



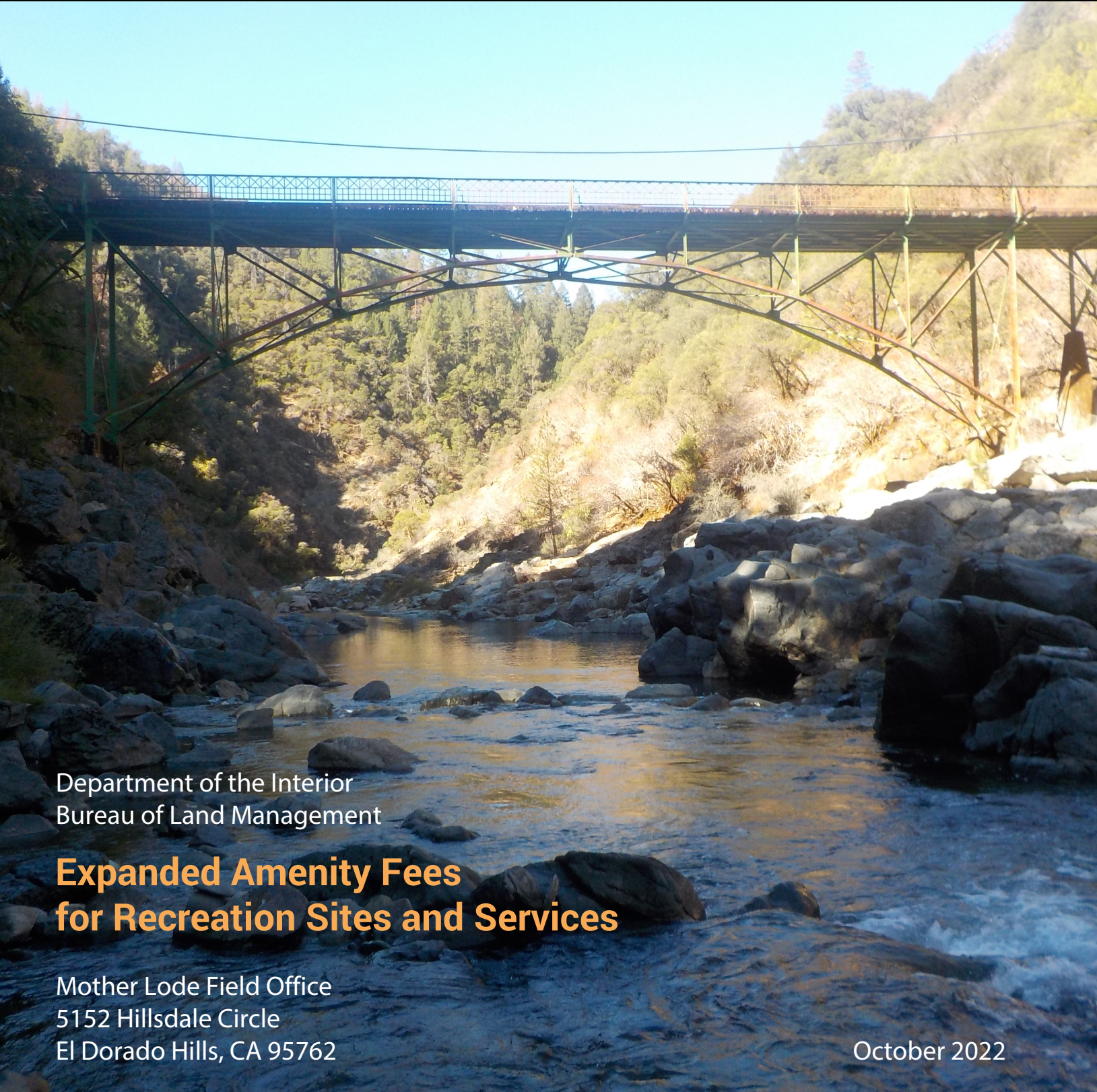
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Business Plan

Mother Lode Field Office, California

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Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

## Expanded Amenity Fees for Recreation Sites and Services

Mother Lode Field Office  
5152 Hillsdale Circle  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

October 2022

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## **BLM Signatory Page**

Business Plan Developed By:

Mother Lode Field Office – Recreation

5152 Hillside Circle

El Dorado Hills, California 95762

### **Signatures for Approving Business Plan**

**Recommended By:**

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**Field Manager**

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**Date**

**Reviewed By:**

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**District Manager**

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**Date**

**Approved By:**

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**State Director**

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**Date**

## 1. Executive Summary

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004, (P.L. 108-447) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the Mother Lode Field Office's recreation fee program. This business plan outlines a proposed fee change for a campground, presents historical visitation and revenue, provides a fair market value analysis, and shows the need to increase fee revenue to pay for operating costs. Consistent with FLREA, the intent of this business plan is not to maximize fee revenue but to help protect natural resources, provide for public health and safety, and facilitate access to public lands and related waters. Fees are a way of ensuring that those who actively use recreation opportunities make a greater, but reasonable, contribution toward protecting and enhancing those opportunities than those who do not utilize recreational opportunities.

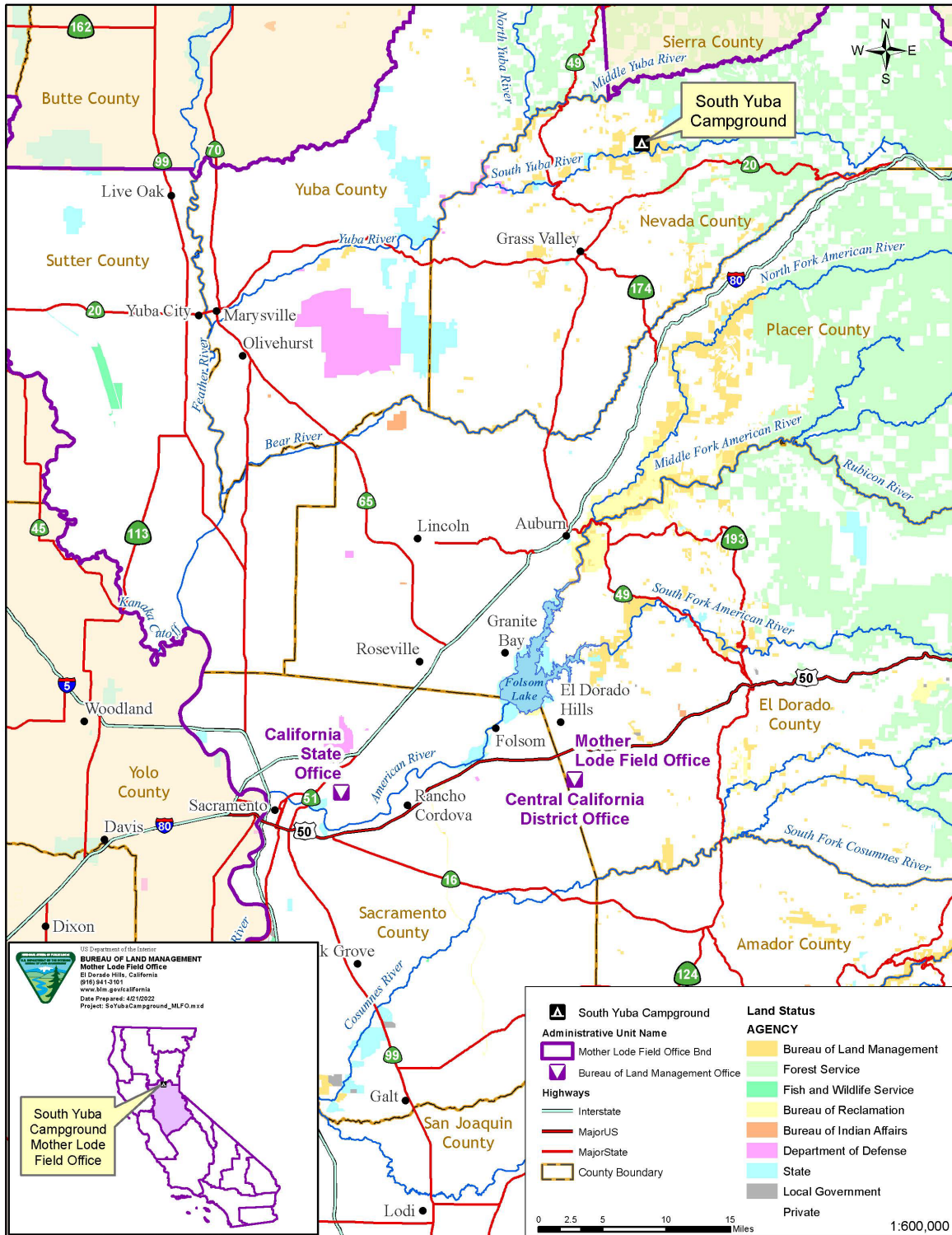
The Mother Lode Field Office Recreation Program includes active management of expanded and standard amenity recreation sites within the South Yuba Recreation Area including the South Yuba Campground, Edwards Crossing, Round Mountain, Primitive Camp, Hoyts Crossing and Purdon Crossing. This business plan will only discuss the fee increase at South Yuba Campground. South Yuba Campground meets the expanded amenity parameters as defined in FLREA because the recreation areas provide five or more amenities, including: tent or trailer spaces, refuse containers, toilet facilities, reasonable visitor protection, food storage, potable water and simple devices for containing a campfire. No standard amenity fees for day-use within the South Yuba Recreation Area currently exist and are not proposed at this time.

*Table 1: Proposed Modified Expanded Amenity Fees*

Campground	Current Fee Structure	Proposed Modified Fee Structure
South Yuba Campground	\$5 per night to include parking for 2 vehicles.	\$15 per night to include parking for 2 vehicles. \$5 per additional vehicle as space allows to a maximum of 4 vehicles per site.

All proposed fees are based on a fair market analysis of fees charged by other public agencies and private providers for similar services within the respective geographic area of each recreation site. Fee increases are necessary to better meet the expenses of the recreation program, including maintenance and operations to prevent resource damage and provide better visitor services.

## Mother Lode Field Office - South Yuba Campground



Map 1: Mother Lode Field Office area is depicted along with the location of the South Yuba Campground with proposed fee changes in this business plan.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1. Fee and Business Plan Requirement**

This business plan outlines direction for the operation and maintenance of the Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode Field Office campgrounds and the associated Recreation Use Permit (RUP) program. The plan conforms to state and national direction for recreation management and is built on partnerships with local communities. This plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended and codified at 16 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 87), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930-Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook).

FLREA provides the BLM's current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at Federal recreational lands and waters. FLREA authorizes the BLM to retain locally collected recreation fees and outlines how revenues may be used for such things as facility repair, maintenance, facility enhancement directly related to public use and operating, or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program. Under FLREA, a Standard Amenity fee and an Expanded Amenity fee may be charged for the use of certain facilities or services, which include developed day-use sites and campgrounds. The developed recreational sites must meet the criteria defined below to charge fees. These fees are usually implemented through the issuance of a recreation use permit (RUP), or through a specific annual pass. BLM policy requires that revenue from RUPs be deposited into a separate account (pg. 2-3 (8) of H-2930-1). Doing so allows the BLM to more readily track and report collections and ensures that RUP revenue is spent at or near the site of collection.

Definitions of Standard and Expanded Amenities, defined at 16 U.S.C §6802 (f) and (g), are summarized below.

Expanded Amenity Recreation Fees cover specialised outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least a majority of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) reasonable visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec. 803.(g)(2)(A) of REA.

### **2.2. Regulatory Background**

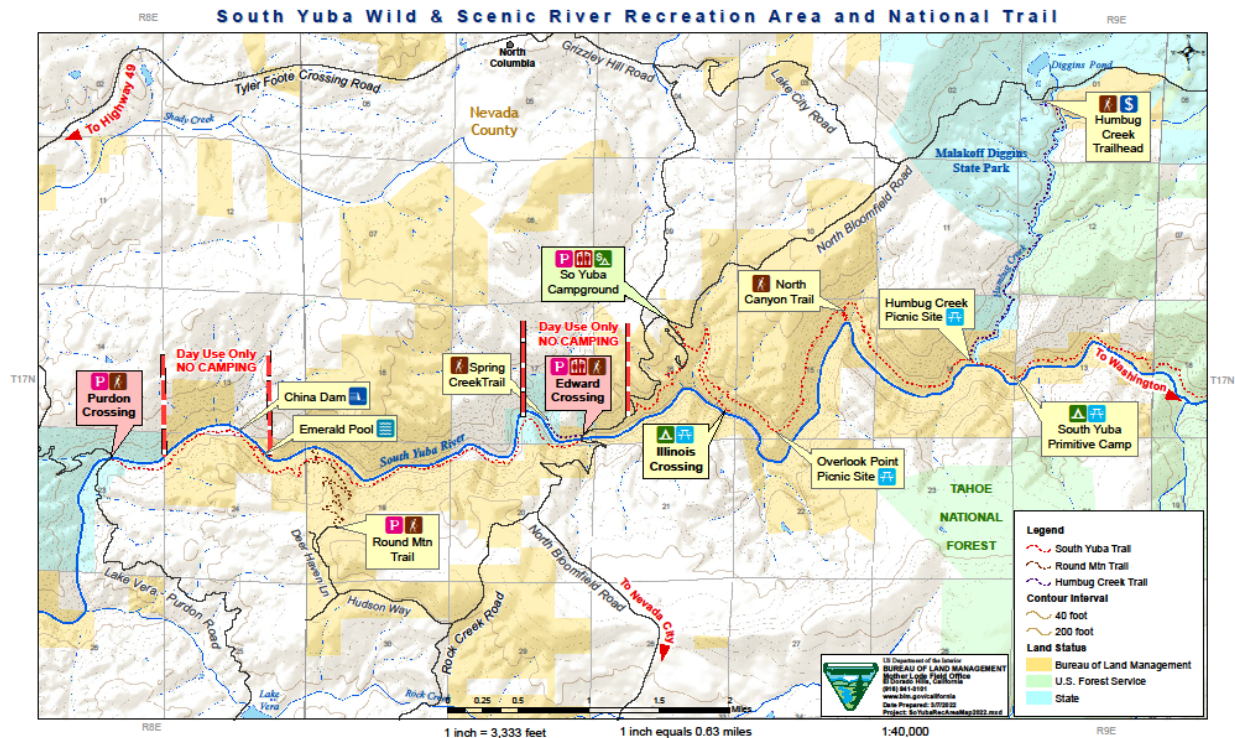
The BLM Handbook H-2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fee Administration (Rel. 2- 300, dated Nov. 17, 2014), requires each recreation fee program has an approved business plan which thoroughly discusses fees and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in FLREA. Business plans are to assist management in determining the appropriateness and level of

fees, the cost of administering a fee program and the expected benefits for the public. The primary purpose of the plan is to serve as public notification of the objectives for use of recreation fee revenues and to provide the public an opportunity to comment on these objectives. The finalized business plan guides the expenditure of collected FLREA funds and ensures public accountability. The business plan will specifically cover a description of the fee site, proposed changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study of fees charged for other similar recreation facilities, and the impacts of proposed fee changes. The data used to analyze and prepare this business plan was obtained through internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Federal Business Management System (FBMS), Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billing Systems (CBS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking spreadsheets.

16 U.S.C. §6802 (d) provides limitations on recreation fees including prohibitions that standard or expanded amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for: parking only, undesignated parking, or picnicking along roads or along trails, general access, low investment sites or areas, persons moving through without using the facilities or services, for camping at undeveloped sites that do not provide a minimum number of facilities or services as described above (expanded amenity recreation fee), use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for non-commercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Public Law 94-579) provides the BLM's general land use management authority over public lands and establishes outdoor recreation as an authorized use of those lands. Section 302(b) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to regulate public lands uses through permits or other instruments.

This business plan has been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance outlined in the BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (H-2930-1).



Map 2. South Yuba Recreation Area

### 3. Background

#### 3.1. Area Description

##### South Yuba River

The South Yuba River from Washington, CA to Highway 49 is a class III to V river segment flowing out of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Nevada County. This section of river has a state designation of Wild and Scenic by the State of California and is listed suitable and eligible for National Wild and Scenic designation by the BLM and United States Forest Service (USDAFS). The river is known regionally for its clear water and swimming holes. The South Yuba National Recreation Trail, designated in 1971, parallels the river from the town of Washington to Purdon Crossing of which 15 miles is on BLM. There are parking areas and bathrooms at Highway 49, Purdon Crossing, and Edwards Crossing which are popular river crossings that have easy access to BLM lands adjacent to the South Yuba River. Purdon Crossing and Highway 49 are on California State Parks property. The South Yuba Campground is a mile from the river and transects the South Yuba National Trail. There is a day use parking area at the campground which has a vault toilet and permanent trash receptacle. All day use areas have BLM kiosks on BLM lands. Edwards Crossing has a vault toilet in addition to a parking area. The campground offers the opportunity for close access to the river. Swimming, hiking, backpacking, gold panning, fishing, whitewater boating, hunting and mountain biking are

popular recreational activities in the area in addition to visiting the Gold Rush era historical town of Nevada City and Malakoff Diggins California State Historical Park.

### **3.2.Visitor Demographics**

The Mother Lode Field Office does not collect or maintain comprehensive visitor demographic information for recreational users across the public lands it administers. The most reliable information on local visitor demographics comes from census data for Nevada County. Visitation data for 2021 is provided by the South Yuba Citizens League (SYRCL) which is considered reliable. Observed trends in visitation are described below and recreation staff identify most visitation to BLM campgrounds as local to Nevada County and Counties of Central California.

**Nevada County.** According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Nevada County in 2020 was 102,241 with a median household income (in 2019 dollars) of \$66,096.

**Yuba County.** According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Yuba County in 2020 was 81,575 with a median household income (in 2020 dollars) of \$59,425.

**Placer County.** According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Placer County in 2020 was 404,379 with a median household income (in 2020 dollars) of \$93,677.

**Sacramento County.** According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Sacramento County in 2020 was 1,585,055 with a median household income (in 2020 dollars) of \$70,684.

BLM Nevada County recreation areas frequently border California State Parks along the South Yuba River in addition to butting up against Tahoe National Forest upstream. Survey data from the Tahoe National Forest is not an accurate reflection of visitors because much of that data collected comes from visitation to Lake Tahoe and the surrounding area which includes interstate 80. California State Parks has not surveyed visitors to the South Yuba River but does collect daily parking fees at Bridgeport State Park which is downstream of Highway 49. Bridgeport receives less visitation than Highway 49, Purdon Crossing, and Edwards Crossing locations but is worth noting for comparison. The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), which has actively been involved with stewardship programs since 1983, estimates over 700,000 people annually visit the South Yuba River (<https://yubariver.org/our-work/river-ambassador/>). Their River Ambassador Program completed a visitor survey in 2021 at Highway 49 and Bridgeport River Crossings. Between those two river access sites over 13,000 visitors were observed along with over 3,200 interactions. Of the people contacted, 311 were local and 2,460 were from out of town. Of the 1,760 people who disclosed where they were from, 45% were from the San Francisco Bay Area, 17% were from the Sacramento area, 9% were from the Marysville-Yuba City Area, and 29% were from other areas. Additionally, SYCRL did an online survey of 439 residents, 34% were from Grass Valley, 65% were from Nevada City, and 1% were from other

locations. The survey reflected that residents supported increased signage and in-person visitor contacts. The survey also illustrated that 34% of the respondents supported paid parking lots.

### **3.3. Recreational Visitation**

Visitation at the South Yuba Campground primarily includes fishermen, beach goers, and people seeking the leisure and relaxation offered by a forested campground close to a river and trail system. The campground is open and used April 1<sup>st</sup> - October 15<sup>th</sup>, with concentrated use around the three major holidays of Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day weekends. Although most of the campers are from the Central California area, visitation is represented from all over the country. Most campers stay for one to three nights; however, there is a percentage of users that will stay for one to two weeks. Visitation also comes from the local and often underserved communities.

### **3.4. Season of Use**

Most visitation at the South Yuba Campground occurs between late May and early October. Visitation is largely dependent on seasonal factors such as weather. Campground occupancy rates differ by season and day of week but are observed to generally range between 30 and 45 percent for midweek occupancy and fill for weekend occupancy during the peak summer months. The campground fills on the popular three-day weekends, such as Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

### **3.5. Operating Costs**

The Mother lode Field Office expends substantial resources in managing visitor use at developed recreation sites. All sites require and benefit from staff presence and visitor contacts, signage, interpretive opportunities, cleaning, trash pick-up, and maintenance. Direct costs for these services are primarily BLM employees. Costs also include services such as restroom pumping, garbage collection, hazard tree mitigation, potable water testing, vehicles, law enforcement, signage, maintenance supplies, brochures, and other interpretive materials.

#### **3.5.1. Annual Operating Costs of Recreation Sites**

The greatest operating expense is related to staff labor for visitor services and related maintenance actions. BLM recreation employees and contractors ensure the cleanliness and safety of the facilities. These staff are responsible for responding to visitor inquiries, resolving disputes, fee collection, cleaning campsites, infrastructure maintenance, construction of campground amenities, and landscaping. The campgrounds are also patrolled by BLM Law Enforcement Rangers to assist with fee compliance, protect resources and facilities, and help ensure the safety of campers. Toilet cleaning, pumping and effluent disposal services are performed by staff and/or specialized contractors certified to address hazardous wastes. The cost of cleaning and maintaining the campgrounds also includes buying toilet paper, garbage

bags and cleaning supplies. Maintenance and testing of the drinking water systems is provided by BLM staff and a private lab. The program also supports the cost for government vehicles and equipment used to support patrols, resource and visitor use monitoring, and maintenance work. Large projects involving campground design, construction, and road maintenance are supported by engineering staff as needed. Other annual operating costs include monitoring of visitor use, contract procurement and administration, public affairs, GIS mapping and support functions, such as providing information services to the public from the front desk of the Field Office.

*Table 2: Annual Operating Costs for the South Yuba Campground*

Site Operating Costs per Worker Based on Allocated Time	Approximate Annual Operating Costs
Maintenance Worker	\$19,770
Park Ranger	\$1,324
Outdoor Rec Planner	\$6,412
Administrative Rec Staff	\$2,182
Law Enforcement	\$7,481
<b>Utilities &amp; Services</b>	
Electricity	\$500
Water	\$1,606
Toilet Pumping	\$1,971
<b>Materials and Supplies</b>	
Toilet Paper, Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies	\$1,207
Incidental Maintenance	\$2,000
Vehicles	\$4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,453</b>

An average of about \$7,546 in fees is collected annually from the campground.

Maintenance costs at recreation sites vary year to year, and the “incidental maintenance” noted in the table applies to needs such as basic plumbing repair, basic landscaping, periodic fuels reduction, hazard tree removal, picnic table replacement, painting, broken bear box locks and sign replacement.

### **3.5.2. Recreation Use & Fee Revenues**

The table below shows the visitor days as self-reported on recreation use permits and annual revenue for the past 5 years (FY 2017 through FY 2021). Fees collected show fluctuations in visitation, with an annual average revenue collected from campgrounds of \$7,546. Fee compliance is considered to fluctuate largely based on BLM presence.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted recreational visitation in FY 2019 and 2020. Campgrounds delayed opening for 3 months, but visitation increased in those years due to increased demand by people looking to vacation outdoors and due to various National Forest closures in California due to wildfires.

*Table 3: Five Year Average for Nightly Campground Visits*

Five Year Average for Nightly Campground Visits FY 2017 to FY 2021*			
FY Year	RUPS Received	RUP Visitor Days	Annual Revenue
2017	412	2,738	\$4,532
2018	1,147	4,218	\$12,617
2019	625	3,725	\$6,886
2020	594	3,128	\$6,534
2021	651	6,242	\$7,161
2017-2021	Total: 3,429	Total: 20,051	Total Average: \$7,546

\*Please see Appendix 6.2 for 5-year visitation and revenue table for breakdown by year.

### **3.5.3. Identification of Fee Program Goals**

The BLM Mother Lode Field Office has identified the need for visitor use recreation fees to contribute more equitably to the cost of providing campgrounds and day-use area facilities and services to the recreating public. In review of the average operating costs for fee sites, recreational users currently contribute about 15% toward the operating costs. In addition to the implementation of proposed fees, increased efforts to ensure fee compliance, and the proposed future use of recreation.gov for online reservations and secure payments, the field office seeks to have recreational fees cover, at minimum, between 50 - 75% of operating costs. Based on projected increased visitation through improved opportunities and increased demand, and with increased fees and fee compliance efforts associated with the implementation of online reservation systems (recreation.gov), expected revenue increases will offset those operating costs.

## **4. Fee Proposal**

### **4.1. Summary of Expanded Amenity Fee Modifications**

The South Yuba Campground is proposed for a site fee increase and an additional vehicle fee. Day Use fees are not proposed to be added.

To comply with Section 3(g)(2)(A) of FLREA, BLM recreation sites must offer at least 5 of 9 specific amenities to charge an expanded amenity fee for the use of a developed campground. Table 4 shows the amenities provided at the South Yuba Campground.

*Table 4: Determination of Recreation Site Eligibility for Fee Collection*

Required Amenities (Minimum of 5 of the following)	South Yuba Campground
Tent or Trailer Spaces	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes
Drinking Water	Yes
Access Roads	Yes
Fee Collection by Employee or Agent	Yes
Reasonable Visitor Protection	Yes
Refuse Containers and Collection	Yes
Toilet Facilities	Yes
Simple Devices for Containing Campfires	Yes

Based on the information in Table 4, the field office determined the South Yuba Campground qualifies as an expanded amenity fee site.

#### **4.2. Existing and Proposed Fee Types**

All visitors utilizing recreation fee site amenities are required to obtain a recreation use permit (RUP). These permits can be obtained at self-service fee stations located in the campground. It is proposed that these permits also be available on recreation.gov, the federal government's one-stop center for reservations and trip-planning information.

Recreation staff and law enforcement all play a role in recreation fee site compliance. BLM staff directly interface with visitors to ensure they clearly understand payment requirements and procedures. First come, first serve permit receipts must be displayed on the campsite post. When recreation.gov reservations are implemented, users will have campsite markings provided or additional options may be explored for confirming payment and site occupancy. There is a consistent presence at recreation fee sites by BLM personnel. Compliance issues are addressed through recreation staff or law enforcement rangers as appropriate.

The following sections identify the proposed fee structures that would be implemented. The proposed fees are also available in table in Appendix 6.2.

#### **4.2.1. Expanded Amenity – Campground Fee Update**

##### **1. South Yuba Campground**

The South Yuba Campground (elevation 2,600') is located 10 miles northeast of Nevada City, within one mile of the South Yuba River off North Bloomfield Road. Access in the campground is via two paved loop driveways. The recreation site is wooded and shady. There are sixteen campsites, six will accommodate small trailers or RV's, fifteen sites meet accessibility standards. The South Fork of the Yuba River is approximately one mile from the campground. Sites include fire rings with campfire grills, bear boxes and picnic tables. Potable water, vault toilets, are available at the campground. The campground is open April 1 through October 15, weather dependent.



<b>South Yuba Campground</b>	
Open:	April 15 through October 15, weather permitting.
Reservations:	Currently first come, first served. Proposed for recreation.gov reservation system with implementation of modified fee.
Current Expanded	\$5 fee charge per campsite per night including parking for two vehicles. Senior and Access passes are the only accepted passes for fee discounts at expanded

Amenity Fees:	amenity fee sites per FLREA.
Proposed Expanded Amenity Fees:	An increase to \$15 per campsite per night including parking for 2 vehicles. \$5 per additional vehicle as space allows up to a maximum of 4 vehicles per site. Senior and Access passes are the only accepted passes for fee discounts at expanded amenity fee sites per FLREA.
Number of Sites:	16 RV/tent sites. Parking spurs are typically between 16-30'
Group Picnic area	No
Usage:	Moderate
Restrictions:	Dogs must always be under the owner's control. This is bear country so food must be secured overnight and when not attended. Always keep a clean camp and do not feed animals.
Closest Town:	Nevada City, CA
Water:	Yes, there is a permitted potable well water system.
Restrooms:	Vault Toilets
Showers:	No
Dump Station:	No
Host:	No
Other Amenities:	Trail access

#### 4.2.2. Expanded Amenity – Reservation Services

Mother Lode Field Office will use various e-commerce technologies, as directed in Instruction Memorandum 2022-019, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve, and pay for campsites and day use within the field office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service, Recreation.gov.

**What is Recreation.gov?** Recreation One Stop (R1S) is a joint initiative among more than a dozen federal agencies working together to support Recreation.gov, the online reservation and trip-planning service. Recreation.gov is a contract-delivered online service and mobile app that

hosts more than 4,600 recreation areas to over 113,000 individual sites and experiences available for reservation. The Recreation.gov website hosts over 58 million visitors and securely processes more than 9 million reservations each year.

A form of Recreation.gov was created in 1995 to provide a reservation service to the public for federal recreation facilities and activities. Today, the website and mobile app is the one-stop resource for reservations and extensive trip-planning services for the participating federal agencies and their millions of visitors.

**Is there a cost for using Recreation.gov?** Yes. A federal contractor operates Recreation.gov. That contractor receives a processing fee for reservations made through the online platform. Such fees, which are typically referred to as “reservation fees,” can be charged to the public as expanded amenity recreation fees under 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). Current fees can range from \$0.50 to \$10.00. The reservation fee is subject to contracting requirements on Recreation.gov and will be adjusted as that contract changes or with future updates to the South Yuba Business Plan.

**What does a Recreation.gov reservation fee cover?** When a visitor makes a reservation on Recreation.gov, they are securing a recreation opportunity through the reservation platform at a cost to the government. To recuperate these costs, a reservation fee is applied. Participating agencies, including the BLM, are solely responsible for setting the reservation fee associated with each item of inventory represented on Recreation.gov; however, that reservation fee must, at a minimum, be sufficient to cover the Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) fee owed to the contract service provider for that specific transaction.

- The reservation fee reflects the cost of providing and continually improving an online public reservation service, which includes:
  - ensuring the site meets strict security requirements,
  - protecting users’ personal information,
  - providing field support,
  - monitoring and analyzing customer feedback, and
  - providing expanded hours for customer support for field staff and public users. Contact center hours are year-round, 10 a.m. – 12 a.m. Eastern Time (closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day).
- The R1S contract is funded through a firm-fixed-price mechanism where the contractor earns a commission (CLIN) for each reservation made by a visitor.
  - Visitors can make reservations online through the Recreation.gov website, the Recreation.gov mobile app, by contacting an agent through the Contact Center (available seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. ET), or in many locations on-site at a ranger station.

#### **4.3. Fee Calculation**

BLM policy provides several items to consider when establishing recreation fee rates: direct cost to the government, level of benefits and services provided, and comparability with fees charged by others in the area. Direct costs consider a fee rate calculated to provide revenue to cover most of the projected annual operating and maintenance costs. Benefits provided look at fees that are reasonable and fair based on the amenities available, and the services provided. Comparability considers a fee rate that is calculated to be comparable with fees charged at similar or comparable federal, state, and local recreation sites. The fee rate analysis in this business plan focuses on the comparability of other fees in the area. An analysis of comparable fees charged by similar state, federal, and local park facilities was completed. To determine whether BLM campground permits are currently priced at a comparable rate, an assessment of fees at other area campgrounds was conducted. This survey revealed the BLM South Yuba Campground is currently priced below other area campgrounds with similar amenities.

*Table 5: Comparability Analysis- Expanded Amenities for South Yuba River Vicinity*

<b>South Yuba Vicinity</b>	<b>Expanded Amenity Fees-- Current</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Agency/ Private</b>
South Yuba Campground	\$5/night, \$0 per additional vehicle	Yes	Vault	BLM
Malakoff Diggins Campground	\$35/night, \$6 per additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	CA State Parks
Skillman Campground	\$18 to \$36/night, \$5 per additional vehicle	No	Vault	USFS
White Cloud Campground	\$24 to \$48/night,	Yes	Flush	USFS
Bullards Bar Reservoir	\$24 to \$48/night,	Yes	Vault	USFS
North Yuba River	\$24 to \$48/night	Yes	Vault	USFS
Little Town Campground	\$44 to \$63, \$7 per additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	Private
River Rest Resort	\$44 to \$62/night, \$7 per additional vehicle	Yes	Flush	Private
Englebright Lake Campground	\$20/night, boat in campsites	No	Vault	Army Corps of Engineers

The proposed updates to expanded amenity fees for the campground is comparable to providers in each respective market for location and access to recreational opportunities. The locations provided by private business typically include amenities such as Wi-Fi, electricity and showers that are not comparable to the BLM South Yuba Campground. Tahoe National Forest (TNF) offers recreation sites in abundance in the vicinity of BLM areas, and the tables represent a proportionate sampling in the area. TNF campgrounds offer more comparable amenities, such as vault toilets and drinking water.

#### 4.4. Financial Projection

Financial projections require good-faith assumptions and professional estimates to confidently estimate future conditions with the proposed updates and new fee structure in place.

The history of campground visitation at South Yuba Campground is known by observation to be full on weekends during the peak summer months, with weekdays varying from 30-50% during the same time. The South Yuba campground closes when winter weather sets in around October and opens in early April, providing a 6-month window for visitation with fees.

All campgrounds within the Mother Lode Field Office tend to fluctuate in fee compliance depending on BLM staff presence. The “little yellow envelopes” or recreation use permits (RUPs) people use to pay campground fees are also the sole source of visitation data beyond observational data. Additionally, use patterns are frequently interrupted by fire season, and most recently, COVID-19 disrupted campgrounds opening schedule by a minimum of three months in 2020. By considering observational data, RUPs visitation data, and the known fluctuations due to fire, a financial projection is considered possible only as a rough approximation. If the Mother Lode Field Office received an average of full payment at 50% capacity annually, we can estimate the proposed fee provides just under 50 percent of the annual operating costs. Table 6 only shows a financial projection at 50% capacity with updated fees.

*Table 6: Financial Projection at about half-full, 100% fee compliance*

<b>Recreation Area</b>	<b>Amenity Type</b>	<b># of Sites</b>	<b>Occupancy/Compliance Average</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>	<b>Projected Revenue</b>
South Yuba Campground	Expanded	16	At 50% for 6 months	\$15	\$21,600
				Total:	\$21,600

The financial projections under the current level of fluctuating visitation illustrate that fees provide about \$21,600, which is slightly less than 50% of projected operational costs for the South Yuba Campground. An increase in visitation and/or increase in fee compliance would help meet costs specific to the recreating public and provide revenue for high quality recreational opportunities and their continuous maintenance needs. Improvements to the facilities, expanded recreational opportunities, and an online reservation system are anticipated to increase visitation and revenue, however, it is unknown by how much.

#### 4.5. Use of Fees

The historical norm for funding recreational site operations and maintenance is to draw on base appropriated funds and for the field office to supplement that funding with fee revenues collected within the specific field office. The base funding dollars for recreation sites have been flat to

decreasing over past years due to inflation and administration priorities. With the proposed fees and development of recreational programming in the field, we seek to modernize BLM recreation sites for the enjoyment of the recreating public. Below are areas the BLM Mother Lode Field Office would put recreation fees to this purpose:

- Additional vault toilets within the area as needed.
- Service contracts as needed for site opening procedures, restroom cleaning, garbage collection, septic pumping, and water testing.
- Coverage for cost of staff in the field for positive visitor contacts, providing information, and providing for the overall sense of health and safety in recreation sites.
- Landscaping for promotion of native species and sedimentation reduction in the riparian corridor.
- Maintain and improve existing environmental education and interpretive information services.
- Maintain and expand the multi-use trail system for greater connectivity between communities and recreation areas.

#### **4.6. Impact of Fee Changes**

##### Anticipated Benefits to Recreational Users from Updating Recreational Fee Rates:

The proposed fees in this business plan ensure that services may continue at the South Yuba Campground. Services for the campground include maintained septic systems, trash removal, basic sanitation, provision of enforcement for health and safety, and fuels reduction. The updated fees will additionally allow for improved recreation experience through improved signage, interpretation, and amenities such as upgraded trails and river access points, for example.

##### *Benefits to the Local Economy*

The South Yuba Campground is near the communities of San Juan Ridge and Nevada City with recreational opportunities on the South Yuba River, BLM parcels, California State Parks and the Tahoe National Forest. Therefore, the continued and improved service for campers in these communities is anticipated to contribute to the overall sustained success of retail outlets, outfitters, lodging, restaurants, nature and youth centers, and additional tourism industry associations.

##### *Benefits to the Environment*

The campground fee program enables the BLM Mother Lode Field Office to reduce impacts to sites and resources through provision of adequate infrastructure required for continuous visitation and human impacts. For example, bear boxes for storing food and bear proof dumpsters with routine trash removal service help keep bears alive and wild. Routine patrols by

law enforcement can go toward reducing vandalism and looting and retaining distinctive natural landscape features and preserving historic sites, as well as preserving the local community's character. Overall, a healthy environment is encouraged through regular presence and maintenance of trails and developed camping areas affecting the soil, vegetation, and river health.

#### *Socioeconomic Impacts, Including Low-Income Populations*

Socioeconomic impacts are expected to be low for many traveling populations as the proposed rates are well below the costs of hotels, and they are less than nearby comparable campgrounds. Rates were considered with reference to the locality, and the new fees reflect a rate that is considered affordable for low-income populations. No new development within campgrounds was proposed that does not go to the immediate goal of security and environmental stewardship, making a positive contribution to the experience of all campers for health and safety. When people seek no-cost options for camping, the BLM Mother Lode Field Office will educate the inquiring public on responsible recreation and provide locations where dispersed camping is available.

#### *Environmental Justice*

The BLM Mother Lode Field Office campgrounds are managed with respect to environmental justice, which is defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Furthermore, the BLM Mother Lode Field Office abides by fair treatment as defined by the EPA, where “no group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.” In upgrading fees to the minimum for meeting operating costs with select and few amenities, campgrounds are anticipated to serve multiple segments of society with camping opportunities where a sense of health and safety are equally felt, valued, and appreciated within low-income communities. Where camping with an amenity fee is not a possibility for individuals, the BLM Mother Lode Field Office will expand recreational opportunity through education on principles such as Leave No Trace and information sharing on locations available for dispersed camping. Where feasible and appropriate, volunteers may be rewarded with campground vouchers following event days or upon completion of identified volunteer work.

Additionally, ensuring campgrounds meet or exceed accessibility requirements will be a priority, and that developing this infrastructure be done with recreational fee dollars. Tourism growth is expected to continue and in acknowledgement of diversity of visitors, the BLM Mother Lode Field Office will implement additional signage for multiple languages and braille.

### Anticipated Impacts of Not-Changing Recreation Fee Rates:

Amenity campgrounds are considered functioning when most features are in operating condition, a sense of security prevails, and services are timely and routine. Impacts of not changing fee rates may mean deteriorating conditions, such as rotting campground markers remaining in place, bear boxes that do not lock properly, fire rings that are missing or in a state of disrepair and remain dislodged from the ground, and bathrooms with needed replacement parts or in need of repainting may not be refurbished in a timely way. Maintenance may be needed more frequently than is possible to provide due to lack of funding for contracts or workers. Areas may not offer a sense of security suitable for family outings.

#### *Impacts to the Local Economy*

Campgrounds would not be expected to increase in visitation or promote socioeconomic growth. A decrease in current visitation would be expected in the long term due to demand for adequate services and amenities, but a decrease in current visitation may be a negligible impact to the economy as the campgrounds would not receive high visitation annually.

#### *Impacts to the Environment*

Overtime, it is unknown if multiple developed campgrounds with amenities are sustainable when appropriated funding and recreational fees do not meet operating costs. Fees are a way of ensuring that those who actively use recreation opportunities make a greater, but reasonable contribution toward protecting and enhancing those opportunities than those who do not. Impacts to the environment would include hazards to human health due to poor sanitation, impacts to wildlife due to refuse, and degradation of ecosystems through human impact, such as unmitigated erosion and the dumping of toxic waste.

#### *Socioeconomic Impacts, Including Low-Income Populations*

Where current fees and visitation allow a campground to continue to operate within the bounds of health and safety, socioeconomic impacts would be negligible. Any reduction in services would carry socioeconomic impacts, especially to low-income populations seeking more modest costs when on vacation or when utilizing amenity campgrounds when between housing.

#### *Environmental Justice*

Principles of environmental justice would be upheld regardless of fee rates. Priority in funding services would be given to upholding fair treatment and equitable access. If upholding these principles is no longer feasible across all recreation sites, operating seasons or availability would be curtailed to ensure fair treatment occurs where it is possible to provide recreational opportunities. Providing infrastructure to meet Americans with Disabilities Act specifications will be prioritized over keeping a campground open when there is low to no visitation and

introducing brochures or signage for multiple languages would be considered before investment in recreational programs that enhance leisure for one subset of the population only, for example.

## **5. Public Outreach**

### **5.1. Public Communication and Marketing Plan**

As part of the proposal to modify recreation site fees, the Mother Lode Field Office has been and will continue to conduct the following outreach to notify the public of its opportunity to review and provide comments:

- Public notice of proposed fee changes will continue to be posted onsite until implemented.
- News releases will be provided to local news outlets, informing the public of the proposed fee changes, and requesting public comment.
- Both the public notice and news releases will contain contact information for public comments on the proposed fee changes.
- Website information will inform the public of the proposed fee changes.
- Fee signs and paper materials will reflect the proposed fee changes, including notice of the fee rate(s), the passes that are accepted, and where the fees are charged.
- The BLM Mother Lode Field Office will present the campground fee increase proposal to the BLM California Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The FLREA mandates the appropriate Recreation RAC reviews all BLM recreation fee proposals prior to approval. Comments from both the public at large and the BLM California RAC will be considered prior to approval of the South Yuba BLM Campground business plan.
- The BLM monitors visitor uses to detect changes in site utilization, and documents written and oral communication from the public. Business plan review occurs on a biennial schedule from the date of the last signature. Future adjustments to approved fee schedules will reflect public comment and program implementation needs.

## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Proposed Fee Table

*Table 7: Proposed Updated Expanded Amenity Fees*

South Yuba Campground	\$15 per campsite per night to include parking for 2 vehicles. \$5 per additional vehicle as space allows with a maximum of 4 vehicles per site. A nominal reservation services fee will be charged for online reservations and/or payment when those services become available.
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### 6.2. 5-year Visitation and Revenue table

*Table 8: 5-year Visitation and Revenue table for Breakdown by Year*

	FY17		FY18		FY19		FY20		FY21	
	RUPS	Revenue	RUPS	Revenue	RUPS	Revenue	RUPS	Revenue	RUPS	Revenue
South Yuba Campground	412	<b>\$4,532</b>	1,147	<b>\$12,617</b>	625	<b>\$6,886</b>	594	<b>\$6,534</b>	651	<b>\$7,161</b>