

August 2017



**Bureau of Land Management  
Northwest Oregon District Office**

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# **Whittaker Creek Recreation Site Business Plan**



**Bureau of Land Management  
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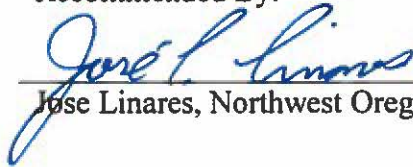


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8/23/17

Date

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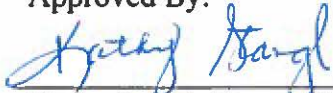


Jose Linares, Northwest Oregon District Manager

8/23/17

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Approved By:



Kathy Stangl, Deputy State Director for Resources

8/28/17

Date

## **Executive Summary**

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual direction. REA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. Section 804 of REA addresses the minimum public outreach requirements that an agency must consider when developing or changing recreation fees. This outreach process includes the involvement of a Resource Advisory Council (RAC). RACs provide recommendations to agency officials on matters including, but not limited to:

- **Implementing or eliminating fees;**
- **Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and**
- **Implementing fee level changes.**

The fee analysis portion of this business plan was based on a comparative review of fees charged elsewhere and by other public agencies within the geographic area of the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site that provide similar services. Based on the comparative fee analysis, this business plan proposes to revise the day-use and camping fee for the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site.

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

The recreation site includes 28 basic campsites, 3 double campsites, a gazebo, hiking trail and many other day-use activities. Amenities include paved or surfaced access and parking, picnic tables, barbecues and fire pits, potable water, interpretive or informational kiosks, garbage cans, and toilet facilities.

Fee revenue for the recreation site has historically been generated from day-use fees, camping fees, and extra vehicle parking in the campground. The following fee schedule outlines the existing and proposed changes for recreation fees at Whittaker Creek Recreation Site. Detailed discussion on this fee proposal occurs in the body of this business plan.

**Table 1: Existing Fees and Proposed Fee Changes**

Standard Amenity	Existing Fee	Proposed Fee
Day-use for passenger vehicle	None	\$5
Annual Day-Use Pass <sup>1</sup>	None	\$30
Expanded Amenity	Existing Fees	Proposed Fees
Extra Vehicle Fee	\$5	\$5
Basic Campsite	\$10	\$15 (once approved) \$20 (2 years after approval)
Double Campsite	None	\$30 (once approved) \$40 (2 years after approval)

## **Introduction**

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook). REA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. REA authorizes the BLM to locally retain collected recreation fees and outlines how revenues may be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, facility enhancement directly related to public use, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.

Under REA, a Standard Amenity fee and an Expanded Amenity fee may be charged for the use of certain facilities or services, which include developed day-use sites and campgrounds. The developed recreational sites must meet the criteria that are defined below. These fees are usually implemented through the issuance of a recreation use permit (RUP), or through a specific annual pass. BLM policy requires that revenue from RUPs be deposited into a separate account (pg. 2-3 of H-2930-1). Doing so allows the BLM to more readily track and report collections; and ensures that RUP revenue is spent at or near the site of collection. This business plan and these fee sites are associated with the **Siuslaw River Project Area**.

Definitions of Standard and Expanded Amenities taken from Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) for the area covered under this business plan:

- **Standard Amenity Recreation Fees** cover outdoor recreation areas that provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation; has substantial Federal investments; where fees can be effectively collected, and that has all of the following amenities: (1)

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed revision of the annual day-use pass is covered in a separate business plan for the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass which is designed to cover multiple recreation sites, but is shown for informational purposes only as one of the fee types for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site.

designated developed parking, (2) a permanent toilet facility, (3) a permanent trash receptacle, (4) interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, (5) picnic tables, (6) and security services (Sec. 803.(f)(4)(D) of REA).

- **Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees** cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least a majority of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) reasonable visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec. 803.(g)(2)(A) of REA).
- **Additional Expanded Amenity** recreation facilities or services include rental of cabins, group day-use or overnight sites, binoculars or other equipment (Sec.803.(g)(2)(C) of REA); use of hookups for electricity, cable, or sewer (Sec.803.(g)(2)(D) of REA); use of sanitary dump stations (SEC.803.(g)(2)(E) of REA); and use of reservation services (Sec.803.(g)(2)(G) of REA).

## **Purpose of Document**

The BLM Handbook H-2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fee Administration (Rel. 2-300, Dated November 17, 2014), requires that each recreation fee program have an approved business plan which thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in REA. Business plans are to assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, the cost of administering a fee program, the expected benefits to be derived for the public and to provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of the plan is to serve as public notification of the objectives for use of recreation fee revenues and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives. The finalized business plan guides to expenditure of collected REA funds and insures public accountability.

The business plan will specifically cover a description of the fee site, proposed changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study of fees charged for other similar recreation facilities, and the impacts of proposed fee changes. The data used to analyze and prepare this business plan was obtained through internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Federal Business Management System (FBMS), Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billing Systems (CBS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking spreadsheets. For additional detailed information, contact the BLM Northwest Oregon District. Much of the data is open and available, but associated personally identifiable information contained in these systems may be subject to Privacy Act requirements.

## **Prohibitions on Charging REA Fees**

Section 803(d) of the REA provides that standard or expanded amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for (shortened list): solely for parking, undesignated parking, or picnicking along roads or trails, general access, low investment sites or areas, persons moving through without using the facilities or services, for camping at undeveloped sites that do not provide a minimum



number of facilities or services as described above (expanded amenity recreation fee), use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal, or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others.

## **Fee Discounts**

Section 805 of the REA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the “America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass,” which provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees and holders of the Interagency Senior and Access Passes a 50 percent discount on some expanded amenity fees. The national interagency Senior and Access Passes replaced the Golden Age and Access Passports in 2007; the BLM continues to honor these passes. No discount is allowed for expanded amenity group use sites, shelters, yurts or cabins. The Northwest Oregon District Pass only provides the bearer full coverage for standard amenity fees, with no discounts for expanded amenity fees. It is not expected that the total use from passes would make a substantial impact on fee revenue for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site in the near future and this will be discussed further in the document.

## **Background**

### **Fee Site Description**

Whittaker Creek Recreation Site (WCRS) features a campground and day-use area. Campground amenities include 28 basic campsites, 3 double campsites, vault toilets, gazebo, potable water, picnic areas, Old Growth Ridge National Recreation Trail (2.5 miles), boat ramp, foot-bridge, play equipment, horseshoe pits, and seasonal swimming area. Whittaker Creek Watchable Wildlife Site is also within this recreation site. In the fall, winter, and spring, buses of middle school students visit the site to learn about spawning salmon and trout and to assist with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s breeding program. ODFW operates a fish trap at the site. WCRS is situated in excellent proximity to a large, regional population. River-based recreation opportunities serve as a draw for visitors wishing to fish and engage in water play.



### **Amenity Descriptions**

Each individual site allows up to eight people and two vehicles. An additional tent is allowed at each site in addition to their primary camping type. For example, an RV site allows for one RV

and a tent; a tent site allows for two tents. An RV and camper trailer at one site is not allowed; two camper trailers or two RVs are not allowed.



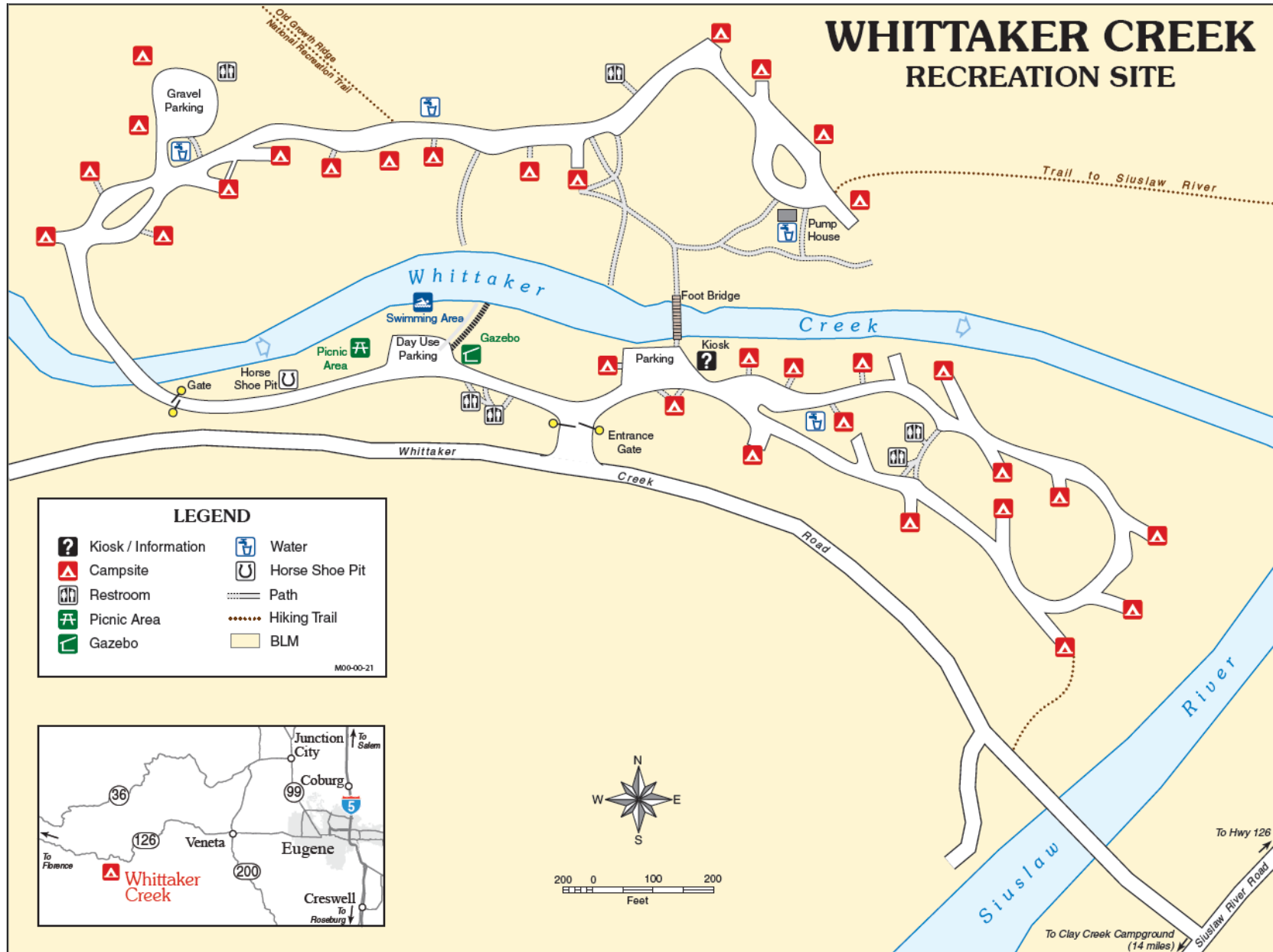
**Basic Campsites** offer BBQ grills, picnic tables, tent pad, assigned parking and a fire ring. The sites allow for RVs, camper trailer or large vehicles to park in for overnight camping.

**Double Campsites** allow twice the amount of people, vehicles and tents, and would offer picnic tables, fire rings, BBQ grills, tent pads and assigned parking. No hookups would be available and only tents would be allowed at the site.

### Season of Use

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

Figure 1: Map of Whittaker Creek Recreation Site





## Recreation Use

Visitation at the **Whittaker Creek Recreation Site** is recorded annually in the BLM’s Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) database. The use at a specific site is captured as “visits” which equates to one person entering onto lands or waters, administered by the BLM for pursuit of recreational experiences. The applicable rule is that one entrance per individual per day to public lands is reportable as a visit. Visitation in RMIS also follows the federal fiscal year (FY) cycle that begins on October 1, and runs through September 30 of the following year. Calculating or estimating visitor use is derived through several methods including tallying the information from recreation use permits (fee envelopes and passes), traffic counters, trail counters, and through simple observation. In most cases, the number of visits is a combination of these methods. Table 2 captures the visits at the sites within the **Whittaker Creek Recreation Site**.

**Table 2: Annual Visitation**

Site	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Whittaker Creek	14,041	6,940	14,266	9,174	10,302

WCRS received approximately 10,945 visitors over the past five years, with the majority of visits occurring from May through September. Visitation rates vary from year to year, based on a number of factors, including existing economic conditions.

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

The public visiting this site continues to come back for many reasons. Past input from visitors includes recognition of the quality of campsites, natural environment and setting of the park, and proximity to the coast and a major highway. Visitors show appreciation of the creek and swimming area, with the grassy play and lounging area.

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

## Fee Revenue

Table 3 displays the annual amounts collected at Whittaker Creek Recreation Site since 2012.

**Table 3: Annual Fee Collection and 5-Year Average**

FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	5-Year Average
\$10,076	\$6,202	\$7,107	\$12,634	\$13,101	\$9,824

## **Fee Collection and Enforcement**

Currently all vehicles entering the **Whittaker Creek Recreation Site** for camping are required to obtain a recreation use permit for overnight camping (expanded amenity fee). WCRS currently does not charge for day-use (standard amenity fee), but would be easily enforced by utilizing the self-service pay stations. Visitors can purchase the recreation use permits at self-service fee stations located near the host site and entrance gate. All passes must be displayed either on the campsite post or within view from the vehicle's front window. The BLM is considering placing some or all of the campsites on Recreation.gov, the Federal government's one-stop center for reservations and trip-planning information. Visits would be expected to increase as a result of adding Whittaker Creek Recreation Site to the reservation system.

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

School groups and educational organizations can arrange free access at any time of the year for authorized educational activities by contacting the BLM and providing a curriculum of their planned educational activities (see Prohibitions on Charging REA Fees). Other recreation events must be held under a special recreation permit issued by the Northwest Oregon District.

## **Operations and Maintenance Costs**

The BLM spends about \$121,350 each year to operate and maintain the site, which includes staff salary, vehicles, supplies, law enforcement, and operations. The cost for fee collections is approximately \$3,000 annually, which includes collection, maintenance of self-service fee stations, and costs associated with the sale of annual passes. As use increases to the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site due to adding the site to the reservation system, and re-developing the site, the operation and maintenance costs will likely increase as well. Any future facility development is unlikely to significantly impact the operation and maintenance expenses, beyond upkeep and replacement of the facilities as they become unserviceable. The largest rise in operations and maintenance costs would be for additional staff time, youth corps work, and supplies.

**Table 4: Annual Expenditures by Expense Cost Category**

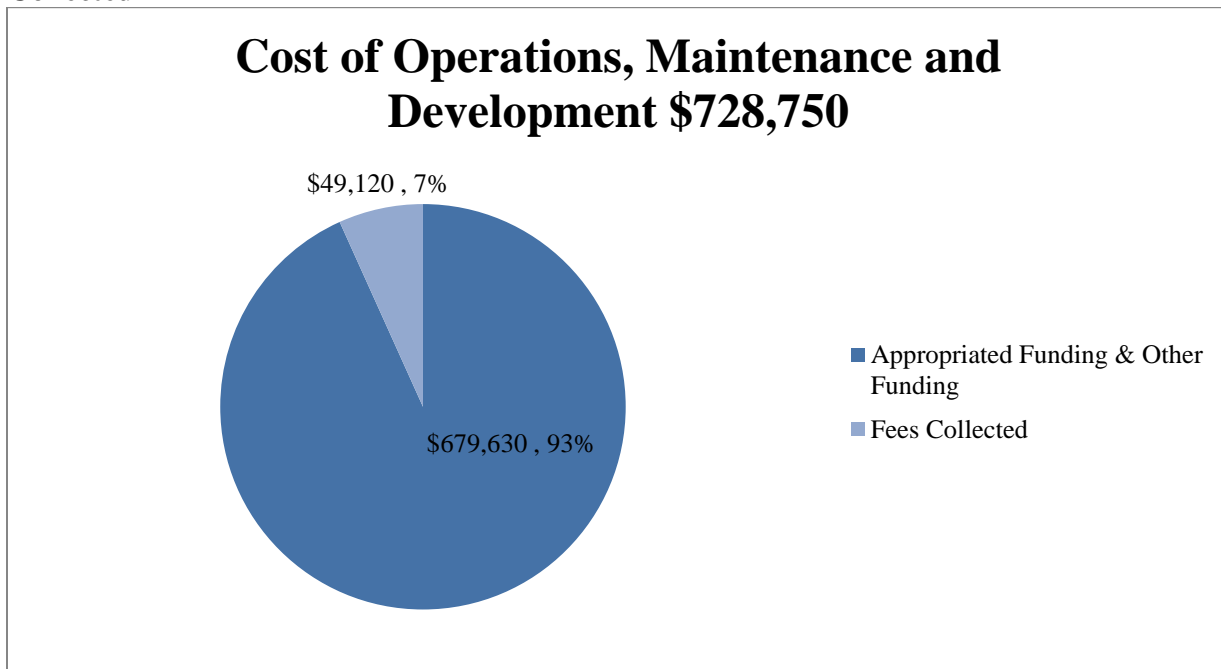
<b>Cost Type</b> (These costs are the averages and include benefits.)	<b>Current</b>	<b>Projected Year 2021</b>
Park Rangers (6 months)	\$24,000 (1 ranger)	\$27,850 (1 ranger)
Other Staff Labor (outdoor recreation planners, specialists, other rangers...etc.)	\$45,000	\$52,167
Youth Corps Labor	\$14,400 (2 weeks)	\$16,694 (2 weeks)
Vehicles	\$3,500	\$4,050
Equipment/Supplies	\$7,500	\$8,695
Services (water testing, waste pumping, trash pickup...etc.)	\$5,000	\$7,000
Camp host stipend	\$4,700 (1 host)	\$5,450 (1 host)
Law Enforcement	\$17,250 (15% present)	\$20,000 (15% present)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$121,350</b>	<b>\$141,906</b>

Whittaker Creek’s recreational facilities represent over \$850,000 in capitalized infrastructure investment over the last 44 years. In addition, alternative program funds, including recreation pipeline funding, have been invested in improving and maintaining the facilities and infrastructure at WCRS over the last 16 years. With continual decreases in annual recreation budgets, the fee collection program is necessary to continue operations, maintain, and enhance the site’s high quality recreational opportunities for the public.

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

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

**Figure 2: Five-Year Total Costs of Operations, Maintenance, Development and Fees Collected**



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

**Below is a list of recent improvements, repairs and their costs.**

- Move water system building (2014; about \$10,000)
- Vegetation plan (2013; \$2,000)
- New pedestrian bridge (2014; about \$100,000)
- Low water vehicle bridge repair (2014; about \$5,000)
- Bank of pressure tanks (2014; about \$5,000)

**Projected Development Costs**

The Whittaker Creek Recreation Site is already a developed recreation site. Future plans include a new site design to accommodate improved group campsites with better access; new host site; trail maintenance and upgrade, including plans to link the non-motorized portion of the trail to United States Forest Service and county land; and an improved water system. It is too early in the planning process to be able to determine the total cost for these improvements and additional development.

## **Fee Proposal**

### **Summary**

The fee analysis portion of this business plan was based on a comparative review of fees at other existing private and public facilities that provide similar services within the geographic area of the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site. Based on the comparative fee analysis, this business plan proposes to add a day-use fee and increase the camping fee.

The following fee schedule outlines the existing and proposed changes for recreation fees at the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site.

**Table 5: Existing Fees and Proposed Fee Changes**

<b>Standard Amenity</b>	<b>Existing Fee</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>
Day-use for passenger vehicle	None	\$5
Annual Day-Use Pass <sup>2</sup>	None	\$30
<b>Expanded Amenity</b>	<b>Existing Fees</b>	<b>Proposed Fees</b>
Extra Vehicle Fee	\$5	\$5
Basic Campsite	\$10	\$15 (once approved) \$20 (2 years after approval)
Double Campsite	None	\$30 (once approved) \$40 (2 years after approval)

### **Financial Analysis of Existing Private and Public Facilities**

The BLM currently charges expanded amenity fees for camping at Whittaker Creek Campground. Current fees have not changed in over 20 years. The BLM conducted a comparative market study of similar public facilities in the region (Appendix 1). State, federal, and local parks were surveyed in the same regional recreation market as WCRS. Proposed fees are based on what the public sector currently charges for similar visitor facilities, number of campsites, access, and service. In summary, all campgrounds charge fees. RV parks are available but do not provide the same amenities offered at WCRS and were not included in the fee comparisons charts. Additionally, some parks may charge a day-use fee if visiting other areas of the park.

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

**Basic Campsite** fees were determined from averaging the fees from comparable campgrounds. The range for tent sites is \$12 to \$26 per basic campsite, the average fee for these sites after being rounded to the nearest whole dollar is \$20 per night. The quality and extent of Whittaker

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<sup>2</sup> The proposed revision of the annual day-use pass is covered in a separate business plan for the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass which is designed to cover multiple recreation sites, but is shown for informational purposes only as one of the fee types for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site.



Creek’s facilities are comparable to other parks in the region. However, due to this large increase in fees that resulted from the decades between increases, a phased approach will be used. The phased approach will increase fees to \$15 once approved and then to \$20 two years after approval.

**Double Campsite:** The campgrounds in the analysis do not provide a solid comparable for the double sites at the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site. The Whittaker Creek double campsites can accommodate twice as many visitors as the basic site. However, they are not as large, nor do they offer comparable amenities, as the group campsites found at comparable campgrounds in the analysis. Therefore, the proposed nightly fee reflects the double capacity of these sites compared to a basic site, but recognizes these sites are not *full* group sites at comparable campgrounds. However, due to this large increase in fees that resulted from the decades between increases, a phased approach will be used. The phased approach will begin fees at \$30 once approved and then increase to \$40 two years after approval, reflecting double the amenities of basic campsites.

**Day-use Fee:** The day-use fees at recreation sites in the analysis ranged from \$4 to \$6. After averaging and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount the fee resulted in \$5.

**Projected Fee Revenue**

For camping, the estimated revenue was derived by multiplying the number of available campsites by the regional occupancy rate of 40 percent, then multiplying that by the average 184 day season, and finally multiplying that number by the fee. For example; 29 (basic campsites) x .4 (occupancy rate) x 184 (season) x \$15 (fee) = \$32,016.

**Table 6: Estimated Fee Revenue by Site Type**

Type	Amount	Occupancy Rate	Days Available	Cost Per Night	Revenue
Basic Campsite	29	40%	184	\$15	\$32,016
Double Campsite	3	40%	184	\$30	\$6,624
Camping	Total				\$38,640

Based on both our current and projected fees, operation and maintenance costs for Whittaker Creek Recreation Site (see Table 7); the site will become more self-sufficient and will allow for improved maintenance and visitor services, as well as other enhancements in the recreation site.

**Table 7: Difference Between Revenue Collected and Expenditure Costs**

	Current	Projected After Fee Increases	Projected 2021
<b>Fees Collected</b>	\$9,824	\$38,640	\$51,520
<b>Operation &amp; Maintenance</b>	\$121,350	\$121,350	\$141,906
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-\$100,526</b>	<b>-\$82,710</b>	<b>-\$90,386</b>

The Northwest Oregon District's primary goal for recreation sites is to provide high-quality recreation opportunities and experiences for all visitors. Labor will continue to be the highest operating cost for the recreation sites. BLM staff provides visitor information and interpretive programming; conducts field patrols; maintains facilities; collects and reconciles fees; and rehabilitates natural resource damage. Recreation fee revenue is needed to help support the operation and maintenance of these developed recreation sites. The following is an initial list of how the proposed recreation fee revenue would be used:

- Service contracts for garbage collection, septic pumping, water testing, and firewood.
- Increased patrols for visitor safety, property protection and compliance.
- Renewal of county and state drinking and wastewater permits.
- Supplies including but not limited to cleaning supplies, toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, fuel for motorized equipment, paint, lumber, rock, concrete...etc.
- Maintain, improve and replace recreation site infrastructure such as trails, signage, barbeque grills, fire rings, picnic tables, cement and wood fencing, restroom buildings, kiosks, lighting, roadway striping, maintenance building, communication devices, curb stops, non-motorized...etc.
- Maintain and replace equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, weed trimmers, hand tools, golf carts, ATVs, pressure washers, chain saws, drills...etc.
- Operating or capital costs associated with government vehicles, trailers, tractors, and bobcats.
- Information material such as maps, brochures, and interpretive signage.
- Fee collection equipment and upkeep.
- Audits and evaluations.
- Construction of recreation facilities, such as additional camp sites, trailheads and trails.
- Campground Host stipend payments.
- Purchase native trees and shrubs to prevent social trailing through sensitive areas,
- new interpretive panels could be installed to educate visitors on the importance of the natural resources and how a healthy forest system works
- increased effort to eradicate invasive species from recreation sites could occur

Due to continued stagnation or decreases in the BLM budget there is a growing need for the recreation program to become more self-sufficient, while recognizing that appropriated funds still provide the majority of the recreation program funding. Over the next five years, the recreation program is looking to achieve greater self-sufficiency and resiliency through market rated fee increases, repurposing low visitation recreation sites and designing purpose built recreation sites that fill popular recreation needs. The Bureau of Land Management's Recreation Strategy "Connecting with Communities", provides a vision to increase and improve collaboration with the local community network of service providers to help communities produce greater well-being and socioeconomic health to deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors while sustaining the distinctive character of public land recreation settings. The Northwest Oregon District is also striving to continue relationships with local youth groups in helping to promote a positive experience for youth on public lands and to inspire them to take a greater interest in public land issues.

## **Impacts of Implementing or Not Implementing Fee Changes**

**Positive Impacts** – Fees at Whittaker Creek Recreation Site have not been changed for over 20 years, yet the costs of goods, labor, and services have steadily increased. As the costs of goods, labor, and services increase, the purchasing power from recreation fees decreases proportionately. If the proposed fee changes were adopted, current services would continue to be offered and additional services (additional trails, new types of amenities) would be available. Some of the revenue would be used to gradually reduce the maintenance backlog. Also benefiting would be additional law enforcement, employee oversight of the sites that would reduce vandalism, negative behavior and increased visitor safety. Site infrastructure, cleanliness, and visitor services and information would be benefited as well. All of these combine to improve the overall visitor experience.

Benefits to the local economy could also be realized. It is imperative to the local economy to keep recreation site infrastructure in good condition, clean and serviced to high standards. Maintaining these high standards and creating new opportunities improves the overall recreational experience for current and new visitors alike.

Increased fees also add benefits to the environment. It would allow the Northwest Oregon District to improve, manage, and operate recreational facilities to the fullest. By providing day-use trailheads, campgrounds, and day-use areas for visitors, it allows the District to consolidate resource impacts to a much smaller area. Human waste and garbage are dealt with in an appropriate manner in areas where infrastructure is provided. If these services were not available, the impacts would be felt across a wide area, as illegal dumping would increase. Increased fees would also allow for more purchasing power to acquire items that help reduce negative impacts to the environment. For example, native trees and shrubs could be purchased to prevent soil trampling through sensitive areas, new interpretive panels could be installed to educate visitors on the importance of the natural resources and how a healthy forest system works and an increased effort to eradicate invasive species from recreation sites could occur.

**Negative Impacts** – If proposed fees are not adopted, the existing facilities could see a loss of functionality as operation and maintenance efforts may not be able to keep pace with the increased use of the site due to the rising popularity of the mountain bike trail system. As costs continue to increase, maintenance may not happen as quickly or as often as needed and some services may be reduced. Deferred maintenance costs would increase as facilities age and deteriorate without proper annual maintenance. Maintenance which is deferred because of insufficient funding may result in increased safety hazards, reduced service to the public, higher costs in the future and inefficient operations.

A reduction in recreation and maintenance staff could occur as those positions may not be filled if vacated due to lack of funds. Law enforcement patrols are not expected to be affected. Recreation demands will continue to increase as the Northwest Oregon District is seeing some of the highest population growth in the nation, which in turn increases visitation, thus the costs to operate the fee sites would become more dependent on the fluctuating appropriated funding. The opportunities for future planned developments would be constrained and likely dropped from implementation.

Negative impacts to the environment could also occur. Fewer trash pickups and pumping of toilets could occur, thus creating human waste and garbage impacts. Less-frequent patrols from recreation staff to maintain trails, signage and education materials may allow some visitors to act inappropriately by cutting new trails and vandalizing facilities.

## **Outreach**

### **Stakeholders and Partnerships**

As part of its Connecting with Communities Recreation Strategy, BLM seeks engagement and partnerships with local stakeholders to accomplish mutual objectives for public access and recreation. The BLM will continue partnerships with Lane County youth, Salmon Watch, Outdoor Adventure organizations (REI), scouts, and individuals. Accomplished work such as firewood preparation, trail, and site maintenance projects completed throughout the year would continue.

BLM is a Partner with Willamette National Forest, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Lane County, Corps of Engineers, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks for information sharing relative to the regions recreation areas. A partnership with the Oregon Country Fair was forged in the spring of 2011. A priority will be to increase the number of partnerships and agreements associated with the Northwest Oregon District Recreation Program as a whole.

### **Public Comments**

Partners realize that fees are a part of using developed facilities and continually ask when fee changes will be implemented. Partners understand that fee collection provides available funds for the completion, operation and maintenance of developed sites. Fees also act as a tool for resource protection by helping prevent miss-use and individuals using locations as housing.

Dating back to 2011 information has been posted to the site stating that fee changes are likely to come for Whittaker Campground. Fee implementation has been unsuccessful in the past due to the RAC dissolving before any business plans or fee proposals could be brought forward.

On August 11, 2016, information about the Northwest Oregon District's Proposed Fee Changes was posted onsite at the Whittaker Creek Recreation Sites; simultaneous news releases were pushed to local newspapers. The news release was also published in the Statesman Journal, which prints for the upper Willamette Valley area on August 14, 2016, and The Tillamook County Pioneer which prints for Tillamook County on August 15, 2016. The Northwest Oregon District also posted news releases online for viewing. All documents provided an email address where public comments related to any recreation project may be submitted ([blm\\_or\\_no\\_rec\\_publiccomments@blm.gov](mailto:blm_or_no_rec_publiccomments@blm.gov)); the email is monitored daily during the workweek. As of March 22, 2017, the Northwest Oregon District has received seven comments, nothing specific to the Whittaker Creek Recreation Sites. Commenters generally were confused about

the America the Beautiful-The National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass and in general support of fee increases.

### **Public Communication and Marketing Plan**

1. Public notice of the proposed fee changes will continue to be posted onsite until implemented.
2. News releases will appear in local newspapers informing the public of fee changes the Northwest Oregon District BLM is planning.
3. Both the public notice and news release will contain contact information for public comments on the proposed fee changes.
4. Website information will inform the public of the proposed fee changes.
5. Fee signs and paper materials will reflect the proposed fee changes, including notice of the fee rate(s), the passes that are accepted, and where the fees are charged.
6. A Notice of Intent to Collect Recreation Fees will be published in the *Federal Register* six months before establishing any new recreation fees sites.

In addition, the Northwest Oregon District will be presenting fee proposals to the Coastal Oregon and Northwest Oregon 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 approximately 720,000 acres of public lands in Oregon. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act mandates that the appropriate Recreation RAC or District RAC will be consulted and given opportunities to provide recommendations to the BLM on all recreation fee proposals prior to implementation. Comments from both the public at large and the BLM RAC will be considered prior to the implementation of the proposed recreation fees.

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















### **Ways to Inform Public of Fee Expenditures**














Fee expenditure information is collected on an annual basis and presented in the Public Land Statistics available online at [https://www.blm.gov/public\\_land\\_statistics/](https://www.blm.gov/public_land_statistics/). More specifically, each area will post fee expenditure information on site and online to inform the public where and on what services, maintenance, operations their fees are spent.































**Appendix 1: Analysis of Existing Recreation Site’s Standard and Expanded Amenities:**

Campgrounds below have all 9 expanded amenities listed above. \*Partial hookup is water and electric. \*Full hookup is water, electric and sewer. \*Basic is no hookups

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

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

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

Recreation Site	Fee														
<b>Millpond Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)</b>	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5 Day-use shelter \$130	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓		
<b>Susan Creek Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)</b>	Basic \$20 Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									
<b>Rock Creek Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)</b>	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5	✓	✓	✓									✓		
<b>Tyee Recreation Site (Roseburg BLM)</b>	Basic \$14 Extra vehicle \$5 Day-use shelter \$55				✓	✓							✓		