

Bureau of Land Management Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

Proposed changes to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area 2018-2028 Business Plan

Executive Summary

Overview

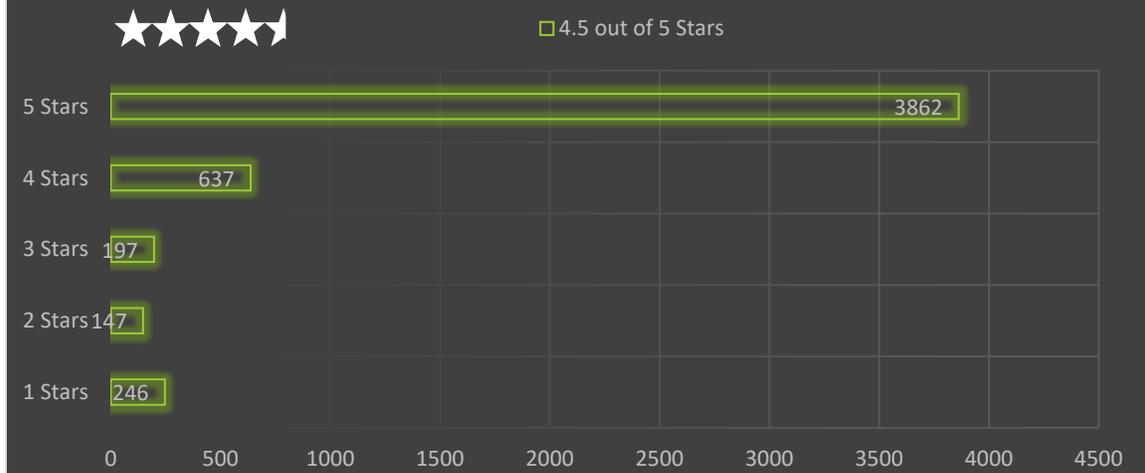
- The establishment of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) is to conserve, protect and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations including the unique and important natural, cultural and recreation resources.
- The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area 2018-2028 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.
- Amenity fees were first instituted at Red Rock Canyon in 1997 as part of the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program which was reauthorized in 2004 with the enactment of FLREA. Fees were subsequently raised in 2005, 2011, and 2018.
- In 2016-2019, Great Basin Institute performed a capacity study of RRCNCA which included the core area (Scenic Drive, Calico Basin, and Cottonwood Valley). The report determined that the Scenic Drive core area was regularly over capacity at a rate of 300%.

One of the capacity study recommendations was to implement a reservation system for the RRCNCA

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Great Basin Institute

- On December 14, 2018, the BLM started online reservations through Recreation.gov for the expanded amenity fee collections for the RRCNCA campground.
- In 2020, Recreation.gov launched the timed entry ticket service to welcome visitors back into areas that closed due to COVID protocols. This service has proven to be a valuable tool to manage visitation when popular locations exceed capacity. Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is the most recent example of this timed entry service, and visitors are responding positively to this experience. Out of 5,089 ratings and reviews, nearly 4,500 are 4- and 5-star ratings.

Public Reviews of RRCNCA Scenic Loop Drive Reservation System



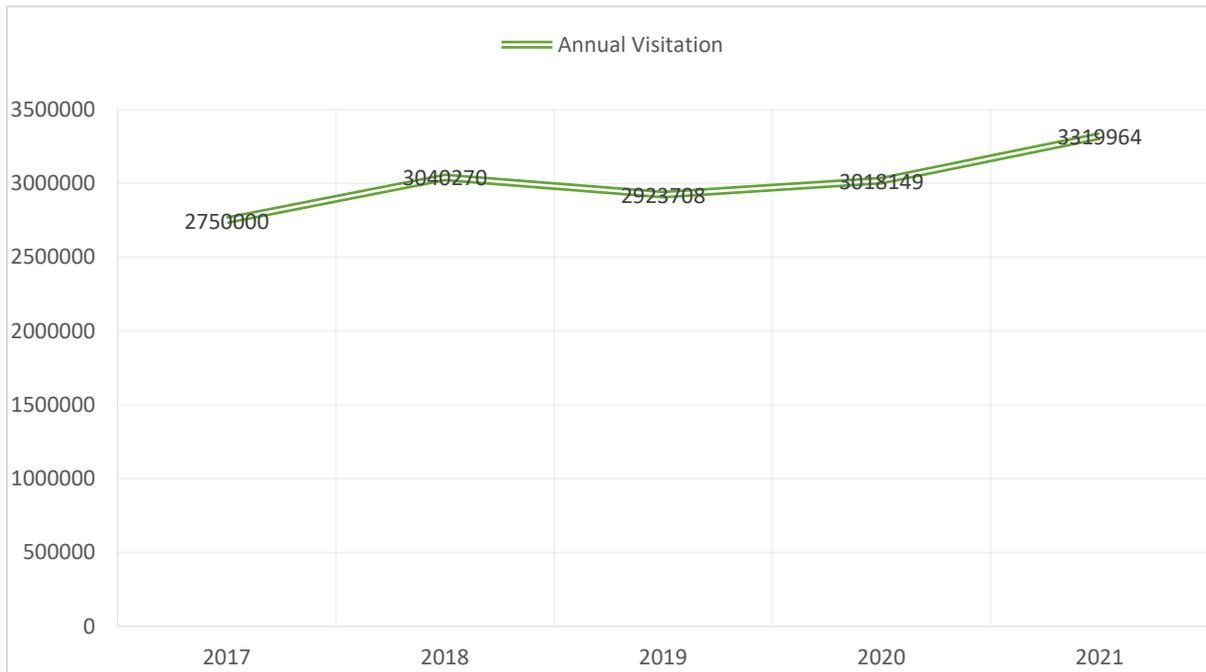
Source: Recreation.gov

Today, millions of visitors are using Recreation.gov to plan, reserve, and share their recreational experiences about the RRCNCA Scenic Drive and Campground. Recreation.gov hosts a range of sites allowing visitors to reserve a campsite or daily/annual passes, and picnic areas on public lands.

CALICO I PARKING AREA, RRCNCA SCENIC DRIVE



RRCNCA IS THE BUSIEST NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA IN THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT. 3.5 MILLION VISITORS VISIT ANNUALLY.



Source: BLM Recreation Management Information System (RMIS)

Proposed Changes:

BLM proposes to amend the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area 2018-2028 Business Plan.

Proposal to add a standard and expanded amenity fee for reservation services at RRCNCA in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G).

This amenity fee structure change is necessary to meet the needs of RRCNCA to conserve, protect, enhance, and manage the public lands in RRCNCA for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

This Executive Summary proposes updating BLM fee structure at the ***RRCNCA Scenic Drive, Campground and Calico Basin Core Area*** in the following ways:

- 1) Add an expanded amenity fee for the RRCNCA Scenic Drive equal to the associated Recreation.gov reservation service fee**
- 2) Add an expanded amenity fee for the Red Rock Campground equal to the associated Recreation.gov reservation service fee**
- 3) Add an expanded amenity fee for the RRCNCA equal to the associated Recreation.gov reservation service fee**
- 4) Modify the existing name(s) of the Red Springs/Calico Basin fee site, to be further defined and finalized as the Calico Basin Core Fee Area**

5) Add an expanded amenity fee for the Calico Basin Core Area equal to the associated Recreation.gov reservation service fee

Table 1. Scenic Drive, Calico Basin Core Fee Area, and Day Use Area Proposed Fee Table

| Amenity Type | Current Standard Amenity Fee | Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee for Reservation Services | | Fees FY23 and Beyond Including Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee for Reservation Services | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | | Online or Onsite | Phone Reservation | FY23 Fees | Online or Onsite | Phone Reservation |
| Scenic Loop Drive Daily Fees | | | | | | |
| Vehicle | \$15.00 | \$2.00 | \$3.00 | \$20.00 | \$2.00 | \$3.00 |
| Bicyclist | \$5.00 | No Reservation Required | | \$8.00 | No Reservation Required | |
| Pedestrian | \$5.00 | No Reservation Required | | No Change | No Reservation Required | |
| Motorcycle | \$10.00 | \$2.00 | \$3.00 | \$15.00 | \$2.00 | \$3.00 |
| Commercial Tour Vehicle | \$ 5.00 pp + entry | \$2.00 | \$3.00 | No Change | \$2.00 | \$3.00 |
| Red Rock Annual Pass ¹ | \$45.00 – 1 time annually | \$2.00 @ entry | N/A | \$60.00 | \$2.00 @ entry | N/A |
| Day Use Picnic Area | No Fee | | | No Change | \$8.00 | \$9.00 |

¹The proposed expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be required for each time a reservation was made even with a Red Rock Annual Pass or America the Beautiful Interagency Pass.

Table 2. Redrock Campground Proposed Fee Table

| Amenity Type | Current Expanded Amenity Fee | Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee for Reservations ² | | Fees FY23 and Beyond Including Proposed Expanded Amenity Fee for Reservations | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|------------------|-------------------|
| | | Online or Onsite | Phone Reservation | FY23 Fees | Online or Onsite | Phone Reservation |
| Campground Fees per site/per night | | | | | | |
| Campground Nightly Fee | \$20.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 | \$25.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 |
| Campground – Walk-in Site | \$10.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 | \$12.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 |
| Campground Group Rate | \$60.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 | \$80.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 |

²The proposed expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be only assessed once per reservation. For example, if a visitor were to reserve a site online for one night the total fee would be \$28.00. If that same visitor were to reserve a site online for 10 nights, the total fee would be \$208.00.

Current Recreation.gov reservation fees can range from \$0.50 to \$10.00 per reservation. The RRCNCA reservation services fees are subject to contracting requirements on Recreation.gov and will be automatically adjusted and incorporated onsite as contract changes occur or with future updates to the Business Plan.

Since 2018, the BLM RRCNCA has utilized the fees for:

“100% of the amenity fees collected are reinvested back into RRCNCA”

| Description | Costs |
|--|-------------------|
| Additional staff added – Park Rangers (temp and seasonal), Law Enforcement, NCA Manager, Project Manager | \$665,347 |
| Completed Red Spring Boardwalk (ADA) | \$1,481,931.54 |
| Painted exterior of Scenic Drive bathrooms. | \$2,000 |
| Installation of traffic counters throughout RRNCA. | \$15,000 |
| Harris Springs RAMP completed to help prevent future fires and improve public access | \$84,687 |
| Calico Basin RAMP completed – to improve access and protect and conserve resources in the area. | \$150,000 |
| Added new signage and kiosks | \$160,000 |
| New post and rail fencing throughout the area | \$15,000 |
| Waterline and well completed | \$1,702,000 |
| Outdoor exhibit improvements (In development) | \$100,000 |
| Indoor exhibit area improvements (In development) | \$100,000 |
| Installation of reservation posts at each site | \$15,000-\$20,000 |
| AM radio implemented | \$5,000 |
| Mobile app (In development) | \$100,000 |

Adjusting and expanding the fee structure will enable BLM RRCNCA to provide improved visitor services and agency operations including:

- Preventing overcrowding on the Scenic Drive and Calico Basin Core Areas through reservations
- Decrease damage and destruction to significant resources including the Wilderness Areas, cultural resources, threatened, and endangered wildlife, and plants
- Decrease damage and destruction of habitat including the desert tortoise, Gila Monster, wild horses, and burros
- Reduce parking lot congestion
- Prevent unnecessary site area closures by controlling the pace of visitation.
- Improve fee collection control and management
- Decrease costs of contracts including armored car deliveries
- Improve communications to the public by providing real-time messaging through recreation.gov for closures related to weather, power outages, and search and rescue activities
- Maintain manageable visitation and allow for emergency vehicle access for search and rescue and necessary evacuations
- Decrease vandalism and theft in the area



Ash Spring Red Rock Canyon graffiti vandalism

In addition, it is important to consider the benefits to the BLM and visitors for these online trip-planning and reservation services. Some of these reservation benefits include:

- **Customer service available 7 days a week, 14 hours a day**
- **Unlimited access to a management portal to update and maintain facility information**
- **Training and support services available for staff**
- **Reports and data for day-to-day operations, as well as trend analysis**
- **Security that meets all federal government requirements for system security, privacy protection and financial transactions**
- **Outreach and communication to stay in touch with visitors, influence behavior, and convey messaging important to the agencies through social media, newsletters, email, and marketing campaigns**
- **Field staff and visitor feedback mechanisms and analysis that feeds operational decisions for enhancements, new tools, training, and other tweaks to better meet customer needs and expectations**



RRCNCA Red Spring Boardwalk Renovation

BLM RRCNCA proposed future Projects:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Legacy Trail (multi-use) (Design Completed, EA Draft) | \$34 million |
| Ride Share/Fast Lane (In design) | \$620,000 |
| Lost Creek boardwalk improvements (Fall 2022) | \$383,000 |
| Cottonwood Valley RAMP (In Development) | \$75,000 |
| New restrooms throughout Core Area and Calico Basin | \$400,000 |
| Science Plan (to contract out) | \$5,000 |
| Sign Plan (In development) | \$5,000 |
| More positions (Natural Resource Specialists, Supervisory Park Rangers, Land Law Examiner, Outdoor Recreation Planners) | varies |