

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Business Plan for the
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
Visitor Center and Museum**

October 2019

DRAFT

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
27501 Highway 184
Dolores, CO 81323

BLM



**Business Plan for the
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
Visitor Center and Museum
2019**

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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 use of fee money collected at the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center and Museum.

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Executive Summary

The Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum has charged a \$3.00 per person fee since it opened (as the Anasazi Heritage Center) in 1988. The BLM charges the fees to visitors 16 years old and older, unless they have an America the Beautiful Pass. Visitors under 16 years old get in free. Fees are only charged eight months out of the year (March 1 to October 31). The average revenue from fees between FY16 and FY19 was \$17,575 (not including revenue from sales of America the Beautiful passes).

The fee proposal is to: (1) increase the fee from \$3 to \$6 per person (16 years old and older) and (2) to charge the fee year-round rather than only eight months a year. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) estimates that the proposed changes could increase annual fee revenue from an average of \$17,575 per year to over \$41,300 per year.

To help evaluate how much to increase the fee, the BLM compared visitor user fees at comparable regional sites to determine the fair market value of the entrance fee to the Visitor Center and Museum. The average fees for an adult at similar regional attractions ranges from \$8.56 to \$10.31.

To be sensitive to local economic conditions, the BLM is proposing to increase the fee to \$6. This proposal would more than double current revenue and would be similar to the original fee after adjusting for inflation.

Visitors would see benefits related to the fee increase as an increase in capacity for BLM staff to conduct additional education and interpretive programs on the Monument and at the Visitor Center and Museum (through employment of additional seasonal staff). Fees could also assist in completing larger projects, such as special exhibits, improvements at existing trailheads, periodic stabilization of developed pueblo sites, and updates to the main exhibit hall.

The BLM evaluated dropping the existing fee and only accepting donations, similar to Aztec and Hovenweep National Monuments. The decision to drop an existing fee is often made when the costs of collection outweigh the revenue generated by the fee or when the site is experiencing declining visitation. The BLM did not select this alternative because: (1) the Visitor Center and Museum has increasing visitation rates and (2) there are minimal costs of collection since BLM staff are already assigned to staff the Visitor Center and Museum and are capable of collecting fees. Average annual donations are \$2,650, which would not allow the BLM to hire additional seasonal staff or fund special projects.

The BLM consults with 26 federally recognized Native American tribes that have cultural and historical associations with Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The BLM would not require Tribal members to pay the fee for the Visitor Center and

Museum, which is one way the BLM is implementing the guidance in the RMP to “encourage visits by Native Americans...to sacred sites or places of cultural importance within the Monument” (CANM RMP page 55).

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1. AUTHORITY FOR COLLECTING FEES

The BLM prepared this Business Plan to meet the criteria defined in the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004” (FLREA). The FLREA provides the BLM with the authority to collect a standard amenity recreation fee for the recreational use of certain areas. The FLREA allows recreation fees to be retained locally and further outlines how revenues are to be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, and enhancement; interpretation and visitor services; habitat restoration; law enforcement related to public use and recreation; and direct operating or capital costs associated with recreation and visitor services.

The FLREA guidelines and the BLM 2930 Manual and Handbook require that each fee program have a business plan that thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in the Act. Business plans assist in determining the appropriateness and level of fees, cost of administering fee programs, how fees would be used, and provide a structured communication plan. The primary purpose of the business plan is to serve as public notification of the objectives for use of recreation fee revenues and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Site Location

The Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is located in the Four Corners region of southwestern Colorado, about 50 miles west of Durango, 10 miles north of Cortez, and 12 miles northwest of Mesa Verde National Park. The Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum is the headquarters for the Monument but is not located in the Monument itself. Rather, the Visitor Center and Museum is located approximately 10 miles east of the Monument at 27501 Hwy 184, Dolores, CO 81323. (Refer to Appendix A, Map 1.)

The BLM manages the Monument as part of its National Landscape Conservation System within BLM Colorado’s Southwest District and Tres Rios Field Office. The Monument is located in Dolores and Montezuma Counties in Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District.

Refer to Appendix B for photos of the Visitor Center and Museum as well as some other developed recreation sites within the Monument.

2.2. History

The Dolores Archaeological Program (DAP) was one of the largest salvage archaeology programs undertaken in the United States and mitigated the loss of archaeological sites from the construction of McPhee Reservoir. The local community lobbied to keep recovered artifacts in the area and the Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC) was constructed to house these artifacts. The BLM renamed the AHC as the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in April 2018 to more closely tie the museum to the Monument and to provide a means to educate the public about the natural and cultural resources within the Monument.

Due to the area's internationally significant cultural resources, the Anasazi Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) was established in 1985. On June 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation Number 7317 established this area as the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The Monument contains the highest known archaeological site density in the United States.¹ This cultural landscape contains more than 6,355 recorded sites reflecting all the physical components of past human life: villages, field houses, check dams, reservoirs, great kivas, cliff dwellings, shrines, sacred springs, agricultural fields, petroglyphs and sweat lodges. It is estimated that there are up to 30,000 archaeological sites on the Monument. With the acquisition of some inholdings, the Monument is now over 174,000 acres.

The Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum serves as the headquarters for the Monument and the primary visitor contact station. The Visitor Center and Museum is one of only three curation facilities within the BLM. With 3.9 million objects, the Visitor Center and Museum houses the largest collection of artifacts and archives in the Bureau. Combined, BLM's other two facilities hold 810,732 objects—one in Montana (770,000 objects) and Oregon (40,732 objects). The Visitor Center and Museum is a 40,000 square-foot facility that includes a curation facility, administrative offices, and exhibit space (Refer to Appendix A, Map 2).

The Monument has been used or inhabited by humans, including the Northern Ancestral Puebloan culture (or Anasazi), for 10,000 years, and continues to be a landscape used by humans today. Contemporary uses of the Monument include recreation, hunting, livestock grazing, and energy development.

2.3. Management Direction (RMP)

Management direction for the Monument is provided in the 2010 Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan (CANM RMP). In general, only 13 to 25 cultural resource sites are allocated for development and public use (with associated interpretive signs and brochures). However, visitors are able to visit the backcountry where they can experience the Monument's "Outdoor Museum" which involves experiencing cultural and natural resources through self-discovery. Relevant goals for the fee proposal include:

Education and Interpretation (CANM RMP page 73)

Increase public education and appreciation of the objects identified in the Proclamation by creating opportunities for visitors and other users to learn about the Monument's overall landscape and about its multiple-uses, as well as about the needs for protection and stewardship.

Ensure long-term public benefits from research, education, interpretation, and heritage tourism while, at the same time, balancing other uses and considering the effects on the local economy.

¹ In addition to archaeological sites, the Presidential Proclamation also established the Monument to protect natural resources, spectacular landforms, rugged and dissected geology, and wildlife species (including Mesa Verde nightsnake, long-nosed leopard lizard, and twin-spotted spiny lizard).

Facilities and Infrastructure (CANM RMP page 75)

Develop and maintain the smallest number of facilities and infrastructure necessary in order to provide for public safety and to assist in meeting resource management objectives.

Recreation (CANM RMP page 86)

Manage and enable access to the Monument for recreational activities while, at the same time, protecting cultural and natural resources, ensuring compatibility with other existing and permitted uses, and considering effects on adjacent landowners and the local community.

The Monument contains six Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAS): the Visitor Center and Museum, Pueblo Sites, Sand Canyon/Rock Creek, Mockingbird Mesa-Rincon, Squaw-Cross Canyons, and Goodman Point SRMAs. In regards to the fee proposal, most of the developed recreation opportunities within the Monument occur within the Visitor Center and Museum, Pueblo Sites, and Sand Canyon/Rock Creek SRMAs.

2.3.1. Visitor Center and Museum SRMA

The BLM manages the Visitor Center and Museum SRMA as the focal point for the Monument's interpretation and education program and as the primary visitor contact station. The Visitor Center and Museum serves as the headquarters for the Monument and is the most developed of all the sites (refer to Appendix B for photos). The Visitor Center and Museum features:

- Permanent exhibits on archaeology, local history, and Native American cultures;
- Two 12th-century archaeological sites;
- Special exhibits and events;
- Educational resources for teachers;
- A research library of archaeology and anthropology resources;
- A research collection of more than 3 million artifacts and records from archaeological projects in southwest Colorado; and
- A picnic area, half-mile nature trail, and bookstore.

The CANM RMP identifies the following objectives for the Visitor Center and Museum SRMA (page 88):

- Activities: viewing interpretive exhibits, learning about ancient cultures, hiking, viewing of archaeological sites (with additional activities that might include learning about ancient cultures and lifestyles), and learning about recreation opportunities within the Monument.
- Experiences: contemplating people's relationship with the land, learning how to respect other users and land uses, and learning new places to go with a group.
- Benefits: increased respect for cultural heritage, increased access to hands-on learning, improved environmental ethics, an increased sense of stewardship of cultural resources (with additional benefits that might include an improved ability to relate to local cultures), improved scholarship/more highly motivated students, an enhanced ability for visitors to find what they want, and improved local economic stability.

2.3.2. Pueblo Sites SRMA

The Pueblo Sites SRMA (approximately 240 acres across 3 tracts) includes the Painted Hand, Lowry, and Sand Canyon Pueblos. All three of these sites have dedicated trailheads and parking areas. The Lowry Pueblo site is currently the only developed site on the Monument with picnic tables and vault toilets but the BLM is working on a proposal to further develop the trailhead at the Painted Hand Pueblo. The BLM is also currently evaluating a proposal to develop an equestrian trailhead near the Painted Hand Pueblo trailhead.

Management objectives in the CANM RMP for the Pueblo Sites SRMA (page 86) are:

- Activities: day hiking and viewing of archaeological pueblos.
- Experiences: learning about the Monument and contemplating people's relationship with the land.
- Benefits: a greater respect for cultural heritage and a greater desire for the protection of archaeological structures and sites.

2.3.3. Sand Canyon/Rock Creek SRMA

The Sand Canyon/Rock Creek SRMA (approximately 7,500 acres) includes Sand, Rock, and East Rock Creek Canyons. The southern Sand Canyon trailhead is a popular hiking and horseback riding location within the Monument and offers 20 miles of developed trails within the three canyons.

In April 2019, Montezuma County installed a parking area for 20 vehicles adjacent to County Road G and volunteers helped install a connector trail from the new county parking lot to the main Sand Canyon trail. In December 2019, the BLM will begin construction on the existing Sand Canyon parking lot to level and expand the parking lot to accommodate another 20 vehicles. Both parking lots would accommodate horse trailers.

Additionally, re-locating trails away from impacted cultural sites in several areas and adding additional equestrian trail opportunities could occur.

Management objectives in the CANM RMP for the Sand Canyon/Rock Creek SRMA (page 87) are:

- Activities: hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and viewing of archaeological sites.
- Experiences: engaging in outdoor exercise, relishing group affiliation and connections, escaping human-made machinery and noise, and enjoying access to close-to-home amenities.
- Benefits: improved fitness and health, improved mental well-being, an enhanced relationship with the natural world.

3. VISITATION

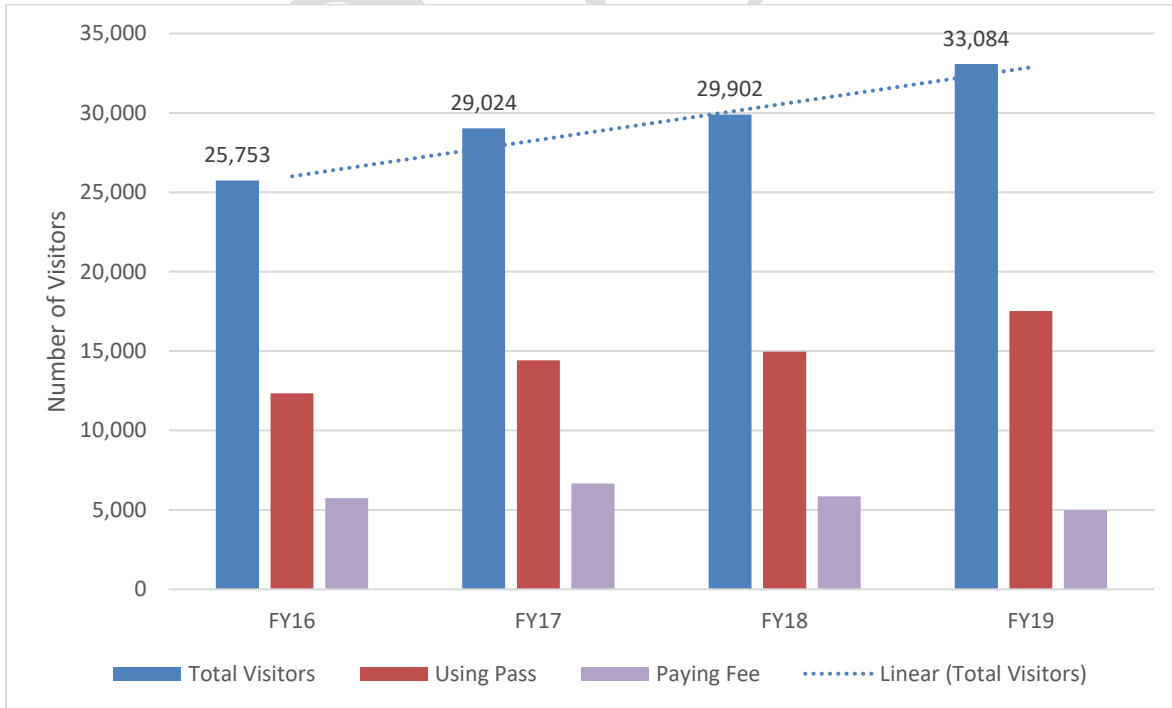
3.1. Visitor Use

In FY11, a Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) survey indicated that 92 percent of the visitors to the Monument were adults over 18 years old while 7 percent of visitors were children under 12 years old. Of the adults who responded to the survey, 17 percent were between the ages of 18 and 30; 49 percent were between the ages of 31 and 50; and 31 percent were 51 years old and older. According to the FY11 GPRA survey, the most popular activities on the Monument are hiking, sightseeing, biking, birdwatching/wildlife viewing, picnicking, education, and camping.

Based on data collected at the Visitor Center and Museum, highest use is typically between April and October. More people tend to visit the Visitor Center and Museum during the summer months, whereas recreation on the Monument itself decreases in the summer and increases in the spring and fall (due to hot summer temperatures).

Estimated average annual visitation from FY16 to FY19 is 29,441 visitors (Figure 1).² Visitation in FY19 was 10 percent higher than FY18. The BLM presumes that the increase in visitation is related to the name change since more visitors are accustomed to seeking out national monument visitor centers rather than “heritage centers”.

Figure 1. Annual Visitation to the Visitor Center and Museum



² Note: The BLM summarized visitation from hand-written records prior to implementing the new point of sale system. The point of sale system is anticipated to be implemented by March 2020.

The BLM will continue to monitor visitor use at the Monument as well as at the Visitor Center and Museum. A GPRA survey, concluded in late September 2019, will provide updated demographic data. In addition, BLM anticipates installing a new point of sale system that will be operational by the end of the year. The point of sale system will help track visitor numbers and provide demographic data, such as visitors under 16 years old and visitors using various versions of the America the Beautiful Pass (Military, Senior, or Access).

3.2. Hours of Operation

The Visitor Center and Museum is currently open 362 days a year (closed New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). It is open from 9am-5pm during from March 1 to October 31 and from 10am-4pm November 1 to February 28, which equates to being open 2,662 hours each year.

While the Visitor Center and Museum is fortunate to have a passionate cadre of volunteers, the BLM remains obligated to staff it—there are some tasks that not all volunteers are either trained, educated, or willing to do. The primary BLM staff responsible for the Visitor Center are the Park Ranger and Visitor Center Manager, but the extensive hours of operation for the visitor center affects their ability to devote time to work on the Monument itself or to develop new interpretative materials and educational outreach.

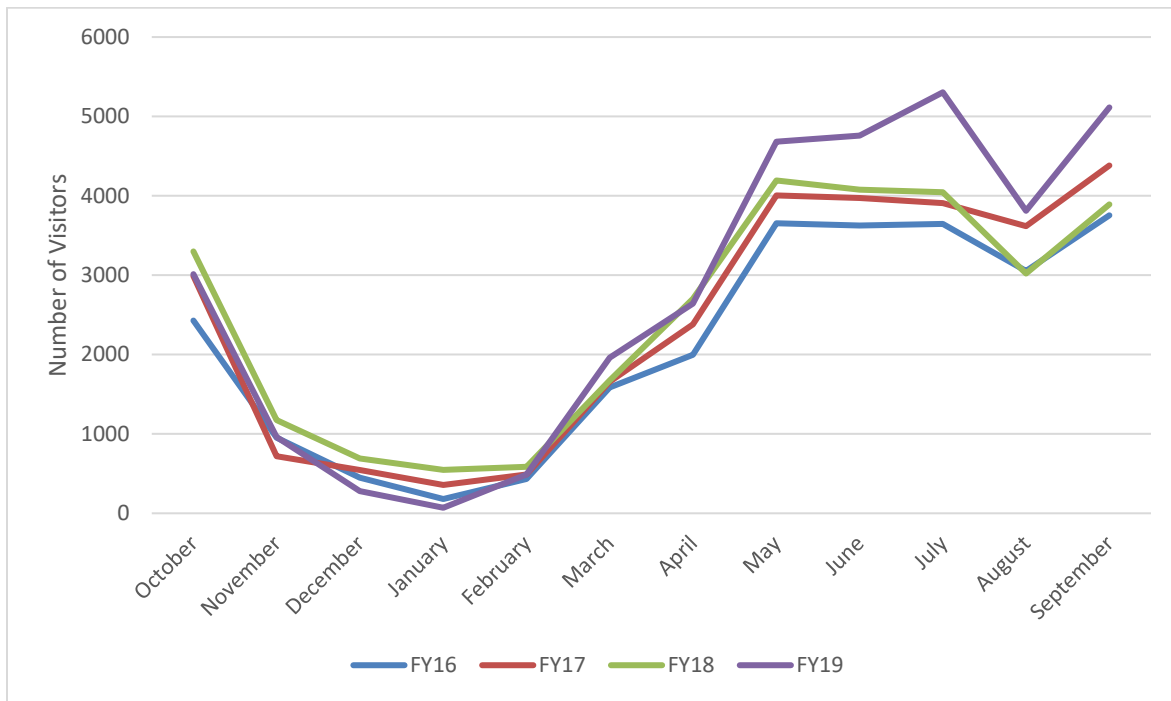
As of November 1, 2019, the Visitor Center and Museum will operate under a new schedule (Table 1). It will remain open 6 days/week for 8 months out of the year (closed on Mondays). It will also be open every weekend (minimum of Thursday-Sunday) for the remaining four months. In summary, the visitor center would be open 287 days/year (2,142 hours). The Monument itself, as well as the hiking trail to the Escalante Pueblo at the Visitor Center and Museum, would remain open year-round.

Table 1. Visitor Center and Museum Operating Schedule

Dates	Days Open Each Week	Number of Days Open Each Week	Hours of Operation
March 1 – October 31	Tuesday to Sunday	6 days/week	9am-5pm
November 1 – November 30; January 6 – February 28	Wednesday to Sunday	5 days/week	10am-4pm
December 1 – January 5	Thursday to Sunday	4 days/week	10am-4pm

The reduced number of days during the four winter months corresponds with a slow visitation time (Figure 2). Closing the Visitor Center and Museum a few days each week during these slow visitation times allows permanent BLM staff to focus on planning for the busier months (e.g., seasonal hiring, project planning, annual installation of a new special exhibit, etc).

Figure 2. Seasonal Trends in Visitation to the Visitor Center and Museum



4. CURRENT FEE PROGRAM

The Visitor Center and Museum is currently classified as a standard amenity fee site and provides the following:

- Opportunities for outdoor recreation;
- Designated developed parking;
- Permanent toilet facilities;
- Permanent trash receptacles;
- Interpretative signs;
- Kiosks;
- Picnic tables;
- Security services;
- Access roads;
- Fee collection by an employee or agent of the land management agency;
- Reasonable visitor protection;
- Participation in an enhanced interpretive program or special tour;
- Emergency medical or first-aid services;
- Picnic shelters;
- Informative guides and brochures;
- Educational opportunities; and
- Employment opportunities.

4.1. Cost to Operate the Site

The Monument and the Visitor Center and Museum receive appropriated funds that pay for permanent staff, vehicles, equipment, and material and supplies. In FY 19, the Monument received \$1,700,500 in appropriated funds. The majority of the Monument's expenditures were labor costs.

Under the previous schedule of operations (open daily), estimated BLM staff costs for the Visitor Center and Museum was approximately \$132,400 annually, accounting for the staff of two GS-9 employees. In the past, the BLM has relied heavily on volunteers to help run the Visitor Center and Museum while BLM staff have tried to juggle both front-desk and back-office tasks. It has proven to be an ineffective staffing model. Historically the BLM has relied on an “honesty system” where visitors drop the entrance fee into a collection box, which avoided having volunteers handle funds. However, volunteers must routinely summon BLM staff to the front to assist visitors for financial transactions, such as credit card transactions (including donations), making change, and selling America the Beautiful passes. This results in a lower level of customer service due to an additional delay in response for relatively simple tasks. It also results in BLM staff being routinely interrupted while working on back-office tasks like staff meetings, coordinating with partners, scheduling volunteers, program development, and other duties. Rather than expecting BLM staff to effectively be in two places at one time, the BLM has recently revised Visitor Center and Museum staffing so that a BLM staff person is stationed at the front desk during all open hours.

In conjunction with the new schedule of operations, the BLM also added additional staff (including GS-7 and GS-5 employees) to assist with covering the Visitor Center and Museum. This change allows time for important behind-the-scenes planning and coordination by higher-graded (GS-9) permanent employees. The BLM estimates future labor costs for the Visitor Center and Museum to be approximately \$81,400, which includes a GS-5 summer seasonal employee. This change in labor costs for the Visitor Center and Museum does not represent a reduction in overall labor costs for the Monument, but rather a re-distribution of staff time—including allowing higher graded employees to focus on working on the Monument, developing interpretation and education programs, and staffing the Visitor Center and Museum with lower graded employees. The BLM would continue to use volunteers in the Visitor Center to help welcome visitors and provide information.

4.2. Current Fees and Expenditures

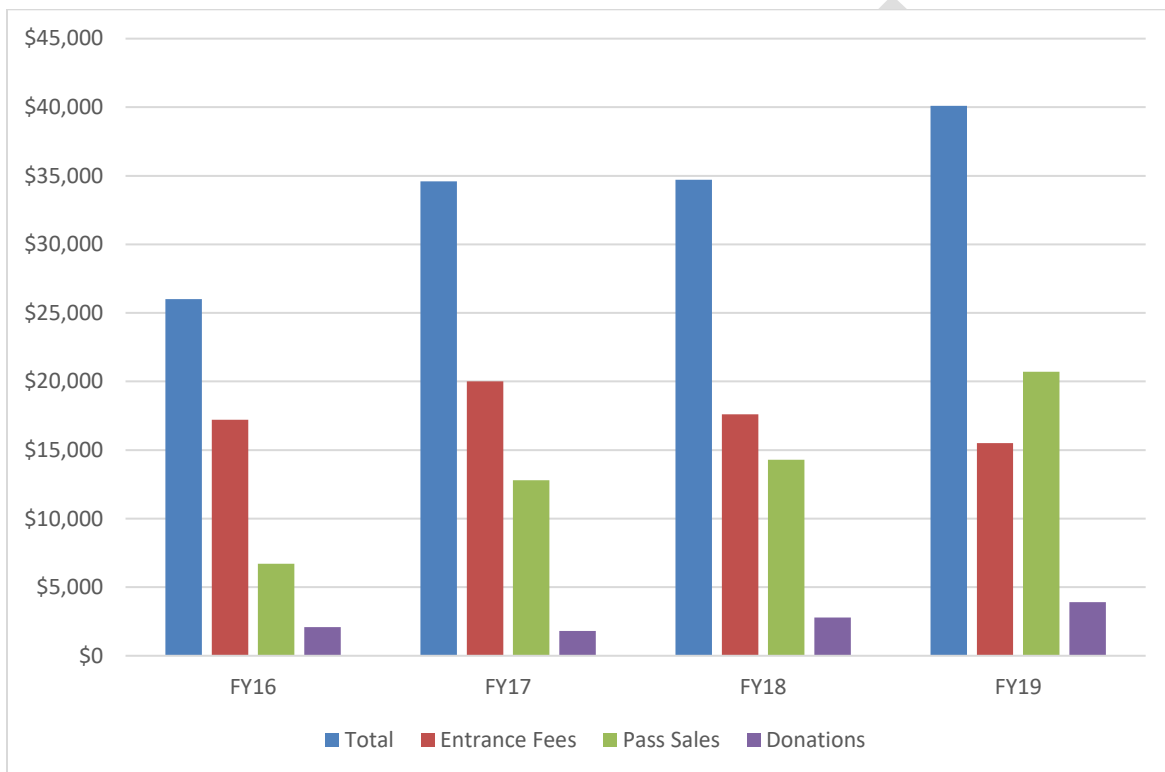
The Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum has charged a \$3.00 per person fee, since it opened (as the Anasazi Heritage Center) in 1988. The BLM charges the fees to visitors 16 years old and older, unless they have an America the Beautiful Pass. Visitors under 16 years old get in free. Fees are only charged eight months out of the year—March 1 to October 31. The average revenue from entrance fees between FY16 and FY19 was \$17,575 (Figure 3).

This fee proposal will not impact sales of the various versions of the America the Beautiful pass because those prices are set. There has been an increase in pass sales and use over the past several years, which benefits the Monument since the money from each pass remains on site. At the current rate of \$80 for a regular annual pass, each pass sale equals as much as 26 individual

entrance fees. In FY19, pass sales generated \$20,700 in revenue, compared to \$15,500 in entrance fee revenue.

Total annual revenue from fees, pass sales, and donations averaged \$33,850 from FY16 to FY19. However, fluctuation in annual revenue ranged from a low of \$26,000 in FY16 to a high of \$40,100 in FY19.

Figure 3. Annual Revenue from Entrance Fees, Pass Sales, and Donations



Unlike appropriated funds, which lapse if not spent in a given fiscal year, revenue generated from fees can be rolled over from one year to the next, allowing the BLM to “save up” and plan for larger future expenditures. In FY16 and FY17, \$10,800 of fee money was used for materials and supplies (for partial funding of a special exhibit and enhancement of some museum exhibits and displays). At the start of FY20, the balance of the fee account (which includes fees and pass sales) is approximately \$133,000. (Refer to section 5.2 for information about planned future expenditures.)

4.3. Cost of Fee Collection

In FY19 the BLM invested \$13,500 for a point of sale system to assist with the collection of fees. Service and maintenance of the system is estimated to cost \$2,500 annually.

While the BLM relies heavily on volunteers to provide the current level of visitor services in the Visitor Center and Museum, it remains the BLM’s obligation to staff it and funds for permanent employees is provided in annual appropriated funds (section 4.1). Since BLM staff needs to be

available during hours the Visitor Center and Museum is open to the public, BLM does not consider labor costs associated with collecting fees during these hours as costs of fee collection. In September 2019, the BLM hired a full-time Administrative Assistant for the Monument paid for with appropriated funds. This position will assist with any additional tasks needed to support fee collection, such as reconciling, reporting, and depositing cash.

4.4. Fee Security Measures

Fee collection officers would primarily be BLM employees (including seasonal employees). Volunteers have not previously been responsible for conducting financial transactions but they could certainly assist in those tasks if they are willing to go through the training process and handle money. To become designated as a fee collection officer, each individual must complete an online course and on the job training.

5. PROPOSED FEE INCREASE

The fee proposal is to: (1) increase the fee from \$3 to \$6 per person (16 years old and older) and (2) to charge the fee year-round rather than only eight months a year, March 1 – October 31.

The BLM consults with 26 federally recognized Native American tribes that have cultural and historical associations with Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The BLM would not require Tribal members to pay the fee for the Visitor Center and Museum, which is one way the BLM is implementing the guidance in the RMP to “encourage visits by Native Americans...to sacred sites or places of cultural importance within the Monument” (RMP page 55).

As discussed in section 4.2, the average revenue from entrance fees between FY16 and FY19 was \$17,575 or approximately \$71 per day (24 paying customers) for the 245 days BLM collected the fees. Under the new hours of operation, BLM anticipates an additional 42 days of fee collection. Assuming the number of paying customers remains the same (24 per day), annual revenue would increase to approximately \$41,300.

Estimating future revenue:

Current fee structure: 245 days x 24 paid customers/day x \$3.00 per customer = \$17,640

Proposed fee structure: 287 days x 24 paid customers/day x \$6.00 per customer = \$41,328

5.1. Fair Market Value Fee Calculation

To help evaluate how much to increase the fee, the BLM considered what fair market value would be by comparing visitor user fees for comparable regional sites. The average fees for an adult at similar regional attractions ranges from \$8.56 to \$10.31 (Table 2).

To be sensitive to local economic conditions (section 6.1), the BLM is proposing to increase the fee to \$6. This proposal would more than double current revenue and would be similar to the

original fee after adjusting for inflation. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistic’s CPI inflation calculator, the original \$3 fee (1988) is equal to \$6.65 in today’s spending power².

Table 2. Average Adult Fees for Similar Regional Attractions

Site	Location (Distance to Visitor Center & Museum)	Individual Fee (Adults)
Mesa Verde National Park	Mesa Verde, CO (18 miles)	\$7 for January-April \$12 for May-October
Ute Indian Museum	Montrose, CO (122 miles)	\$6 adults \$5 senior
Powerhouse Science Center	Durango, CO (48 miles)	\$7.50 adult \$6.50 senior, military, student
Southern Ute Museum	Ignacio, CO (69 miles)	\$7 (individuals in groups less than 10) \$5 (individuals in groups of 11+)
Chimney Rock National Monument	Chimney Rock, CO (93 miles)	No entry fee but tours are required. \$16 guided tours \$12 audio tour
Chaco Culture National Historical Park	Nageezi, NM (147 miles)	\$15 for 7 days
Salmon Ruins Museum	Bloomfield, NM (92 miles)	\$4 adults \$3 senior
Bandelier National Monument	Los Alamos, NM (258 miles)	\$15 for 7 days
Average Fees Range from:		\$8.56 to \$10.31

There are no fees charged at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (253 miles away), Aztec National Monument (80 miles away), or Hovenweep National Monument (42 miles away). (Refer to section 8.2 for an evaluation of why the BLM is not proposing to eliminate the fee at Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum).

5.2. Future Expenditures

Revenue generated from fees stays at the Monument and can be rolled over from year to year, allowing the BLM to “save up” and plan for larger expenditures in the future. While accumulated revenue from fees can be directed to larger multi-year projects, BLM generally expects to focus the fee revenue on annual expenditures. Revenue generated from the fee increase would be used primarily in two ways: (1) hiring seasonal park ranger staff and (2) funding for special projects.

The BLM estimates that the fee increase would result in approximately \$41,300 annually (section 5). Combined with average revenue from pass sales (\$13,625) and donations (\$2,650), the total annual revenue increases to \$57,575.

Seasonal Employees

The BLM intends to use the fee and donation revenue to help fund two seasonal employees. The BLM will use approximately \$20,000 annually to fund a portion of the salary for a permanent

² The CPI Inflation Calculator can be found online at: <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>. Compared \$3 in January 1988 to buying power in August 2019.

GS-7 career seasonal (working 9 months/year) positions. The BLM would use another \$22,000 annually to fund a GS-5 six-month seasonal employee. Both of these positions would assist in staffing the Visitor Center and Museum during the busiest time of the year. These positions would also assist in managing recreation on the Monument itself and providing interpretative programs to the public and educational programs to school groups. Increased staff capacity further supports public outreach to schools, higher educational institutions, and regional groups. Staff would also be able to do more interpretative programs at the nearby historic sites on the Monument such as Lowry Pueblo and Sand Canyon. The BLM staff seeks to increase awareness of the Monument and to encourage visitors to visit sites on the ground instead of limiting their visit to only the Visitor Center and Museum. Field-based experiences would also create a sense of stewardship for the visiting public and provide the opportunity to educate them about the BLM's multiple use mission.

Special Projects

After accounting for seasonal employee costs, BLM estimates there would be approximately \$15,575 annually to use for special projects. The BLM can use this money within the same year it is generated for smaller projects or BLM can save it for larger projects.

Examples of upcoming larger projects include:

- Special exhibits (updated annually) \$25,000
- Painted Hand Pueblo trailhead and access road improvements \$100,000
- Periodic stabilization of developed pueblo sites \$35,000

Examples of longer-term larger projects include:

- Updating the main exhibit hall at the Visitor Center and Museum
- Development of the Lamb House historic site as a visitor contact station

5.3. Informing the Public of Expenditures

The BLM will prepare an annual report that summarizes revenue generated from fees, associated expenditures, and any balance of funds to be rolled over to the next fiscal year. The report will be available for public review at the Visitor Center and Museum. Signs will also be used to inform the public of any projects that are paid for by fee revenue.

6. SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

6.1. Impacts to Underserved Communities

According to the Census Bureau³, approximately 16.8 percent of Montezuma County residents and 14.1 percent of Dolores County residents are living in poverty (compared to 11.5 percent of Colorado residents). While the average fees for an adult at similar regional attractions ranges from \$8.56 to \$10.31, the BLM is proposing to increase the fee to \$6 in order to be sensitive to local economic conditions.

³ US Census Bureau, American Fact Finder website at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk

There are no fees to access the Monument itself or the hiking trail to Escalante Pueblo (located at the Visitor Center and Museum). Additionally, the BLM offers several fee-free days each year at the Visitor Center and Museum, including National Get Outdoors Day (June), National Public Lands Day (September), and Veterans Day (November).

6.2. Aggregate Effect of Recreation Fees

The BLM anticipates that the increase in recreation fees will minimally effect both recreation users and recreation service providers since the fee is currently well below what other sites in the area charge. Even with the increase, the proposed fee increase would remain below what many of the areas charge. Recreation users would see benefits related to the fee increase, including an improved capacity for BLM staff to conduct additional education and interpretive programs on the Monument and at the Visitor Center and Museum.

6.3. Effect On Local Businesses

A 2016 study by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (CCAC) illustrates that tourism is a “base” economy for the area. In 2017, CCAC published a report detailing the overall contribution of revenue generated, and lives touched, by heritage tourism in Southwest Colorado. Data from “The Economic Contributions of Cultural Resources in Southwest Colorado” (2016), describes the interest in heritage tourism and the contribution of both the Monument and the Visitor Center and Museum at \$5,536,000 economic input.

The CCAC based its report on six locations designated for heritage tourism in the Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado, which includes Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan Counties. Public lands make up 45 per cent of the district and represent the top earners based on primary and secondary effects of the industry. The study includes Mesa Verde National Park (NPS), Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Visitor Center and Museum (BLM), Chimney Rock National Monument (USFS), Crow Canyon Archaeologic Center (NGO), Hovenweep National Monument (NPS), and the Southern Ute Museum (State). Mesa Verde has a significant contribution on the monetary impact in the region, followed by Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Visitor Center and Museum, which comes in as the second largest input contributor at \$5,536,000. The impact of heritage tourism “[c]ombined, employment and visitor spending totaled 1,340 jobs, \$42.2 million in labor revenue, \$67 million in value added, and \$113.6 million of economic output in 2016.”

7. OTHER METHODS TO INCREASE CAPACITY

In addition to appropriated funds and fees, BLM also uses other means to increase capacity at the Monument. These methods include donations from visitors, donated labor from volunteers, and a variety of programs and projects supported by partner groups.

7.1. Donations

The Visitor Center and Museum has permission to collect donations. This revenue is deposited into a separate account set up specifically for the Monument. Average revenue from donations between FY16 and FY19 was \$2,650 per year (range of \$1,800 in FY17 to \$3,900 in FY19).

7.2. Volunteers and Partners

The Monument and Visitor Center and Museum has a dedicated cadre of volunteers who support a variety of programs. In FY18, volunteers donated 10,138 hours of labor (worth an estimated \$202,760). Volunteers assist in a variety of capacities, including: visitor services/front desk, interpretation/docent tours, bookstore operation, library, curation, cultural site stewards, and gardeners.

Volunteers who assist at the Visitor Center and Museum are not currently certified as collections officers. Certifying volunteers as collection officers⁴ would assist BLM staff with front desk operations, particularly during busy times of the year or when collecting fees from large tour groups (i.e., improved customer service by having more than one person capable of processing financial transactions to reduce lines during busy times).

Numerous partner groups also help to improve the BLM's capacity to provide for improved visitor services, education, and outreach. These groups include: History Colorado's State Historical Fund, Canyonlands Natural History Association, Southwest Conservation Corps, San Juan Mountains Association, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance, McElmo Canyon Research Institute, Anasazi Historical Society, and Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway.

7.3. Bookstore

The BLM works with partner groups to provide a bookstore at the Visitor Center and Museum. The bookstore helps provide interpretative materials to visitors.

8. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

8.1. Initial Scoping of the Fee Proposal

The BLM presented a draft business plan for the proposal to increase the fee at the Visitor Center and Museum to the Southwest Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) on March 8, 2016. Additionally, BLM held two scoping meetings at the Visitor Center and Museum on December 4 and 6, 2018, and all comments presented supported the increase (at that time proposed as an increase to \$5). The BLM announced the December 2018 meetings in a November 30, 2018 article in the Cortez Journal newspaper.

The BLM has also discussed the fee proposal with the Dolores and Montezuma county commissioners. The BLM updated the RAC on its continued work on the fee proposal at their March, June, and September 2019 meetings. The BLM also discussed the fee proposal with various Tribes at annual consultation meetings, and most recently at the October 8, 2019 meeting with the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Santa Clara Pueblo, Pueblo of Laguna, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Santa Ana, Pueblo of Acoma, Ute Mountain Ute, and San Felipe Pueblo.

⁴ The BLM staff believe that attempts to train current volunteers as collections officers may lead to the loss of some volunteers for the front desk. Recruitment of additional volunteers who are willing to be trained to complete basic financial transactions (collecting fees and selling passes) would help complement the work of existing volunteers.

These initial public discussions helped to identify potential alternatives that the BLM should evaluate (section 8.2).

8.2. Other Alternatives Considered but Not Carried Forward

The BLM identified the following alternatives during internal and external scoping:

- Drop existing fee (donations only);
- Fee for curation tours;
- Local pass or free days for local citizens (Dolores & Montezuma County residents); and
- Different fee for commercial bus tours.

The BLM evaluated dropping the existing fee and only accept donations based on a comparison to the Aztec and Hovenweep National Monuments, which have dropped their fees. The decision to drop an existing fee is often made when the costs of collection outweigh the revenue generated by the fee or when the site is experiencing declining visitation. The BLM did not select this alternative because: (1) the Visitor Center and Museum has increasing visitation rates (section 3.1, Figure 1), (2) there are minimal costs of collection since BLM staff are already assigned to staff the Visitor Center and Museum and are capable of collecting fees, and (3) average annual donations are \$2,650, which would not allow the BLM to hire additional seasonal staff or fund special projects (as proposed in section 5.2).

The BLM also analyzed charges for weekly behind-the-scenes curation tours offered at the Visitor Center and Museum during the summer season. These tours are very popular. However, the tours are limited to 12 participants, which limits the amount of revenue that could be generated compared to the fees charged for all adult visitors.

The BLM reviewed suggestions to provide for free or reduced admission for local citizens. Specifically, that the BLM offer either a local pass (\$10 annual pass) or free days for local citizens (i.e., Dolores and Montezuma County residents). The BLM determined that implementing these proposals would over-complicate its fee collections because it would require front desk staff (either BLM staff or volunteers) to determine which visitors qualify for these programs. In contrast, it is relatively easy to determine (or “prove”) which visitors qualify for a senior pass based on the age provided on a driver’s license or to identify military visitors by their military identification card. There are also several ways that locals can get free admission to the Visitor Center and Museum, including: (1) fee-free days, (2) volunteering, or (3) fourth-grade passes. The fee-free days are National Get Outdoors Day (June), National Public Lands Day (September), and Veterans Day (November). Also, volunteers who donate 250 hours of time (cumulatively, at any office, and doing any volunteer job) are eligible for a free (annual) America the Beautiful Pass. Fourth-graders are also eligible for a free America the Beautiful Pass for their family.

The BLM examined charging more to visitors arriving on commercial bus tours. The BLM originally proposed a fee increase to \$5, and this alternative would charge a \$6 fee to the commercial bus tours, which is comparable to commercial tour groups permitted under special recreation permits. The BLM is not bringing this alternative forward because implementing this proposal would require front desk staff to determine what mode of travel visitors used to access the facility.

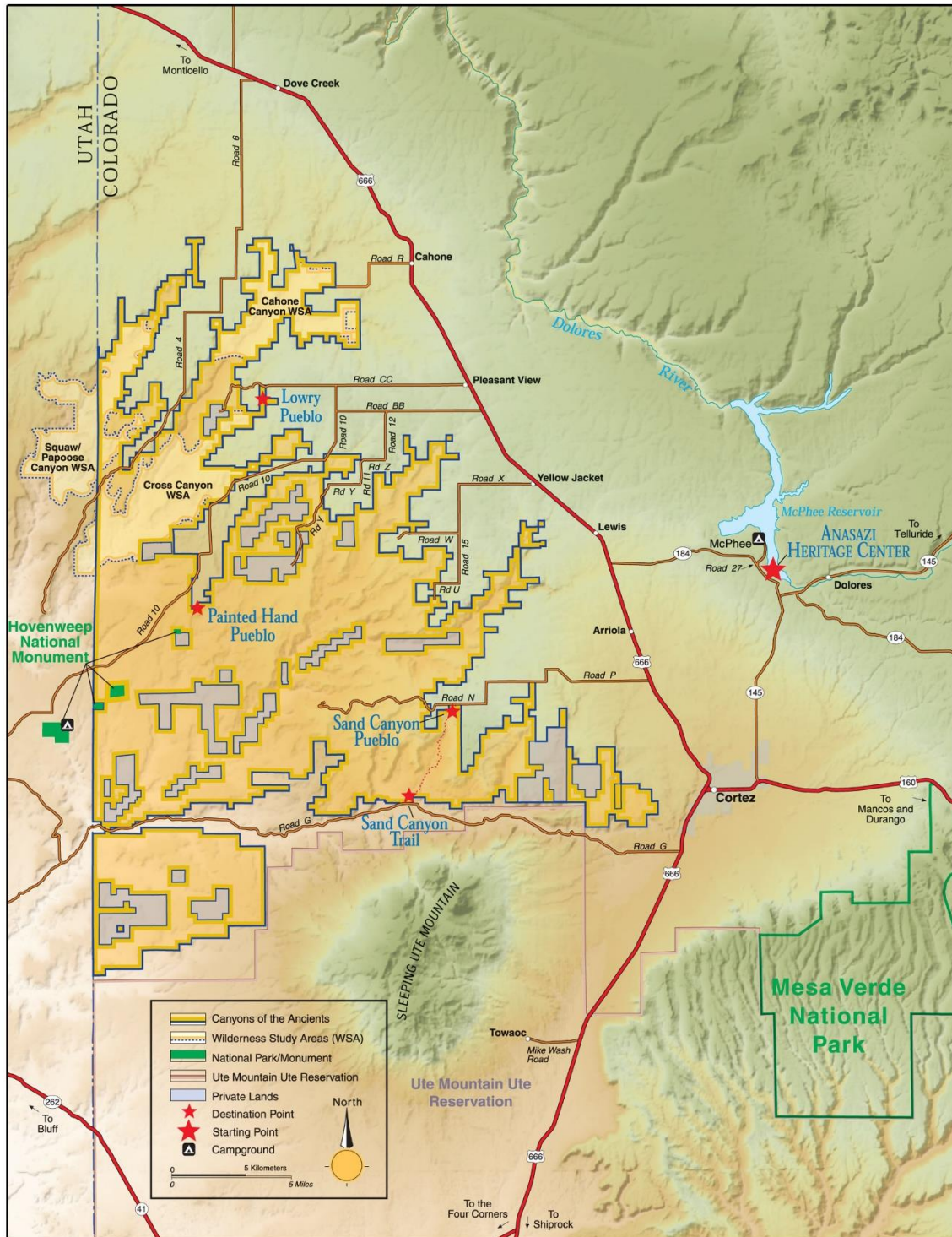
8.3. Public Review of the Draft Business Plan

In the fall of 2019, the BLM will conduct additional public outreach, including public review of the draft business plan. The BLM will post the draft business plan online and notify the public its availability through a news release, social media, letters to our partner groups, and postings at the Visitor Center and Museum and at trailheads at kiosks on the Monument (refer to Appendix C for outreach material). The BLM plans on presenting the final business plan the Southwest RAC at the December 2019 meeting. If the RAC recommends approval of the fee increase, the new fee would go into effect approximately 90 days after it is approved.

DRAFT

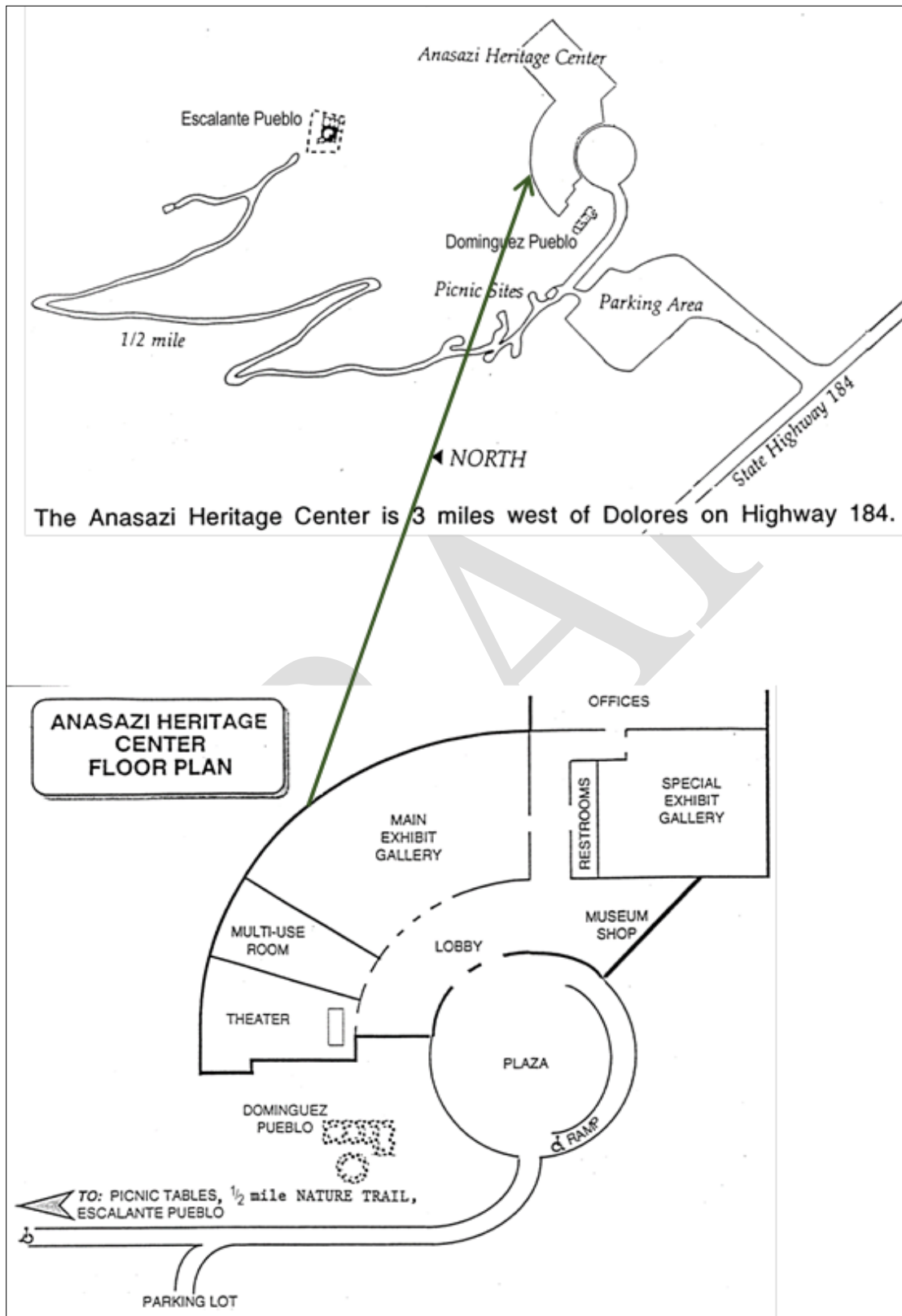
APPENDIX A. MAPS

Map 1. Canyons of the Ancients National Monument & Location of Visitor Center and Museum
 (The Anasazi Heritage Center was re-named the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in 2018.)



Map 2. Visitor Center and Museum Footprint

Note: The Anasazi Heritage Center was re-named the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in 2018.



APPENDIX B. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1. Entrance plaza and gardens at the front of the Visitor Center and Museum.



Photo 2. Main exhibit room in the Visitor Center and Museum.



Photo 3. Panoramic view of the special exhibit room in the Visitor Center and Museum



Photo 4. Escalante Pueblo and the McPhee Reservoir Overlook at the Visitor Center and Museum.
(Photos by Lanny Wagner)



Photo 5. Lowry Pueblo (The metal roof was constructed to help preserve the site.)



Photo 6. The great kiva at Lowry Pueblo



Photo 7. Castle Rock Pueblo at the Sand Canyon Trail Head



Photo 8. Painted Hand Pueblo



APPENDIX C. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS

C.1. Cortez Journal Article Regarding December 2018 Public Meetings

10/10/2019

Price increase proposed for monument museum



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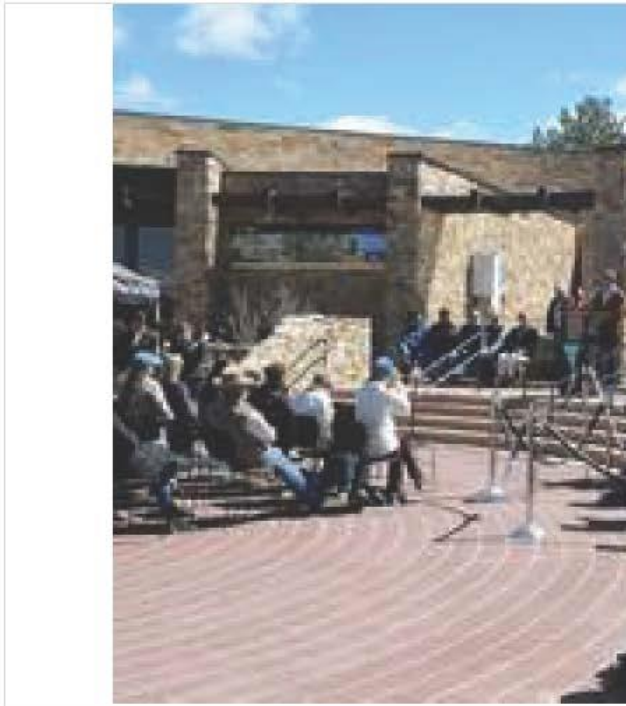
Price increase proposed for monument museum

Two public meetings scheduled

By The Journal (/staff/2045-the-journal)

Friday, Nov. 30, 2018 10:34 AM Updated: Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2018 7:10 PM

Select Language | ▼



<https://the-journal.com/articles/119017>

1/3

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument will host two public meetings to discuss proposed fee increases for the monument's visitor center and museum west of Dolores.

The meetings will take place Dec. 4 and 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum, 27501 Colorado Highway 184, and will include a short presentation followed by an open discussion with the participants.

The proposal is to raise the year-round museum entry fee from \$3 to \$5. Currently, the museum is free November through February.

The increased revenue would provide opportunities to support programs and projects that directly benefit the museum and its visitors. The proposal also includes offering a free visitation day on the last Saturday of the month and the option for locals in Montezuma and Dolores counties to purchase an annual pass for \$10.

"The purpose of the meetings is to hear from the public," said monument manager Marietta Eaton. "We look forward to a productive dialogue with the many users who enjoy this special area."

If unable to make the meetings and would like to provide feedback, contact the BLM at 970-882-5600 or meaton@blm.gov.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
[/CALENDAR]

CLICK HERE
([HTTPS://WWW.SPINGO.COM/SUBMIT/?](https://www.spingo.com/submit/?PARTNERID=574)
PARTNERID=574) TO
ADD YOUR EVENT

C.2. Draft Press Release for October/November 2019 Public Review



News Release

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Colorado

XXX XX, 2019

Contact: Eric Coulter, Public Affairs Specialist, (970) 244-3000

BLM Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Fee Change

Dolores, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management seeks public comment regarding a proposed increase to the entrance fee to the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center and Museum.

The current fee is \$3 per visitor (ages 16 and up) during eight months of the year, March 1 through October 31. The BLM is requesting comments on a plan to increase the fee to \$6 and to charge the fee year-round.

The average revenue from individual fees at the Visitor Center and Museum between 2016 and 2019 was \$17,575. The BLM estimates that the proposed fee changes could increase revenue to \$41,300 annually. The fee increase will improve capacity for BLM staff to conduct additional education and interpretive programs on the Monument and at the Visitor Center and Museum by employing additional seasonal staff. The increased fees would also assist BLM in completing larger projects, such as special exhibits, improvements at existing trailheads, periodic stabilization of developed pueblo sites, and updates to the main exhibit hall.

The draft business plan can be found online at: <https://go.usa.gov/xVhyt> or at the Visitor Center and Museum. Please submit comments by November 29, 2019. Written comments and questions should be directed to the Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Monument Manager, 27501 Highway 184, Dolores, CO 81323 or submitted electronically to hsauls@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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Social Media – BLM seeks public input on a proposed fee increase for the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center and Museum.