$18.40
McMillan Spring	
Option 1	$10.90
Option 2	$8.73
Option 3	Unknown
Lonesome Beaver	
Option 1	$7.25
Option 2	$5.81
Option 3	Unknown

Projected revenues are also based on visitor use remaining the same. Based on visitor use data, there is no indication that use on the Henry Mountains has or will significantly increase in the near future. General recreation user data suggests that visitor use on public lands is generally increasing. This trend may result in small incremental visitor use increases, but they are not expected to be significant. Table 7 below illustrates the projected revenue for all fee rate modifications.

Table 7: Projected Revenue

Campground	Five Year Average RUPs Sold	Projected RUPs Sold	Five Year Average Revenue	Projected Revenue
Starr Spring	217	...	$1,601	...
Option 1	...	217	...	$3,993
Option 2	...	217	...	$3,993
Option 3	...	217	...	$3,993
McMillan Spring	52	...	$454	...
Option 1	...	52	...	$567
Option 2	...	52	...	$454
Option 3	...	60	...	$654
Lonesome Beaver	49	...	$285	...
Option 1	...	49	...	$355
Option 2	...	49	...	$285
Option 3	...	57	...	$413
Annual Total	318	...	$2,340	...
Option 1	...	318	...	$4,915
Option 2	...	318	...	$4,732
Option 3	...	334	...	$5,060

F. PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE EXPENDITURES

It may have been noted from Table 4 that labor expenses for campground operations have significantly increased over the past five years, from $9,600 in 2009 to $19,200 in 2013. This increase is primarily due to positions that play a key role in campground management having been vacant and being filled. These positions included a Recreation Planner position that was filled in late 2009 and a Law Enforcement Ranger position that was filled in early 2013. These positions are crucial in providing an enjoyable and safe camping experience. All positions are currently filled. Labor expenses are not expected to increase beyond the 2013 level, and may perhaps decrease if key support positions are left vacant in the future for extended periods.

Also noted in Table 4, there has also been significant facility improvements made the last four years. These improvements have had a large expense associated with them. Because all three campgrounds are in relatively good condition, fewer large expenses are expected in the near future.

The campground cleaning contract in 2011 was $7,968, while in 2013 it was $8,043. This represents a 1% increase in cost each year over the last three years. It is expected that this annual increase would continue. The cleaning contract, aside from BLM labor, is a priority expense to maintain the campgrounds in good repair and order. Calculating the 1% increase, the cleaning contract is projected to cost approximately $8,443 by 2018.

Several potential improvements to the campgrounds have been discussed that would have significant costs. The following projects are currently planned for and the RFO has recently received funding through the Capital Improvement Plan to implement them in FY 2015. The projects and estimated costs are listed below:

- Increase size and capacity and improve the group site at Starr Spring. The parking at the group site is currently an odd size, making it difficult and impractical for groups with trailers to use. The project would consist of enlarging the parking area and creating a pull-through so vehicles with trailers can utilize the site. This change could be significantly beneficial. There are many educational organizations and rock-hounding clubs that use the campground, or areas just outside the campground, that could begin utilizing the group site that have not in the past.
    - Estimated Cost: $20,000
- Improve the water system at McMillan Spring. The water for the campground currently comes from Willow Spring just outside the campground. It has been a source of reliable potable water for years. On dry years, late in the year, when the spring flow is low, the water occasionally does not pass the State of Utah culinary water tests. We then post the water as "not for human consumption". The project is to drill a well near the campground to tap into a more reliable source of potable water for the campground. In addition to the well, new pipelines would be installed throughout the campground. This would come with a significant cost.
    - Estimated Cost: $200,000

- Improve the roads and parking pads throughout each of the campgrounds. The roads around the Henry Mountains, rough and rocky, are in generally poor condition. The same holds true for roads within the campgrounds. This project would consist of laying down some road base, adding proper drainage along the roadways, and installing culverts where necessary. Additionally, surface improvements would be made to the camping pads and pull-outs.
    - Estimated Cost: $40,000
- Install a new toilet at Starr Spring Campground. One of the two vault toilets at Starr Spring is older and is in need of replacement. This project would entail removing the old toilet that is currently there. And replacing it with a newer concrete vault toilet.
    - Estimated Cost: $35,000

No amount of money saved through fee revenues would make implementing these projects feasible solely using campground revenue. It may be possible, although unlikely, to save campground revenue to complete the group site project. Even if all campground revenues were saved, it would take 4-6 years to save the amount needed to complete that project.
Even with the proposed fee modifications, the campground program would operate in the red each year. There does not appear to be a realistic solution to further reduce the difference between expenditures and revenue. Fee increases are a step in the right direction to reduce the difference. Under option 3, which is the most profitable option, expenses would still exceed revenue by approximately $6.38 spent for every $1.00 received (5 year annual average expected revenue/option 3 projected revenue).

Financial support for the campgrounds is also received through the Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program. SRPs are issued to commercial organizations that use public lands for financial gain. These SRPs generate recreation revenue. Dozens of SRPs are issued each year to big game hunting outfitters who operate on the Henry Mountains. Some of these outfitters camp in the campgrounds. Many more who don't camp still use the facilities during their trips. Similarly to the general recreating public, these commercial groups stop in McMillan Spring or Lonesome Beaver to get water, have lunch at the picnic tables, and use the restroom facilities. For this reason, fees that are collected through the SRP program are also used to support the maintenance and improvements of the campgrounds. Only through a combination of the RUPs and fees from the SRP program has the HMFS been allowed to pay for necessary costs associated with these sites. The relationship between SRP revenue and campground support will be discussed further in the SRP business plan.

G. ANALYSIS OF RECREATION FEE RATES

If we were required to cover 100% of our operating costs, projecting use levels and RUP sales remain the same (318 RUP sales five year average), a single RUP would cost the visitor $109. This is derived by dividing our five year annual average expenses by the five year average RUP sales. This is impractical. The bottom line is our recreation sites have relatively low visitation. Staff at the RFO opted to use the *Fair Market Value Fee Calculation Method* to determine the proposed fee rates. To analyze the fee rates using this method, the BLM compared existing and

proposed fee increases to those charged by other outdoor recreation providers for similar opportunities. Below is a table identifying similar campgrounds in the area and the current fee.

Table 8: Similar or Nearby Campgrounds

Campground Name	Operating Agency	Current Fee	Key Differences
Cedar Mesa Primitive Campground	Capitol Reef National Park	No Fee	No water at this site
Cathedral Valley Primitive Campground	Capitol Reef National Park	No Fee	No water at this site
Natural Bridges Campground	Natural Bridges National Monument	$10	No water and no barbeque grill at this site
Lower Bowns Campground	Fishlake National Forest	$8	No water at this site
Single Tree Campground	Fishlake National Forest	$10	No key differences
Red Rock Campground	Privately Owned – Hanksville, Utah	$15	In town, showers, flush toilets
Sleepy Hollow Campground	Privately Owned – Caineville, Utah	$15	In town, showers, flush toilets

McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver are most similar to Cathedral Valley Campground operated by Capitol Reef National Park. That campground is also off the main travel corridor. The key difference is that potable water is provided at the BLM campgrounds.

Starr Spring is most similar to Single Tree Campground operated by Fishlake National Forest. Amenities are similar and they are both located not far from the Highway. The largest difference would be the location. While Single Tree is located along the well-traveled and scenic Highway 12, Starr Spring is along the much less traveled Highway 276 that dead ends at Bullfrog Marina within Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

H. IMPACTS FROM CHANGING AND NOT CHANGING RECREATION FEE RATES

The goal of the campground program in the Richfield Field Office is to provide needed public services while protecting and enhancing public lands and recreation opportunities. In considering changes to fee structures, it's imperative we also consider how the changes will affect public land users.

In April of 2010, President Obama launched the Americas Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO). AGO's recreation work focuses on engaging all Americans in outdoor recreation. Through this initiative, the 21st Century Conservation Service was developed whose primary purpose is to engage young Americans in public lands. An excerpt on the AGO website states: "Americans today, and especially children, have become increasingly disconnected from nature, a serious threat facing Americans and the great outdoors. Studies show that spending time in nature benefits physical and mental health, academic performance, and overall quality of life" (http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/whatwedo/index.cfm). Since its launch in April of

2010, several other initiatives and programs have been implemented to achieve that purpose. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell issued a Secretarial Order in March of 2014 formalizing the goals of her youth initiative which is further designed to connect America's young people to the great outdoors. The BLM Richfield Field Office recognizes the vital role it plays in connecting this and future generations with public lands to develop the next generation of conservationists.

Particularly in tough economic times, a variety of recreation opportunities, including camping in developed areas, should remain available to families from all levels of income. With this in mind, increasing recreation fees at our campgrounds could potentially hinder our ability to make those all-important connections between youth and the great outdoors.

The field office will seek to increase campground revenues by managing for positive results for the following three groups: campers using BLM lands, the local community, and the BLM.

The campers benefit by:

1) having recreation sites and services 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

The local community benefits by:

1) the development of business opportunities in the outdoor recreation, hospitality, and retail sector (i.e. guide services, grocery stores, motels)
2) 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) increasing revenues by developing improved business management systems

The beneficial results summarized above allow campers to vacation on BLM lands in a responsible manner. As users of the public lands, campers have a vested interested in their sustainability. The achievement of beneficial campground program results requires adequate revenue to provide necessary services. The campgrounds would still require some outside money to subsidize them. As long as other sources of support funding continue, the public will still have access to these opportunities. The risk lies in depending upon outside sources of funding that have the potential to dry up. We have been relying on, and will continue relying primarily on revenue generated from Special Recreation Permits (SRP) (L1232); commercial outfitters who operate in the area and use the campgrounds. Additional sources we have used where there is still funding potential include grant money from Utah State Parks OHV program, BLM recreation (L1220), BLM challenge cost share (L1770), BLM facility operations (L1660), and the BLM deferred maintenance (L1653). If these funds cease to exist or become inadequate to

cover our campground expenditures, we would not be able to afford large improvement projects. Between our campground revenue and a portion of our SRP revenue, we would be able to manage and minimally maintain them in their current condition, as long as staff labor continues to be covered as it has been in years past.

I. PUBLIC OUTREACH

Prior to modifying the fee rate, the BLM Richfield Field Office has conducted the following outreach efforts to notify the public of its opportunity to review and comment on the proposal to modify the Richfield BLM campground fee:

- Made the Draft Plan available for public review and comment from October 11th thru November 10th 2014.
- Posted the Draft Business Plan on the Richfield Field Office website;
- Posted a notice in Hanksville Post Office;
- Publishing a public notice in the *Wayne and Garfield County Insider, Sanpete County Messenger, and Richfield Reaper*;
- Placed a copy of the Draft Business Plan in the BLM public room at both the Richfield Field Office and the Henry Mountains Field Station, and provided hard copies of the draft plan to anyone who requested a copy;
- Formally notified both Wayne and Garfield County Commissions of the proposal;
- Posted a notice of the proposal at each of the three campgrounds;
- Issued a News Release to statewide print and broadcast media;
- Handed out 18 post cards during visitor contacts on the mountain during the comment period.

Our public outreach efforts resulted in receiving one comment from the public. The comment was received via email from an individual who resides in Ohio. The comment agreed that it is necessary to modify the fee rates however, recommended much higher rates than we proposed.

In addition, the BLM Richfield Field Office presented the campground fee increase proposal to the BLM Utah Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RAC) for its formal review. The Utah 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 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act mandates that the appropriate Recreation RAC reviews all BLM recreation fee proposals prior to approval.

The proposal was presented to the RAC on November 25, 2014. The RAC unanimously supported and approved the BLM implementing our preferred alternative. The approval was contingent upon our office reporting back to the RAC on the outcome of the "no-minimum-fee"

trial period. We intend to implement this fee schedule early spring of 2015, and thus expect to report to the RAC approximately one year after that time.

RICHFIELD FIELD OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The BLM Richfield Field Office prepared this *Final Business Plan for Recreation Use Permits* to provide the public with information on how recreation fees are spent. As outlined in section C, BLM has identified three fee options. It is the recommendation of the BLM Richfield Field Office to implement our preferred option (option 3).

This proposal was reviewed by the RAC and it's noted that the proposal was identified as "interesting and perhaps innovative" by a RAC committee member and furthermore found to be built with sound rationale.

The recommendation is as follows:
Increase the fee at Starr Springs to $10 for a single site and $20 for the group site. Modify the fee at Lonesome Beaver and McMillan Spring to "no-minimum-fee" for a trial period of one year. At the end of the trial period two things will occur: 1) Recreation staff will report back to the RAC on the outcome of the fee structure, and 2) the Field Office Manager will decide whether to permanently implement the fee structure change or dismiss it. This decision will be made based on the following considerations:

1. **Revenue** During the trial period, has revenue increased or decreased compared to the previous five year average?
2. **Visitor Experience** Has customer feedback, if any received, been negative or positive regarding the fee system?
3. **Visits** Based on the registration information and RUPs sold, has visitor use increased or decreased at these campgrounds?
4. **Expenditures** Has there been any unforeseen facility expenses, or requirements of BLM staff time as a result of the new fee system?
5. **Fewer impacts** Are there decreases in camping activity immediately outside of the campgrounds by those hoping to avoid a fee?

If at any time after the trial period, whether year one or year ten, a downward trend in collected revenues is identified, customer feedback has been primarily negative, visits to the campgrounds have decreased, operating expenses have increased as a result of the fee system, and impacts immediately outside the campground have not decreased, then the permit fee at McMillan Spring and Lonesome Beaver campgrounds will increase to $5 per campsite per night.