



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



El Malpais National Conservation Area

Draft Business Plan & Proposed Fee Implementation



August 19, 2021



EL MALPAIS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA (NCA) OFFERS:

- Unique geological history
- Extensive cultural history
- Inspiring natural resources
- 2 designated Wilderness areas
- 3 Wilderness Study Areas
- Designated trails – including Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- Breathtaking scenic resources



CURRENT NCA VISITATION & FEE STRUCTURE

- El Malpais NCA Visitation yearly average – 264,764
- The NCA is open year-round
 - Ranger Station normal operating hours are Thursday – Monday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
- Currently every area is Fee Free
- Average of 4 Special Recreation Permits issued each year - primarily Commercial Outfitting and Guiding Permits





RECREATION SITES IN EL MALPAIS NCA WHICH QUALIFY AS A FEE SITE

Sites which qualify as a **Standard Amenity Fee Site**:

- El Malpais Ranger Station Recreation Site
- La Ventana Natural Arch Recreation Area
- South Narrows Picnic Area

Site which qualifies as an **Expanded Amenity Fee Site**:

- Joe Skeen Campground

WHAT MAKES A SITE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A STANDARD AMENITY FEE SITE?

A site must include these six amenities for it to qualify as a standard fee site:

- ✓ Developed Parking
- ✓ Permanent Toilet Facility
- ✓ Permanent trash receptacle
- ✓ Interpretive signing
- ✓ Picnic Tables
- ✓ Security services

All amenity requirements are met by each of these three recreation areas within El Malpais NCA.



La Ventana Natural Arch Recreation Arch



South Narrows Picnic Area



El Malpais Ranger Station Recreation Site



WHAT MAKES A SITE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME AN EXPANDED AMENITY FEE SITE?

A site must offer 5 of 9 amenities for it to qualify as an expanded amenity fee site:

- ✓ Tent or Trailer Spaces
- ✓ Picnic Tables
- ✓ Access Roads
- ✓ Reasonable Visitor Protection
- ✓ Permanent Toilet Facility
- ✓ Permanent trash receptacle
- ✓ Simple Devices for Containing Campfires
- ⊗ Drinking Water
- ⊗ Fee Collection by an Employee or Agent

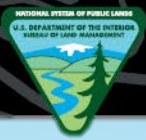
Joe Skeen Campground in El Malpais NCA offers 7 amenities.



JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND AMENITIES:

- Graveled route to and through campground
- 2 vault toilets
- 10 campsites with picnic tables and shelters
- 1 camp host site with picnic tables and shelter
- Grills and fire rings at each campsite
- 3 bear proof trash receptacles
- Welcome kiosk with regulations
- Ample parking for vehicles pulling trailers up to 50 ft.





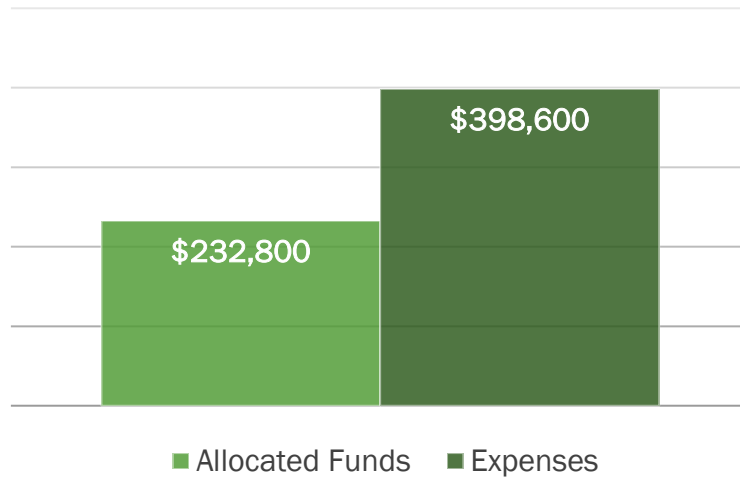
JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND VISITATION AND FEE STRUCTURE

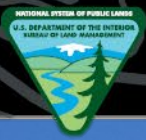
- No concrete visitation data
- Observation from park rangers is that campground use is steady throughout the year, with slight decrease in use during the coldest winter months of January and February.
- Currently, the campground is a fee-free area



EL MALPAIS NCA APPROPRIATED FUNDS AND EXPENSES

Comparison of 5-year average of allocated funds and expenses from L1210, L1220, L1711. Data from FY 2016 through FY 2020.



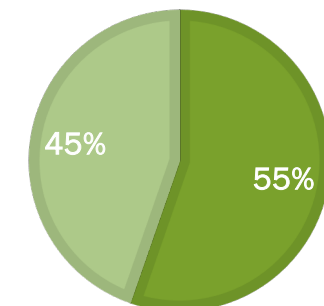


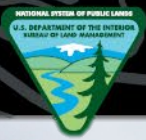
EL MALPAIS NCA AVERAGE ANNUAL LABOR & OPERATING COSTS OVER 5 YEARS

Average Annual Expenditures for 5 years (Fiscal Years 2016-2020)

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Labor Costs | \$220,431 |
| Operating Costs | \$178,171 |
| Total Average Expenditures | \$398,602 |

■ Labor Costs ■ Operating Costs





PROJECTED ANNUAL EXPENDITURES FOR JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND (FY 2021 - FY 2025)

| Operating Expenses | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Volunteer campground host reimbursement (6 months, \$38/day) | \$6,916.00 | \$6,916.00 |
| Supplies (e.g., toilet paper, garbage bags, cleaning supplies) | \$2,307.47 | \$2,814.32 |
| Vault toilet pumping services | \$3,500.00 | \$5,412.16 |
| Unexpected expenses (e.g., rec site repairs, and sign purchases) | \$1,000.00 | \$2,500.65 |
| TOTAL | \$21,004.04 | \$28,448.05 |

Minimum range are FY 2021 projected costs. Maximum range determined by including a 2% increase in labor and larger operational costs for each fiscal year, accounting for the general effects of inflation. Camp host reimbursement is a fixed cost and is not adjusted for inflation.



EL MALPAIS NCA PROPOSED FEE MODIFICATION

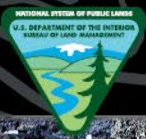
Rio Puerco Field Office proposes to:

1. Implement an expanded amenity fee at Joe Skeen Campground for \$5.00 per night per campsite for up to two vehicles and \$5.00 per night for additional vehicles

Campground would remain first-come, first-served area for now.

2. Currently maintain El Malpais Ranger Station Recreation Site, La Ventana Natural Arch Recreation Area, and South Narrows Picnic Area as fee-free sites.





PROJECTED REVENUE BASED ON PROPOSED FEE IMPLEMENTATION AT JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND

| Fiscal Year | Estimated Group Size | Projected User Nights | Estimated Revenue Range (assuming fee increase) | Estimated Revenues (with no fee increase, ex. donation only) | Total Annual Revenue |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| 2022 | 4 - 8 people | 2 nights | \$9,125 - \$12,775. | \$1,560 | \$10,685 - \$14,335 |

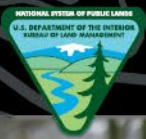
This estimated projection of revenues (assuming fee increase) is based on a range of 50% - 70% capacity at the campground throughout the year, meaning 5 – 7 sites would be filled every day of the year.



IMPACTS FROM IMPLEMENTING A FEE AT JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND

- Additional revenue for labor and operational needs
- Increased BLM presence to halt resource damage
- Ability to improve campground facilities, recreational opportunities, quality of the experience, and visitor satisfaction
- Ability to sustain and direct management of the recreation fee site.
- Ability to continue operations despite potential increase of costs of goods, labor, and/or services.
- Return visitors may find it off-putting that they are now required to pay a fee.
- Socio-economic impacts to low-income or minority populations are unknown presently, but impacts could be expected with any fee. Collection of RUPs will be used to understand visitor demographics.





IMPACTS FROM NOT IMPLEMENTING A FEE AT JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND

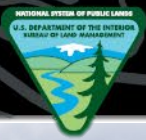
- Loss of potential revenue in L1232 funds to augment funds for labor and operational costs.
- Potential environmental degradation of resources in and around the campground.
- Potential degradation of recreation experience and public satisfaction for current and new visitors.
- Costs of goods, labor, and services increase at a faster rate than fee revenue projections.
- Socio-economic impacts to low-income or minority populations would be favorable because no fee would be required.



JOE SKEEN CAMPGROUND SHORT- AND LONG-TERM FUTURE EXPENDITURES

- Barricades (boulders) at Joe Skeen Campground to prevent user-created routes/camping areas (\$7,500)
- Stabilize general site erosion at Joe Skeen Campground (\$5,000)
- Repaint picnic shelters and vault toilet flooring at Joe Skeen Campground (\$5,000)
- Replace fire rings at Joe Skeen with maintenance-friendly versions (\$8,000)
- Add additional concrete sidewalks at Joe Skeen Campground to improve ADA accessibility (\$25,000)
- Revamp campground host area and reclaim user-created turn-around (\$75,000)
- Deferred Maintenance: New potable waterline system and new electrical system for Joe Skeen Campground (\$447,000)





QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Please feel free to raise your hand to comment to ask a question verbally.

You are also welcome to type your questions into the chat box.



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THANK FOR DROPPING BY!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME TODAY AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS!