

Dalton Highway Recreation Fee Site Business Plan

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Central Yukon Field Office
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Sukakpak Mountain – Milepost 204 Dalton Highway

Business Plan for BLM
Central Yukon Field Office Campgrounds

RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS, and APPROVALS

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This business plan was prepared pursuant to the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004” (P.L. 108-447) and the BLM recreation fee program policy. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the Recreation Use Program in the Central Yukon Field Office.

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Draft Business Plan for BLM Central Yukon Field Office Campgrounds

Executive Summary

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual direction. FLREA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. After careful consideration of the current fee program and the anticipated revenues and expenditures as outlined in this document, as well as comparison with other regional and local recreation providers, the following fee rate increases are recommended:

- Increase the individual campsite fee at Marion Creek Campground from \$8.00 to \$10.00
- Add a Recreation Vehicle (RV) Sanitary Dump Station fee of \$5.00 at Five Mile Campground
- Add individual campsite fees of \$10.00 per night at the following locations:
 1. Five Mile Campground
 2. Arctic Circle Campground
 3. Galbraith Lake Campground

The fee increase is necessary to meet the growing expenses of the campground program, especially deferred maintenance costs stemming from the growing popularity of the Dalton Highway Corridor as a travel destination and an associated increase in public use. The growth in expenses is compounded by the increasing age of the Dalton Highway campgrounds and a resultant increase in deferred maintenance needs. Developed fee campgrounds are a management tool used to prevent further resource damage and to provide better visitor services.

1. Introduction

a. Background and Authorities

The authorities and regulations for this business plan are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA)**, [Public Law 94-579], contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one principal use of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. The BLM originally began collecting recreational fees for the use of public lands under this authority. Section 303 of FLPMA contains the BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.
- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 2004** [Public Law 108-447], repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced the BLM's authority to collect recreational fees. The FLREA provides the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at federal recreation lands and waters that meet certain requirements. The FLREA also allows the BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they are collected and directs how the BLM will manage and utilize these revenues, including for expenses such as facility repair, maintenance and enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, services and needs assessments, signage, law enforcement directly related to public use and recreation, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program. The FLREA also established the America the Beautiful - The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass program.
- **43 CFR 2930: Permits for Recreation on Public Land**
This business plan has also been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:
 - BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Manual 2930
 - BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Administration Handbook (2930-1 Handbook)

b. Fees and Business Plan Requirement

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

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

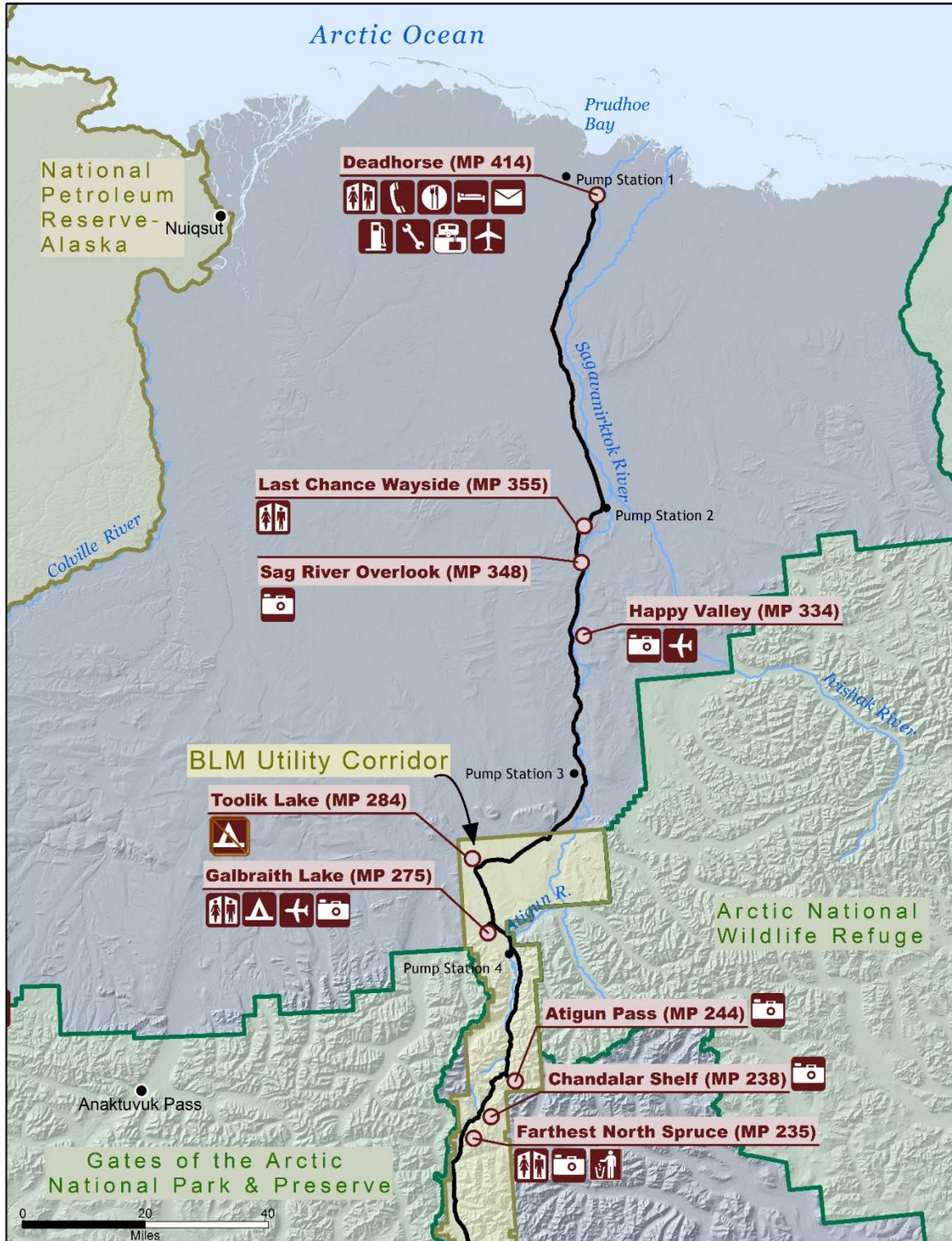
This business plan will assist the Central Yukon Field Office (CYFO) in meeting these recreation and visitor service goals.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act guidelines and the BLM 2930 Manual and 2930-1 Handbook require that each recreation fee program have a business plan that thoroughly discusses the purpose and rationale for recreation fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in FLREA. Business plans assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of fees as well as the cost of administering fee programs. Plans also outline how fees will be used and provide a structured communication and marketing plan. The primary purpose of the plan is to serve as public notification of the objectives of the recreation fee program, including use of recreation fee revenues, and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives.

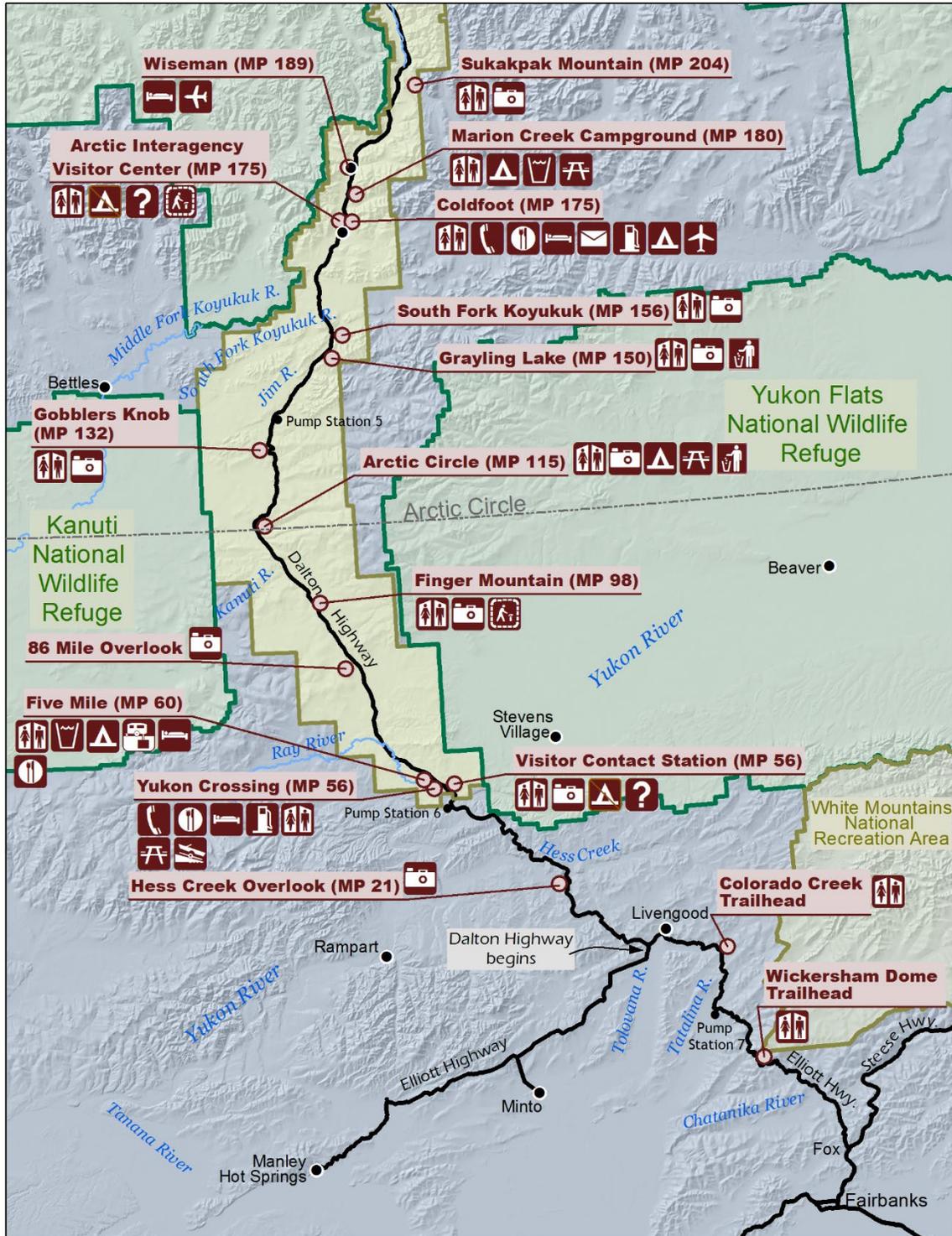
This business plan meets the criteria defined in the FLREA. The plan describes the fee sites, proposed fee changes, addition of facilities to the fee system, associated operating costs, financial analysis, and impacts of proposed fee changes. It includes analysis of data from internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billings Systems (CBS), Federal Business Management System (FBMS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking spreadsheets. For more detailed information, contact the CYFO. Some data contained in these systems may be subject to Privacy Act requirements.

The plan covers recreation fee revenues for one recreational vehicle dump station and for developed campsites at four campgrounds, all located within the Dalton Highway Special Recreation Management Area on BLM-administered public lands in northern Alaska. Under FLREA, an expanded amenity fee may be charged for the use of certain facilities or services, in this case developed campgrounds that provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, the collection of the fee by an employee or agent of the federal land management agency, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities, and/or simple devices for containing a campfire. Each of the facilities covered by this plan has, or will soon have, the required amenities to qualify for collection of expanded amenity fees. The CYFO uses such fees to fund campground maintenance, operations, visitor services, and construction of new campground facilities. In the CYFO, campground revenues are deposited in a recreation fee account (WBS LVRDAK010000).

Map 1 – Dalton Highway – Coldfoot to Deadhorse



Map 2 – Dalton Highway - Fairbanks to Milepost 215



2. Background

a. Area Description

The James W. Dalton Highway (Dalton Highway), formerly called the Haul Road, is a rough, industrial road that begins 84 miles north of Fairbanks and travels 414 miles northward, where it terminates in the industrial camp of Deadhorse at Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean. The road was built in 1974 to haul industrial equipment to the Prudhoe Bay oil fields. The State of Alaska, in conjunction with the oil industry, initially prohibited access to all non-commercial traffic. Beginning in 1981, the State of Alaska eased public entry, allowing access as far north as Disaster Creek at milepost (MP) 211. In 1981 the road was renamed the James W Dalton Highway. The Utility Corridor Final Management Plan (January 1991) and Dalton Highway Recreation Area Management Plan (November 1991) provided the management guidance for recreation site and program development. When the State in 1994 opened the full length of the highway to public use, the demand for recreational facilities and campgrounds increased. The CYFO administers the BLM utility corridor and adjacent lands along the Dalton Highway from MP 56 to just south of milepost 300. Along that section of highway, the BLM manages four campgrounds, 15 waysides (including outhouses), and a visitor contact station at Yukon Crossing. With its agency partners the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service, the BLM also operates the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center (AIVC) in Coldfoot. Marion Creek Campground is the only BLM fee site along the Dalton where Recreational Use Permits (RUPs) are collected. The other three campgrounds (Galbraith Lake, Arctic Circle, and Five Mile) are currently non-fee sites. However, the BLM has recently improved these facilities to provide the amenities required by FLREA for their designation as fee sites. Table 1 lists amenities for the campgrounds.

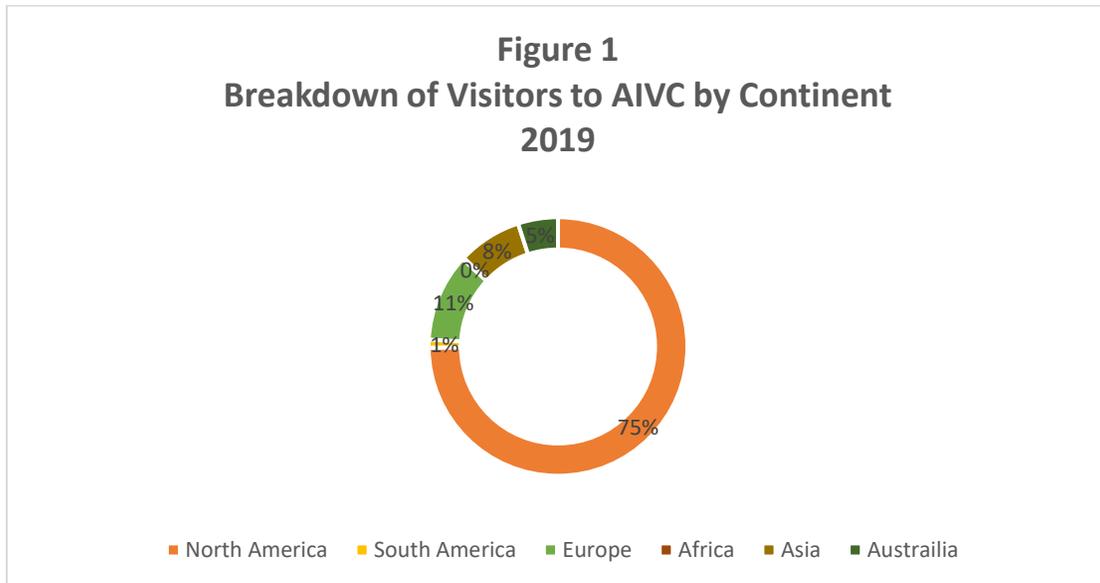


A truck descends a steep slope near the Chandalar Shelf.

b. Visitor Demographics

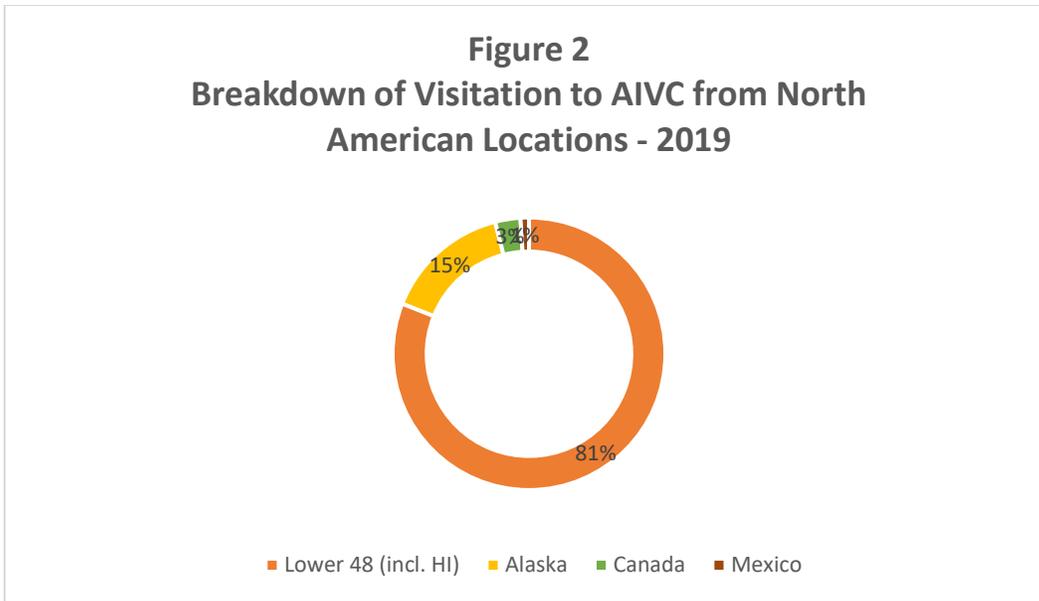
The state of Alaska had an estimated population of 736,239 in 2018.¹ That year the nearby Fairbanks North Star Borough has an estimated population of 97,121. The median household income for the State of Alaska is \$72,515 (2011–2015) with 9.9% of the population living below the poverty level. The state’s median age is 34 with 47% of the population being female. Alaska is racially composed of 61% Caucasians, 15% American Indians or Native Alaskans, 7% Hispanic or Latinos, 6% Asians, 4% Blacks or African Americans, and 7% others.

The Dalton Highway is the final stretch of road in Alaska connecting Canada and the lower 48 to the Arctic region of the United States. As such, the Dalton Highway is an attractive destination for adventurous tourists. The visitor logbook at the AIVC in Coldfoot provides insight into the country of origin of Dalton Highway tourists. Of the 499 visitors who signed the logbook during the summer season of 2019, 75% came from the lower 48 states, while 11.6% came from Alaska. Visitors from Canada and Mexico represented 2.2% and 0.6 % of visitors, respectively. Visitors from Europe traveled from 15 different countries and constituted 10.6% of visitors. Asian tourists from five different countries represented 8.4%, and visitors from Australia and New Zealand accounted for 5.2%. The AIVC also had one visitor from South Africa, representing 0.2% of visitors. Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of visitors by continent. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of North American visitors.



¹ All demographic information in this paragraph is from State of Alaska Labor Department and Workforce Development – Research and Analysis

Figure 2
Breakdown of Visitation to AIVC from North American Locations - 2019



c. Recreation Campsite Descriptions

Table 1 – Campground Descriptions

| Site | Type | Location | Amenities | Points of Interest |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Five Mile | Developed (5 sites) with a large, open graveled section | MP 60, 4 miles north of Yukon River | potable water, dump station, outhouse, picnic tables, fire rings, leveled tent sites | Yukon River and food service nearby |
| Arctic Circle | Developed (8 sites) with multiple user-created locations, scheduled for full development in 2021 | MP 115, on hill above Arctic Circle Wayside | No water currently (potential well installation in future), outhouse, picnic tables, fire rings, leveled tent sites | Arctic Circle, pipeline, hiking |
| Marion Creek | Developed, 27 sites including tent and pull through | MP 180, 5 miles north of Coldfoot | potable water, outhouse, picnic tables, fire rings, host, trash, leveled tent sites | Hiking, fishing, visitor center in Coldfoot |
| Galbraith Lake | Developed (6 sites) with a large, open graveled section | MP 275, 2.5 miles off highway near airstrip | Picnic tables, fire rings, outhouse, trash, leveled tent sites | Hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing, access to backcountry |

i. Five Mile Campground

The Five Mile Campground, located four miles north of the Yukon River at MP 60, offers the most amenities of any public site along the Dalton Highway. The campground includes potable water, interpretive displays, information kiosks, outhouse toilets, and trash services. The site also has the only free public RV dump station along the highway. The campground is staffed by volunteer hosts during the summer season. This is a rustic campground that was once a man-camp during the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. The site is in a graveled open space and is currently a non-fee site. Each campsite has a picnic table and fire ring. Visitors enjoy activities such as hiking, picnicking, hunting, interpretive sightseeing, fishing, and boating access nearby at Yukon Crossing. Four miles south of the campground on the north bank of the Yukon River, the commercially operated Yukon River Camp provides year-round services such as phone service, lodging, gas, and a restaurant dining. Another restaurant offers meals and lodging within walking distance of the campground.

Table 2 – Five Mile Campground Visitation

| Fiscal Year | Visits | Visitor Days |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 2012 | 319 | 702 |
| 2013 | 380 | 836 |
| 2014 | 415 | 913 |
| 2015 | 810 | 1782 |
| 2016 | 861 | 1894 |
| 2017 | * | * |
| 2018 | 782 | 1720 |
| 2019 | 93 | 107 |
| 2020 | 527 | 604 |

***Data not available**



Five Mile Campground

ii. Arctic Circle Campground

The Arctic Circle campground is located at MP 115, a short drive up the hill behind the Arctic Circle Wayside sign, interpretive viewing deck, and picnic area. This campground provides an outhouse toilet, access roads, and trash services. Eight campsites offer picnic tables and fire rings. Visitors can enjoy camping, hiking, and picnicking. This is a rustic campground without potable water, and fees are not currently collected. Visitors from all over the world come here to be photographed in front of the Arctic Circle sign. The location also serves as a midway point along the highway for those recreation users travelling either south or north on their adventures. Undeveloped areas adjacent to the campground provide recreationists opportunities for exploration. Arctic Circle Campground is scheduled for substantial upgrades in 2021, including improved access roads throughout the campground, further delineation and hardening of campsites, additional toilet facilities, and spaces for camp hosts. The upgrades began in 2020 and are scheduled for completion in 2021.

Table 3 – Arctic Circle Campground Visitation

| Fiscal Year | Visits | Visitor Days |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 2012 | * | * |
| 2013 | 380 | 836 |
| 2014 | 415 | 913 |
| 2015 | 381 | 838 |
| 2016 | 440 | 968 |
| 2017 | 512 | 1126 |
| 2018 | 609 | 1340 |
| 2019 | 600 | 2413 |
| 2020 | 454 | 1825 |

***Data Not Available**



Arctic Circle Campground

iii. Marion Creek Campground

Marion Creek Campground is located 5 miles north of Coldfoot at Dalton Highway MP 180. The 26-site campground offers potable water, outhouse toilets, trash services, firewood, fire rings, accessible campsites, pull-through sites, and picnic tables. The campground is open from late May through late September and closed to the public the remainder of the year. Volunteer campground hosts support the operation during the summer months. The campground and surrounding area offer visitor services (at the AIVC), river access, interpretive sightseeing, river rafting, fishing, hiking, and hunting. Five miles south of the campground the small community of Coldfoot has the following services: restaurant, gas station, phone, internet access, lodging, and tire repair. Marion Creek Campground is the only Dalton Highway campground that currently charges a fee. The fee is \$8 per night, but roughly 65% of visitors pay half price (Senior or Access Pass). In 2020 the BLM collected \$4,018.85 in fees and used most of these fees to reimburse volunteer campground hosts for assisting visitors and performing basic maintenance at the campground. These reimbursements included a daily stipend as well as allowances for propane and vehicle mileage to staff this remote location. The BLM paid all remaining operations and maintenance costs (including staff labor, campground maintenance supplies [toilet paper, hand sanitizer, etc.], vehicles, and incidental cost/repairs) out of the CYFO's base budget.

Table 4 – Marion Creek Campground Visitation and Fees

| Fiscal Year | Visits | Visitor Days | Total Revenue |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2012 | 858 | 1888 | \$6,408.79 |
| 2013 | 718 | 1580 | \$4,763.25 |
| 2014 | 1899 | 4177 | \$4,736.25 |
| 2015 | 1605 | 3531 | \$5,228.83 |
| 2016 | 863 | 1899 | \$5,938.80 |
| 2017 | 2550 | 5610 | \$5,529.89 |
| 2018 | 2312 | 5086 | \$4,729.98 |
| 2019 | 397 | 1611 | \$5,405.55 |
| 2020 | 831 | 3372 | \$4,018.85 |
| 9-Year Average | 1337 | 3194 | \$5,195.58 |



Marion Creek Campground

iv. Galbraith Lake Campground

Galbraith Lake Campground is located near an ancient glacial lake that once occupied the entire Atigun Valley. The campground is located 2 miles down an access road at MP 275 of the Dalton Highway. It is the farthest north campground on the Dalton Highway and is currently a non-fee site with an information kiosk and interpretive signs, as well as an outhouse toilet and trash service. Sweeping vistas of the arctic plain are available to those who camp here. The campground was originally a man-camp during the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Campsites were established by user preference. In 2017 BLM Alaska engineers, in collaboration

with CYFO recreation staff, used deferred maintenance funds to establish permanent campsites with picnic tables and fire rings and upgrade the access roads.

Table 5 – Galbraith Lake Campground Visitation

| Fiscal Year | Visits | Visitor Days |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 2012 | 300 | 660 |
| 2013 | 300 | 660 |
| 2014 | 1290 | 2838 |
| 2015 | 951 | 2092 |
| 2016 | 657 | 1445 |
| 2017 | 1451 | 3192 |
| 2018 | 1590 | 3498 |
| 2019 | 1160 | 97 |
| 2020 | 1295 | 2370 |



Galbraith Lake Campground

d. Operating Costs

The Central Yukon Field Office expends considerable resources in managing the BLM Utility Corridor recreation sites and campgrounds along the Dalton Highway. The current system of

waysides and campgrounds requires substantial levels of facility maintenance, visitor contact, signage, staff, volunteers, and law enforcement support to maintain a presentable and safe experience for visitors. CYFO management resources available include two full-time outdoor recreation planners, one full-time Interpretive Park Ranger, one full-time Maintenance Park Ranger, one seasonal park ranger, several volunteer campground hosts, and law enforcement staff.

Campgrounds and the AIVC are currently open only during the snow-free months, but a growing winter tour industry, focused largely on northern lights viewing, is increasing BLM's expenditures during non-summer months. Outhouse maintenance costs have increased, and the Yukon Crossing station is now open May through September. The BLM and its partner agencies are also holding preliminary conversations about potentially staffing the AIVC during the winter soon.

Direct costs for recreation management of the Dalton Highway BLM Utility Corridor include BLM employees, volunteer, contractors, and intern labor. Services include diverse items such as restroom pumping, garbage collection, firewood, hazard tree mitigation, potable water testing, vehicles, law enforcement, signage, maintenance materials and supplies, brochures, and interpretive materials.

The CYFO operates a small fleet of vehicles to support the recreation program along the Dalton Highway. The fleet includes two large 4500/5500 series 4x4 stake bed trucks, three passenger pickup trucks, two specially designed gooseneck 30' garbage trailers with custom-designed animal-proof covers, one enclosed 5 'x10 ' trailer for hauling potable water to remote sites, one flatbed auto-transport trailer for transportation of equipment and removal of abandoned vehicles, one hydraulic snow plow for the 4500 series truck, two snow blowers, one skid-steer loader with several attachments (i.e., snow blower, bucket, post hole digger, brush hog), and three power washers with 100-gallon water tanks. This extensive collection of equipment is necessary to maintain four campgrounds and 15 waysides with a total of 33 vault toilets along 238 miles of remote, rough industrial highway.

Labor is the most expensive direct cost. Three full-time outdoor recreation planners are tasked with managing all aspects of recreation across the length of the Dalton Highway, as well as remote lands that are accessible only via aircraft. The CYFO expends a significant amount of time managing recreation fee sites as well as non-fee sites that draw considerable visitation. Leading staff, managing volunteer campground hosts, and developing interpretive materials are among the many duties associated with managing fee sites and developed recreation areas. A percentage of the overall recreation budget also funds engineering staff to work on deferred maintenance, facility upgrades, and new projects as needed.

Unanticipated expenditures are the biggest unknown when it comes to operation costs. Water system failures, winter snow and plowing damage, and the price of fuel to transport materials to this remote region are recent examples where the BLM has used considerable recreation fee revenue and base budget funding.

Table 6 – Labor and Supply Breakdown for Fee Site Operation

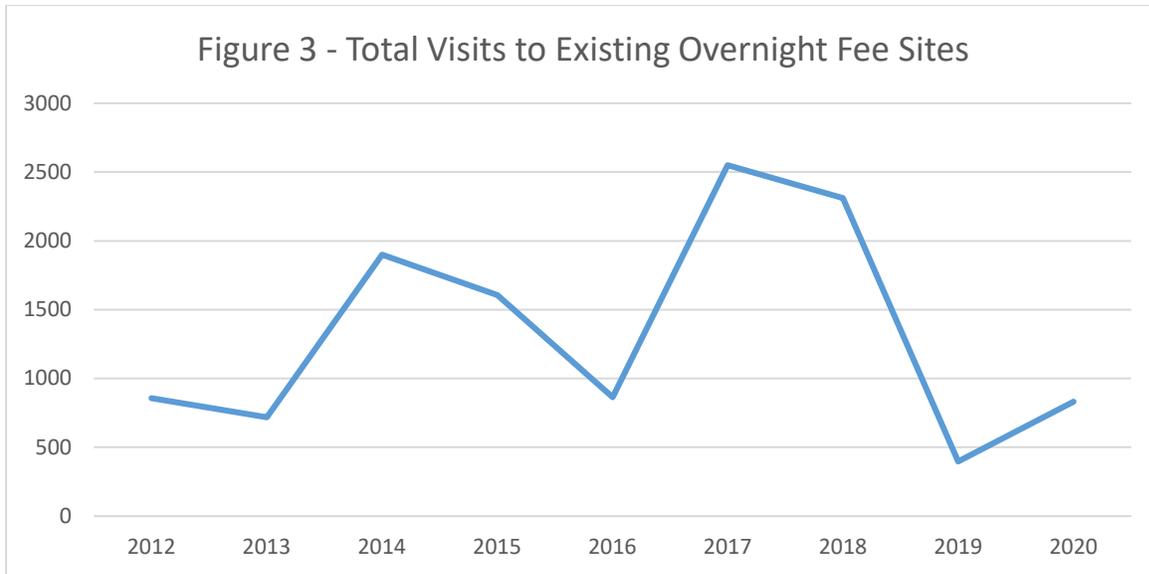
| Expenditures | Cost (approximate) |
|---|---------------------------|
| Labor – Outdoor Recreation Planner (2 work months) | \$22,000 |
| Labor – Outdoor Recreation Planner (2 work months) | \$19,000 |
| Labor – Maintenance Worker (4 work months) | \$35,600 |
| Labor – Seasonal park ranger (4 work months) | \$29,000 |
| Campground Host subsistence payments | \$12,000 |
| Supplies and Materials | \$8,000 |
| Vehicles | \$20,000 |
| Total | \$145,600 |

Table 6 lists anticipated costs associated with operating all CYFO fee and non-fee sites along the Dalton Highway in FY21. The most variable (and unpredictable) cost in this breakdown would be vehicles and the associated fuel to operate them —when fuel prices spike, BLM’s costs rise with them.

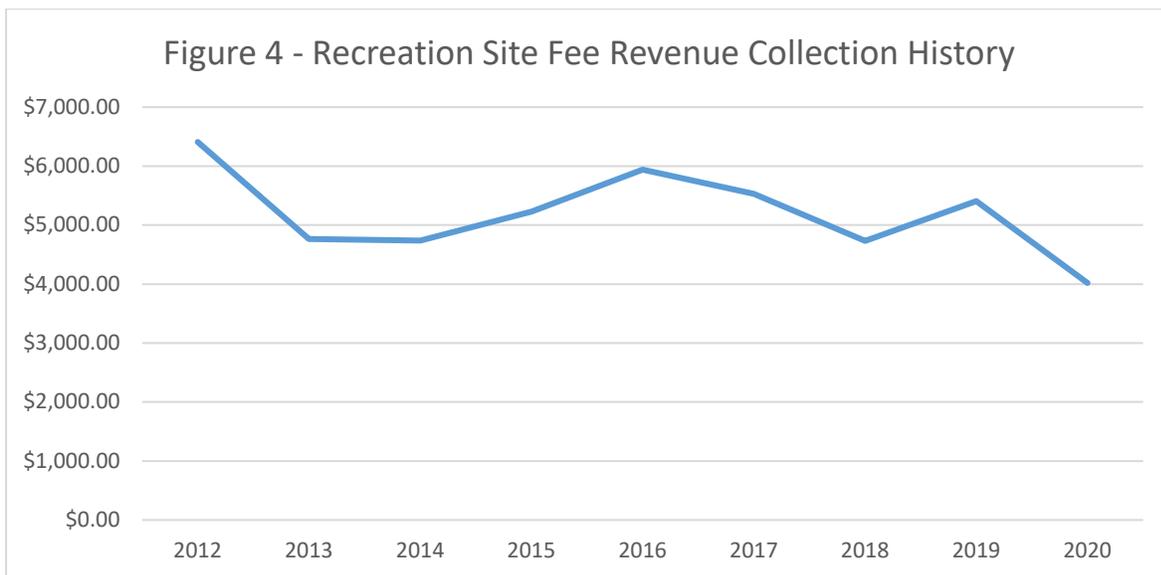
e. Recreation Use Fees and Revenues

From 2011 through 2018, an estimated yearly average of 73,700 people visited lands along the Dalton Highway. Visitation from North America and international locations continues to increase significantly. Clients of several tour companies now complement the growing numbers of independent travelers. In 2011 the BLM recorded 24,875 visits along the Dalton Highway. By 2018 that number had increased to 126,845 — a jump of 409%.² Of these visits, an estimated 20% (or approximately 15,000 visitors per year, averaged from 2011 to 2018) visited an existing or proposed recreation fee site. (See Figure 3 for total visits to overnight fee sites.) Visitation trends are highly variable and influenced by several factors, including the state of the economy, fuel prices, weather, and the overall condition of the Dalton Highway. Since 2015, the BLM has observed a marked increase in Dalton Highway visitation. The agency attributes this increase to the popularity of television programs featuring this area, more readily available information through social media, and improved map systems that the BLM launched in 2015.

² Recreation Management Information System – BLM Internal System



The BLM has collected recreation fees at Marion Creek Campground since 1995. One fee increase occurred in 2008. Though visitation to Marion Creek has only increased slightly over the last six years, revenue collected from fee sites has remained nearly static, with a small decline noted. Figure 4 illustrates total recreation fee revenue for the last six years. Special Recreation Permit income is not included in the chart.



Several reasonable explanations could account for the variability in fee revenue versus visitation numbers. Of note in these charts are the years 2012 and 2016, when the BLM collected similar fees respective of the visitation; these years had consistent campground host presence throughout the summer, leading to more thorough encouragement of payment.

The BLM has had other seasons where campground hosts had less consistent presence due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather, vehicle problems, lack of recruitment, or medical issues. CYFO now has an extremely vibrant volunteer program and manager, and camp hosts return from year to year for most of our campgrounds.

3. Fee Proposal

a. Summary of Fee Proposal

This fee proposal includes increasing camping fees at Marion Creek Campground and establishing Galbraith Lake, Arctic Circle, and Five Mile Campgrounds as fee sites, as well as establishing a RV Dump Station fee at Five Mile Campground. Table 7 below shows a summary of the proposed changes and additions while Appendix B shows a more detailed analysis of the changes.

b. Existing and Proposed Fees

Table 7 illustrates the current and proposed fee structure for CYFO recreation sites.

Table 7 – Existing and Proposed Fee Structure

| Recreation Site | Existing Fee | Proposed Fee |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Marion Creek | \$8 | \$10 |
| Arctic Circle | \$0 | \$10 |
| Galbraith Lake | \$0 | \$10 |
| Five Mile | \$0 | \$10 |
| Five Mile RV Dump Station Use Fee | \$0 | \$5 |

c. Financial Analysis

In fiscal year 2020, the CYFO collected \$4,018.85 in recreation fee site revenue. With the proposed increase at Marion Creek, the BLM estimates that CYFO would collect an additional \$2,425 annually, an increase of 51%. This number assumes all visitors to the first-come, first-served campground pay the full or correct amount. This is sometimes not the case, so this estimate represents a best-case scenario.

Table 8 illustrates the projected revenue if the fee increases are implemented. Revenue projections are based on the implementation of the proposed fee increases and by looking at three factors used to determine revenue: 1) total number of Recreation Use Permits (RUPS), 2) percentage of discounted RUPS, and 3) average length of stay.

Table 8 – Recreation Site Use Fee Projected Revenue

| Recreation Fee Site | *RUPS Issued | *Average Length of Stay (days) | *Site Occupancy (nights) | Proposed Fee | **Total Fees | **Percent Increase in Revenue |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Marion Creek | 623 | 1.7 | 1059 | \$10 | \$7,155 | 51% |

* Figures are based on a six-year average (FY12–FY20)

** Total assumes visitors pay the full or correct amount for every RUP

Figures are derived by multiplying the total number of RUPs by 35%, the estimated percentage of full-priced RUPs purchased. The remaining RUPs (65% of the total) involve Senior or Access passes that reduce fees by half. The CYFO multiplied the numbers of full-priced and discounted RUPs by the average length of stay and then by the appropriate proposed fees (full-price or discounted) to determine projected revenue.

Using Marion Creek as the example, 623 RUPs x .35 = 218 full-priced RUPs. 218 full-price RUPs x 1.7 days avg. stay/RUP = 371 days. 371 days x \$10/day = **\$3,710**. 623 RUPs – 218 full-price RUPs = 405 half-priced RUPs. 405 half-priced RUPs x 1.7 days avg. stay/RUP = 689 days. 689 days x \$5 per day = **\$3,445**. \$3,710 + \$3,445 = **\$7,155 projected revenue**. The projected revenue figures assume all visitors to the first-come, first-served campground pay the full or correct amount. Unfortunately, collections over the years have shown that this is not always the case, so actual revenue will assuredly be lower than the estimates.

Currently no recreation sites managed by the CYFO utilize the Recreation.gov online reservation system. If visitors can in the future make reservations for these sites through Recreation.gov, they will be charged a customer transaction fee according to the schedule negotiated with the contractor. This is common practice for other local, state, and federal agencies.

Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake campgrounds could not be included in the above analysis because the CYFO currently collects no fees at those facilities. Instead of using RUPs as a baseline for the analysis, the CYFO used visitor use counts taken by campground hosts, employees, and 2012–2020 RMIS data. These averages were then compared to Marion Creek Campground data (similar size, visitation, and location) to come up with an estimated number of anticipated RUPs. The same formula from Table 8 was then applied.

The CYFO could not determine a conclusive future revenue formula for the proposed Five Mile Campground RV dump station fee. Information is not available to determine the percentage of RV campers versus tent campers that visit the campground, or to determine the percentage of RV campers that would use the dump station while visiting. Over the years, however, BLM employees and volunteers have observed RV campers utilizing the dump station, and the continued cost of maintenance remains a cost borne by the CYFO.

Table 9 – Five Mile, Arctic Circle, Galbraith Lake Campground Projected Revenue

| Recreation Fee Site | *Visitor Use | Estimated # of RUPs | Average Length of Stay (days) | Site Occupancy (nights) | Proposed Fee | Total Fees |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Five Mile | 595 | 225 | 1.7 | 383 | \$10 | \$2,581 |
| Arctic Circle | 456 | 250 | 1.7 | 425 | \$10 | \$2,855 |
| Galbraith Lake | 932 | 225 | 1.7 | 383 | \$10 | \$2,581 |

*Average from FY12 – FY20

d. Fee Calculation

The CYFO determined the new expanded amenity fees for existing and proposed recreation fee sites by comparing its facilities to park facilities offering similar recreation activities, access, services, and amenities in Alaska. These facilities included campgrounds managed by adjacent BLM field offices as well as those managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS), Alaska State Parks, and Chugach National Forest.

All developed campgrounds compared within the market comparison area charged an overnight fee (Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake excluded). These fees ranged from \$6 per night at more rustic and remote BLM and FWS campgrounds to \$28 per night at highly developed, urban interface Forest Service, State, and private campgrounds. Since the CYFO has not raised its fees since 2008 and has never charged fees at three campgrounds covered by this plan, the field office currently charges significantly lower fees than nearby BLM facilities managed by the Glenallen and Eastern Interior field offices, even though visitation patterns and levels of amenities at sites are similar for all field offices (See Appendix A).

The CYFO determined the proposed Marion Creek fee increase and new fees at Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake campgrounds directly from this analysis. The proposed fees lie within the range of other service providers’ highs and lows and are based on what these agencies currently charge for similar visitor facilities, access, and amenities. Although comparison to facilities with similar services and amenities was the main determining factor, the CYFO also took into consideration the length of time since the CYFO last raised fees, the length of time since other agencies last raised fees at their sites, the number of discounted RUPs sold, and the increased cost of maintaining and operating the recreation sites.

e. Use of Fees

CYFO’s main goal for recreation fee sites is to provide high-quality recreation opportunities and experiences for all visitors. BLM labor and cost of volunteer support will continue to be the highest operating cost, but less than 4% of that cost is currently funded by recreation site fee revenue. BLM staffing among many other things provides visitor information, conducts field

patrols, provides interpretive programming, maintains facilities, collects and reconciles fees, and rehabilitates natural resource damage.

Recreation fee revenue will continue to provide essential support for day-to-day operation of the sites. The following is an initial list of priority expenditures that recreation fee site revenue will continue to be used for:

- Service contracts for garbage collection, septic pumping, water testing, wildland fire mitigation through brush clearing, hazard tree mitigation, and firewood
- Supplies including but not limited to cleaning supplies, toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, fuel for motorized equipment, paint, lumber, upkeep of mechanical equipment, etc.
- Maintain, improve, and replace recreation site infrastructure such as trails, information and interpretive signage, fire rings, picnic tables, restroom buildings, etc.
- Government vehicles and trailers
- Maps, brochure development and reprints, and interpretive materials
- Construction of recreational facilities
- Volunteer campground host per diem and reimbursement for expenses

Youth engagement, an often-overlooked value of the recreation program, is also enhanced through recreation fee revenue. The Student Conservation Association, local school districts, and nearby villages have all been involved with recreation site development and maintenance projects over the years. Recreation site fee revenues will help secure the services of these providers, allowing youth to gain invaluable work skills and an introduction to and appreciation for natural resource agencies.

Budget shortfalls due to emergency building and site repair, or other unforeseen events, are a frequent cause of maintenance backlog or employee shortages. Given current reduced budget levels and uncertainty in the use of assistance agreements for labor and support, authorizing new fees and raising one existing fee would allow the field office to continue to fill vacant positions, and continue to support the recreation sites in the Dalton Highway corridor and visitors who use them.

Over the next five years, the CYFO intends to achieve greater self-sufficiency for the recreation fee sites along the Dalton Highway corridor while recognizing that appropriated funds still provide the backbone of the recreation program. 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 integration and socioeconomic health to deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors, while sustaining the distinctive character of public land recreation settings.

Work and items needed at Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake campgrounds: installation of "Iron Ranger" fee tubes and new information boards, purchase of additional fire rings and picnic tables (once future development is finished), earth and rock work. Repair of

damaged/vandalized stonework on the vault toilets needs to occur, as well as continued toilet pumping and general maintenance repairs. CYFO estimated that these new items, in addition to transportation fees, would cost \$50,000. Although current fees generated would not begin to cover the costs of the upgrades/repairs, CYFO anticipates being able to cover the costs through deferred maintenance funding and limited base funding, due mainly to lapse funding available because of staff vacancies. If the new fee proposal is approved, however, CYFO would gain greater self-sustaining ability to manage the continued costs of operating these sites.

Other priority items that would be accomplished within the next five years should fees increase include the following:

- Continued development of a 0.75-mile non-motorized trail at Marion Creek connecting the campground to a scenic waterfall
- Installation of new BLM signs that direct visitors to Dalton Highway recreation sites and comply with Federal Highway Administration MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Device) regulations
- Replacement of the Arctic Circle Campground/Wayside sign and boardwalk
- Repair of resource problems, including vandalized toilets, trash dumping, impacts of off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and damaged structures
- New interpretive panels depicting local cultural, historical, and wildlife features at Five Mile, Galbraith Lake, and the Arctic Circle

Compliance and Enforcement – Recreation staff, law enforcement, and volunteer campground hosts all play a vital role in recreation fee site compliance. Campground hosts directly interface with visitors to ensure they clearly understand payment requirements and procedures. Visitors are required to hang the yellow envelope stub on clips that are affixed to Carsonite or wooden posts at every site or on vehicle dashboards. If a host does not observe the yellow stub, visitors are handed a yellow payment envelope and are encouraged to pay. If any refusal or difficulties arise, law enforcement is notified the next time they drive through the park, or by cell phone when there is coverage. Regular patrols by recreation staff and volunteers compliment this process. During the summer months, BLM personnel maintain a consistent presence at recreation sites, due in large part to the presence of a sizeable staff at the AIVC.

Concrete-affixed Iron Ranger fee tubes are already in use at Marion Creek, and if this proposal is approved, they will be installed at Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake. CYFO utilizes the double-insert style of Iron Ranger. This allows one person to collect fees, due to a double accountability system where the person collecting the fees only has access to the box that is swapped out and cannot gain access to the fee envelopes; only the budget personnel at the district office has access to the fees. Campground hosts, BLM employees, and volunteers are under no circumstances allowed to handle fees unless they have taken the collection officer training required through the BLM Collection and Billing System and BLM regulations. On occasion, BLM staff and law enforcement conduct on-site compliance checks, during which fee envelopes are compared to actual site visitors to ensure payment.

Fee Discounts – Section 5 of FLREA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the America the Beautiful Pass – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. This pass provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees. No sites within the field office charge a standard amenity fee (these are typically day use fee areas, high visitation picnic areas, etc.); the one current fee charged is for an expanded amenity. Holders of the Interagency Senior and Access passes receive half-off of expanded amenity fees. This includes overnight camping at CYFO campgrounds. As described before, roughly 65% of campground visitors have historically used the Interagency Senior or Access pass for a 50% discount. No other fee discounts, passes or waivers are allowed.

f. Impacts of Fee Changes

Positive Impacts of Adopting the Proposed Fees – CYFO has not changed or updated its campground fees since 2008. Prior to 2008, fees had remained the same since 1994, when the initial fee structure was developed. Since 2008, the cost of goods, labor and service have steadily increased. During this time, the Consumer Price Index has increased 18.35%.³ As the costs of goods, labor, and services increase, the purchasing power from recreation fees decreases proportionately.

If the proposed new fees and the one fee increase were adopted, current services would continue to be offered, and added amenities would be expanded at Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake. Some of the revenue would be used to incrementally reduce the maintenance backlog. New projects identified in the priorities for future expenditures section would be implemented. Site infrastructure, cleanliness, and visitor services and information would also benefit. All these combined would improve the overall visitor experience.

Benefits to the local economy could also be realized. An Outdoor Industry Association study found that in 2017, outdoor recreation generated \$887 billion in consumer spending in the United States and generated \$7.3 billion in Alaska alone. It also brought in \$337 million in Alaska state and local tax revenue.⁴ 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 improve the overall recreational experience for current and future visitors alike.

New and increased fees also benefit the natural environment. These fees would allow the field office to improve, manage, and operate recreational facilities to their fullest. By providing trailheads, waysides, campgrounds, and day-use areas for visitors, the field office can 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 realized across a wide area as illegal dumping increased. Increased and

³ US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

⁴ <https://outdoorindustry.org/state/alaska/>

new fees would allow for more purchasing power to acquire items that help reduce negative impacts to the environment.

Negative Impacts of Not Adopting the Proposed Fees— New and existing facilities represent a substantial public investment, and visitors could expect to see a loss of functionality and use of these facilities as maintenance efforts might be reduced due to insufficient funding or staffing. As costs are anticipated to increase, maintenance might not happen as quickly or as often as needed, and some services might be reduced. Deferred maintenance costs would increase as facilities age, and some facilities might not be operated at full capacity. Maintenance that is deferred because of insufficient funding might result in increased safety hazards, reduced service to the public, higher costs in the future, and inefficient operations.

Recreation demands would continue to increase if visitation increased, thus the costs to operate the fee sites and those proposed in this analysis would become more dependent on the fluctuating appropriated funding. The opportunities for future planned developments would be constrained and likely set aside. The field office might have challenges implementing the BLM's Recreation Strategy. As mentioned earlier, not raising or establishing these proposed sites could lead to the erosion of services such as cleaning and maintaining the sites. If sites were not appealing to visitors, they might stop recreating in this region, thereby affecting the local economy.

Negative impacts to the environment could also occur. Fewer trash pickups and pumping of toilets could occur, creating human waste and garbage impacts. These garbage impacts could also attract wildlife such as bears, which could further lead to negative impacts to visitors and the environment. Less frequent patrols from recreation staff to maintain trails, signage, and education materials might allow some visitors to act inappropriately by creating new trails and vandalizing facilities. If visitors began to view these sites as non-maintained, it could lead to a belief that these sites are not frequented at all and could exacerbate problems with dumping and vandalism.

4. Outreach

a. Public and Stakeholder Participation

Outreach efforts for proposed fee changes or new fee implementation will follow procedures outlined in FLREA.

In May 2019, the BLM posted a notice of intent to increase fees at Marion Creek and charge a new fee at Five Mile, Arctic Circle, and Galbraith Lake campgrounds at the campgrounds, information kiosks, and adjacent waysides along the Dalton Highway. No comments have been received to date.

The BLM will issue a press release to local and regional print media, television, and radio when the proposed fees and 30-day public comment period are announced. The release will also be posted on the BLM Alaska website and advertised via BLM social media platforms.

The BLM will issue a press release and undertake other outreach efforts regarding the new fee sites and increased fee at Marion Creek when the *Federal Register* notice is published (scheduled for the summer/fall of 2021).

b. Visitor Feedback Mechanisms

The BLM will allow for a 30-day public review period during which the public will have the opportunity to learn about the proposal and to submit comments for consideration.

The public may submit comments on the proposed Recreation Use Fee changes by any of the following methods:

- Website: <https://www.blm.gov/office/fairbanks-district-office>
- E-mail: CentralYukon@blm.gov
- Fax: 907-474-2318
- Mail: BLM Central Yukon Field Office, 222 University Ave., Fairbanks AK 99709

5. Appendices

Appendix A – Fee Comparison Analysis

| CAMPGROUND SERVICES AND FEES COMPARISON - 2020 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------|------|-------------------|--------|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| AGENCY | CAMPGROUND | STANDARD SERVICES (FLREA) | | | | EXPANDED SERVICES | | | | | EXISTING FEES (PROPOSED) |
| | | Sites | Drinking Water | Toilet | Host | Picnic Area | Shower | Boat Launch | Additional Developments | Overnight Sites | |
| Private | Nenana RV Park and Campground | 45 | x | V | x | | x | | RV Dump, Pavilion, Playground, Laundry, Wi-Fi | \$20 | |
| Private | Tok Sourdough Campground | 75 | x | F | x | | x | | RV Dump, Pavilion, Laundry, Wi-Fi, Café | \$28 | |
| AK State | Chena River | 61 | x | F | x | x | | x | Pavilion/Dump Station/WiFi | \$12 walk-in/\$15 dry | |
| USFS | Trail River | 91 | x | V | x | | | | Picnic shelter, volleyball & horseshoe area, playground | \$18 | |
| USFS | Williwaw | 60 | x | V | x | x | | | | \$18 single site/\$28 double site | |
| USFS | Tenderfoot | 35 | x | V | x | | | x | | \$18 | |
| USFS | Russian River | 83 | x | F | x | x | | | | \$18 single site/\$28 double site | |
| USFS | Quartz Creek | 45 | x | F | x | x | | x | Picnic Shelters, RV Dump | \$18 single site/\$28 double site | |
| AK State | Big Delta | 25 | x | V | x | x | | | | \$15 | |
| AK State | Birch Lake | 19 | x | V | x | x | | x | 1 Cabin Rental | \$15 | |
| AK State | Red Squirrel | 5 | x | V | | x | | x | | \$15 | |
| AK State | Rosehip | 37 | x | V | x | x | | x | | \$15 | |
| AK State | Granite Tors Trail | 24 | x | V | x | x | | x | | \$15 | |
| AK State | Salcha River | 6 | x | V | x | x | | x | 1 Cabin Rental | \$15 | |
| AK State | Upper Chatanika River | 24 | x | V | | | | x | | \$15 | |
| AK State | Whitefish | 25 | x | V | | x | | x | Picnic Shelter | \$15 | |
| AK State | Olnes Pond | 15 | x | V | | x | | x | | \$15 | |
| BLM | Marion Creek | 27 | x | V | x | x | | | | \$8 (\$10) | |
| BLM | Brushkana | 21 | x | V | x | | | | | \$12 | |
| BLM | Tangle Lakes | 27 | x | V | x | | | x | | \$6 (walk-in)/\$12 | |
| BLM | Paxson Lake | 50 | x | V | x | | | x | RV Dump | \$6 (walk-in)/\$12 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----|---|---|---|---|--|---|----------------|--------------------|
| BLM | Sourdough Creek | 42 | x | V | | | | x | | \$6 (walk-in)/\$12 |
| BLM | Cripple Creek | 21 | x | V | | | | | | \$6 |
| BLM | Mount Prindle | 13 | x | V | | | | | | \$6 |
| BLM | Ophir Creek | 19 | x | V | | | | x | | \$6 |
| BLM | Eagle | 16 | x | V | ? | | | | | \$10 |
| BLM | Walker Fork | 20 | x | V | ? | | | | Picnic Shelter | \$10 |
| USFWS | Upper Skilak Lake | 25 | x | V | | | | x | RV Dump | \$10 |
| USFWS | Hidden Lake | 44 | x | V | | | | x | RV Dump | \$10 |
| BLM | Galbraith | 30 | | V | | x | | | | \$0 (\$10) |
| BLM | Arctic Circle | 12 | | V | | x | | | | \$0 (\$10) |
| BLM | Five Mile | 8 | x | V | | x | | | RV Dump | \$0 (\$10) |
| BLM | West Fork | 20 | | V | | | | | | \$10 |

V=Vault Toilet, F=Flush Toilet

Appendix B – ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND SYMBOLS

AIVC – Arctic Interagency Visitor Center

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

CBS – Collection and Billing System

CYFO – Central Yukon Field Office

FBMS – Federal Business Management System

FLREA – Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

FY – Fiscal Year

MP – Milepost

MUTCD – Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

OHV – Off-highway Vehicle

RMIS – Recreation Management Information System

RUP – Recreation Use Pass

RV – Recreational Vehicle

SO – State Office

SRMA – Special Recreation Management Area

USFS – United States Forest Service

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WBS – Work Breakdown Structure

WO – Washington Office