



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

South Dakota Field Office Campground Fees Business Plan

January 2025



BLM South Dakota Field Office Campground Fees Business Plan

LVRDMT090000

Recommendations, Reviews, and Approvals

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This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management's South Dakota Field Office pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814) and BLM recreation fee program policies. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the following campgrounds Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp within the South Dakota Field Office.

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1 Executive Summary

This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) South Dakota Field Office (SDFO) in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) and BLM recreation program policy and manual direction regarding the administration of fee sites (BLM Manual 2930). FLREA provides the BLM current authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at federal recreational lands and waters. FLREA states that an expanded amenity fee may be collected if the developed campground provides at least five of the following nine services: 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 simple devices for containing a campfire. Per FLREA the Interagency Senior and Access passes may provide a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees associated with individual campsites. This discount does not apply to group sites or dump station fees. FLREA (16 United States Code (U.S.C.) 6802(b)(1)) does not grant the authority for BLM to provide discounts or reduced recreation fees for residents or other special groups.

For the Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp, this business plan will replace the existing plan (dated June 2013) in its entirety. This plan includes an increase in the amount of the established expanded amenity fee (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)(D)) for overnight camping. These sites currently meet FLREA requirements by providing tent or trailer spaces, tables, drinking water, access, collection of fees by BLM employees, visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities, and fire rings. The Horse Camp, in addition to those listed above provides, corrals and tie lines for stock animals.

The proposed expanded amenity fees for SDFO's Alkali Creek Campground are:

- Individual tent sites of \$24 (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A))
- Individual non-electric RV sites of \$30 (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)(D))
- Reservation services (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G)). Reservation services fees could range from \$.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan.

To account for inflation, the SDFO proposes to adjust fees when the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U), US City Average, increases by 20%. Fees would then increase by 20% and be rounded to the nearest half dollar.

For example: If a fee is currently \$20.00, a 20% increase would raise it to \$24.00. Rounded to the nearest half dollar, the new fee would be \$24.00. Similarly, a fee of \$24.00 would increase to \$28.80 and round to \$29.00.

Table 1 summarizes the existing and proposed fee schedule.

Table 1: The Fee Schedule Developed for the South Dakota Field Office Campgrounds

Fee Areas	Current Fees	Proposed Fees (Expanded Amenity)
Alkali Creek Campground	\$6 camping (expanded amenity)	Individual Tent Site per night: \$24 Individual RV Site (non-electric) per night: \$30 Senior and Access Pass holders: 50% off individual campsites
Alkali Creek Horse Camp	\$8 camping (expanded amenity)	Individual Site (non-electric) per night: \$30 Senior and Access Pass holders: 50% off individual campsites

The proposed fee increase for individual campsites at the Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp, will follow the guidelines established by FLREA. Fee revenue would be used to fund maintenance, enhance visitor services, and sustain natural resources. Fees would support the upkeep of campgrounds, trails, and amenities such as toilets and picnic areas, improving the overall visitor experience and safety. By complying with FLREA, the BLM ensures responsible management of recreation sites, fosters public-private partnerships for enhanced facilities, and contributes to the conservation and restoration of public lands.

Currently fees collected at the Alkali Creek Campground are used for campsite maintenance, trash collection, vault toilet maintenance, kiosk upkeep, site monitoring and road maintenance. The SDFO will use the expanded amenity fee revenue to increase staffing, maintenance, seasonal park rangers, and law enforcement while also bringing in volunteers to serve as campground hosts. Revenue would also fund improvements to the existing campsites, campground amenities and signage.

The SDFO conducted market analysis to develop the fee proposal. The proposed \$30 fee for an individual (non-electric) site is comparable to a variety of other federal and state, campgrounds near the South Dakota Field Office that offer similar amenities. Market analysis identified these sites charge between \$19 to \$30 per night.

2 Background and Authorities

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-447; Title VIII, Section 801; 16 U.S.C. 6801–6814). The authorities and regulations for this business plan are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976** (Public Law 94-579; 43 U.S.C. 1701–1787), contains BLM’s general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses 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. Section 303 of FLPMA

contains BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.

- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004** repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced BLM's authority to collect recreation fees. This current law authorizes BLM to collect recreation fees at sites that meet certain requirements, allows BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they were collected, and directs how BLM will manage and utilize these revenues. FLREA also established the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Pass Program. FLREA (16 U.S.C. 6802(b)(1)) does not grant the authority for BLM to provide discounts or reduced recreation fees for residents or other groups.
- **Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2930 (43 CFR 2930) Permits for Recreation on Public Lands** contains the regulations governing BLM's recreation permitting program.

This business plan has also been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- BLM Manual 2930, *Recreation Permits and Fees*, Rel. 2-296 dated October 22, 2007
- BLM Handbook 2930-1, *Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook*, Rel. 2-300 dated November 17, 2014

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

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

3 Introduction to the South Dakota Field Office Recreation Program

- **South Dakota Field Office – Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp.**

SDFO manages 274,239 acres of public land across South Dakota. The recreation program includes two recreational shooting sports sites, a large network of multi-use trails for hiking, equestrian use, OHV riding, and mountain biking, as well as opportunities for dispersed camping and recreational shooting. The SDFO also administers a Special Recreation Permit program supporting events such as mountain bike races, horse endurance races, OHV events and endurance running events. Notable features encompassed in the SDFO include the Fort Meade Backcountry Byway, Fort Meade Special Recreation Management Area, and the Exemption Special Recreation Management Area.

3.1 South Dakota Recreational Visitation

The 2020-2024 Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) data of the South Dakota Field Office shows that overall visitation numbers have increased steadily from year to year. In

the most recent five-year span since the last Business Plan update in 2013 there has been an increase in the number of users of 65% (Table 2).

Table 2: Estimated Number of Visitors and RUPs to South Dakota Field Office, Fiscal Years 2020-2024

Fiscal Year	South Dakota Field Office Estimated Number of Visitors	Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp Recreation Use Permits Issued
FY 2013 *	82,022	-
FY 2020	131,675	947
FY 2021	130,321	1,041
FY 2022	129,332	651
FY 2023	117,054	763
FY 2024	135,075	952

* Fiscal Year 2013 was the last year the Fort Meade Recreation Area Business Plan was updated, and fees have not been increased since the campgrounds initial fee structure was developed in 2005.

Visitation specifically to the BLM Fort Meade Recreation Area in South Dakota consist of many non-motorized user groups such as mountain bikers, hikers, equestrian users, and hunters due to the reduced conflicts with motorized users, primarily UTV/ATV use. With over 25 miles of non-motorized trails and access to other trail systems, the visitation is high during the summer months with use dropping off during the winters months to more winter type activities including cross country skiing, hunting, fat tire biking, snowshoeing etc. The two campgrounds provide a popular place to stay in order to access these trails and recreation area throughout the year. Currently the Alkali Creek Campground is open all year because it shares a parking area with the Alkali Creek Trailhead. The Alkali Creek Horse Camp is open to the public between April and October as most equestrian activity does not take place in the winter months. Fees are only collected during the time of May 15th through September 30th, but with the increased use and popularity of the area, fees will be collected the entire year as many recreation users take advantage of the winter recreation the area has to offer.

With the increased winter visitation at the campground the need for maintenance and services throughout the year has increased. Trash collection services have been extended into the shoulder seasons, vault toilet cleanings are needed more frequently requiring BLM recreation employees' additional trips to the site, and the need for snow removal in the parking areas has also increased.

3.2 Partnerships and Volunteer Programs

A volunteer program through the BLM is in place for campground hosts in South Dakota. Currently the SDFO has one campground host that manages the Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp due to their proximity to each other. These positions are vital to assist with on the ground management and increase the visitor experience. On average, campground hosts contribute approximately 400 volunteer hours/year with an estimated value of approximately \$11,376.

Implementing this business plan would allow SDFO to invest more resources into its campgrounds, making these positions more desirable, and would enable SDFO to continue recruiting high quality volunteers at the campgrounds.

4 Description of Each Fee Site/Area

Alkali Creek Campground

This campground is located 2 miles east of Sturgis South Dakota at exit 34 off Interstate 90. This campground is approximately 14 acres with a total of 18 tent sites and 5 temporary RV sites with plans to develop an additional 10 RV sites. This campground is also used as a day use trailhead to access over 20 miles of non-motorized single-track trail and access to additional trail systems on USFS lands, city of Sturgis property and Veterans Administration trails. Campground amenities include vault toilets, steel fire rings, trash collection, picnic tables, fee collection location, informational kiosk, a maintained access road, bicycle repair station, group picnic shelter, and two handicap accessible tent sites. There is a campground host on site between May 1st and September 30th of each year. Law enforcement does regular patrols in the area as well as a summer seasonal reporting daily to the campground for maintenance and other projects. These amenities meet and exceed the requirements put forth by FLREA, 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A), stating expanded amenity fee sites will include at least 5 of the 9 criteria of 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 simple devices for containing a campfire. Future amenities, such as additional RV sites and electrical hookups may or may not be constructed.

Current fees at the Alkali Creek campground for overnight use are \$6 per night per site. Fee collection began in 2005 and the fees have remained \$6.00 since their inception. The campground is part of the Fort Meade Recreation Area ACEC SRMA. The Fort Meade Recreation Area was identified for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) due to the numerous historical and archeological sites associated with one of the last frontier posts to be built in the Dakotas. The area encompasses 6,693 acres which provide recreational opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, scenic driving along the backcountry byway, hunting, fishing, and camping. Visitation numbers are calculated using traffic counters and visual inspection throughout the year. Because the campground and day use trailhead share a parking area, the visitor numbers are strictly the number of Recreation Use Permits that were collected over the 5-year period.

Visitation numbers from FY 2020 and 2021 were the result of the covid pandemic which pushed visitation numbers up as people were seeking to get outside more. In FY 2022 the numbers dropped back but have shown a steady increase in the number of visits per year and is expected to keep increasing. With increased visitation numbers, the frequency of cleaning, trash collection, maintenance issues also increase which requires the BLM to spend more time at the campground providing these services. With the increased shoulder season use, this has led to additional cleaning visits from the BLM, extended trash collection and more maintenance issues than previous years.

Table 3: Annual Overnight Visitation at Alkali Creek Campground

<u>Visitation by year</u>	<u>Number of Visits</u>
FY 2020	572
FY 2021	664
FY 2022	428
FY 2023	599
FY 2024	646

Alkali Creek Horse Camp

This campground directly adjacent to the Alkali Creek Campground. It is located 2 miles east of Sturgis South Dakota at exit 34 off Interstate 90. This campground is approximately 10 acres with a total of six drive in horse trailer sites. This campground is set aside for equestrian use only and provides access over 20 miles of non-motorized single-track trail and access to additional trail systems on USFS lands, city of Sturgis property and Veterans Administration trails. Campground amenities include vault toilets, steel fire rings, trash collection, picnic tables, fee collection location, informational kiosk, a maintained access road, group picnic shelter, and corrals and tie lines for horses. There is a campground host on site between May 1st and September 30th of each year shared between the two campgrounds. Law enforcement does regular patrols in the area as well as a summer seasonal reporting daily to the campground for maintenance and other projects. These amenities meet and exceed the requirements put forth by FLREA, 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A), stating expanded amenity fee sites will include at least 5 of the 9 criteria of 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 simple devices for containing a campfire. Future amenities, such as additional equestrian sites, potable water, and electrical hookups may or may not be constructed.

Current fees at the Alkali Creek Horse Camp for overnight use are \$8 per night. Fee collection began in 2005 and the fees have remained \$8.00 since inception. The campground is part of the Fort Meade Recreation Area ACEC SRMA. The Fort Meade Recreation Area was identified for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) due to the numerous historical and archeological sites associated with one of the last frontier posts to be built in the Dakotas. The area encompasses 6,693 acres which provide recreational opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, scenic driving along the backcountry byway, hunting, fishing, and camping. Visitation numbers are calculated using traffic counters and visual inspection throughout the year.

While visitation numbers have remained consistent over the most recent five-year span, the expense of providing the public with a campground set aside for equestrian users is expensive and time consuming. Additional tasks required from the BLM at the Horse Camp in comparison to the Alkali Creek Campground is the need for manure disposal, fly control, weed infestations

from manure/hay, and corral cleanout. The hours spent by BLM employees maintaining these areas will only increase with increased use.

Table 4: Annual Overnight Visitation at Alkali Creek Horse Camp

<u>Visitation by year</u>	<u>Number of Visits</u>
FY 2020	375
FY 2021	377
FY 2022	223
FY 2023	164
FY 2024	306

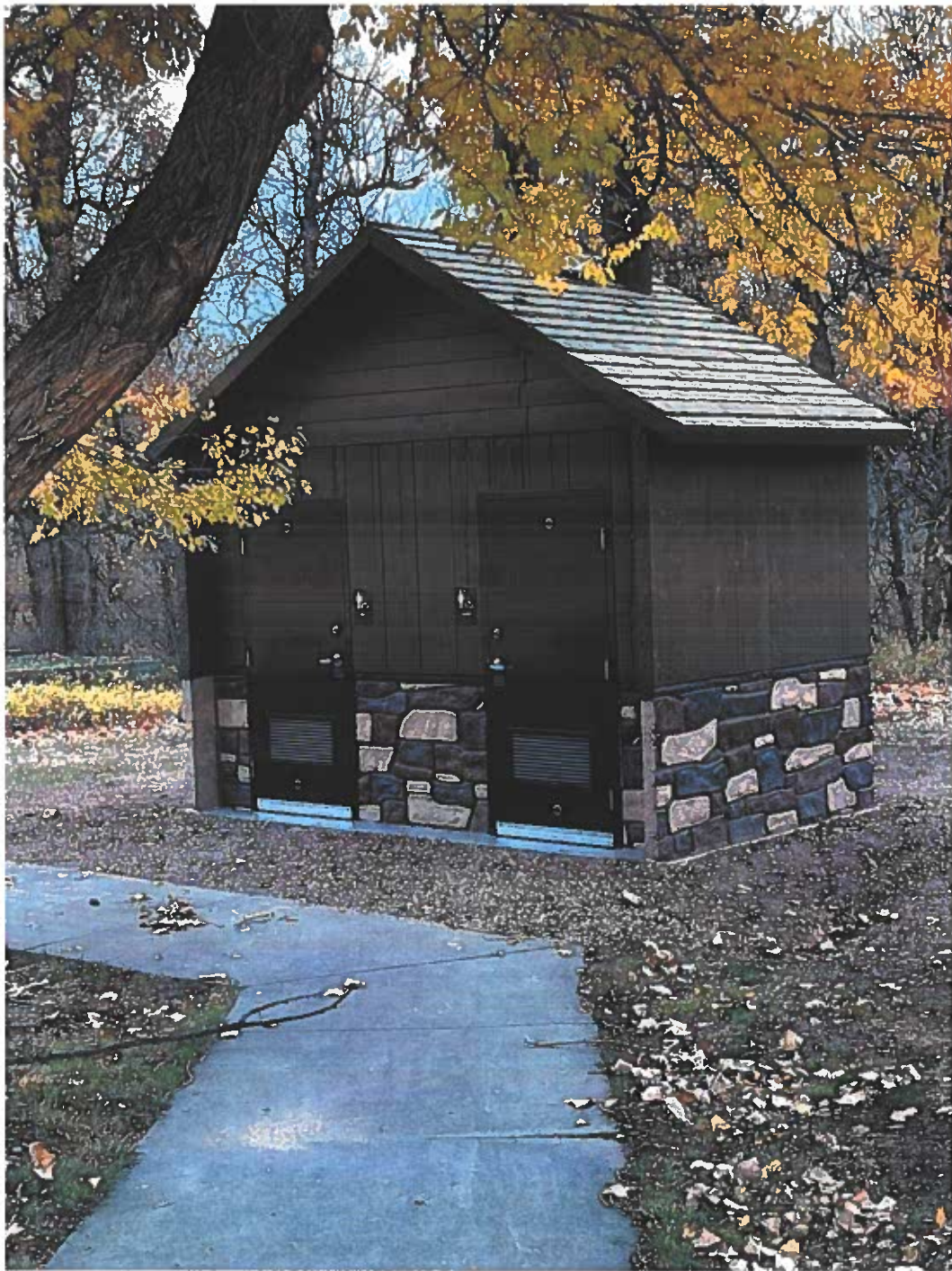


Figure 1: Facilities at Alkali Creek Campground

BLM South Dakota Campgrounds



Creator: lcarlson
Date: 12/10/2024

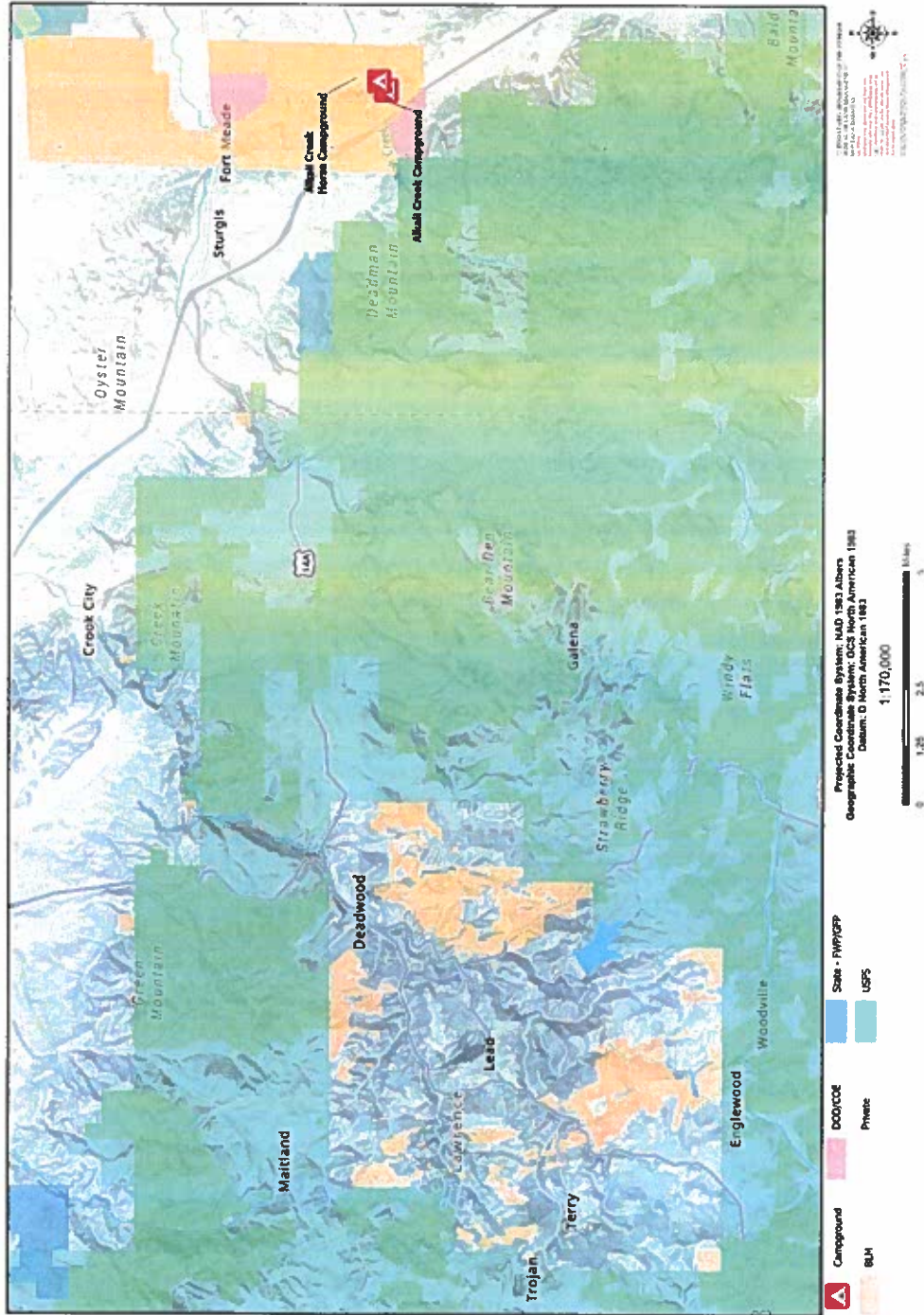


Figure 4: Map Showing Location of South Dakota Field Office Campgrounds

5 Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Rates

This business plan is proposing to increase expanded amenities fees at two existing sites: Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp described in Section 4 (Description of Each Fee Site/Area), which the BLM is authorized to collect if each site meets the requirements outlined in the Federal Lands and Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). FLREA states that an expanded amenity fee may be collected if the developed campground provides at least five of the following nine services: 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 simple devices for containing a campfire. Per FLREA the Interagency Senior and Access passes may provide a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees associated with individual campsites. The BLM retains and expends 100% of collected recreation fees for maintenance, improvements and visitor services at the site or area in which they are collected.

Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp already meet the FLREA expanded amenity requirements. This business plan will replace the existing 2013 plan for Fort Meade Recreation Area in its entirety. The site's current fees are \$6 and \$8 per night per individual site (expanded amenity). This plan includes an increase in the amount of the established expanded amenity fee (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)(D)) for overnight camping, as described in the following fee summary table.

For the Alkali Creek Campground and Horse Camp this business plan proposes to increase expanded amenity fees for non-electric tent sites and non-electric hookup campsites (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)(D)). All sites listed satisfy the expanded amenity fee requirements of FLREA.

The proposed expanded amenity fees for SDFO's campgrounds are:

- Individual non-electric tent sites of \$24 (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A))
- Individual non-electric RV sites of \$30 (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)(D))
- Reservation services (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G)). Reservation services fees could range from \$.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan.

Table 5 summarizes the existing and proposed fee schedule for SDFO's campgrounds.

Table 5: The Current and Proposed Fee Schedule for the South Dakota Field Office Campgrounds

Fee Areas	Current Fees	Proposed Fees (Expanded Amenity)
Alkali Creek Campground	\$6 camping (expanded amenity)	Individual Tent Site per night: \$24 Individual RV Site (non-electric) per night: \$30 Senior and Access Pass holders: 50% off individual campsites

Fee Areas	Current Fees	Proposed Fees (Expanded Amenity)
Alkali Creek Horse Camp	\$8 camping (expanded amenity)	Individual Site (non-electric) per night: \$30 Senior and Access Pass holders: 50% off individual campsites

5.1 America the Beautiful

FLREA established an interagency national pass known as the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. There are six types of America the Beautiful (ATB) passes: Annual, Military, Every Kid Outdoors (EKO, 4th grade), Senior, Access, and Volunteer. While the America the Beautiful Annual, Military, EKO, and Volunteer passes are accepted at BLM fee sites that charge a standard amenity fee, these passes are not eligible for expanded amenity fees, such as the SDFO campgrounds. Only the Interagency Senior and Access passes apply to expanded amenity fees.

Interagency Senior Pass or Interagency Access Pass holders will receive a 50% discount on the expanded amenity fee for overnight individual campsites. The discount only applies to the fee for the campsite physically occupied by the Senior Pass or Access Pass holder, not to any additional campsite(s) occupied by members of the pass holder’s party.

5.2 E-Commerce

South Dakota Field Office will use various e-commerce technologies as directed in E-Commerce Technologies for Recreation Fee Collections and Reservation Services (BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-010), to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve and pay for campsites within the field office. The SDFO will be posting our reservation system through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov. Currently the sites can be reserved by calling the SDFO and paying for each site, or by first come first served at the campgrounds. The SDFO is working to get both campgrounds listed in Recreation.gov by the summer of 2026.

An expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be charged at the SDFO campgrounds in addition to any other expanded amenity fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). Reservation services fees are expected to range approximately from \$0.50 to \$10.00, depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the SDFO will attempt to continue to provide a blend of reservation and first –come, first-served options until or unless the office moves the fee site/area entirely to e-commerce. Other payment options may also be considered in the future as technology and software develops, such as onsite credit card payment systems or scan and pay.

5.3 Model for Establishing Future Fee Changes

BLM’s permit and fee policy recommends using a standard index for routine fee adjustments rather than reviewing each fee change through a comprehensive business plan process, which can be time consuming. The SDFO seeks approval to implement a fee increase model based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Under this model, fees would increase by 20% (rounded) whenever the CPI-U (US City Average) rises by 20%.

The CPI measures how the price of goods and services changes over time. The CPI-U represents a broad group of urban consumers, covering over 90% of the U.S. population. The CPI helps track inflation and cost increases, which directly affect the costs of operating and maintaining campgrounds.

For example, in 2013, the CPI was 233.0, and by 2024 it had increased to 315.664, a 35% rise. If this model is approved, the first adjustment would increase campground fees by 20%. This means that for a non-electric campsite, the fee would rise to \$29, and for an electric campsite, the fee would increase to \$36.

This model helps ensure that campground fees keep pace with inflation and the increasing costs of maintaining the campgrounds, while minimizing the need for extensive fee reviews each time a change is needed.

6 Operating Costs

Annual operating cost for SDFO campgrounds is approximately \$27,620 per year. Table 6 describes the operating and maintenance expenses of the site and shows each year the business plan was updated. Appropriated recreation funding is utilized for seasonal staff labor but does not cover all the costs associated with a summer seasonal employee.

Table 6: Annual Operating Costs for Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp

Operation and Maintenance Expenses	2005 Costs	2013 Costs	2024 Costs
Labor- Law Enforcement/Non-LE Patrols	No Record	No Record	\$1,000
Labor- Seasonal Staff	No Record	No Record	\$7,500
Road Maintenance	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Supplies	\$1,550	\$1,551	\$5,000
Utilities (dumpster service, water samples)	\$880	\$900	\$2,500
Vehicle Expenses (fuel, maintenance, etc.)	\$2,000	\$3,500	\$5,000
Vault Toilet Pumping	\$780	\$780	\$2,500
Camp Host Reimbursement	\$1,455	\$2,000	\$3,120
Total	\$7,665	\$9,731	\$27,620

7 Revenues

Table 7 shows Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp's annual fee revenue for last 5 years. Revenue collected from the campground goes to funding law enforcement, general maintenance, trash collection and improvement projects.

Table 7: Annual Revenue for Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp

Revenue by Year	Total
FY 2020	\$5,484
FY 2021	\$5,001
FY 2022	\$3,218
FY 2023	\$4,914
FY 2024	\$4,491

On average the annual revenue covers approximately 17% of operating costs.

Currently, campsites are reserved by calling the SDFO and reserving the sites over the phone or they are reserved by first-come first-served using an iron ranger at the campgrounds. SDFO anticipates enhancing on location fee compliance through use of improved e-commerce methods such as recreation.gov. Recreation.gov will increase reservation compliance and free up SDFO staff from taking reservations over the phone. It is difficult to measure the amount of non-compliance at these sites, but a conservative estimate would be 30% to 40% of users either do no pay or pay less than the minimum.

Table 8 shows future projected revenue for each of the SDFO campgrounds. SDFO's campgrounds have a seasonal user base, with most visiting between the months of April and October. Currently the SDFO only collects campground fees between May 15th and September 30. Under this updated plan fees will be collected year-round with the only change being potable water is only available seasonally and hosts are only on-site during summer months. This will increase the fees collected throughout the year, but difficult to predict because user fees have not been collected in the past between the months of October 1st to May 14th.

Table 8: Future Projections with New Fees in Place.

Site Type	Number of Reservations (5-year avg.)	Total
Alkali Creek Campground Individual Site (non-electric): \$24	471	\$11,304
Alkali Creek Campground Individual RV Site (non-electric): \$30	111	\$3,330
Alkali Creek Horse Camp Individual Site (non-electric): \$30	289	\$8,670
Total		\$23,304

*5-year average only includes the months of May 15th to September 30th.

With the proposed fee, the SDFO recreation program expects to average \$23,304 per year fee collection. When holding back 15% (\$3,000) per year for emergency repairs and future construction the fees collected will cover approximately 74% of operating costs. Additional funding from appropriated funding will be utilized when available. The projected revenue does not consider public that utilized the Interagency Senior Pass or the Interagency Access Pass which allows for a 50% discount on expanded amenity fees at FLREA sites.

8 Priorities for Future Expenditures

Each year, the South Dakota Field Office anticipates saving approximately 15% from the campground’s annual revenue for long-term site maintenance and to reinvest into facilities and services that will promote program growth consistent with visitor demand. This balance provides flexibility to conduct emergency repairs, improve ability to fund unanticipated costs or opportunities to enhance services, and to improve future recreation infrastructure to support visitor use. Future expenditures will consist of continuing to support day-to-day operations at the campground, provide hosts for both sites, and make improvements to improve public opportunities. With the costs of services and supplies continuing to increase the fee increase will allow the recreation program to continue to make improvements to the infrastructure, additional services, and additional personnel to manage the campgrounds.

Future projects being considered will be to develop additional RV sites at Alkali Creek Campground, planting trees around RV sites, additional potable water hydrants, improvements to tent sites, additional creek access, and adding a second group picnic area. Horse camp improvements will include replacement of the vault toilets, accessible horse mounting ramp, and additional corrals at each camping site.

9 Analysis of Recreation Fee Rates

9.1 Fair Market Value

Table 9 shows the fair market value comparison analysis for the services provided by the SDFO’s current and proposed fee campgrounds to nearby fee campgrounds operated by other entities. These entities include the U.S. Forest Service, South Dakota State Parks, Private RV Parks, and Campgrounds of America (KOA) all of which provide similar fee-based services in the western South Dakota area.

The proposed fees for SDFO BLM campgrounds are in line with comparable sites in the western South Dakota area. SDFO’s non-electric campsites compare closely with U.S. Forest Service campgrounds and offer similar layouts and amenities. Some of the more developed sites on this list with higher camping fees have amenities such as running water, showers, and full bathrooms. That level of amenity is not currently planned at SDFO’s campgrounds.

Table 9: Comparability Analysis of Nearby Similar Fee Sites

Campground Name	Agency or Operator	Campground Fees	Amenities Offered	Key Amenity Differences in Comparable Sites
U.S. Forest Service Black Hills National Forest Campgrounds	U.S. Forest Service	Standard site fees range from \$26-\$30 per night. Senior and Access pass give 50% discount.	Amenities vary by campground, all standard campsites have at least fire rings, pit toilets, picnic tables.	Parking is located at many of the tent sites, where the BLM sites have a single parking area, and you walk to your tent site.

U.S. Forest Service Black Hills National Forest – Willow Creek Horse Camp	U.S. Forest Service	Standard site fees: \$30 per night. Senior and Access pass give 50% discount.	Non-electric sites, grills, vault toilets, fire rings, horse corrals, host, picnic tables, potable water, trash collection.	Identical camping set up.
Rocky Point State Park	South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks	Daily entrance fee: \$10.00 per vehicle. Annual entrance fee: \$40.00 per vehicle Developed camping: \$26.00 per night.	Developed campsites with restrooms, vault toilets, electrical, picnic tables, and fire pits.	Dump station free for campers, boat ramp, fish cleaning station, swim beach, showers, and playground.
Vanocker Canyon Campground and RV Park	Private	Tent Site: \$29.00 per night (2 adults) RV Sites (electric): \$39.00 to \$49.00 per night.	Developed campground with restrooms, showers, laundry, picnic tables, potable water,	Rental Cabins,
Bear Butte State Park	South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks	Daily entrance fee: \$10.00 per vehicle. Annual entrance fee: \$40.00 per vehicle. Campsite non- electrical: \$11 per night. Horse Camp non- electrical: \$18 per night.	Every site has a picnic table, and a fire pit with adjustable grill gate. Group picnic shelters, vault toilets, hiking trails, equestrian trails, self-serve kiosks,	Boat ramp, fishing pier. Horse camp does not provide picnic shelter, corals, potable water,
Spearfish KOA	Private	Campsite electric: \$83.89 per night.	These are developed campsites with electric and water, picnic tables, bathrooms, showers, and fire pits.	Dump station free for campers, playground, river access.
Sturgis RV Park	Private	RV Daily \$60 RV Weekly \$360	These are developed campsites with electric and water, picnic tables, bathrooms, and showers.	No fire pits, crowded spacing.

The proposed fees for SDFO's Alkali Creek Campground and Alkali Creek Horse Camp are in line with comparable sites in the western South Dakota area. SDFO's non-electric campsites compare closely with U.S. Forest Service campgrounds and offer similar layouts and amenities. Some of the more developed sites on this list with higher camping fees have amenities such as running water, showers, and full bathrooms.

10 Impacts from Changing and Not-Changing Recreation Fee Rates

Consistent with the Department of the Interior and BLM priorities, the BLM SDFO will continue to make a difference in western South Dakota area communities through expanding recreational diversity, access and opportunities and providing for natural resource interpretation. This includes to:

- improve public health and safety at developed recreation sites and areas by updating and modernizing infrastructure and improving facility amenities
- collaborate with community members, government organizations, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to address challenges for recreation management.
- and develop and support youth education and outreach programs.

10.1 Anticipated Results of Not Establishing New Fees

By not establishing the new fees in this business plan the South Dakota Field Office would not be able to provide adequate maintenance and monitoring for the already established campgrounds. Without the new fees the SDFO would not have the funding to be able to achieve goals of improving visitor experiences and would likely need to minimize services and amenities offered. As with most services, the fees continue to increase such as trash collection, water sample testing, vehicle costs, etc. and without increasing the expanded amenities fees, the current revenue collected will not cover all the services that we provide. Services such as providing a campground host on site, cleaning of toilets, purchasing of supplies and trash collection could be reduced in the future if SDFO campgrounds revenue remains at its current levels. This would also hamper the goal of growing the recreation program by utilizing current funding to maintain the assets we currently have.

10.2 Impacts of Fee Changes

Market research indicates that the proposed fees are aligned with other area campgrounds. Dispersed camping is not allowed on the Fort Meade Recreation Area but is available on nearby BLM and USFS lands for users who desire a dispersed camping experience. With no dispersed camping on the Fort Meade Recreation Area and the campgrounds being relatively small, it's important to make improvements to improve the durability of the existing sites because we are consolidating a lot of use into a small area. Items like concrete sidewalks in high traffic areas, additional potable water hydrants to spread out users, and increasing RV sites to allow for more users. Continuing to improve the current developed campgrounds would lessen environmental damage and provide a more sustainable option for BLM recreation users. With the Fort Meade Recreation Area being located near the town of Sturgis, many of the private campgrounds available to the public are higher priced and crowded to account for the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally that happens every year during the month of August. With the fee change it will help the BLM continue to provide improvements to the campgrounds and provide the public with safe and affordable opportunities for camping in western South Dakota.

11 Public Outreach

The draft business plan will be made available for a 2-week comment period. Statewide outreach efforts will include news releases, social media posts, and on-site signage.

Comments may be submitted by email to blm_mt_south_dakota_fo@blm.gov, in person at the South Dakota Field Office, or via mail to BLM South Dakota Field Office, Attn: Business Plan, 309 Bonanza Street, Belle Fourche, SD 57717.

The BLM's plan for outreach and notice about fees includes:

- 2-week public comment period.
- Public notice of proposed fee changes posted on site along with information on how to provide comments.
- News release and social media posts announcing the public comment period for proposed fee changes, including information on how to provide comments.
- Information on proposed and/or approved fee changes will be posted on BLM's website at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/business-plans>.
- The Business Plan will be posted on the eplanning website to allow the public and avenue to provide comments.
- Any approved fee changes would be updated on the fee signs onsite to clearly reflect the fee changes when new fee schedule implemented.

Once the public comment period is completed and any changes are made to the fee proposal because of analysis of the public participation, the SDFO will present the draft business plan proposal to the Missouri Basic Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in January of 2025.

These outreach methods comply with requirements established by FLREA and BLM policy.

Before charging fees at fee sites, the following outreach will occur:

- Issue a news release and the updated fees will be posted at the campgrounds.